SOCIAL AND POLITICAL CONSERVATISM
IN JOSEPH CONRAD'S FICTION

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

In the abundance of criticism and commentary which naturally accumulates about the work of an outstanding writer, even though there are divergencies of opinion, there are usually some characteristics which are outstanding enough to be agreed upon by at least the majority of observers. Two expressions which have been used time and again, alternately and in conjunction, in connection with the works of Joseph Conrad are the terms aristocratic and conservative. Those who knew him personally attest to his conservatism as expressed in his conversation, and his biography gives evidence of his aristocratic background and tastes. Critics, too, have indicated that these characteristics permeate Conrad's writings, but few have mentioned specific cases of this evidence of conservatism, and no study has been made for the purpose of showing this particular phase of his philosophy as expressed in his novels.

The purpose of this thesis is to investigate the evidences of Conrad's conservative tastes and beliefs as
indicated by his way of life and his associations, and to show, further, that this conservatism is revealed directly and indirectly in his stories and novels. Conrad himself in his article on "Books" said:

Where a novelist has an advantage over the workers in other fields of thought is in his privilege of freedom—the freedom of expression and the freedom of confessing his innermost belief—which should console him for the hard slavery of the pen.¹

This thesis, then, is an attempt to show how some of those "innermost beliefs" have been expressed.

Procedure

First are presented evidences in Conrad's life and associations which confirm his conservatism. The remaining chapters show some of Conrad's conservative beliefs as revealed by the writings themselves.

For purposes of organization the phases of Conrad's conservative philosophy have been grouped under four headings—his hatred for rebelliousness and general liberalism, terms which to him were synonymous; his disbelief in and antipathy for any Utopian social idea; his distrust of the principle of complete democracy, both social and governmental; and his dislike for humanitarianism in its various manifestations.

CHAPTER II

LIFE AND ASSOCIATIONS

The aristocratic tastes and philosophy which Conrad displayed in his mature years are doubtless attributable to a large degree to his birth and early life in Poland, in the atmosphere of the genuine old-world, educated upper class. His was the station of the "provincial nobility," his families being landowners on each side, the father's surname also traditionally appearing in the lists of officers in the Polish Army. With his parents the boy Conrad lived in the conventional manner of the landed gentry, and after the exile of his father and the quickly ensuing death of both parents, the boy resumed this manner of life under the guardianship of his mother's brother, Thaddeus Bobrowski. It was in this aristocratic and intellectual atmosphere that he lived until the time of his departure for France, where others of his well-to-do relatives helped him get established in his career of the sea.¹

Thaddeus Bobrowski's correspondence with his nephew reveals the intellectual and patriotic interests that must have pervaded the household of Conrad's early life, often

reminding the youth of his birth and station. In the summer of 1880, following Conrad's passing the examination for third mate, he had an opportunity to leave the merchant service for a business position with political connections in Canada, and his uncle's reaction was typical:

Being an officer, the first step is taken. You need only now work and persevere. . . . You know much better than I what you ought to do. I give you a free hand, even to the point of becoming a Yankee if you choose. I told you in my last letter that it would be wiser, in my opinion, to remain a sailor than to become an American politician. Nevertheless, I shall have nothing to say if you do otherwise, but on two conditions: that you always keep in mind that you have to take the consequences of your own acts, and that you never forget in the stormy confusion of American life, what you owe to the nobility of race and family to which you belong.²

Though the well-ordered life of the seaman, commanded by laws of duty, obedience, and loyalty, doubtless had its effect on Conrad's philosophy and way of thinking, obviously this early life and training established patterns and tastes which were so marked in his later career, for it was his desire and his constant effort to maintain the life of a gentleman, a country squire, representing England's "ruling class" of well-born, intellectual, if not landed, aristocracy, and his friends were with few exceptions of that stratum.

Soon after his marriage with an upper middle-class English girl in 1896, he set about to establish himself

²Ibid., p. 59.
permanently, to locate a home in England, and to make a living as a writer. With his financial means as a determining factor, he sought for a house the largest country-estate type of establishment possible, with as many servants as the place required or his means would allow. Conrad, "whose nerves made him attribute any difficulty he might encounter in his work to the place where he happened to be," lived in eight different homes during the twenty-eight years of his life in England, six of them in the first fourteen years. All were homes befitting a country gentleman, but Capel House, in Kent, which he rented in 1910 after he had become less financially strained, seemed to be a more suitable home, for the Conrads remained there ten years, changing only to the still more spacious Oswalds, also in Kent, for the last three years of Conrad's life. Conrad liked Kent, for he felt at home there. "The feudal spirit remained in the territories of the great landowners," Ford points out, and "the Korzeniowski's were country gentlemen, for all the world like an English County Family, with land lived on and owned since the darkest ages, untitled, but aristocrats to the backbone."  

Conrad liked living in the large country home, with a

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3 Ibid., II, p. 5.  
4 Ibid., I, II.  
well-ordered, "ship-shape" household and plenty of servants, and he made every effort his modest writer's income would allow to follow the mode of life in keeping with his taste in houses. He provided private tutors for his sons until they were ready to take their examinations for Luton School. The family made frequent trips abroad, to Switzerland, to Capri, and several times to France. And he liked to provide a gentleman's hospitality for his friends, customarily having them bring their families for a week-end, or a week or more.

As in judging character, we look to one's choice of friends to judge tastes and also the direction of one's thinking, so we may judge Conrad. He had an extraordinary gift for friendship, as pointed out by numerous associates, as borne out by the tone of the tributes paid him by the number of men who could claim a close and intimate association with the Conrad household. His biographer says, "Few writers of his generation have drawn to themselves a more devoted little band of friends than Conrad by his genius and by the magic of his personality," ⁶ and Richard Curle adds:

Conrad had many friends who were dear to him, and the fact that he usually preferred to have them staying with him one at a time proves that from

each different friend he derived a special kind of pleasure and sustenance.\footnote{Richard Curle, The Last Twelve Years of Joseph Conrad, p. 7.}

The oldest, by way of acquaintance, of Conrad's literary friends was John Galsworthy, who was a passenger aboard the Torrens on his way to meet R. L. Stevenson when Conrad served as first mate on the trip to Australia. Galsworthy, "of old Devonshire stock, . . . patrician by birth, instincts, and education,"\footnote{Twentieth Century Authors, p. 510.} appealed to Conrad because of his "inherent propriety"\footnote{Jessie Conrad, Joseph Conrad and His Circle, p. 74.} and because both in aspect and manner he represented to Conrad the most perfect type of the proverbial English gentleman.\footnote{Joseph Retinger, Joseph Conrad and His Contemporaries, p. 99.} Though he inherited all the social ideas of the comfortable middle class and retained the manner and aspect of his breeding, he acquired a critical attitude later in his writings to which Conrad objected, but which did not affect their personal friendship.

In a sense they were diametrically opposed types, and one cannot properly compare them, even in their fatalism. In the very order of things, it would have been improbable that either would have appreciated deeply the work of the other. . . . Their
friendship, in brief, was based primarily on human affections and not on literary affinities.\textsuperscript{11}

Ford, also, points out that Conrad never really liked Galsworthy's writing, though he wrote to "Jack" himself in high praise of some works, as he was wont to do to all his friends. His affection was simply personal for one whose genuine and obvious gentility and pleasant nature endeared him to his fellow author.\textsuperscript{12}

Edward Garnett, the distinguished literary critic, son of the learned Dr. Garnett who was keeper of the British Museum for many years, deserves distinction among Conrad's friends. He was one of the earliest and dearest of Conrad's intimates as well as his first literary critic. It was he, as the publisher's reader, who was responsible for the publication of \textit{Almayer's Folly}, Conrad's first novel.

As a rule, Mr. Fisher Unwin's reader was not brought into personal contact with authors, but this time Edward Garnett had taken such an interest in the acceptance of this manuscript that Mr. Fisher Unwin arranged a meeting between the young reader and the strange writer. The almost immediate result of this meeting was a mutual sympathy between the two men, which soon turned into a friendship that death alone cut short.\textsuperscript{13}

Garnett was of a family of culture and scholarship, of the same class by birth and education as the others in Conrad's circle. The Conrads enjoyed visiting with him

\textsuperscript{11}Richard Curle, \textit{Caravansary and Conversation}, p. 158.
\textsuperscript{12}Ford Madox Ford, \textit{Portraits from Life}, p. 136.
\textsuperscript{13}Aubry, \textit{op. cit.}, I, p. 160.
and his family, and Jessie Conrad refers repeatedly to the close friendship between Garnett and her husband.\textsuperscript{14}

One of the first of the literary friendships, after Garnett, was that of Robert B. Cunningham-Graham, who insisted upon meeting Conrad after reading "An Outpost of Progress," one of the earliest-published stories, and who remained one of his dearest friends the rest of Conrad's life. Of a distinguished, landed Scotch family, "head of the clan Graham and rightful Earl of Menteith,"\textsuperscript{15} he was known for his forceful personality and his courageous, adventurous spirit. He was a Labor member of Parliament, leader of the workers against the police in the Trafalgar Square Riots, and an organizer of the Scotch Labor Party, as well as traveler, adventurer, and author.\textsuperscript{16} "His mingled courage and tact carried him through the difficulties of every situation, and he was able to take Conrad to a radical meeting and remain friends with him."\textsuperscript{17} Though he had warm sympathies for the oppressed and all who suffered, he was "one of the least fanatical of men,"\textsuperscript{18} and Conrad's own

\textsuperscript{14}Jessie Conrad, \textit{op. cit.}
\textsuperscript{15}Curle, \textit{Caravansary and Conversation}, p. 33.
\textsuperscript{16}\textit{Twentieth Century Authors}, p. 340.
\textsuperscript{17}Curle, \textit{Caravansary and Conversation}, p. 32-33.
\textsuperscript{18}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 35.
statement that Cunningham-Graham was a "grand seigneur born out of his time"\textsuperscript{19} is significant of the feeling he held for his friend and the type of person Graham was. Although Conrad disagreed with him politically, he was endeared to Cunningham-Graham by his personality, the adventurousness which the two instinctively shared, and by the gentility of manner which was such a foremost part of Cunningham-Graham's personal qualities.

Another distinguished author who was also among the important literary friends was Henry James, also a country gentleman, one of the "good people" of his own writings. "Good people" indicates the class which Ford defines:

"Good" people does not mean virtuous, but well-born, of the sufficiently...intelligent and educated that supply recruits to the ruling classes of the British Isles.\textsuperscript{20}

James, like Conrad, was an adopted son of the British Isles who felt at home in the feudal territory of the Kent farms. He and Conrad visited often and remained friends through the years. It is pointed out that James not only was aristocratic in his life and viewpoint, but that he knew nothing else.

He saw the common people lying like a dark sea round the raft of the privileged. He observed

\textsuperscript{19}Twentieth Century Authors, p. 341.

\textsuperscript{20}Ford, Portraits from Life, p. 7.
enough to be able to give characteristics and phrases /In his books/ of retainers of the privileged, but if, as happens to us today, he had been confronted by a Radical Left clamouring that he must write about the proletariat or be lost, he would just forever have dismissed his faithful amanuensis and relapsed into mournful silence.21

James' friendship with Conrad could not have been only literary, though they each expressed admiration of the other's works, and James was one of the already distinguished authors to give encouragement to Conrad's early writing.22 Conrad, however, held high personal regard for James, who was "so essentially a gentleman in every sense of the word."23

A close friendship which lasted for a number of years was that with Ford Madox Hueffer, later Ford Madox Ford, the young author with whom Conrad collaborated on two novels. Also of an upper class educated family, he had the further quality in common with Conrad of being Roman Catholic in background and sharing similar ideas concerning the New Form of the novel. Though she had a strong personal dislike for Hueffer, Mrs. Conrad points out that the intellectual stimulation of Conrad's association with Hueffer was invaluable, but because of ungentelemanly manners on the

21 Ibid., p. 8.
22 Aubry, op. cit., I, p. 166.
23 Jessie Conrad, op. cit., p. 115.
part of the young novelist in abusing his privileges as guest during a certain extended visit, a coolness appeared in their friendship. There was not a complete breach, but the two ceased to be the close friends they had been for a number of years.\textsuperscript{24}

Stephen Crane’s brief life in England provided a valued friendship, and his tragic death was deeply regretted by Conrad. His picturesque country home was within walking distance from the Conrads’ Pent Farm, and the two families, along with John Galsworthy and Ford Madox Hueffer, visited frequently.\textsuperscript{25}

The trip to Capri produced another long-standing friendship, that of Norman Douglas, another of an old established Scotch family. His impatience with “shams and shibboleths” and his dislike for socialism and puritanism\textsuperscript{26} must have drawn him to Conrad, though Mrs. Conrad indicates that, “a consummate gentleman with great charm of manner and conversation,” his chief attraction for Conrad lay in “his wonderful erudition.”\textsuperscript{27}

Hugh Walpole, English gentleman with breeding and education on a level with the rest of Conrad’s circle,

\textsuperscript{24}\textit{Ibid.}, pp. 115-116. \textsuperscript{25}\textit{Ibid.}, pp. 72-75. \textsuperscript{26}Twentieth Century Authors, p. 430. \textsuperscript{27}Jessie Conrad, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 97.
became a frequent visitor to Capel House late in Conrad's career. Walpole "said truly that the middle and upper classes were what he knew best, and he never attempted to write about any social group with which he was not acquainted and in sympathy." 28 Conrad's letters to him show, by the confidences, the concern for his friend's health, and the urgent invitations to Capel House, the high regard in which Walpole was held.

The young writer Richard Curle, son of a well-to-do Roxburghshire "County Family," was among Conrad's friends for the last twelve years of his life, and was the only person outside the immediate Conrad Household who was present at the time of Conrad's death. Curle was held in high respect by the senior writer, who wrote to Alfred Knopf, "He knows my work backwards," 29 and to Curle himself, on the occasion of the young man's planning a review of Conrad's work for the Times literary supplement, said,

This is an opportunity that will never be renewed in my lifetime for the judgment of a man who certainly knows my work best and not less certainly is known for my closest intimate, but before all is the best friend my work has ever had. 30

28 Twentieth Century Authors, p. 701.
30 Ibid., p. 318.
Conrad also claimed W. H. Hudson among his frequent visitors and among those with whom he frequented the Mont Blanc Restaurant or the Wellington Club in London. These gatherings in London consisted of a group of such distinguished men as Garnett, Hudson, E. V. Lucas, Stephen Reynolds, Edward Thomas, Percival Gibbon, Sir Hugh Clifford, Sir Edmund Gosse, Sir Frank Swettenham, and others.\footnote{31} Conrad held a deep affection for this group of very loyal friends, all of whom could claim the distinction of high birth, aristocratic backgrounds, and with few exceptions, conservative tastes.

\footnote{31}Aubry, \textit{op. cit.}, I, p. 168.
CHAPTER III

HATRED FOR GENERAL LIBERALISM
AND REBELLIOUSNESS

Conrad's conservatism, though shown more emphatically in some phases than in others, was general, and it was consistent. In essence it was a philosophic conservatism which held to the old aristocratic traditions of duty, order, seemliness, faith, and responsibility. Partly, perhaps, because of his experience as a ship's officer, says Weygandt, "his aversions included disorder, irresponsibility, slackness, and inefficiency, and so he was strongly on the side of the established social system."\(^1\) Curle adds that Conrad, having been brought up in the tradition that a sense of duty loyally performed was just reward for toil and a justification for happiness, saw a new tone in the public conscience and of course regretted to see the passing of "the old order of things."\(^2\)

In The Nigger of the Narcissus this attitude of the older generation is represented by the old sailor Singleton, faithful, hard-working, and honest. When his duties are hard, he is uncomplaining.

\(^1\) Cornelius Weygandt, A Century of the English Novel, p. 370.

\(^2\) Curle, The Last Twelve Years of Joseph Conrad, p. 168.
The men who could understand his silence are gone—those men who knew how to exist beyond the pale of life and within sight of eternity. They had been strong, as those are strong who know neither doubts nor hopes. They had been impatient and enduring, unruly and faithful. Well-meaning people had tried to represent these men as whining over every mouthful of food; as going about their work in fear of their lives. But in truth they had been men who knew toil, privation, violence, debauchery—but knew not fear, and had no desire of spite in their hearts. Men hard to manage but easy to inspire; voiceless men—but men enough to scorn in their hearts the sentimental voices that bewailed the hardness of their fate.... Their successors are the grown-up children of a discontented earth. They are less naughty, but less innocent; less profane, but perhaps also less believing; and if they have learned how to speak, they have also learned how to whine.3

Liberalism to Conrad was synonymous with whining or complaining or defiance. He had no patience with the social rebel of any type, and he summarized this feeling in The Secret Agent.

[Verloc's] instinct of conventional respectability was overcome by his dislike of all kinds of recognized labour—a temperamental defect he shared with a large proportion of revolutionary reformers of a given social state. For obviously one does not revolt against the advantages and opportunities of that state but against the price which must be paid for the same in the coin of accepted morality, self-restraint, and toil. The majority of revolutionaries are the enemies of discipline and fatigue mostly. There are natures, too, to whose sense of justice the price exacted looms up monstrously enormous, odious, oppressive, worrying, humiliating, exorbitant, and intolerable; those are the fanatics. The remaining portion of social rebels is accounted for by vanity, the mother of all noble

3Conrad, The Nigger of the Narcissus, p. 25.
and vile illusions, the companion of poets, reformers, charlatans, prophets, and incendiaries. 4

"In all phases," Weygandt says, "Conrad hated turbulence and noise," whether it be of an organized cause or of a rebellious individual, and he regretted the tendency in society to cry out for rights and to neglect devotion to duty. 5 His pictures of "social rebels," then, all follow his own definition. They either object to accepted self-restraint and morality, have a strong aversion to "recognizable labor," seek to appease their vanity through gain and recognition of one kind or another, or else, as Wright says of the anarchists, are misguided idealists or dilettantes who do not realize the direction of their action. 6

As indicated already, the devotion to duty was one of Conrad's strongest demands for admirable character, and laziness one of the qualities he could not tolerate. Complaints of the laborer, either individually or collectively, were the result of an unwillingness to put forth the required physical effort, in Conrad's opinion. As an example of the malcontent, particularly the laborer who is always thinking of his rights and stirring up trouble among those of his fellow-workers who listen to him, Donkin

4Conrad, The Secret Agent, p. 53.
5Weygandt, op. cit., p. 378.
6Walter F. Wright, Romance and Tragedy in Joseph Conrad, p. 177.
of The Nigger of the Narcissus shows Conrad's contempt for this type of rebellious individual.

They all knew him. Is there a spot on earth where such a man is unknown, an ominous survival testifying to the eternal fitness of lies and impudence? . . . They all knew him! He was the man that cannot steer, that cannot splice, that dodges the work on dark nights; that, aloft, holds on frantically with both hands and legs, and swears at the wind, the sleet, the darkness; the man who curses the sea while others work. The man who is the last out and the first in when all hands are called. The man who can't do most things and won't do the rest. The pet of philanthropists and self-seeking land-lubbers. The sympathetic and observing creature that knows all about his rights, but knows nothing of courage, of endurance, and of the unexpressed faith, of the unspoken loyalty that knits together a ship's company. The independent offspring of the ignoble freedom of the slums, full of disdain and hate for the austere servitude of the sea.7

Donkin's story ends at the docking of the Narcissus, with Conrad's terse comment, typical in its attitude toward such individuals.

The sea took some, the steamers took others. . . . And Donkin, who never did a decent day's work in his life, no doubt earns his living by discoursing in filthy eloquence upon the right of labour to live. So be it. Let the earth and the sea each have its own.8

In "The Heart of Darkness" there is a comment from another point of view, showing the contempt which Conrad felt for movements prompted by those "bewailing the hardness of their fate." He terms rot and humbug the Laborite

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8 Ibid., p. 172.
propaganda aimed to secure followers and obtain sympathy for Labor's efforts to obtain its rights in an unjust world.

I was one of the Workers, with a capital—you know. Something like an emissary of light, something like a lower sort of apostle. There had been a lot of such rot let loose in print and talk just about that time, and the excellent woman, living right in the rush of all that humbug, got carried right off her feet. 9

Similarly, all movements designed to arouse sympathy and focus attention on some group whose complaint was the injustice of society were looked upon with disrespect by Conrad. Mrs. Fyne in Chance is an expounder of an "individualist woman-doctrine" in which she calls upon the members of her sex to claim their rights, to come into their own, to attain their place in the world.

The salad of unprincipled notions she put into those girl-friends' heads! Good innocent creature, worthy wife, excellent mother (of the strict governess type), she was as guileless of consequences as any determinist philosopher ever was. 10

There has been a great deal of comment on Conrad's anti-feminism, much of it springing from his account of Mrs. Fyne's fanatic Cause for the New Woman, to which she devoted so much of her energies. Conrad's objection, however, was to the feministic movement and the clamoring for

10Conrad, Chance, p. 63.
"equal rights," and not, as Maurois, for one, has said, a pessimism regarding women in general.¹¹ Mencken says, "Conrad sees how vastly the role of women has been exaggerated, how little they amount to in the authentic struggle of men;"¹² but the influence of Antonia on Decoud in Nostromo, Natalie Haldin on Razumov in Under Western Eyes, Lena on Heyst in Victory, Aissa and Joanna on Willems in An Outcast of the Islands, and Flora on Captain Anthony in Chance, to name some, would belie Mencken's observation. Conrad was opposed to the New Woman movements and to the growing theory of women's sharing men's place and responsibilities. His alter ego Marlow in Chance explains the feeling:

[Women] know that the clamour for opportunities for them to become something which they cannot be is as reasonable as if mankind at large started asking for opportunities of winning immortality in this world, in which death is the very condition of life. You must understand that I am not talking here of material existence. That, naturally, is implied; but you won't maintain that a woman who, say, enlisted for instance (there have been cases) has conquered her place in the world. She has only got her living in it—which is quite meritorious, but not quite the same thing.¹³

Again in Nostromo he says,

A woman with a masculine mind is not a being of superior efficiency; she is simply a phenomenon

¹¹Andre Maurois, Prophets and Poets, p. 207.
¹²Henry L. Mencken, A Book of Prefaces, p. 34.
¹³Conrad, Chance, pp. 281-282.
of imperfect differentiation—interestingly barren and without importance.\footnote{14}

However, he does admire womankind, and some of his most admirable characters are women. Mrs. Gould and Antonia of Nostromo have all the nobility of character, strength, and sense of honor that could be demanded of a hero, and Lena of Victory is the strongest, most admirable person in the book. Conrad’s anti-feminism, if it can be called that, is directed at the New Woman movement, and not at the qualities of femininity.

In the realm of social and political movements, extreme groups such as anarchists, socialists, or any advocates of revolutionary action would naturally be extremely distasteful to Conrad’s sense of tradition, law and order, and antifanaticism. He has no patience with those Razumov describes:

\begin{quote}
Fanatical lovers of liberty in general. Liberty with a capital L, Excellency. Liberty that means nothing precise. Liberty in whose name crimes are committed.\footnote{15}
\end{quote}

Ford says,

\begin{quote}
Revolutions were to him anathema, since, he was accustomed to declare, all revolutions always have been, always must be, nothing more in the end than palace intrigues--intrigues either for power within or occupancy of, a palace.\footnote{16}
\end{quote}

All of the revolutionary characters (anarchists and

\footnote{14}Conrad, Nostromo, pp. 66-67.
\footnote{15}Conrad, Under Western Eyes, p. 50.
\footnote{16}Ford, A Personal Remembrance, p. 58.
socialists mostly) bear out Conrad’s distrust in and hatred for such movements. In discussion Conrad was always moved to indignation when asked about his sympathies for the revolutionaries in Poland, and his answer was that the Poles were not rebels but were lovers of liberty seeking freedom from the tyrannous government that held them prisoner.  

He makes a clear distinction between fighting for freedom and anarchistic plotting against government per se in his novels, and the social and political rebels are all unsavory, thoroughly unsympathetic characters.

His anarchists, whether in "An Anarchist," "The Informer," Under Western Eyes, or The Secret Agent, are disillusioned sensualists, megalomaniac graspers for power, misguided idealists, or dilettantes who are looking for excitement without considering the direction of their activity.  

Mr. Verloc in The Secret Agent, a spy for the tzarist embassy against the revolutionaries who plot against the established economic and social order, is at the same time "a member of a revolutionary proletariat." His associates who meet in his home to discuss the injustice of the current order of society, and yet against whose activities he is employed to spy, are mostly anarchists of the types mentioned above. Though Conrad held no sympathies for the tyrannous bureaucracy represented by the Embassy, surely the various  

17Curle, The Last Twelve Years of Joseph Conrad, p. 168.  

18Wright, op. cit., p. 177.
types of revolutionaries represented show clearly his attitude toward advocates of social revolution.

Karl Yundt, the terrorist, is ambitious and hypocritical, talking at great length about "social cruelty" and the "poor luckless devils" that the current society has made of men. A former actor, he is fond of oratory and of swaying crowds by appealing to their sympathy with misery and their indignation against oppression. Yet he himself is a coward, as the loud, constant complainer often is, never having taken part in any of the terrorist activities of which he preaches. In one dramatic and heated discourse he calls the law "the branding instrument invented by the overfed to protect themselves against the hungry."^{19}

He seemed to sniff the tainted air of social cruelty, to strain his ear for its atrocious sounds. . . . The famous terrorist had never in his life raised personally as much as his little finger against the social edifice. He was no man of action.^{20}

Yundt is not even an eloquent speaker, depending rather on swaying the emotions, "sweeping the masses along in the rushing noise and foam of a great enthusiasm," playing on their ignorance and their honest feelings to gain his own sinister ends.

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^{20} Ibid.
Equally terrifying and even more bent on complete and violent destruction of all existing institutions along with their material symbols, the Professor, too, is ambitious. A man of science and learning, he has been dismissed from several positions because of quarrels with his employers, in each case as a result of having been "treated with revolting injustice." 21

His struggles, his privations, his hard work to raise himself in the social scale, had filled him with such an exalted conviction of his merits that it was extremely difficult for the world to treat him with justice—the standard of that notion depending so much upon the patience of the individual. The Professor had genius but lacked the great social virtue of resignation. 22

He desires power and prestige, and he feels he deserves them through his merit alone. His father had been an extremely self-righteous itinerant preacher, and "in the son. . . once the science of colleges had replaced thoroughly the faith of conventicles, his moral attitude translated itself into a frenzied puritanism of ambition." 23 His disillusionment and indignation at society's unjust neglect of his deserving genius have brought him to embrace the cause of destruction as a means to the end of bringing about a change in that society.

To destroy public faith in legality was the imperfect formula for his pedantic fanaticism;

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21 Ibid., p. 75.  
22 Ibid.  
23 Ibid., pp. 80-81.
but the subconscious conviction that the framework of an established social order cannot be effectively shattered except by some form of collective or individual violence was precise and correct.²⁴

He has built for himself the conviction that he is a moral agent, and by ruthlessly exercising his agency, he "procured for himself the appearances of power and personal prestige."²⁵ Wright points out that his accepting Ossipon's largesse, saying it will indirectly help the cause, shows him to be the perfect example of those who make their sacrifice for an ideal actually a means of self-glorification.²⁶

Also one who fancies himself a man of science, having studied that subject as a medical student, Ossipon is a student of theorists, one who hates and distrusts the middle classes, having written a book on "The Corroding Vices of the Middle Classes." He is the writer of propaganda pamphlets for the Future of the Proletariat organization. He feels his philosophy is objective and "scientific."

There is no law and no certainty. The teaching propaganda be hanged. What the people knows does not matter, were its knowledge ever so accurate. The only thing that matters to us is the emotional state of the masses. Without emotion there is no action.²⁷

Hypocritical, sensual, and indolent, his desire to alter society is obviously a revolt against paying "the

²⁴Ibid., p. 81. ²⁵Ibid. ²⁶Wright, op. cit., p. 188. ²⁷Conrad, The Secret Agent, p. 50.
coin of accepted morality, self-restraint, and toil."
Verloc remarked that he was sure to want for nothing "as
long as there were silly girls with savings books in the
world," and he does not hesitate to secure dishonestly
Winnie Verloc's money, "a bit of the middle-class comfort
he condemns."28

Quite another type of revolutionist is Michaelis,
socialist idealist who writes continuously for the cause
of overthrowing of the upper classes, but who is supported
by a rich patroness who pities him because of his having
been twenty years in prison.

He was so far from pessimism that he saw already
the end of all private property coming along
logically, unavoidably, by a mere development of
its inherent viciousness. The possessors of
property had not only to face the awakening pro-
letariat, but they had also to fight amongst
themselves. Yes. Struggle, warfare was the
condition of private ownership. It was fatal.
Ah, he did not depend upon emotional excitement
to keep up his belief.29

His method is by his treatises to enlighten the people
concerning the true conditions of things. Believing in
the inevitability of revolution, he is anxious that the
people be prepared for the future, which, like the history
of the past, is determined by the nature of the economic
change; "history is made with tools, not with ideas."30

28Wright, op. cit., p. 187.
29Conrad, The Secret Agent, p. 43. 30Ibid., p. 50.
Likewise, the revolutionaries in *Under Western Eyes* are for the most part the same types of individuals. The main rebel, Peter Ivanovitch, "that hairy and obscene brute," 31 claims to be a great feminist, yet the girl Tekla who works for him can attest to his cruelty; and though he advocates the overthrow of the tyrannous government which sent him to prison, yet he is described as "an awful despot," with political aspirations of his own, one of "the vanguard--. . .bearers of the spark to start an explosion which is meant to change fundamentally the lives of so many millions in order that Peter Ivanovitch should be the head of a State." 32

A "misguided idealist," Sophia Antonovna, embittered by the death of her peasant father, has become a revolutionary through reflection on "the great social iniquity of the system resting on unrequited toil and unpitied sufferings." 33 "Stripped of rhetoric, mysticism, and theories, she was the true spirit of destructive revolution." 34 However, as her motives are less selfish, she is treated more sympathetically than the gain-seeking, indolent anarchists. Energetic, untiring, fanatically revolutionary, her error is not in being opposed to the tyranny of the present oppression but in adhering to the idea of destructive revolt.

Her eyes rested upon him, black and impenetrable like the mental caverns where revolutionary

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33 Ibid., p. 262. 34 Ibid., p. 261.
thought should sit plotting the violent way of its dream of changes. As if anything could be changed! In this world of men nothing can be changed; they can only be replaced at the cost of corrupted consciences and broken lives—a futile game for arrogant philosophers and sanguinary triflers.\textsuperscript{35}

The other revolutionists are all typical. There is Laspara, a writer who believes that "any subject can be treated in the right spirit, for the ends of social revolution," who makes no inquiry concerning his daughter's nameless child, since maternity should be an anarchist function.\textsuperscript{36} There is Nikita, or "Necator" as he is called, menacing, despotic, and discovered in the end to be a spy for both sides; and there are the fanatic students at the University, like the one who stole money from his father at Razumov's request. There is Madam S—, whose favor is curried by the revolutionists because they suppose she has money, who embraces revolutionism because she desires the destruction of the family who she imagines prevented her getting all of her late husband's property.

In the short stories "An Anarchist" and "The Informer," the advocates of social revolution are equally unadmirable. Thieves and robbers in the former, the anarchists justify their actions as claiming their own from the rich who have deprived them of it. In "The Informer" there is a more varied group. Two are of the upper class, a girl and her

brother--amateurs, the narrator calls them. "Amateurism in this, that, and the other thing is a delightfully easy way of killing time, and feeding one's own vanity--the silly vanity of being abreast with the ideas of the day after tomorrow." 37 One is an artist who, after his wife and child died of privation, has become convinced that the overfed bourgeoisie killed them. Mr. X, who tells the narrator the story of the Informer, is himself "the greatest rebel (revolte) of modern times. The world knows him as a revolutionary writer whose savage irony has laid bare the rottenness of the most respectable institutions;" 38 he preaches revolt to the starving proletariat while he himself basks in luxury from money gained from his writings.

As seen in the contempt shown for its advocates, it is obvious that Conrad held little respect for social or political revolution. The narrator in Under Western Eyes, whom we may assume to be a voice for Conrad, sums up his opinion of revolution:

The last thing I want to tell you is this: in a real revolution—not a simple dynastic change or a mere reform of institutions—in a real revolution the best characters do not come to the front. A violent revolution falls into the hands of narrow-minded fanatics and of tyrannical hypocrites at first. Afterwards comes the turn of all the pretentious intellectual failures of the time. Such are the chiefs and the leaders.

38 Ibid., pp. 73-74.
You will notice that I have left out the mere rogues. The scrupulous and the rest, the noble, humane, and devoted natures; the unselfish and the intelligent may begin a movement—but it passes away from them. They are not the leaders of a revolution. They are its victims: the victims of disgust, of disenchantment—often of remorse. Hopes grotesquely betrayed, ideals caricatured—that is the definition of revolutionary success. There have been in every revolution hearts broken by such successes. 39

39 Conrad, Under Western Eyes, p. 134.
CHAPTER IV

CONTEMPT FOR THE UTOPIAN SOCIAL IDEAL

Just as Conrad was strongly opposed to rebelliousness and all forms of social revolution, he was equally contemptuous of the Utopian dream which gave impetus to such rebels and their acts. He not only felt that rebels were so because of their own shortcomings and shortsightedness, but it was his conviction that the total trend of society to try to find perfection in something new and easy rather than to make the best of existence was unreasonably optimistic and extremely regrettable. Stephen Reynolds, a personal friend of Conrad's, quotes him as saying, "We live nowadays in a haze of ideals, less concerned with making the best of man as he is than with altering him into a new man—a superman."\(^1\) In his article on Anatole France, Conrad says that France, in embracing the "too materialistic ideal" of socialism, has forgotten that the evils are many and the remedies are few, that there is no universal panacea.\(^2\)


The socialist movement itself was beginning to make strides during the time that Conrad lived in England, and the term "social democracy" was a common cry in fashionable use by liberals all over Europe. We have Conrad's opinion of it from several of his letters as well as in his creative work. As early as 1885, before he came to live in England, he wrote from abroad to his Polish friend in London, deploring the results of a recent election which favored the advocates of "social progress and radical reform."

Joy reins in St. Petersburg, no doubt, and profound disgust in Berlin: the International Socialist Association are triumphant /sic/ and every disreputable ragamuffin in Europe feels that the day of universal brotherhood, despoilation and disorder is coming apace, and nurses day-dreams of well-plenished pockets amongst the ruin of all that is respectable, venerable, and holy. The Great British Empire went over the edge, and yet on to the inclined plane of social progress and radical reform. The downward movement is hardly perceptible yet, and the clever men who started it may flatter themselves with the progress, but they'll soon find that the fate of the nation is out of their hands now!... Where's the men to stop the rush of social-democratic ideas?

Socialism must inevitably end in Caesarism.3

The instances in the novels wherein Conrad treats the subject are closely related, for the most part, to those already discussed in connection with social rebels, for those who are discontent with society as it is dream of one in which their lot will be the ideal one. Perhaps the

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3Aubry, op. cit., I, p. 84.
most pronounced judgment on the Utopian ideal of socialism to be found in the novels is the picture of Michaelis and his dreams in The Secret Agent. Utterly confident in the belief that social revolution is inevitable, the ex-convict idealist expounds at length on the logical, unavoidable triumph of socialism over capitalism, of the proletariat over "the possessor of property."

Michaelis pursued his idea—the idea of his solitary reclusion—the thought vouchsafed to his captivity and growing like a faith revealed in visions. . . . He made again the confession of his faith, mastering him irresistible and complete like an act of grace; the secret of fate discovered in the material side of life; the economic condition of the world responsible for the past and shaping the future; the source of all history, of all ideas, guiding the mental development of mankind and the very impulses of his passion—4

Michaelis is even engaged in writing his autobiography, with the purpose of educating the people for their inevitable destiny. One of his friends describes his dream of the forthcoming social state as "a world planned out like an immense and nice hospital, with gardens and flowers, in which the strong are to devote themselves to the nursing of the weak."5 Though he is not an advocate of physical violence, his faith in the inevitability of the social revolution, probably to be accomplished by violence, is almost an obsession. His ideas, "inaccessible to reasoning,"

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5Ibid., p. 303.
produced by a simple mind grown merely simpler in twenty years of absolute solitude, are called "an embittered faith" and utterly without logic.\(^6\)

It is significant, too, that Michaelis' patroness, though a member of the very class who would suffer from the revolution necessary to bring about his Utopia, is impressed by his "embittered faith, by the sterling quality of his optimism."\(^7\) Her property having been left her by her husband (and not, by the way, by her own inheritance), she is not engaged in any capitalistic enterprises, and since her social position, which she values above all else, is already established, she sees nothing to lose in the elimination of the "parvenus." The irony of her optimistic blindness is clear in her picture of a perfect society in which all other classes are trimmed to equality, while she is left the grand old lady of her salon, serene in her social prestige. "A certain simplicity of thought is common to serene souls at both ends of the social scale."\(^8\)

A still different idea of the perfect society is that of the Perfect Anarchist, the Professor. He would completely exterminate all of the weak, "the source of all evil." They are the multitude now; "theirs is the kingdom of the earth," but to exterminate them, leaving only the strong, and to continue to do so, "that is the only way of progress;"

\(^6\)Ibid., pp. 107-109. \(^7\)Ibid., p. 107. \(^8\)Ibid.
that will lead to the perfection of society. 9 And yet he, who of course believes himself to have a place in that "society of the strong," carries with him an explosive for his own destruction and is completely absorbed in the worthy task of making a perfect detonator for it.

Ossipon, on the other hand, says,

In two hundred years doctors will rule the world. Science reigns already. It reigns in the shade maybe—but it reigns. And all science must culminate at last in the science of healing—not the weak but the strong. Mankind wants to live—to live. 10

And Ossipon's dream of the new post-revolutionary life is one of "humanity universally putting out the tongue and taking the pill from pole to pole" 11 and being given thereby a cure for whatever ails it. He is an anarchist with dreams of a revolution to bring about a society consisting of doctors and a liberated proletariat enjoying a long, blissful life free of the restraining conventions that current society imposes.

The Utopian dreams of the Russian revolutionary idealists in Under Western Eyes are likewise varied and are as ridiculous, and are treated with the same disdain on the part of the author. In the "Author's Note" introducing the novel, Conrad makes the following statement regarding

9 Ibid., pp. 303-304. 10 Ibid., p. 305.
11 Ibid., p. 306.
the futility of the whole revolutionary dream as it was entertained by the Russians:

The ferocity and imbecility of an autocratic rule rejecting all legality and in fact basing itself upon complete moral anarchism provokes the no less imbecile and atrocious answer of a purely Utopian revolution encompassing destruction by the first means to hand, in a strange conviction that a fundamental change of hearts must follow the downfall of any given human institutions. These people are unable to see that all they can effect is merely a change of names.\textsuperscript{12}

Guerard notes that Razumov, the main character, holds many of Conrad's ideas, "traditionalism, conservative nationalism, a distrust of compassion," though he holds them for the wrong reasons.\textsuperscript{13} It is clear that Conrad is speaking through Razumov when that young man says the following of his late idealist friend Haldin:

He was a wretch from my point of view, because to keep alive a false idea is a greater crime than to kill a man... Visionaries work everlasting evil upon earth. Their Utopias inspire in the mass of mediocre minds a disgust of reality and a contempt for the secular logic of human development.\textsuperscript{14}

In another instance Haldin's belief in the wonderful post-revolutionary future in which justice reigns through the supremacy of the present down-trodden "people" is called the "dream intoxication of the idealist incapable  

\textsuperscript{12}Conrad, \textit{Under Western Eyes}, "Author's Note," p. x. 
\textsuperscript{14}Conrad, \textit{Under Western Eyes}, p. 95.
of perceiving the reason of things."^15 His sister, living completely for his dream and sharing his theories together with an implicit faith in their outcome, is, as Conrad himself confesses, almost incredible in her great heart, intelligence, and idealistic faith.^16 The irony of that faith is quite clear in the Westerner's comment:

It is hard to believe I shall never look any more into the trustful eyes of that girl—wedded to an invincible belief in the advent of loving concord springing like a heavenly flower from the soil of man's earth soaked in blood, torn by struggles, watered with tears.^17

The revolutionists' Utopia is to be achieved by people just like the ones from whom they plan to wrest the governing power (like Peter Ivanovitch and Nikita) and by means of physical violence as compared with the tyranny of enthroned oppression. Though Conrad is speaking primarily of Russia and the problem of tyranny versus revolution there, the feeling of "the futility of impossible dreams" is not for Russia alone.

In Nostromo, the South American republic of Costaguana, which is called by Decoud the land of "deadly futilities of pronunciamientos and reforms,"^18 goes through the throes of one of its periodic revolutions. This time the San Tomé mine, center of industrial development in the isolated

^15Ibid., p. 31.  
^16Ibid., "Author's Note," p. ix.  
^17Ibid., p. 377.  
^18Conrad, Nostromo, p. 183.
little country, is the object of covetous greed on the part of various corrupt officials in the government who take advantage of the ignorance and credulity of the poor and incite rebellion in order to gain their own ambitions.

When "Negro Liberals" (as opposed to the conservative political party, the "Blancos") take the town of Sulaco, apeon delivers this message to the protector of the mine:

They had done no damage to the buildings. The foreigners of the railway remained shut up within the yards. They were no longer anxious to shoot poor people...The poor were going to be made rich now. That was very good. More he did not know.19

The author's statement following the revolution is a comment on the character of the people as well as their vain hopes:

The cruel futility of things stood unveiled in the levity and suffering of that incorrigible people; the cruel futility of lives and deaths thrown away in a vain endeavor to attain an enduring solution to the problem.20

The statement refers to the revolutionary tendencies of the Latin American republic; but there is the same message, concerning the vain dreams that the peons had been lead to support, in the fact that the New Era merely presents new problems, and Antonia Avellanos, who worked so desperately for the patriots' cause, goes on her way "a relic of

19Ibid., p. 396.
20Ibid., p. 364.
the past, disregarded by men awaiting impatiently the
Dawns of other New Eras, the coming of more Revolutions.\textsuperscript{21}

Conrad's case against social Utopianism, then, is the
contention that the impossible dreams of those who are
unwilling to make the required sacrifices of self-disci-
pline and toil, for the purpose of maintaining or improving
the accepted order of society, merely stir the emotions and
blind the reason to the deeper universal values of honor,
fidelity, and duty in the realm of human endeavor, often
"exploiting the sufferings and credulity of the poor"\textsuperscript{22} and
taking advantage of their ignorance in order to get a fol-
lowing started for their movements. Social Utopias to
Conrad were typified by the dream of the sailors in \textbf{The
Nigger of the Narcissus} after Donkin's agitating influence.

Our little world went on its curved and unswerving
path carrying a discontented and aspiring population.
They found comfort of a gloomy kind in an inter-
minable and conscientious analysis of their unappre-
ciated worth; and inspired by Donkin's hopeful
doctrines, they dreamed enthusiastically of the
time when every lonely ship would travel over a
serene sea, manned by a wealthy and well-fed crew
of satisfied skippers.\textsuperscript{23}

\textsuperscript{21}\textit{Ibid.}, "Author's Note," p. xiv.
\textsuperscript{22}Guerard, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 72.
\textsuperscript{23}Conrad, \textit{The Nigger of the Narcissus}, p. 103.
CHAPTER V

DISTRUST FOR DEMOCRACY

Just as Conrad felt disdain for the Utopian social ideal in extreme forms, he was also skeptical regarding the democratic ideal, in both the social and political realms. To him it was another idealistic principle which, like all the others, was doomed to disappoint the high expectations placed in it. Richard Curle makes a point of this attitude in mentioning Conrad's conservatism.

His conservatism was not a mere selfish desire to keep things as they had been; it was a philosophic conservatism. He knew that old times had gone, never to return. . . . He knew it and he accepted it, but that did not alter his convictions. He was democratic in his mode of life and in many of his sympathies, but he had little faith in democracy as a political force. He saw the world dissipating its energies in impossible dreams, and he believed all this would end only in disillusion and disaster.  

Weygandt points out that he admired the order, discipline, tradition, sense of duty, and responsibility found in long-established rule and that, though he did not deny corruption in high places, he preferred the centralized power that gets things done.  

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2 Weygandt, op. cit., p. 374.
Conrad's distinct views concerning political systems, particularly in Europe, are made plain in "Autocracy and War," included in Notes on Life and Letters. Here he declares his view, described by Guerard as the feeling of solidarity promoted by the national spirit, which "draws men together in companionship with the past."³

In Europe the old monarchical principle stands justified in its historical struggle with the growth of political liberty by the evolution of the idea of nationality as we see it concreted at the present time; by the inception of that wider solidarity grouping together around the standard of monarchical power these larger agglomerations of mankind.⁴

This service of unification, he says, serves to promote the "solidarity of Europeanism," for the old monarchies of Europe, the "creations of historical necessity," containing "seeds of wisdom in their very mistakes and abuses. They have a past and a future; they are human." It is they that have developed the "conceptions of legality, of larger patriotism, of national duties and aspirations."⁵ The case against Republicanism and for the old monarchical system becomes stronger later in the same article, as Conrad asserts that the "era of wars" is not ended by establishment of Republics and the dissolution of dynastic rule.

³GUERARD, OP. CIT., P. 72.
⁴CONRAD, "AUTOCRACY AND WAR," NOTES ON LIFE AND LETTERS, PP. 96-97.
⁵IBID., P. 97.
The era of Wars so eloquently denounced by the old Republicans as the peculiar blood guilt of dynastic ambition is by no means over yet. They will be fought out differently, with increased bitterness, and the savage tooth-and-claw obstinacy of a struggle for existence.6

In defense of the evils of "dynastic ambitions" he says that they were marked by "human absurdity moderated by prudence and even by shame, by the fear of personal responsibility and the regard paid to certain forms of conventional decency."7 It is here that he made his famous comment upon the brotherhood of monarchs.

If the monarchs of Europe have been derided for addressing each other as "brother" in autographed communications, that relationship was at least as effective as any form of brotherhood likely to be established between the rival nations of this continent, which, we are assured on every hand, is the heritage of democracy. In the ceremonial brotherhood of monarchs the reality of blood-ties, for what little it is worth, acted often as a drag on unscrupulous desires or greed. . . . No leader of a democracy, without other ancestry but the sudden shout of a multitude, and debarred by the very condition of his power from even thinking of a direct heir, will have any interest in calling brother the leader of another democracy--a chief as fatherless and heirless as himself.8

E. L. Adams quotes Conrad's statement, in reference to the Eighteenth Amendment in the United States, that it only confirmed his early conviction that a representative government is but a poor guarantee of liberty, although he was

6Ibid., pp. 104-105.  
7Ibid., p. 105.  
8Ibid.
not sure what should be put in place of it. In December, 1918, after the Armistice of World War I was signed and reconstruction was the business of the whole political world, the trend of affairs did not make Conrad hopeful. In that month he wrote to the Galsworthys, wishing them "felicity in the home and many years of peace."

At the same time I'll confess that neither felicity nor peace inspire me with much confidence. There is an air of the "packed valise" about these two divine but unfashionable figures. I suppose the North Pole would be the only place for them, where there is neither thought nor heat, where the very water is stable, and the democratic bawlings of the virtuous leaders of mankind die out into a frozen, unsympathetic silence.10

It is to be expected that this attitude toward the new democratic principles, which formed such a distinct part of his prejudices, should be reflected in his imaginative writings. Of course, in general those novels which have most to do with political systems as such contain the most evidence of Conrad's political opinion. In Under Western Eyes, which treats of the forces of Russian autocracy versus anarchist and socialist revolutionaries, there are several comments regarding the superiority or the advantages of the monarchical system. Razumov, who, as it has been pointed out, is treated sympathetically as holding many of Conrad's own ideas, reflects on the theories that have made his

9E. L. Adams, Joseph Conrad, the Man, p. 23.
friend a revolutionary and concludes that Haldin's idea is wrong.

Haldin means disruption. Better that thousands of people should suffer than that a people should become a disintegrated mass, helpless like dust in the wind.\textsuperscript{11}

Razumov, in justifying his own resentment against Haldin's endangering his one chance of assuring himself a place in the future, finds expression for his conviction that the need in Russia is not destruction but the unification that one great leader can give.

What it needed was not the conflicting aspirations of a people, but a will strong and one: it wanted not the babble of many voices, but a man—strong and one.\textsuperscript{12}

In addition to encouraging unity, a centralized system works more effectively than one involving too many authorities.

What is a throne? A few pieces of wood upholstered in velvet. But a throne is a seat of power, too. The form of government is the shape of a tool—an instrument. But twenty thousand bladders inflated by the noblest sentiments and jostling against each other in the air are a miserable incumbrance of space, holding no power, possessing no will, having nothing to give.\textsuperscript{13}

Razumov, Conrad says, is not a moss-grown reactionary. He realizes the evils and the disadvantages of the present system, "despotic bureaucracy—abuses—corruption—and so on."

\textsuperscript{11} Conrad, Under Western Eyes, p. 35.
\textsuperscript{12} Ibid., p. 33. \textsuperscript{13} Ibid., p. 34.
The trouble, however, is in the personnel, not in the "shape of the tool."

Capable men were wanted. Enlightened intelligence. Devoted hearts. But absolute power should be preserved—the tool ready for the man—for the great autocrat of the future. Razumov believed in him. The logic of history made him unavoidable. . . . "What else?" he asked himself ardently, "could move all that mass in one direction?" Nothing could. Nothing but a single will. 14

In naming one of the present evils at the time of relating Councillor Vikulin's fate, Conrad adds a subtle phrase which may, no doubt, be taken at its face value.

It seems that the savage autocracy, no more than the divine democracy, does not limit its diet exclusively to the bodies of its enemies. It devours its friends and servants as well. 15

It is Conrad's as well as Razumov's conviction that that nation is most ideal which follows a strong centralized rule based on tradition and honor, "a homogeneous mass of mankind with a capability for logical, guided development in a brotherly solidarity of force and aim." 16

The Secret Agent, also concerned with anarchistic revolutionaries and socialist Utopians, contains less direct judgment concerning political democracy. However, the anarchists do make a comparison of the United States and England, and their prospects in each of the two countries.

14 Ibid., p. 35.  
15 Ibid., p. 306.  
16 Ibid., pp. 301-302.
"If the police here knew their business, they would shoot you full of holes with revolvers, or else sandbag you from behind in broad daylight."... "Yes," the Professor assented with utmost readiness. "But for that they would have to face their own institutions. Do you see? That requires uncommon grit. Grit of a special kind."

Ossipon blinked. "I fancy that's exactly what would happen to you if you were to set up your laboratory in the States. They don't stand on ceremony with their institutions there."17

The Professor, admitting the remark is true, feels, however, that the Republic has great anarchistic possibilities.

They have more character over there, and their character is essentially anarchistic. Fertile ground for us, the States—very good ground. The Great Republic has the root of the destructive matter in her. The collective temperament is lawless. Excellent... 18

On the other hand, the unity, the deep-set, long-established strength of English law and spirit make anarchistic activities there quite difficult.

America is all right. It is this country that is dangerous, with her idealistic conception of legality. The social spirit of this people is wrapped up in scrupulous prejudices, and that is fatal to our work.19

Nostromo has as its setting a republic on the defensive against rebels who fight in the name of "liberty" and democracy. It is written altogether from the point of view of the aristocracy, the "Blancos" whose cause is that of a smooth-running government affected by the granting of a

18 Ibid.
19 Ibid., p. 73.
five-year power mandate to the president of the republic, a man of their own choice and from their own class, making him the President-Dictator. At the time of the revolution, Decoud, recounting the history of the country, says:

We convulsed a continent for our independence, only to become the passive prey of a democratic parody, the helpless victims of scoundrels and cut-throats, our institutions a mockery, our laws a farce... And we have sunk so low that when a man like you has awakened our conscience, a stupid barbarian... becomes a deadly danger and an ignorant boastful Indio like Barrios is our defender.20

The democracy of the New World is a lawlessness, a disunified pretence at organization, consisting as it does of authority vested in the multitude, in the heterogeneous masses who, in addition to being ignorant of politics and logical government, swayed by each successive "liberator," are completely lacking in the solidarity of like temperaments and common understanding. Decoud, the skeptic, agrees with Bolivar that trying to effect their independence is like "ploughing the sea."21

Often, even when no issue is made of his preference, Conrad's faith in the monarchical as opposed to the democratic system is confirmed by the point of view from which the novel is written. The hero in The Arrow of Gold, for instance, is a legitimist sympathizer. Though his activities in behalf of the Carlist cause are prompted by his attraction

20Conrad, Nostromo, p. 171. 21Ibid., p. 74.
to Rita and by her persuasive influence, his sympathies are with the Pretender even before he meets the girl. It was such a natural thing that Carlos should fight for his kingdom that the young hero did not even get excited about the affair until his friends called it to his attention.

Most of my acquaintances were legitimists and intensely interested in the events of the frontier of Spain, for political, religious, or romantic reasons. But I was not interested. . . . The affair to me seemed commonplace. The man was attending to his business of a pretender. ²²

The sympathy with traditional government in Nostromo, The Secret Agent, and Under Western Eyes has been pointed out. In the latter, however, in addition to his defense of centralized rule while disapproving of Russian tyranny, the Westerner holds a decidedly English point of view, reminding the reader often that he is English and therefore cannot understand the Russian, whether czarist or revolutionary. The English tradition, he clearly implies, is a sensible and altogether preferable one. At the time of describing Razumov's decision as to whether to disclose Haldin's whereabouts, the Westerner says:

Nations, it may be, have fashioned their governments, but the Governments have paid them back in the same coin. It is unthinkable that any young Englishman would find himself in Razumov's situation. ²³


²³Conrad, Under Western Eyes, p. 25.
There are numerous asides involving the term democracy, showing by the very form of their facetiousness his opinion that the democratic method does not assure virtue nor the greatest degree of satisfaction. For example, Captain Powell in Chance remarks, "An act of Parliament hasn't any sense of its own. It has only the sense that's put into it, and that's precious little sometimes." 24 In the same novel Marlow says of the money-lender convict, "He was a true democrat. He would have done business (a sharp kind of business) with the devil himself." 25 The same type of satirical witticism occurs in The Arrow of Gold, when the journalist says of the late artist-comoisseur:

What made it possible for everybody to get along with our poor dear Allegre was his complete, equable, and impartial contempt for all mankind. There is nothing in that against the purest democratic principles. 26

In a more serious vein, a statement is made in Nostromo concerning Giorgio Viola, the "Garibaldino," described as "full of scorn for the populace, as your austere republican often is." 27

The Italian's scorn for the populace, however, is not censured as much as it perhaps would be by one of more democratic sympathies. Weygandt says that there is no questioning

25 Ibid., p. 75.  
27 Conrad, Nostromo, p. 16.
Conrad's being on the side of the angels, and Guerard observes that though Conrad mentioned to Galsworthy the "moral evil of the class feeling," he urged Sir Hugh Clifford against appeasement. This was in a letter after World War I, when "social democracy" was again a common phrase in Europe.

In a class contest there is no room for conciliation. The attacked class cannot save itself by throwing honest dignity and conviction overboard. The issue is simply life and death, and if anything can save the situation, it is only ruthless courage.

Although Curle indicates that he was "democratic in his mode of life and many of his sympathies," Conrad clearly thought of a nation's population in terms of the aristocracy, the middle classes, or bourgeoisie, and the proletariat. The democratic rule, including in one word the whole of all these, all having equal authority under the name of "the people," does not make for efficiency; rather it favors the opposite, and it cannot be expected to insure liberty, justice, nor peace.

In the first place, "the people" consist of the greedy, dishonest, and ignorant as well as the honest and enlightened, and apparently Conrad had no faith in the predominance of

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28 Weygandt, _op. cit._, p. 370.
29 Guerard, _op. cit._, p. 72.
30 Aubry, _op. cit._, II, p. 216.
31 Curle, _The Last Twelve Years of Conrad_, p. 109.
the latter. In *Nostrorno* he speaks of the proletariat as "peons and Indios, that know nothing either of reason or politics,"\(^{32}\) and in *Under Western Eyes* Razumov says of the peasant workers, "Ejectors! Eligible! Enlightened! Brutes all the same."\(^{33}\) Of the bourgeoisie, Conrad's opinion was that they were only slightly better. Thomas Mann notes this attitude in his preface to the German edition of *The Secret Agent*.

No, Conrad's leaning to the West is not an indication of artistic or intellectual surrender to the bourgeois point of view. He puts into Mr. Vladimir's mouth a question full of social and critical implications when he makes him ask: "I suppose you agree that the middle classes are stupid?" And when Mr. Verloc replies, "They are," we have no doubt that the author shares the opinion of the two men.\(^{34}\)

Mr. Vladimir, though an arch villain, frequently points out some all-too-true weaknesses of the "imbecile bourgeoisie" whose values are placed in the material and whose understanding and tastes are so lacking in enlightenment and refinement.\(^{35}\) In *Chance* the Fynes are typically bourgeois--Mr. Fyne easily lead and Mrs. Fyne unimaginative, headstrong in her women's rights cause. Even worse is Flora's relative, the cardboard box manufacturer, who


\(^{33}\) Conrad, *Under Western Eyes*, p. 204.

\(^{34}\) Thomas Mann, *Past Masters and Other Papers*, p. 241.

displays in his manner "a derisive disapproval of everything that was not lower middle class," has all the "civic virtues in their very meanest form"--an irritating fastidiousness for punctuality and industry, a profound respect for money, "a mean sort of contempt for speculators that fail, and a conceited satisfaction with his own respectable vulgarity."  

Though Rita in The Arrow of Gold, of altogether uncommon charm and intelligence, is of peasant stock, when the young hero expresses surprise at her origin, Mills says:

A strange bird is hatched sometimes in a nest in an unaccountable way, and then the fate of such a bird is bound to be ill-defined, uncertain, and questionable.  

It is this tendency of Conrad's to speak derisively of the masses and to prefer, as a group, the aristocracy to other classes that confirms his partiality to traditional rather than democratic political and social institutions. Maurois states that "he believes in the essential badness of man in the mass," such an attitude stemming, no doubt, from his deeply-instilled aristocratic beliefs which could not accept a faith in the democratic method.

36 Conrad, Chance, pp. 129-130.
38 Maurois, op. cit., p. 195.
CHAPTER VI

ANTI-HUMANITARIANISM

After the foregoing evidence of Conrad's attitude toward the movements of society, it becomes quite obvious that he was strongly anti-humanitarian. He reacted against the whole atmosphere of the movement, the salient feature of which Babbitt says to be "the attempt to minimize the struggle between good and evil in the breast of the individual and transfer this struggle to society" by putting the prime emphasis on humanity and its future progress.¹ This trend of thought, that man's obligations toward sympathetic and brotherly treatment of mankind takes supremacy over the necessity for self-restraint and self-reform, finds expression in various ways, which Babbitt groups into two main categories. These are the utilitarian and the sentimental activities. Those humanitarian activities which come under the former heading are those which contrive to improve the machinery of society and are exemplified by reform movements, including those aiming at violent political or social revolution as well as such attempts at reform as labor movements, movements for equal rights for women, and the like.

The other phase of humanitarianism is expressed in attempts to "diffuse brotherhood" and promote philanthropy and sympathetic understanding. The whole effort to further the progress of mankind and elevate society through promoting brotherly and sympathetic conduct, carried to the extreme of achieving that end through revolutionary reforms, has caused the era of the rise of humanitarianism to be called "the epoch at the same time the most rebellious and the most philanthropic" that the world has known.²

Conrad's attitude toward rebelliousness and reform movements has been pointed out in an earlier chapter. Guerard lists humanitarianism as one of the non-traditional points of view which Conrad considered "an expression of man's vanity and indolence and his propensity to exploit the sufferings and credulity of the poor,"³ so he naturally despised those radical movements theoretically aimed at the perfection of society. In the article on Anatole France, mentioned earlier,⁴ he criticizes France's endorsement of socialism, saying that France overlooks the fact "that there is the menace of death in the humanitarian idea."⁵ Michaelis and his patroness show Conrad's treatment of the socialists and their means of reforming the machinery of society.

²Ibid.  
³Guerard, op. cit., p. 72.  
⁴Page 31.  
Also, the subordination of self-discipline to the perfection of society leads eventually to the passion for liberty, the extreme expression of which is anarchy. This, too, has been discussed earlier, in the characters of Yundt and the Professor in *The Secret Agent*, especially, as well as Jaspara in *Under Western Eyes* and the characters in "An Anarchist" and "The Informer." Here the will to perfect society has reached the extreme of eliminating its conventions and restrictions—its institutions—which go to make up a cohesive society in the first place.

As has been noted, the milder types of reforming movements, though less radical, or anyway less violent, meet with equal disfavor in the eyes of one who despised the resulting disunity and ruin to which he felt the path of humanitarianism would inevitably lead. It has been shown that such causes as the various labor movements, drives for elevation and equalization of the status of women, and other movements with their emotional appeal to the ideal of human progress and human welfare were treated quite unsympathetically in all instances in which they appear in the novels.

The sentimental phase of humanitarianism is expressed in the diffusion of brotherhood, the broadest sense of which is to reform society in general by promoting universal sympathy among mankind. Conrad had no faith in this point of view, holding as he did those social and political prejudices which precluded the possibility of achieving racial
and international brotherhood. He had as Follett expresses it, "a profound sense of racial identities and of the potential tragedy in inter-racial contacts," as well as a belief in characteristics of temperament identifying nationalities which would make impossible international understanding and unity.

In 1899 Conrad wrote to Cunninghame-Graham, disagreeing with his friend’s attitude toward the dream of international fraternity.

I cannot admit the idea of fraternity, not so much because I believe it impracticable, but because its propaganda (the only thing really tangible about it) tends to weaken the national sentiment, the preservation of which is my concern. . . .International fraternity may be an object to strive for. . . .but that illusion imposes by its size alone. Franchement, what would you think of an attempt to promote fraternity amongst people living in the same street, I don't even mention two neighboring streets? Two ends of the same street.

. . .Fraternity means nothing unless the Cain-Abel business. That’s your true fraternity. 7

In a letter to Sir Hugh Clifford written in January, 1919, he states the following opinion of the post-war steps toward internationalism:

There is an awful sense of unreality in all this babel of League of Nations and Reconstruction and Commodities and Industrial arrangements, while Fisher prattles solemnly about education, and Conciliation Boards are being set up to bring about a union of hearts while the bare conciliation of interests is obviously impossible. It is like

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6Follett, op. cit., p. 53.
7Aubry, op. cit., I, p. 269.
people laying out a tennis court on a ground that is already moving under their feet. I ask myself who is being deceived by all these ceremonies? Conrad's opinion of the futility of an attempt at a "union of hearts" or "conciliation of interests" is shown in numerous ways. The very differences that distinguish races make such unions impossible. In Almayer's Folly what Follett calls the "pivot of Almayer's destiny" is his marriage to the Malay girl, who comes to hate him and warns her child not ever to trust white men, because "they despise us that are better than they are but not so strong." Upon leaving her father, the girl says, "I am not of your race. Between your people and me there is also a barrier nothing can remove." She knows he cannot understand her, she explains, for she is a part of the Malay woman whom he could never understand. "The path you wanted me to follow has been closed to me through no fault of mine." But neither could her Malay lover understand the white woman in her.

As he lay looking ardently in her face, . . . he was uneasily conscious of something in her he could not understand. . . . He felt something invisible that stood between them, something that would let him approach her so far, but no farther. No desire, no longing, no effort of will or length of life could destroy this vague feeling of their difference.

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The same lack of understanding because of racial difference is emphasized in *An Outcast of the Islands*, the companion story to *Almayer's Folly*. Aissa realizes the gulf between her and the white man as she pleads for mercy for her lover:

Again she gave him the look that was like a stab, not of anger but of desire; of the intense overpowering desire to see in, to see through, to understand everything: every thought, emotion, purpose; every impulse, every hesitation inside that man; inside that white-clad foreign being who looked at her, who spoke to her, who breathed before her like any other man, but bigger, red-faced, white-haired and mysterious. It was the future clothed in flesh... standing there before her alive and secret, with all the good and evil shut up within the breast of that man; of that man who could be persuaded, cajoled, entreated, perhaps touched, worried; frightened—who knows?—if only first he could be understood.14

There is the same barrier before the white man she loves.

I live with him all the days. All the nights. I look at him; I see his every breath, every glance of his eyes, every movement of his lips. I see nothing else! And I do not understand! I do not understand him!—Him!—My life!15

In "Heart of Darkness," the story of the decadence of a man living among African savages, Kurtz, the European, "is shown drained, diseased, a prey to madness and unutterable horror and death, a witness to the ghastly something in the secret of race that disintegrates all blood but its own."16

Follett states that the intellectual basis of *Almayer's Folly* and *An Outcast of the Islands* is the failure to

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15 Ibid., p. 249.
16 Follett, op. cit., p. 56.
understand that secret of race, while that of "Heart of Darkness" is the tragedy of too intimate understanding of things across the gulf of race.

Kurtz, initiated into monstrous and unnameable rites of savages, loses all his bearings in space and time, and slips back into a twilight of chaos like that before mind dawned upon the body's bestiality.17

In Nostromo the rise of one rebel leader after another, the very instability of any government of the Americas, is attributed in part to "the lawlessness of a populace of all colours and races."18

There is a difference, he felt, in temperament, which is visible in nationalities as well as between different races. In his article on the partition of Poland by Russia and Germany, he says that it is not just the current governments of the ruling nations that make the Polish situation unbearable.

Those governments were characterized in the past as they will be in the future by their people's national traits, which remain utterly incompatible with the Polish mentality and the Polish sentiment.19

In Under Western Eyes the reader is reminded time after time of the difference in temperaments between the western European and the Russians. The Westerner is always aware

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17Ibid.
18Conrad, Nostromo, p. 186.
of his inability to understand his Russian friends as well as those whose ideas are in direct opposition to his own.

"Your mother /Mrs. Haldin/ may mistrust me, too."
"You? Why? You are not a Russian nor a conspirator."

I felt profoundly my European remoteness and said nothing. 20

There is a difference in temperaments between the peoples of the European nations themselves. Numerous times Conrad mentions traits characteristic of one nationality or another, like the generalities about Germans when he speaks of Stromberg in Victory:

He put on a sinister expression to tell us that Heyst had not paid perhaps three visits to his "establishment." This was Heyst's crime, for which Stromberg wished him nothing less than a long and tormented existence. Observe the Teutonic sense of proportion and nice forgiving temper. 21

The German emotional temperament, too, is distinctive. Again Stromberg is the example:

He was beside himself in his lurid, heavy, Teutonic manner, so unlike the picturesque lively rage of the Latin races. 22

The Teutonic temperament was the object of Conrad's special disfavor, even before Germany became England's foe in World War I, and during that conflict he remembered with renewed animosity some earlier experiences involving Germans. Of one who had been a fellow passenger aboard ship, he said:

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20 Conrad, Under Western Eyes, p. 336.
21 Conrad, Victory, p. 25.
22 Ibid., p. 106.
He trod the deck of that decadent British ship with a scornful foot while his breast (and to a large extent his stomach too) appeared expanded by the consciousness of a superior destiny. Later I could observe the same truculent bearing, touched with the racial grotesqueness, in the men of the Landwehr Corps.  

In recalling a storm experience on the North Sea, he makes this aside remark:

There had been a very troublesome week of it, including one hateful night—or night of hate (it is not for nothing that the North Sea is called the German Ocean)—when all the fury stored in its heart seemed to concentrate on that ship.

His praise of the English was as lavish as his condemnation of the Russian or German national traits. After describing one feat of seamanship in *Youth*, he digresses for a little while to consider the character of the English sailors. It was not a result of sense of duty, praise, example, or wages that they acted as they did, he says.

It was something in them inborn, and subtle and everlasting. I don't say positively that the crew of a French or German merchantman wouldn't have done it, but I doubt whether it would be done in the same way. There was a completeness in it, something solid like a principle and masterful like an instinct—a disclosure of something secret—of that hidden something, that gift of good or evil that makes racial differences, that shapes the fate of nations.

Gould in *Nostromo*, though a native of the Latin-American

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repulic, is of English blood, and his English characteristics are repeatedly emphasized. As an individual he has a tragic weakness, but his English temperament is always in his favor.

Thus Conrad shows that he definitely believes there is a gulf between races and nationalities that no kind of humanitarian brotherhood movement can bring together. In Chance he speaks of this through Marlow:

Differences in politics, in ethics, and even in aesthetics need not arouse angry antagonism. One's opinion may change; one's tastes may alter--in fact they do. One's very conception of virtue is at the mercy of some felicitous temptation which may be sprung on one any day. All these things are perpetually on the swing. But a temperamental difference, temperament being immutable, is the parent of hate. 26

The humanitarian attitude toward internationalism, assuming that a dropping of barriers between nations will automatically bring about the peace and unity that society is seeking, is not only impossible in its very definition, but endeavors toward such relations end in disunity and tragedy. This view is obvious in Nostromo, which as Follett points out, is permeated throughout with the suggestion that national identities must not be tampered with from the outside in the name of progress. 27

26 Conrad, Chance, p. 54.

relationships merely become an example of imperialistic invasion, and instead of the peace and unity of a brotherhood of nations with a common commercial interest, the stronger nations take advantage of their power; the native population fight with the imported alien laborers; and the people within the nation become rebellious and finally divide into separate states.

Sentimental humanitarianism is no more successful in effecting personal peace and understanding than it is in terms of nations and peoples. As Conrad saw it, the inner character of the individual is of prime importance, his relationship with his fellow men depending on that, rather than mere philanthropic or sympathetic gestures, which are never sufficient in themselves to fulfill man's obligations to the group with which he identifies himself. Like rebellious reform, with which it has a common origin, an obsessing philanthropy merely obscures the real issue of the inner struggle to develop the type of character necessary to maintain the fidelity which is a requisite for inner peace. For that reason Conrad despised the tendency to draw attention to the suffering or to arouse sympathy for the "underdog." Ford states that Conrad's indignation at Galsworthy's "dogged humanitarianism" went beyond bounds, and that he once said of his friend that he believed if all the wrongs were righted, Galsworthy would be unhappy, for
he then would have nothing to write about. 28 Conrad himself, as Mann observes in his discussion of Conrad's western point of view, "seems to have little memory of the reverence for suffering which is so characteristic of eastern Christianity." 29 This lack of reverence for suffering does not mean a lack of humaneness or pity, but a disregard for the preoccupation with arousing sympathy which is characteristic of the humanitarian principle. For example, Mrs. Gould in her kindness and untiring charitable activities is genuinely interested in helping those who need her services; whereas the aunt in "Heart of Darkness," though she is deeply moved by the plight of the ill-used workers and the poor savages, is merely emotionally affected and does nothing but talk about it. Also, the philanthropies of Holroyd in the form of endowments to churches mean nothing in the light of his other activities. His philanthropy is for philanthropy's sake; his uncharitable motives, his "hobby" of not just conducting a profitable business but "running a man" make him an example of humanitarianism's weakness—the omission of the primary requirement of adherence to a higher, restraining moral law.

Conrad's feeling is shown in two ways, his treatment of those groups and individuals who subscribe to that field

28Ford, Portraits from Life, p. 136.
29Mann, op. cit., p. 240.
of thought which places philanthropy before self-discipline and his own conspicuous avoidance of opportunities to arouse sympathy, either for groups or for the individual underdog.

Stevie, the half-witted brother who is the innocent victim of the bombing outrage in *The Secret Agent*, is treated in a most matter-of-fact manner, completely without comment as to his pitiable condition or the total injustice of his end as a victim of the explosion. His abnormality is noted, its part in Stevie's being selected the carrier of the bomb is made quite clear, but nowhere does the author seek the reader's pity; the emphasis is on other points of interest.

James Wait, the dying Negro aboard the *Narcissus*, receives no comment regarding his status as the "underdog," though there is every opportunity for pointing out the misfortunes of his racial difference as well as his physical condition and his fear of death. It has been noted, too, that the sailors, rather than being pitied for their hard life and the tyranny of their officers, are praised for choosing that life and for scorning those who would pity them.

Flora, in *Chance*, the victim of a succession of circumstances beyond her control which result in a lack of self-confidence, almost an inferiority complex, which almost drives her to despair, is never pointed to as pitiable nor deserving of sympathy. The writer interested
in provoking the reader's sympathies could easily have treated her as a victim of society's neglect, but Conrad's interest is in the part that pure "chance" plays in her story, not in the fact that she is unfortunate.

Groups which are usually the object of pity and to whom the humanitarians call special attention are never treated as "causes" in Conrad's works. The peasants of Under Western Eyes, though they as Russian workers are admitted to be unfortunate, are never the object of serious pitying attention; when they are mentioned, it is through the mouths of the revolutionaries who themselves are unfavorably presented, or through Razumov, who mentions them only as a class incapable of the responsibilities of making decisions relative to government.

The Indios and peons in Nostromo are never made the objects of pity. The story is presented from the aristocrats' point of view, and though the changes of industrialization, including advent of labor problems, are mentioned, the victims of those problems are never given special attention. The opportunity to present the cause of the laborer is again overlooked in favor of attacking the bigger problem of the effect of imperialism and the progress of material interest on the nation itself.

The natives in the South Seas stories are not treated as unfortunates, the stories all being told from the
viewpoint of the white man, and the existing conditions taken for granted. The white man is recognized as being the invader, but the situation is not deplored. Sir Hugh Clifford, who was Conrad's very dear friend, states that Conrad's point of view is Eurasian; "it is in the Eurasian that color prejudice and contemptuous hatred of the native have their culmination."  

Conrad's feeling is not so much a hatred of the natives as a conviction that there is no meeting-ground between them and the white man, and his lack of making a point of their disadvantage is consistent with his treatment of all such sufferers.

Finally, Conrad's anti-humanitarian views are clearly discernible in his treatment of character. Humanitarianism, it has been stated, places man's first obligation toward society, and in that emphasis presupposes a naturalistic philosophy that, in effect, man is not governed by a law separate from that of all nature; that man's natural state, therefore, does not need restriction nor reform; that society will be perfect as long as men act charitably toward one another.  

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31 Irving Babbitt, Literature and the American College, p. 31.
Conrad did not believe that man's nature nor his institutions were perfectible in the first place, and, in addition, his treatment of his characters shows that he felt man's first obligation to be to a moral law which regulates the human community, and that fidelity to that law is his only means of remaining within that solidarity "which binds together all humanity."\textsuperscript{32}

In every man, by Conrad's view, there was some quality in him which drew him toward the universal current of human life. There was also in human nature a contrary temptation to pull away from that current.\textsuperscript{33}

Thus man's expansive, sympathetic activities are only half the requirement; he must also be on guard lest he be tempted to assert his power, "to individualize and separate himself from his fellow men."\textsuperscript{34}

This struggle is the main theme of a number of the novels, in which the main character is confronted with the temptation to "assert his power" or to escape his responsibility and, yielding, finds himself in the position of trying to regain his "mortal identity" in the solidarity of mankind. Razumov betrayed his fellow student, and though acting in accordance with his convictions in the matter of social revolution, he was redeemed only when he confessed

\textsuperscript{32}Conrad, Preface to The Nigger of the Narcissus, p. xii.
\textsuperscript{33}Wright, op. cit., p. 39.
\textsuperscript{34}Ibid., p. 40.
his position and ceased the deception in which he had been living. Jim's breach of faith by way of abandoning ship was redeemed only when he relinquished his chance for life and love, unrelenting this time in the principle of honor. Nostromo, to his own knowledge only, broke his countrymen's faith in his incorruptibility by stealing the silver entrusted to his care, and died unredeemed, still honored by his townsmen and busy in their service, but haunted by his own knowledge of his having broken faith.

There are others—Captain Whalley of "The End of the Tether," Captain McWhirr of Typhoon, Willems of An Outcast of the Islands, others, whose inner struggle is a matter of infidelity to and redemption by the moral law by which man keeps within the solidarity of humanity. This solidarity, deeper than the sentimental brotherhood of the humanitarians, is the inner feeling of accord with the destiny of mankind.
CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION.

Conrad's early life and background as a member of the traditional aristocracy in Poland and his career as a ship's officer naturally instilled in him the conservative and aristocratic tastes which are revealed in his mode of life in England. The same kind of taste is shown in his choice of friends, mostly literary men, who were members of the gentility and who were almost all exemplary of the typical conservative, upper-class Englishman.

This conservatism is revealed in Conrad's writing by his treatment of the various subjects and characters. The liberals whom Conrad observed and about whom he wrote were malcontents who rebelled against restrictions or responsibilities or else were victims of their own vanity. The new generation, having learned to speak, "had also learned how to whine," and Conrad's liberals, whether violent or merely sentimental, are whiners.

The rebels, whether socialists, violent anarchists, or merely sentimental dreamers of reform, usually entertain a pet dream for a Utopian society fitting their own widely varying formulas. Conrad, convinced that human institutions
are imperfectional, pictures Utopian dreams as utterly ridiculous.

A popular dream among nations, democracy was, in Conrad's opinion, inferior to traditional monarchy because with its decentralized plan and its completely electoral methods it could never act efficiently, nor maintain the unity and the quality of leadership necessary for stable existence. When the type of government is a factor in the story, Conrad's is always the traditional point of view; in all cases the writer is "on the side of the angels," the perspective being from the higher vantage point of the upper class looking down upon the masses.

As a conservative in all fields, Conrad was against all phases of humanitarianism and shows his disfavor through those characters and movements exemplary of humanitarian principles. His hatred of rebellion, his disbelief in the dream of comradeship and real understanding between races, and his conviction that a philanthropic disposition toward one's neighbors does not assure fidelity to the supreme moral law are all revealed in his treatment of both character and situation.

Since Conrad's whole philosophy is based on man's obligation to be restrained by moral law in order to fit into the solidarity of the community of humanity, humanitarianism's subordination of the individual's inner struggle
between good and evil is contrary to Conrad's treatment of character. Heyst, Jim, Mostrom, and the rest find that they have to submit to this moral law in order to fit into the community of men and thus find themselves.

Conrad stated that it was the privilege of the novelist to reveal his confessions and innermost beliefs. He might have gone further and said that if he is a sincere writer, he has no choice; those beliefs which are a part of his philosophy reveal themselves in the characters, in the situations, and in the events which make up the tale. So it is that Conrad's anti-liberalism finds expression in his creative works as well as in his mode of life and his explicit philosophy.
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**Articles**

