

CREDO OF A REACTIONARY

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I do not hesitate to announce that I am a reactionary. I take a deep pride in the fact. I see no more virtue in looking forward longingly to an unknown future than in looking backward nostalgically to known and proven values.

The term "reactionary" as I use it does not stand for a definite and immutable set of ideas. It stands for an attitude of mind. As a reactionary I resent and oppose the spirit and the trends of the epoch I am forced to live in, and seek to restore the spirit which had its finest embodiment in by-gone periods.

The circumstance that the term "reactionary" is applied as an epithet to fascists and other brands of modern man for whom a true reactionary has only contempt is no fault of mine.

As an honest reactionary I nat-

urally reject Nazism, communism, fascism and all related ideologies which are, in sober fact, the *reductio ad absurdum* of so-called democracy and mob domination. I reject the absurd assumptions of majority rule, parliamentary hocus-pocus; the bogus materialistic liberalism of the Manchester School and the bogus conservatism of the big bankers and industrialists. I abhor the centralism and uniformity of the herd life, the stupid mob spirit of racialism, the private capitalism as well as the state capitalism (socialism) which have contributed to the gradual ruin of our civilization in the last two centuries. The real reactionary of this day is a rebel against the prevailing assumptions and a "radical" in that he goes down to the roots.

I am personally a reactionary of the traditional Christian faith, with a liberal outlook and agrarian propensities. Where so many around me worship the "new," I respect forms and institutions which have grown organically over a long period

This is the fourth in a series of articles summing up personal "credos" or life-views. Previous contributions were the credo of a Liberal by Oswald Garrison Villard; of a Conservative by George Barton Cutten; and of a Socialist by Norman Thomas. The editors do not necessarily agree with the views expressed in this series.

of time. The periods that preceded the two great storms — the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, ended by the Reformation; and the Eighteenth Century, ended by the French Revolution — are rich in forms and ideas of lasting importance. The universality of a Nicholas of Cues or of an Albertus Magnus, the glory of the Cathedral of Chartres and the late Baroque of Austria, inspiring figures like Maria Theresa, Pascal, George Washington or Leibnitz fascinate me more than the three “common men” of our time — Mussolini, Stalin and Hitler — or the democratic splendor of a department store or the spiritual emptiness of communist and fascist mass meetings magnetized by ecstatic mob-masters.

The introductory note to this decline of civilization was written by Martin Luther, who worshipped the nation, exalted the state and ranted against the Jews; by that royal barbarian on the English throne who supplanted the Catholic spirit of his country with a paralyzing parochialism; by the first “modern” — the Genevan who denied the basis of all philosophical freedom, Free Will — and the other Genevan who preached the return to the jungle and idyllic barbarism. These four horsemen — Luther,

Henry VIII, Calvin and Rousseau — were but the heralds of more fateful things to come. The disaster was final when the French Revolution, faced by the eternal dilemma of choosing between liberty and equality, decided for equality. The guillotine and the Strasbourg magistrates who decreed that the spire of the cathedral be demolished because it rose above the equalitarian level of all other houses, are everlasting symbols of modernism and perverse “progress.”

The masses, forming organized majorities holding identical ideas and hating uniformly all those who dare to be different, are the present-day product of these various revolts. Priest and Jew, aristocrat and beggar, genius and imbecile, the political non-conformist and the philosophical explorer — all of them are on the list of the proscribed. The herd rules today almost everywhere with various means and under the most diverse labels. This tyranny is what I oppose.

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As a reactionary, I believe in liberty, but not in equality. The only equality I can accept is the spiritual equality of two newborn babes re-

ardless of the color, creed or race of their parents. I accept neither the degrading equalitarianism of the "democrats," nor the artificial divisions of the racialists, nor the class distinctions of communists and snobs.

Human beings are unique. They should have the opportunity to develop the personalities—and that means responsibility, suffering, loneliness. I not only like the principle of monarchy but I like all people who are crowned. And there are all sorts of crowns, the noblest of them consisting of thorns. Modern Man—this docile, "cooperative" and urbanized animal—is not after a reactionary's liking.

I believe in the family, in the natural hierarchy within the family, and in the natural chasm between the sexes. I love old men full of dignity and proud fathers, but I also love courageous and upright children. In a hierarchy the lowest member is functionally as important as the highest. And the abyss between men and women seems to me a good thing too; there is no triumph in building a bridge over a mere puddle.

I like people with property. I am not at all enthusiastic about the rootless fellow in an apartment house, with a social security num-

ber as his main distinction. I loathe the capitalism that concentrates property in the hands of a few, no less than socialism which wants to transfer it to that great nobody, the hydra with a million heads and no soul, Society. I like people with their own abode, their own fields, their own views promoting them to independent action. I fear the herd: the 51 per cent who voted for Hitler and Hugenberg; the howling mob which supported the French Terror; the 55 per cent of Whites in Southern States who keep the 45 per cent of Negroes "in their place" with the help of blow torch and rope.

I dread all masses consisting of men afraid to be unique, to be persons; caring for safety more than for liberty, fearing their neighbors or "community" more than God and their conscience. These are the people who demand not only equality but identity. They suspect anybody who dares to be different. They want merely "ordinary, decent chaps" after the British, "regular guys" after the American or "*rechte Kerle*" after the German pattern. Modern Man seems to have only one wish: to see everything moulded after his own image; he loathes personality and wants to assimilate. What he