

---

# EXPLORATIONS

---

## Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Intent

NORMAN O. BROWN

**T**he *Venture of Islam*—Marshall Hodgson's title. Epic history; the history of human initiative, leadership accepting responsibility and taking risks; releasing and organizing vast collective energies; in a struggle to master the recalcitrant environment and the even more recalcitrant facts of human nature.

Marshall Hodgson's three volumes on *The Venture of Islam* for the first time does for Islam what Mommsen did for Rome; carrying forward what was started by H. A. R. Gibb. But Hodgson has done much more. By a singular feat of self-overcoming, he has shown us how to begin to think of Islam without Western prejudice. Edward Said's *Orientalism* prosecutes the prejudice of Western scholarship, even in the case of H. A. R. Gibb; there is no mention of Marshall Hodgson's transcendent achievement. It is a masterpiece and a miracle: universal history with cosmopolitan intent, from the University of Chicago. How was it possible?

On the one hand an original Quaker sensibility, self-consciously elaborated into an intellectual discipline, the "psychosociological science of compassion," proceeding on the path of mutual understanding between Islam and Christianity pioneered by Louis Massignon.<sup>1</sup> On the other hand an ecumenical sociological awareness, ultimately Marxist in origin, of world history as a unity resulting from the commitment of the human race to the city and civilization.

<sup>1</sup> M. G. S. Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam*, 3 vols. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974), vol. I, p. 379 n. Hereafter referred to as Hodgson I, II, or III.

Quaker compassion and Marxist realism are combined with prophetic seriousness. Hodgson borrows Jaspers's notion of the first millennium B.C. as an Axial Age in which the civilized world (*Oikoumene*) is diversified into four areas, Chinese, Indian, Irano-Semitic ("from Nile to Oxus"), and Mediterranean. Each of these regions develops its own variety of civilized tradition; all of them have been undermined by the Great Transformation (borrowing from Polanyi) initiated in Western Europe in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. At the core of the Great Transformation, says Hodgson, was the pattern of multiple technical specialization.<sup>2</sup> Hodgson's understanding of the technological society is explicitly based on the work of John Nef; the sociology of Jacques Ellul could be included in this understanding if it could be liberated from its Calvinist presupposition of predestined damnation. The crucial next step here is to overcome the residues of nineteenth century complacency; to begin to perceive the city, civilization itself, as a questionable institution, posing unsolved problems, problems not to be solved automatically by "progress" and "development," but also not inevitably doomed to destruction and salvation by divine grace. In the middle of the muddle is Marxism.

We cannot dispense with the Marxist vision of world history as a unity, the evolution of a species destined (programmed "by nature") for city life. We cannot dispense with the Marxist anatomy of the contradictions (class antagonisms, but not only class antagonisms) inherent in the structure of civilization, and inherent in it from the start. In this respect Marxist "materialism" is modern realism, and attempts to do without it, or to refute it, are self-stultifying. This still has to be said, and has to be said to Islamic Revolutionaries, Iranian Islamic Revolutionaries such as Ali Shariati, *On the Sociology of Islam, Marxism and Other Western Fallacies*. And it has been said by Maxime Rodinson, *Islam and Capitalism*. On the other hand, Marxism has been from its inception contaminated (and is still so in Rodinson) precisely by the Western fallacy of economic development as an automatic solution to the problems of economic development; or, in Ellul's terminology, technical solutions to the problems of technological society. Ellul is a Christian Revolutionary corresponding to the Islamic Revolutionary Shariati. Both preach a return to prophetic scripture; both try to found sociology on scriptural insights (cf. Ellul's *The Meaning of the City*). We end with the static trench warfare between Marxism and Religion registered in the sociology of Rodinson.

Can we move this debate off dead center? Hodgson's work is a very serious and very deep effort to work toward a synthesis rather than a confrontation between sociological realism and religious idealism. Christianity and Islam (let us bypass Indic and Chinese civilization and concentrate on the prophetic tradition)—the whole prophetic tradition is an attempt to give direction, or quality of

<sup>2</sup> Hodgson III, p. 184.

life, to the civilizational structure precipitated by the urban revolution; an attempt to control and mitigate its inherent contradictions (anomie, injustice).<sup>3</sup> For interesting reasons (not unrelated to but not simply attributable to Quaker presuppositions) Hodgson thinks Islam provided a more promising framework than Christianity for the task of world unification or world order that is set by the nature of civilization as such. But the fact is that traditional inhibitions, Islamic or Christian, have been destroyed by the Great Transformation, modernization, Marx's capitalism: "Constant revolutionizing of production, uninterrupted disturbance of all social conditions, everlasting uncertainty and agitation distinguish the bourgeois epoch from all earlier ones. All fixed, fast-frozen relations, with their train of ancient and venerable prejudices and opinions, are swept away, all new-formed ones become antiquated before they can ossify. All that is solid melts into air, all that is holy is profaned, and man is at last compelled to face with sober senses his real conditions of life and his relations with his kind." *The Communist Manifesto* is not out of date.

Where do we stand then? The prophetic tradition, which was from its inception a critique of the sociological forces inherent in civilization and an attempt to control and redirect them, has been overwhelmed. Hodgson concludes, rather bleakly, with a call for the renewal of the prophetic tradition: "The Great Transformation has posed a common set of problems to the whole world." "The deepest problem of the Modern world is to find a vision at once challenging and genuine."<sup>4</sup>

**I**f the static confrontation between Marxist realism and religious idealism is to be transcended, there will have to be some exercises of purgation and penitence on the Marxist side. What kind of exercises, and with what result, can at the present moment best be perceived by taking seriously the witness of Rudolf Bahro, *The Alternative in Eastern Europe*.<sup>5</sup> Rudolf Bahro faces the reality of the outcome of the Russian Revolution. He is to be juxtaposed to Marshall Hodgson because he sees coming to terms with the reality of the outcome of the Russian Revolution as requiring substantial modification of the Marxist vision of world history and of the fundamental sociological categories of civilization: the nature of classes, the nature of the state.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. H. N. Schneidau, *Sacred Discontent: The Bible and Western Tradition* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976).

<sup>4</sup> Hodgson, III, pp. 427, 429.

<sup>5</sup> Rudolf Bahro is an East German political philosopher who was jailed in 1977 for writing *The Alternative—A Contribution to a Critique of Socialism as It Actually Exists*. (Published in English as, *The Alternative in Eastern Europe* [London: New Left Books, 1978]. Hereafter referred to as *Alternative*.) In 1979 the author of this important original and radical critique was allowed to migrate to West Germany.

It is at first sight surprising, and then on second thought not surprising, that Bahro's modifications bring the traditional Marxist model of world history into line with Hodgson's. The genius and authority of Marx and Engels burdened Marxism with their version of the nineteenth century image of world history. This nineteenth century image of world history is the great idol that Hodgson is out to smash: "The view I have presented runs radically counter to the usual Westernistic image of world history, which not only pure Westernists but most Western Christians and Jews have accepted to some degree. That image—in direct continuity with Medieval Occidental notions—divides the world into three parts: the Primitives, who were supposed to have no history; the Orient, which produced great cultures at a certain point, but, for want of a sense of due proportion, stagnated thereafter and regressed; and lastly the West (composed, by arbitrary fiat, of Classical Greece plus the Latin Occident), where due proportion was introduced by the Greek genius, which in turn produced Truth and Liberty and hence a Progress which, if at first less spectacular than the Orient, at last necessarily led to Modernity and to world dominion. In accord with this image, Islamicate culture, as a late manifestation of the "Orient," ought to be at most a latter-day reworking of earlier cultural achievements, and must certainly have soon degenerated into the normal "Oriental" stagnation. So it has been interpreted almost unanimously by modern Western scholars. On the other hand, Modernity would be but the latest stages of age-long progress as exemplified most normally in the West. In accordance with this image, many speak of the "impact of the West"—not of technicalism—on Islamdom, as if it were two societies, not two ages, that met; as if it were that Western progress had finally reached the point where Muslims could no longer escape it, rather than that something new had happened to Western culture which thereby was happening to Islamdom and the whole world as well."<sup>6</sup>

As Hodgson notes, the "Westernistic" world image achieved classic formulation in Hegel's philosophy of history. Engels, in *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State* (1891), proposed the schema of stages that still in the twentieth century weighs heavily on all minds with a decent respect for Marxism: (1) primitive communism; (2) origin of the family, private property, and the state, passing through three stages, (a) the ancient (Greco-Roman) city with slavery, (b) feudalism, (c) capitalism; (3) return to communism at a higher level. Engels's schema omits what was in Hegel a major phase, the Orient. The decisive thing in Bahro's revision of the Marxist model of world history is the return of the Orient, under the name of the "Asiatic Mode of Production," as the key to Marxist understanding of the latest social structure precipitated by world history, the "actually existing socialism" of the USSR.

6 Hodgson III, p. 204.

The "Asiatic Mode of Production," or "Oriental Despotism," is first of all an attempt to define the archetypal essence of civilization in its original manifestations, in the river valleys of China, India, Mesopotamia, Egypt, or in the highlands of Central and South America. Civilization (as outlined already in Plato's *Republic*) is the transformation of the division of labor into the division into classes, as a result of the development of the new science of management. Bahro starts from the modernization of Plato in Marx and Engels's *German Ideology*: "The *division of labour* implies the possibility, nay the fact, that intellectual and material activity, that enjoyment and labour, production and consumption, devolve on different individuals."<sup>7</sup> Civilization begins with the urban or managerial revolution. Philosophical sociology has to be supplemented with philosophical archaeology: there has been in the twentieth century a real advance in our understanding of the origins of civilization in the ancient Near East; see Gordon Childe, *Man Makes Himself* and *What Happened in History*. The fundamental categories of Marxist sociology are being remodeled. That central feature of civilization as seen from a Marxist point of view, exploitation of human labor, is being detached from the institution of private property and connected rather with that other primal institution, the state. The riddle of history is shifted from the fetishism of commodities to the mystery of the state. "Our popular textbooks often give the bland Enlightenment-type idea that these priests first appropriated the power of disposal over the common wealth and only then discovered the religion of domination, linking this up with naive popular mythology and adding it on as a kind of justifying ideology. In reality it was the other way round. The power of disposal grew out of the priestly magic as a task of consciousness that, while privileged, was expressly *necessary* for the progress of the community. To use an anachronistic expression taken from our present situation: in order to expropriate these priests, it would first be necessary to socialize the *magic*, and only then—or rather, *in this way!*—the wealth. And what is involved in magic is nothing more than the ability to understand the whole community in its internal functioning and hence represent its needs vis-à-vis the natural and social environment."<sup>8</sup>

World-historically considered, the Russian Revolution is a return to the original position. "Class domination . . . has been reduced to its most basic starting-point, and this is where it is now so obstinately defending itself. I have shown how the Bolsheviks came to establish their party and state apparatus as a substitute for an exploiting class, as the *labour lord* of Soviet society." "The non-capitalist apparatus-state is at once administrative superstructure and political expression of the traditional division of labour. It appears as the absolute task-

7 R. Bahro, *The Alternative*, pp. 140-41.

8 *Ibid.*, p. 144.

master of society. It functions, as Marx in his time characterized the universal bank of the Saint-Simonians, as a 'papacy of production.'"<sup>9</sup>

As in Hodgson, capitalism, i.e., the abdication of the state to the market, is an aberrant interlude. The world disorder that resulted from the free enterprise system provoked the Russian Revolution, and the exigencies of the situation in which the Russian Revolution found itself occasioned the inevitable relapse into the more normal pattern of state despotism. "The relations of private property gradually drive the state function to the margin of the economic process. The classical bourgeois state in particular was—as the young Marx called it—simply a 'political state,' in other words merely an additional shield for the relations of production, in the last analysis economically superfluous. In actually existing socialism, on the other hand, the state wins back its original all-pervading character in an expanded sense."<sup>10</sup> Bahro's vision of the Russian Revolution as a convulsive restoration of the ancient Oriental urban empire explains why the revolution took place in "backward" countries with a still lively tradition of despotism, which need to find a "non-capitalist road" to industrialization. Bahro replaces the Marx-Engels schema of a return to communism "at a higher level," with a return to state despotism at a higher level. The exigencies of national survival in the increasingly antagonistic world economy will dictate general evolution in this direction, enabling the "advanced" capitalist countries to "catch up." In any case, the state will have to bring the economy back under control. There is no "progressive" way to get from free-enterprise capitalism to "free socialism" (whatever that would be). "*Overall social organization on the basis of traditional division of labour can only be overall state organization, it can only be socialization in this alienated form, especially in the modern mass societies with their hyper-complex process of reproduction.*"<sup>11</sup>

**A**s in Hodgson, world history is no story of Progress. Economic development is not denied, but rather the (capitalist) assumption that economic development is the meaning of history and the solution of the social problem. There is no connection between the emancipation of the bourgeoisie and the emancipation of the working class. Socialism is no solution, but rather a disclosure of the essential nature of the problem. After five thousand years, the contradiction inherent in civilization as such—the antagonistic creation of surplus value, the hierarchical organization based on the division of labor into manual

9 Ibid., p. 141; R. Bahro, "The Alternative in Eastern Europe," *New Left Review*, no. 106 (November-December 1977), p. 14.

10 Bahro, *New Left Review*, p. 14.

11 Bahro, *Alternative*, p. 141.

and managerial functions—remains as it was in the beginning. For Bahro, this recognition is the starting point for a program of “cultural revolution,” to transform the nature of socialism, to give socialism a human face, in the spirit of Marx’s early philosophic writings and the Czech spring of 1968.

“Socialism with a human face.” The Sphinx that frustrates humanity is not the fetishism of commodities but the mystery of the state. In Bahro’s analysis of “actually existing socialism”—declared by Marcuse in his last published pronouncement to be the most important contribution to Marxist theory and practice in recent decades<sup>12</sup>—the fundamental concept is theocracy. “The dictatorship of the politbureau is a fateful exaggeration of the bureaucratic principle, because the party apparatus which obeys it is, so to speak, an ecclesiastical hierarchy and a supra-state rolled into one. The whole structure is quasi-theocratic. For the essence of political power here—to say nothing of the hypertrophy of executive and police organs—is spiritual power, with its constant tendency towards an inquisition, so that the party itself is the actual political police. The party apparatus as the nucleus of state power signifies the secularization of the theocratic state. Never, since the collapse of the theocracies of antiquity, have the secular and spiritual authorities been concentrated in this way in a single hand. This institutional identity between the authority of the state, the power to make economic decisions, and the claim to an ideological monopoly, as well as the consequent lack of any control over the politbureau and its apparatus, which reaches right down to the base, is the main politico-economic problem in socialism as it actually exists. That is the Gordian knot which has first to be cut.”<sup>13</sup>

To disclose the inner nature of Soviet bureaucracy, Bahro uses Marx’s dialectical analysis of Hegel’s idealization of the Prussian bureaucracy as the universal class, or representative of the general interest of society, in the alienated form of the state: “‘The bureaucracy’ holds the state, the spiritual essence of society, in thrall, as its *private property*. . . . The universal spirit of bureaucracy is *secrecy*; it is mystery preserved within itself by means of the hierarchical structure and appearing to the outside world as a self-contained corporation. . . . The principle of its knowledge is therefore *authority*, and its *patriotism* is the adulation of authority. . . . The bureaucrats are the Jesuits and theologians of the state.”<sup>14</sup> Bahro quotes Lenin to register the transformation, unbeknownst to Lenin, of the Bolshevik party into the new priesthood: “We have given the workers visual proof that the Party is a special kind of thing which needs forward-looking men prepared for sacrifice; that it does make

<sup>12</sup> Herbert Marcuse, “Protosozialismus und Spätkapitalismus, Versuch einer revolutions-theoretischen Synthese von Bahros Ansatz,” *Zeitschrift für Sozial Diskussion*, no. 79 (1978), p. 5.

<sup>14</sup> Bahro, *Alternative*, pp. 217-19.

mistakes, but corrects them; that it guides and selects men who know the way and the obstacles before us." Bahro comments: "This is unambiguously reminiscent of the self-portrayal of the authenticated priesthood of ancient times, and the fount of all later party metaphysics and mysticism. Yet it is no fantasy, but simply the expression of the new social formation *in statu nascendi*."<sup>15</sup> The science of Marxism-Leninism was not enough to reveal to the participants what was really going on: "All the party struggles of the 1920s between 'Left' and 'Right' were nothing but the birthpangs of the new despotism. The combatants recognized too late that what was at stake was nothing to do with 'Left' and 'Right,' and that they had only one unmistakable result: the strengthening of the apparatus."<sup>16</sup> Bahro shows that the self-deception goes back to Marx himself, and is revealed in Marx's reactions to Bakunin's criticisms: "We can therefore read today in incredulous astonishment, in Marx's own extracts, what Bakunin claimed to have seen at the basis of Marxist theory and practice. Bakunin viewed the Marxist goal as 'a despotism of the *governing minority*, and only the more dangerously in so far as it appears as expression of the so-called people's will.' 'But this minority, say the Marxists' (Marx interrupts with 'where?') 'will consist of workers. Certainly, with your permission, of former workers, who however, as soon as they have become representatives or governors of the people, *cease to be workers* and look down on the whole common workers' world from the height of the state. They will no longer represent the people, but themselves and their pretensions to people's government.' With respect to Bakunin's charge of 'government of the educated,' Marx interrupts with the exclamation '*quelle rêverie!*' And this even though it is on that very point that Bakunin's fantasies are somewhat more concrete. After the people have placed all power in their hands, the Marxists plan to establish 'a single state bank concentrating in its hands all commercial-industrial, agricultural and even scientific production, and to divide the mass of the people into two armies, an industrial and an agricultural, under the direct command of state engineers, who will form a new privileged scientific-political class.'" This last expression is strikingly exact. It was probably necessary to be both an anarchist *and* a Russian, to perceive behind the authority of Marx and his doctrine, in the year 1873, the shadow of Stalin."<sup>17</sup>

**I**f we persevere, as we must, in the Marxist tradition of sociological realism, we must go back to theology. The concept of theocracy is not just a (poetic) analogy. Marxist political theory has to be political theology: see E. Kan-

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., p. 110.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., p. 116.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., pp. 40-41.

torowicz, *The King's Two Bodies, A Study in Mediaeval Political Theology*, and Norman O. Brown, *Love's Body*, Chapters 5-7, on "Person," "Representative," and "Head." For Marxists the starting point of political theory has to be Marx's *Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right*; recall Bahro's use of it in his analysis of Soviet bureaucracy. But Hegel's *Philosophy of Right* is not medieval but modern political theology. Take Colletti's exposition of the relation of Marx to Hegel. In Hegel, "The meaning of the argument could not be clearer: God becomes real in the world. And this indwelling of God's in the world is represented by His presence in the civil and political institutions of modern bourgeois society: marriage, the family, commerce, 'action to acquire goods through one's own intelligence and industry' (i.e., entrepreneurial activities), and finally obedience to the laws of the State. These institutions . . . to Hegel appear (like the 'bread' and 'wine' of the *Jugendchriften*) as the presence itself of God in the world—not profane realities but 'mystical objects,' not historical institutions but sacraments. . . . Just as Hegel sees in the 'Germanic-Christian' world the realization of the *verkehrte Welt* previously presaged in the *Phenomenology*; so Marx sees in this world, which is after all bourgeois society itself, a world 'stood on its head,' starting with its most elementary institution, the commodity—a world which, if it is to be put back on 'its feet,' must therefore be overturned from its very foundations. The difference is only that whereas Hegel sees the actualization of God in the suprasensate's becoming sensate, Marx (who obviously reasons in a way that goes beyond the Christian horizon) sees a process whereby *forces alienated and estranged* from mankind become present and real, beginning with capital and the State themselves."<sup>18</sup> Modern bourgeois society is a theocracy. Marx's unbearably controversial essay *On the Jewish Question* extends his dialectical political theology to the American Constitution, to show that the separation of Church and State still leaves us with a Christian State.

The Marxist tradition has taken it for granted that the proletarian revolution carries forward the achievements of the bourgeois revolution; that socialism is the perfection of the bourgeois process of secularization; that Marxism itself is the perfection of bourgeois enlightenment, that is to say, atheism. In this tradition, Bahro uses the term "theocracy" unself-consciously as a term of abuse, as something to be liquidated; *écrasez l'infâme*. But atheism leaves Marxist political theory at a dead end: Marxism inherits an abstract theoretical injunction to abolish the state and a sociological practice that can lead only to the strengthening of the state. The Marxist tradition of atheism is wedded to the false perspective on world history that, with the help of Hodgson and Bahro, we are trying to overcome. Secularization is the ideology of the Great Transforma-

<sup>18</sup> L. Colletti, *Marxism and Hegel* (London: New Left Books, 1973), pp. 269-70.

tion, the emancipation of economy from sacred controls; the ideology of bourgeois nihilism and anomie. "All fixed, fast-frozen relations, with their train of ancient and venerable prejudices and opinions, are swept away, all new-formed ones become antiquated before they can ossify. All that is solid melts into air, all that is holy is profaned. . . ." *The Communist Manifesto* is not out of date; but it is not true that "man is at last compelled to face with sober senses his real conditions of life and his relations with his kind." It is not true that secularization leaves man at last "with sober senses," demystified. After writing *The Communist Manifesto*, Marx devoted his life to exposing capitalism as idolatry—a political theology of capitalism. Money, or capital, says Marx, as "universal equivalent," takes the place of Christ as representative of "man before God," as "Lord and God of the world of commodities."<sup>19</sup> Karl Marx, the last of the Hebrew prophets. The result of the Great Transformation is that we can see the abomination of desolation standing where it ought not: "Modern society greets gold as its Holy Grail, as the glittering incarnation of the very principle of its own life."<sup>20</sup>

A political theory of the stature of Marx's *Capital* would reveal the state as the new Leviathan, the new idol that fills the vacuum left by the death of God (Nietzsche, *Zarathustra*, Part I, §15). Such a Marxism would be on speaking terms with Jacques Ellul, who says that "technique makes the state a god in the most theologically accurate sense of the term: a power which obeys nothing but its own will and submits to no judgment from without."<sup>21</sup> Such a Marxism would also be on speaking terms with Islam: Islam has always said the choice was between theocracy and idolatry. And, challenged by Islam, Marxism could ask itself the Nietzschean question: How, after the death of God, do you define idolatry? Or is everything permissible?

**T**he alternative in Eastern Europe, more realistically considered, is a choice between theocracy and idolatry. Bahro has inherited from the Marxist tradition the unexamined assumption that the thing to do with theocracy is abolish it. But the logic of his analysis leads him to call for a new Communist party, or a renewal of the party; exactly, in his own words, the "spiritual renewal" of the party. "Bringing all this together, one can say that the party must wager its old institutional existence against its spiritual renewal."<sup>22</sup>

19 Ibid., pp. 217-72.

20 Karl Marx, *Capital* (New York: Modern Library), p. 149.

21 Jacques Ellul, *The Technological Society*, trans. J. Wilkinson (New York: Knopf, 1964), p. 229

22 Bahro, *New Left Review*, p. 24.

This "spiritual renewal" of the party is based on a redefinition of the party and the "cultural revolution" in purely spiritual terms. The cultural revolution is a struggle between "emancipatory" and "compensatory" interests. The struggle is for "emancipation from modern slavery to material things and the state": "compensatory interests" seek "compensation in consumption, in passive amusements, and in attitudes governed by prestige and power"; "emancipatory interests" are "oriented to the growth of man as a personality, to self-realization of individuality," etc.<sup>23</sup> In the tradition of conventional Marxist materialism, it is not clear where "idealism" ends and "religious mystification" begins; or where "spiritualism" lies on the spectrum. Certain it is that Bahro's cultural revolution regresses to that "German" or "True" socialism attacked in *The Communist Manifesto* as expressing "not the interest of the proletariat, but the interests of human nature, of man in general, who belongs to no class, has no reality, who exists only in the misty realm of philosophical fantasy."

The spiritual revolution has to be led by a spiritual elite. It is obvious that the new party must function as philosopher-kings and educators, and therefore must perpetuate the situation stigmatized in Marx's third thesis on Feuerbach, which Bahro repeatedly cites in criticism of the old party: "This doctrine must therefore divide society into two parts, one of which is superior to society." The new party differs from the old only as regenerate true believers from degenerate soulless bureaucrats. The real model for the cultural revolution is the Protestant Reformation: "As I have shown, the existing order is formed almost like a church, so that the idea comes to mind of applying to the party the model of a *reformation*. Time and again, this word rears its head. Reformations do not perhaps always achieve their aim of reconstruction, re-establishment and regeneration, indeed rebirth, but this is at least their intent; they are thus essentially 'positive,' if not seldom with ultimately conservative consequences, as in the case of Luther. It is a constant for any kind of church organization that its reformation has to come from its most fervent heretics: the temple must be destroyed in order to build it anew, the money-changers driven out, so that the faithful can again make their appearance. There is no doubt that this psychostructural model plays a role in the present situation, where we are facing the rapid ideological decay of the power of the 'catholic' party. As reformations of the church presuppose the Christian sentiment, so party reformations presuppose the communist."<sup>24</sup>

The cultural revolution would be a new intrusion, to change the course of history, of the prophetic impulse: "There have been historical moments which have something to tell us as to the possible *form* of the transition. We can see

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., p. 17.

<sup>24</sup> Bahro, *Alternative*, pp. 346-47.

those moments in many books of the Old Testament, in the New Testament, in the chorales of the Reformation and the songs and hymns of the infant workers' movement. There have always been times in which people [were] pressed beyond existing arrangements without being subordinated to the rule of a priestly caste, times of movement, times of a people led by *prophecy*. Only in such movements did masses and classes who were otherwise inevitably subaltern manage to reach the level of a historical consciousness, of immediate communication with the universal. In movements of this kind, fishermen from Galilee and Paris workers suddenly rose to the highest possible human dignity attainable. . . . It is hope that leads the people, and its prophets are nothing more than interpreters who give their deepest emancipatory needs a concrete, articulated and historical expression, in which the totality of what is promised is not lost."<sup>25</sup> This is Marxism that, without knowing it, is Islamic socialism.

"Cultural Revolution" and "Hegemony" are Marxism's cumbersome and not entirely candid way of breaking free from its tradition of materialism and economic determinism. The pitiless pressure of real historical developments is forcing Marxism to make choices, to become political, to become theologicopolitical. History does not confront us with inevitable developments that we can at most hasten or delay by our action or inaction; it confronts us with ineluctable choices, and opportunities to fall in love with, on which we have to wager our immortal soul, and the survival of the species. Sociological realism is blind without visionary idealism. *Proverbs* 29:18: "Where there is no vision the people perish."

**F**acing the prospect of the new Leviathan, Western intelligentsia, the clerisy —what is left of the prophetic tradition—must overcome the myopia that has prevented us from recognizing Islam as an alternative interpretation of our own tradition. Christianity is a wager that the kingdom is not of this world; its political theology commands us to render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's and to God the things that are God's. In this tradition, the clerisy constitute a Church, a culture, a counterculture, confronting the State; see Coleridge, *On the Constitution of the Church and State*. Theologicopolitical realism discloses an alternative to Bahro's alternative in Eastern Europe: the organization of a new Church to confront the power of the State. Islam on the other hand recognizes no duality between Church and State. Its commitment is to struggle ("holy war") to establish theocracy, world wide; one theocratic world government. It is Dante's *De Monarchia*, without the fatal inner contradiction consequent upon accepting Christianity's accommodation with the Roman

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., p. 372.

Empire. Book I of *De Monarchia* is pure Islam: "Of all things ordained for our happiness, the greatest is universal peace"; "To achieve this state of universal well-being a single world-government is necessary"; "Since any particular institution needs unity of direction, mankind as a whole must also need it"; "Human government is but a part of that single world-administration which has its unity in God"; "Man is by nature in God's likeness and therefore should, like God, be one"; "At the root of what it means to be good is being one; thus we can see what sin is: it is to scorn unity and hence to proceed to multiplicity." But his tradition committed Dante to proceed to duality (Church and State); and even to Trinity. Islam's unequivocal unitarianism is closer to the Old Testament, the "Psalmist" cited by Dante; but also to Greek philosophy, the "Philosopher" cited by Dante.

Muhammad is the supreme example of the Prophet Armed. Islam is committed by the Hegira and by the subsequent takeover of Medina to the seizure of power. The elemental energy that Islam immediately displayed is the result of its overcoming of the fatal inner irresolution that had condemned Hebrew-Christian versions of the prophetic tradition to political impotence. Islam was a decision to break the stalemated confrontation between Prophet and King in the Old Testament, between Caesar and Christ in the New; to take responsibility; to seize power. Islam is the theology of political (and sociological) realism; mediating between Dante and Machiavelli. The new Machiavellians, who include Marxists influenced by Gramsci, as well as utopian preachers of the primacy of politics as a neo-Pagan heresy,<sup>26</sup> must not ignore the example of Muhammad and the Venture of Islam. Spinoza's *Theologico-Political Treatise* needs to be rewritten, starting, as he does, with Chapter 1, "Of Prophecy," but not restricting the phenomenology of prophetism to Moses and Christ. It would not be a step backward to regain the awareness of the Muslim alternative, and of the philosophy of al-Farabi, that Maimonides had. Nothing less than a transvaluation of all values is at stake; Nietzsche, *Will to Power*, no. 983: "Education in those ruler virtues that achieve rule even over one's benevolence and pity: the great breeder virtues [Nietzsche uses *Zucht* and *Züchtung* to suggest the double sense of "breeding" and the importance of discipline (*Zucht*) for cultivation (*Züchtung*)]—'forgiving one's enemies' is by comparison child's play—to bring the creative temperament to the highest pitch, no longer chipping marble! The exceptional power-status of these beings compared with that of princes hitherto: the Roman Caesar with Christ's soul." The Roman Caesar with Christ's soul. If Nietzsche had been conscious of Muhammad, he would have seen how much our future lies behind us; what world-historical opportunities have been lost. We really need to absorb Marshall Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam*.

<sup>26</sup> See J. G. A. Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975).