

The Individual Against Moloch

Benjamin De Casseres

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Contents

| | |
|---------------------------------------|-----------|
| Foreword | 4 |
| The Individualist | 5 |
| The Ideological Masquerade | 10 |
| Lullaby of the Molochs | 14 |
| “The Coming Slavery” | 16 |
| The Illusion of “Protagonists” | 20 |
| Pacifist Cant | 22 |
| The Economic Escape | 25 |

To
My Oldest Friend
AL SATTERTHWAITE

Foreword

“The Individual Against Moloch” is Book No. 2 in the publication of my unpublished works. The titles of other books, chapters or parts of which will be published, are:

“The Eternal Return,” “Black Suns” (poems), “Broken Images,” “Saint Tantalus,” “My Symphonies,” “Chaos and Cosmos,” “The Elect and the Damned,” “The American Comedy,” “Nutopia” and “Fantasia Impromptu: the Adventures of an Intellectual Faun.”

The latter book is an intellectual autobiography, begun in 1925 and which will continue till I die. It is now about five hundred thousand words long.

These books will not be published with any regard to order. I may jump from book to book, as I see fit.

Whether these books will ever be published complete in my lifetime is on the lap of the gods.

Because of my extreme literary and philosophical individualism, I have always had the greatest difficulty in finding a publisher.

Hence these books.

Benjamin DeCasseres

I write because I wish to make for ideas, which are my ideas, a place in the world. If I could foresee that these ideas must take from you peace of mind and repose, if in these ideas that I sow I should see the germs of bloody wars and even the cause of the ruins of many generations, I would nevertheless continue to spread them. It is neither for the love of you nor even for the love of truth that I express what I think. No—I sing! I sing because I am a singer. If I use you in this way, it is because I have need of your ears.

—Max Stirner

Who would be a man must be a non-conformist.

—Emerson

They that can give up essential liberty to obtain a little temporary safety deserve neither liberty nor safety.

—Benjamin Franklin

To allure many from the herd—for that purpose have I come.—*Nietzsche*

The Individualist

The Individual stands on the brink of annihilation. The State is the new divinity. The masses everywhere yearn to be kept. Economic pimping and gregarious parasitism are the dominant traits of the times. Mob-masters put the shackles on the people everywhere. And the people howl for bigger and better shackles.

The Bed of Procrustes stretches from the Rhine to Tokio—due east. To the west the shadow of the Bed of Horrors is thrown over France, England and America.

The Individual withers and the miracle-mongers are more and more. These miracle-mongers have various labels for their steady descent toward the life of the ant: Fascism, Communism, Socialism, Technology, Capitalistic-Ku-Klux-Klanism, Totalitarianism, Aryanism. However, in the crucible of the word-concept *Automatism* they all dissolve into one another.

For the human race, in all times, is divided psychologically into two classes only: the Collectivist-Automatic being and the Individualistic-Self Reliant being. There are degrees of each, fine shadings and interappings and overlappings; but as a perfect living equilibrium is inconceivable, one or the other psychological characteristic will dominate every human being. It is a manifestation of the centripetal and centrifugal forces in psychic—and hence social and economic—life.

If the word *progress* has any meaning to me, it means this: *Whatever tends to individualism, differentiation, contrast, clash, independent life, variety is progressive.*

Whatever tends to automatism, mass-movement, likeness, peace, parasitic life, unity, is retrogressive.

One is life; the other is death.

Unity, the automatic, mass-movement, likeness, peace, etc., cannot, of course, be abolished (one may as well try to abolish the centripetal forces), but they must be *subordinated* to the instinct for independent life.

Not since the Middle Ages, when the Catholic Church had dissolved all variety into unity, has there ever been such speedy motion toward universal Automatism as to-day. Mob-Moloch, with its Machiavellian masters, marches on relentlessly to swallow up the Individual.

Therefore, today, what we name “radicals” are reactionaries (including all Fascists and advocates of unregulated Capitalism). The “progressist,” the real radical, is now, as always, the Individualist—he who has no programme for any one else, who often has no programme even for himself—he who evolves spontaneously and expresses himself in the rhythm of his whole psyche.

One may love his country, his race, his countrymen; but I defy you to show me any one who ever loved his government. Even those who are its beneficiaries hold it in secret or open contempt.

Now, the government is the state. It is, therefore, always the enemy of the individual. And yet this enemy must not, cannot, be abolished. For, like all enemies, it breeds, by the law of menace and opposition, a more definite, a more militant form of Individualism.

The great Greek, Roman, Italian and Russian individualists, for instance, flourished under various degrees of tyrannies. Under Communism and Fascism, as in Sparta, the individual is completely cowed into the mass. But in that oppressed mass—or masses—giant individuals are being created—just as the ultimate ego in a man is brought out in prison.

Georges Palante, Frenchman, who died about ten years ago, was the last of the few great thinkers who have been the defenders of Individualism against the continuous and murderous aggressions of Society, Church, State, universities and the Mob. He is one of the greatest analysts of man in society—a clarifier of Emerson, Stirner, DaVigny, Leconte de Lisle, Nietzsche and Spencer.

His three books, “*Combat pour l’Individu*,” “*Les Antinomies entre l’Individu et la Societe*” and “*La Sensibilite Individualiste*,” might have for inscription, “Dying, we salute thee, Lucifer!” For Lucifer is the protagonist of all Individualists. He revolted against the totalitarian State called Heaven, and as he fell he became immeasurably greater, and in the Domain of the Damned, whereto are sent by Church, State and Society all those who antagonize them, he reigns, the eternal enemy of the Collectivist, Unitarian theocracy of the sweet and brainless angels.

For all Collectivist societies are theocracies, even if they proclaim themselves atheistic, as in Russia. A Moloch—by various names—rules every such state. And there are blood-sacrifices to these ideological Molochs just as there were to Jehovah or the Aztec gods. The centuries and centuries of slaughter of millions in the name of the Lowly Nazarene will soon be taken up again under different masks: Communism, Socialism, Fascism—and even “Individualism,” that pseudo-“Individualism” which is nothing but predatory greed wearing the mask of a great personal ideal (a word—Individualism—debased, ladies and gentlemen of posterity, by a Herbert Hoover, a name which in all probability has no meaning to you; but he was once President of the United States).

Palante’s style is crystal-clear, sensitive, poignant, precise, logical, literary, simple: all the virtues of the French tradition—in fewer words, *exquisite strength*. From time to time I shall quote Palante and comment on what he has to say, for this essay is a collaboration, a conversation, between this great Individualist and myself. All italic quotations not otherwise credited are from the books of Georges Palante.

“Individualism is not an object of proselytism. It has value in its own eyes only as a personal sensation of life.”

The real Individualist is thus an Epicurean. He lives for experiences. He reacts to each experience differently. No Individualist seeks to make any one else an Individualist. He aims at the unique. He loves the unique in others. “He who calls himself a Whitmanite has not understood me,” said Walt Whitman.

The Individualist is a disciple of his own moods, his own sensations, his own emotions and instincts. His life is an adventure in psychological vistas, in comic and dramatic situations of which he himself is always the hero.

To the Individualist life is a series of experiences, not a programme. The only discipline that he willingly assents to is self-imposed. He absorbs whatever he needs, and always stands at a distance from his environment and “the times.”

As the sidereal system is said to be travelling eternally toward the sun Vega in the Constellation of Lyra, so the Individualist is always travelling toward an unknown, an unprogrammed destiny, toward a mysterious and ultimate star in the firmament of his imagination.

The Individualist is the very opposite of a “selfish being.” The professional (and quite often the unprofessional) altruist, idealist, Collectivism the highly socialized busybody, attempts to

impose his own private reactions on others by force or through the medium of laws; whereas the Individualist says, "Live and let live." Society, the state and the moralist are always selfish. The Individualist is the enemy of selfishness. He opposes it with *selfism* for all.

The *Sacculina*, as Professor Maynard D. Metcalf tells us in his "Organic Evolution," is a barnacle, "normally a free-swimming, shelled animal, with legs, swimming organs, nerves, stomach, etc. But it often attaches itself to a crab and draws its living from its host. Here it loses its legs, swimming organs and most of its sense organs until finally it is little more than a shapeless mass of protoplasm. Evolution is not increased efficiency or more perfect structure...It is adaptation to environment, and often if an animal degenerates it is better adapted to its environment than with a more ideal equipment."

This is one of the best unintentional allegories of the Individualist versus the State and Society that I have ever read.

To-day, the masses seem to be degenerating to the *Sacculina*. The State tends more and more to become a tax-fat crab on which batten millions of *sacculinas*. In order to have the security of living on this filthy, corrupt, rich old crab, the *Sacculinidae* are quite content to give up all liberties and rights. As I write this, all Russians, Germans and Italians (in varying degrees) are of the *Sacculinidae*. The crab-state in America, England and France also waxes fatter and her parasitic guests grow apace.

But there are still a few of us who prefer to remain free-swimming marauders, retaining our organs—and our inherent right to take our food when and where we see fit.

Wherever I turn today, ladies and gentlemen of posterity, I see great schools of *Sacculinas* headed for the Crab. In fact, mass-pimpery has become a great economic theory.

Individuality is *character*. Personality is artificial. Character is inherent, and, I believe with Schopenhauer, unalterable. Character is *difference*. The development of character is generally *away* from standardized and conventional patterns. Communism, Socialism and all authoritarian programmes aim at the destruction of character and the creation of a mass-personality.

Whatever exists tends *naturally* to individualize itself. The Ideal—which is always anti-biological—tends to destroy this natural law. It substitutes *You ought* for *I will!* Unless the *Ought* is self-evolved, I smash it, and reiterate in the face of all opposition, to the extent of my power and courage, *I will!*

Palante makes a distinction between economic individualism (the doctrine of *laissez-faire*, *laissez-passer*) and psychological individualism, although he admits one may have both characteristics, like Benjamin Constant, for instance. He instances Herbert Spencer as one who was doctrinaire individualist, but who did not possess "*la sensibilité individualiste*." For, says Palante, the individualist sensibility may express itself negatively. It is then will-to-isolation—almost misanthropic.

Spencer, being a thorough Englishman, was cosmically and socially an ethicist. He believed—in "Man Versus the State" and "Justice"—he had discovered the fine hair that divided the *eternal* rights of the state and the rights of the Individual.

There are no rights. There is only a war of might. "Right" is the utilitarian application of Might.

But Spencer's "The Coming Slavery" (meaning Socialism) is one of the clearest-eyed prophecies ever made. Those of you (whoever you are) who stand outside of the encroaching shadow of the universal ant-village ideal of humanity should dig it up and read it.

Instances in America of a doctrinaire Individualist and a man with a highly organized individualist sensibility are Thomas Jefferson and Henry David Thoreau. Jefferson was, in my opinion, the most highly civilized being who ever appeared in our public life. Thoreau was, as a Frenchman has called him, a “civilized savage.”

Combine the socialized individualism of Jefferson with the militant anti-social attitude of Thoreau and we have Walt Whitman, barbaric-socialized-individualized Ego-Demos.

What the herd always fears, worships, follows, crucifies, hopes for, turns against, cringes before, revolts against, returns to, defies and anathematizes is the Individual.

“Sociability and originality exclude one another.”

Palante might have added to sociability *amiability*.

I am alone. Whether suffering or joyful, I am an individual. I am myself. Some one enters the room. I become masked immediately, automatically. I put on a borrowed air. Something of my innate self recedes to the dark depths. I become almost a stranger to myself. The same thing, no doubt, happens to the person who has come to see me. Two lies face one another. When I step out of a roomful of persons into the street, alone, I resume my self.

The *me* and *they* are always at war. The conquering *me* eats *they*; or if they are the conquerors, which is nearly always the case, *they* eat me.

Great poets are the supreme Individuals, for great poets are the most highly differentiated and evolved human beings on the planet. Poetic genius is the compendium and summit of the hidden inner self; and the inner self is always at war with the environment, and very often with its own heredities. The poet-genius is the unique opposed to the conventional and commonplace.

“It is always an advantage for the Individual that the political and social powers should be divided and engaged in a fierce competitive rivalry in order to play one against the other.”

Therefore, I hold, that democratic individualism such as we have at present in America, England and France is the best form of government for the Individualist. In Chaos Lucifer is king. While the gangsters of the political parties wrangle over the spoils we go unscathed. It is only when they all agree that they turn their eyes on us. A unified society immediately begins to dust off the guillotine and pick out shooting-walls. Nearly all peoples east of the Rhine are *servant-minded*. The Americans, Englishmen and Frenchmen are *master-minded*.

“The pedagogic spirit is a new avatar of the priest-spirit.”

The universities, while they seem on the surface to be hotbeds of revolution, free thought and economic heresies, are in reality always reactionary, always anti-Individualistic. All their “revolutionary” demonstrations are gregarious. They hoot and howl and threaten in mobs. The yawp of the students for “freedom” always means the privilege of advocating some Collectivist doctrine, something fundamentally Christian, equalitarian, levelling.

The new priest is the professor. He is a priest whether he is tory or “red.” He teaches something. He is *ex-cathedra*. He is the salt of the earth. He is quoted today, ladies and gentlemen of posterity, as if he were the way, the truth and the life.

As a matter of fact, he is either a paid pimp of the *status quo* or a Saint Paul who has just discovered some new Collectivist Damascus-Utopia (and the value of publicity and syndicated tripe).

Did you ever know of an Anarchist who did not travel in gangs, groups, movements—just like capitalists, Socialists, Communists, Christian Scientists, Fascists and other herd-conditioned humans? The Individualist is to the Anarchist what the eagle is to the sea-gull.

Whatever is beautiful in this world is the product of an individual mind. There can be no such thing as mass-beauty, crowd-beauty. What the people like may be pretty, but never beautiful. The average man is not even moved emotionally before a sunset, the moon or dawn. He likes, above all things, Fourth of July fireworks.

Aesthetic apperception is purely an individual exfoliation. A professor of aesthetics (and there are such things in our *seats* of learning, ladies and gentlemen of posterity) is the comic pathos of Demos trying to rape the evanescent and always fleeing Helena.

Here is a piercing observation of Sainte-Beuve:

“After all, great external events and what we call ‘general interests’ are expressed in each man and enter in him through roads which are always very private and personal. Those who speak magnificently in the name of humanity as a whole consult their own secret passions and ambitions, which they dare not confess. They secretly wish to put themselves up as leaders and to crush their adversaries. Their motive is applause and power.”

Beware of those who profess a “love for humanity,” who want to “lift up mankind,” who have a hurry-call to “save the race.” They are all sentimental butchers. Deep in the perverse vats of the subconscious lie the masks of the eternal will-to-power. The meanest soapbox Fiat Luxer in Union Square dreams of a soft job under the Proletarian Regime and the loud, literate bawlers see themselves as Robespierres, Hitlers or Stalins.

“There is nothing new under the sun,” said the greatest seer of antiquity and modernity. But there is something new hidden from all suns, something that values or devalues (according to one’s temperament) all suns: the differentiated and unique soul of each human being. As Emerson said, everything conspires against this uniqueness. To affirm it to the utmost and then to be resumed in the viewless Absolute constitutes the only sublimity attainable by me—and you.

The Ideological Masquerade

That which is most completely hidden to the common eye are *motives*.

This concealment of Purpose and Intent is cosmic, personal and social. Nothing is more deftly hidden than the motive for Life. Man has never found out why *anything* should be.

Personally: our motives for doing and uttering are enclosed so deeply within us that we ourselves often do not know *why* we do a thing after the most galling self-inquisition. The motive-kernel is buried in the center of thousands of self-defensive wrappings.

Socially: the art of concealing motive, purpose, intent here reaches the highest perfection. It is hypocrisy, bluff, and auto-deception that keep the wheels of society revolving. Hence the cynic, the blurring, blunt truth-teller, is looked on as the common enemy. He is the menacing sleuth in a business suit at the Masked Ball of Appearances.

In human evolution, belief, not fact or experience, is the prime mover.

This belief—which is illusion with its fountain-core in the instincts and its mirages in the imagination—is the false motive. It is the eternal bale of hay hung before the hungry mouth of the Eternal Jackass.

The real motives for as far-sundered events as to why Abraham Lincoln freed the slaves, why you murdered your wife last week or why Romeo scaled the wall-ladder to Juliet's bedchamber are as different from the masked motives as are the form and substance of a joint resolution from a ringworm.

Nature, God—and therefore mankind—is Machiavellian. To rule is to lie. To sway, to move, to achieve corporeal power is to lie. Swindling—and above all self-swindling—as a fine art is the law of Maya and man.

The only persons—and they are infinitesimal in all ages—who can escape this perpetual bilk and mulct are the Apollonian artists—the spectacular aesthetes of life and its tragicomedies—and the religious quietist who reposes serenely in the Essence, who lives with the Master of Tricks himself. Even they do not escape wholly, but they do live closer to the heart of the Secret Motive of Things than the hoodwinked billions who are doomed to eternal credulity, who tramp the Sahara of life down through the aeons looking for a Biskra, with its chanting nightingales, its featherbeds, its free champagne and caviar—that Biskra which is only a mirage, a pictured halation out of the ideological-fabricating skull of man.

Man must always be masked; he must always be the victim of ideological lies; he must always be compelled to conceive himself as he is not because of the unshatterable and immanent law of bovarysm that rules the universe.

This bovarysm, of which Jules de Gaultier is the formulator and expounder, is based on the fact that man is *two*. He is both object and subject. He is both actor and spectator. But if he knew the inutility and futility of the universe, or guessed that the motive for life was quite other than he complacently believes to be the true one—that is, his good—he would cease to be the actor. He would seek the Nirvana of Buddha.

But Nature, or God, has apparently other plans. It has its secret motive for carrying on the universe. And so it has given to man the Lie Preservative: the ideological lure and the ideological mask to keep him moving toward that mysterious bourne from which no news has leaked out and the secret of which is locked up in the heart of the Innominate.

The eternal conflict, then, between Motive and Ideal, or between the Purpose and the Mask, was never in the history of man more beautifully exemplified than it is today.

The drama rises to crescendo because there are more of us today who sleuth out *motives*. But there are as many—more!—ideological masks than there ever were. But there are more unmaskers, too. The human heart and its nest of secret motives now lies with fewer wrappings before the eye of the cynics and chemists of illusion than it ever had.

The great progress of psychology and psycho-analysis, stemming from the two master unmaskers, Machiavelli and LaRochefoucauld, has thrown a blinding light on the stage secrets of the human soul.

We now know how and why these pretty ideologies—economic and political—are fabricated by the fundamental, predatory, egotistic, greedy, anarchic instincts of man.

We see now the whole workshop—how the bombs of egotistic motive are carefully wrapped in all the fine silks of Utopian promises.

Soak the luminous blue-prints of the Saviors of Humanity in the acid of brutal analysis and see the pattern hidden in the scroll: the spider-web of greed, envy, exploitation and predatory power.

No normal man may look on his own naked soul. It is Medusa. The congealing stare of this famous lady—whose other name is Truth—is reserved for those daring souls who know how to marshal the shock-troops of Humor and Tragic Satanism against the death-dealing bolts from her eyes.

Buddha, LaRochefoucauld, Spinoza, Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, Baudelaire, Jules de Gaultier, Flaubert, Thomas Hardy are a few among those who have not only looked the old lady square in the eye but tumbled her in the ditch.

The Veil of Isis—which veil is nothing but the ideological webs that are spun over the brains of Earthlings—has also not only been ripped off by these metaphysical and cosmic Realists, but they have ripped her drawers off of her as well. And behold!—the taproot of all lies is exposed—the cornucopia of all illusions, the pubic-sheathed dynamo which, in its unspeakable gnawing and craving, pumps up all the ideologies to the brain.

For only three things are needed to carry on this shockingly bitter farce beneath the stars: yone, lingam and ideological illusions of messianic, economic and social redemption.

Above the dynamo lies—in the instincts—the House of the Ego, the lair of the natural-satyr man, the humming subterranean factory of the Alberichs who spin with the mystical gold of Maya the redemptive economic and religious Cockaynes, which they pump up through the sluiceways of the blood into man's brain—even making him believe they are the products of his reason!

The alchemy of this process! The marvel of this transubstantiation! The cosmic-crashing humor of the hypnotic feat of transforming Caliban, Sancho Panza and Attila into a Don Quixote, a Jesus, a Karl Marx! It is a fantastic comedy played in crucible and retort—the heart and skull of Man.

The raw material for the manufacture of brain-blown ideologies are: man's instinct for escape, self-preservation-at-any-price, greed, personal imperialism, profound narcissism love of lying, perpetual miracle-hunger, desire for the *Summum Bonum* without paying for it, primordial predatory

instincts, egotism, love of psychological ambushes, prehensility, lust for power, love of cruelty, indestructible boobism in regard to the phantasmal To-morrow, envy for that which I have not but which some other one has, and will-to-vengeance, to get-even, to settle scores.

This is the natural-satyr man. Love is included in this inventory of the original beast, for love is a compound of will-to-power, lust and narcissism. Love is the veiled satyr, one of the masterpieces of Maya.

But Maya is kind. Man, as I said, must not look down into this den of growling, gnawing, lawless animals, the composite name for which is Ego. So the Lie Ethical, the Lie-Ideal, the Lie Altruistic, the Lie Common Good are invented to hide man from himself.

The voice is the voice of Beneficence, but the hand is the hand of predatory and hairy Esau.

George Bernard Shaw (himself a comic victim of the ideological mask of Social Service, when all that he does is for the glory and the expansion of the innate prehensility of Shaw) said somewhere, in effect, that when an Englishman is urged by a perfectly natural desire to appropriate to his own use the lands and labor of another people he first of all constructs an ethical reason to sanctify the theft—then he goes ahead and butchers and conquers with a lily-white conscience.

This trick is universal. Every criminal instinct constructs its moral mask. Self-excuse is the commonest of psychological manoeuvres. The Beast in the cellar is always ready with its alibi before the Social Magistrates. Ideologies for economic crimes and confiscations, ethical reasons for the commission of every private offense and perfectly logical and reasonable reasons for the most enormous crimes of governments and churches against dissenters are always on tap.

The sadistic, bloodthirsty, cruelty-loving, power-craving instincts in Torquemada, Robespierre, Cromwell, Lenin, Hitler and Mussolini, for instance, are veiled, hidden, clamped-down under the most grandiloquent and idealistic principles.

The natural monster that is man (all of us) took other forms in Jesus, Mahomet and Moses. There was forged—beyond their will—in the belly of their dreams of power and social vengeance the shield and helmet of Ethical Progress and Salvation for Mankind.

For the spiritual mob-masters as well as the physical and politico-economic mob-masters are Machiavellis (and, remember, Machiavelli was the sincerest man of his age). These spiritual Machiavellis (who have one set of rules for themselves and another for their exploited victims to-be) are profoundly sincere. In fact, they never know how sincere they are. They are the satyr-man in all his luminous glory. If they really knew their *real selves* they would commit suicide.

It was these continuous glimpses of the depths in himself that caused Tolstoy to veil himself with the mask of Primitive Christian Communist.

In a study of the soul of Tolstoy (such as we have in Stefan Zweig's fulgurant analysis of the fake Grand Moujik) we have a perfect example of the sublime comedy of the natural-satyr man parading the world with a crown of thorns on his head peddling a fifth gospel.

In my Lady Maya's wardrobe are many costumes, but they are all cut for one person—her eternal buffoon, Man.

Today, the natural-satyr-predatory man lies ambushed behind the ideologies of Communism, Socialism, Fascism. Ambush behind the ambush: Youth Movement.

Practical life also has its ideologies. There are just two classes in this realm: those who have fat jobs and those who haven't—the Ins and the Outs, as we say politically. The Ins all hold their seats because of some high-falutin' ideal principle. The Outs, wanting to get in, also construct an ideology dripping with sweetness and light and promises as gaudy as the madame in an exclusive old Roman whorehouse for Senators and Pro-Consuls.

The “Redeemer” bawls Social Justice! Equitable Distribution of Wealth! Capitalistic Vampires! Dictatorship of the Proletariat! He has endless shibboleths for his own secret designs; he has a fine row of show-windows. But when you peer into the store—the deep-buried and ambuscaded Motive—you will find those fine old fellows, Envy, Greed, Will-to-Power, Vengeance, Exploitation and Ego, parading around as naked as a satyr at a strip-party on the Isle of Lesbos.

Lullaby of the Molochs

“Be hard, and live dangerously!”, is the continual auto-suggestion of the Nietzschean individualist.

This was merely the crystallization into a formula of all those who have instinctively and temperamentally viewed life as an adventure, an adventure both in self-discipline and the unforeseen.

“Be soft, and live in security!”, is the slogan of the social, huddling animal. Like sheep, they are kept alive by the friction of friendly behind-rubbing.

“I want to be kept!” is the unspoken but passionate aspiration of the masses from the formation of the first parasitic human group-state to the Communist, Socialist, Nazist and Fascist of today.

And the hundreds of master-exploiters of the masses who are alive at every period in the history of the world watch from behind their prettily painted masks of Popular Ideals and Visions the exact state of the tired patient and its desire for Church and state-security.

They know that after a short debauch of individualistic democracy—where each one is “on his own”—there will come the reaction toward the always criminal paternalistic state.

And so the compact of the Faustian spirit of man is made with the Devil: in return for “No one shall go hungry!” man signs away all his freedom. For a loaf of bread he sells his liberties.

To be kept means to be fattened up for the wars of the Dictators. For security against idleness and starvation (exaggerated by the masters into vast bugaboos) man becomes an automatic saluter, a click-heel, cannon-fodder for the ideals of Communist-Capitalism, a copybook thinker and a pimp-artist—in a word, the robot of a Stalin, a Hitler, a Mussolini.

And man the individual vanishes into the darkened inquisition-room that was Sparta as the last rays of the sun that was Athens sink into the night of Spenglerian “Prussianism.”

Fear being the psychological and physical root of all movement and the “instinct for progress,” a desire for security of some sort is legitimately part of all of us. To do anything, to accomplish anything, there must be a certain sense of security. But security as *an end in itself* and security as a springboard for more daring ventures into the infinitude and vastitude of Chance are two different things.

Today, the ideal is security for the individual as end-in-itself, just as it was in feudal days—an end-in-itself taught by the master-thugs to the mob. But for the thugs themselves the security and doping of the masses are—and always were—a means to an end: Caesarian exploitation and the inflation of the unshackled ego of pederastic (“ascetic”) madmen to the Neronian-Caligulan degree.

These cycles of sleep always follow ages of great psychical and physical activity: it is the disintegrating yawn that follows a full day’s work. The activity of the Western peoples since the French and American revolutions has been so intense it has culminated in such an expenditure of energy, mental, physical and spiritual, that it has now come time to put the baby-man to bed

again. And after the exhausting World War there were no end of sand-men waiting to throw sand in the eyes of the tired democratic masses, and to the sand they added a bit of vitriol.

That the human race from time to time should want to sleep—should yearn for a rest for a century or two from its disillusion and physical agonies—is therefore normal and even desirable as strength-recruiting periods for further hazards. But that it should deliberately go to sleep in the arms of the Molochs—the Church, a Lenin, a Mussolini, a Hitler—is a degrading sleep, a desertion, a crime! Rather a forgetting for a thousand years in drunkenness and lewdness than to pimp and pander for the Dictators.

It is better to be a free-man in Hell than a slave in Heaven.

Again, by what right has any one (except the physically and mentally botched) to demand economic security? Invent your own securities, as you keep your own bank account. Fear the state, or the Church when it comes with gifts. The state is the eternal Shylock, and it will always take your pound of flesh for every spoonful of hash it doles out to you.

And distrust to the full the Machiavellis of “for the common good.” For there is no common good except the development of the individual. The state has no other function than to protect its members against invasion and promote the will of the individual so long as that will does not *force* itself on the will of another individual.

This cry today for economic security is a prolongation into manhood of our infantility. It is the return to breast-yearning—to suckle the teat of the common hoard with the minimum effort.

How well the dictator-thugs know that every one who has ever lived will take something if he can be *made to believe* he is getting something for nothing! But the economic phenomena today far surpass this common Machiavellian manoeuvre. The dictator-thugs have made almost half the human race believe that by giving up *all* it will be given something (a vague something) in five years, ten years, sixty years (they sinisterly call it “a Plan”).

Rouse yourselves out of your lethargy, you poor swindled and half-doped men and women of the Communistic-Socialistic-Fascist-Nazi security-dens!

Rather fifty years of freedom in Hell than a cycle of state-pimpdom!

“The Coming Slavery”

“All Socialism involves slavery,” said Herbert Spencer fifty years ago.

The human race as a whole has no use for any man who hasn’t got something to give away. Promise the perfect Kingdom Come and they’ll follow you to the gallows—and help to hang you if you cannot materialize your promise.

Herbert Spencer, as a social philosopher, had nothing to hand out but the raw truth. And his raw truths were naturally uncomfortable. He is, therefore, today entirely forgotten; and Karl Marx, who died just one year before Spencer published his four prophetic essays on the regression of man to the economic slavery of Communism and Socialism, is, even under the Fascist mask, riding high, wide and handsome.

For Marx put a New Jerusalem in the mental stocking of every good little Simple Simon who would hang up his sock under the old—the very old—mantelpiece of Hope.

Herbert Spencer versus Karl Marx. And Marx and his variations have nearly won, for what chance has the unmelodious pitch-pipe of reason against the Pied Piper of Hamelin and his promises of Economic Security?

It was in 1884 that Herbert Spencer published his four essays, “The New Toryism,” “The Coming Slavery,” “The Sins of Legislators” and “The Great Political Superstition.” They brought down on his head the abuse of all the herd-suckled “thinkers” (a contradiction in terms) and Collectivist “philosophers” (another contradiction in terms) in the British Empire.

It was a brave thing to do—for what shall it profit a man if he offer the stone of Rugged Individualism and Self-Reliance to a people when it waits, with open mouth, for a fall of crabmeat and bottled beer out of the mansion in the skies called the state?

But today the state is no longer a mansion in the skies. It has become a vast hospital, and the human race will soon be completely interned as invalids—or, at the best, out-patients, with doles and cards of mental diet handed out at the side-door, with not very gay trips to a stone wall if you don’t “join up.”

“*L’Etat—c’est moi!*” says the new Louis XIV—who is no longer the Sun-King, but looks, today, a little like Torquemada von Caliban.

I ask you to take a look at Russia, Germany Austria and Italy. And, make no mistake, Torquemada von Caliban is moving on France and England, and will soon move across the seas to America—for, like another famous water-walker, this fellow, T. von C, is the Way, the Truth and the Life, and those who do not come unto him will be damned—and *how!*

The Individualism of Herbert Spencer differed radically from the Individualism of Emerson, Nietzsche and Max Stirner.

The Individualism of Emerson was mystical and Transcendental. To Emerson, man was the unit of all values. He was, particularly, the measure of social values.

The Individualism of Nietzsche was rather that of the aristocratic and cultured Anarch. Emerson’s Individualism had room for the proletarian mind. Nietzsche excluded the populace from his beyond-good-and-evil Individualism. They were the Chandala.

Max Stirner's Individualism was sheer Anarchy. He saw man as a predatory, naked Ego, whose rights were only limited by the power of other predatory, naked egos.

Emerson's great men were Goethe, Montaigne, Plato and Spinoza.

Nietzsche's great men were Empedocles, Goethe, Spinoza and Cesar Borgia. They were his beyond-good-and-evil heroes.

I imagine Max Stirner's great man was *himself* dilated to the dimensions of Jupiter or Jehovah.

Spencer's Individualism resembled very closely the Individualism, the anti-stateism, of Thomas Jefferson, who always feared the sinister and sly encroachments of the government on the rights of the individual.

The state, like the Church, is among the most necessary of all the necessary evils that are the product of inherent human traits—such as our natural love of murder, theft and swindling in a business deal.

Man is immanently a criminal. He always obeys the first and most necessary of all laws that rule in the cosmos: "self-preservation is the first law of nature."

Self-preservation being the first law of nature and social life, it follows that you are not only permitted but urged by the Law-Giver to prolong your life at the price of other lives.

Eat or be eaten is the law of God.

The state was founded (not consciously, but necessarily and instinctively) to prevent beings from killing one another in the competitive struggle for food and women. The man-state is only a biological extension of the state in the sub-kingdoms: the ants, the bees, wolves, elephants.

The state says, "Let's stick together so that we can kill off the other pack." And from the moment a state ceases to be predatory and war-like, it begins to decline.

Pacifism is a declining form, a degeneracy—not the pacifism of the mystical-militant desertion by a man of the group into the realm of a profounder Individualism (Buddha, Thoreau, Amiel, De Vigny), but I mean the pacifism of those who instinctively prefer slavery to combat and whose ideology is a mask for class-warfare.

As pacifism has no reality in nature and war is the single reality (even in love), it also follows that the pacifist is the most dangerous member in any group. If the human race is to be preserved (and with Buddha and Schopenhauer, I cannot conceive why it should be unless you love an extraordinary non-moral adventure in consciousness), the state, as a necessary evil, must go on as the incarnation of that other necessary evil—Man.

We can, then, never get rid of the state. It has cosmic, mechanical and biological sanctions. It is an instinctive union of individuals to devise rules more subtle and unobtrusive for preying on one another. It also invents the rules for either absorbing, weakening or exterminating other competing states.

The last thing any state has ever thought of is the promotion and encouragement of the arts, sciences and independent thought. In the few instances where it has, it mutilates everything it touches that has to do with the finer essences. It is Caliban in the Garden of Ariel. Beauty and the state are antithetical terms.

No first-class man ever had a good word for the state. He either hates the state or invents an ideal one of his own (and all these ideal states are far more to be feared than the real ones).

Herbert Spencer was a first-class man in spite of the fact that he was tainted *cap-a-pie* with English moral concepts and was a naive perfectibilist. Nevertheless, Spencer, for an Englishman, was a first-class thinker.

His fundamentalist and indestructible individuality is manifest in the title of his volume: “The Man *Versus* the State.” Here he plants the eternal antagonism. Even the italics are his, for he wished to emphasize the inherent nature of the conflict.

It is a realistic continuation—this Man *versus* the State—of Prometheus *versus* Jupiter, Lucifer *versus* the Lord, Cain *versus* Jehovah, Jesus *versus* the Caiaphii.

Always the Rebel Man before Moloch, the cannibal-absorber!

Today, as in Spencer’s time, the Church having lost the firmness of its grip on the soul of man, the Moloch is now the state.

Moloch, indeed, has, or had originally, some benefit to confer, for the State-Moloch is paradoxically the father and the guarantor of the individual.

But, like all primal powers, it became corrupt, for *all* things tend to degradation and corruption. Eternal vigilance against the aggressions and the crimes of this Moloch is the price of the liberty of man.

The state, originally the fosterer of the spontaneous, the natural, the characteristic, is now the enemy of the dynamic individualist principle. Its intent is criminal even when it comes bearing gifts to the individual—more so than ever, indeed.

While it hands you out bread and soup at the back door it is planting machine guns at the front window.

It will take care of you from the cradle to the grave, in return for which you become a robot.

It rids you of your rags in exchange for a straitjacket.

There have been beneficent rulers; but there has never been a beneficent state. It’s the eternal Shylock.

The Dictators—the high priests of Moloch—move down on us with the inexorable tread of Dunsany’s jade Gods of the Mountains. In the fine couplet of Elizabeth Barrett Browning:

“They sit on their thrones in purple sublimity
And grind down our souls to a pale unanimity.”

Spencer’s “New Toryism” is pat today. “Most of those who now pass for Liberals are Tories of a new type,” he says.

Originally a Tory was a coercionist. The Liberal was an anti-coercionist. But as the Liberals became more and more powerful they, too, tended to become coercive.

It is the new paternalism—masked under philanthropic and social-planning schemes. It is the new Salvation, the old Salvation having gone to pot.

At least the Tory wore no mask. He frankly was a class-man, a caste-man. He didn’t rob you of life, liberty and the pursuit of your own private image of happiness for *your* good, but for his *own* good. And he made no bones about it even when they led him to the guillotine.

But today the Liberals have become so aggressive in their encroachments on personal liberties, they have gone so far in the direction of the old system of Tory regimentation, that it may bring about the paradox of capitalistic Toryism being compelled to issue a new Declaration of Independence! A Jeffersonian Tory is not inconceivable.

The old slogan of the Church was the *Salvation of Mankind, or be burned!* Liberalism (of which Socialism and Communism are its more honest expressions) has now subtly alchemized it into *For the Common Good, or up against the wall!*

“The Coming Slavery” (another one of the chapters in “The Man *Versus* the State”) is marvelously clairvoyant. Here Spencer foresees the growth of bureaucratic tyranny, the absorption of the individual more and more completely into the body of the State, the growth of a vast army of office-holders, whose only purpose is to hold their jobs at the expense of the vital liberties of both the inferior and the superior man; the rise to the top of the social lump of the incompetent, the mental Chandala. For, says Spencer, there is no alchemy by which you can get golden conduct out of leaden instincts.

“The great political superstition,” says Spencer in another chapter in the book, “The Great Political Superstition,” “of the past was the divine rights of kings. The great political superstition of the present is the divine right of parliaments. The oil of anointing seems unawares to have dripped from the head of the one on to the heads of the many, and given sacredness to them also and to their decrees.”

But Spencer could not see how far this would go. For even the “divine right” of the many has passed back again (the Eternal Return!) to the One: the Dictator. Lenin, Stalin, Hitler, Mussolini, Dollfuss, Kemal, Pilsudski, Horthy—what country will next come under the yoke of the New Toryism? France, England, America?

The Coming Slavery of Herbert Spencer is *here, now*, at our doors. All for the “Common Good”! Self-reliance crumbles as the Moloch of the Common Good advances.

There is only one answer: the perpetual and unrelenting warfare of Horatius Codes, the eternal Individualist, against the Etruscans and their Lars Porsenas—always the advancing Slavery!

The Illusion of “Protagonists”

I believe the world would be just where it is today—economically, historically, psychologically and religiously—if there had never lived a philosopher, a poet, a metaphysician, an artist or an economist.

The sum-total of the effect of Plato, Aristotle, Sophocles, Spinoza, Bacon, Hegel, Karl Marx, Herbert Spencer, Nietzsche, Bergson, Beethoven and Gobineau, for instance, on conditions and events today has been perhaps about two per cent. The remaining ninety-eight per cent is *Historical Necessity*, of which all the intellectuals are merely the passing recorders.

It is the confirmed egotry of the human race that drives it to pin all that happens to it on a name. “Marx is the father of the Russian revolution. Nietzsche was the progenitor of the World War. Hegel is responsible for the Nazi State. Luther was the maker of the Reformation. Plato’s Ideas are the Prometheus of Roosevelt’s benevolent NRA.” All of which is no more true than that the Declaration of Independence caused the American Revolution or Rousseau’s “Contrat Social” caused the fall of the Bastille.

I am surprised to find Aldous Huxley—one of the keenest minds of the age—writing this:

“The two cardinal points in the philosophy by which the Nazis justify their violence were both invented by Frenchmen! Gobineau was responsible for that doctrine of race superiority used by the Nazis as an aphrodisiac to arouse hatred for Gobineau’s own countrymen. And it was Bergson who led the intellectuals’ disastrous attack on the intellect, and so prepared the way for the systemized paranoia of Hitler.”

As a matter of fact, I doubt whether Hitler ever read a line of Gobineau or Bergson. And if he had, they would have had no more effect on him than Gobineau and his theories have on a gang of Georgia negro-lynchers and their practical demonstration of race superiority, or the anti-intellectualism of the French Romantics had on the adventure of John Brown, who believed so devoutly in race-equality.

Sparta was the greatest of all the totalitarian states. If she was egged on to her brutal courses by a Gobineau or a Bergson, or even a Hegel, history has left no record of these fellows’ essays. The genius and destiny of Sparta, as of every other people since or before, are implicit in the character of the units of the persons who compose the tribe (today called “races” and “nationals”).

Suppose Karl Marx had never written “Das Kapital”? Suppose Karl Marx had never existed? The Russian revolution would have taken place just as it did at about the same time that it did. Lenin and Trotzky would have been there just the same. If not Lenin and Trotzky, then some one else.

The desire, the obscure and incomprehensible inner urge of evolution produce the book and the human tool, not the book and the human tool the desire or the obscure inner urge.

In the case of Gobineau and Bergson, for instance, there happens to be a *coincidence*, a *similarity*, in the doctrines of these men and the doctrines of Nazism, just as there is this same

coincidence and similarity between the doctrines of Machiavelli and the studied hypocrisy of Mussolini.

The mistake that Aldous Huxley makes is in predicating as *causes* what are really *effects* of profounder, extra-human, or intra-human, movements.

It is true that if Nietzsche had not written “Thus Spake Zarathustra” Bernard Shaw would probably not have written “Man and Superman.” But this is cause and effect in the same medium, in the same world—the intellectual. But neither the Superman of Nietzsche nor Shaw is the cause of any physical phenomena. Hitler, Mussolini and Stalin would be precisely where they are and doing just what they are doing if printing had not yet been invented—given the same antecedent economic causes.

This is why history is a continuous series of ironic paradoxes. Reality has one logic and the intellect another. When they agree—as in the case of Spengler’s “annunciation” of world-dictators—it is because the intellect is shrewd enough to register what Reality reveals. Such a man will always be anathematized because of the confusion of *interpretation* with cause and effect, as, for instance, when Ibsen wrote “Ghosts” he was denounced as being actually *in favor* of cerebral syphilis! I myself have been denounced as an advocate of war because I believe that not only is war a biological necessity but have subscribed to the doctrine of Heraclitus that “war is the father of all things.”

The high comedy of the human-mind is the belief that by books and propaganda it can alter the laws of Reality—which makes “Don Quixote” the only history of the human race that is, to me, a true history.

The flowers are totally oblivious of the existence of Linnaeus, the Struggle for Existence knoweth not Darwin nor Marx, the ether-waves are not aware of Marconi, and the eternal action and reaction in historical evolution between the centrifugal individualistic mind and the centripetal Collectivist-dictator mind knows naught of Jefferson, Spencer, Gobineau, Marx or Bergson.

“Uncle Tom’s Cabin” had nothing whatever to do with freeing the slaves. It was a shot fired by General Beauregard at the American flag that did it. Nietzsche, Houston Stewart Chamberlain nor Hegel had anything to do with the World War. It was a crackbrained jackass of a boy in Sarajevo that brought it on.

Changes in the economic and historical-material world are pivoted on the microscopic fulcrums of destiny, and Gobineau and Bergson have no more to do with the astounding goings-on in Germany today than a pre-election platform of one of our major political parties resembles the monkeyshines of that party after it attains power—or the beautiful streamline concepts of Norman Thomas will resemble practical predatory Socialism.

Not only is the sword mightier than the pen but the sword is the pen that writes all history. The arm that handles this pen is *Historical Necessity*.

Pacifist Cant

Man is so profoundly and incorrigibly a masked animal that no matter how low or how high his social development he casts around for a pretext, an excuse, a justification for doing what is perfectly natural and normal.

These “moral justifications” are scapegoats. When man becomes an abstract-thinking social animal he transfers the scapegoat from the concrete world to the realm of ideas. The more the natural man disappears in the wrangle-mangles of social pressure the greater becomes his sense of shame before the normal, the biological, the natural. And it is this shame—this false, lying, self-deceiving man—that begins to invent abstract scapegoats to blame for what the principle of Indifference that rules the world compels him to do.

There is, therefore, more rubbish, more lying and self-deceptive rigmarole being written today about war and the causes of war than at any time in the history of man. This is because man was never more highly and compactly organized socially, more conscience-conscious and more mentally cockeyed when looking at simple facts than he is today.

One of these simple facts is that man is anthropophagus. (When a man becomes a “pacifist” or an “intellectual” he is autoprophagus—one half of him devours the other half or he goes in for the gentler and more ethical butcheries of the class-war.) “Eras of Peace” are what Ilya Ehrenbourg most beautifully describes as “the doze of the Anthropophagi after a full meal.”

To commercialize the “horrors of war” with the slogan that “nothing is more conducive to the promotion of peace” is another transparent mask for the simple fact that man loves to be horrified and shaken to the quick of his guts, as the makers and publishers of war-books and war-films quite well know—these not very sly Machiavellis! Arnold Zweig and others made fortunes out of the war, just as Victor Hugo and Charles Dickens made bags of money by pitying the poor.

The pictures on Broadway that gross the largest are those showing the younger generation “the horrors of war.” And the professional denouncers of war, everywhere, collect and denounce and denounce and collect—in picture-books, over the radio, on the screen, on the stage (“What Price Glory?”, “Peace on Earth,” etc.). O delightfully hypocritical Anthropophagi!

Just as advertising today has become almost wholly dis severed from actual human needs, but, instead, creates artificial needs by the thousand and then ballyhoos and commercializes them to the panic point, so any person who can make a cent out of exploiting the artificial reasons for war (and carefully side-stepping the inherent “bloody intent” of man against man) syringes into the ear of the puppy-minded public his platitudes.

Some of these platitudinous “causes” of war follow:

Wars are made by munitions-makers. Logically, then, there were no wars before there were munitions-makers. The Trojan wars were promoted by the Boulder-and-Battering Ram Trust.

Munitions-makers exist because there are wars to be fought, not vice-versa. They are the concrete manifestation of aggression and self-defence, the two principles, in their infinite and often masked ramifications, that govern every act of will, every thought, every desire and every physical act of any living thing. Abolish all the munitions-makers in the world by miracle-fiat and

peoples would fight with their fists, just as infants do in a cradle when they get on one another's nerves—or rattles.

The capitalistic system engenders war. Every age has its terror-inspiring word, its one verbal casket of green venom. When Communists, Socialists and Planned-Economy Salvationists hiss *Capitalist!* or *Capitalism!* in the ear of a rugged individualist he is supposed to die of fright.

It used to be “Heretic!” “Atheist!” “Libertine!” “Aristocrat!” etc., etc., Now the scapegoat is Capitalism. This baneful system is responsible for all the ills of humanity if we except those three other good old stand-bys, Tammany Hall, the Treaty of Versailles and the Spanish flu.

But the same question may be asked of those who charge all modern wars to capitalistic society that I asked of those who put the wars up to the munitions-makers—were there no wars before the capitalistic system's advent? The question answers itself.

Or we may look at it this way: If capitalism is a system of private or collective profit, then capitalism is an eternal biological law. And all wars, in all ages, are capitalistic, for the so-called “rights of man” and the “sacredness of life” as distinct from the “sacredness of property” are, always have been and always will be indissolubly bound up with the profit-instinct, or the desire to get more out of a thing than we have put into it.

Russia—the self-confessed enemy of Capitalism—is today an instance of this. For so-called Communistic Russia is an imperialistic, militaristic, capitalistic tyranny such as no hitherto capitalistic country has yet dreamed of. The breath of its life is *Profit* and *Conquests*. Russia *promises* to each individual a divvy of the ultimate trade-swag, which in the old-line capitalistic countries is taken by force through trade-unions and strikes.

Russia is today armed to the teeth, just like any private-profit governmental system. Her excuse is precisely the same as that made in America, England or France: the Big Bad Wolf is at the door. To exploit the masses no substitute has ever been found for the Big Bad Wolf of Threatened Invasion.

But this is what no one dare affirm—that property-rights *are* superior to human rights, for the meaning of the abstract phrase “human rights” reduced to concrete terms means property rights—to have and to hold. Russia recognizes the divinity—so to speak—of property when she puts a death penalty on sabotage and certain forms of theft and swindling. Property first always, everywhere!

Karl Marx — alleged anti-capitaliarian—proclaimed the most ruthless of all wars in the class-war (a struggle for profit), and so did Lenin and Trotzky. So necessary are strife and exploitation for the preservation of life that again and again verbal masks must be invented to face the truth.

Capitalism is, then, not the instigator of wars, but, on the contrary, it is war (class or inter-racial) that produces the indestructible capitalistic system, which is, whether in ancient Rome or in feudal times, only one of the many manifestations of the immanent Will-to-Power.

Secret diplomacy causes wars. In August 1914 an Homunculus-Tartarin named Izvolsky came out of his obscurity long enough to blow himself up like a toad-fish and shout, “This is my war!” He was the Russian Ambassador to France. Lots of people believed him. But it was just another case of a nobody finding a sudden spotlight and indulging himself in a little verbal exhibitionism.

No war was ever caused by a diplomat or any form of secret or open diplomacy. It is probable that diplomats have done more to prevent wars than anything else. Their business is lying, and it is good lying—sound, mutual, smiling lying—that keeps the peace of nations as well as of individuals.

Preparedness. I never heard of a pacifist—a universal disarmament advocate—who keeps his house-door open at night, who turns the other cheek when he gets a clout on the jaw, or who refuses a receipt from his landlord when he pays his rent. In their daily lives pacifists are prepared for attack, they carry on the warfare called their “business lives,” they are always prepared to fight for and defend their jobs, and they are absolute cynics when, as I have said, it comes to paying a bill—they will not take merely the other fellow’s word that it has been paid. It is a commonplace to say that they will fight for peace.

Every human being, as well as the inhabitants of the sub-kingdoms, including the vegetables, goes through life *prepared*. Fear is the main-spring of every act and thought. We all travel armed. But rarely does any one hunt for trouble—either among nations or individuals. The pathetic paradox of humanity is that it consciously desires peace and unconsciously seeks war.

Universal preparedness—equal preparedness—will stave off war for a long time. Those who are not prepared will be eaten up—Belgium in 1914, China today, Switzerland and Denmark tomorrow.

Preparedness is mutual defense against the universal Anthropophagi. The rage and mouth-frothing of the anti-preparedness pacifist is itself the sublimation of the war-instinct. If absolute universal disarmament ever takes place, these pacifists would be just as frothingly for a return to preparedness, for they are profoundly and first of all *warriors*, like all Salvationists and idealistic fanatics. *What* they break their teeth on is of no importance so long as there is something to break them on.

And the same law of perpetual self-deceit applies to all the lesser “reasons for war”: bad treaties (what is, and where is there, a “good treaty?”), ambitious rulers (no one is so popular as an ambitious, war-like ruler), greed for territory (who hasn’t it?, seeing that man cannot live without land), religion, God, trade, military glory—these are all the effects, not the causes, of the predatory nature of man, who when he ceases to be predatory must choose Nirvana, the home of the real pacifist, if you can conceive of one.

All great catastrophies have shaken man with pleasurable horror. Nothing is more bone of his bone and blood of his blood than war. But, as in front of everything nakedly natural, he averts his gaze or invents screens.

Man can only combat war with war. Only one form of warfare can kill another form of warfare: international horrors can be abolished for a while by the substitution of class and ideological wars—the slaughter of Anarchists by Communists, the murder of Socialists by Fascists, the killing of Communists, Republicans and Jews by Nazis, the extermination of Communists, Socialists and Anarchists by Capitalistic Democrats—and the guillotining of all advocates of war by militant pacifists.

But the General Grants, fresh from the slaughter-houses of the battle-fields, will, tired and drowsy, maunder between their eternal blood-baths, “Let us have peace!”

The Economic Escape

The history of the human race is a history of the invention of escapes: escapes from a diabolical Reality. Man is Proteus eternally seeking to out-manoeuvre Medusa.

These escapes may, broadly, be brought under these categories: religion, alcohol, money-power, woman, art and economic idealism.

Boredom is the concrete name of the frightful Reality that the human race is fleeing. All conscious and unconscious movements in living things are movements away from an annihilating *Ennui*.

Neither History nor the Cosmos has any other discernible purpose than to escape deterioration and death from yawning.

A healthy, normal, extraverted man is seldom bored because he is Nature's supreme ignoramus. Having no thinking apparatus, he cannot decompose his illusions. He is a political and social animal of perfect breed. His ideal is Theodore Roosevelt—the practical windmill escape-animal *par excellence*.

But no human being can exist a day without his private escape from boredom and Reality. The completely disillusionized and indifferent being has never existed, for indifference and disillusion are also escapes—retreat to the tree-top of one's own pride.

All the more comic is it, then, to hear the choir-boys of the Marxian Approach in literature and the arts shuffling up and down the land ridiculing all persons who create and read romances, adventure-stories, poetry, abstract philosophies—in a word, all those persons who insist that plays, poems, novels and even paintings should first, last and always entertain. For the word *entertain* is to the choristers of Economic Values what a “Heil, Moses!” would be during the canonization of Adolf Saint Pederast in the Sportspalast of Berlin.

The leaders of these choir-boys shake their curls vigorously at any one who reads Cabell or E. Phillips Oppenheim, Emily Dickinson or Ring Lardner, for instance, as “cowards,” “deserters,” “tories,” “aristocrats,” “bourgeois bums,” and “runaways before Reality.” I have heard all of these phrases used both on the platform and in the beer-holes where the lesser rattlepates of the Marxian Approach hurl their defies in the very teeth of Reality and into the gaping mouths of spittoons.

Now, of all the scare-babies before the irremediably diabolical low-down on life, the economic escapists are the most hopelessly self-deceptive. Their Dutch courage is an hourly pull at the old bottle labelled “PROGRESS.”

From the ideal Republic of Plato to the ideal Republic of Lenin, the fadimanhickscalvertions have lived in a veritable paradise of escapes. They live and thrive on fictions as Einstein thrives on sterile logarithms. Alice-in-Wonderland was a brutal realist compared to these blinded and deafenend Oedipuses of Economic Redemption, who run as fast as their legs will carry them away from the unveiled Isis and the mocking-tongued Sphinx into the Cockaynes of Socialism, Communism and other subtle transubstantiations of the Mansion in the Skies and a thousand other forms of the old theological hypnagogic baloney.

The elemental base of the Marxian dream is sadistic sentimentalism. Persons who are most susceptible to collective suffering are ripe victims for an economic fiction. They have more feeling than brain. Lazarus scares them stiff and Dives puts daggers of venomous envy in their eyes.

Fearing to face the biological, the psychological, the cynical fact that Dives and Lazarus are immortal, inexorable products of the laws of Difference and Will-to-Power, they escape—perpetually escape—to some New Jerusalem, where they, these sweetly human Torquemadas, will drag those of us who really *do* face Reality—poets, thinkers, cynics, epicureans of all the sauces of Experience—by the hair to be tortured and burned to the chant of “Man Shall Live by Bread and Bridges Alone!”

This denunciation of “the literature and the arts of escape” by those who are themselves totally unable to face the Horror of Life (“take *my* escape, or I’ll kill thee, brother!,” paraphrasing Mirabeau) also appeals to the well-to-do bores and those whose imaginations and cogitative centers have been pre-natally atrophied. I mean the Park avenue boudoir Communists, the spats-and-monocled Heralds of the Red Dawn, the silk-diapered university Level-Leaveners, the proletarian polo-players from the Long Island country clubs and the juvenile bankers from Broad and Wall streets who are in training for fat Commissariats in case———.

Seeking an unusual thrill, a new escape, these Anacharis Cloutzes having exhausted the 392 ways of making cocktails and God having neglected to mentally condition them for an escape into Keats or a ride on the back of Maurice de Guérin’s Centaur—these Cloutzes take up the Economic Escape either by hiring a hall or writing books, all having the same title, “These Changing Times; or, Whither?”

One has but to study the tense, purpose-set expressions on the faces of the acolytes of the Marxian Approach to see how necessary to them is the escape into the domain of Utopian illusion. These are the faces and the cock-sureness of Peter the Hermit, Savonarola, Torquemada, Lenin and John Roach Straton. Take away their Castle-in-Spain and they collapse. They are not firmly rooted in Reality like the congenital sceptic, the social and religious agnostic or the economic Individualist.

These deriders of all romance are themselves incorrigible romantics. These denouncers of those who love things *merely* because they are beautiful and entertaining are themselves scared into hysterical conniptions when you hiss at them the name of the two Big Bad Wolves, Nietzsche and Spengler.

If they ever felt certain just for one minute that every attempt to free man *en masse* brings mankind nearer and nearer to universal slavery, they would collapse in their grooved cardboard tracks. For the real “literature of escape” is the frightful avalanche of books that come down on us every week, all entitled “These Changing Times; or, Whither?” The men who write them have never changed and their Whither? is always some dismal Utopian or semi-utopian escape: Saint Augustine’s “City of God” done over and over into modern Marxian models.

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Benjamin De Casseres
The Individual Against Moloch
1936

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