Volume 7

POLITICS AND MORALS
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Chapter I

ELEMENTS OF POLITICS

I. POLITICAL SENSE

When we speak of political sense we think immediately of the perception of convenience, of expediency, of reality, of suitability, and the like. People who act or who judge the actions of others in accordance with this perception are said to be endowed with political sense. On the other hand, those who behave contrary to expediency, even though they may be full of the best moral intentions and may be kindled by the noblest ideals, are thought to be lacking in political sense.

In the face, therefore, of what we might call this everyday admission, it is irrational to object to the doctrine that political action is only an action guided by the sense of what is useful and directed toward a utilitarian goal, and that per se it cannot be qualified as either moral or immoral.

Perhaps the motive for opposing particularly this last proposition is to be found in the unconscious substitution that we are accustomed to make of the concept of what is for our self-interest for the concept of what is useful—in spite of Aristotle's warning against confusing love of oneself with evil love of oneself, and the whole development of modern thought and the many disciplines relating to routine behaviour which inculcate this difference and justify the concept of what is useful.

Although this erroneous substitution has hindered or weakened the serious study of politics, by doing away with the character of politics as distinct from ethics, since the living reality of politics cannot be denied, the substitution has
led to the treatment of what is merely political as a thing from which no one can abstain completely, even though not infrequently it is more or less immoral. Thus a dualism is set up between political action and moral action. A consequence of this dualism is the common opinion that politics is a sad necessity (an opinion to which some philosophers have given an important place in the forefront of their speculations, making of politics and of the State a temporary expedient and a transitory condition of mankind). Another consequence is the series of illogical maxims which declare that it is sometimes necessary to do evil in order to attain good, that private ethics are different from public ethics, that it is impossible to take part in politics and keep one's hands clean, and that in the interest of the State one must, if necessary, break a promise or commit murders. These maxims are illogical because our human conscience cries out to us that in no case is it permissible to break a promise or commit murders; that there is not one set of ethics in the home and another in the public square; that one cannot do evil in order to attain good, as though evil and good were merchandise to be exchanged; that our hands must be kept clean; that the quality of the means must not conflict with the quality of the end. Worse than illogical, these maxims would be called degraded if we did not recall that they are sometimes found on the lips of such men as Frederick of Prussia and Camillo di Cavour; and in such cases they express the genuine anguish that is experienced in performing actions for which a rational necessity is felt. And yet these actions cannot be set into the schemes of the doctrines professed; indeed, their very authors turn away from them after having performed them, and apprehensively acknowledge their guilt, or attribute the sole responsibility for their deeds to God, who has put them in such straits that they have had to do what they have done.
But the truth is that if, at a time when the moral conscience was at its greatest clarity, the performance of these actions proved necessary (necessary, of course, not to satisfy one's own lust for power or other private ambitions or passions, and not because of the habit of brutality and evil-doing, but for the sacred protection, for the development, or for the rebirth of the fatherland), these actions can be neither a breach of promise, nor murder, nor any kind of roguery or wickedness; just as the "magnanimous lie" of which Tasso speaks could not be a "lie," exactly because it was "magnanimous," except as a poetic metaphor.

Not only is political action any action which is useful, but the concept of political action is co-extensive with that of useful action. Nor will we ever be in a position to adduce any characteristics which may distinguish political action within the category of useful action. If political ability is necessary to govern the State or to lead a party, it is likewise necessary to rule one's own family, to establish and cultivate relationships of love and friendship; and it is even necessary toward the animals we use and toward things, granted that things, too, obey laws and in their own way (or according to the theory of Campanella) have life and feeling. Therefore, in speaking, as here, of politics and of political actions we mean simply to turn our attention to certain facts which are ordinarily quite important and frequently offer material for research and discussion. It would not be possible to define these facts by logic within the infinite expanse of that which is useful. We shall refer to them according to the ideas commonly connoted by the word "politics."

It is useless to try, as is frequently done, to single out political actions from among practical and utilitarian actions, as those which have to do with the life of the State. After all, what is the State? It is nothing but a series of useful
actions performed by a group of persons or by individual members within a group. For this reason this series of actions is not to be distinguished from any other series performed by any other group or by any other individual; for the individual is never isolated and always lives in some form of social relationship. Nor is anything to be gained by defining the State as an entity made up of institutions or laws, because there is no social group or individual that does not possess its own institutions and ways of life, and which is not subject to laws and regulations. Strictly speaking, every form of life is, in this sense, fundamentally like that of the State. Therefore, in speaking of the State as something specific, we mean likewise to refer to the general connotation of the word.

If the concept of State has no value in distinguishing political actions from other utilitarian actions, it has even less value in contrast with individual actions or as an entity with its own life above and beyond individuals. The attempt to give this concept some such connotation is the usual trick played, through the use of metaphorical language, by the failure to think, and clinched by rhetorical emphasis. The idea of the State is subject to this trick as are other abstractions, such as Truth, Good and Beauty, capitalized and suspended on high as bright stars. From this way of reasoning arise the absurd questions as to what Truth, Good and Beauty are, objectively and in themselves, and the absurd theories which explain how man behaves with regard to those ideas, how he learns them, imitates them, and puts them into practice, or how he betrays them and revolts against them. Finally, dissatisfaction with such doctrines develops and leads to the realization that there exists not Truth, but the thought which thinks; not Good, but moral volition; not Beauty, but poetic and artistic activity; not the State, but political actions. However, the word "State," to which the Italians
of the Renaissance gave a political significance, seems almost a paradoxical word because it brings the idea of something static into political life, which, like any other form of life, is dynamic or, better, spiritually dialectical.

The word "State" is meant to indicate all the institutions, customs and laws which govern the actions of man, and more precisely the whole body of fundamental and constitutional laws. In the first place, however, laws themselves are merely the actions of individuals; they represent the will of individuals asserting itself to promote certain more or less general tendencies which are deemed useful. In the second place, inasmuch as these tendencies are indicated only abstractly by laws, their translation into action is not merely a matter of obedience or imitation on the part of each individual, but the individual's real creation, laws playing the role of a simple material element, that is negative in the formal synthesis. In other words, it is known that laws are important; but far more important is the manner in which they are observed, that is, the actual behaviour of man. It is also known that laws, when interpreted and put into effect, become broad, flexible, richer; in a word, they change. Exactly for this reason, the distinction between State and government, very common in political doctrines and debates, but of little practical importance, cannot be accepted in the realm of pure theory, that is, of pure truth. For those who seek concreteness rather than abstractions, the State is nothing but the government and assumes complete reality in the government; outside the unbroken chain of the actions of the government there remains only the principle of the abstract necessity of these same actions and the assumption that the laws have an unchanging value of their own, different from the actions performed in their light or in their shadow.

However, this is one of those truths that with some reason
are called "dangerous," in so far as they are easily used to
defend or justify certain unpraiseworthy actions and measures.
Thus the critical theory that grammar is devoid of truth and
consists of abstract and arbitrary rules might be cheerfully
welcomed by the ungrammatical schoolboy, whereas the real
meaning of this theory is that grammar must be studied
because it is useful and that it makes use of abstractions in
order to be useful, and for no other purpose. The abstract-
ness of laws and the concreteness which the State secures only
in the act of government do not mean that institutions, cus-
toms and laws are to be disregarded and despised, and that
one should, if it were possible, rule from day to day and from
hour to hour, improvising short-lived laws for each occasion.
Nor do they mean that, inasmuch as normal life is an
unending revolution, one should engage in revolutionary acts
at every moment. This deduction would be a convenient
sophism, based, like all sophisms, on a play on words and a
subtle substitution of one class of ideas for another.

In spite of their abstract nature, laws have been and still
are indispensable. With reason, they are hailed, in the words
of Aristotle, as "intellect without greed," that is, as the
creation of man's own will which he pledges not to touch or
disturb with his interests and desires. Everyone desires laws,
lasting laws, so that he may be able to plan his future accord-
ing to a pattern which, though altered by events, will be
effective. The relative stability of laws is what we call
"peace," so dear to the heart of every industrious man. The
force and appeal of tradition and of the past are founded on
institutions, laws and customs. On the other hand, govern-
ments not founded on any right, but arbitrarily created do not
grow any roots, or if they do, grow them very slowly and
with difficulty. The ancient peoples praised especially legis-
lators, founders and reformers of States; because, if men of
war and diplomacy stand for strength of action in the present, for victories, conquests and the security of States against dangers and ruin, legislators stand for the preservation and increase of these advantages in the future by means of the institutions which guarantee them. Polemics and satire against the so-called "bigoted supporters" of the laws and against the "Vestals" of the institutions may have some justification in that superstitious timidity which sometimes interferes with the active life of the State. The other polemic against the legal formalists has some justification against pedantry and superficiality which, by having recourse to abstractions, prevent a view of the reality of historical events and of accomplished, irrevocable changes. Greater blame, perhaps, is deserved by those who lack the sense of tradition, of continuity and of legality even though they work eagerly on behalf of the good that is necessarily unstable and shallow in so far as it is based solely on the arbitrary decision of the individual. If the former group can be charged with a deficiency of political sense, this latter group is certainly deficient in juridical sense, which is also a special form of political sense.

In apparent contradiction to the theory that the essence of the State is only political action, and that political actions are useful actions, stands the widely accepted view that the origin and the government of the State are to be attributed to force. At first sight, this view seems to be the direct opposite of the theory of usefulness and economic convenience, or at least quite different from it. In this connection an eclectic attempt has been made to combine these two contradictory conceptions by relating force or violence to the origin of States and the idea of utilitarian convenience to their life and development. At this point it is worth remarking that the "birth" or "origin" referred to in these and in
similar cases is not at all a historical fact, but, rather, the origin, the birth, the eternal nature or idea of the State; and consequently there is no place for a historical distinction between origin and development and between primitive and later times. As was known and stated by the ancients, man is by nature a social or political being; and, as we moderns say, the State is not a fact, but a spiritual category. Another caution: we must not limit the idea of force to the superficial meaning which the word usually suggests—almost the seizing of a man by the neck, bending him and forcing him to the ground, and similar meanings. But we must think of force in the complete sense of all human and spiritual force, which includes the wisdom of the intellect no less than the strength of the arm, foresight and prudence no less than daring and boldness, gentleness no less than severity, candour no less than discernment or even malice, the virtue of beauty no less than the beauty of virtue.

If the concept of force is correctly understood in this sense, it follows that one cannot conceive of force as distributed in such a way that, in a large group of men one or a few possess it and the others do not, or that one or a few possess more of it than others, so that that one or those few should impose their will on the others and dominate them. The varied distribution of that force is not quantitative but qualitative. It is a variety of tendencies, abilities and virtues; each one of these seeks its complement in the others, each one needs the others, each one can in reciprocal fashion impose itself upon the others, threaten to deprive them of its own support, or, as we say, exert pressure on the others. And the result of these different pressures is the agreement on a way of living, the reciprocal accord. The dilemma as to whether the State is founded on force or mutual consent and the question as to which is the legitimate State, that founded on
force or only that founded on consent, are problems on a par with the distinction already made between State and government. Actually, in the field of politics, force and consent are correlative terms, and one does not exist without the other. The objection will be raised that this is a "forced" consent. But every consent is more or less forced; that is, every consent is based on the "force" of certain facts and is, therefore, "conditioned." If the de facto condition changes, the consent, as is natural, is withdrawn, debates and struggles break out, and a new consent is established on the new condition. There is no political body which escapes this vicissitude: in the most liberal State as in the most oppressive tyranny there is always a consent, and it is always forced, conditioned, changeable. Otherwise, neither the State nor the life of the State would exist.

Expressing the same idea in other words, we may designate by the term "authority" everything included in the concept of force, whether it be promise or threat, reward or punishment; and by the term "liberty" everything connoted by the concept of spontaneity and agreement. It will then be seen that in every State authority and liberty are inseparable. (And this is equally true of the extremes of despotism and liberalism.) Liberty struggles against authority, yet desires it; and authority checks liberty, yet keeps it alive or awakens it, because neither would exist without the other. We exalt liberty, and rightly so. What other word so warms the heart of man? None is so powerful except, perhaps, the word love. In a way, the connotations of the two words merge; because liberty, like love, is life that desires to expand and enjoy itself; life in all its forms, felt by each one in his own way in that infinite variety, in that individuality of tendencies and of activities of which the unity of the universe is woven. And by "liberty" here we mean nothing more than this joy of
doing, this joy of living, the natural faculty of man to do what is pleasing to him, not the moral liberty usually perceived by the stern moralists, who, with their "moral liberty," are capable of misrepresenting even the simple impulses and confidences of Romeo and Juliet! But with reason, too, we praise authority, order, regularity, the sacrifice which individuals and groups owe to each other and which implies the strengthening of any individual in every other, and of each one in every one else. Whereas the word "liberty" is pleasing, the word "authority" is chilling to the spirit. The fault lies solely with those who praise exclusively either force or authority, either consent or liberty, and forget that the term excluded by them is already included in the one they have accepted, because it is its correlative. The practical politician agrees with Joseph De Maistre that it is necessary to preach the benefits of authority to the people and those of liberty to the princes.

We do not deny that in the arguments favouring liberty against authority, and vice versa, and the principle of consent against the principle of force, and vice versa, as in the other arguments in favour of the State against the government, quite important matters are often the subject of discussion, almost per speculum et in aenigmate. But they are matters which concern historical and contingent situations and which pertain to the emotions and interests of the citizens of a given State at a given time. Later, because of philosophical immaturity and sometimes as a result of oratorical ability or polemic violence, these matters are elevated to the position of supreme concepts or to the position of derivations and deductions from those supreme concepts, thus giving the value of concepts to metaphors used in the discussion and transforming problems of practical politics into theoretical problems.

Furthermore, we do not deny that to define sovereignty
and to find the person or persons in whom, according to the various types of State, sovereignty is embodied may be matters of practical meaning and importance. On the other hand, in the realm of pure theory such a definition certainly has no place and such a search no meaning. As long as all degrees of force are thought of as one concept, varying only with respect to the degree found in the components of the State, it is logical to define sovereignty as the possession of force, of the greatest force, and to seek out wherein it lies, according to the different types of States. Once the concept of qualitative differentiation has been substituted for the above inaccurate concept, it is just as logical to reach the conclusion that in a State every one is by turn sovereign and subject. Not even kings escape such a law: many a time they have complained openly of their "lack of freedom," of that freedom enjoyed by even men of the lowest rank, men who have nothing, have no ambitions, and are indifferent to praise or blame (like the punchinellos of the second part of Faust). In the relationship between ruler and ruled sovereignty belongs to neither but to the relationship itself. In truth, when we are forced to find it in something which surpasses and dominates the relation itself, we are tempted to answer that the sovereign is God or Idea or History (omnis potestas a Deo), that is, we are tempted to change this meaningless question to one with meaning. If sovereignty exists in every part of the relation, nec cubat in ulla, the division of States according to the persons who exercise the sovereignty also collapses as devoid of theoretic value, and with it collapses above all the famous tripartition into monarchy, aristocracy and democracy. This tripartition retains a certain philosophical meaning, not in relation to the place to be assigned to sovereignty, but in so far as it perceives three phases of all political life: collaboration, which is for all; advice, which is for the few, the optimates
or aristocrats; and resolution, which is for one individual. Taken in this meaning, however, the tripartition would indicate the organic composition of any State, that is, of the State in the abstract, rather than three forms of States.

The political theories which up to now have been rejected because they are one-sided have, for this very reason, one merit at least: they are founded on a real aspect or phase and they recall it emphatically in cases where there is a tendency to forget it or deny it. But there is a political theory which does not even have such a merit, is not founded on any phase of the political relationship, and yet is the theory which boasts the greatest number of followers. This is the theory which, in order to avoid misunderstandings, we shall call neither democratic nor Jacobin, but the theory of equality. "Democracy" signifies the tendency to give the masses, that is the common people, added importance in political deliberations. And it is always more or less an empirical problem. "Jacobinism" signifies a practical attitude which departs from an abstract ideal. In order to put this ideal into effect, Jacobinism has recourse to impositions and violence. For this reason, the name "Jacobin" is given not only to the extreme democrats, but also to extreme conservatives and aristocrats, that is to say, to all who have resort to similar impositions and violence, usually of brief duration and with meagre results. In given circumstances democracy may or may not be plausible, and Jacobinism will always be very slightly plausible. But neither the one nor the other is intrinsically impossible or absurd, as is the theory of equality. This theory presupposes the equality of individuals, and places it at the foundation of States. This equality would not be conceivable except as a form of self-sufficiency, of the complete self-satisfaction of the individual, with nothing to ask of his fellow man, whose equal he is. Equality in this form
cannot be of value in the founding of a State; on the contrary, it shows that the State is superfluous, since every individual is a State in himself. Not even a "contract" is possible between these independents, because there is a lack of bargaining material, that is, of that variety which is the basis of reciprocal rights and duties. In order that the State may rise according to this hypothesis it is necessary to introduce a *deus ex machina* or to have one or more individuals suddenly detach themselves from the rest, as being neither the equals of the others nor like them. This would amount to the nullification of the hypothesis and of the whole theory.

We do not intend to deny the effectiveness which this theory may have had, has, and will have in the future as the myth of certain economic and moral doctrines and needs. Likewise, we do not deny that a derivative of this theory, the theory of majority rule, has value as a practical expedient and as a symbol of what is practically possible at a given moment. But, of course, in political science its falseness is complete; and when it is taken as a criterion, all good judgment of political matters runs into insurmountable obstacles and finally goes astray. The "liberty" and "fraternity" which this theory associates with the idea of "equality" are such empty terms, subject to anyone's arbitrary interpretation, that one understands the abuses hurled at these noble words by men gifted with a keen feeling for politics and history; men who, because of their hatred for these words, have become ardent partisans of "force," in a partial and approximate interpretation, that is, one might say, the force to box the ears of those who believe in those stupid formulas and of those who go about repeating them for the use of fools. In truth, is there anything more stupid than the "liberty" and the "fraternity" attributed to a row of cold, smooth billiard balls, all of the same size? This leads us to say that the theory of equality,
for which there is no logical place in the political relation, has its true origin within the framework of mathematics and mechanics, both of them unable to comprehend the living world. In fact, although the theory of equality represents a mistake found in all ages and always reappearing, the period of its greatest glory was the century of mechanical discoveries.

It would seem that in the loss of political sense and judgment one could not sink any lower than the theory of equality. Yet this does happen and as a result of the very distress which that ideology awakens in the minds and in the souls of men by promising respect for equality and the abstract freedom of equality, and by violating it time after time. This occurs because every development and every conclusion of that theory, as well as every attempt to put it into practice which proceeds from such premises, alters equality and represses liberty, even though with the purpose of "compelling men to be free" (as was wittily stated by Rousseau). The only means left, then, for saving the principle of equality and liberty is the egoarchic and anarchic doctrine. This is the only theory which promises man full and complete enjoyment of liberty, even if it upsets all judgment on history as it has developed up to our time, and even if it shifts admiration from social to antisocial men. But this theory, which springs from the heart of the theory of equality, is the vengeance of daughter against mother, the criticism and irony of the theory itself, its \textit{reductio ad absurdum}, and, like the mother theory, it cannot be called a political theory because it denies the object which it should explain.

II. The State and Ethics

In political action, in attempts to reach a definite goal, everything becomes a political means—everything, including in certain respects morality and religion, that is, moral and
religious ideas, sentiments and institutions. The initial situation is given in each case: the men with whom we have to deal are always what they are; their ideas, their prejudices, their good or bad dispositions, their virtues and their defects furnish the material on which and with which we must work and there is no way of substituting for them more pleasing material. If, in order to agree with men in a common action or to induce them to come to an agreement, it is necessary to soothe their illusions, flatter their vanity, appeal to their most superstitious and childish beliefs (as, for example, the miracle of St. Gennaro), or to their most superficial or most superficially understood ideas (for example, equality, liberty and fraternity and the other so-called "principles of '89," which are big emotional realities, whatever may be their theoretical value), then it will be well to adopt these means. We must not be shocked by them. Every form of human activity, as it unfolds, takes strength from all other activities and it subjects and makes its own the products of all the other activities. It would be the same as being scandalized by the poet who uses thoughts and affections, joys and griefs, good and evil, all as material for his poetry and turns all to winged images.

But there is still another reason for not being shocked. Pure poetry does not dispel reflection, criticism and science from the spirit and from the world, but, rather, prepares for and almost summons them. Just so, politics, which is pure politics, does not destroy, but produces morality, in which it finds its completion and highest expression. In the world of reality there is no sphere of political or economic activity that can stand by itself, closed and isolated; but there is only the process of spiritual activity, in which process what is useful is continually being transformed into what is ethical.
The ethical spirit has in politics the premise of its activity and also its tool, almost as though it were a body which politics fills with renewed soul and bends to its own will. There is no moral life unless economic and political life is first established; as the ancients used to say, first the "living" and then "good living." On the other hand, there can be no moral life that is not both economic and political life, just as there can be no soul without a body. And moral man does not put into practice his morality except by acting in a political manner and by accepting the logic of politics. Quoting two letters of St. Bernard, written in the course of his spirited and varied struggle in favour of the Church against King Ruggiero of Sicily and containing, within a brief interval, two conflicting assertions, a historian points out that "that was politics, of course, but not the politics of a saint." This should be countered with the observation that it was indeed the "politics of a saint," of a saint who, in order to attain his saintly goal, availed himself of the sole means of attaining it, which were those offered him by politics. And was not protestantism itself, which contributed so greatly to the restoration of moral intimacy and sincerity, forced from the very beginning to adopt political methods and later to learn, in this connection, from its Jesuit adversaries, excellent teachers of such matters in theory and in practice?

The a-morality of politics, the priority (in time) of politics over morality, constitute its specific character and make it possible for it to serve as the instrument of moral life. But the sphere of politics is not the only one; nor is it self-sufficient. This must be pointed out so that the origin of this specific character of politics may not be misconceived or distorted into a sort of parthenogenesis and so that it may not be imagined that there can exist a political man entirely devoid of moral conscience. This would be the same as
admitting that a "political man" can exist without being a "man." The specific always sprouts from the trunk of unity and humanity, as a phase of a spiritual circle. Would a poet without experience of affections, morality, and thoughts, a cold, dull and deficient poet, be a poet? Is it not known that poetry is the expression of a personality and that, therefore, in order to create poetry, the first requirement is the full development of man? Do we not laugh at those claiming to be poets, who strive for poetry by means of stylistic efforts, metric exercises, and notes on what their senses perceive; and do we not advise them to turn round and go back to the roots of being, and to create for themselves a heart and an intellect? Similarly, a political man without experience and, consequently, without moral conscience, not only would not last in his work and would not dedicate himself to it as one of the highest offices, but he would also be unable to handle other men and make use of their moral sentiments as convenient tools. Their psychology would be unknown to him because he would never have lived according to it. Therefore, he could not even be what we call a "cynical political man."

But in the fields of ethics, which we have now entered, it is no longer a question of moral and human experience, indispensable to the purely political man; the political sphere here has been left behind. The life lived is a moral one, for which, as has been said, politics is a means and not an end. Moral man is *vir bonus agendi peritus*. His moral education calls also for political education and for the cultivation and use of virtues which more appropriately should be called practical, such as prudence, wisdom, patience and daring.

In this elevation of pure politics to an ethical position even the word "State" takes on new meaning: it is no longer a simple utilitarian relation, the synthesis of force and mutual consent, of authority and liberty, but the incarnation of the
human ethos and therefore an ethical State or State of culture, as it is also called. And, along with the word “State” the words “authority” and “sovereignty,” which are the authority and the sovereignty of duty and of the moral ideal, take on new meaning. So it is with the word “liberty,” which, in so far as it is moral liberty, cannot help being one and the same thing with this duty and this ideal. So it is, too, with the word “consent,” which is ethical approval and devotion to “force,” but to the force of good, so that consent is not more or less forced, but becomes full and complete, love replaces fear, or, to put it in theological terms, there is a transition from “law” to “grace.” And new meaning is taken on even by the word “equality,” which no longer means mathematical equality, but Christian equality before God, whose children we all are, the low and the high; it is the consciousness of our common humanity and of our common rights. Because of this characteristic the ethical State does not tolerate, either above itself or by its side, other forms of association, all of which it must subordinate or deny and nullify. When the Church was the opponent of the State and was dominant, the Church was the true ethical State; and when the temporal State undertook its struggle with the Church, it did not cease this struggle until it had assimilated the Church to itself, by considering itself the only true Church, the representative of the needs of a more perfect morality.

From this point of view, that exaltation of the State which, begun by Hegel during the classical period of German philosophy and repeated in Italy by Spaventa and others, still re-echoes in many schools to-day, may seem intelligible, though redundant. Inasmuch as the State was understood as the moral life, as the very concreteness of moral life, it followed precisely that it should be elevated to the heights where Kant
had placed moral law and that it should become an object of the same reverence and veneration. But the mistake of those theorists consisted, and still consists, in their having conceived moral life in a form inadequate to it, namely, the form of political life and of the State in a political sense.

The State, politically understood, that is, the State by itself is, as we know, one and the same thing as the government; it is a relation based on authority and consent which has as its enemies, and treats as such those who do not accept it and intend to change it. According to circumstances, they are called traitors, rebels, conspirators, undesirables, and they are executed, imprisoned, exiled and persecuted and punished in other ways. And because of the tendency which that political relation, or state order, has and must have to preserve its existence, it watches and suspects all free and unruly spirits, and even critics and thinkers, who, because they centre their attention on eternity, always go beyond the present existing world. By alternating intimidation with flattery, the rulers do their best to make these men their friends or to win them over to their cause. Regimes of the most varied type surround themselves with men of letters, or, as they are now called, "intellectuals." As long as these "intellectuals" remain submissive and offer themselves to the service of the State, to coin theories or poems useful to the State, they cannot be anything but literary men and intellectuals of a poor quality, as is to be expected. For those of a better type and of a finer temperament, for the unruly ones, for the tormentors and disturbers of themselves and of others, for the tempters and seducers of souls, the poet of poets has put on the lips of the politician the saying: "He thinks too much: such men are dangerous"; and a theorist uttered the saying: "Omnis philosophia, cum ad communem hominum cogitandi facultatem revocet, ab optimatibus non iniuria sibi existimatur perniciosa."
But the moral life embraces both those who govern and their adversaries, conservatives and revolutionaries, and the latter perhaps more than the former, because better than the others they open the ways of the future and bring about the advancement of human society. For the moral life none are to be condemned except those who have not raised themselves to the moral life; and it frequently praises, admires, loves and exalts those who are cast out by governments—the condemned and the vanquished—and sanctifies them as martyrs to an idea. For the moral life, every man of good will serves the cause of culture and of progress in his own way, all in a discordant harmony.

When "morality" has been conceived as the "ethical State" and the latter has been identified with the political State, or simply with the "State," we arrive at the concept—to which the theorists of that school do not demur—that concrete morality lies wholly in those who rule, in the act of their governing; and their adversaries must be considered the adversaries of morality in action, deserving not only to be punished, with or without the sanction of the law, but also deserving the highest moral condemnation. This is, so to speak, a "governmental" concept of morality, the first appearance of which had a certain justification. This was in connection with the polemic against the romantic inclinations, the vagueness and presumptuousness of beautiful and sensitive souls, to which Hegel felt himself driven. Hence he thought it opportune to praise the good citizen over and above the man of genius and the hero. And even if this conception cannot be justified, it can, after all, be explained by Hegel's personal conservatism and by his loyalty to the Prussian State of the restoration. But we cannot understand how it can still be the object of such great fervour as is felt by the writers of the school, who seem to become inebriated
and fall into ecstasy before the sublime image of the State. In spite of these exaltations and this Dionysiacal delirium over the State or government, we must insist that the State be considered what it really is: an elementary and narrow form of practical life, from every part of which the moral life issues and overflows, spreading out in abundant, productive streams; so productive as to make and remake perpetually political life itself and States, that is, to compel them to renew themselves in conformity with the needs which political life creates.

III. Political Parties

The problem of understanding the State and morality is a theoretical one and it belongs to the theorist. But the problem of "what to do?" is a practical one, of the practical man, and, consequently, of the political man and of the ethico-political man. And yet it is so easy for this practical problem to fall into the error of a merely theoretical treatment, that it is well to insist on a matter which might seem obvious, namely, that the problem of behaviour does not consist in research and a philosophical statement, but in a deliberation and an act of the will. Apparently the responsibility for this action is so serious, and the perplexity of the deliberation so anguishing, that time after time an escape from that practical struggle is sought in theory and science, with the hope that these will provide the sure paths of action and will tell us with their solemn authority, "what to do." Certainly, one can argue about how to prevent revolutions and how to hold peoples in check, or, on the contrary, how to arouse and unleash them, how to overthrow existing governments. And, time and space being specified, one can argue as to the arrangement to be made of the modern world, of Europe, of Italy, or of one part or another of the Italian government
and administration. But although these arguments assume the form of conclusions and exhortations, they are not solutions to practical problems, but methodical collections of data, their arrangement in series, the establishment of abstract relations between these abstract series, and the statement of the relation between causes. From the practical life they are divided as by a bottomless abyss. After all, who will put those plans into effect? And by that very act will not he who has put them into effect have modified them, adapted them to himself, and produced them anew, that is to say, asserted his own will? Not that these theoretical debates are entirely useless: they have the usefulness, common to all knowledge, of imparting information, and in some way they lend their colour to action. But indirectly, that is, because of the usual confusion as to what they really are, they help foster the erroneous idea that the means of achieving any desired end ought to be ascertained by the study of the end itself. It is not uncommon to hear the wistful proposal that we entrust to an international assembly of scientists the task of outlining, on the basis of Science, a programme or hygienic regime for humanity, which has suffered so many hardships throughout the centuries and is to-day still in suspense and deeply afflicted!

No, this is not the course to be followed. The political problem as a practical problem is a problem of enterprise, invention and creation, and therefore wholly individual and personal. All knowledge helps; but no single knowledge will ever tell me what I must do, because this is solely the secret of my own being and the discovery of my will. As long as the problem is stated in the impersonal and objective form: "What must the world do? What must Italy do?", it is stated in a form that is debatable in the abstract but insoluble in practice. What the world must and will do is known and
will be known by the world and not by me; what Italy must and will do is known and will be known by Italy and not by me. On the contrary, the correct way of expressing the problem is: "What must I do?—I who live in the world, in Italy, etc."

The problem is always stated in this form and solved in the economic sphere, where each man seeks what is to his advantage or to his liking or to his taste and not to the liking of Italy, Europe or the world. So it is, too, in the political sphere, in so far as it is merely a political or utilitarian relation to which each man adapts himself as best he can, and from which he derives the greatest possible profit; or, when it is impossible for him to adapt himself to it, he tries to change it, in good ways and bad. Nor can this problem be stated and solved in another way in the ethical sphere, where it is a question of attaining a thing that goes beyond the individual, of putting into practice the universal and the good, but where this attainment is always the task of the individual, of one man, of a person, and must therefore be his own work, the work of individuality and personality at the service of the universal, universally conforming with and different from the work of every other individual. The belief that it is up to the individual who acts according to the moral code to do what the intellect ascertains and shows to be the good, that is historically attainable under the given circumstances, again changes the practical problem to a theoretical one, and, what is more, to an insoluble theoretical problem. The good of which we speak, an historically attainable good, is the dialectic product of the concordant discord of moral individuals, and will therefore, but cannot at present, be known by the individual who joins in the mystery of creation, just as the father does not know the son in whose creation he shares.

It is not to be feared that by this rejection of every ethical
intellectualism free rein is given to caprice, to pleasure and to the whims of individuals, because the moral conscience requires that each man, upon resolving to act, descends to the depth of his own being and, with purity and humility of heart, asks questions of and listens to the voice which speaks to him and commands him; and it requires that he then follow with resolute and courageous spirit his own "inner voice," whatever it may be, trusting in the Providence that directs human affairs. Those various "inner voices" are nothing but the needs of history personified in individuals and they gradually assume their proper order in the maze, in the intricacy, in the struggle of individual actions, gradually being translated into actuality in the manner and degree possible to them. Thus, when individuals decide, in the midst of conflicting reality and of the infinite choices of action, they decide well when they know they cannot do otherwise and must obey their lex singularis. Consequently, in the general course of their lives or in some aspects of it, they assert themselves as conservatives or revolutionaries, authoritarians or liberals, aristocrats or democrats, observers of tradition or breakers of tradition; by thus defining themselves, they differentiate themselves from others and at the same time with certain common and generic names they draw near to others. Man's brief life seldom permits versatility in the work that he accomplishes and in the function that he discharges and therefore the "inner voices," considered in their fundamental quality and character, are not ordinarily numerous in each individual. Therefore, although we do not deny that there are exceptions and extraordinary cases, great credit is given in political life to those who in the course of their public life play only one role, as a guarantee that they have seriously searched and inquired within themselves. On the contrary, there is a distrust of changes and conversions, which, though they may sometimes
be corrections of a previous error or may have become necessary because of profound and unforeseen historical changes, most frequently are signs of fickleness or of utilitarian interests prevailing over ethical interests.

Unions between individuals who feel that they have more or less similar needs and tendencies give rise, in the economic-political sphere, to what are called "associations," "corporations" or "syndicates" and, in the ethico-political sphere, to what are called "political parties," often likened to and confused, incorrectly, with economic groups. Common opinion, or common thought (and regretfully, we must add, even some philosophers, like Rosmini), fosters a great deal of ill-feeling against parties. Why make divisions? they ask. If we are divided on questions of public interest, it is a sign that personal interests enter into them; otherwise, we would all be in agreement. And the dream always dreamed by those who reason thus is the dream of the one great political party, the party with no other defect than that of being neither a party nor political. But in our opinion, on the basis of what has been said above, parties might be charged with the opposite fault, that of weakening the energy of individual variations and of reducing persons to flocks, held together by certain common and generic tendencies, if they were actually to carry out what is necessarily contained in their slogan of uniformity and discipline. In reality, they do not carry it out, and the parties are means offered to the various personalities so that they may fashion for themselves instruments of action, or so that they may assert themselves and, with themselves, their own ethical ideals, and so that they may make efforts to accomplish them. This accounts for the importance in the parties of heads and leaders and also of the others who seem to have positions of secondary importance and modestly withdraw to the shadows, yet manipulate the wires of action. The
important thing, then, is the vigour of the personality, in whom the ethical ideal is embodied and expressed; it is usually admitted that political parties have the character of the individuals who form and represent them.

Just as party discipline is nothing but the means by which political personalities succeed in holding their followers in their power for the actions to be performed, so each party develops an ideology or theory, or rather a pseudo-theory, which is useful for no other purpose than to create the appearance that it has as allies Truth, Reason, Philosophy, Science and History, deities which supposedly have deserted the camp of the adversary. But Philosophy and Science, and the other deities just mentioned, are impartial to all parties; or, better, they favour no party, since they are intent not on helping one party against the other, but on embracing and understanding them all. Taken by themselves, the pseudo-theories by which parties formulate their programmes may be correct and real, as, for example, the theory of historical development by antinomies, a theory with which liberalism with its progressiveness is connected. But the pseudo-theories have no connection with the party as political will, a will historically determined and individualized, the sole reason for which lies in itself (*stat pro ratione voluntas*); and in that forced relationship they become imbued with falsity. But in other cases, taken by themselves, the pseudo-theories are false as, for example, those Marxian theories on the surplus value and historical materialism and on the leap from the realm of necessity to that of liberty. At best, they express, in a form that is apparently logical—but is intrinsically fanciful, the sentiments and the practical tendencies of the party. Nevertheless, even in these cases they fulfil their function. The ideologies have no function other than that of being the mouthpiece and defender of the party and sometimes exert
their influence on the very members of the party and even on the leaders, making them prisoners in the nets of their own sophisms.

The "programmes," too, usually have a fictitious part, strategically valuable, representing the hopes and promises by which one party tries to win over the minds of men and emerge victorious in competition. But they have another part that is real, that which announces the intentions and proposals of the party. It is indispensable in order to give to the action a certain beginning and the general direction. This general direction cannot help being "indefinite" and therefore continually modified or denied in the succeeding action. The fictitious part of the programmes, their indefinite and ineffectual character, and the calculated or impulsive sophisms of the ideologies provide an opportunity, according to the common estimate, for a further and different criticism of parties: it is said that they exhibit nothing but lies and idle talk and that they lack all profundity. But it is clearly a superficial judgment which attacks ideologies and abstract programmes, but does not understand their instrumental function and therefore does not see that the substance and reality do not lie in such programmes, but in the actual wills of persons joined in those unstable organic and living associations which are called parties.

Since the moment at which the programmes most clearly reveal their abstract nature is not when they are wielded as offensive arms, but when they are put to the test, and above all when the parties come to power, a sharp line is usually drawn between being a partisan and governing; between a member of the party and a member of the government, or that same person risen to power; between the moment of criticism and of struggle, and the moment of doing and achieving. However, this difference, too, is merely empirical: social
life is completely a matter of reciprocal relationship and responsiveness, and he who raises oppositions, criticizes and questions, governs or, what amounts to the same thing, has influence in the government; in the same way, he who governs is a partisan; that is, he follows the impulse of the party in which he is enrolled or of his own personality, which is in itself a party. In this case, too, it would be foolish to expect the individual to do what as an individual he cannot do, because it is the work of Providence, work which lies beyond the individual. And it would be foolish to expect the individual to do the impossible by merely transferring from one social position to another or from one place of work or combat to another. The antitheses of parties find their synthesis not in the government, but in history.

And history is the field in which one really finds differences between political parties, that is, among individuals in their various changeable groupings, which are not expressed and differentiated, as is imagined, by the various "labels" with which they are tagged. If the designations of parties were drawn only from contingent and extrinsic facts, they would have the advantage of referring the man in quest of information to the historical knowledge of the reasons and circumstances in which they were formed, just as the names of people send us back to the direct observation and knowledge of the real persons. But since the parties, as a result of their ideologies and of the attempt to appropriate political theories and fit them to their own, are frequently designated according to the various phases of political theory, and separate the inseparable and are called "liberal," "authoritarian," "democratic," "aristocratic," "monarchical," "socialist," etc., it is always easy for the sophistry of political passions to change one designation to another, and to show that the true liberal is the authoritarian, the true democrat the aristocrat,
the true socialist the antisocialist, the true republican the
monarchist—a demonstration whose only disadvantage is that
it can, with the same logic, be turned by the adversary to his
own favour. But when names are treated as names and
respected as such, and when in parties one seeks and con-
templates their historical existence and the individuals who
belong to them and guide them, these tricks of reciprocal
transformation, these sophisms, are hindered or made useless.
This is because in such cases we have before us the reality
of the various parties, which is a diversity of sentiments, of
temperaments, of precedences, of mental development, of
culture, of education, of vocation. And it is then as impossible
to confuse liberalism, authoritarianism and socialism as it is
to mistake for each other the noble Piedmontese Camillo di
Cavour, modernized in culture and in spirit, the Prussian
_junker_ Otto von Bismarck, and the apocalyptic Jew, armed
with Hegelian historical notions, Karl Marx.

IV. _The Empirical Science of Politics_

To those who are apparently dominated and overwhelmed
by the spectacle of the States, of disputes and of political
struggles, the philosophical propositions which we have been
expounding will perhaps seem an extreme abstraction, almost
a departure from the world for the region of the non-existent.
But since these propositions, like all philosophical propositions,
lead back to the creative spirit which is the sole and central
source of everything, they are, instead, to the greatest degree
concrete; whereas that materially conceived world, by which
others allow themselves to be dominated and oppressed, is an
abstract and untrue world. In those propositions all history
is included, the past and the present (as Machiavelli would
have said, "the experience of modern things and the lesson
of ancient things”); and they are not understood well without the history to which they make references and illusions, just as history is not understood without them, for they are its soul. The aim of the philosophy of politics is to make clear the history of practical human activity, in its twofold form—as economic and merely political history and as ethico-political or moral history. This is not an aim which the philosophy of history looks forward to carrying out in the future, but one which it has always carried out; because history has always been thought about, in the form of narration and reflection, and for this reason there has always been philosophizing on politics and on morality, and there has always been a consciousness of what they really are. This consciousness has been more or less complex, coherent and systematic.

A legitimate need arises in the process of this knowledge, of fixing in mind what is known or that part of it which it is most urgent to remember, in the form which will make it easiest for the spirit to remember and have available. This is a legitimate need both for the necessities of action and as an aid for further research and new knowledge. This is the invariable origin, in every field of knowledge and action, of what is called “empirical science”; in our case, of the empirical science of politics.

This empirical science is reached through the reduction (to types and classes) of the innumerable facts of history, here chiefly economic or political history and ethico-political history. Facts are taken in the abstract content which is their matter, and deprived of their proper life, given by their spiritual form or individuality. The so-called empirical laws are based on classification, because to determine the characteristics of the various types of facts is the same as to organize these characteristics according to some system and to establish
agreements and disagreements, concordances and discordances of effects. And, inasmuch as in all this continual fabrication of classes and of laws, one proceeds by abstraction, that is, by dividing the indivisible, there is continual recurrence to artificial concepts.

Thus, in order to fix in the memory those individuals and those actions which have the greatest importance in political life and which by comparison make other individuals and facts, also of a political nature, seem negligible and as though non-existent, it is imagined that "sovereignty," that is, the State itself, is found in certain persons and not in others; and the sovereignty or State, whose only reality lies in the relation which it constitutes, is personified. This opens the way for other artifices which try to bring into evidence certain modes of historical life (for example, the Athenian life), and therefore differentiate them from other modes (for example, the Persian). In order to attain this goal they build the frameworks of democratic, monarchical and aristocratic States. Similarly, in order to understand the relations in a State, between the various parts of the social or moral life, between the constitutional forms and the working of agriculture or of industry or of commerce, between economy and war, between religion and government, between the State and nations or languages, etc., similar cases are collected and the types of the theocratic, agricultural, commercial, industrial, military, national, pluri-national State, are set up. In fact, the first fallacy, which precedes all those we have mentioned, is the fallacy of single States, each one closed off from the others; whereas, in the aspect we are now considering, history is always universal history, that is, reality shows only whole sets of the most varied relations among all the inhabitants of the earth (not excluding the relations which may be established in the future with the inhabitants of other planets!). Only
by some arbitrary intervention can these relations be divided into a series of state, intrastate and interstate relations. Yet, without these artifices it would not be possible to constitute the bodies of national, international, public, private, civil, penal, commercial law, etc.

The formation of the type of the mixed State, the division of the three powers of the State, the determining of the various goals which the State does or can set up for itself, the antithesis and the harmony between the concept of the State and that of the individual, the distinction of State from government, the characteristic features of the various parties in which the political struggle takes place, and many other concepts of this sort might be cited as examples of the work of classification which the empirical Science of politics is carrying on. And if more conspicuous examples of its laws were desired, it would be enough to mention the law of the rotation of political forms, each of which, through its own degeneration, passes on to the following one. And there are those other laws which establish a relation of concomitance between agricultural economy and the feudal constitution, between commercial economy and democracy; or again, the laws about political liberty and its beneficent effectiveness in fostering life, and about the depressing effect of absolutism and despotism, and other similar laws.

All these classifying and directional categories, laws, questions and problems form, then, the subject matter of Political Science, a science which does not need to be invented, because it can point to classical books, still alive and instructive to-day, in Greek and Roman literature, chief among them the treatise of Aristotle; and to books in the literature of the Renaissance, especially the Italian Renaissance, chief among them *The Prince*, *The Discourses* and the other writings of Machiavelli; and to the efforts of English, French and German writers
of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, from Montesquieu to Treitschke. In recent times so-called Sociology has been added, as a companion or rival, to Politics, as it was traditionally called. Sociology, in that small part of it which is not altogether contemptible, must be considered an attempt to expand the old science by the inclusion of the types and laws of some forms of life which belong to political life but had been neglected because they did not refer to public law, to government, to war and to diplomatic negotiations, all of which were usually directly associated with the idea of politics.

To those who know the cause and genesis of empirical science in general, and of the empirical science of politics and sociology in particular, no pronouncement sounds more preposterous than that made by some of the supporters of this discipline (recently repeated in a well-known Treatise on Sociology, written in Italian). Namely that empirical science leaves philosophy aside and is founded directly on facts, divorced from all philosophical speculations. The facts on which it is founded are, at best, those facts which histories, critically elaborated, hand down and explain; or, at worst, they are the facts taken from the newspapers, histories of little critical value which give information on the facts of yesterday and to-day (newspapers are widely used in the above-mentioned Treatise). And these histories and newspapers are never anything but creations of the mind which thought—that is, philosophy—produces by interpreting, and shaping and qualifying actions and events. By giving a mere outline of those accounts of facts and of those philosophical interpretations empirical science has the power to deprive them of soul and of meaning. But it cannot put them aside, and therefore it cannot put aside the philosophy which has given them life, any more than the butcher can do without the live
animals which he slaughters. Even in this case the dislike expressed for philosophy serves only to prepare for the stealthy introduction of a common or very poor philosophy and to permit an outlet for passions and whims, lurking among the severe theorems of the mechanical science which has made the State and society its objects.

But, on the other hand, those who bear in mind the cause and the genesis of the empirical science of politics understand its function and necessity; and whereas they guard against denying in its name the work of philosophy and of history or against usurping their roles, they are careful to defend the usefulness of that science against philosophical reasoners. This is the usefulness defined by its own genesis, its usefulness as an instrument. In this respect it would be pedantic, from the philosophical point of view, to criticize the theory of sovereignty, of the three forms of the State and of the three powers, of the rotation of forms, of the purpose of the State, of the rights of the citizen toward the State, of the distinction between State and government, and all the other theories. This criticism ceases to be pedantic and becomes valuable only as a defence against the plans of the empirical science of politics, when these plans, disguised as philosophical aphorisms and taken as absolute principles, are transferred to philosophy and history. Then philosophy and history rise in protest—philosophy, which, through the empirical science of politics, has witnessed the splitting of a unity, the separation of the inseparable and everywhere the multiplication of artificial concepts; and history, which in the same way has seen its manifold varieties become uniform and its vivid and various colours fade and merge. They protest because they had willingly adapted themselves to these pauses in their work for the advantage which might later come to the work itself; but they cannot accept having what was to be an expedient for
their use changed to an obstacle. It is well that for certain purposes a distinction be made between monarchy and democracy; but this empirical distinction should not prevent our seeing that two monarchical States can have far more differences between themselves than exist between a monarchy and a democracy, because what matters from the historical point of view are not abstract forms, but concrete political and moral reality. It is well to try to combine differing forms with the hope of avoiding certain disadvantages and attaining what used to be known as the "mixed State" or the "excellent State"; but it must not be forgotten that only the State which seeks to promote the advancement of mankind, whatever may be the class or classes in which the abstract form of its constitution may later be placed, is an excellent State; nor must it be forgotten that in the final analysis States are what the men who constitute them continually make them, with their mind and with their spirit, which alone lend meaning and give life to forms of government. There is pedantry in political science just as there is pedantry in literary science. Neither the wisdom of antiquity, nor the Renaissance with its subtle reasoning and combination of forms, nor the modern era, the era of the constitutions, escaped this pedantry. The fundamental question is always: "Who undertakes all these things?" A poet, a philosopher, a saint, a simple and resolute man are worth more in political reality than all the political theorists and are able to do what the latter cannot do. And it is well that we should define parties empirically as the liberal, the conservative, the radical or the socialist. However, the real problem is not how to be a good liberal, a good conservative, a good socialist or a good radical, but how to act in certain given circumstances in a manner suitable to reality, which is neither radical nor socialist nor conservative nor liberal. It is well, finally, to devise new institutions to
settle arguments between the various States; but it must not be imagined that thereby there has been or will be first brought into being the Society of peoples, the unity of mankind or the World State, because this society, this unity, this World State has always existed and is called history. The life of this civitas mundi flows and will flow at times in a peaceful manner, at times in a troubled and violent manner, exactly like the life of the single civitates or States.

The laws of the empirical science of politics, when presented as maxims and advice, have the same auxiliary function, and not the function of a determining force, toward the decision of the will. Are maxims and advice useless? It is customary to say that advice is offered with the consciousness that it will not be followed. This is true. But it should be added that advice is not offered in order to be followed, but is given as advice, as practical possibilities offered to those who are experiencing difficulty in reaching a decision, so that they may not overlook these possibilities in searching for the solution they are about to reach. Even if this advice is not accepted, it will nevertheless be weighed mentally and with some effect on the decision. Or, if this advice is followed, the case is certainly no different, because the decision and the action are identical with the advice only in appearance, and in reality differ from it in so far as they are the decision and the action of the individual, created by the individual. Going still further, it might even be said that advice is offered in order not to be followed. The conclusion expressed or understood in every honest advice is: "See for yourself." That demagogue, Spedito of Porta San Piero, of whom Villani speaks, was not entirely wrong. Villani tells us that, with his ardent words, he incited the Florentines to the battle which ended in the defeat at Montaperti. After the disaster, the demagogue, now in exile, was reprimanded by one of his
opponents, Tegghiaio Aldobrandi, of Dantecan memory, for having brought the Florentines and himself to so much misery by his advice. He boldly answered, "And why did you believe in it?" Actually, he was merely practising his profession, in conformity with his character. The profession of demagogue was one which Providence had assigned to him, a profession useful as a stimulus and as a catalyst. And the others, the thoughtful and sensible ones, indifferent to the favour of the populace, should have practised their profession better than they did, should have resisted more strongly until victory was theirs, and should not have succumbed to the oratory of the demagogue; then they would not have had to share the responsibility for what had happened.

Why have I insisted on pointing out, with the greatest care, the distinction between theory and practice, between the philosophy of politics and politics? To urge the philosophers to be modest and not to confuse political life, already sufficiently confused, with inopportune and feebly argued philosophy? Yes, of course. I had that idea too. But I confess that I was moved, above all, by the opposite desire, namely, to save historical judgment from contamination with practical politics, a contamination which deprives historical judgment of tolerance and fairness. This desire is also, in its own way, politics, profound politics, if what Aristotle, the father of political science, used to say is true, about the contrast between the active and the contemplative life—that not only the actions which turn towards the facts are practical, but even more practical are the contemplations and reflections which have their origin and end in themselves and which, by educating the mind, prepare for good deeds.