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. . . We have said that man is not only the most individualistic being on earth — he is also the most social. It was a great mistake on the part of Jean Jacques Rousseau to have thought that primitive society was established through a free agreement among savages. But Jean Jacques is not the only one to have said this. The majority of jurists and modern publicists, either of the school of Kant or any other individualist and liberal school, those who do not accept the idea of a society founded upon the divine right of the theologians nor of a society determined by the Hegelian school as a more or less mystical realisation of objective morality, nor of the naturalists' concept of a primitive animal society, all accept, nolens volens, and for lack of any other basis, the tacit agreement or contract as their starting point.

According to the theory of the social contract primitive men enjoying absolute liberty only in isolation are antisocial by nature. When forced to associate they destroy each other's freedom. If this struggle is unchecked it can lead to mutual extermination. In order not to destroy each other completely, they conclude a contract, formal or tacit, whereby they surrender some of their freedom to assure the rest. This contract becomes the foundation of society, or rather of the State, for we must point out that in this theory there is no place for society; only the State exists, or rather society is completely absorbed by the State.

Society is the natural mode of existence of the human collectivity, independent of any contract. It governs itself through the customs or the traditional habits, but never by laws. It progresses slowly, under the impulsion it receives from individual initiatives and not through the thinking or the will of the law−giver. There are a good many laws which govern it without its being aware of them, but these are natural laws, inherent in the body social, just as physical laws are inherent in material bodies. Most of these laws remain unknown to this day; nevertheless, they have governed human society ever since its birth, independent of the thinking and the will of the men composing the society. Hence they should not be confused with the political and juridical laws proclaimed by some legislative power, laws that are supposed to be the logical sequelae of the first contract consciously formed by men.

The state is in no wise an immediate product of nature. Unlike society, it does not precede the awakening of reason in men. The liberals say that the first state was created by the free and rational will of men; the men of the right consider it the work of God. In either case it dominates society and tends to absorb it completely.

One might rejoin that the State, representing as it does the public welfare or the common interest of all, curtails a part of the liberty of each only for the sake of assuring to him all the remainder. But this remainder may be a form of security; it is never liberty. Liberty is indivisible; one cannot curtail a part of it without killing all of it. This little part you are curtailing is the very essence of my liberty; it is all of it. Through a natural, necessary, and irresistible movement, all of my liberty is concentrated precisely in the part, small as it may be, which you curtail. It is the story of Bluebeard's wife, who had an entire palace at her disposal, with full and complete liberty to enter everywhere, to see and to touch everything, except for one dreadful little chamber which her terrible husband's sovereign will had forbidden her to open on pain of death. Well, she turned away from all the splendours of the palace, and her entire being concentrated on the dreadful little chamber. She opened that forbidden door, for good reason, since her liberty depended on her doing so, while the prohibition to enter was a flagrant violation of precisely that liberty. It is also the story of Adam and Eve's fall. The prohibition to taste the fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for no other reason than that such was the will of the Lord, was an act of atrocious despotism on the part of the good Lord. Had our first parents obeyed it, the entire human race would have remained plunged in the most humiliating slavery. Their disobedience has emancipated and saved us. Theirs, in the language of mythology, was the first act of human liberty.

But, one might say, could the State, the democratic State, based upon the free suffrage of all its citizens, be the negation of their liberty? And why not? That would depend entirely on the mission and the power that the citizens

surrendered to the State. A republican State, based upon universal suffrage, could be very despotic, more despotic even than the monarchical State, if, under the pretext of representing everybody's will, it were to bring down the weight of its collective power upon the will and the free movement of each of its members.

However, suppose one were to say that the State does not restrain the liberty of its members except when it tends toward injustice or evil. It prevents its members from killing each other, plundering each other, insulting each other, and in general from hurting each other, while it leaves them full liberty to do good. This brings us back to the story of Bluebeard's wife, or the story of the forbidden fruit: what is good? what is evil?

From the standpoint of the system we have under examination, the distinction between good and evil did not exist before the conclusion of the contract, when each individual stayed deep in the isolation of his liberty or of his absolute rights, having no consideration for his fellowmen except those dictated by his relative weakness or strength; that is, his own prudence and self^^interest. At that time, still following the same theory, egotism was the supreme law, the only right. The good was determined by success, failure was the only evil, and justice was merely the consecration of the fait accompli, no matter how horrible, how cruel or infamous, exactly as things are now in the political morality which prevails in Europe today.

The distinction between good and evil, according to this system, commences only with the conclusion of the social contract. Thereafter, what was recognised as constituting the common interest was proclaimed as good, and all that was contrary to it as evil. The contracting members, on becoming citizens, and bound by a more or less solemn undertaking, thereby assumed an obligation: to subordinate their private interests to the common good, to an interest inseparable from all others. Their own rights were separated from the public right, the sole representative of which, the State, was thereby invested with the power to repress all illegal revolts of the individual, but also with the obligation to protect each of its members in the exercise of his rights insofar as these were not contrary to the common right.

We shall now examine what the State, thus constituted, should be in relation to other states, its peers, as well as in relation to its own subject populations. This examination appears to us all the more interesting and useful because the State, as it is here defined, is precisely the modern State insofar as it has separated itself from the religious idea — the secular or atheist State proclaimed by modern publicists. Let us see, then: of what does its morality consist? It is the modern State, we have said, at the moment when it has freed itself from the yoke of the Church, and when it has, consequently, shaken off the yoke of the universal or cosmopolitan morality of the Christian religion; at the moment when it has not yet been penetrated by the humanitarian morality or idea, which, by the way, it could never do without destroying itself; for, in its separate existence and isolated concentration, it would be too narrow to embrace, to contain the interests and therefore the morality of all mankind.

Modern states have reached precisely this point. Christianity serves them only as a pretext or a phrase or as a means of deceiving the idle mob, for they pursue goals which have nothing to do with religious sentiments. The great statesmen of our days, the Palmerstons, the Muravievs, the Cavours, the Bismarcks, the Napoleons, had a good laugh when people took their religious pronouncements seriously. They laughed harder when people attributed humanitarian sentiments, considerations, and intentions to them, but they never made the mistake of treating these ideas in public as so much nonsense. Just what remains to constitute their morality? The interest of the State, and nothing else. From this point of view, which, incidentally, with very few exceptions, has been that of the statesmen, the strong men of all times and of all countries from this point of view, I say, whatever conduces to the preservation, the grandeur and the power of the State, no matter how sacrilegious or morally revolting it may seem, that is the good. And conversely, whatever opposes the State's interests, no matter how holy or just otherwise, that is evil. Such is the secular morality and practice of every State.

It is the same with the State founded upon the theory of the social contract. According to this principle, the good and the just commence only with the contract; they are, in fact, nothing but the very contents and the purpose of the contract; that is, the common interest and the public right of all the individuals who have formed the contract among themselves, with the exclusion of all those who remain outside the contract. It is; consequently, nothing but the greatest satisfaction given to the collective egotism of a special and restricted association, which, being founded upon the partial sacrifice of the individual egotism of each of its members, rejects from its midst, as strangers and natural enemies, the immense majority of the human species, whether or not it may be organised into analogous organisation.

The existence of one sovereign, exclusionary State necessarily supposes the existence and, if need be,

provokes the formation of other such States, since it is quite natural that individuals who find themselves outside it and are threatened by it in their existence and in their liberty, should, in their turn, associate themselves against it. We thus have humanity divided into an indefinite number of foreign states, all hostile and threatened by each other. There is no common right, no social contract of any kind between them; otherwise they would cease to be independent states and become the federated members of one great state. But unless this great state were to embrace all of humanity, it would be confronted with other great states, each federated within, each maintaining the same posture of inevitable hostility. War would still remain the supreme law, an unavoidable condition of human survival.

Every state, federated or not, would therefore seek to become the most powerful. It must devour lest it be devoured, conquer lest it be conquered, enslave lest it be enslaved, since two powers, similar and yet alien to each other, could not coexist without mutual destruction.

The State, therefore, is the most flagrant, the most cynical, and the most complete negation of humanity. It shatters the universal solidarity of all men on the earth, and brings some of them into association only for the purpose of destroying, conquering, and enslaving all the rest. It protects its own citizens only; it recognises human rights, humanity, civilisation within its own confines alone. Since it recognises no rights outside itself, it logically arrogates to itself the right to exercise the most ferocious inhumanity toward all foreign populations, which it can plunder, exterminate, or enslave at will. If it does show itself generous and humane toward them, it is never through a sense of duty, for it has no duties except to itself in the first place, and then to those of its members who have freely formed it, who freely continue to constitute it or even, as always happens in the long run, those who have become its subjects. As there is no international law in existence, and as it could never exist in a meaningful and realistic way without undermining to its foundations the very principle of the absolute sovereignty of the State, the State can have no duties toward foreign populations. Hence, if it treats a conquered people in a humane fashion, if it plunders or exterminates it halfway only, if it does not reduce it to the lowest degree of slavery, this may be a political act inspired by prudence, or even by pure magnanimity, but it is never done from a sense of duty, for the State has an absolute right to dispose of a conquered people at will.

This flagrant negation of humanity which constitutes the very essence of the State is, from the standpoint of the State, its supreme duty and its greatest virtue. It bears the name patriotism, and it constitutes the entire transcendent morality of the State. We call it transcendent morality because it usually goes beyond the level of human morality and justice, either of the community or of the private individual, and by that same token often finds itself in contradiction with these. Thus, to offend, to oppress, to despoil, to plunder, to assassinate or enslave one's fellowman is ordinarily regarded as a crime. In public life, On the other hand, from the standpoint of patriotism, when these things are done for the greater glory of the State, for the preservation or the extension of its power, it is all transformed into duty and virtue. And this virtue, this duty, are obligatory for each patriotic citizen; everyone is supposed to exercise them not against foreigners only but against one's own fellow citizens, members or subjects of the State like himself, whenever the welfare of the State demands it.

This explains why, since the birth of the State, the world of politics has always been and continues to be the stage for unlimited rascality and brigandage, brigandage and rascality which, by the way, are held in high esteem, since they are sanctified by patriotism, by the transcendent morality and the supreme interest of the State. This explains why the entire history of ancient and modern states is merely a series of revolting crimes; why kings and ministers, past and present, of all times and all countries — statesmen, diplomats, bureaucrats, and warriors — if judged from the standpoint of simple morality and human justice, have a hundred, a thousand times over earned their sentence to hard labour or to the gallows. There is no horror, no cruelty, sacrilege, or perjury, no imposture, no infamous transaction, no cynical robbery, no bold plunder or shabby betrayal that has not been or is not daily being perpetrated by the representatives of the states, under no other pretext than those elastic words, so convenient and yet so terrible: "for reasons of state."

These are truly terrible words, for they have corrupted and dishonoured, within official ranks and in society's ruling classes, more men than has even Christianity itself. No sooner are these words uttered than all grows silent, and everything ceases; honesty, honour, justice, right, compassion itself ceases, and with it logic and good sense. Black turns white, and white turns black. The lowest human acts, the basest felonies, the most atrocious crimes become meritorious acts.

The great Italian political philosopher Machiavelli was the first to use these words, or at least the first to give

them their true meaning and the immense popularity they still enjoy among our rulers today. A realistic and positive thinker if there ever was one, he was the first to understand that the great and powerful states could be founded and maintained by crime alone — by many great crimes, and by a radical contempt for all that goes under the name of honesty. He has written, explained, and proven these facts with terrifying frankness. And, since the idea of humanity was entirely unknown in his time; since the idea of fraternity — not human but religious — as preached by the Catholic Church, was at that time, as it always has been, nothing but a shocking irony, belied at every step by the Church's own actions; since in his time no one even suspected that there was such a thing as popular right, since the people had always been considered an inert and inept mass, the flesh of the State to be moulded and exploited at will, pledged to eternal obedience; since there was absolutely nothing in his time, in Italy or elsewhere, except for the State — Machiavelli concluded from these facts, with a good deal of logic, that the State was the supreme goal of all human existence, that it must be served at any cost and that, since the interest of the State prevailed over everything else, a good patriot should not recoil from any crime in order to serve it. He advocates crime, he exhorts to crime, and makes it the sine qua non of political intelligence as well as of true patriotism. Whether the State bear the name of a monarchy or of a republic, crime will always be necessary for its preservation and its triumph. The State will doubtless change its direction and its object, but its nature will remain the same: always the energetic, permanent violation of justice, compassion, and honesty, for the welfare of the State.

Yes, Machiavelli is right. We can no longer doubt it after an experience of three and a half centuries added to his own experience. Yes, so all history tells us: while the small states are virtuous only because of their weakness, the powerful states sustain themselves by crime alone. But our conclusion will be entirely different from his, for a very simple reason. We are the children of the Revolution, and from it we have inherited the religion of humanity, which we must found upon the ruins of the religion of divinity. We believe in the rights of man, in the dignity and the necessary emancipation of the human species. We believe in human liberty and human fraternity founded upon justice. In a word, we believe in the triumph of humanity upon the earth. But this triumph, which we summon with all our longing, which we want to hasten with all our united efforts — since it is by its very nature the negation of the crime which is intrinsically the negation of humanity — this triumph cannot be achieved until crime ceases to be what it now is more or less everywhere today, the real basis of the political existence of the nations absorbed and dominated by the ideas of the State. And since it is now proven that no state could exist without committing crimes, or at least without contemplating and planning them, even when its impotence should prevent it from perpetrating crimes, we today conclude in favour of the absolute need of destroying the states. Or, if it is so decided, their radical and complete transformation so that, ceasing to be powers centralised and organised from the top down, by violence or by authority of some principle, they may recognise — with absolute liberty for all the parties to unite or not to unite, and with liberty for each of these always to leave a union even when freely entered into — from the bottom up, according to the real needs and the natural tendencies of the parties, through the free federation of individuals, associations, communes, districts, provinces, and nations within humanity.

Such are the conclusions to which we are inevitably led by an examination of the external relations which the so−called free states maintain with other states. Let us now examine the relations maintained by the State founded upon the free contract arrived at among its own citizens or subjects.

We have already observed that by excluding the immense majority of the human species from its midst, by keeping this majority outside the reciprocal engagements and duties of morality, of justice, and of right, the State denies humanity and, using that sonorous word patriotism, imposes injustice and cruelty as a supreme duty upon all its subjects. It restricts, it mutilates, it kills humanity in them, so that by ceasing to be men, they may be solely citizens — or rather, and more specifically, that through the historic connection and succession of facts, they may never rise above the citizen to the height of being man.

We have also seen that every state, under pain of destruction and fearing to be devoured by its neighbour states, must reach out toward omnipotence, and, having become powerful, must conquer. Who speaks of conquest speaks of peoples conquered, subjugated, reduced to slavery in whatever form or denomination. Slavery, therefore, is the necessary consequence of the very existence of the State.

Slavery may change its form or its name — its essence remains the same. Its essence may be expressed in these words: to be a slave is to be forced to work for someone else, just as to be a master is to live on someone

else's work. In antiquity, just as in Asia and in Africa today, as well as even in a part of America, slaves were, in all honesty, called slaves. In the Middle Ages, they took the name of serfs: nowadays they are called wage earners. The position of this latter group has a great deal more dignity attached to it, and it is less hard than that of slaves, but they are nonetheless forced, by hunger as well as by political and social institutions, to maintain other people in complete or relative idleness, through their own exceedingly hard labour. Consequently they are slaves. And in general, no state, ancient or modern, has ever managed or will ever manage to get along without the forced labour of the masses, either wage earners or slaves, as a principal and absolutely necessary foundation for the leisure, the liberty, and the civilisation of the political class: the citizens. On this point, not even the United States of North America can as yet be an exception.

Such are the internal conditions that necessarily result for the State from its objective stance, that is, its natural, permanent, and inevitable hostility toward all the other states. Let us now see the conditions resulting directly for the State's citizens from that free contract by which they supposedly constituted themselves into a State.

The State not only has the mission of guaranteeing the safety of its members against any attack coming from without; it must also defend them within its own borders, some of them against the others, and each of them against himself. For the State — and this is most deeply characteristic of it, of every state, as of every theology — presupposes man to be essentially evil and wicked. In the State we are now examining, the good, as we have seen, commences only with the conclusion of the social contract and, consequently, is merely the product and very content of this contract. The good is not the product of liberty. On the contrary, so long as men remain isolated in their absolute individuality, enjoying their full natural liberty to which they recognise no limits but those of fact, not of law, they follow one law only, that of their natural egotism. They offend, maltreat, and rob each other; they obstruct and devour each other, each to the extent of his intelligence, his cunning, and his material resources, doing just as the states do to one another. By this reasoning, human liberty produces not good but evil; man is by nature evil. How did he become evil? That is for theology to explain. The fact is that the Church, at its birth, finds man already evil, and undertakes to make him good, that is, to transform the natural man into the citizen.

To this one may rejoin that, since the State is the product of a contract freely concluded by men, and since the good is the product of the State, it follows that the good is the product of liberty! Such a conclusion would not be right at all. The State itself, by this reasoning, is not the product of liberty; it is, on the contrary, the product of the voluntary sacrifice and negation of liberty. Natural men, completely free from the sense of right but exposed, in fact, to all the dangers which threaten their security at every moment, in order to assure and safeguard this security, sacrifice, or renounce more or less of their own liberty, and, to the extent that they have sacrificed liberty for security and have thus become citizens, they become the slaves of the State. We are therefore right in affirming that, from the viewpoint of the State, the good is born not of liberty but rather of the negation of liberty.

Is it not remarkable to find so close a correspondence between theology, that science of the Church, and politics, that science of the State; to find this concurrence of two orders of ideas and of realities, outwardly so opposed, nevertheless holding the same conviction: that human liberty must be destroyed if men are to be moral, if they are to be transformed into saints (for the Church) or into virtuous citizens (for the State)? Yet we are not at all surprised by this peculiar harmony, since we are convinced, and shall try to prove, that politics and theology are two sisters issuing from the same source and pursuing the same ends under different names; and that every state is a terrestrial church, just as every church, with its own heaven, the dwelling place of the blessed and of the immortal God, is but a celestial state.

Thus the State, like the Church, starts out with this fundamental supposition, that men are basically evil, and that, if delivered up to their natural liberty, they would tear each other apart and offer the spectacle of the most terrifying anarchy, where the stronger would exploit and slaughter the weaker — quite the contrary of what goes on in our model states today, needless to say! The State sets up the principle that in order to establish public order, there is need of a superior authority; in order to guide men and repress their evil passions, there is need of a guide and a curb.

. . . In order to assure the observance of the principles and the administration of laws in any human society whatsoever, there has to be a vigilant, regulating, and, if need be, repressive power at the head of the State. It remains for us to find out who should and who could exercise such power.

For the State founded upon divine right and through the intervention of any God whatever, the answer is

simple enough; the men to exercise such power would be the priests primarily, and secondarily the temporal authorities consecrated by the priests. For the State founded on the free social contract, the answer would be far more difficult. In a pure democracy of equals — all of whom are, however, considered incapable of self−restraint on behalf of the common welfare, their liberty tending naturally toward evil — who would be the true guardian and administrator of the laws, the defender of justice and of public order against everyone's evil passions? In a word, who would fulfil the functions of the State?

The best citizens, would be the answer, the most intelligent and the most virtuous, those who understand better than the others the common interests of society and the need, the duty, of everyone to subordinate his own interests to the common good. It is, in fact; necessary for these men to be as intelligent as they are virtuous; if they were intelligent but lacked virtue, they might very well use the public welfare to serve their private interests, and if they were virtuous but lacked intelligence, their good faith would not be enough to save the public interest from their errors. It is therefore necessary, in order that a republic may not perish, that it have available throughout its duration a continuous succession of many citizens possessing both virtue and intelligence.

But this condition cannot be easily or always fulfilled. In the history of every country, the epochs that boast a sizeable group of eminent men are exceptional, and renowned through the centuries. Ordinarily, within the precincts of power, it is the insignificant, the mediocre, who predominate, and often, as we have observed in history, it is vice and bloody violence that triumph. We may therefore conclude that if it were true, as the theory of the so−called rational or liberal State clearly postulates, that the preservation and durability of every political society depend upon a succession of men as remarkable for their intelligence as for their virtue, there is not one among the societies now existing that would not have ceased to exist long ago. If we were to add to this difficulty, not to say impossibility, those which arise from the peculiar demoralisation attendant upon power, the extraordinary temptations to which all men who hold power in their hands are exposed, the ambitions, rivalries, jealousies, the gigantic cupidities by which particularly those in the highest positions are assailed by day and night, and against which neither intelligence nor even virtue can prevail, especially the highly vulnerable virtue of the isolated man, it is a wonder that so many societies exist at all. But let us pass on.

Let us assume that, in an ideal society, in each period, there were a sufficient number of men both intelligent and virtuous to discharge the principal functions of the State worthily. Who would seek them out, select them, and place the reins of power in their hands? Would they themselves, aware of their intelligence and their virtue, take possession of the power? This was done by two sages of ancient Greece, Cleobulus and Periander; notwithstanding their supposed great wisdom, the Greeks applied to them the odious name of tyrants. But in what manner would such men seize power? By persuasion, or perhaps by force? If they used persuasion, we might remark that he can best persuade who is himself persuaded, and the best men are precisely those who are least persuaded of their own worth. Even when they are aware of it, they usually find it repugnant to press their claim upon others, while wicked and mediocre men, always satisfied with themselves, feel no repugnance in glorifying themselves. But let us even suppose that the desire to serve their country had overcome the natural modesty of truly worthy men and induced them to offer themselves as candidates for the suffrage of their fellow citizens. Would the people necessarily accept these in preference to ambitious, smooth−tongued, clever schemers? If, on the other hand, they wanted to use force, they would, in the first place, have to have available a force capable of overcoming the resistance of an entire party. They would attain their power through civil war which would end up with a disgruntled opposition party, beaten but still hostile. To prevail, the victors would have to persist in using force. Accordingly the free society would have become a despotic state, founded upon and maintained by violence, in which you might possibly find many things worthy of approval — but never liberty.

If we are to maintain the fiction of the free state issuing from a social contract, we must assume that the majority of its citizens must have had the prudence, the discernment, and the sense of justice necessary to elect the worthiest and the most capable men and to place them at the head of their government. But if a people had exhibited these qualities, not just once and by mere chance but at all times throughout its existence, in all the elections it had to make, would it not mean that the people itself, as a mass, had reached so high a degree of morality and of culture that it no longer had need of either government or state? Such a people would not drag out a meaningless existence, giving free rein for all its instincts; out of its life, justice and public order would rise spontaneously and naturally. The State, in it, would cease to be the providence, the guardian, the educator, the regulator of society. As it renounced all its repressive power and sank to the subordinate position assigned to it by

Proudhon, it would turn into a mere business office, a sort of central accounting bureau at the service of society.

There is no doubt that such a political organization, or rather such a reduction of political action in favour of the liberty of social life, would be a great benefit to society, but it would in no way satisfy the persistent champions of the State. To them, the State, as providence, as director of the social life, dispenser of justice, and regulator of public order, is a necessity. In other words, whether they admit it or not, whether they call themselves republicans, democrats, or even socialists, they always must have available a more or less ignorant, immature, incompetent people, or, bluntly speaking, a kind of canaille to govern. This would make them, without doing violence to their lofty altruism and modesty, keep the highest places for themselves, so as always to devote themselves to the common good, of course. As the privileged guardians of the human flock, strong in their virtuous devotion and their superior intelligence, while prodding the people along and urging it on for its own good and well−being, they would be in a position to do a little discreet fleecing of that flock for their own benefit.

Any logical and straightforward theory of the State is essentially founded upon the principle of authority, that is, the eminently theological, metaphysical, and political idea that the masses, always incapable of governing themselves, must at all times submit to the beneficent yoke of a wisdom and a justice imposed upon them, in some way or other, from above. Imposed in the name of what, and by whom? Authority which is recognised and respected as such by the masses can come from three sources only: force, religion, or the action of a superior intelligence. As we are discussing the theory of the State founded upon the free contract, we must postpone discussion of those states founded on the dual authority of religion and force and, for the moment, confine our attention to authority based upon a superior intelligence, which is, as we know, always represented by minorities.

What do we really see in all states past and present, even those endowed with the most democratic institutions, such as the United States of North America and Switzerland? Actual self−government of the masses, despite the pretence that the people hold all the power, remains a fiction most of the time. It is always, in fact, minorities that do the governing. In the United States, up to the recent Civil War and partly even now, and even within the party of the present incumbent, President Andrew Johnson, those ruling minorities were the so−called Democrats, who continued to favour slavery and the ferocious oligarchy of the Southern planters, demagogues without faith or conscience, capable of sacrificing everything to their greed, to their malignant ambition. They were those who, through their detestable actions, and influence, exercised practically without opposition for almost fifty successive years, have greatly contributed to the corruption of political morality in North America.

Right now, a really intelligent, generous minority — but always a minority — the Republican party, is successfully challenging their pernicious policy. Let us hope its triumph may be complete; let us hope so for all humanity's sake. But no matter how sincere this party of liberty may be, no matter how great and generous its principles, we cannot hope that upon attaining power it will renounce its exclusive position of ruling minority and mingle with the masses, so that popular self−government may at last become a fact. This would require a revolution, one that would be profound in fat other ways than all the revolutions that have thus far overwhelmed the ancient world and the modern.

In Switzerland, despite all the democratic revolutions that have taken place there, government is still in the hands of the well−off, the middle class, those privileged few who are rich, leisured, educated. The sovereignty of the people — a term, incidentally, which we detest, since all sovereignty is to us detestable—the government of the masses by themselves, is here likewise a fiction. The people are sovereign in law, but not in fact; since they are necessarily occupied with their daily labour which leaves them no leisure, and since they are, if not totally ignorant, at least quite inferior in education to the propertied middle class, they are constrained to leave their alleged sovereignty in the hands of the middle class. The only advantage they derive from this situation, in Switzerland as well as in the United States of North America, is that the ambitious minorities, the seekers of political power, cannot attain power except by wooing the people, by pandering to their fleeting passions, which at times can be quite evil, and, in most cases, by deceiving them.

Let no one think that in criticising the democratic government we thereby show our preference for the monarchy. We are firmly convinced that the most imperfect republic is a thousand times better than the most enlightened monarchy. In a republic, there are at least brief periods when the people, while continually exploited, is not oppressed; in the monarchies, oppression is constant. The democratic regime also lifts the masses up gradually to participation in public life—something the monarchy never does. Nevertheless, while we prefer the republic, we must recognise and proclaim that whatever the form of government may be, so long as human

society continues to be divided into different classes as a result of the hereditary inequality of occupations, of wealth, of education, and of rights, there will always be a class−restricted government and the inevitable exploitation of the majorities by the minorities.

The State is nothing but this domination and this exploitation, well regulated and systematised. We shall try to prove this by examining the consequences of the government of the masses by a minority, intelligent and dedicated as you please, in an ideal state founded upon the free contract.

Once the conditions of the contract have been accepted, it remains only to put them into effect. Suppose that a people recognised their incapacity to govern, but still had sufficient judgment to confide the administration of public affairs to their best citizens. At first these individuals are esteemed not for their official position but for their good qualities. They have been elected by the people because they are the most intelligent, capable, wise, courageous, and dedicated among them. Coming from the mass of the people, where all are supposedly equal, they do not yet constitute a separate class, but a group of men privileged only by nature and for that very reason singled out for election by the people. Their number is necessarily very limited, for in all times and in all nations the number of men endowed with qualities so remarkable that they automatically command the unanimous respect of a nation is, as experience teaches us, very small. Therefore, on pain of making a bad choice the people will be forced to choose its rulers from among them.

Here then is a society already divided into two categories, if not yet two classes. One is composed of the immense majority of its citizens who freely submit themselves to a government by those they have elected; the other is composed of a small number of men endowed with exceptional attributes, recognised and accepted as exceptional by the people and entrusted by them with the task of governing. As these men depend on popular election, they cannot at first be distinguished from the mass of citizens except by the very qualities which have recommended them for election, and they are naturally the most useful and the most dedicated citizens of all. They do not as yet claim any privilege or any special right except that of carrying out, at the people's will, the special functions with which they have been entrusted. Besides, they are not in any way different from other people in their way of living or earning their means of living, so that a perfect equality still subsists among all. Can this equality be maintained for any length of time? We claim it cannot, a claim that is easy enough to prove.

Nothing is as dangerous for man's personal morality as the habit of commanding. The best of men, the most intelligent, unselfish, generous, and pure, will always and inevitably be corrupted in this pursuit. Two feelings inherent in the exercise of power never fail to produce this demoralisation: contempt for the masses, and, for the man in power, an exaggerated sense of his own worth.

"The masses, on admitting their own incapacity to govern themselves, have elected me as their head. By doing so, they have clearly proclaimed their own inferiority and my superiority. In this great crowd of men, among whom I hardly find any who are my equals, I alone am capable of administering public affairs. The people need me; they cannot get along without my services, while I am sufficient unto myself. They must therefore obey me for their own good, and I, by deigning to command them, create their happiness and well−being." There is enough here to turn anyone's head and corrupt the heart and make one swell with pride, isn't there? That is how power and the habit of commanding become a source of aberration, both intellectual and moral, even for the most intelligent and most virtuous of men.

All human morality—and we shall try, further on, to prove the absolute truth of this principle, the development, explanation, and widest application of which constitute the real subject of this essay—all collective and individual morality rests essentially upon respect for humanity. What do we mean by respect for humanity? We mean the recognition of human right and human dignity in every man, of whatever race, colour, degree of intellectual development, or even morality. But if this man is stupid, wicked, or contemptible, can I respect him? Of course, if he is all that, it is impossible for me to respect his villainy, his stupidity, and his brutality; they are repugnant to me and arouse my indignation. I shall, if necessary, take the strongest measures against them, even going so far as to kill him if I have no other way of defending against him my life, my right, and whatever I hold precious and worthy. But even in the midst of the most violent and bitter, even mortal, combat between us, I must respect his human character. My own dignity as a man depends on it. Nevertheless, if he himself fails to recognise this dignity in others, must we recognise it in him? If he is a sort of ferocious beast or, as sometimes happens, worse than a beast, would we not, in recognising his humanity, be supporting a mere fiction? No, for whatever his present intellectual and moral degradation may be, if, organically, he is neither an idiot nor a madman—in which

case he should be treated as a sick man rather than as a criminal—if he is in full possession of his senses and of such intelligence as nature has granted him, his humanity, no matter how monstrous his deviations might be, nonetheless really exists. It exists as a lifelong potential capacity to rise to the awareness of his humanity, even if there should be little possibility for a radical change in the social conditions which have made him what he is.

Take the most intelligent ape, with the finest disposition; though you place him in the best, most humane environment, you will never make a man of him. Take the most hardened criminal or the man with the poorest mind, provided that t neither has any organic lesion causing idiocy or insanity; the criminality of the one, and the failure of the other to develop an awareness of his humanity and his human duties, is not their fault, nor is it due to their nature; it is solely the result of the social environment in which they were born and brought up.