

# The Political Theology of Mazzini And The International

Mikhail Bakunin

1871

If there is a man universally respected in Europe and who, by forty years of active life wholly devoted to the service of a great cause, has really merited this respect, it is Mazzini. He is incontestably one of the noblest and purest individualities of our century,—I might say even the greatest, if greatness was compatible with the stubborn worship of error.

Unfortunately, at the very foundation of the programme of the Italian patriot, there has been, from the first, an essentially false principle, which, after having paralyzed and made barren his most heroic efforts and his most ingenious combinations, must drag him sooner or later into the ranks of the reaction. This principle is that of an idealism at once metaphysical and mystical, grafted upon the patriotic ambition of the statesman. It is the worship of God, the worship of divine and human authority; it is the faith in the Messianic predestination of Italy, queen of the nations, with Rome, capital of the world; it is the political passion for the grandeur and glory of the State, founded necessarily on the misery of the people. It is, in short, that religion of all dogmatic and absolute minds, the passion for uniformity which they call unity and which is the grave of liberty.

Mazzini is the last high priest of religious, metaphysical, and political idealism which is disappearing.

Mazzini reproaches us with not believing in God. We reproach him, as a set-off, with believing in him, or rather, we do not even reproach him, we only deplore that he believes. We infinitely regret that by this intrusion of mystical sentiments and ideas into his conscience, his activity, his life, he has been forced to range himself against us with all the enemies of the emancipation of the popular masses.

For, in fact, we cannot longer deceive ourselves. Who are now found under the banner of God? From Napoleon Third to Bismarck; from the Empress Eugenie to Queen Isabella; and between them the pope with his mystical rose which he gallantly presents, by turns, to the one and the other. There are all the emperors, all the kings, all the official, officious, aristocratic, and otherwise privileged world of Europe, carefully enumerated in the Gotha almanac; there are all the great leeches of industry, of commerce, of finance; the licensed professors and all the functionaries of the State; the high and the low police, the gendarmes, the jailers, the executioners; without forgetting the priests, constituting today the black police of souls for the benefit of States; there

are the generals, those humane defenders of public order, and the editors of the venal press, such pure representatives of all the official virtues. Behold the army of God!

Behold the banner under which Mazzini is ranged today, doubtless in spite of himself, drawn by the logic of his ideal convictions, which force him, if not to bless all that they bless, at least to curse all that they curse.

And in the opposite camp, what is to be found there? The revolution, the audacious deniers of God, of the divine order and the principle of authority, but, on the other hand, and for that very reason, the believers in humanity, the affirmers of a human order and of human liberty.

Mazzini, in his youth, divided between two opposing currents, was at once priest and revolutionist. But the inspirations of the priest, as was to have been expected, finally stifled in him the instincts of the revolutionist; and today all that he thinks, all that he says, all that he does, breathes the purest reaction. In consequence of which there is great joy in the camp of our enemies and mourning in our own.

But we have something else to do than to lament; all our time belongs to the battle. Mazzini has thrown down his gauntlet before us, and it is our duty to pick it up, in order that it may not be said that, through veneration for the great past services of a man, we have bent our head before untruth.

It is not with a light heart that one can decide to attack a man like Mazzini, a man whom one is forced to revere and love even in combating him, for, if there is one thing which no one dares question, it is the high disinterestedness, the intense sincerity, and the no less intense passion for good, of this man, whose incomparable purity shines with all its brightness in the midst of the corruption of the century. But veneration, however legitimate it may be, must never turn into idolatry; and there is one thing more sacred than the greatest man in the world,—namely, truth, justice, the duty of defending the sacred cause of humanity.

This is not the first time that Mazzini launches his accusations and condemnations, not to say his insults and calumnies, against us. The past year, in a letter addressed to his friend, an idealist and priest like himself, the illustrious Quinet, he had bitterly censured the materialistic and atheistic tendencies of the modern youth. This was his right, the logical consequence of his misfortune in having always connected his noblest aspirations with the fictitious existence of an absolutely impossible Being, a malevolent and absurd phantom, created by the childish imagination of people just emerging from animality, which, after having been successively reviewed, corrected, and enriched by the creative fancy of poets and still later gravely defined and systematized by the abstract speculations of theologians and metaphysicians, is vanishing today, like a true phantom as it is, before the powerful breath of the popular conscience, matured by historic experience, and before the still more pitiless analysis of real science. “ And since the illustrious Italian patriot, from the beginning of his long career, has had the misfortune to always place his most revolutionary thoughts and acts under the protection of this imaginary being and to enchain thereto his whole life, to the extent of sacrificing to it even the real emancipation of his dear Italy, can we be surprised that he is now indignant at the new generation which, inspired with another spirit, another morality, and another love than his own, turns its back upon his God?

The bitterness and anger of Mazzini are natural. To have been for more than thirty years at the head of the revolutionary movement of Europe and to feel now that this management is escaping him; to see this movement take a road in which his petrified convictions do not permit him to lead, or even to follow; to remain alone, abandoned, not understood, and henceforth incapable

of himself understanding anything of all that is going on under his eyes!’ For a great soul, for a proud intelligence, for a grand ambition, like that of Mazzini, at the end of a career dedicated wholly to the service of humanity, this is a tragic and cruel position.

So, when the saintly old man, from the height of his isolated ideal, launched at us his first thunderbolts, we made no answer, or almost none. We respected this powerless but grievous wrath. Yet not from any lack of arguments by which, not only to resent his reproaches, but even to turn them against him.

He says that we are materialists, atheists. To this we have nothing to answer, for we are that in truth, and, as far as a sentiment of pride is permissible in poor individuals who, like the waves, rise only to soon disappear in the immense ocean of the collective life of human society, we glory in being such, because atheism and materialism are the truth, or rather, the real basis of all truth, and because, without troubling ourselves with the practical consequences, we desire the truth before all and nothing but the truth. Moreover, we have this faith,—that, notwithstanding all appearances to the contrary, notwithstanding all the timid suggestions of a political and sceptical prudence, the truth alone can effect the practical good of men.

Such is, then, the first article of our faith; and we will force you to really admit that we too have a faith, illustrious master. Only it looks never backwards, but always forwards.

You do not always content yourself, however, with establishing our atheism and our materialism, you conclude that we can have neither love for men nor respect for their dignity; that all the great things which, from time immemorial, have inspired the noblest hearts—liberty, justice, humanity, beauty, truth—must be completely unknown to us, and that, dragging through our miserable existence in a hap-hazard fashion, crawling rather than walking on the earth, we can know no other cares than to satisfy our sensual and gross appetites.

If any other than you said it, we should call him a shameless calumniator. To you, respected and unjust master, we say that this is on your part a deplorable error. Do you wish to know to what extent we love all the grand and beautiful things of which you deny us knowledge and love? Know, then, that we love them to this extent,—that we are wearied and disgusted with seeing them eternally suspended from your heaven, which has stolen them from earth, as so many symbols and promises forever unrealizable! We content ourselves no longer with the phantom of these things; we wish the reality.

And that is the second article of our faith, illustrious master. We believe in the possibility, in the necessity, of this realization upon earth; at the same time we are convinced that all those things which you adore as celestial hopes will necessarily lose, in becoming human and terrestrial realities, their mystical and divine character.

In calling us materialists, you believe that you have said everything. It seems to you that you have definitively condemned and overwhelmed us. And do you know whence your error arises? From the fact that what we call matter and what you call matter are two things, two conceptions, absolutely different. Your matter is to you an imaginary being, like your God, like your Satan, like your immortal soul. Your matter is the basest grossness, inert brutality, an impossible being, just as pure, immaterial, absolute mind, which likewise has never existed but in the speculative fancy of theologians and metaphysicians, those unique creators of the one and the other, is impossible. The history of philosophy has now unveiled the process—a very simple one, moreover—of this unconscious creation, the genesis of this fatal historical illusion, which, during a long series of centuries, has weighed like a horrible nightmare on the crushed spirit of human generations.

The first thinkers, who were necessarily theologians and metaphysicians, because the earthly mind is so made that it commences always with many follies, with falsehood, with error, to arrive at a particle of truth, which does not highly recommend the holy traditions of the past,—the first thinkers, I say, took in the lump the real beings with whom they were acquainted, including, doubtless, themselves, all which appeared to them to constitute force, movement, life, intelligence, and they called this by the generic name of mind; then they gave to the rest, the unformed and inert residue which they supposed must remain after this abstractive operation, executed unconsciously on the real world by their own mind, the name of matter. After which they were astonished that this waiter, which, like this mind, never existed but in their imagination, appeared to them so inert, so stupid, in the presence of their God, pure mind....

As for us, we admit frankly that we do not know your God, but neither do we know your matter; or, rather, we know that both are equally No-Beings created a priori by the speculative fancy of the simple thinkers of past centuries. By the words “material and matter” we understand the totality, the whole scale, of real beings, known and unknown, from the most simple organic bodies up to the constitution and operations of the brain of the greatest genius: the most beautiful sentiments, the grandest thoughts, heroic deeds, acts of devotion, duties as well as rights, sacrifice as well as egoism, all, even to the mystical and transcendental aberrations of Mazzini, like the manifestations of organic life, chemical properties and actions, electricity, light, heat, the natural attraction of bodies, constitute in our eyes so many evolutions, doubtless different, but not less strictly solidary, of this totality of real beings which we call matter.

And notice carefully that we do not consider this totality as a sort of absolute and eternally creative substance, as the Pantheists make it, but as an eternal resultant, ever produced and reproduced anew by the concurrence of an infinity of actions and reactions of all kinds or by the incessant transformation of the real beings who are born and die in its bosom.

Not to prolong this metaphysical dissertation, I will say, by way of summing up, that we call material all that is, all that is produced in the real world, in man as well as outside of man, and that we apply the name ideal exclusively to the products of man’s cerebral action; but as our brain is an organization wholly material, and as, consequently, all its functions are as material as the action of all other things united can be, it follows that what we call matter or the material world does not in the least exclude, but, on the contrary, inevitably includes, the ideal.

There is a fact which is worthy of careful consideration by our platonic adversaries: How is it that materialistic theorists generally show themselves much more largely idealists in practice than the idealists themselves? At bottom, nothing is more logical or more natural than this fact. Does not all development imply in some way negation of the point of departure? Well, the materialistic theorists set out from the conception of matter to arrive at what? At the idea. While the idealists, setting out from the pure, absolute idea and always repeating anew the old myth of original sin, which is only the symbolic expression of their melancholy destiny, are eternally falling back, as well in theory as in practice, into the matter of which they never succeed in getting clear. And such matter! Brutal, ignoble, stupid, created by their own imagination, as the alter Ego or as the reflection of their ideal Me.

So the materialists, always conforming their social theories to the real developments of history, consider bestiality, cannibalism, slavery as the first points of departure in the progressive movement of society; but what are they seeking, what do they wish? The emancipation and complete humanization of society; while the idealists, who take for the foundations of their speculations the immortal soul and free will, end inevitably in the worship of public order, like Thiers, and in

that of authority, like Mazzini,—that is to say, in the consecration and organization of an eternal slavery. Whence it follows, evidently, that theoretical materialism has for a necessary consequence practical idealism, and that, on the contrary, ideal theories find their realization possible only in the grossest practical materialism.

But yesterday, under our eyes, where were the materialists, the atheists, found? In the Paris Commune. And the idealists, the believers in God? In the National Assembly of Versailles. What did the men of Paris wish? Through the emancipation of labor, the definitive emancipation of humanity. And what does the triumphant Assembly of Versailles wish? Its final degradation under the double yoke of spiritual and temporal power. The materialists, full of faith and despising suffering, dangers, and death, wish to march forward, because they see gleaming before them the triumph of humanity; and the idealists, out of breath, seeing no longer anything but red spectres before them, wish to push it back with all their might into the mire from which it has escaped with so much trouble. Compare and judge.

Mazzini pretends and asserts, with that doctrinal and imperious tone which is peculiar to all founders of new religions, that materialists are incapable of loving and of devoting their life to great things. In saying that, he only proves that, a consistent idealist and scorner of humanity, in the name of his God, whose prophet he very seriously believes himself to be, he has never comprehended human nature nor the historical developments of society, and that, if he is not ignorant of history, he misunderstands it in a singular manner.

His reasoning is that of all the theologians. If there were no creative God, he says, the world with its admirable laws could not exist, or else would present nothing less than a horrible chaos, where all things would be governed, not by a providential and divine thought, but by frightful chance and the anarchical competition of blind forces. There would be no aim in life; everything would be only material, brutal, and fortuitous. For without God, no coordination in the physical world, and no moral law in human society; and without moral law, no duty, no right, no sacrifice, no love, no humanity, no country, no Rome, and no Italy; for, if Italy exists as a nation, it is only because she has a providential and worldly mission to fulfill, and she could have been charged with this mission only by God, whose paternal solicitude for this queen of nations has gone so far as to trace, with his own divine finger, her frontiers, predicted and described by the prophetic genius of Dante.

In the course of this work, I will try to prove against Mazzini:

1. That, if there were a God, the world could never have existed.
2. That, if God had been the legislator of the natural world, which in our idea includes all the world, properly speaking, as much the physical as the human or social world, what we call natural laws, physical and social, likewise could never have existed. Like all political States subordinated and ruled from above by arbitrary legislators, the world would then present the spectacle of the most revolting anarchy. It could not exist.
3. That the moral law, whose existence we materialists and atheists recognize more really than idealists of any school whatever, Mazzinians or non-Mazzinians, can, is a truly moral law, a law at once logical and real, a powerful law, a law which must triumph over the conspiracies of all the idealists in the world, because it emanates from the very nature of human society, a nature of which we must seek the real foundations, not in God, but in animality.

4. That the idea of a God, far from being necessary to the establishment of this law, has been only its disturbance and depravation.
5. That all the Gods, past and present, have owed their first existence to human fantasy, hardly free from the swaddling-clothes of its primitive bestiality; that faith in a supernatural or divine world constitutes an aberration historically inevitable in the past developments of our mind; and that, to use an expression of Proudhon, men, deceived by a sort of optical illusion, have always adored in their Gods only their own image, reversed and monstrously exaggerated.
6. That divinity, once established on its celestial throne, has become the scourge of humanity, the ally of all the tyrants, of all the charlatans, of all the tormentors and exploiters of the popular masses.
7. That, finally, the disappearance of the divine phantoms, necessary condition of the triumph of humanity, will be one of the inevitable consequences of the emancipation of the proletariat.

As long as Mazzini was content to insult the youth of the schools, the only ones who, in the profoundly corrupted and degraded circles of the existing bourgeoisie, still evinced a little enthusiasm for great things, for truth and justice; as long as he limited his attacks to the German professors, to the Moleschotts, the Schiffs, and the others, who commit the horrible offence' of teaching true science in Italian universities; and as long as he amused himself with denouncing them to the Italian government as propagators of subversive ideas in the country of Galileo and Giordano Bruno,—the silence enjoined by affection and pity was possible to us. The young people are energetic enough and the professors learned enough to defend themselves.

But today Mazzini has exceeded the limit. Still in good faith and still inspired by an idealism as fanatical as sincere, he has committed two crimes which, in our eyes, in the eyes of the entire socialistic democracy of Europe, are unpardonable.

At the very moment when the heroic population of Paris, more sublime than ever, was getting itself massacred by tens of thousands, including women and children, in defending the most humane, the most just, the most grand cause which was ever produced in history, the cause of the emancipation of the working-people of the whole world; at the moment when the frightful coalition of all the unclean reactions which are now celebrating their triumphal orgies at Versailles, not content with massacring and imprisoning en masse our brothers and sisters of the Commune of Paris, launches at them all the calumnies which a baseness without limits can alone concoct,—Mazzini, the great, the pure democrat Mazzini, turning his back upon the cause of the proletariat and remembering only his mission of prophet and priest, likewise hurls his insults at them I He dares deny not only the justice of their cause, but even their heroic and sublime devotion, representing them, they who have sacrificed themselves for the deliverance of the whole world, as a lot of coarse creatures ignorant of all moral law and obeying only egoistic and savage impulses.

This is not the first time that Mazzini has insulted and calumniated the people of Paris. In 1848, after the memorable days of June which had inaugurated the era of the demands of the proletariat and of the really socialistic movement in Europe, Mazzini had launched a manifesto full of wrath, cursing the workingmen of Paris and socialism at the same time. Against the workingmen of 1848,

devoted, heroic, sublime, like their children of 1871, and, like them, massacred, imprisoned, and banished en masse by the bourgeois Republic, Mazzini had repeated all the slanders of which Ledru-Rollin and his other friends, self-styled red republicans of France, made use to palliate in the eyes of the world, and perhaps in their own eyes, their ridiculous and shameful incapacity.

Mazzini cursed socialism: as priest or as Messianic deputy of the master on high, he must curse it, since socialism, considered from the moral point of view, is the advent of human respect replacing the voluntary degradations of divine worship, and, considered from the scientifically practical point of view, is the proclamation of that grand principle which, from this time a part of the conscience of the people, has become the single point of departure, as well of the researches and developments of positive science, as of the revolutionary movements of the proletariat.

This principle, summed up in all its simplicity, is as follows:

“As in the world specifically called material, inorganic matter (mechanical, physical, chemical) is the determinative base of organic matter (vegetable, animal, intelligent or cerebral), so in the social world, which can be considered only as the highest known degree of the material world, the development of economic questions has always seen and still continues to be the determinative base of all religious, philosophical, political, and social developments.”

We see that this principle brings with it nothing less than the most audacious overturning of all the theories, scientific as well as moral, of all the religious, metaphysical, political, and judicial ideas, which together constitute the belief of all idealists, past and present. This is a revolution a thousand times more formidable than that which, starting from the Renaissance and especially from the seventeenth century, overthrew the scholastic doctrines, those ramparts of the Church, of absolute monarchy, and of feudal nobility, to replace them by the metaphysical dogmatism of so-called pure reason, so favorable to the domination of the latest privileged class and especially of the bourgeoisie.

If the overthrow of scholastic barbarity caused such a terrible emotion in its time, we can understand what convulsions must be caused, in our day, by the overthrow of doctrinal idealism, of this last refuge of all the oppressors and privileged exploiters of humanity.

The exploiters of ideal beliefs feel themselves menaced in their most precious interests, and the disinterested, fanatical, and sincere partisans of dying idealism, like Mazzini, see all the religion, all the illusion of their life, destroyed at a single blow.

Since he began to act, Mazzini has not ceased to repeat to the proletariat of Italy and of Europe these words, which sum up his religious and political catechism: “Be moral, adore God, accept the moral law which I bring you in his name, aid me in establishing a republic founded on the (impossible) marriage of reason and faith, of divine authority and human liberty, and you shall have glory and power, and, moreover, you shall have prosperity, liberty, and equality.”

Socialism says to them, on the contrary, through the mouth of the International:

“That the economic subjection of the laborer to the monopolist of raw material and the instruments of labor is the source of servitude in all its forms,—social misery, mental degradation, political submission,—and

“That, for this reason, the economic emancipation of the laboring classes is the great end to which all political movements should be subordinated as a simple means.”

Such is, in its simplicity, the fundamental thought of the International Association of Working-People.

One can understand that Mazzini has been obliged to curse it; and this is the second crime with which we reproach him, while recognizing, however, that, in cursing it, he has obeyed his conscience as prophet and priest.

But, while rendering justice to his incontestable sincerity, we must affirm that, in adding his invectives to those of all the reactionists of Europe against our unfortunate brothers, the heroic defenders and martyrs of the Commune of Paris, and his excommunications to those of the National Assembly and of the Pope against the legitimate claims and the international organization of the workingmen of the entire world, Mazzini has definitively broken with the revolution, and has taken his place in the international reaction.

In the course of this work, examining one by one his grievances against our admirable Association, I shall endeavor to lay bare the emptiness of the religious and political doctrines of the prophet.

Mazzini must be very disconsolate. Hardly has he had time to launch his excommunication against the International, when forthwith the archangels of public order set themselves to striking him.

We know what has just happened at Naples. The International Association has just been dissolved by a superior order, "as a permanent offence against the laws and the fundamental institutions of the country;" and this condemnation, pronounced without trial by the simple good pleasure of the ministry, has naturally been accompanied by minute and fruitless searches and arbitrary arrests. In a word, the public authorities have done their duty, and for the thousandth time, in this century, society has just been saved.

No one can be as much dismayed as Mazzini. For a revolutionist like him, incorrigible idealist though he be, it cannot be an agreeable thing to see a government, of which he certainly cannot be a friend, thus translate his theoretical maledictions into action. It is a great pity! But the principal cause must be sought in the religious and political theories of Mazzini, all the latest manifestations of which have made the entire reactionary press of Italy and Europe leap for joy.

It is more than probable that the deed which has just been done at Naples will be soon reproduced in all the other cities of Italy. All the governments of Europe are plotting today the ruin of the International, and already our adversaries in all countries are beginning to cry, making or not making the sign of the cross: "Thank God! it is dead!"

"The International is dead!" you say. Oh, no; long live the International! And it is you, dear involuntary allies, who are conducting in its favor, by your atrocious persecutions and by your infamous calumnies, a propaganda far more formidable than that which our poor means would ever permit us to carry on.

Notwithstanding the millions that the hireling press attributes with a ridiculous generosity to the General Council of the Association, sitting at London, we must say, alas! that the International is very poor. And whence should it get its millions? Is it not the Association of misery and exploited labor, and has it not all the rich against it? Admit it then, this holy poverty which is a sure guarantee of its sincerity, of its honesty, a proof of its power. For, if the International is developed and progresses notwithstanding its undeniable poverty, notwithstanding all the machinations of the mighty joined against it, it is because it constitutes evidently one of those grand historical realities, the vitality of which has its causes, not in the artificial and more or less arbitrary combinations of some tens, or hundreds, or even thousands, of interested, ambitious,



or fanatical individuals, but in the fatal development of society, the irresistible tendencies and needs of the century; it is because it contains in itself the future.

We have, then, full confidence in our inevitable triumph, which does not in the least prevent us from understanding how urgent it is to propagate our principles and organize the working-people's forces. For, if we are convinced, on the one hand, that true ideas, which are such only because they are the faithful expression of the real development of humanity, must necessarily triumph, sooner or later, we know also that they will obtain this triumph only because there are always found at their disposal a certain number of individuals who are profoundly penetrated with them, who are passionately devoted to them, who propagate them, and who aid in the spontaneous creation of new associations formed in their name. Without prejudice to the fatality which presides over all historical developments, the initiative of individuals, conscious or unconscious instruments of the movement which pushes and bears them on, has been and is still necessary to impregnate the creative faculty of the masses.

So, fully assured though we are of the final triumph of the International Association, we are very far from ignoring the urgency of active propagandism and a social organization of the working-people's forces. But it is precisely in the accomplishment of this duty that our poverty creates for us, alas! too often, insurmountable obstacles.

Strikes ruin us, and yet it is impossible either to anticipate or prevent them. They are never or almost never the result of a plot, of a rash action, of a caprice; they are the forced result of the entire existing economic situation. Each day more and more menaced in the last guarantees of their independence and even of their existence, the workingmen well know that to commence a strike, for them, means to condemn themselves to inconceivable sufferings. But generally they have no other means of defending their miserable morsel of bread and the shadow of liberty which the economic organization of society allows them. One more step in this path, progressive and prosperous for the happy holders of capital, but retrogressive and disastrous for them, and they would see themselves reduced to the condition of serfs or of negroes. White negroes! such is the name which the workingmen of the United States of America, of that democratic republic par excellence, are now giving themselves. On the other hand, it is evident to all those who can comprehend and see that in this same social organization a fatal law and one which no capitalist can escape without condemning himself inevitably to ruin, forces indirectly all the money-lenders and directly all the conductors of industrial enterprises, to base all their calculations on the progressive diminution of the liberty and the bread of the workmen whom they employ. In the midst of frightful competition, in this struggle of life and death where small and medium-sized capitals are being swallowed up, little by little, in the pockets of the great bank-lords, all profits are made exclusively out of the wages of the proletariat; and if the proletariat did not defend itself with the energy of despair, it would find itself in a state of slavery worse than that of the Middle Ages.

We foresee, then, that strikes will become from day to day more universal and more formidable, until the very intensity of the evil shall produce at last the good. And we not only cannot, but we ought not to prevent them. For strikes and all the unheard-of sufferings, the keen misery, the hunger, the illnesses and often death which are the inevitable consequences of them, are the most powerful and the most terrible propagators of socialistic ideas among the masses.

Well! the Internationalists have to run to the help of their brothers of all countries, deprived of work. They have to give their last cent, and sometimes even contract debts, to prevent them from dying of hunger. This ruins them.

If it were known how much of their meagre funds they have had to expend, first to save their brothers of the Commune of Paris from the clutches of the bourgeois Republic, and then to give them hospitality! And all this was done without ostentation, without boasting, as the most natural thing in the world, not for the love of God, but by simple and irresistible human impulse. It was human brotherhood concrete and direct. Such is the practice of the International.

It is the ardent solidarity of a mass of obscure, ignorant, miserable workingmen who, again raising very high the flag of humanity which the privileged and civilized classes had let fall into the mud, are, at the same time, the strugglers, the victims of the present and the founders of the future. It is the daily exercise of real love, founded on the most complete equality and on the respect of all for the liberty and for the human dignity of each. More than all the organizations and the propaganda of principles, this love each day practised by the sections of all countries, without any exception, reassures us concerning the near triumph of the International!

It will be understood, nevertheless, that this practice must leave us very little money for propagandism and the organization of the working-people's forces. If it were known at what cost and sacrifice we publish our pamphlets, which are, naturally, read and paid for only by workingmen! The journals of the International—and there are many already, thanks to the zeal of our companions in all countries—are supported only by the few remaining cents which the workingmen deduct from the bread of their families.

Such are our means of action. In presence of the immense task which is imposed upon us, and which we have accepted with passion, with happiness, relying less on our forces than on the justice of the cause which we serve, these means seem so ridiculously small that really there are moments when we could despair, if, precisely at these very, hours of distress, our enemies and our persecutors did not come generously to our aid.

What has popularized the International in France since 1866, and especially since 1867? The persecutions of the Empire. And today, what has made, and what continues to make, the most powerful propagandism in our favor? First—and here hats off—the heroic Commune of Paris,—the immense fact of this last socialistic revolution, conquered externally for a time, but morally everywhere triumphant. It has roused the popular masses, it has been unanimously greeted by the proletariat of all countries as the announcement of a near deliverance. But what has explained to the masses the true sense, the whole import of this revolution? The official and officious press of all countries, the terror of the privileged classes, the Draconian measures of governments, and, finally, Mazzini himself.

Mazzini had doubtless entertained the hardly generous intention of morally annihilating the Commune, which the government had succeeded only in killing in a brutal manner. Has Mazzini attained his object? Not at all; he has, on the contrary, powerfully contributed to exalt the Commune in the opinion of the Italian masses. And today, always fatally bound up with the negative propagandism of the reactionary press, he has just rendered the same service to the International. He wished to destroy it, and he aids us in propagating its principles. Hardly a year ago, except at two or three points isolated and lost in space, the existence of the International in Italy was not even suspected. Now, thanks to the governmental press and thanks to Mazzini above all, no one is ignorant of it.

Mazzini is not contented, like the journals of the reaction, with frightening only the bourgeois. No, he and his partisans, scattered in very little groups in almost all the cities of Italy, go to the workingmen's associations to say to them: "Beware of the International! It is the Devil!" Poor things! They do not know, then, that the Devil has been in all times the being who has most

interested the human race. Ah! the International is Satan in person; we must therefore make his acquaintance as soon as possible!

And thus it is that, thanks to this furious negative propagandism, in Italy, as everywhere, an immense interest in the International is being awakened today among the masses.

Our enemies have ploughed well; now is the time for us to sow.

In all the cities, and even in many of the country places, there will be found one, two, or three intelligent workmen, devoted to their brothers and who know how to read; or else, in default of such, some young people born in the bourgeoisie class, but not penetrated with the perverse spirit which now reigns in this class,—in short, to avail myself of an expression consecrated by Mazzini, some apostles inspired with a true love for the holy cause of justice and humanity, and who, the statutes of the International in their hands, will make it a duty to explain to the working-people's associations:

1. That this pretended Devil claims for each worker the full product of his labor: finding it wrong that there should be in society so many men who, producing nothing at all, can maintain their insolent riches only by the work of others. The International, like the apostle, Saint Paul, maintains that, "if any would not work, neither should he eat." The International recognizes the right to this noble name of labor as belonging only to productive labor. Some years ago, the young king of Portugal, having come to pay a visit to his august father-in-law, was presented in the working-people's association at Turin; and there, surrounded by workingmen, he said to them these memorable words: "Gentlemen, the present century is the century of labor. We all labor. I, too, labor for the good of my people." However flattering this likening of royal labor to workingmen's labor may appear, we cannot accept it. We must recognize that royal labor is a labor of absorption and not of production; capitalists, proprietors, contractors, also labor; but all their labor, having no other object than to transfer the real products of labor from their workingmen into their own pockets, cannot be considered by us as productive labor. In this sense thieves and brigands labor also, and roughly, risking every day their liberty and their life. The International clearly recognizes intellectual labor—that of men of science as well as of the application of science to industry, and that of the organizers and administrators of industrial and commercial affairs—as productive labor. But it demands for all men a participation as much in manual labor as in labors of the mind, suited, not to birth nor to social privileges which must disappear, but to the natural capacities of each, developed by equal education and instruction. Only then will disappear the gulf which today separates the classes which are called intelligent and the working masses.
2. The International declares that, so long as the working masses shall remain plunged in misery, in economic servitude, and in this forced ignorance to which economic organization and present society condemn them, all the political reforms and revolutions, without excepting even those which are projected and promised by the Republican Alliance of Mazzini, will avail them nothing.
3. That consequently, in their own interest, material as well as moral, they should subordinate all political questions to economic questions, the material means of an education and an existence really human being for the proletariat the first condition of liberty, morality, and humanity.

4. That the experience of past centuries as well as of all present facts ought to have sufficiently convinced the working masses that they can and should expect no social amelioration of their lot from the generosity nor even from the justice of the privileged classes; that there has never been and that there will never be a generous class, a just class, justice being able to exist only in equality, and equality involving necessarily the abolition of privileges and classes; that the classes actually existing—clergy, bureaucracy, plutocracy, nobility, bourgeoisie—dispute for power only to consolidate their own strength and to increase their profits; and that, consequently, the proletariat must take henceforth the direction of its own affairs into its own hands.
5. That, once clearly understanding itself and organized nationally and internationally, there will be no power in the world that can resist it.
6. That the proletariat ought to tend, not to the establishment of a new rule or of a new class for its own profit, but to the definitive abolition of all rule, of every class, by the organization of justice, liberty, and equality for all human beings, without distinction of race, color, nationality, or faith,—all to fully exercise the same duties and enjoy the same rights.
7. That the cause of the workmen of the entire world is solidary, across and in spite of all State frontiers. It is solidary and international, because, pushed by an inevitable law which is inherent in it, bourgeois capital, in its threefold employment,—in industry, in commerce, and in banking speculations,—has evidently been tending, since the beginning of this century, towards an organization more and more international and solidary, enlarging each day more, and simultaneously in all countries, the abyss which already separates the working world from the bourgeois world; whence it results that for every workman endowed with intelligence and heart, for every proletarian who has affection for his companions in misery and servitude, and who at the same time is conscious of his situation and of his only actual interests, the real country is henceforth the international camp of labor, opposed, across the frontiers of all countries, to the much older international camp of exploiting capital; that to every workman truly worthy of the name, the workmen of foreign countries, who suffer and who are oppressed like himself, are infinitely nearer and more like brothers than the bourgeois of his own country, who enrich themselves to his detriment.
8. That the oppression and exploitation of which the toiling masses are victims in all countries, being in their nature and by their present organization internationally solidary, the deliverance of the proletariat must also be so; that the economic and social emancipation (foundation and preliminary condition of political emancipation) of the working-people of a country will be for ever impossible, if it is not effected simultaneously at least in the majority of the countries with which it finds itself bound by means of credit, industry, and commerce; and that, consequently, by the duty of fraternity as well as by enlightened self-interest, in the interest of their own salvation and of their near deliverance, the working-people of all trades are called upon to establish, organize, and exercise the strictest practical solidarity, communal, provincial, national, and international, beginning in their workshop, and then extending it to all their trade-societies and to the federation of all the

trades,—a solidarity which they ought above all scrupulously to observe and practise in all the developments, in all the catastrophes, and in all the incidents of the incessant struggle of the labor of the workingman against the capital of the bourgeois, such as strikes, demands for decrease of the hours of work and increase of wages, and, in general, all the claims which relate to the conditions of labor and to the existence, whether material or moral, of the working-people.

Is it not true that all these affirmations and all these counsels are so simple, so natural, so legitimate, so true, and so just that a government must have deliberately determined upon brutal iniquity and the flagrant violation of all human rights, like the Russian government, for example, or like that of the present French Republic, to dare avow that the propaganda and the putting in practice of these truths are contrary to its existence, and to have the cynical courage to openly and rigorously proceed against them. Such a government, formidable as may be, or rather, as may appear, the organization of its material power, will not be able to maintain itself lone against the irresistible tendencies of the century, and the more violence it shows the sooner it will perish. Thus we see that the statesmen of Germany, who certainly will not be accused of ignorance, or of want of foresight, or of exaggerated tenderness for the popular cause, or of weakness, since they are found at the head of the most powerful State in Europe, and who have never failed to interpose in our path as many obstacles as they could,—we see, I say, that they take good care, nevertheless, not to openly and violently proceed against the propaganda and legal agitation, or against the public organization, of the Social-Democratic party. The day when, imitating the summary proceedings of the French and Russian governments, they shall have recourse to open violence, the government of Germany will betray the beginning of its downfall.

But let us leave the governments, and return to this proletariat, which contains the lightning that must exterminate all the injustices and absurdities of the present, and the fruitful elements that must constitute the future.

The labor associations most devoted to Mazzini,—those which, consequently, whether through Mazzinian propaganda or through the official action which today no longer disdains to descend to the lower strata of society, will be the most obstinately prejudiced against the International,—when they have heard the explanation of its programme and when they are convinced that this great association aims at absolutely nothing else than their moral and human emancipation by means of a radical amelioration of the material conditions of their labor and their existence, produced solely by the association of their own efforts, will all say, as we have often happened to hear in other countries: “What! Is that what this International of which we have heard so much evil believes and wishes? But we have been thinking, feeling, and wishing the same thing for a long time. Then we also belong to the International!” And the workingmen will be amazed that an association founded exclusively in the interest of the people has been attacked by men who call themselves the friends of the people, and they will finish by concluding, not without much reason, that these pretended friends are in reality enemies of popular emancipation.

The great error of Mazzini and of all the other persecutors and slanderers of the International, consists in imagining it as an association more or less secret and artificial, which sprang unexpectedly, arbitrarily, with all its principles and all its organization, from the brain, naturally inspired by evil, of one or a few individuals, as the Republican Alliance sprang from the brain, doubtless divinely inspired, of Mazzini.

If the International were really such, it would be a weak, insignificant sect, lost in the midst of so many other still-born sects. No one would deign to speak of it. Who disturbs himself today about the deeds and movements of the Republican Alliance? On the contrary, the International has become today the object of universal attention,—the hope of the oppressed, the terror of the powerful of the world. Hardly seven years old, it is already a giant.

A few individuals, however great their genius might be, could never have created an organization, a power, so formidable. Therefore the very intelligent and very devoted men who are found among those generally called the first founders of the International have been in a way only its very fortunate, very skilful midwives. But it is the laboring masses of Europe which have given birth to the giant.

That is what Mazzini refuses to comprehend, and what, in his two-fold character of believing idealist and self-styled revolutionary statesman, he will probably never succeed in comprehending.

As an idealist, he cannot do otherwise than deny the spontaneous development of the real world and what we call true force, the logic or reason of things. And the moment he believes in God, he is forced to believe that not only ideas, but the life and movement of the material world come from God,—all the more, then, the religious, political and social, and intellectual and moral evolutions of humanity.

As a statesman, he must scorn the masses. Urged by his generous heart and loving to do them the most good possible, he must consider them as absolutely incapable of guiding themselves, of governing themselves, and of producing the least good thing by themselves.

And, in reality, we know, and later we will prove, that Mazzini, preeminently a religious man and founder or revealer of a new religion, which he himself calls the Religion of Association and of Progress, affirms the permanent and progressive revelation of God in humanity, by means of men of genius crowned with virtue and of the nations the most advanced in the realization of the law of life. He is deeply convinced that upon Italy today is again incumbent the high mission of interpreter or apostle of this divine law in the world; but that, to fulfil thus mission worthily, the Italian people must first be thoroughly imbued with the Mazzinian spirit, and by means of a Constituent Assembly entirely composed of Mazzinian deputies, give itself a Mazzinian government. At this price, but only at this price, he promises her, for the third time in her history, the supremacy (moral only, and not Catholic this time, but Mazzinian), the sceptre of the world.

From the moment that the initiative of the new progress must proceed from Italy, and, what is more, from exclusively Mazzinian Italy,—that is, from an excessively small minority which, by I know not what miracle, is to represent the whole nation,—it is clear that the International, which is born outside of Italy and entirely outside of the Mazzinian party and Mazzinian principles, must be declared null and void by Mazzini.

We also know that Mazzini, preeminently a politician and dogged partisan of a unified and powerful State, proclaims that upon the State alone is incumbent the duty and the right of administering to the whole nation a uniform education, strictly in conformity with the dogmas of the new religion which the coining Constituent Assembly, met at Rome, again become the capital of the world, and, without doubt, divinely inspired (the Constituent Assembly, not Rome—but perhaps Rome also?), will have proclaimed as the sole national religion, in order that the nation may become one in thought, as it will be in acts. We know that, beyond the unification produced artificially, from above to below, by this so-called national education, Mazzini does not recognize in the popular masses, which he always calls multitudes (only the adjective vile is lacking, but it

is implied), the character of a people, and refuses them, consequently, what we call the popular initiative. But the International has sprung properly from the spontaneous initiative of the laboring masses, not instructed, not warped, not mutilated by the Mazzinian education; therefore it is evident that it must be rejected and disparaged by Mazzini.

There is nothing more strange than to see the unheard-of pains which Mazzini takes to persuade the public, the militant youth and, above all, the working people of Italy, that the International is nothing but a mockery, an unfortunate abortion all ready to dissolve, and that all which is related of its present power is ridiculously exaggerated.

Does he himself believe what he says? Out of respect for his high sincerity we must think that he does; but the respect which his intelligence inspires in us commands us to suppose the contrary. For, after all, Mazzini is not only an idealist and a theologian, the inspired revealer of a new religion,—he is at the same time a consummate conspirator, a man of action, a statesman. It is true that many of his own friends (I will not give their names, not wishing, in imitation of Mazzini, to sow or increase discord in the Mazzinian camp, this being a proceeding which I leave to the theologians),—yes, many of his nearest friends have often declared to me that his religious hallucinations, projecting their fantastic and delusive light on his judgments, on his acts, have always perverted them, and that, in spite of all his great intelligence, they have always prevented him from appreciating things and facts at their true value. So it is, they have said to me, that, living in a perpetual illusion, and considering the world only through the prism of his imagination haunted by divine phantoms, he has always exaggerated the strength of his own party and the weakness of his enemies.

All this is possible and even very probable. Yet Mazzini remains none the less a statesman recognized and reputed as such by all Europe.

He cannot fail to see what all the world sees today, some with joy, others with terror,—the growing power of the International. This power, as an established fact which no sane person can longer deny, is imposed henceforth in a most imperative manner on the conviction of the most serious, at the same time as on the most stubborn, minds of Europe. Statesmen of almost every country are immensely preoccupied with it today, and among them, with them, against us, Mazzini himself. All his recent writings prove it, doubtless in spite of himself.

Why, then, does he deny this power? Why does he promise the youth and the Italian laborers its speedy dissolution? Can he himself believe it? I have put to myself and very seriously debated in my own mind this question. I at first hesitated, uncertain whether I ought to suspect Mazzini's intelligence or his good faith. For a long time I could not decide between these two equally distressing suppositions. And yet one of them, if not both together, must be true, since the power of the International is a fact as positive and patent as is, alas! the public negation of this power by Mazzini. This uncertainty was painful to me, for, in spite of all the religious hallucinations of the prophet, my respect for the practical intelligence and the good faith of the great Italian patriot was profound and sincere.

But the last articles which he has just published in "La Roma del Popolo" (Numbers 29, 30, and 31) have forced me to recognize that, if his great intelligence, perverted by theology, takes a considerable part in the errors which he believes it his duty to propagate, it is incontestable also that in the furious polemical crusade which he has undertaken against the International Association of Working People, he lacks sincerity and good faith. I shall prove it in analyzing his articles.

No one will dare to accuse him of falsehood, but of pious larceny, yes. A great writer and consummate politician, Mazzini is a master in that manipulation of language which is very evidently calculated to instil into the minds of his numerous readers certain judgments, certain estimates of facts, conforming to his views, without positively expressing them and still less proving them. Moreover he never descends to proofs, to that real verification and comparison of things and of facts which constitutes, in our opinion, the only solid foundation of all positive knowledge and of all serious judgment. This method doubtless appears to him much too material, too brutal, and, above all, it would embarrass him considerably in the demonstration of the errors which he wishes to propagate, he prefers the easier method of ingenious allusions and hazardous affirmations. That is what he calls, in opposition to the critical method, the synthetic method. It is that of all theologians.

Mazzini never appeals to free thought; he takes good care not to arouse it in his audience. This would be a witness and a judge far too troublesome. His great care, on the contrary, is always to lull it to sleep, as much in himself as in others, by the poetic harmony of his language, of his mystical fantasies, and of his sentimental reasoning. His logic is not that of thought, as with pure metaphysicians, and still less that of facts, as with the materialistic or positivistic thinkers; it is not even the brutal and frank logic of the absurd, as with theologians by profession; it is a logic of sentiment, powerful in its fervor, but as uncertain and vague as the Ideal which forms its object, and masking with a remarkable skill, behind the appearances of a delusive liberalism and of a false rationalism, its fanatical worship of the absurd and of authority.

Mazzini is a great artist. He knows the generous sentiments of youth and of a part of the Italian proletariat which he has so powerfully aided in forming, and for forty years he has known how to draw from this magnificent instrument whatever sounds he wished. But in politics the name of art is prestidigitation. For forty years Mazzini has been the great prestidigitator of Italy.

Understand, there are two kinds of prestidigitators. There are the common statesmen, whose interested, personal ambition, foreign to any ideal, asks nothing better than to avail itself of all ideas and of all possible sentiments, to gain its ends more promptly. Such was the great Napoleon, the leader and true founder of the modern political school; such were, and are after him, naturally each in his own way, the Napoleon Thirds, the Cavour, the Bismarcks, the Thiers, the Gambettas, and, not to forget the small fry, the Jules Simons, the Jules Favres, the Trochus, the Keratrys, the Picards... But there are also, at rare intervals, in history, political prestidigitators of a kind infinitely superior and incomparably more noble and pure: these are the sincerely religious statesmen like Mazzini. These deceive the people in deceiving themselves; they are strangers to the vulgar inspirations of interest, vanity, and personal ambition, and, if they magnetize and abuse the masses, it is never with a view to their own glory, but with a view to the triumph of an adored ideal, of their God.

There is one thing in common between these two categories of statesmen, otherwise so different and even so completely opposite,—it is that both, although actuated by quite contrary motives, equally deceive the popular masses and oppress them, when they have the power, by imposing on them tendencies which have nothing in common with their spontaneous aspirations or their real needs.

Alas, history tells us that the masses have lent themselves only too readily up to this time, never wean of playing this unhappy role of instrument at the disposition of the first artist who deigns to make use of it. It tells us also that they have always paid very dear for this generous, but blind, confidence. And we see, in truth, that, in spite of the lofty deeds of so many skilful



and illustrious enchanters, in spite of all these Messiahs and all these Saviours, the real situation of the proletariat remains in the highest degree deplorable. It is not ameliorated, it has grown worse.

But here is the proletariat of Europe and of America beginning, at last, to perceive this also. Everywhere, in all countries, we see the masses awakening, stirring, agitating, and putting their heads together, defiant of all their saviours, tutors, and past leaders, and more and more resolved to take into their own hands the direction of their own affairs. And as they are collectivists as much by position as by nature, they tend to create today an immense collective force, by organizing in solidarity among themselves across the political frontiers of States.

Such was the real, the sole cause of the birth of the International, and such is also the secret of its present power.

But this the mind of Mazzini, so profoundly religious, absolutely refuses to comprehend. Idealist to the marrow of his bones, revealer, statesman, he always imagines that one can still impress today upon the hearts and imaginations of the people, as on a blank page, anything that one wishes. This false idea is the basis of all his hopes, but also the permanent cause of all his disappointments. "Multitudes, as well as individuals," he pretends, "are essentially capable of being educated," and doubtless this is why, although forty years of abortive efforts ought to have sufficiently proved to him the profound incompatibility which exists between the living and real nature of the Italian nation—the least religious of any in Europe, excepting always the people of Russia—and the mystical idealism of which he has made himself the Messiah and apostle, Mazzini does not yet despair of converting it. But this is also the reason why he dreads, more than he is willing to admit, the disastrous effects of the socialistic and materialistic propaganda, the more threatening as it is infinitely better suited to the national genius of the Italians than his own. This is why he has declared this war to the death against us, not recoiling even from the horrible danger of seeing himself sustained, in the furious struggle which he has excited against us, by the arbitrary and violent acts of a government which he detests, as much as an heir, more or less legitimate, can detest his rich relative who shows himself in no hurry to die.

I well know that Mazzini professes in theory the greatest respect for the people. In his celebrated formula, "Dio e Popolo," he even accords them the second place after God. Mazzini respects the people as much as a theologian can respect anything outside of God; as much as an idealist in general is capable of recognizing and appreciating a living reality.

Moreover, between the theologians and the idealists the difference is not great. The theologian is the idealist consistent and sincere, and the idealist is the theologian hesitating and ashamed. Both of them, moreover, agree in the worship of the absurd in theory and in that of authority or discipline, appointed from above, in practice; the absurd being the consecration of this discipline, which in its turn is the guaranty of all privileges; with this difference, as I have just said, that the theologians have the courage and the ostentation of the absurd, while the idealists vainly try to give it an appearance of rationality. Theology, then, is only the heroic and violent display of that historic disease of the mind which is called, in general, idealism; a disease which, long prepared by the Pantheistic religions of the East, as a metaphysical theory, dates from the first Greek philosophers and especially from Plato, but which Christianity alone has introduced officially, as a practical, dissolvent element of life, into the social and political organization of nations. The essential nature of this disease is to seek and to love in the real world, in society, in men, in things, only itself,—either its own interest, or its personal thought,—not their real nature, but the

reflection of a preconceived ideal, which is, in reality, nothing but the worship of himself by the individual, who adores himself in the absolute or in God.

Mazzini, who proscribes and who abhors individualism, but who, on the other hand, proclaims and adores idealism, does not even suspect that idealism is the spiritual father of individualism.

Mazzini, moreover, never says the Absolute: he says "God." And he is a thousand times right, for, from the moment that one is an idealist or a spiritualist, he must, under penalty of inconsistency, recognize himself a theologian, and, when one is a theologian, he must have the courage to proclaim it before the whole world. He must have the holy audacity of the absurd. The Absolute is an equivocal term invented by the metaphysicians who endeavor to establish an impossible golden mean between reason and religious faith, between scientific truth and theological fictions, between the real world and the God-phantom.

But, although actually a phantom, once taken from nothingness and placed on his throne by the belief of the faithful, God becomes a proud and jealous Master. He does not suffer himself to be denied, or even simply concealed, under any circumstances or pretexts whatsoever. So we have seen the republican Mazzini conceal at times the flag of the Republic, but never the flag of God. For love of Italian unity, necessary and sole instrument, according to him, for the propagandism and realization of the now divine law in the world, he could consent to covenant or, at least, to treat with the Pope and the kings; but to covenant with ungodly persons,—what do I say?—to merely observe a truce of tolerance toward republican, ardent, devoted, generous, but atheistical, youth, for love of the Italian Republic, that he can not, that lie will not do. Better retard a hundred years the advent of the Republic, for the Republic without God would be the triumph of the Italian people, real and living, and not that of the Mazzinian Italy, privileged throne of his God.

The religious hypocrites, the Tartuffes, have well said, there is no transaction or compromise with God. From the moment that his existence is proclaimed, he wishes to be everything, to invade everything, and to absorb everything. If he is, everything must disappear; he is alone, and alone he wishes to fill the heart of his subjects, whose existence even, strictly, would be already in contradiction with his being; so of all known religions Buddhism appears to me the most consistent, since its worship has no other object than the progressive annihilation of human individuals in the absolute nothing, in God. It is certain that, if God had a real existence, neither the world nor, consequently, the believers would ever have existed. He alone would be: the sole Being, the absolute recluse. But as he exists only in the imagination and simply through the faith of the believers, he has been forced to make them this important concession,—to suffer them to exist also, by the side of him, in spite of logic,—and this is one of the fundamental absurdities of theology. So he makes them pay very dear for this forced and single concession, because he immediately demands of them that, annihilating themselves continually in him, they shall seek and find their existence only in him and shall adore only him, which is to say that they must break all human and terrestrial solidarity to adore themselves in him. God is egoism idealized; he is the human Me lifted to an infinite power.

This refined egoism, this adoration of self in any ideal whatsoever,—the adoration of God, in a word,—produces effects so much the more maleficent and cruel because, in men sincerely religious, it has no consciousness of itself: they believe they are serving God in satisfying their own desires and in sacrificing all the world, including themselves, to their dearly loved fancies, to the ardent hallucinations of their own minds. I speak only of sincere believers, for the hypocrites

do not deceive themselves, but make use of religion as a very convenient mask to hide their infamous game, and as a pretext to sacrifice others, never themselves.

These religious hypocrites, always allied, more or less, with political hypocrites,—see Versailles, see all the present governments of Europe,—have doubtless done immense harm to human-society. But the harm which the sincere believers have done and still continue to do is not less. In the first place, without these last, the power of the hypocrites, whether religious or political, would have been impossible. Hypocrites have never founded any religion; they have contented themselves with exploiting those religions which the sincere believers have founded. The ardent sincerity of the latter has always served as a passport to the criminal hypocrisy of the former. This is our prime grievance against the sincerely religious.

These men may be divided into three categories: first, the violent and furious believers; second, the loving believers; and, third, the routine, or machine, believers. This last category constitutes the immense majority of believers. Irresponsible because they are destitute of all power of reflection, believing through tradition, through ignorance, through custom, they form the flock of Panurge in their respective churches, and at the same time a terrible instrument of reaction, when blood is wanted,—see Saint-Bartholomew,—in the hands of the hypocrites and the violent and furious believers.

Above the flock, and by the side of the hypocrites, always sharing the power and the control with these last, rises the terrible group of the fanatical and furious believers. Purer because infinitely more sincere, they are at the same time more maleficent and much more ferocious than the hypocrites. Humanity is unknown to them; burning with an ardent zeal for their God, they despise it, hate it, and ask nothing better than to exterminate men by thousands, by tens and hundreds of thousands. There are such religious demoniacs in the Assembly of Versailles; not many, the majority of that Assembly being composed of hypocrites or fools, but there are some. Such were the people who in the Middle Ages and later soaked the earth in blood in the name of their so-called God of mercy and love. They established the Inquisition and the order of the Jesuits. Torquemada and Loyola were sincere Christians, but rather violent. Moreover, we find them as well in Protestant churches as in the Roman Catholic church; Luther, Melancthon, Calvin at Geneva, Knox in Scotland, were of this number. And even today the societies of the pietists in Germany, of the Momiers in Switzerland, of the holy propagators of the Bible in England, as well as the Society of Jesus, are full of them. Savonarola, that hero and, after Dante, that inspirer of Mazzini, would have become a terrible persecutor, if, instead of being burned, he had triumphed. All these men, these heroes of religion, have burned and are burning with an ardent and exclusive love for their God, and, terribly consistent, they ask nothing better than to burn and exterminate all that appears to them heretical and profane,—that is, human,—for the greater glory of their God: Celestial Master, “Father and Teacher,” as Mazzini says.

Finally, there is the category of the loving believers. This is the least numerous, the most amiable, but not the least dangerous. Jesus Christ, the greatest among them, was, without doubt, of this class. Let us hope that Mazzini will be its last representative in the history of the religious aberrations of civilized humanity. I have said that this category of believers is not the least dangerous. And, in truth, their first wrong consists precisely in serving as passports, and almost always also as tools and bait, for the hypocrites and violent believers. When society, tired of the falsehoods of the former and the cruelty of the latter, seems on the point of disgust with a religion which produces so much misery and horror, it is pointed to some simple, good, narrow, saintly man, and his sympathetic, venerable, look disarms suspicions and hatred. These men are

very rare; so the leaders of the churches appreciate them highly, and generally know how to put them to excellent use. Time it was that at the epoch when the cruel persecutions practised by the Jesuits upon the Protestants, the Vaudois, were drenching Savoy with blood, there was in this very order of the Jesuits, in Switzerland, a bishop, a saintly man, Francois de Sales, whose heart, overflowing with love, made more conversions than all the cruelties of the church.

Heart overflowing with love! That is the true, accurate definition of these men. They are, I repeat, excessively rare. But they exist, and each of us has met one at least in our lives. When they are very strong, and, what is more, very intelligent, as Jesus Christ doubtless was, they found new religions, provided the spirit of their age is at all ready for the foundation of a new religion. Or they seek to found it and are disappointed, when the tendency of the surroundings and the times is opposed to it, as is happening to Mazzini. But ordinarily, with the exception of some who are geniuses "crowned with virtue," these men, profoundly, intimately, lovingly religious, form no school; for what predominates in them is not mind, but heart; is not thought, but love. They are religious, but they are not theologians. Their faith, indefinite and not firmly settled, is only a very imperfect expression of that love which is called divine because it is excessively rare, and which really overflows their whole being. Contrary to those who enlighten without warming, they warm all those who surround them without enlightening them, exciting love, never thought.

Mazzini, by his intelligence, is infinitely superior to these obscure lovers. But he does not equal them in love. They are so full of it that, in spite of their faith, they have the power of bravely loving pagans, atheists. Mazzini is too theological for this; he detests atheists, and, like Christ, if he had the power, would take the scourge to drive them from his dear Italy, considering them as corrupters of his predestined people.

Let us leave, then, to flourish in peace those sweet religious souls, loving and obscure, who perfume with their native grace their little unknown corners, and study in Mazzini himself the ravages which theology can and must work in the greatest souls, the noblest hearts, the loftiest minds.

Doubtless few men are capable of loving as Mazzini loves. Whoever has had the good fortune to approach him personally has felt the influence of that infinite tenderness which seems to penetrate his whole being, has felt his soul kindled by the beams of that indulgent and delicate goodness which shines in his look, at once so serious and so sweet, and in his fine and melancholy smile. Whoever approaches him, sees him, and hears him, has no difficulty in discovering, under his most simple and least affected exterior, his great intelligence, his great heart above all, and character which, by its extraordinary purity, seems to tower above all the miseries of this world. He does not overwhelm, he encourages, he provokes confidence. Few men, I believe, think as little of themselves as Mazzini. Behold the terrible revolutionist who has brought so many bad nights to most of the sovereigns and governors of Europe!

I am now giving my personal impressions. For I also had the happiness of meeting Mazzini, very often even, during the whole of the year 1862, at London. I shall never forget the noble welcome which he gave me when I arrived in that city, escaping from Siberia where I had been exiled for life and where I had lived four years, after having passed almost eight in different fortresses of Saxony, Austria, and Russia. I am, indeed, eternally indebted to Mazzini, for even before knowing me other than by name, he generously took up my defence against the infamous calumnies which German emigrants, Jews especially, with that noble delicacy, justice, and good taste which distinguish them, had endeavored to disseminate regarding me, not so much from

personal hatred of me as from a general hatred for Russia, for the Slavs, and particularly for my compatriot, Alexander Herzen, who naturally did not fail to answer them; which I could not do, confined as I was in the Russian fortresses and later in Siberia, not even knowing that I was being attacked in this base fashion.

Herzen even told me that Citizen Karl Marx, who became later one of the principal founders of the International and whom I had always considered as a man endowed with a great intelligence and profoundly, exclusively devoted to the grand cause of the emancipation of labor, had taken an active part in these calumnies. I was not altogether astonished, knowing by my past experience—for I had known him since 1845—that the illustrious German Socialist, to whose great qualities I have always rendered and shall never fail to render full justice, has, nevertheless, in his character certain traits which one would be less astonished to meet in a Jewish devotee of belles lettres, corresponding for German newspapers, than in such a serious and ardent champion of humanity and justice. Therefore, arriving in London in 1862, I abstained from calling on him, naturally having little desire to renew acquaintance with him. But in 1864, as I was passing through London, he came to see me himself, and assured me that he had never taken any part, directly or indirectly, in these calumnies, which he had himself considered as infamous. I had to accept his word.

However that may be, Mazzini nobly took up my defence. Do I need to say that I was profoundly attached to this admirable individuality, certainly the purest and grandest that I have ever met in my life. I love Mazzini, and I venerate him today as much as I did nine years ago, and yet I must combat him. I must put myself by the side of Marx against him. It is a fatality from which all my convictions, my religion, no less profound and sincere than his own, will not grant me escape.

Mazzini, I have said, overwhelms no one; that is true. But he is himself overwhelmed by his God, and in this overwhelming, of which he is the first victim, he makes his friends, his party, more or less participate. Such is the real cause, in my opinion, of the present isolation of this party in the midst of the Italian nation, of its sterility and of its powerlessness, more and more visible.

This distressing powerlessness and sterility is read in every line printed, every thought expressed, in the properly Mazzinian journals. Open "L'Unita Italiana," or even "La Roma del Popolo," which are today the two principal organs of this party, and you will at once feel an indescribable stifling atmosphere, a breath of death, like the odor of corpses or dried mummies. It is a current, once limpid, but today struck with stagnation, whose waters flourish, as old age flourishes, without motion, without communication with waters more alive. In the midst of the immense social movement which has invaded the human world, drawing it irresistibly towards the realization of the grandest things that ever the imaginations of men have dreamed, they remain there, motionless, isolated, strangers to this development of life which is going on around them, to the aspirations, even, of this people which they pretend to govern and save, ignoring or misunderstanding the ideas as well as the facts which envelop them on all sides; and, their eyes fixed unalterably on Savonarola and Dante, they chant their old litanies, as the Jews recite the verses of the Talmud in the hope of raising again by this means the forever fallen walls of Zion.

What is the cause of this stagnation, of this death? Ah! it is because God has smitten them with his favor. God is a terrible companion. He overwhelms, he absorbs, he annihilates, he devours, he distorts, he dissolves, or else he withers, all that has the misfortune to approach him from

near or from far. Whatever has been done to humanize him a little during recent centuries, he remains always the ancient Jehovah, the egoistic, the jealous, “the cruel God of the Jews!” and he has ended by reigning also over Mazzini. He has bewildered, perverted, and made barren the noblest intellect of this century. This is one more terrible grievance that we have against him.

Mazzini, by the natural impulse of his heart, loves men, and, more passionately still, he loves Italy. But this love is paralyzed or at least warped by the exclusive and jealous influence of the divine phantom, of the ideal Me exaggerated to the Absolute, which, unconscious of itself, adores itself in the person of an imaginary God, hiding in this way from all the world as well as from himself, in the heights of a fictitious heaven, his supreme egoism. And he who serves this God must sacrifice everything to him, even his country; he who loves God cannot really love anything else in the world. He must detest the world; and if, urged by an invincible need of the heart, he wishes to love it, it still must be only for the glory of God, in order to transform the world into a stepping-stone to the divine glory.

Mazzini loves most certainly Italy; but he loves her as Abraham loved his son Isaac, ready to sacrifice him, if it must be, on the altar of his God, who, like the God of the Christians and the Jews, of which he is only the somewhat illogical continuation, measures the love of his faithful by the grandeur of their sacrifices. Sacrifice, which, according to the doctrine of Mazzini, constitutes the supreme virtue, is in truth the foundation, at once cruel and mystical, of all real religious worship; for in every religion which takes the adoration of divinity seriously, cruelty and love are but one. Has not God himself given an example, forever memorable, to men, in sacrificing his only son and causing him to be assassinated by the Jews, his chosen people, in order, he says, to gratify his pitiless vengeance, otherwise called eternal justice? Divine justice, as we see, feeds on human blood, as divine wisdom feeds on human absurdities. This justice united to this wisdom constitutes what is called divine love.

Mazzini, moreover, has done all that he could to give to his God at least the appearance of humanity. To make him accepted by the reasoning mind and by the nervous sentimentality of this century, he has put on his lips the words, at first unknown, philosophy, science, liberty, and humanity; and he has, at the same time, filed his claws and teeth, trying to give him a spiritual, amiable, and tender air; so that the priests of the good old Catholic religion refuse to recognize their old Jehovah in the portrait which the modern prophet has made of him. And in truth, in attempting to soften the traits of the celestial despot, Mazzini has excessively lessened that gloomy and terrible figure which plunged all the priests into transports and which sowed terror in the superstitious masses.

The God of Mazzini is not the God of implacable vengeance and eternal punishment. Breathing only pardon and love,—the same has always been said of the God of the Christians,—he repudiates hell, admitting at the most only purgatory, which consists, moreover, in the Mazzinian theology, only in a delay, more or less prolonged, of the progressive development of the guilty, individuals or nations, as the natural consequence of their faults. In general, what distinguishes the God of Mazzini from the Jewish and Christian God is his visible, but always vain, tendency to reconcile himself with human reason and to appear to conform as much to the nature of things as to the principal aspirations of modern society; and, to better reach this end, he even pushes his quite modern condescension to the point of renouncing his liberty!

“You appeal to the inalienable divine liberty,” writes Mazzini in his protest against the last council of Rome; “We deny it. We are free because we are imperfect [Such is Mazzini’s idea of liberty; it is the sign, the consequence of our imperfection! We understand why he submits it

and must always submit it to authority; this last being the manifestation of God, that is to say, of perfection, it is clear that it must rule over our liberty, over our imperfection. This is not more difficult than that, and we can see by this example the very ingenious method which Mazzini makes use of to re-establish, by the aid of modern words, the old divine despotism], because toe are called to rise, to merit, consequently to choose between the good and the bad, between sacrifice and egoism.” What Mazzini calls liberty is at bottom only the absurd fiction invented by theologians and metaphysicians,—that is, by the licensed consecrators of all despotism,—and which they call free will. What we call liberty is quite another thing: it is the satanic principle and the natural fact which is called rebellion, the holy, the noble rebellion which, originating in animal life and united to science, this creation of a human world, urged on, moreover, both together, by the struggle for existence, by the necessity, as much individual as social, of developing and living, is the true, the only mother of all emancipations and all human progress. We conceive that our liberty can triumph only on the ruins of all authority. I give back the floor to Mazzini: “Our liberty [free will] is unknown to God, a perfect Being, whose every act is necessarily identical with the true and the just, and who cannot, without ruining all the notions we have of him, violate his own law.”

This last argument is magnificent, and gives the measure of Mazzini’s logic. In the same way any pagan priest who would sacrifice human victims on the altar of divinity could as logically cry out: “God loves to feed upon human blood; he could not fail to love it without ruining all the notions which we have of him!”

It is evident, in any case, that the God of Mazzini is a tolerably constitutional God, since, better than all kings thus far known, he observes the charter which he has been pleased to grant to the world and to humanity, at least according to what is told us about it by Mazzini, who, as the last prophet, ought to know better than anybody.

But does this condescension, excessive on the part of a God, reach its object? Absolutely no. And how could he reconcile his existence with that of the world, when his very title of God, and, besides, that of Creator, Legislator, and Educator of the natural and human world, renders him absolutely incompatible with the real development of both! Later, I will demonstrate his incompatibility with reason, of which positive science is the only, the sole theoretically perfect expression. Now, may it not displease M. Aurelio Saffi, I will continue my practical demonstration, tending to prove that the new God of Mazzini exercises an influence on men quite as pernicious as the old Platonico-Judaico-Christian God, from whom he differs, moreover, only in his dress borrowed from our century, in which Mazzini believed he should be clothed, but not in the reality, which remains the same.

To be just and to show how Mazzini, individually, puts love and noble human sentiments into his religion, I believe I ought to present to the reader, in a translation,—doubtless very imperfect, but faithful,—a fragment, some eloquent, burning pages, of his energetic protest against the council of Rome, containing at the same time the splendid affirmation of his faith:

“The world is of God, it cannot be cursed. Life, like God himself from whom it descends, is one and continuous: it cannot be broken into fragments, divided into opposite or radically diverse periods.” The world is not cursed, for the simple reason that there is no one who can curse it, except man, her son, her product, who launches this malediction at it from time to time, in moments of discouragement and despair, and who, so far as he has believed in God, has imagined that this curse,

which was born in his own heart, has been pronounced by God himself. As for what Mazzini calls the unity of life, it is founded, in our opinion, on the universality, ;it least terrestrial, of the laws of organic life in general, and especially of man's, on the identity of the special traits which properly constitute human nature or physiology: sociability, thought developed up to the power of abstraction, and the intelligent organization of language, three conditions which are found united, in a degree more or less pronounced, in all human tribes, even among cannibals. The first condition, sociability, is found likewise in many other species of animals, but not this capacity of development of thought and of language; united to these last two elements equally natural, but belonging exclusively to man, the natural, primitive, and fatal sociability of men has created successively in history and still continues to create the social unity of the human race,—humanity. For all this, as we see, there is no need of God; and it will be easy to prove later that a real intervention of any God whatever in the developments of human society would have rendered these developments absolutely impossible. The very fiction of divinity, a fiction historically explicable and inevitable, has sufficed to excite men against men and to inundate the earth with human blood. What would it be if, in place of a fiction, we had had a real God!

“There is no antagonism between matter and mind: matter give\* forms to thought, symbols to ideas, modes of communication between beings.” Whence it would result that, if God were only pure mind, his thoughts would be eternally formless, indeterminate, void; if, on the contrary, God were mind and matter at the same time, absolute thought eternally lost and dispersed in the immensity of the material universe and eternally seeking to find itself again there, coming perceptibly, little by little, but never in a complete manner, to the consciousness of itself in the historic development of the collective consciousness of men, we should end in the purest Hegelian pantheism. But Hegel, at least, never speaks of God; he speaks of the Absolute; and no one, it must be said, has dealt this poor Absolute such rough blows as Hegel himself, for as fast as he built him up, he demolished him by his pitiless logic, so that, much more than Auguste Comte, he may be considered the real father of modern scientific atheism. Ludwig Feuerbach, the most sympathetic and the most humane of German thinkers, has seen the real executor of his will, much more truly and much more effectively than poor Chaudey was for Proudhon, whom he served, not as executor of his will, but as the real digger of his grave. Would Mazzini be such a Pantheist as Hegel, or even as Spinoza? Doubtless not, since he always speaks of God as a personal being, having consciousness of himself outside of the world, outside of this poor matter which he is supposed to have created. This is the dilemma from which Mazzini, in spite of all the artifices of his language, cannot escape: either God is identical with matter, lost in matter, reaching consciousness of himself—and always in an excessively incomplete and relative manner—only in the consciousness of living and thinking beings in the universe, and then he is an impersonal God, never succeeding in lifting himself quite up to himself, and thinking and willing nothing of himself, for to think and to will one must first be a person; or he is a complete person, having outside of matter or of the world full consciousness of himself, and then he is absolutely separated from matter and the world, and the an-



tagonism between matter and mind, fundamental principle of every consistent and serious theology, exists in all its force, forever irreconcilable, whatever Mazzini may say and do. It does not suffice to affirm or deny arbitrarily; it is necessary to prove. But Mazzini never descends to proofs; he affirms what is agreeable to him, and denies what is disagreeable to him. That is his whole philosophy. It is very convenient for him who writes, but not at all satisfactory or edifying to him who reads. It is the most absolute individualism applied to dialectics, transforming the latter into rhetoric. Moreover, in saying that "matter gives modes of communication between beings," Mazzini tacitly affirms that beings, not only the supreme Being, God, but imperfect beings, human souls, exist outside of matter, and that matter forms only a means of communication, a kind of bridge, between them, at the same time that it constitutes their prison.

"The body, decreed by God as a limit of the individual [that is, his prison] and as a means of transmission between his own life and the external world, is not the seat of evil and temptation. When the evil and temptation exist, they exist in the Me; the body is only an instrument serving for translation of good or evil into deeds, conforming to our free choice."

Here we have one of the most original peculiarities in Mazzini's theological system. He places the origin of evil, not in the body, not in the material world, as many, though not all, theological Christians have done; and Mazzini is wrong in reproaching Christianity with not having affirmed before him that the origin of evil is in the Me, the exclusively spiritual and immortal being, of man. Christianity had symbolized this same idea in the myth of Satan, an incorporeal being, who, nevertheless, was the first to rebel against God, tired of seeing and hearing from morning till night the myriads of slave angels, cherubs, seraphs, and archangels chant their eternal hallelujah to eternal haughtiness, to the divine egotist.

According to the Mazzinian as well as the Christian doctrine, Evil is the Satanic revolt of man against divine authority, a revolt in which we, on the contrary, see the fruitful germ of all human emancipations. As the Fratricelli of Bohemia in the fourteenth century, the revolutionary Socialists recognize each other today by these words: In the name of him to whom wrong has been done, hail! Only, the Satan, the conquered but not pacified rebel, of today, is called the Commune of Pant. It is easy to see why all the Christian and Mazzinian theologians, their masters, the Pope and Mazzini, at their head, should have excommunicated the rising of the heroic Commune. This was at last the audacious realization of the Satanic myth, a revolt against God; and today as always the two opposing parties are ranged, the one under the standard of Satan or of liberty, the other under the divine banner of authority. What we call liberty, Mazzini calls egoism; what constitutes in our view the ideal sanction of all slavery, the prostration of man before God and before the authority of that State-Church which, if one is to believe Mazzini, is his permanent revelation on earth, he calls supreme virtue.

We also, we curse egoism; but egoism consists, in our opinion, not in the revolt of the human individual against God,—such revolt, we have said, is the supreme condition of all human emancipations, and consequently of every human virtue, because there can be no virtue where slavery prevails,—but in the revolt against that law of solidarity which is the natural and fundamental base of all human society; in that tendency, as well of individuals as of privileged classes, to isolate themselves in an ideal world, whether religious, or metaphysical, or political and social,

apart from the mass of the people,—an isolation which has never any other aim, or any other real result, than the domination over the masses and their exploitation, as much for the profit of these individuals as of these classes. The law of solidarity being a natural law, no individual, however strong he may be, can escape it. No one can live humanly outside of human society: good or bad, afflicted with idiocy or endowed with the greatest genius, all that he has, all that he can do, all that he is, he owes to the collectivity, to it alone. Then it is impossible to separate himself from it; but he can, when this natural and unavoidable collectivity which we call society is so stupidly sheepish as to permit it,—he can oppress and exploit it to his exclusive profit and to the detriment of all; and the best means of doing it is to give to egoism the form of a religious thought and aspiration.

When the historic world, considered especially from the standpoint of the development of economic and social realities, always accompanied moreover by a parallel development of ideas,—when this world is ripe for the triumph, either of a class or of any people whatever, then God, who has always taken the part of the strongest, or who, according to a very graphic expression of Frederick the Great, is always on the side of the largest battalions,—the good God, rousing from his age-long sleep, and giving a signal contradiction to the morality which has been preached in his name in the past century, intervenes again in the human world and reveals a new law to some man of genius crowned with virtue. The new religion is propagated and founded, doubtless not to the profit of this man or of his first followers, who almost always become its victims, but to the profit of that new class which organizes a new exploitation in the shadow of this new thought, divinely inspired.

As for the revealers, the prophets, the Messiahs, they have, the high compensation of contemplating and adoring their own Me in what they believe to be God; more than that, of imposing it, in the name of God, on the whole world. So Mazzini, who, in the name of this new religion of which he is the prophet, means to impose, on Italy first and then, by means of Italy duly educated,—that is, muzzled and emasculated,—on all other countries, a new political and social order,—Mazzini does not care in the least to question the needs, tendencies, and aspirations of Italy and of other countries, in order to conform thereto this new order; this order has been revealed-to him from on high, by the very inspirations of his Me which contemplates itself through the false prism of divinity. From this ardent preaching he will naturally derive no profit for himself. His satisfaction, if he can triumph, will be wholly ideal and moral. But, however sublime and pure it may appear, this satisfaction will be no less the triumph of supreme Egoism,—that of having imposed on the world his thought. It is, I think, the manifestation of the most transcendent Individualism, not satanic, but divine. God, then, is the superb isolation of the Me adoring itself; it is easy to see that he must become the patron of the material Me imposing itself, dominating, oppressing, exploiting.

Satan is quite the contrary; he is not at all egoistical. The Biblical legend shows him to us, rebelling not only for himself, but for entire humanity; and he has really sacrificed himself, since, rather than renounce this principle of revolt which must emancipate the human world, he has allowed himself to be condemned to eternal torments, if we are to believe the Holy Scriptures. So does the Commune today, whose glorious representatives, men, women, and children, suffer themselves to be assassinated, shot, mitrailleused, transported, or tormented in infamous hulks, rather than deny the principle of deliverance and salvation. What does Mazzini wish, then? Is not this a sublime sacrifice? But Mazzini is unwilling to recognize this sacrifice. And why? Because it has not been imposed on them from on high as a duty commanded by God himself; because

it was a spontaneous act, commanded or rather inspired, not by a metaphysical or abstract duty, but by a sublime passion, by the passion for liberty. And liberty, whatever Mazzini may say about it, and whatever all the idealists in the world may say with him about it,—they, naturally, comprehending nothing of this word, and, when the thing is presented to them, detesting it,—liberty, by its very nature, excludes egoism; it cannot be simply individual (such liberty is called privilege); the true, human liberty of a single individual implies the emancipation of all; because, thanks to the law of solidarity which is the natural basis of all human society, I cannot be, feel, and know myself really, completely free, if I am not surrounded by men as free as myself, and because the slavery of each is my slavery.

Here I touch one of the fundamental points of Mazzini's theological morality. We know that he has founded his whole theory on the exclusive idea of Duty. On the other hand, he bitterly reproaches the French Revolution for having founded its theory on the idea of Rights. He attributes to the latter theory, which he considers entirely false, the numerous failures of this revolution hitherto.

Here is his reasoning:

“Certainly, there exist rights; but where the rights of one individual are found in contradiction with the rights of another, how can we hope to reconcile them, to put them in harmony, without recurring to something superior to all rights? And where the rights of one or more individuals are in opposition with the rights of a country, to what tribunal will you have recourse? If the right to well-being, to the greatest possible well-being, belongs to all men, who shall decide the question between the laborer and his employer? If the right to existence is the first and the most inviolable right of every man, who can command the sacrifice of his own existence for the amelioration of the existence of another? Will you command it in the name of Country, of society, in the name of the multitude of your brothers?

“But what is Country from the standpoint of the theory of which I speak, if not the place where our individual rights are best assured? What is society, if not a convention of men mutually pledged to sustain by the force of many individuals the rights of each? And you, after having taught the individual for fifty years that society is constituted to assure him the exercise of his rights, will you now demand of him that he sacrifice all his rights to society, that he submit himself, in case of need, to all privations, to fatigues, to prison, and to exile for the amelioration of this society? After having preached in every way to men that the aim of life is well-being, will you, all at once, enjoin them to lose well-being and, if need be, life itself, to free the country from a foreign yoke, to obtain better conditions of existence for a class which is not theirs? After having spoken to them so long in the name of material interests, will you pretend that, when they see before them riches and power, they are not to extend the hand to seize it, even to the detriment of their brothers?

“And who can, even in a society founded on more just bases than the present society,—who can convince a man educated only in the theory of rights that he ought to keep in the common path and occupy himself with the development of the social design? Suppose he revolts; suppose that, feeling himself the stronger, he says to you: ‘My tendencies, my faculties, call me elsewhere; I have the sacred,

inviolable right of developing them, and I place myself at war with all.' What answer can you give him from the point of view of his own doctrine (that of rights)? What right have you, even being the majority, to impose on him obedience to laws which do not accord with his desires, with his individual aspirations? What right have you to punish him when he violates them? Rights are equal for all individuals: the social community cannot create a single one. Society has more power, but no more rights, than the individual. How, then, will you prove to the individual that he ought to blend his will with the will of his brothers in Country and in Humanity? By the executioner? By the prison? So have done all societies which have ever existed. But this is war, and we wish peace; this is tyrannical repression, and we wish education.

“Education, we have said; and this is the grand word which includes our whole doctrine. The vital question of our century is a question of education. It is not a question of establishing a new order of things by violence; an order of things established by violence is always tyrannical, even when it is better than what it replaces ; it is a question of overturning by force the brutal force which today opposes every attempt at amelioration, and then of proposing to the consent of the nation thus made free to express its will [a fiction!] the order which appears the best [to whom does it appear so? to Mazzini and to his disciples.], and finally of educating men of all kinds [the unfortunates!] so that they may become developed and act in conformity with this order.

“With the theory of rights we can revolt and overturn obstacles [this is something and even much], but not establish, in a strong and durable manner, the harmony of all the elements which compose a Nation. With the theory of happiness, comfort being assigned as the principal aim of life, we shall make egoistical men, worshippers of matter, who will bring the old passions into the new order, and corrupt it in a few months. We must, then, find a doctrine superior to the theory of rights, which guides men towards good, which teaches them constancy in sacrifice, which attaches them to their brothers without rendering them independent either of the idea of a single man or of the force of all. This principle is that of Duty. It is necessary to convince men that, children of one God, they ought to execute here below, on this earth, one and the same Law; that each of them ought to live, not for himself, but for others; that the aim of his life is not to be more or less happy, but to make himself better by making all the others better; that to combat injustice and error for the good of his brothers is not only a right, but a duty... [It is precisely this duty which I am fulfilling now with reference to Mazzini.]

“Italian laborers, my brothers! Understand me rightly. When I say that knowledge of their rights is not sufficient for men in order to accomplish an important and durable amelioration, I do not ask you to renounce these rights. I only say that they are but consequences of duties fulfilled, and that we must commence with the duties to arrive at the rights; and when I say that, in assigning happiness, well-being, material interests, as the aim of life, we run the risk of making egoists, I do not mean that you ought not to think of them; I say that material interests, sought alone, and considered not as means only, but as end, always Lead to this deplorable result... Material

ameliorations are essential, and we will fight to obtain them; but not because it is of sole consequence to man that he be well fed and lodged, but because the consciousness of your dignity and your moral development will be impossible so long as your permanent duel against misery shall continue. You work ten and twelve hours a day [either Mazzini is very badly informed, or it does not enter into the economy of his propaganda to appear to know that the greater part of the Italian proletariat work from fourteen to fifteen hours a day]: how can you find time to educate yourselves? [To let yourselves be educated. Mazzini always speaks of moral education, never of mental instruction and development, which he disdains, and which, like all theologians, he must dread.] The most fortunate among you earn hardly enough to support their families. How could they find the means to educate themselves?" etc., etc.

All that follows proves that Mazzini knows perfectly well the miserable situation of the Italian laborers; he even finishes by saying to them:

"Society treats you without a shadow of sympathy: where could you learn to sympathize with society? You need, then, a change in your material conditions to make it possible for you to develop morally; you need to work less to be able to devote a few hours of your day to the progress of your soul [Mazzini will never say to the development of your mind through science]; you need such reward for your work as will enable you to accumulate savings [in order to become individually rich,—that is, to become in your turn bourgeois exploiters of the labor of others. The economic thought of this poor great theologian, Mazzini, goes no farther; he would like all laborers to become bourgeois, rich and isolated individuals; and he does not comprehend that individual fortunes, even the greatest, are consumed and melt away very quickly when they do not find the means of reproducing themselves, and even of increasing, by the exploitation of the labor of others. Individual riches, hereditary property, constitute precisely the bourgeoisie, and preserve and develop themselves only by the exploitation of the misery of the proletariat. To wish that all proletarians should become bourgeois is to wish that the bourgeois should find no longer at their disposal workingmen forced by hunger to sell them at the lowest possible price that collective work which fertilizes their capital and their property; it is to wish that all the bourgeois should be alike ruined in a very short time; and then what would ensue? All being equally poor, each remaining isolated in misery and reduced to working for himself, entire society would be ruined, because isolated work is hardly sufficient to nourish a savage tribe. Only collective work creates civilization and riches. This truth once comprehended and admitted,—and he must be a great barbarian in social economy who does not admit it,—there remain only two possible forms of property or of exploitation of social wealth: the present bourgeois form,—that is, the exploitation of this wealth, the product of collective labor, or rather the exploitation of collective labor, by privileged individuals, which is the only true sense of that individual and hereditary property which the generous and popular General Garibaldi takes the attitude of defending today; or the new form, which we sustain against the bourgeoisie and against General Garibaldi himself, because it is the sole and supreme condition of the real emancipation of the proletariat, of all the world,—the collective ownership of the wealth produced by collective labor. But I restore the floor to Mazzini]:

"You need a reward which will tranquillize your soul in regard to the future and which will give you the possibility of purifying it, above all, of every sentiment of

reaction, of every impulse of vengeance, of every thought of injustice towards those who have been unjust towards you. You should, then, seek this change, and you will obtain it [if they obtain it, it will be only by their own efforts, by the use of their own organized force, and not by the aid of a few dozen Mazzinians, who will be able to do nothing but paralyze or mislead their efforts; but you should seek it as means, not as end; you should seek it from a sentiment of Duty, not alone as a Right; you should seek it to make yourselves better, not alone to make yourselves materially happy...

“To make yourselves better,—that is what should constitute the aim of your life. You cannot even make yourselves, in any constant and secure way, less” unhappy except by making yourselves better. Tyrants would rise by thousands among you, if you fought only in the name of material interests, or of some social organization or other. It matters little that you change organizations, if you yourselves remain infected with the passions and egoism which reign today: organizations are like certain plants which sometimes are poisonous, sometimes remedial, according to the operations of the one who administers them. Good men make all bad organizations good, and bad men make good ones bad.”

I stop here to establish the profound and completely theological ignorance of Mazzini in everything relating to the social nature of man. Moreover, this ignorance is entirely natural and even necessary. As a theologian, Mazzini must think, and he really does think, that all morality descends on human society from on high, by the revelation of a divine law; whence it follows that society has no inherent or immanent morality,—that is, that, considered apart from this divine revelation, it presents absolute immobility, a mechanical aggregation of human beings without any bond of solidarity between them, for Mazzini ignores and repels as blasphemy natural solidarity,—an unorganized mass of egoists. The moralization of this unhappy human society depends then, according to Mazzini, on the religious and moral amelioration of the individuals of which it is composed, independently of all the real conditions of their existence, and of the organization, political as well as economic, of society. What is of most importance is that the superior men and classes who are called to govern society, a nation, should be profoundly religious and moral. Then all is saved, thinks Mazzini,—for these men and these classes administer to the multitude the religious and moral education which will moralize them in their turn. This is not more difficult than that, and one can understand perfectly that, with this theory, Mazzini, notwithstanding his undeniable preference for the republican form, can say without moving a muscle, and without even suspecting the frightful and fatal sophism contained in his words, that good men can make a bad social organization excellent, and that, on the other hand, bad men can make the best organization in the world frightful, it being accepted that the goodness or the wickedness of men is entirely independent of the organization of society and dependent solely on their individual religion.

Our opinions, our convictions are equally opposed to Mazzini's. First, we do not believe in the existence of any Divinity whatever, other than that which has been created by the historic fantasy of men. Consequently for us there can be no divine revelation from on high, all religions having been only revelations of the collective mind of men, in proportion as it has developed in history, to itself, through this false divine prism. Not believing in God, we can no more believe in the intellectual and moral existence of human individuals outside of society. Man becomes man

only in the bosom of society and only because of the collective cooperation of all men, whether present or past. This is a truth which forms the basis of all our socialistic beliefs and which I shall, therefore, try to develop and prove fully in its time and place. Today I can only state the principle. And the first consequence of this truth is this,—that neither religion, nor morality, nor even thought can be peculiarly and exclusively individual. The greatest men of history, the most sublime geniuses, the greatest philosophers or prophets, have always received all the contents, all the foundation of their religion, of their morality, and of their thought, from this same society of which they form a part and to which they seemed to bring it spontaneously or from on high. It is this accumulated treasure, the product of the collective labor, material, intellectual, and moral, of all past generations, elaborated anew and transformed slowly, in a manner more or less invisible and latent, by the new instincts, the aspirations, and the real and manifold new wants of the present generations, which always forms the contents of the revelations or discoveries of these men of genius, who add only the formal work of their own brains, more capable than others of seizing and classifying the details in a larger whole or in a new synthesis. So that we may say with as much reason as justice that the men of genius are precisely those to whom society always gives more than to others, and, above all, more than it receives in return. Even the misfortunes and persecutions which it has lavished upon them with great generosity hitherto have been transformed for them into benefits, because it is more than probable that, if it had accorded them gratitude, respect, riches, power, and authority during their lives, it would have made tyrants of them and transformed them into wicked and stupid privileged persons.

From the truth which I have just laid down as a principle flows another consequence as important as the first,—that all religions and all systems of morality which prevail in a society are always the ideal expression of its real, material situation, that is to say, of its economic organization first of all, but also of its political organization, the latter being, moreover, nothing but the legal and violent consecration of the former. Christ, who was quite a different sort of socialist from Mazzini, since he has declared that it was easier for a great rope—others say for a camel—to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into his Paradise,—Christ himself has said: For where your treasure is, there is your heart also! and he has tried to transfer human treasures into heaven, but he has not succeeded. He has succeeded so little that the Church itself, this divine institution which has no other aim, if we may believe the Christian theologians and Mazzini himself, than to assure the road to -heaven to all believers, was hardly officially established before it found nothing more pressing to do than to monopolize all the treasures of the earth, which it has justly considered as instruments of power and enjoyment. During the fifteen centuries which have passed since the miraculous conversion of the very depraved and very great Emperor Constantine down to our time, have not all the Christian churches —Roman Catholic. Byzantine-Greek, Byzantine-Russian, Protestant —displayed by turns the most fanatical fury in the preservation and increase of the holy property and riches of the Church?

Fifteen centuries of experience! Should not such a solemn and memorable failure made by the most ideal religion in the world suffice, therefore, to prove to us the inconsistency of all abstract idealism on this earth, its absolute incompatibility with the fundamental conditions of human society? What will Mazzini do, then, with his new idealism, with his eclectic medley of traditions fallen into disuse and of Platonic absurdities revived, a sort of abortion which has neither the merit of the logical rationality of the metaphysicians, nor that of the material brutality of the positive religions, and which, at the same time that it revolts thought, does not even give to the superstition of the masses and to this need of believing in miracles which yet lives in

feminine souls the nourishment afforded them by spiritualism or even Mormonism,—religions as new as Mazzini's and much more positive?

Man, like everything which exists, is matter. His soul, his mind, his thoughts, his morals are products of it, and he cannot make abstractions of them with impunity. Every time that he attempts it, he falls back again, and with grievous consequences to himself. His pretended immateriality is always transformed, when it comes to action, into brutality, bestiality, negation of humanity. All that he can, all that he should do, is to humanize matter as much in himself as outside of himself, and he humanizes it by rendering it always more and more favorable to the complete development of his humanity by means of work, science, and the education which he gives himself under the direction of this last combined with the historical experience of life. It is well understood that, when I speak of historic man, I speak always of collective man, of society, since the individual man, considered outside of society, has never had a history, for the simple reason that as man but little developed as thinking animal, or even as capable, of pronouncing a few words, he has never existed; for—I repeat it again—the animal called man becomes really man only in society and by the cooperation of all society. Individual liberty itself is a product of this collective work, material, intellectual, and moral, of all the world.

What is Humanity? It is animality endowed with the faculty of abstraction or of generalization, or of the highest known degree of intelligence; a faculty equally material, since it is the action of an entirely material organ called the brain, which, far from being exclusively peculiar to man, is manifested, more and more developed, in the ascending series of the animal species, from the most formless animate being up to man. But in man alone it reaches this power of abstraction which permits him to lift himself by his thought not only above all the things that surround him, but also above himself, as real, living, and sentient being. It is by virtue of this faculty that by a slow historic labor which develops his mind, man is enabled to successively grasp things as a whole and sense the general and constant laws which manifest themselves in their relations and development. And it is in applying to his life and to his social relations the natural laws which he so discovers that he succeeds in perfecting, little by little, his primitive animality and in transforming it into humanity.

Humanity is, then, animality transformed by a progressive thought and by the progressive application of this thought to life. For animal life itself is not at all as brutally material as the theologians, the consistent idealists, and Mazzini himself are induced to believe: animals whose whole existence is concentrated exclusively in the two-fold passion of digestion and reproduction belong to the most inferior species. But in the species more developed in intelligence, in those which approach man, you will find the germs of all the passions of man, without an exception; you will find in them the love of children, the religious sentiment, sacrifice, the social passion, patriotic devotion, and even a beginning of scientific curiosity. Doubtless the care for the stomach and sexual love play a dominant role, but do they not play a role, if not as dominant, at least excessively important, in the human world itself?

To sustain themselves animals, as individuals, must eat, and, as species, must propagate. That is the first, the real foundation of life, common to all species of animals from the most inferior, inclusively, up to man. All the other faculties and passions can be developed only on condition that these two primordial needs are satisfied. This is the supreme law of life from which no living being can escape.



This law, which Mazzini must attribute to his God and which we attribute to no one, because we do not believe in laws ideally predetermined and because what we call natural laws constitute, in our eyes, only general and constant resultants of an infinity of actions and reactions which real things exercise incessantly, all on each and each on all,—this law transforms the animal kingdom into a perpetual tragedy, of which nature, or at least our earth, still continual to be the bloody theatre. This is the mournful struggle for life. All the animal species exist only by destruction. There are some, it is true, who are content with destroying the vegetable species. But there are at least as many others which can live only by devouring animate and living beings. These are the wild beasts, the carnivora, which are neither the least developed nor the least intelligent, since it is just these which, by their organization, approach nearest to man, and since man himself, an omnivorous animal, is the most ferocious and the most destructive of all.

Such is then in its reality the law of nature. It is an indefatigable and incessant devouring of each other: it is life which, in order to continue to be life, kills and devours life. It is an assassination without mercy and without truce. Before this bloody fact which no one can deny, we really cannot understand how Mazzini, so jealous of the glory, wisdom, justice, and loving kindness of his God, can attribute to him the preestablishment of this law and the creation of this world! Only a Divine Tiberius, a ferocious monster endowed with supreme power, could have created it. And how inconsistent, farther, is the attempt of Christian theology to explain this fact, which becomes monstrous as soon as it is attributed to any author whatever, by a fall of all nature, which was, they pretend, the necessary consequence of original sin. The explanation is doubtless absurd, but at least proves that they have felt the contradiction that exists between the inherent cruelty of the natural world and the infinite goodness of their God. For Mazzini even this contradiction does not exist. It must be added, also, that he never deigns to observe the earth, but seeks the proofs of his God in the starry heaven which is so far, far away that it appears to him absolute and perfect.

The history of man in nothing else than the continuation and development of this animal struggle for life. There is, in the animal kingdom, which includes man, this law,—that the numerical increase of a species is always determined by the question of the means of subsistence. Every species increases indefinitely till it has attained the limit when this quantity ceases to be proportional to the number of individuals who compose it; then the more feeble individuals, forced to yield their pittance to the stronger, die of hunger. What happens among individuals of the same species occurs in the same way among different species. The stronger supplant, eliminate the weaker...

Is not this same fact repeated and reproduced even today in the history of human societies? There is, however, in this respect, an enormous difference between man and the other animal species. Among some of the latter intelligence reaches such a degree of development that, in anticipation of the future,—of winter, for instance,—they store up provisions. But no other animal species that I know has yet had the idea of making the earth yield, by artificial means, by cultivation,—that is, by the application of natural laws either to labor or to the struggle for life,—more than it yields naturally. Man alone has had this thought, and he could get it only through this power of abstraction, of generalization, which has enabled him to perceive, to verify, and to know again successively the constant processes of development of real things, otherwise called the laws of nature, by means of positive science, commencing with the so simple and imperfect

observations of primitive societies and continuing to the most complicated combinations of the present scientific systems.

It is in and by this that the human world began to separate itself definitively from the animal world. Alone among all the living species on this earth, the human species has a history in the sense of the progressive development of an actual society. In the rest of the animal world there is also a history, but it is manifested exclusively by the physiological and, as it were, simply material development of the species and races, by the production of new species and races, while each species considered separately, as long as it exists, hardly progresses, living today as it lived a thousand years ago.

Man alone, thanks to his two precious faculties, thought and speech, which are so far inseparable that one cannot say really which is first, each implying the other,—one of which recognizes nature and its laws, while the other transmits to generations to come, as an accumulated treasure, all the discoveries and all the experiences of past centuries,—thanks to these two magnificent faculties, man alone has a history.

At first he lived, scattered in little societies over the earth, like a brutal and ferocious beast, living on the natural fruits of the earth, and mingling in his meals uncooked vegetables and fruits with the flesh of animals, including that of men. He recognized so little the human character of his neighbors belonging to other tribes that he ate them whenever he could. Cannibalism, we know, was the point of departure of human civilization. The first men lived chiefly by hunting and war, war itself being only a hunt for men.

Much later we find the man-shepherd. This is already an immense step forward. He does not yet cultivate the ground; but he already cultivates different species of animals, which he has learned not only to subdue but to tame, by transforming somewhat their nature, by means of his dominant intelligence and will, and on whose flesh and milk he feeds, while their skins serve him for clothing.

Later we find him a farmer. Man becomes sedentary and begins to have a country. With this phase of his economical development are connected, among most of the peoples known to history, some facts as well religious as political, and which are not its first cause, as Mazzini claims, but, on the contrary, its result, expression, and, as it were, ideal consecration. These facts are the worship of the tombs of the fathers, the constitution of the patriarchal right and of property in the person of the head of the family, the patriarchal government of the ancients, slavery.

The hunting people had no need of slaves, knowing only the noble works of hunting and fighting, which a part of our civilized society still considers as a prerogative of men well-born. It would even have been impossible for them to support slaves, for hunting is never excessively productive, and hunting peoples, as we see them today in the deserts of Africa and America, often find themselves reduced to death by starvation. In this first phase of human barbarism, women are the natural slaves on whom brutal and ferocious man throws all the burden of work which his miserable household requires. Consequently he does not make slaves, he kills his enemy and eats him.

Pastoral peoples likewise can make no great use of slaves, and, living almost exclusively on the milk and flesh of their flocks, they could not maintain a great number. They seek, moreover, the plains, broad spaces, the immense prairies, capable of supporting their flocks. Far from seeking other tribes, like the hunting peoples, they avoid them; war, consequently, is not frequent among them, and no war, no slaves. When one pasturage is destroyed, they go in search of another; vagabonds on the earth, they observe only the changes of temperature and climate, seeking water

first of all, and have no other guides in their periodical transmigrations than the stars in the sky. They were the first founders of astronomical science and of star worship. The patriarchalism, the natural and traditional authority of the fathers of families, of the ancients, is already strongly developed in their bosom, but it is still only a matter of custom. It does not become a right, founded on land and hereditary property and consecrated by religion, as with the agricultural nations. Pastoral peoples remain peaceable so long as they find pasturage sufficient for their flocks; but at last there comes a time when many nomadic tribes encounter each other, and the plain becomes too small for all. Then, urged on always by this supreme and inevitable law of the struggle for life, they stain the plain with the blood of their battles and are transformed into warlike peoples, after which, mingling in a single mass, too numerous henceforth to find its food on the plains, they fall upon agricultural countries, which they conquer, and forcing into submission to their yoke, like slaves, peaceful populations devoted to agriculture, they found States.

Such was the natural and real process by which the first States in history were founded, without any intervention of legislators or divine prophets.

The brutal fact of brigandage, conquest, and slavery, the material and real base of all States, past and present, has always preceded the idealization of this fact by some sort of religion and legislation. First the conqueror, the fortunate brigand, the hero of history, founds the new State; then, and often directly with him, come priests, prophets, and legislators at the same time, who consecrate in the name of their God, and establish as legal foundations, the very consequences of this accomplished fact.

The following is a universal rule, demonstrated by the history of all religions:

No new religion has ever been able to interrupt the natural and inevitable development of social facts, nor even to turn it aside from the path traced for it by the combination of real forces, whether natural or social. Often religious beliefs have served as a symbol for nascent forces at the very moment when these forces were about to accomplish new facts: but they have always been the symptoms or prognostics, never the real causes, of these facts. As for these causes, we must seek them in the ascending development of economic wants and the organized and active forces of society, not ideal, but real; the ideal always being only the more or less faithful expression, the last resultant, as it were, whether positive or negative, of the struggle of these forces in society.

This idea, so true, announced and developed more than twenty years ago principally by Karl Marx, is necessarily combated by Mazzini, who, a logical idealist, imagines that in the history of humanity, as well as in the development of the properly material world, ideas, first causes, and successive manifestations of the Divine Being, precede and create facts.

“Religions govern the world,” he says. “When the men of India believed that they were born, some of the head, others of the arms, and still others of the feet of Brahma, their God, they regulated society, in conformity with this division, in castes, by assigning to the first, hereditarily, intellectual work, to the second a military status, and to the last servile tasks; and they condemned themselves thereby to an immobility which still continues and which will continue as long as the faith in this principle lasts.”

Mazzini is so much of an idealist that he does not perceive that, in citing the religion of the Brahmins as an example, he proves just the contrary of what he wished to demonstrate, unless he is willing to admit this absurd supposition, that an entire people, at first free, was able to submit itself voluntarily to the most grievous and abject slavery, simply because priests had come to tell them and had succeeded in convincing them that they were formed of the feet of Brahma! The

establishment of castes in the East India having been, according to Mazzini, only the consequence of the revelation of this religious doctrine, must he not conclude that, before it had been revealed, there did not exist this hereditary inequality in the Indies? What follows, then? That a people comparatively free and composed of citizens living in equality has freely consented to descend so low, to become a people of pariahs, with no other reason for so doing than a new religious propaganda. But would not that be a miracle? I can assure Mazzini that, if he would take the pains to prove to us its historical authenticity, this miracle would alone suffice to convert us once for all to all the religious absurdities. Why does he not at least try to explain the possibility of it? That in itself would be an immense victory for his faith against this poor human reason which he maltreats horribly in all his writings.

To explain so surprising a fact, one must suppose:

Either that the people of the Indies naturally love slavery, that they seek misery, tortures, and shame, as others seek liberty, riches, joys, and honor. But such a people is simply an impossibility, for we see that everything which lives, not only men, but the lowest, the smallest animal on this earth, rebels instinctively and just as far as it can, against every attempt to deprive it of its independence,—that is, of the conditions of its existence and of its natural development;

Or else that Brahma, the incarnation of Mazzini's eternal Divinity at that epoch of history and in that country, himself descended in person, invested with his overwhelming power, from his heaven, to impose this hard slavery upon the peoples of the Indies. But Mazzini, while professing a fanatical faith in and an ardent worship for his God, refuses him the pleasure and the right of revealing himself directly, of showing himself personally on the earth.

If the Brahmins had at least promised the Indian people eternal happiness in return for temporary privations, sufferings, and slavery, as the Christian priests still do today when they come to preach submission and-resignation to the proletariat of Europe. But no; the Brahmins have been, in this respect at least, much more honest than our priests; they demand all and promise nothing. In their religion there is neither deliverance nor salvation for the parias, either in this world or the other; for them there is only eternal slavery.

There remains, therefore, only one supposition: this is that the priests of Brahma, his revealers, his prophets, had been endowed by him with such eloquence and such great powers of persuasion that, without recourse to supernatural means, to miracles,—since Mazzini himself denies the possibility of this sort of miracles,—without recourse even to force, that last and powerful argument of all historical religions,—by the sole power of their divinely inspired propaganda, they were able to convert the masses and subject them to this eternal slavery.

They came to say to free men, who only the day before had been more or less their equals: "Wretches I prostrate yourselves! and know that, having come from the foot and perhaps from a still baser part of the body of Brahma, you must serve us eternally as slaves, because we came, some from his head, others from his arm!" And the millions of free Hindoos, suddenly converted by this divine eloquence, flung themselves on the ground, crying with one voice: "Yes, we are wretches, parias, and we will serve you as slaves!"

Of all the suppositions which Mazzini's singular theory imposes on us this is the least absurd, and yet it is so absurd that our good sense, sustained by all we know of the nature and habitual practice of men, revolts. We can conceive that men to whom these same revealers of the religion of Brahma had said, to some: "You must be the supreme arbiters of nature because you come from the head of Brahma," and to others: "You are free and strong, and you must command because you come from his arm," would have responded in unison: "Yes, you are a thousand times right, and

may Brahma be greatly blessed! We will direct and we will command, and the vile rabble shall work for us, obey us, and serve us!" We can conceive this, because man is generally disposed to believe in what it is for his interest to accept. But to imagine that the masses, living men, in any stage whatever of civilization, could have accepted freely, simply in consequence of an entirely moral propaganda, a belief which, without the least hope and without the least compensation, condemns them to the state of pariahs is simply to show misunderstanding, not to say ignorance, of the most elementary bases of history and of human nature.

It is evident that this acceptance of the religion of the Brahmins by the Hindoo masses could not have been free, but that it was preceded and produced by the fact of their very real and wholly involuntary slavery, under the yoke of the" conquering tribes who came down from the plateau of the Himalayas upon the Indies,—a slavery of which this religion and this worship have been only the expression and later theological explanation. The hereditary castes, therefore, were not formed as a consequence of the theological vagaries of the Brahmins. They had a much more real foundation, and especially were the last resultant of a long struggle between different elements, between many social forces, which, after a long conflict, ended in a certain equilibrium that is now known as the social order of the Hindoos.

We know so little of the history of those far-away times and countries. The tribes who descended from the Himalayas to conquer the Indies had, undeniably, already had a previous history of struggles, of social relations more or less determined, of germs of political institutions, in short, a religion, or even several religions, which had been the expression of all these historical realities. All these matters are entirely unknown to us. What we can and must suppose is that the invading power was not a simple power, but, on the contrary, very complex, a combination, not fixed, but moving and living, of popular elements and of diverse social forces which were constantly being modified and transformed within it. It must have been the same with the conquered tribes. The meeting of all those elements, each of which tended naturally to absorb all the others, must have produced a terrible and long struggle,—the eternal struggle for life, that supreme law of nature and society,—and the material result of this struggle was precisely the establishment of new relations between all these different social forces, in conformity with the relative and real power or weakness of each,—the at first wholly material institution of castes by the brutal triumph of preponderant forces.

The definitive triumph of one assemblage of social forces over another has been and will always be a brutal fact, in this sense that the most humane, the most just, as well as the most iniquitous, the most false, idea can never triumph in the world, if it does not rest on material power. This last is indispensable; Mazzini recognized it himself, as we have just seen; it is indispensable to remove the material obstacles which prevent the realization of the new idea, to overthrow the material power on which the existing order of things rests. Therefore the last word belongs always to force, and a party which wishes to triumph, however holy may be its cause, must create a material power capable of breaking the material power of its adversaries. But when we speak of the struggle and of the successive victories of material powers in history, we must not take this word "material" literally, in its simply mechanical, physical, chemical, or even organic sense. It refers to social forces, human forces, and man is a being, doubtless exclusively material, but organized and intelligent. His ideas, his sentiments, his passions, and, before all, his social organization, which is penetrated and always modified by it, are integral elements of his material force. This force, belonging to man, though entirely material, is more intelligent than that of the

animals of other species, and so man has become the king of the earth, in spite of the fact that, at his origin, he was physically the weakest and above all the least numerous.

It is solely the superiority of his intelligence, and of his science which is the product of it, which makes him obtain the victory over all the other animal species in this eternal fight for life which constitutes the groundwork of all natural history; it is also these principally which, in the continuation of this same fight in the midst of human society, makes some nations triumph over others; it is not numerical superiority, for it oftenest happens that the conquering masses are numerically weaker than the conquered peoples. For instance, when Alexander of Macedonia conquered a part of Asia and Africa, and when, later, the Romans conquered a great part of the world known to the ancients, their forces were very inferior in point of numbers to those of the conquered peoples.

It cannot be said, however, that it is only the superiority of intelligence and of science which assures triumph in history; nor even does the superior development of economic interests, of industry, commerce, and social wealth exclusively assure it. The Romans who conquered Greece had been infinitely less intelligent, less learned, less civilized, and less rich than the Greeks. The Poles who, at the close of the last century, succumbed under the united blows of Russia and Prussia were unquestionably more intelligent and more civilized than the Prussians and the Russians. And even today, in presence of the terrible catastrophe which France has just endured, who will dare to say that the Prussians, the Germans, have more brains and are more civilized than the people of France! As for social wealth, that of France, even today, after the defeat, notwithstanding the depredations of the Germans who have devastated her, notwithstanding the five thousand millions which they force her to pay, notwithstanding even the “restorative” government of M. Thiers, remains infinitely superior to that of Germany.

It is doubtless undeniable that the German universities are much better organized than the French universities; that, especially with respect to natural sciences,—the only sciences which are yet positive,—the German professors have considerably-outstripped the French professors; that the middle colleges, the gymnasiums, in Germany are really superior to corresponding institutions in France; that the mass of the German bourgeoisie is much more learned, better instructed, than that poor French bourgeoisie which is stagnating in the old routine and official rhetoric; that the proletariat and the peasants know at least how to read and write: and that, finally,—an important point in the question which we have to solve,—the instruction in the military schools of Germany, and especially of Prussia, is more solid, more complete, more serious, than that in the military schools of France, which makes the German officers learned brutes, while the French officers are ignorant brutes.

Nevertheless, everybody feels that it was not these advantages, undeniable though they are, which secured the definitive victory to the Germans. That the German armies, infinitely better organized, better disciplined, better armed, and better commanded than the French troops, should have beaten the latter is not at all astonishing. But, the war having taken a national character, what surprised everybody was to see a nation so powerful in all respects as France undeniably is, so proud, not to say so glorious, prostrated in so short a time by the German forces.

Statesmen, professional military men, and, generally, the interested partisans of order, that is, of the privileged, exploiting, official, and officious rabble, today triumphant in all countries, have arrived at a conclusion which, though very reassuring and very consoling for them, is none the less entirely false. They say, they publish, and they endeavor to spread this idea,—that military art and the improvement of destructive weapons have made in our day such immense progress

that the power of well-organized and well-disciplined military forces has become irresistible; that armies alone can cope with armies, and that the army of a country once prostrated and destroyed, there is nothing left for that country but submission, all popular resistance from that time having become impossible. The conclusion is naturally this: the natural and organic organization of popular forces, outside of the State and opposed to it, being of no avail, powerless, in comparison with the artificial, mechanical, and scientific organization of the military forces of the State, revolution itself has become impossible.

This idea, becoming general in the camp of the conservatives of all countries, pleases, reassures, and really consoles them very much. It is true that it leads them to this disagreeable conclusion,—that the independence and that even the existence of a country depends today solely on the number, the good organization, and the good management of its army, so that, if at any given moment it finds itself inferior in this respect alone to another country, this will be sufficient to deliver it over to the mercy of the latter, unless the political interests of neutral countries serve it in some way as security and safeguard. This is doubtless not very reassuring to their patriotism. But they console themselves easily, for there is now hardly a conservative in Europe who would not prefer foreign victory and even the foreign yoke to the salvation of his own country by a popular revolution. We have just seen a memorable proof of it in France.

Therefore the conservatives, the honest people of all the countries of Europe, including the bourgeois republicans, are today seeking their salvation in the formidable organization of the military forces of the State, and they foolishly imagine that this power guarantees them against all possible revolutions.

These honest people are much deceived, and if the perpetual frights in which they live today did not render them incapable of all serious reflection, they would have understood that even the catastrophe which has just subjugated France proves nothing at all. France has succumbed, not because her armies have been destroyed, but because, at the time they were destroyed, the French nation itself found itself in a state of disorganization and demoralization which rendered her absolutely incapable of creating spontaneously serious national defense. When Napoleon I. invaded Spain, the disproportion which existed between the quality, organization, intelligence, and even the quantity of his troops, and those of the Spanish troops, between the intellect and knowledge of the French and the rough ignorance of the Spanish people, was even more formidable still than that to which is attributed today the prodigious success of the Germans. He also prostrated the Spanish armies and the Spanish State. But he did not succeed in putting down the national uprising which lasted five years and which ended in the expulsion of the French from Spain.

That is an example at least as memorable as that of the last defeat of the French. How is it to be explained? By the simple reason that, when Napoleon invaded Spain, that country was neither disorganized nor demoralized. It has been BO, doubtless, and even to a degree which no other country has ever surpassed in rottenness, but only from the point of view of the organization and morality of the State, not from the national point of view, not from that of the natural and spontaneous organization of the Spanish nation, outside of the State. The State fell, but the nation remained erect; and it was the nation which, after having expelled the French, again, to its own misfortune, freely submitted to the State. It is lamenting today the fatal consequences of this mistake.

Unity makes strength, they say, and it is perfectly true. Only there are two kinds of unity. There is an artificial, mechanical unity, learned and immoral at the same time, composed entirely of fictions, falsehoods, centralization, absorption, compression, and exploitation; this is the unity of

the State. Outside of this unity, ever unhealthy and artificial, there is a moral unity of the nation, resulting from a certain accord or the more or less temporary harmony of different instincts and forces of the nation, spontaneously organized, and not yet divided, and always represented by a certain number of dominant ideas, true or false, and corresponding aspirations, good or bad. This is the real unity, fruitful and living.

These two unities are so opposite in nature that, for the greater part of the time, they are fighting each other, the first always tending to disorganize and destroy the second. A nation has never a greater enemy than its own State. Nevertheless, it sometimes happens that these two unities meet in a common accord, but it can never last long, because it is against nature. This accord, moreover, is only possible when the really social unity suffers from some great vice: either when the masses, brutalized, misled, and unconscious of their own power, seek their salvation in the protection of the State against the privileged classes, whom they necessarily always detest, ignorant of the fact that the State has really no other mission but to protect those classes against them; or when, over these masses still sleeping and passive, the privileged classes, dreading their awakening, group themselves in fear and servility about the State. Whatever may be the reason of this meeting when it takes place, the State becomes very powerful.

That is precisely what we see today in Germany. The Germans have conquered the French, because, being themselves well organized, politically and morally united, they attacked them at the very moment when not only the French State, but the French nation itself was a prey to complete dissolution and demoralization. The principal advantage of the Germans, that which was the principal cause of their unprecedented triumph, was, therefore, moral force.

But let us clearly understand each other. When I speak of the moral force of nations in general and of the Germans in particular, I take good care not to confound it with human, absolute morality. I well know that this word absolute, applied to human morality, will sound badly in the ears of many of our friends, materialists, positivists, and atheists, who have declared war to the death against the absolute in whatever form it may appear, and with much reason, for the Absolute, taken in the absolute sense of the word, is absolute nonsense. So it is not of this absolute Absolute, it is not of God, that I speak. I do not know this gentleman; I am as ignorant of him as they are themselves. The absolute which I mean is relative only to humanity. It is that universal law of solidarity which is the natural base of all human society, and of which all historical developments have been and are only successive expressions, manifestations, and realizations.

Every real being, composite or simple, collective or individual, every intelligent, living being, organic or even inorganic, has a principle which is peculiar to it, which is not imposed on it from on high by any supreme Being whatever, but which is inherent in it, which constitutes it, and makes it remain what it is, as long as it is, and all the successive developments of which are only necessary manifestations. Without doubt, at least in my mind, this principle, which is, in reality, nothing else than this being's manner of existence and development, is only the resultant, more or less prolonged and constant, but never eternal, of an indefinite multitude of natural actions and reactions, of a combination of causes and effects,—a combination which, while always modifying itself somewhat, continues to reproduce itself, so long as it is not forced to change its direction or its nature, and transform itself into some new combination, by the action of new causes, more powerful than those which first gave it birth ; then the being which is the product of this disappears with what we call its principle. Thus it is that we see many species of animals remain today what they have been for more than three thousand years. Many



others have completely disappeared from the earth, and, naturally, their particular principles, which constituted their particular being, have also disappeared with them. Our planet and our solar system itself, having had a beginning in the eternal Universe, must necessarily have an end; in some millions of years the earth will be no more, and with it, and perhaps even before it, will also disappear the human race with all its principles, with all the laws inherent in its being.

We have no occasion to be troubled. A few millions of years are the same as eternity to us. The ambitious idealists who talk of eternity, without finding, for the most part, enough depth in themselves to fill an existence of sixty years, usually imagine much less than that. In reality, a single million of years surpasses the power of our imagination. We have hardly the history of the last three thousand years, and it appears to us eternal and humanity already so old! Let us, then, fill the present with our best, prepare, as far as our means and strength allow, for the nearest future, and leave the care of far-off times to come to the men or the new beings of those times.

It suffices us to know that every real being, so long as it exists, exists only by virtue of a principle which is inherent in it and which determines its particular nature,—a principle which is not imposed on it by any divine law-maker whatever, but which is the prolonged and constant resultant of a combination of natural causes and effects; and which is not enclosed in it like a soul in its body, according to the absurd imagination of the idealists, but which is in reality only the inevitable and constant mode of its real existence.

The human race, like all the other animal races, has inherent principles which are peculiar to it, and all these principles are summed up in or reducible to a single principle which we call Solidarity.

This principle may be formulated thus: No human individual can recognize his own humanity, or, consequently, realize it in life, except by recognizing it in others and by cooperating in its realization for others. No man can emancipate himself save by emancipating with him all the men about him. My liberty is the liberty of everybody, for I am really free, free not only in idea, but in fact, only when my liberty and my right find their confirmation, their sanction, in the liberty and right of all men, my equals.

What all other men are is of great importance to me, because, however independent I may imagine myself or may appear by my social position, whether I am Pope, Czar, or Emperor, or even prime minister, I am always the product of the lowest among them; if they are ignorant, miserable, enslaved, my life is determined by their ignorance, misery, and slavery. I, an enlightened or intelligent man, for example,—if such is the case,—am foolish with their folly; I, a brave man, am the slave of their slavery; I, a rich man, tremble before their misery; I, a privileged man, turn pale before their justice. In short, wishing to be free, I can not be, because all the men around me do not yet wish to be free, and, not wishing it, they become instruments of my oppression.

This is not imagination, it is a reality, the sad experience of which the whole world is undergoing today. Why, after so many superhuman efforts, after so many revolutions, always at first victorious, after so many painful sacrifices and so many struggles for liberty, does Europe still remain a slave? Because in all the countries of Europe there is still an immovable mass, immovable at least in appearance, which up to this time has remained inaccessible to the propaganda of ideas of emancipation, humanity, and justice,—the mass of the peasants. It is this which constitutes today the power, the last support and the last refuge of all despots, a real club in their

hands to crush us, and, in so far as we shall fail to fill them with our aspirations, our passions, our ideas, we shall not cease to be slaves. We must emancipate them to emancipate ourselves.

Considering western humanity, including America, the Roman, German, and Anglo-German nations, as the most civilized and relatively the most liberal portion of the world, we find even in Europe a black point which menaces this civilization and this liberty. This point is a whole world, the world of Slavs, which up to the present time has been almost always the victim, rarely the hero, and still less the conqueror of history, having been by turns the slave of the Huns, of the Turks, of the Tartars, and, above all, of the Germans. Today it is rising, moving, organizing itself spontaneously, creating slowly a new power, and beginning to demand with a loud voice its place in the sun. What makes its demands still more menacing is that, at the eastern extremity of the European continent, there is an immense empire of more than seventy millions of inhabitants, half Slavs, half Finns, and in part Germans and Tartars, as despotic as possible, founding its enormous power as much on its inaccessible geographical position as on the mass of its innumerable peasants, and raising against the flag of Pan-Germanism hoisted in a manner so grievous for the liberty of the whole world, by the modern patriotism of the Germans, the no less grievous and menacing flag of Pan-Slavism.

The Germans, in all their present publications, laugh at this, or, rather, pretend to laugh at it. For, infatuated as they are with the easy victories which their traditional discipline and their morality of voluntary slaves have just won over the disorganization and the merely transient demoralization of France, they well know, and have known for a long time, that, if there is a danger which they really need to fear, it is that with which the eastern Slav threatens them.

They know it so well that there is no race which they detest more; in all Germany, except the German proletariat in so far as it is not misled by its leaders, and except the immense majority of the German peasants who do not come into immediate contact with the Slav peasants, this hatred is a universal and profound sentiment. The Germans detest this race for all the harm which they have done it, for all the hatred which by their ages of oppression they have inspired in it, and for the instinctive, irresistible terror which its awakening causes them. This intense mutual hatred, mingled with terror on the one side and a deplorable desire for vengeance on the other, disturbs the mind of the Germans and makes them commit many injustices and follies.

Their relations to the Slavs are absolutely the same as those of the English towards the Irish race. But there is an immense difference between the present policy of the English and that of the modern Germans. The English, notwithstanding the reputation for egoism and brutal narrowness which people have been ready to attribute to them, have been and are still the most humanely practical and the most really liberal people of Europe. After having treated the Irish people like a race of pariahs for almost three centuries, they have at last come to see that this policy was as iniquitous as dangerous to themselves, and they have just entered resolutely upon the broad road of reparation. They have already yielded much to Ireland; urged on by the logic of this new road, at once salutary and humane, they will doubtless finish by yielding to her the last, the greatest reparation,—that autonomy which the Irish have, for centuries, demanded with a loud voice, an autonomy of which the radical transformation of all the economic relations prevailing there today will necessarily be the inevitable accompaniment and, as it were, the last word.

Why do not the Germans follow the example of England? Why do they not try to gain the sympathies of the Slavic peoples by the broadest recognition of their right to live, to arrange and organize themselves as they please, and to speak whatever language they like,—in a word, by the most complete recognition of their liberty? Instead of this, what are they doing? They

are themselves pushing the Slavic peoples into the arms of the Czar of all the Russias by this odious threat of forced Germanization and the annihilation of the entire Slavic race in the grand centralization of the Pan-Germanic State. This is at once a great wrong and a great folly.

And unfortunately it is not only the conservatives, nor even the modern liberals and progressives, of Germany, who make this threat; these, on the contrary, are paying very little attention at present to Slavic affairs, absorbed as they are in the contemplation of their patriotic triumphs. No, it is the Republicans,—what do I say?—it is the workmen of the Social-Democratic party of Germany who, in imitation of their leaders, confounding Pan-Germanism with Cosmopolitanism, are pretending that the Slavic peoples of Austria should freely annihilate themselves in the grand Pan-Germanic and so-called popular State.

Let us hope that the General Council of the International Association of Workingmen, which has so well understood the Irish question, as it has recently proved by undertaking the defense of the autonomy of Ireland against the supremacy of England,—let us hope that, inspired by the same principles and urged on by the same sentiment of humanitarian equity, it will give to its friends and intimate allies, the leaders of the Social-Democratic party of Germany, the counsel to recognize as soon as possible, with all its political, economic, and social consequences, the complete liberty of all the Slavic peoples.

If it does not do this, it will prove that, led principally by the Germans, it comprehends justice and humanity only when they are not found in opposition to the immeasurably ambitious and vain designs of the Germans; that it also, like the leaders of the Social-Democratic party, with respect to the Slavic race at least, confounds Pan-Germanism with Cosmopolitanism,—a deplorable confusion, absolutely contrary to the most fundamental principles of the International, and which can serve only the Reaction.

Yes, the Reaction, for, I repeat it once more, the inevitable consequence of such a policy is to throw all the Slavic peoples of Europe into the arms of the Russian Czar. And then will arise a formidable struggle between the disorganized and demoralized West of Europe and the moralized Eastern Slavs,—that is, the Slavs united by hatred of the Germans.

That will be a real catastrophe for humanity; for, even supposing that the Germans triumph at first, which is not at all probable, they must maintain the Slavs in slavery by force, they must sacrifice everything to the formidable development of their armed forces, they must, in a word, continue to form a powerful military State,—that is, they must themselves remain slaves, and a permanent menace against liberty in all the countries of Europe. This is an inevitable result and, at the same time, a triumphant demonstration of that law of solidarity which is the fundamental law of humanity.

If, on the contrary, the Slavs triumph, under the colors of the Czar of Russia, it will be all over with humanity for a long time. There will remain only a single way of salvation for the Germans and for the entire West of Europe,—namely, to liberate and revolutionize the Slavic peoples, including the Empire of Russia itself, as quickly as possible. In no other way can there be any triumph except for the most pitiless, the most brutal, the most inhuman reaction. Any other path can end only in the ruin of all human civilization, at least for many centuries.

But consider the question from a still broader point of view. Consider all Europe, including Russia, as a grand Federative Republic founded broadly on the principles of liberty, equality, justice, and solidarity. This would doubtless be an immense triumph for humanity. If to the population of Europe should be added that of the greater part of America and Oceanica, this would form a humanitarian Federation of from three hundred and forty to three hundred and fifty

millions of souls. This would be really immense. But would humanity be definitively established on its foundations? No, for outside of this Federation there would still remain an even more immense population of eight hundred and fifty millions of Asiatics, whose civilization, or rather, whose traditional barbarism and slavery, would remain suspended like a horrible menace over all this magnificent organization of the free and humane world.

Here I permit myself to put a question which may at first appear singular, but which will none the less serve, by a sort of elimination, to determine in a still more precise manner this grand principle of human solidarity. If, instead of these eight hundred or eight hundred and fifty millions of barbarous men, there were in Asia as many wild beasts,—lions or tigers,—would the danger be the same for the liberty, for the very existence of society in Europe? It is undeniable that, if they found themselves there in such great numbers, they would be forced, by the impossibility of subsisting there all at the same time, to spread out—braving the inclemencies of the climate—over Europe. This would be, no doubt, a terrible invasion, but, nevertheless, not as terrible as that with which the Asiatic populations threaten us. Why? Are lions and tigers less ferocious than men? Alas! After what we have seen done by the Germans in France and by the French of Versailles against the French of Paris, we might almost be tempted to answer this question in the affirmative. Yes, men, when they are led by a Thiers or a Bismarck, when they are inspired by the clergy, by the nobility, by the bourgeoisie furious at finding themselves menaced in their economic privileges, by religious fanaticism, by military discipline, by State patriotism, when they can give full scope to their impure and ferocious desires, under the pretext of serving their country, artificial morality, and public order, may become and often show themselves more merciless and more destructive than the most ferocious beasts. But this is not the principal cause; a little ferocity, more or less, does not constitute a difference so great, and the ferocity of carnivorous beasts would amply suffice to destroy and devour all.

The principal cause resides in the superior intelligence and in the progressive sociability of man,—the first, as we have already said, being able to develop only in society, but, viewed in another light, constituting also, at the same time that it is itself incessantly stimulated by the growing needs of life, the active principle of all social progress. That is the secret of the power of man, and the elements of this power are found in every human society, whatever the degree of its civilization or barbarism. Men add to their numerical superiority the power of their progressively intelligent organization. When they attack or when they defend themselves, they do not always follow one system, like the other species of animals, whose very nature seems to have dictated, once for all, their invariable tactics; no, they can act in concert with each other and contrive new plans, collectively devising methods more in conformity with new circumstances. In a word, they are always still farther perfecting the organization of their collective forces; slaves themselves, they create those horrible machines of war, destruction, and enslavement called States.

The first historic States, as we know, were born in Asia. Asia was the cradle of all religions, of all despotisms; and today it is still Asia which menaces the liberty and humanity of the civilized world.

If Asia were peopled with wild beasts only, if Europe were menaced only with the invasion of some hundreds of millions of lions or tigers, such a danger would doubtless be very serious, but in no way to be compared to that with which she is really threatened today by the existence in Asia of these eight hundred to eight hundred and fifty millions of ferocious men, capable of constituting States, forming already immense despotic States, and sure to overflow, sooner or later, into Europe. If this overflow were only of wild beasts, even if their number were twice as

great, European humanity, doubtless with great effort, might succeed in destroying it. But eight hundred millions of men cannot be exterminated.

Can they be enslaved? England and Russia are attempting it today. The first has established an immense empire in the Indies; the second, while drawing each day nearer the English positions in the South, is trying to establish one between the Caspian Sea and Persia on one side, and the Western frontier of the Chinese Empire on the other, waiting till it can encroach upon Persia and China, both of which it already surrounds on three different sides,—that is, on the east, west, and north; inasmuch as it is exerting itself today to take possession also of Mongolia and Manchuria, on the south of the Amur river, and has already taken possession of the whole eastern part of China along the Gulf of Tartary from the mouth of that river to Korea, at the same time that it is throwing its grappling-irons on the Northern islands of Japan. In this manner, England on one side and Russia on the other seem bound to enclose, if not to stifle, the whole Asiatic East in their arms for the greatest triumph of civilization.

Will they succeed? We can say with certainty that they will not. They will not succeed for the simple reason that, being ambitious rivals, they make incessant war upon each other in Asia, a war to the death, the one seeking to baffle the projects and to paralyze the efforts of the other, conspiring, arming, and stirring up the Asiatic populations one against the other; so that without intending it, they accustom these populations to our military tactics and to the use of European arms; and as these populations are not counted by tens, but by hundreds of millions, the most probable result of all these intrigues and of this struggle between the two powers which are disputing the dominion of Asia will be to shake up this Asiatic world which has hitherto lain motionless, and to pour it through the valley of the Amur, through Siberia, through the country of the Kirghizes, through Persia, and through Turkey, a second time, over Europe.

I am convinced, for example, that all the ephemeral triumphs which the Russian government is obtaining today in Japan will end, in the not distant future, in the entire destruction of Russian dominion over the entire valley of the Amur, under the irresistible force of a formidable Japanese invasion which the Russian government will find itself in no condition to oppose. The valley of the Amur is a magnificent country, enjoying a temperate climate and as fertile as Japan itself. Its area is almost as large as that of Italy and five-sevenths of that of Japan. And it has in all only forty thousand inhabitants, and what is worse, Russia can never people it, for between it and European Russia stretches immense Siberia over a distance of nearly four thousand miles,—a country twenty-six and a half times as large as France and which has itself only a little over four million inhabitants, including the forty thousand in the valley of the Amur. If we except the country of the Kirghizes, all the southern part of Siberia along the northern frontier of China is an excessively fertile country, in spite of the severity of the winter, which lasts from six to seven months, but which does not at all frighten the Russian peasants; so that an emigration of these peasants from European Russia would find as much and more land than they would need, long before reaching the banks of the Amur. It must be centuries, therefore, before the valley of the Amur can be peopled by Russians.

Japan, which is separated from this country only by the Gulf of Tartary, is a country of thirty millions of inhabitants. The Japanese are not like the Chinese; they are not an old people. On the contrary, they are a people very new, very barbarous, full of vigor and energy, and endowed with much natural intelligence. They are a people who observe, who learn well and very quickly. At present they only imitate, like all peoples just becoming civilized. But they have pushed this talent of imitation so far that in a short time they have learned the art of constructing steam-

boats, of manufacturing guns, and of casting cannon. Today young Japanese go to study in the Universities and in the Polytechnic Institutes of Europe. All the journals have been talking of one of those feudal princes who still share the power with the Tycoon and the Mikado, and who, with the aid of a Prussian sergeant, has organized in Japan one or two battalions of troops disciplined and armed like the Europeans. It was in this way that Peter the Great began. They have already commenced to build a navy, and all this goes on and is developed with an unheard-of rapidity. Look out for the Russian possessions on the Amur; I do not give them fifty years. The whole power of Russia in Siberia is only fictitious. Imagine an invasion of some tens of millions of Chinese of all sorts, pushed by hunger,—what resistance could be offered them by those poor Siberian towns, the largest of which, Irkoutsk, numbers only thirty thousand souls, and which are separated one from another by hundreds, what do I say? by thousands of miles. The Chinese are a people intellectually more debased and physically more decrepit than the Japanese; but necessity imparts energy to the feeblest; the atrocious, pitiless civil wars which are today rending the interior of this immense Empire, apparently, but only apparently, immovable, will end by newly tempering the energies and characters of its people. The Europeans, by going to Peking, have put an end to the old Empire; a new order of things must undoubtedly arise from its ruins, a formidable new movement,—for a movement of five hundred millions of men can be nothing else than formidable,—and then, Europe, beware!

But even though there were not this war of two rival powers in Asia; even supposing all Europe reunited and agreed upon a common action,—could Europe conquer Asia and maintain dominion there? From two hundred and sixty-five to two hundred and seventy millions of Europeans, united to seventy-five millions of Americans,—could these keep in subjection eight hundred millions of barbarous Asiatics? Even admitting the possibility of this fact, it is clear that they could do it only to the injury of their own liberty. For to maintain so many millions of men in slavery, they must maintain formidable standing armies, armies which in a very short time would adopt the manners, ideas, and customs of the barbarous and enslaved populations of Asia and even surpass them in savage barbarity. They would split up among themselves; they would dispute over the booty; each fortunate general would pose as a sovereign; and there, would be no result from this change in Asia except that, at the head of these brutal masses, there would be found well organized and well disciplined troops, with generals who had become dictators and sovereigns and who would lead them and the Asiatic hordes to pillage Europe.

Therefore there is but one means of saving Europe,—the civilization of Asia. Such is the inevitable consequence of this law of solidarity which unconsciously unites all humanity, and which makes the destiny of each individual dependent upon that of his whole nation, and the destiny of each nation upon that of all nations and tribes, of all human collectivities, in a word, large or small, which all together constitute humanity.

Civilize Asia! That is easy to say, but difficult to do; to civilize it in a manner to render it not only inoffensive, but useful to and in sympathy with the liberty and humanity of Europe! In official and officious regions, as well as in all circles where conservatism, doctrinarianism, and bourgeois authoritarianism prevail, much is said about civilization; indeed, today they talk of nothing else. But what is called civilization in such circles is pure barbarism, only refined and perfected in the direction of organization and not in that of the humanization of destructive and brutal forces. Civilization in this sense signifies exploitation, subjection, slavery, if not extermination. Bismarck, Thiers, the three emperors of Europe, the Pope, the Sultan, all the statesmen, all the generals, of Europe, are the knights of this civilization.

It is a long time since England especially, but Russia also, undertook this work of the civilization of Asia. The principal means are, first, conquest, and then commerce and religious propagandism, I have just said what I think of conquest. Of these three means commerce is doubtless the most efficacious. It-brings Asia and Europe together by the exchange of their products, and by this means even establishes between them a commencement of real solidarity. The peaceful invasion of European merchandise must necessarily carry with it—very slowly, it is true—the successive introduction at least of some of the customs and habits of European life; but with these customs and habits are indissolubly bound up certain ideas, certain sentiments, and certain social relations, heretofore unknown in Asia; furtively, insensibly, Asia is being penetrated by at least a few drops of that human respect of which she is utterly ignorant and which is the true, the only foundation of all morality and civilization.

Of reverence or of divine worship, which Mazzini preaches to us, probably to take us back to Asia, she has had only too much. All the religions which today still afflict the human world were born in Asia, not even excepting the new religion of Mazzini, which is in reality, as I shall presently demonstrate, only a very strange eclectic collection of Chinese, Brahministic, Buddhist, Jewish, and Christian principles,—and if we should search thoroughly, we should find Mohammedanism also, the whole sprinkled with Platonic metaphysics and Catholico-Danteistic theosophy. But what has been always lacking in Asia, the complete absence of which properly constitutes Asiatic brutality, is human respect. The life of man, his dignity, his liberty, count for nothing there. All that is pitilessly crushed in blood and mire by God, by castes, by the principle of authority, by the State. Nowhere can we see more clearly that these two principles, these two pestilent historical fictions,—God and the State,—are the intellectual and moral source of all slavery; whence it follows that, from the point of view of intellectual and moral propagandism, what must be done first of all to emancipate Asia is to destroy in its popular masses faith in any authority, whether divine or human.

Is the Christian propagandism exercised today on so large a scale in China, in Cochinchina, in Japan, in the East Indies, and in Tartary, by the French Jesuits, by the Protestant Biblists of England and America, and by the Russian Popes, really capable of civilizing, of emancipating Asia, intellectually and morally? The question is answered decidedly in the negative by the facts. For almost three centuries already has Christianity, represented at first by the Portuguese missionaries, later by the Jesuits, and, beginning with the past century, by the English Protestants, tried to Christianize China, Japan, and the Indies. Vain efforts! At most they have succeeded in making some hundreds of thousands of men accept a few religious ceremonies, a few Christian rites; an absolutely external conversion, for not a single spark of the Christian spirit has entered into these souls. Mohammedanism, much better adapted, it seems, to these rude natures, at once contemplative and violent, idle in their daily lives, but destructive and furious when aroused under the impulse of any passion whatsoever, seems to carry on today a propagandism much more extensive and real than that of Christianity. As for Christianity, it has made a complete failure in the East. One would say that, after having vomited it from its breast, the East wishes to hear no further mention of it. This is so true that the few primitive churches which remain, either in Syria or in Armenia or in Abyssinia, are dying of inanition...

But even supposing that either Christianity or Mohammedanism should finish by spreading throughout the East, would this be a real progress for civilization, in the human sense of the word, the only one which, as we have just seen, can avert the horrible danger with which the Eastern world menaces the liberty of Europe? Have not these two religions for a fundamental

principle, as well as all the other religions which have sprung from the East like themselves, the belief in divine authority and consequently in human slavery? I think I have no need to demonstrate it for Mohammedanism; but has not Christianity itself, whatever form it may take, Roman Catholic, Greek Catholic, or Protestant, always been contrary to liberty? I very well know that I may be pointed to the examples of a part of Switzerland, of Holland, of England, and of the United States of America,—not of Germany, I hope,—as proof, in opposition to what I have just stated, that Protestantism has established liberty in Europe. This is a great error. It is the economic, material emancipation of the bourgeois class on the one hand, and on the other its necessary accompaniment, the intellectual, anti-Christian, and anti-religious emancipation of this class, which, in spite of Protestantism, have created that exclusively political and bourgeois liberty which is today easily confounded with the grand, universal, human liberty, which only the proletariat can create, because its essential condition is the disappearance of those centres of authority called States, and the complete emancipation of labor, the real base of human society.

Moreover, is not the present state of Europe an evident proof of the absolute incapacity of Christianity to emancipate men and to organize society according to justice,—what do I say?—to even inspire their political and social acts with a somewhat human character? Europe counts today nearly a dozen centuries of Christianity and three centuries of Protestantism. What is its last official word today? The veracity of the Popes, the liberalism and humanity of the Mouravieffs, the Thiers, and the Bismarcks. Imagine all these great men, accompanied by their priests, their clerks, their generals, and their officers, not forgetting their great manufacturers, their great merchants, their bankers, reigning as sovereigns in Asia in the name of a Christian civilization, acquiring renewed strength in the Divine sources of the old Oriental slavery! It would be then that Europe and humanity with her would be lost.

It is clear that, in the absence of a truly human and moral principle, there remains to the Europe of today, official and bourgeois, only one means of civilizing the East,—namely, commerce. The needs of the world's commerce have succeeded in overthrowing today all the walls with which the East had surrounded herself in the interest of her immobility and conservatism. Railroads are being built in the Indies, they will necessarily be built, sooner or later, in Asia Minor, in Persia, in Tartary, and in the Chinese Empire itself. Telegraph lines already bind Japan, the Indies, and Peking itself with Europe and America. All this introduces the commodities and with them the social relations of Europe at the remotest points; all this tends to destroy the fatal stagnation of the Orient.

The Orient, these eight hundred millions of men asleep and enslaved which constitute two-thirds of humanity, will be forced to awake and put itself in motion. But in what direction and to what end? Behold the terrible question on the solution of which the whole future of humanity in Europe depends. Is commerce, as it is carried on today, capable of humanizing the East? Alas! No.

It enriches many commercial houses in Europe, it increases the accumulated riches of a much more limited number of great merchants in the East, but it does nothing for the amelioration of the wretched economic situation or for the social, political, intellectual, and moral emancipation of the populations of the East. How should it, since it does not and cannot do this for those of Europe? The commerce of England is certainly superior to that of all other countries in the world. But the economic situation of the English proletariat and especially of the peasantry is miserable. In London alone there are almost a hundred thousand individuals who do not know what they



will eat tomorrow, and the fact of able workmen seeking, but not finding, work has become a common and daily fact in this richest and most prosperous of all the countries in the world.

Eastern commerce cannot civilize, cannot humanize the countries of the East for this simple reason, if for no other,—that it is founded principally on the misery and slavery of the people, a slavery and a misery which are the principal foundation of the cheapness of Eastern goods, the importation of which into Europe enriches exclusively the great commercial houses of Europe.

From all this does it follow that the present Europe is absolutely incapable of civilizing or humanizing the East? Yes, it would have to be said, if there had not recently appeared a fact of the extremest importance, which opens new prospects for the civilization of the East. I refer to those hundreds of thousands of Chinese laborers who, pushed on by the surplus population of the Celestial Empire, are going to seek their bread today in remote countries, principally in Australia and California. They are very badly received and looked upon by the American workmen. This is very natural: accustomed to a miserable existence, they can sell their labor much cheaper and make a competition very dangerous to the labor of American workmen. On the other hand, habituated from their infancy to the hardest slavery—since that is the foundation of the religion of the East—and to bad treatment of all kinds, they are welcomed by the employers with double favor. The employers of America, as well as those of Europe and, in general, all men who are put in a position of command, are naturally more or less despots; they love the slavery of their laborers and they detest their revolts; this is in the nature of things.

The Chinese laborers are sober, patient, servile, and skilful. These are precious qualities to employers. But by these very qualities they degrade, not only with regard to wages, but morally, with regard to human dignity, the labor and consequently also the whole economic and social position of the laborers of America, from which results the growing hatred of the latter for the Chinese laborers. We know that in California monster meetings are held with a view to the expulsion of these Oriental slaves from the sacred soil of liberty.

This is not easy. Hundreds of thousands of workmen, organized in secret societies for protection against the persecutions of American workmen, are not to be driven across the ocean at a day's notice. Neither is it desirable, for this is perhaps the only way which the force of events and the necessities of international production have opened for the real civilization of the East. The presence and the competition of these Chinese laborers is doubtless very inconvenient, today, for the laborers of America, but it is salutary for China, for these hundreds of thousands of Chinese laborers are serving today in Australia and California their apprenticeship in liberty, dignity, rights, and human respect. We have already seen that, following the example set by American workmen, they have struck on several occasions for an increase of wages and an amelioration of the conditions of their work.

This is the first step in the path of human and real emancipation; this is the apprenticeship of humanity, of its foundation, of its aim, of its thought, of the only road to its emancipation, of its force,—“the foundation of human liberty and human dignity on emancipated and solidary labor by the collective revolt of the working masses, organized, not by the efforts of directors, guardians, or any official leaders whatever, but by the spontaneous action of the laborers themselves, with a view to the emancipation of labor and of human right, and thereby constituting the solidarity of each and all in society.”

The revolt of the laborers and the spontaneous organization of human solidary labor through the free federation of the workingmen's groups! This, then, is the answer to the enigma which the Eastern Sphinx forces us today to solve, threatening to devour us if we do not solve it. The

principle of justice, liberty, and equality by and in solidary labor which is agitating today the working masses of America and Europe must penetrate the East equally and completely. The salvation of Europe is to be had only at this price, for this is the true, the only constitutive principle of humanity, and no people can be completely and solidarity free in the human sense of the word, unless all humanity is free.

To conclude:

It is not enough that the Latin, Celtic, German, and Anglo-German West of Europe should emancipate itself and form a grand Federative Republic founded on emancipated and solidarity organized labor. That this constitution may be enduring it is indispensable that the whole Slavic, Grecian, Turkish, Magyar, Tartaric, and Finnish East of Europe should emancipate itself in the same way and form an integral part of this Federation. Nor will it suffice for humanity to triumph in Europe, America, and Australia. It must also penetrate the dark and divine East, and expel therefrom the last vestige of Divinity. Triumphant in Africa and especially in Asia, it must drive from its last refuges this cursed principle of authority, with all its religious, political, economic, and social consequences, in order that in its place human liberty, founded solely on solidary labor, scientific reason, human respect, justice, and equality, may triumph, develop, and become organized.

Such is the final object, such the absolute morality, of the humanity which Mazzini vainly seeks in his God, and which we materialists and atheists look upon as the constitutive principle, as the fundamental, natural law, of the human race.

THE END.

The Anarchist Library (Mirror)  
Anti-Copyright



Mikhail Bakunin  
The Political Theology of Mazzini And The International  
1871

Retrieved on 25<sup>th</sup> April 2021 from [www.libertarian-labyrinth.org](http://www.libertarian-labyrinth.org)  
Translated from the French by Sarah E. Holmes.

**[usa.anarchistlibraries.net](http://usa.anarchistlibraries.net)**