

## Fascism against Christianity: The Great Liberation

Let us conclude.

Today we must absolutely put a stop to Christianity.

Everything in it is incompatible with and contradictory to the ideals, the morals, the vision of the world and of man that would enable a race to bring about the resurrection of the empire.

Our sleep has lasted long enough. All the possible compromises and variations have been exhausted. It is time to say “Enough!” No more of Christianity embraced as a whole, in the totality of all its forms! The Latin race in particular must bitterly disavow any descent from the dark object that emerged from the Jewish slums of Palestine to contaminate us. Thus:

On an ideal and moral level, it is time to unmask Christianity’s enormous doctrinal bluff and to refuse to allow it to continue to parade around loaded up with all the values that have been superstitiously and unconsciously attributed to it.

On a practical level, it is time to become aware of the European danger and the decline of the West and to respond by reviving in the modern world the political and sapiential values characteristic of the Mediterranean tradition.

Ethical and religious Christianity today is nothing more than a name and a habit, absolutely external to conscience; but nobody, or nearly nobody, has bothered to abolish the name itself and to put its content on trial again, so as to start right back at the beginning, rejecting the “fact” of Christianity, its “tradition” and all the rest.

This is precisely my intent: to hold such a trial, demanding that every account to be scrutinized with inflexible severity, that all cards be placed openly on the table, and that every way out and every compromise be barred in advance. At stake are not more or less anticlerical polemics but rather a serious, objective examination, unbiased by feeling and belief. A cool-headed examination should suffice to blunt the ecstatic thrill and to unmask the true poverty and inferiority of the Christian vision of the world and of man.

With regard to fascism I declare:

Fascism... will blaze the path toward breaking up the monstrous political connivance with the Catholic Church, abetted by the intrigues of that secret and illicit association, the Society of Jesus. It will become aware that it has fallen prey to a suckers' marketplace (*marche' de dupes*). The petty political advantages to be gained are trivial when compared to the Church's devious efforts to achieve monopoly control over Italy's conscience by means of public education and clever sophistries that polarize the fascist regime against everything that is not Catholic. To have agreed that a crucifix should be placed not in the universities, not in the coliseum, but on the Campidoglio in place of the eagle and the fasces is a blot without precedent that it will take a lot to wipe away.

This transpired because fascism still lacks spirituality and culture of its own, as fresh and vibrant as the warrior forces that brought it into being. The result was that fascism's political triumph was unaccompanied by a spiritual-cultural triumph. This transpired because fascism is still crippled by a definition of empire as a simple political, economic, and military organization, based on the industrial-capitalist system and cast in the mold of British and German bourgeois and material imperialism. But such a definition has nothing in common with true imperialism, that spiritual, sacred, and heroic imperialism of ancient Rome, Byzantium, and Persia. The real explanation for the success of Catholic infiltration lies in fascism's actual (though concealed) indifference to spiritual questions, whereby it did not hesitate to embrace new members who could solidify the material structure of the new regime, even at the cost of accommodating the most strident of contradictions.

Once fascism transcends the bourgeois-industrial definition of empire, once it embraces imperiousness (*imperialita'*) in the true, traditional sense, the problem will be resolved. Fascism will find its soul within itself, a fact that will paralyze all efforts to apply external pressure and render ever more acute the incompatibility between state and Church. "Incompatibility" not as understood by demagogic, anticlerical, or secular ideologies but in the sense that the empire would become the true spiritual reality, the immanent, powerful religion that ousts the dead hierarchies and empty devotional forms that have survived in Catholicism.

Julius Evola, *Revolt against the modern world* So if the "daring" that fascism regularly exalts is more than rhetorical bluster, here's a first task: deride the arrogance that did not hesitate to call the king of Italy a usurper from on the high at the Vatican and reaffirm the complete dominion of the state over the Church. The Church must be directly controlled by the state. Its every organization must require state approval and sanction... Above all, it must be denied any role in the education of souls during the period in which the will is not yet formed and the conscience is not yet clear. (Though its continuing presence can be tolerated as a feature of popular belief, but only on a temporary basis, until such a time as the Mediterranean and imperial sense of life has fully revitalized everyone's spirit, thanks to pedagogical training carried out over several generations.)

So much for Catholicism, which on a practical plane must be distinguished from Christianity. The latter is mostly to be identified with the forms of Protestantism active in Anglo-Saxon liberal democracies. Here lies the true European danger from which we must protect ourselves, reacting ruthlessly to all the international, unionist, Masonic, anti-aristocratic, anti-Roman, socialist, humanitarian, moralist ferments with which it would seek to infiltrate Italy.

In the properly cultural field, fascism ought to begin by promoting critical and historical studies, not partisan studies but cold surgical analyses of the essence of Christianity akin to Louis Rougier's work in France, published in his collection, *Masters of Anti-Christian Thought*. At the same time, fascism ought to promote studies and research on the spiritual side of paganism (and work to diffuse such knowledge) studies extending from paganism's true vision of life to rigorously appropriate (because many are not) explorations of the Mediterranean tradition in its primitive and metaphysical nature.

Let the following be stated firmly, absolutely, and unambiguously. We are not destroyers but restorers. When we appear to be destroying we are in fact rearranging and replacing what is on the wane with higher forms, forms more vibrant and glorious. We possess a complete, total, positive system of values, developed in close connection with the forms of contemporary civilization, a system that provides us with a firm foundation and frees us from any fear of the void as we demolish all the negatives of European decadence.

From the standpoint of its praxis, Fascism must not betray itself, which is to say, it must deeply embrace those values of affirmation, activity, will to power, antisentimentalism, and antirhetoricism whose imprint it bears (especially in its purest manifestations). Values that are essentially anti-Christian. Values to be raised to a higher internalized and spiritualized form and freed from the inferior and provisional approach based on mere violence and material domination.

And here there is a precursor, a misunderstood man, who waits in the shadows: Friedrich Nietzsche. The Nietzschean experiment is not yet exhausted because it hasn't even truly begun. What is worn out is the aesthetic-literary or firebrand (baionettista) caricature of Nietzsche found in characters like Corrado Brando, Stelio Effrena, or William II. But very much alive are values that Nietzsche heroically propagated despite no end of suffering, despite the rebellion of his entire being, which, after having given everything without complaint, simply collapsed. These values transcend his philosophy, his "humanity", even himself. They are of cosmic significance, reflecting the power of the Aeion, the Ur, the terrible fire of magical initiations. These are the values that are still waiting to be understood and taken up. They encompass the sounding of an alarm, an appeal for disgust, the call for an awakening, and a summons to participate in the great struggle in which the destiny of the West will be decided, whether toward twilight or toward dawn. Fascism must begin here: by beginning the slow, tenacious construction of a new and wondrous race.

Accordingly, education will be reoriented toward pagan and Mediterranean values.

The “myth” of the crucified God-man who suffers and loves will be opposed that of the man-God, a being radiating light and power, the summit of an imperial ethos. To a dualistic and transcendental worldview will be opposed a vision of free and immanent unity, withdrawn into itself, matter for domination. To Christianity’s race of “slaves and children of God” will be opposed a race of liberated and liberating beings who interpret God as a supreme power that one may freely obey or do battle against in manly fashion with one’s head held high, immune to the taint of feelings, vacillations, and prayers. To feelings of dependence and lack will be opposed a feeling of sufficiency; to the will to equality, the will to difference, distance, hierarchy, and aristocracy. To the mystical communist promiscuity will be opposed firm individuality; to the need for love, happiness, peace, and consolation, the heroic contempt for all this and law of pure will and absolute action. To Christianity’s providential vision will be opposed the tragic conception whereby man stands alone facing the contingencies of nature such that either he must redeem himself or redemption will forever elude him. Do away with “sin” and “bad conscience” bravely heap all responsibilities upon one’s shoulders, bar the door to any escape, fortify the innermost spirit.

No more “brothers” or “fathers” but instead a fully autonomous individuals, self-enclosed as if each were a separate world, rock, or peak, individuals clothed only in their strength or in their weakness, each and every one operating like an independent combat post that defends a distinctive quality, life, dignity, unequal strength, indomitable force. No more subjection to the need to “communicate”, and to be “understood” or to fraternal bonds or to the sensual pleasure of loving and of feeling loved as equals. All are subtly corrupting and violent forces that weaken aristocracy and individuality. On the contrary, the incommunicability must be celebrated in the name of absolute purity and respect. Stronger forces and weaker forces, the one alongside or against the order, loyally, coldly, acknowledging one another thanks to the discipline of the spirit that burns within but produces an exterior rigid and tempered like steel, forces magnificently infused with the immeasurability of the infinite as found in feats of war and on the battlefield : (this is the ideal). A state of absolute generosity and absolute cruelty insure that some men and races ascend, while others fall with a thud. Nothing “infinite”. Precise relations, order, cosmos, hierarchy. Solar and sufficient beings, masters who are far-sighted, fearful, distant, and solitary; who, instead of taking in, give out an overabundance of light and power, who resolutely incline toward ever more dizzying intensities within a hierarchical chain of being that comes not from above but from the dynamic natural interconnection between their natures.

“How beautiful they are, how pure are these free forces not yet corrupted by the spirit!” wrote the young Nietzsche after an ascent during a storm. In the place of Nietzsche’s “not yet”, I would substitute “no longer corrupted by the spirit” in the present context, the word “spirit” meaning the unreal: an outer crust of feelings, hopes, doctrines, beliefs, “values”, sensations, words, sensual pleasures, and human emotions. But the meaning remains the same. The world is to be cleansed, returned to its pre-Christian state. It is to be returned to a free, overabundant, essential state within which nature is not yet nature or

the spirit, in which “things” and “forms” do not exist except as powers; in which every instant of life is a heroic event, made up of acts, symbols, commands, magical gestures, and rituals, accompanied by great waves of sound, light, and terror.

This is our truth and this is the threshold of our great liberation: the end of faith and the world’s emancipation from God. No “heaven” will hover over the land, gone will be “providence”, “reason”, “good”, and “evil”, masks for the terrified, pallid escapes for pallid souls. At last, those who think themselves men, unaware that they are sleeping gods, will be left to themselves: everything, all around, will return to a state of freedom; everything will finally breathe. The weak will collapse. The strong will assert themselves and will be rekindled as the “holy race of the kingless” of the ancient Gnostic oracles; the race of “those who are”, of the unchained and the unburdened, of reedemed justifiers of the world, lords of necessity and suffering.

This is our truth. This is the “myth” that we pagans oppose to the superstition of Galilee, the myth that we affirm today as central to the values of our race and to the restoration of the empire in the West.

Tradition - catholicism - ghibellinism  
di Troy Southgate  
(torna indietro)

Catholicism is perceived by many to be the pinnacle of Tradition. Evola accepts that it contains many Traditional aspects, but goes on to say that in order to be seen as a legitimate form of authority and sovereignty it must become fully integrated within the sphere of Tradition itself. Catholicism alone is inadequate and represents only a minimal current of a far wider Tradition. Here, Evola opts to discuss the implications of this fact in both a political and contemporary context, despite using examples from the past.

Religion falls into various categories and cannot match the supreme and unitary nature of Tradition. In fact religion is simply an exoteric version of a deeper, esoteric undercurrent. Christianity, for example, panders to the masses, whilst Tradition is reserved for the spiritual elite: "In effect, nobody with a higher education can really believe in the axiom 'There is no salvation outside the Church' (nulla salus extra ecclesiam), meaning the great civilisations that have preceded Christianity (the still-existing millennia-old non-European traditions, such as Buddhism and Hinduism, and even relatively recent ones such as Islam) have not known the supernatural or the sacred, but only distorted images and obscure 'prefigurations' and that they amount to mere 'paganism', polytheism, and 'natural mysticism'." This statement would undoubtedly arouse in the more "traditional" Catholic a feeling of revulsion and anger, perhaps even accusations of "ecumenicalism." However, Evola is not advocating the unification of all religions, but the acceptance that there is a common Tradition which lies in each. He goes on to say that for a Catholic "to persist in the sectarian and dogmatic exclusivism about this matter would amount to being in the same predicament of one who wished to defend the views of physics and astronomy found in the Old Testament, which have been made obsolete by the current state of knowledge on these matters." Catholicism, then, is only "traditional" in the sense that certain aspects tend to accord with Tradition itself. The same can be said of Islam or Judaism.

We now turn our attention to the centuries-old debate concerning Catholicism and Ghibellinism. The Ghibellines (like their Guelph rivals) were a political force in northern and central Italy between the

twelfth and fifteenth centuries. These opposing groups began in Germany as partisans in a struggle for the throne of the Holy Roman Empire between two dynastic houses: the Welfs on the one hand (who were dukes of Saxony and Bavaria), and the Hohenstaufens on the other (who were rulers of Swabia). During the thirteenth century the Welf leader, Otto of Brunswick, was involved in a fratricidal struggle for the imperial crown against Frederick II of Hohenstaufen, and the all-German battle soon moved south to Italy. The name Guelph is derived from Welf, whilst Ghibelline is a corruption of Waiblingen, an area of land belonging to the emperors of Hohenstaufen. According to the Ghibelline view of the world, as elucidated by Evola, "the Empire was an institution of supernatural origin and character, like the Church. It had its own sacred nature, just as, during the Middle Ages, the dignity of the kings themselves had an almost priestly nature (kingship being established through a rite that differed only in minor detail from Episcopal ordination). On this basis, the Ghibelline emperors - who were the representatives of a universal and supranational idea, embodying a *lex animata in terris* (a living law on earth) - opposed the hegemonic claims of the clergy and claimed to have only God above themselves." The struggle between the Ghibellines and the clergy is usually discussed in political terms, but was actually a form of spiritual combat waged at the very highest level. Humanity, during the medieval period, was caught between two distinct paths: action and contemplation. Evola tells us that this relates to the Empire and the Church respectively: "Ghibellinism more or less claimed that through the view of earthly life as discipline, militia, and service, the individual can be led beyond himself and reach the supernatural culmination of human personality through action and under the aegis of the Empire. This was related to the character of a non-naturalistic but 'providential' institution acknowledged in the Empire; knighthood and the great knightly Orders stood in relation to the empire in the same way in which the clergy and the ascetic Orders stood in relation to the Church." This sounds like an analogy of the political soldier, but Evola is keen to demonstrate that such Orders "were based on an idea that was less political than ethical-spiritual, and partially even ascetic, according to an asceticism that was not cloistered and contemplative, but rather of a warrior type. In this last regard, the most typical example was constituted by the Order of Knights Templar, and in part by the Order of the Teutonic Knights." This subject is discussed at length in Evola's *Revolt Against The Modern World*, during which the author explained how the Emperor waged a calculated holy war against the pro-Guelphist clergy and how even the Crusades became an active consolidation of the imperial idea; just as the Empire had been in times of peace. The Ghibellines, he said, were engaged in an occult struggle "against papal Rome that was waged by Rome itself" (p.300). Indeed, the head of the Church is known as *pontifex maximus*; a title which is taken directly from the leaders of early Rome. Indeed, according to Evola the Emperor Julian opposed Christianity due to its "upholding of an anarchical doctrine; with the excuse of paying homage to God alone, they refused to give him homage in the person of those who, as legitimate leaders of men, were his representatives on earth and drew from him the principle of their power. This, according to Celsus, was an example of impiety."

Evola's whole point is that in ancient times the religious clergy were answerable to the Emperor himself; not simply from a political perspective, but also in a theological capacity: "It was only during the Middle Ages that the priest nourished the ambition, not of being king, but of being the one to whom kings are subject. At that time, Ghibellinism arose as a reaction, and the rivalry was rekindled, the new reference point now being the authority and the right reclaimed by the Holy Roman Empire." But this does not presuppose that religion must be at the service of the State like those of "a Masonic, anti-clerical character," on the contrary, this leads to totalitarianism and the Concordats which were conveniently arranged in both Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy. The separation of the spiritual and political spheres is epitomised by the Christian maxim "render unto Caesar what is Caesar's and unto God what is God's," something which was quite unknown in ancient times. Needless to say, throughout history the Catholic Church has played a very large role in secular affairs by using politics as a mere wing of the religious establishment. Although in the later Middle Ages the Church did recognise the

divine right of kings, Evola considers these "atheistic" monarchs to have been at the forefront of the liberal ideas which later found expression in the French Revolution of 1789. Once the State had vacated the domain of the spirit and become secular, however, it turned against the Church. But this was different to the rebellion of the Ghibellines, because this current "did not pursue the subjection of spiritual authority to temporal powers, but rather upheld, vis-?-vis the exclusivist claim of the Church, a value and a right for the State, different from those that are proper to an organisation with a merely human and material character." However, lest one wrongly imagine that Evola somehow wishes to revive the Ghibelline struggle against the Church, the author carefully points out that the key point is to resist the secular State in all its forms. Only in this way can politics be ascribed to a higher level.

Catholicism today is in great decline. Not least because it is always forced to compromise with the prevailing ideologies among which it finds itself. Liberalism is gradually eroding the last vestiges of Catholic tradition in the same way that it is eating away at the edifice of Tradition in general. The likes of the Protestant Reformation and Vatican II have taken their toll, and we now see modernist popes tolerating bastardised currents like Liberation Theology, supporting the burgeoning New World Order and kneeling before the might of International Zionism. Evola tells us that "the decline of the modern Church is undeniable because she gives to social and moral concerns a greater weight than what pertains to the supernatural life, to asceticism, and to contemplation, which are essential reference points of religiosity." It is certainly not fulfilling any kind of meaningful role, either: "For all practical purposes, the main concerns of Catholicism today seem to turn it into a petty bourgeois moralism that shuns sexuality and upholds virtue, or an inadequate paternalistic welfare system. In these times of crisis and emerging brutal forces, the Christian faith should devote itself to very different tasks." In the medieval period the Church possessed a more traditional character, but only due to the fact that it had appropriated so many Classical elements and, by way of Aristotle, lashed them firmly to the theological mast being constructed by Thomas Aquinas during the thirteenth century. Catholicism, however, will never reconcile itself with the problem of how to deal with politics and the State because it relies upon separation and dualism. Tradition, on the other hand, is integralist and unitary.

Evola notes that certain individuals and groups have sought to incorporate the more traditional aspects of Catholicism within the broader and far more encompassing sphere of Tradition itself. Evola's French philosophical counterpart, Rene Guenon, for example. Catholics, however, are far too dogmatic and would merely seek to make Tradition "conform" to their own spiritual *weltanschauung*. This, says Evola, is "placing the universal at the service of the particular." Furthermore, of course, the anti-modernists who are organised in groups such as The Society of St. Pius X and the Sedavacantist fraternity do not speak with the full weight and authority of the Church. They are, therefore, powerless because "the direction of the Church is a descending and anti-traditional one, consisting of modernisation and coming to terms with the modern world, democracy, socialism, progressivism, and everything else. Therefore, these individuals are not authorised to speak in the name of Catholicism, which ignores them, and should not try to attribute to Catholicism a dignity the latter spurns." Evola suggests that because the Church is so inadequate, it should be abandoned and left to its ultimate doom. He concludes by reiterating the fact that a State which does not have a spiritual dimension is not a State at all. The only way forward, he argues, is to "begin from a pure idea, without the basis of a proximate historical reference" and await the actualisation of the Traditional current.

Troy Southgate examines late Italian philosopher Julius Evola's *Men Among the Ruins: Post-War Reflections of a Radical Traditionalist*. This is chapter 10 ( n.d.r. )

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Now, without wanting to minimize the possible religious, cultural, and political errors propagated by some or all of the nefarious groups just listed, mere opposition to them does not guarantee truth in its opponents — far from it. Many of the Nouvelle Droite or “Third Position” value the Faith — as Maurras and Primo de Rivera were rightly or wrongly accused of — purely as a cultural institution, incarnating the values of the “West.” Still others, such as the late Julius Evola and Alain de Benoist reject Catholicism entirely as (in reference to our Jewish origins) as a “Semitic corruption” of Europe’s Aryan or Indo-European pagan heritage: an analysis shared with — among others — Nazi theorist Alfred Rosenberg. My late lamented friend, Thomas Molnar, wrote a brilliant book (*The Pagan Temptation*, whose title I have stolen for this essay) specifically on these folk. But whether or not such people openly worship Thor or whomever (and so unwittingly join hands with their supposed Wiccan opponents) or not, they make an idol for themselves of the nation, the race, or the West itself. Akin to but distinct from this current is that of “Traditionalism” — which word in this sense has nothing to do with traditionally-minded Catholics, but rather refers to schools of thought launched by such figures as the afore-mentioned Julius Evola, Rene Guenon, Oswald Spengler, Frithjof Schuon, Hermann Count Keyserling, and Mircea Eliade, among others. For these men, either the West or all Mankind are undergirded by a Universal “Tradition,” of which the various religions and cultures were all more or less legitimate expressions — and all are equally threatened by a variously described phenomenon that might be called “Modernity” or “Modernism.” Soulless and materialist, this enemy — of whom the various organisations described earlier may or may not be minions — shall strangle all that is true or beautiful or good: Man shall be left in its wake either an unconscious automaton mindlessly doing his masters’ bidding, slaughtered by neo-barbarians destroying his corrupt civilization, or some combination of the two. Now, to be fair, all of these thinkers and their ilk have insights — some very good indeed. But the problem once more is that they tend to subordinate the Faith to something else — in this particular case, its value is merely that of one vessel of a more important thing. Nor is it necessarily the best vessel, as Guenon showed by becoming a Muslim, since, as he thought, Islam is “more faithful to itself” than Catholicism.

Against the Neo-Pagans (Julius Evola)

Extract from “Grundrisse” (1942) by Julius Evola

The Misunderstandings of the New “Paganism”

It is perhaps appropriate to point out the misunderstandings that are current at the moment in some radical circles, who believe that a solution lies in the direction of a new paganism. This misunderstanding is already visible in the use of terms such as “pagan” and “pagandom”. I myself, having used these expressions as slogans in a book that was published in Italy in 1928, and in Germany in 1934, have cause for sincere regrets.

Certainly the word for pagan or heathen, *paganus*, appears in some ancient Latin writers such as Livy without an especially negative tone. But this does not alter the fact that with the arrival of the new faith, the word *paganus* became a decidedly disparaging expression, as used in early Christian apologetics. It derives from *pagus*, meaning a small town or village, so that *paganus* refers to the peasant way of thinking: an uncultured, primitive, and superstitious way. In order to promote and glorify the new faith, the apologists had the bad habit of elevating themselves through the denigration of other faiths. There was often a conscious and often systematic disparagement and misrepresentation of almost all the earlier traditions, doctrines, and religions, which were grouped under the contemptuous blanket-term of



paganism or heathendom. To this end, the apologists obviously made a premeditated effort to highlight those aspects of the pre-Christian religions and traditions that lacked any normal or primordial character, but were clearly forms that had fallen into decay. Such a polemical procedure led, in particular, to the characterization of whatever had preceded Christendom, and was hence non-Christian, as necessarily anti-Christian.

One should consider, then, that “paganism” is a fundamentally tendentious and artificial concept that scarcely corresponds to the historical reality of what the pre-Christian world always was in its normal manifestations, apart from a few decadent elements and aspects that derived from the degenerate remains of older cultures.

Once we are clear about this, we come today to a paradoxical realization: that this imaginary paganism that never existed, but was invented by Christian apologists, is now serving as the starting-point for certain so-called pagan circles, and is thus threatening for the first time in history to become a reality—no more and no less than that.

What are the main traits of today’s pagan outlook, as its own apologists believe and declare them to be? The primary one is the imprisonment in Nature. All transcendence is totally unknown to the pagan view of life: it remains stuck in a mixture of Spirit and Nature, in an ambiguous unity of Body and Soul. There is nothing to its religion but a superstitious deification of natural phenomena, or of tribal energies promoted to the status of minor gods. Out of this there arises first of all a blood- and soil-bound particularism. Next comes a rejection of the values of personality and freedom, and a condition of innocence that is merely that of the natural man, as yet unawakened to any truly supra-natural calling. Beyond this innocence there is only lack of inhibition, “sin,” and the pleasure of sinning. In other domains there is nothing but superstition, or a purely profane culture of materialism and fatalism. It is as though only the arrival of Christianity (ignoring certain precursors which are dismissed as insignificant) allowed the world of supra-natural freedom to break through, letting in grace and personality, in contrast to the fatalistic and nature-bound beliefs ascribed to “paganism,” bringing with it a catholic ideal (in the etymological sense of universality) and a healthy dualism, which made it possible to subjugate Nature to a higher law, and for the “Spirit” to triumph over the law of flesh, blood, and the false gods.

These are the main traits of the dominant understanding of paganism, i.e., of everything that does not entail a specifically Christian world-view. Anyone who possesses any direct acquaintance with cultural and religious history, however elementary, can see how incorrect and one-sided this attitude is. Besides, in the early Church Fathers there are often signs of a higher understanding of the symbols, doctrines, and religions of preceding cultures. Here we will give only a sampling.

What most distinguished the pre-Christian world, in all its normal forms, was not the superstitious divinization of nature, but a symbolic understanding of it, by virtue of which (as I have often emphasized) every phenomenon and every event appeared as the sensible revelation of a supra-sensible world. The pagan understanding of the world and of man was essentially marked by sacred symbolism. Moreover, the pagan way of life was absolutely not that of a mindless innocence, nor a natural abandonment to the passions, even if certain forms of it were obviously degenerate. It was already aware of a healthy dualism, which is reflected in its universal religious or metaphysical conceptions. Here we can mention the dualistic warrior-religion of the ancient Iranian Aryans, already discussed and familiar to all; the Hellenistic antithesis between the “two natures,” between World and Underworld, or the Nordic one between the race of the Ases and the elementary beings; and lastly the Indo-Aryan contrast between sams’ra, the “stream of forms,” and m(o)kthi, “liberation” and “perfection.”

On this basis, all the great pre-Christian cultures shared the striving for a supra-natural freedom, i.e., for the metaphysical perfection of the personality, and they all acknowledged Mysteries and initiations. I have already pointed out that the Mysteries often signified the reconquest of the primordial state, the spirituality of the solar, Hyperborean races, on the foundation of a tradition and a knowledge that were concealed through secrecy and exclusivity from the pollutions of an environment already in decay. We

have also seen that in the Eastern lands, the Aryan quality was already associated with a “second birth” achieved through initiation. As for natural innocence as the pagan cult of the body, that is a fairy-tale and not even in evidence among savages, for despite the inner lack of differentiation already mentioned in connection with races “close to nature,” these people inhibit and constrict their lives through countless taboos in a way that is often stricter than the morality of the so-called “positive religions.” And as for that which seems to the superficial view to embody the prototype of such “innocence,” namely the classical ideal, that was no cult of the body: it did not belong on that side of the body-spirit duality, but on the other side. As already stated, the classic ideal is that of a Spirit that is so dominant that under certain favorable spiritual conditions it molds Body and Soul to its own image, and thereby achieves a perfect harmony between the inner and the outer.

Lastly, there is an aspiration away from particularism to be found everywhere in the “pagan” world, to which was due the imperial summons that marked the ascending phase of the Nordic-derived races. Such a summons was often metaphysically enhanced and refined, and appeared as the natural consequence of the expansion of the ancient sacred state-concept; also as the form in which the victorious presence of the “higher world” and the paternal, Olympian principle sought to manifest itself in the world of becoming. In this respect we might recall the old Iranian concept of Empire and of the “King of kings,” with its associated doctrine of the *hvarenū* (the “celestial glory” with which the Aryan rulers were endowed), and the Indo-Aryan tradition of the “World-king” or *cakravartī*, etc., right up to the reappearance of these signifiers in the “Olympian” assumptions of the ancient Roman idea of State and Empire. The Roman Empire, too, had its sacred contents, which were systematically misunderstood or undervalued not only by Christendom, but also by the writers of “positive” history. Even the Emperor-cult had the sense of a hierarchical unity at the top of a pantheon, which was a series of separate territorial and ancestral cults belonging to the non-Roman peoples, which were freely respected so long as they kept within their normal boundaries. Finally, concerning the “pagan” unity of the two powers, spiritual and temporal, this was very far from meaning that they were fused. As a “solar” race understood it, it expressed the superior rights that must accrue to the spiritual authority at the center of any normal state; thus it was something quite different from the emancipation and “supremacy” of a merely secular state. If we were to make similar amendments in the spirit of true objectivity, the possibilities would be overwhelming.

Further Misunderstandings Concerning the “Pagan” World-View

This having been said, there remains the real possibility of transcending certain aspects of Christianity. But one must be quite clear: the Latin term “*transcendere*” means literally leaving something behind as one rises upwards, and not downwards! It is worth repeating that the principal thing is not the rejection of Christianity: it is not a matter of showing the same incomprehension towards it as Christianity itself has shown, and largely continues to show, towards ancient paganism. It would rather be a matter of completing Christianity by means of a higher and an older heritage, eliminating some of its aspects and emphasizing other, more important ones, in which this faith does not necessarily contradict the universal concepts of pre-Christian spirituality.

This, alas, is not the path taken by the radical circles we have mentioned. Many of these neo-pagans seem to have fallen into a trap deliberately set for them, often ending up by advocating and defending ideas that more or less correspond to that invented, nature-bound, particularistic pagandom, lacking light and transcendence, which was the polemical creation of a Christian misunderstanding of the pre-Christian world, and which is based, at most, on a few scattered elements of that world in its decline and devolution. And as if this were not enough, people often resort to an anti-Catholic polemic which, whatever its political justification, often drags out and adapts the old clichés of a purely modern, rationalist and enlightenment type that have been well-used by Liberalism, Democracy, and Freemasonry. This was also the case, to a degree, with H. S. Chamberlain, and it appears again in a certain Italian movement that has been trying to connect racial thinking with the “idealistic” doctrine of immanence.

There is a general and unmistakable tendency in neo-paganism to create a new, superstitious mysticism, based on the glorification of immanence, of Life and Nature, which is in the sharpest contrast to that Olympian and heroic ideal of the great Aryan cultures of pre-Christian antiquity. It would indicate much more a turning towards the materialistic, maternal, and telluric side, if it did not exhaust itself in foggy and dilettantish philosophizing. To give an example, we might ask what exactly is meant by this "Nature," on which these groups are so keen? It is little use to point out that it is certainly not the Nature that was experienced and recognized by ancient, traditional man, but a rational construct of the French Encyclopedist period. It was the Encyclopedists who, with definitely subversive and revolutionary motives, made up the myth of Nature as "good," wise, and wholesome, in opposition to the rottenness of every human "Culture." Thus we can see that the optimistic nature-myth of Rousseau and the Encyclopedists marches in the same ranks as "natural right," universalism, liberalism, humanitarianism, and the denial of any positive and structured form of sovereignty. Moreover, the myth in question has absolutely no basis in natural history. Every honest scientist knows that there is no room for "Nature" in the framework of his theories, which have as their object the determination of purely abstract equivalences and mathematical relationships. As far as biological research and genetics are concerned, we can already see the disequilibrium that would occur the moment one held certain laws to be final, when they only apply to a partial aspect of reality. What people call "Nature" today has nothing to do with what nature meant to the traditional, solar man, or to the knowledge of it that was accessible to such a man thanks to his Olympian and regal position. There is no sign of this whatever in the advocates of this new mysticism.

Misunderstandings of more or less the same kind, arise regarding political thought. Paganism is here often used as the synonym for a merely worldly and yet exclusive concept of sovereignty, which turns the relationships upside-down. We have already seen that in the ancient states, the unity of the two powers meant something quite different. It provided the basis for the spiritualization of politics, whereas neo-paganism results in actually politicizing the spiritual, and thereby treading once again the false path of the Gallicans and Jacobins. In contrast, the ancient concept of State and Empire always showed a connection to the Olympian idea.

What shall we think of the attitude that regards Jewry, Rome, the Catholic Church, Freemasonry, and Communism as more or less one and the same thing, just because their presuppositions differ from the plain thinking of the Folk? The Folk's thinking along these lines threatens to lose itself in the dark, where no differentiation is possible any more. It shows that it has lost the genuine feeling for the hierarchy of values, and that it cannot escape the crippling alternative of destructive internationalism and nationalistic particularism, whereas the traditional understanding of the Empire is superior to both these concepts.

To restrict ourselves to a single example: Catholic dogmatism actually fulfils a useful preventive role by stopping worldly mysticism and suchlike eruptions from below from passing a certain frontier; it makes a strong dam that protects the area where transcendent knowledge and the genuinely supra-natural and non-human elements reign—or at least where they should reign. One may well criticize the way in which such transcendence and knowledge have been understood in Christianity, but one cannot cross over to a "profane" criticism that seizes on some polemical weapon or other, fantasizes over the supposed Aryan nature of the immanence-doctrine, of "natural religion," the cult of "life," etc., without really losing one's level: in short, one does not thereby attain the world of primordial beginnings, but that of the Counter-Tradition or the telluric and primitive modes of being. This would in fact be the very best way of re-converting those people with the best "pagan" talents to Catholicism!

One must be wary of falling into the misunderstandings and errors that we have mentioned, which basically serve only to defend the common enemy. One must try to develop the capacity to place oneself at that level where didactic confusion cannot reach, and where all dilettantism and arbitrary intellectual activity are excluded; where one resists energetically every influence from confused,

passionate desires and from the aggressive pleasure in polemics; where, finally and fundamentally, nothing counts but the precise, strict, objective knowledge of the spirit of the Primordial Tradition.

## Julius Evola's Political Testament

By Nigel Jackson

In 1950, Julius Evola wrote *Orientations*, a pamphlet for a number of his young political associates, intended as a compendium that would set down the most important core values of a traditional rightist group. This pamphlet then led to the writing of Evola's main political book, *Men Among the Ruins* (1953).

Dr. H. T. Hansen, in his 100-page introduction to this first English translation of Evola's work, explains that *Men Among the Ruins* was written in the hope of influencing Italian politics of the time, but was not successful in that regard. Despite that, it was reprinted several times in Italy and was Evola's most commercially successful book.

Hansen's claim that "it probably was and has remained the only 'practical' handbook for a truly traditional right wing" may be an excessive claim. It is as much theoretical as practical; and an abundance of books of a traditional conservative bent have appeared in the same period, such as Russell Kirk's *The Conservative Mind*[1] and Eric Voegelin's *The New Science of Politics*.[2]

Hansen states that Evola himself felt that *Men Among the Ruins* was a failure. At much the same time he also wrote a companion book, *Riding the Tiger*, in which he preached a gloomy doctrine of *apoliteia* (withdrawal from active politics). "Today there is no idea, no object, and no goal that is worth sacrificing one's own true interest for," he declared.

Hansen, who rarely intrudes his own views in his brilliantly researched analysis of Evola's life and intellectual career, finally lets loose a severe judgment about the impracticality of *Men Among the Ruins*:

"Evola's Traditionalism cannot be used by modern political movements."

According to Hansen, Evola's teachings "are too aristocratic, too demanding, and too much directed against progress and modernity." In the 1930's and early 1940's Evola strove in vain to influence Italian Fascism and German National Socialism, which provided more "fertile ground" than the postwar era.

"Traditionalists must hold on to ideas and principles, not institutions," Hansen adds. He suggests that Evola would probably have held that his Traditional doctrines should serve as centers of intelligence, around which groups might slowly form which in the future might be nuclei in a providential transformation of society.

In the 20th century Australian right-wing political movements have enjoyed little success and sometimes proved to be fiascos. Senator George Hannan's 1970's National Liberal Party[3] never got off the ground. More recently, Graham Campbell's *Australia First*[4] has sunk amidst a cruel media silence, while Pauline Hanson's *One Nation*,[5] although enjoying a degree of media puffing and some electoral successes, never lost the unhappy image of a slightly tawdry political circus. Perhaps a study

of *Men Among the Ruins* might help the Australian Right achieve something more fruitful in the future. This article is offered as a contribution to that end.

First we will look briefly at Evola's life and the kind of person he was. Next we will survey his intellectual career, relying on Hansen's substantial and succinct introduction. Finally we will study the 175-page text of *Men Among the Ruins* itself and consider how it might be practically applicable in the Australian political arena today.

## Evola the Man

Baron Julius Evola was born into a family of the Sicilian gentry on 19th May 1898, about a year and a half after Prince Giuseppe di Lampedusa, author of the plangent historical novel *The Leopard*,<sup>[6]</sup> whose theme is the decay of the Sicilian aristocratic class.

He received a strict Catholic upbringing which he soon discarded. "His was not the spirituality of piety and mysticism," comments Joscelyn Godwin in a brief foreword, "but the aspiration to what he understood to be the highest calling of man: the identity of Self and Absolute."

Evola also developed "an unconditional and militant antipathy toward everything bourgeois," Hansen tells us:

"The fact that he never married, never wanted children, never had a middle-class job, and broke off his engineering studies before the last exam in spite of his excellent record (so he would not be a Doctor or Professor) can be traced back to this sentiment."

There was plainly an austerity in Evola's make-up. It could be seen in his personal style of impeccable suits and monocle (reminiscent of the defiant wearing of dinner suit and bow tie in the Soviet Union amidst the "Red terror" by another of his contemporaries, the novelist Mikhail Bulgakov). It can equally be noted in his extraordinary reticence about his upbringing and personal life, which are hardly mentioned even in his autobiography, and in his attitude to personal property (all his life he owned very little and even habitually gave away his books and paintings). It would be tempting to view him as a partly repressed personality with an unduly negative attitude to femininity; but there is evidence against this. For example, we learn from Hansen that, after the fall of Rome to the Allies in 1943, his mother kept their secret service operatives at bay while he made his escape. He evidently enjoyed good relations with her, despite having renounced Catholicism in his teens. Evola also wrote a whole book on Eros and the Mysteries of Love. Moreover, the second last chapter of *Men Among the Ruins* (The Problem of Births) shows that he did not have a puritanical attitude towards sexuality.

Evola seems to have been a knightly man with leanings towards the brahminic lifestyle. On March 12, 1945, he was seriously wounded during an air strike on Vienna and his spinal cord was damaged. He remained paralyzed from the waist down for the rest of his life. This disability was not allowed to curtail his dedication to Tradition and his prodigious literary career. He wrote twenty-five books (*Men Among the Ruins* being the ninth to appear in English), around three hundred long essays and over a thousand newspaper and magazine articles. He translated into Italian many notable works including Oswald Spengler's *Decline and Fall of the West*,<sup>[7]</sup> the Taoist classic, the *Tao Te Ching*,<sup>[8]</sup> and René Guénon's *The Crisis of the Modern World*.<sup>[9]</sup>

Evola also introduced many notable European writers to the Italian public, including Gabriel Marcel, Ernst Jünger and Gustav Meyrink. Close personal friends from youth onwards included comparative

religion authority Mircea Eliade and Tibetologist Giuseppe Tucci. After spending a year and a half in hospital in Austria, Evola returned to Rome and thenceforth rarely left his apartment. He was arrested in 1951 on the preposterous charge of "glorification of Fascism," detained for six months, proved innocent and acquitted. His famous *Autodifesa* (self-defence testimony) is included as an appendix in *Men Among the Ruins*.

He chose to die standing upright (as much as he could), since he wished to emulate forebears like Roland of France. (It will be recalled that Zorba the Greek died in the same fashion in Nikos Kazantzakis's novel.[10]) Plainly there was much that was heroic in Evola's life; but was there also something of the quixotic?

### Intellectual Career

Hansen points out that for Evola, from his mid-twenties onwards, the centre of all things was not man but rather the Transcendent, the eternal "One without a second." Evola was a Traditionalist in the sense made famous by Guénon, father of the "Perennialist" school.[11] Everything had to be appraised from the standpoint of the principles which form the foundation of our world and remain forever the same - that is to say, Tradition.

Evola's awareness of the vertical dimension of human existence was based on personal experience which gave him keys to the mysteries of self-transformation. As Guido Stucco noted in his translator's preface to Evola's masterwork, *Revolt Against the Modern World* (1995), Evola was not first and foremost a right-wing, reactionary political thinker, but an esoterist. His socio-political views sprang from his religious and metaphysical convictions. Evola upheld the primacy of Being (as did Martin Heidegger). For him there was an immortal nature as well as a mortal nature, a superior world of being as well as an inferior world of becoming.

Evola considered human beings to be fundamentally and inherently unequal, so that they do not have and should not have, nor should they enjoy, the same dignity and rights. Therefore a sociopolitical hierarchy is best suited to express the differentiation between them.

Evola tended to reject dialogue with the apostles of modernity as a waste of time. He favored self-questioning and the cultivation of one's soul. Stucco viewed Evola's whole oeuvre as a quest for, and as an exposition of, the means employed in Western and Eastern traditions to accomplish that noble task.

Julius Evola - \*1898 † 1998 - here anno 1940 (left) and 1973 (right)

The titles of Evola's other books available in English, but not yet mentioned, support this claim: *The Doctrine of Awakening* (analyzing Buddhism), *The Yoga of Power* (investigating Hinduism), *The Hermetic Tradition*, *Introduction to Magic*, *The Mystery of the Grail* and *Meditation on the Peaks*.

An apologetic tone appears periodically in Hansen's introduction, denoting a strong conviction that he has to deal with a largely uncomprehending if not downright hostile readership. So, for example, he states that Evola's mindset was formed in "a relatively recent intellectual climate that seems to belong to a whole other world in its incisive questioning of what we regard today as self-evident 'humanism': a different world whose utterances seem barely publishable today." However, perhaps modernity is only standing tall on feet of clay - as its well-known tendency to discourage and even suppress antithetical political and historical theses testifies.

Important early influences on Evola's thought were the mediaeval Christian mystics Meister Eckhart and Jan van Ruysbroeck. Hansen includes pertinent quotations from Eckhart, whom Evola respected throughout his life:

"Being is God. [...] God and existence are identical. Should I then be able to recognize God in an immediate way, then I must become he and he must become I, pure and simple [...] so completely at one, that this he and this I are one and will become and be one. [...] Coarse-natured people must simply believe this, but the enlightened must know it."

Plainly this is equivalent to the Hindu doctrine *tat twam asi*, which proclaims the ultimate identity of the Self and the Divine Source.

A number of secular writers also influenced Evola in his youth. From Carlo Michelstaedler (1887-1910) he learned the vital importance of personal authenticity, of following "the path of conviction, which has no road-signs or directions that one can share, study or repeat," of not "surrendering to contentment with what has been given to one by others."

From Otto Weininger (1880-1903), author of *Sex and Character*, Evola derived his sense of the importance of manliness, his attitude towards woman as the metaphysical and political opposite of man, his dislike of populist "Caesars" and his hostility to the decadence of modernity.

Plato played an important role in arousing Evola's antidemocratic views, as did Nietzsche, although Evola always cautioned against the hubris implicit in Nietzsche's ignoring of transcendence.

Oswald Spengler alerted Evola to the fundamental decadence of modernity, despite its boasts about "progress" and "the advances of science." From Spengler he learned that it is a sure sign of corruption of the body politic when the economy wins the upper hand. He agreed with Spengler's analysis of the onslaught of money against the spiritual in Western culture: "Only high finance is completely free, completely unsusceptible to attack. Since 1789, the banks and thus the stock exchanges have come into their own as a power, feeding off the credit needs of an industry growing into monstrous proportions. Now they, and money, want to be the sole power in all civilizations."

From *The Crowd* by Gustave Le Bon[12] (1841-1931) Evola absorbed a pessimistic attitude towards the masses, whose natural tendency is to follow strength rather than virtue. And from Johann Jakob Bachofen came the identification of the age of female rule with the age of earthbound, chthonic deities, against which Evola proposed the superiority of a solar, manly and Olympian rule. There is definitely error in Evola's analysis here, as anyone who appreciates Robert Graves' *The White Goddess*[13] and Starhawk's *The Spiral Dance*[14] will agree. There is a Graeco-Roman bias in Evola which leaves inadequate room for the Celtic.

Evola was deeply influenced by texts of the non-dogmatic Eastern religions, including Buddhist Pali scriptures and the Hindu Bhagavad Gita.[15] From Taoism he derived his understanding of the nature of power. The Tao Te Ching tells how "the awakened one" achieves self-fulfillment because he is selfless, and praises the superior man who "leads and yet does not lord it over" his fellows.

Thus Evola differentiated power from mere brute force.

"Superiority does not rest on power, but power rests on superiority. [...] The path of renunciation can be a condition for the way to the highest power. [...] A true ruler has access to this higher quantity of being, a different quality of being, and imposes himself through his mere presence."

Evola was twenty-four when Mussolini entered Rome at the invitation of King Victor Emmanuel III. He thus lived the years of his prime under Fascism and naturally had hopes of influencing it, correcting it and steering it into aristocratic channels.

In 1927 in his first political book, *Imperialismo Pagano*, he expressed concern at the direction Fascism was taking:

"Caught up in the struggles and worries of concrete politics, Fascism does not seem to be interested in creating a hierarchy in the higher sense, based on purely spiritual values and knowing only disdain for all pollutions due to 'culture' and modern intellectualism, so that the centre might again shift to a position that lies beyond secular and religious boundaries alike."

His critique applied to Western nations generally:

"In the same way that a living body stays alive only when a soul is present to govern it, so every social organization not rooted in a spiritual reality is outward and transitory, unable to remain healthy and retain its identity in the struggle of the various forces; it is not really an organism, but more aptly something thrown together, an aggregate.

The true cause for the decline of the political idea in the West today is to be found in the fact that the spiritual values that once permeated the social order have been lost, without any successful efforts to put something better in their place. The problem has been lowered to the plane of economic, industrial, military, governmental, or even more sentimental factors, without considering that all this is nothing more than matter: necessary if you like, but never enough by itself, and unable to create a healthy and reasonable social order."

Relying on Dante's *De Monarchia* and other authorities, Evola saw a monarchy as the "natural gravitational and crystallizing point" of the true Right:

"This ideal implies the affirmation not only of the concept and right of the nobility, but also of the monarchy. [...] It must be renewed, strengthened, and dynamized as an organic, central, absolute function that embodies the might of power and the light of the spirit in a single being; then the monarchy is truly the act of a whole race, and at the same time the point that leads beyond all that is bound by blood and soil.

Only then is one justified to speak of an Imperium. When it is awakened into a glorious, holy, metaphysical reality, the pinnacle of a martially ordered political hierarchy, then the monarchy once



again occupies the place and fulfils the function that it once had, before being usurped by the priestly caste."

As Hansen observes, with this emphasis on a spiritual monarchy presiding over an imperial order, Evola stood in sharp contrast to the principle of the leaders of Fascism and National Socialism, both of whom derived their legitimacy, they claimed, from the people. Inevitably he remained without political influence on either movement.

He saw Fascism as "a degenerate child of Tradition." It appeared to him as "the last chance of the West." From his standpoint, the visible alternatives were much worse, explains Hansen.

"There were only liberalism paired with capitalism ('Anything goes!') and communism, both of which worshipped a world of machines and limitless materialism. [...] Fascism at least strengthened the State and the hierarchical concept [...] and praised honour, bravery and loyalty."

Evola believed that it was Italy that had failed Fascism, rather than the other way around. The nation

"did not have enough men on the necessary plane of certain higher qualifications and symbols [...], capable of further developing the positive possibilities that could have been contained in the system."

Hansen explains how National Socialism came to have greater appeal to Evola, partly because of its concept of a State ruled by an Order, which he felt was embodied in the SS. Yet he strongly warned against the inadequate respect for the transcendent:

"National Socialism has forsworn the ancient, aristocratic tradition of the Empire. Being nothing but a semi-collectivist nationalism and equalizing in its centralism, it has not hesitated to destroy Germany's time-honoured division into duchies, counties and cities that all enjoyed a measure of independence."

An extract from a lecture he gave in Berlin in 1937 shows how Evola saw Hitler's National Socialism as a caricature of a true conservative order:

"According to the Aryan primordial conception, the Reich is a metaphysical solar reality. The Nordic heritage is not semi-naturalistic, only conceivable on a blood-and-soil basis, but rather constitutes a cultural category, an original transcendent form of the spirit, of which the Nordic type, the Aryan race, and the general Indo-Germanic moral being are only outward manifestations.

Race is a basic attitude, a spiritual power, something primal and creative. [...] This is the true level to which the motifs and symbols that the new Germany has called forth must be elevated if it really wants to stand at the forefront of the resistance and attack against the dark powers of world revolution."

Hansen stalwartly presents and assesses Evola's attitudes to race and to the Jewish question - intellectual minefields over which he steps delicately and honorably. He stresses that Evola's position regarding race was a consequence of his worldview. Evola wrote:

"Our racial doctrine is determined by Tradition. Thus the traditional view of the human being is our foundation, according to which this being has a tripartite nature; that is, it consists of three principles, spirit, soul and body. [...] Race is a deeply embedded force that reveals itself in the biological and morphological realm (as race of the body), the psychological (as race of the soul), as well as in the spiritual (as race of the spirit)."

And in 1928 he stated that races deteriorate when their spirits deteriorate.

"That is why for us the return to the race cannot be merely the return to the blood - especially in these twilight times in which almost irreversible mixtures have taken place. It must mean a return to the spirit, not in a totemistic sense but in an aristocratic sense, relating to the primordial seed of our 'form' and our culture."

As Hansen remarks, Evola not only fought vehemently against a purely physical racism, but also understood the term 'race' differently from its general usage. His studies of Buddhist scriptures that continually mention the arya and understand the arya as "the noble" affected his employment of the word "Aryan." The Sanscrit word arya has a fourfold meaning:

1. spiritually, "the awakened ones";

2. aristocratically, membership of a higher caste;

3. racially, as of the light-skinned Nordic conquerors. (Varna, caste, originally meant color.);

4. stylistically, as of a crystalline clarity, lack of passionate emotion, ascetic manner, and detached attitude.

Hansen condemns some of Evola's obsessions and utterances critical of Jewry, especially an appendix he wrote to the Protocols of the Elders of Zion,[16] which demonstrated "sheer carelessness, a lack of serious research, and the reckless assimilation of prejudices that happened to coincide with his own views."

On the other hand, Hansen points out that Evola's writings never spoke out against orthodox, religious Judaism. "There are elements and symbols in the Old Testament," Evola commented, "that possess metaphysical and therefore universal value." He also praised Kabbalah as one of the few initiatory paths that can still be followed successfully in the West today.

His attacks were directed against the Jews as a symbol of the rule of economic-materialistic individualism and the hegemony of money. A Jewish critic, Adriana Goldstaub, agreed that Evola did not deem all Jews, or the Jews exclusively, as responsible for the decline of the modern world.

It is true, Hansen notes, that Evola was attracted to the theory of a 'global conspiracy' by Jewish and Freemasonic circles, with the intention of toppling Christian and traditional state institutions; but he considered such circles not so much movers as instruments of other forces, not necessarily human.

In summary, Evola 'engaged' himself for almost sixty years in the fight to defend his principles. He embodied, says Hansen, the 'legionary spirit', which was a phrase he took both from the greatness of the Roman army and the Legionary movement of one of his most admired heroes, the Rumanian Corneliu Codreanu.[17] Evola defined the legionary spirit as "the attitude of him who can choose the hardest life, who is able to continue fighting even when he knows that the battle is materially lost, who holds to the ancient precept that 'loyalty is mightier than fire' and who carries the traditional idea of honour and dishonour within."

Evola was something of a universal man. Amongst other pursuits, he found time as an alpinist for several difficult climbs; he felt at home among the mountains; and the mountain remained a potent and inspiring symbol for him of an arena where direct experience of the transcendent can occur.

He requested in his will that after his death the urn containing his ashes be deposited in a glacial crevasse on Monte Rosa; and this was faithfully carried out by his executors and friends.

Beyond doubt Baron Julius Evola was a man of destiny and a great man. The closest figure for comparison in the English-speaking world is surely the Traditional poet, dramatist and essayist, T. S. Eliot.[18] It seems likely that Evola will exert more influence on the world after his life than in it.

### Conservative Revolution

In *Men Among the Ruins* Evola begins by considering what needs to be preserved (or re-instated) by a truly authentic counter-revolution; he identifies his enemy as "the subversion introduced in Europe by the revolutions of 1789 and 1848."

In a passage remarkably reminiscent of words of T. S. Eliot in his 1917 essay "Tradition and the Individual Talent,"[19] Evola defines the Tradition that needs to be defended: "Tradition is neither servile conformity to what has been, nor a sluggish perpetuation of the past into the present.

"Tradition, in its essence, is something simultaneously meta-historical and dynamic: it is an overall ordering force in the service of principles that have the chrism of a superior legitimacy (we may even call them 'principles from above')."

Thus, as Eliot, Russell Kirk and others also did, he warns against the error of a worldly, but short-sighted and partial, conservatism, involving merely the defence of the "sociopolitical positions and the material interests of a given class, of a given caste."

He stresses, too, the need to be faithful not so much to past forms and institutions as to the principles of which they were particular expressions.

"New forms, corresponding in essence to the old ones, are liable to emerge from them as if from a seed."

In Australia, undoubtedly, imperfect forms and movements have come into being since Federation[20] (of which One Nation is currently the most notorious), which were not sufficiently rooted in traditional principles because their leaders lacked adequate understanding.

"The conservative revolution must emerge as a predominantly spiritual phenomenon," Evola insists. In Australia some movements have paid insufficient attention to this fundamental (Graham Campbell's Australia First fatally lacked such vision, for all its pragmatic and sensible socio-political positions).

Others have been too closely attached to outdated and inadequate religious forms, such as the National Civic Council[21] and National Action[22] (to different strands of Catholicism) and the Australian League of Rights[23] (to an Anglicanism mediated through the particular mind of Major Clifford Douglas, founder of Social Credit).

Evola, naturally, focuses especially upon Italy, as he looks for historical forms that might be the "basis for an integration that will immediately leave them behind." For him, these are the "ancient Roman world" (the world of Cato, not of Nero!) and "certain aspects of mediaeval civilization" (mainly the Ghibelline movement which supported the Holy Roman Empire).

This prompts the question of what forms we in Australia should seek as supports; and immediately it must be stressed that for us Australian history cannot be viewed as beginning with the brave seamen who discovered our continent only a few centuries ago.

For us, despite the barrage of contemporary propaganda to the contrary, Australia remains a fundamentally British nation (it retains the British Crown, a constitution and laws essentially inspired by Britain, and the language of the British people).

Thus our history extends back to the foundations of Britain itself, and its four kingdoms of England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland (the best Irish tradition is that of Tara and the High Kings). Our supports will be found from a period of two millennia.

### The Basis of Sovereignty

Evola's second chapter ("Sovereignty, Authority, Imperium") is one of his most important. He proceeds from the conviction that the principle of the "true State" (a principle expressed as sovereignty, authority and law) is itself founded upon transcendence.

As soon as Evola moves downwards from this metaphysical point of origin, his formulations require careful critical examination. For example, he admires

"the pure power of command, the almost mystical power and auctoritas inherent in one who had the function and quality of Leader: a leader in the religious and warrior order as well as in the order of the patrician family, the gens."

Here, already, is a possible weakness in Evola. Himself by nature a kshatriya (knightly man of honor), he tends (in my view) to wrongly annex for his caste the superior authority of the brahmins (the sages, those who know) - just as, in places, he demeans the brahmins by confusing them with "priests" who he sees as usurpers of the original royal authority.[24]

Of the principle of sovereignty, Evola writes that "it is also necessary to recognize its attribute of absoluteness." Such an absoluteness can only belong to the One Divine Source ("There is no God but God."), irrespective of what name is given to this source ("God," "Allah," "Brahman," "The Goddess" or whatever).

Evola tends, however, at times, to transfer this absoluteness to forms which appeal to his strongly masculine, knightly and warrior temperament. Yet, no matter how valuable they may be, such forms remain contingent and limited, not universal. This tendency to absolutize the contingent is the "occupational hazard" of the modes of dogmatic religion which have proceeded from the Middle East.

We can observe among the three "Peoples of the Book" three forms of this error: the absolutization of a people (Judaism), of a prophet (Christianity) and of a sacred scripture (Islam). (We may compare the theological mistake, noted by Maurice Nicoll and Frithjof Schuon, of absolutizing Hell, an error deriving from the mistranslation of the Greek word *aionios* as "eternal" instead of "age-long." [25] Just as "there is no God but God," so there is no eternity but eternity.)

Evola correctly identifies the principle of sovereignty as "the point of stability" and "the natural centre" of the entire organism. The essential political task in Australia at the present time is to safeguard and then strengthen and even re-establish the only centre we possess, which is the monarchy, Christian and British, which we currently share with the mother country and some other nations.

The republican presidency which is being vigorously promoted by powerful (and sometimes sinister) influences, as well as by numerous wiseacres (sincere as well as opportunistic), cannot provide such a centre, because it is not authorized by a transcendent origin.

*Princeps a legibus solutus* ("the law does not apply to the one who acts as Leader") is a maxim quoted approvingly by Evola; but it, too, needs qualification.

Strictly, it applies only to the leader, or monarch, who lives and governs "in accordance with the mandate of Heaven," as Chinese tradition puts it. [26]

Royal dynasties, emperors, houses can lose their *te*; and then it becomes right that they be replaced by fresh blood. Unlucky the generation on whom the burden of replacement falls, however, as such transitions are fraught with instability and danger.

Evola rejects emphatically the modern heresy that the State is the expression of 'society'.

"The anagogical end (namely, of a power drawing upward) of the State is [...] completely denied by the 'social' or 'communal' view of its formation."

Nor, he argues, is it the chief purpose of the State to bring worldly happiness or pleasure (as Aldous Huxley showed in *Brave New World* [27]).

Evola places much store on the theory of 'the regression of the castes' and the claim that we are living in the last phase of the fourth and darkest age. He sees the decline as having begun when the rulers lost their authorizing link with the worlds above.

"Later in history, this line leads, if not to the imperium, to the divine right of kings; where there were no groups created by the power of a rite, there were orders, aristocracies, political classes defined by disciplines and dignities. [...] Then the line was broken, and the decadence of the State idea [...] ended with the inversion through which the world of the *demos* and the materialized masses emerged on the political horizon, engaging in the struggle for power."

This picture of deterioration is important for us, because it reminds us that even the monarchical political orders of the period of European greatness and expansion were themselves seriously deficient. This suggests that Australian monarchists today need to recover a concept of royalty that exceeds in dignity anything recorded in British history. It may be that such a concept can be found in the ancient cultures of Egypt,[28] India and China.

Much more questionable is Evola's attempt to unite his image of the State to manliness.

"The State is under the masculine aegis, while 'society' and, by extension, the people or demos are under the feminine aegis."

Evola's attempt to justify this from mythology appears to depend on a selective approach to ancient myths.

His approach parallels that espoused by Melbourne psychologist Ronald Conway in *The Great Australian Stupor and Land of the Long Weekend*. [29] Conway takes over from historian of sexuality Gordon Rattray Taylor [30] the model of four psychological modes into which human beings, their behaviors and communities formed by those behaviors, can be classified. He idealizes the patrist-conservative at the expense of the patrist-authoritarian, the matrist-permissive and the fraternalist-anarchic.

It seems likely, however, that a fifth mode should be included, which I designate as the matrist-creative; and that normality (in the sense of rightness and good health) should be seen to reside in the wedding of the patrist-conservative and matrist-creative.

Both Conway and Evola are clearly very aware of the gulf between the Higher Masculine (the sage, the warrior) and the Lower Masculine (the profiteer, the mobster), but each, through some fault of temperament, has failed to acknowledge a corresponding dichotomy between the Higher Feminine (well symbolized by the goddesses in many pantheons) and the Lower Feminine (the nymph, the courtesan).

Thus, when Evola asserts that "both democracy and socialism ratify the shift from the masculine to the feminine and from the spiritual to the material and the promiscuous," he has in mind the Lower Feminine only and has temporarily forgotten the comparable imperfection of the Lower Masculine (which is clearly just as much implicated in "the revolt of the masses").

Evola also warns against an insufficient kind of patriotism. "The notions of nation, fatherland and people, despite their romantic and idealistic halo, essentially belong to the naturalistic and biological plane and not the political one." He contrasts "the masses," who can be easily mobilized by patriotic motifs, with "men who differentiate themselves [...] as bearers of a complete legitimacy and authority, bestowed by the Idea (of the true State) and by their rigorous, impersonal adherence to it. The Idea...must be the true fatherland for these men."

Evola tends to disparage adherence "to the same land, language or blood." Perhaps stock and "blood" are more important than he admits, being the bodies in which the 'soul of the State' can incarnate. Even

Evola, writing only eight years after the end of World War II, may have been traumatized by the intense anti-Nazism of that time.

His rejection of democracy is trenchant:

"When a sovereignty is no longer allowed other than one that is the expression and the reflection of the 'will of the nation', it is almost as if a creature overtook its creator."

He traces the "inconsistency and, most of all, the cowardice" of those who in our time constitute the political class to the shift from monarchical and aristocratic orders to "demagogues and to the so-called 'servants of the nation' [...] who presume to 'represent' the people and who acquire various offices or positions of power by flattering and manipulating the masses."

Then occurs the phenomenon of action through pseudo-myths, "formulas lacking any objective truth and that appeal to the sub-intellectual dimension and passions of individuals and the masses." The current campaign for "Aboriginal reconciliation" is an example.[31]

Fantasy novels, such as *The Lord of the Rings*[32] and Terry Goodkind's "Sword of Truth" series,[33] represent a yearning in the souls of modern people to escape from democratic degradation back to the clear air of the true State. Russell Kirk also noted the importance of modern fantasy literature in *Enemies of the Permanent Things*.[34]

Evola also noted the attempt to create a counter-State by the forces of subversion: "A realization of the Idea is already present on the other front." He had in mind the recently formed United Nations Organization, which he correctly saw as lacking authorization by transcendence. Half a century later the danger of the "New World Order" is much greater, as Australia's ratification of the International Criminal Court has just recently shown.[35] Those who will not be ruled by kings will end up being ruled by tyrants.

Person, Justice, and Freedom

Evola names liberalism as the origin of the various inter-connected forms of global subversion. He sees the essence of liberalism as individualism. "It mistakes the person for the individual." The nonsensical theory of egalitarianism depends upon this confusion.

Evola defines a person as "an individual who is differentiated through his qualities, endowed with his own face, his proper nature, and a series of attributes that make him who he is [...] that make him fundamentally unequal."

This leads to a consideration of "natural rights" or "human rights." Evola points out that "the principle according to which all human beings are free and enjoy equal rights 'by nature' is truly absurd, due to the very fact that by nature they are not the same."

There may be such a thing as "the dignity of the human person," but it "admits to different degrees." Thus, justice means "to attribute to each and every one of these degrees a different right and a different freedom." Evola is a champion of discrimination, a just discrimination that recognizes the ancient principle "to each his own."

Defence of personhood against the atomization of humanity into faceless individuals requires the recognition that man comes before society and not the reverse. Evola also places personhood as superior to membership of a nation.

"The perfection of the human being is the end to which every healthy social institution must be subordinated. [...] This perfection must be conceived on the basis of a process of individuation and progressive differentiation."

At the top of the pyramidal structure of the true State Evola rather vaguely imagines 'the absolute person', the "supremely realized person who represents the end, and the natural centre of gravity, of the whole system [...] a dominating super-personality." Here he is in danger of forgetting the pre-eminence of the transcendent. The lives of sages such as Sri Ramana Maharshi[36] and Sheikh Alawi[37] indicate that the "top of the pyramid" lies outside this world.

Evola upholds the right of the nation over 'humanity', over and against "all the forms of individualistic disintegration, international mixture and proletarianization." As regards the question of property, he castigates economic liberalism for engendering "various forms of capitalist exploitation and cynical, antisocial plutocracy," but also castigates the French revolutionaries' attack on the ancien régime[38] because it broke the organic connection "between personhood and property, social function and wealth, and between a given qualification or moral nobility and the rightful and legitimate possession of goods."

These developments enabled the communist attack on the very principle of private property,[39] since "whenever there is no higher legitimization of ownership, it is always possible to wonder why some people have property and others do not, or why some people have earned for themselves privileges and social pre-eminence [...], while lacking something that would make them stand out and above everybody else in an effective and sensible manner."

By contrast, "ancient and primitive man essentially obeyed [...] those in whom he perceived a saturation of mana (that is, sacred energy and life force)." The lesson from this part of Evola's book is that the Australian Right must courageously champion discrimination, hierarchy, caste and personhood - and find ways (a rhetoric, a discourse) of showing ordinary persons how a society based on such principles will bring them more real benefit than the utopian dreams of egalitarians.

## Totalitarianism

Evola points out the fundamental distinction between the traditional, organic State, based upon transcendent authority, and the modern totalitarian state.

A State is traditional and organic "when it has a centre that shapes the various domains of life in an efficacious way [...] when, by virtue of a system of hierarchical participation, every part within its relative autonomy performs its function and enjoys an intimate connection with the whole."

Such a state is sympathetic to pluralism and decentralization, which "can be accentuated in proportion to the degree to which the centre enjoys a spiritual and even transcendent character, a sovereign equilibrating power and a natural prestige."



In such a State there is "an inner order of single freedoms, an immanence of general law that guides and sustains people without coercing them." Evola notes the importance of oaths in traditional societies. "The oath of loyalty [...] was regarded as a true sacrament [...] in the feudal world."

By contrast, a totalitarian state is a counterfeit of the organic ideal. Unity is imposed from the outside by a power that is exclusively and materially political. There is a tendency towards uniformity and intolerance of any partial form of autonomy and any degree of freedom, for any intermediate body between the centre and the periphery.

This in turn engenders "a kind of sclerosis [...] a monstrous hypertrophy of the entire bureaucratic-administrative structure," leading to "an insolent intrusion of the public sphere into the private domain." A super-organized, centralized economy makes totalitarianism "a school of servility," in which there is "a sort of intrinsic and gloomy enjoyment of this relentless levelling process."

Thus, totalitarian rule destroys "quality, articulated forms, castes and classes, the values of personhood, true freedom, daring and responsible initiative and heroic feats."

Democrats tend to publicize an alleged antithesis between liberal democracy and totalitarianism; whereas the truth appears to be that such democracy is a phase in the decline from the true State into the tyranny of totalitarianism.

Thus, democrats (and their hidden promoters) are happy to give much publicity to George Orwell, whose *Animal Farm* and *Nineteen Eighty-Four*[40] brilliantly expose the evil of totalitarianism; but they tend to be much less enthusiastic about Alexander Solzhenitsyn, whose series of great novels culminating in *The Red Wheel* (parts of which are still, mysteriously, unavailable in English) not merely rivals Orwell's depiction of the horror, but also advocates a return to traditional verities including religious orthodoxy.[41] The Australian Right needs to note the difference between the two writers (for Orwell never recovered from his early rebellion against Tradition) and to stress that the Sovereign, acting in the service of God, is a better protector from tyranny than the democratic politician.

"Sons of the People"

Evola sees another extreme consequence of democracy to be Bonapartism,[42] which he defines as "a despotism based on a democratic view, which it denies de facto while fulfilling it in theory." Many a modern dictator, large or small, comes under this heading.

The danger of such figures is well indicated by Evola:

"Since he personifies the will of the people, which is conceived as the political ultima ratio, the leader ends up claiming for himself an unlimited authority and regarding all the intermediate political bodies and all the branches of government as completely dependent on the central power, which alone is believed to legitimately represent the people."

Orwell's portrait of Big Brother attacked this kind of dictatorship.

Evola further distinguishes the true king from the Bonapartist despot by considering their relationships with those whom they rule:

"While the traditional view of sovereignty and authority sees it characterized by distance from the people, and the feeling of distance induces in the inferiors a sense of veneration, a natural respect and disposition to obedience and loyalty towards the leaders [...], the Bonapartist despot is [...] enslaved to the complex of 'popularity' and [...] appeals to the lowest levels of human beings."

Bread and circuses - or the modern equivalents!

In considering dictatorship, a mode of rule he finds but rarely justified in history, Evola points out that, according to traditional thought, "what matters is that a man be valued and recognized in terms of the idea and the principle he upholds, and not vice-versa."

Thus, within a properly constituted aristocratic order, we should admire a noble "for being one in whom a tradition and a special 'spiritual race' shine forth [...] whose greatness is due not to his human virtues, but rather to the principle, the idea and a certain regal impersonality that he embodies."

In this context Evola dismisses Machiavelli's prince as one whose authority no longer comes from above, its foundation being mere worldly strength.

"Here the leader does not consider the higher faculties that can be reawakened in his subjects; he harbours contempt and a fundamental pessimism towards people in general, on the basis of an alleged political 'realism'."

Such a leader also lacks a true respect for himself and his own dignity.

In Australia, the kind of adulation felt in some quarters for people as diverse as Paul Keating,[43] Pauline Hanson, and Sir William Deane[44] reminds us of the temptations the general populace may experience to draw towards themselves the "son" or "daughter" of "the people."

Evola does not, by the way, neglect to pay respect to the military genius and achievements of Napoleon Bonaparte, but associates these with the heroism of the dux or imperator, a figure carefully distinguished in ancient Rome from the rex.

The lesson for the Australian Right here is that it must seek a national leader who embodies the aristocratic sense of quality that comes hand-in-hand with a sense of humility before the awesome presence of God. A populist leader will be insufficient.

A Demonic Economy

"Nothing in excess!" (the Delphic Oracle)

"Substine et abstine!" ("Stand firm and hold back!")

These are two of the traditional sayings Evola invokes in his examination of the modern glorification of work in our demonized economy.

In traditional societies "individuals still lived in the station allotted to them by life. In those societies an individual contained his need and aspirations within natural limits; he did not yearn to become different from what he was, and thus he was innocent of that alienation decried by Marxism."

Evola also refers to the Thomist and Lutheran teaching that the acquisition of goods should be restricted and that work and the quest for profit are justifiable only in order to acquire a level of wealth corresponding to a person's status in life.

He compares this traditional lifestyle of restraint and modesty with the pathological behavior of the modern world in which the importance of the economy is grossly exaggerated, so as to exercise a hypnotic tyranny over consumers whose appetites have been artificially inflamed.

"The true antithesis," Evola insists, "is between a system in which the economy rules supreme [...] and a system in which the economy is subordinated to extra-economic factors, within a wider and more complete order, such as to bestow a deep meaning upon human life and foster the development of its highest possibilities."

Evola counters the utilitarian argument that the development of modern commerce and industry has improved the standard of living by pointing out that "the qualities that matter the most in a man and make him who he is often arise in harsh circumstances and even in conditions of indigence and injustice, since they represent a challenge to him, testing his spirit."

Evola sees the task ahead as being "to deproletarize the view of life" and calls for a metanoia,[45] an inner transformation that will strike at the heart of the hegemony of work and regain for man his inner freedom.

As regards the State itself, he suggests that autarchy may be an ethical precept.

"It is better to renounce the allure of improving general social and economic conditions and to adopt a regime of austerity than to become enslaved to foreign interests."

This, of course, was a key position taken by the great Portuguese leader Dr. Oliveira Salazar, whose life and philosophy deserves careful study.[46] The overthrow of his successor, Dr Marcello Caetano, by the Spínola coup in 1974 was one of the tragedies of modern Europe - and of southern Africa. The full story has perhaps not yet been told in English.

Evola also makes an important distinction between work and action. It is action that is performed by those of the kshatriya class - by ascetics, rulers, artists, explorers, warriors, scientists, diplomats, philosophers and theologians.

The challenge for the Australian Right, in the context of this tyranny of a mercantile outlook, is to articulate a comprehensive vision for Australians which will have the capacity to win their hearts away from hedonism and the lust for wealth, which is currently symbolized so effectively by the domination of gambling facilities of all kinds.

## History and its Misuse

Evola attacks a tradition of historicism, originating with Hegel, which has given an abnormal emphasis to history, to the advantage of subversive forces.

He laments "the disastrous shift from a civilization of being (characterized by stability, form and adherence to super-temporal principles) to a civilization of becoming (characterized by change, flux

and contingency)." He also points out that the ideas of History, progress and evolution have been closely associated.

Monarchists will enjoy his observation that "the anathema of being 'anti-historical' and 'outside history' is cast against those who still remember the way things were before and who call subversion by its name, instead of conforming to the processes that are precipitating the world's decline."

From this discussion, Evola moves to a consideration of the "different histories" that exist within the history of nations. What is required is a wise choice of traditions. Evola condemns a pseudo-patriotic historiography in Italy which, "due to its partisan spirit, suggestions and catchphrases, precludes the objective comprehension of many aspects of the past." He even writes of fabricated history: "the alibi that revolutionary liberalism, democracy and the thinkers of Freemasonry and the Enlightenment have created for their own benefit."

The Australian Right needs to rescue much from the history of the British and of Australia which has been overlooked, while contending intelligently with partisan accounts of (for example) the treatment of the Aborigines, which are designed to enable political change leading to a republic (in name) which will be a province (in fact) of the New World Order.

#### Warrior and Bourgeois

Evola's most self-revealing chapter is his study of the different ways of looking at war and the role of the warrior found in traditional "heroic" societies and in modern bourgeois societies. It was only in reading it that I realized how much I myself am a product of mercantile politics, and why men like Sir Walter Scott and Sir Arthur Conan Doyle wrote novels like *Quentin Durward* and *Sir Nigel*.<sup>[47]</sup>

Evola points out that "militarism" is the *bête noire* of many democrats - and that it is a word at times misapplied to noble warrior behavior. His account, in this context, of modern democracies seems, in the light of September 11, to be remarkably up to date!

He notes that their view "is that in society the primary element is the bourgeois type and the bourgeois life during times of peace." Such a life "is dominated by the physical concern for safety, well-being and material wealth, with the cultivation of letters and the arts serving as a decorative frame." The military is a mere instrument. Democratic ideology proclaims that armies should be used "only as an international police force" to maintain "the peace." Evola dryly comments that "in most cases this amounts to allowing wealthy nations to live undisturbed." The armed forces are used "to impose or retain an economic hegemony; to gain new markets and to acquire raw materials; and to create new space for capital seeking investment and profit." This explains "the deep, widespread mistrust toward the ideological background of the recent wars, a background shaped by many lies and much propaganda."

In short, the bourgeois-democratic lifestyle leads to hypocrisy and deceit: corruption on the grand scale.

Evola contrasts such a civilization with that of which the ancient Order of Teutonic Knights and the Prussian tradition were recent examples. In such a world the warrior (as opposed to the mercenary soldier) was not at the service of the merchant class but ruled over it.

His lifestyle had its own spirituality and ethics:

"love for hierarchy; relationships of obedience and command; courage; feelings of honour and loyalty; specific forms of active impersonality capable of producing anonymous sacrifice; frank and open relationships from man to man, from one comrade to another, from leader to follower."

In such a climate of heroic integrity war did not have a merely negative meaning. Evola points out that there is an identity between spirit and superior civilization and the warrior's role.

"In the traditional world we encounter the interpretation of life as a perennial struggle between metaphysical powers, between Uranian forces of light and order [...] and telluric, dark forces of chaos and matter. [...] Traditional man yearned to fight this battle and to triumph in both the inner and outer worlds."

Evola adds that there is an interdependence between the warrior idea and that "of a certain 'asceticism', inner discipline and superiority toward or control of one's self." This was "the foundation of a specific 'style' that has largely been lost."

He also reminds us that in many civilizations "even the hierarchies with a spiritual foundation either relied on hierarchies that were more or less warrior [...] or reproduced their form." Then, "when the original spiritual level could not be maintained, hierarchical structures of a warrior type constituted the armature of the major States, especially in the West."

Thus, "since the sensibility for purely spiritual values and dignities has become mostly atrophied among Western populations [...], the model of a military hierarchy [...] is almost the only one that can still supply the basis" for an upwardly striving lifestyle. "That model still retains a certain prestige," since "there is a heroic dimension in the Western soul that cannot be extirpated."

One advantage of a heroic, as opposed to a bourgeois, civilization is its readiness to fight. There is "a certain continuity of spirit and attitude, a common denominator in peace and in war that facilitates the shift from one state to the other." Thus, "when a war breaks out, a nation is ready for it, and fights with a sufficient number of men who reproduce in a new form the warrior type."

Evola also addresses the question of what role can be played by the heroic spirit in modern, "total" wars, in which science and technology have so drastically changed the human conditions of combat. Here he writes with a bleakness that he probably absorbed in part from Ernst Jünger.[48]

Essentially, he calls for a quality of endurance through warfare that is comparable to "elementary and unavoidable natural phenomena." Man must "remain spiritually upright" through "extreme trials and destructions" by developing in himself "a new inner dimension [...] of cold, lucid and complex heroism" including "a sacrificial disposition."

It seems clear that in Australia an effective movement of the Right will need to honor the warrior lifestyle in both its deeds and its words. Ways must be found to rouse our manhood from "the great Australian stupor" that has perhaps resulted primarily from the bourgeois atmosphere.

Ronald Conway pointed out that Australia most nearly approached an aristocratic political order in the two decades before World War I, when there was a society of quality that Martin Boyd (a member of it) captured well in his novels, which merit close study.[49]

Religious Restoration

Hindu tradition teaches that there are four states in which human beings can exist: deep sleep, sleep, awakening and enlightenment or attainment. What we normally think of as our waking state is in fact sleep; and what we regard as sleep is deep sleep.

It was in this tradition that Gurdjieff[50] told those who came to his lectures that they were machines which "could do nothing," because they were asleep.

Evola does not mention this tradition in *Men Among the Ruins*, although he no doubt discusses it elsewhere. It is vital to an understanding of religion and, most especially, initiation - the processes of esoteric sacred tradition designed to wake initiates up. In my view, initiation is the prerogative of the brahmin caste; and René Guénon was correct to state that "the modern disaster" had befallen Western Europe because the Church had lost its power to initiate.[51] That loss is the greatest difficulty with which modern Europeans and Australians who seek to restore traditional society must contend. It has created a void which can only be filled by a new impulse from the "worlds above."

In another very important chapter ("Tradition / Catholicism / Ghibellinism") Evola begins by stressing that by Tradition he does not refer to religious traditions in general or to the Catholic Christian tradition in particular, but "to something wider, more austere and more universal than mere Catholicism."

He acknowledges that in the past some conservative forces have been inspired by Catholicism, which "gave a special chrism to the principles of authority and sovereignty." However, "the true traditional spirit acknowledges a superior, metaphysical unity beyond the individual religious traditions."

That position has been most succinctly and effectively expressed by Frithjof Schuon in *The Transcendent Unity of Religions*.<sup>[52]</sup> Representatives of Catholicism (such as James McAuley, the Australian poet, in *The End of Modernity*) and of Orthodoxy (such as Monk Damascene Christensen in *Not of This World*) have tried in vain to disprove this perennialist thesis.<sup>[53]</sup>

Evola correctly warns that foolish persistence in religious exclusivity will impede efforts to engage in the restoration of traditional political order. Evola needs to be quoted at length here, as too many Australian Christians are resisting the essential metanoia (not "repentance," but fundamental change of orientation - as Maurice Nicoll stressed).

"Despite the fact that every religious form has the right to a certain exclusivity in the area of its pertinence, the idea of this higher unity [...] should be acknowledged by its most qualified representatives.

The exclusivist position may not be maintained without the danger of discrediting the traditional Catholics (and other Christians) who rigidly adhere to it. [...] Nobody with a higher education can really believe in the axiom: 'There is no salvation outside the Church.' This is a matter not of 'faith', but of either knowledge or ignorance. [...] The current state of knowledge in matters of comparative religion, mythology and even ethnology requires a revision and an adequate widening of the intellectual horizons."

Muslims should heed this warning as well as Christians.

Evola also gives his attention to "the problem of the relationship between the principle of sovereignty and the religious principle in general," but his adherence to the Ghibelline cause may have led him

astray. He argues that, according to Ghibelline theology, the Holy Roman Empire was "an institution of supernatural origin and character, like the Church."

During the Middle Ages "the dignity of the kings themselves had an almost priestly nature (kingship being established through a rite that differed only in minor detail from episcopal ordination)."

The Ghibelline emperors opposed the hegemonic claims of the clergy and claimed to have only God above themselves. The realization of the human person was believed to consist either in the path of action (represented by the Empire) or in the path of contemplation (represented by the Church). This was Dante's view. Thus, knighthood and the great knightly orders stood in relation to the Empire in the same way in which the clergy and the ascetic orders stood in relation to the Church.

Evola also points out that the title of Pontiff, originating from the Latin word pontifex ("bridge-builder") and denoting one who mediates transcendence into this world, was the title of Roman emperors.

Thus, in the first few centuries of the current era, as well as in the Byzantine Empire, the clergy were subjected to the Emperor in the theological domain, as is proved by the fact that it was to the Emperor that the formulas of the church councils were submitted for their final decision and ratification.

Evola clearly prefers this pre-eminence of Empire over Church to the model of the Guelph opposition, which sought to ensure that the Church was the supreme power. In my view, however, neither faction was completely right.

By nature, the brahmin is superior to the kshatriya. The latter needs the guidance of the former, not vice-versa. Unfortunately, the Church (as noted above) lost its brahminic capacity and thus forfeited any right to give directions to kings and emperors.[54] Nevertheless, kshatriyas continue to need guidance; an Arthur needs his Merlin, an Aragorn his Gandalf.

It is very doubtful whether the Byzantine and Ghibelline emperors were initiated men; in which case their claims to "have only God above them" were of very dubious standing.

The probable truth is that both Church and Empire were "shells," in the sense in which Idries Shah uses the term in his book *The Sufis*.<sup>[55]</sup> That is to say, they preserved forms from former initiatory groups without possessing the capacity of initiation itself.

Hence in the world of European kingdoms that emerged out of the Middle Ages there was no perfect solution to the dilemma over which institution should have supreme power, Church or State; and, inevitably, there was a continuing tug-of-war.

Evola also developed further his critique of the Catholic Church, arguing that its "capability of providing adequate support for a revolutionary-conservative and traditionalist movement must be resolutely denied." He enumerated various failings of Catholicism and concluded that the direction it has taken "is a descending and anti-traditional one, consisting of modernization and coming to terms with democracy, socialism and progressivism."

Thus, "the norm that must be followed [...] is to travel an autonomous way, abandoning the Church to her destiny, considering her actual inability to bestow an official consecration on a true, great, traditional and super-traditional Right."

My own view is that Australians of the Right should be a little more magnanimous in their attitude to the Catholic Church and other churches and even other religions. These may have their faults, but we will have our faults too; for we cannot at present claim to be initiates, to be awakened men. All of us are like travelers lost in the dark; we can use what intelligence we have to help each other, but must remain honestly aware of the tentative nature of our own efforts. Let us pray that Heaven will send down some future light to us or our descendants!

Finally, Evola comments on the apparent discrepancies between what he misguidedly calls "the nihilist teachings" of Jesus in the Gospels and the kind of understanding necessary for effective rule of a kingdom or empire. Here, he seems to give insufficient weight to the obvious initiatory nature of much of the Gospel message, tending to respond to texts as though they are to be taken literally when beyond doubt they are to be taken symbolically.[56]

For example, he objects to the famous exhortation: "Render unto Caesar what is Caesar's and unto God what is God's." He sees this as promoting a separation between human institutions and supernatural order which the Guelph faction was able to exploit. However, it surely refers to the fundamental difference between this world (Caesar's world, the world of those asleep) and the worlds above (those of the awakening and the enlightened). The essential message is that the two worlds should not be confused.

It is only if the profound initiatory teaching of the Gospels is taken literally that it tends to conflict with practical common sense in our ordinary conduct in this mundane world!

Unreal "Realisms"

In his eleventh chapter Evola considers a variety of unsatisfactory responses to the unappealing and conformist world of the bourgeois.

He rejects neo-realism as "the mistake of those who regard only the inferior degrees of reality as real" and condemns psychoanalysis as "a doctrine that divests and brands as unreal the conscious and sovereign principle of the person, considering as 'real' instead the irrational, unconscious, collective and nocturnal dimension of the human being, every higher faculty being seen as derived and dependent."

He gives a particularly adroit and succinct summary of existentialism. It "proclaims the primacy of 'existence' over 'being', instead of acknowledging that existence acquires a meaning only when it is inspired by something beyond itself. [...] In this philosophy, 'existence' is identified with the most shallow forms of life; this kind of existence is separated from any superior principle, made absolute and cherished in its anguished and lightless immediacy."

That is an apt diagnosis of Albert Camus' interesting but poisonous novel *The Outsider*, but would not be fairly applied to the nobler novel *The Plague*, in which the failed Algerian metaphysician struck a truly tragic note.[57]

Evola also notes that the bourgeois pettiness can even infect monarchs, churchmen and communist demonstrators. Another inappropriate response to the bourgeois mentality that he identifies is an exaggerated appreciation of culture and intellectualism, associated with "the growing, hypertrophic cerebralization of Western man," who has given too privileged a position in recent centuries to conceptual thought.



In response to these false alleys, Evola calls for "a more realistic opposition to the bourgeois spirit" which is "oriented upward" and includes "a revival of the heroic and aristocratic virtues."

We must "remain upright, feeling the presence in life of that which leads beyond life." We need to recover a worldview based on "an inner form and a sensibility endowed with an innate character" which expresses "instinctive certainty" and a sense of "a sure meaning of life." This is the premise for "the emergence of new men and leaders" capable of establishing a new political climate.

This suggests that any effective political movement of the Right in Australia will need to promote inner exploration in its followers - not merely pious prayer, but deeper forms of meditation and contemplation.

### The Corporative Workplace

As a necessary step to the reassertion of control over the economy by the State, Evola recommends an end to "classism" and class struggle.

His ideal is a corporative principle involving "a community of work and productive solidarity, based on the principles of competence, qualification and natural hierarchy, with the overall system characterized by a style of active impersonality, selflessness and dignity." He recalls the mediaeval artisan corporations, guilds and craft fraternities, whose members "enjoyed the status of free men and also were very proud of belonging to their association." Such men "felt love for their work, which was regarded as [...] an art and an expression of one's vocation." They readily upheld "the code of honour of their corporations."

That world was turned upside down by the industrial revolution, which went hand-in-hand with the rise to power of usurious financial groups. Thus, says Evola:

"today the truly relevant and serious problem is that of the restraint that needs to be placed on the wild and unscrupulous struggle among various monopolies, and especially among the monopoly of goods and materials (co-operatives), the monopoly of money (banking, finance, stock speculations) and the monopoly of labour (trade unions)."

Evola is certain that "only the State can effectively [...] limit the power of these groups" and that this can only happen "where the State appears as a super-ordained power, capable of facing and defeating any subversive force." Australians should note here the overwhelming case for the retention of our monarchy. Yielding to the agitation for a republic will mean handing ourselves over to those who control these great monopolies - the "barons" or "giants" of the age. Our task, then, must be to breathe life back into the monarchy, by finding ways to rekindle heartfelt loyalty to the Crown, and later in our history to effect the inauguration of a truly Australian monarchy, seeded, as it were, from the parent tree in Britain.

Evola is emphatic that the struggle against a degenerate and arrogant capitalism must be waged "from above." As regards solutions, he is opposed to forms of worker co-ownership, which he sees as tending to fatal inefficiency, particularly in the management of large companies, which are like large armies. However, he suggests that "ways should be devised through which the worker could gradually become a small 'owner,' by making him possessor of non-transferable stocks of his company corporation."

Evola calls for the suppression of "the worst type of capitalist, who is a parasitical recipient of profits and dividends." Instead, in a new corporative system, the owner of the means of production should "assume the function of responsible leader, technical manager and capable organizer of the business he runs, being surrounded by loyal workers who are free from trade union control."

Evola understands well that "in the varieties of what is essentially mechanical work it is very difficult to retain the character of 'art' and of 'vocation' and for the results of production to show any signature of the personhood of those who worked to manufacture them." This poses a problem similar to that encountered earlier in the phenomenon of "total war" caused by modern scientific, technological and industrial advances.

Evola adopts a similar solution, seeking "the emergence of a new type, characterized by a certain impersonality" who will incarnate "new forms of the anonymity and unselfishness that characterized ancient corporativism." Clearly such a phenomenon could only appear in a noble and just State whose population as a whole had faith in the goodness and purposes of that State.

Evola also favored a reconstructed parliamentary system in which the Lower House is filled with representatives of the business, professional and trades corporations, whose task would mainly be the management of the State's economic affairs.

Political concerns would largely be dealt with by the Upper House, which would consist of men who embodied and could defend spiritual and national interests of prestige and power. One should belong to this superior House "by designation from above and for life, almost as if it were an Order, on the basis of one's natural dignity and inalienable qualification."

Such discussions will make Australian men and women of the Right aware of the magnitude of the challenge that lies before them; but certainly we cannot rest content with the current political structures as they operate.

## Occult Politics

In his thirteenth chapter, in which Evola rightly acknowledges his considerable debt to René Guénon, [58] the question is asked whether "it is necessary to identify influences of a higher order" behind the disastrous collapse around the world of traditionally articulated societies.

Evola reminds us of how, for example, Catholic historiography "used to regard history as [...] the unfolding of divine Providence, to which hostile forces are opposed [...], "forces of evil" [...], "forces of the Antichrist" [...], forces of the cosmos against forces of chaos."

This is potentially sensational copy! However, Evola does not develop any kind of detailed and documented enquiry into the mystery of iniquity. Many readers may agree with me on the basis of their own personal experience that there does seem to be active in our world a superhuman being of evil, whose presence can be felt on occasions as not merely one of enormous and elemental power, but also one of a devastating hatred and conscious malignity. Evola carries out no research into this matter, perhaps preferring to keep metaphysics out of what is largely just a primer for political action.

Instead, he uses the Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion, of whose authenticity he is clearly very skeptical, to allow him to raise another question, that of "whether or not the disorder of recent times is

accidental, since it corresponds to a plan, the phases and fundamental instruments of which are accurately described in the Protocols."

Thus, he focuses wholly on the question of whether or not there has been a worldly political conspiracy behind the world's calamities. He produces a fairly convincing case that there has been, but avoids the cliché of placing blame on "the Jews" and "Masonry." Rather, he surmises that these groups themselves may have been used by a more concealed source.

Evola also considers carefully the various instruments by which "occult war" appears to be waged: "scientific suggestion and positivist propaganda, the tactic of replacement, the tactic of counterfeits," the encouragement of a useless traditionalism (the tares and chaff of Tradition), the tactic of inversion, the tactic of ricochet, the scapegoat tactic, the tactic of deliberate misidentification of a principle with its representative and the tactic of replacement infiltrations (in "shell-like" organizations which have, as it were, lost their soul and so can become possessed by alien forces).

Evola sensibly warns us against quixotic gallantries in this dangerous situation.

"Those movements of the past that intended to react against and stem the currents of national, social and moral dissolution [...] often upheld dangerously unilateral positions, due to the lack of adequate discernment; this was a weakness that [...] played into the enemy's hands."

He concludes this chapter by adding:

"There is little hope that anything may be saved when among the leaders of a new movement there are no men capable of integrating the material struggle with a secret and inexorable knowledge, one that [...] stands [...] on the side of the luminous principle of traditional spirituality."

### The Roman Ideal

Related to Evola's discussion of the need for a choice of traditions within a nation's history is his comparison of the two dominant temperaments within the Italian soul: the Roman and the Mediterranean. A discussion interesting in itself, it also suggests that the Australian Right may need to undertake a comparable analysis of the Australian soul.

Evola begins by presenting two unexpected historical perspectives. He first argues that the "heroic-sacred" world of early Rome and Sparta "was not perpetuated in the following 'Classical' civilization, from which, in turn, the 'Latin spirit' and the doctrine of the 'unity of the peoples of Latin civilization' derived."

Next, he replaces the "democratic" image of the Axis pact between Italy and Germany (a little clown joining a big devil) with a much more dignified interpretation. Arguing that Germany retained aspects of the "heroic-sacred" world longer than Greece or Italy, he suggests that the Axis could have spiritually strengthened both peoples with a "reciprocal integration," if it had not been sabotaged - partly by elements in Italy itself, even Fascist cadres misled by the myth of the Risorgimento.

Evola's depiction of "the original Roman spirit" deserves to be quoted at length, since it clearly reflects his own personal ideal and the temperament which gave him his perspective on life. Australians might be wise to draw up a similar inventory of "the British spirit" as the better part of their own national soul.

Evola saw the Roman spirit as based on a human type characterized by "self-control, an enlightened boldness, a concise speech and determined and coherent conduct, and a cold, dominating attitude exempt from personalism and vanity.

"To this Roman style belong *virtus*, in the sense not of moralism, but of virile spirit and courage; *fortitudo* and *constantia*, namely spiritual strength; *sapientia*, in the sense of thoughtfulness and awareness; *disciplina*, understood as love for a self-given law and form; *fides*, in the specifically Roman sense of loyalty and faithfulness; and *dignitas*, which in the ancient patrician society became *gravitas* and *solemnitas*, a studied and moderate seriousness."

The Roman spirit preferred

"deliberate actions, without grand gestures, a realism that is [...] love for the essential [...], clarity [...], an inner equilibrium and a healthy suspicion of every confused form of mysticism; a love for boundaries; the readiness to unite, as free human beings and without losing one's identity, in view of a higher goal or for an idea [...]; *religio* and *pietas*, which [...] signify an attitude of respectful and dignified veneration for the gods and [...] of trust and re-connection with the supernatural, which was experienced as omnipresent and effective."

By contrast, Evola characterized the Mediterranean style much less favorably, seeing it as consisting of

"love for outward appearances and grand gestures; concern to be noticed by others and to make an impact on them; the choreographic-theatrical and spectacular, comparable to the French *grandeur* and *gloire*; the tendency toward a restless, chaotic and undisciplined individualism; intolerance of any general and strict law of order; the fireworks of a creativity disjoined from any higher meaning and tradition; the pseudo-genial hypercritic, expert in eluding a law; the cunning and malicious fooler of others; a gesticulating, noisy and disordered exuberance; a manic effusiveness; excitability and verbosity; a flaunted and conventional sense of honour; immediacy of desire or affection; and a public cheeriness masking an inner hopelessness."

There is an element of caricature, of course, in this comparison of two poles; and Evola's "ideal Roman" is not the only fruitful way of being human: it is not a universal requirement of man. Nevertheless, Evola's discussion can alert us to the ways in which propagandists and agitators promote various stereotypes of "the typical Australian " or "the Aussie bloke and Sheila"[59] which may, in fact, be inadequately attuned to reality as well as psychosocially demeaning. The Australian Right needs to determine its own modes of "the ideal Australian character," based on scrupulous examination of our history and culture; and to promote these coolly and calmly in the public forums.

As Evola also noted, there is no need to suppress passion; rather, we should heed Nietzsche's warning "against every morality that tends to dry up every impetuous current of the human soul instead of channeling it." [60] What matters is "to organize one's being in an integral way around the capability of recognizing, discriminating and adequately utilizing the impulses and the lights that emerge from one's deep recesses."

For Evola, the "myth of Rome" was Italy's most desirable model. "In the rectifying and formative action the key role will always be played by the political myth [...] a galvanizing idea-force. The myth reacts on the environment, implementing the law of elective affinities: it awakens, frees and imposes those possibilities of single individuals and the environment to which they correspond."

## Sex and Population

Evola believes in the need for humanity to control the world's population growth.

"Overpopulation exacerbates the problem of how to employ the workforces; it also unavoidably intensifies production processes, which in turn, due to their determinisms, strengthen the demonic nature of the economy. The result is the increasing enslavement of the individual and the reduction of free space and of any autonomous movement in modern cities."

Evola also mentions the "congestion that in turn produces critical international solutions," a theme that Jean Raspail later took up in his novel *The Camp of the Saints*[61] and a reality that now poses headaches for the Australian Government as regards immigration policy.

Evola takes up a number of controversial and uncompromising positions. In the first place, he endorses the view that some peoples are superior to others and that the political order of the State should appropriately reflect this.

"Every true empire is born from a race of conquerors who overcame lands and peoples [...] on the basis of a higher calling and qualification, which allowed them to rule as a minority in foreign lands [...] the Romans, the Achaemenids, the Franks, the Spaniards, the early Islamic hosts and the British."

In the second place, he rejects as outdated and in fact immoral the Catholic religion's embrace of the biblical principle of the multiplication of the human species and the Church teaching that sexual union and marriage are legitimate and sanctified only when they are aimed at procreation.

Evola acknowledges the good sense of a Vatican II declaration that love, too, may be a legitimate foundation of marriage. In referring also to the libertine, "who elevates pleasure to an art," and the Dionysianism "that in antiquity enjoyed a religious sanction," Evola clearly insists that birth control measures should be widely employed so that sexual satisfaction of various intensities can be obtained without worsening the population problem.

A third controversial position (very personal to Evola himself) concerns the identification of "the cult of children" with the bourgeois spirit. Evola calls for men to join the revolutionary-conservative movement who should almost look upon creating a family as a betrayal of the cause. He perhaps mistakes a personal preference for an ideal. Such men are not necessarily to be ascetics.

"I believe that in the personal domain the right to an ample degree of sexual freedom for these men (the warriors) should be acknowledged, against moralism, social conformism and 'heroism in slippers'."

A degree of personal feeling has clearly entered the discourse here, confirmed by Evola's approving quotation of Nietzsche's infamous dictum that "man should be trained for war and woman for the recreation (or rest) of the warrior."

At the same time Evola must be commended for his courage and frankness in tackling such difficult subjects in defiance of taboos old or new. The Australian Right will need to show similar integrity in determining policy on immigration and population issues for our future.

## A True European Union

Evola's last chapter considers the daunting task of bringing about a united Europe in accordance with the principles of Tradition. This is of great interest in a time when a quite different kind of European Union is being more or less forced on the peoples of the traditional European nations; and when Britain is moving towards its fateful referendum on whether or not to accept the Euro as its unit of currency.

Evola begins by outlining the organic character that his ideal Europe would possess.

"Fatherlands and nations may exist. [...] What should be excluded are nationalism, imperialism, chauvinism - every fanatical absolutization of a particular unit."

Such a European Empire would safeguard the principles of both unity and multiplicity.

"Individual states would have the character of partial organic units, gravitating around a one that is not a part."

Transcending the political sphere would be an idea, a tradition and a spiritual power.

"The limitations of the sovereignty of the single national units before an eminent right of the Empire will have as their sole condition this transcendental dignity of the Empire [...] an organism composed of organisms."

Thus, "the elementary presupposition of an eventual united Europe appears to be the political integration of the single nations." A healthy whole cannot be made up of unhealthy parts.

In such integrated nations, quite different from the current bourgeois democracies, the elites of each nation "could understand one another and co-ordinate their work," rather in the manner of the royal houses and their supporting aristocracies in the Old Europe.

Evola does not fudge the "disheartening magnitude" of the task, which seems almost utopian. He notes that the problem of finding a spiritual foundation for such a European Empire is quite unresolved. Neither Catholicism nor "a generic Christianity" (which would be too weak and diffuse) would serve the purpose. Moreover, Europeans have largely lost contact with the highest meaning of Europe itself; and "European tradition" and "European culture" are too confused and too contaminated by false ideas.

Evola is aware that the "general leveling of cultures" of the world has been used as an argument by those "who do not want a united Europe but rather a unified world, in a supernational organization or World Government." Today's European Union, brought about by massive deceit in recent decades, is perhaps a step in that direction. It would, of course, lead to an anti-traditional world in which the majority of human beings would be drugged and driven serfs.

Evola adds that "a radical European action finds its major obstacle in the lack of something that could represent a starting point, a firm support and a centre of crystallization." He proposes the creation of an Order whose members would work in the right direction in the various nations.

Such an order could include members of ancient European families, warrior types (especially those trained in elite combat units) and other persons in whom a distaste for "the modern disaster" has aroused a yearning for a traditional political order, together with the will and character to strive for it.

"The personality of an authentic leader at the centre and head of the Order is of the utmost importance."

No such person was visible to Evola in Europe as he wrote those words. For members of the Australian Right, this chapter reminds us of the kind of political order in Australia towards which we should work, together with the attendant difficulties. To date it seems that no suitable leader arose during the five decades after the Japanese collapse; but perhaps that reflects the fact that individuals and groups on the Australian Right lacked the wisdom and understanding to create the necessary atmosphere in which such a leader could appear and act.

Envoi

The most arresting question to be asked of Evola is whether or not he ever wrote as an initiate, as an awakened man, as a brahmin. Judging by *Men Among the Ruins*, I believe the answer to be no.

A not altogether friendly critic of Evola, Richard Drake, in Chapter 7 ("Children of the Sun") of his *Revolutionary Mystique and Terrorism in Contemporary Italy* (Indiana University Press) has written of Evola's period of magical studies with the Ur group in the 1920's as follows: "Evola proposed a philosophy of utter wakefulness and vigilance on this plane of existence, the only one with which he was seriously concerned." This was after Evola had left the Ur group.

And Dr H. T. Hansen, in "A Short Introduction to Julius Evola" published in *Theosophical History* noted of Evola: "Since he does not regard himself as master, he can recognize no student."

Evola's behavior in 1945 is also inconsonant with that of a wise initiate. Hansen reported:

"During air attacks, Evola had the habit of not going to the bomb shelters but instead went on working in his office or walked about the streets of Vienna. He wanted, as he said, 'calmly to question his fate.'"

In fact it was foolish negligence - and he suffered terribly for it.

Robin Waterfield, the biographer of Guénon, published "Baron Julius Evola and the Hermetic Tradition" in *Gnosis Magazine*. About the Ur phase, he tersely commented:

"Their attempts to form a 'magical chain' in order to exercise supernatural influence on others were soon abandoned."

Waterfield felt that Evola had, however, performed a service by bringing back to European attention the concept of theosis, personal deification - that level of attainment known as *jivanmukta* in Hinduism, "the superior person" in Chinese tradition, "the liberated one" in Buddhism and the saint or sage in Christian tradition.

"This notion has been fiercely opposed by the hierarchical Christian Church, whose clergy have seen unmediated access to divine grace as a threat to their influence and power."

They have also, of course, found it at odds with the Pauline doctrine of the "one atonement" by the blood of the crucified Jesus.

In my view Evola is a man of very similar character and achievements to the great Russian writer P. D. Ouspensky (1878-1947), who searched diligently (or thought he did) for a school of initiation, but never succeeded in becoming initiated.[62] There seems to have been a degree of gloom at the end of each man's life, the gloom of hamartia, of having had one's arrow fall short of the target. Yet, in the world of us ordinary men, the unawakened, each of these writers is a towering figure of integrity, independent thought and intellectual achievement.

Their work has to be read critically, however. British psychiatrist and devotee of the Cathar tradition, Dr. Arthur Guirdham,[63] would surely have diagnosed each man as a typical modern obsessive. Obsession is indeed a psychological failing, but it can drive its victims to lifetimes of intense labor and magnificent achievements. In my case, my main criticism of Evola is his undue depreciation of the feminine side of human nature, his unfair identification of femininity with the will-to-sleep, to give up the struggle to achieve wisdom. Evola appears to me to have been a very highly strung person; and his adherence to a "path of virility" was a means by which he kept his own nature from collapsing. It was a noble path, but it is not the only path.

#### Further Reading

Books by Julius Evola available in English and published by Inner Traditions, Rochester, Vermont, USA, unless otherwise indicated, are:

- Eros and the Mysteries of Love (1983)
  
- The Yoga of Power (1992)
  
- Revolt against the Modern World (1995)
  
- The Hermetic Tradition (1995)
  
- The Doctrine of Awakening (1996)
  
- Meditation on the Peaks (Feral House) (1997)
  
- The Mystery of the Grail (1997)
  
- Introduction to Magic (2001)
  
- Men among the Ruins (2002)



## The Author

Nigel Jackson was born on September 4, 1939, in Melbourne, Australia. He holds a Master of Arts degree in English from the University of Melbourne and has been a secondary school teacher for thirty-five years. He published four books of poetry in the 1970's and *The Case for David Irving* in 1994. For two decades he has publicly defended the principle of intellectual freedom and, consequently, the right of revisionist historians to publish in national forums without defamation, harassment or punishment. This review-article on Julius Evola's *Men Among the Ruins* was accepted for publication in three parts by the Australian *New Dawn Magazine* and the first part appeared in its September-October 2002 edition. Mysteriously, the other parts never appeared and the magazine was deaf to several letters of enquiry by the author.

Troy Southgate, *Julius Evola: A Radical Traditionalist*, (full text)

### 1. REVOLUTION-COUNTER-REVOLUTION - TRADITION

In the opening chapter of his work, Evola can be forgiven for appearing to sound like a typical Catholic fundamentalist. According to the Baron, socio-political subversion (*eversio*) was introduced into Europe for the first time with the 1789 and 1848 revolutions. Catholic writers like Chesterton, Belloc and a whole array of popes and cardinals would agree with him. Indeed, Evola even suggests that the term 'reactionary' should be adopted by those who realise the true extent to which the forces of liberalism, Marxism and democracy are advancing their secret agenda. We are informed that if this term had not been so furiously rejected by the conservative opponents of revolution, our European nations would have been relatively more salvageable. But now that several decades have passed since the book was first published, had the author still been alive he may well have been surprised to learn that his ideas have found significant expression within the ranks of those who have become known as 'conservative revolutionaries'. For Evola, therefore, perhaps the apparently conflicting terminology in this phrase would have been a misnomer. On the contrary, it was used throughout the twentieth century by men such as Arthur Moeller van den Bruck, Michael Walker, Armin Mohler and Otto Strasser. In fact Evola tells us himself that 'conservative revolution' should not be connected with the term 'reaction' because the former has distinctly positive and energetic connotations. Revolution in this sense, he admits, simply means restoring order and thus avoiding entirely its chaotic antithesis. He even defines revolution (*revolutio*) - not as a departure from prevailing trends - but as a return to origins. Thus revolution, in his evaluation of the term, indicates a replenishment of that which has gone before. But the word "conservative" can also be very misleading. Evola argues that "it is necessary to first establish as exactly as possible what needs to be 'preserved'". He is also under no illusion that capitalists have long used this term with which to advance the interests of their own class, rather than "committing themselves to a stout defence of a higher right, dignity, and impersonal legacy of values, ideas and principles." This suggests a kind of aristocratic benevolence, a chivalric sense of duty and sacrifice. Evola also believes that the State must not concern itself with economic matters, rather assuming a transcendent role in opposition to the class-oriented obsessions of both the bourgeoisie and Marxists alike. Furthermore, he tells us, "what really counts is to be faithful not to past forms and institutions, but rather to principles of which such forms and institutions have been particular expressions." So, therefore, the success of tradition lies in our ability to create new forms from the etymological drawing-board which inspired those of the past, a process which works its way down through the generations as though divinely inspired. In other words it is not the transitory or - in the

case of historical personality cults - even the idolatrous facets which are of value, but those which are everlasting and permanent. Indeed, Evola pours scorn upon the very term 'historical' because such matters rise above and beyond the whole notion of history altogether. Mircea Eliade has discussed this idea at length in *The Myth of The Eternal Return* [Princeton, 1991], echoed here by Evola: "These principles are not compromised by the fact that in various instances an individual, out of weakness or due to other reasons, was able to actualise them or to even implement them partially at one point in his life rather than another." The designers and schemers of the modern age, of course, dismiss these aspects as having been a consequence of the period in which they were apparently expressed. So therefore tradition and historicism are totally irreconcilable. The author's own homeland also comes in for some criticism, with Evola firmly believing that Italy has no material or ideological connection with tradition and that her only hope lies in a spiritual renewal.

Returning to the dangers of revolution - at least in the purely negative sense as defined above - we are reminded of the more positive, Hegelian analysis: "the negation of the negation." In other words, eradicating that which in itself has been the great eradicator is a worthwhile objective. On the other hand, Evola is being slightly pedantic when he criticises the adoption of the "revolutionary spirit," lest it sound too progressive or wild. His denunciation of the unfulfilling legend of technological advancement, however, is very accurate indeed: "Those who are not subject to the predominant materialism of our times, upon recognising the only context in which it is legitimate to speak of progress, will be on guard against any orientation in which the modern 'myth of progress' is reflected." Indeed, there are many such examples, all of which contend either blindly or knowingly that the past must be eradicated for the good of the present. This, says Evola, is "history's demolition squad." It is rather surprising, therefore, to consider that in his youth Evola offered his support to Italian Futurism. Not, of course, that Marinetti's pledge to raze libraries and museums to the ground was ever designed to be an attempt to destroy the perennial essence which always transcends the purely anachronistic. The contentious issue of Fascism is also tackled by Evola and is here regarded as being valid only when it concords with tradition. To stand vigorously in favour of Fascism simply for its own sake, is akin to the fulminating negativity inherent within many of its anti-fascist opponents.

## 2. SOVEREIGNTY - AUTHORITY - IMPERIUM

According to Evola, "every true political unity appears as the embodiment of an idea and a power, thus distinguishing itself from every form of naturalistic association or 'natural right', and also from every societal aggregation determined by mere social, economic, biological, utilitarian, or eudemonistic factors." He goes on to point out that, for the Romans at least, the very idea of an imperium of sovereign power was something perceived to be highly sacred. This functioned by way of a mystical trinity comprised of the Leader (*auctoritas*), the Nobility (*gens*) and the State (*res publica*). Evola's interpretation of the imperium is certainly supported by those historians who - like Edward Gibbon and Oswald Spengler - have allowed the Holy Roman Empire its own unique and symbolic niche in both time and space. That it prevailed until its disastrous collapse at Constantinople in 1453, of course, is demonstrative of the way in which the very idea of imperium survived the various cycles of history in which it found itself. Evola also reminds us of De Maistre's assertion that a "power and authority that are not absolute, are not real authority or real power" at all.

The author then turns his mind to judicial matters, stating that, whenever the State rises above the merely temporal laws of the nation, it assumes the role of an independently organic entity. In other words, Evola is basically suggesting that in cases of national emergency, for example, the State can flex its muscles and prove just how transcendent it really is by overriding the laws of the judiciary. This

notion will fill the average supporter of democracy and egalitarianism with some horror, but Evola is referring to a central principle of authoritative order rather than advocating that a fascist dictatorship rule over the masses with an iron fist (although he does suggest that a temporary dictatorship can often get things back on track). Indeed, this is rather similar to the way Cicero analyses Natural Law and the fact that it only applies to those who seek to transgress its permanently entrenched codes.

Evola also refutes the idea that power should rise up to the State from the grass roots, for example in the way that Muammar al-Qathafi explains the concept in *The Green Book*. As far as he is concerned, the State is not the expression or embodiment of the people at all. This "political domain is defined through hierarchical, heroic, ideal, anti-hedonistic, and, to a degree, even anti-eudemonic values that set it apart from the order of naturalistic and vegetative life." But this is almost like a paradox. If the State completely transcends the ordinary functions of what most people consider to be the role of a State, then surely Evola's vision is one of anarchic authority? Evola may have disagreed with the use of the term "anarchy," but surely the State for him is more mystical than fully tangible in the purely ordinary sense? By this, I am implying that the State is present as a guiding authority at the helm of a nation or empire, but absent in terms of the way it is perceived by most people. Anarchy, of course, does not mean that authority is non-existent, it simply refers to the absence of rule. Therefore Evola's concept of the mystical State may well be altogether detached from the socio-economic version which writers like Peter Kropotkin (*The State: Its Historic Role*), Michael Bakunin (*Marxism, Freedom & The State*) or Herbert Spencer (*The Man Versus The State*) have gone to such great lengths in order to analyse and dissect. Evola makes a profound distinction between the political and social aspects of the State, arguing that it emanates from a specific family (*gens*) and thus rejecting the idea that states can arise from the naturalistic plane. At first, this appears to be a contradiction in terms, because, surely, the family is a naturalistic phenomenon? On the contrary, Evola is referring to an altogether different interpretation of the term "family," that of the *Mannerbunde* (or all-male fraternity). Given the nature of the Mafia, of course, Italians should find it that much easier to appreciate the subtle differences in terminology. Evola was also a Freemason and wrote extensively on the Mithraic sun-cult, both prime examples of the *Mannerbunde* and possessing deep initiatic qualities which - by way of a series of trials and degrees - take the male apprentice way beyond his maternalistic upbringing on the exoteric plane. Thus a significant change takes place both within the man himself and the way he is then perceived by others. But this interpretation is not designed to leave women out of the equation, it simply states that whilst men are the natural frequenters of the mystical, or political, domain, women are the pivotal masters of society. It lies completely "under the feminine aegis." Those readers who are familiar with Evola's *Revolt Against The Modern World* [*Inner Traditions*, 1995] will grasp the higher significance of what Evola is trying to say. Indeed, in the present work he summarises these metaphysical concepts thus: "The common mythological background is that of the duality of the luminous and heavenly deities, who are the gods of the political and heroic world on the one hand, and of the feminine and maternal deities of naturalistic existence, who were loved by the plebeian strata of society on the other hand. Thus, even in the ancient Roman world, the idea of State and of imperium (i.e., of the sacred authority) was strictly connected to the symbolic cult of the virile deities of heaven, of light and of the super-world in opposition to the dark region of the Mothers and the chthonic deities." If we follow Evola's line of thinking, we soon arrive at the medieval idea of the divine right of kings. This, he tells us, was a development which - contrary to the earlier imperium - was not consolidated "by the power of a rite." Traditional Catholics would disagree wholeheartedly with this conclusion, at least right up until the Reformation and Henry VIII's well-documented break with Rome. And if the divine right of kings is one step removed from the imperium, the next logical stage of decline is that of Socialism and the *demos*; which Evola describes as "the degradation and contamination of the political principle." Furthermore, he argues, "[b]oth democracy and socialism ratify the shift from the masculine to the feminine and from the spiritual to the material and the promiscuous."

Evola is often portrayed by his opponents as a "fascist," but it may surprise many of them to learn that he relegates "romantic and idealistic" concepts such as the nation, the homeland, and the people to the purely naturalistic and biological level. These issues, he contends, have replaced a political principle that is representative of a far higher and more penetrating tradition. By refusing to accept the legitimacy of feudalism or the authority of the Holy Roman Empire, he argues, nation-states tried to create their own pockets of authority. Thus, the struggle between popes and princes, kings and noblemen, led a vast centralisation of power which was epitomised by the Third Estate. This is where Evola returns to what he perceives as the crucial - and destructive - role played by the 1789 French Revolution, whereby the final vestiges of tradition were erased from the face of Europe. The process was aided by the 1848 Revolution and the onslaught of the First World War, pitting nation against nation in the name of "patriotism." Furthermore, he says, elevating a national identity or geographical territory to a kind of mystical status completely erodes both authority and sovereignty. Nations are associated with female terminology - Motherland, for example - and therefore "attributed to the Great Mother in ancient plebeian gynecocracies and in societies that ignored the virile and political principle of the imperium." Evola goes on to compare the political unit of the nation with the position of the soul in comparison to the body. In other words, it assumes an "inner form," which totally goes beyond the popular understanding of the way a nation is defined. It is true, after all, that nations do not arise purely by themselves and so the hidden - spiritual - component is the true guiding force. The nation is only perceived as an independent entity with a life of its own once the political aspect has been significantly weakened: "From the political class understood as an Order and a Mannerbund a shift occurs to the democratic ruling classes who presume to 'represent' the people and who acquire for themselves the various offices or positions of power by flattering and manipulating the masses." This, according to Evola, is due to the lack of real men in contemporary society and - paying his respects to Carlyle in the process - he goes on to warn us that we live in a "world of domestics that yearns to be ruled by a pseudo-hero." Indeed, there is little doubt that the parliamentary system, for example, never fails to deviate from the idea of the nation as myth, despite the fact that the political sphere is never regarded as being sovereign in itself. Evola attacks universal suffrage because he sees it as the consequence of "the degradation of the ruling class." It is certainly a fact that the reforms of the nineteenth century were achieved at the expense of the ruling classes, but, from an Evolian perspective, the scales were tipped at both ends. The consequence of this formative episode in European history, modern democracy, saw the true political unit replaced with a corrupt and bastardised system based entirely on materialism.

But what of those nations which have actually followed the political principle to the letter? We are informed by Evola that the nation will always be potentially compromised, whilst "on the one side stand the masses, in which, besides changing feelings, the same elementary instincts and interests connected to a physical and hedonistic plane will always have free play; and on the other side stand men who differentiate themselves from the masses as bearers of a complete legitimacy and authority, bestowed by the Idea and by their rigorous, impersonal adherence to it. The Idea, only the Idea, must be the true fatherland for these men: what unites and sets them apart should consist in adherence to the same idea, rather than to the same land, language, or blood." This is a pretty bold statement, given that Evola is usually - and wrongly - associated with certain elements of the Far Right. Perhaps this is why the Assassins and their Knights Templar contemporaries found that they had so much in common? That which is most important, therefore, is not one's adherence to a nation or a race - which instantly means that one must love, respect and work for the best interests of his compatriots without question - but one's loyalty and fidelity to the very essence and spirit of tradition. In Evola's own words: "The true task and the necessary premise for the rebirth of the 'nation' and for its renewed form and conscience consists of untying and separating that which only apparently, promiscuously, or collectively appears to be one entity, and in re-establishing a virile substance in the form of a political elite around which a

new crystallisation will occur." This, of course, is very different to the sheep-like mentality of most nationalist groups. One only has to look at the recent revival in England of a pseudo-patriotism built upon the most base and plebeian values of modern culture. Aligning oneself with existing national stereotypes, of course, is hardly making an attempt to transcend the sterile values which are embraced by the masses. The Idea that Evola talks about is based upon "strength and clarity, rather than 'idealism' and sentimentality." The nation has to be integrated with the political, so that the whole concept is raised to a much higher level by replacing the degenerative ruling classes with a new, elite aristocracy of cadres.

### 3. PERSONALITY - FREEDOM v HIERARCHY

In this chapter the author begins by attacking liberalism, the chief scourge behind the French Revolution. Many have tried to define liberalism, including Traditional Catholics like Pope Pius XI [Quadragesimo Anno], Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre [They Have Uncrowned Him], Fr. Felix Sarday Salvany [What Is Liberalism?] and Rev. Fr. Stephen P. DeLallo [The Sword of Christendom], although today the word is wrongly associated with anarcho-capitalists and right-wing libertarians. So how does Evola define the term?: "The essence of liberalism is individualism. The basis of its error is to mistake the notion of the person with that of the individual and to claim for the latter, unconditionally and according to egalitarian premises, some values that should rather be attributed solely to the former, and then only conditionally. Because of this transposition, these values are transformed into errors, or into something absurd and harmful." Egalitarianism - another mainstay of the 1879 Revolution - is completely dismissed by Evola due to its fundamentally ridiculous belief in the equality of all individuals. It not only relegates the person to the level of a mere part within the broader egalitarian mass, which Evola rightly shows to be a contradiction in terms, it obliterates human diversity by suggesting that no one person is significantly different to another. From the judicial perspective, of course, it is surely wrong to establish a form of fake "justice" by ensuring that everybody is legally bound in an unjust manner. It is also entirely out of step with Natural Law. Evola explains: "the lower degrees of reality are differentiated from the higher ones because in the lower degrees a whole can be broken down into many parts, all of which retain the same quality (as in the case of the parts of a non-crystallised mineral, or those parts of some plants and animals that reproduce themselves by parthenogenesis); in the higher degrees of reality this is no longer possible, as there is a higher organic unity in them that does not allow itself to be split without being compromised and without its parts entirely losing the quality, meaning, and function they had in it." When Evola speaks of parthenogenesis, of course, he is referring to those invertebrates and lower plants which engage in a form of sterile self-reproduction. The allegedly "free" individual, therefore, is considered to be inorganic and much lower than its organic superior. Meanwhile, the true person is he who continues to remain "unequal" due to his own distinct features and abilities. Natural individuation is not the same as crass individualism. At the same time, however, Evola does not infer that everyone deserves the "right" to be regarded as a person. Thus, he dispels the liberal myth that all of us possess some form of "human dignity" regardless of who we are. In fact there are several different levels of dignity each contained within a just and specific hierarchy. So once again, Evola is dismissing the egalitarian idea of a "universal right," brotherhood of equality or an automatic entitlement of some kind. In times gone by, however, "'peers' and 'equals' were often aristocratic concepts: in Sparta, the title homoioi ('equals') belonged exclusively to the elite in power (the title was revoked in cases of misconduct)."

Moving on, the notion of freedom - a favourite catchword of those engaged in the struggle between classes - is regarded in the same manner. It is something we enjoy as a consequence of who we are as a person, rather than simply because we happen to be a member of humanity. Evola remarks that freedom

does not come in any one form, but is actually multifarious and homogenous. He goes on to suggest that the freedom "to do" is quite different from the freedom "for doing." Indeed, whilst the former has to function within a controlled and standardised system of liberal "equality" (which inevitably leads, therefore, to one class disregarding the freedoms of others), the latter has more in common with Aleister Crowley's often-misunderstood expressions "do as thou wilt" and "every man and woman is a star." In other words, by possessing the freedom "to do," one can follow one's own unique course and act in accordance with one's true nature.

So how does the individual relate to society as a whole? Tradition accords with the ultimate supremacy of the individual, or what Ernst Junger has defined elsewhere as "the anarch" or "sovereign individual" [see Eumeswil, Quartet, 1993]. Evola even puts the sovereignty of the person before the State, because he views people not "as they are conceived by individualism, as atoms or a mass of atoms, but people as persons, as differentiated beings, each one endowed with a different rank, a different freedom, a different right within the social hierarchy based on the values of creating, constructing, obeying, and commanding. With people such as these it is possible to establish the true State, namely an anti-liberal, anti-democratic, and organic State." This vision, however, depends upon the advancement of the person through various stages of individuation and self-awareness. Natural inequality, therefore, will lead to an organic structure of society at the very helm of which stands the "absolute individual." This figurehead, says Evola, is completely different to the mere concept of the individual because it encapsulates that which is most qualitative within man. The "absolute individual" is fundamentally opposed to the concept that society itself is the ultimate manifestation of humanity. It is the sheer pinnacle of a transcendental sovereignty which represents the synthesising nature of the imperium. Moreover, of course, the idea can become manifest within the framework of the nation and seems defiantly opposed to present trends like globalisation and multi-racialism: "Thus, it is a positive and legitimate thing to uphold the right of the nation in order to assert an elementary and natural principle of difference of a given human group over and against all the forms of individualistic disintegration, international mixture and proletarianisation, and especially against the mere world of the masses and pure economy." To achieve this process, Evola declares that the State must be established from the nation itself.

But if one is seeking to fully align himself with the principles of Evolian thought, a person who is free in the true sense of the word must never be constrained by national, racial or family ties. This does not imply that he should actively seek to turn himself against them, on the contrary, the importance is to follow one's own path. Indeed, this course - which must lead towards the creation of the New Man - requires great discipline and understanding. Many who try, however, will fall by the wayside: "he who does not have the capability to dominate himself and to give himself a code to abide by would not know how to dominate others according to justice or how to give them a law to follow. The second foundation is the idea, previously upheld by Plato, that those who cannot be their own masters should find a master outside of themselves, since practising the discipline of obeying should teach these people how to master their own selves." People are therefore different, although Evola does make a distinction between the ruthlessness of "natural selection" and that of respect. In ancient societies the people who were most respected and admired were those with special abilities and qualities, not simply animalistic strength and brute force. The secret, of course, is to ensure that "power is based on superiority and not vice versa." It is certainly not necessary to bludgeon people into submission in order to get them to respect true leadership and ability. In the light of what Evola really thinks about such matters, therefore, you have to wonder why on earth Evolian Tradition was ever compared to Fascist totalitarianism in the first place.

The fact that Evola so openly acknowledges that there are various stations in life will outrage liberals, Marxists and advocates of democracy alike. But he is, nevertheless, absolutely correct. Forcing people

to accord with a societal conglomeration which has been enshrined in law by a coterie of dogmatists and architectural levellers, is simply not allowing people to discover and thus accomplish their true destinies. Evola believes that historical events have often been determined by the manner in which "the inferior" - which is not used in a derogatory sense - regard their "superior" counterparts. Indeed, to believe that humanity can somehow be subjected to a form of international utilitarianism is naive and misguided in the extreme. Humans are prone to "emotional or irrational motivation" and, inevitably, this will usually be the dominant factor which shapes the course of their lives. The Evolian - and, thus, traditional - approach to organisation lies in what is described as the "anagogical function" of the State and its latent ability to both engender and co-ordinate the individual-s sacrificial capacity to ally himself with a higher principle. The success of man-s organisational capacity, therefore, is not based purely on economics or prosperity but depends on whether the organic hierarchical balance has been maintained effectively. Within the liberal system, of course, the balance is upset by the fact that he "who becomes an individual, by ceasing to have an organic meaning and by refusing to acknowledge any principle of authority, is nothing more than a number, a unit in the pack; his usurpation evokes a fatal collectivist limitation against himself." Liberalism, therefore, may appear to defend freedom but it is actually a means of subverting it altogether. Marxism functions in the same way and both ideologies stem - once again - from the French Revolution: "when Western man broke the ties to Tradition, claiming for himself as an individual a vain and illusory freedom: when he became an atom in society, rejecting every higher symbol of authority and sovereignty in a system of hierarchies." Fascism, by falsely claiming to restore the traditional equilibrium, actually worsened the situation by initiating a crude and materialistic form of totalitarianism.

The worst example of liberalism is its dependence upon economic exploitation. Evola charts the decline of economic stability from the death of the feudal system - when "the organic connection . . . between personality and property, social function and wealth, and between a given qualification or moral nobility and the rightful and legitimate possession of goods, was broken" - and the onset of the Napoleonic Code, right through to the desanctification of property and the arrival of the unscrupulous capitalist. So what, according to Evola, is the role of the traditionalist in light of the modern evils which were unleashed over two hundred years ago? Our response must be founded upon a return to origins: "To go back to the origins means, plainly and simply, to reject anything that in any domain (whether social, political, or economic) is connected to the 'immortal principles' of 1789, as a libertarian, individualistic, and egalitarian thought, and to oppose it with the hierarchical view, in the context of which alone the notion, value, and freedom of man as person are not reduced to mere words or excuses for a work of destruction and subversion."

#### 4. ORGANIC STATE v TOTALITARIANISM

Evola now attempts to make a distinction between the totalitarian and organic State. The democracies have gone to great lengths in order to portray the traditional State "in a heinous way," ensuring that opponents of democracy are instantly equated with brutality and fascism. Totalitarianism, being a relatively modern word, is inevitably applied to past systems in a purely retrospective manner. Evola, however, seeks to approach the question of totalitarianism by examining the way in which the term is actually defined by the democracies. Therefore whenever the author refers to the more positive aspects of "totalitarianism," these components are said to accord with the organic State: "A State is organic when it has a centre, and this centre is an idea that shapes the various domains of life in an efficacious way; it is organic when it ignores the division and the autonomisation of the particular and when, by virtue of a system of hierarchical participation, every part within its relative autonomy performs its own function and enjoys an intimate connection with the whole." It is not difficult to see how this differs fundamentally with the individualism and liberalism of the modern age. Evola rightly points out that

more traditional societies were even able to accommodate a loyal opposition. In stark contrast to the representative party system of today, the early English Parliament was far more pluralist and was often heard to refer to "His Majesty-s Most Loyal Opposition."

But the organic State also had a spiritual or religious dimension, whereby the political was formulated in accordance with a more penetrating and unitary outlook. This, says Evola, is what makes the organic synonymous with the traditional. In the minds of the liberals and the communists, of course, this healthy approach to former societies and a more pluralist style of organisation inevitably means that tradition is wrongly equated with "fascism." Evola, on the other hand, is able to counter this fraudulent analogy by explaining that "totalitarianism merely represents the counterfeited image of the organic ideal. It is a system in which unity is imposed from the outside, not on the basis of the intrinsic force of a common idea and an authority that is naturally acknowledged, but rather through direct forms of intervention and control, exercised by a power that is exclusively and materially political, imposing itself as the ultimate reason for the system." Having lived through Mussolini-s Italy, of course, Evola was more than aware of the shortcomings relating to the Corporate State. Totalitarian dictatorship also fails to accept the organic chain that runs between the upper and lower poles of traditional society, replacing pluralism, decentralisation and participation with the fuhrer-princip. Furthermore, the totalitarian State "engenders a kind of sclerosis, or a monstrous hypertrophy of the entire bureaucratic-administrative structure." The Orwellian ministries of Nazi Germany spring to mind, becoming "all-pervasive, replacing and suppressing every particular activity, without any restraints, due to an insolent intrusion of the public sphere into the private domain, organising everything into rigid schemes." But these characteristics are not a purely modern phenomenon, on the contrary, as Oswald Spengler notes in *The Decline of the West* [Oxford University Press, 1991, p. 73]: "the great cultures accomplish their majestic wave-cycles. They appear suddenly, swell in splendid lines, flatten again and vanish, and the face of the waters is once more a sleeping waste." Thus, a similar pattern emerged during the death-throes of Persia and Greece and, according to Edward Gibbon: "the demise of Rome was the natural and inevitable effect of immoderate greatness. Prosperity ripened the principle of decay; the cause of destruction multiplied with the extent of conquest; and as soon as time or accident had removed the artificial supports, the stupendous fabric yielded to the pressure of its own weight. The story of its ruin is simple and obvious; and instead of inquiring why the Roman Empire was destroyed, we should rather be surprised that it had subsisted so long." [The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, Chatto & Windus, 1960, p. 524-5]. Similarly, Evola likens the degenerative process to a living organism: "after enjoying life and movement, a stiffening sets in when they die that is typical of a body turning into a corpse. This state, in turn, is followed by the terminal phase of disintegration."

The way in which the organic or traditional State is perceived is also important. Fascism and Marxism tend to lead to blind statism, but Evola believes that the organic State must be granted a degree of "Statolatry." In other words, rather than seeking to worship the State for its own sake, "[t]here is a profound and substantial difference between the deification and absolutisation of what is profane and the case in which the political reality derives its legitimisation from reference points that are also spiritual and somehow transcendent." This is the difference between the materialist and the spiritual, the totalitarian and the organic. The spiritual element acts like a societal adhesive, binding together the unitary whole to which the people are willingly attached without coercion or repression. In contemporary Western societies it is considered normal in certain occupations and ceremonies to undertake an oath. But despite being a remnant of the distant past, the oath today has been stripped of its sacred implications and has become empty, meaningless and contractual. This is because the State and various other national institutions have become a merely temporal form of authority, rendering the more spiritual expressions of verbal fidelity completely irrelevant. The gulf between the contractual and the traditional is demonstrated by the way in which the "Official Secrets Act" is designed to secure



the loyalty of the individual to the State. In feudal times, of course, the intrinsically transcendent nature of the oath became manifest by way of the sacramentum fidelitatis. This was infinitely more binding than giving one's allegiance to a company, an institution or a squadron.

But when the traditional State is said to represent a unitary organism it must not be compared, warns Evola, to the humanistic vision epitomised by Hegel's "Ethical State." Indeed, when Hegel perceives the individual to be part of a universal code of ethics, he is looking at humanity through rose-tinted spectacles. The unworkable liberalism which pervades this idealistic interpretation will only lead to one thing: totalitarianism in the name of "tradition" and "order." Therefore the "ethical" State inevitably leads to the "fascist" State, with the destructive multi-party system being replaced with an even more dangerous one-party dictatorship. Muammar al-Qadhafi, whose vision of the "organic" State conflicts with that proposed by Evola and other traditionalists, defines the party thus: "It is the modern dictatorial instrument of governing. The party is the rule of a part over the whole" [The Green Book, Tripoli, 1977, p. 11]. On this point Evola agrees, suggesting that once the party has ascended to power it simply tries to advance the interests of its own faction. It is therefore divisive and threatens the stability of that which must be unitary and transcendent. The solution to this problem, it seems, lies in the re-establishment of an elite suited to maintaining the balance of sovereignty and authority. Evola suggests that this can be done from within by both installing and enduring a period of interregnum, although National-Anarchists prefer to advocate the foundation of new decentralised communities on the periphery from which elite cadres recreate the very essence of true aristocracy.

## 5. BONAPARTISM - MACHIAVELLIANISM - ELITISM

Bonapartism is a rather unusual term and one which Evola borrows from R. Michels, author of the 1915 work *Political Parties: A Sociological Study of the Oligarchical Tendencies of Modern Democracy*. Michels demonstrates how representative democracy and "government of the people" leads to the control of the State by a self-interested minority. This view is echoed by J. Burnham in *The Machiavellians*, who explains that the so-called "will of the people" is eventually superseded by the domination of a bureaucratic clique. Thus Bonapartism begins with a popular demand for more freedom and equality and ends in the totalitarian "dictatorship of the proletariat." Evola likens this process to a people who have catastrophically "led and disciplined themselves." After the decline of its aristocratic nobility, ancient Greece witnessed the same systematically repressive phenomenon. Power simply became detached from a higher, spiritual authority, leading to fear and brutality. Evola then turns to Otto Weininger, who once "described the figure of the great politician as one who is a despot and at the same time a worshipper of the people, or simultaneously a pimp and a whore." Indeed, by seeking to appeal to the masses the modern leader easily commands their respect and adulation. Not in the way that traditional societies gave their loyalty to the organic State, however, because instead of engendering a healthy diversity between the various levels (not classes) of society Bonapartism forces the politician to become a "man of the people." Therefore he is perceived as a common man, rather than as someone exceptionally transcendent and symbolic. This, Weininger called "mutual prostitution." Authority is perfectly useless unless it is attached to a central idea which runs throughout the social fabric and acts as a point of reference. This affects the individual because one "is restricted not so much in this or that exterior freedom (which is, after all, of little consequence) but rather in the inner freedom - the ability to free himself from his lowest instincts." Bonapartism - which Evola interprets here as a political, rather than militaristic, term - is equated with dictatorship because this is the logical result of its democratic ethos. It completely erodes the traditional values of human existence, refusing to "distinguish clearly between the symbol, the function, and the principle, on the one hand, and man as an individual, on the other." Instead, it rejects "that a man be valued and

recognised in terms of the idea and principle he upholds" and simply views man in terms of "his action upon the irrational forms of the masses." Similarly, Evola points out the errors which began with Social-Darwinism and consequently found expression in Nietzsche's concept of the Superman (Übermensch): "most people, even when they admit the notion of aristocracy in principle, ultimately settle for a very limited view of it: they admire an individual for being exceptional and brilliant, instead of for being one in whom a tradition and a special 'spiritual race' shine forth, or instead of whose greatness is due not to his human virtues, but rather to the principle, the idea, and a certain regal impersonality that he embodies."

Machiavellianism - despite its frequent portrayal as an aristocratic notion - is also a highly individualist philosophy. Indeed, although the concept of The Prince rejects democracy and the masses, it makes the fatal mistake of encouraging power and authority to reside in the hands of man. In other words, man is himself the be all and end all of Machiavellian doctrine. Such men are not connected to a chain of Tradition, they are merely interested in deploying their political capabilities to advance their own interests. His very position is maintained by lies, deceit and manipulation, becoming a rampant political monster to which everything must be methodically subjected. This is clearly very different to the way in which traditional aristocracies functioned and indicates that Machiavellianism is a consequence of the general decline. True elitism, argues Evola, degenerates in four stages: "in the first stage the elite has a purely spiritual character, embodying what may be generally called -divine right-. This elite expresses an ideal of immaterial virility. In the second stage, the elite has the character of warrior nobility; at the third stage we find the advent of oligarchies of a plutocratic and capitalistic nature, such as they arise in democracies; the fourth and last elite is that of the collectivist and revolutionary leaders of the Fourth Estate."

## 6. WORK: THE DEMONIC NATURE OF THE ECONOMY

When Evola discusses the "demonic nature of the economy," we are instantly reminded of the capitalist free market and communism's deterministic assessment of man as economic unit (*homo economicus*). In the modern age economic forces have become the new gods of Mammon, creating a dangerous and cataclysmic antithesis to the spiritual aspirations of the ancient world. We have already examined how Evola warns against the lack of hierarchical authority, and in this chapter he demonstrates how both capitalism and Marxism have completely subverted the organic nature of our whole existence: "as long as we only talk about economic classes, profit, salaries, and production, and as long as we believe that real human progress is determined by a particular system of distribution of wealth and goods, and that, generally speaking, human progress is measured by the degree of wealth or indigence - then we are not even close to what is essential." Thus work and the modern economy are depicted as the penultimate goals of human endeavour, rather than man accepting that his natural interests must lie ultimately in the satisfaction of his own material needs. This is not to suggest that food, clothing and shelter are the most important facets of human existence, simply that they are the most basic prerequisites of all. Man also needs to be satisfied both spiritually and as part of a structure which: "neither knows nor tolerates merely economic classes and does not know the division between -capitalists- and -proletarians-; an order solely in terms of which are to be defined the things worth living and dying for. We must also uphold the need for a true hierarchy and for different dignitaries, with a higher function of power installed at the top, namely the imperium." But this vision is hardly being fulfilled today. Everything is geared towards economic production and, inevitably, wage-slavery. Evola does not believe in the formulation of a new economic theory, instead he explains that the current obsession with economic matters can only decline once people change their attitudes completely: "What must be questioned is not the value of this or that economic system, but the value of the economy itself." This is a

fundamental part of National-Anarchist thinking, too, a total rejection of the Left-Right spectrum which, once again, ever since the French Revolution has imposed upon us a wholly superficial antithesis between two allegedly opposed economic ideologies. Those so-called "backward" nations which, thus far, have avoided economic development are said by Evola to "enjoy a certain space and a relative freedom." By seizing upon the issue of class, Marxists have deliberately obscured the components of the ancient world by smearing them with an economic grime. In traditional societies, of course, the economy was simply one area within an all-encompassing hierarchical structure. Terms like "capitalist" and "proletarian" did not exist and class struggle was redundant: "Even in the domain of the economy, a normal civilisation provides specific justification for certain differences in condition, dignity, and function." Marxism, says Evola, did not come about due to the need for a resolution to the social question, on the contrary, Marxism itself has exacerbated the problem by creating the myth of the class system. In traditional societies "an individual contained his need and aspirations within natural limits; he did not yearn to become different from what he was, and thus he was innocent of that *Entfremdung* (alienation) decried by Marxism." Leninists, Trotskyists and other advocates of the class struggle will recoil in horror at this statement, but Evola is denouncing the materialist desires of the common economic agitator rather than supporting the aspirations of the "ruling class." Indeed, economic determinism is considered to be unhealthy and detrimental because "it can legitimately be claimed that the so-called improvement of social conditions should be regarded not as good but as evil, when its price consists of the enslavement of the single individual to the productive mechanism and to the social conglomerate; or in the degradation of the State to the -State based on work-, and the degradation of society to -consumer society-; or in the elimination of every qualitative hierarchy; or in the atrophy of every spiritual sensibility and every -heroic- attitude." There is little doubt, therefore, that the appliance of the economic worldview comes at a great cost. Evola implores us to express our real selves and to unleash our true potential. Each of us has a different function and a unique position to fulfil. Class conflict, therefore, is a diversion which has been thrust in the path of the unitary and the organic. In terms of the way in which we approach work, Evola tells us that an American attempt to extract more labour from a Third World workforce by doubling their wages, was met with "a majority of the workers cutting their working hours in half." Compare this traditionalist attitude with that of the modern-day office or factory worker who perpetually competes for overtime with his colleagues. Indeed, whilst traditional societies are merely interested in satisfying their basic needs, those in the West endure increasingly long hours, exhaustion, bad diets and severe health problems in their pursuit for computers, televisions and cars. Evola notes that, prior to the rise of the mercantile economy and the gradual evolution of capitalism, "the acquisition of external goods had to be restricted and that work and the quest for profit were justifiable only in order to acquire a level of wealth corresponding to one's status in life: this was the Thomist and, later, the Lutheran view." Work was always designed to satisfy man's basic needs and provide him with the time he needed in order to pursue more worthy and meaningful pursuits. But when the acquisition of wealth becomes such an obsession that it imprisons the individual within an economic straightjacket, something is clearly very wrong indeed. Success, therefore, is not determined by the credit in one's bank account or the growth of industry and technology, it relates to the way in which an individual is able to progress in a more spiritual sense. Living in accordance with one's own intrinsic nature (*dharma*) is far preferable to pushing oneself beyond the boundaries of normal behaviour through greed and materialism. This trend is epitomised by the restless nature of the capitalistic economy and its exploitative pursuit of new global markets. In the knowledge, of course, that once it has run its inevitable course the lack of available resources will herald its total collapse.

The emergence of capitalism has often been equated with the Protestant work ethic, and is here dismissed by Evola for the simple reason that labour has been transformed from a means of subsistence to an end in itself. It is not only the Right who are obsessed with work, of course, it is the Left too. One

thinks of endless marches organised by the likes of Militant Labour and the Socialist Workers Party, during which the only objective is to enslave the proletariat to the employment system: "The most peculiar thing is that this superstitious and insolent cult of work is proclaimed in an era in which the irreversible and relentless mechanisation eliminates from the main varieties of work whatever in them still had a character of quality, art, and the spontaneous unfoldment of a vocation, turning it into something inanimate and devoid of even an immanent meaning." Evola sees this process as the very proletarianisation of life itself. There are certain parallels here with Richard Hunt's advocacy of the "leisure society," in which man can rediscover the natural and qualitative values of his existence. But Evola warns his readers that we must not "shift to a renunciatory, utopian, and miserable civilisation," but rather "clear every domain of life of insane tensions and to restore a true hierarchy of values."

But whilst the individual is inadvertently eroding his own freedoms by viewing work as the ultimate goal in life, the State is also endangering its own existence through the encroaching scarcity of resources to which increasing productivity leads. Evola argues that the way forward lies in "autarchy," and that "it is better to renounce the allure of improving general social and economic conditions and to adopt a regime of austerity than to become enslaved to foreign interests or to become caught up in world processes of reckless economic hegemony and productivity that are destined to sweep away those who have set them in motion." On this point, however, Evola is perhaps forgetting that the decline of capitalistic economies is inevitable and therefore it is futile to postpone their collapse by implementing a policy of protectionism. This strategy may indeed enable a country to stave off the effects of an impending economic catastrophe, but given that all capitalist systems rely on the internationalist system, this simply would not work in the long term.

## 7. HISTORY - HISTORICISM

Evola now turns his attention to the way in which history is so often presented as a religious tenet of the modern age, representing the switch from a world of being towards that of a world of becoming. Indeed, whilst the former relates to an organic and stable form of civilisation, the latter denotes a chaotic and constantly evolving process in which "rationalist, scientific, and technological civilisation" acts as the pied piper of our rapid decline. Rationalism was perceived by Hegel as reality itself. Likewise, reality is also rational. But traditional values, says Evola, cannot be analysed or defined in this way because they are based on something far beyond the comprehension of mere philosophy. Historicism often regards those episodes which it cannot account for as "anti-historical." This has been said of historical phenomena which appear to obstruct the process of development in accordance with the rationalist worldview. This is why historicists and modernists are fond of portraying conservatives - in the true sense of the word - as "reactionaries" and enemies of progress. Furthermore, it is not men who make history at all. Traditionalists like Evola have learnt to recognise and accept the transcendental forces which are never taken into consideration by rationalist historians: "only an obsolete 'historicism' can be so presumptuous to reduce everything to a linear development." Indeed, both Marxism and Christianity adopt this method and the cyclical nature of the universe is therefore ignored.

## 8. CHOICE OF TRADITIONS

Whilst the word "tradition" is used to describe Evola's cosmological stance against the modern world (and that of certain other Traditionalists like Guenon, Nasr and Schuon), he also accepts that during certain key periods of his existence man has often used a series of more commonly known traditions in

order to act as a unifying force. These forms of tradition relate to specific "suggestions and catchphrases" which are used to revitalise or regenerate a civilisation, although they can often assume a very "non-traditional" form. Using the example of Italy, Evola points out that professional subversives from the ranks of liberalism, communism and Freemasonry have distorted certain words to ensure that they are equated with patriotism and national pride. So to disagree with their objectives, therefore, is to invoke accusations of "treachery" and "disloyalty." This makes it rather difficult for traditionalists to adopt traditions of their own without incurring the systematically-engineered confusion that sometimes accompanies them. Due to the fact that national traditions are associated with the historical realities of a country's particular development, attempting to place such terminology in its true context will inevitably lead to the adoption of the modern view that a country's tradition is based upon its whole history. This is why Evola recommends the deconstruction of the mythology which surrounds national patriotism itself. Italian pride consists in glorifying the Italian Commune, the Renaissance and the Risorgimento. French patriotism is based upon the principles of the French Revolution and the upheavals of 1848 which followed it. An atmosphere of petty-nationalism and xenophobia also fuels the flames of justification for the two destructive world wars which decimated Europe. Revolution and conflict is based on the struggle between diametrically-opposed ideas or economies, not upon racial or national antagonism. Evola suggests that Frederick I, for example, fought against the Italians because he saw it as his imperial duty and not because he simply happened to despise the Italian people or wished to subvert them to his will. Ironically enough, Frederick was committed to the re-establishment of Roman law and many Italians even fought alongside him. This completely demolishes the idea that the aforementioned episodes in Italian history were somehow "patriotic." The importance of struggle is characterised by the idea and not by the perceived national loyalties of those involved. Think of those Englishmen who fought in Hitler's SS, for example, or the Muslims who travelled from around the world in order to fight against the Americans in modern-day Afghanistan. The "traditions" of those who are committed to the obliteration of the ancient world, then, are highly questionable and - at the very least - intrinsically selective.

By charting the progress of the Italian Renaissance through to its logical conclusion, the so-called Enlightenment, Evola demonstrates that "in the same sense in which Renaissance Italy becomes the mother of geniuses and artists, it also becomes the forerunner of subversion. And just as the communes represent the first rebellion against an alleged political despotism, the civilisation of the Renaissance likewise represents the 'discovery of man' and of freedom of the spirit in the creative individual, as well as the principle of the intellectual emancipation that constitutes the 'basis of human progress'." The Risorgimento is not dissimilar in that it represented a paradoxical alliance between Masonry and patriotism: "The representatives of what at the time was still traditional Europe regarded liberalism and Mazzinianism in the same way as today's liberal and democratic parties regard communism; the truth is that the subversive intentions of the former were not much different from the latter's, the main difference being that liberalism and Mazzinianism employed the national and patriotic myth at the early stages of the disintegrating action." The Risorgimento, therefore, was a pseudo-tradition and at the very root of its secret machinations lay the destruction of Tradition itself. The Carbonari was not fighting "Austria" at all, it was engaged in a bitter attempt to topple the Austrian dynasty and, thus, one of the final vestiges of Tradition in Europe. But this is not to suggest that the House of Austria had an impeccable track record. On the contrary, along with Russia and Germany its primary importance lay in opposing the rise of liberalism and modernism. This is demonstrated by the spirit of unity which permeates a letter sent to Wilhelm I by Bismarck in 1887: "The struggle today is not so much between Russians, Germans, Italians, and French, but rather between revolution and monarchy. The Revolution has conquered France, affected England, and is strong in Italy and in Spain. There are only three emperors who can oppose it . . . An eventual future war will have less the character of a war between governments, but more so that of a war of the red flag against the elements of order and preservation."

Beneath the surface of all dynasties, churches and governments, of course, lie the denizens of the single idea and the common struggle. A contemporary example on a far smaller scale, perhaps, is the tactical support offered by Alexander Dugin's Eurasianists to Vladimir Putin's government. The main point of this chapter, however, is the undermining of the popular fantasies which surround national "traditions." Once we can stop focusing on the kind of nationalism served up by the historicists, therefore, it will be easier to accept the validity of an Idea.

## 9. MILITARY STYLE - -MILITARISM- - WAR

Evola tells us that militarism is the enemy of democracy. This divergence of beliefs came about as soon as economics had replaced things like Prussianism and the Order of Teutonic Knights. Modern democracy, having originated in England, has led to the rise of a society in which "the primary element is the bourgeois type and the bourgeois life during times of peace; such a life is dominated by the physical concern for safety, well-being, and material wealth, with the cultivation of letters and the arts serving as a decorative frame." It is the bourgeoisie who are presently in control of the State and, despite the absence of a militaristic spirit in modern society, whenever an "international crisis" looms on the horizon they have no qualms about using militaristic techniques in order to advance their own interests. This is precisely the same form of shameless hypocrisy which usually regards warfare as "something materialistic and soulless." But Evola makes a distinction between the soldier and the warrior. Indeed, whilst the former is a paid mercenary who sees warfare purely as a means of self-enrichment, the latter is a specific aristocratic caste which is altogether superior to the bourgeoisie. In the present atmosphere soldiers are used to maintain "the peace," although in reality capitalism uses its Establishment shock-troops to crush its opponents and maintain its own position on the economic ladder. This means that the mercenary is employed by the merchant class, rather than a warrior caste "with its own spirituality, values, and ethics" playing an active role in the nature of the State. But Evola is not suggesting that "the military must manage the affairs of the State . . . but rather that virtues, disciplines, and feelings of a military type acquire pre-eminence and a superior dignity over everything that is of a bourgeois type." Furthermore, he does not believe in the control of one's everyday affairs by a military clique: "Love for hierarchy; relationships of obedience and command; courage; feelings of honour and loyalty; specific forms of active impersonality capable of producing anonymous sacrifice; frank and open relationships from man to man, from one comrade to another, from leader to follower - all these are the characteristic living values that are predominant in the aforementioned view." Evola follows this up by explaining that external warfare compliments that occurring within the self. This is the spiritual battle which is waged by the individual in defiance of his own shortcomings, described by Evola in *Revolt Against the Modern World* as the "big holy war" and the "little holy war"; a jihad which is fought upon two fronts. This also has important similarities to the Hermetic concept "as above, so below." War against one's enemies is a macrocosm of that taking place within the individual. For the man who is born to be a warrior, this kind of asceticism becomes a way of life. It is not a form of mindless violence in which death and destruction become the central pillars of one's very existence, it is "the calm, conscious, and planned development of the inner being and a code of ethics; love of distance; hierarchy; order; the faculty of subordinating the emotional and individualistic element of one's self to higher goals and principles, especially in the name of honour and beauty." Herein lies the difference between the soldier and the warrior.

The decline of the warrior ethos, according to Evola, is due to the fact that democracies have diminished the importance of the political in favour of the social. Previously, of course, Evola had referred to the Mannerbund or all-male fraternity. Without this vital heroic element, the modern State has inevitably become very inferior when compared to those of the past like Sparta. Western society is

now in the hands of the bourgeoisie and lacks that key ingredient of atmospheric tension which acts as a safeguard against complacency and deterioration. Evola is not implying that warfare and struggle are eternal concepts, but simply that the individual must seek out the active life in opposition to the pacifism and decay that comes with "peace." Therefore "the nations in which such premises are sufficiently realised will be not only the ones better prepared for war, but also the ones in which war will acquire a higher meaning." By sheer contrast, the democracies now claim to be fighting against war itself and use a force of their own in a purely defensive capacity. The ranks of those who fight however, are filled not with the bourgeoisie but with the paid mercenaries of the army and police. These soldiers do not fight for an idea or a higher principle, but for "material well-being, economic prosperity, a comfortable and conformist existence based on one's work, productivity, sports, movies, and sexuality." Modern warfare is also based upon the war of the machine, rather than on the physical or spiritual combat of warriors. This leads to a complex and technological manifestation of the heroic ideal, rather than offering the prospective warrior a just cause for which to fight. Evola attacks the manipulative propaganda and lies which have been used throughout the process of modern warfare, something which leads to the relativisation and systematic repackaging of the "cause" itself. But what does Evola say about the attitude and motivation of the true warrior?: "A warrior tradition and a pure military tradition do not have hatred as the basis of war. The need to fight and even to exterminate another people may be acknowledged, but this does not entail hatred, anger, animosity, and contempt for the enemy. All these feelings, for a true soldier, are degrading: in order to fight he need not be motivated by such lowly feelings, nor be energised by propaganda, smoky rhetoric and lies." These elements have only come to the fore since the natural warrior caste was replaced by an army of enlisted mercenaries drawn from the ranks of society at large. Mussolini once wrote about the spirit of the trenches in which class divisions were eradicated in the name of a common cause, but Evola believes that today the masses have to be deceived before they will agree to fight for the ruling class. Modern conflicts are irrational, too, in that they are artificially constructed in order to justify the ever-increasing expansion of capitalism. The wars of the past were quite different, in that they had a sovereign quality as the necessary determining force for the deployment of what Evola describes as "[c]learly defined goals." Perhaps the antithesis of the just war is the very irrationalism which lies at the core of the ultimate form of modern combat we know today as nuclear war.

## 10. TRADITION - CATHOLICISM - Ghibellinism

Catholicism is perceived by many to be the pinnacle of Tradition. Evola accepts that it contains many Traditional aspects, but goes on to say that in order to be seen as a legitimate form of authority and sovereignty it must become fully integrated within the sphere of Tradition itself. Catholicism alone is inadequate and represents only a minimal current of a far wider Tradition. Here, Evola opts to discuss the implications of this fact in both a political and contemporary context, despite using examples from the past.

Religion falls into various categories and cannot match the supreme and unitary nature of Tradition. In fact religion is simply an exoteric version of a deeper, esoteric undercurrent. Christianity, for example, panders to the masses, whilst Tradition is reserved for the spiritual elite: "In effect, nobody with a higher education can really believe in the axiom 'There is no salvation outside the Church' (nulla salus extra ecclesiam), meaning the great civilisations that have preceded Christianity (the still-existing millennia-old non-European traditions, such as Buddhism and Hinduism, and even relatively recent ones such as Islam) have not known the supernatural or the sacred, but only distorted images and obscure 'prefigurations' and that they amount to mere 'paganism', polytheism, and 'natural mysticism'." This statement would undoubtedly arouse in the more "traditional" Catholic a feeling of revulsion and

anger, perhaps even accusations of "ecumenicalism." However, Evola is not advocating the unification of all religions, but the acceptance that there is a common Tradition which lies in each. He goes on to say that for a Catholic "to persist in the sectarian and dogmatic exclusivism about this matter would amount to being in the same predicament of one who wished to defend the views of physics and astronomy found in the Old Testament, which have been made obsolete by the current state of knowledge on these matters." Catholicism, then, is only "traditional" in the sense that certain aspects tend to accord with Tradition itself. The same can be said of Islam or Judaism.

We now turn our attention to the centuries-old debate concerning Catholicism and Ghibellinism. The Ghibellines (like their Guelph rivals) were a political force in northern and central Italy between the twelfth and fifteenth centuries. These opposing groups began in Germany as partisans in a struggle for the throne of the Holy Roman Empire between two dynastic houses: the Welfs on the one hand (who were dukes of Saxony and Bavaria), and the Hohenstaufens on the other (who were rulers of Swabia). During the thirteenth century the Welf leader, Otto of Brunswick, was involved in a fratricidal struggle for the imperial crown against Frederick II of Hohenstaufen, and the all-German battle soon moved south to Italy. The name Guelph is derived from Welf, whilst Ghibelline is a corruption of Waiblingen, an area of land belonging to the emperors of Hohenstaufen. According to the Ghibelline view of the world, as elucidated by Evola, "the Empire was an institution of supernatural origin and character, like the Church. It had its own sacred nature, just as, during the Middle Ages, the dignity of the kings themselves had an almost priestly nature (kingship being established through a rite that differed only in minor detail from Episcopal ordination). On this basis, the Ghibelline emperors - who were the representatives of a universal and supranational idea, embodying a *lex animata in terris* (a living law on earth) - opposed the hegemonic claims of the clergy and claimed to have only God above themselves." The struggle between the Ghibellines and the clergy is usually discussed in political terms, but was actually a form of spiritual combat waged at the very highest level. Humanity, during the medieval period, was caught between two distinct paths: action and contemplation. Evola tells us that this relates to the Empire and the Church respectively: "Ghibellinism more or less claimed that through the view of earthly life as discipline, militia, and service, the individual can be led beyond himself and reach the supernatural culmination of human personality through action and under the aegis of the Empire. This was related to the character of a non-naturalistic but 'providential' institution acknowledged in the Empire; knighthood and the great knightly Orders stood in relation to the empire in the same way in which the clergy and the ascetic Orders stood in relation to the Church." This sounds like an analogy of the political soldier, but Evola is keen to demonstrate that such Orders "were based on an idea that was less political than ethical-spiritual, and partially even ascetic, according to an asceticism that was not cloistered and contemplative, but rather of a warrior type. In this last regard, the most typical example was constituted by the Order of Knights Templar, and in part by the Order of the Teutonic Knights." This subject is discussed at length in *Evola's Revolt Against The Modern World*, during which the author explained how the Emperor waged a calculated holy war against the pro-Guelphist clergy and how even the Crusades became an active consolidation of the imperial idea; just as the Empire had been in times of peace. The Ghibellines, he said, were engaged in an occult struggle "against papal Rome that was waged by Rome itself" (p.300). Indeed, the head of the Church is known as *pontifex maximus*; a title which is taken directly from the leaders of early Rome. Indeed, according to Evola the Emperor Julian opposed Christianity due to its "upholding of an anarchical doctrine; with the excuse of paying homage to God alone, they refused to give him homage in the person of those who, as legitimate leaders of men, were his representatives on earth and drew from him the principle of their power. This, according to Celsus, was an example of impiety."

Evola's whole point is that in ancient times the religious clergy were answerable to the Emperor himself; not simply from a political perspective, but also in a theological capacity: "It was only during



the Middle Ages that the priest nourished the ambition, not of being king, but of being the one to whom kings are subject. At that time, Ghibellinism arose as a reaction, and the rivalry was rekindled, the new reference point now being the authority and the right reclaimed by the Holy Roman Empire." But this does not presuppose that religion must be at the service of the State like those of "a Masonic, anti-clerical character," on the contrary, this leads to totalitarianism and the Concordats which were conveniently arranged in both Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy. The separation of the spiritual and political spheres is epitomised by the Christian maxim "render unto Caesar what is Caesar-s and unto God what is God-s," something which was quite unknown in ancient times. Needless to say, throughout history the Catholic Church has played a very large role in secular affairs by using politics as a mere wing of the religious establishment. Although in the later Middle Ages the Church did recognise the divine right of kings, Evola considers these "atheistic" monarchs to have been at the forefront of the liberal ideas which later found expression in the French Revolution of 1789. Once the State had vacated the domain of the spirit and become secular, however, it turned against the Church. But this was different to the rebellion of the Ghibellines, because this current "did not pursue the subjection of spiritual authority to temporal powers, but rather upheld, vis-à-vis the exclusivist claim of the Church, a value and a right for the State, different from those that are proper to an organisation with a merely human and material character." However, lest one wrongly imagine that Evola somehow wishes to revive the Ghibelline struggle against the Church, the author carefully points out that the key point is to resist the secular State in all its forms. Only in this way can politics be ascribed to a higher level.

Catholicism today is in great decline. Not least because it is always forced to compromise with the prevailing ideologies among which it finds itself. Liberalism is gradually eroding the last vestiges of Catholic tradition in the same way that it is eating away at the edifice of Tradition in general. The likes of the Protestant Reformation and Vatican II have taken their toll, and we now see modernist popes tolerating bastardised currents like Liberation Theology, supporting the burgeoning New World Order and kneeling before the might of International Zionism. Evola tells us that "the decline of the modern Church is undeniable because she gives to social and moral concerns a greater weight that what pertains to the supernatural life, to asceticism, and to contemplation, which are essential reference points of religiosity." It is certainly not fulfilling any kind of meaningful role, either: "For all practical purposes, the main concerns of Catholicism today seem to turn it into a petty bourgeois moralism that shuns sexuality and upholds virtue, or an inadequate paternalistic welfare system. In these times of crisis and emerging brutal forces, the Christian faith should devote itself to very different tasks." In the medieval period the Church possessed a more traditional character, but only due to the fact that it had appropriated so many Classical elements and, by way of Aristotle, lashed them firmly to the theological mast being constructed by Thomas Aquinas during the thirteenth century. Catholicism, however, will never reconcile itself with the problem of how to deal with politics and the State because it relies upon separation and dualism. Tradition, on the other hand, is integralist and unitary.

Evola notes that certain individuals and groups have sought to incorporate the more traditional aspects of Catholicism within the broader and far more encompassing sphere of Tradition itself. Evola's French philosophical counterpart, Rene Guenon, for example. Catholics, however, are far too dogmatic and would merely seek to make Tradition "conform" to their own spiritual weltanschauung. This, says Evola, is "placing the universal at the service of the particular." Furthermore, of course, the anti-modernists who are organised in groups such as The Society of St. Pius X and the Sedavacantist fraternity do not speak with the full weight and authority of the Church. They are, therefore, powerless because "the direction of the Church is a descending and anti-traditional one, consisting of modernisation and coming to terms with the modern world, democracy, socialism, progressivism, and everything else. Therefore, these individuals are not authorised to speak in the name of Catholicism, which ignores them, and should not try to attribute to Catholicism a dignity the latter spurns." Evola

suggests that because the Church is so inadequate, it should be abandoned and left to its ultimate doom. He concludes by reiterating the fact that a State which does not have a spiritual dimension is not a State at all. The only way forward, he argues, is to "begin from a pure idea, without the basis of a proximate historical reference" and await the actualisation of the Traditional current.

## 11. REALISM - COMMUNISM - ANTI-BOURGEOISIE

Intellectuals are often attracted to communism because it claims to be anti-bourgeois, despite communism itself claiming to despise the intellectual for his bourgeois origins. According to Evola, however, this is misleading and such people are deluding themselves. Evola also accepts that the word "bourgeois" relates to far more than economics; something representing a specific cultural niche in which everything is "empty, decadent, and corrupt." The role of the traditionalist must be to overcome these materialist concepts. Indeed, the perennial attraction of communism indicates that it would be a big mistake to combat Marxist values with a "bourgeois mentality and spirit, with its conformism, psychological and romantic appendices, moralism, and concerns for a petty, safe existence in which a fundamental materialism finds its compensation in sentimentality and the rhetoric of the great humanitarian and democratic worlds - all this has only an artificial, peripheral, and precarious life." This is why conservatism has always been so ineffective, and why the adoption of a true anti-bourgeois spirit is so essential in the ongoing replenishment of Tradition. For Evola, the solution lies in realism.

In its efforts to overcome the unreality of bourgeois society, Marxism simply relegates the individual to an even lower level. This results in the systematic spawning of homo economicus, a process in which "we go toward what is below rather than above the person." It represents a collective reduction of the human type, rather than a raising of the individual consciousness. So how does Evola's realism differ from the kind of "neo-realism" advocated by left-wing philosophers such as Sartre? The latter, of course, brings human existence into line with transient concepts such as psychoanalysis. This is achieved by creating a kind of psycho-collectivisation, whereby man's various personality traits are said to originate from below. Evola, on the other hand, accepts "that existence acquires a meaning only when it is inspired by something beyond itself." Therefore the political, economic and psychological aspects of Marxism are identical and adhere to a decidedly false sense of "realism."

Given the confusion which has been generated by the Marxists and their misleading interpretation of "realism," perhaps another solution is needed to counteract the unreality of the bourgeoisie; one which seeks to go higher, rather than lower? Evola explains: "It is possible to keep a distance from everything that has only a human and especially subjectivist character; to feel contempt for bourgeois conformism and its petty selfishness and moralism; to embody the style of an impersonal activity; to prefer what is essential and real in a higher sense, free from the trappings of sentimentalism and from pseudo-intellectual super-structures - and yet all this must be done by remaining upright, feeling the presence in life of that which leads beyond life, drawing from it precise norms of behaviour and action." This means that a new breed of individuals must bear the task of combining strong anti-Marxism with a committed opposition to bourgeois society: "Lenin himself said that a proletarian, left to himself, tends to become a bourgeois." It is therefore not necessary to become a communist in order to reject the trappings of conformity and sterility, although the shortcomings of Fascism and its well-documented reliance upon the bourgeoisie suggests that it, too, is incapable of providing real solutions to the problem. Evola also notes that "[e]ven those who call themselves monarchists can only conceive of a bourgeois king."

I have already discussed how communists harbour an ironic grudge towards the intellectual, but Evola demonstrates that the only answer to the intellectual/anti-intellectual debate is to put forward a third option: the *Weltanschauung*, or worldview. This is "based not on books, but on an inner form and a sensibility endowed with an innate, rather than acquired, character." In other words, a mentality which does not remain fixed in the mind or submerged in theories, but realised in a more practical sense through the deployment of the will. Thought alone is incapable of taking on a life of its own or significantly changing anything. Here we return to the traditional idea of an organic civilisation which is expressed not by culture, but through a deeper understanding of eternal values. Thus, intellectualism and culture are merely used to express the more fundamental worldview, not designed to evolve into determining characteristics of humanity in their own right: "this is sheer illusion: never before as in modern times was there such a number of men who are spiritually formless, and thus open to any suggestion and ideological intoxication, so as to become dominated by psychic currents (without being aware of it in the least) and of manipulations belonging to the intellectual, political, and social climate in which they live." The worldview of which Evola speaks, of course, is Tradition. This represents the basic impetus which must beat firmly within the heart of all those who wish to bring to an end the contaminating era of the bourgeoisie.