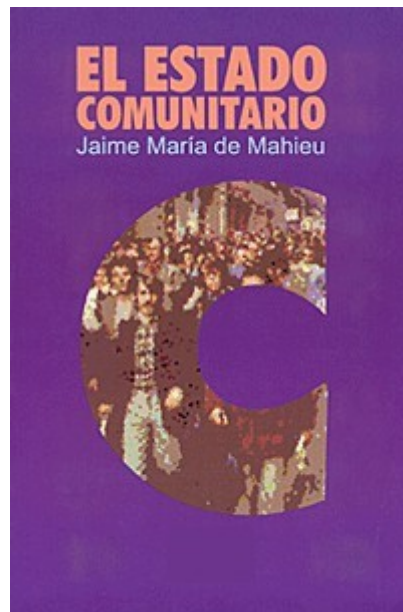


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THE COMMUNITY STATE



INDEX

I. THE STATE, COMMUNITY BODY

1. Natural inequality
2. Command, a consequence of natural inequality
3. Command, a social necessity
4. The origin of command: the will to power
5. The origin of obedience: the need to be commanded
6. The hierarchical organic community
7. Anarchist utopia
8. The State
9. The State, a communal body
10. The State, organ of command
11. The State, organ of conscience
12. The State, a factor of political order

II. THE STATE, PRODUCT AND FACTOR OF HISTORY

13. The duration of the community
14. The State, a product of history
15. The State, interpreter of history
16. The State, creator of history
17. The State, embodied guiding intention of the Community
18. The State, embodied community purpose
19. The State, factor of community continuity
20. The State, factor of community rhythm
21. The State, agent of the Community's will to be
22. The State, agent of the Community's will to power

23. The legitimacy of the State

III. STRUCTURE OF THE STATE

24. The functional organisation of the State

25. The government

26. The administration

27. The ruling minority

28. The aristocratic ruling minority

29. The technocratic ruling minority

30. The oligarchic ruling minority

31. The revolutionary ruling minority

32. The functional ruling class

33. The usurping ruling class

34. Political stratification and qualitative stratification

35. The political organisation of the Community by the State

IV. DYNAMICS OF THE STATE

36. Social antagonisms

37. The State, organ of community synthesis

38. The social order

39. The State, a requirement of dialectical duration

40. The State, the objective of social forces

41. The revolutionary crisis

42. The revolution

43. Community spirit of the revolution

44. Process of the revolution

45. Dynamics of social stratification

46. Selfishness and the community function of the state

47. Dirigisme and statism

V. SOVEREIGNTY OF THE STATE

48. The state, de facto sovereign

49. Sovereignty and legitimacy

50. The historical framework of sovereignty

51. The myth of sovereignty

52. The divine right

53. Popular sovereignty: the political contract

54. Popular sovereignty: the General Will

55. Historical sovereignty

56. Historical law and natural law

57. Historical law and legislative law

58. Authority and freedoms

59. General interest and particular interests

60. The individual, a social product

61. The raison d'état

VI. STATE INSTITUTIONS

62. The importance of institutions

63. Institutions and ideologies

64. Theoretical democracy

65. Real democracy

66. The party system

67. The separation of powers

68. Monarchy

69. Hereditary monarchy

70. Substitutes for the hereditary monarchy

71. The principle of command

I. THE STATE, COMMUNITY BODY

1. Natural inequality

Man is not a scheme drawn up by some master of abstraction. He is a complex individual, made of matter and immanent organising intelligence, who develops at his own pace in his environment, which conditions him but within which he manifests his autonomy. He possesses a certain number of biopsychic characteristics that come from the actualisation of potential possibilities received from his parents.

This actualisation is not automatic. Throughout their existence, human beings choose at every moment, from among their various theoretically achievable virtualities, the one that best allows them to adapt to their living conditions. They therefore renounce the innumerable possibilities that, under other circumstances, they would have actualised but which their choice definitively excludes. It is worth noting that even if all human beings received an identical hereditary endowment at the moment of their conception, their history would be enough to differentiate them by requiring each of them to make successive choices, conditioned by the individually variable pressure of the environment. Not only would certain characteristics be actualised in some and not in others, but even those that are specific, that is, common to all human beings, would be taken to extremes in some, while in others they would only develop to the minimum degree compatible with life. Even in the hypothesis of original equality, the cosmic and social environment would impose variations on individuals that would create inequalities. But such a hypothesis is not defensible.

Not all men are born with the same abilities. This is an immediately observable fact, which is not surprising if we consider that each person's hereditary endowment is the product of a long previous evolution of the species, which has differentiated itself into races and lineages. This is without mentioning the still largely unknown process of germ formation, through which the genes transmitted by the father and mother are selected and combined in a way that appears arbitrary and therefore unpredictable. Human beings are unequal, both because of the virtual characteristics they receive at the moment of conception and because of the historical evolution that forces them to realise only a variable part of their potential. Some are strong, intelligent, artistic, courageous. But others are weak, stupid, philistine, cowardly. They are born male and female, and each sex not only possesses physiological and mental peculiarities, but also imposes its own colouring on the set of individual characteristics.

Thus, sexual specialisation constitutes a factor of inequality that is highlighted by the basic fact of the organic union of men and women. Finally, age intervenes to create an undisputed qualitative hierarchy among human beings.

Perhaps the considerations we have just outlined seem untimely at the beginning of a study of political science. They are indispensable, however. Life and, consequently, the organisation of human communities are based on the social nature of the beings that compose them in the final analysis, and we cannot study that nature independently of the individual groups, of which it is only one aspect. Men are not equal. Any social explanation that did not take such a fundamental fact into account would be inaccurate. Any political construct that disregarded it would be nothing more than a utopia.

2. Command, a consequence of natural inequality

It is because they are unaware of this basic reality that egalitarian theorists are unable to explain a phenomenon that coexists with every kind of society, command, considering it a consequence of social organisation when, on the contrary, it is the social consequence of the natural inequality of men.

If, in fact, all members of a social group are equal, why do some command and others obey? The only possible answer is that social hierarchy is of contractual origin, and that command thus depends on the willingness of subordinates to obey. But such an explanation is highly unsatisfactory, since it ignores the easily verifiable fact that command arises spontaneously as soon as several human beings form a group, even and especially when some of them are incapable of making personal decisions. We would therefore have to admit that tacit electioneering is inherent in human nature.

But to reject such a somewhat far-fetched hypothesis, it suffices to examine the basic social group par excellence: the family. Not only are the individuals who comprise it distinct and unequal, but the social relations between them are also based precisely on their difference and inequality. In the sexual union that forms the basis of the family group, men and women have different functional roles that stem from their respective biopsychic natures. Due to their more advanced development, both are destined to command the child, who clearly does not choose his or her parents nor submit to their authority of his or her own free will.

In the family, therefore, hierarchy is a natural phenomenon. Now, the social instinct is nothing more than the extension of the sexual instinct through hereditary adaptation to group life, and therefore includes the notion of authority. Not only is man incorporated from birth into a hierarchical society that imposes itself on him, but he also has the *subconscious* awareness that his place in it depends on his value in relation to that of the other individuals united with him by common life. He may, of course, underestimate himself or, on the contrary, believe himself to be superior to his true worth. But even such an error of judgement does not call into question the principle of command, which is inseparable from social man because it is immanent in him.

That is why we see contractual associations modelled on natural groups, appointing a president as a first step. It is in this *authoritarian* social instinct that we must seek the explanation for the phenomenon of civil obedience, which has preoccupied so many sociologists. If a few posters are enough to make an entire town respond, sometimes reluctantly, to the call to mobilise, a demand to pay taxes that they consider unfair or excessive, and even an order from some anonymous office to change the traffic flow in an entire country on the same day at the same time, it is not so much because citizens fear coercion that their numbers would render ineffective, but because each one subconsciously feels respect for authority, even when they dispute the choice of who exercises it.

All this does not mean that Nietzsche's classification of human beings into masters and slaves is accurate in the social sphere. On the contrary, it dangerously simplifies reality. Social individuals are all, but in varying proportions, both masters and slaves, and it is precisely these proportions that, in natural society, determine each person's place.

3. Command, a social necessity

Command therefore stems from the inequality of individuals and from the social instinct that derives its hierarchical character from it, which means that it constitutes a natural factor of social order.

Its exercise can be regulated *a posteriori*, and even attributed according to this or that procedure, at least in some cases where nature does not assert itself through an indisputable designation; it cannot be denied in principle or made dependent on anything other than original inequality. Inherent in the very essence of human beings, command is therefore indispensable to all social life.

Let us think for a moment about what would happen in a family deprived of all authority. Sexual union would not be possible, since it is organically based on male supremacy. The child, supposing it were born by some miracle, would not survive, since, without even mentioning its education, its upbringing presupposes subordination. Moreover, one need only look at the results in the family of the contemporary weakening of marital and paternal authority to get an idea of what its outright disappearance would produce in the mere domain of common life: the group would irretrievably disintegrate or, at the very least, be incapable of lasting collective activity. Command is therefore, here, even independently of biological relationships, a factor of coherence and stability.

Now, the family is the smallest social group in terms of numbers, the one within which it is easiest to conceive of harmony without coercion, based on common feelings and interests, at least if we arbitrarily disregard its functional role in procreation, which in all cases requires a fundamental hierarchy. But if we consider a group that cannot be limited to the coexistence of its members because common activity is its only justification, the need for command becomes absolute. Without it, a crew of labourers could not lay a rail, dig a trench, or even build a house, because individual efforts must be directed and synchronised. Without it, a workshop would work in a vacuum and would soon come to a standstill. Without it, a military unit would lose its effectiveness and be destroyed. Without it, an academy or a sports club, typical contractual associations, would be incapable of the slightest collective work.

Deprived of leadership, a village would descend into chaos. Rivalries would prevail over common interests, and the law of the jungle would soon govern relations between families. Even more so, a larger territorial community would dissolve into civil war. History teaches us, to the point of obviousness, that social order only prevails where there is leadership, at the level of leadership.

The early Middle Ages knew no effective and constant authority other than that of the feudal lord: order reigned in the village, and disorder between villages. Then, as the process of concentration, that is, of extension, of the field of command took place, order reached the province and the dynastic community, and disorder reigned only between provinces and, later, between dynastic communities. In the economic sphere, we can observe a reverse process. When the authority of the guilds disappeared, command no longer existed except at the level of the enterprise, and free competition – also the law of the jungle – alone regulated the exchange of goods.

Always and everywhere, command is a social necessity. The most miserable horde demands a leader. The most civilised empire only survives as long as it has a central power. There are no exceptions.

4. The origin of command: the desire for social power

On the one hand, there is inequality among the individuals who form the human 'raw material' of any social group and, on the other, the need for one or more of these individuals to command the others. The problem seems easy to solve without resorting to any metaphysics. It boils down to establishing a certain relationship between individual biopsychic reality and social demands. The men most capable of leading a given community will be in charge of command functions.

Unfortunately, the machine for discovering leaders has not yet been invented, and it seems unlikely that such an instrument will ever see the light of day. For this reason, the indispensable selection process is too often distorted, as we shall see in Chapter VI, by flawed institutional systems. It does not occur spontaneously, but only in the few historical moments when a new society is formed without stable foundations; however, analysis of the process of hierarchisation that develops at such times is particularly revealing of the real origin of leadership.

Let us take two examples. First, the early Middle Ages in Europe. The Roman hierarchy had collapsed. The local authorities that had managed to resist the disintegration of the Empire belonged to the civil and religious orders. They were therefore unable to fulfil their role effectively when anarchy left the field open to barbarian tribes and bands of robbers. This is why we see, throughout the West, strong and daring men, accustomed to the use of arms, asserting themselves, placing themselves at the head of the communities they protect, and around whom communities regroup in search of protection, thus creating the new military-based hierarchy of feudalism. They are not always the most intelligent or the most honest, but those who possess the gift of command and the peculiar qualities demanded by the momentary conditions of social existence.

Closer to home, the conquest and colonisation of the American *frontier* in the last century shows us an identical spectacle. From the caravans that set out into the desert and have to defend themselves from the Indians, leaders emerge who are capable of imposing themselves on rough men who only respect personal courage and of directing both discovery and war. As might be expected, they took the lion's share of the conquered lands and formed a ruling social class that still dominates in certain states and which, without the pressure of pre-existing American society, could have become a true landowning aristocracy.

In both cases, we see men of exceptional qualities, adapted to the circumstances, imposing themselves, without any kind of appointment, on their peers and seizing command, sometimes not without resistance, rivalry and struggle. There is, therefore, not simply superiority in them, but also a will to social power that marks the choice between the two paths open to the superior man: confinement within himself or in a small group – family or convent – and the exaltation of his personality in identification with his social environment.

The leader is not Nietzsche's superman, disdainful of the society into which he was born and without which, whether he knows it or not, he could not live, but rather the leader integrated into the group or community that he embodies and directs. Command is not, for him, a gift from Heaven or a mission entrusted to him, but a means of fully affirming his personality in the inner synthesis of his personal dynamism and social instinct. He fulfils himself fully in the role he imposes on himself and in which he imposes himself on others, even when asked to accept it. He needs command and claims it as a right.

5. The origin of obedience: the need to be commanded

Such a need to command can obviously only be satisfied if there is obedience in return. It is not, let us repeat, that men are divided into two categories, one of leaders and the other of passive individuals. Even in dominant races, there are very few integral and exclusive leaders. The demand for supreme authority stems not only from the gift of command and social ambition, but also from a set of exceptional qualities. Likewise, in a healthy society, those who are purely receptive, incapable of any authority over their fellow men or, why not, over animals, and who shun all command, constitute a tiny minority of abnormal individuals.

The separation is not between masters and slaves, but between men who, whatever their hierarchy and function, cannot bear or find it difficult to bear being commanded and always and everywhere seek to assert themselves in personal initiative and responsibility, and the mass of those whom their nature predestines to integrate into a pre-established hierarchy and to play a subordinate role in it, then to obey and command at the same time and in varying proportions depending on the individual. Obedience annoys the former. The latter seek it outside the limited field in which their capacity for command applies.

Obedience can therefore be the product of force of circumstance, or of force pure and simple, when a leader must submit, against his will, to orders that he does not recognise as valid for himself, or when an ordinary man suffers irresistible pressure in the domain where he should be the master; but this is not its true nature, since, apart from accidental cases, it is not only accepted but also desired.

It suffices to consider the fundamental relationship of authority on which the order of the family group is based to see that conscience is only a secondary phenomenon here. Children sometimes rebel against their state of subordination. This does not make obedience any less indispensable for their development and even their survival. It is a necessity for them that stems from their relative inferiority. This is not only true for children. Any human being, whether conscious of their personal inadequacy or not, who is not capable of fully directing themselves and acting on their social environment in order to adapt it so as not to be forced to adapt to it, only fulfils themselves to the extent that a leader compensates for their shortcomings by charting the path to follow and, when necessary, forcing them to respect it.

The need to command is therefore matched by the need to be commanded, which is no less natural since both express both biopsychic realities and the social consequences of their comparison.

Obedience is therefore not at all an effect of social life. It does not arise, in principle, from oppression or voluntary alienation by contract, even if, in this or that case, this is what actually happens. It is simply the other side of the hierarchy inherent in the social nature of man, a nature which is the cause of social organisation. In other words, it does not in any way consist of a reduction, for the benefit of the leader, of the autonomy of the relatively weak, but rather conditions its affirmation.

Obedience is a more inescapable right than that which arises from the need to command. A leader who is ignored or rejected may indeed withdraw into himself, allowing his personal strength to isolate him to some extent from his social environment, while the weak are powerless outside the frameworks that guide and protect them. Without a leader, children cannot live, workers cannot produce, and soldiers cannot fight. The Vendean peasants were driven by force

force the liberal nobles who did not want to lead them, and the Italian workers who occupied the factories after the First World War kidnapped technicians from the streets, without whom it was impossible for them to work. Both groups instinctively claimed their right to be commanded, even though they were totally incapable of formulating it. Even in the chaos of civil war and social war, the need for leaders was imperative.

6. The hierarchical organic community

If the social instinct requires men to live in groups, it is command, necessary both to those who exercise it and to those who obey, that gives these groups the hierarchical structure indispensable to their functioning.

The natural character of the order that proceeds from it is clearly perceptible in the family, since its foundations here are biological, and it is as inconceivable to modify the relationship between man and woman, which establishes sexual union, as it is to attribute any authority to children over their parents. It is slightly less evident in the workshop, the economic social cell, in the parish or in the military company, because in these groups the dual necessity we have analysed above is affirmed at a primary level that makes it immediately noticeable.

However, outside of patriarchal society, in which all social activities are carried out within a single, multifaceted group, human beings are not subject only to the hierarchy of the group or groups to which they belong. They live within a community, that is, a complex of biological, economic, religious, ethnic, territorial, and other groups, each of which has its own order that is to some extent opposed to that of the others, yet they remain united by bonds of solidarity that are stronger than their antagonisms. More precisely, the community is presented as a pyramid of federations whose base is made up of natural groups and associations, both of which can only be reduced to the individuals who compose them and for whom they represent the primary social reality.

Man is a member of a family, a workshop, a parish, a sports club. But families grouped together in a certain territory form a municipality; several juxtaposed municipalities form a province; several provinces form a nation. And the same is true, or should be true, of other groups with a common function. At the different levels of such a pyramidal organisation, command exists: this is a fact of observation and also an understandable necessity.

If authority is an indispensable factor of order in the family, whose members are already united by fleshly solidarity, it must be affirmed even more so in groups that do not possess immanent unity and whose elements are only associated by external ties, even when their existence depends on them.

The federal order limits, in the common interest, the autonomy of basic groups, and all the more so the larger the complexes it encompasses. For this very reason, it provokes defensive reactions that must be neutralised. Federal authority is more distant and less tangible than that which is asserted within the smallest group. It must therefore impose itself with greater force the more debatable it is, if not in principle, at least in its current expression and in those who exercise it. Federated groups are not only destined to coexist, but also to collaborate, in the precise sense of the word, exactly like members of a family. It is not enough for them to limit each other's scope of action

action, as is the case in juxtaposed sovereign communities. Each must play its particular role within the social organism. Their respective functions are complementary. How could one conceive of harmonising so many diverse and interdependent activities without a hierarchical order, which implies command?

The organic community, by the very fact that it is made up of unequal individuals and groups, possesses the human factors of such an order. In it, as in every basic group, leaders seek to command and the passive desire to obey. Hierarchy therefore arises from a dual requirement of its social being and its individual *raw material*. It is not surprising that history offers us not a single example of a community without command.

7. The anarchist utopia

There have been theorists, however, who consider such command superfluous and parasitic.

For sociologists of the anarchist school, central authority is not only useless, but also harmful to the common existence of groups and individuals. It is nothing more than a tool in the hands of an oppressive minority, superimposed on community reality without ever forming part of it. Kropotkin, in this respect very different from the individualists, perfectly analyses the organic structure of society, but for him, hierarchy only has a *raison d'être* within groups and not between them. The anarchist community would thus be made up of a mosaic of small collectivities, which would automatically understand each other simply because of their common interests and natural solidarity. According to our author's favourite example, collaboration between autonomous groups would be as easy as that between railway companies on the same continent, which coordinate their various technical and commercial activities without any difficulty, even though there is no central authority above them.

For Marx and his disciples, power is nothing more than the dominating expression of an economic class, bourgeoisie or proletariat, and the socialist dictatorship, once internal and external resistance has been broken, will disappear to make way for a classless communist society in which the administration of things will replace command over people. Although he does not have such a clearly stated conception of natural social structure as Kropotkin and considers the extinction of community authority to be the conclusion of a long evolutionary process, Marx considers anarchic society not only desirable but also inevitable.

But it is clearly, in both cases, a utopia that stems from an unrepudiated encyclopaedic heritage: the belief in the natural goodness of man. Paradoxical as this may seem in Kropotkin, whose organic conception of society is entirely similar, except on the point at issue here, to that of Maurras, and Marx, who, in the economic field, reacts so violently against 17th-century liberalism, both remain imbued with the theories developed and used by the bourgeoisie in its effort to disintegrate the traditional community and seize power.

They reject, however, individualism and admit the natural character of society. Kropotkin also shows with surprising clarity the existence in man of an instinct for solidarity that is stronger than his selfish tendency to fight for life. But he refuses to see, as Marx does, that this instinct is expressed precisely through a hierarchical order. Egalitarians, they reject authority itself, or at least its legitimacy. Optimists, they believe that man will live peacefully in harmony not only with the members of his group, but also with neighbouring groups. They forget that the instinct of

solidarity only acts automatically within the limited framework to which the individual feels bound by an immediate collective life, and that in order to assert themselves within larger groups, they need to rely on the reality of a pre-established structure that cannot exist without command.

The history of the Middle Ages shows us an irrefutable example of the limits of spontaneous solidarity. In the chaos born of the barbarian invasions and the disintegration of the Roman Empire, communal groups withdrew into themselves, closely united around the military leaders that the needs of defence made indispensable. But they became locked in struggle with each other. The community did not survive the disappearance of the authority that made it real, despite everyone's interest in preserving it.

8. The State

If we give the term community its true meaning, which we believe to be that of an autonomous social collective, it would be more accurate to say that, in the case we have just cited, the feudal community replaced the imperial community due to the very fact that command had passed from the imperial to the feudal level. What makes a community is therefore not collective life, the exchange of services, the division of labour or common interests – which are mere consequences – but self-sufficiency.

Whatever factors may otherwise favour its formation and existence, the community is defined by the more or less extensive reach of central power. The patriarchal family is a community, not because it is self-sufficient, but because it recognises no authority other than that of the father. The Roman Empire was a community because the peoples it encompassed were subject to a common supreme power.

In the patriarchal family, however, community authority is not differentiated, since the father rules in all areas by virtue of his biological nature and function. But as soon as we consider a complex community, supreme power takes on a peculiar character. It overlaps and imposes itself on the brute and immediate power of the heads of families, whose scope of application it limits. It becomes specialised and responds to a perfectly determined social function, on whose performance the common life of the subordinate groups depends. It then becomes properly political, and the *social element* – we cannot yet define it more precisely – that exercises it takes the name of the state.

Here, then, we are faced with the object of our study, and we can now consider the basic facts of the problem, since everything we have said about command in general applies to command in particular, whose expression is the state.

We already know from our previous analyses that the state itself is not the result of a pact between free and equal beings, not even between the natural groups it federates, or between their leaders. On the contrary, it arises from the need for central command of the community to which it is inherent. And when we say that it arises, we do not mean at all that it arises within a pre-existing community, since there is no community without command, and therefore without a state, but simply that it asserts itself at the same time as the community to which it corresponds, whether it arises from the expansion of the state of a smaller previous community or is created together with the new community.

Perhaps it will be objected that history presents us with more than one example of a state constituted by a formal contract between communities that decide to associate and submit to a federal power

federal power. The case of Switzerland, whose origins lie in the voluntary union of the primitive cantons, and that of the forty-one heads of families who disembarked from the Mayflower and solemnly decided to establish a common organisation, will undoubtedly be cited. It should be noted, however, *volens nolens*, that such political (and not social, since only the modalities of collective life are at stake here) pacts, in addition to expressing a historical necessity and not an arbitrary will, establish, by a single decision, both the State and the Community, rightly considered as a whole.

Even such extreme and rare examples of voluntary federation, imposed by the conditions of social existence at a given moment, show us, therefore, that the liberal scheme of an anarchic community that decides to establish a State does not correspond to any reality.

There is no political community without a state, since the state constitutes the indispensable authoritarian link between federated groups. Conversely, the state is communal by definition, since it always exists out of necessity for a command without which the federation would disintegrate or fail to form.

9. The state, a communal body

The analysis we have just made could give the impression that the state and the community are two realities, undoubtedly associated and interdependent, but distinct. Such an impression would be mistaken.

Command cannot, in fact, be external to the social whole of which it is an immanent factor of unification and for which it thus constitutes a vital necessity. It is a community function and, by the very fact of performing it, the state forms part of the community. Better still: it is the community considered in one of its essential aspects and in one of its fundamental processes. The Community is not hierarchical in nature insofar as it includes a State: it includes a State insofar as it is hierarchical in nature and the State constitutes its hierarchy.

Therefore, it does not incorporate an element that is useful to it and gives it a new character that perfects it: it specialises in a differentiated functional instrument. The state is not even a creation of the community, since the latter did not precede it, but rather a simple organ through which the community fulfils a condition of its being.

An organ: we have already used the word. It is not our purpose here to discuss organicist sociological theories. Let us simply point out that in defining the state as we have just done, we do not intend to assimilate the community to a biological organism, but simply to verify the analogy that exists between the individual body and the social body. This analogy is striking in relation to the subject of our study. The family community has no more state than the single-celled animal brain. But as soon as multiplicity requires unitary coordination, the being, whether individual or social, differentiates within itself the organ specialised in performing the primary function of command.

We will be opposed by historical examples of states that were born of conquest, such as the Norman monarchy in England, or also of the call of a foreign dynasty, as in the case of numerous European nations. Must we therefore admit that the state, however indispensable it may be, is distinct from the community, and not within it as we thought we had demonstrated? No, not at all. The external element, in fact, is not added to the Community: it is incorporated into it. It does not create the state: it is introduced into its pre-existing framework or, strictly speaking, replaces the degenerate organ.

It is, therefore, the social equivalent of a surgical graft, which adds nothing to the structure of the organism, but artificially allows the latter to satisfy a vital need. In the extreme case where the conquering State does not assimilate and, although performing the functions of the community State, remains alien to the social body, the situation would be analogous to that of an individual organism kept alive by one of those mechanical organs that medicine is beginning to use: an abnormal situation that in no way prejudices the nature of the provisionally replaced organ.

The consequences of our analysis are exceptionally important. As a simple organ, the State does not, in fact, enjoy any autonomy, let alone any supremacy over the Community. It is merely the servant of the community of which it is a part and to which it is subject. It is at its service. The function it performs does not belong to it by right, even though it is the only qualified holder of that function, but by delegation of power.

This does not mean, on the contrary, that it is the instrument of the federated groups, nor that it depends on their majority or even unanimous will. For the Community is not reduced to the sum of its constituent groups, especially if we exclude the one that plays a key role due to its specialisation. But this is a problem that involves data that we have not yet found. We will examine it in our next chapter. Let us limit ourselves here to highlighting the organic nature of the State.

10. The State, an organ of command

In the social body, as in the individual body, organic differentiation is nothing more than the consequence of the division of labour, born of the constitutive complexity of the whole considered. But such a division, linked to the evolution of collective life towards forms that allow for greater power in all fields, leads to a functional compartmentalisation, which is in itself dissociative, and which the organism must compensate for. It does so by means of a body of a particular nature whose function, although specialised, participates in the organic unity that it imposes on the federated parts.

The State, so to speak, specialises in community. It is the keystone that maintains harmonious relations between the constituent elements of the edifice, thereby enabling them to play a role that would have no *raison d'être* and, therefore, no meaning outside the whole.

Of course, such a static comparison is very insufficient, since the parts of the Community are each endowed with their own dynamism, and only one force, whose modes of action we will study in Chapter IV, can achieve their unification. But from now on we can specify the community role of the State. We already know that it arises from the social need for command. It suffices to combine the two terms 'organ' and 'command' to define not only its primary function but also the nature of its power.

Since the State, in effect, is nothing but a function of the Community, of which it merely expresses an essential tendency, its authority cannot belong to it as property nor arise from its own nature. The power it exercises is therefore simply the power of the community.

Its existence, structure and dynamism derive from the organic function of command by which the collective imposes itself on the divergent tendencies of the groups that compose it and whose coherence it maintains by asserting itself with respect to the autonomous communities that are juxtaposed to it.

that are juxtaposed with it. The State, therefore, does not command the Community, as is sometimes said, but in the name of the Community.

Its situation, it must be admitted, is somewhat paradoxical in appearance. On the one hand, it has natural authority over all the groups that make up the social body. Since it is one of those groups, it is free from any external constraints and depends only on itself. It is dominated only by an incorporeal and mythical entity, which is all the less capable of giving it orders in that it acquires no reality and commands only through it. But, on the other hand, it is the functionary of the Community to which it is by definition subject and without which its power would vanish, since all power presupposes a force (and we shall see in Chapter V that the State, to some extent, possesses this force itself), but also a point of application.

There is no command without someone to command, and the State only commands the federated groups in its capacity as a community body. But is not such a situation common to all organisms, whether individual or social? Is not the brain also an organ of organismic command, yet subject to the organism? We will be told that the brain is directed in its action by an immanent purpose, which is that of the organism itself. We shall see in the next chapter whether the state is guided in a similar way, as we can already assume, since there is no function without purpose.

For the moment, it suffices to note that the role of the State is to direct the various social groups that are subordinate to it, but also to guide the Community itself on the path to its fulfilment. For it is not enough to unify the constituent elements of the social body, that is, to create the internal conditions of organic life. It is also necessary for the social organism to secure its external conditions of existence, that is, to assert itself in its environment by adapting to it to the extent, and only to the extent, that it cannot adapt to it.

11. The State, an organ of conscience

But authority is not enough to lead the community and, first and foremost, to ensure its existence. The state is a chief organ, and a chief only commands effectively when he or she issues orders based on a goal to be achieved and, therefore, on needs to be met. Authority is nothing more than the indispensable factor in the application of prior knowledge. Reduced to itself, command only makes sense if it is supplied with ready-made directives, which it then merely transmits and imposes, as is the case with a subordinate member of any hierarchy. But the State receives instructions from no one, for the simple reason that it is located at the apex of the social pyramid. In order to fulfil its command function, it must therefore first and foremost be – and indeed is – the conscience of the community.

Like the brain of an individual organism, the state centralises the information it receives from the various constituent elements of the social body. It knows the existence, nature, needs and relationships of the basic groups and intermediate federations. But, even more than that, it grasps the community as a whole in its being and history. A set of fragmentary knowledge would not allow it to play the role of unifier, since the very life of the organism would escape it, a life that is not the sum of partial activities but the projection in time of a unitary reality.

The state is interested in the dynamic essence of each group to the extent that it represents a cellular or organic factor of community life. It thus becomes aware of the internal conditions

internal conditions of existence of the social organism or, more precisely, through it, the social organism becomes aware of its being both in its modalities and in its unity.

But this knowledge is not entirely satisfactory. The Community lives in a dual internal and external environment. Its development is conditioned by geography, but also by the pressure or resistance of the communities that surround it. It would be impossible for it to adapt to these realities and adapt them if it were unaware of them. The State, therefore, functionally captures all the data on community evolution. And that is still not enough. Information is only useful when its consequences are extracted, when it is exploited, as military language would say. Between awareness of the facts and command lies the fundamental phase of drawing up orders that are by no means automatic results, but rather imply a vision of the future.

The cabinet sociologist can construct an indifferent political science induced by historical experience. The social organism cannot limit itself to this, because it has to move in the direction of its affirmation, that is, intervene in the process of events by choosing between progress and decline, between life and death. A mathematical problem allows only one exact solution, even if several paths lead to it. A political problem, on the contrary, opens up a range of possibilities that are equally logical but unequally favourable. The state must therefore add to its awareness of the present data the will to live of the community, that is, to think in terms of the future, and of a necessarily positive future.

Between knowledge and command, therefore, there is an intention that the state apprehends, but does not limit itself to apprehending: an intention that it realises, then possesses. Its awareness of the community and its conditions of existence is not neutral. We see that, despite our efforts to remain within the physiological realm, we constantly encounter the biological nature of the state, which is the subject of the next chapter. This is only natural: a living organ cannot be studied in terms of its function, that is, its particular purpose, without taking into account the general purpose of the organism. This is all the more true when it comes to the central organ in which and through which that organism affirms its unity.

12. The State, a factor of political order

At this point in our analysis, it is appropriate and possible to resolve an important problem of vocabulary.

The word State has, in fact, two very different meanings. On the one hand, it means a politically organised Community. This is the meaning generally given to it by jurists, and also by many sociologists more or less influenced by Hegelianism, even if they do not accept its theses on the subject. On the other hand, the State is called, as we have done, the organ of conscience and command of the Community, that is to say, the Prince of the old terminology, which is more precise than ours but too limited to be possible to adopt again.

The danger lies not so much in the poverty of modern vocabulary, deplorable as it may be, as in the confusion it too often introduces into ideas. Even in theorists with vigorous minds, there is sometimes an involuntary slippage from one concept to another, and one ends up no longer distinguishing very well between the State-Community and the State-community organ.

To choose a familiar example, most of the criticisms levelled against totalitarian doctrine stem from the misinterpretation of ambiguous propositions. To say, in effect, that the individual, as a natural being, is subject without limitation to the State does not, of course, have the same meaning if the term refers to the Community as if it applies to the Prince. Now, the theorists of Italian fascism always use it in the first sense, while their opponents generally give it the second. It is therefore difficult for them to understand each other.

The difficulty, however, has a simple solution. The word State, in its meaning of a politically organised Community, is redundant, since every Community, by definition, has a political order. On the other hand, we have no other term than State to designate a body that is clearly differentiated in its being and well defined in its function. It is therefore logical, and indeed indispensable, to reserve the name State only for the body of conscience and command of the social body.

Will idealists object that our analysis has led us to abusive conclusions and that the State is nothing more than the political organisation of the Community, from which it is therefore illegitimate to isolate it, even by a mere process of abstraction? If we understand political organisation to mean the set of relationships that exist between basic groups and between secondary federations, establishing organic unity, then the objection is not valid. However inherent it may be to the social entity, political organisation is not, in fact, spontaneous. It is in principle the consequence and in its modalities the creation of command, and command presupposes a specialised body, whose communal nature and functional distinction we have recognised, and which we shall see in Chapter III can be anatomically delimited. In a state of social chaos (as we have established with our examples from the early Middle Ages and the American frontier), order arises from command, not command from order. And in the organised community, the state constantly modifies political relations according to the needs arising from changing circumstances. If we give the term in question the meaning, equally legitimate according to the dictionary, of the set of elements that constitute the hierarchical structure of the social body, we thereby affirm, with another less precise name, the existence of the state-organ. In both cases, the state appears to us as the factor of political order in the community.

II. THE STATE, PRODUCT AND FACTOR OF HISTORY

13. The duration of the community

The political community is not made up of groups that are always identical to themselves and fixed once and for all in relation to each other in unchanging positions, as are the houses in a city. Each group is made up of living matter – individuals – and is constantly changing in the course of its evolution, resulting from the biopsychic evolutions of its components, even when the fundamental relationships between the latter remain unchanged.

The family, for example, essentially implies the sexual relationship between a man and a woman. But its forms vary according to the personalities of its members and the circumstances that condition it. We know to what extent industrialisation has changed it. And no one can fail to notice that, between the formation of the couple and its break-up, the family structure goes through various but interlinked phases. However, the family is a natural group with an unchanging biosocial foundation. This is not the case with associations, which are created by contracts without necessary foundations and which could not exist or could take forms completely different from what they are.

Whether natural or contractual, all social groups must, on the other hand, adapt to their internal and external conditions in order to survive, and therefore they are constantly changing. Since their basic constituent elements change in their essence or in their modalities, and since their other cells are accidental, the community is already changeable in its substance. The relationships it establishes between the groups it federates obviously have to vary with those same groups, but the complex it constitutes is not a simple conglomerate, as we have already said, and any attempt to reduce it to its components comes up against the profound reality of the very essence of the unitary whole.

It is an observable fact that the Community has its own lifespan – we will study this process in Chapter IV – being born, developing and dying like an individual. History provides us with countless examples of this phenomenon. Empires that dominated the known world for centuries fell into chaos. Nations that were once powerful and feared now vegetate in mediocrity and no longer count for anything in the political life of the universe, while Communities arise, dominating, where yesterday there was nothing but a dust of anarchic or subjugated tribes or peoples. Within nations, regimes succeed one another, transforming the social structure before our eyes. Although there are static laws of collective order, that is, constants that express the structural essence of the community – such as, for example, the one that confirms the need for a body of conscience and command – there is none that can be isolated from historical evolution.

The Community lives, and all life runs in time, not as in an imposed framework, but in a unity of nature. Social duration is change, constant modification of the organic complex of relationships in function of unitary continuity. History is an uninterrupted creation of the present with the help of the past. Each period or form that is isolated by a legitimate but arbitrary operation of intelligence has its *raison d'être*, and its reason for being what it is, in the precedents that impose it and condition the subsequent ones that arise from it. Each one brings new elements and influences the rhythm of the evolution that gives it existence and value.

The Community creates its history by asserting itself in the present through adapting its data to new conditions, and projects itself into the future with a wealth of potentialities that it will be up to it to actualise or consign to oblivion. Its being is inseparable from its duration, just as its organisation is inseparable from its being.

14. The State, a product of history

It is natural, then, that the State, an organ coexisting with the social body and a factor in its order, should also evolve and transform itself, without ceasing. Although it has its own duration as a group, as we shall see in Chapter IV, this does not enter into the community's duration as a simple component.

The State, in fact, is not a group like the others. The family or the company is influenced by the whole, but this does not prevent it from progressing according to the particular law of an order that is determined by a function limited, at least in its performance, to the same group. The community of which it is a part may disappear at any given moment, but the basic group will continue to live on, despite this, without any essential changes.

This is not the case with the State, whose function is communal in all its aspects and which has no *raison d'être* other than in the Community at the level at which it is situated. If the social body, of which it is the instrument of unification, changes, the State must change with it in order to respond to its new operating conditions. It is easy to understand that the

State, in order to perform its unchanged role, cannot remain unchanged when the Community it governs sees, for example, new forces forming within it, or when it suffers attacks from dangerous external enemies. In its form and variations, the state is therefore the product of community history, from which its conditions of existence and action arise. But the same is not true of its essence, and we have already seen in the previous chapter that it is born together with the social body of which it is the indispensable political organ. Its origin, therefore, is no different from that of the community to which it belongs. This does not mean that it ceases to be a problem.

If the state exists out of community necessity, it remains to be explained why the community, with the state that its nature implies, arises at a certain moment out of social chaos, that is, why pre-existing groups find themselves federated into a particular community while other solutions appear, in theory, equally possible, and in fact belong to the reality of other eras. We can only understand this by bearing in mind that the history of the community is but one phase in the broader history of human societies.

A particular community responds to a need that did not exist before or that circumstances did not allow to be met. Without the need for defence, the ancient Swiss cantons would not have united. Without Clovis' political intention, France would not have emerged from the disintegration of the late empire. In the first case, the state was born out of the collective will of previously autonomous communities, and in the second, out of the conqueror's desire to become the leader of a potential community. Depending on which of these examples they choose to rely on, some sociologists argue that the state finds its origin in a political contract, while others argue that it comes from plain and simple force. Both explanations are wrong. The reality of history does not easily bend to theories. The agent of the social body varies according to circumstances, but the result of its action is always identical and unitary.

Whether men and groups want union or seek power, it is the Community provided with its State that emerges, at least when environmental conditions allow it. Intentions may be communal or statist: the consequences are always political, in the true sense of the word. Neither the State creates the Community nor the Community creates the State, as we know. It is history that produces the unitary social body, condensing the flow of interactive durations that constitute it into a whole that develops in an autonomous life until the forces of disintegration, which tend to destroy it, end up being more effective than its internal power of solidarity.

15. The State, interpreter of history

Let us not, of course, take history to be a hypostasis that imposes its respective activities on individuals and groups. History is nothing more than social duration itself when we consider it in its causal chain, and this duration, far from being prefabricated by an external or immanent force, consists, on the contrary, of the simple projection into the present and future of social reality as constructed by the past. In other words, history merely presents facts which, precisely because they are facts of the past, cannot validly be denied or rejected.

But it is individuals and groups of individuals who are confronted with these facts, which they must grasp and interpret in order to create the present social duration. They therefore act under the rule of historical conditions that make this or that attitude necessary

attitude so that the community in question can assert itself to the fullest extent of its power. But the necessity of history does not have the rigour that logic attributes to the term. It is different from the necessity that reigns in the chains of physical phenomena in that it is not determinative. It is necessary, in a given historical situation, for the Community to take such a form or such a direction because, if it does not, it will not fully and satisfactorily resolve the vital problem of its progression in time and will not realise all its possible potential to the greatest degree. But the solution does not arise automatically from the flow of social duration. It is necessary for individuals to become aware of historical conditions and discover the response to them, which they do to the extent of their capacity, their enlightenment and their social sense, and therefore with a margin of personal freedom.

Political understanding is therefore inseparable from the leadership of the community, since it constitutes its precondition. Hence, the state, an organ of conscience and command born of history, remains in history, and we could almost say that it is history that it interprets on behalf of the community. The individuals and groups that make up the latter are, to some extent, aware of their own duration. But they do not grasp the historical duration of the whole of which they are a part, only partial and distorted aspects, due to incapacity in the first place, lack of information afterwards, and selfishness in the end. Their political vision is limited to the framework of their immediate activity and interest.

For the Community to evolve as a unified whole, it needs a vision on its own scale. The State is its appropriate instrument. It is not only aware of the static data of the social order, that is, of the relationships that remain constant throughout history between groups and individuals, or of the changing relationships that exist in the present moment, but also of the evolution of the latter, which it grasps in its vital dynamism. It is not enough for the contemporary state, for example, to know about the existence of the proletariat in its internal structure and in its relations with the bourgeoisie. It must also grasp the proletarian line of force in order to know whether the present situation tends towards rupture or integration. It is not enough to be informed about the military power of a neighbouring nation. It must also know whether that power stems from aggressive intentions or defence concerns.

From this point of view, the state functions as a kind of central receiver of historical currents that it apprehends in their changing interaction. We can compare it, to some extent, to the *dispatcher* of a large station, who knows, at any given moment, the position and movement of the various trains on the network. But while the latter data are mechanically recorded in an *ad hoc* table, the state must, on the contrary, tirelessly grasp the constituent elements of historical duration and the general line of its evolution.

16. The State, creator of history

If it limited itself to such administrative centralisation, the state would be nothing more than a community information office. It would understand historical evolution, but it would remain outside it. It would be a good observer of political reality, but its awareness of events and forces would be useless.

Now then, we already know that consciousness is only a condition of command for the State, and that it therefore has no value in itself for the State. Likewise, the *dispatcher* does not receive traffic data in order to write a report or draw a graph, but rather to guide the convoys in his care to their destination. The comparison, however, ends here. For the *duration* of the network, that is, its transformation according to the possibilities and demands

of transport, precisely escapes the *dispatcher*, who limits himself to regulating movements planned within a fixed time frame.

The State, on the contrary, embodies what we might call the *fourth dimension* of the Community. It is situated in the present of history, that is, on the fluid boundary between the past and the future, between a past that is constantly growing and a future that is only partially predictable in relation to that past. It is not immobile with respect to the movements it directs: it is as if driven by them. It does not regulate time as if it were in eternity: it lives communal time. It is at the forefront of history, which concludes in it and which it affirms, in a continuous conquest of the future, that is to say, which it realises. If you will forgive the comparison, the Community progresses in time like a worm in space. The combination of its vital forces propels it forward, but it is the State – the head of the animal – that charts the course. It is the State that relentlessly chooses from among the various possibilities that history offers at each moment of evolution, the one that seems to best respond to the internal demands of the Community in its confrontation with the external environment to which it must adapt.

Its decision is conditioned, but free. In other words, its choice is limited by historical data, but it depends on its capacity and will as the governing body of the community. Faced with a neighbour's ultimatum, the state cannot maintain the *status quo*. It is not possible for it to instantly change the balance of military forces, as established in the past. But it can choose to submit or defend itself, and it is perfectly free to prefer, through misjudgement, cowardice or, on the contrary, recklessness, the solution that will prove less advantageous.

The state is not an electronic pilot. It is made up of human beings whose social function as a group constrains them to a decision, but not to a specific decision. A historical event is never predetermined. It may be considered probable, because the health and even the life of the social body depend on it, but one cannot be sure that the state will carry it out, for even suicide is not forbidden to it.

There are, therefore, some very good reasons to judge, as do those traditional historians who are sometimes criticised today, for whom the history of a nation is summed up in the acts of the state and their consequences. For those acts, regardless of their author, could have not been, or could have been different from what they were, and it is they that constitute the linked phases of social development.

The state is not, therefore, as has often been said, the midwife of history, for history is never pregnant with anything but multiple possibilities, without its own dynamism, from which one must choose: it is its creator. It is not the minister of community duration, for this is a result and not an entelechy: it is its agent.

17. The State, the embodied guiding intention of the Community

Historical duration, therefore, is neither a hypostasis nor an abstraction of intelligence, but rather the very existence of the Community, which is only affirmed in the changing flow of the forces that compose it. The role of the State consists, then, both in maintaining relations of unity, without which the whole would disintegrate, or which compel it to modify them constantly according to the needs of vital adaptation, and in directing the progression of the unitary current.

These are not two successive operations, since the being and becoming of social duration are confused, but a single permanent effort. In other words, the orientation of historical movement is not the effect of an external action added to the present being of the Community as it results from its past evolution, but the modality of that same evolution, which is prolonged according to the guiding intention that gives it meaning. For history has a meaning that can not only be clarified *a posteriori* by a kind of rational schematisation of duration, but also apprehended at the very heart of the community's impetus; a meaning that springs from the nature of the social being considered, whose tendency towards vital affirmation it expresses.

Historical intention is therefore nothing other than the law of social dynamism, that is, the principle of order of organic duration. It coexists with the Community and manifests its permanent will through all variations, of unitary existence, the will to give a positive response to the problems that arise, the will to create its present being and to prepare its future being.

Is this, then, a guiding intention identical to that of the individual organism? No: it is precisely on this essential point that the social differs from the biological. The intention of living matter is an organising intelligence of a peculiar nature, a *sui generis* energy which, potential in the egg cell, actualises specific forms and their individual variations in the course of organismic evolution. We would search in vain for its equivalent in the social body. The instinct that leads human beings to group together belongs to individuals or, if you prefer, to the species of which individuals are but moments, and not to the Community. In other words, historical duration is not the product of guiding intention: it is created according to that intention, with a certain margin of freedom, by individuals.

This does not mean that community duration is a sum, or even a synthesis, of individual decisions. The famous *will to live together* by which Renan defines the nation is an acquired character, that is to say, a consequence of historical fact and not its cause. The members of the community are, moreover, incapable of fully understanding the immediate conditions of their collective life, let alone comprehending in a single vision the past, present and future of a whole that existed before them and will exist after them, at least if they do not destroy it. Their historical intention is vague, unreasonable, fickle, obscured by particular interests and often even non-existent. For the social body to endure, it is therefore essential that a man or group of men grasp its evolution in its vital force, becoming the guide of its development process, that is, embodying its historical intention. Such a man or group exists: it is the State, interpreter and creator of history by function; the State, which is prohibited by nature, except in the pathological cases we will study in Chapter IV, from giving arbitrary direction to social duration, since it is an organ of the Community, that is to say, the Community itself insofar as it is dedicated to its own direction.

Thus, the social organism compensates for its inferiority with respect to the biological organism by giving it a special guiding intelligence, one or more individual intelligences whose function is to grasp the meaning of its history and guide the flow of its duration with a view to its greater affirmation.

18. The State, embodied community purpose

It remains to be seen whether the greater affirmation of the Community requires a certain necessary relationship between internal and external forces whose theoretical framework is known or knowable: in other words, whether the guiding intention of history implies, if not a rigid plan such as that applied by the *dispatcher* in our previous comparison, at least a predetermined goal. If so, the State would only have freedom of choice with regard to the possible intermediate forms. It would find itself in the situation of a motorist who must reach a certain city but chooses, based on the capabilities of his vehicle and external circumstances (accidental state of the roads, weather conditions, etc.), the route that, in his opinion, is most likely to lead him to the successful completion of his journey. At most, he would be free to refuse the necessary goal, at the price of the decline and disappearance of the Community. But he would then betray his mission and, moreover, destroy himself.

Such finalism presupposes the existence of a kind of magnetic pole – a classless society or Freedom, for example – which attracts the social whole by imposing its direction on it. Hence a mechanical or ideal determinism that in no way takes into account the three factors of social evolution: its internal data – groups and individuals – on which the state undoubtedly has an influence but which nevertheless have their own autonomous existence and duration; its external data – foreign communities – which do not depend on it except to the limited extent that it is possible to adapt them; the human character of the directing state, which brings into play not only its theoretical functional capacity, but also the intelligence and passions of the individuals who compose it.

It is precisely because of the historical indeterminacy of these factors that we can speak of the creation of social duration. For if the Community were necessarily directed towards a certain form of organisation, the State would merely be actualising a potential general line. However, the community's intention – like any intention – is inconceivable without purpose. If it were otherwise, historical duration would be the product of pure chance, and such a product has a name: chaos, which it is precisely the State's role to prevent. A community purpose is therefore inherent in the guiding intention that the state embodies. But the end of historical evolution is not a fixed relationship between its constituent elements, much less the triumph of an ideological principle, but simply the greater affirmation of the community, that is, the continuous establishment of the most favourable social relations in the changing circumstances of its movement.

Social duration is not comparable to the flow of a canal rigidly oriented by its bed, but rather to a river that an earthquake caused to rise from the ground and painstakingly trace its path, adapting to the nature of the terrain to the extent that it was not possible to impose itself on it. It is permissible to speak of the determinism of community evolution, but only if it is made clear that it is a matter of self-determinism.

This does not mean that every decision is imposed on the State by the Community's internal historical data, but rather that the entire social body, including the State, progresses according to what it is: according to its structure and dynamism, but also according to its human *raw material*. The contingency of individual decisions, and in particular those of the political leaders who constitute the State, is therefore paradoxically found among the factors of community self-determination. But the paradox is only apparent, since these decisions are in turn determined by the personality of their authors, members of the social being under consideration. They are not contingent except in relation to an abstract, *dehumanised* historical duration that does not exist in reality.

19. The state, a factor in community continuity

Let us not forget, on the other hand, that individual decisions that influence historical evolution are generally not individualistic, since they emanate from beings who are social by nature and integrated into the pyramidal organisation of the groups that constitute the community.

There are undoubtedly anarchists who fight against any form of power, and therefore against any kind of order. There are undoubtedly pure egoists who are uninterested in collective life in all its aspects. But anti-social and asocial individuals never represent more than a minority, usually a tiny one. For if it were otherwise, society would sink into chaos. But it is true that men, torn between their tendency towards individual affirmation and their tendency towards social life, give preference to one or the other depending on their more or less satisfactory integration into the social body.

Now, such integration is not simple, as we know, and the individual is much more sensitive to the immediate reality of basic groups and local federations than to the more distant reality of the Community. Man feels the permanence of his family in his flesh. He perceives the existence of the workshop or the municipality as a vital necessity. That is why he generally acts effortlessly in the direction demanded by a social evolution whose dynamic data he grasps in its entirety. He takes into account a future that is his own and that of his children. On the contrary, the Community escapes him in its duration. He more or less accepts its existence, but he is incapable of grasping an evolution that is too long and complex for him. Events appear to him as isolated facts of which he sees, at best, only some immediate causes and consequences. And of these, it only grasps the most notable ones, those produced by the great movements of opinion in which it participates. For this reason, its action on a community scale, which is disorderly, excessive and illogical, develops in fits and starts. It cannot, therefore, be the basic constituent element of historical evolution, whose fundamental character is continuity.

Emotional movements of opinion are undoubtedly incorporated into the flow of social duration. But they cause dangerous disturbances that must be overcome, due to their violent intrusion and unexpected variations. In other words, the dysfunctional forces they unleash must be bent to the community's intention. And this intention, as we have seen, is embodied by the state. It is therefore up to the state to maintain or restore the continuity of the evolutionary process. Let us say more precisely and in general terms that the state is the natural factor of this continuity by the very fact that it is the creator of historical duration. Only the state, in fact, acts on behalf of the whole, which it apprehends and accepts, not only in its static unity, but also and above all in its vital dynamism. Only the state acts with full awareness of the causal chain from which the present is born and on which the future depends. Only the state, because it is functionally confused with the entire community, acts according to that past with a view to that future.

While for the individual in the mass and for the basic group the communal present has the reality of a state of affairs, for the State it is nothing more than a mathematical boundary between what is no longer and what is not yet. That is why the political act is not a fact, but a movement of progression that would have no more valid meaning outside the continuous process of history than an isolated note has outside the context of the melody in which it is inserted.

The State is traditionalist by nature. This does not mean that it remains stuck in positions that respond to conditions of existence that no longer exist, nor that it tries to recreate what history has rendered obsolete: that would be evidence of functional incapacity. But it cannot lead the Community without taking into account lines of force that come from the past. The

social body is transformed and renewed, but it always remains the same through its variations. It perpetuates itself over time, which implies both conservation and adaptation; that is to say, precisely the continuity of which the State is the agent.

20. The State, a factor in the community's rhythm

The continuity of social evolution does not, of course, imply its temporal homogeneity. We have just seen that movements of opinion disrupt the course of community duration. They introduce into it an element that is, if not entirely foreign, at least unforeseen, causing both an acceleration of the historical process and a relaxation of intentional impetus, that is to say, a kind of anarchic whirlpool. On the contrary, the intervention of the state aims to subject the dissociating forces to the community's intention, which is only possible through greater tension in the flow of forces increased by new contributions.

More generally, we have already verified in each human being the existence of a personal rhythm made up of the alternating predominance of their social tendency and their selfish tendency. Moreover, there is a multiplicity of rhythms that correspond to the various groups of which the individual is a direct or indirect part. Each of these groups, moreover, evolves according to a rhythm resulting from the succession of its movements towards theoretical perfect unity and towards dissociation never achieved, except at the moment of its disappearance. The same is true of intermediate federations, which last according to their successive more or less effective assertions.

It is therefore normal that the Community, whose evolution is the result (a result of a particular type, the formation process of which we will study in Chapter IV) of the individual and collective durations that develop within it, should also follow a rhythm whose phases correspond to the more or less complete realisation of its historical intention, that is to say, here, of its unity in time.

The Community concentrates on the affirmation of its being, and then relaxes into a crisis that it will overcome through a new effort. But this double movement is neither automatic nor even simply spontaneous. Unitary and intentional tension is the product of a constraint imposed on the constituent elements of the social body, at least to the extent that they tend to dissociate themselves. It is by nature the State, the organ of static and temporal unity, the State, embodied guiding intention, that creates it. As for relaxation, it is nothing more than the result of insufficient tension, that is, an organic or accidental deficiency of the State with respect to the dynamic elements it is meant to dominate. The rhythm of community evolution therefore stems from the alternately positive and negative relationship between the functional power of the state and the forces of dissociation due to selfishness (whether of individuals or groups) or simply anarchism. In other words, the state develops social duration from interactive elements that are constantly changing, and far from being established once and for all with constant possibilities like a kind of regulating dam, it changes according to the rhythm of its own duration, depending on its own potentialities, but also on the forces it has to impose itself on.

The community flow, therefore, does not progress in time but according to its own internal time, which is its own because it creates it. Consequently, applying the measure of cosmic time to social evolution is to artificially superimpose a rhythm that is foreign to it and is therefore powerless to express it. Solar years are convenient for the historian as a reference system, but history ignores them because it develops according to its own law. And the

State, which is in history and makes history, the State, which accelerates the rhythm of social evolution, which would not exist without it, by tightening its grip on the forces it unifies, and which slows it down by relaxing its efforts, creates community time by creating duration, of which it is but one aspect.

21. The State, agent of the will, of the being of the Community

The rhythm that the State imposes on the bundle of forces it unites can be expressed on paper in the form of a sinusoidal curve. But it is exceptional for tension and relaxation to balance each other out and for this curve to remain horizontal. Generally, it rises or falls, and it is then said that the Community is in progress or decline.

This does not mean that the direction of historical evolution depends exclusively on the State. It is clear, in fact, that if the human *raw material* of society degenerates for a non-political reason, or if the basic groups are weakened by internal disintegration, the State may act with all its energy but will never succeed in uniting anything but insufficient forces, without being to blame for the decline indicated by the downward curve.

Let us note, moreover, that the opposite is not true. The more vigorous the race and powerful the constituent groups, the more the state encounters resistance to its actions. Individuals and groups assert their autonomy with a vigour that requires a proportional effort on the part of the federating body. But the result is also proportional, while communities of mediocre composition, which can be content with a weak state, obviously never reach a very high level.

We will study this problem of the balance of power between the state and the constituent elements of the community in Chapter IV. For the moment, let us limit ourselves to considering, as we have done so far, a social whole that we assume to be unchanging except in relation to the state, in order to grasp the role of the latter in all its purity.

We have already seen that if the unifying body disappears, the community disintegrates. If it becomes too weak to perform its function properly, relaxation prevails over tension and the community degenerates. But, on the contrary, if the State succeeds in asserting unity in the face of the complexities and diversities of individuals and groups, its victory is manifested by a strengthening of the functional activity of the social body, that is to say, of its vitality: the curve of its rhythm is positive. It is in this sense that we can conceive of the State as the agent of the Community's will to be. Admittedly, such a term is somewhat ambiguous, as it evokes Rousseau's mythical *General Will*, as well as the *Will of the People* of the supporters of universal suffrage. Obviously, it is neither the expression of a supposed *collective soul* nor the sum of individual wills, but rather the simple organic affirmation of the social whole in its entirety.

It requires neither enlightenment nor calculation, but rather respect for the Community and its internal conditions of existence. For let us not forget: the forces we have discussed throughout this chapter constitute nothing more than the dynamic aspect of individuals and groups, which we know must be ordered according to functional relationships. It would therefore be wrong to consider the State's efforts as merely aimed at concentrating social forces without taking into account their organic value. Community unification is not undifferentiated. It does not consist so much in grouping social currents as in strengthening the relationships that the social body demands between them.

The will to be is nothing more than the inner affirmation of the vital order of the community; not of some static order that would be meaningless, but of the dynamic order of individuals and groups that live, and therefore act, in themselves. But such a plain and simple affirmation presupposes the stability of the interactions of forces, that is to say, a horizontal evolutionary curve. This is only possible in periods of complete harmony or stagnation, when the problems that arise are always identical to themselves, their solution arising from simple routine, or when they remain and can remain half-resolved. Outside such exceptional periods, as we have already said, the affirmation of the community presupposes the realisation of potentialities that were hitherto latent but whose actualisation requires new internal conditions of existence.

In the first case, the state maintains the order it has previously established. In the second, it struggles to impose a partially new order. But the result is always the same: the adaptation of the community to

22. The State, agent of the Community's will to power

It is conceivable that a community living in complete isolation and having achieved a stable balance between its territory and its population could limit itself to a purely internal and, we might say by analogy with the individual, contemplative affirmation. But this is, historically, a rare case, if it has ever occurred. For a community focused on a positive effort to realise itself seeks and achieves an increase in its power.

While it is false to claim that it can only assert itself through opposition, it remains true that the development of its energy causes an expansion of forces that overreach and, for that very reason, clash with the positions occupied by neighbouring communities. Power, moreover, is nothing more than a set of possibilities, and one of the easiest means of realising its being by exercising its power is to seek confrontation with everything that opposes its conquering energy. The struggle for power is nothing more than the struggle for life stripped of the narrow utilitarianism to which Darwin's disciples sought to reduce it.

Imperialism, which manifests itself in the violent form of colonisation and war, is the normal expression of social ascendancy in its inevitable confrontation with the outside world. Let us note that this is in no way a spontaneous phenomenon resulting from overpopulation or the biopsychic vigour of the race. The conquest of the American West and Siberia ultimately expanded the United States and Russia, but it was nevertheless only the result of the private initiative of groups that voluntarily separated themselves from the Community, or at least acted outside it. The imperialism we are thinking of is the extension of the will to exist of the social body that no longer finds, within its borders, the conditions of existence that correspond to its material or psychic needs.

We can, of course, discover through analysis the immediate, isolated or, more generally, combined motives for community expansion: lack of living space, economic demands, desire for domination, taste for violence and war, or spirit of proselytism. But their common characteristic is that they give rise to a projection of the social being beyond its biogeographical limits. Thus, the will to power not only presupposes a strongly unified community, and therefore a state that performs its role perfectly, but also that its realisation is only possible through the solution of new problems that require a special effort on the part of that state.

War involves an extreme concentration of all internal forces, that is, a reduction in the margin of autonomy of individuals and groups, a modification of their activity, and the creation of new and provisional groups. Social duration is brought to its maximum point of tension. Once victory is achieved, it is still up to the state to hierarchically coordinate or merge the duration of the conquering community and that of the defeated one. The conservative adaptation of the social body to its own being leads to the formation of a new being: the empire, whose core is the primitive community and whose unifying organ is the primitive state.

Thus, the solidarity of the groups that make up the social body is transformed into power, power is expressed in conquest, and conquest gives birth to a whole whose sole actor, at first, is force, but within which functional relationships, creators of solidarity, are gradually established and developed. These are successive and diverse phases of the process of historical duration in its dominating impetus, but with a single agent: the state.

23. The legitimacy of the state

Whatever aspect of community duration we consider, the State appears as its indispensable factor. Without it, the shifting forces, diversely organised by different guiding intentions, which contribute, each in its own place and according to its own purpose, to the dynamic harmony of the whole, become dissociated. Without it, expanding external powers find no effective resistance. Through it, on the contrary, the social body concentrates all its forces in a unified impetus of affirmation, adapts to its internal and external conditions of life, realises its will to be and, for that very reason, whenever it has sufficient capacity, to conquer.

The state is therefore indispensable to the community. But it is not a fixed part of the social edifice, a part that is either in place or not. The state is an organ, made up of human beings, who play a role and play it more or less well; and it was only to facilitate our initial analysis that we have considered it thus far, except for brief observations, in the perfect fulfilment of its work. Between absolute efficiency and total deficiency, there is in fact a whole scale of qualitative possibilities, and history teaches us that, far from always remaining identical to itself in its relationship with the whole of which it forms part, the State varies, on the contrary, according to its own rhythm of functional value, which we shall study later. We will also see that it is renewed not only by the normal biological succession of the individuals who compose it, but also, from time to time, by a more or less brutal change of team, regime and operating rules.

Such verifications, which we already have the right to make since the functional variability of the State stems from its historical nature, as we have just established, allow us to resolve one of the most important problems in political science: that of the legitimacy of the governing body of the social body as it presents itself at a given moment in the evolution of the community. For if no one, apart from the anarchists, whose theses we have rejected as contrary to the requirements of social order, questions the necessary existence of the state itself, the right to power of this or that team, on the contrary, is constantly under scrutiny.

Now, traditional theories of legitimacy are as unsatisfactory as possible and have in common the fact that they rely on data prior to the phenomena they seek to judge. Some are of theological origin and distort the principles on which they are based. Others are of a legal nature and neglect the fact that legality,

considered by them to be the principle of legitimacy, is not the factor of the state but its product. It suffices, moreover, to go back more or less far in the history of a community to find an illegal starting point in the filiation of regimes, without it being possible to understand how time can erase it, as certain authors maintain. Still others refer to a pseudo-metaphysics, arbitrarily making some Platonic idea, such as Freedom, the criterion of legitimacy. Finally, there is the multifaceted theory of popular consensus, which we will analyse in detail in Chapter V and which, either starts from the enlightenment of a few chosen by a more or less confessed community hypostasis, thus falling into the previous category, or makes legitimacy depend on a majority sum of present individual decisions, which means denying both the reality and the duration of the social body.

If, on the contrary, we consider the Community in its historical development and the State in the performance of its functions, it becomes possible for us to establish an effective relationship between the whole and its organ, a relationship that allows us to define legitimacy in historical-functional terms, that is, without resorting to any data other than those of social reality.

The State is legitimate regardless of its origin and doctrine when it fulfils its organic function, or, in other words, when it affirms the historical intention it embodies, bringing the Community to the peak of its power. Or more precisely, its legitimacy is proportional to its degree of political effectiveness.

A product and factor of history, it is only in relation to history that the state takes on meaning; it is only in relation to history that it is valid to judge it.

III. STRUCTURE OF THE STATE

24. The functional organisation of the State.

We have already seen, in the course of the previous chapters, why and how the state differs within the community. We know that it responds to a need and performs a function. We must now examine its functioning, that is, the way in which it performs its role, and then, above all, analyse its structure. For while it is true that the anatomy of the social organ, like that of the individual organ, has no meaning except for its physiological purpose, it is no less true that functional movement cannot be understood without prior knowledge of the elements that make it possible.

To understand how a machine works, one must first know what parts it is made of and what place each part has within the whole. The vocabulary we have used, by analogy as always, could exempt us from further explanation of what the structure of the state is. Let us specify, however, that we are referring to its organisation, that is, the different elements into which it is differentiated and their relationships. Let us note above all that this organisation is not as rigid as that of an individual organ, whose variations are negligible compared to those of the social organ, for the simple reason that the organism of which it forms part evolves within much narrower limits than the political community.

The state modifies its structure according to requirements, that is, according to the nature and historical conditions of life of the social organism. In a small savage tribe, it is confused with the chief: its structure is simple, as is its function within a community of homogeneous composition. In a contemporary nation, on the contrary, it differentiates itself, branching out to respond to the need for command in different parts of the territory and in the multiple fields of its jurisdiction: it has a complex structure. Are we dealing with

two types of state that are essentially different from each other? Not at all, for it is not difficult to follow in history the process of complication of the same state as it develops to respond to the growing demands of a community whose population and territory are increasing or, more simply, as we see every day, whose internal and external conditions of existence are becoming more complicated.

The constant feature of the state is not its structure but its function, which requires precisely an organisation adapted to circumstances and, therefore, subject to change. This does not prevent, but rather implies, that states belonging to communities with a similar historical process have, at a given time, a common schematic structure, if only as a consequence of the interaction of coexisting political communities, which makes it essential for each of them to have the same degree of tension, without which the balance would disappear, at the expense of the less organised. Hence, it is possible to make a structural analysis of the modern state in general, provided, of course, that we take into account particular variations, that is, that we limit ourselves to the broad outlines of its organisation.

Such a state is complex, as we have already said. It presents itself as a kind of octopus whose tentacles extend from a single centre and penetrate the social body down to the smallest cell. But such a comparison – like the word 'organisation' that we have had to use for lack of a better one – is inaccurate in one essential point. The state is not an organism associated with the community organism like moss with lichen fungus, but, as we know, a simple organ that only has meaning because of the function it performs. It is an abuse of language to speak of organs of the state, when these are nothing more than specialised constituent elements through which the state acts on groups and federations of various kinds. Ministries, chambers or councils, the army, the police, the road network, etc., are only parts of the state, each dedicated and adapted to a specific domain. They have no functional autonomy and are limited to performing, in their various aspects, the unifying function of consciousness and command that corresponds to the state.

25. The government

Our image of the octopus – which, needless to say, has only structural significance – is nevertheless very useful in capturing the hierarchical nature of the complex whole that forms the community organ. Above all, it allows us to show that its specialised parts are not all of the same nature. Some, the *tentacles*, depend on a single centre, the *head*, from which they are mere projections into the social body. The others, on the contrary, differ within the same centre that they constitute together.

This initial analysis suffices to highlight the qualitative difference that separates the two categories. The *tentacles*, as we shall see in the following section, only have being and functional value because of their dependence on the centre. They are merely agents of execution, and their power is not their own. The *head*, on the contrary, has in essence the function that we have recognised in the State, although it is incapable of performing it on its own. It is, in effect, the head that takes stock, in an overall view, of the situation and needs of the Community. It is the head that embodies its historical intention, judging the present data of social duration in its light. It is also the head that decides on the measures to be taken and gives the orders by which its decisions, which are purely volitional, are transformed into acts and, in accordance with its own nature, cause the political being it directs to progress over time. In other words, it is the head that governs.

Undoubtedly, constitutional law generally attributes a more restricted meaning to the term "government" than that which emerges from the above lines. But its definitions, even when limited to this or that regime, unfortunately do not correspond to the structural reality of the State. The Council of Ministers, whether chaired by one of its members or by the Head of State, whether accountable to the latter or to a parliament, does not decide alone. It is even possible, in an authoritarian monarchical state (absolute monarchy, dictatorships and, sometimes, presidential states), for ministers to be nothing more than the heads of various administrative departments and not to belong to the real government, which is reduced to a single man, advised or not by councils. In a constitutional state, they share decision-making power with parliament and the head of *the executive*.

But here we also encounter an ambiguous term, imposed on everyday vocabulary by jurists. The head of state, even if he is only recognised as having a purely representative role, even if he becomes a mere *signing machine* (which is not the case, theoretically, under any regime, although in fact this sometimes happens), is still a constituent element of the government, in the real sense of the word. He participates, however little, in decision-making, and not in execution.

Whatever the regime in force, we always find, at the top of the state, a political element proper, of variable extent, which may be reduced to a single leader, comprise a more or less numerous group of ministers, or include an entire parliament. Whether simple or complex, such a government is indivisible from a functional point of view. Or, if you prefer, the performance of its function requires, if not homogeneity – since a complex, well-hierarchicalised government is conceivable – at least unity of operation, that is to say, of decision-making.

Its effectiveness depends on such unity. Regardless of the empirical evidence that history allows us to draw from it, our proposition stems from the most elementary logic.

How could the government possibly decide on the basis of community unity, which is its *raison d'être*, if it were divided? How could it produce unity if it did not essentially possess it? This logical requirement will become clearer to us when we study the dynamics of the state in Chapter IV.

26. The administration

The centre of the state, the government is not and cannot be the entire state. Decision-making is undoubtedly the primary factor in community progress. But it is only possible, or at least valid, insofar as it is based not only on an awareness of historical intention, but also on an accurate knowledge of the present situation. It is only effective insofar as it is resolved into action, that is, insofar as it is executed by the social body as a whole or by the specialised body concerned. Limited to itself, the government would be reduced to impotence, like a brain disconnected from the nervous system that connects it to the rest of the organism. Hence the indispensable nature of a second constituent element of the state: the administration.

Through it, the government is informed. Through it, its orders are transmitted and eventually imposed on groups and individuals. Through it, in other words, the government projects itself onto the living whole of the Community, capturing and directing each organ and each cell in accordance with the organic unity it embodies and creates. As an auxiliary to the government, the administration is therefore neither accidental nor, even less so, parasitic in nature. Through its dual centripetal and centrifugal movement, it responds to a dual need for

information and execution. It instructs the government about the organic multiplicity of the Community. It imposes on the multiple organs the unity of functioning without which they would have no reason or possibility of being. Moreover, it multiplies and differentiates the government, whose (single but complex) function of command is specialised in it according to the diverse demands of the social order. That is why we find it already present and already specialised, in the form of ministries, around the government. The central administration of each functional department complements its political head, a member of the government, and extends through its local branches.

It hardly needs to be pointed out that the information and executive arm of the state is, by its auxiliary nature and functional multiplicity, prohibited from any autonomy, even in its own field. This is, moreover, the reason why, even in highly centralised countries, there is no administrative *government* to which the various executive branches are subject and which depends globally on the political head or council. If this were not the case, we would in fact have a duality of powers at the head of the state, with inevitable rivalry despite their theoretical hierarchy. For it is a well-known law that the administration grudgingly tolerates its dependence and tends to usurp governmental prerogatives. It sometimes succeeds in seizing political power, but it is never confused with it from a structural point of view, nor is it juxtaposed with it.

The respective roles of government and administration are, in fact, too well and too necessarily differentiated for the situation to be otherwise. For this reason, the word administration, in the singular, only expresses the common nature of the function performed by specialised administrations which, dependent on central political power, have no relations whatsoever with each other. It is convenient, but it is nothing more than an abstraction. The unity of the state requires administrative multiplicity as much as it requires governmental unity.

The structure of the Community's governing body is thus clearly captured in its pyramidal form. At the top is the unitary government; below it are the specialised administrations, which are the instruments of information and action. And each of these administrations branches out into hierarchical elements modelled on the federations and social groups within their jurisdiction. Let us repeat this, at the risk of being unfairly labelled as organicists, because there is no more accurate comparison: by its function and nature, the State is the equivalent in the social body of the brain and nervous system in the individual body.

27. The ruling minority

Like any attempt to draw up a rigid outline of a living reality, our analysis is, of course, not entirely satisfactory. It presents the structure of the state as a pyramid of perfectly defined and hierarchical functions, without taking into account the fact that the men who perform these functions find it difficult to remain within the limits of their theoretical power.

We have already seen that authoritarian regimes tend to make ministers, members of the government, mere heads of the various administrative departments. We have also noted that the executive branches tend to usurp the powers of the political branch. These two contradictory processes clearly demonstrate that the schematic distinction between government and administration is not always respected by the holders of the corresponding offices and that the actual distinction fluctuates somewhat as a result of the reciprocal and variable pressure that the two branches exert on each other.

Furthermore, even in theory, are decision-making and execution as clearly distinct as our diagram suggests? A look at reality shows us that this is not the case. The government that drafts and enacts a law cannot be uninterested in how it is applied. It is also the government that organises the departments and appoints the people who will be responsible for enforcing it. The administrative head, whatever his rank, does not simply follow a text blindly or mechanically obey the orders he receives. He interprets and adapts regulations and instructions to particular cases – and there are always particular cases. Moreover, he has a certain degree of freedom in his field. A colonel is hierarchically subject to the orders of his general, who reports to a staff that carries out ministerial instructions. This does not mean that he ceases to be the head of his regiment, and he would be legitimately reproached for a lack of initiative, that is, of decision-making, as a serious fault.

We can therefore distinguish between two categories of civil servants: those who participate to a variable but appreciable extent in political power through the right delegated to them – or which they usurp – to lead the Community in a certain field; and those who are merely human instruments of implementation. This does not mean that it is always easy to grasp the moving barrier that separates the two layers. Senior management is very close to the government. It even happens, as is the case in France, that it makes up for its shortcomings or instability.

Let us take an example that clearly illustrates the situation: if the government decided to dismiss all the typists in its services overnight, it would find replacements and the change of personnel would only cause minor disruption. But if it did the same with all senior officials, the state would find itself completely disorganised. The government and senior management therefore constitute the ruling minority that holds the levers of power in the Community. Both factions may well be rivals, but they are nonetheless interdependent. Senior officials hold their positions by the authority of the government that appoints them; the government cannot do without senior management.

We must therefore complete the schematic functional structure that we defined in the previous section with a human functional structure that does not contradict it but does express the flexibility inherent in all living organisms. The ruling minority is not the entire state, but it is made up of all the individuals who actually exercise state power, whatever their theoretical position, all those who, within the state and in its name, effectively command.

The line of separation that we have recognised between government and administration does not disappear, but a second line is added, separating the leaders – political and administrative, insofar as such a distinction remains – from the mere agents of execution.

28. The aristocratic ruling minority

The ruling minority does not depend in its existence on either a will or a doctrine, but on an essential requirement of the state, whatever that may be. But its mode of recruitment and, therefore, its biopolitical nature, that is, the relationship between its capacity and its function, vary with the regime.

In a society in formation, such as that of the early Middle Ages or the American *frontier*, leaders emerge through a dual process of spontaneous hierarchisation and natural selection, based on the empirical adaptation of individual qualities to positions of

command. But as soon as the state is organised, it must regulate access to the various functions, thereby granting status to the ruling minority. Regulation and status can undoubtedly stem from any ideology, but they can also be firmly grounded in the realities of human nature. In the latter case, an aristocratic ruling minority emerges, based on two well-defined biopolitical laws.

Firstly, the function *attracts* the person best qualified to perform it. Under the most egalitarian regime, it is not possible, on board a ship, to make a blind man a lookout or a stoker a captain. The same applies to the state. Secondly, the performance of a function shapes the person who performs it according to its own requirements, and the acquired characteristics are hereditary. This is a fact that has been scientifically proven by recent experiments carried out in different but converging ways in the United States and Russia over the last few years, but which has been known empirically since time immemorial. Every animal breeder takes this into account – and man, although he is more than an animal, is first and foremost an animal – and industrialists know very well that it takes, for example, three generations to train a good glassblower. History knows lineages of craftsmen, business leaders, artists, warlords. It also shows us lineages of statesmen. How could unions between lineages of the same biopsychic differentiation not form a broader specialised class? When the development of industry multiplied factories, there was no hereditary proletarian type that served as a recruitment standard. It was among the peasants, whose biotype had been fixed by centuries of unchanging life, that the factories went to find their workers. Nevertheless, we still see today a proletarian class that is as biopsychically differentiated as possible from the peasant class in many essential respects. Similarly, the European aristocracy of the ancien régime was very different from the bourgeois patriciate from which it was continually recruited.

An aristocracy is constituted by selection and perpetuated by inheritance. It also receives an educational training that reinforces its innate biopsychic qualities, the equivalent of the training that breeders subject dogs or thoroughbred horses to for hunting or racing. It is open to the values that emerge from the mass of the population, and only a part of its members constitute the ruling minority. The latter is the product of selection within a social stratum specialised in the function of command, except, however, in the case of royal families, which are more strictly differentiated and which, with very few exceptions, form a true closed international caste whose function is transmitted from father to son.

In other words, everything converges to provide the state with a body of officials, in the broadest sense of the word, that is as capable as possible: heredity, education and selection. We can see to what extent the prejudices against the aristocratic regime, so common in our day, are unfounded. Far from being the consequence of an illegitimate hoarding of governmental and administrative functions and the benefit of unjust privileges, the aristocratic specialisation of the ruling minority is, on the contrary, the result of a rational use, by the state and for the benefit of the community, of all the resources of biopolitics.

The fact that the aristocracy sometimes degenerates through neglect of its own fundamental principles or loss of its function, or that the oligarchy, of which we shall speak later, adorns itself with a name to which it has no right, in no way diminishes the essentially natural character of a system that matches political leadership positions as closely as possible with individual abilities, bringing them to their highest degree of intensity and effectiveness.

29. The techno-bureaucratic ruling minority

The hereditary selection of the ruling minority, practised for centuries throughout the West with the happy results attested to by history, is today violently attacked by rationalist ideologues for whom the individual is an abstract concept, equal in rights to any other, or at least to be treated as such. Even though they do not deny the factual inequality of human beings and do not attribute it solely to the influence of the social environment, they refuse to take it into account at the outset.

They oppose *equality of opportunity* to heredity corrected by continuous selection and reinforced by adequate education. This theory is attractive at first glance, since it promises to entrust each function to those who are most apt to perform it, but it does not stand up to analysis. For either *equality of opportunity* presupposes an *equality of abilities* that does not exist, or it consists in giving everyone the possibility of fulfilling themselves fully within the framework of the function to which their hereditary endowment predestines them, that is to say, giving them from birth an education that develops their innate specialisation, which egalitarian idealists precisely refuse to do. To subject, under the pretext of *equal opportunities*, the thoroughbred and the Percheron to identical training would be nonsense, for what makes them valuable is their inequality, their hereditary differentiation, which will only give them their full potential if specialised training favours their development. The same is true of human beings. To level human beings as far as possible through a single education is to diminish them as individuals and as citizens.

The ruling minority is then recruited from a mass of mediocrities in which the functional values that have withstood the pressure of school are lost. How can one choose between so many theoretical equals? They are subjected to a competition, a test lasting a few hours on a specific subject, and are judged on the work they submit. In other words, only the candidates' rote learning, or at best their intellectual abilities, are taken into account. Their qualities as leaders are not considered at all. The ruling minority is then composed, at least in part, of technicians who are competent in a narrowly defined field but lack political vision and leadership skills.

Undoubtedly, no state, especially nowadays, can do without specialists. But it is important that they are subordinate to true administrative and political leaders, which is increasingly rare in the contemporary world. Technicians occupy all the administrative positions they obtain through competitive examinations and automatic promotion. When faced with a weak government, as is the case in a democratic regime, they impose themselves on it precisely because of the complexity of a task for which the election obviously does not prepare them. Technical administration, already abusive in itself, thus gradually takes over political power, reducing its legal holders, to a certain extent, to the role of signing machines.

They even manage to absorb the government, whose members are then recruited into their ranks, as happens in Soviet Russia. The ruling minority there is almost purely technocratic. The administrative and the political are confused, not in their functions, which remain separate, but in their personnel. In other words, it is not the administration that becomes political, but the administrators who go beyond their functional powers and occupy government positions that they are not normally capable of handling.

The state then becomes a huge rationalised, irresponsible and systematic machine, in which authority no longer comes from merit but from appointment. It is reduced to a mere sum of fragmented technical functions, with no guiding principle

guiding intention to ensure its unity or purpose. It becomes inhuman and apolitical and, as we shall see in Chapter IV, tends to subjugate a community with which it no longer feels solidarity, when it should be at its service. It thus loses all legitimacy.

30. The oligarchic ruling minority

However, the technocratic-bureaucratic ruling minority retains an indisputable functional character. The criteria for its recruitment are false and incomplete, but this does not prevent it from competently performing administrative functions without which the state would be powerless. It usurps governmental power, sometimes distorting it for its own benefit, but this does not prevent it from having its legitimate place in the community.

But the same is not true of the oligarchic ruling minority in liberal regimes. This is the result of the conquest and *occupation* of the state by an economic class. Those who control the means of production, in order to ensure their economic omnipotence, take over political power, which, by its very nature, opposes their purpose. For no community state can tolerate the anarchy of production, let alone the exploitation of the producer. It is therefore essential for the capitalist bourgeoisie to remove the obstacle. It achieves this through a dual process of undermining and violence, supported by liberal and egalitarian theories.

It proclaims the sovereignty of the people. Censal suffrage allows it to secure the government until it has public opinion in its hands, thanks to its control of the media, particularly the press, which the power of money provides it with, and can thus establish universal suffrage without great danger. The political faction of the ruling minority is then made up of those elected by the people, but by a people guided in their choice by the owners of capital. In other words, the bourgeoisie elects a parliamentary majority loyal to it, which in turn appoints the ministers.

The government is thus made up of representatives of the liberal oligarchy, and democracy is merely the political façade – or mask – of capitalist rule. Even though senior management does not renounce the defence of its privileges and even takes advantage of the weakness of the liberal regime to usurp ground in the political arena, and even though technicians, increasingly numerous within it due to the demands of the modern state, exert increased pressure on the elected power, as is the case in the United States, it remains subject to the government, which appoints its supporters to the most important positions. The ruling minority is thus entirely oligarchic in nature. Its recruitment is based neither on hereditary selection nor on technical selection: it is now based solely on money or submission to money.

Nor is even this miserable criterion the only one at stake: the electoral system imposes a demagogic servitude on candidates which, as a general rule, excludes from government posts the men of value who are not lacking within the bourgeois class. Hence the appalling mediocrity of parliamentary personnel and, indirectly, of the ministers and senior officials who depend on them. Unable to perform its function satisfactorily, will the oligarchic ruling minority at least seek to do its best? Its nature forbids it. It is bound to the powers of money that are at the origin of its power and of which it is but an instrument. It does not embody the guiding intention of the Community, but that of the capitalist class. In other words, it is not to be confused with the State; *it occupies and* uses it for purposes foreign to those that are organically its own. It diverts it from its community role for the benefit of a parasitic social stratum.

Undoubtedly, the state continues to perform some of its functions. It maintains the unity of the social body and directs it. But it no longer acts except as a prisoner of the bourgeoisie and for the benefit of its conqueror. Its structure remains, but it serves against the intention for which it was created and which justified it. The oligarchic ruling minority is the bourgeois or mercenary garrison that *occupies* the state in the name of the capitalist class and, through the state, subjugates the community. Not only does the state become illegitimate, but the entire organic system is altered.

31. The revolutionary ruling minority

Does all this mean that the *occupation* of the state by the oligarchic ruling minority is definitive and irremediable? No, for the enslaved community cannot fail to react, at least to the extent that the decline produced by the alienation of its organ of conscience and command has not yet produced the degeneration of its human *raw material*.

That is why we see, in different countries and in different forms, the birth, within the dominated population, of a revolutionary party that brings together the conscious minorities of the various social strata and undertakes the assault on the bourgeois state. This is not a party like the others, which express the will to power of a fraction of the social body, but a liberating army that becomes the instrument of the community's historical intention. It seeks to destroy or subjugate, not a valid group whose interests are different from its own, but a parasitic minority. It constitutes itself as a legitimate supplementary state on the margins of the distorted legal state. Even before its victory, its future role is already determined by its very nature.

The revolutionary clash therefore occurs between two states. One, which occupies its rightful place, controls the administrative apparatus of the Community. However, it does not perform its organic social function and acts only as an instrument of the bourgeois class, even if it saves some appearances. Its role, however, as we have seen, is not entirely negative: by its very existence, it maintains the structure and political life of the Community, albeit distorting them. The other, the party, embodies the community's intention, but finds it impossible to assert it in the present and project it into the future because it lacks the power to do so. It aspires to merge with the legal state, not to seize its power, but, on the contrary, to restore it. Victorious, it eliminates the oligarchic ruling minority and replaces it with its own cadres.

The legal state then gains a dynamism that comes from the conscious forces of the community and the independence whose lack made it a mere tool in the hands of a usurping group. In other words, the legal state and the real state merge into an essential unity that restores the natural political order of the community. The revolutionary state is no more an instrument of the party than the party is an instrument of the state: they constitute one and the same functional entity.

This does not mean, of course, that no problems remain. The new ruling minority is the product of spontaneous self-selection. It has demonstrated its qualities of consciousness and leadership in struggle. But it is more warrior-like than political, and has not received the specialised training that would make it fully suited to its new functions. It therefore runs the risk of falling short of its task, even if it absorbs some of the mercenary personnel of the bourgeois state. But the same thing happened with all the aristocracies of military origin that were formed in the Middle Ages and whose performance of power was

The remedy for the relative incapacity of the new aristocracy is well known, therefore, if not easy to employ.

More serious is the danger of seeing the revolutionary ruling minority, which holds power by right of conquest, forget the intention that constituted its *raison d'être* and on which its legitimacy rests, that is, to use the state for its own benefit and thus adopt an attitude identical to that of the technocratic-bureaucratic minority. But we must not overlook the fact that the national revolutionary party is neither a flock of voters nor a troop of praetorians, but rather has emerged from the people through the intentional and qualitative selection of the struggle. If its members had sought personal advantage, they would have integrated themselves into the existing state instead of embarking on an adventure whose success was highly doubtful. On the other hand, and this also applies to the technocratic-bureaucratic minority, it is in the interest of the group that runs the state – we do not say occupies it – that the latter functions satisfactorily, since this is a guarantee of the preservation of power.

But technocrats, by their very nature and training as subordinates, are incapable of properly performing leadership functions that do not correspond to them, and they try to keep their positions despite their inadequacy. This is not the case with the revolutionary minority made up of leaders. History will tell whether it will succeed in becoming a true aristocracy. Provided that capitalism, which has broken or stifled it in Europe, does not also destroy it in America (Written in 1954. Author's note).

32. The functional ruling class

If we consider the four types of ruling minorities we have studied in the previous sections, we will notice that two of them are essentially provisional and unstable.

The techno-bureaucratic minority is the product of a structural disintegration of society and a usurpation of state power by its officials. That is why it is isolated from the social body, even though it is recruited from within it and continues to occupy a place in it. The individuals who join by co-optation are nothing but that, because they were nothing before the appointment they owe to it. They are not linked to anything other than the apparatus of which they form part, because they do not gain their position by virtue of a predesignation, but merely by luck or, at best, by a certain intellectual capacity. They are not promoted as members of a social stratum, but against the hierarchical stratum from which they are torn. In other words, their *raison d'être* is to belong to the dominant group, to merge into it and to serve it exclusively.

The revolutionary minority, for its part, as we have already said, is the product of a spontaneous reaction against the subjugation of the Community. The men who constitute it undoubtedly draw on history, whose intention they embody, but they too are devoid of any structural basis. They owe their position solely to their strength, and they have had to break, to some extent, all ties with their milieu of origin in order to adopt an insurrectionary attitude. Whatever the resonance of their actions among the population, they remain isolated. Only in the long run will the party transform itself from an organised militia for struggle into a true aristocracy.

But this is not the case with the other two types of ruling minority. The aristocratic minority is the product of a selection within a much broader social stratum, which occupies a large part of the positions of command in the community, outside the state. The aristocracy, although its recruitment is constant, forms a stable hereditary group. It has an economic base that gives it the material means necessary to maintain its position

position and prepare its members for their role as leaders. It is united by its deep tradition of service, by its privileges (that is, not its abusive rights, but its particular laws, adapted to its function), and even by its prejudices. The ruling aristocratic minority is, therefore, nothing more than the emanation of a social stratum already specialised in command, which provides it with solid structural foundations, removing the somewhat artificial character of the organisation of the state. There is no division between the community and its governing body, but rather a staggered hierarchy that passes imperceptibly from political authority to autonomous authorities, that is, from the ruler to *the notable*. Nor is it possible to deify the state, because the distance between it and its subjects is bridged by the social class from which the state emerges, whose members continue to form part of it.

This is why aristocratic regimes are always more popular than egalitarian ones. A community without a ruling class naturally tends towards pharaonic rule. It is therefore essential that the minority occupying state positions be supported by a structural base that integrates it into the social body. But it is of course important that the ruling class be functional, that is, that it participate in the nature of the state.

This is precisely the case with the true aristocracy, which has no other *raison d'être* than to rule and constitutes a reserve of rulers and administrators. Due to its hereditary selection and training, it is prepared to provide at any time the leaders that the state requires, leaders whose appointment will not cause them to lose touch with their social class of origin or, consequently, with the people, whose natural framework they constitute. For we would be mistaken if we considered the aristocracy to be a class superimposed on the rest of the population. The word class that we use simply expresses a qualitative differentiation.

The aristocracy, insofar as it deserves its name, penetrates and hierarchises the people, if not in all fields, at least in all degrees.

33. The usurping ruling class

The oligarchic ruling minority is not without a solid foundation either. As we have seen, it emanates from the economic class that holds the instruments of production. However, its position in relation to this bourgeoisie is essentially different from that of the aristocratic minority in relation to the social layer on which it rests.

Indeed, the oligarchy undoubtedly constitutes, like the aristocracy, a reserve of personnel for the state. But it is not the state that recruits rulers and senior officials from within its ranks. On the contrary, it is the oligarchy that delegates, more or less directly, some of its members, or mercenaries in its pay, to occupy positions of political command. In other words, while the ruling aristocratic minority dominates the social stratum from which it recruits, the ruling oligarchic minority is subject to the orders of the social stratum that has appointed it as its representative.

The same difference applies to their position within the people. The oligarchy is not a natural intermediary between the state and the rest of the community. Firstly, because it rules the state, but also because its power is illegitimate. Where does this power come from? From the possession of capital that enslaves the producer. The social authority of the bourgeoisie is therefore not the result of the biopsychic capacity for command of its members. Nor does it derive from the performance of an organic function. For the economic function

is performed by the producer and not by the owner of the machines that the producer uses.

Once the natural relationship between the producer and his working tool has been reversed, the bourgeoisie is obviously free to direct at will those men whom it can deprive of their essential economic resources. It also has at its disposal the instruments of propaganda that make it the master of elections. The political power it wields through the state *occupied* by its representatives is therefore nothing more than a consequence of the economic power it usurps. It is doubly parasitic, in the order of production and in that of politics.

This does not mean that it is not firmly rooted, even outside the state, in the social body. On the contrary, it penetrates even the smallest enterprise, whose boss supplies, whose producers it exploits and whose production it monopolises. But the economic hierarchy that results from such a situation – an illegitimate hierarchy – is endured rather than accepted by the population, especially by the proletarian class, which suffers it most directly and harshly.

Hence the violent reactions, one of which, in Russia, succeeded in eliminating the bourgeoisie. A ruling minority seized the state, not to liberate it, but to *occupy it* in turn. The dictatorship of the proletariat, as it prevailed during the first decade of the Soviet regime, before it became a techno-bureaucratic system, was the result of the replacement of one class minority by another class minority. A ruling group delegated by the working class – which does not mean elected by it – replaced the ruling group delegated by the bourgeois class. In both cases, real power was economic in nature and belonged to a ruling class that used the state for its own ends.

However, the proletarian class was only parasitic on the political level. As a group of industrial producers, it truly belonged to the Community, within which its members played an essential role. The difference with the capitalist class was certainly noticeable. But that did not mean that the dictatorship of the proletariat did not represent the height of the desire for power over the Community by a social fraction separated from the whole by its previous working and living conditions and incapable, by virtue of its very function, of becoming a true aristocracy.

34. Political stratification and qualitative stratification

All our analysis of the functional structure of humanity, which complements and refines the schematic structure of the state, tends to show us the need for as close a correlation as possible between function and functional capacity. Hence these two extreme theoretical cases: a state whose leadership possesses the essential qualities to the highest degree and is supported by a ruling class firmly rooted in the people; and a state whose leadership is wholly inadequate and, being parasitic in itself or coming from a parasitic social class, finds itself isolated from the people. Between these two extremes lies the whole range of real states that history offers us.

However, the functional structure of society expresses only one aspect of the population, or rather, the use of the latter for the smooth running of the state. Certainly, the leader is a natural feature of social beings. But not all leaders form or should form part of the governmental and administrative hierarchy. The term 'leader', moreover, expresses much more a type of man than an integral human value, and we find leaders at almost every level of the social scale. It is therefore not without interest to now compare

political stratification as we have observed it with the general qualitative stratification of the population as it can be established without taking into account the specific functions performed by its members.

Modifying Vacher de Lapouge's classification somewhat, we can distinguish the following four categories within the community: at the top of the pyramid, the *creators*, suited to command, invention and conquest; then, the *doers*, who complement the former, *refine* their ideas, transmit their orders and thus make their enterprises possible; thirdly, the *assimilators*, an inert mass that allows itself to be carried along by social movement; finally, the plain and simple *brutes*, an almost useless residue.

Of course, the proportion of these different qualitative layers varies with the biopsychic level of peoples, and *creators* are only found in societies of superior race or, at least, those that have human elements of superior race within them. Let us not fall into the error of confusing such qualitative stratification of the Community with the qualitative stratification of the State. All *creators*, when they exist, cannot occupy government positions, lest they condemn all fields of social life other than politics to stagnation. For the same reason, all *doers* cannot occupy administrative positions. A social body composed of a mass of *assimilators* and led by a minority that brings together all the individuals in the first two categories would be a herd, well led, yes, but a herd nonetheless.

Conversely, however, we cannot neglect the relationship between state personnel and the pyramid that expresses values regardless of functions. It is not irrelevant whether the head of state is a *creator* or an *assimilator*, or whether the ruling minority is made up mostly of *doers* or passive individuals. In a well-organised higher community, *creators* form part of the ruling class, which is complemented by a selection of *doers*. Senior administrative officials are chosen from among the latter. The rest of the members of both categories constitute the framework of social groups at different levels of the organic hierarchy. It is not enough for the community to have a qualitative *elite* for the state to have satisfactory personnel. It is also necessary for this *elite* to be an aristocracy at the same time.

Otherwise, the people will undoubtedly retain their qualitative hierarchy, but the political hierarchy of the state will not coincide with it. The imbalance thus created will give rise to chaos, decadence and, in the long run, the degeneration of the human *raw material* of society.

35. The political organisation of the Community by the State

We now need to clarify the structural relations between the State and the rest of the Community.

Although we have already noted the projection of the government, through the administration, onto the living whole of the social body, our previous analyses could, in fact, mistakenly give the impression that the organ of conscience and command is superimposed on the rest of the organism, directing it, no doubt, but recognising its autonomous structure. Here we must make a careful distinction: natural groups and basic contractual associations each have their own order, which, in essence, owes nothing to the state, even when the latter intervenes to protect or modify it to the extent of its original malleability.

The family is governed by its biological purpose, the workshop by the demands of production, the sports club by the statutes it has given itself with a view to collective activity. But this does not make it any less true that the family does not live within the Community as in the patriarchal state, that the workshop is constrained, to the extent of its importance, to take into account the market as a whole, that the club itself is integrated into the social complex that surrounds it. Each group or association, even if in theory, as in the case of the family, it is possible for it to be self-sufficient, plays an organic role in the community and is therefore subject to the need for general coordination, which implies certain necessary relationships.

It is possible to conceive of a cell that lives according to its own immanent organisation in Carrel-Lindbergh's apparatus. But when that cell forms part of an organism, its internal functioning is dominated by the functional requirements of the whole, within which, moreover, far from losing any of its value, it fulfils itself completely. Furthermore, it is positioned in relation to other cells according to the structure for which it is made, but without possessing it in potential, since we know precisely that the isolated cell proliferates without any valid order. The same is true of the social cell, integrated into an organism that surpasses it, directs it and, at the same time, gives it its full meaning.

Now, we have seen that the functional order of the community is the work of the state. The latter can and must respect the constituent groups and their federations, but by imposing on them the structure indispensable for them to play their role in the social body, that is, by subjecting their functioning to the imperatives of the purpose it embodies. For this reason, as we have seen, the state, through its administration, penetrates even the most basic groups and associations, imposing its authority on them. It is therefore the state that constitutes the political hierarchy of the community and, through that hierarchy, creates the functional structure of the social body.

But in doing so, it encounters another hierarchy, no longer political in the strict sense of the word, but social and organic as well: that which proceeds from elements spontaneously organised according to their own convenience and, let us say, selfishness. It does not come from above, like the administrative hierarchy, but arises from the people themselves. It is made up of heads of families and heads of businesses, mayors and union leaders (or, in a liberal regime, trade union secretaries); in a word, all those who exercise, by nature or by delegation, a degree of authority over a certain number of individuals in a domain unrelated to politics proper. Such a hierarchy is by no means parasitic or superfluous: it is both proof and condition of social vitality, for without it the state would lead nothing more than a flock, that is to say, an inferior community.

But this does not make it any less true that the clash between the two systems of authority is difficult to avoid, unless the state recruits, as in aristocratic regimes, a ruling class made up, at least in part, of *spontaneous* leaders or, in any case, of those among them who are at a certain level on the social ladder.

Now, any opposition between social cells and organs and the state can only reduce the effectiveness of the latter, thus producing a dissolving effect on the community itself. For the state, as we shall see, depends in its dynamism on the various structural elements that it organises by function.

IV. DYNAMICS OF THE STATE

36. Social antagonisms

In the first three chapters, we studied the nature, origin and structure of the state. We must now analyse its dynamics, that is, how it functions in relation to the individuals and groups that make up the community.

We are faced with two aspects of social duration created by the State that are difficult to reconcile at first glance: the complexity of its constituent elements and its essential unity. Should we see in this duality a fatal and insoluble contradiction that weighs on human society, between, on the one hand, the innumerable *selfish* tendencies of individuals and groups and, on the other hand, the Community animated and directed by a mysterious and ineffable force of which the State is only an agent? This would mean forgetting that social life does not overlap with the beings that develop within it, but rather is inherent to their nature.

But individual opposition to collective needs is no less natural in man. Individuals have their own existence, needs and aspirations. They may well depend on society, but that does not mean that they do not have an activity that cannot be reduced synthetically to social activity, just as the latter cannot be reduced analytically to individual data. The same is true of the constituent groups of any society, each of which has its *own private life*.

Even the most homogeneous communities harbour deep antagonisms of a very varied nature. Marxism has drawn attention to the economic struggle between classes, which does indeed predominate in contemporary society. But the reign of capitalism is relatively recent and localised: for millennia, societies developed without class relations weighing on their historical duration. In reality, social antagonisms are as varied as human nature itself. Economic and religious, ethnic and cultural, they are intertwined in such complexity that their analysis is always difficult. Interests and feelings clash in a continuous but changing interaction, from which it is only possible, at best, to grasp some essential or momentary constants.

What is certain is that any attempt to reduce the complexity we discover within social duration to simplicity comes up against the profound reality of the very nature of society. What could be more unitary, when viewed from the outside, than an association of producers grouped together in a company? The work they create requires a constant combination of forces. It proves the vitality of the workshop. However, the slightest observation reveals the powerful antagonisms that oppose not only individuals but also the groups that share the work. Now, the workshop does not explode as a result of such internal and multifaceted warfare. On the contrary, it produces. It is worth noting that the divergences and oppositions of social factors are constantly dominated by their unity, and not a unity imposed from outside, such as that of a gang of convicts, for example, but one that arises from the very confrontation between individuals and groups and from the necessity of their common activity.

We are thus faced with the following dilemma: either the social complexity from which antagonisms arise must be considered a flaw in the Community, which makes no sense, since sociability is inherent in human beings, who, moreover, only exist in diversity; or we must recognise that there is no complexity on the one hand and unity of the social body on the other, but rather unity of its essential complexity, that is to say, that

antagonisms are not harmful but, on the contrary, indispensable to the life of the Community.

The unitary interpretation, which denies social contradictions or, at least, considers them accidental anomalies, and the pluralist interpretation, which hypostasises them, are two aspects of the same inability to grasp reality as a whole.

37. The State, organ of community synthesis

The historical evolution of the community is therefore dialectical in nature. It stems from a continuous overcoming of the multiple antagonisms in which the individual and collective durations that unfold within it are affirmed and opposed. In other words, community unity is the result of the synthesis of the various constituent social forces, a synthesis that is constantly being developed because it is constantly being brought back to the fore by the very evolution of the individuals in the groups.

But we must not forget that there is nothing mechanical about this process. Social synthesis is not necessary, in the philosophical sense of the word, and history gives us numerous examples of communities that broke down and disappeared due to anarchic outbreaks. Man undoubtedly has a social instinct. But this instinct is all the more effective when the demand for solidarity it represents manifests itself in a more limited and immediate circle. In other words, the interests of basic groups and the federations that encompass them in the second degree prevail in the mind of the social being over those of a distant community, whose usefulness is only episodic, while the burdens that come from it are a daily concern.

The unified overcoming of internal antagonisms cannot, therefore, be achieved by a spontaneous movement. It is the result of an effort of domination by which synergistic solidarity *is imposed* on individuals and groups at the community level, and this effort requires a specialised body. Such a body is obviously none other than the state, since we know that it is the creator of unified historical duration, whose dialectical nature we now understand.

The State is, therefore, very different from the conciliatory arbiter portrayed by liberal theorists and Maurras himself. It does not limit itself to smoothing over clashes between antagonistic forces, nor does it intervene as a supreme judge in conflicts that threaten to undermine the pre-established unity. It is not, in fact, a question of achieving a balance that would only lead to stagnation.

The Community must progress over time, that is to say, it must assert itself more and more in a positive impetus by definition. For this reason, the State takes control of the antagonistic forces and achieves harmony beyond their contradictions. Compromise would force groups to abandon part of their demands for the sake of social peace, and thus to relinquish part of their power. Synthesis, on the other hand, allows each of them to achieve complete fulfilment, forcing them to adapt rather than abdicate.

The ancient image of *the chariot of the state* takes on its full meaning here: the horses only achieve their full effectiveness because the charioteer forces them to form a homogeneous team instead of fighting each other or going their separate ways. The synthesis of forces, therefore, is communal, but it is only achieved to the extent that the state, as a specialised autonomous group, has the capacity, power and will to perform its functions.

Let us not forget, however, that the state is one of the constituent groups of that community, which cannot exist without it or outside it. It would therefore be wrong to believe that the state transcends the community. It is the community that overcomes its internal antagonisms through the work of the state.

It is therefore possible to conceive, based on countless historical data, a Community whose constituent groups are strong, except for the State, and also a society of decadent groups, except for the State. The power of the latter is therefore not linked to that of the groups whose synthesis it carries out, but it is on this synthesis that the effective power of the Community depends. In other words, a society whose antagonistic forces are vigorous but whose State is weak is virtually powerful and effectively weak. The upward rhythms of its constituent elements contradict each other instead of overcoming each other: the Community disintegrates. On the contrary, a society that is organically weak but firmly taken in hand by a strong State can reverse the negative direction of its vital rhythm.

Of course, the state is not all-powerful in this domain. Community synthesis undoubtedly depends on it, but above all on the forces from which it springs. And these forces depend on various factors that the state does not always control. It can act on its structure and even on its dynamism, but it is powerless to give its human *raw material* racial possibilities that it does not possess.

38. The social order.

We have noted above the permanent nature of the effort by which the state achieves community synthesis. This observation directly contradicts the traditional conception of social order.

Indeed, despite the positive but overly systematic contribution made in this field by Hegel and the Marxists, historians generally persist in considering the history of an organised community as a succession of long periods of equilibrium and brief revolutionary upheavals. The norm of social life, therefore, would be static. The state would maintain, by persuasion or force, a set of fixed relations between the constituent elements of the community, and only its momentary deficiency would allow anarchic forces to disturb the harmony thus achieved. Society would be comparable to a mountain that was occasionally shaken by an earthquake but always quickly returned to its normal immobility.

In reality, social conflicts are neither accidental nor sporadic. They do not come to upset the balance. They are not in themselves factors of disorder. They do not result from mistakes or crimes committed by individuals or groups who momentarily forget their duty of solidarity. On the contrary, they constitute the norm of social life and arise from the very autonomy of the elements that make up a unitary society, an autonomy that implies the struggle for power.

Certainly, social statics exist. But they are only made up of the constants of the interaction of individuals and groups, that is to say, ultimately, of human nature and the nature of the cosmic environment that conditions evolution. Social order is therefore not a state, but a continuous creation. It is not a balance in which internal forces cancel each other out, but a dynamic harmony constantly developed by overcoming normal antagonisms. And we already know that such overcoming is the work of the state.

We must therefore rectify here almost all the comparisons we have used in the course of the previous chapters. They were useful to us at a given moment in our analysis to help us better understand this or that function of the state. But they are insufficient because they systematically disregard the dialectical nature of community evolution. The state is not truly the keystone of the social edifice, even though it maintains the harmonious solidarity of individuals and groups, since it acts on the constituent elements of a fluid whole. It is not truly the pilot of a ship, even though it steers the community towards its fulfilment, since it dominates changing forces. Nor is it truly the brain of an individual body, even though it unifies a set of organs, since it overcomes not only differences but also oppositions.

Only our comparison with the conductor remains valid without modification. The state creates, through the synthesis of diverse elements that, left to themselves, would each play their part, trying to dominate the others, a unified and harmonious *social melody*. It uses *instrumental* contradictions to develop an essentially mobile order, an order that would have no meaning and would not even exist if it were not changing: a dialectical order.

However, the state is not the creator of social duration because it imposes a pre-established historical intention on the internal forces of the community that unifies and guides them. Its role is more important: it improvises, based on the past and with a view to the future, a harmony of autonomous forces that it can only modify to a limited extent. This harmony is unstable, as we have already said, an order at the mercy of unforeseen and sometimes unpredictable conflict, of an uncontrollable will to power at a given moment in history or, more simply, of an accidental deficiency of the state itself.

A crisis then occurs that requires an abnormal effort of synthesis, but without the nature of the dialectical process being brought back into question. As we shall see later, true revolution is nothing more than the difficult solution to an exceptional conflict. As a corollary, and if we consider only the nature of the phenomenon and not its intensity, the state is the instrument of permanent revolution.

39. The State, a requirement of dialectical duration

The analysis by which we have just established the dialectical nature of community evolution confirms our conclusions in Chapter II in that it prohibits us from seeing the state as merely an entity external to the dynamic *materials* of social duration.

Synthesis, in fact, never imposes itself on hostile forces like a cage on fighting birds. On the contrary, it constitutes a new state of affairs that comes about simply by overcoming them. Social synthesis is undoubtedly very different from what Hegel believed. As we have already said, it is by no means the product of a necessity inherent in conflicting groups. On the contrary, it arises from human effort. But that does not make it arbitrary. Social antagonisms call for it simply because they exist within the community, since the latter cannot survive unless its internal contradictions are overcome in a unified manner.

The state, an instrument of synthesis, is therefore not superimposed on the constituent elements of evolution. If it were, it would have to be recognised as an autonomous reality prior to its object, that is to say, its intervention would have to be considered accidental or, at least, secondary. Now, what would the state be if it were thus isolated from its

field of action? A functionless *official*, since its *raison d'être*, from a dynamic point of view, is the overcoming of antagonistic forces. In other words, the state is inconceivable without social contradictions.

But on the other hand, the antagonisms inherent in the very life of social groups, without which the community would not exist, are unthinkable at least as positive factors of duration, without a harmonious result that they are themselves incapable of producing, since they clash by virtue of their essential nature. They demand a synthesis that they cannot achieve, and therefore an instrument, external to them, of that synthesis.

We say deliberately: external to the antagonisms, but in no way external to the antagonistic forces. These, in fact, constitute, as we have already specified, the respective dynamisms of individuals and groups that depend, in their existence or, at least, in the modalities of their existence, on the Community of which they are an integral part, and in whose bosom, in general, they were born and, in any case, have developed. Because of their history, therefore, these forces are imbued with community continuity, and they need this continuity to continue so that they too can continue to evolve in conditions similar to those that have shaped them in the past, and to which they are therefore, to a certain extent, pre-adapted. In other words, they have been conditioned by the state and, in some cases, even determined by it, and would be left helpless or would disappear if the state were to withdraw its intervention.

Incidentally, the organ of conscience and command of the Community is distinct from other social groups, but it acts upon them and not for them. It does not cover them: it penetrates them, and its penetration is natural insofar as the Community itself is natural, that is to say, insofar as the Community responds to its own historical conditions. This does not mean, of course, that each group necessarily requests or even always willingly accepts an action that may well seem to it to be an undue intrusion into its *private life*: if the constituent elements of the community had a perfect awareness of the common good and the will to always respect it, the State would become useless, since there would be no more social contradictions, or at least these would resolve themselves.

It simply means that the community that arises from antagonisms has no more reality without the state than the state has outside of it, and that individuals and groups who demand the community that transcends them therefore demand the state, whether or not they are fully aware of it.

We can now see more clearly how true it is that history creates the state, since history is nothing but this duration which, by its very nature, implies and therefore gives rise to the instrument of its own continuity.

40. The State, the objective of social forces.

Let us repeat, however, that there is no idealistic automatism in the unitary perpetuation of duration. The men who make up the state are not inspired by a hypostatic will that uses them as agents of its own affirmation. They are not determined by history, but are only aware, to a varying degree, of the conditions imposed by that history on functional action that presupposes community continuity.

The dialectical process of social evolution does not respect the Hegelian scheme in any of its aspects, which, because of its simplistic nature, tends too easily to

impose itself on our minds. On the one hand, as we have already seen, the antagonistic forces are innumerable and the final synthesis is only achieved between results that are themselves synthetic in nature, thus culminating in a pyramidal dynamic corresponding to the structure we analysed in the previous chapter. On the other hand, communal overcoming does not imply the disappearance of its data, which remain underlying the duration they constitute. Finally, there is neither a mechanical realisation of the conflicting forces nor a necessary supremacy of one of them marked by its position within the historical process.

The State acts, in effect, not as a *machine for overcoming*, but as a human organ that evaluates the community importance of groups and grants each of them a *coefficient of realisation* that does not depend exclusively on their power but on a variable relationship between that power and the common good. This means that the state is in a position to grant one of the terms of the contradiction a primacy that it would not enjoy if the synthesis were made automatically and, therefore, were determined solely by the interplay of antagonistic forces.

However, the state is not infallible: it can make mistakes in its assessment. Nor is it insensitive to the pressures that can be exerted on it. The temptation is therefore great for sufficiently powerful social forces to use it in such a way that the process of overcoming the contradiction is diverted in their favour, thus allowing their particular interests to prevail, to a certain extent, over the interests of the community. In their eyes, the state becomes a decisive weapon in their conflicts, a weapon that, once in their possession, ensures victory.

Hence an unforeseen aspect of the dialectical movement: not only do social forces oppose each other, but each of them also opposes the state, either through mere passive resistance to synthesis or, more precisely, to the coercive action without which overcoming would not take place, or through a direct attack on the organ of power.

Neither of these two attitudes implies an anarchist intention. The community is not rejected, as demonstrated by the spontaneous union that normally occurs in the event of war, but each social entity seeks to sacrifice as little as possible, at the expense of its less powerful adversaries. All this is very natural, as we have already seen. Each individual or group has its own vitality and is aware of its immediate conditions of existence, and therefore of affirmation, in a clearer way than of community conditions, which are more distant and, above all, seem secure.

In opposing the state, they are generally completely unaware that they are harming it: they simply seek to tip the balance of power in their favour, which they never find fully satisfactory. Hence the need for the state to have sufficient power to resist the pressures it faces and impose its authority on normally rebellious individuals and groups, that is, power proportional to any possible coalition of social forces whose conflict it is designed to overcome.

41. The revolutionary crisis

The evolutionary synthesis that gives rise to community endurance therefore depends on the relationship between the state and the constituent social forces. If the vitality of the groups, or some of them, is weakened, either because of their structural dissociation or because of the degeneration of their members, their natural rivalries are softened, and they tend towards the false harmony of vegetative mediocrity. If the state sees its power diminish or fails to increase it in

proportion to the new forces that are asserting themselves, if it therefore loses the dynamism that allowed it to adapt, at every moment, to the situations that arose, it is nothing more than a fossilised organ, capable, despite everything, of providing numerous services, but which acts only out of routine.

It is then at the mercy of a force that is bolder and more conquering than the others, becoming its instrument. It retains its structure. It continues to play, to a certain extent, its role as an organ of synthesis, but it is no longer free. It no longer acts for the benefit of the Community but for one of its components, which excludes itself from the dialectical process and enriches itself, from then on, with a social duration that should normally surpass it. Recent history offers us two perfect examples of such a subversion of the community order: in 1789, when the French bourgeoisie took over the weakened traditional state; in 1917, when the Russian proletariat seized power under identical conditions.

It is even possible for the state itself, as an autonomous group, to become independent of the community of which it is an organ, hypertrophying at its expense. Whatever the reason why the indispensable social synthesis is no longer carried out according to the guiding intention of the community, there is a revolutionary crisis, and this stems from a functional rupture between the state and the rest of the social body. It then becomes necessary to resort to an exceptional procedure to restore the natural conditions of synthesis: revolution.

This, therefore, only has dialectical meaning insofar as it resolves the problem posed by the crisis, that is, it restores to the state an independence and power that allow it to intervene effectively in community evolution, whether by restoring its lost possibilities, freeing it from the forces that *occupy* it, or reducing it to its legitimate proportions and historical activity.

It is therefore as erroneous to define revolution by the external manifestations – riots, persecutions, accidental disorders – that generally accompany it but are not essentially part of it, as it is to define it by the ideological and structural transformations that are its consequences and not its purpose. Even more so – but here the error borders on pragmatic bad faith – it is inadmissible to speak of revolution or counter-revolution depending on whether the results of the social phenomenon thus qualified correspond to this or that doctrine.

Revolution must be studied in its essence, independently of any preconceived ideas. The only solid basis for our analysis is provided by the definition we have established of the revolutionary crisis, from which logically follows the need for a solution to the problems raised. We now know that revolution is situated in historical duration as a factor in restoring the state to its communal role. It remains to be seen how it does so.

42. The revolution

The usual imprecision of the term and concept of revolution, generally applied to the subversion of the natural order, very often leads it to be considered a sudden catastrophe, caused by some contingency external to the evolution of the community, which in reality constitutes a strictly logical phase of the community movement.

Revolution is not an accident, unfortunate or fortunate, that breaks historical continuity, nor, even less so, a disease of the social body. Far from being a cause of

disturbance, it marks, on the contrary, the end of a crisis that it resolves. Through a mutation analogous in some measure to biological mutation, and whose factors we must seek in the anarchy or imbalance of the forces at work, it adapts the structure of the existing society to the conditions of community development. It is worth noting that it cannot in any case be considered a chance occurrence or the result of the sheer will to power of a man or a group.

Revolution requires a certain balance of forces and institutions. It is brought about by a crisis arising from an intolerable social situation. We can compare it, even more than to biological mutation, to the psychological phenomenon of conversion. Society rediscovers its harmony and fidelity to itself through a sudden acceptance of its hitherto poorly understood nature. It chooses between life and death, between endurance and collapse. It is no more free to reject the new conditions of its permanence than the soul that is forced, in a dazzling revelation, to accept its true nature of rejecting unexpected certainty. It may hesitate, grope, make mistakes, because it is human: it is not allowed to make a good or a bad revolution.

Such value judgements are meaningless. There is or is not a revolution depending on whether or not the Community restores the State to its functions of dialectical overcoming, thus resolving by exceptional action the exceptional crisis that was leading it to its end. We say deliberately: exceptional crisis. It is normal, in fact, that the State, at every moment of historical evolution, faces new situations that it needs to overcome. This is its natural role, which it can only perform by adapting to circumstances, that is, by reforming itself.

The revolutionary crisis arises precisely because of the State's inability to reform. Organically too weak to synthesise the opposing forces, or having become the instrument of one of them, how could it change on its own? The State, unable to adapt to the new conditions of its mission, can only survive by abandoning synthesis in favour of compromise. However, it is not possible to accept compromises between movements that only come about when their opposition becomes unbearable and whose dialectical value is therefore a function of their intransigence.

The synthesis from which social duration arises is not an agreement between two opinions or an average between two forces, but rather the enrichment of antagonistic factors in their common overcoming. Compromise, on the contrary, marks an impoverishment of the forces present, since it results from each of them abandoning a part of their becoming.

Synthesis is an affirmation of community; compromise is decadence. This is why the authentic liberal system of government based on compromise is not viable and necessarily ends in revolution.

43. The communal meaning of revolution.

The social phenomenon we are studying is not, therefore, one possibility among others, which we find desirable in certain circumstances and can accept or reject as we please. It is the end result of a process of evolution, and we cannot choose either its framework or its outcome. The struggle of individuals and groups does not take place within an ideal society but within the historical community that encompasses rival forces and gives meaning to their conflict. Only a historical community, that is, a collective with

its own duration, has, for that very reason, the privilege of synthetic overcoming, by which it affirms and perpetuates itself.

Every revolution is communal and, conversely, every Community endures through a dialectical movement that participates in the essence of revolution. In other words, there are no differences in nature between the normal functioning of the state and revolution, only differences in degree: revolutionary overcoming responds to an exceptional crisis in the community, while the synthesis that we might call organismic is nothing more than the permanent solution to the usual antagonisms that the state is normally capable of overcoming.

Revolution is, therefore, an affirmation of society that its internal contradictions endangered because the state was no longer able to resolve them, a victory of the community forces present within the antagonistic groups themselves. Through it, the struggle is overcome by the awareness of a necessary solidarity between the elements of the conflict, more powerful than their rivalry. The dialectical contradiction is resolved in the restoration of community harmony, the result of the action of a restored state. Revolution is, therefore, the product of history, of this very history that the community creates according to the needs of its existence.

From the moment that an embryo of overcoming antagonisms can be discerned, which, taken to their extreme, become unbearable, society has a life of its own. A past is created that weighs on its future by shaping it in its present but also in its future through the conditions it imposes on it.

It is therefore accurate to say that the Community is forged by history, but by a history that is its own, that of its own evolution. Society, insofar as it is historical, therefore only has a factual value. It does not need to be justified, but it cannot be rejected. Its history gives the Community the possibilities from which it can choose, but without being able to depart from them. It is through the choice it makes that it expresses its will to live, that is to say, the positivity of the relationship between its power to overcome and the antagonisms it has to master.

The revolution represents the most decisive choice, since it resolves a situation of decline; whereas its failure would mark the Community's inability to continue its historic effort towards self-affirmation. Through the revolution, society returns to its constants and rediscovers itself, that is to say, it once again adopts a way of life in accordance with its being and its needs. History, therefore, weighs with all its might on the forces whose antagonism, in the face of a useless or harmful state, constitutes the revolutionary crisis, in order to realise its synthesis and give them the communal meaning that will make them valid.

History here is the structure of society as it has been formed over the centuries, the instinct for solidarity, the customs and traditions in which the subconscious of the social being is expressed, and finally the embodied guiding intention that rebels against the decline of the Community.

44. Process of revolution

It is clear that revolution cannot come from the state itself, since it is only useful and possible when the state has lost its communal effectiveness and becomes the immediate object of necessary action.

When we speak of *revolution from above*, we simply mean that the victorious revolutionary forces have already restored the State's social value and that the State has once again taken up the work of synthesis that is proper to it and imposed on it, that is to say, that it is once again playing its natural role.

Otherwise, the state would merely recover itself in an effort of revolutionary appearances, but this would not essentially change the balance of power, which would only constitute an appearance of crisis. The Community's reconquest of its harmony must therefore be achieved with the help of forces independent of the weakened, *occupied* or hypertrophied state, which oppose it in order to restore its historical being.

It is not, therefore, society that is fighting for its life, since community consciousness resides organically in the state, which is incapable of performing its function, but rather a spatial and temporal part of the community that suffers from disorder and aspires to remedy it, thus uniting its own interest with that of the whole of which it is a part.

But the solution to the struggle against the incapable state cannot, of course, result from a mere seizure of power by the revolutionary minority, but from the subordination of its victory to the historical intention of the Community. Otherwise, there would be no revolution, but rather the subjugation of the state by a faction. The revolutionary crisis would persist, in a more or less different form. The success and, consequently, the very existence of the revolution depend, therefore, on the dialectical solution given to the problems whose permanence and acuteness created the crisis.

There is no such thing as a partial revolution or a more or less successful revolution, but only a revolutionary appearance or reality. Revolution is necessarily total, since the new state that has emerged from it synthesises all the forces at play. It is therefore permissible, in this sense, to apply the adjective 'totalitarian' to the state, without thereby implying any statist conception of the community order, that is to say, any confusion between the function of the state and that of its constituent groups.

A state is total by definition insofar as it is the instrument of social duration, which is made up of all the existing forces that it folds into the historical intention of the community. It is not possible, therefore, to confuse this intention, as it emerges from the past, with the forces whose clash engenders revolution. The operating minority is only one of the equally necessary terms of the dialectical contradiction and cannot, therefore, claim to represent the entire Community or, consequently, take the place of the State. At most, it can become the State, even before occupying its position, but at the price of a fundamental transformation by which it surpasses itself. Let us remember that revolution consists in restoring the Community's functional order, not in imposing any authority on it.

The restructuring of the State is indispensable for the necessary transformation of the Community, but it only has permanence and value because of the changes it brings about in the relations between the forces that constitute social duration. From this revolutionary interdependence of the State and the Community to which it belongs springs the priority of the political factor in the evolution and solution of the crisis.

If the State were only a passive result of community forces, the inert expression of a social will emanating from it, the transformation of society itself would determine its regeneration. But since, on the contrary, as we have already seen, it is the creator of the synthesis that operates within it, and the organiser of the Community according to the

historical intention of which it is the repository, the revolution can only be carried out in it and by it.

Priority of the political stage, but not primacy, of course; revolution, an exceptional tension, has no social value except for the harmony and community effectiveness it restores by re-establishing the State in its functions. It cannot limit itself to alleviating the lack of organisation with its essentially momentary dynamism. It must resolve the problems raised, the consequence of which is crisis, that is to say, modify the causes of the relations of forces incompatible with the social order.

45. Dynamics of social stratification

We now understand how wrong it would be to study the dynamics of the state without taking into account the principle of legitimacy as we defined it in Chapter II.

Indeed, far from being based on any arbitrary judgement of preference, respect for the historical intention of the Community is intertwined with the natural functioning of its organ of synthesis, and the dialectical perfection of social evolution is its positive result.

It is undoubtedly possible and legitimate to show that subversion and revolution boil down to a sudden, technically identical change in the ruling minority, a change that constitutes the crucial moment of a substitution of the ruling class. We can even, with Ernesto Palacio, outline the pattern of such a movement: pressure from the popular forces on the ruling class and from the latter on the minority that has emerged from it but which, by virtue of its function, acquires a certain independence from it. We can also add the pressure, within the ruling minority (which Palacio calls, in our opinion too strictly, *personal power*), of the administration on the government.

In periods of relative stability, the only result of all this is progressive social advancement through selection. In periods of turmoil, on the other hand, the displacement is sudden and violent. Such an analysis, however, is purely formal. Viewed from this perspective alone, the state always remains in place, even when its personnel change from time to time. Its structure remains unchanged, as does the political stratification of the community (state, ruling class, people). Palacio thus comes to consider aristocratic, oligarchic and democratic regimes as equally natural and valid, whose necessary cyclical replacement would not change the social order in any way.

However, we have seen that the state, depending on which minority animates it, either fulfils its function of community synthesis or more or less distorts social continuity for the benefit of one of the forces it is supposed to overcome. We must therefore recognise that its functioning, leaving aside any qualitative problems, depends not only on its structure, but also on the intention that guides its policy; an intention that is not linked to good or bad will, nor even less to the moral level of the ruling minority, but to social nature, that is to say, to its position within the Community and in relation to it.

This is why the same stratification movement takes on a positive or negative character when considered from the point of view of historical duration.

Our conclusions thus distance us from both Palacio's indifference and Marx's messianism. The former considers the social order to be a balance of forces periodically disrupted by a revolution that marks the rise to power of a new

ruling class. The latter defines it as an antagonism of forces periodically overcome by a revolution that marks the conquest of the state by a new ruling class. For one, history is reduced to a whirlwind, a rotating movement without a guiding intention. For the other, it proceeds through a series of leaps that constitute the stages, always positive, of its realisation. But in both cases, the state is nothing more than an instrument of domination that social forces pass from one to another.

We know, on the contrary, that historical duration evolves according to a complex sinusoidal curve, and that the state, its organ, acts more or less effectively according to its power of synthesis, a power that depends first and foremost on the degree of community specialisation of the ruling minority.

46. Selfishness and the community function of the state

The term community specialisation, which implies an intentional content, also presupposes the organic differentiation that we have discussed on several occasions in the course of our study. In other words, the state only performs its organic function to the extent that it has a life of its own, that is, autonomy of existence and activity. It constitutes a social group, as characterised as possible, which, although not devoid of internal antagonisms (for example, that between government and administration), overcomes them through the natural interplay of solidarity that arises not only from constant collaboration but also from a common interest: that of at least preserving the power and moral and material satisfactions it gives to those who hold it in their hands. From this overcoming comes the very duration that expresses its unity, its continuity and its will to power.

But we know that the power of the State is exercised over the constituent forces of the Community. We must therefore continue the analysis we began above: while it is true that social forces oppose the State in order to limit it and even conquer it, it is no less true that the State opposes social forces in order to dominate them. The organ of synthesis is therefore inserted into the dialectical process, not as an inert instrument acting by mere position, but as a force whose peculiar mission with respect to the others does not exclude antinomic activity, but rather demands it, since its work depends on its will to power. In other words, the organic egoism of the state, far from contradicting its functional organic nature, turns out to be its condition.

That is why we see that, in the course of history, states constituted by right of conquest *become communitarian* simply because of their own interests. But we also see that elective states acquire, simply by performing the functions entrusted to them, an autonomy that differentiates them from the forces from which they were born.

Nothing is more normal than this double phenomenon: for the state, to retain power is to retain its function; and to perform its function is to assert its power. A state that renounces imposing itself eliminates itself; this was clearly seen in France in 1789 and in Russia in 1917. Louis XVI and Nicholas II were sovereigns who loved their peoples and were as well-intentioned as possible: they lacked the will to power; they lacked state egoism.

This does not mean, of course, that selfishness is the only driving force behind community synthesis, but simply that altruism is not effective in the statesman except to the extent that it is confused with the will to command, that is, to dominate. But then, how is it possible that, in certain circumstances, the state becomes hypertrophied within

the community and absorb the forces that it is supposed to overcome, that is, above all, to respect?

At first glance, such a phenomenon seems inconceivable, since the state never has any interest in weakening the organism of which it is a part. It occurs, however, not because of the expansion of a superpowerful state, as Jouvenel believes, but as a consequence of a dialectical anomaly. A weak, and therefore illegitimate, state, a state which by its very nature (as in the case of an *occupation*), institutional inadequacy or simply political incompetence feels incapable of dominating social forces, naturally strives, unless it abdicates, to destroy them one after the other. A strong state that finds itself unable to achieve a communal synthesis that corresponds to its own will to power, because the social forces at its disposal are weak in relation to it, tends to take them into its own hands in order to invigorate them.

Here too, the positive or negative nature of the same social fact can only be determined in terms of the legitimacy of the state. It will be readily admitted that there is nothing in common between the activity of the liberal state, *occupied* by the bourgeoisie, which suppresses corporations and is hostile to the family (especially the system of succession), and the fascist state, which reconstitutes the guilds and strives to re-establish the family order; between the techno-bureaucratic state, which makes trade unions mere instruments of coercion, and the justicialist state, which makes the workers' confederation the most important force in the country.

47. Dirigisme and statism

The thesis of the Minotaur State, of the body that, by the very effect of its will to power, would inevitably tend to absorb the organism, stems from a common confusion among liberals between concentration and dirigisme on the one hand, and centralisation and statism on the other.

However, these are very different concepts. In order to perform its community function, the state needs the integrity of political power. If it does not have it, it tends to acquire it by stripping abusive authority from command bodies that are nothing more than remnants of historically outdated sovereign communities, or purely parasitic social excrescences. Thus, the dynastic states of the old regime gradually absorbed feudal political powers. Thus, confederal states tend, by their very existence, to become federal states, and federal states to become unitary states. Thus, states that have regained their independence through revolution eliminate the class parties that held part of the power. In other words, the state concentrates all political authority in its hands, and this is an indispensable process.

Since, on the other hand, the state must, by function, dominate all the constituent forces of every kind and imbue them with a communal intention, its field of political action encompasses all areas of social activity. Dirigisme, therefore, does not imply any intrusion by the state into the *private lives* of specialised groups and communities, but rather the normal performance of its functions of command and synthesis.

By directing the economy, for example – and this is the crucial point for liberals – the state does not stray from its political role, since economic forces are part of the *polis*, that is, the community, and must contribute like the others to the essential synthesis, which they would certainly not do on their own.

The situation is very different when the central power absorbs the powers that naturally belong to social forces, thus attributing to itself functions that belong to them.

Louis XIV ensured the federation, that is, the communal synthesis, of the French provinces through royal governors and intendants whom he appointed, but each historical community retained its own life, its particular legislation and its privileges: it was, therefore, only a concentration of political power. In contrast, the so-called French Revolution replaced the natural provinces with arbitrarily drawn departments, mere administrative entities without organic life, and Napoleon, completing his work, promulgated a single civil code for the whole nation: this was already abusive centralisation. The fascist state constrained the various economic forces to collaborate in the general interest and directed their activity: dirigisme. The Soviet state became a business leader and trader: statism.

The two processes of concentration and centralisation may have some common features, but they are no less antithetical for that. For the concentration of political power allows internal groups and communities to live their organic lives freely without any danger of disintegration for the whole of which they form part, while centralisation tends to suppress all intermediate life between that of the individual and that of the state. Dirigisme stems from the very functioning of the social order. Statism is the product of a pathological macrocephaly that undermines the vitality of that organism.

Having clarified this, let us specify that health and disease are never absolute and that, moreover, the state constitutes a human group and is therefore subject to error. It is therefore not impossible that statism may, in times of crisis, be mixed with dirigisme, or even that it may always be somewhat present in the legitimate activity of the state, just as the tendency to usurp political power is always somewhat present in the legitimate activity of the great social forces. All this is quite normal.

V. SOVEREIGNTY OF THE STATE

48. The State, de facto sovereign

Our previous analysis highlights that the political power exercised by the State does not encompass the specialised powers that are naturally held, at different levels of the social hierarchy, by the particular authorities of groups and federations. However, this does not mean that it is simply one more power.

On the one hand, the state dominates, thanks to the power that corresponds exclusively to it as a functional group and which therefore derives from its organic power, the constituent forces whose synthesis it carries out. It imposes its decisions on each of them, as well as on their eventual coalition. In other words, it is sovereign in the internal order. On the other hand, it has the power that it creates through its dialectical action and that comes from the entire social organism.

Now, to have power is to possess *ipso facto* the corresponding authority. It is indeed the State's responsibility to lead the Community in its confrontation with its surroundings, that is, to impose its own affirmation on rival Communities that exert constant pressure on it, without the antagonisms thus aroused ever being overcome due to the lack of the indispensable organ. The State, therefore, is also sovereign in the external order. In both cases, its power is limited only by the power it has at its disposal

and by the demands of its function, which prevent it from using such power (except, of course, through a lack of political vision) against the interests of the community.

Here we see the common *panjurist* error of most authors of political treatises. Sovereignty is by no means an attribution given to the community body in the name of a principle or, worse still, a theory, but on the contrary, an essential attribute of the State. It is perfectly legitimate, of course, to study its origin, but not before having verified its existence and nature.

Now, we have just seen that, in its two complementary aspects, sovereignty is inseparable from the function of synthesis that necessarily corresponds to the State. The State is therefore sovereign *de facto*, sovereign by nature, since it cannot lose its function without disappearing.

Will it be objected that sovereignty is linked to power, and not to authority, which is merely its expression, and that therefore, although the State is indeed sovereign in itself in the internal order, it is not so in the external order except by delegation from the Community? That would be to forget two things. First, that Community power exists only through the State. Without it, there would only be antagonistic powers that would cancel each other out in chaos. Secondly, that the State is never anything other than the delegate of the Community, not within some temporary process that would imply a separate pre-existence of the organ and the organism, but insofar as it is the result of an internal specialisation of the unitary whole of which it forms part as an instrument of unification and affirmation.

The organic power of the community is only conceivable in the state, whose function is to create and project it, but the organic power of the state is only conceivable within the community, since it is functional in nature. While it is therefore legitimate to distinguish, as we have done, between the power that brings about synthesis and the power that emanates from that synthesis, it is not possible to separate sovereignty from them, which in both cases is communal and in both cases resides in the State.

49. Sovereignty and legitimacy

At first glance, the objection based on the legitimacy of the state seems more serious. If, in fact, as we have just demonstrated, sovereignty is a fact linked to the very being of the organ of synthesis and therefore depends only on power, that is to say, ultimately, on force, it seems to be independent of historical intention. In other words, an illegitimate state according to our own conception in Chapter II, a state which, for one reason or another, does not satisfactorily ensure the present and future affirmation of the Community, would be as sovereign as one that performs its functions perfectly.

Such reasoning is based on a misunderstanding. It is true that legitimacy is not the criterion of sovereignty. But that does not mean that the two concepts are separate: it is sovereignty that constitutes the criterion of legitimacy. Are we contradicting ourselves?

Are we reducing legitimacy to a mere verification of power after having made it spring from intentional effectiveness? No, not at all. While sovereignty does indeed come from power, that power arises from community synthesis. And when that synthesis is achieved, the social group that constitutes its instrument is legitimate. Or, more precisely, since a classification of dominant minorities as legitimate and illegitimate is always somewhat simplistic: the state is legitimate to the exact extent that it achieves community synthesis.

There is therefore no such thing as an illegitimate state, since a group that assumed the functions of conscience, command and synthesis of the community without fulfilling them would not be a state. It is only through an abusive simplification of language that we speak of a usurping state: there is only a usurped state or, rather, an *occupied* state. Under oligarchic or techno-bureaucratic *occupation*, the state survives, legitimate to the extent that it ensures the permanence of the community. But it is subjugated by a usurping minority that limits its sovereignty by subordinating the power it retains to particular interests, thus distorting the process of synthesis, which continues to develop, albeit unsatisfactorily.

As for the state which, due to its weakness, provokes a revolutionary crisis, it becomes illegitimate to the extent that it loses its power, that is, its sovereignty. We say deliberately: *it becomes* illegitimate. It is never fully so. For its absolute illegitimacy would imply a total inability to synthesise, then the disintegration of the community and its own disappearance.

This is why revolution never signifies the replacement of one state by another, but rather the liberation or reinforcement of the existing state by a minority that already possessed, before acting, an awareness of the community's intentions and its own power, but which lacked, in order to be the state, the function that remained in the hands of the usurping or incapable group. Virtually legitimate, the revolutionary minority only becomes so effectively through its incorporation into the pre-existing state, to which it returns its full sovereignty.

Does this mean that the State is, in itself, merely an empty form that is successively filled by more or less legitimate minorities? No, because an empty form cannot be sovereign, and a usurping minority would then render the State totally illegitimate, which is not possible, as we have just seen.

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The state is, in reality, a complex of functions necessarily embodied in a social group, which identifies more or less with them and is susceptible to internal modifications as well as replacement. The ruling minority, therefore, is only the state to the extent that it fulfils these functions, which, in themselves and then in the absolute, imply integral sovereignty and, for that very reason, legitimacy without reservation or restriction.

50. The historical framework of sovereignty

But we are not moving here in the realm of metaphysics. It is certainly not forbidden, however dangerous it may be, to speak of sovereignty, giving the term an absolute ideal value, as the result of a logical process of abstraction. But the concept thus elaborated in our minds is not an expression of reality, much less reality itself. We have no right to project it onto history.

Sovereignty has nothing of a Platonic Idea that informs the State. Nor can we consider it a value in itself that constitutes the criterion of our political judgements. It does not even have its own existence. We only grasp it as an attribute of a social body of relative efficacy that evolves together with the organism whose permanence it ensures and which, therefore, is by nature submerged in the historical duration it creates. It is worth noting that embodied sovereignty, real sovereignty, is subject to community self-determination and conditioning by the environment. It expresses a given power in its confrontation with the obstacles that oppose its expansion. And this power is obviously never total or absolute, since it corresponds to that social organism at that moment in its evolution, to a community whose present arises from a past that the state can no longer modify, although it can, to the extent of its power, modify its current expression.

In other words, the sovereign body acts on data that represent the raw material of its historical creation and that commit it by their very existence. The power that arises from its power as a functional group only creates the power that comes from the synthetic affirmation of the whole in a permanent conflict with the customary and legal survivals that are inseparable from the community's present because they constitute the memory of the organism, a memory that is not only made up of individual ideas and habits, but also of living social relations.

Internally, the sovereignty of the state is therefore limited by the community environment in which it operates and outside of which it could not be conceived, since it only exists in relation to that environment. However, this environment has a deep-rooted political tradition with which the state comes into conflict whenever it tends, for one reason or another, to innovate. Far from finding its source in law or custom, as is sometimes claimed, sovereignty is, on the contrary, bound by a conception and a feeling of the state that do not necessarily respond, in general terms, to the present demands of the situation (and never, due to the very fact of evolution, respond completely); a conception and sentiment that are nothing more than the ideological superstructure of an institutional system endowed with a certain force of resistance.

In the external order, the limitation is even clearer, although it is generally denied out of community pride or panjurist hypocrisy. One may well proclaim the absolute sovereignty of contemporary states in international relations. In fact, the very terms we have just used are contradictory, since every relationship implies a relativity of the powers involved._ A state would only have absolute sovereignty if it encountered no other power to oppose it.

How can we fail to see, moreover, that relations between states, even their actual legal expression, derive from their respective powers? This is only natural, since, on the one hand, a power that encounters only minimal resistance tends to assert itself through expansion and, on the other hand, the pressure of the strong community on the weak community constitutes for the latter a condition of existence to which it must adapt.

Whatever aspect of the problem is considered, sovereignty derives from power, and power depends on the strength it expresses in relation to the powers that form the historical framework of its affirmation.

51. The myth of sovereignty

Why, in such circumstances, are statesmen and experts generally reluctant to admit the facts as they stand and take refuge in the transcendent, real or supposed origin of sovereignty?

At first glance, it seems that they would lose everything if they denied the state they constitute or advocate an attribute that ensures its independence, replacing it with a mere attribution that is always debatable. But this is nothing more than a rationalist illusion. If the leader of the Community insists on declaring himself the direct representative – and not through the mediation of the natural order – of God or of men, it is because in this way he places beyond reach a power that, in the real political sphere, is always susceptible to more or less well-founded criticism.

As a human social organ, the State never performs its functions perfectly, and its legitimacy, as we have defined it in relation to the historical community intention,

can always be questioned, in good or bad faith, by this or that coalition of discontented or ambitious individuals.

The situation is different if it is accepted that the state derives its power directly from an absolute sovereign power. It then no longer needs to justify its actions. Its legitimacy depends only on the authenticity of a delegation whose rules of procedure are set by the beneficiary itself. From a simple functional attribute, sovereignty thus becomes a myth, that is to say, a confusing and variable complex of abstract and concrete images that expresses, in a global affirmation, rebellious to all analysis, a power and a right that henceforth escape the domain of relative facts to situate themselves in the realm of the absolute.

The state derives a double advantage from this transposition. First, it avoids any reproach of incompetence: the discontented will have to address themselves to the all-powerful Sovereign, who is ultimately solely responsible. But above all, it acquires a supernatural character in the eyes of the members of the community, in the etymological sense of the word, which multiplies its power. Myth is always more effective than reasoning when it comes to influencing the greatest number, the crowd, the masses or the people.

Firstly, because it is more easily imposed by the very fact that its acceptance requires no effort; secondly, because neither immediate realities nor arguments can be opposed to it. In the realm of pure pragmatism – that of the state – theories of sovereignty only have value to the extent that they manage to become myths, thus merging with the beliefs of the time, whether they use them or give rise to them. Metaphysical in nature, they are psychological in their *raison d'être* and their use. They therefore belong much more to the realm of propaganda than to that of political science.

That is why not only the state resorts to them, giving them, of course, a conservative meaning, but also subversive or revolutionary minorities. It seems that a myth of sovereignty can only be destroyed by a myth of the same nature, and that a state can only be *occupied* or liberated when the myth that sustained the former ruling minority has been replaced by another.

Let us not conclude, however, on the basis of this analysis, that all theories of sovereignty are scientifically false: on the contrary, we are trying here to induce the one that corresponds to the functional reality of the state, that is to say, the one that precisely escapes any metaphysical or psychological projection. Let us simply note that the effectiveness of a thesis does not depend on its accuracy but on its mythical power of popular embodiment. Political science and political art do not necessarily coincide.

52. The "divine right"

Of all the theories of sovereignty, the most effective and easiest to transform into myth is, without a doubt, at least in the ages of faith, that of *divine right*, an abusive distortion of Catholic doctrine on the origin of power.

The theory effectively incorporates the political structure of the Community into the providential order. The state, in this case the monarch, becomes the direct representative of God on earth. It has received sovereignty from Him, which it exercises in His name in the temporal order. It is therefore accountable only to Him, and the only recourse of the people against

the royal will is prayer. Any refusal to obey takes on the character of a sin punishable in the hereafter.

The whole body of religious beliefs thus reinforces political power. It is not surprising, in such conditions, that the doctrine of divine right has tempted monarchs and theorists since long before the Christian era. Moreover, it is among pagan peoples that it has taken its most extreme form: the emperor of Japan is considered a god, and this is certainly not the only case in history.

In Rome itself, Caesar was worshipped. No Catholic prince can obviously go that far. But in the 17th century, the monarch came to be considered a *minor god*, according to the expression of James I, and Bossuet did not hesitate to describe him as *Christ*, in the etymological sense of the word, of course, but not without the choice of the word being very revealing.

Taken to its logical conclusion, this thesis loses some of its rational power. For we would search in vain for any indication of divine designation of this or that monarch or dynasty. Sovereignty comes from God, but its attribution depends solely on historical circumstances. In other words, divine will is confused with social evolution. The state does not have power because God delegates sovereignty to it: it is sovereign insofar as it has power.

Under such conditions, it would be just as valid to speak of the divine right of physical force. But the people have never grasped the doctrinal subtleties of theologians and lawyers. They have understood only one thing: the monarch is God's lieutenant and rules in His name. The myth therefore survives in its entirety.

53. Popular sovereignty: the political contract

The rational flaw in the thesis of divine right thus understood provided Suárez with the necessary means to undermine the theoretical foundations of absolute monarchy.

God, the sole sovereign, does not in any way designate the holder of political power. He did not create the state, much less any particular state. He merely created society by giving man a political nature.

It is this society, that is to say, the people, that receives the delegation of divine sovereignty. But since no community can subsist without a state, the people provisionally transfer temporal power to the individual or group that they consider most capable of exercising it.

The state is therefore nothing more than the representative of the people, who appoint it and can always dismiss it. There is a true political contract between the people and the state: citizens voluntarily subordinate themselves to one or more leaders whom they appoint, with the task of administering the community. If they perform their mission poorly, the people dismiss them and change the leaders, and even the regime.

Here we clearly see both the strength and the weakness of Suárez's argument. Its strength lies in the recognition of the state as a functional requirement of the natural social order. Its weakness lies in the fact that divine sovereignty no longer exists except in theory. We can eliminate it without changing the theory of the political pact in any way. But then the people are fully sovereign.

The temptation to replace divine right with popular right is all the more appealing as it returns to the political traditions of the Roman Republic, which were never completely erased, even during the Middle Ages. Suárez thus plays the role of the sorcerer's apprentice: Locke and Rousseau will be his direct and legitimate heirs. Hobbes and Spinoza tried in vain to use popular sovereignty to repeat the operation that had been so successful with divine right, using it to the advantage of the established order and even of absolute absolutism.

They may well demonstrate that the political contract was concluded, tacitly, once and for all, and that the people, by transferring their sovereignty, lost it or, at least, no longer possess it except in theory. They may even go so far as to assert that the delegation of power entails not only the unreserved obedience of the principals but also the irresponsibility of the agent. The cunning is too obvious. The people replace God as the principle of sovereignty, but the effective sovereign proclaimed remains the historical state.

Now, the people constitute a human reality, a concrete group of individuals.

How can we make him admit for a long time, that is, how can we make public opinion admit for a long time that he is forbidden to retake the power he has delegated? How can we make him prefer the thesis of the definitive alienation of his sovereignty to the infinitely more logical and seemingly satisfactory one of a revocable delegation?

The myth of divine right reinforced the people's natural tendency towards obedience. The myth of popular right can only exacerbate their natural tendency towards anarchy. It will soon make the state the impotent target of various social forces, covering up their *occupation*, bourgeois or proletarian, with a hypocritical cloak of Noah.

54. Popular sovereignty: the General Will

In the form given to it by Suárez, the theory of the political pact undoubtedly contains a fair idea: that of the functional dependence of the state. But this same idea is distorted by a mistaken conception of political command and its origin, and by an unacceptable definition of the Community. For Jesuit doctors, in fact, it is the people who possess sovereignty and delegate it, always provisionally, to the managers they appoint.

However, natural command excludes any subordination of the leader to his subordinates, and the appointment of those who exercise authority is only conceivable insofar as it constitutes a mere recognition *of* a pre-established superiority. Furthermore, for Suárez, the people consist of the *multitude of individuals and families*. Any historical continuity is therefore excluded from the relationship between the community and the state. It is the current multitude that constantly judges its political demands, despite its inability to grasp the problems in their complexity and duration. In other words, the state is subject not to the body of which it is a part, but to incompetent and changing opinion.

Presented so crudely in its consequences, the thesis of popular sovereignty is difficult to sustain. And Rousseau certainly does not improve it when he places in the hands of the numerical majority of individuals the exercise of a sovereignty whose delegation he no longer even admits. Nevertheless, his conclusions are much more logical than those of Hobbes and Spinoza.

On the one hand, indeed, the political pact is difficult to conceive without the social contract, since command is naturally linked to the very existence of any human community. On the

On the other hand, the people cannot delegate their sovereignty without losing it, at least in fact, even if they reserve the right to invalidate the mandate previously granted at any time. Finally, it is not enough to say that the multitude decides: it is also necessary to specify how it expresses its decisions.

Rousseau theoretically resolves all the problems raised by Suárez. However, he does not fail to realise that the solutions he proposes are as difficult to justify as they are to implement. If all voluntary citizens are free and equal, why does half plus one grant itself the right to impose its social conduct on half minus one? The law of numbers destroys, without replacing it, the myth of popular sovereignty, and, however unworkable it may be, the state established by the majority restores the autonomy of political power to its own advantage. Whether it is a minority that imposes itself on the majority or the majority that imposes itself on the minority, coercion changes in degree but not in nature. That is why Rousseau recognises the need to give popular sovereignty a new mythical expression: he launches the theory of the General Will.

The entire people are sovereign, but they express their will through their numerical majority. When casting their vote, citizens do not seek to impose their own point of view, but rather to express the will of the People, the will of the Whole into which they have freely integrated themselves. The majority decision, therefore, satisfies them, whether or not it coincides with their own original opinion, and they accept it without it being necessary to impose it on them. If they refused to comply with it, they would *ipso facto* break the social contract that binds them to their fellow citizens, and it would then be lawful to expel them from the community.

Juan Jacobo's argument is as skilful as it is arbitrary. For even if we accept his individualistic premises, why must the General Will necessarily be embodied in the majority in this or that circumstance, rather than in a minority aware of the decisions that the people would make *if they were fully aware of the situation*?

If the myth of popular sovereignty logically leads to anarchy, the myth of the General Will potentially contains the most arbitrary and absolute dictatorship, as was well proven in France under the regimes of terror established in 1798 by the Jacobins and in 1944 by the *Resistance*, or also in Belgium, when the Social Democrats overthrew, King Leopold III, who had just been confirmed on the throne by a plebiscite, through street action.

Thus, contemporary democracy will oscillate relentlessly between the two myths, that is, between the parliamentary system and party despotism.

55. Historical sovereignty

Despite their contradictory consequences, the two theories of popular sovereignty have a common character. Both make the state a mere instrument of execution, a simple agent, periodically or constantly subject to the ever-present decisions of a public opinion that is defined and captured in a more or less arbitrary manner.

The myth of the General Will poorly disguises the fact that it is individuals, considered in their momentary existence, who express collective sovereignty. The sovereign, therefore, is not the people, but a mass made up of *free and equal* Robinsons, artificially extracted from all social structure and historical continuity. On paper, a sum of abstract schemes. In reality, a conglomerate of beings without memory or foresight.

We know that such unviable theories actually allowed the bourgeoisie to take over the community state and impose its own guiding intention on it. The myth covered up an illegitimate domination, while the individualistic electoral system placed opinion at the mercy of propaganda reserved for the owners of the material means of its dissemination.

However, the divorce between theory and reality could, in the long run, become dangerous. For this reason, the ruling class of the last century welcomed Hegel's thesis of the State, which undoubtedly contradicted the *metaphysical* foundations of the encyclopaedic doctrine but in fact reinforced it by giving the General Will the continuity it lacked. From now on, the majority vote will no longer express a current decision by a certain number of individuals, but rather hypostatise History imposing its intention on the masses. Social evolution thus becomes inevitable in its successive forms, and the State becomes its necessary instrument.

But why, under such conditions, continue to speak of popular sovereignty? The sovereign is no longer the people but History, directly embodied in the State – this is the thesis of the *right-wing* Hegelianists – or diffused throughout society, within which it proceeds according to its dialectical nature – this is the thesis of the Marxists. In the first case, the historical will is imposed on the people through the inspired State. In the second, it gives rise to the State as a provisional expression of class conflict in a given period.

The myth of historical sovereignty thus takes the form of a new divine right, transcendent or immanent. There is hardly any need to emphasise its power over minds. This stems largely from the truth that the theory possesses. Although history is not hypostasis, it nevertheless exists in a real continuity that asserts itself through effective pressure on the community's present and, consequently, on each individual. From it comes all the data on every social problem to be solved. From it have been born both structures and ideologies. From it arise the forces that confront each other in a dialectical antagonism at every moment. From it, finally, is projected the community's intention in perpetual realisation.

The myth of the sovereignty of history is therefore nothing more than the idealisation, in the Platonic sense of the word, of the historical sovereignty of the state, or, if you prefer, of the sovereignty of the historical state, the state that is both the product and creator of history. The fact that one or another usurping or conquering class has been able to use it to its own advantage, thus attributing a fatalistic meaning to its position or action, does not detract from the accuracy of its foundation. However, such accuracy does not authorise us to take the myth for reality. It is not history that possesses sovereignty, but the state insofar as it fulfils its historical function, insofar as it embodies and affirms the community's intention as it emerges from a history that is not a separate intelligence, but simply the past of the social organism. Without denying the importance or effectiveness of myth, it is clearly objective reality that we are concerned with analysing here.

56. Historical law and natural law

The first point to note, as a corollary to our conclusions in the previous paragraph, is that idealistic theories, which attribute to History (or to Social Consciousness, which in Durkheim, for example, replaces it) an existence or at least a being in itself, deify myth and thus grant a complex of images, whose value is purely psychopragmatic, a supernatural power of determination that it does not possess.

History is always the history of a community or set of communities. It is reduced to the causal flow of forces and the needs that result from them, or also to the life of the social organism, both in its constants and in its changing modalities. At a given moment in its evolution, it expresses demands; it does not impose solutions. And the demands it expresses are reduced to the application in such and such particular circumstances of the general laws that govern society.

Now, the state is a constant in community life. In its essence, it is therefore natural law. In its modalities, variations and actions, it is historical law. Does this mean that we are opposing nature and history here? Not at all. On the contrary, we consider historical law to be the real duration of schematic natural law, which is never anything but an abstraction.

When we define the state as the organ of conscience, command, and synthesis of the community, we are stating the general conclusion of an inductive process based on immediate observation and scientific knowledge of diverse states belonging to multiple communities, both present and extinct. We have already grasped and studied these diverse states in the flow of their effective duration, that is, in the mobile forms born of their historical evolution. And we have had to disregard their different regimes, their variable institutions, their changing legislation, as well as their coefficient of legitimacy. This is a valid procedure in political science, but it does not authorise us, however, to reduce the complex reality that presents itself to us, the fluid reality outside of which all action is impossible, to the scheme thus formed in our minds.

If history is always the history of a community, as we have already said above, the state is always the state of a social organism at a given moment in its historical trajectory. It is not enough, therefore, to consider it in the light of natural law, which only allows us to affirm its theoretical legitimacy, that is, simply to reject any anarchist thesis in the realm of utopias. We must also confront it with historical law, that is, determine whether, in its present forms, it responds to the demands that community life has given rise to, whether or not it arises spontaneously – which does not mean without effort or struggle – from the immediately preceding past.

An example will clarify our thinking. A monarchical state is, in natural law, always perfectly legitimate; we are speaking in the abstract. In historical law, it is not irrelevant whether the sovereign who embodies it at a given moment comes from a dynasty that has been dedicated to its function for centuries or, on the contrary, has seized power. In the first case, a lineage that has proven its legitimacy continues. In the second, he establishes a new order. But the monarch who is historically legitimate with respect to the past is not necessarily so in his present activity: he may be incapable of fulfilling his task and thus open up a revolutionary crisis. Conversely, the improvised sovereign may well respond to present needs and, for example, resolve the crisis at the cost of disrupting dynastic or institutional continuity.

In other words, it is historical demands that determine legitimacy, not of the state itself, which is always legitimate, but of its current forms.

57. Historical law and legislative law

All this only confirms what we wrote at the beginning of this chapter: sovereignty does not come from a principle or a theory. Nor is it based on written constitutional law. The latter, as Ernesto Palacio has rightly pointed out, is only

a political epiphenomenon. It merely expresses in codified formulas the institutions of an era. Not of the present era, moreover, but of a more or less updated past. It is therefore only the legal survival of a *de facto* situation that is constantly being overcome, but which nevertheless continues to form the historical substratum of present social evolution.

This simple analysis clearly shows us how wrong it is to oppose, as is usually done, the *de facto* state to the *de jure* state. Both can be historical rights if they respond to the conditions posed in the present by the duration of the community. Both may not satisfy the demands of the moment at all. The *de facto* state undoubtedly breaks legal continuity: this does not mean that it ceases to be historical law in the event that a *de jure* state is powerless to fulfil its functions. We can even say that the *de jure* state, even outside of any crisis, does not adapt, due to its legislative condition, to its necessary tasks and constantly has to modify its own legal status, to a varying degree, thus partially transforming itself into a *de facto* state, regardless of appearances.

In reality, our terminology is inadequate in that it implies a pan-jurist theory of political order. To be precise, we should speak not of a *de jure* state or a *de facto* state, but rather of a *passive de jure* state, when it is simply the present projection of a past institutional system, and an *active de jure* state, when there is the creation of a legislative superstructure.

Such a distinction, however, is only valid with regard to written constitutional law. As far as historical law is concerned, any state is both *de jure passive*, insofar as it is faced with facts that it cannot change because they are the product of the past, and *de jure active*, insofar as it has to resolve successive present problems. It is both heir and legislator: heir to a social order in continuous evolution, as it emerges from the duration of the community, and legislator of its necessary present modifications.

Written law is no longer merely the codification of existing norms: it becomes a political instrument for intervention in social relations. It thus responds to the sovereign role of the state as interpreter and creator of history. But this does not make it any less dangerous, even when it is legitimate in that it validly expresses, at a given moment, a norm of natural law. By its very wording, it effectively immobilises the flow of evolution into which it seeks to insert itself. Adapted to the present, it is already outdated when the State enacts it, and it will become increasingly irrelevant as time goes by. Intended for the future, it will undoubtedly play its role in the history to come, but this will nevertheless be somewhat different from what the legislator expected or even foresaw; hence the inadequacy of the text to a situation which, nevertheless, it will have helped to bring about.

A necessary evil in communities that are too large for customary law to suffice to govern them, written legislation strives in vain to express or precede social evolution. The state must therefore constantly not only rewrite it, but also interpret it. It is therefore essential that, far from being subject to it, it should, on the contrary, be placed above it. We shall see in the following chapter the institutional consequences of such a necessity.

58. Authority and freedoms

From now on, we can relegate the Law, that ambiguous abstraction to which liberals have often tried to subordinate the State, to the museum of myths with no real basis.

Undoubtedly, there are natural social laws that proceed from the community body and that it must enforce whenever it wants to make valid policy: we are not talking about them here, but rather about a legal absolute whose manifestation would be written laws. Now, far from being the cause, let alone the source, of authority, these laws are, on the contrary, its past or present work, and therefore its consequence. It is therefore a strange illusion to see in them the guarantee of individual freedoms against the authority of the state when the latter uses them, to the extent that its historical framework allows, as effective instruments of eventual centralisation.

In reality, individual freedoms only exist insofar as they express the particular powers that groups and individuals possess by their very nature. Whether these powers are recognised and respected by the State *de jure* or *de facto* is of little importance. The essential thing is that they are recognised and respected. And such recognition and respect in no way imply a restriction of community authority, for the simple reason that such authority would disappear or be weakened if the constituent, cellular and organic elements of the social body were to break down, and it therefore has an interest in protecting them.

Conversely, individual freedoms would disappear or be weakened if the authority of the state were to fail, since the power of groups and individuals is a function not only of their own vitality but also of organic harmony. Anarchy, it hardly needs to be emphasised, is not the optimal condition for the affirmation of the family or the enterprise, for example.

It can certainly happen, as we have seen, that the state tends to restrict individual freedoms, just as groups tend to restrict central authority. Both attitudes are pathological in nature. It is the weak state, powerless to synthesise strong groups, that tends to *atomise* the community. It is the weak groups, fearful of the state because they are unable to resist its undue intervention, that tend to hinder its action.

We return, then, to the two powers exercised by the community body and from which its authority derives: that which belongs to it by right and is, to a certain extent, in dialectical conflict with the particular powers from which the freedoms in question derive, and that which arises from the synthesis of the forces that have been overcome, on whose power it depends. Subordinate powers are formidable for a weak state because they effectively oppose, by their very vitality, the performance of the functions of synthesis, while a strong state will draw from them an increase in power, which it is in its interest to acquire.

Far from there being an antinomy between authority and freedoms, we see, on the contrary, that authority constitutes the indispensable condition for the free development of groups and individuals. It goes without saying that by free development we do not mean an anarchic affirmation, much less an anarchic expansion, that is to say, independent of the unitary intention of the organism. But freedom is never independent of historical conditions, and it is futile, for example, for a family integrated into a community today to aspire to a greater freedom than it would have if it were possible to live in a patriarchal state.

Is it conceivable, moreover, that the freedom of any social group, independent of the historical whole of which it is a part, could be greater than that which it enjoys within the

unitary organism? To believe so would be to forget that freedom is nothing more than the expression of power, and that the power of the group, even when directed towards a higher end than its own, is expanded by association and, even more so, by socialisation, in the general sense of the word. As for individuals, as we shall see later, they depend in their very being on life in society.

59. General interest and particular interests

The fact that both the group and the individual find their most favourable conditions for development within the Community does not imply that their particular interests always necessarily coincide, or even mainly coincide, with the general interest, but simply that their autonomous activity presupposes the existence – and not the respect – of the collective organism. Each can, in fact, to a varying degree, take advantage of the benefits of organised life without accepting to fulfil the most basic duties of solidarity, and even violating the natural rules, written or unwritten, of the social order.

Let us note that, in doing so, the parasite – or pirate – does not in any way deny the Community, although it harms it. It does not become independent from the whole to which it belongs by historical position. It simply privileges its particular interest, not only over other particular interests, or over some of them, which is a matter of mere natural law, but over the general interest. This is undoubtedly an extreme case, but in fact, any constituent element of the social body sometimes acts as a parasite or pirate, even when it is otherwise willing to sacrifice itself for the community in certain circumstances. There is nothing strange about that.

But we must draw conclusions from the normality of the phenomenon: the famous formula *that the general interest is the sum of particular interests* is nonsense. The sum of particular interests is a quagmire, resulting in anarchy. Will it be objected that such anarchy is contrary to particular interests and that therefore these interests tend towards order? It is indisputable, and we have already noted, that social life presupposes a constant *de facto* victory of solidarity over struggle. But this solidarity is imposed by community organisation and by the action of the state. It is not spontaneous in every group or in every individual at every moment of social life. Above all, it is not voluntary, although the will can confirm it *a posteriori* (and generally does so), but historical.

It results from a complex chain of data, in the full sense of the word, whose rejection would require greater effort than acceptance. A generalised good faith and an almost divine clairvoyance on the part of all members of the Community may perhaps explain, in theory, their subordination to the social Whole understood as the supreme condition of particular existences: but they can never justify the sacrifice of those very existences. The soldier on the battlefield understands very well that discipline and mutual aid are the reasons for his strength, and therefore for his survival. It would be somewhat difficult, however, to make him admit that his selfishness obliges him to die for the benefit of the community. Individualistic theses end up in plain and simple absurdity.

In reality, the general interest is the overcoming of particular interests in a dialectical process that includes a hierarchy of values. A strictly rationalist synthesis, Hegelian in nature, presupposes the automatic realisation, in a new form, of all the forces that have been overcome. Here, on the contrary, we see that the affirmation of the Whole sometimes requires the complete negation – the destruction – of one or another of its constituent elements. If legitimate, this phenomenon prevents us from considering the social body as a

simple resultant. We must recognise its qualitative supremacy over the groups and individuals that compose it, and admit that the Whole, superior to its parts, may demand their sacrifice.

Here we address the crucial problem of the relationship between the individual and the Community, and with the State that embodies its historical intention. This is a crucial problem, for its solution determines not only the meaning of political action, but also that of society itself.

60. The individual, a social product

The pragmatic and logical arguments commonly used in favour of social supremacy actually include a begging of the question. To say that the sacrifice of the individual in some cases conditions the very existence of the Community and that all discussion must disappear before the law of necessity, or that the Whole is, by definition, more important than its parts, is always to assume the pre-eminence of the social, and it is precisely this pre-eminence that is at stake.

Liberals readily argue that any community is nothing more than a conglomerate of individuals associated by free contract – the thesis of the encyclopaedists – or by the demands of their nature – the thesis of the Christian Democrats – with a view to their personal ends. They may admit to certain limitations, agreed upon in advance, on the rights of each individual, but they will never accept the idea that social coercion can harm the existence or what they consider to be the fundamental rights of any member. But the starting point of their reasoning is false.

The individual is not born free to live or not in society: he is born a child, subject to the environment in which he finds himself without having been asked for his consent. While it is true that society stems from human nature, that is, from the social instinct that each person carries within themselves, it is no less true that this instinct, which presupposes, moreover, the natural incompleteness of the individual and, in its modalities, a prodigious historical enrichment, does not create the social framework of its possessor, but simply incorporates the latter into a pre-established framework. (Cf. Our work "*The Nature of Man*", Chapter VI, "The Social Man", Buenos Aires, Ed. Arayú, 1955).

We are seeing here a state of affairs that marks an indisputable dependence. Is this an unjust situation, assuming that such a term can be validly applied to a natural phenomenon, a situation that the legislator should endeavour to correct? Perhaps the answer would be yes if the social birth of the child, with the consequences that it entails, were a mere accident. But man is not a pure *individual* upon whom external forces impose an essentially inadequate environment. He is the biological product of a more or less stable social group, but always solidly constituted at the moment of procreation, the couple, the basic element of the family that the child comes to complete.

He therefore depends, in his very being, on society. Moreover (and here we need only follow Maurras' analysis), he survives and develops only thanks to the care he receives from his family or, in its absence, from some other, no less social, body that replaces it. The community then gives him the education that makes him the beneficiary of the capital of civilisation created by centuries or millennia of history.

Thus, whichever way we look at it, man is nothing but an heir. Of course, society does not give him life and culture, that is to say,

personality, only to take them away later. But it is natural for it to do so when its existence or power demands it, just as it is natural, in general, for the individual to be subject to it. Of course, the society we are talking about here is not an abstract entity, but the historical organism that constitutes the framework of a given individual, and we know that the state is its indispensable governing body.

Man is therefore naturally subject not only to the principle of society, but also, through the hierarchy of groups and federations, to the particular community to which he belongs, and consequently to his state, at least to the extent that the latter performs its functions as it should.

61. The *raison d'état*

Contrary to what one might think at first glance, the above analysis highlights the artificial nature of a problem that has long poisoned ill-informed minds: that of the relationship between ethics and politics, that is, between the science and art of personal leadership and the science and art of community leadership. Both disciplines are undoubtedly on different planes. The former determines and imposes the rules of voluntary action; the latter determines and imposes the laws of necessary action, which, as we have seen in the course of this chapter, belong to the order of nature and not to that of conscience.

It will be easily argued that, although it is true that political sovereignty does not come from the sum of individual wills, it is nonetheless true that political action undoubtedly depends on the will of those who decide and execute it. Or also that, while it is true that social evolution obeys natural laws, it is nonetheless men who take responsibility for their application. In other words, politics is independent of ethics, but the political action of the individual, whether an ordinary citizen or a ruler, is subject to it.

We readily admit this. Does this mean that there can be conflict between two contradictory demands? This is where the facts of the problem are systematically distorted by individualists of all kinds. They consider the moral man to be a self-sufficient god who acts on or in a social environment that is subordinate to him. Political action would thus depend on personal convenience.

Nothing could be further from the truth. The individual who makes a decision in good conscience cannot morally disregard his social nature or his position within the groups and community to which he belongs. Obedience to the orders of the legitimate state is, for the citizen, a moral duty, whatever judgement he may make in his heart of hearts. As for the ruler, he is bound by a duty of state which is, for him, a duty of state. The most basic ethics oblige him to perform first and foremost the functions that are proper to him, that is, to bend his actions to the needs of community life.

Politics cannot, therefore, demand any immoral act, for the simple reason that every act becomes moral by the mere fact that politics demands it. It is only immoral when it is carried out for personal gain, thereby distorting it. Hence, condemnations pronounced in the name of individualistic morality against the *raison d'état* are indefensible. They are based, not on the natural right of the autonomous human being to self-realisation – a right that is subordinate, as we have seen, to the no less natural right of the community to

affirmation – but rather in the idea of absolute justice in which all individuals participate equally and before which the state must bow.

It may be unfair that such a soldier should die in war while others survive, or that an innocent person should be sacrificed in defence of the social order. But the sovereign body of the Community cannot and must not enter into such considerations. It embodies a human purpose that is higher than that of the individual and foreign to all abstraction. It therefore has its own reason for acting and cannot be subject to any principle other than that of immanent legitimacy.

VI. INSTITUTIONS OF THE STATE

62. Importance of institutions

The exercise of sovereignty requires the State to have an internal organisation, the structural constants of which we have studied in Chapter III. We know that the governing body of the Community, at least as soon as it exceeds the elementary political level of the tribe, always involves a government and an administration. But we must also note that these necessary mechanisms can take various institutional forms, which have been duly classified by theorists.

There has often been a tendency to view different regimes as mere accidental variations on a single theme, all equally valid although more or less adapted to different peoples and circumstances, making the morality of men (Plato, Aristotle) or the representative character of the ruling class (Palacio) the sole criterion of social order. Those who hold this view forget the functional nature of the state, which exists only to perform a clearly defined mission.

It is not enough, therefore, that the individuals who embody it at a given moment in history are honest or 'characteristic' of a given social situation: above all, they must be politically capable, obliged by their position to use their abilities in the interests of the community, and possess the technical means that are essential to them. Now, if the very existence of the state depends on an unchanging fundamental structure, the choice of men, their general orientation, and the political instruments at their disposal to carry out their task depend on its changing institutions.

Of course, whatever the regime, there is always a state, a ruling class and the governed people. But such an observation is *anatomically* accurate: it is not *biologically* accurate. The state is not as effective when its powers are limited by a constitution as when its leader is a king or dictator. The ruling class does not provide it with personnel of equal effectiveness if its selection criteria are wealth or functional value. The people do not obey as well if the regime attributes sovereignty to them as if it keeps them in their subordinate position.

This does not mean that one system is a political panacea, nor that another system produces equally deplorable results for all peoples and in all eras. The best theoretical institutions will be powerless to restore the biopsychic qualities that a degenerate race lacks, while a rapidly expanding community may be better suited than another to an inferior regime. Certain ethnic, geopolitical or historical conditions may impose unity on a people whose system of government tends to break it down, or vice versa. But this does not detract from the truth that the goal sought by any state, taking into account the nature of man and that of the community, requires

a set of institutions that may vary in their nuances and relationships, but which are always unavoidably imposed on pain of failure.

Of course, we are only talking here about real institutions and not those proclaimed, in the form of written laws, by a provisional constitution. The latter is undoubtedly important: it exerts pressure on the real state, which is constrained, if it lacks the strength or the will to repeal it, to respect its letter. Its spirit is more malleable. Suffice it to note, after many others, that the liberal United States and the camouflaged colonies of Central America have identical constitutions from an institutional point of view, as does Bolivia, which was able to carry out its national revolution without modifying its theoretical system of government. No observer, however, would dare to identify the real political institutions of Bolivia with those of the United States.

63. Institutions and ideologies

Institutions are, after all, only the technical aspect of a regime. They are merely instruments that are more or less suited to the ends sought, tools that can be created for those ends, but which can also be inherited and interpreted in new ways. Their structure, then, is important, as we have seen, but it is less important than the spirit that permeates them and determines their use. This spirit comes from what our contemporary language calls, with a slight modification of the traditional meaning of the term, an ideology, which in other times was designated, in a more strictly rationalist sense, by the name of doctrine.

Let us not be misled by words: the ideology of the State does not in any way consist, despite what pseudo-Machiavellians have often claimed, in a reversal of the terms of the problem, making the structure and dynamism of the Community dependent on some preconceived and *arbitrary* theory of an intellectual or ethical nature. Undoubtedly, as in any human mental construct, a certain amount of error or utopia may be introduced into it. This does not make it any less a more or less clear awareness on the part of the ruling class of its position and role in the Community and with regard to the Community.

The fact that the state has an ideology, and cannot fail to have one, does not mean, therefore, that it derives its institutions from some body of abstract principles – such idealism would lead it straight to failure – but, on the contrary, that it acts according to a doctrinal system, sometimes more pragmatic than scientific, which expresses the purpose that inspires it.

Hence the division of state ideologies into two categories: those that respond to a communal intention and those that conceal a social class interest. Fascism belongs to the former: that is why the liberal institutions it has inherited function, even if they are far from satisfactory from a structural point of view, in the sense of national affirmation. Liberalism, on the other hand, belongs to the second: the community institutions it has had to preserve are distorted by the bourgeois class that *occupies* the state.

We can therefore see the extent to which ideology prevails over purely formal institutions. But its effectiveness is not limited to the strictly governmental sphere. It manifests itself throughout the social organisation, which in turn reacts on the political order. In a society where there is a tendency towards family breakdown, it is not irrelevant whether the state supports or combats it, especially by authorising or prohibiting divorce.

In a community where class struggle prevails, it is not irrelevant whether the state places its authority and power at the service of the exploiters or the exploited. But the attitude of the governing body of society in favour of or against the indissolubility of marriage, and in favour of or against the hoarding of surplus value by the owners of the means of production, is not solely a consequence of its ideology.

The communal state, the liberal state and the communist state will not solve the problems of organic structure in the same way and will be more or less sensitive to the vital needs of the natural order. Individuals themselves externalise, in their social attitude, the influence of an official doctrine from which they cannot escape. The state disseminates, by all the means at its disposal, and especially through the school system, ideas, values and myths that create, within the population, currents of force and a degree of tension that contribute powerfully to orienting social evolution in one direction or another; in the direction that the ruling class considers most satisfactory in terms of its objectives, whether or not these coincide with those of the community.

64. Theoretical democracy

We have said above that state ideology is sometimes more pragmatic than scientific in nature. We can now clarify our thinking: it is always pragmatic, whether or not it expresses the demands of the natural social order. It is always a simple means used by the ruling class to impose its domination. But to achieve this, the legitimate ruling class needs, by virtue of its very purpose, a scientifically valid body of doctrine, while a usurping ruling class, on the contrary, needs a theoretical construct that facilitates and appears to justify an anti-physical position and action, and which can therefore only be based on false principles.

Contemporary history offers us a perfect example of ideological mystification. In order to seize power and use it to its advantage, the conquering bourgeoisie obviously could not rely on scientific data on the problem of the state: this would only have served to highlight the illegitimate nature of its claims. It therefore needed to adopt, and even promote, an ideology whose dissemination would weaken the traditional community system, transform it into a ruling class, and establish an economic system that would ensure its dominance in the emerging industrial society.

Liberalism served its purpose perfectly. What, in fact, is its theoretical basis? The principle of popular sovereignty, which presupposes the thesis of the social contract, with its individual premises: the natural freedom and equality of men considered as abstract schemas and not as historical beings.

If we leave aside the mythical power of such an ideology, as well as its actual results, and analyse its various aspects from a scientific point of view, we cannot help but notice its unreal nature. If society is, in fact, only a juxtaposition of free and equal individuals, all organisation is by definition forbidden, as Maurras has rightly seen, since it means internal differentiation into organs, then functional hierarchy and, for that very reason, inequality and authority. Anarchy is therefore the normal state of democratic society, and Rousseau recognises this. But he prohibits all social life.

It is therefore necessary, from the outset, to twist the principles and admit a delegation of popular sovereignty: a State will be maintained, but its members will be appointed by

free and equal individuals. And since electoral unanimity seems somewhat difficult to achieve, a new stratagem will allow it to be replaced by numerical majority. Hence the following dilemma: either statesmen will be considered the representatives of their constituents, and will therefore be subject in all respects to private interests or, at best, and to the extent that individuals become aware of a general interest, to incompetent wills; or else they will want to make them true leaders, and their appointment by their own subordinates will constitute mere nonsense, aggravated by the inability of individuals to base their choice on the real needs of a community whose historical intention cannot but escape them.

Ernesto Palacio tries to justify the democratic system as an instrument for selecting the ruling minority. For him, the people do not really elect their leaders; they consecrate them, that is to say, they merely vote for those who already rule. Thus, suffrage would be the *ratification of a prior authority, obtained by the usual means of gaining authority, through persuasion and prestige.*

This may be true in a very small community, where people know and judge each other through daily social contact and where the general interest is immediately apparent, without any room for discussion. The peasants of the early Middle Ages who gathered around the soldier, making him their lord, had only a theoretical choice: in fact, necessity prevailed with an invincible force over their eventual preferences. The same is still true, *mutatis mutandis*, in small rural communities. But when it comes to appointing the men who are to lead the community, on a scale far greater than that of the individual, the masses are no longer sensitive to anything but a complex and variable mixture of particular interests, passionate impulses, customs and myths that have very little to do with politics.

For every true leader who manages, in a period of crisis, to impose himself on the masses, how many mediocre and unscrupulous social climbers manage to win their trust and their votes! Perhaps the people consecrate with their vote those who already rule them, but they allow themselves to be ruled not by the most capable, but by those who best know how to flatter their aspirations of the moment.

65. Real democracy

Historically, these two successive aspects of democracy served the bourgeoisie's purposes admirably. In its doctrinal purity, the theory was inapplicable, but it had a strong power of suggestion over minds. In the name of egalitarian individualism and barely mitigated anarchism, it effectively undermined the traditional order of the community, its organic structure and its state. In its majority form, it placed political authority at the mercy of opinion, that is to say, ultimately, of those who held the means to act on the *atomised* masses *or*, if you prefer, on individuals arbitrarily removed from their natural settings.

However, possession of the instruments of propaganda depended on financial power, which belonged precisely to the bourgeois class. For the latter, it was therefore only a matter of time. Thus, once it had taken control of the state, we saw it first establish a census system that reserved the right to vote for its members, and then grant universal suffrage to the people when the work of ideological penetration, carried out mainly through schools and the press, had made any surprises impossible.

Perhaps it will be objected that such a procedure constitutes an abusive and fraudulent use of the principles and institutions of democracy. We do not deny this. But we must recognise that it is these very unnatural principles, and the institutions they give rise to, that create the optimal conditions for the *occupation* of the community state by an oligarchy. Moreover, they make such *occupation* inevitable. For there is no state, as we have seen, without a ruling minority.

If this minority is elected by universal suffrage, it depends on opinion, which depends on propaganda, which depends on money. There is no way to break this fatal chain, except through revolutionary rupture. Democracy is necessarily a plutocracy.

The only alternative would be the drawing of lots for magistrates, proposed, no doubt ironically, by Aristotle. It is hardly necessary to spell out the catastrophic consequences that would be expected from such a system. All continuity in community leadership would disappear. The incompetence of those in power would be almost total. Their isolation, due to the lack of a ruling class to support them, would make their position untenable and their authority uncertain.

Paradoxically, we should be glad that theoretical democracy cannot function and that an oligarchy effectively holds the political levers of power. Undoubtedly, the state is then *occupied*. Undoubtedly, it serves as an instrument for a class that exploits the community for its own exclusive benefit. Undoubtedly, as a result, its power is diverted from its natural purposes. Undoubtedly, it is poorly managed, since its ruling minority is economic in nature and not political as it should be, and the historical intention it embodies is subject to a class intention that often contradicts it.

But that does not make it any less true that the bourgeois oligarchy has an interest in keeping alive the community on which it parasitises. It weakens it by its mere presence, but ensures its basic functions. It subordinates it to international financial powers, but preserves a minimum of organic structure. Its domination creates a pathological social state, but the patient does not die from it: it would inevitably die if the absolute anarchy that theoretical democracy implies were to succeed in suppressing the state.

The oligarchy, needing political power for its own use, cannot deliberately destroy its organ. But it takes away its independence and reduces its authority because it fears some shock on its part, and also because it has to respect, to some extent, in the face of public opinion, the anti-physical principles it proclaims and from which institutions arise that respond only partially to the demands of command.

66. The party system

The bourgeois oligarchy is thus a prisoner of the regime that constitutes the instrument of its domination. It is undoubtedly possible for it, in times of crisis, to tighten the class dictatorship it imposes on the community: however, it can only do so by means of a *trompe l'oeil*, in the name of the famous sophism: *no freedom for the enemies of freedom*. But under normal conditions, it must respect the rules of the game that it itself has instituted and from which it derives its political power. The electoral system presupposes not only freedom of expression but also a multiplicity of opinions. And if the general interest is nothing more than the sum of particular interests, it is logical that these should be represented within the state.

On the other hand, and this is not the least important aspect of the problem, the bourgeois class is neither a community nor an organ of the Community. It is merely a social stratum devoid of institutions, and therefore of hierarchy, except in the economic order, where,

precisely, its institutions are rivals. It may well have a common higher interest: to retain power. But that does not make it any less heterogeneous, divided by the particular interests that economic liberalism, even if not always strictly respected, opposes by definition.

In short, it would be wrong to attribute to the bourgeoisie a political cynicism that would imply excessive clairvoyance on its part. Only a tiny minority is fully aware of the liberal mystification. Most capitalists believe in the ideology that justifies their power, and do not hesitate to attribute to themselves, sometimes in good faith, a genuine social mission. And this ideology, although based on immutable general principles, is no less heterogeneous in its practical expression than the positions and interests it conceals.

For all these reasons, which are diverse but interrelated, a democratic regime cannot be monolithic. The social forces that use and support it each claim their place within it. Non-bourgeois social forces, whether they come from other classes, such as the proletariat, or from movements founded on different bases, as was the case with National Socialism under the Weimar Republic, also use, at least to the extent that they manage to shake off the yoke of the powers of money, the weapons that their adversary unwittingly places at their disposal. The state thus becomes the prize in an electoral struggle in which parties compete to win the majority of votes and then form the ruling minority of the community.

Democracy, then, necessarily determines the party system. It thus subordinates the general interest to particular interests, and only exceptionally does a party that embodies the historical intention of the social body, which presupposes extraordinary political lucidity or an uncommon capacity for sacrifice on the part of its members, manage to prevail in the electoral arena, which, moreover, marks the end of the regime.

It hardly needs to be noted that a state that is not only *occupied* by a class oligarchy but also torn between rival factions of that oligarchy and subjected to pressure from parties of different origins is by its very nature incapable of any continuous action. It is the plaything of events and of the repercussions that those events have on interests and sentiments.

Instability reaches its peak when the government emerges from a parliament of parties to which it is accountable, as is the case under a parliamentary regime. It is somewhat mitigated when the head of state is not elected, thus limiting democracy, as in constitutional monarchies. The King embodies historical continuity, even if he does not have the necessary means to ensure that it always prevails. But the government, from which the head of state is arbitrarily excluded, is subject to parliament. The presidential system, on the other hand, respects the necessary unity of leadership. Ministers are merely secretaries of the head of state and are accountable only to him. Parliament performs purely legislative functions.

But the president is elected. He is therefore a party man, with all the consequences that this implies. And he enjoys only provisional stability, limited to the variable duration of his term of office.

67. The separation of powers

In terms of institutions, the presidential system suffers from the same problem as all democratic systems: the separation of powers.

The principle of popular sovereignty is in no way responsible for this untouchable dogma of liberalism, nor for the internal anarchy that results from it for the state. An elected government that has all the levers of power in the Community in its hands is, in fact, perfectly conceivable. And, on the other hand, if there is an infallible general will, why such eagerness to limit its power by artificially creating authorities whose diversity only has meaning if they are rivals?

There is a theoretical absurdity here, although it constitutes proof of great political prudence on the part of the ruling oligarchy. The liberal state, in effect, may well be the mere representative of the bourgeois class: nevertheless, as we have already seen, it continues to perform its function as the governing body of the community, a function that has been diverted from its real meaning but still exists. The men who embody it may well be appointed by the powers of money: this does not prevent their actions from being conditioned by the position they occupy and even by their personal ambition. In other words, the puppet state naturally tends to free itself, as far as possible, from the yoke of the social forces that *occupy* it.

It is therefore all the more difficult to manage the more power it possesses and the more firmly it exercises the strictly political power that derives from its not entirely disappeared community role. It is therefore in the interests of the ruling class to break its functional unity by entrusting its three fundamental powers to institutions of different origins and natures, independent of each other.

Any sovereign act thus depends on an agreement, or more often a compromise, between parliament (for greater security, generally divided into two chambers), the repository of legislative power, and the government, the holder of the falsely named executive power. And that act is still subject to the rulings of a body of magistrates, the holders of judicial power, whose members are irremovable. There can therefore be no rigour whatsoever in either decision-making or execution.

If the background to the matter were ignored, one might think that, in the minds of the constituents, the Community and its various components must protect themselves from the State as if it were an enemy. However, either the governing body of society is legitimate, and there is no valid reason to limit powers that are merely different expressions *of* the same power governed by a single purpose; or it is illegitimate, and then any power it wields is superfluous.

For its defenders in good faith, the separation of powers can only be explained by the false theory of social equilibrium. If the State is nothing more than the arbiter of conflicting forces, its division is a guarantee of impartiality, and it is unlikely that elements of different origins will agree to favour one group at the expense of others. But this is to make social evolution the result of a mere compromise between the dynamics of the community, without recognising the latter as having a life of its own. In such conditions, obviously, the state has nothing to direct for the simple reason that the social body has no existence outside its components.

Our previous analyses have shown how mistaken such a conception is. The demand for synthesis is, moreover, so powerful that the tripartite state, despite pressure from the ruling oligarchy, tends relentlessly to regain its lost unity.

Sometimes it is the *executive* that subjugates the legislature, sometimes it is the legislature that absorbs the *executive*. Only in exceptional cases does the judiciary truly enjoy the sovereign freedom

sovereign freedom that democratic constitutions, whether written or customary, recognise. The social body, even *when occupied*, only has meaning and *raison d'être* because of its function: it is natural that it should spontaneously seek, even without realising it, the means to fulfil it.

68. Monarchy

For all these reasons, the dogma of the separation of powers constitutes the institutional basis of every democratic regime and, more generally, the various constitutions drawn up by liberal theorists bring into play all possible and imaginable systems to make the act of government dependent on a majority multiplicity of accidentally converging decisions.

The unitary state, even when it emerges from a particular social class, which it therefore favours – as was the case, for example, with the Napoleonic Empire – always tends to identify itself to some extent with the historical intention of the Community. It is then fragmented in order to constrain it to represent only the more or less common interests of the ruling class. Not only are the various powers entrusted to autonomous entities, as we have just shown, but the latter are also deprived of the functional unity that would make them coherent, and therefore dangerous.

The executive power, because of its symbolic nature, is the most resistant to multiplicity: the constitution is therefore generally limited, although we have some contemporary examples of collegiate systems, to removing all effectiveness by making the head of state a mere representative figure. Legislative power is handed over to assemblies of several hundred members. Judicial power passes, in important matters, from the judge to the jury. There is no longer a sovereign, then, but a number of small partial sovereigns, each expressing themselves through a vote and representing organic social forces, as in the case of senators, or artificial and changing forces, as in the case of deputies, theoretically elected by a majority of individuals, but in fact appointed by parties.

In this way, all particular interests can be confronted: only the general interest remains unexpressed. Government decisions are the result of a mechanical calculation of votes and thus satisfy, to the extent that the necessary compromise does not diminish their vigour or coherence, a provisional coalition of social elements.

To complete the picture, let us add that crowd psychology has clearly established, without any doubt as to the results of its analyses, that the intellectual level of an assembly is always lower than that of its members on average. But even if this were not the case, it would still be impossible to identify a synthesis and a majority result. Even if all the constituent elements of the Community were represented and expressed, which is not the case in an individualistic regime, and agreed on everything (a hypothesis that only occurs in the few moments of intense collective emotion), the social body would be deprived of an organ of affirmation or, at least, of a fully effective organ.

For its historical intention to be realised as it should be, it is essential that the instrument of its projection share in its unitary nature. It is necessary for the State to be its memory, its will and its purpose, that is to say, for it to possess not only functional independence, but also an awareness of social duration and unquestionable authority. Unity of leadership is therefore inherent in the very being of the Community. And it is in the monarchical State, according to Maurras' terminology, in the State whose sovereignty is

embodied in a single person, whatever the mode of designation, that such unity is most naturally manifested.

Louis XIV's often misunderstood phrase, "*I am the State*," merely expressed the perfect identification of community unity and monarchical unity. Certainly, the personal sovereign is subject to error, as is the collective sovereign, albeit to a lesser extent. But he possesses the fundamental condition of consciousness, command and synthesis, a condition that is lacking in any council or assembly of equal individuals.

No one, in fact, can give what they do not possess. Only the unitary state can give the social body the unity of which it is, by definition, the functional organ.

69. Hereditary monarchy

This unity, as we have seen, is not static. Constantly brought back to the fore by the very interplay of necessary dialectical confrontations, it is the product of ever-renewed overcoming, that is to say, of continuous creation on the part of the State. It is not enough, therefore, for the latter to concentrate all powers in a single hand at a given moment in history: it must also have a continuity that allows it to embody the guiding intention of the community throughout its social duration.

Not a plain and simple existential continuity: this goes without saying, since we know that the State, however weakened or subjugated it may be, cannot disappear without causing the decomposition of the social body, and therefore retains a minimum of effectiveness even in periods of crisis or subversion; but rather the continuity of its finalistic action, or also the continuity of its unity.

Monarchical regimes, when they place power in the hands of a single man for a fixed term or for life, fragment the historical evolution of the state and, therefore, that of the community. We do not mean, of course, that social duration stops with each transfer of power: the state continues to fulfil its function, but it temporarily loses the unitary concentration that is indispensable to it. Periodically, it becomes leaderless. Furthermore, the legitimacy of the new leader, regardless of the constitutional system under which he is appointed, remains to be proven, since it is strictly personal: only subsequent events will establish it. And if the monarch takes power by force, or if previous services cause him to be appointed, the problem of succession remains to be resolved.

In theory, monarchy allows authority to always fall to the most suitable person. In fact, it does not ensure the state a continuity that is perfectly confused with the continuity of the organism, and social duration periodically suffers, through its fault, from always dangerous crises of depression. Is it not abnormal, moreover, to reduce a social organ par excellence to a succession of individuals juxtaposed in time? Is it not possible *to socialise* the state without causing it to lose the personal character on which its unity depends?

There is one social group that naturally possesses both continuity and unity of leadership: the family, which perpetuates itself through the generations and whose head is designated, by each generation and without possible discussion, by its very biological function. Hence the hereditary monarchy, in which power belongs to a family whose head automatically exercises it.

Constitutional crises disappear, although not the rare biological accidents of minorities. The problem of choice disappears, since nature resolves it. The rhythm of the state merges with that of the community composed of families. Legitimacy, always based on the adequacy of the functional organ to its mission, is no longer personal but historical, like the duration of the community itself. The guiding intention of the social body is thus embodied in a biological lineage that lives it without interruption.

Let us add that the inheritance of acquired characteristics intervenes to give the dynasty a functional biopsychic specialisation that is as satisfactory as possible, that the future monarch is educated with a view to his intended role, and that personal and family selfishness, as we have already pointed out, merges with the community's purpose.

Everything thus converges, within the framework of the natural social order, to integrate the state into the historical duration that it creates. Maurras rightly says that monarchy proves itself like a theorem. However, it is not enough to recognise its theoretical value in order to establish it, or even to restore it. The monarch arises spontaneously, which does not mean without struggle, from the crisis that demands it. The dynasty, on the contrary, imposes itself slowly throughout history. It is the crowning glory of a social structure that does not exist in all times or in all countries. By its very nature, then, as Napoleon experienced, hereditary monarchy cannot be improvised.

70. Substitutes for hereditary monarchy

In the absence of a legitimate dynasty to ensure continuity through natural succession, non-democratic states have always sought some institutional system to avoid succession crises, i.e., vacancies and periodic *auctions* of power.

The first solution that comes to mind is what Auguste Comte, who advocates it, calls *sociocratic inheritance*: the appointment of a successor by the head of state. The Roman Caesars, from Nerva to Marcus Aurelius, resorted to it, not without success. Legal adoption, sanctioned by the aristocratic senate, established a true political filiation that associated the sovereign with the presumptive heir before automatically conferring the purple upon him.

This was, of course, only a more or less satisfactory substitute for biological inheritance. As soon as public opinion was duly prepared, Marcus Aurelius, and after him numerous emperors, designated their own sons. And the first Capetian kings, to mention only them, systematically used the same procedure, with better results, to establish the order of succession without upsetting their peers. Nowadays, it is also his son whom Regent Horthy designates to succeed him as head of the Hungarian state. In France, on the contrary, Marshal Pétain *chooses* a politician as *his heir apparent*, only to replace him shortly afterwards with an admiral. But events did not allow such contemporary experiments to develop normally.

It is easy, however, to see the flaw in the system. Either it is merely a more or less successful camouflage of the royal inheritance, or the continuity of power is only assured in a very relative way, since it depends on a will against which other wills can always rise up, on a choice that can always be put back on the table in the name of a legitimacy that remains personal. This is what happened in Rome, despite the religious consecration of the heir, as soon as the senatorial guarantee ceased to intervene. Theoretically, sovereignty was transmitted from

emperor to emperor. In fact, because succession was not automatic, it became the lot of the most powerful legion commander.

Less satisfactory in rational terms because it establishes a certain duality, another solution, which was also part of the system of succession in the Roman Empire in its early days, has historically proven its effectiveness. It consists of a mixed regime, both monarchical and aristocratic at the same time. In it, sovereignty belongs alternately to a council, which appoints the head of state, and to the head of state, who appoints the members of the council. There is no recourse here either to the Bonapartist referendum, which enshrines, with all the necessary demagoguery that entails, the principle of popular sovereignty, or to election by a college of feudal lords, which so seriously weakened the Holy Roman Empire and the Kingdom of Poland by making the throne the prize of rivalries and ambitions. Internal struggles are certainly not excluded. They are not even excluded within the conclave of the Church, where temporal interests nevertheless carry less weight than in a strictly political council. But they are generally offset by the functional interdependence of the aristocratic minority, provisionally sovereign but endowed with a permanent role in the state, and the sovereign, who secures his position and his renewal.

We are a long way from the magnificent natural development of hereditary monarchy. The unity of the state and the authority of the monarch are at the mercy of a rebellion by the council. The sovereign is little more than *primus inter pares*, and we are familiar with the famous dialogue between Hugh Capet and the Count of Périgord: *Who made you a count? Who made you king?* The risk is inevitable. It is the price to be paid for the artificial continuity of power.

71. The principle of command

This continuity is not ensured by the aristocratic regime itself, nor does it ensure the unity of the state. Whether supreme power is directly in the hands of a council or whether that council elects a nominal monarch, sovereignty remains the prerogative of a more or less large number of men who, far from being bound by position and function in the service of the state as in the constitutional system we have just analysed, represent a particular social force and each possess their own power on their own scale, which is not that of the community. Under such conditions, synthesis is logically replaced by compromise, and the eventual head of state is constantly subjected to the discordant pressures of his constituents or, worse still, is merely the creation of a clan.

In essence, the aristocratic regime is nothing more than a particular form of restricted democracy, quite similar to census democracy, although the ruling class is not the same. It is true that it has to tolerate, in fact, a sovereign state, but that state only functions in spite of the system, by force of community necessity. In other words, it functions poorly, hampered in each of its actions by the imposition of an authority that is not its own but comes, in one way or another, from the social forces that it is supposed to overcome. If authority comes from below, it is never granted, then respected only to the extent that it suits the co-possessors of sovereignty.

The natural role of the aristocratic minority is not to make the State, but to serve it. It constitutes the political innervation of the Community. Far from *lending* the state the authority it possesses, it is, on the contrary, even when it possesses its own power, that it receives a *delegation* of command from the sovereign. The necessary concentration of political power that we studied in Chapter IV cannot tolerate any reversal of the hierarchical order. Local authorities, insofar as they participate *in* the functions of the

State, do nothing more than exercise a power that originates above them and, in the final analysis, in the sovereign.

Does this mean that they are merely instruments for implementing measures that are beyond their control? This is what happens in bureaucratic regimes, and we have shown, in Chapter III, how unnatural they are. A true hierarchy is not made up of a boss and a multitude of *robots*, but of a descending pyramid of bosses who are each subordinate to a direct superior, from whom they receive instructions, and who have as much autonomy as possible within their sphere of command. The *Führerprinzip* – the principle of command – so often misrepresented, means nothing more than the freedom to apply and then adapt the orders received, the freedom of initiative of the subordinate boss with, in return, total responsibility in his area of action.

While the bureaucrat does nothing but carry out the instructions given to him to the letter, with no other concern than to protect himself from whatever may happen, the real leader commands within the framework of general directives that represent the political intention of the state. That is why he is an aristocrat, hereditary or personally chosen. That is also why the state performs its organic functions by modelling itself on internal realities, which are irreducible, because they are living, to any stereotypical conception of the social body.

Bureaucracy seems designed to direct schematic individuals and groups, and tends, in order to justify its role and perform it, to reduce any diversity to a pre-established theoretical model. Aristocracy, on the contrary, is integrated into diversity. It directs and coordinates human beings and groups, which are differentiated, and to which the autonomy enjoyed by each of its members allows it to adapt. This makes it possible for it to model itself on the organic realities that the state must *functionalise*, but not dissociate or restrict, since in doing so it would violate natural rights, which are subordinate but respectable, and destroy the factors of its dialectical creation.

The principle of command does not exclude, therefore, but rather presupposes popular representation, if by people we mean not a mass of individuals but the set of internal groups and communities that perform, with the dependent autonomy we have defined, the various vital functions of the social organism. This is not, of course, a disguised return to the liberal system of assemblies. On the one hand, because representative chambers do not participate in sovereignty in any way, even when they exercise the administrative, legislative and judicial powers that arise from the natural privileges of the municipality or corporation, for example; on the other hand, because they do not arise from a democratic vote but from an organic election, that is to say, in the cases we have just mentioned, not from individuals domiciled in a certain territory or engaged in a certain professional activity, but from families or companies.

The organised people thus find themselves, at each federal level, in close connection with the head appointed by the central power or, at the top of the pyramid, with this same central power. The state does not absorb the organic functions that do not belong to it, although it dominates and coordinates them. The representative chambers do not usurp the political function that their partial nature prohibits them from assuming. Thus, the *absolute* state, let us note once again, respects, unlike levelling democracies and bureaucracies, the legitimate internal peculiarities that make up the organic coherence and, consequently, the power of the community. It is therefore entirely in accordance with the natural social order.