

CIVILIZATION'S DOOM AND RESURRECTION

BY JOSEPH L. HROMADKA

I

ALTHOUGH at the present moment there is a triumphant hope that final military and political victory will be ours, yet we cannot suppress a dismal feeling of uncertainty as to the future of our civilization. The last ten years have had a terrifying effect upon our minds. At times we have an irrepressible misgiving that something irreparable has happened and that our moral, political, and spiritual resources are not strong enough to cope with the tremendous issues and tasks of the coming peace. Future historians will, with intense interest, study the puzzle of the tragic failure on the part of the victorious nations to organize and maintain the peace. What was wrong with modern humanity? What was lacking in the modern mind and heart? What had weakened the arms and muscles of civilized man? These are the questions that are urgently demanding a critical, sound answer, and which often cause us sleepless nights. We have blamed our statesmen, politicians, and diplomats for terrible, catastrophic blunders. But there has been something morbid in the very heart of our civilization, some kind of moral helplessness, spiritual blindness, social selfishness, and political self-complacency. All that has prevented us from understanding the real nature of destructive movements and from making timely decisions in the realm of international cooperation.

All that makes us critical, reserved and distrustful in regard to the future. We are lacking the enthusiasm of the pre-Armistice days of 1918 and are uncertain about the very nature of the forthcoming order. In 1918, the civilized world was expecting the era of a liberal, democratic community of nations. The old, nineteenth century bright view of life and history was still essentially unshaken, and faith in the world, in humanity, in the friendliness of the universe was not yet disturbed, in spite of human weakness, vice, and helplessness.

ness manifested in the war-catastrophe. Today, our soul is more weary, and behind the tremendous achievements on land, in the air, and on the sea we sense the presence of a spiritual fatigue which may prove to be a real menace for the stability of the coming peace.

During my visit to the British Isles last summer, I tried unceasingly to test the pulse of the British people, asking one disturbing question after another: How deep and strong are the spiritual resources of this great nation? Is not the present moment, in many ways so magnificent and glorious, exhausting and draining the last virile and creative elements of her historical heritage? Are not the overwhelming achievements of the years 1940–1942 the last gleaming manifestation of British political and moral leadership? Will the British people be spiritually strong enough and politically creative enough to shape, or re-shape, the destiny of the human race? Is not what happened, in June 1940 in France, a “Mene, Mene, Tekel” pointing to Great Britain?

These have been the questions tormenting my own mind in the moments of my deepest devotion and love for the people of the British tradition. The same questions emerge as a challenge here, in America. To be sure, the American tradition is more adolescent and pioneering than the British way of life. We cannot escape, however, thinking of the American years of disillusionment and cynical depreciation of the old values. Disillusionment and cynical indifference in regard to definite convictions and loyalties were, in the post-war years, symptoms of moral and spiritual fatigue. Sooner or later it might have been followed by a disastrous decay of social health and political responsibility.

What we have euphemistically called the absolute honesty and frankness, or the total absence of hypocrisy on the part of American youth, may in fact be an indication that the essential foundations of moral life have disintegrated, that our people have ceased to be interested in eternally valid criteria of faith, thought, and morality. They are frank and honest in a negative way: they not only do not believe in traditional and conventional standards of life, but do not even think any absolute norm of conduct and thought matters or exists. Is this a manifestation of youth and virile strength or of weariness and decay? What will happen if the national and international situation turns out to be disappointing, when only a powerful faith and a great vision are able to overcome the imminent dan-

gers of a new catastrophe? How far has the American soul recovered and girded itself for the days of great trial?

I deliberately raise these questions concerning the peoples of the Anglo-Saxon tradition since it is they who will carry the heaviest burdens of responsibility as far as the western orbit of our civilization is concerned. But simultaneously, our mind is constantly being disturbed by the enigmatic and weird situation of the European continent. What is the real meaning of the French catastrophe? Is it a providential ordeal of purification and regeneration which will prepare a glorious national and political renaissance of the French people, or is it an external expression of some incurable malady at the very bottom of the French soul? Is it a new beginning? Are we justified to expect a resurgence of the best spiritual and moral stamina of the French tradition? Or is it a symbol of doom? No excessive gloominess has ever been constructive, but an easy optimism may amount to the comfortable feeling of a disease stricken man who does not know he is sick. The French collapse has shaken us to our very depths. It has, in many ways, revealed what has been corroding the vital resources of modern European civilization.

The problem of the German people is still more alarming. Even if we draw a dividing line between the present regime and the people of Germany, we cannot shut our eyes to the moral and spiritual disaster inflicted by the national leaders on the German soul. A nation of seventy to eighty millions in the heart of Europe has for a long period been persuaded that power is the ultimate court of appeal, that the display and victory of power is the only reliable criterion of right and wrong. This way of persuasion has been exhibited not only by the political and Party leaders but also by a variety of educators, thinkers, and writers. The Nazi explosion has been called a Revolution of Nihilism. It has certainly been a nihilistic destruction of all classic norms and values of the European tradition. We may call it an unprecedented effort at the de-Europeanization of Germany in particular, and of Europe in general. It has been a terrifying manifestation of moral chaos and spiritual anarchy covered by external, political uniformity and military discipline. However, the present situation in Germany has not been created only by a small group of gangsters and adventurers, by the unscrupulous lust of power of a criminal clique. Behind all the racial madness, behind all the aggressive and destructive *Drang* of the present lords of Ger-

many, there is an alarming metaphysical despair, a morbid pessimism of the German philosophical and religious tradition, an agony of soul which has lost its balance because all the great moral and spiritual norms have been absorbed both by intellectual Titanism and an evolutionary relativism leading to Nietzsche's "Beyond-good-and-evil." There has been an essentially devastating factor in the historical tradition of the German people for which all thinkers, educators, theologians, and statesmen are responsible. When the present regime has broken down, what will reappear out of the ruins and the devastated soul? The tragedy of the German people consists in the fact that they have forfeited any right on their part to appeal to the universally valid norms of justice and fair play. If power be the ultimate court of appeal, no room has been left for any moral and political agreement and covenant. And this agonizing situation may have a disastrous effect beyond the boundaries of the vanquished nation.

The events of the last three years have brought together the people of the European East and the nations of the democratic West. After a long period of mutual distrust and hostility, a new era of cooperation has come. Never in their history have the thinkers and the masses, the Christians and the non-Christians in Europe faced a more astounding challenge than at present. The tremendous, almost agonizing task of a total reconstruction of the devastated, disintegrated continent will be combined with an uncomfortably direct contact between the orbit of Latin-Protestant Europe with her liberal democratic finale, on the one hand, and the Russian-Soviet area with its communistic experiment and Eastern Orthodox heritage, on the other. The dynamism of the European East has stunned the people of the whole world. Something unexpected has happened, and the horizon of our expectation and visions has assumed a quite different category. You may sense in the air, here in America and everywhere else, a shivering of anxiety and fear, of uncertainty and horror. Masses of people of whom we have known nothing or almost nothing, with their way of thought and life so profoundly different from ours, are now moving toward the West, approaching the dividing line between two historical traditions and civilizations, claiming a place within the council of leading, responsible nations and offering their hands and minds in the reconstruction of a new world.

What a baffling situation! With how many unknown entities and

possibilities we must reckon! How much more complicated and difficult are the problems and tasks of the coming peace negotiations! How much more unpredictable are the outcomes and results of present political and international alliances! The situation in 1918 appears so simple today that we almost envy the statesmen of that time. Germany offered another political alternative to the Kaiser-regime. Soviet-Russia had been eliminated from the peace negotiations. The liberal and democratic ideal had gripped the majority of European and American citizens. The questions of new boundaries and new states proved to be, at times, noisome and unpleasant jobs. New quarrels between the victorious nations were, irksome, disquieting and disturbing. But all that was interpreted as the inevitable, yet temporary reflection of a long, devastating war without serious effect upon the very structure of our political tradition and civilization. In fact, the situation at the beginning of the post-war period was spiritually very sinister and disastrous; but only very few people realized what was going on.

At this moment, we find ourselves in a panicky state of mind. We may have very little use for those whose political distress and action are being motivated by sheer social selfishness, by the fear of any new unpredictable social change and political progress. But we have reason to be distressed. The real problem of the present time is not what, as a result of the dynamic Soviet participation in world affairs, the social and political order will be like. The real issue is whether our spiritual vigor, moral resources, intellectual vision and understanding suffice to cope with the devastation wrought upon the soul and mind of the European continent and with the tremendous dynamism coming from the European East. The crisis of our spiritual and philosophical life may be overcome by the urgent seriousness of the present challenge. It may, however, grow worse and end in a total collapse. I shall try to illustrate what I have in mind by reference to the tragic end of one of the world's representative men of letters.

II

On February 23, 1942, the Austrian writer, Stefan Zweig, committed suicide. The day before, he wrote a letter explaining the reason for his voluntary departure from this world. No bitterness, no hatred, no physical need or suffering, no social disgrace or failure

was the real motive of his decision. He was a man of unusual literary success and reputation, of great poetic and essayistic achievements, a man of refined culture and mind, of many friends and admirers. He praised Brazil, where he had taken refuge, for her kindness and hospitality, "Nowhere else," he wrote, "would I have preferred to build up a new existence, the world of my own language having disappeared for me and my spiritual home, Europe, having destroyed itself." This was the motive of his death: "But after one's sixtieth year unusual powers are needed in order to make another wholly new beginning. Those that I possess have been exhausted by long years of homeless wandering."

"Unusual powers are needed in order to make another wholly new beginning." These are symptomatic and symbolic words of a typical European writer between the two wars. Stefan Zweig lacked those powers and departed this life by his own hands. In many ways he represented the European intelligentsia, at the peak of its creative achievements; and his death reflects the inner weariness, spiritual emptiness, and uprootedness of our modern civilization.

Stefan Zweig passionately loved humanity and reason. In view of the first world catastrophe of 1914-1918, he genuinely sought to overcome the forces of fanaticism, of madness and hatred. When the situation became bleak and gruesome, and the forces of racial mysticism and political tyranny swept over a considerable part of the European continent he was searching, in European history, for inspiration and patterns of a truly human, kind, and beautiful life. He thought he had discovered them in men like Erasmus of Rotterdam, the antagonist of Martin Luther, and in Sebastian Castellio, the adversary of John Calvin. He was dreaming of a world of absolute liberty, of free human personalities, of kindness and charm, beauty and tolerance, of peace and reasonableness, of a world in which all human bigotry, blind faith, tyranny, and aggressive, fanatical drive for self-assertion would be subdued by the moderation of a higher wisdom. And, in Erasmus and Castellio he excavated personifications of his longed-for world. He realized that the old world of bourgeois culture was vanishing from the stage of history through its inner emptiness. "In the collapse of all values [after the war] a kind of madness gained hold particularly in the bourgeois circles which until then had been unshakeable in their probity." A new world was to be built.

Alas, he soon came to know that what he had believed in were just beautiful dreams and charming ideals, too weak to conquer the forces of evil and slavery, to build a new cathedral of durable peace and righteous order. Sigmund Freud helped Stefan Zweig to understand the very nature of man and the tragedy of civilization. He realized that the supremacy of culture over the instincts was illusory. "The barbaric, the elemental destructive instinct in the human soul was ineradicable." The growing horror of the tyrannical regimes in Europe broke his faith in the adequacy of his dreams and ideals to prevail and to establish the kingdom of forbearance, reason, and peace. His book about Erasmus was written in a melancholic fit of resignation. It was "a spiritual portrait of the humanist who, though he understood the madness of the time more clearly than the professional world-reformers, was, for all his sound reason, tragically enough, unable to oppose unreason."

Indeed, Erasmus was a mirror in which the European intelligentsia recognized or should have recognized their own countenance. The best representatives of the liberal and humanitarian civilization lost the buoyant, daring faith in the victory of reason, science, and human virtues. The forces of darkness and brutality, and irrational, amoral impulses were on trek crushing the brave, bending the weak, hypnotizing the mob, and shaking the old pillars of our classic civilization. What could have unveiled the real state of human affairs and stopped the torrent of madness and destruction? Only an unshakable faith and conviction, loyalty, and discipline. Only a triumphant hope against hope could have answered the cunning devices of the spirit of chaos, and strengthened weary souls by endurance and courage. No civilization can survive without strong faith and conviction; no order of liberty without eternally valid laws; no tolerance without homage before the Truth. We cannot live in real joy, indeed, we cannot even possess a genuine sense of humor, without the altar before which we are ready to kneel in repentance and adoration. All that was lacking in the most decisive years of the post-war period. "Unusual powers are needed in order to make a new beginning. Those that I possess have been exhausted by long years of homeless wandering."

Stefan Zweig's outcry of despair and death has a deeper symbolic meaning. He was a "homeless wanderer" not only because he was haunted and deprived of his country, cultural treasures, and friends.

He was "homeless" because his soul and intellect were metaphysically uprooted and unarmed. The end could be only resignation, abdication, surrender, and suicide.

Is it a parable of our civilization? Are we confronting its doom? Where do we stand? What are our spiritual resources? If we hear alarming reports about the religious illiteracy and disinterestedness of the boys in the armed forces throughout the Anglo-Saxon world in general, and in America in particular, we cannot help asking: What, if the boys are religious illiterates, *do* they believe? Where is the center of gravity of their life and thought? What is their supreme authority? What kind of god *do* they worship? And, what do *we* actually believe and worship? The real problem is not just the future of our empirical church organizations. The real question is whether we have the "unusual powers we need in order to make a new beginning."

III

In the seventies of the nineteenth century, a dreadful premonition tormented Russia's most versatile genius, F. M. Dostoyevski: that the very foundation of modern European civilization was shaken and an unfathomable catastrophe and chaos were approaching. Externally his misgivings seemed to be exaggerated and unjustified. Russia had—under the leadership of the Tsar (Alexander II)—undergone a period of great social and political reform; Germany was unified and prosperous; France was rapidly recuperating from her military defeat of 1870; Great Britain's international position was like an invisible backbone of international security—and everywhere the spirit of liberal philosophy, of triumphant scientific research, technical progress, and political liberty was inspiring hopes and expectations without check or reserve. It was, however, exactly at that time that Dostoyevski wrote his novels and political and literary essays, all of them pointing to subterranean tokens and indications of an ensuing explosion. In 1877, he expressed his amazement at the odd and incredible blindness of professional European diplomacy. To be sure, all diplomats are more or less shrewd men, he wrote. But, what a lack of real wit and understanding they show! None of them has penetrated into the very depth of history, none of them has realized the mysterious laws which are driving Europe into an inscrutable and horrible end!

The awful catastrophe of which Dostoyevski warned with uncanny sharpness of mind, amounted to much more than mere political or international disaster. It was a sinister breakdown of the invisible, and yet essential, pillars of our moral order and civilization. The Russian middle-class and aristocratic society manifested, to his horror, an abysmal inner anarchy without law and order. Not even an artist of Shakespeare's greatness would be able in Dostoyevski's judgment to discover a unifying chord there—everywhere disintegration of life, confusion of reason and heart, everywhere spiritual inertia which, incapable of seeing the forces of evil and death, is all the more unable to have cognizance of what can conquer chaos, death, and destruction. The only way, indispensable for resurrection and regeneration, is the way which enables us to see the very bottom of the abyss, to understand and to challenge the darkness, the evil, and the devil. And this way was hidden before the eyes of complacent, prosperous, and careless society. Russian groups, both liberal and conservative, reflected the far more advanced decomposition of Western European life.

Dostoyevski's readers have realized with what delight and compassion he would, time and again, speak of the Schillerian souls, e.g. of charming idealists, gentle hearts, who passionately believed in human goodness, beauty, and kindness, who joyfully dreamed of the victory of love—yet without understanding the depth of evil, without grasping the monstrous reality of human sin and corruption, brutality and vice. There is something nostalgic and melancholic in Dostoyevski whenever he touches upon the longing on the part of these gentle souls for love, freedom, and joy. Nostalgic—since he loved the Schillerian souls but had personally apprehended that the reality of evil, sin and death cannot be conquered by beautiful dreams and lofty ideals; that the monstrous passions of vice and Titanic revolt cannot be broken by gentle sentiments of kindness and hilarity; that abysmal chaos and anarchy cannot be mastered by mere human rational and moral categories.

This situation of modern humanity, any moment threatened by a sudden volcanic eruption, has been created by a spiritual and moral revolt on the one hand, and a nauseating laziness, indifference, and sluggishness of the modern soul on the other. People are enjoying themselves, living in a state of false security not realizing that the fortifications of their life have been stormed and the invisible foun-

dations of their order shaken. They are dancing and singing on a volcanic rock; they are carelessly approaching the edge of the abyss blind to the fact that the invisible barrier protecting them from falling down has long been removed by the disorderly lust for intellectual destruction, by morbid scepticism and moral anarchy. There may still exist a thin cord linking our earthly order with the eternal order beyond this world. This was Dostoyevski's last hope. There may live in our midst a few saintly souls of intrepid faith and self-sacrificial love, a few "idiots," "*Stulti pro Christo*," whose humility, simplicity, and unshakable obedience to the sovereign authority of the Lord of life and death preserve the thin cord from breaking and the world from self-destruction. Who knows and who can say? We *may* find ourselves, however, in a transition period between the moment when the thin cord was at last broken and the moment when the inescapable consequences of the spiritual catastrophe will mercilessly reveal themselves in a total misery, chaos, and horror of social and political disintegration. There is still some external order left. But the integrating spiritual reality may have gone, and we are now facing what is inevitable, irreparable: the total collapse of our present civilization.

This is, it seems to me, in the background of Dostoyevski's literary creations. He envisaged a crisis of much more dismal character than our threadbare usage of that word indicates. All natural, intellectual, rational, moral, social, economic, and political order revolves on a hinge which is beyond our human power, virtue, and skill. This hinge is invisible and intangible, and yet it is *the* reality without which all natural and spiritual harmony is bound to collapse and to convert into a hell of tyranny, destruction (murder), and self-destruction (suicide). The world cannot exist, and the highest human civilization cannot survive, unless they hang and depend on that unshakable, indestructible, and eternal point—*the* truth, *the* norm, *the* love, *the* eternal court of appeal. There is no human truth unless it is related to *the* truth; there is no moral order in the world unless it is subordinated to *the* eternal criterion of life and ready to submit to the eternal court of appeal; there is no earthly beauty and love unless they long and strive for the heavenly beauty of absolute purity and glory. There is no human freedom, no personal dignity, no undeniable political right unless man and society recognize and accept the final authority of *the* truth. There is no

life unless men are ready to lose their life in self-sacrificial love and discipline. Has not this hinge, the only integrating point of our civilization, gone? This was Dostoyevski's alarming question.

IV

In the period between the two wars, Dostoyevski's view of man was, time and again, interpreted as an anticipation of the Freudian philosophy of subconsciousness and unconquerable instinct. The realm of amoral, irrational vitality, of instincts and sexual impulse unceasingly boils under the thin surface of our civilized habits, ideas, and moral conventions. This realm breaks, over and over again, through our barely disciplined surface and may destroy, in a minute, what through centuries of rational, moral, and political toil has been achieved and accomplished. If this is a simplified Freudian philosophy of history and civilization, then Dostoyevski differs essentially from it. Indeed, his underlying view of man and history would contradict the pessimistic philosophy of the supremacy of human instincts. In his visions and analyses the destructive rebellion of animal life in man and society was a sinister reflection of a spiritual defiance, an intellectual and moral act of human self-assertion against the Lord of the universe, history, and man.

Dostoyevski's philosophy was both more disturbing and more promising. He did not see in man just a bundle of elemental impulses, a mere animal in human form. He did not relieve man from terrible personal responsibility. Human history is not a comedy or farce of elemental vitality ever ready and powerful enough to destroy what reason and spirit have accomplished. Human history is a history of men created unto God, responsible to Him, free in Him and in possession of supreme joy in Him, but a history of a dismal revolt, of a deliberate defiance against *the* Truth and Love. *We* are responsible for everything, even for our helplessness, in view of the destructive passions in our soul and of devastating social and political catastrophes in our history. Modern man completed the revolt in a most refined intellectual and philosophical way. He cut off his soul from the living Lord of life and denied his responsibility before the supreme tribunal of divine authority. He has gone so far as to obscure and question the line between good and evil, right and wrong, true and false. The wall protecting us from the horror of passions and impulses, from the powers of moral chaos, lust, de-

bauchery, and death has been torn down by a deliberate, conscious, and responsible act of the human mind.

Peter Verkhovenski (in *The Possessed*), a sinister villain, a man of death, a leader of young nihilists, rejoiced maliciously and viciously at the help indirectly offered to him by the representative men and women of official society. The decomposition of order and decency has been anticipated, he said to his master, Stavrogin, by the teacher who induced children to scorn God, by the attorney who explains the naturalness of crime, by the jury which follows him on the same line, by the public prosecutor who is "liberal" to the point of losing any definite conviction about good and evil and justifying the criminal.

Dostoyevski was in his analysis of human nature much more critical and realistic than any philosophical pessimist and naturalistic writer of modern Europe. He cherished no illusions about the powers of destruction and confusion, about the peril undermining the very structure of our civilization. Dostoyevski made man responsible for this peril. Sin and evil do not originate on the level of sub-rational and sub-moral nature; they come into existence in the kingdom of spirit, at the peak of our mental consciousness, at the point where men make accountable and responsible decisions between life and death, heaven and hell, God and Satan, truth and falsehood, at the moment when man deliberately defies the ultimate authority of divine truth.

Modern humanity lives in a bleak twilight without definite and distinctive sign-posts, without mile-stones, without hedges, without roads and avenues, without compass and Northern Star. All traditional categories of reason, all moral values and norms have lost their meaning. All convictions and loyalties have been deprived of any reliable criterion. All political common sense and social consciousness of justice have gone. Man has ceased to understand himself and has become helpless in view of an astounding whirlwind. He does not even apprehend the meaning of our times. There is no real knowledge and understanding without definite criteria and norms. There is no life if man does not know in whose name he ought to live and to whose glory he ought to work. Vitality and passion, cut loose from the discipline of norm, and without awe before what is unconditionally sacred, are doomed to perish in incurable disease and self-destruction. Modern civilization is a macabre

dance of men without bones, without sense of rhythm and melody, without order and discipline, without beauty and joy.

This was Dostoyevski's vision of the fall of man and of the tragedy of our civilization. The stench of decomposition everywhere; the forces of tyranny raising their heads without being morally checked by faith in the ultimate authority of the holy, righteous, and merciful God; morbid indifference of the decadent modern mind as to what *is* right and wrong resulting in unwillingness to protect the poor, destitute, weak, and wretched; a lack of faith and conviction depriving our life of a chivalrous, Don Quixotic determination never to yield to the forces of brutal power and domination; a positivistic interpretation of the human soul as a by-product of environment blinding our eyes both to the wickedness of evil and the eternal glory of man. The modern mind does not know about the depth of our tragedy, and cannot therefore know anything about the way of resurrection and victory!

V

There is a resurrection! Divine victory came only after the moment of agony and absolute dereliction, after the outcry, "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani." Dostoyevski's vision of resurrection starts at the bottom of the human abyss. Many of his ideas and characters have, as it were, a tinge of a mystical Utopia. They have, however, nothing to do with dreamy idealism. His was almost a morbid predilection for the most wretched, destitute victims, for the scum of the human society, for murderers, villains, buffoons, braggards, prostitutes, epileptics, helpless children—but his love for them was a reflection of his faith that the Father of darkness, vice, lies, chaos, and death can only be defeated at the place of his greatest arrogance and power. Only if our eyes are open for the stark power of evil can they understand what weapons are needed in order to break the lust of the devil. Only if we have peered into the depths of the human soul with its misery and corruption are we able to apprehend the reality of sin and guilt and realize that this reality cannot be defeated by mere human ideas and dreams, that victory can be achieved only by the reality of divine holiness, compassion, and love. Dostoyevski would today hardly be discouraged and disillusioned. Listening to the whining and crying of modern sentimentalists and looking at the exhibition of their tragi-comic "disillusionment" he would

not despise them but certainly would say: "How could it be otherwise? A man building on illusions will always be dis-illusioned. A man of faith will never fail."

Dostoyevski, however, would decidedly oppose cynical "realists" as men, at best, of penultimate wisdom, as fifty percent realists—men without a deep knowledge of *all* realities, of the realities of evil *and* the reality of divine truth and mercy. He certainly would challenge even the adequacy of their earthly realism. The deepest depth of human life lies beyond our political, psychological, sociological, and historical categories. In your critical realism you have left the train at the station before the terminal! he would say to these "realists." You have stopped exactly at the moment you should have, with the best tools of knowledge, bored into the hardest rock barring you from the bottom of human life and spirit. The tools indispensable for the real knowledge of human existence and history come from the knowledge of Him who is *the* Lord of our life and death and without whom our wisdom and understanding of life are half-truths. A half-truth is bound to be more confusing and perilous than a forthright lie. Whereas the knowledge of truth, though uncomfortable and contradicting all our human desires and safeguards, is the only way of re-integration, universal harmony, and reconciliation, the only way of salvation and resurrection.

It is exactly this that makes Dostoyevski's philosophy of faith not only more disturbing but also more promising. In his judgment, the days of darkest crises and catastrophies are manifestations of a new chance offered to us by the providential divine wisdom and love. There is no way upward unless we have perceived the bottom of the abyss of our helplessness and agony. Then, only then, can we see the way out, the outstretched hand reaching down to where we are and helping us to light and hope. Only then, our heart sets itself free from all miserable self-interest and cowardly fear.

There is no way back. The selfish horror of reactionaries who try, in every period of historical cataclysm, to save their skin, comfort, and property is only apt to increase the peril of destruction because it, of necessity, intensifies the illusion of all tyrants that they may be able to establish by force and violence "order," a quasi unity, "the universal happiness of men."

However, the opposite way, the way of liberalistic carelessness and indifference in regard to ultimate truth and eternal authority, is

equally vain. The liberalism of the continental European area, in Dostoyevski's judgment, has emptied human minds of all convictions and human hearts of all loyalties. It destroyed the grand tradition of Don Quixotic chivalry and replaced it by the selfish narrow-mindedness of a small shopkeeper. Without a chivalrous faith and compassion for the weak, destitute, and poor there is no remedy.

We civilized nations cannot be saved unless our mind bows before *the* authority which is absolute and final, and yet makes us *free, responsible* citizens both of the spiritual and earthly kingdom. We cannot be rescued unless we recognize the sacred line between good and evil, right and wrong, God and devil, and, simultaneously, identify ourselves with the grief and sorrow, corruption and misery of the most destitute and wretched sinners; unless we acknowledge what is holy and take upon ourselves the responsibility for the tragedy of the human race. A *self-complacent dis*-appointment of *dis*-illusioned idealists, a self-righteous condemnation of the world in the name of lofty ideals and expectations, is as bad as both the violence of tyrants and the carelessness of cynical "liberals."

Behind almost all Dostoyevski's writings stands the invisible, intangible figure of the Crucified and Risen One. His majestic glory and unfathomable self-identification with the corrupted world was for Dostoyevski the hinge on which the world revolves. He is the center of gravity of our life. In Him is the solution of what is intellectually and morally insoluble. He is *the* authority which makes us free and gives us a selfless courage. It is He that makes us understand the deepest depth of evil, love the most destitute sinner without confusing the line between truth and falsehood, right and wrong. He is the unceasing driving force in our struggle for political justice and social brotherhood. It is He through whom we may even save the most precious intellectual, artistic, and moral elements of our civilization for our children and our children's children. In Him can be rescued and glorified all the crippled victims of our society, all the "Insulted and Injured," all the rubbish, scum, and garbage of the human race.

"Brother," said Alyosha Karamazov suddenly and with flashing eyes to his atheistic brother Ivan, "you said just now, 'Is there a being in the whole world who would have the right to forgive and would forgive?' But there is a Being and He can forgive everything, all and for all, because He gave His innocent blood for all and every-

thing. You have forgotten Him, and on Him is built the edifice, and it is to Him they cry aloud, 'Thou art just, O Lord, for Thy ways are revealed!'

"You have forgotten Him!" This is, to be sure, no solution, no blueprint, no elaborate plan, no program for concrete action. Dostoyevski certainly did not offer us any permanent solution. But there is no ready-made medicine for any emergency. Thank God, there is not! There is, however, great promise for all those who know about the supreme Lord of Life and death, who have descended with Him into the abyss and in vigilant and courageous hope are looking for the chance to serve, and, if necessary, to die.

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