

property. These revolutionists were not in general afflicted with anything the psychiatrist could be called in about. They were certainly not riffraff, scoundrels, scum of the earth. They were above all *not* worms turning. Nor were their leaders by any means an inferior lot suddenly elevated to positions of power which they could not worthily occupy. There is no question that in the turmoil of revolutions a good many scoundrels rise to the top—though they can also rise to the top without benefit of revolution, as a glance at some of the phases of either the Grant or the Harding administrations should amply prove. But the level of ability, of ability not with moral overtones, but in a purely technical sense, the ability to handle men and to administer a complex social system, the level of ability suggested by names like Hampden, Pym, Cromwell, Washington, John Adams, Hamilton, Jefferson, Mirabeau, Talleyrand, Carnot, Cambon, Danton, Lenin, Trotsky, Stalin, is certainly very high.

All this by no means amounts to asserting the paradox that there are no real differences between revolutions and ordinary times. On the contrary, especially in their crisis periods, revolutions are like nothing else on earth. But you cannot altogether explain the differences between societies in revolution and societies in equilibrium by suggesting that a whole new crew operates during a revolution; by saying, if you dislike a particular revolution and all its works, that the scoundrels and the bums put it over on the good souls; or if you happen to like and approve a particular revolution, that the heroes and sages turned out the corrupt old gang. It just isn't as simple as all that. Since on the whole the evidence would seem to show that revolutionists are more or less a cross section of common humanity, an explanation for the undoubted fact that during certain phases of a revolution they behave in a way we should not expect such people to behave, must be sought in changes worked on them by the conditions they live under, by their revolutionary environment.

Crane Brinton

Chapter

5

THE RULE OF THE MODERATES

Begin Here

1. *The Problem of the Moderates*

In the summer of 1792 Lafayette, with some of his officers, left the French Army and passed over to the Austrian lines. He was promptly put in prison by the Austrians, to whom he was a dangerous firebrand of revolution. Lafayette was, however, a good deal more fortunate than many of his fellow heroes of 1789 who elected to stay in France, and who were guillotined as dangerous reactionaries and counter-revolutionists. Fedor Linde, a moderate Socialist who in April, 1917, moved the Finnish Regiment to a mutinous demonstration against the pro-Ally and still more moderate Miliukov, was later sent to the front as a government commissar under Kerensky and there was lynched by mutinous soldiers who refused to obey his commands. In 1647 Denzil Holles, of whom we took note briefly back in 1629, as he was helping to hold down the Speaker in his chair, was with ten other Presbyterian members excluded from Parliament for "endeavoring to overthrow the rights and liberties of the subjects." He did indeed return briefly to his seat again in 1648, but was soon forced to flee to France to save his life. A famous phrase of the French moderate Vergniaud puts the thing neatly: "The revolution, like Saturn, devours its children."

The honeymoon was in these revolutions short; very soon after the old regime had fallen there began to be evident signs that the victors were not so unanimous about what was to be done to remake the country as had appeared in the first triumphant speeches and ceremonies. Those who had directly taken over the mechanism of government were in all four of our societies men of the kind usually called moderates. They represented the richer, better known, and higher placed of the old opposition to the government, and it is only to be expected that they should take over from that government. Indeed, as we have seen, their assumption of responsibility is almost a spontaneous act. So strong is this feeling that the moderates should take over power that it prevailed even in Russia in February, 1917. Not the socialists, but the mere "liberals" headed by Prince Lvov, became the provisional government.

The moderates, once in power, turned out to have less homogeneity and party discipline than they seemed to have when they were in opposition. They were faced with the difficult task of reforming existing institutions, or making a new constitution, and taking care at the same time of the ordinary work of governing. They were also confronted very soon with armed enemies, and found themselves engaged in a foreign or civil war, or in both together. They found against them an increasingly strong and intransigent group of radicals and extremists who insisted that the moderates were trying to stop the revolution, that they had betrayed it, that they were as bad as the rulers of the old regime—indeed, much worse, since they were traitors as well as fools and scoundrels. After a period, brief in Russia, longer in France and England, there came a show of force between moderates and extremists, a show of force in many ways quite like that earlier one between the old government and the revolutionists, and the moderates were beaten. They fled into exile, they were put into prison ultimately to face the scaffold, guillotine, or firing squad, or if they were lucky or obscure enough, they dropped out of sight and were forgotten. The extremists in their turn took power.

This process was not quite the same in the American Revolution, where it may be said that extremists like the

Independents, the Jacobins, and the Bolsheviks, did not attain undivided rule. Nevertheless, as we shall see, in America rather earlier in the revolutionary process a struggle between moderates and radicals had been fought out, and had ended with victory for the radicals. The fruit of that victory was the Declaration of Independence.

We may say then that in all our revolutions there is a tendency for power to go from Right to Center to Left, from the conservatives of the old regime to the moderates to the radicals or extremists. As power moves along this line, it gets more and more concentrated, more and more narrows its base in the country and among the people, since at each important crisis the defeated group has to drop out of politics. To put it in another way: after each crisis the victors tend to split into a more conservative wing holding power and a more radical one in opposition. Up to a certain stage, each crisis sees the radical opposition triumphant. The details of this process vary naturally from revolution to revolution. Its stages are not identical in length or in their time-sequence. In America power never got as far Left as it did in the other countries.

Finally, it must be insisted that the word "moderate" as here used of groups in these four specific revolutions has overtones not present when the word is used of politically stable societies. Both in methods and in aims our revolutionary moderates often behave quite immoderately. You can defend the position that the Presbyterians, not the Independents, the Gironde, not the Mountain, even perhaps the Mensheviks, not the Bolsheviks, were the extremists. Certainly the last three of each of these opposing factions came out in the end as defenders of order and authority. But in the jockeying of violent revolutionary politics the first three of each were at least maneuvered into a position where they were attacked from both Right and Left. Perhaps the term "compromisists," fastened on Mensheviks, Social Revolutionaries, Narodniks and the rest by the triumphant Bolsheviks, is an even better term than "moderate" for the reality we are in this chapter attempting to fix in words.

At any rate this struggle between moderates and extremists is a stage in our revolutions as definite as those we

have studied in previous chapters, and by its very existence provides us with a useful if somewhat simple uniformity. Before we attempt to make refinements in this observation, before we try to discern uniformities in the conduct of moderates and extremists, we must review briefly the course of events during the rule of the moderates.

II. Events During the Rule of the Moderates

With the outbreak of the Civil War in the summer of 1642, Royalists and Parliamentarians stood opposed in arms. By the Battle of Marston Moor in 1644, and certainly by that of Naseby in 1645, the Royalist cause had become, in a military sense, hopeless. But almost from the first clear break with Charles, the Parliamentarians had won their revolution. The Royalists did but play more effectively the role played in America by the Loyalists, in France by the Royalists and clericals in the provinces, the *émigrés* abroad, in Russia by the numerous White Armies which opposed the Bolsheviks until 1921. We are not here so much interested in the Royalists as in the Parliamentarians. Within these latter there is from 1642 on an increasingly evident division between groups which we may call roughly moderates and extremists.

The division is not at first a simple one between two parties. At the extreme right of the Parliamentarians were a few moderate Episcopalians just touched with puritan notions, and usually also constitutional monarchists. Many of this group were on the whole indifferent to religious questions, felt that church matters would settle themselves decently if the political difficulties could be adjusted. Between these men and the moderate Royalists, who somewhat reluctantly chose to stand with their king, there was actually very little difference. Next came the great moderate party, Presbyterian in religion, puritan in ethics, monarchist at heart, but monarchist in a constitutional sense. The left wing of the Presbyterians, early disillusioned with the idea of monarchy by their hatred for Charles, merged easily with the main group of the extremists. These in the English Revolution are called the Independents, extreme Calvinists who insisted upon the independence of each

separate congregation. Their notions of church government were substantially those well known in this country as Congregationalism. With them for most political purposes were other groups that subsequently made up the English nonconformists or dissenters—notably the Baptists. The New Model Army, through which these radicals made themselves an effective force in the revolution, contained individuals espousing almost every conceivable kind of evangelical religious belief, and a good many varieties of economic and social beliefs. But the group did work as a group, and its core was certainly Independent. To the left were other groups, Levellers, Diggers, Fifth Monarchy men, whom we shall consider in a later chapter.

Now the fact that Episcopalians, Presbyterians, and Independents are in the English Revolution respectively conservatives, moderates, and extremists, is a bit confusing to the modern reader. For the old-fashioned idealist, these seventeenth-century Englishmen are fighting over religious matters, fighting for ideals, and he finds it absurd to equate them with Frenchmen fighting for worldly liberty, equality, and fraternity, and shocking to compare them with Russians fighting for crude economic interests. On the other hand, the modern convert to the economic interpretation of history is likely to regard these religious differences as mere "ideologies," or pretexts for a quarrel which was really a simple economic one. To him, the Presbyterians were small gentry or bourgeois businessmen, the Independents petty bourgeois traders, artisans, and yeomen farmers who quarreled after they had disposed of the feudal upper classes. Both the idealist and the materialist are here clearly wrong. Politics, economics, church government, and theology are inextricably mingled in the minds and hearts of seventeenth-century Englishmen. Their conflicts are conflicts between human beings, not between the abstractions of the philosopher, the economist, or the sociologist. We must here observe the ways in which these conflicts worked out. From many points of view, it is profitable to regard these conflicts as exhibiting the sequence of domination first by conservatives, then by moderates, then by extremists. Naturally these conservatives, moderates, and extremists were not identical with similar

groups in later revolutions. As compared with the men of 1789 or of 1917, they read different books, disputed over different ideas, just as they wore different clothes. Yet the course of their revolution does display a striking identity with our other revolutions in the relation between political organization and human temperaments. The Presbyterian "compromisists" were pushed aside by more determined if not more unscrupulously "extremist" men, just as were the Feuillants and Girondins in France and the Kadets and compromisist Socialist groups in Russia. In America, the career of John Dickinson, a moderate who refused to sign the Declaration of Independence, is revealing. Though he was never harmed or even imprisoned, he was bitterly attacked, and never attained political power again.

Under the leadership of the Westminster Assembly, a Presbyterian synod which began its meetings in the summer of 1643, that part of England under parliamentary control was brought under the famed Scottish Covenant. Crosses, images, crucifixes were torn down; the stained glass was removed from the churches; sermons were lengthened; and the liturgy simplified. Parliament became the supreme law of the land. But already there were signs that the Presbyterian rule was not to go unchallenged. Marston Moor was not a Presbyterian victory. It was won by Cromwell and his "Ironsides"; and these men were not good Presbyterians. They were Independents, and some were Anabaptists, Antinomians, and the like. It is said that someone complained to Cromwell because one of his officers was an Anabaptist, and received the reply, "Admit he be, shall that render him incapable to serve the public? Take heed of being too sharp . . . against those to whom you can object little but that they square not with you in every opinion concerning matters of religion."

When the New Model Army was constructed from the nucleus of Cromwell's Ironsides, and had won the Battle of Naseby, army and Parliament, Independent and Presbyterian, extremists and moderates, found themselves in opposition on various questions, notably on religious toleration and on what was to be done about Charles I. The Presbyterians wanted an established State Church, built on their own notions of church government and theology, with a

minimum of toleration toward papists and prelatists on the right and the sects on the left. And they most certainly wanted a king, even if that king were Charles Stuart. The Independents wanted what they called toleration. They certainly didn't mean what a nineteenth-century Englishman or an American meant by religious toleration, and when they got into power they were very far from practicing toleration, even in the sense in which they had preached it. But at least while they were in opposition they agreed that religious belief was a personal matter and that the State should not seek to impose identical religious practices and organization on its citizens. As for the king, most of them by 1645 were sure Charles Stuart would never do. Cromwell was probably never a doctrinaire republican, but a great many of his men certainly were.

No single event marks exactly the transfer of power from the moderates to the extremists in England. The process had gone pretty far when Cornet Joyce of the army in June, 1646, seized the King at Holmby House as he was about to yield to the Parliament and consent to govern for three years as a Presbyterian king. It was almost completed when two months later Parliament at the dictation of the army reluctantly agreed to the exclusion of eleven of its own members, conspicuous leaders of the Presbyterian group. Charles took the occasion of the quarrel to attempt to further his own interests. His complicated intrigues ended in nothing better than a brief war between the Scottish Presbyterians and the Cromwellians, in which for a moment the moderates could look up hopefully. Cromwell defeated the Scots at Preston Pans in August, 1648, and his army was in undisputed control in Great Britain. After this the formal end of the moderates at Pride's Purge in December was unimportant. Colonel Pride and a few soldiers were stationed at the door of the House of Commons to turn back the unsuitable members as they came. Ninety-six Presbyterians were thus excluded, leaving a group of fifty or sixty regular voting members on whom the extremists could rely. The Long Parliament had become the Rump.

In America the conflict never took quite such clear lines. We may say that the conservatives were those Loyalists

who never really complained about the imperial government—and who, like Jonathan Boucher, preached against the agitators—the moderates those merchants and prosperous landowners who in a sense began the whole movement by their agitation against the Stamp Act, and the radicals that by no means united group which finally put through the Declaration of Independence. There was thus a kind of three-way struggle going on among these groups in the ten years preceding the outbreak of hostilities with the British Army. In this struggle the radicals exhibited an extraordinary technical skill in the practical politics of revolution. As John Adams later wrote of the organizations which, starting with local committees of correspondence and committees of safety, worked up to the continental congresses: "What an engine France imitated it and produced a revolution. . . . And all Europe was inclined to imitate it for the same revolutionary purpose."

The radicals really won their decisive victory by organizing as they did the first Continental Congress in 1774. Professor A. M. Schlesinger, Sr., admirably summarizes the work of this Congress.

The radicals had achieved several important ends. They had reproduced on a national scale a type of organization and a species of tactics that in many parts of British America had enabled a determined minority to seize control of affairs . . . they had snatched from the merchant class the weapons which the latter had fashioned to advance their own selfish interests in former years, and had now reversed the weapons on them, in an attempt to secure ends desired solely by the radicals.

The taking of the Bastille on July 14, 1789, in France sealed the defeat of the most conservative group, the true Royalists. The victorious revolutionists did not long remain in harmony, and the process of transfer of power to the left began in a few months. In October of the same year the King and Queen were riotously brought back to Paris from Versailles in what are known as the October Days. These events sent into exile the leaders of the moderate conservatives, men like Mounier who greatly admired the

English Constitution, and wished France to have a bicameral legislature with a House of Lords and a House of Commons, and a real king. For the next few years a group of moderates centering about men like Mirabeau, Lafayette, and the Lameths, were opposed by a group of radicals centering around men—Pétion, Robespierre, Danton, Brissot—soon to be leaders of the rival republican groups of Gironde and Mountain, but at present more or less united against the moderates. The moderates succeeded in making the Constitution, and starting the new regime off. But war between France and the Central European powers of Austria and Prussia broke out, France was invaded and Paris threatened, certain provisions of the Constitution, notably those concerning religion and the monarchy, failed to work well, Louis himself was suspected of treason by many of his subjects, and in the general political turmoil the active and well-organized radicals overthrew the monarchy in the famous attack on the Tuileries Palace in Paris on August 10, 1792.

Avowed monarchists and such mild reformers and liberals as Lafayette were thus excluded from power, and France became a republic. But the final and critical defeat of the moderates in France is better placed on June 2, 1793. In matters of this sort, as in any splitting up of historical events into periods, there may be legitimate differences of interpretation. Conservatives, moderates, and radicals and extremists are not in any of our societies absolutely clear-cut and definite groups, nor is the transference of power from one to another very often a single event agreed upon by all to be such. You may feel that no moderate could have voted the end of the French monarchy. Nonetheless it would seem that the right wing of the republicans, known to history as the Girondins, and to their contemporaries as the Brissotins, were really moderates upon whom circumstances forced actions which were to them disagreeably radical and extreme. Notably they did not wish the death of the King. They were mostly prosperous bourgeois, lawyers, and intellectuals, and after the trial of the King in January, 1793, they became very sure that the revolution had gone far enough, that it ought to be stopped. Whatever their past, whatever their philo-

sophical radicalism, they had now become moderates. By the early months of 1793 they had lost control of the Paris Jacobin Club and with it most of the other revolutionary clubs and the whole network of organizations which had helped the radicals achieve their ends in the early days of the revolution. They could not command the support of the hesitating and more or less neutral mass of deputies in the Convention who were called the Plain. Their enemies were better organized, more aggressive, and perhaps more unscrupulous. They were certainly more successful.

Just as with the Presbyterians in England, there came the demand that these now moderate leaders be excluded from the Convention and brought under arrest. In a test of strength in the Convention on June 2, 1793, the extremists took care to surround the meeting place of that body with sympathetic Parisian militiamen, back of whom assembled a large and hostile crowd. The Convention tried to stand on their representative dignity and to refuse to permit the arrest of the twenty-two members demanded by the radical Mountain. Headed by their president, they solemnly marched out to ensure that their position be respected as the embodiment of the will of the people. The deputies made the circuit of the gardens, finding an unyielding row of bayonets at every gate, and a "people" with a temporary will of its own. They returned indoors and voted the arrest of the twenty-two Girondins. The radical Mountain was now in undisputed command.

Events moved rather faster in Russia, but their sequence is almost identical with those in England and in France. The first provisional government headed nominally by Prince Lvov, really by Miliukov, was made up mostly of Kadets, the left wing of middle-class groups in the old duma, but no more than "progressives," "liberals," or "democrats" in Western political terminology. There were several representatives of more conservative groups, and only one Socialist, Kerensky. After a life of less than two months, this government broke down over the question of continuing an "imperialist" war on the side of the allies, with whom the United States was now associated. Miliukov was forced out for too great compliance with the wishes of the allies, and a number of Mensheviks and

Social-Revolutionaries accepted positions in the new government. In July Kerensky took the formal leadership after a crisis, and in September the Kadets finally withdrew altogether, leaving Kerensky at the head of a very shaky moderate Socialist government.

The Socialists who thus consented to co-operate with bourgeois governments in the prosecution of the war were christened by the Bolsheviks "compromisist." In the specific Russian situation, these Social-Revolutionaries, Trudoviks, Narodniks, Mensheviks, must be called moderates. They did not hope to introduce the dictatorship of the proletariat. They wanted to win the war, and they were willing to make use of parliamentary methods to secure social reforms. They had long been distrustful of the Kadets, but under the pressure of events they consented to co-operate with them. The Kadets themselves suffered the fate of the Puritan Episcopalians and the Feuillants; they were pushed out by their collaborators to the Left.

The Bolsheviks refused to take part in any of these governments. They insisted that the bourgeois revolution of February must sooner or later be followed by the proletarian revolution Marx had preached and predicted. Lenin, who returned from a Swiss exile in April to enjoy a few months of bourgeois freedom, decided that the proletarian revolution might be brought off in Russia. His party was by no means unanimously agreed, but his leadership kept the small band together, and the blunders of the compromisists, together with the heritage of defeat and disorganization, played into his hands. In July a premature rising of workers in Petrograd was apparently given local and reluctant leadership by some of the party, and its failure sent Lenin into hiding, and Trotsky and Lunacharsky to prison. The subsequent swing of the pendulum to the Right ended with the abortive attempt of General Kornilov to march on Petrograd, and in this whole process the Bolsheviks gradually acquired new courage and a new following. Lenin from hiding held a guiding hand. Trotsky was released and elected president of a Petrograd soviet now in Bolshevik control. Lenin, back secretly in Petrograd, presided at a final meeting of the party Central

Committee, and an insurrection was decided upon. In a masterly exhibition of revolutionary technique, a military revolution committee made sure of the Petrograd garrison, other groups contrived to hamstring the press and communications, and on the agreed day the Bolsheviks took over Petrograd with astonishingly little difficulty and almost no bloodshed. Even the siege of the Winter Palace, which forms the high point of the uprising, has a comic-opera touch. The October Revolution in Petrograd was almost as bloodless as Pride's Purge or the *journée* of June 2, 1793, the corresponding events in the English and French revolutions. In Moscow there was real fighting, but there, too, the Bolsheviks were successful within a week. Kerensky fled, and the rule of the moderates in Russia was over.

III. *Dual Sovereignty*

The Russian Revolution affords the neatest example of a uniformity that lies beyond the somewhat superficial uniformity of sequence of power from conservatives to moderates to extremists, from Right to Center to Left. This is at once an institution and a process; or better, a process that works through a very similar set of institutions. Theorists and historians of the Russian Revolution refer to it as the *dvoevlastie*, a word usually translated as dual power, but containing overtones that make it better translated, perhaps, as dual sovereignty. We must go briefly into the general situation to which this word refers.

The problem of sovereignty has long been in itself sufficient to keep hundreds of political philosophers busy and happy. In a normal Western society, it may well be difficult or impossible to locate any one person, or group of persons, who possesses the final, authoritative power to decide questions concerning what the society is to do. The pluralists would seem to be, from the point of view of description of social processes, quite right. Even the broader political policies of a modern state seem to be arrived at by so elaborately natural a process of adjusting the desires of conflicting groups, that to say a single and identifiable "sovereign" determines these policies is nonsense. And yet in a normal society, even in an open demo-

cratic society with division of powers, there is at least one co-ordinated chain of institutions through which conflicting groups do finally adjust their conflicts, for the moment at least, in action. That co-ordination may seem inefficient and irrational when academically analyzed, and it may well be so complicated that even the politicians who make it work do not understand it. For men are as often as not unaware of how they do things they do very successfully.

But it does work, and through it questions at issue are decided—or forgotten, which is also a kind of deciding. Those who do not like the decision may try to alter it by a very great variety of action, from agitation to conspiracy or sabotage. Socially powerful or numerous groups may under favoring conditions even go so far as to nullify for a time a given decision: the examples of the Eighteenth Amendment in the United States and of the desegregation of schools in the deep South will occur to everyone. For the most part, however, the decisions are carried out.

When another and conflicting chain of institutions provides another and conflicting set of decisions, then you have a dual sovereignty. Within the same society, two sets of institutions, leaders, and laws demand obedience, not in one single respect, but in the whole interwoven series of actions which make up life for the average man. The resistance to desegregation in the South, the lawlessness of juvenile delinquency, the corruption of many sectors of American politics are by no means examples of dual sovereignty, merely of resistance to law. The conflict between state and federal governments over civil rights in a state like Alabama comes closer to being an instance of dual sovereignty. Were the White Citizens Councils, the Ku Klux Klan, the white trades-unions, and other groups, led by a revolutionary junta, to take over directly part of the *administration* of Alabama, we should have a kind of dual sovereignty, complicated, of course, by the federal structure of our politics; we should, as a matter of fact, have a state of affairs something like that in Russia in the summer of 1917, when the "legal" provisional government was challenged by the "illegal" soviets.

In *all* our revolutions, the legal government finds opposed to it, not merely hostile individuals and parties

—this any government finds—but a rival government, better organized, better staffed, better obeyed. This rival government is of course illegal, but not all of its leaders and followers are from the beginning consciously aiming to supplant the legal government. Very often they think of themselves as merely supplementing it, perhaps also as preserving it in a revolutionary course. Yet a rival government they are, and no mere critics or opponents. At a given revolutionary crisis they step naturally and easily into the place of the defeated government.

This process does indeed begin to work itself out in the old regimes before the first steps in revolution are taken. Puritans in England, Whigs in America, Third Estate in France, the Kadets and compromiser Socialists in Russia, all had organizations that demanded their allegiance and that enabled them to fight the old regime with revolution at least in the back of their minds. But the process is much more clear, more sharply edged at the stage we have now reached.

Once the first stage in revolution is over, the struggle that arises between moderates and extremists comes to be a struggle between two rival governmental machines. That of the moderates, the legal government, has inherited some of the prestige that goes with being established, some of the financial resources—actual or potential—of the old government, most of its liabilities, all of its institutions. Try to alter these latter as it may, it finds them annoyingly persistent, extremely difficult to blot out. The legal government is unpopular with many for the very reason that it is an obvious and responsible government and therefore has to shoulder some of the unpopularity of the government of the old regime.

The illegal government of the extremists, however, has to face no such difficulties. It has the prestige which recent events have given to attackers, to those who can claim to be in the forefront of the revolution. It has, as governments go, relatively few responsibilities. It does not have to try to use, if only temporarily, the worn-out machinery, the institutions of the old regime. It has, on the contrary, for the moment the great advantage of using the efficient machinery gradually constructed by the revolutionists,

both moderates and extremists, from the time when they began under the old regime to emerge as a pressure group even, as in Russia, as an underground group of conspirators. Indeed, the final capture of this machinery—or this organization, if you prefer—seems to be what really determines the final victory of the extremists over the moderates, long before that final victory is apparent in events. Why the moderates do not keep control of the organization they have done so much to initiate and to mold is a question that permits of no simple answer. We may hope that some answer will emerge from a more detailed study of the fate of the moderates. We must first, however, see how well the foregoing analysis fits the facts in our four revolutions.

Charles and the Long Parliament were clearly dual sovereigns from the actual outbreak of hostilities in 1642 if not from the very first session of 1640. Once the Civil War was decided against Charles, Parliament, under the control of the moderates, found itself the legal government. But almost immediately it was confronted by the radical New Model Army, which very soon began to take the kind of action that in this world only a government can take. The fact that Charles was still on the scene and the existence of the Scottish Army complicated the situation in the three or four years before the execution of Charles in 1649, but the broad lines of the duel between the newly legal government of the Presbyterian moderates in Parliament and the illegal government of the extremist Independents in the New Model Army are clear.

In America this dual sovereignty is most obvious in the years before the final break in 1776. The lines between the legal and the illegal government were obscured, especially in a colony like Massachusetts, by the fact that town meetings and colonial legislatures were part of the legal government, but were often controlled by men active in the illegal government. Nonetheless, the machinery which culminated in the continental congresses—in themselves illegal bodies—was clearly used by revolutionists against constituted authority.

While the moderates in France, the Feuillants, or constitutional monarchists, still controlled the legislative body

and the formal machinery of the centralized state, their increasingly republican opponents controlled the network of Jacobin societies which made up the frame of the other, or illegal, government. Through their control of these societies they worked into the control of many of the units of local government, and from this position of vantage were able to expel the Feuillant moderates and destroy the monarchy. The process was then repeated with the Girondin moderates controlling the legislative body and the Montagnard extremists controlling the important units of the Jacobin network and at least one exceedingly important local governmental unit—the Paris Commune. In the crisis of June 2, 1793, the illegal government again won out over the legal. For a moment in the earlier crisis of August 10, 1792, the legal and the illegal governments of Paris were actually sitting simultaneously in different rooms of the *hôtel de ville*.

In Russia the *dvoevlastie* is plain. The provisional government which emerged from the February Revolution had through its connection with the *duma* some claim to legitimacy. Though it absorbed more and more Socialists of various stripes in the next six months, thus exhibiting the leftward movement we have found in all our societies, it remained moderate and quite conscious of its legality.

On the other side the Bolsheviks and a few allied radical groups had by late summer obtained control of the network of soviets which was in part a heritage from the abortive revolution of 1905 and stood as an illegal government facing the legal one. Soviet means no more than "council" and had originally in Russia no more connotations than its English equivalent has for us. The soviets were local councils of trades-unionists, soldiers, sailors, peasants, and suitable intellectuals. They sprang up naturally enough with the dissolution of the Czarist power in 1917, all the more since memories of the rising of 1905, in which a St. Petersburg soviet had played a large part, were fresh in the minds of everyone. The Bolsheviks, wisely concentrating on the soviets while the attention of the compromisers was increasingly taken by participation in the legal government, were able to wrest control of key soviets in Petrograd, Moscow, and major industrial towns

from the compromisers. There is here a curious detailed parallel with the French Revolution. The final insurrectionary victory of the Bolsheviks was achieved without complete control of the general network of soviets, just as that of the Montagnards was achieved without control of the whole network of Jacobin clubs. In each case control of the most important units of the illegal government was sufficient.

iv. Weaknesses of the Moderates

At this stage in revolution, then, the moderates in control of the formal machinery of government are confronted by the extremists, or if you prefer, merely by radical and determined opponents, in control of machinery devised for propaganda, pressure-group work, even insurrection, but now increasingly used as machinery of government. This stage ends with the triumph of the extremists and the merging of the dual sovereignty into a single one. We must now inquire into the reasons for the failure of the moderates in these revolutions to hold power.

There is first the paradox we have previously noted, that in the early stages of revolution the control of the machinery of government is in itself a source of weakness for those who hold such control. Little by little the moderates find themselves losing the credit they had gained as opponents of the old regime, and taking on more and more of the discredit innocently associated by the hopeful many with the status of heir to the old regime. Forced on the defensive, they make mistake after mistake, partly because they are so little used to being on the defensive. They are in a position from which only a superhuman wisdom could extricate them; and the moderates are among the most human of revolutionaries.

Faced with the opposition of more radical groups organized in the network we have called the illegal government, the moderates have broadly but three choices: they may try to suppress the illegal government; they may try to get control of it themselves; or they may let it alone. Actually their policy shifts around among these three policies, combining one with another; in these circumstances, the net

effect is to produce a fourth policy, which amounts to a positive encouragement of their enemies in the illegal government.

In the revolutions we are studying the moderates are particularly handicapped in their efforts to suppress these enemy organizations. The revolutions were all made in the name of freedom, were all—even the Russian February Revolution—associated with what the Marxists call a bourgeois individualistic ideology. The moderates found themselves obliged to observe certain “rights” of their enemies—notably those of freedom of speech, of the press, of assembly. What is more, many if not most of the moderates sincerely believed in such rights, held that truth is great and will prevail. Had it not just prevailed against the tyranny of the old regime? Even when under pressure the moderate begins to try to suppress an extremist newspaper, forbid an extremist meeting, jail a few extremist leaders, his conscience troubles him. More important, any unsupported extremists raise a mighty howl. The moderates are betraying the revolution; they are using exactly the same methods the villainous tyrants of the old regime had used.

The Russian Revolution is here an excellent example. The Kadets and compromisists between February and October could not conveniently suppress Bolshevik propaganda, nor indeed any form of Bolshevik political activity. When they tried to do so after a premature Bolshevik rising, the street troubles in Petrograd known as the “July Days,” they were met by protests from all sorts of people, including notably the Bolsheviks. This was despotism, this was Czarism of the worst sort. Had not the February Revolution brought political freedom, freedom of the press and association, to Russia forever? Kerensky mustn't make use of the kind of weapons the Czars had used. Stalin of course could later use methods worthy of Peter the Great or Ivan the Terrible, but that is only to say that the moderate, the “liberal” phase of the Russian Revolution was unquestionably over by the time Stalin took power. In 1917, however, even had Kerensky been the sort of man who could successfully organize repressive measures—and he plainly was not that sort of man—what we are bound to call public opinion would not in those days have permit-

ted the execution of such measures. Much the same situation is to be found in France, where the Jacobins were permitted free speech and free association, and firmly and publicly insisted on their rights as free men to get ready for a dictatorship by suppressing the “enemies of the fatherland”—that is, what was left of royalists, non-juring priests, active conservatives.

Nor are the moderates more successful in their attempts to get—or rather to retain—control of the machinery which they and the extremists had jointly built up as a means of overthrowing the old regime. For this there seems to be no single preponderant reason. The moderates are, of course, occupied with a good deal of the work of actual governing, and they have less time for army committees or Jacobin clubs or soviet meetings. They feel themselves perhaps a trifle superior to such activity. They are temperamentally unfitted for the rougher and dirtier work of the politics of direct action. They have moral scruples. They are not quite the noble souls historical legend makes out the Girondin moderates in the French Revolution to have been; indeed many of them, like Brissot and Kerensky, have a good many of the gifts of the political manipulator. But they are in power, and they seem to set about quite naturally cultivating the sober virtues that go with power. Such virtues, however, make them inadequate leaders of militant revolutionary societies.

Whatever the explanation, the fact of the uniformity is clear. This particular failure of the moderates is well shown in the French Revolution. The Jacobin network of societies of “Friends of the Constitution” was in its inception hardly to the Left of Lafayette and his friends. When, however, it began to move further to the Left the Fayetteists made a few feeble efforts to retain control, and then went off and founded their own society, the Feuil-lants. The Feuil-lants, however, could not spread with much success beyond narrow upper-class and intellectual Parisian circles. Later groups founded here and there throughout the country as “Friends of the Monarchy,” or “Friends of Peace,” tried to compete with the Jacobins, but with very little luck. If they gave bread to the poor, the Jacobins cried out that they were attempting bribery.

If they did nothing, the Jacobins complained that they lacked social conscience. Finally the Jacobins worked out a fairly systematic procedure. They would hire a few hoodlums—sometimes it was not necessary to hire them—to break up a meeting of the rival Friends of Peace, and would then send a deputation to the municipal authorities asking that the Friends of Peace be closed as a public nuisance. The authorities were either Jacobins themselves, or more afraid of the Jacobins than of the Friends of Peace, so that the matter received a suitable revolutionary solution.

Similarly the Presbyterians found themselves powerless to control the spread of Independency, not only in the army, but in local parishes. And in Russia the compromisers found the Bolsheviks formidable in all the important soviets. A detailed study of the Petrograd soviet from February to October will show how cleverly the party of Lenin took advantage of every mistake of its opponents, how successfully it burrowed from within, spreading its control from factory soviets on up until finally the city soviet was captured. Such a study will also show the compromisers gradually losing ground, in spite of the great oratorical gifts of leaders like Tseretelli, Chkheidze, and Kerensky.

There is, indeed, an almost organic weakness in the position of the moderates. They are placed between two groups, the disgruntled but not yet silenced conservatives and the confident, aggressive extremists. There are still freedom of speech and the other political rights, so that even conservatives have a voice. Now the moderates seem in all these revolutions to be following the slogan used so conspicuously for French politics of the *Cartel des Gauches* in 1924, a slogan that still gives difficulties to the noncommunist Left throughout the Western world today: "no enemies to the Left." They distrust the conservatives, against whom they have so recently risen; and they are reluctant to admit that the extremists, with whom they so recently stood united, can actually be their enemies. All the force of the ideas and sentiments with which the moderates entered the revolution give them a sort of twist toward the Left. Emotionally they cannot bear to think of themselves as falling behind in the revolutionary process.

Moreover, many of them hope to outbid the extremists for popular support, to beat them at their own game. But only in normal times can you trust in the nice smooth clichés of politics like "beat them at their own game." The moderates fail by this policy of "no enemies to the Left" to reconcile these enemies to the Left; and they make it quite impossible to rally to their support any of the not yet quite negligible conservatives. Then, after the moderates get thoroughly frightened about the threatening attitude of the extremists, they turn for help to the conservatives, and find there just aren't any on hand and available. They have emigrated, or retired to the country, hopeless and martyred in spirit. Needless to say, a martyred conservative is no longer a conservative, but only another maladjusted soul. This last turn of theirs toward the conservatives, however, finishes the moderates. Alone, unsupported in control of a government as yet by no means in assured and habitual control of a personnel, civil or military, they succumb easily to insurrection. It is significant that Pride's Purge, the French crisis of June 2, 1793, and the Petrograd October Revolution were all hardly more than *coups d'état*.

In the English, French, and Russian revolutions it is possible to distinguish one critical measure around which all these currents converge, a measure which, espoused by the moderates, cuts them off from support on the Right and leaves the radicals in a position to use this very measure against its authors. Such are the Root-and-Branch Bill in the English Revolution, the Civil Constitution of the Clergy in the French, and Order Number One in the Russian.

The Root-and-Branch Bill originated in a petition with 15,000 signatures presented to the House of Commons late in 1640, asking for the abolition of Episcopacy "with all its roots and branches." Naturally the moderate Episcopalian, from Hyde and Falkland to Digby, were against a measure which destroyed their Church; and just as naturally the Presbyterians were inclined to favor it. It is possible that politically minded moderates like Pym might have left the bill alone, but the refusal of the bishops to give up their seats in the House of Lords seems to have

determined Pym to support the bill. This espousal made almost every thorough Episcopalian some kind of Royalist, and when the Civil War broke out in 1642 the Presbyterians were stranded on the extreme Right of the party groupings within the region controlled by the Parliamentarians. They could find no possible allies except to the Left. The Independents—and Cromwell had first actually introduced the Root-and-Branch Bill in the House—could now argue that presbyters were no better than bishops, that the reasons which held for the abolition of one held incontrovertibly for the abolition of the other. Later, when the moderates proved incapable of carrying the war to a successful conclusion, measures like the Self-Denying Ordinance and the creation of the New Model Army had to be accepted by a Presbyterian majority which was not by any means a commanding majority, and which had left itself with no possibility of conservative support.

The Civil Constitution of the Clergy emerged after months of discussion in the National Assembly as a charter for renewed Christianity in France. The moderates who put it through seem mostly to have been sincere men, bad Catholics in some ways, perhaps, but rather because they had absorbed some of the practical wordly spirit of the age than because they were outright anticlericals or "freethinkers." Yet their measure alienated the good Catholics and merely encouraged the violent freethinkers to try to root out the "vile superstitions" of Christianity altogether. The Civil Constitution in all innocence provided for the election of parish priests by the same local electoral bodies that chose lay officials for the new government positions, and for the election of bishops by the same departmental body that elected representatives to the Legislative Assembly. It scrapped all the historic dioceses of old France, and substituted nice, nearly uniform dioceses identical with the new *départements* into which France was governmentally divided. It did consent to "notify" the Pope of such elections.

Since the property of the Church as a corporation had been taken over to serve as security for the new paper money of the revolution, the *assignats*, the State was to support the expenses of the clergy under the new constitu-

tion. The election of priests and bishops by bodies to which Protestants, Jews, and avowed atheists were theoretically eligible was so completely uncanonical that no Pope could for a moment have considered accepting it. Although there was the usual diplomatic delay, the break between the Pope and the revolutionary government was inevitable, and with it a powerful and conservative group of Catholics was forced irreconcilably into opposition. The new Constitutional Church was hardly more acceptable to the real radicals than the old Roman Catholic Church, and as the critical days of the Terror drew nearer the moderates found themselves saddled with the protection of a church which returned them no important support.

Order Number One emerged from no such long debate as did the Root-and-Branch Bill and the Civil Constitution of the Clergy. Indeed, it is not quite fair to list it as a definite measure sponsored by the moderates, though the soviet leader most prominent in the group which prepared it was the moderate N. D. Sokolov, and the compromisers energetically promulgated it. The Order emerged in the very last days of the February Revolution from the headquarters of the Petrograd soviet. It was addressed to the army, and in addition to the usual revolutionary measures toward a standing army of the old regime—abolition of salutes, social and political equality of privates with officers, and so on—it provided for elected company and battalion committees which were to have entire charge of arms, above all of those of officers; and it ordered that every military unit obey the soviets in political matters. The military committee of the *duma* might be obeyed in military matters, provided the soviet did not object in a specific case. The Order was devised primarily with the Petrograd garrison in mind, but its main provisions were rapidly taken up at the front. This order at once convinced the conservatives that there was nothing to be hoped for from the revolution, and put even the more liberal officers in a state of mind to welcome later attempts at a conservative *coup d'état*. It made the subsequent task of the moderates in bringing Russia back to military efficiency for the war on Germany more difficult than ever. And it by no means served to reconcile the soldiers themselves with the

continuation of the war. Most of the popularity of Order Number One eventually redounded to the credit of the Bolsheviks; most of its unpopularity came back on the compromisers. This is the typical fate of the moderates in these revolutions.

Again, the moderates are in all our societies confronted sooner or later with the task of fighting a war; and they prove poor war leaders. In England the fighting broke out in 1642, and before the first Civil War was over Cromwell and the Independents had made themselves indispensable, and were on the threshold of power. Foreign war in France broke out in the spring of 1792, and a few months later the monarchy had fallen; the war went very badly in the spring of 1793, and in June the moderate Girondins, who had on the French side been the most eager for war, were turned out by the Montagnards. The Russian Revolution was born in the midst of a disastrous war, and the Russian moderates never had a chance at peaceful administration. The fact is clear. The moderates cannot seem to succeed in war. The reasons why are less clear. No doubt the commitment of the moderates to protect the liberties of the individual is a factor. You cannot organize an army if you take Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity at all seriously.

Modern wars seem to carry with them the necessity for organizing civil government along military lines, for the exercise of strong, centralized governmental authority in which the liberty of the individual is far from a matter of first concern, in which there is very little debate, very little of the government by discussion so prized by the moderates, very little compromise and moderation. War, said Madison, is the mother of executive aggrandizement, and even here in America our wars have borne him out. But in the midst of a revolution the executive that gets aggrandized is not the moderate executive. The Reigns of Terror in France and in Russia are in part explicable as the concentration of power in a government of national defense made necessary by the fact of war. This is by no means a complete explanation of the Reigns of Terror. But certainly the necessity for a strong centralized government to run the war is one of the reasons why the moderates failed. They simply could not provide the discipline, the enthusi-

asm, the unpondered loyalty necessary to fight a war, and they went out.

v. Summary

To the kindly souls who for the most part wrote the history from which we get our notions of modern revolutions, this failure of the moderates was a great tragedy. The moderates appear as good men worsted by circumstances and unscrupulous opponents. They seem to be idealists crushed by a harsh world, but thereby sure of the resurrection history holds out to the just. The gentle Falkland and the scholarly Condorcet—the latter in his political and ethical *ideas* an immoderate—smile down upon us from the only heaven to which mere mortals hold the key. It is true that not even foreign historians have as yet made a heaven for Miliukov or Kerensky. Their failure, for one thing, is still too stark; and for another, the Russian moderates are still without honor in their own country.

Perhaps most of the moderates would be morally better or at least more normal men than their extremist opponents. Yet, leaders and led together, they make a motley lot, by no means easily catalogued by Marxist or by psychologist. And the traditional notion that they were idealists and that they failed because in the rough give-and-take the idealist must always fail is here peculiarly misleading. It is more accurate to risk the paradox: they failed because they were in so many respects what is usually called realists; that is, some of them were reasonably well adapted to a common-sense world.

Pym and Mirabeau, who died peacefully before the defeat of the moderates was evident, still enjoy reputations as skilled politicians, as sensible moderates. Over most of the others there hangs something of the kind of reputation most definite and clear with Kerensky. The eloquent compromiser leader seems to us a man of words, an orator who could move crowds but could not guide them, an impractical and incompetent person in the field of action. The Gironde seems much the same, as also the lesser Presbyterian leaders like Holles. It seems empty paradoxical to list these people as realists. Yet realists of a kind they

were. They used grand words and phrases grandly as a consolation and a joy to their listeners and to themselves. But they did not believe in them as the radicals believed in them; they did not intend to try to pursue them to their logical conclusions in action. They were, in short, using words in the way most men in normal societies, including such realistic politicians as Gladstone, use them. They would not seem realists to a hard-headed horse trader. But within the limits which tradition and ritual have set for the work of such people as they—part priest, part administrator, part actor, part teacher—they were good quiet practitioners.

But the times were turned topsy-turvy, and as the crisis of the revolution approached, only the man with a touch—or more—of fanatic idealism in him, or at least with the ability to act the part of such a fanatic, could attain to leadership. The normal social roles of realism and idealism are reversed in the acute phases of a revolution. We shall return to this topic in our next chapter. Here we need only note that the outward evidences of the approach of this kind of crisis appear as a heightened form of class antagonism. The moderates by definition are not great haters, are not endowed with the effective blindness which keeps men like Robespierre and Lenin undistracted in their rise to power. In normal times, ordinary men are not capable of feeling for groups of their fellow men hatred as intense, continuous, and uncomfortable as that preached by the extremists in revolution. Such hatred is a heroic emotion, and heroic emotions are exhausting. The poor may hate the rich, the Protestant the Catholic, the bourgeois the noble, the Southerner the Yankee, and so on. But this hate is normally in human beings a routine and consoling hate, a part of life, like food, drink, and loving, integrated with an existence as alien to the possibility of revolution as that of a vegetable.

The moderates, then, do not really believe in the big words they have to use. They do not really believe a heavenly perfection is suddenly coming to men on earth. They are all for compromise, common sense, toleration, comfort. In a normal society, these desires are part of their strength and give them their hold over their fellows, who share at

least their desire for comfort. But in these three revolutions large numbers of men were for the moment lifted by desire and emotion to a point where they seemed to despise even comfort. The moderates could not deal politically with such men; they could not take the first steps which are necessary if such men are to be understood. The moderates were cut off from the immoderates by a gap neither philosophy nor common sense could fill. There is an adage that in the kingdom of the blind the one-eyed man is king. In one of his subtler short stories, "The Kingdom of the Blind," H. G. Wells exposed the weakness of this apothegm. In the heat of a violent revolution, its weakness is perhaps even more apparent than in the imaginary Andean valley of Wells's tale. The moderates we have been dealing with were all very human and very fallible; but even had they been as wise as the heroes of Plutarch, as wise as Washington, it would seem that they must have failed. For we are here in a land fabulous but real, where the wisdom and common sense of the moderate are not wisdom and common sense, but folly.

Chapter

6

THE ACCESSION OF THE EXTREMISTS

I. The Coup d'État

The struggle between the moderates and the extremists, which begins almost as soon as the dramatic overthrow of the old regime is effected, is marked by a series of exciting episodes: here street fighting, there a forced seizure of property, almost everywhere heated debates, attempted repressions, a steady stream of violent propaganda. Tempers are strained to the breaking point over matters that in a stable society are capable of an almost automatic solution. There is an almost universal state of tension. The fever is working its way to a crisis. As with many fevers, its progress is in detail jerky, with now an apparent improvement and then a sudden jump ahead. But the cumulative effect is unmistakable. With the final overthrow of the moderates the revolution may be said to have entered its crisis stage.

Before we attempt to describe the behavior of men in societies in such a crisis, we shall have to go a bit further into the process by which the extremists acceded to power. In a sense, such an analysis will be but pointing out in reverse what we have already said of the moderates: the reasons why the extremists succeeded are but the other side of the reasons why the moderates failed. Where the

moderates were weak, the extremists were strong. The actual steps by which the extremists rise to power are, however, too important to be left with this general statement. We must parallel our analysis of moderate weaknesses with an analysis of extremist strengths.

The extremists win out because they secure control of the illegal government and turn it in a decisive *coup d'état* against the legal government. The problem of the dual sovereignty is solved by the revolutionary acts in which the Independents, the Jacobins, and the Bolsheviki seized power. But the moderates had once shared with them the control of the organizations which they had turned against the government. The key to the success of the extremists lies in their monopoly of control over these organizations—New Model Army and Independent churches, Jacobin clubs, and soviets.

They obtain this monopoly by ousting, usually in a series of conflicts, any and all *active and effective* opponents from these organizations. The discipline, single-mindedness, and centralization of authority which mark the rule of the triumphant extremists are first developed and brought to perfection in the revolutionary groups of the illegal government. The characteristics which were formed in the growth of the illegal government remain those of the radicals after the illegal government becomes the legal. Indeed, many of these useful characteristics were first molded even further back in the days of the old regime, when the extremists were very small concentrated groups subject to the full "tyranny" of the government.

The Independents gained discipline and devotion from a long series of persecutions which began under Elizabeth, whose famed love of tolerance was not extended to Catholics or Brownists. The French radicals were not so badly treated under the old regime as their descendants and historians like to think, but the censorship, the Bastille, and the *lettres de cachet* were real enough, even if they rarely fell to the lot of the rank and file of the enlightened. As for Russia, its extremists were molded in the most melodramatic traditions of oppression, were backed by almost a century of secret organization, plotting, oaths, and martyrdom. We shall see later that the great Russian Revolution

is indeed over; but many of the authoritarian features of the extremist period have clearly survived in the Russia of today. One of the reasons for that survival is the very great strength of the Communist authoritarian discipline, forged by years of underground conspiracy and control from above and within.

II. Organization of the Extremists

The first thing likely to strike an observer of the successful extremists in the English, French, and Russian revolutions, and indeed, the not quite so radical patriots who put through the American Revolution, is their fewness in numbers. The membership of the formal organizations which did the work of beating the moderates was never more than a small minority of the total population. Their active membership was of course always smaller than the membership on the books. It is not easy to get exact figures, either for membership or for populations, but the following figures are not erroneous enough to be misleading. The New Model Army was created at a membership of 22,000, and was not more than 40,000 in its most obstreperous days. The population of England was somewhere between three and five million. The Jacobins at the most generous estimate numbered in their struggle with the moderates about 500,000. The population of France was probably over rather than under twenty million. The Communist party in Russia has always prided itself on its numerical smallness; this is no bloated bourgeois party, full of indifferent members who cast a lazy vote, or don't even vote at all. Figures again are uncertain, but it seems likely that at no time during the active revolution—say up to Stalin's final acquisition of power by the expulsion of the "Rightist opposition" in 1929—did the Communist party number even 1 per cent of a population of well over one hundred million. In America the difficulty of even approximate figures is greater, since the patriots were not organized into a single body. It is clearly not fair to take the relatively small continental armies as exactly measuring the strength of the patriot—or Whig—group. Nevertheless, the best authorities are agreed that if you count out

avowed Loyalists and the very numerous indifferent or neutral, cultivating their own gardens throughout the war, the group which actively engineered, supported, and fought the American Revolution is a minority, probably not more than 10 per cent of the population.

It is easy to remark that though the facts clearly show that these revolutionary groups are very small minorities indeed, all politically active groups are minorities, and that in these revolutions the radicals in some way "represented" or "carried out" what the soul, will, genius, of their nations demanded. This may well be so in terms familiar to the metaphysician, but the relation involved is one which at present we cannot pretend to be able to study by the methods we have laid down in this book. Perhaps the Jacobins were the agents of the general will of the French people; but the general will is a metaphysical concept the relation of which with tangible Jacobins we cannot possibly measure here.

Trotsky in one of his less realistic moods had a fine time reconciling the fewness of the Bolsheviks in 1917 with the largeness of Russia, and with the various groups clearly hostile to the Bolsheviks. "The Bolsheviks," he wrote, in a fine anticipation of George Orwell's 1984, "took the people as preceding history had created them, and as they were called to achieve the Revolution. The Bolsheviks saw it as their mission to stand at the head of this people. *Those against the insurrection were everybody—except the Bolsheviks. But the Bolsheviks were the people.*" Trotsky wasn't quite metaphysician—or psychologist—enough to insist that the Bolsheviks were forging the Russian people to be free.

In fact, neither revolutionists of the Right nor of the Left have in the twentieth century quite dared to take a consistently Nietzschean position in this matter of the relation between their own elect few and their own masses; that is, they have not dared to say that the elect should be masters in the full connotation of that term and the rest should be slaves in the full connotation of that term. Lenin seems often on the edge of this Nietzschean position, and Hitler in *Mein Kampf* falls over into it not infrequently. But the official position of the Communist, Nazi, and Fas-

cist parties was that the party, the elect, the minority in power, is really a trustee, a shepherd of the people, ruling to improve the people's lot; and Communism to this day holds out the promise that eventually—in a long “eventually,” after world capitalism is beaten—the distinction between leaders and led, between party and people, between brain workers and manual workers, will vanish in the classless society.

In all our societies these radicals were very conscious, and usually very proud, of their small numbers. They felt definitely set off from their countrymen, consecrated to a cause which their countrymen were certainly not consciously and actively equal to. Some of the radicals may have satisfied themselves that they really represented the better selves of their fellow countrymen, that they were the reality of which the others were the potentiality. But here and now they were very sure that they were superior to the inert and flabby many. The English saints of the seventeenth century, the elect of a God more exclusive than any poor worldly king, made no attempt to conceal their contempt for the damned masses—and dukes and earls were of course masses for these determined Puritans. The Jacobins inherited from the Enlightenment a belief in the natural goodness or the natural reasonableness of the common man, and this belief put a limit to their expressed scorn for their fellows. But the scorn is there, and the Jacobin was almost as loftily consecrated as was the Independent. The Bolsheviks were brought up to believe that dialectical materialism works through an elite of the laboring classes aided by intellectuals, and that the peasants in particular were incapable of working out their own salvation. The Bolsheviks therefore took their fewness naturally enough, and their superiority as well.

There is also a good deal of evidence that as the revolutions go on, a very large number of people just drop out of active politics, make no attempt to register their votes. Now it may be that most of these people again are at heart in sympathy with the active radicals; but on the whole it looks as if most of them were cowed conservatives or moderates, men and women not anxious for martyrdom, but quite incapable of the mental and moral as well as physi-

cal strain of being a devoted extremist in the crisis of a revolution. We have very clear evidence of this dropping out of the ordinary man in *two* of our revolutions, and we may reasonably assume that it is one of the uniformities we are seeking.

In Russia, the February Revolution brought in universal suffrage as a matter of course. Russia had at last caught up with the West. At the first elections almost everybody, men and women alike, took the opportunity to vote in various local elections. But very shortly there set in a noticeable decline in the total number of votes cast. In the June, 1917, elections for the Moscow district dumas the Social-Revolutionary groups received 58 per cent of the votes; in the September elections the Bolsheviks received 52 per cent. A clear gain for the Bolsheviks by democratic methods? Not at all. In June the Social-Revolutionaries got 375,000 votes out of 647,000 cast; in September the Bolsheviks got 198,000 out of 381,000 cast. In three months half the electorate dropped out. Trotsky himself has a simple explanation for this: “many small-town people who, in the vapor of the first illusions, had joined the Compromisers fell back soon after into political non-existence.” The same story is graphically recorded in French municipal and national elections between the rosy days of 1789, days of almost universal suffrage in practice, and 1793, when in some cases less than a tenth of the qualified voters actually voted. The “people” did not vote for Bolsheviks or Jacobins, and it seems more than likely that if most Englishmen could have voted at all in 1648, they would not have voted for Independents, Levellers, Diggers, Fifth Monarchy Men, or Millenarians. It seems likely also that a full referendum or plebiscite on the American Declaration of Independence in 1776 would have been pretty close. The great numbers of qualified voters just don't vote; in Trotsky's compact phrase, they are politically nonexistent.

Their political nonexistence is not achieved without a good deal of help from the extremists. The elections are supposedly free and open, but the extremists are not hindered by any beliefs in freedom they may have expressed in other days. They soon take steps familiar in this country through the history of groups like the Ku Klux Klan and

Tammany Hall. They beat up well-known aristocrats and suchlike class enemies, they start riots at polling places or in electoral assemblies, they break windows and start street fights, they howl down moderate candidates, they bring to bear good journalists, skilled at libel and innuendo, and in a hundred ways which any realistic student of politics can uncover with a little study, they make it very difficult for ordinary, peaceful, humdrum men and women to go to the polls and cast their votes for the moderates to whom ordinary, peaceful, humdrum men and women seem attracted. Not that terrorism alone scares off the ordinary man. Mere laziness, an inability to give to political affairs the ceaseless attention revolutions demand, is also instrumental in keeping the man in the street from expressing himself. He gets fed up with the constant meetings, the deputations, the papers, the elections of dogcatchers, general inspectors, presidents, the committees, the rituals, the ceaseless moil and toil of self-government on a more than Athenian basis. At any rate he quits, and the extremists have the field to themselves.

Their fewness is indeed one of the great sources of the extremists' strength. Great numbers are almost as unwieldy in politics as on the battlefield. In the politics of revolutions what counts is the ability to move swiftly, to make clear and final decisions, to push through to a goal without regard for injured human dispositions. For such a purpose the active political group must be small. You cannot otherwise obtain the single-mindedness and devotion, the energy and the discipline, necessary to defeat the moderates. You cannot maintain the fever of fanaticism in large numbers of people long enough to secure the ultimate victory. The masses do not make revolutions. They may be enlisted for some impressive pageantry once the active few have won the revolution. Our twentieth-century revolutions, both of the Right and the Left, have achieved apparent miracles of mass participation. But the impressive demonstrations the camera has recorded in Germany, Italy, Russia and China ought not to deceive the careful student of politics. Neither Communist, Nazi, nor Fascist victory over the moderates was achieved by the participation of the

many; all were achieved by small, disciplined, principled, fanatical bodies.

Nor at this stage of revolution do the victorious radicals dare make use of the plebiscite. They cannot risk anything like a free election. Only later, when the crisis is followed by a convalescence, by a return to normal ways, does the plebiscite stage arrive, if it ever does. This interval may not be a very long one, and in the case of Rightist revolutions may be very brief, since the full fury of the Ideal rarely inspires the men of the Right. But certainly for the revolutions we are here studying, the generalization holds: the honest plebiscite is absent from the struggle between extremists and moderates, and is not used by the extremists even after their accession to power. This still holds true in Russia and in her satellites.

The extremists are not only few; they are fanatically devoted to their cause. Their awareness of being few seems correlated with the intensity of their fanaticism. One feeds upon and strengthens the other. With their objects, with the content of their dreams of a better world, we shall concern ourselves later. For those who think that only in the service of a personal God can feelings properly defined as "fanatical" be aroused, our application of the word to Jacobins and Bolsheviks may seem illegitimate. But this is surely an undue narrowing of a clear and useful word. Bolsheviks and Jacobins were as convinced as any Calvinist that they alone were right, that what they proposed was the only possible course. All of our revolutionary radicals displayed a willingness to work hard, to sacrifice their peace and security, to submit to discipline, to submerge their personalities in the group. They were all aware of the spiritual difficulties of keeping "always at the height of revolutionary circumstances," as the Jacobins used to put it; but to a surprising extent they overcame these difficulties and maintained on this earth an *esprit de corps*, an active moral union, that is far beyond the powers of ordinary men in ordinary circumstances to attain and to maintain.

And they are disciplined. Partly, as we have explained, this is an inheritance from their oppressed past. It cor-

relates with their fewness and with their fanatical strength. The New Model Army is an excellent example. It defeated the hapazard aggregations which the ordinary recruiting methods of the Royalists opposed to it; it defeated the cream of the opposing forces, the cavalry recruited from faithful country gentlemen and their dependents. The New Model was recruited from ardent Puritans, vouched for by men who knew them; and it was submitted to a brief but effective course of training incomparably more severe than any that had yet been used in English military history. The result was a fine army—and a compact body of hard revolutionists who could cut through the best intentions and the best rhetoric of the moderates. The discipline of the Jacobins was not military, but it was very rigorous, and indeed resembled the kind of discipline which a militant religious body imposes on its members. The Jacobins were always scrutinizing their own membership, submitting to the ordeal of an *épuration*, literally a "purification," better, a "purge." The slightest deviation from the established order of the day might bring a warning and possible expulsion. With the Spartan ways of the Russian Communist party in the early days of the Soviet state most of us are familiar; it is a point on which all reporters, kindly and unkindly, are agreed.

The extremists put their disciplined skill into the realization of the revolutionary ends. There has been worked out in the last few hundred years an elaborate technique of revolutionary action, of which the Russian, Chinese, and Cuban Communists were the latest heirs. A good deal has been written about this technique, which is in part simply the technique of any successful pressure group: propaganda, electioneering, lobbying, parading, street fighting, guerrilla warfare, Gandhian non-violent violence, delegation making, direct pressure on magistrates, sporadic terrorism of the tar-and-feather or castor-oil variety and other techniques in various combinations. Jacobins, Communists, and Sons of Liberty did a notably good job at this sort of thing. But it is rather surprising to note how many of these techniques can be found in England, and especially in London, as early as the seventeenth century. In this respect, as in many others, the English Revolution is clearly

of a modern type. Here is a bit that might have come from the French Revolution: during the debate on the Militia Order, a crowd of apprentices "came into the House of Commons and kept the door open, and their hats on . . . and called out as they stood, 'Vote, vote,' and in this arrogant posture stood until the votes passed." One suspects that these apprentices did not march in spontaneously. This is the kind of thing that takes organization.

Finally, the extremists follow their leaders with a devotion and a unanimity not to be found among the moderates. Theories of democratic equality, which crop up at the start of all our revolutions, prove no obstacle to the development among the extremists of something very like the "Führer" principle we associate with Fascist movements. Here it is the moderates who live up to their theories, and in the early stages of the revolutions it is not uncommon to find complaints that So-and-so is arrogating to himself powers, a personal leadership, no good man would want to possess. Mirabeau and Kerensky, to take neat examples, were accused by moderates and extremists alike of aiming at a personal dictatorship. Yet Robespierre and Lenin followed in their footsteps almost literally and for them only the cheering could be heard—at least in the homeland. This magnifying of the principle of leadership runs right through the organization, from the subalterns up to the great national heroes—Cromwell, Robespierre, Lenin.

On the whole, this leadership is effective, and especially so at the very top. Now if they are seen as full and rounded human beings, there are unquestionably differences among the men who make up the general staffs of the extremists. The psychologist and the novelist, indeed the historian as well, could not lump them all together. Yet they have in common one aspect which is of great importance to the sociologist; they combine, in varying degrees, very high ideals and a complete contempt for the inhibitions and principles which serve most other men as ideals. They present a strange variant of Plato's pleasant scheme: they are not philosopher-kings but philosopher-killers. They have the realistic, the practical touch very few of the moderate leaders had, and yet they have also enough of the prophet's fire to hold followers who expect the New

Jerusalem around the next corner. They are practical men unfettered by common sense, Machiavellians in the service of the Beautiful and the Good.

A bit from Lenin's life will make the point clear. At a secret meeting of the Central Committee of the Bolshevik party just before the October Revolution, Lenin was urging insurrection on the more tender-minded of his colleagues, who thought that the Bolsheviks ought to respect the will of the majority of Russians, which was clearly against them. "We are inclined to consider the systematic preparation of an uprising as something in the nature of a political sin," said he. "To wait for the Constituent Assembly, which will clearly not be with us, is senseless." There is the practical Lenin, unworried by a democratic dogma that stands in his way. After the October Revolution he wrote in *Pravda* of "the crisis which has arisen as a result of the lack of correspondence between the elections to the Constituent Assembly and the will of the people and the interest of the toiling and exploited classes." Here the will of the people is somehow at bottom the will of the minority party of Bolsheviks. We are back again in the midst of democratic dogma. Parallel cases could readily be drawn from Robespierre, Cromwell, and even, one fears, from Jefferson.

Hypocrisy? To those of little imagination or experience of the world, such acts must always seem hypocritical. But, on a less heroic scale, they are far too much a part of normal human action to deserve so opprobrious a label. The Robespierre who, as an enlightened young man, had held capital punishment wrong did not hypocritically send his enemies to the guillotine. He had convinced himself that his enemies were scarcely men at all; they were sinners, corrupt souls, agents of a worse-than-Satan, and their removal from this earth wasn't really capital punishment in the conventional sense at all. You could still treat ordinary criminals in full accord with the most humanitarian principles of jurisprudence. Most of us make this sort of compromise with ourselves often enough in daily life. But with us comfort, convenience, habit, even common sense, determine the limits of compromise. For the revolutionary extremist such limits are off; in the delirium, in the crisis,

there is an extraordinary reversal of the roles played in normal times by the real and the ideal. Here briefly and at last the blind—or the seer—is king; plain earthly seeing, the kind that concerns the oculist, is for once of very little use. The seers have just enough of it to keep their positions of leadership. Cromwell, indeed, had a good deal of what seems an English sense of the contingent, and Lenin was certainly no academic idealist. Robespierre is in some ways the most unadulterated seer of the lot.

Yet all of them, including even Robespierre, were what the world calls men of action. They could and did get things done, were administrators and executives, ran organizations for which tradition and routine had not yet been able to build up much that worked automatically. If they have left behind them a reputation for unusual ruthlessness, this may be in part a reflection of the ill repute terrorism has for most of us. And the ruthlessness, in the proper service of the ideal, went while they were alive into the making of their leadership. Cromwell gained credit among the Saints for his Irish massacres. The guillotine in France was for a few months the "holy guillotine." Trotsky, early in his famous rallying of the Bolshevik troops in the Civil War, ordered shot the commander, commissar, and one soldier out of ten in a Petrograd workers' regiment that had fled the enemy, and to the dismay of gentler colleagues showed no hesitation about continuing the policy of discipline through bloodshed. Trotsky became briefly a savior and a hero. We are a long way from Order Number One!

For most men, there is a gap between their deeds and their professions, between what they are and what they would like to be, between what they are and what they think they are. Normally, however, they manage to keep the gap small enough, or turn their attention away from one side of it or the other, so that they are not unduly troubled by it. For the leaders of the extremists in times of revolution the gap looks to an outside observer enormous, bigger than it ever is in normal times. A few men, like Fouché, seem to have been terrorists to save their own skins. But, in general, only a sincere extremist in a revolution can kill men because he loves man, attain peace

through violence, and free men by enslaving them. Such contrasts in action would paralyze a conventionally practical leader, but the extremist seems quite undisturbed by it. Where the ordinary man would be troubled by something like a split personality, where his conscience or his sense of reality, or both, would be haunted, the extremist goes boldly ahead. Wide though the gap between the real and the ideal is in the crisis period, he can cross it at his own convenience. He has, for the moment, the best of both worlds. He can manipulate with equal skill the concrete and complex human beings on committees, deputations, bureaus, ministries, all the unsettling problems of administration, and yet use gracefully and convincingly the abstract, indispensable, haunting words which have in revolutions such magic power over large groups of men.

It is this last gift that seems to lie all but wholly beyond the capacity of the most ambitious hypocrite. The great leaders of the Terrors are fitted for their task by a genuine vocation, a vocation which in ordinary times would exclude them from political power. Their belief in the Absolute is not assumed, and is as real as their ability to handle the contingent. And for once the Absolute is practical politics. F. W. Maitland has a passage, suggested by Coleridge, which puts the point neatly:

Coleridge has remarked how, in times of great political excitement, the terms in which political theories are expressed become, not more and more practical, but more and more abstract and impractical. It is in such times that men clothe their theories in universal terms. . . . The absolute spirit is abroad. Relative or partial good seems a poor ideal. It is not of these, or those men that we speak, of this nation or that age, but of Man.

III. *Fitness of the Extremists*

The transition from opposition to power is not a sudden one for the extremists. The whole point about the *duo-evlastie*, the dual sovereignty, is that it is not a struggle between government and opposition, between ins and outs,

but between two governments within the same state, an irregular civil war. Under the old regime perhaps no more than a pressure group, the revolutionists' organization gradually takes over, in the confusion of the first stages of actual revolution, governmental powers which are never thereafter wholly subordinated to the provisional government, the almost legal heir of the old regime. The process is especially clear in Russia, though it is substantially uniform in all our revolutions.

Practically all the soviets, even in the market towns, did administrative work from the very beginning. Trotsky, here in his role of historian, gives some good succinct examples:

The soviet in Saratov was compelled to interfere in economic conflicts, to arrest manufacturers, confiscate the tramway belonging to Belgians, introduce workers' control, and organize production in the abandoned factories. . . . In the Urals the soviets frequently instituted courts of justice for the trial of citizens, created their own militia in several factories, paying for its equipment out of the factory cash-box, organized a workers' inspection which assembled raw materials and fuel for the factories, superintended the sale of manufactured goods and established a wage-scale.

Obviously, in parts of Russia the slogan "All power to the Soviets" had become a bit superfluous even before the October Revolution.

In France the "Societies of Friends of the Constitution," at their formation in 1789 hardly more than pressure groups, or possibly French variants of the Yankee caucus, had by June 2, 1793, taken over a good many functions normally carried out by governmental bodies. When the "constituted authorities," as the Jacobins respectfully called governing councils and legislatures, failed to do what the Jacobins wanted, the Jacobins went ahead and did it themselves. Notably the whole repressive legislation on the non-juring (Catholic) clergy was anticipated in practice by the Jacobin clubs in the provinces.

The clubs were organized like parliamentary bodies, with elaborate rules on debating, with committees, officers, minutes, and indeed all the apparatus of a proper legislature. Sometimes a club would overawe or persuade municipal or departmental officers into an approved Jacobin policy; sometimes, failing in this, a club would almost openly pass laws and decrees. Those of the members who protested against this shocking interference with authorities chosen by popular election—and many did protest on just such grounds—were thereby ticketed as moderates, and were lucky if they avoided the guillotine later.

That the men who made the American Revolution were by no means unexercised in the art of actual governing has long been a commonplace of proud Anglo-Saxon writers on both sides of the Atlantic. What we must note here is that that preparation had by no means been wholly of the conventional legal sort. Not only in town meeting and colonial legislatures, but in caucuses, committees, and congresses that bear a close parallel with soviets and Jacobin clubs, the American radicals were schooled to take over the government from the agents of the Crown. We shall see in the next chapter that they did not hesitate to use terroristic means to preserve, as they had used them to attain, that power.

In England the situation is complicated by the fact that though the illegal organization headed up in the New Model Army, the various Independent congregations were also in their way agents of the extremists in their drive to power. The army itself, of course, began very soon after Naseby to interfere in politics in a way no conventional army does; and the first expulsion of Presbyterians from Parliament was initiated and carried through by army resolutions and an army committee. But the Independents, and especially the Independent clergy, had much earlier taken a hand in matters very terrestrial indeed. As Professor Grierson has said, "It is not what Laud did that Baxter [a Puritan divine] seems to complain of, so much as what he would not allow them, the parish pastors, to do, viz., to exercise a moral discipline co-extensive with the parish." And by a moral discipline a Puritan meant something co-extensive with the whole of human life.

The extremists are not, then, politically innocent or inexperienced; they have had a long experience of oppression, and a briefer, but very intensive, training in actual government before they come to full power. To call either leaders or rank and file inexperienced, "pure theorists," and "metaphysicians," as has long been the habit especially among political writers in English, is misleading. Neither their aims nor their methods are those that good Victorians like Bagehot or Maine could approve or sympathize with. They are certainly heaven-storming idealists, scornful of compromise. But they are not academic theorists totally unadapted to action. *On the contrary, they are admirably adapted, almost in the sense a biologist gives to adaptation, to the special, the unique environment of the crisis.* That is why they succeed.

The actual overthrow of the moderates is usually a very neat job, an excellent example of the skill of the revolutionary leaders and the close adaptation of the revolutionary organizations to their functions. It is, as we have seen, by no means a great popular uprising. The crowds whose confused milling about makes an exact account of the taking of the Bastille or the February Revolution in Petrograd impossible for the historian, do not interfere with the professional dispatch with which Pride's Purge, the purge of the Girondins, and the October Revolution were put through. In France the extremists reached power in two of these *coups d'état*. The first, the overthrow of the monarchy on August 10, 1792, was achieved through an elaborate but never confused collaboration of various organs of the illegal government—Jacobin and other political clubs, the *fédérés*, local militia from all over France assembled in Paris to celebrate the anniversary of the fall of the Bastille, and the ward organizations out of which the revolutionary Parisian Commune was made. Almost the same elements were integrated ten months later for the easier task of bullying the Convention into giving up the Girondins. Danton, Marat, possibly Robespierre, and certainly a number of less famous but very skilled secondary leaders formed a general staff which engineered both of these *coups*.

The October Revolution was elaborately prepared, and

has been clearly described in Trotsky's own *History of the Russian Revolution*. We need not here go into details of this preparation. But a quotation from Trotsky will show how the details were taken care of:

The typographical workers through their union, called to the attention of the Committee [the Military-Revolution Committee in Petrograd, the general staff of the October Revolution] an increase in Black Hundred [reactionary] leaflets and brochures. It was decided that in all suspicious cases the printers' union should come for instructions to the Military-Revolution Committee. This control was the most effective of all possible forms of control over the printed agitation of the counter-revolution.

Naturally; printed agitation has to have printers as well as legal freedom of the press. Perón in Argentina used a very similar technique to get rid of the independent newspaper *La Prensa*. In a dozen such ways the moderates were hamstringed in the last few days before the Bolshevik insurrection. There was no nonsense about a general strike; there was simply a co-ordinated series of seizures of centers of military and police power, press, post and telegraph, banks, and ministries.

The dramatic seizure of Charles I by Cornet Joyce on June 3, 1647, at Holmby House is perhaps the first assumption of sovereign power by the New Model. When Charles asked Joyce whence he had his commission to remove him, Joyce is said to have replied, pointing to his soldiers drawn up on the lawn. "There is my commission." The reply will serve in all our revolutions. Once the extremists are in power, there is no more finicky regard for the liberties of the individual or for the forms of legality. The extremists, after clamoring for liberty and toleration while they were in opposition, turn very authoritarian when they reach power. There is no need for us to sigh over this, or grow indignant, or talk of hypocrisy. We are attempting to discern uniformities in the behavior of men during certain revolutions in specific social systems, and this seems to be one of the uniformities.

It was but a bare six months [writes Gardiner] since the Independent leaders [Cromwell and Vane] who now permitted some hundreds of sufferers to be excluded for conscience's sake from the University of Oxford, had been striving to lay the foundations of a broad system of toleration in *The Heads of the Proposals* and had even taken into consideration a scheme for extending that toleration to the Roman Catholic priesthood itself.

Later under the Rump a strict censorship of the press was instituted, and the various canons and tastes of Puritanism enforced as far as possible by government policy. Similarly in France and Russia the new government clamped down at once on its enemies and began to build up the machinery of the coming Terror. Where, as in France and Russia, the army had lost its discipline under active attempts to introduce Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity, discipline was reintroduced with a good deal of firmness. Mr. Chamberlin describes the Russian situation:

The Bolshevik military authorities now began to talk about the harmful and disruptive influence of army committees very much as Kornilov, Denikin, and the old army officers had spoken in 1917; and strict obedience to the orders of the officers gradually became embedded in the discipline of the Red Army.

The Heads of Proposals and *The Agreement of the People*, radical platforms adopted by the army under Leveller influence, had proposed something very close to what came to be conventional nineteenth-century democracy—equal electoral districts, frequent parliaments, specific limitations on the executive power, even universal manhood suffrage. Cromwell seems never to have been in any sense a doctrinaire rebel, and indeed probably had many of the sentiments about authority and tradition one would expect from a country gentleman. If he suffered at all in mind about the situation, it was probably because the good old parliamentary institutions could not be restored. Certainly the last thing that could be done was to hold an open and free election on any conceivable fran-

chise. The so-called Parliament of Saints which met in 1653 after the dissolution of the Rump was hardly more than a council sent up from trustworthy Independent groups and chosen by caucus methods.

Similarly in France, the victors of June 2nd did not dare go to the people. As a gesture they promulgated the so-called Constitution of 1793, based on universal suffrage, bill of rights, and the rest of the paraphernalia of democracy, but they took good care to go no further than printing it. It was never put into effect.

The Bolsheviks had for months attacked the Provisional government for not calling a constituent assembly. Such an assembly was finally chosen by universal suffrage just before the Bolshevik *coup*. In it the Bolsheviks were in a clear minority. Lenin dissolved this constituent assembly in January, 1918, with a light heart, but many of his followers, in spite of their Marxist training, were really hurt by such a defiance of democratic sentiments and traditions. Many good Jacobins were also worried by the fact of their new dictatorship.

Theory came to provide a salve to wounded consciences—no mean or unimportant function in any society. The theory of revolutionary dictatorship is very nearly identical in all three of our revolutions. Liberty for everyone, liberty full, free, and fair, is of course the ultimate goal. But such liberty at present would mean that men corrupted by the bad old ways would be able to realize their wicked plans, restore the bad old institutions, and frustrate the good men. On reflection, the extremist continues, it is clear that we must distinguish between liberty for those who deserve it, and liberty for those who don't, which latter is, of course, false liberty, pseudo-liberty, license or anarchy. God had given liberty to the Saints—true liberty, which is obedience to Him—but he clearly did not give liberty to sinners. You repress papists as you would repress devils. To argue that such sinners ought to be left alone would have seemed to seventeenth-century English Puritans as absurd as it would to us to suggest that yellow-fever-bearing mosquitoes be left alone. Robespierre himself phrased it with classic neatness: the revolutionary government, he said, was the despotism of liberty against tyr-

anny. For Marx, the dictatorship of the proletariat is a necessary transitional stage, in which the last vestiges of capitalistic methods and capitalistic mentality are wiped out. Ruthless use of force will be necessary in this period—unfortunately of indeterminate length. Once a capitalist, always a capitalist, apparently. But when men are finally brothers, then the freedom of the classless society will finally begin.

Solaced by the knowledge that they are serving Liberty—in the high, true sense of the word—by a rigorous application of what to the unbelievers seems tyranny, the extremists go ahead to consolidate their power through institutions. Before we attempt a brief, generalized description of these institutions, we may note another uniformity. With the triumph of the extremists as we have defined them, the process of transfer of power from Right to Left ceases. The extremists are not indeed exempt from the difficulty other triumphant groups had faced from the very beginning of the revolutionary process. They develop internal conflicts, tend to split up into groups too hostile among themselves for co-operation. But these groups cannot usually be neatly ranged from Right to Left; and their dissension is ended quickly and without even the turmoil and confusion of a *coup d'état*. The dissensions have by now become so subtly doctrinal, so remote from the masses of the population, that they can be centered on a few leaders. And they are settled by the banishment or "judicial murder"—as it seems to the defeated partisans—of some of these leaders. What began with large-scale popular uprisings has now come to the dramatic intimacy of a courtroom.

France is here the clearest case. The victorious Montagnards of June 2nd divided into three major factions, that of which Robespierre stands as the head, that of Danton, and that of Hébert. There were, of course, subfactions, wheels within wheels, and had Marat not been already assassinated in the summer of 1793, there might have been still further complications. Robespierre, eventually victorious, rationalized the situation as a conflict between the true revolutionaries on one hand and the ultra-revolutionaries (Hébert) and the citra-revolutionaries (Danton) on the

think of as almost a racially founded British love for the middle-of-the-road is not very evident in these years. Strachey ironically lists the possibility of becoming a Behmenist, a Bidellian, a Coppinist, a Salmonist, a Dipper, a Traskite, a Tyronist, a Philadelphian, Christadelphian, or Seventh Day Baptist, omitting the subject he was actually writing on, Ludovic Muggleton, leader of the Muggletonians. The terms mean almost as little to us today as do those with which John Goodwin is referred to in the third volume of *Gangraena*: "a monotonous sectary, a compound of Socinianism, Arminianism, Libertinism, Antinomianism, Independency, Popery and Skepticism." As early as 1647 John Hare published a pamphlet, *Plain English to our Wilful Bearers of Normanism*, in which he attacked the institution of private property without being very clear about what might take its place. Chamberlen, in his *Poor Man's Advocate*, urged the nationalization of all Crown and Church possessions, the resumption of all common lands that had been enclosed. This land was to be called the national stock, and was to be administered for the benefit of the poor.

In comparison with the wealth of imagination the English put into the effort to bring heaven to earth, the other two extremist revolutions seem poverty-stricken. Perhaps the old Anglo-Saxon belief that the French lack imaginative depth is valid, but surely this cannot be brought up against the Russians. Perhaps the answer is simply that as sources of imaginative inspiration neither the Enlightenment of the eighteenth-century *philosophes* nor the dialectic materialism of the Marxist can hold a candle to the King James version of the Bible. Yet France was by no means unproductive on the side of the lunatic fringe. The *Enragés*, the *bras nus*, the followers of Babeuf, have, as we have noted, been variously hailed as proto-Marxists; they were certainly firm social, economic, and political egalitarians. Then there was the incredible little circle around Catherine Théot, "Mother of God"—with Robespierre designated at least as one of the manifestations of God. It does indeed seem likely that republican professors in France are right, and that much of this was stirred up by Robespierre's enemies to make him seem ridiculous; for

even at the crisis period of revolutions some men retain a sense of humor. Yet the fact remains that Catherine Théot and her circle existed.

In Russia the completeness and quickness of the Bolshevik victory probably explains the relative lack of rival Utopias. It is true that from 1918 to 1921 the Bolsheviks were forced to fight off Whites and Allies on a dozen fronts, and that in a region like the Ukraine, for instance, you can find everything from Czarist rulers through mild *narodniks* and partisan or guerrilla rulers to pure Reds. But there is a dog-eat-dog cruelty in the Russian Revolution that seems to exclude the mild delusions of an Everard or a Catherine Théot.

iv. *The Machinery of Dictatorship*

The dictatorship of the extremists is embodied in governmental forms as a rough-and-ready centralization. In detail these forms vary in our different societies, but the Commonwealth in England, the *gouvernement révolutionnaire* in France, and the Bolshevik dictatorship during the period of "war communism" in Russia all display uniformities of the kind the systematist in biology or zoology would not hesitate to catalogue as uniformities. Notably the making of final decisions in a wide range of matters is taken away from local and secondary authorities, especially if those authorities have been "democratically" elected, and is concentrated on a few persons in the national capital. Though names like Cromwell, Robespierre, and Lenin stand out as those of rulers, and although these men did exercise unquestioned power in many ways, the characteristic form of this supreme authority is that of a committee. The government of the Terror is a dictatorship in commission.

This centralized executive commission—Army Council or Council of State, Committee of Public Safety, the All-Russian Central Executive Committee (Vtsik)—rests on a supine if talkative legislative body—Rump, Convention, All-Russian Congress of Soviets—and gets its orders carried out by an extemporized bureaucracy, largely recruited from party workers, and from that club-sect-pressure-group

we have seen as the body of the extremist group. The old law courts cannot work, at least in their traditional manner. They are therefore supplemented by extraordinary courts, revolutionary tribunals, or are wholly transformed by new appointments and by special jurisdictions. Finally, a special sort of revolutionary police appears. The Russian Cheka is familiar to everyone with the slightest knowledge of recent history. Its continuation under different names (Ogpu, NKVD, MVD) is evidence, not so much that Russia is in continual revolution, as that Soviet Russia remains in many ways like Czarist Russia, which also had secret police. In France the *comité de sûreté générale* and the *comités révolutionnaires* fulfilled these police functions; in the English Revolution they were carried out very effectively by the new Independent parish clergy, aided by various *ad hoc* committees in the army. But in England the whole fabric of governmental centralization was rudimentary and simple—Cromwell's own anomalous dictatorship, the new Council of State, annually elected by the Rump, in which legislative, administrative, and judicial powers were as thoroughly combined as ever in the Tudor and Stuart Star Chamber, the curious experiment of the Major Generals in 1655-56. The fact of the centralization in England is, however, unquestionable. Even the sacred functions of that holiest guardian of English local liberties, the Justice of the Peace, were under attack all during the domination of the extremists.

These extemporized dictatorships were faced not only with the ordinary problems of government, but with civil and foreign war, and with at least a certain number of actual reform measures which they had to try to put through. Notably in the French and Russian revolutions, the new government had to administer what, to avoid dispute as to the meaning of Socialism, we may call measures of economic planning—fixed prices and wages, managed currency, food rationing, and so on. We need not here bother with the problem as to whether in France these were purely war measures or not. The point is that the government found itself obliged to try to administer them. In Russia, of course, there were conscious efforts to embody Marxist Socialism in working institutions.

But these were all very rough-and-ready forms of dictatorship. The governments of the Terror were on the whole much less efficient, less effectively absolute than many peacetime governments with nowhere near their reputation for arbitrariness and bloodshed. The present Russian government is infinitely more efficiently centralized than was Lenin's; Napoleon's than Robespierre's. Indeed, one of the reasons why the governments of the Terror seem so tyrannical and hard to bear, even retrospectively, is precisely that they were so inefficient. They got their big tasks done—saved England, France, and Russia from dissolution or conquest, but they did it very messily and, in detail, very badly. The actual administrators were usually inexperienced, were often petty fanatics, often incompetent blowhards who had risen to prominence in politics of the New Model Army, in the clubs or the party. They were under tremendous pressure from above to get results. They were frequently in charge of operations very close to the heart of the revolution as an economic movement—confiscation of Royalist estates and clerical livings in England, disposition of the confiscated lands of clergy and *émigrés* in France, nationalization of land and factories in Russia—which gave them grand opportunities for graft. They had to work with a population many if not most of whom were distrustful or hostile. Small wonder then that these reigns of terror stand out rather for irregular acts of violence, that their full history is a matter of incredible complexity. Nothing is more illuminating in the study of these revolutions than the study of local history. Here you see the Terror as it really was, no steady and efficient rule from above, as in an army or in Sparta, but a state of suspense and fear, a dissolution of the sober little uniformities of provincial life. Much depends on the accidents of personality—a sensible squire, a moderate and able local revolutionary or two, and a given town or village may go through a revolution fairly serenely. In others, terror may rule as bitterly as in the capital.

This inefficiency of the governments of the crisis period comes out clearly in their attempts to regulate and control the economic life of the State. This whole matter has probably very little to do with the general problem of what is

now known as "economic planning." Again we must emphasize that we are concerned only with the anatomies of certain specific revolutions. Suffice it to say that in France in 1793-94 and in Russia in 1918-21 armies were fed and supplied with munitions, and some civilians kept alive at any rate, under a pretty absolute state control of economic activity. The French *maximum* meant of course price and wage fixing, and the Russian war communism was an even more complete form of central planning. Yet in France violation of the *maximum* was as frequent as bootlegging used to be in this country, and the detailed history of the *maximum* seen as part of local history would certainly provide some amusing bits. In Russia illegal trading in the war years was again very like our bootlegging. The famous Sukharevka Market in Moscow was occasionally raided but on the whole winked at by Lenin's government. All city dwellers who could possibly do so made trips to the country to bargain with peasants for forbidden food supplies. Here again the intimate little details of daily life are fascinating, and call for the full talents of the social historian.

There seems to be a pretty unanimous admission by historians, even when they are hostile to revolutions in general, that during the crisis period ordinary crimes of violence are rare. There may be plenty of cruelty and corruption among these new administrators and judges, the new regime may be very far from ensuring peace and order, but conventional robbers, cutthroats, kidnapers, and their like are not very active. Your good stupid Tory has a simple explanation: they've all got government jobs. We can, however, hardly accept this as a blanket explanation. It seems likely that the ordinary criminals are for the moment pretty well cowed by the general crusade against ordinary vice and crime which is a part of the crisis period and to which we are coming shortly. Petty thieves and in several instances even prostitutes were summarily disposed of by what amounts to lynch law during the French Revolution, and similar instances can be found in England and Russia. One need not accept it as a general suggestion that you can always cow criminals by lynching; here, as throughout this book, we are studying a particular set of events, seeking some rough uniformities, and making no

attempt at general conclusions in any such field as criminology. It may be that in the general tension, in the extraordinary widening of public concerns until privacy is almost impossible, so private a thing as ordinary crime is difficult. The criminal is disturbed, not only by fear of being lynched, but by an indefinable general fear which he shares with ordinary citizens. For fear needs no object, and in the Terror often has none. It must be remembered that this crisis period is brief—a few months, a few years at the most. At any rate, again a simple uniformity stands out: a considerable lessening in the number of ordinary crimes is to be noted during the crisis period. Mr. Chamberlin notes that Moscow in 1918-19 was a very safe place to live in—if you could get enough to eat and keep warm.

There is usually a short period between the overthrow of the moderates and the full impact of the Terror. The machinery of the Terror, for one thing, hastily assembled though it is, cannot be assembled overnight. Though the earlier history of the revolution has had its share of violence, there has been an interlude or so of apparent peace at times during the struggle between the moderates and the extremists. The pressure of foreign enemies and their *émigré* allies is not immediately at its strongest. Yet as the weeks go on the forces that make for the Terror come into full operation.

We have in this chapter briefly described the rise of the extremists, and have attempted to analyze the reasons for their victory. We have taken them to the point where they have disposed of all important conflicting groups, and have consolidated their position by installing a centralized system of government. For the next few months, or for a year or so, the extremists can be as extreme as they like. No one dare challenge them. We have come to that crisis in the fever of revolution men commonly call the Reign of Terror. This very important subject must be treated in a separate chapter.