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The Spirit of the Nation

T. VAIL PALMER, JR.

“For God and country” — is this just a popular slogan, or does it represent something more far-reaching? Has the nation itself become a god — or even God? Is this God still a living reality — or is He dead? What implications do these questions have for the future of the Christian faith?

To deal with these issues, we need to develop a style of prophetic historical analysis of the powers at work in society. By discerning how and where God is at work, the church can better know where and when it should act. Would such a prophetic social-historical analysis actually confirm the widespread belief that the nation is one of the most fundamental and effective social units in our world, and its corollary, that we should look to the organs of the national government as bearers and executors of the basic moral values of our society? If so, then presumably the church’s mission should include a large dose of lobbying and work in electoral politics, in order to assure that Christian values are actually put into practice in the policies and acts of the national government.

A Christian prophetic analysis of society would, presumably, find its source in the Bible — in the insights of biblical writers and in the biblical understanding of human history and society. In our modern age, however, most of us are inclined to discount the Bible as a possible supplement or alternative to scientific methods in telling us about the nature of our physical or social environment. Certainly, the church has committed grave errors and lost much influence, in its attempts to use the Bible too simply and directly as a textbook in astronomy or biology — or even in objective history!

Yet, as we look today at the social and psychological sciences, in particular, the question cannot escape us: How far can we get, through purely “objective” analysis and research?

Even mathematics and logic have to start out with a few unproved assumptions; the number of these postulates increases greatly as we get into more complex fields like the social sciences. There is a similar increase in the number of competing "schools of thought" which base their respective analyses on conflicting sets of postulates. In any particular school in the social sciences, these postulates are likely to be based, consciously or otherwise, on the scientist's underlying system of values. In the nature of the case, these values cannot themselves be established by objective, "scientific" methods. Just at this point, therefore, the Christian would do well to look to biblical revelation as the source for his basic system of values and of his otherwise unprovable postulates about the nature of man and of society, around which he can organize the information provided by his empirical observations.

A decision to approach the study of the nature of society from a biblical perspective will of necessity require the rejection of one very popular and influential contemporary approach to biblical interpretation: namely, Bultmann's program of "de-mythologization." Bultmann points out that the thought-world — the basic pattern of intellectual assumptions — of the biblical writers was "mythological." The thought-world of modern man is scientific. Mythological thinking will no longer do. Therefore we must strip away everything in the Bible that depends on the mythological world-view and that is incompatible with the scientific outlook. The core that is left — faith, love, obedient freedom, responsibility — is the Christian message. This is all that we can responsibly derive from the Bible, for guidance in contemporary life.

Bultmann, clearly, takes the world-view of contemporary man as normative for theology. Peter Berger, from the standpoint of one of the most contemporary of scientific disciplines, the sociology of knowledge, points out the fatal flaw in Bultmann's approach: it is based on

a hidden *double standard*:... The *past*, out of which the tradition comes, is relativized in terms of this or that socio-historical analysis. The *present*, however, remains strangely immune from relativization.... The New Testament writers are seen

as afflicted with a false consciousness rooted in their time, but the contemporary analyst takes the consciousness of *his* time as an unmixed intellectual blessing....

The perspective of... the sociology of knowledge can have a definitely liberating effect. While other analytic disciplines free us from the dead weight of the past, sociology frees us from the tyranny of the present.... The perspective of sociology increases our ability to investigate whatever truth each age may have discovered in its particular "immediacy to God."

In particular, Bultmann's approach is far too contemptuous of mythological thinking. Modern man — even the modern Christian — probably does find it hard to think in mythological terms. But he is the poorer — not the richer — for this difficulty. As Amos Wilder has pointed out: "The world's greatest myths have always been summary and symbolic representations of essential truths.... A myth... carries a weight of spiritual truth such as only the greatest art can convey." Rather than "de-mythologize" the Bible, then, we would do far better to "re-mythologize" our own understanding of life! At least some of the myths underlying biblical thought may have the power to throw new and unsuspected light on our understanding of ourselves and our environment.

Any attempt to view the nation-state from a biblical perspective can hardly avoid taking Romans 13 seriously into account. Oscar Cullmann and Clinton Morrison, in particular, have thrown considerable light on the "mythological" world-view which underlies Paul's thought in Romans 13.

New Testament scholars today generally agree that the *exousiai* ("authorities" or "powers"), in such passages as Ephesians 3:10 and 6:12, Colossians 1:16 and 2:15, I Peter 3:22, and I Corinthians 15:24, are invisible, spiritual beings, such as angels or demons. Cullmann argues that these same spiritual powers are referred to in Romans 13, where the word *exousiai* means both those beings *and* ordinary governments and kingdoms on earth. Behind the complex structure of power in human society, the New Testament thus portrays a vast interplay of conflict among powerful spiritual forces or beings,

whose activity is reflected in the confused affairs of social institutions and human power structures.

It is, of course, difficult today to picture the world as full of invisible powers, spiritual hosts, and angels. But we should note that man is, after all, a religious being. He is forever seeking a reality to which he can fully commit himself, a being real, great, and awesome enough, yet warm enough for him to worship with everything he has — his wealth, his self-interest, his family attachments, even his life. And since man is also a social being, he can find full satisfaction only at the center of social groups and institutions, with which he can identify himself and feel a full sense of "belonging." There is a great tendency for these two drives to merge with each other. Indeed, the claim of both the Old and the New Testaments, which is exemplified in the histories of both Israel and the Christian church, is that when men worship the true God they find themselves drawn, through this religious loyalty, into a "people of God," which provides them with a sense of "corporate personality." But often this sense of belonging is provided by less inclusive social groups or institutions, which claim to embody some great values to which men can give their ultimate loyalty. Thus social institutions can, in actual fact, become the embodiments and instruments of great spiritual forces, which can powerfully move and influence men and communities — the forces of "philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the universe." (Colossians 2:8)

The object of ultimate devotion to which people give themselves plays an essential role in motivating them and determining the nature and direction of the most important deeds of their lives. The purposes of the *exousiai*, the spiritual powers and authorities, thus exercise a sway over and beyond the independent purposes of men and groups. These "spiritual" purposes operate through groups and institutions and through the quasi-religious loyalties which are expressed in the adherence of their members to the "ideals" and values for which the groups stand. People often submerge their own interests in purposes which are "above" the aggregate self-interest of all the members of the group, even though these

higher purposes may stop short of — or conflict with — the highest and most inclusive purpose in the universe.

Clearly, then, the church must understand the deeper implications of the forces at work in society and in historical events. We need to supplement our scientific and rational powers of observation and thought, with a form of insight which might well be termed "the ability to distinguish between spirits" (I Corinthians 12:10). There need to be persons in the Christian community who have the gift of seeing beyond even the conscious and subconscious purposes of men in their actions. There must be Christians who can see which of the spiritual powers, whose activity is involved in the course of *Heilsgeschichte*, is actually advancing through the deeds and arguments of men in their social and political activities. This "distinguishing between spirits" is a form of "prophetic historical analysis" which would be particularly appropriate to a study of the role of the nation in contemporary society.

One of the spiritual powers or *exousiai* most evidently at large in the contemporary world is the spirit of nationalism. The rise of this spirit has paralleled the decline of the influence of the Christian faith in the western world. In this essay I shall draw on interpretations already made by such scholars as James Hastings Nichols, Hans J. Morgenthau, and Will Herberg, for "raw material" in my attempt to trace the careers of the Christians' God and of the spirit of nationalism in the modern West.

The late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries can be characterized as the "Confessional period" in Europe. Each confession was convinced that it alone possessed the Truth. All other confessions were in error. No Christian confession, therefore, could see any justification for the existence of the others. In practical terms, this attitude made religious warfare almost inevitable. And for two or three generations, the history of Europe was characterized by almost chronic religious wars — especially the French Wars of Religion, the Thirty Years War in Germany, and the English Civil War. Each of these wars, of course, was fought on both sides in the name of Christianity.³

These wars were so savagely fought, and the devastation that resulted was so great, especially in Germany, that a tremendous emotional revulsion had set in by the last quarter of the seventeenth century. This revulsion was particularly directed against the exclusive dogmatism that had undergirded the wars. People had become tired to death of dogmatic theology and of its political consequences. Christian Europe settled down to accepting the three or four major religious divisions, which apparently had to co-exist.

For most European villagers, of course, no great adjustment of outlook was required at first. The intellectual horizon was limited to one's own village and the surrounding farms. In that area, there was only one church; its teachings were, without question, the Truth. The situation was different for the leaders of society. Businessmen, soldiers, and highly educated persons had become aware that elsewhere, beyond their own villages and towns, there were other men who did not accept their own formulations of Christianity. Yet they were acquainted with these other persons, who clearly were fellow-humans and even seemed to be decent persons. Thus a sense of common humanity began to develop across church barriers. People began to compare various religious faiths and ethical standards. The increasing awareness of alternative formulations, in faith and ethics, led to a growth of skepticism about the teachings of the official spokesmen of one's own church.

For the first time, traditional church authority *as such* was being questioned on a substantial scale. Individuals increasingly wanted to emphasize the common beliefs — God, objective morality, and justice — which seemed to be shared by all humans, whatever their confessional background. More and more, the thinking laity tended to believe in a kind of "common-sense," least-common-denominator religion. The feeling even grew that specific, positive religious beliefs can be actively immoral. Was it not theological orthodoxy which had led to such atrocious crimes as torture, burning at the stake, and religious wars? There was also a growing sense that specific areas of common life — politics, economic life, natural science — possessed their own intrinsic right to solve their own

problems, without theological dictation by the churches. This attitude was particularly strengthened by the tremendous growth of the physical sciences. It was an age of great scientific geniuses, who attained new knowledge through empirical observation and the exercise of their natural reason. The successes of science led to the increasing prestige of human reason and the conviction that reason should also be applied in human affairs.

By the eighteenth century, a new scientific view of the universe was gaining headway. The discoveries, for instance, of Isaac Newton were being popularized by thinkers like Voltaire. In contrast with the old semi-biblical, semi-Aristotelian teleological understanding of the natural universe, a new, mechanical view of nature was becoming the guiding image for popular thought. The mechanistic physics, which excluded all ideas of purpose, was proving to be a powerful tool for increasing man's understanding of natural processes. From this viewpoint, which looked on the universe as an enormous "machine," biblical language about the world seemed fantastic, miraculous, incredible. Even though most of the great scientists, including Newton, were themselves Christians, their discoveries were creating all sorts of intellectual problems for Christians.

Even more upsetting than the new physics was a new political faith. Typical leaders of Enlightenment thought were the *philosophes* — thinkers like Voltaire, Rousseau, Lessing, Franklin, and Jefferson. These thinkers denied many fundamental Christian affirmations — sin, human depravity, the incarnation of ultimate meaning in one historical person, a personal God, miracles, the chosen people, the second coming of Christ. But the *philosophes* were not primarily critical philosophers. They were not even consistent mechanists — at least in their view of history. They were primarily prophets, reformers, crusaders, enthusiasts, "ersatz theologians." They proposed for Western man a new, "enlightened" faith to live by. They saw themselves as an emancipated, enlightened, international company of cosmopolitan members of the human race. They had a great faith in reason and in the perfectibility of

the human race. History did have a meaning and a purpose. A kind of "secular eschatology" — the idea of progress — emerged as a key feature of their thinking. If they denied a last judgment by Jesus Christ, they did trust their actions to a later judgment by "posterity." If they denied the old picture of a New Jerusalem at the end of the age, they were convinced that history was progressing toward an ideal social order within history — "a kind of bourgeois heaven."

By the latter half of the eighteenth century, the idea of progress was becoming more and more intensified. Enlightenment men were expecting an impending climax; they were hoping for an imminent fulfillment of their social dreams. This climax soon arrived — in the French Revolution — a revolution based on a "religion of humanity," complete with its own martyrs, saints, and festival days. In the French Revolution, Reason was even put forth as a new goddess to lead the people.

But the new Enlightenment faith in reason and human goodness was already being undermined from within. A leading *philosophe*, Diderot, was moving toward a deterministic psychology — which left no room for any distinctions between right and wrong. Even more seriously, a rigorous philosopher, David Hume, was demonstrating, on the Enlightenment's own premises, that reason is not competent to answer the major questions of life. There was no rational proof of deity, purpose, or morality. When the scientific method was consistently applied to human concerns, it undercut the ethical assumptions of the *philosophes*. With Hume, faith in reason turned into an ultimate skepticism. Even the scientific method itself was shown to have no underlying rational justification. Reason was, in any case, too impersonal a spirit to capture the warm, passionate loyalty of many people for long. Now it had proved to be too frail a ghost even to carry its own weight. Christianity had been rejected; Reason had disintegrated. What god was left?

A new god was waiting in the wings, to make its dramatic entry onto the world's stage during the French Revolution. For many centuries, this god had been laying the groundwork for

its ultimate triumph. It had lost an early skirmish when Henry II did penance at Becket's tomb in 1174. It had grown strong enough to defy successfully the claims of the papacy, when Philip the Fair imprisoned Boniface VIII in 1303. It was an important ally of Huss' reform in the fifteenth century and of Luther's in the sixteenth. But even then, the spirit of the nation had been only a supporting actor on the stage of world history. Nationalism, as a significant, primary force, first came forth to center stage at the time of the French Revolution. Only in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries has nationalism become the dominant religion of the masses in Western civilization.

At the time of the French Revolution, the Third Estate declared that they were the people — and the people should rule. The concept of popular sovereignty was asserted, against the old hierarchical concept of government. In principle, all persons were included as participants in the nation. French nationalism was founded on a covenant, consciously celebrated in 1790, when "in every commune . . . the oath to *la patrie* was taken, often around an open-air altar."⁴ The spirit of the nation was personified in Marianne (to be followed by such divinities as John Bull and Uncle Sam). "The people" became a collective personality, a true mystical body.

The national state, of course, had already developed unprecedented power in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and had largely superseded the old centers of power — religious authorities, the emperor, the feudal nobility. But this power was largely imposed on the people by absolute monarchs. The new characteristic of national power, which emerged at the end of the eighteenth century, was a widespread and deep-seated sense, among the people, of *participation* in government and national life. This nationalistic spirit rapidly established institutional means for perpetuating itself. The public school system was first set up in France as a device of the Enlightenment. The hope had been to get education away from the priests and thus to outflank the church by raising an "enlightened" generation of the nation's youth. This public school system was readily transformed into a means of training

children in devotion to the fatherland. In many nations, this public education has been made universal and compulsory; and the school system is held accountable for any slips or deviations from the national cult. Many religious devices and practices have been borrowed from Christianity — shrines, saints, altars, hymns and anthems, holy days, rituals, the flag, censorship. Among the professions, journalism and history have particularly become agents of nationalism.

The spirit of nationalism spread rapidly from France through Europe and America in the nineteenth century, and on through Asia and Africa in the twentieth century. With nationalism came a great increase in the exercise of personal responsibility in society. Nationalism brought to men and women a new sense of dignity, exaltation, and fulfillment, beyond the spheres of private and family or clan life. Even in recent decades, nationalism has been primarily a releasing force in Asia and Africa.

Nationalism was not the only new religion to emerge in Europe. From the early days of the Reformation, as Weber and others have pointed out, there was a close alliance between Protestantism and the emerging capitalist economic structure. This alliance was only strengthened with the coming of the Industrial Revolution. By the middle of the nineteenth century, especially in central Europe, Protestantism in particular had become identified as the religion of the bourgeoisie, of the wielders of economic and political power. The rapidly growing class of industrial workers was forced by economic necessity into hostility toward the owners of industry. Not surprisingly, they were increasingly alienated from, and hostile to, Christianity. They were more and more turning toward some form of socialism or communism as an answer to their misery. Marx and Engels could thus write in 1848: "A spectre is haunting Europe — the spectre of Communism."⁵

With prophetic fervor, Marx formulated a version of communism that claimed scientific objectivity for itself. Thus undergirded with a respectable philosophical foundation, Marxist socialism had become a formidable political force in Europe by the end of the nineteenth century. It also served

as a religious substitute for the discredited Christianity, among many in the working classes. Marx had proclaimed that the interests of the working classes were international in scope; not a parochial nation but the world-wide proletariat was the bearer of historical destiny. He had sounded his challenge: "Let the ruling classes tremble at a Communist revolution. The proletarians have nothing to lose but their chains. They have a world to win. Working men of all countries, unite!"⁶ And the workers were uniting in a grand Socialist International which had great hopes of gaining its triumph in Europe through the very parliamentary processes that now afforded the bourgeoisie their political control of the nations of Europe.

The fatal weakness of socialist internationalism was revealed, however, in the fateful days when World War I broke out in a largely unsuspecting Europe. The Socialist parties in each nation listened to — and believed — the self-justifications of their respective national governments, and stampeded into line behind the national war efforts. The Socialist International was completely shattered. In the council of the gods, Vaterland had emerged completely victorious from his struggle with the Dialectic of History.

One of the first to see and condemn this betrayal of socialism to the nationalist spirit was Lenin. He returned to his native Russia and presided over a rebirth of socialism, purged of its alliance with nationalism, in the Russian Revolution of 1917.

The nation, for all of its strengths and triumphs, does have one obvious failing as a god. It simply is not supreme and all-powerful; it is only one of many such gods, all competing for first place on Mt. Olympus. Such parochial and local gods have, throughout history, had a notorious tendency to succumb and disappear in any contest with a more universalist faith.

Why has nationalism, then, proved so successful in its encounters with such universalist rivals as Christianity, the Enlightenment, and Socialism? Part of the explanation, at least, has been nationalism's enormous capacity for syncretism.

At the outset, in the early nineteenth century, most nationalists still affirmed the Enlightenment faith in common humanity. They were confident that, once the old aristocratic and royal rulers were swept away, the bonds of universality and of peace would be strengthened. Once the people were liberated and were in charge, they would readily recognize that in all nations they were inspired by the same universal ideals of freedom, tolerance, and peace. Thus all peoples would pursue their national destinies in harmony with one another.

But the Enlightenment had run its course. The reality turned out to be far different from the promise. The spirit of nationalism, once victorious, proved to be exclusive and intolerant. National jealousies were now far stronger and more deep-seated than the old rivalries among the princes.

Many people, of course, were uneasy in conscience. They still had memories of the universal moralities preached by Christianity and by the Enlightenment. The nationalist spirit could not have prevailed, had it not found an escape for such uneasy consciences. In the twentieth century, a few of the great nations have solved this problem by identifying themselves with great ethical principles or sets of values, which can claim to be universally valid. Men recognized that their own nations stood for such great principles as liberty, equality, justice, or fraternity. It was not difficult to jump to the conclusion that one's own nation possessed the true morality, which *all* men should follow. Each particular nation claims that its own values should be universally recognized. The other nations are wrong; hence their ethical systems should be suppressed. The situation is strangely parallel to that of the confessional states of the early seventeenth century:

Nations no longer oppose each other... within a framework of shared beliefs and common values, which imposes effective limitations upon the ends and means of their struggle for power. They oppose each other now as the standard-bearers of ethical systems, each of them of national origin and each of them claiming and aspiring to provide a supranational framework of moral stand-

ards which all the other nations ought to accept and within which their foreign policies ought to operate. The moral code of one nation flings the challenge of its universal claim into the face of another, which reciprocates in kind... The stage is set for a contest among nations whose stakes are... the ability to impose upon the other contestants a new universal political and moral system recreated in the image of the victorious nation's political and moral convictions.⁷

Lenin had set out to build a non-nationalistic communism in Russia. But his dream was rapidly transformed. By the nineteen-thirties, Communist parties throughout the world had already been reduced to the status of pawns for Russian foreign policy. The real resurgence of Russian nationalism, however, came during World War II, when the deep penetration of Russia by German armies aroused and united the Russian people in a reawakened national fervor. At the end of the war, this nationalist spirit, now identified with the idealism of communist morality, expressed itself in the establishment of Communist regimes by Russian arms throughout eastern Europe and in Russian support for successful Communist revolutions in the Far East.

An even more remarkable synthesis of nationalism with democratic values and Judæo-Christian religion has come to fruition in the United States of America. More and more in recent decades, Protestants, Catholics, and Jews have come to think of themselves as simply three varieties of one true religion. All three major groups tend to identify the basic common faith, which they share, with the "American way of life" and the spiritual values of democracy. This "religion of America" is identified with "democracy in a peculiarly American sense — ... individualistic, dynamic, pragmatic, ... humanitarian, 'forward looking', optimistic."⁸

By and large, the "common faith" of American society remains implicit... By the great mass of the American people the American Way of Life... operates as a "common faith"... through its pervasive influence on the patterns of American thought and feeling. It makes no pretensions to

override or supplant the recognized religions, to which it assigns a place of great eminence and honor in the American scheme of things. But all the implications are there.⁹

The contemporary triumph of this "nationalistic universalism" can be seen in such diverse developments as Woodrow Wilson's crusade to "make the world safe for democracy," Maoist China's claim to be the "vanguard of the revolution," and even the claim of the Nazis to possess a new moral code for the whole world, superior to vicious bolshevism and decadent democracy. The most powerful nations in the world have become missionaries for the values which they profess; and they of course claim to incarnate these values in their own internal structures. Thus have the nations in this century successfully asserted their claim to the religious loyalties of men. Each major nation now has a whole "way of life" at stake in the international struggle. International politics has, in effect, become the staging ground for the contests between rival gods:

However much the content and objectives of today's ethics of nationalistic universalism may differ from those of primitive tribes or of the 'Thirty Years' War, they do not differ in the function they fulfill for international politics, and in the moral climate they create. . . . Thus, carrying their idols before them, the nationalistic masses of our time meet in the international arena, each group convinced that it executes the mandate of history, that it does for humanity what it seems to do for itself, and that it fulfills a sacred mission ordained by Providence, however defined.¹⁰

In three centuries, Western civilization appears to have come full circle, back to a situation strikingly similar to that of the Confessional period. Again, states stand for competing versions of the ultimate truth. Each "confession" alone possesses the truth, and cannot tolerate the existence of its rivals. Warfare has again attained a level of savagery, an inclusiveness of scope, and a degree of devastation comparable with that of the great wars of religion, and far exceeding that of warfare in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

Clearly the syncretism with nationalism must be an uneasy one for any international, universalist religion — be it Christianity, Communism, Buddhism, or Islam. If any of these religions retains any vitality of its own, the future of the synthesis must be in question. Morgenthau concluded his passage on the meeting of the nationalistic masses of our time in the international arena with the cryptic comment: "Little do they know that they meet under an empty sky from which the gods have departed."¹¹ Is there any sign that the peoples may realize that "the gods have departed"? Nichols concluded his account of nationalism as a new religion with the question: "Will these wars result as did the Christians' religious wars, in a similar reaction and weariness against the current orthodoxy, in a 'new enlightenment'?"¹²

Nichols asked his question in 1958. A dozen years later, there is some evidence that the reaction may be well under way. In the United States, the breaking-point seems to have come as a consequence of the contradictions involved in the Vietnam war. Since Communism is the chief rival of the American Way of Life, it has been readily identified as the primary source of evil in today's world. At the very least, any attempt by Communism to win new adherents must be resisted to the death. This attitude has necessarily dictated American intervention in Vietnam, since Communism was clearly threatening to spread southward in that land. On the other hand, a primary value affirmed in the American creed is "freedom," interpreted to mean self-determination — for individuals and for such primary social units as families, business enterprises, and nations. To informed Americans, however, it has become increasingly clear that genuine self-determination in Vietnam might well mean that that nation would choose to "go Communist." American intervention in South Vietnam has thus been recognized as — potentially and perhaps even actually — the primary adversary of "freedom" in that land, as Americans have understood the term.

Most of American society has been able to ignore the dilemma, simply by refusing to admit the possibility that any people could conceivably want to be Communist. The aca-

democratic community in America, however, has sufficiently valued the ideal of openness to objective evidence, that it has had to face up to the facts of the situation. The result has been an agonizing recognition that the very premises of the American national ideal are mutually inconsistent.

This result has been especially dramatic among students. Having invested less of their lives already in commitment to the American Way of Life, they have been freer to reject that religion outright than have most older members of the academic community. Thus the amazingly widespread student protests against the Vietnam war have taken place in an even more far-reaching context: a style-of-life that deliberately dramatizes a wholesale rejection of the American Way of Life — at least as that Way has worked out in historical reality. For the student radicals, God truly is dead — but not in the sense intended by Altizer and Hamilton. The god whose death is now being announced is not the God whose obituary Nietzsche pronounced. It is the *exousia* of American nationalistic universalism, the Author of this country's "manifest destiny," who has died — at least to the younger portion of the intellectual community.

Professor Federico Mancini, of the University of Bologna, confirms in his description of the Italian student movement that these developments are not limited to the American scene:

Even its intolerance, its violence have something in common with the intolerance of the *philosophes* who paved the way for the Revolution in the 18th century. The "burn, baby, burn" of the students has obviously been borrowed from the American Blacks; but, to me, yelled as it is by cultivated and rather privileged youths, it has much the same ring as the "*Ecrasez l'infame*" of Voltaire... The new radicalism... is, in fact, more akin than one generally recognizes to the very old radicalism of the Enlightenment.¹³

In light of the analysis which I have developed here, the place of critical decision today is not in Washington, but on the university campuses. The student movement is clear in what it is rejecting; it does not yet know where it is going.

The only available ideology of protest has been Marxism; but Marxism is as fundamentally compromised with the demon of nationalism as are Christianity and democracy. There is a widespread religious groping, an experimentation with everything from witchcraft to the *I Ching*. A god has died; the search is on for his successor, but the new god has not yet revealed himself.

If there is any hope for Christian renewal, if "through the church the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known to the principalities and *exousiai* in the heavenly places" (Ephesians 3:10), a crucial locus today for this revelation must be an active encounter with the student radicals. At the very least, an honest, prophetic church should be able to recognize that the Christian faith is *not* identical with the American "religion of democracy" and thus able to meet the radicals on their own terms, in a mutual quest for a religious understanding and commitment adequate to our times.

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