

**Section readings: *Stirrings***

**CHOOSE THREE OF THESE!**

## 1517: Wittenberg

### MARTIN LUTHER QUESTIONS THE POPE

Out of love for the truth and the desire to bring it to light, the following propositions will be discussed at Wittenberg, under the presidency of the Reverend Father Martin Luther, master of arts and of sacred theology and lecturer in ordinary on the same at that place. Wherefore he requests that those who are unable to be present and debate orally with us, may do so by letter. In the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

Our Lord and Master Jesus Christ, when He said "repent," willed that the whole life of believers should be repentance.

This word cannot be understood to mean sacramental penance, i.e., confession and satisfaction, which is administered by the priests.

Yet it means not inward repentance only; nay, there is no inward repentance that does not outwardly work diverse mortifications of the flesh.

The penalty of sin, therefore, continues so long as hatred of self continues, for this is the true inward repentance, and continues until our entrance into the kingdom of heaven.

The pope cannot remit any guilt except by declaring that it has been remitted by God and by assenting to God's remission; though, to be sure, he may grant remission in cases reserved to his judgment.

Those preachers of indulgences are in error who say that by the pope's indulgences a man is freed from every penalty, and saved.

It is certain that when the penny jingles into the money box, gain and avarice can be increased, but the result of the intercession of the Church is in the power of God alone.

They will be condemned eternally, together with their teachers, who believe themselves sure of their salvation because they have letters of pardon.

Every truly repentant Christian has a right to full remission of penalty and guilt, even without letters of pardon.

Every true Christian, whether living or dead, has part in all the blessings of Christ and the Church, and this is granted to him by God, even without letters of pardon.

Nevertheless, the remission and participation in the blessings of the Church that are granted by the pope are in no way to be despised, for they are the declaration of divine remission.

Christians are to be taught that he who gives to the poor or lends to the needy does a better work than buying pardons.

Because love grows by works of love, and man becomes better; but by pardons man does not grow better, only more free from penalty.

Christians are to be taught that he who sees a man in need and passes him by, but gives his money for pardons, purchases not the indulgences of the pope, but the indignation of God.

Christians are to be taught that the buying of pardons is a matter of free will, and not of commandment.

Christians are to be taught that if the pope knew the exactions of the pardon preachers, he would rather that St. Peter's church should go to ashes, than that it should be built up with the skin, flesh, and bones of his sheep.

It must be the intention of the pope that if pardons, which are a very small thing, are celebrated with one bell, with single processions and ceremonies, then the Gospel, which is the very greatest thing, should be preached with a hundred bells, a hundred processions, a hundred ceremonies.

The "treasures of the Church," out of which the pope grants indulgences, are not sufficiently named or known among the people of Christ.

The true treasure of the Church is the Most Holy Gospel of the glory and the grace of God.

The treasures of the Gospel are nets with which they formerly were wont to fish for men of riches.

The treasures of the indulgences are nets with which they now fish for the riches of men.

He who speaks against the truth of apostolic pardons, let him be anathema and accursed!

But he who guards against the lust and license of the pardon preachers, let him be blessed!



Night attack on the Sanjō Palace, from the illustrated scrolls of *The Events of the Heiji Era* (detail), Japan, c. 1275.

To say that the cross, emblazoned with the papal arms, which is set up by the preachers of indulgences, is of equal worth with the cross of Christ, is blasphemy.

The bishops, curates, and theologians who allow such talk to be spread among the people will have an account to render.

This unbridled preaching of pardons makes it no easy matter, even for learned men, to rescue the reverence due to the pope from slander, or even from the shrewd questionings of the laity.

To wit: "Why does not the pope empty purgatory, for the sake of holy love and of the dire need of the souls that are there, if he redeems an infinite number of souls for the sake of miserable money with which to build a church? The former reasons would be most just; the latter is most trivial."

Again: "What is this new piety of God and the pope, that for money they allow a man who is impious and their enemy to buy out of purgatory the pious soul of a friend of God, and do not rather, because of that pious and beloved soul's own need, free it for pure love's sake?"

Again: "Why does not the pope, whose wealth is today greater than the riches of the richest, build just this one church of St. Peter with his own money, rather than with the money of poor believers?"

To repress these arguments and scruples of

the laity by force alone, and not to resolve them by giving reasons, is to expose the Church and the pope to the ridicule of their enemies and to make Christians unhappy.

If, therefore, pardons were preached according to the spirit and mind of the pope, all these doubts would be readily resolved; nay, they would not exist.

Away, then, with all those prophets who say to the people of Christ, "Peace, peace," and there is no peace!

Blessed be all those prophets who say to the people of Christ, "Cross, cross," and there is no cross!

Christians are to be exhorted that they be diligent in following Christ, their Head, through penalties, deaths, and hell;

And thus be confident of entering into heaven rather through many tribulations, than through the assurance of peace.

*From The Ninety-Five Theses. While the story about Luther nailing his theses to a church door is apocryphal, he did send the document on October 31, 1517, to Archbishop Albert of Mainz, who passed it along to Pope Leo X in Rome. Printed copies of Luther's protestations circulated widely in Germany. Shortly after his excommunication in 1521, he was ordered to appear before the Diet of Worms, where he refused to recant any of his claims and purportedly remarked, "Here I stand. I cannot do otherwise. God help me." Luther died at the age of sixty-two in 1546.*

## 1848: London

### THE BOURGEOIS REVOLUTION

A specter is haunting Europe—the specter of communism. All the powers of old Europe have entered into a holy alliance to exorcise this spectre: pope and tsar, Metternich and Guizot, French radicals and German police spies.

The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles.

Freeman and slave, patrician and plebeian, lord and serf, guild master and journeyman, in a word, oppressor and oppressed, stood in constant opposition to one another, carried on an uninterrupted, now hidden, now open fight, a fight that each time ended, either in a revolutionary reconstitution of society at large or in the common ruin of the contending classes.

*The peasants alone are revolutionary, for they have nothing to lose and everything to gain. The starving peasant, outside the class system, is the first among the exploited to discover that only violence pays. For him there is no compromise, no possible coming to terms.*

—Frantz Fanon, 1961

The modern bourgeois society that has sprouted from the ruins of feudal society has not done away with class antagonisms. It has but established new classes, new conditions of oppression, new forms of struggle in place of the old ones.

Our epoch, the epoch of the bourgeoisie, possesses, however, this distinctive feature: it has simplified the class antagonisms. Society as a whole is more and more splitting up into two great hostile camps, into two great classes directly facing each other: bourgeoisie and proletariat.

From the serfs of the Middle Ages sprang the chartered burghers of the earliest towns. From these burgesses the first elements of the bourgeoisie were developed.

The discovery of America, the rounding of the Cape, opened up fresh ground for the ris-

ing bourgeoisie. The East-Indian and Chinese markets, the colonization of America, trade with the colonies, the increase in the means of exchange and in commodities generally, gave to commerce, to navigation, to industry, an impulse never before known, and thereby, to the revolutionary element in the tottering feudal society, a rapid development.

The feudal system of industry, under which industrial production was monopolized by closed guilds, now no longer sufficed for the growing wants of the new markets. The manufacturing system took its place. The guild masters were pushed on one side by the manufacturing middle class; division of labor between the different corporate guilds vanished in the face of division of labor in each single workshop.

Meantime the markets kept ever growing, the demand ever rising. Even manufacture no longer sufficed. Thereupon, steam and machinery revolutionized industrial production. The place of manufacture was taken by the giant, Modern Industry, the place of the industrial middle class by industrial millionaires, the leaders of whole industrial armies, the modern bourgeoisie.

Modern industry has established the world market, for which the discovery of America paved the way. This market has given an immense development to commerce, to navigation, to communication by land. This development has, in its turn, reacted on the extension of industry; and in proportion as industry, commerce, navigation, railways extended, in the same proportion the bourgeoisie developed, increased its capital, and pushed into the background every class handed down from the Middle Ages.

We see, therefore, how the modern bourgeoisie is itself the product of a long course of development, of a series of revolutions in the modes of production and of exchange.

Each step in the development of the bourgeoisie was accompanied by a corresponding political advance of that class. An oppressed class under the sway of the feudal nobility, an armed and self-governing association in the mediæval commune; here independent urban republic (as



Alexander McQueen & Isabella Blow: *Burning Down the House*, by David LaChapelle, 1996. Chromogenic print.

in Italy and Germany), there taxable "third estate" of the monarchy (as in France), afterward, in the period of manufacture proper, serving either the semifeudal or the absolute monarchy as a counterpoise against the nobility, and, in fact, cornerstone of the great monarchies in general. The bourgeoisie has at last, since the establishment of modern industry and of the world market, conquered for itself, in the modern representative state, exclusive political sway. The executive of the modern state is but a committee for managing the common affairs of the whole bourgeoisie.

The bourgeoisie, historically, has played a most revolutionary part.

The bourgeoisie, wherever it has got the upper hand, has put an end to all feudal, patriarchal, idyllic relations. It has pitilessly torn asunder the motley feudal ties that bound man to his "natural superiors," and has left remaining

no other nexus between man and man than naked self-interest, than callous "cash payment." It has drowned the most heavenly ecstasies of religious fervor, of chivalrous enthusiasm, of philistine sentimentalism, in the icy water of egotistical calculation. It has resolved personal worth into exchange value, and in place of the numberless indefeasible chartered freedoms, has set up that single, unconscionable freedom—free trade. In one word, for exploitation, veiled by religious and political illusions, it has substituted naked, shameless, direct, brutal exploitation.

The bourgeoisie has stripped from its halo every occupation hitherto honored and looked up to with reverent awe. It has converted the physician, the lawyer, the priest, the poet, the man of science, into its wage laborers.

The bourgeoisie has torn away from the family its sentimental veil and has reduced the family relation to a mere money relation.



The bourgeoisie has disclosed how it came to pass that the brutal display of vigor in the Middle Ages, which reactionists so much admire, found its fitting complement in the most slothful indolence. It has been the first to show what man's activity can bring about. It has accomplished wonders far surpassing Egyptian pyramids, Roman aqueducts, and Gothic cathedrals; it has conducted expeditions that put in the shade all former exoduses of nations and crusades.

The bourgeoisie cannot exist without constantly revolutionizing the instruments of production, and thereby the relations of production, and with them the whole relations of society. Conservation of the old modes of production in unaltered form, was, on the contrary, the first condition of existence for all earlier industrial classes. 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 need of a constantly expanding market for its products chases the bourgeoisie over the whole surface of the globe. It must nestle everywhere, settle everywhere, establish connections everywhere.

*Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, from The Communist Manifesto. Assigned the task of drafting a statement for the Communist League in London, Marx and Engels worked for a month and a half on this foundational text, publishing it in February 1848—the same year that revolutionary movements swept across many European countries, among them France, Hungary, Denmark, and the German and Italian states. After Marx died in 1883, Engels published the last two volumes of his Capital.*

*The Agitator, by David Petrovich Shterenberg, 1928.*



## 1840: Paris

### PROPERTY IS ROBBERY

If I were asked to answer the following question, What is slavery?, and I should answer in one word, Murder, my meaning would be understood at once. No extended argument would be required to show that the power to take from a man his thought, his will, his personality, is a power of life and death; and that to enslave a man is to kill him. Why, then, to this other question, What is property?, may I not likewise answer, It is robbery, without the certainty of being misunderstood; the second proposition being no other than a transformation of the first?

I undertake to discuss the vital principle of our government and our institutions, property: I am in my right. I may be mistaken in the conclusion that shall result from my investigations: I am in my right. I think best to place the last thought of my book first: still am I in my right.

Such an author teaches that property is a civil right, born of occupation and sanctioned by law; another maintains that it is a natural right, originating in labor—and both of these doctrines, totally opposed as they may seem, are encouraged and applauded. I contend that neither labor, nor occupation, nor law, can create property; that it is an effect without a cause: am I censurable?

But murmurs arise!

*Property is robbery!* That is the war cry of 1793! That is the signal of revolutions!

Reader, calm yourself: I am no agent of discord, no firebrand of sedition. I anticipate history by a few days; I disclose a truth whose development we may try in vain to arrest; I write the preamble of our future constitution. This proposition which seems to you blasphemous—property is robbery—would, if our prejudices allowed us to consider it, be recognized as the lightning rod to shield us from the coming thunderbolt; but too many interests stand in the way!...Alas! Philosophy will not change the course of events: destiny will fulfill itself regardless of prophecy. Besides, must not justice be done and our education be finished?

*Property is robbery!* What a revolution in human ideas! *Proprietor* and *robber* have been at all times expressions as contradictory as the beings whom they designate are hostile; all languages have perpetuated this opposition. On what authority, then, do you venture to attack universal consent and give the lie to the human race? Who are you, that you should question the judgment of the nations and the ages?

Of what consequence to you, reader, is my obscure individuality? I live, like you, in a century in which reason submits only to fact and to evidence. My name, like yours, is truth seeker.

The things of which I am to speak are so simple and clear that you will be astonished at not having perceived them before, and you will

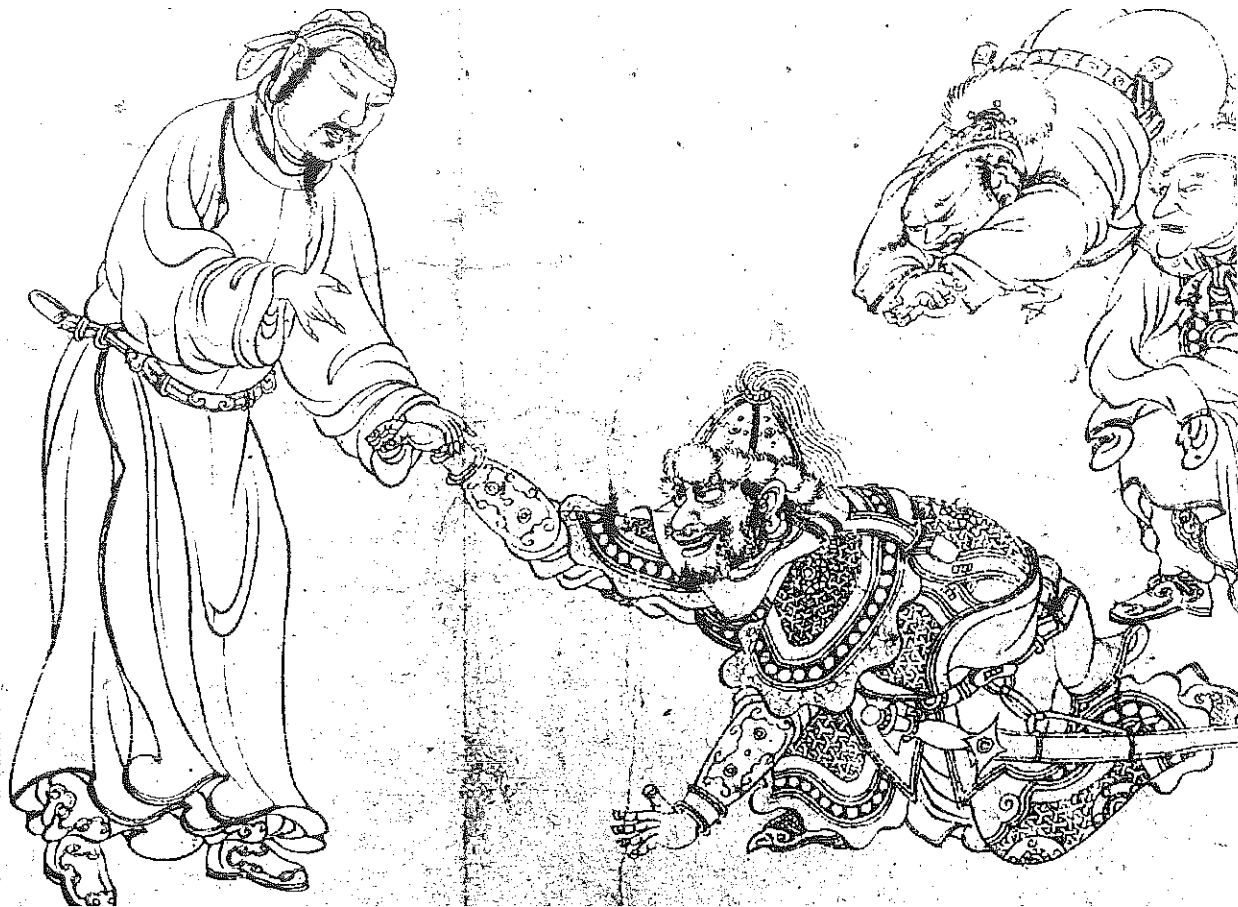
*Governments are not overthrown by the poor, who have no power, but by the rich—when they are insulted by their inferiors and cannot obtain justice.*

—Dionysius of Halicarnassus, c. 20 BC

say, "I have neglected to think." Others offer you the spectacle of genius wresting nature's secrets from her and unfolding before you her sublime messages; you will find here only a series of experiments upon justice and right, a sort of verification of the weights and measures of your conscience. The operations shall be conducted under your very eyes; and you shall weigh the result.

Nevertheless, I build no system. I ask an end to privilege, the abolition of slavery, equality of rights, and the reign of law. Justice, nothing else; that is the alpha and omega of my argument: to others I leave the business of governing the world.

One day I asked myself, Why is there so much sorrow and misery in society? Must man always be wretched? And not satisfied with the explanations given by the reformers—these attributing the general distress to governmental cowardice and incapacity, those to conspirators and uprisings, still others to ignorance and general corruption—and weary of the interminable



Guo Ziyi Receives the Homage of the Uighurs (detail), by Li Gonglin, late eleventh century. Allied with the Tibetans and threatening the Tang-dynasty capital, Chang'an, the nomadic Uighurs surrendered to Guo after he went out to meet them unarmed.

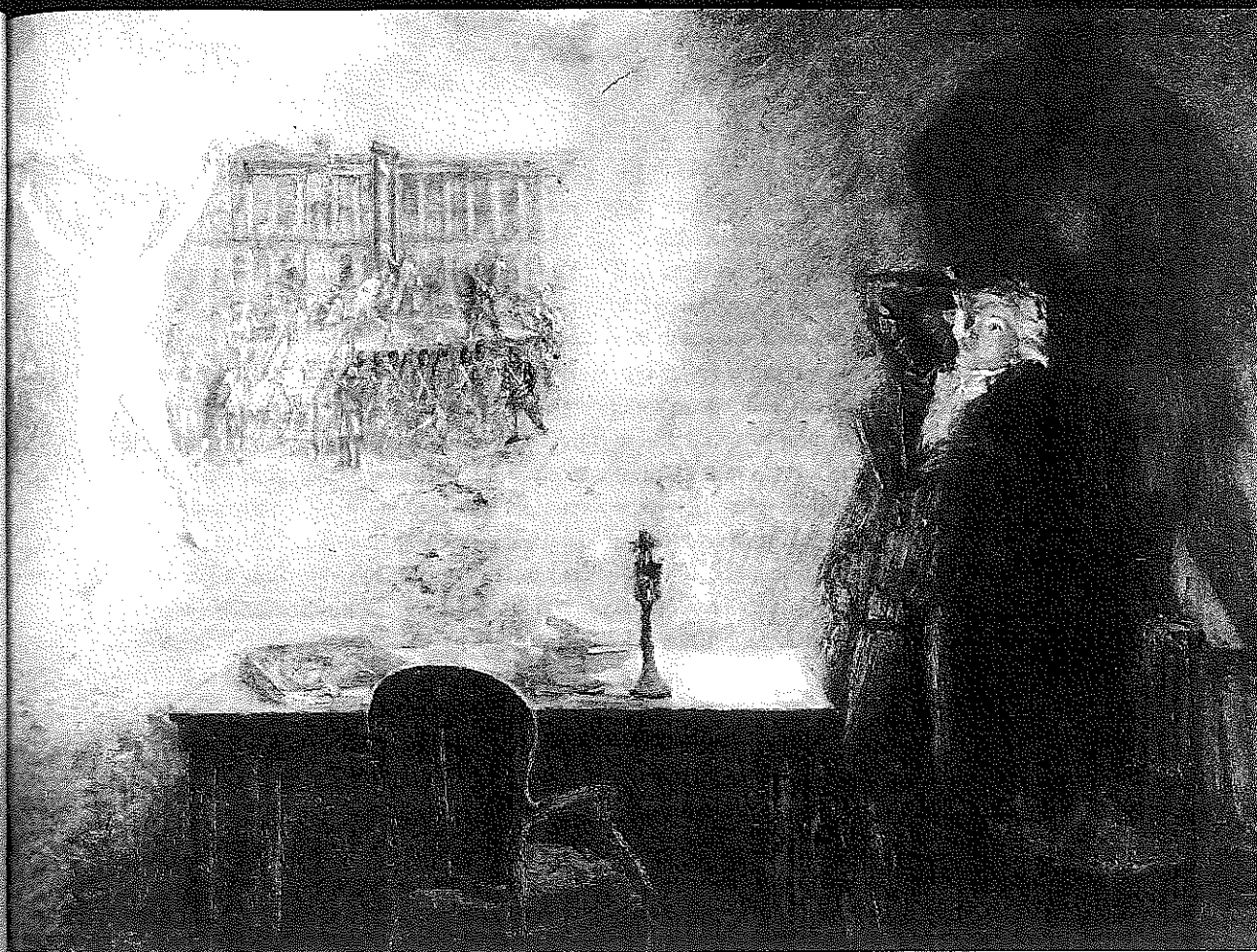
quarrels of the tribune and the press, I sought to fathom the matter myself. I have consulted the masters of science; I have read a hundred volumes of philosophy, law, political economy, and history: would to God that I had lived in a century in which so much reading had been useless! I have made every effort to obtain exact information, comparing doctrines, replying to objections, continually constructing equations and reductions from arguments, and weighing thousands of syllogisms in the scales of the most rigorous logic. In this laborious work, I have collected many interesting facts that I shall share with my friends and the public as soon as I have leisure. But I must say that I recognized at once that we had never understood the meaning of these words, so common and yet so sacred: *justice, equity, liberty*; that concerning each of these principles our ideas have been utterly obscure; and, in fact, that this ignorance was the sole cause both of the poverty that devours us and

of all the calamities that have ever afflicted the human race.

Yes: all men believe and repeat that equality of conditions is identical with equality of rights; that *property* and *robbery* are synonymous terms; that every social advantage accorded, or rather usurped, in the name of superior talent or service, is iniquity and extortion. All men in their hearts, I say, bear witness to these truths; they need only to be made to understand it.

**Pierre-Joseph Proudhon**, from *What is Property?* In this work, his first, Proudhon drew a distinction between possessions—a carpenter's tools, a farmer's land—and property, wherein through the ownership of the means of production one extracts profit from another's labor. Karl Marx attacked his beliefs in *The Poverty of Philosophy*, published in 1847, and one year later Proudhon was elected to France's Constituent Assembly. He wrote *The General Idea of the Revolution in the Nineteenth Century* while in prison for criticizing Louis-Napoleon.





*The Vision of Robespierre*, by Jean Joseph Weerts, c. 1880.

## 1792: St.-Domingue

### NONNEGOTIABLE DEMANDS

Gentlemen,

Those who have the honor to present you with these memoirs are a class of men whom up to the present you have failed to recognize as like yourselves, and whom you have covered in opprobrium by heaping upon them the ignominy attached to their unfortunate lot. These are men who don't know how to choose big words but who are going to show you and all the world the justice of their cause; finally, they are those whom you call your slaves and who claim the rights to which all men may aspire.

For too long, gentlemen, by way of abuses that one can never too strongly accuse of having taken place because of our lack of understanding and our ignorance—for a very long time, I say—we have been victims of your greed

and your avarice. Under the blows of your barbarous whip we have accumulated for you the treasures you enjoy in this colony; the human race has suffered to see with what barbarity you have treated men like yourself—yes, men—over whom you have no other right except *that* you are stronger and more barbaric than we; you have engaged in slave traffic, you have sold men for horses—and even that is the least of your shortcomings in the eyes of humanity; our lives depend on your caprice, and when it's a question of amusing yourselves, the burden falls on men like us, who most often are guilty of no other crime than to be under your orders.

We are black, it is true, but tell us, gentlemen, you who are so judicious, what is the law that says that the black man must belong to and be the property of the white man? Certainly you will not be able to make us see where that exists, if it is not in your imaginations—always ready to form new phantasms so long as they are to your

advantage. Yes, gentlemen, we are free like you, and it is only by your avarice and our ignorance that anyone is still held in slavery up to this day, and we can neither see nor find the right that you pretend to have over us, nor anything that could prove it to us, set down on the earth like you, all being children of the same father created in the same image. We are your equals then, by natural right, and if nature pleases itself to diversify colors within the human race, it is not a crime to be born black nor an advantage to be white. If the abuses in the colony have gone on

*The successful revolutionary is a statesman, the unsuccessful one a criminal.*

—Erich Fromm, 1941

for several years, that was before the fortunate revolution that has taken place in the motherland, which has opened for us the road that our courage and labor will enable us to ascend, to arrive at the temple of liberty, like those brave Frenchmen who are our models and whom all the universe is contemplating.

For too long we have borne your chains without thinking of shaking them off, but any authority that is not founded on virtue and humanity and that only tends to subject one's fellow man to slavery must come to an end, and that end is yours. You, gentlemen, who pretend to subject us to slavery—have you not sworn to uphold the French Constitution? What does it say, this respectable constitution? What is the fundamental law? Have you forgotten that you have formally vowed the Declaration of the Rights of Man, which says that men are born free, equal in their rights; that their natural rights include liberty, property, security, and resistance to oppression? So then, as you cannot deny what you have sworn, we are within our rights, and you ought to recognize yourselves as perjurers; by your decrees you recognize that all men are free, but you want to maintain servitude for 480,000 individuals who allow you to enjoy all that you possess. Through your envoys you offer liberty only to our chiefs; it is still one of your maxims of politics to

say that those who have played an equal part in our work should be delivered by us by your victims. No, we prefer a thousand deaths to acting that way toward our own kind. If you want to accord us the benefits that are due to us, they must also shower onto all of our brothers.

Gentlemen, in very few words you have seen our way of thinking—it is unanimous and it is after consulting everyone to whom we are connected in the same cause that we present to you our demands, as follows.

First: general liberty for all men detained in slavery.

Second: general amnesty for the past.

Third: the guarantee of these articles by the Spanish government.

Fourth: the three articles above are the basis and the sole means to achieve a peace that would be respected by the two parties, and only after they are approved in the name of the colony and the lieutenant general, and when the national civil commissioners have agreed to present this approval to the king, and to the National Assembly.

If, like us, you desire that the articles above be accepted, we will commit ourselves to the following: first, to lay down our arms; second, that each of us will return to the plantation to which he belongs and resume his work on condition of a wage that will be set by the year for each cultivator who starts work for a fixed term.

Here, gentlemen, is the request of men who are like you, and here is their final resolution: they are resolved to live free or die.

We have the honor to be, gentlemen, your very humble and obedient servants.

**Georges Biassou, Jean-François, and Toussaint L'Ouverture**, a letter to colonial leaders of St.-Domingue. Having been freed from slavery in 1776, L'Ouverture joined Biassou and Jean-François in the burgeoning slave rebellion in Haiti in 1791, training a group of soldiers in the arts of guerilla tactics and joining the side of the Spanish in their war with the French in 1793. By 1801 L'Ouverture had won command of the entire island. After confronting a French invasion in 1802, he retired to his plantation, only to be arrested and sent to a prison in France, where he died the following year.

## 1582: Rome

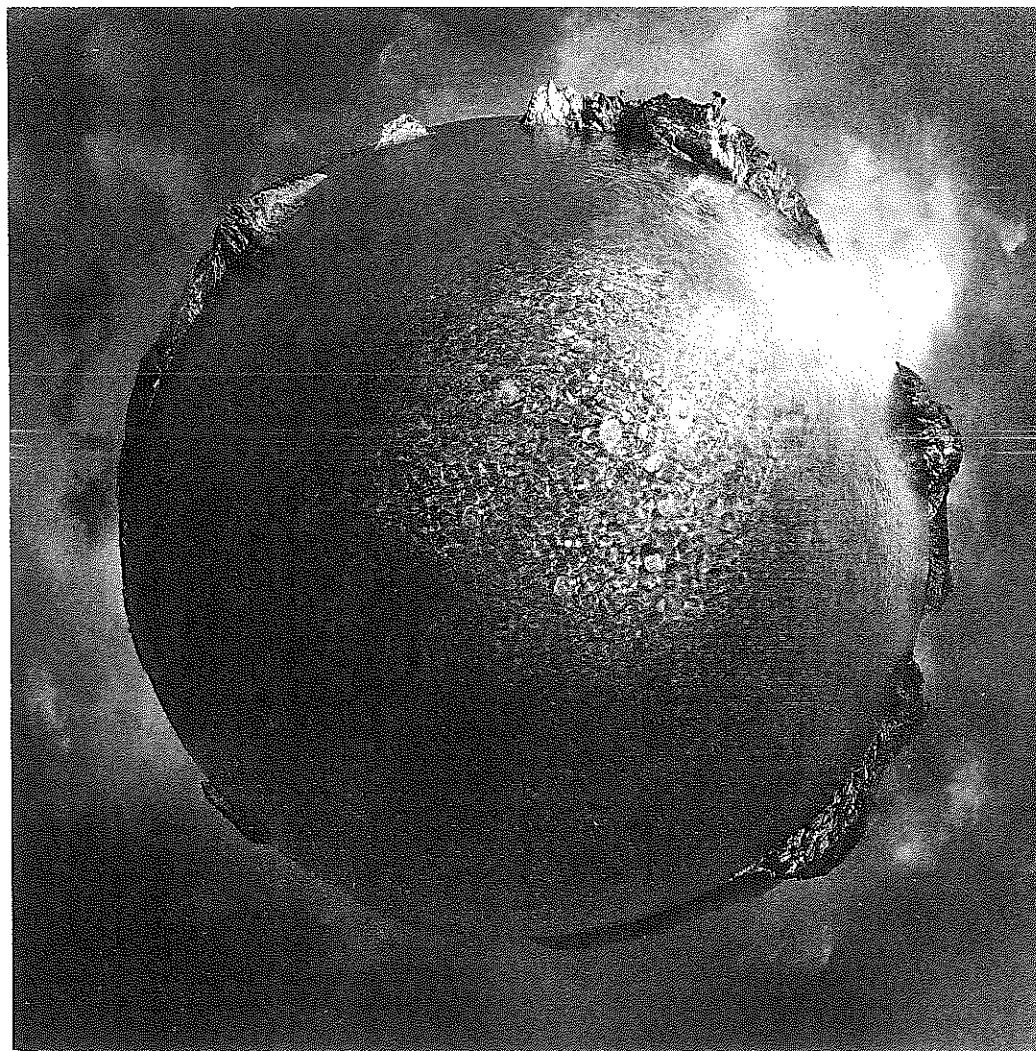
### GETTING IT RIGHT

This breviary is concerned with the annual cycle of Easter and other festivals whose return depends on measuring the movement of the sun and the moon. The reform of this cycle, which first requires the restoration of the calendar, has been tried often, over a long time, by our predecessor Roman pontiffs. However, it could not be carried out thus far because the various calendar-reform projects proposed by astronomers, in addition to presenting the immense and almost inextricable difficulties that

always accompanied such reform, did not leave intact the ancient rites of the Church, and that was our first concern in this business.

One notes in examining this that it is necessary to rule at the same time on three points to restore the celebration of Easter. First, the precise date of the vernal equinox; second, the exact date of the fourteenth day of the moon that reaches this age the very same day as the equinox or immediately afterward; finally, the first Sunday that follows this same fourteenth day of the moon. Therefore we took care not only that the vernal equinox returns on its former date, of which it has already deviated approximately ten days since the Nicene Council

*Elba*, by Catherine Nelson, 2013. Pigment print.



in 325, and so that the fourteenth day of the paschal moon is given its rightful place, from which it is now distant four days, but also that there is founded a methodical and rational system that ensures in the future that neither of them move from their appropriate positions.

So that the vernal equinox, which was fixed during the Nicene Council as March 21, is restored to this date, we prescribe and order that there is removed, from October of this year, the ten days which go from the fifth through the day before the Ides, inclusively. The day that will follow the fourth shall become the new Ides of October. But so that this ten-day removal does not cause any injury with those who must carry out

monthly or annual payments, it will fall to the judges in any litigation that could result from it to take account of the removal by deferring the expiration of any payment by ten days.

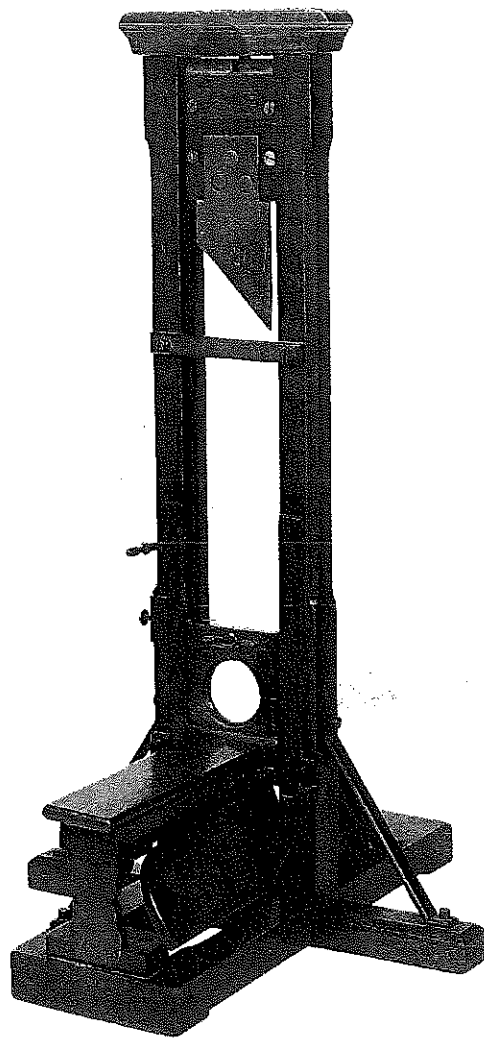
So that the equinox does not recede from March 21 in the future, we establish every fourth year to be a leap year, except in centennial years, which were always leap years until now. We wish that 1600 remain a leap year; after that, however, those centennial years that follow are not *all* leap years—in each four hundred years, the first three centennial years are not leap years, then the fourth centennial year is. So the years 1700, 1800, and 1900 will not be leap years. Assuredly, the year 2000 will have an extra day in it; February will contain 29 days, and the same rule of intermittent leap-year days in each four-hundred-year period will be preserved in perpetuity.

We therefore, with what is traditionally the attribute of sovereign pontiff, approve this calendar, now reformed and made perfect thanks to the infinite benevolence of God toward his Church, and we order that it is printed in Rome with the martyrology.

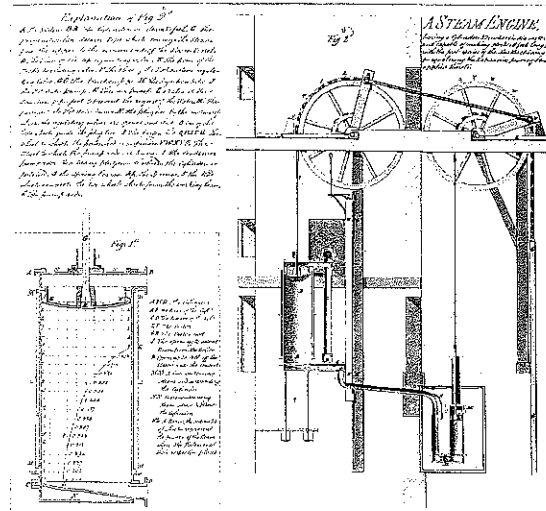
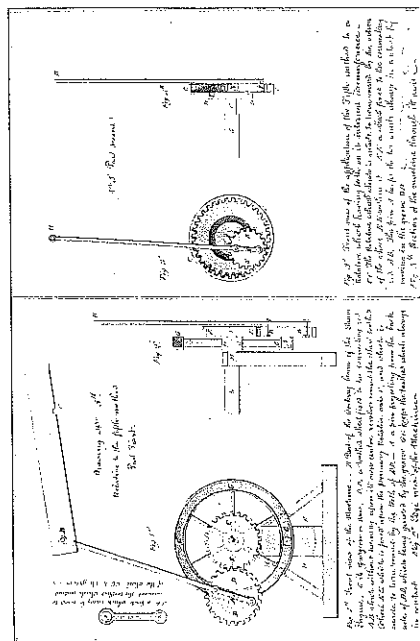
We thus remove and absolutely abolish the old calendar, and we wish that all the patriarchs, primacies, archbishops, bishops, abbots, and other leaders put into force for the reading of the divine office and the celebration of the festivals the new calendar, whose use will start after the ten-day removal in October. As for those who live in areas too distant to take knowledge of this letter in time, they are allowed to make such a change in October of the year that will follow immediately, namely 1583, or the next one, as soon, of course, as this letter will have come to them.

**Pope Gregory XIII**, from *"In the Gravest Concern."*  
*In addition to issuing this bull that increased the accuracy of the solar year by ten minutes and forty-eight seconds over the Julian calendar, Gregory XIII was active in church reform and the Counter-Reformation. Michel de Montaigne wrote that the pope troubled "himself very little about politics, but a great deal about building, in which particular he will leave, at Rome and elsewhere, memorials greatly redounding to his honor." The Soviet Union did not adopt the Gregorian calendar until 1918.*

Model guillotine, France 1876.







Figures from the patent application for the steam engine, by James Watt, Birmingham, England, 1781.

## 1823: Greece

### LORD BYRON VOLUNTEERS HIS SERVICES

July 7

To John Bowring, secretary of the London Greek committee:

We sail on the twelfth for Greece. The Greek government expects me without delay.

In conformity to the desires of my correspondents in Greece, I have to suggest, with all deference to the committee, that a remittance of even "ten thousand pounds only" would be of the greatest service to the Greek government at present. I have also to recommend strongly the attempt of a loan, for which there will be offered a sufficient security by deputies now on their way to England. In the meantime, I hope that the committee will be enabled to do something effectual.

For my own part, I mean to carry up, in cash or credits, above eight, and nearly nine thousand pounds sterling, which I am enabled to do by funds I have in Italy and credits in England. Of this sum I must necessarily reserve a portion for the subsistence of myself and suite; the rest I am willing to apply in the

manner which seems most likely to be useful to the cause—having, of course, some guarantee or assurance that it will not be misapplied to any individual speculation.

If I remain in Greece, which will mainly depend upon the presumed probable utility of my presence there, and of the opinion of the Greeks themselves as to its propriety—in short, if I am welcome to them—I shall continue, during my residence at least, to apply such portions of my income, present and future, as may forward the object—that is to say, what I can spare for that purpose. Privations I can, or at least could once, bear—abstinence I am accustomed to—and as to fatigue, I was once a tolerable traveler. What I may be now, I cannot tell—but I will try.

I await the commands of the committee. It would have given me pleasure to have had some more *defined* instructions before I went, but these, of course, rest at the option of the committee.

I have the honor to be  
Your obedient, etc.

PS. Great anxiety is expressed for a printing press and types, etc. I have not the time to provide them, but recommend this to the



notice of the committee. I presume the types must, partly at least, be *Greek*: they wish to publish papers, and perhaps a journal, probably in Romaic with Italian translations.

*October*

To Teresa, countess of Guiccioli:

Pietro has told you all the gossip of the island—our earthquakes, our politics, and present abode in a pretty village. I need say little on that subject. I was a fool to come here, but, being here, I must see what is to be done.

We are still in Cephalonia, waiting for news of a more accurate description, for all is contradiction and division in the reports of the state of

the Greeks. I shall fulfill the object of my mission from the committee and then return into Italy. For it does not seem likely that, as an individual, I can be of use to them—at least no other foreigner has yet appeared to be so, nor does it seem likely that any will be at present.

We are very kindly treated by the English here of all descriptions. Of the Greeks, I can't say much good hitherto, and I do not like to speak ill of them, though they do of one another.

*November 29*

To John Bowring:

The public progress of the Greeks is considerable, but their internal dissensions still

The first International Dada Fair, Berlin, 1920. Standing (left to right): Raoul Hausmann, Otto Burchard, Johannes Baader, Wieland and Margarete Herzfelde, George Grosz, and John Heartfield. Sitting: Hannah Höch and Otto Schmalhausen.



continue. On arriving at the seat of government, I shall endeavor to mitigate or extinguish them—though neither is an easy task. I have remained here till now, partly in expectation of the squadron in relief of Missolonghi and partly to receive from Malta or Zante the sum of four thousand pounds sterling, which I have advanced for the payment of the expected squadron. The bills are negotiating, and will be cashed in a short time, as they would have been immediately in any other mart, but the miserable Ionian merchants have little money, and no great credit—and are besides, *politically shy* on this occasion, for although I had letters from one of the strongest houses of the Mediterranean, there is no business to be done on *fair* terms except through English merchants. These, however, have proved both able and willing—and upright, as usual.

Colonel Stanhope has arrived and will proceed immediately; he shall have my cooperation in all his endeavors, but from everything that I can learn, the formation of a brigade at present will be extremely difficult, to say the least of it. I regret to hear that the committee has exhausted their funds. Is it supposed that a brigade can be formed without them? Or that three thousand pounds would be sufficient? It is true that money will go further in Greece than in most countries, but the regular force must be rendered a *national concern* and paid from a national fund—and neither individuals nor committees, at least with the usual means of such as now exist, will find the experiment practicable.

November 30

To the general government of Greece:

The affair of the loan, the expectation so long and vainly indulged of the arrival of the Greek fleet, and the danger to which Missolonghi is still exposed, have detained me here, and will still detain me till some of them are removed. But when the money shall be advanced for the fleet, I will start for the Morea, not knowing, however, of what use my presence can be in the present state of things. We have heard some rumors of new dissensions, nay, of

the existence of a civil war. With all my heart, I pray that these reports may be false or exaggerated, for I can imagine no calamity more serious than this; and I must frankly confess, that unless union and order are established, all hopes of a loan will be in vain; and all the assistance which the Greeks could expect from abroad—an assistance neither trifling nor worthless—will be suspended or destroyed;

*Nothing is more unpredictable than the mob,  
nothing more obscure than public opinion,  
nothing more deceptive than the whole political  
system.* —Marcus Tullius Cicero, 63 BC

and, what is worse, the great powers of Europe, of whom no one was an enemy to Greece—and favor her establishment of an independent power—will be persuaded that the Greeks are unable to govern themselves, and will, perhaps, themselves undertake to settle your disorders in such a way as to blast the brightest hopes of yourselves and of your friends.

Allow me to add, once for all—I desire the well-being of Greece, and nothing else; I will do all I can to secure it, but I cannot consent, I never will consent, that the English public or English individuals should be deceived as to the real state of Greek affairs. The rest, gentlemen, depends on you. You have fought gloriously—act honorably toward your fellow citizens and the world. Let not calumny itself (and it is difficult, I own, to guard against it in so arduous a struggle) compare the patriot Greek, when resting from his labors, to the Turkish pasha, whom his victories have exterminated.

*From his correspondence. Byron died of a fever in Missolonghi six months after the November 30 letter. As part of his grand tour beginning in 1809, Byron traveled to Greece for the first time, swam the Hellespont like the legendary Leander, and supposedly saved a girl from drowning. After the first two cantos of Childe Harold's Pilgrimage appeared in 1812, the duchess of Devonshire noted that the work "is on every table, and himself courted, visited, flattered and praised wherever he appears." Caroline Lamb called the poet "mad, bad, and dangerous to know."*

## 1869: Geneva

### JOB REQUIREMENTS

#### *The Duties of the Revolutionist to Himself*

1. The revolutionist is a person doomed. He has no personal interests, no business affairs, no emotions, no attachments, no property, and no name. Everything in him is wholly absorbed in the single thought and the single passion for revolution.

2. The revolutionist knows that in the very depths of his being, not only in words but also in deeds, he has broken all the bonds that tie him to the civil order and the civilized world

*I began revolution with eighty-two men. If I had to do it again, I do it with ten or fifteen and absolute faith. It does not matter how small you are if you have faith and plan of action.*

—Fidel Castro, 1959

with all its laws, moralities, and customs, and with all its generally accepted conventions. He is their implacable enemy, and if he continues to live with them it is only in order to destroy them more speedily.

3. The revolutionist despises all doctrines and refuses to accept the mundane sciences, leaving them for future generations. He knows only one science: the science of destruction. For this reason, but only for this reason, he will study mechanics, physics, chemistry, and perhaps medicine. But all day and all night he studies the vital science of human beings, their characteristics and circumstances, at every possible level of social existence. The object is perpetually the same: the surest and quickest way of destroying the whole filthy order.

4. The revolutionist despises public opinion. He despises and hates the existing social morality in all its manifestations. For him, morality is everything that contributes to the triumph of

the revolution. Anything that stands in its way is immoral and criminal.

5. The revolutionist is a person. He is merciless toward the state and toward the whole formal social structure of educated society, and he can expect no mercy from them. Between him and them there exists, declared or concealed, a relentless and irreconcilable war to the death. He must accustom himself to torture.

6. Tyrannical toward himself, he must be tyrannical toward others. All the gentle and enervating sentiments of kinship, love, friendship, gratitude, and even honor, must be suppressed in him and give place to the cold and singleminded passion for revolution. For him there exists only one pleasure, one consolation, one reward, one satisfaction—the success of the revolution. Night and day he must have but one thought, one aim—merciless destruction. Striving cold-bloodedly and indefatigably toward this end, he must be prepared to destroy himself and to destroy with his own hands everything that stands in the path of the revolution.

7. The nature of the true revolutionist excludes all sentimentality, romanticism, infatuation, and exaltation. All private hatred and revenge must also be excluded. Revolutionary passion, practiced at every moment of the day until it becomes a habit, is to be employed with cold calculation. At all times, and in all places, the revolutionist must obey not his personal impulses but only those which serve the cause of the revolution.

**Sergei Nechaev**, from *Catechism of a Revolutionist*. It is in dispute whether Nechaev collaborated on this text with the anarchist Mikhail Bakunin. Elsewhere in the catechism, he wrote that a revolutionist "should not hesitate to destroy any position, any place, or any man in this world. He must hate everyone and everything in it with an equal hatred." Nechaev was later convicted of murdering a member of a secret revolutionary cell and died in prison in 1882. Fyodor Dostoevsky based a character in his novel *Demons* on Nechaev.



Students reading *Quotations from Chairman Mao Zedong*, China, c. 1965.

themselves and endeavor to put the rule into such hands which may secure to them the ends for which government was at first erected.

Thirdly, I answer, that this doctrine of a power in the people of providing for their safety anew, by a new legislative, when their legislators have acted contrary to their trust by invading their property, is the best fence against rebellion, and the probablest means to hinder it; for rebellion being an opposition not to persons but authority, which is founded only in the constitutions and laws of the government; those, whoever they be, who by force break through and by force justify their violation of them, are truly and properly rebels—for when men, by entering into society and civil-government, have excluded force and introduced laws for the preservation of property, peace, and unity among themselves, those who set up force again in opposition to the laws, do *rebellare*—that is, bring back again the state of war, and are properly rebels. Which they who are in power (by the pretense they have to authority, the temptation of force they have in their hands, and the flattery of those about them) being likeliest to do, the properest way to prevent the evil is to show them the danger and injustice of it, who are under the greatest temptation to run into it.

But if they who say it lays a foundation for rebellion mean that it may occasion civil wars or intestine broils, to tell the people they are ab-

solved from obedience when illegal attempts are made upon their liberties or properties and may oppose the unlawful violence of those who were their magistrates, when they invaded their properties contrary to the trust put in them—and that therefore this doctrine is not to be allowed, being so destructive to the peace of the world—they may as well say upon the same ground that honest men may not oppose robbers or pirates because this may occasion disorder or bloodshed. If any mischief comes in such cases, it is not to be charged upon him who defends his own right but on him that invades his neighbors. If the innocent, honest man must quietly quit all he has for peace's sake, to him who will lay violent hands upon it, I desire it may be considered what a kind of peace there will be in the world, which consists only in violence and rapine; and which is to be maintained only for the benefit of robbers and oppressors.

**John Locke**, from *Two Treatises on Government*. Locke was made a fellow of the Royal Society in 1668; one of his few contributions to its journal, *Philosophical Transactions*, was a letter on a Bahamian fish. He defined political power as the "right of making laws with penalties of death, and consequently all less penalties, for the regulating and preserving of property, and of employing the force of the community, in the execution of such laws and in defense of the commonwealth from foreign injury, and all this only for the public good."



## 1686: Netherlands

### THE BEST FENCE AGAINST REBELLION

The reason why men enter into society is the preservation of their property, and the end why they choose and authorize a legislative is that there may be laws made, and rules set, as guards and fences to the properties of all the members of the society, to limit the power and moderate the dominion of every part and member of the society. Whenever the legislators endeavor to take away and destroy the property of the people, or to reduce them to slavery under arbitrary power, they put themselves into a state of war with the people, who are thereupon absolved from any further obedience and are left to the common refuge, which God hath provided for all men, against force and violence. Whensoever, therefore, the legislative shall transgress this fundamental rule of society and either by ambition, fear, folly, or corruption endeavor to grasp themselves, or put into the hands of any other, an absolute power over the lives, liberties, and estates of the people—by this breach of trust they forfeit the power the people had put into their hands for quite contrary ends, and it devolves to the people, who have a right to resume their original liberty and, by the establishment of a new legislative (such as they shall think fit), provide for their own safety and security, which is the end for which they are in society. What I have said here concerning the legislative in general holds true also concerning the supreme executor, who having a double trust put in him—both to have a part in the legislative and the supreme execution of the law—acts against both when he goes about to set up his own arbitrary will as the law of the society.

To this, perhaps it will be said that, the people being ignorant and always discontented, to lay the foundation of government in the unsteady opinion and uncertain humor of the people is to expose it to certain ruin—and no government will be able long to subsist if the people may set up a new legislative whenever they take offence at the old one. To this I answer, quite

the contrary. People are not so easily got out of their old forms as some are apt to suggest. They are hardly to be prevailed with to amend the acknowledged faults in the frame they have been accustomed to. And if there be any original defects or adventitious ones introduced by time or corruption, it is not an easy thing to be changed, even when all the world sees there is an opportunity for it. This slowness and aversion in the people to quit their old constitutions has, in the many revolutions which have been seen in this kingdom in this and former ages, still kept us to, or, after some interval of fruitless attempts, still

*Revolutions are not made by men in spectacles.*  
—Oliver Wendell Holmes, 1871

brought us back again to our old legislative of king, lords, and commons; and whatever provocations have made the crown be taken from some of our princes' heads, they never carried the people so far as to place it in another line.

But it will be said, this hypothesis lays a ferment for frequent rebellion. To which I answer:

First, no more than any other hypothesis, for when the people are made miserable and find themselves exposed to the ill usage of arbitrary power, cry up their governors as much as you will, for sons of Jupiter, let them be sacred and divine, descended, or authorized from heaven—give them out for whom or what you please, the same will happen. The people, generally ill treated and contrary to right, will be ready upon any occasion to ease themselves of a burden that sits heavy upon them.

Secondly, I answer, such revolutions happen not upon every little mismanagement in public affairs. Great mistakes in the ruling part, many wrong and inconvenient laws and all the slips of human frailty will be born by the people without mutiny or murmur. But if a long train of abuses, prevarications, and artifices all tending the same way make the design visible to the people, and they cannot but feel what they lie under and see whither they are going, it is not to be wondered that they should then rouse



## 1978: Prague

### TURNING AWAY FROM ABSTRACTION

If there are in essence only two ways to struggle for a free society—that is, through legal means and through (armed or unarmed) revolt—then it should be obvious at once how inappropriate the latter alternative is in the post-totalitarian system. Revolt is appropriate when conditions are clearly and openly in motion—during a war, for example, or in situations where social or political conflicts are coming to a head. It is appropriate in a classical dictatorship that is either just setting itself up or is in a state of collapse. In other words, it is appropriate where social forces of comparable strength (for

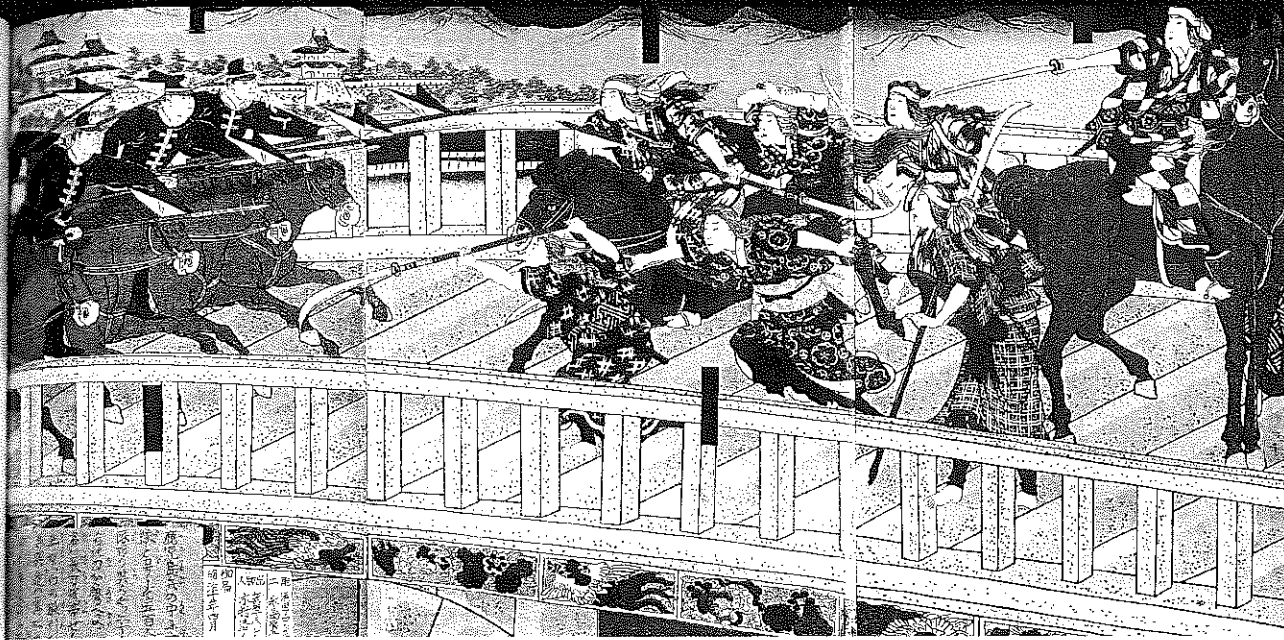
*If not us, who? If not now, when?*

—Czech slogan, 1989

example, a government of occupation versus a nation fighting for its freedom) are confronting each other on the level of actual power, or where there is a clear distinction between the usurpers of power and the subjugated population, or when society finds itself in a state of open crisis. Conditions in the post-totalitarian system—except in extremely explosive situations like the one in Hungary in 1956—are, of course, precisely the opposite. They are static and stable, and social crises, for the most part, exist only latently (though they run much deeper). Society is not sharply polarized on the level of actual political power; the fundamental lines of conflict run right through each person. In this situation, no attempt at revolt could ever hope to set up even a minimum of resonance in the rest of society, because that society is soporific, submerged in a consumer rat race, and wholly involved in the post-totalitarian system (that is, participating in it and acting as agents of its automatism), and it would simply find anything like revolt unacceptable. It would interpret the revolt as an attack upon itself and, rather than supporting the revolt, it would very

probably react by intensifying its bias toward the system, since, in its view, the system can at least guarantee a certain quasilegality. Add to this the fact that the post-totalitarian system has at its disposal a complex mechanism of direct and indirect surveillance that has no equal in history, and it is clear that not only would any attempt to revolt come to a dead end politically, but it would also be almost technically impossible to carry off. Most probably it would be liquidated before it had a chance to translate its intentions into action. Even if revolt were possible, however, it would remain the solitary gesture of a few isolated individuals and they would be opposed not only by a gigantic apparatus of national (and supranational) power, but also by the very society in whose name they were mounting their revolt in the first place. (This, by the way, is another reason why the regime and its propaganda have been ascribing terroristic aims to the “dissident” movements and accusing them of illegal and conspiratorial methods).

All of this, however, is not the main reason why the “dissident” movements support the principle of legality. That reason lies deeper, in the innermost structure of the “dissident” attitude. This attitude is and must be fundamentally hostile toward the notion of violent change—simply because it places its faith in violence. (Generally, the “dissident” attitude can only accept violence as a necessary evil in extreme situations, when direct violence can only be met by violence and where remaining passive would in effect mean supporting violence: let us recall, for example, that the blindness of European pacifism was one of the factors that prepared the ground for the Second World War.) As I have already mentioned, “dissidents” tend to be skeptical about political thought based on the faith that profound social changes can only be achieved by bringing about (regardless of the method) changes in the system or in the government, and the belief that such changes—because they are considered “fundamental”—justify the sacrifice of “less fundamental” things, in other words, human lives. Respect for a theoretical



Women from Kyushu fighting against government cavalry during the Satsuma Rebellion of 1877, by Nagayama Umosai. Saigo Takamori led the revolt against the Meiji emperor; ten years prior he had helped to restore the imperial system.

concept here outweighs respect for human life. Yet this is precisely what threatens to enslave humanity all over again.

"Dissident" movements, as I have tried to indicate, share exactly the opposite view. They understand systemic change as something superficial, something secondary, something that in itself can guarantee nothing. Thus an attitude that turns away from abstract political visions of the future toward concrete human beings and ways of defending them effectively in the here and now is quite naturally accompanied by an intensified antipathy to all forms of violence carried out in the name of a better future, and by a profound belief that a future secured by violence might actually be worse than what exists now; in other words, the future would be fatally stigmatized by the very means used to secure it. At the same time, this attitude is not to be mistaken for political conservatism or political moderation. The "dissident" movements do not shy away from the idea of violent political overthrow because the idea seems too radical, but on the contrary, because it does not seem radical enough. For them, the problem lies far too deep to be settled through mere systemic changes, either governmental or technological. Some people, faithful to the classical Marxist doctrines of the nineteenth century, understand our system as the hegemony of an

exploiting class over an exploited class and, operating from the postulate that exploiters never surrender their power voluntarily, they see the only solution in a revolution to sweep away the exploiters. Naturally, they regard such things as the struggle for human rights as something hopelessly legalistic, illusory, opportunistic, and ultimately misleading because it makes the doubtful assumption that you can negotiate in good faith with your exploiters on the basis of a false legality. The problem is that they are unable to find anyone determined enough to carry out this revolution, with the result that they become bitter, skeptical, passive, and ultimately apathetic—in other words, they end up precisely where the system wants them to be. This is one example of how far one can be misled by mechanically applying, in post-totalitarian circumstances, ideological models from another world and another time.

**Václav Havel**, from *"The Power of the Powerless."* Havel was a resident playwright of the Theater on the Balustrade—he had completed his best-known play, *The Memorandum*, in 1965—when he took part in the reforms of the Prague Spring in 1968. After the Soviet Union invaded the country, his plays were banned, his passport confiscated, and he was arrested multiple times in the 1970s and 1980s. Subsequent to the Velvet Revolution in 1989, he became the first noncommunist president of Czechoslovakia since 1948. He died at the age of seventy-five in 2011.