Marx, Moses, and the Pagans
in the Secular City
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With the conversion of the Roman Emperor Constantine to Christianity, the period of pagan Europe began to approach its end. During the next millennium the entire European continent came under the sway of the Gospel- sometimes by peaceful persuasion, frequently by forceful conversion. Those who were yesterday the persecuted of the ancient Rome became, in turn, the persecutors of the Christian Rome. Those who were previously bemoaning their fate at the hands of Nero, Diocletian, or Caligula did not hesitate to apply "creative" violence against infidel pagans. Although violence was nominally prohibited by the Christian texts, it was fully used against those who did not fit into the category of God's "chosen children." During the reign of Constantine, the persecution against the pagans took the proportions "in a fashion analogous to that whereby the old faiths had formerly persecuted the new, but in an even fiercer spirit." By the edict of A.D. 346, followed ten years later by the edict of Milan, pagan temples and the worship of pagan deities came to be stigmatized as magnum crimen. The death penalty was inflicted upon all those found guilty of participating in ancient sacrifices or worshipping pagan idols. "With Theodosius, the administration embarked upon a systematic effort to abolish the various surviving forms of paganism through the disestablishment, disen-dowment, and proscription of surviving cults."(1) The period of the dark ages began.

Christian and inter-Christian violence, ad majorem dei gloriam, did not let up until the beginning of the eighteenth century. Along with Gothic spires of breathtaking beauty, the Christian authorities built pyres that swallowed nameless thousands. Seen in hindsight, Christian intolerance against heretics, Jews, and pagans may be compared to the twentieth-century Bolshevik intolerance against class opponents in Russia and Eastern Europe-with one exception: it lasted longer. During the twilight of imperial Rome, Christian fanaticism prompted the pagan philosopher Celsus to write: "They [Christians] will not argue about what they believe-they always bring in their, `Do not examine, but believe'. . ." Obedience, prayer, and the avoidance of critical thinking were held by Christians as the most expedient tools to eternal bliss. Celsus described Christians as individuals prone to factionalism and a primitive way of thinking, who, in addition, demonstrate a remarkable disdain for life.(2) A similar tone against Christians was used in the nineteenth century by Friedrich Nietzsche who, in his virulent style, depicted Christians as individuals capable of displaying both self-hatred and hatred towards others, i.e., "hatred against those who think differently, and the will to

persecute."(3) Undoubtedly, early Christians must have genuinely believed that the end of history loomed large on the horizon and, with their historical optimism, as well as their violence against the "infidels," they probably deserved the name of the Bolsheviks of antiquity.

As suggested by many authors, the break-up of the Roman Empire did not result only from the onslaught of barbarians, but because Rome was already "ruined from within by Christian sects, conscientious objectors, enemies of the official cult, the persecuted, persecutors, criminal elements of all sorts, and total chaos." Paradoxically, even the Jewish God Yahveh was to experience a sinister fate: "he would be converted, he would become Roman, cosmopolitan, ecumenical, gentile, goyim, globalist, and finally anti-Semite. "(!)(4) It is no wonder that, in the following centuries, Christian churches in Europe had difficulties in trying to reconcile their universalist vocation with the rise of nationalist extremism.

Pagan Residues in the Secular City

Although Christianity gradually removed the last vestiges of Roman polytheism, it also substituted itself as the legitimate heir of Rome. Indeed, Christianity did not cancel out paganism in its entirety; it inherited from Rome many features that it had previously scorned as anti-Christian. The official pagan cults were dead but pagan spirit remained indomitable, and for centuries it kept resurfacing in astounding forms and in multiple fashions: during the period of Renaissance, during Romanticism, before the Second World War, and today, when Christian Churches increasingly recognize that their secular sheep are straying away from their lone shepherds. Finally, ethnic folklore seems to be a prime example of the survival of paganism, although in the secular city folklore has been largely reduced to a perishable commodity of culinary or tourist attraction. (5) Over the centuries, ethnic folklore has been subject to transformations, adaptations, and the demands and constraint of its own epoch; yet it has continued to carry its original archetype of a tribal founding myth. Just as paganism has always remained stronger in the villages, so has folklore traditionally been best protected among the peasant classes in Europe. In the early nineteenth century, folklore began to play a decisive role in shaping national consciousness of European peoples, i.e., "in a community anxious to have its own origins and based on a history that is more often reconstructed than real. "(6)

The pagan content was removed, but the pagan structure remained pretty much the same. Under the mantle and aura of Christian saints, Christianity soon created its own pantheon of deities. Moreover, even the message of Christ adopted its special meaning according to place, historical epoch, and genius loci of each European people. In Portugal, Catholicism manifests itself differently than in Mozambique; and rural Poles continue to worship many of the same ancient Slavic deities that are carefully interwoven into the Roman Catholic liturgy. All over contemporary Europe, the erasable imprint of polytheist beliefs continues to surface. The Yule celebration represents one of the most glaring examples of the tenacity of pagan residues. (7) Furthermore, many former pagan temples and sites of worship have been turned into sacred places of the Catholic Church. Lourdes in France, Medjugorje in Croatia, sacred rivers, or mountains, do they not all point to the imprint of pre-

Christian pagan Europe? The cult of mother goddess, once upon a time intensely practiced by Celts, particularly near rivers, can be still observed today in France where many small chapels are built near fountains and sources of water. (8) And finally, who could dispute the fact that we are all brain children of pagan Greeks and Latins? Thinkers, such as Virgil, Tacitus, Heraclitus are as modern today as they were during the dawn of European civilization.

Modern Pagan Conservatives

There is ample evidence that pagan sensibility can flourish in the social sciences, literature, and arts, not just as a form of exotic narrative but also as a mental framework and a tool of conceptual analysis. Numerous names come to mind when we discuss the revival of Indo-European polytheism. In the first half of the twentieth century, pagan thinkers usually appeared under the mask of those who styled themselves as "revolutionary conservatives," "aristocratic nihilist," "elitists"-in short all those who did not wish to substitute Marx for Jesus, but who rejected both Marx and Jesus.(9) Friedrich Nietzsche and Martin Heidegger in philosophy, Carl Gustav Jung in psychology, Georges Dumézil and Mircea Eliade in anthropology, Vilfredo Pareto and Oswald Spengler in political science, let alone dozens of poets such as Ezra Pound or Charles Baudelaire-these are just some of the names that can be associated with the legacy of pagan conservatism. All these individuals had in common the will to surpass the legacy of Christian Europe, and all of them yearned to include in their spiritual baggage the world of pre-Christian Celts, Slavs, and Germans.

In the age that is heavily laced with the Biblical message, many modern pagan thinkers, for their criticism of Biblical monotheism, have been attacked and stigmatized either as unrepentant atheists or as spiritual standard-bearers of fascism. Particularly Nietzsche, Heidegger, and more recently Alain de Benoist came under attack for allegedly espousing the philosophy which, for their contemporary detractors, recalled the earlier national socialist attempts to "de-christianize" and "repaganize" Germany. (10) These appear as unwarranted attacks. Jean Markale observes that "Naziism and Stalinism were, in a sense, also religions because of the acts that they triggered. They were also religions insofar as they implied a certain Gospel, in an etymological sense of the word . . . Real paganism, by contrast, is always oriented towards the realm of sublimation. Paganism cannot be in the service of temporal power."(11) Paganism appears more a form of sensibility than a given political credo, and with the exhaustion of Christianity, one should not rule out its renewed flourishing in Europe.

Paganism Against the Monotheist Desert

Two thousand years of Judeo-Christian monotheism has left its mark on the Western civilization. In view of this, it should not come as a surprise that glorification of paganism, as well as the criticism of the Bible and Judeo-Christian ethics-especially when they come from the right wing spectrum of society-are unlikely to gain popularity in the secular city. It suffices to look at American society where attacks against Judeo-Christian principles are

frequently looked at with suspicion, and where the Bible and the Biblical myth of god's "chosen people" still play a significant role in the American constitutional dogma. (12) Although the secular city has by now become indifferent to the Judeo-Christian theology, principles that derive from Judeo-Christian ethics, such as "peace," "love," and "universal brotherhood," are still showing healthy signs of life. In the secular city many liberal and socialist thinkers, while abandoning the belief in Judeo-Christian theology, have not deemed it wise to abandon the ethics taught by the Bible.

Whatever one may think about the seemingly obsolete, dangerous, or even derogatory connotation of the term "European paganism," it is important to note that this connotation is largely due to the historical and political influence of Christianity. Etymologically, paganism is related to the beliefs and rituals that were in usage in European villages and countryside. But paganism, in its modern version, may connote also a certain sensibility and a "way of life" that remains irreconcilable with Judeo-Christian monotheism. To some extent European peoples continue to be "pagans" because their national memory, their geographic roots, and, above all, their ethnic allegiances-which often contain allusions to ancient myths, fairy tales, and forms of folklore bear peculiar marks of pre-Christian themes. Even the modern resurgence of separatism and regionalism in Europe appears as an offshoot of pagan residues. As Markale observes, "the dictatorship of Christian ideology has not silenced those ancient customs; it has only suppressed them into the shadow of the unconscious" (16). The fact that all of Europe is today swept by growing nationalism bears witness to the permanency of the pagan sense of tribal historical memory.

In European culture, polytheistic beliefs began to dwindle with the consolidation of Christianity. In the centuries to come, the European system of explanation, whether in theology or, later on, in sociology, politics, or history gradually came under the sway of Judeo-Christian outlook of the world. David Miller observes that Judeo-Christian monotheism considerably altered the Europeans' approach to the social sciences as well as to the overall perception of the world. In view of these changes, who can reassure us about our own objectivity, especially when we try to understand the pagan world with the goggles of the postmodern Judeo-Christian man? It is no wonder that when paganism was removed from Europe the perceptual and epistemological disruptions in sciences also followed suit. Consequently, with the consolidation of the Judeo-Christian belief, the world and the world phenomena came under the sway of the fixed concepts and categories governed by the logic of "either-or," "true or false," and "good or evil," with seldom any shadings in between. The question, however, arises whether in the secular city-a city replete with intricate choices and complex social differences that stubbornly refuse all categorizations-this approach remains desirable.(13) It is doubtful that Judeo-Christian monotheism can continue to offer a valid solution for the understanding of the increasingly complex social reality that modern man faces in the secular city. Moreover, the subsequent export of Judeo-Christian values to the antipodes of the world caused similar disruptions, yielding results opposite from those originally espoused by the Westerners, and triggering virulent hatred among non-Western populations. Some authors have quite persuasively written that Christian ecumenism, often championed as the "white man's Christian burden," has been one of the main purveyors of imperialism, colonialism, and racism in the Third World.(14)

In the modern secular city, the century-long and pervasive influence of Christianity has significantly contributed to the view that each glorification of paganism, or, for that matter, the nostalgia of the Greco-Roman order, is outright strange or at best irreconcilable with contemporary society. Recently, however, Thomas Molnar, a Catholic philosopher who seems to be sympathetic to the cultural revival of paganism, noted that modern adherents of neo-paganism are more ambitious than their predecessors. Molnar writes that the aim of pagan revival does not have to mean the return to the worship of ancient European deities; rather, it expresses a need to forge another civilization or, better yet, a modernized version of the "scientific and cultural Hellenism" that was once a common reference for all European peoples. And with visible sympathy for the polytheistic endeavors of some modern pagan conservatives, Molnar adds:

> The issue is not how to conquer the planet but rather how to promote an oikumena of the peoples and civilizations that have rediscovered their origins. The assumption goes that the domination of stateless ideologies, notably the ideology of American liberalism and Soviet socialism, would come to an end. One believes in rehabilitated paganism in order to restore to peoples their genuine identity that existed before monotheist corruption. (15)

Such a candid view by a Catholic may also shed some light on the extent of disillusionment among Christians in their secular cities. The secularized world full of affluence and richness does not seem to have stifled the spiritual needs of man. How else to explain that throngs of European and American youngsters prefer to trek to pagan Indian ashrams rather than to their own sacred sites obscured by Judeo-Christian monotheism?

Anxious to dispel the myth of pagan "backwardness," and in an effort to redefine European paganism in the spirit of modern times, the contemporary protagonists of paganism have gone to great lengths to present its meaning in a more attractive and scholarly fashion. One of their most outspoken figures, Alain de Benoist, summarizes the modern meaning of paganism in the following words:

> Neo-paganism, if there is such a thing as neo-paganism, is not a phenomenon of a sect, as some of its adversaries, but also some of the groups and chapels, sometimes well-intentioned, sometimes awkward, frequently funny and completely marginal, imagine ... [What worries us today, at least according to the idea which we have about it, is less the disappearance of paganism but rather its resurgence under primitive and puerile form, affiliated to that "second religion," which Spengler justifiably depicted as characteristic of cultures in decline, and of which Julius Evola writes that they "correspond generally to a phenomenon of evasion, alienation, confused compensation, without any serious repercussion on reality. (16)

Paganism, as a profusion of bizarre cults and sects, is not something modern pagan thinkers have in mind. A century ago, pagan philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche had already observed in Der Antichrist that, when a nation becomes too degenerate or too uprooted, it must place its energy into various forms of

Oriental cults, and simultaneously "it must change its own God" (979). Today, Nietzsche's words sound more prophetic than ever. Gripped by decadence and rampant hedonism, the masses from the secular city are looking for the vicarious evasion in the presence of Indian gurus or amidst a host of Oriental prophets. But beyond this Western semblance of transcendence, and behind the Westerners' self-hatred accompanied by puerile infatuation with Oriental mascots, there is more than just a transitory weariness with Christian monotheism. When modern cults indulge in the discovery of perverted paganism, they also may be in search of the sacred that was driven underground by the dominating Judeo-Christian discourse.

From Monotheist Desert to Communist Anthropology

Has monotheism introduced into Europe an alien "anthropology" responsible for the spread of egalitarian mass society and the rise of totalitarianism, as some pagan thinkers seem to suggest? Some authors appear to support this thesis, arguing that the roots of tyranny do not lie in Athens or Sparta, but are traceable, instead, to Jerusalem. In a dialogue with Molnar, de Benoist suggests that monotheism upholds the idea of only one absolute truth; it is a system where the notion of the enemy is associated with the evil, and where the enemy must be physically exterminated (cf. Deut. 13). In short, observes de Benoist, Judeo-Christian universalism, two thousand years ago, set the stage for the rise of modern egalitarian aberrations and their modern secular offshoots, including communism.

> That there are totalitarian regimes "without God," is quite obvious, the Soviet Union for example. These regimes, nonetheless, are the "inheritors" of the Christian thought in the sense as Carl Schmitt demonstrated that the majority of modern political principles are secularized theological principles. They bring down to earth a structure of exclusion; the police of the soul yield its place to the police of the state; the ideological wars follow up to the religious wars. (17)

Similar observations were echoed earlier by the philosopher Louis Rougier as well as by the political scientist Vilfredo Pareto, both of whom represented the "old guard" of pagan thinkers and whose philosophical researches were directed toward the rehabilitation of European political polytheism. Both Rougier and Pareto are in agreement that Judaism and its perverted form, Christianity, introduced into the European conceptual framework an alien type of reasoning that leads to wishful thinking, utopianism, and the ravings about the static future.(18) Similar to Latter-day Marxists, early Christian belief in egalitarianism must have had a tremendous impact on the deprived masses of northern Africa and Rome, insofar as it promised equality for the "wretched of the earth," for odium generis humani, and all the proles of the world. Commenting on Christian proto-communists, Rougier recalls that Christianity came very early under the influence of both the Iranian dualism and the eschatological visions of the Jewish apocalypses. Accordingly, Jews and, later on, Christians adopted the belief that the good who presently suffer would be rewarded in the future. In the secular city, the same theme was later interwoven into modern socialist doctrines that promised secular paradise. "There are two empires juxtaposed in the space," writes Rougier, "one

governed by God and his angels, the other by Satan and Belial." The consequences of this largely dualistic vision of the world resulted, over a period of time, in Christian-Marxist projection of their political enemies as always wrong, as opposed to Christian-Marxist attitude considered right. For Rougier, the Greco-Roman intolerance could never assume such total and absolute proportions of religious exclusion; the intolerance towards Christians, Jews, and other sects was sporadic, aiming at certain religious customs deemed contrary to Roman customary law (such as circumcision, human sacrifices, sexual and religious orgies). (19)

By cutting themselves from European polytheistic roots, and by accepting Christianity, Europeans gradually began to adhere to the vision of the world that emphasized the equality of souls, and the importance of spreading God's gospel to all peoples, regardless of creed, race, or language (Paul, Galatians 3:28). In the centuries to come, these egalitarian cycles, in secularized forms, entered first the consciousness of Western man and, after that, entire humankind. Alain de Benoist writes:

> According to the classical process of the development and degra-dation of cycles, the egalitarian theme has entered our culture from the stage of the myth (equality before God), to the stage of ideology (equality before people); after that, it has passed to the stage of "scientific pretension" (affirmation of the egalitarian fact). In short, from Christianity to democracy, and after that to socialism and Marxism. The most serious reproach which one can formulate against Christianity is that it has inaugurated this egalitarian cycle by introducing into European thought a revolutionary anthropology, with universalist and totalitarian character.(20)

One could probably argue that Judeo-Christian monotheism, as much as it implies universalism and egalitarianism, also suggests religious exclusiveness that directly emanates from the belief in one undisputed truth. The consequence of the Christian belief in theological oneness-e.g., that there is only one God, and therefore only one truth-has naturally led, over the centuries, to Christian temptation to obliterate or downplay all other truths and values. One can argue that when one sect proclaims its religion as the key to the riddle of the universe and if, in addition, this sect claims to have universal aspirations, the belief in equality and the suppression of all human differences will follow suit. Accordingly, Christian intolerance toward "infidels" could always be justified as a legitimate response against those who departed from the belief in Yahveh's truth. Hence, the concept of Christian "false humility" toward other confessions, a concept that is particularly obvious in regard to Christian attitude toward Jews. Although almost identical in their worship of one god, Christians could never quite reconcile themselves to the fact that they also had to worship the deity of those whom they abhorred in the first place as a deicide people. Moreover, whereas Christianity always has been a universalist religion, accessible to everybody in all corners of the world, Judaism has remained an ethnic religion of only the Jewish people. (21) As de Benoist writes, Judaism sanctions its own nationalism, as opposed to nationalism of the Christians which is constantly belied by the Christian universalist principles. In view of this, "Christian anti-Semitism," writes de Benoist, "can justifiably be described as a neurosis." Might it be that

the definite disappearance of anti-Semitism, as well as virulent inter-ethnic hatred, presupposes first the recantation of the Christian belief in universalism?

Pagan Notion of the Sacred

To the critics who argue that polytheism is a thing of the prehistoric and primitive mind incompatible with modern societies, one could respond that paganism is not necessarily a return to "paradise lost" or a nostalgia for the restoration of the Greco-Roman order. For pagan conservatives, to pledge allegiance to "paganism" means to rekindle Europe's historical origins, as well as to revive some sacred aspects of life that existed in Europe prior to the rise of Christianity. One could also add that, as far as the alleged supremacy or modernity of Judeo-Christianity over the backwardness of Indo-European polytheism is concerned, Judeo-Christian religions, in terms of their modernity, are no less backward than pagan religions. To emphasize this point de Benoist writes:

> Just as it was yesterday a grotesque spectacle to see the "pagan idols" denounced by Christian missionaries, who were themselves enamored of their own bric-a bracs, so it is somewhat ridiculous to see the (European) "past" denounced by those who never tire of praising Judeo-Christian continuity, and who refer us to the example of "always modern" Abraham, Jacob, Isaac, and other proto-historic Beduins. (22)

According to some pagan thinkers, Judeo-Christian rationalization of historical time has precluded the projection of one's own national past and, in so doing, it has significantly contributed to the "desertification" of the world. In the last century, Ernest Renan observed that Judaism is oblivious of the notion of the sacred, because the "desert itself is monotheistic."(23) In a similar tone, Alain de Benoist in L'éclipse, while quoting Harvey Cox's The Secular City, writes that the loss of the sacred, which is causing today the "disenchantment" of the modern polity, resulted as the legitimate consequence of the Biblical renunciation of history. First, the disenchantment of nature had started with the Creation; the desacralization of politics with the Exodus; and the deconsecration of values with the Alliance of Sinai, especially after the interdiction of idols (129). Continuing with similar analyses, Mircea Eliade, an author himself influenced by pagan world, adds that Judaic resentment of pagan idolatry stems from the ultra-rational character of Mosaic laws that rationalize all aspects of life by means of a myriad of prescriptions, laws, and interdictions:

> Desacralization of the Nature, devaluation of cultural activity, in short, the violent and total rejection of cosmic religion, and above all the decisive importance conferred upon spiritual regeneration by the definite return of Yahveh, was the prophets' response to historical crises menacing the two Jewish kingdoms.(24)

Some might object that Catholicism has its own form of the sacred and that, unlike some other forms of Judeo-Christian beliefs, it displays its own

spiritual transcendence. But there are reasons to believe that the Catholic concept of the sacred does not emerge sui generis, but rather as a substratum of the Christian amalgam with paganism. As de Benoist notes, Christianity owes its manifestation of the sacred (holy sites, pilgrimages, Christmas festivities, and the pantheon of saints) to the indomitable undercurrent of pagan and polytheistic sensibility. Therefore, it seems that the pagan revival today represents less a normative religion, in the Christian sense of the word, than a certain spiritual equipment that stands in contrast to the religion of Jews and Christians. Consequently, as some pagan thinkers suggest, the possible replacement of the monotheistic vision of the world by the polytheistic vision of the world could mean not just the "return of gods" but the return of the plurality of social values as well.

Courage, personal honor, and spiritual and physical self-surpass-ment are often cited as the most important virtues of paganism. In contrast to Christian and Marxian utopian optimism, paganism emphasizes the profound sense of the tragic, the tragioc-as seen in Greek tragedies-that sustains man in his Promethean plight and that makes his life worth living. (25) It is the pagan sense of the tragic that can explain man's destiny-destiny, which for old Indo-Europeans "triggered action, endeavor, and self-surpassment. (26) Hans Günther summarizes this point in the following words:

> [I]ndo-European religiosity is not rooted in any kind of fear, neither in fear of deity nor in fear of death. The words of the Latter-day Roman poet, that fear first created the Gods (Statius, Thebais, 3:661: primus in orbe fecit deos timor), cannot be applied to the true forms of Indo-European religiosity, for wherever it has unfolded freely, the "fear of the Lord" (Proverbs, Solomon 9, 10; Psalm 11, 30) has proved neither the beginning of belief nor of wisdom.(27)

Some have suggested that the greatest civilizations are those that have shown a strong sense of the tragic and that have had no fear of death .(28) In the pagan concept of the tragic, man is encouraged to take responsibility before history because man is the only one who gives history a meaning. Commenting on Nietzsche, Giorgio Locchi writes that, in pagan cosmogony, man alone is considered a forger of his own destiny (faber suae fortunea), exempt from biblical or historical determinism, "divine grace," or economic and material constraints.(29) Paganism stresses a heroic attitude toward life as opposed to the Christian attitude of culpability and fear toward life. Sigrid Hunke writes of the [e/ssentialization of life, since both life and death have the same essence and are always contained in both. The life, which at any moment is face-to-death and with-death, renders the future per-manent in each instant, and life becomes eternal by acquiring an inscrutable profundity, and by assuming the value of eternity.

For Hunke, along with other authors of pagan sensibility, in order to restore these pagan virtues in the secular city, man must first abandon the dualistic logic of religious and social exclusion, "a logic which has been responsible for extremism not only among individuals, but also among parties and peoples, and which, starting out from Europe, has disseminated into the world this dualistic split that has acquired planetary proportions."(30) To achieve this ambitious goal, Western man must first rethink the meaning of history.

The Terror of History

Modern pagans remind us that Judeo-Christian monotheism has substantially altered man's attitude toward history. By assigning history a specific goal, Judeo-Christianity has devalued all past events, except those that display the sign of Yahveh's theophany. Undoubtedly, Yahveh does admit that man may have a history, but only insofar as history is bestowed with an assigned goal, a certain goal, and a specific goal. Should man, however, continue to cling to the concept of history that evokes collective memory of his tribe or people, he runs the risk of provoking Yahveh's anger. For Jews, Christians, as well as Marxists, historicity is not the real essence of man; the real essence of man is beyond history. One could observe that the Judeo-Christian concept of the end of history correlates well with modern egalitarian and pacifist doctrines that inspire themselves, often unknowingly, with the Biblical proverb: "the wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid" (Isa. 11:6). De Benoist notes in L'éclipse that, unlike the pagan concept of history that involves organic solidarity and communal ties, the monotheistic concept of history creates divisions. Accordingly, Yahveh must forbid "mixtures" between the present and the past, between people and the divine, between Israel and the goyim (132). Christians, of course, will reject Jewish exclusiveness-as their century-long religious proselytism amply demonstrates-but they will, nonetheless, retain their own brand of exclusiveness against "infidel" Moslems, pagans, and other "false believers."

Contrary to the Judeo-Christian dogma that asserts that historical time starts from one unique father, in European paganism there are no traces of the beginning of the time; instead, historical time is seen as a perpetual recommencement, the "eternal return" emanating from multiple and different fathers. In pagan cosmogony, as de Benoist writes, time is the reflection of the non-linear or spheric conception of history, a conception in which the past, the present, and the future are not perceived as stretches of cosmic time irrevocably cut off from each other, or following each other on the single line. Instead, present, past, and future are perceived as dimensions of actuality (L'éclipse 131). In pagan cosmogony, it is incumbent to each people to assign itself a role in history, which in practice means that there cannot be self-appointed peoples occupying the central stage in history. Similarly, just as it is erroneous to speak about one truth, it is equally wrong to maintain that entire humanity must pursue the same and unique historical direction, as proposed by Judeo-Christian universalism and its secular fall-out "global democracy."

The Judeo-Christian concept of history suggests that the flow of historical time is monolinear and, therefore, limited by its significance and meaning. Henceforth, for Jews and Christians, history can be apprehended only as a totality governed by a sense of ultimate end and historical fulfillment. History for both Jews and Christians appears at best parenthetical, at worst an ugly episode or a "vale of tears," which one of these days must be erased from earth and transcended by paradise.

Furthermore, Judeo-Christian monotheism excludes the possibility of historical return or "recommencement"; history has to unfold in a predetermined way by making its way toward a final goal. In the modern secular city, the idea of Christian finality will be transposed into a myth of a

finite "classless" society, or the apolitical and ahistorical liberal consumer society. Here is how de Benoist sees it in L'éclipse:

> Legitimization by the future that replaces legitimization of the immemorial times authorizes all uprootedness, all emancipations" regarding the adherence in its original form. This utopian future that replaces a mythic past is incidentally always the generator of deceptions, because the best that it announces must constantly be put off to a later date. Temporality is no longer a founding element of the deployment of the being who tries to grasp the game of the world temporality is pursued from one goal, reached from one end; expectation and no longer communion.
> To submit globally the historical becoming to an obligatory meaning means in fact to shut history in the reign of objectivity, which reduces choices, orientations and projects. (155-56)

Only the future can enable Jews and Christians to "rectify" the past. Only the future assumes the value of redemption. Henceforth, historical time for Jews and Christians is no longer reversible; from now on each historical occurrence acquires the meaning of divine providence, of "God's" finger, or theophany. In the secular city, this line of monolinear thinking will give birth to the "religion" of progress and the belief in boundless economic growth. Did not Moses receive the Laws at a certain place and during a certain time, and did not Jesus later preach, perform miracles, and was he not crucified at a specifically recorded time and place? Did not the end of history begin for Communists with the Bolshevik Revolution, and for liberals with the American century? These "divine" interventions in human history are never again to be repeated. Eliade summarizes this point in the following words:

"Under the "pressure of history" and supported by the prophetic and Messianic experience, a new interpretation of historical events dawns among the children of Israel. Without finally renouncing the traditional concept of archetypes and repetitions, Israel attempts to "save" historical events by regarding them as active presences of Yahveh. . . . Messianism gives them a new value, especially by abolishing their [historical events] possibility of repetition ad infinitum. When the Messiah comes, the world will be saved once and for all and history will cease to exist."(31)

Directly commanded by the will of Yahweh, history henceforth functions as a series of events, with each event becoming irrevocable and irreversible. History is not only discarded, but also fought against. Pierre Chaunu, a contemporary French historian, observes that "the rejection of history is a temptation of those civilizations that have emerged out of Judeo-Christianity. "(32) In a similar tone, Michel Maffesoli writes that totalitarianism occurs in those countries that are hostile to history, and he adds: "We enter now into the reign of finality propitious to political eschatology whose outcome is Christianity and its profane forms, liberalism and Marxism."(33)

The foregoing observations might need some comments. If one accepts the idea of the end of history, as proposed by monotheists, Marxists, and liberals, to what extent, then, can the entire historical suffering be explained? How is it possible, from liberal and Marxist points of view, to "redeem" past oppressions, collective sufferings, deportations, and humiliations that have filled up history? Suffice it to say that this enigma only underscores the

difficulty regarding the concept of distributive justice in the egalitarian secular city. If a truly egalitarian society miraculously emerges, it will be, inevitably, a society of the elect-of those who, as Eliade noted, managed to escape the pressure of history by simply being born at a right time, at a right place, and in a right country. Paul Tillich noted, some time ago, that such equality would result in immense historical inequality, since it would exclude those who, during their life time, lived in unequal society, or-if one can borrow Arthur Koestler's words-who perished with a &#x20shrug of eternity." (34) These quotes from Koestler and Eliade illustrate the difficulties of modern salutary ideologies that try to "arrest" time and create a secular paradise. Would it not be better in times of great crisis to borrow the pagan notion of cyclical history? This seems to be the case with some East European peoples who, in times of crisis or catastrophes, frequently resort to popular folklore and myths that help them, in an almost cathartic manner, better to cope with their predicament. Locchi writes:

"The new beginning of history is feasible. There is no such thing as historical truth. If historical truth truly existed then there would be no history. Historical truth must time and again be obtained; it must always be translated into action. And this is exactly-for us-the meaning of history."(35)

We might conclude that for Christians it is Christ who defines the value of a human being, for a Jew it is Judaism that gauges someone's "choseness," and for Marx it is not the quality of man that defines the class, but rather the quality of the class that defines man. One thus becomes "elect" by virtue of his affiliation to his class or his religious belief.

Pagans or Monotheists: Who is More Tolerant?

As observed, Yahveh, similar to his future secular successors, in the capacity of the single truth-maker, is opposed to the presence of other gods and other values. As a reductionist, whatever exists beyond his fold must be either punished or destroyed. One can observe that, throughout history, the monotheistic true believers have been encouraged, in the name of "higher" historic truths, to punish those who strayed away from Yahveh's assigned direction. Walter Scott writes:

"In many instances the Mosaic law of retaliation, an "eye for eye, tooth for tooth," was invoked by the Israelites to justify the atrocities which they visited upon their fallen enemies ... The history of the Israelite campaigns shows that the Hebrews were most often the aggressors." (36)

Thus, in the name of historical truth, the ancient Hebrews could justify the slaughtering of Canaanite pagans, and in the name of Christian revelation, Christian states legitimized wars against infidel heretics, Jews, and pagans. It would be imprecise, however, in this context to downplay the pagan violence. The Greek destruction of the city of Troy, the Roman destruction of Carthage, clearly point to the frequently total and bloody nature of wars conducted by the ancient Greeks and Romans. Yet, it is also important to stress that seldom do we find among the ancients the self-righteous attitude toward their victories that accompanied Christian and Jewish military victories. Seldom, if ever, did the Romans or the Greeks attempt, after the military destruction of their opponents, to convert them to their own deities. By contrast, both the Gospel and the Old Testament are interspersed with acts of self-

congratulatory justice that will, in turn, justify "redeeming" violence against opponents. Similarly, in the modern secular city, to wage war for democracy has become a particularly nefarious means for erasing all different polities that refuse the "theology" of global progress and that shun the credo of "global democracy." To underscore this point, Pierre Gripari writes that Judaism, Christianity, and their secular offshoots Naziism, socialism, and liberalism, are barbarian doctrines that cannot have their place in the modern world (60).

By contrast, notes de Benoist, a system that recognizes an unlimited number of gods acknowledges also the plurality of cults offered in their honor, and above all, the plurality of customs, political and social systems, and conceptions of the world of which these gods are sublime expressions.(37) It follows from this that pagans, or believers in polytheism, are considerably less inclined to intolerance. Their relative tolerance is primarily attributed to the acceptance of the notion of the "excluded third" ("der ausgeschlossene Dritte"), as well as the rejection of Judeo-Christian dualism.

To underscore pagan relative tolerance, it is worth mentioning the attitude of Indo-European pagans toward their opponents during military confrontation. Jean Haudry remarks that war for pagans was conducted according to strict regulations; war was declared according to the rituals that beseeched first the help of gods and asked for their anger against the adversary. The conduct of war was subject to well-defined rules and consequently, "the victory consisted of breaking the resistance, and not necessarily of destroying the adversary" (161). In view of the fact that Judeo-Christianity does not permit relative truths, or different and contradictory truths, it will frequently adopt the policy of total war toward its opponents. Eliade writes that the "intolerance and fanaticism characteristic of the prophets and missionaries of the three monotheistic religions, have their model and justification in the example of Yahveh."(38)

How does the monotheist intolerance transpire in the purportedly tolerant secular city? What are the secular consequences of Judeo-Christian monotheism in our epoch? In contemporary systems, it is the opposite, the undecided-i.e., those who have not taken sides, and those who refuse modern political eschatologies-that become the targets of ostracism or persecution: those who today question the utility of the ideology of "human rights," globalism, or equality. Those, in short, who reject the liberal and communist credo.

In conclusion, one could say that, in the very beginning of its development, Judeo-Christian monotheism set out to demystify and desacralize the pagan world by slowly supplanting ancient pagan beliefs with the reign of the Judaic Law. During this century-long process, Christianity gradually removed all pagan vestiges that co-existed with it. The ongoing process of desacralization and the "Entzauberung" of life and politics appear to have resulted not from Europeans' chance departure from Christianity, but rather from the gradual disappearance of the pagan notion of the sacred that coexisted for a long time with Christianity. The paradox of our century is that the Western world is saturated with Judeo-Christian mentality at the moment when churches and synagogues are virtually empty.

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Notes:

1. Charles Norris Cochrane, *Christianity and Classical Culture* (New York: Oxford UP, 1957), 254-55, 329.

2. T. R. Glover, *The Conflict of Religion in the Early Roman Empire* (1909; Boston: Beacon, 1960), 242, 254, passim.

3. Friedrich Nietzsche, *Der Antichrist,* in Nietzsches Werke (Salzburg/Stuttgart: Verlag "Das Bergland-Buch," 1952), 983, para. 21.

4. Pierre Gripari, *L'histoire du méchant dieu* (Lausanne: L'Age d'Homme, 1987), 101-2.

5. Michel Marmin, "Les Piegès du folklore'," in La Cause des peuples (Paris: édition Le Labyrinthe, 1982), 39-44.

6. Nicole Belmont, *Paroles paiennes* (Paris: édition Imago, 1986), 160-61.

7. Alain de Benoist, *Noël, Les Cahiers européens* (Paris: Institut de documentations et d'études européens, 1988).

8. Jean Markale, et al., "Mythes et lieux christianisés," *L'Europe paienne* (Paris: Seghers, 1980), 133.

9. About European revolutionary conservatives, see the seminal work by Armin Mohler, *Die Konservative Revolution in Deutschland, 1919-1933* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1972). See also Tomislav Sunic, *Against Democracy and Equality: The European New Right* (New York: Peter Lang, 1990).

10. See notably the works by Alfred Rosenberg, *Der Mythus des 20. Jahrhunderts* (München: Hoheneichen Verlag, 1933). Also worth noting is the name of Wilhelm Hauer, *Deutscher Gottschau* (Stuttgart: Karl Gutbrod, 1934), who significantly popularized Indo-European mythology among national socialists; on pages 240-54 Hauer discusses the difference between Judeo-Christian Semitic beliefs and European paganism.

11. Jean Markale, "Aujourd'hui, l'esprit païen?" in *L'Europe paienne* (Paris: Seghers, 1980), 15. The book contains pieces on Slavic, Celtic, Latin, and Greco-Roman paganism.

12. Milton Konvitz, *Judaism and the American Idea* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1978), 71. Jerol S. Auerbach, "Liberalism and the Hebrew Prophets," in *Commentary* 84:2 (1987):58. Compare with Ben Zion Bokser in "Democratic Aspirations in Talmudic Judaism," in *Judaism and Human Rights,* ed. Milton Konvitz (New York: Norton, 1972): "The Talmud ordained with great emphasis that every person charged with the violation of some law be given a fair trial and before the law all were to be scrupulously equal, whether a king or a pauper" (146). Ernst Troeltsch, *Die Soziallehren der christlichen Kirchen and Gruppen* (1922; Aalen: Scientia Verlag, 1965), 768; also the passage "Naturrechtlicher and liberaler Character des freikirchlichen Neucalvinismus," (762-72). Compare with Georg Jellinek, *Die Erklärung der Menschen-und Bürgerrechte* (Leipzig: Duncker and Humblot, 1904): "(t)he idea to establish legally the unalienable, inherent and sacred rights of individuals, is not of political, but religious origins" (46). Also Werner Sombart, *Die Juden and das Wirtschaftsleben* (Leipzig: Verlag Duncker and Humblot, 1911): "Americanism is to a great extent distilled Judaism ("geronnene Judentum")" (44).

13. David Miller, *The New Polytheism* (New York: Harper and Row, 1974), 7, passim.

14. Serge Latouche, *L'occidentalisation du monde* (Paris: La Découverte, 1988).

15. Thomas Molnar, "La tentation paienne," Contrepoint 38 (1981):53.

16. Alain de Benoist, *Comment peut-on etre païen?* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1981), 25.

17. Alain de Benoist, *L'éclipse du sacré* (Paris: La Table ronde, 1986), 233; see also the chapter, "De la sécularisation," 198-207. Also Carl Schmitt, *Die politische Theologie* (München and Leipzig: Duncker und Humblot, 1922), 35-46: "(a)ll salient concepts in modern political science are secularized theological concepts" (36).

18. Gerard Walter, *Les origines du communisme* (Paris: Payot, 1931): "Les sources judaiques de la doctrine communiste chrétienne" (13-65). Compare with Vilfredo Pareto, *Les systèmes socialistes* (Paris: Marcel Girard, 1926): "Les systèmes métaphy-siques-communistes" (2:2-45). Louis Rougier, *La mystique démocratique, ses origines ses illusions* (Paris: éd. Albatros, 1983), 184. See in its entirety the passage, "Le judaisme et la révolution sociale," 184-187.

19. Louis Rougier, *Celse contre les chrétiens* (Paris: Copernic, 1977), 67, 89. Also, Sanford Lakoff, "Christianity and Equality," in Equality, ed. J. Roland Pennock and John W. Chapaman (New York: Atherton, 1967), 128-30.

20. Alain de Benoist, "L'Eglise, L'Europe et le Sacré," in *Pour une renaissance culturelle* (Paris: Copernic, 1979), 202.

21. Louis Rougier, *Celse,* 88.

22. *Comment peut-on être païen?,* 170, 26. De Benoist has been at odds with the so-called neo-conservative "nouveaux philosophes," who attacked his paganism on the grounds that it was a tool of intellectual anti-Semitism, racism, and totalitarianism. In his response, de Benoist levels the same criticism against the "nouveaux philo-sophes." See "Monothéisme-polythéisme: le grand debat," *Le Figaro Magazine,* 28 April 1979, 83: "Like Horkheimer, like Ernest Bloch, like Levinas, like René Girard, what B. H. Lévy desires is less `audacity,' less ideal, less politics, less power, less of the State, less of history. What he expects is the accomplishment of history, the end of all adversity (the adversity to which corresponds the Hegelian *Gegenständlichkeit*), disincarnate justice, the universal peace, the disappearance of frontiers, the birth of a homogenous society . . .“

23. Ernest Renan, *Histoire générale des langues sémitiques* (Paris: Imprimerie Impériale, 1853), 6.

24. Mircae Eliade, *Histoire des croyances et des idées religieuses* (Paris: Payot, 1976), 1:369, passim.

25. Jean-Marie Domenach, *Le retour du tragique* (Paris: édition du Seuil, 1967), 44-45.

26. Jean Haudry, *Les Indo-Européens* (Paris: PUF, 1981), 68.

27. Hans. K. Günther, *The Religious Attitude of Indo-Europeans,* trans. Vivian Bird and Roger Pearson (London: Clair Press, 1966), 21.

28. Alain de Benoist and Pierre Vial, *La Mort* (Paris: ed. Le Labyrinthe, 1983), 15.

29. Giorgio Locchi, "L'histoire," *Nouvelle Ecole* 27/28 (1975):183-90.

30. Sigrid Hunke, *La vraie religion de l'Europe,* trans. Claudine Glot and Jean-Louis Pesteil (Paris: Le Labyrinthe, 1985), 253, 274. The book was first published under the title *Europas eigene Religion: Der Glaube der Ketzer* (Bergisch Gladbach: Gustav Lubbe, 1980).

31. Mircae Eliade, *The Myth of the Eternal Return or, Cosmos and History,* trans. Willard R. Trask (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1965), 106-7.

32. Pierre Chaunu, *Histoire et foi* (Paris: Edition France-Empire, 1980), quoted by de Benoist, *Comment peut-on être païen?* 109.

33. Michel Maffesoli, *La violence totalitaire* (Paris: PUF, 1979), 228-29.

34. See Paul Tillich, *The Eternal Now* (New York: Scribner's, 1963), 41, passim. "Shrug of eternity" are the last words Arthur Koestler uses in his novel *Darkness at Noon* (New York: Modern Library, 1941), 267.

35. Georgio Locchi, et al., "Über den Sinn der Geschichte," *Das unvergängliche Erbe* (Tübingen: Grabert Verlag, 1981), 223.

36. Walter Scott, *A New Look at Biblical Crime* (New York: Dorset Press, 1979), 59.

37. *Comment peut-on être païen?* 157-58.

38. Mircea Eliade, *Histoire des croyances,* 1:194.