

THE CRISIS OF THE OLD ORDER

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We are in the midst of a worldwide revolution. It is peaceful, so we tend not to notice its revolutionary character. It is revolutionary in the sense of the public's shift in commitment: from the Old Order to something new. There is a lot of scrambling and positioning going on to identify and control this new order, but it is not clear what it will be.

Three things about this revolution are obvious. First, there is not one political leader of any real substance or following who is articulating it. Yeltsin is unable to get his agenda through his parliament, and Mexico's **Salinas** is retiring. **China's** Deng is elderly and almost invisible. Second, **there** is no visible spiritual leadership. Even in **Iran**, **the** politicians seem to have overturned rule by Mullahs. Third, the key Western institutions that the humanists have captured, most notably education, are under constant **fire** from the public. There is a widespread loss of faith. Where is the center? Can the center hold?

The United States seems to have entered a new political era. Italy is coming apart at the seams; Germany is drifting, as is England; France is somewhat better, but Mitterrand has faded. Thatcher is in the House of Lords, and Reagan is growing senile. Only the memories of their leadership remain. Gorbachev -- a decade ago, the World's Great Leader, *Time's* Man of the Decade -- is an unemployed Communist ex-dictator, hyping a New World Ecological Order for a living: a red turned green. Only Nelson Mandela has anything like a leadership role. He is 76 years old.

What has gone wrong? More than anything else, a loss of faith. We are living in what appears to be the late stages of sensate culture, the civilization inaugurated by the Renaissance. **Ptirim** Sorokin warned us about this in the late 1930's and thereafter. Something will replace it, but what? It is time for Christians to begin to think about their responsibility to offer an alternative worldview, as well as working models of alternative institutions. But Christian intellectuals, to an extent that they refuse to admit, are the captives of five men who gave ~~us~~ modern culture. ~~We must escape~~ the influenced all five.

The Gang of Five

We live in a world dominated by the theories of five dead white European males: a physicist, Isaac Newton; a novelist, political theorist, and lying autobiographer, Jean Jacques Rousseau; an unemployed naturalist, Charles Darwin; an unemployed philologist, **Friedrich** Nietzsche; and a conservative politician, Otto von **Bismarck**. These five men created the modern world. Only Nietzsche's legacy still seems to be in the ascent phase, and only in one area: culture. But that is sufficient to put us all at risk.

On the surface, Newton seems to be the untouchable master. His physics is still the

physics of introductory textbooks. But the discovery of quantum physics in the 1920's ended his reign in the realm of subatomic physics, and astronomical discoveries since 1965 have called into question his authority over the heavens. To the extent that social theory became mechanical and therefore Newtonian after 1687, it is now in mortal danger. Roscoe Pound, Dean of Harvard's Law School, understood the threat as early as 1940:

Nothing has been so upsetting to political and juristic thinking as the growth of the idea of contingency in physics. It has taken away the analogy from which philosophers had reached the very idea of law. It has deprived political and juristic thought of the pattern to which they had conceived of government and law as set up. Physics had been the rock on which they had built. When physicists began to play with the idea of jumps and breaks in natural phenomena instead of the orderly sequence of cause and effect and inexorably operating laws which had governed nineteenth-century positivist physics, the effect was bewildering.

Rousseau's romanticism began the erosion of Newtonian classicism in the late 18th century. His theory of the General Will did not sweep Western political theory until the 19th century. But his novels sent women across Europe into tears of sentimentalism, and his theory of education -- not tested on his five illegitimate children, whom he turned over to public orphanages as infants, where most children died -- laid the foundations of modern education's theory of the innocent child in need of State education.

Darwin's theory of evolution through impersonal, **unplanned** natural selection transformed Western religion and philosophy, as well as Western social theory. By 1880, Darwinism reigned almost supreme in every academic discipline except physics, where Newton still was king. It seemed to all that Darwin had accomplished for the life sciences what Newton had accomplished for physics: a system of causal explanation that did not rely on God. (Newton did rely on a Deistic kind of god, but his successors soon jettisoned this minimal theological aspect of his theory.) But since the late 1950's, Darwin's specific explanations have been undermined again and again by those inside the camp. Darwinists have been forced to abandon his specifics in the name of his general theory of causation. A book like Hsu's *The Great Dying* leaves Darwinists devoid of plausible explanations. The jumps and breaks of literally millions of species that perished overnight on three occasions, and then the filling up of the post-catastrophe environment with totally new species, are as impossible to explain rationally as the quantum leaps of subatomic physics.

This brings us to Nietzsche. His influence is still profound. Marx is now *passé*; Freud is suspect; and Carl Jung turns out to have been the founder of his own messianic secret society, with himself as god incarnate -- all very embarrassing for his humanist disciples. But Nietzsche, the great modern exponent of the death of God philosophy, still exercises influence through his existentialism and his control over the arts, especially rock music. E. Michael Jones has traced this cultural influence in his important book, *Dionysus Rising* (Ignatius Press, 1994). It began with Richard Wagner, a participant in the German

Revolution of 1848-49, who subsequently used music to undermine the political and moral order. His disciple Nietzsche took this strategy one step farther: using philosophy in a cultural war against Christendom. When Wagner pulled back from the moral precipice with *Parsifal* in 1877, Nietzsche broke with him and continued moving forward. He believed in 1888 that Africa would provide the new music that would eventually undermine the West. (Nietzsche's strategy of cultural revolution was adopted in the late 1920's and 1930's by the Italian Marxist, Antonio Gramsci.)

On January 3, 1889, Nietzsche saw a cab driver beating a horse. Nietzsche threw himself on the horse's neck and burst into tears. He then collapsed. When he awoke, he was maniacal. He was committed to a mental institution, where he died in 1900. (His first American popularizer, H. L. Mencken, also lost his mind in the last years of his life; he was unable to read or write, although he could speak, unlike Nietzsche.)

Jones argues that Nietzsche's revolt against classical music was extended in two forms: (1) modern classical music, pioneered by Schönberg's atonal music in 1908 and then 12-tone music, an idea he stole from Josef Hauer in 1920; and (2) jazz, rock and roll, and the subsequent developments. Almost no one listens to the first, but the whole world is tuned in to MTV. As I write this, Mick Jagger and the Rolling Stones are touring the U. S., playing before to huge crowds, three decades after they first appeared on the scene. Dionysos is still rising.

Finally, there is Otto von Bismarck. It was he who, as Prussia's political leader, put together the modern German state, from 1866 to 1871. In the mid-1870's, he successfully undermined the political platform of the liberals in the German parliament by proposing State-funded insurance: the first State-guaranteed pension system for all workers. This idea was adopted by the English, along with the income tax, in 1911. It was adopted in the United States in the late 1930's: the Social Security system.

German unification had been preceded by the *Zollverein*, the German customs union, which created a tariff-free economy for the German principalities. This began in 1834, and by 1867 all but two of the German states were members. German unification took place in 1871, after the victorious war against France. First came the promise of economic growth through a tariff-free economy. This promise came true. Then came successful foreign wars against Austria (1866) and France (1870-71). Then came German unification. Then came the beginning of the welfare State. Bismarck oversaw the final stages of these plans.

The promise of economic growth through free trade is valid. Tariffs are in fact sales taxes on imported goods. Import restraints also reduce exports. When a nation lowers its taxes, it gets economic growth. The problem is the common political means of enforcing the low-tariff agreement: political unification and centralization.

We do not normally think of the welfare State as the invention of a conservative, but its initial implementation surely was. For over a century, the promise of guaranteed

retirement has been the most politically powerful lure of all government intervention, the basis of the most **powerful** organized constituency. To challenge Social Security is to touch “the third rail of American politics” -- as deadly as the electrified third rail of the New York subway system. This is the most sacred of all sacred cows in Western politics. It apparently cannot be stopped through political action. There is only one way to reverse it: the bankruptcy of the State.

The problem is, when a society has placed its faith in a false god, it becomes dependent on that god. Western voters are increasingly dependent on the State pension systems. The voters have trusted the promise of the State. They climbed aboard the tiger, thinking it was a pussycat. Now they cannot get off, and no one else is allowed to get off.

The modern world has placed its faith in the ideas of five men. All of them constructed worldviews that, to one degree or other, deny the existence of the providential God of the Bible. Nietzsche was most vocal in his rejection of all gods, but intellectually and socially, all of them denied providence. All of them denied that cause and effect in history are **covenantal**: the response of a sovereign God to the acts of corporate humanity. Newton’s physics still benefits us, but social theorists have used his mechanistic methodology to undermine ethics.

Our problem as Christians is that our spokesmen are, to one degree or other, dependent on one or more of these five men. The Creation Science movement depends on Newton to refute Darwin. No one has offered an alternative to quantum theory other than a return to Newton, which seems impossible. The political conservatives are unable to break with the nationalism of Bismarck, which came by way of Napoleon and the French Revolution, one of whose patron saints was Rousseau. If Jones is correct about the program of Nietzsche, few Christians have escaped its results: modern music in general.

Modern social theory is dialectical, trapped between Newtonian mechanism and Darwinian organicism. Organicism is linked to romanticism (Rousseau) and existentialism (Nietzsche). The answer to mechanism is not organicism; the answer to organicism is not mechanism. The answer to both is **covenantalism**.

Covenantalism

Covenantalism is creationist. **Covenantalism** is therefore **personalistic**: it is God, not the cosmos, who is supreme. **Covenantalism** is judicially representative: God gave man authority over the earth. **Covenantalism** is judicial: God has established laws governing nature that man can understand, since he is made in God’s image. **Covenantalism** is providential: God brings historical sanctions, positive and negative, in terms of His law. Finally, covenantalism is progressive: the righteous shall inherit the earth. So, covenant theology offers the basis for finding the answers, which are not found in humanism. This is why ICE exists: to find biblical answers.