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**HISTORY AND HOPE:
An Analysis of Our Age**

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HISTORY AND HOPE

I. The Destruction of Reality

The title which I have given to these lectures may sound strange; "History and Hope." Yet these words refer to plain facts. The history of mankind falls into two sharply divided periods, two periods of vastly different lengths. The first extends from the beginnings of human society and all through recorded history up to the American and French revolutions. All during these ages men had accepted existing custom and law as the foundation of society. There had been changes and some great reforms, but never had the deliberate contriving of unlimited social improvement been elevated to a dominant principle. The first government to adopt this principle was that established by the French Revolution. Thus, the end of the eighteenth century marks the dividing line between the immense expanse of essentially static societies and the brief period during which public life has become increasingly dominated by fervent expectations of a better future. Such is the history -- the short history -- of hope as a political and social force. Such the justification ^{for} of entitling an analysis of our age by the words "History and Hope."

In the western countries where it had its origin, the pursuit of these hopes achieved in the course of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries the most humane and most free societies the world had ever seen. It has engendered an intellectual life of unprecedented range and has led to a new flowering of the arts/ which rivaled the splendors of Greece and the Renaissance. It has

created immense wealth, more equally distributed than before and thus approached the point of abolishing poverty.

But another stream of the same flow led to different results. It established the Soviet empire which has spread its power and influence during the last forty-four years over a major part of the globe. Thus, hardly had the march of humanity towards its new hopes got under way that it ~~already~~ divided mankind into two rival camps mortally opposed to each other by their totally different visions of progress. 1-2

Last June the leaders of these two camps met in Vienna and on his return one of these, President Kennedy, reported that the Soviets and we have wholly different views of right and wrong and above all have wholly different concepts of where the world is and where it is going.

The situation is terrifying; but here in this place, in this university, we are concerned only with understanding it. We must ask how the pursuit of progress has engendered and established over vast areas a system of ideas which mortally conflicts with the original hopes of human progress.

We might be tempted to think that the dominance of Soviet ideologies was imposed by sheer force of arms, but this would leave unexplained how the power of Communist governments originally came into existence at the centers from which it subsequently spread to other parts. We must face the fact that these centers of power were originally established by groups of deeply convinced adherents, who gained influence over broad masses. And we must face also the fact that these ideas, so different from our own, are still echoing

round the globe and gaining followers, particularly among the more educated people. We must acknowledge that these converts embrace these ideas with fervent hopes for humanity, and that they are dedicated to fight and surpress any opposition to them.

The main difficulty in understanding this rise of modern totalitarian ideas is the habit of thinking of it in terms of the conflict between progress and reaction. This is false; the revolutions of the twentieth century are not in line with this conflict. They do not aim at restoring either the dogmas or the authorities shattered by the French Revolution. They are dogmatic and oppressive in an entirely new way which -- by a curious process -- harnesses to its purpose the great intellectual and moral passions by which free thought and popular government were first achieved in Europe and America.

This strange transmutation was first achieved by Karl Marx. In his biography of Marx, Isaiah Berlin describes him at work. "The manuscripts of the numerous manifestoes, professions of faith and programs of action, to which he appended his name," writes Berlin, "still bear the strokes of the pen and the fierce marginal comments with which he sought to obliterate all references to eternal justice, the equality of man, the rights of individuals or nations, the liberty of conscience, the fight for civilization and other such phrases which were the stock in trade . . . of the democratic movements of his time; he looked upon these as so much worthless cant, indicating confusion of thought and ineffectiveness in action."

Marx obliterated all references to moral ideals from his manifestoes

for he believed he had far better, more honest and more intelligent grounds^{because} on which to achieve these very ideals. He had written: "It is not the consciousness of human beings that determines their existence, but conversely their social existence that determines their consciousness." To him, therefore, a revolution which would transform the existence of society became the only possible embodiment of social ideals. Otherwise ~~there~~^{they} were just empty words.^{these} Even his own resolve to fight for this revolution was cast in the form of a scientific sociology which predicted that the revolution was inevitable and imminent, owing to the material fact that it would release an immensely increased productive capacity.

Tonight's lecture bears the title; "The Destruction of Reality." The way Marxism transmuted the ideals of human progress into a doctrine of sheer violence is a case in point. It proclaimed a new vision of reality in politics and history, reducing all morality to underlying economic necessities. Moral forces then become illusory and economic forces alone are accepted as real. This is the famous transformation of utopia into a science. In the name of science Marxism destroys the moral image of man and affirms that human ideals are mere derivatives of power and profit.

But it would be a mistake to accept at its face value this description that Marxism gives of itself. The image of a mechanical process of history leading to the establishment of socialism, could not inspire revolutionary passion. But Marxism does inspire powerful passions. The secret of this contradiction lies in the fact that the Marxist conception of history does not

eliminate -- as it pretends to do -- the moral ideals of progress, but absorbs them into its vision of this process. The mechanical machinery of history is in fact seen and deeply felt as the embodiment of all the moral aspirations of man, which, being thus embodied, are assured of inevitable victory by the mechanical laws of history.

The Soviet regime itself is an exact replica of the machinery of history conceived by Marx. It claims to be intellectually superior to all other governments, both past and present, by conducting itself on strictly scientific lines. Hence the fierce struggle between rival Communist factions about the correct interpretation of the historical situation of the day, and about the correct application of Marxist theory to this situation. Arguments on deciding the Party line are conducted in the sociological terms of Marxism. Yet all the time this allegedly cold, calculating, machinery is fueled by the fierce passions of utopian aspirations; the regime relies for its driving force on the very motives which its scientific theory claims to have exposed as ineffectual.

But this unfortunately does not mean that a government thus constituted is guided by moral considerations. It will no doubt occasionally respond to them, but it will do so only by departing from its theoretical principles. The main behavior of the regime will conform to its theory, relegating the moral passions of socialism to the role of a fuel, blindly driving the machinery of revolutionary power. But when used as a fuel, the moral force of socialism is torn from its original context. It becomes

inaccessible to moral, or indeed any reasonable argument. This is fanaticism; a fanaticism of a kind the world has never seen before. For it is a fanaticism induced by skepticism, which turns to science for denying the reality of moral motives and for reducing them to mere reflections of economic necessities. Communist fanaticism is clearly a product of the scientific age. La

But we must recognize also, that moral skepticism would never have produced modern fanaticism, but for the great new tide of political and social hopes engendered by the revolutions of the eighteenth century. I have spoken of the progress achieved by these forces during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries in all western countries. Progress has been slower in areas more distant from its original centers. But the demand for progress has been all the more insistent in these lands among the individuals who fully realized the backwardness of their country. Today, demands for progress and social justice have reached a range and force altogether without precedent in the history of mankind. Thus the catastrophic eruption of Communist fanaticism has been due to the confluence of the two main ideas of the French Revolution. Both scientific skepticism, which originally liberated free thought, and the new tide of humane sentiments which inspired subsequent social reforms, were combined in it. Modern skeptical fanaticism unites these progressive forces in a deadlock which turns skepticism into dogmatism and morality into contempt for morality. This is what I meant by saying that modern totalitarian tyranny does not go back on the French Revolution but is an

outcome of it; that is another branch of the same pursuit of progress which brought forth the comprehensive humanization of western society since the French Revolution.

Some people have described Soviet morality as an extreme form of hypocrisy. It is true that Soviet representatives sometimes sound unbearably sanctimonious, but the true strength of the Bolsheviks lies in being frankly hard-boiled. We have seen Marx engaged in furiously eliminating all moral professions from his manifestoes. An American analysis of the chief propagandistic writings of Lenin and Stalin shows that ninety-four to ninety-nine percent of the references to the Communist Party and its activities describe it as seizing, manipulating, and consolidating, power. This is not hypocrisy. It is the inverse of hypocrisy -- a skeptical fanaticism, contemptuous of moral motives which it yet uses as raw fuel to feed the cylinders of its political machinery. For some years past, I have used the term "moral inversion" as a label for this peculiar mental structure. The term is useful and I shall introduce it tonight as a guide to other states of mind both inside and outside Communism, that can be best understood as variants of moral inversion.

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But I have not yet sufficiently consolidated this concept of moral inversion as applied to the Soviet regime itself. It might be objected that it is simpler to say -- as it is commonly said -- that the Soviet regime is crassly materialist and hence blind to all moral considerations. But I deny this; I deny that the Soviet regime is materialistic. Materialism is an

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indulgence of appetites and a love of comfort. A materialist economic life is one that concentrates excessively on material comforts. But the Russian economic system is the opposite of this. It neglects the most desperate popular needs -- e.g., for better housing -- in favor of ornate skyscrapers and underground marble halls. It deflects untold treasures from the use of consumers in order to plant a pinion on the face of the moon. It revels in production and shies away from consumption. Comfort is sacrificed to the passionate endeavor to conduct production in a particular way that is deemed socialistic, and thus to erect a monumental symbol of the march of Communism to world supremacy. Indeed, we in the West should watch keenly and hopefully for any sign of a true materialism in Soviet Russia. For if the regime once turned to the pursuit of material advantages, it would have lost its fanaticism. Love of comfort may be ignoble, but one may trust it to be reasonable.

The Soviet economic system is in fact another instance of inversion. Just as moral inversion transforms morality into the service of power, so the satisfaction of men's needs is transformed into the service of public splendour. The machinery of industry, invented to provide material comfort, is transformed into an altar for material sacrifice. Western scholars will never understand the Soviet economic system until they realize the full extent of this transformation.

Inversion applies also, and with disastrous consequences, to the domain of artistic life in the Soviet empire. Just as the ideals of freedom and democracy are unmasked as bourgeois pretenses, while a party dictatorship is

endowed instead with the quality of being intrinsically free and democratic, so also bourgeois art and literature are unmasked, and the glorification of socialism is proclaimed instead as true art and literature. Mental inversion goes indeed beyond this. It inevitably engulfs the very conception of truth; the truth of ordinary matters of fact. It is difficult to say how far the personal obsessions of Stalin have contributed to the creation of that universe of fictitious allegations, on the grounds of which millions of harmless Soviet citizens were sent to the frozen wastes of Siberia. However that may be, Stalin was certainly supported in the vagaries of his imagination by the principle that objective truth was a bourgeois pretense which must be cast out by affirming the partisan character of all truth. He could always rely on the doctrine that party-truth was sacred and to be protected by terror against objections based on mere facts. A belief in factual reality is indeed a subversive principle under totalitarianism.

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Admittedly, the pervasive mendacity of the Soviet regime, relying on the principle of party truth, eventually overreached itself and evoked the first major revulsion against the Soviet regime. But this event belongs to a later period.

This may remind us that my analysis has so far given no direct answer to the question, why the ideas of modern Communism have exercised such fascination far beyond the domains of the Soviet Union, and indeed for some time gained the allegiance of many men of highest intellectual distinction throughout the West. But it is clear already from what I have said that

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Marxism could claim to satisfy simultaneously the two most active demands of the modern mind. It appealed both to scientific objectivity and to the ideals of social justice. It satisfied the scientific outlook by interpreting man and history in terms of power and profit, and assured at the same time the highest social expectations by identifying social progress with the irresistible course of history.

But one may still ask: Did those responding to Marxism not see the ruthless oppression of their most cherished ideals in the Soviet Union? They did, but they disregarded it, for they had accepted the doctrine of moral inversion according to which the victory of the Revolution was the embodiment of all moral values and was therefore not subject to judgment by moral standards. The Soviets' declared resolve to act unscrupulously was taken to certify their intrinsic supremacy over any moral considerations. As Hannah Arendt rightly observed, "Bolshevik assurances inside and outside Russia that they do not recognize ordinary moral standards, have become a mainstay of Communist propaganda"

Soviet Communism has been the most important revolutionary movement of the twentieth century, and the only one effectively articulated in an elaborate theory of itself. The revolutions of Mussolini and Hitler were by comparison amorphous affairs relying on the incitement of hysterical masses by a turgid rhetoric. Yet the way in which fascist dictators transmuted the patriotic sentiments of the masses into a cult of naked power had the structure of a moral inversion. Hitler's frenzy was primary evil but its appeal to the

German youth was moral. Their response was determined by convictions similar to those which Marx had held about the nature of moral motives in public life; they believed that all decency is hypocritical and brutality alone is honest. Hence their disgust of moralizing and their moral passion for unscrupulous violence.

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Since popular nationalism was as much an outcome of the French Revolution as were the hopes of unlimited social progress, we may say that all forms of modern totalitarianism have a similar structure. Unscrupulous tyranny is justified throughout by a moral skepticism which converts a flow of generous motives into the blind fuel of naked power. Thus in every case the two main forces of the French Revolution, its skepticism and its generous hopes destroyed each other in modern totalitarianism and revealed thereby a catastrophic contradiction between the major ideas of that great revolution.

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But do ideas actually make history? Can the internal contradiction in the ideas which first generated modern liberty, have actually caused in our days a widespread collapse of liberty? Ideas certainly provide the shape, or at least the possible shapes, of historic transformations. It is a moot point, how far the French Revolution was caused by the ideas of the philosophic Enlightenment which preceded it; but there is no doubt that the ideas which the French Revolution proclaimed and spread throughout the world were those of the Enlightenment. And just as this philosophic movement determined the character and the teachings of the French Revolution, so -- I believe -- eventually, the internal contradictions of these teachings have determined in

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their turn the character and the teachings of modern totalitarianism.

This is borne out by the profound influence which the self-destructive tendencies inherent in the ideals of the Enlightenment have exercised on modern minds apart from its bearing on politics. Just look how in France itself, where the dawn of unlimited hopes first arose in the eighteenth century, the continuous pursuit of these great hopes has led the present generation of writers to a philosophy and a literature of despair. How, actually using "The Age of Reason" as his title, Sartre demonstrates that the ultimate outcome of the age of Reason is a recognition of the total absurdity of man and the universe, and that this reduces man's freedom to a total arbitrariness. Look how this sense of total absurdity is combined with a violent moral protest. Roquentin, the hero of Sartre's novel "La Nausée," expands his metaphysical nihilism into an attack on the complacency of the fat bourgeois dignitaries whose portraits he views in the municipal picture gallery. This is a combination of logically incompatible affirmations; for if moral values ~~don't~~ exist no one can be said to be morally defective and still less can such an accusation be made with an outburst of moral indignation. These logical incompatibles are fused together here in the same way by which Marx transmuted an absolute moral skepticism into a moral indignation at bourgeois hypocrisy. Such is the structure of all modern nihilism in the sense I shall use the term here. It is a fierce moral skepticism fired by moral indignation. Its structure is exactly the same as that of the moral inversion underlying modern totalitarianism. Herein lies, to a great part, the susceptibility of the modern

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western intellectual to the ideas of totalitarianism.

Of course in ordinary parlance "nihilism" means often moral depravity or moral indifference, but I regard this kind of nihilism as unimportant both for the history of ideas and the origin of revolutions. Depraved individuals have often joined company with true nihilists and have become instruments of revolutions. There was a vicious madness in Hitler and Stalin, and they attracted criminal types to their service. But by itself such mentality can only produce a crime wave -- not inspire great literature or make a revolution. This mentality is poles apart from that of the personage first identified just one hundred years ago as a nihilist by Turgenev in his hero, Bazarov. This character, which has made history, represents the rebellious Russian intelligentsia of the 1860's, who repudiated all existing bonds of society in the name of a scientific materialism -- which they hoped would liberate men and make them all brothers. The romantic variant of nihilism that Nietzsche introduced in Germany was likewise a moral protest against existing morality. "This shop" wrote Nietzsche "where they manufacture ideals seems to me to stink of lies." It is in disgust with these lies that he proclaims magnificent brutality as something supremely authentic, honest and admirable.

In France the beginnings of a nihilism motivated by moral protest go back two hundred years. Diderot speaks of it already in 1763 in "The Nephew of Rameau" whose immoralism justifies itself by the hypocrisy of society. Soon after, Rousseau in his Confessions proudly acknowledged his

own vices in the name of nature's naked truth. And later in the century the Marquis de Sade gave an extensive account of his cruelties and lust, deriving a sense of intellectual and moral superiority from a conception of man as a mere machine and from the theory that law is but the will of the stronger.

In nineteenth century France, the first major figure of modern nihilism was that of Baudelaire. After him, the distinguished representatives of this mentality became too numerous to be named here, while around them a whole new social stratum emerged in the modern bohémien, popularizing the rebellious immoralism of their masters. A similar mentality spread at that time through the Russian intelligentsia and spread by the beginning of this century also into Germany, particularly in form of the Youth Movement, and to Italy in form of Futurism. It has been said that the European Revolutions ^{were} ~~are~~ made by the armed bohémien^s, and it is certainly true that the rebellious intellectuals of the European Continent were receptive to the ideas of totalitarianism. I believe indeed that their contribution to the rise of totalitarianism was decisive.

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But we must stop here and face the fact that these subversive intellectuals of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries ~~have~~ also brought forth achievements of supreme distinction in the arts and letters, and must acknowledge also that their great works were not unconnected with that very mentality which had such ill consequences in politics. Nihilism has served for a century as an inspiration to literature and philosophy, both by

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itself and by provoking a reaction to itself. A loathing for bourgeois society, a rebellious immoralism and a mood of despair have been prevailing themes of great fiction, poetry and philosophy on the Continent of Europe since the middle of the nineteenth century. Modern painting and music have risen rebelliously within this milieu ^{through} by a deliberate rejection of socially accepted standards. We may actually commemorate the centenary of this great outburst tonight for it was just one hundred years ago that Eduard Manet painted his immortal "Le déjeuner sur l'herbe." Rejected by the official exhibition of paintings, Manet and his rapidly multiplying followers presently founded their own exhibition under the title "Salon des refusés," the Salon of the rejected. The advent of modern music was accompanied by similar public clashes. Throughout the subsequent decades modern art went on battling with academicism. We have ^{become} ~~got~~ so accustomed to this spectacle that it is generally overlooked that nothing like it had ever happened before. Admittedly, great artists had sometimes gone unrecognized during their lifetime, but never had a whole artistic culture gone ^{on} ~~flowering~~ through successive generations in systematic opposition to the prevailing standards of the age.

And let us face it, that the heroism of the modern intellectuals to which we owe the victory in this long battle, arose from the same subversive temper which often made the influence of these intellectuals politically disastrous.

And there is more to this. Modern art has arisen from a persistently continued destruction of existing artistic realities for the sake of penetrating to strata of harder, more genuine forms of reality. So the "poetic" has

vanished from our poetry, the "picturesque" from our painting, the
"harmonious" from our music, ~~gone are~~ ^{the} heroes and heroines from our
novels and plays. All these were rejected in the pursuit of a harsher
artistic truth. But can this process go on indefinitely? Must it not presently
lead to a complete destruction of meaning? "Dr. Faustus" by Thomas Mann
is an inquiry into this question. "In a work of art," Mann writes in one place
"there is much that is specious and sham . . ." "The question is whether
at the present stage of our consciousness, of our sense of truth, this little
game is still permissible, still intellectually possible," whether it "still
stands in legitimate relation to the complete insecurity of our social con-
ditions; whether all fiction, even in the most beautiful, and precisely the
beautiful, has not today become a lie."

So in the end beauty itself and all standards of art are unmasked as
lies. Tortured by ^{the} fear of banality, modern art takes refuge in a complex
formalism bereft of subject matter, or else in a naked subject matter so
harsh as to exclude any suspicion of humane standards. Bawdiness has never
been lacking in literature and art, but this has been always a form of levity;
it was left to our age to discover a somber and fantastic obscenity, as an
ultimate token of intellectual honesty. It seems obvious that the rebellion
which evoked modern art and moved it on for a century, cannot fail to
exhaust itself, once its product ^{has} ~~will have~~ ceased to affirm anything and
hence leave nothing more to rebel against.

But is not science itself -- true science, which was the main source

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of philosophic enlightenment and from which flew the great movement of modern rebellious skepticism -- is it not a safe haven against all the harms of excessive doubt that I have described in politics, in personal morality, in artistic endeavor? Alas, it is not. Scientific rationalism has indeed been the main guide to intellectual, moral and social progress since the idea of progress first gained popular acceptance about a hundred and fifty years ago. But unfortunately, the basic ideals of science are nonsensical. For science does not recognize the existence of any ultimate irreducible entities above the level of elementary particles or their wave-functions. Thus all life, all human beings, and all works of man -- including Shakespeare's sonnets and Kant's Critique of Pure Reason -- are ultimately to be represented in terms of these ultimate particles. The ideal of science remains in fact what it had been in the time of Laplace; namely, to replace all human knowledge by a complete knowledge of atoms in motion. Laplace said that if we knew at one moment of time the exact positions and velocities of every particle of matter in the universe, as well as the forces acting between the particles, we could compute the positions and velocities of the same particles at any other date whether past or future. To a mind thus equipped, he wrote, all things to come and all things gone by would be equally revealed. This is precisely what science still accepts today as its ideal of perfect knowledge; and this ideal is nonsensical for such universal knowledge would tell us absolutely nothing that we are interested in. Take any question to which you want to know the answer. For example, having planted some primroses today

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you should like to know whether they will bear blossoms next spring. This question is obviously not answered by a list of atomic positions and velocities at some future moment on May 1st 1962; it must be answered in terms of primrose blossoms. The universal mind is utterly useless for this purpose, unless it can go beyond predicting atomic data and tell us what they imply for the future blossoming of primroses.

Never mind for the moment whether we could actually infer something about primroses or about anything else that we may be interested in from a topography of atomic positions and velocities. It is enough at this stage to make clear that Laplace's representation of the universe ignores as it stands, all our normal experience and can answer no questions about it; that the Laplacian ideal of universal knowledge is actually a state of complete ignorance.

Science has achieved magnificent results in the pursuit of this absurd ideal, but at some point it must always lead science to an impasse and result in absurdities.

Take for example modern neurology. Its discoveries are unrivaled in beauty and usefulness. But neurology reflects the ideal of science by assuming that man is a mechanical automaton, and hence it cannot account for human consciousness and must in fact deny its existence. Three authoritative contributors to the international Symposium on Brain Mechanism and Consciousness held in Paris in 1954 said this as follows. The first said, "The existence of something called consciousness is a venerable hypo-

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thesis; not a datum not directly observable" The second, "Although we cannot get along without the concept of consciousness, actually there is no such thing." The third, "The knower as an entity is an unnecessary postulate." These statements express, of course, only the theoretical opinion of the three distinguished scientists. Actually they know like everybody else that consciousness, as for example pain, exists, and that other states of consciousness also clearly differ from unconsciousness. But as scientists they feel compelled to make statements to the contrary.

We meet the same situation in the study of society. Anthropologists must endeavour to describe social groups in strictly scientific terms. And most anthropologists will insist, therefore, on carrying out their analysis of society without reference to good and evil. Two distinguished anthropologists of Harvard have represented the unspeakably cruel murder of supposed witches as a cultural achievement. "Some social systems" they write, "are much more efficient than others in directing aggression into oblique or non-disruptive channels. There is no doubt that witchcraft is Navaho culture's principal answer to the problem that every society faces: how to satisfy hate and still keep the core of society solid." Another anthropologist has described head-hunting as fulfilling an essential function to the societies in which it is practiced. "The religion of Edistone Islanders" we read, "provided a motive for living and kept an economic system functioning." Head-hunting only proved wrong in this view because it kept down numbers and so made technical progress superfluous, eventually leaving the islanders a prey to

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British conquerers.

For this kind of scientific anthropology, social stability is the only accepted value and becomes therefore the supreme value. Yet all the time we know, and the anthropologist knows it like everybody else, that the stability of evil is the worst of evils. He ignores this only in order to maintain a purely descriptive attitude towards his subject in accordance with the ideals of the natural sciences. Admittedly, such anthropology avoids the mistakes of earlier explorers who made no effort to understand the internal structure of primitive cultures and condemned their practices out of hand. Yet on the other hand, the modern anthropologist, will tend to draw from his observations such fantastic and morally scandalous conclusions as I have just quoted, and moreover, his method will blind him to the forces of moral progress in the societies that he investigates.

This attitude of scientific detachment pervades our minds today. When we hear that the Soviets and we have totally different views of right and wrong, our immediate reaction is to look for the economic and social structure, to which the peculiar ideas of the Soviets of what is right and wrong may seem appropriate. When Khrushchev denounced Stalin's monstrous regime at the Twentieth Party Congress, a leading English newspaper could not help remarking that the historic necessities to which Stalin's actions responded, must not be overlooked.

Scholars, bent on interpreting the economic and social policies of the Soviet regime as rational responses to historic necessities, have woven

a texture of speculations no less fanciful than those I have quoted from the works of some anthropologists. And what is more, these rationalizations -- ^{like} just as those of the anthropological analysis of primitive societies -- have obscured the moral and intellectual forces rebelling against the evils of Soviet society. Yet this rebellion has, I believe, been the most powerful trend of thought during the past ten years all over the globe. The belief that the rule of the Communist party embodies all the hopes of humanity, and that its very existence is a full compensation for the fact that it does not fulfill these hopes; that its successes should be ascribed to its peculiar excellence, while its failures ^{should} be always regarded as incidental -- this peculiar bias of the twentieth century, which protects its own blinding credulity by a steel armor of skepticism; this condition which is capable of combining highest intelligence and morality in a teaching which reduces both of these to mere derivatives of power and profit -- it has ceased to be as stable and seductive as it used to be.

^R Now was this merely a weakening of fervor due to lassitude. No, it was a passionate movement of minds long starved of spiritual substance. We have seen this in the insurrections in Poland and above all in Hungary. These were not rebellions against the Communists but a change of mind of leading Communists. The Hungarian rising went a long way towards victory as a revulsion of Communist intellectuals without aid from other quarters. They demanded freedom to write the truth; to write about real people, real sentiments and problems; to report truthfully on current events

and on matters of history. In demanding this they reverted to beliefs they had previously abhorred and even violently suppressed. I quote this from a speech by a formerly leading Stalinist, a young man called Gimes, who has since been hanged by Kadar in Hungary: he spoke of the doctrine of party-truth which "affected not only those who thought out the faked political trials, but often infested even the victims; this outlook -- he said -- which poisoned our whole public life, penetrated the remotest corners of our thinking, obscured our vision, paralyzed our critical faculties, and which finally rendered many of us incapable of simply sensing or apprehending any truth."

This is where the regime overreached itself. The last forty years have shown that while it is possible to impose unlimited material sacrifices in the name of a revolutionary doctrine; while its immoralism may actually strengthen its hold by appealing to the hard-boiled moral skepticism of our age; the mendacity of such a regime finally becomes unbearable. Fanatical Communists who had at first resolutely accepted its dishonest paintings and novels, and even its theory of party-truth eventually got sick of these. They had to vomit. The word "vomiting" has actually become a technical term in Poland and Hungary for this reversal of inverted man; the act by which he violently turns himself right-way-up.

I have said before that the totalitarianism of the twentieth century did not go back on the French Revolution, but went forward from it to a consummation of its internal contradictions. The rebellion of the Polish

and Hungarian Communists and the revisionist movement throughout the Soviet empire and beyond it, attempt to reverse this consummation. These movements express the demand to go back to the original Enlightenment, before the movements of scientism and romanticism had clashed with the new tide of social hopes and fused with it into a mutual destruction. A visit to Monticello and a look at Jefferson's bookshelf movingly remind us of that happier philosophic age towards which these movements are yearning.

But can we revert to that age today? No, I believe that the lesson of the Hungarian Revolution and of the world-wide tendencies pointing in the same direction, must go beyond this aim. They challenge us to revise rationalist enlightenment and to purge it of its fateful deficiencies.

And this is where we in the universities come in. It is for us to realize the difficulties of the modern mind to the full, and for us to accept these difficulties as our problem.

In the following three lectures, I shall try to exemplify this undertaking. Much of what I shall say will appear to you remote, and all of it will of necessity be sketchy. But I hope that some of you will yet bear with me, when remembering that all I shall say will be a response to the fearful scene of our age which I have exposed to you tonight.