

ANCIENT AND MODERN PROBLEMS

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There are two ideas of historical development. One represents it as a great whole evolving from the lowest cultural stages, if not *ad infinitum*, at least, *ad indefinitum*, and it is presumed that such a development is continuous; being so, history of humanity may be considered as the history of human progress or as an evolutionary process, the latter point of view being now more popular, because of its "more scientific" character; whether this evolution is simply linear or more complex, for instance, as a dispersion of fragments of a bombshell (Bergson's comparison), it is not important. The conception of universal history is very old, as old as the writing of history itself; some Greek and Roman writers were inclined to such an idea, though the "progress" of mankind seemed negative to them, in so far as, in their opinion, the Golden Age lay in the past, not in the future; this tradition was still corroborated by Christian authors, like St. Augustine, to whom all human history was nothing but a preparation of men for the kingdom of God. At modern times the idea of progress was further elaborated, owing first to the philosophers of Enlightenment, later to the historians of Romanticism. When evolutionism as one of the devices of Positivism, had penetrated all branches of science, history became evolutionary, too.

Such views are not shared by all historians, at present; still, great historical encyclopedias, in many volumes and by many authors, maintain such ideas; it is enough to refer to the most modern production of historical evolutionism—a French publication, "*Evolution de l'humanité*",

with its English corrolary, "*History of Civilization*", as an evidence that the tradition of continuity of human history is still strong and respected.

There are not many historians who lay before another conception, which denies the idea of universal history, with its implications of continuity of historical development and permanent progress. Their standpoint is quite contrary to the traditional manner in which "general histories" are written. The human world, they presume, falls into separated groups of peoples, which pass their own cycles of life, parallel to each other, but not linked together, cycles which have their intrinsic periodicity—their rise, upheavals and depressions, decay, and which must eventually die. Not the fictitious humanity, but living peoples of the same cultural cycle are real subjects of history; like an individual, a human community goes through the stages of birth, flourishing, and death. This idea is very fruitful for historical study; it presents numerous instances for comparison to the historian, it enables him, by drawing conclusions from the past, to formulate hypotheses as to the future.

It has been a fashionable theory after the World War in some countries. But it is not entirely new; this idea was not strange to ancient historians, like Polybius; the isolated thinker of the XVIIIth century, Vico, stressed the parallelism of cultural stages in Ancient and Modern history, too.

It is unnecessary to dwell upon the most sensational recent work in this line (especially for Germany), Spengler's "*Der Untergang des Abendlandes*", based on some metaphysical idea, to which historical reality was sacrificed, indeed, in a quite arbitrary way. Spengler's work is well

known, indeed, more than it deserves. It may be more interesting to mention a Russian thinker, Danilevsky (1822-85), whose work "*Europe and Russia*" was for some time very popular in that country (after his death). He founded his theory on biological considerations and especially stressed the difference between Europe and Russia as belonging to distinct "species" of humanity. Danilevsky, though a naturalist, was under the influence of a political bias; his aim was to oppose Russia to Europe and to scold Western civilization. History has little or nothing to do with the biological conceptions of Danilevsky or the metaphysical speculations of Spengler. Similar ideas are to be found, however, in some modern historical works, in a purely scientific form, moreover, expounded by eminent scholars; it is interesting to note that such historians belong to quite different nations. Famous students of the Ancient World, such a positive and cautious scholar as Eduard Meyer in Germany or such a modernist in the study of Roman History as Guglielmo Ferrero in Italy, willingly compare the Ancient and the Modern World, speaking about the Middle Ages of Greece and Rome, Ancient Capitalism and Imperialism, etc. In France Professor Homo, in Russia Professor Vipper have discussed parallelism of social and economic problems in Rome and Europe; even the titles of their works may stir curiosity: "*Les problèmes de jadis et d'aujourd'hui*" (Homo), or "*Cycles in history*" (Vipper). In another historical field, but influenced by similar ideas, the brilliant German scholar, von Lamprecht, has elaborated a scheme of sequence of cultural types and has adapted it to the history of Germany.

Except Lamprecht, who has completed his work before the World

War, all this modernization of Antiquity, perhaps, must be ascribed to consequences of the catastrophe which shows us that "cultured humanity" is an illusion, and that "modern progress" is very questionable.

Whatever may be the psychological reasons for such an interest, this theory seems to hold water, judging by its application to facts. Before we turn to these facts, let us glance at its principal theses, mainly taken from Danilevsky, in view of their originality and simplicity.

First of all, this theory of the historical process rejects the idea of a continuous evolution, while presuming, on the contrary, the idea of "morphology of culture," i. e. of the human society, represented by culture types, which must be considered as the real subjects of history. Instead of humanity, the historian must deal with several (about ten) historical types, which have developed more or less independently from each other, such as following: Classical, European, Near Eastern (or Islamic), Far Eastern (or Buddhistic), Slavonic, Mexican and Peruvian, (both interrupted by the European conquest); Byzantine and Russian cultures may be separated from others; maybe, such types are even more, but this is not important from the theoretical standpoint. Each type has its own cycle of development, in which a vital principle proper to it is realized, as suggested by Spengler; the types are individual, but the stages they run are "homologous", these stages are the spring, summer, autumn, winter of peoples' life. According to Danilevsky, these stages are the formation of an ethnic unity, the foundation of a sovereign community, the creation of cultural values, the results of each cycle being quite individual. Cycles which have completed their development

are the most interesting for historical study; on the other hand, we are naturally interested in disclosing in which stage are we now; judging by "homology", as presented by Ancient History, Modern Europe has passed over its flourishing stage and is nearing its decline. The downfall of civilization—such is the favourite theme of this theory. As to the Greco-Roman cycle, particularly, it may be taken for a comparison with modern Europe, because, apart from being completed, it is a background of European civilization, thus, the most germane to our subject.

II.

While comparing the Ancient and the Modern World, one must note, first of all, that some parallelism of these cycles has been recognized long ago, especially in the field of social development: the social struggle in Ancient Rome, causes, which produced it (formation of the proletariat), results, which sprang off it (rise of Caesarism), those developments are typical, they have been observed in human society not once, in particular, they are conspicuous at present; even our social terminology, especially that of the class struggle, has been borrowed from Antiquity. This is well known; but what to say of such modern aspects of our life, as the rise of European or American Imperialism, the crisis of modern Capitalistic economy? Are they inevitable stages of cultural cycles similar to ours, or "Ancient Imperialism" was quite peculiar (military), and "Ancient Capitalism" was too primitive (speculative)? On the other hand, there is some resemblance between the critical condition of our spiritual culture and the decomposition of ancient paganism. The comparison of conditions which existed in the Roman Empire during the first centuries A. D. and which characterize modern Europe in the XVIII-

XXth centuries will be the subject of this article, with special attention to the colonial expansion, the economic development, and a cultural crisis—then and now.

Material for such a comparison may be found in works on Roman History, such as Leon Homo, *L'Italie Primitive et les Débuts de l'Imperialisme Romain* and Tenny Frank, *Economic History of Rome and Roman Imperialism*, M. I. Rostovtsev, *Social and Economic History of the Roman Empire*; works on the history of culture, such as Frantz Cumont's old book *Les Religions Orientales dans le Paganisme Romain*, may be used for this aim, too. Causes of Rome's decline have been discussed in larger and minor works, old (as Seeck's) and recent (as Ferrero's), from various standpoints; a summary of this discussion is given in W. E. Heitland, *Roman Fate*, where it is suggested that Rome's decay was due to "fundamental causes that had been the ruin of other states". After such a comparison, maybe, some conclusions should be drawn from this "homology" between the Roman and European cycles, namely, some prediction as to Europe's future might be offered.

Is it true that the Ancient World had its own Imperialism, which had developed to such an extent as ours, and by the same methods as ours? Are they similar in quantity and quality? Let us remember great ancient Empires, Macedonian or Carthaginian, which spread their power, the first, over the Eastern part of the Ancient World (then known), the second—over the Western one, the one being the expansion of a Greek people, the other of a Semitic one. Yet these great states were like

modern European powers, fighting for the domination over neighbouring peoples, founding their provinces (or colonies) in the most remote parts of the Mediterranean.

Later, a true World Monarchy was built by the Roman Empire, where the Orient and the Occident were united, and which represented an instance of expansion unknown in history before and after. It was really an Imperialistic state conscious of its world mission no less than modern Britain, as was expressed by Vergil: "*Tú regere imperiò populòs, Románe, meménto*" (remember, Roman, thou must rule over peoples).

Still, an objection is possible, Modern Imperialism is inspired by economic motives and not simply by the idea of a military conquest; present wars are a struggle for colonial markets, raw materials, investment of capital. Indeed, the Roman expansion was military in its beginning; wars waged by Rome were only preventions against dangerous neighbours, as the Macedonian Kingdom or the Carthaginian Republic; it is true, ambitions of military leaders were responsible for the Roman offensive in some cases—such was the rôle of the Scipios' influential family. But very early military conquest was superseded by economic Imperialism, owing to the favourable position of Rome herself in a commercial centre of the Mediterranean as a mediator between the Occident and the Orient. The situation was too profitable to miss, as Professor Homo points out; remember Italy's present ambitions in a similar environment.

As in modern Imperialism, many classes of the Roman community, not only militarists, were interested in the success of the expansionist policy. The senators and the equestrians favoured the conquest of the

Mediterranean states (and much further); the former benefitted as rulers of newly annexed provinces, the latter—as merchants and bankers who could invest their capital in Eastern enterprises; the subsequent economic upheaval was beneficial to the middle class, who were employed in public and private enterprises, even the proletarians had their share in a new prosperity, as an increase of building at Rome, the growth of consumption gave them many opportunities for their employment, too. Similar phenomena are to be observed in modern states when they start their Imperialistic expansion; such was the situation in Belgium, whose colony Congo was greatly responsible for the prosperity of the whole country, and not only of the capitalistic class.

However, yet an objection may be made as to the resemblance between the development of Roman and Modern Imperialism; this expansion, unlike that of Europe, was spontaneous; not only the Roman people in general, but the senators, who were a leading group of Roman society and were responsible for foreign policy, did not wish to enlarge the territory of the Republic by means of conquest, sometimes repudiated new annexations and this (so unlike the modern scramble for Africa) is true; but the final result, the foundation of the World Empire, may not be considered as an accidental fact, which was not foreseen by the Roman Senate. As Professor Homo has rightly suggested, the Roman senators, though they had not an aggressive program, were compelled to pass from one war to another and, though unwillingly, proved aggressors; thus, Roman policy in this case was one of preventive wars,—a policy well known to modern European states; such was the case of Britain in India

or Russia in Siberia, who were always fighting in Asia, without desiring any expansion there; was the conquest of India or Siberia a realization of some expansionist program or a result of mere chance, however?

Thus, preventive war, which is one of the favourite methods of modern Imperialism, in spite of all disarmament conferences,—was the policy of Ancient Rome, and, accordingly, her relations with neighbouring states were not always “sincere”; indeed, more than once Roman action was treacherous and inhuman (even then). The Carthaginians did not desire the Third Punic War, which destroyed Carthage as an independent state; but Rome just wished to realize Cato’s advice *Delenda est Carthago* (Carthage must be destroyed). Roman diplomacy provoked the war, and after Rome’s victory she destroyed the hostile city itself quite mercilessly. Corinth, the centre of Greek commerce, suffered the same fate a little later. Now Rome had no rivals to her commerce; she dominated all over the Mediterranean politically and economically, and all the wealth of the Occident and the Orient flowed here. One need not remember similar events in modern Europe; quite recently, in the World War, international treaties were recognized as no more than simple bits of paper, and flourishing cities or whole provinces were devastated by enemies, who wanted to get rid of their competition.

Rome stepped over the boundaries of Italy with the beginning of the Punic Wars. Fertile Sicily attracted the Romans, at first; rich Spain, which was a Carthaginian province, proved the second attraction for the Romans. The motives of their aggression were like those in modern colonial expansion: a search for cereals, for minerals.

In the IInd century B. C., Rome interfered in Macedonian and Greek affairs; as a result, both countries submitted to the Roman influence; then Asia Minor and Syria, where numerous kings and kinglets were quarreling, also afforded an opportunity of *debellare superbos* (to pacify the superb); thus, the richest countries of the East became Roman protectorates. In the Ist century B. C. the Roman dominion was extended again by the acquisition of Gaul and Egypt; the unification of the barbarian Occident and the cultured Orient was completed. In the last conquests the economic character of Roman Imperialism is to be observed clearly; Gaul was a typical "raw materials colony", and Egypt was a strategic key for the commercial routes from Europe to Asia.

Thus, the formation of the Roman Empire was accomplished; *pax Romana*, the Roman peace, reigned over the Mediterranean, and the political system of the Ancient World now corresponded with its economic development; an ethnical equilibrium was established, somewhat like the modern system of European states. There is, however, a difference between the two systems. Great colonial powers, as Spain, France, England, possessed a more or less elaborate administration, which made the absorption of overseas dominions easier; it was otherwise with Rome, who till the foundation of the Empire had no bureaucracy, to say nothing of a colonial administration. In spite of the difficult task, a solution was, however, found; Rome, at the beginning of her aggression, had only a few (and did not wish to have more) provinces, such as Spain, or some islands in the Mediterranean, or "Africa" (what was Carthage before). But even in these provinces Rome did not abolish the native municipal administra-

tion, it was only subjected to a Proconsul. As to other kingdoms and republics, which were conquered or politically influenced by Rome, and at the same time were not organized as Roman provinces, they became protectorates; besides, there were some cities which were treated by Rome on a footing of equality as *civitates foederate*, allied states. Indeed, the freedom of such cities or the independence of such kingdoms was fictitious, but, owing to it, expenditures for the colonial administration were saved, and the problem as to how to unite republican Rome with the monarchical Orient was solved; it was a policy which modern colonial powers, especially in Asia, imitate still now (take, for instance, relations between the French Republic and the Empire of Annam).

III.

The transformation of the Roman Republic into the Roman Empire under Augustus made the complicated fabric of the Roman World much more homogeneous than modern Europe, especially now, when even cultural unity is lacking. "*Fécisti patriam diversis gentibus unam*" (thou made a common country for different nations), says a later Roman poet; such a cosmopolitan idea is quite contrary to the petty nationalisms of post-war Europe. *Pax Roman* secured the safety of the population, which had suffered so much under the Civil Wars, facilitated commercial intercourse by improved communications, promoted the rise of industry. During the Ist—IInd centuries A. D. the Empire was economically flourishing to such a degree that one can see there features of modern Capitalism; the economic life of the Ancient World was very complex, being very far from the *oikos* system, or a manor economy, as sometime Karl Buecher

maintained; it was highly developed, and all forms of economy, from a small rural property to a banking concern, were familiar to it.

However, Roman economy as a matter of fact never had such characteristics as enormous industrial development or unusual technical progress, it did not use machinery, which is the foundation of modern industry. There is an opinion that, if Rome reached the stage of Capitalism, it was only speculative, and not productive; Roman Capitalism was no more Capitalism than "Diocletian's Socialism" was Socialism, in the modern sense of either.

It is true, the military conquest was a foundation of Rome's prosperity; at first, spoils taken from the enemy flowed to Rome in mass; after the plunder pure and simple, more or less illegal enrichment became possible, due to extortions of Roman proconsuls in provinces; this (but not only this) fostered the accumulation of wealth in the hands of the equestrians, who were the sole merchants of Rome, as commerce was prohibited to the senators. Professional bankers appeared, who lent money, with a great profit, to cities in Greece and Asia Minor; the amount of money which was thus put into circulation was enormous. There was yet another source of enrichment at Rome—the collection of taxes in provinces, as the Roman government had no administration for it, except farming. Indeed, such farmers were given all opportunities for abuses, in the interest of their enrichment. Finally, state enterprises were conducted by private means, too, by contractors. It is true, in consequence of such a system of the exploitation of public domains, Roman Capitalism adopted some speculative features, however, not unknown in the history of modern

European expansion. Europe was in a better condition, in so far as relations between European states and the colonies are concerned; they could use here their own bureaucratic machinery, which some of them (not England) had.

However, the European states were confronted with similar difficulties after the acquisition of their colonies, at the beginning, at least. Spain, France, and Russia in America, Holland and England in India, all of them were compelled to exploit their new dominions by means of chartered companies, sometimes with government privileges. The result was similar both in Rome and Europe: numerous abuses in the provinces and colonies, and enrichment of officials employed in such enterprises.

Under the Empire, the situation of the provincial became much more favourable; an elaborate administration was created, and the provincials might complain against the authorities to the Imperial throne. The "colonial" administration of that period did not differ very much from ours, perhaps, it was even better, more capable of amalgamating various peoples and tribes into an Imperial unity, without suppressing their local freedom,—a task not yet solved by the most advanced modern states in their colonies. In some other activities, too, the Empire was more successful than the present European states in their colonies; it is no exaggeration to say that North Africa is not so prosperous now as under Rome, and that France must only imitate the Roman practice there.

Let us admit that the origins of Roman Capitalism were not very promising, as it was founded on pillage and speculation, but it afforded larger possibilities later to all the fields of national economy: agriculture,

industry, commerce.

The proprietors of *latifundia* (large real estates), it is true, were inclined to use their vast tracts of land more for animal husbandry than agriculture, as the former was easier and cheaper; thus, the cultivated area became more and more limited. It is not, however, an evidence of economic inertia, the same tendency is to be observed in modern states where pastoral economy is highly developed, for instance, in Argentina.

If the area where cereals were cultivated decreased, there was an increase in another area, olive and grape plantations grew up, and with them oil and wine industry, as more profitable than the cultivation of cereals.

Such an agriculture did not fit the petty farmers, and the peasant property was declining; notwithstanding, land still remained valuable, especially, for rich proprietors, who by all means endeavoured to seize as much land as possible from small farmers. *Latifundia* were organized scientifically, placed under a *villicus* (manager), and worked by numerous slaves and hired labour, too.

Industry developed less than agriculture, as its growth was checked by a lack of technical equipment. Still, it could rest on local markets. The city of Rome had too big a population, and the demand for such articles as food, clothing, utensils was enormous, so that some branches of this local industry developed on a great scale, and here were works where hundreds of workmen (and more) were employed. The situation was similar in other great centres of the Roman Empire.

As to commerce, it was a foundation of Roman Capitalism. All

land and sea routes were used which connected the Atlantic Ocean with the Indian (if not with the Pacific); this fargoing commerce, indeed, required an advanced organization of capital itself. Rome was familiar with a high form of that organization,—*societas*, or a trading company, which then as now afforded the best opportunities for the accumulation of capital. Roman commerce was served by a great commercial fleet, with a whole army of well trained sailors; in this respect the Roman Empire may be compared with modern England, whose fleet dominates all over the seas; Rome was a sea power as well as a land power.

Credit operations also were practised at Rome extensively; however, *argentarii*, or bankers, acted as individual dealers, banking corporations being unknown to the Ancient World. Relationship between the state and capital was at variance. The state interfered with the trading companies, especially *societates publicanorum* (tax-farmers), and favoured them; it was otherwise with the bankers, who represented private interests only.

But a question arises: in spite of so high a development of Roman economy, there is a great difference between the Ancient and the Modern World in one respect; machinery was then used very little or not at all. This circumstance was not a great check on the development of ancient Capitalism, as Rome possessed slaves, in hundreds of thousands, captured in the wars of the IInd-Ist centuries B. C. At that time the slaves, who were available at the market, and multiplied in numbers by natural increase, did not cost much; besides, they could be supported at small expense, and were treated at the full discretion of their masters; they became actually an "*instrumentum vocale*", cheap and docile, like a substitute for

the absent machinery. It is true, later, under the Empire, the conditions changed unfavourably, as the supply of slaves had decreased. To compensate for this, technical inventions, which were really made, were not used, for unknown reasons, and this always remained a limitation of ancient economy.

IV.

The expansion of the Roman power all over the Mediterranean and the growth of the Roman prosperity, due to the amalgamation of the Occident and the Orient, with their riches, into one economic whole, were also accompanied by other conspicuous circumstances, now in the field of culture. Rome acted as a mediator between the barbarian Occident, which was to be civilized by the Roman genius, and the cultured Orient, which could influence Rome herself. Such were the origins of Roman cultural syncretism, so imbued with Oriental influences.

Rome not only annexed alien territories and appropriated their wealth, but also absorbed their cultural traditions, especially, in the field of religion. What Horace says, "*Græcia cæpta ferum victorem cepit et artes intulit agræsti Latii*" (Vanquished Greece captured the savage conqueror, too, and brought in arts to rural Latium)—may be applied to the whole Hellenistic Orient. Modern Europe is half imitating Rome's traditions, when civilizing its colonies in Africa and Asia; but what about reverse influences? And yet in this regard, some analogy exists between the ancient and modern developments.

Indeed, commercial intercourse played a considerable rôle in the transmission of African and Asiatic creeds to the Roman soil; but it must

not be exaggerated. Oriental influences were welcomed, as ancient minds were already prepared for them.

They could not be nourished by the official religion and contemporary philosophy; the one was disdained and the other did not satisfy. Nobody seriously believed, except rural populations in remote provinces, in religious myths, and the Olympian gods themselves were ridiculed by many pagan writers; as to Roman religion in particular, it never stimulated imagination or feelings, being a state religion only. The Imperial cult was not more successful. Philosophy had no creative force, and the scholars devoted themselves to scrupulous investigations in their special field; still, there existed an acute demand for knowledge, especially moral, which should be both reliable and broad. Such was a legacy of the Hellenistic Orient to Rome, when sources of the spiritual life proved to have been exhausted at the beginning of the Christian era. A solution of the problem was proposed by Oriental religions, and Christianity among them.

Such conditions are similar to those in modern Europe in the XIXth century and especially now. More than ever European culture permeates the world; more than ever education is accessible to the masses; never was spiritual life so refined as before the Great War; and yet, why did this decline of the creative force, this distress of the human soul happen, and this is so conspicuous now? Religion is not given much credit, but atheism is not convincing either, and European society is seeking for a new creed passionately. Similar ideal interests were observed in the Ancient World under the Empire.

Indeed, political troubles (in the IIIrd century), the oppression to

which the Empire submitted its subjects, were partly responsible for the spirit of resignation, which penetrated into human souls then; but, as Cumont rightly points out, this was not enough for a triumph of the Orient over Roman paganism. The invasion of Oriental religions was due to an interest, which is inherent in the human spirit, and may be seen not only then but now, too.

There was a desire for knowledge about the world and man, their origins and destinies, and another desire to find ethical standards for human conduct; but above all as says Samuel Dill in *Roman Society from Nero to Marcus Aurelius*, mankind was deeply interested in the problem of immortality, which was not solved by the traditional religion,—an interest which sprang from psychological as well as social sources; at present, one can imagine how acute was this problem, by comparing it with modern political creeds, such as Communism.

The Oriental religions offered all that people needed—not only a transcendent creed, but also a hope for salvation, both brought in a form which passionately excited feelings; deities of Egypt, Asia Minor, Syria, Persia were competitors in that cultural conquest of Rome, and especially Egypt and Persia, with their cults of Osyris and Mithra respectively, were prominent in this competition: one fascinated souls by mysteries of the cult, another by a strong dualism of good and evil in the world. The Orient imported not only some beliefs, but superstitions, too, which could satisfy people who wanted to glance at the future (astrology) or were seeking for marvel (magic); people of that time, whatever were their ranks and education, were greatly devoted to these occult sciences.

By the IIIrd century A. D. the conquest of the Roman Empire by the Oriental religions was completed; it is unnecessary here to follow further developments—the triumph of one creed over others, the final victory of Christianity. However, it is interesting to note how Christianity itself was confronted with the danger of Manicheism, a purely oriental creed, which since the IVth century spread in Africa, Spain, Gaul, and Italy. This spiritual disintegration, which was characteristic of the later Empire, is present at our modern times, too.

Now as then many people hope that a salvation may come from the Orient; they think that its mysteries may be more valuable for humanity than European rationalism. First of all, Oriental religions attract the interest not only of scholars and philosophers but also of the common people; the European community reveals a disposition to theosophy, which pretends to amalgamate all Eastern wisdom; thus may be explained the success of Tolstoism, imbued with ideas more or less proper to the Eastern mind and completely alien to the European outlook. A revival of magic is to be observed, such is the instance of spiritism. All this is especially possible in an environment of discontent and resignation, which affect the post-war mentality.

It is difficult to predict where humanity will find a solution; one is offered by Communism, which pretends to become both philosophy and ethics; it promises to reconstruct the present world on a new—collectivistic, basis. The problem is solved not in a supernatural aspect, but in a really given world, thus, it seems quite different from the solution suggested by the Orient to Rome. However, one cannot yet foresee the next

step of the evolution of Communism; does it not exist in Russia in its Eastern aspect? Ecclesiastical history is familiar with instances of a religious excitement accompanied by communistic tendencies,—such were some Medieval sectarians or Czech millenarians, and, on the contrary, social movements as peasants' revolts in England and Germany were perplexed with religious motives. Finally, the Ancient World had its Communism, too, but such ideas were more widespread in decaying Greece than in the Roman Empire. Still, those ideas had much influence on philosophers and a long history in Antiquity, as was shown by Poehlmann.

V.

In the previous exposition, more attention has been given to the earlier Empire, and only slightly the later Republic has been touched in order to throw some light on the origins of the *Pax Romana* established by the Empire. The early Empire is especially interesting for a comparison with modern times, namely, the XVIIIth-XXth centuries, as a period marked by the colonial expansion of leading European powers, the development of commercial, industrial, and financial capital, and the Europeanization of overseas countries. This Europeanization, by the way, has its brilliant and superior counterpart in the Romanization of Europe accomplished by the Empire. And has not our present condition, which is characterized by consequences of the post-war decay, its parallel in the Roman Empire, too?

The same decline was to be observed there in the IIIrd century—the time of a political, economic, and cultural crisis. The supreme power

depended on the Roman Guards (*Praetorium*), who were able to overthrow and to proclaim the emperors, barbarians invaded the interior of the Empire, land was devastated and agriculture declined, the excellent framework of communications so necessary for commerce was destroyed, a cultural confusion reigned over the human spirit. Nature itself seemed hostile to the population, decimated by numerous epidemics. Causes of that disorganization as explained by distinguished students of the Ancient World, G. Ferrero and M. Rostovtsev, are of vital interest for the modern situation.

Ferrero presumes that the Empire was especially suffering from the absence of a solid foundation for the government; the Imperial regime was a compromise between two opposite principles, autocracy and democracy; the former was imported from the Orient, which was not familiar with another political organization, while the latter was a legacy of Rome, who was traditionally hostile to the royalty.

The Roman democracy ended in a dictatorship, which could not be permanent. As the representative system was unknown to Antiquity, a compromise between a monarchy and a republic was reached; the early Empire was a "dyarchy" ruled by the Emperor and the Senate, the latter representing the republican tradition, in spite of all its servility to some emperors. Still more important was the rôle played by the Senate in administration, and the prosperity of the Empire was due to this management.

But this equilibrium of the powers was unstable; easily destroyed by rebellious soldiers in the IIIrd century, it was followed by anarchy. Fer-

rero compares that situation with consequences of the breakdown of the European monarchies, Germany, Austria, Russia, who represented the traditional principle of authority in Europe.

Another explanation is proposed by Rostovtsev, who emphasizes a barbarization of the population of the Roman Empire at that time; this was due to the recruitment of barbarians to the Roman army, which thus became an alien and hostile state inside the state, and similarly cities were filled in by barbarian elements, which rushed there from the villages. Thus, the barbarization of the army and the prevalence of the "masses" were factors of Rome's decline. Not the overthrow of traditional institutions, not an exhaustion of the soil (as some economists suggest), were responsible for the decline of the Empire, but a deterioration of the human stock itself. Modern Europe is confronted with the same menace, of which the Russian Revolution with its wager on the masses, however ignorant and rude they may be, is the best instance. This argument needs more attention. Not in all European countries are the "masses" a backward element, but even in those countries, for instance, in France or Germany, a barbarization, in the above sense, took place after the World War. There, again, the comparison with Rome is illuminating.

As has been shown by A. Landry, the author of *La Revolution Démographique* (1934), the Ancient World especially suffered from depopulation, for several reasons: the mortality rate was higher than now, and fecundity was lower, particularly in the upper classes. This depopulation was responsible for the decline of the Empire, as it had depleted the human stock and material resources. In such a way "les élites" perish-

ed, similar to what happened in Europe as a result of the World War.

To take a striking instance, France, she lost about three millions of her men; during 1920-1934 the increase of the population was about one million only,— $\frac{1}{3}$ of the loss suffered. As in the Roman Empire, the decrease in fecundity is especially conspicuous in urban centres: the "net reproduction" at Paris was 0.55 (in 1928), at Berlin 0.42 (in 1930). This figure represents the difference between the "crude reproduction", which is 0.683 and 0.505 for Paris and Berlin respectively, and the mortality rate, in so far as girls are concerned (because they are directly responsible for procreation). This, our author argues, if conditions of fecundity and mortality remain the same as now, will eventually (maybe, in one-two centuries) lead to a catastrophic decrease of the population. If there is really a connection between the decay of a nation and demographic phenomena, the present situation in Europe is ominous enough.

If one wishes to continue this comparison, it is very suggestive for the present situation that after these ordeals the Empire was consolidated again by Diocletian and Constantine's reforms.

These reforms established the supreme power on an autocratic basis and organized the community on the subjection of the individuals to the needs of the state, thus introducing to Roman society what may be called Diocletian's Socialism. The reforms secured the existence of the Empire for two more centuries, but did not prevent its final collapse, political and cultural, and the coming of Medieval barbarism.

Modern Europe, which is passing through a crisis similar to that from which the Roman Empire suffered, tries to solve the problem by the same

means as Rome—by the subjection of the individual to the state, by the regimentation of economic life, by imposing a common faith on the subjects. This may be seen in all countries where a dictatorship has been established, in Communist Russia, Fascist Italy, Nazi Germany, in spite of all distinctions of their “constitutions”. Whether this reconstructed Europe will stand, and for how long, it is, of course, unknown; but, judging by the experience of the Roman Empire, prospects of Europe’s future are not very bright.

Heitland, who stresses the depressing effect of the exclusion from public life under the Roman Empire, concludes: “To improve your citizens, and to interest them in their own real welfare, is the only course that offers a possible means of avoiding the Roman fate.”

Ex praeterito spes in futurum (by the past judge of the future).