THE PEOPLE AS MUSICIAN

The theorists of the French Revolution based their program on what they took to be the nature of man as man. There were even members of the clergy who could accept this program with equanimity. Abbé Joli, for instance, vicar of the parish of Limoux in Languedoc, found it possible to make the following statement from his pulpit.

Christians, you know that we are born all equal in our rights; we are today a nation of brothers; we no longer expect distinctions other than those that are assured by our merits, our talents, and our virtues. . . . That is the first law of the august code which our legislators are about to transmit to you. They received it themselves from God, for they found its source in the Gospels. And it is above all this happy conformity with the principles of Jesus Christ which should make it dear to us and worthy of our respect. . . . A Christian orator cried out not long ago, “Although a priest, I would abjure the Gospels if they did not contain the happiness of my fellow citizens.” And I, I would abjure the Constitution, if equality were not its base.

There was in those early days of the Revolution a veritable enthusiasm for the doctrine of the uniformity of human nature. As A. Sorel has pointed out in L’Europe et la Révolution Française (p. 538), the king under the Ancien Régime was the living image of France, and the love of country was identified with devotion to the king. But when sovereignty was transferred to the People, the nation took the place of the king, and the love of country in its turn became respect for the laws. But since the laws were based on reason, according to popular belief, the Revolution had as its primary task the establishment of the rule of reason, and it

was to accomplish this task not for one people alone but for humanity. Patriotism thus became identified with respect for the Rights of Man. The true patriot was a citizen of the world, but the "world" was left undefined. Whatever it meant, it was a country without frontiers, without land, sans souvenirs et sans tombeaux. It was, though many of the revolutionists may not have known this, both the Cosmopolis of the Stoics and the City of God of Saint Augustine.

If Humanity and not Frenchmen, Englishmen, and Germans, were one's fellow citizens, then there must be a common essence in all men and the benefits of the Revolution must be conferred on all alike. Was it not in fact the duty of the revolutionists to insure that all men have the priceless gifts of liberty, equality, and fraternity? In 1796 when Napoleon menaced Venice, he opened his proclamation to the Venetians with the words, "It was to deliver the fairest land of Europe from the iron yoke of the proud house of Austria that the French Army has braved the most difficult obstacles." (Moniteur, Vol. 28, p. 314). Conventional as such words have become in the mouths of conquering generals, and empty as they now seem, there can be little doubt in the mind of one who reads the writings of the time that the revolutionists felt it their mission to make the whole world republican and to treat its inhabitants as if bound to them by the link of brotherhood. Thus it was that the Moniteur (Vol. 27, p. 100) proclaimed Kant's Project of Perpetual Peace a new Gospel, particularly those parts of it which suggested that it was the destiny of a powerful republic to become the center of a federation of other states for the purpose of assuring the rights of the people.

The French maintained that all of their revolutionary wars were fought in defense of the subjugated. The Italians, the Dutch, the Germans along the Rhine were all to be freed, not conquered. These oppressed peoples had all left their Creator's hands alike; they were all the victims of tyrants; they were all to share equally in the blessings of republicanism. It was the insistence upon hu-
manity as a universal, incarnate in all men, which roused the scorn of the Catholic opponents of the Revolution. "I see Man nowhere," cried Joseph de Maistre, "I see Germans, Frenchmen, Italians, but never Man." So Gobineau was to say, "There is no ideal man. Man does not exist. If I am convinced that he will never be discovered, it is above all because of language. On this basis I can recognize him who possesses Finnish, him of the Arian system, or him of Semitic compounds, but absolute Man, him I do not know." 2 Yet the religion whose return to popularity de Maistre, if not Gobineau, was striving to effect had long ago assumed as one of its primary axioms that racial and national differences are inessential. This meant more for Christians than it did for its Stoic proponents. For the dogmas of inherited guilt and vicarious atonement alone, to say nothing of the Augustinian theory of history, demanded that men be instances of Man, as triangles are instances of triangularity.

Hence the federation of states under one great republic was in spite of de Maistre's hatred of revolutionary notions of Humanity, duplicated in his plea for a theocratic empire under the Pope. In both cases there was no question of the right of a nation to exist as a separate and distinct unit. The question in both cases was how to keep these unit nations from straying from the path of rectitude. The injustice which Kant seemed to be aiming at was war, but as he insisted himself, one of the worst features of war was the consequent placing of nations under foreign yokes against their will. The revolutionists were liberating people to govern themselves, for in self-government they saw the only cure for despotism. De Maistre agreed that despotism was an evil but maintained that the only check on the despot was the spiritual check of the pope. In other words, de Maistre made the usual medieval distinction between spiritual and temporal sovereignty. He would have left the nations temporally free but spiritually under papal control. That this was no solution to the problem

had been pointed out to him, for, as he could see, the spiritual supremacy of the pope was bound to have temporal effects. However, when faced with such an objection, de Maistre evaded the issue by replying that he was not responsible for the ultimate consequences of the doctrine but that, since the pope could do no wrong, these consequences could not be evil.

*Du Pape* was written in 1817. The Bourbons were back on the throne. De Maistre and the Theological School, as it was called, found the king for whose return they had pleaded in no wise anxious to renounce any of his sovereign prerogatives even with papal supervision as a reward. The international theocracy was looked upon more or less as the intellectual pastime of clericals and soon it disappeared from sight.

At the same time, this theory was not without influence. One finds it appearing most noticeably in the early Lamennais. But before discussing Lamennais’ ideas, it may be well to point out that the doctrines of the Revolution and those of the Counter-Revolution seemed to depreciate the importance of national boundaries. What is more curious, their reasons were not very different. The revolutionists believed that humanity was better off spiritually if protected by the ideals of liberty, equality, and fraternity. Nationalism, which to them meant monarchism, prevented the exercise of such protection. Hence it was the moral duty of men who did enjoy protection to see that their fellows in other countries enjoyed it as well. Joseph de Maistre also believed in a supernatural community. But he also believed that such a community existed already in the Church. The program of the Church was neither liberty nor equality, but it was to a certain extent fraternity. Thus Christians who were not zealous adherents of the papacy saw no reason to object to the internationalism of the revolutionists.

Lamennais’ fundamental postulate was that the sole test of truth lay in the reason of the race as opposed to the reason of the individual. The reason of the race is an expression of that solidarity which is so marked in Saint Augustine and in the Church
dogmas mentioned above. But just as men are welded into na­tions by the solidarity of their common national tradition, so all mankind is welded into one by its common religious tradition. This religious tradition is found in the remnants of Catholicism remaining in the degenerate sects, including even idolatry.³

But, said Lamennais in his later years, what stands between the binding power of religion and humanity? What prevents a union of all peoples under God? The Seven Kings, who in his Paroles d’un Croyant plan for the perpetual slavery of the human race, are the answer. Slavery is opposed by religion, science, thought; it is reinforced by national boundaries, local pride, fear, and luxury. Accordingly, these things must be destroyed, and above all, national boundaries. A quotation or two may not be amiss.

Man does not live alone. God has not destined for him this solitary existence. He neither preserves himself from death nor develops according to his nature except in society, by union with his kind. And the union of individuals forms peoples and the union of peoples forms mankind or the universal family for whose foundation we ought to labor unceasingly so that the sum of evil whose impure source is egotism may diminish also unceasingly and that of God’s benefactions spread along our earthly road may increase in the same proportion.⁴

Again, after preaching the equality of man before God, he maintained that princes are the result of sin because they were appointed to help men in their war against their fellows. Thus their power comes from God and from the people and is not inherent in themselves as a group set apart.

[God] has united men into families, and all the families are sisters; He has united them into nations, and all the nations are sisters; and whosoever separates family from family, nation from nation, divides what God has joined. He is doing the work of Satan. . . . And that which unites family to family, nation to nation, is first

³. For Lamennais at this time non-Catholic religions were more or less degenerate forms of Catholicism, just as noncivilized societies were remnants of the societies dispersed when the Tower of Babel was destroyed.
of all the law of God, the law of justice and of charity, and then the law of liberty, which is also a law of God.  

This Mennasian doctrine of internationalism was invented to preserve the liberty and solidarity of mankind. Lamennais, like Bonald and de Maistre, believed that man out of society—the individual by himself—is a mere point. Consequently, to free the individual is not to remove social ties; it is, however, to remove political ties. The only authority he thinks legitimate is the authority of duty, which in itself, though inspired and commanded by God, yet is consonant with the inner nature of man. Man is freest to develop his talents socially, but society demands no secular or political government. Hence the dream of Lamennais was a Europe which would be politically one but socially diverse—diverse as the natural talents of the various peoples demanded. But how diverse the results might be was never appreciated by Lamennais. Nor did he realize the possibility that some peoples might express their talents in belligerency and depredation.

There was, then, little that was precise in Lamennais' political speculations, though in his later years (1851) he became more interested in the actualization of his plans. According to his biographer, Duine, he hoped to see a federation of European nations, beginning with the Latin nations as a nucleus. His project, printed as Comité démocratique français-espagnol-italien, is unfortunately not available in American libraries, and nothing definite can be said about it until the plan is reprinted.

In August, 1849 a peace congress was held in Paris. Victor Hugo was elected its president, Cobden its vice-president. In the address with which Hugo opened the congress we recognize the leading ideas of his predecessor—the emphasis upon fraternity, upon the supposed fact that nations would preserve their cultural individuality through their union. In conclusion he said,

5. Paroles d'un Croyant, section 19.
6. Thus he believed in what was later called regionalism.
7. F. Duine, La Mennais, p. 291.
From now on the end of great statesmanship, of true statesmanship, will be this: to recognize all nationalities, to restore the historic unity of peoples, and to bind this unity to civilization by peace, to enlarge ceaselessly the group of civilized peoples, to set a good example to peoples still barbarous, to replace battles with votes, in short, and this sums it all up, to give the last word to justice which the old world gave to force.8

In a man like Victor Hugo, to whom phrases counted somewhat more than ideas, it is interesting to observe his clinging to old phrases, to old Mennasian phrases. In 1869, twenty years after the Paris Peace Congress, he was offered the honorary presidency of the Lausanne Peace Congress. Addressing his “fellow citizens of the United States of Europe” from Brussels, he penned sentences that but for their declamatory quality might have been written by the author of Le Livre du Peuple.

Civilization tends invincibly towards a unity of speech, of measure, of coinage, and to the fusions of the nations in humanity which is unity supreme. Concord has a synonym, simplification. So wealth and life have a synonym, circulation. The first of all servitudes is the frontier.

Who says frontier says ligature. Cut the ligature, wipe out the frontier, do away with the customs officer, do away with the soldier, in other words, be free. Peace will follow.

The cause of the frontier is royalty. Kings must divide peoples if they hope to rule over them. For defense, kings need soldiers; to live, soldiers need murder; to murder, soldiers need war. Hence frontiers produce war.9

The question naturally arises of the affiliations of Lamennais’ doctrines of internationalism, his work on the Comité démocratique, with those of Ledru-Rollin, Mazzini, Ruge, and Darasz, the Comité démocratique Européen Central, formed about the

middle of 1850 to unite all Europe in one organization of democratic governments. In the nature of the case information about the inner workings of this Comité is meager.\(^{10}\) We know, of course, of the close personal relations between Lamennais and Ledru-Rollin, but whether their two projects were related I have not as yet been able to discover. The aims of the two were probably not different. Ledru-Rollin certainly, and presumably Lamennais as well, was anxious to form a federation of nations whose purpose would be the prevention of war and opposition to monarchy. Ledru-Rollin and Mazzini, living in exile in London, were joined by Kossuth, who with them issued a manifesto in September, 1855, calling for international action for the realization of their dream. They hailed the fall of Sebastopol as the beginning of a world war, after which European democracy would be organized, Poland, Hungary, and Italy might be freed from foreign domination, France from despotism. The war must be fought and won not by governments then existing, but by the peoples in revolt. But of this, as of all the works of this committee, nothing resulted.

The development of this plan changed its nature. Now the emphasis was no longer on the cultural result that would obtain if national frontiers were destroyed, but rather on the political

\(^{10}\) There is an account of Ledru-Rollin's committee in A. R. Calman's *Ledru-Rollin après 1848*. It may have been an outgrowth of Mazzini's Young Europe. The difference between Mazzini's internationalism and what was called cosmopolitanism is that the latter concerned the whole human race and its individual members, whereas the former was based on country. "For us," said Mazzini, "the starting point is Country; the object or aim is Collective Humanity. For those who call themselves cosmopolitans, the aim may be Humanity, but the starting point is Individual Man." See his *Life and Writings*, Vol. 3, p. 7. There is an account of Young Europe there also, on pp. 35 ff. Cf. "The Holy Alliance of People" (1849), *ibid.*, Vol. 5, pp. 265 ff. For the reciprocity between Country and Humanity, rights and duties, see *The Duties of Man*, chapter 4, *ibid.*, Vol. 4, p. 58. The pact of Young Europe was signed April 15, 1834, with representatives of Germany, Poland, and Italy.
result. Mazzini, Ledru-Rollin, and Kossuth were at the time more interested in democratizing Europe through the concerted action of the proletariat than in any moral effect this might have upon the welfare of mankind. In fact, what each was thinking of was the liberation of the particular nation to which he happened to belong from the particular government under which it was ruled. The situation, as it then stood, was the third of three stages of development. We have (1) de Maistre in opposition to the Revolution reviving the medieval idea of a spiritual empire under the Pope; (2) Lamennais maintaining that existing national political differences prevented the functioning of the spiritual empire, with God in the place of the pope; (3) the triumvirate of Mazzini, Ledru-Rollin, and Kossuth developing a plan of realizing this empire through a mass revolution against national governments. Out of it all the United States of Europe, a federation like those of the Western Hemisphere, would be formed.

In 1826, however, Théodore Jouffroy developed another argument for internationalism which again hoped for the cultural development of each of the nations by eliminating their political differences. His premises were different from those of Lamennais and his followers, and, since Jouffroy is a neglected figure, I shall give more space to his ideas than might be considered reasonable.

There are in the world, he believed, three civilizations, the Christian, the Muslim, the Brahmin, which in turn are located in Western Europe and America, the Near East, and the Far East, respectively. These civilizations are differentiated by the religions which they profess, for even the blacks in Haiti lead a European life because they are Christians. As for savages, they do not count, having neither religion nor civilization. They will sooner or later be won over to Christianity because their countries are in the hands of Christians. In fact, Jouffroy believed that the future was to be a Christian future. It is just as well that he died young.

Among the Christian nations there are four which are pre-eminent and which excel in different things—Germany, France,
England, and the United States. "Germany," he says (p. 129), "is that country in the world in which the sources of instruction are most opened and the most wisely governed, but she is far from the political perfection of France, England, and the United States. England is not less far from our civil order [notre ordre civil] and our impartiality, and we from her public spirit, industry, and several of her institutions. Finally, the European nations would have much to learn from the United States in economy and tolerance."

These countries have each reached the end of their particular development.

The rest of Christian civilization will have to follow these three nations as they would follow a few chosen men themselves. It is thus the duty of these few leaders to study the needs of humanity as a whole.

But exactly what is this "humanity" of which Jouffroy speaks? It is that of which Vico and Herder had spoken before him and of which, he thought, Thomas Reid had spoken in his doctrine of common sense. But Jouffroy specifically thinks the differentia of man lies in his mutability.\footnote{11 See his "Réflexions sur la philosophie de l'Histoire," in Mélanges Philosophiques, p. 52.} The beasts remain what they were at creation; man has improved. But if he has improved, it is attributable to his intelligence. History, therefore, is the study of man's intelligence as applied to his natural condition. It is expressed in poetry and philosophy and develops in accordance with a definite law. This law had not been clearly defined by earlier philosophers of history, Bossuet, Vico, and Herder,\footnote{12 "Bossuet, Vico, Herder," ibid., p. 86.} but at least Bossuet, unlike Herder, did see that humanity was one and that human thought developed freely and spontaneously.

The intelligence of the race was what Reid had called common sense. Everyone, says Jouffroy,\footnote{13 "De la philosophie et du Sens Commun," ibid., p. 157.} understands by common sense a certain number of principles or self-evident notions whence...
all men draw the conduct of their judgments and the rules of their conduct. These principles are simply “the positive solutions” of the major problems of philosophy, such as the nature of good and evil, beauty and ugliness. It is thus a philosophy anterior to the philosophies of the schools and it reconciles them. It is not, however, a “conscious” philosophy; it is manifested in our actions: we all act as if we were inspired by it. Philosophy proper is simply a clarification of its dim but reliable insights. It is the operation of common sense that is impeded by nationalism. So that the problem of internationalism in Jouffroy is a means of releasing the reason of humanity and, since that reason cannot err, of attaining truth.

The argument for internationalism was destined to be elaborated in greatest detail by Auguste Comte, though a study of the matter more thoroughgoing than this one would certainly include men like Saint-Martin, Saint-Simon, Fourier, Proudhon, and later, Marx. Comte acknowledged that his debt to Catholicism was great, for that religion alone, he believed, appreciated the full meaning of human solidarity and unity. To call Comte an inverted Catholic is now the most worn of scholarly clichés, but there is a good bit of truth in it. Humanity, he believed, was not only one “laterally,” exhibiting a complete coherence of parts, but was one longitudinally as well, having a single life history.

The notion that mankind lived the life of an individual had been expressed most clearly in Condorcet, though he had predecessors. Since the rise of evolutionism as an explanatory technique, we have become accustomed to such phrases as “the childhood of the race,” but it must not be forgotten they had a novel ring to them in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. For if Catholicism had taught the solidarity of humankind, it had not believed in progress. Human beings had a logical unity, the unity of members of a single logical class which formed a family. But the family itself had no history, described no curve of growth, did
not progress. Christian history was a series of events determined by man's supernatural relations and, though never consistently worked out even by Bossuet, tended to overlook the possibility that the organism which its students often said society was might have a life of its own above or apart from that of its members. That was Condorcet's contribution to Comte, and in the Esquisse he retraced the steps which he supposed humanity to have taken and forecast the steps which it would take in the future.

Comte's result was the famous Law of the Three Stages with its supposed implications. It would be absurd to expound the law here; it is enough to say that it was believed to describe the evolution of society-as-a-whole and to suggest to the social reformer ways of ameliorating the lot of man. Comte thought that the final stage of civilization had been opened with the French Revolution, a stage in which metaphysics had disappeared, all knowledge had become scientific, and all science positivistic. In this stage industry would take the place of warfare. It would develop into a time of universal order and peace.

But Comte did not stop with vague predictions of this sort. He had a plan for the organization of this society which was as detailed as a litany. Humanity as a unit seems a negation of nationality, but Comte did not commit the error of neglecting human differences for the sake of human similarities. Accordingly, he sharply distinguished between the spiritual and temporal interests of mankind, and whereas he considered the former to be international, he realized that the latter were national. This does not mean that he wished to preserve the national frontiers of his day. On the contrary, he recognized their viciousness and would have redrawn almost all of them. But he did see the value of keeping smaller national units for administrative purposes. In fact, even spiritually he recognized five leading civilizations, the three Latin, the British, and the German. Curiously enough, the regionalism of Comte was almost the reverse of that of Lamennais, with whom
he had such close social affiliations. Lamennais' plea for regionalism was almost wholly spiritual, his plea for internationalism temporal.

The details of Comte's plan for reorganizing Europe, with its pontifex maximus, its 14,000 bankers, its 70 republics, and so on, can well be omitted from this essay. What is important for our purposes is that for Comte government would tend to become more and more spiritual as it facilitated the natural progress of human intercourse.14 As it would become more spiritual, the political administration of the associated republics would become less serious. For he believed that human beings could be brought by education to act with the same pacific motives toward other nationals as they seem to have toward their fellow citizens. Just as the members of a family do not—or rather did not in the France of 1840—require governmental interference in their private affairs, or make war upon one another, so the new nations would learn to rely upon one another for mutual support.15 A by-product of this arrangement would be universal peace, for “war could be organized only for one's native country,” whereas labor becomes “systematizable” only by relating it to humanity. All the city states were naturally rivals in the military age, either by all striving simultaneously for a domination necessarily unique, or by separately resisting the forced incorporation that alone would unite them. Contrariwise, the industrial state makes them spontaneously converge by assigning to each an end which can become universal because it always remains external to any given nation. The exploitation common to the divers republics of terrestrial domains involves a partition of duties equivalent to that which coordinates the different classes of which each people is composed.16 It is to be remembered that Comte did not believe that the harmonizing of economic interests and activities would suffice to bring about

universal peace but felt that it must be supplemented by a vigorous moral discipline which would translate moral standards from an individual to a social idiom.¹⁷

Such was the complexity of early nineteenth-century thought on nationalism and internationalism. In the main, two sets of interests were distinguished, the spiritual and the temporal. Hence one could be a cultural (or spiritual) nationalist and a temporal internationalist, a cultural and temporal nationalist, a cultural and temporal internationalist, and obviously a cultural and temporal nationalist.

The situation in the first quarter of the nineteenth century then was divided into four camps, depending on whether one was more interested in cultural or political autonomy. It is the former group that is the more important to us. That each People had its own culture had been approached from the point of view of national character, but the arts of a nation had never been considered as relevant to its character. The Germans, for instance, might be thought of as aggressive, brutal, gluttonous, and chaste, but their painting, sculpture, architecture, and music were appraised without consideration for any of these traits. Similarly the French might be thought of as capricious, amorous, arrogant, and so on, but no one ever thought of applying these adjectives to Chartres Cathedral. English poetry was not said to be perfidious nor Italian to be treacherous. The split between one's estimate of a work of art and of a people was definite and unbridged.

This may have been because during the sixteenth century the individual artist's personality came to the fore. It was the era of Michelangelo, when the individual artist's personality was emphasized and when artists were supposed to live their own lives, to gain privileges which other men could not enjoy, to exhibit eccentricities, and to win great renown. Vasari's Lives is full of stories illuminating this side of the artistic career. And, as everyone

¹⁷. Ibid., p. 214.
knows, the idea grew until today it is accepted as dogma. "The artist sees differently"; he has an artistic temperament; he dresses differently; his morals are different and must not be judged by the standards that apply to ordinary people. If carried to its logical conclusion this ought to imply that a work of art must be judged by no common or overindividual standards of beauty or artistic excellence but by its adequacy in expressing its maker's personality, sometimes called his purpose.

The idea that a nation had an art peculiar to itself was given popularity by Herder. His aim was to show that a nation need not imitate classic or, what amounted to the same thing in his time, French art. The nation of which he was thinking was one that did not then exist—Germany—but which began to exist after the Napoleonic wars, bit by bit, until in 1938 it included every people which spoke some sort of German. If World War II had not ended in an allied victory, Germany would no doubt have included Switzerland and all of Scandinavia, northern France, and possibly even England. For it was language above all that determined national character according to Hitler, and all people whose mother tongue was Germanic were part of the German Folk. This did not apply to Jews, nor would it apply to Negroes living in any so-called Germanic country. But Hitler was superior to the Law of Contradiction. In any event, Herder's aim was to make the German language and German literature respectable, and the aim was understandable in view of the imitations of the French court which dotted the Germanic principalities.

It is obvious that a movement so powerful as the growth of national cultures could not be the work of one man. The rise of vernacular serious literature, literature as philosophic and scientific, previously written in Latin, meant that the learned world was broken up, as is true today. An American physicist, for instance, who cannot read French and German, and perhaps Russian and Chinese, does not know the literature of his subject. This was not true even as late as the seventeenth century. Newton and Des-
cartes wrote their major works in Latin, and since every educated man could read Latin, these works quickly spread throughout the European community. Thus serious thought was international in expression and no one could speak reasonably of French mathematics or German chemistry.

Belles lettres had been national from the Middle Ages on, though Latin was occasionally used by authors for special purposes. The Latin poems of Milton are no more significant in the history of literature, though more idiomatic, than the French poems of T. S. Eliot. Similarly, painting was national, and even in the early Renaissance, Flemish painters were distinguished by style and indeed by their use of oils from Italian. Here the costume of the personages and the landscape were distinguishing marks. But the subject matter, whether taken from the Bible or classical mythology, was international, and though Cranach’s Judgment of Paris does not resemble Raphael’s, anyone seeing either would know what it illustrated. Even landscapes and still lifes presented no problems of translation. No one seeing one of Caravaggio’s baskets of fruit would wonder what it was all about.

The architect too was likely to be observant of certain rules, whether derived from Vitruvius or Alberti or imposed by the local materials and climate; and though there were regional variations of style in architecture, they were found more in domestic architecture, guildhalls, hôtels-de-ville, than in palaces and châteaux and churches. When Gothic architecture, which was almost general in Europe became recessive (the exception being Italy), Renaissance and Baroque came in; and though historians can differentiate between northern and southern Baroque, French, English, and Italian Renaissance, there is enough similarity in all these styles to make the classifications reasonable if not exact.

The only one of these arts which could prove an obstacle to comprehension is literature. A man does not need to know German to appreciate Fischer von Erlach, nor Dutch to appreciate Rem-

18. Now extant only in a drawing and an engraving by Marcantonio.
brandt. But obviously if he does not know English he cannot read Shakespeare. The one art which seemed truly international, and was called so in the books, was music. It is true that there were quarrels between the Lullists and the Ramellians, as there were between Rubensists and Poussinists, or later between Gluckists and Piccinists. But the quarrels were not due to any misunderstanding. Italian opera may have been disliked because it was Italian and not French, but the French found that they could enjoy Lully nevertheless. In fact the quarrel arose because so many of them did. The notion of a national music, a music expressing the soul of a people, is a mid-nineteenth-century notion. It is part and parcel of cultural nationalism and perhaps its weakest part. For though people in general prefer those artistic styles to which they are accustomed, they seem seldom if ever to have objected to new music on the ground that it is foreign. Their objections are to its strangeness, which they call by more abusive terms. The objections made to Beethoven, for instance, in the Zeitung für die elegente Welt in 1804, were not that he was un-Austrian but that his second symphony was “ein krasses Ungeheuer, ein angestochener, sich unbändig windender Lindwurm” (“a crass monster, a hideously wounded dragon, that refuses to expire”). And when Fétis said that Berlioz wrote what “n’appartient pas à l’art que j’ai l’habitude de considérer comme de la musique,” he was not not condemning him for being un-French.¹⁹ One can go through that admirable and indeed indispensable collection of diatribes against musicians, Slonimsky’s Lexicon of Musical Invective, and one will look in vain for condemnation based on lack of nationalism. And contrariwise, those composers whose works were deliberately, programmatically nationalistic, of whom Grieg is an outstanding example, have been admired throughout the world by people who could have no idea what Norwegian life and culture were like.

The earliest manifestation of nationalism in music was in

¹⁹. See Nicolas Slonimsky, Lexicon of Musical Invective, pp. 42, 57.
Russia. There it formed part of that anti-Western propaganda that disturbed the salons in the middle nineteenth century. It is usually Glinka who is credited with initiating the movement. But Glinka's memoirs give no indication that he thought he was founding a school or initiating a movement of national music. He hated Italian singing and was pretty critical of French orchestral playing, but in spite of these possible tinges of chauvinism he was appreciative of foreign musical compositions and made arrangements of Spanish dances. In the second chapter of his Memoirs (p. 8) he says that "it may be" because of the Russian tunes he heard in his youth that he "dwelt primarily on Russian folk music later on." He also (p. 82) speculates on the sadness of Russian songs, attributing it to regional sources: "We are either furiously happy or weeping bitter tears"; "Love . . . is with us always linked with sadness." And he adds that while he was in Italy his nostalgia led him "step by step to think of composing like a Russian" (p. 83). He was, of course, aware of the idea of national music in the sense of Russian themes, themes from Russian songs (p. 88), but just as the operas which he wrote were based on Russian stories, so the songs were settings of Russian poems. A Life for the Tzar was enthusiastically applauded as a Russian opera (p. 109, n. 19), but it was also a Russian, Faddei Bulgarin, who styled it la musique des cochers. Ruslan and Ludmila was not the success that its predecessor had been, though it was surely just as Russian (pp. 149 ff.). It was probably the comments of musical critics that created the movement of nationalism. We are told, for instance, that Serov was influential in promoting Glinka's music (p. 164, n. 22), and we may guess at least that the ideology supporting the music was not the work of the composers themselves. The debate between Slavophiles and Westerners was very vigorous during this time.

In fact it is difficult, if possible, to distinguish the Russianness of Glinka's sounds from that of his libretti. One of the most appreciative notices of A Life for the Tzar was written by Henry
Mérimée, published in the *Revue de Paris* in 1844 (p. 183). This notice gave so much pleasure to Glinka that he reprinted part of it in his *Memoirs*. In it Mérimée says that “in its subject matter and poetry and music” the opera is “a most faithful summing up of all that Russia has suffered and sung.” It is a “patriotic and religious act of solemnity,” “a national epic.” But it is, of course, not merely the music which is all that. It is the opera as a whole. What is Russian about the music is the 5/4 time that is occasionally used (as it was to be used later by Tchaikowsky), certain cadences, and themes from traditional Russian dances and songs.

That music could actually be national was a new idea. During the Middle Ages and indeed up to the end of the eighteenth century composers utilized any themes or tunes they wished to use, regardless of origin. Similarly, the social origin of a tune was never considered if a composer wished to use it. Paul Henry Lang, indeed, speaks of the folk song as “the fountain of youth from which music has gained new vitality whenever fatigue and over-cultivation threatened it with sterility.” The use of erotic dance tunes in religious compositions became customary, and some masses were identified by the popular tunes which their composers had borrowed. What is relevant here is the suggestion made by this fact that music was not held to communicate either social or national matter. Associations of a psychological nature were another matter. No one would expect to hear “Yankee Doodle” used to accompany the Credo, and yet “God Save the Queen” has been sung by several generations of Americans to the words, “My country, ’tis of thee, sweet land of liberty,” etc. If the music were felt to be inherently English, it is doubtful that the song would have gained the popularity it enjoyed. But for that matter the United States national anthem today is sung to the tune of a drinking song, “Anacreon in Heaven.”

If one were out to write national music, where was one to find examples? The obvious source was folk song. Aside from collect-

ing folk songs and arranging them in terms of traditional harmony, as Percy Grainger did, the nationalistic composer incorporated portions of them into his compositions much as Bach and Haydn did. The condemnation of this practice in the late Middle Ages and later by the Church is too well known to be more than mentioned here. But again it was associations with the tunes in question that caused the trouble. A mass that had no such basis was called a Missa sine nomine. But the use made by composers of such melodies or phrases was no evidence of nationalism. I have pointed out elsewhere that the opening of Adeste fideles is nearly identical with the opening of Voi che sapete, but even assuming that Mozart realized this, it does not prove that there is any identity of sentiment or “meaning” in the two. Nor would it imply that Mozart was trying to express the nationality of the person who composed Adeste fideles, or of him who sang the aria. Cherubino was, I suppose, a Spaniard, but no one has found a Spanish source for Adeste fideles. When, on the other hand, Tchaikowsky introduced the national anthems of France and Russia into the 1812 Overture, his intention was clear and deliberate and had literary, if not musical, significance; if the French national anthem had been something else, he would have used that. But if the opening notes of a French folk song occur in a composition by Poulenc, they might be supposed to have some symbolic meaning, though they would have none to a person who did not recognize the song. Since World War II the theme of the first movement of Beethoven’s C-minor Symphony has meant Victory, at least to those of us who went through that war. But Beethoven clearly could not have utilized the Morse Code nor did the V-sign occur to anyone until the war was well on.

If a person recognizes the folk songs of his country, as he is likely to recognize certain hymns sung in school or church or national anthems or popular songs, that recognition will carry a certain message to him. This is indubitable. But if he does not recognize them, no message will be conveyed beyond a vague
mood, sadness or jollity. It has been said that the Blues "are filled with the deepest emotions of a race. They are songs of sorrow charged with satire, with that potent quality of ironic verse clothed in the raiment of the buffoon. . . . In song, the Negro expressed his true feelings, his hopes, aspirations, and ideals. . . ." 21 Whether it is the words or the tunes that convey these emotions is not clear, but when the songs are delivered on instruments alone without words, it is questionable whether the sorrow is any more connected with the Negro than with the white man. A person hearing a funeral march probably feels the air to be mournful, but he does not feel the mournfulness of any particular composer or people. This is the one sound reason for calling music a universal language. The history of musical criticism demonstrates how un-universal music is, but that we need not consider.

A given composer, then, a Bartók, a Grieg, a Vaughan Williams, may introduce folk music into his compositions with the purpose of making them sound Hungarian or Norwegian or English, but that does not give us any reason to believe that anyone other than Hungarians, Norwegians, or Englishmen will even recognize the tunes in question, to say nothing of feeling Hungarian, Norwegian, or English. When we hear Rimsky-Korsakov's Scheherazade, do we feel Arabian? If so, we have been tricked, for the music is no more Arabian than the music used for the hoocheecoochee dance is Egyptian. The point is that like the alla turca in Mozart, a convention has been established and we accept it without thinking. So we sometimes wonder at the "operatic quality" of Haydn and Mozart masses. The same comment was made of the cantatas of Bach. But if either Haydn or Mozart, to say nothing of Bach, had realized that their religious music was operatic in the irreligious sense of that word, they would not have written it. All three men were deeply religious. No art, other than architecture, is more conventional than music, though we must not

forget poetic diction and the laws of perspective. As an extraordinary example of this, one has only to think of Gershwin's *An American in Paris*, in which the Americanism is the jazz rhythms and the Parisianism the taxicab horns, now forbidden by law.

The passion for folk songs in countries like Norway (Grieg), Hungary (Bartók), and Bohemia (Smetana and Dvořák) was allied with the desire for political independence. In England it was allied with a desire for cultural independence. Ralph Vaughan Williams, who believed that all music could be traced back to folk music, collected folk songs with the deliberate program in mind of writing English music. “We must be,” he said, “our own tailors. We must cut out for ourselves, try on for ourselves, and finally wear our own home-made garments, which, even if they are homely and home-spun, will at all events fit our bodies and keep them warm.”

The reason lying behind this was Vaughan Williams' belief that, as C. Hubert H. Parry had said “True style comes not from the individual but from the products of crowds of fellow-workers who sift and try and try again until they have found the thing that suits their native taste. . . . Style is ultimately national.”

“Classical” music, Vaughan Williams said, is “nothing more or less than the Teutonic style.” And finally, the various artistic media “are symbols not of other visible and audible things, but of what lies beyond sense and knowledge.”

What lies beyond sense and knowledge is presumably the sentiment of nationality, the feeling of being English or French, German or Italian. And to stimulate this is the object of the arts.

But if this dogma is accepted, then one must also admit a separation within the citizens of a country, primarily between those who can speak in the name of their country and those

who speak an international tongue. The national composer, when he bases his music on folk songs, must know what songs are folk and what non-folk. This problem has been spotted not only by professional students of folk music, like Lloyd, but also by writers interested in contemporary singers, like Pete Seeger or Bob Dylan. One such writer, John Greenway, in his essay “The Position of Songs of Protest in Folk Literature,” faces the problem and concludes that “folk in our culture is an economic term.” “The modern folk is most often the unskilled worker, less often the skilled worker in industrial occupations.”

He turns out to belong to the CIO, not the AFL, a miner, a worker in a textile mill, and sometimes an agricultural laborer. This definition by demonstration is suggestive but hardly conclusive. We have songs that used to be sung by cow punchers, others by soldiers and sailors, and still others by rowdy undergraduates which are both old and of unknown authorship. Why are they not also folk songs?

If one of the differentiae of the folk song is its communal character, then these songs are surely folk songs. They are seldom if ever sung in solo; they are sung by groups, on the march or round the camp fire or after meals. Their longevity is a sign of their popularity. But there are few books on folk songs which include such music. On the contrary, the usual songs discussed are rural songs, as if the rustic were a more representative part of the folk than the urban dweller or factory hand. This point of view was definitely that of one of the most outspoken of musical nationalists—Grieg. As his biographer, Monrad-Johansen, said in 1877 at Hardanger, “he was carried away on an overwhelming wave of enthusiasm for the Norwegian peasant—for his manners and customs, his speech, his aristocratic nature, his feeling for art, his home craft, his dress; in short, everything to do with the peasants had something almost holy about it for him and on this

26. See The American Folk Scene, ed. D. A. De Turk and A. Poulin, Jr., p. 120.
subject he could not bear to hear a disparaging word.” 27 But surely the Norwegian sailors and fishermen, like the Vikings, are as truly Norwegian as the peasant. Yet somehow or other the man of the soil generally seems more representative of a country than his fellowmen. So Karel Hoffmeister says of Dvořák that his Slavonic Dances, which are country dances, “spring directly from the soul of the people. Something of our Slavonic soul speaks in every theme we meet in them.” 28 Again, “In Opera [Dvořák] tends in his loftiest work toward nationality and the poetry of the people” (p. 83). But again the people in question are the country people, or men and women of the distant past. Would one not also say that Cavalleria Rusticana spoke for the soul of the Italian people, or that Louise spoke for the soul of the French people? There are plenty of songs, sung by thousands, and since television by millions, that originate in cities—and not only in New York—which seem to be beloved by those who hear and repeat them. For that matter Old Folks at Home and a half dozen more of Foster’s compositions have been taken to the hearts of thousands and few have the slightest idea of who Foster was.

Now the interest in folk songs is at least as old as the interest in ballads. John Parry, a blind Welsh harper (d. 1782), published a collection called Antient British Music as early as 1742, antedating Percy’s Reliques by over twenty years. Edward Bunting (d. 1843) got out some Irish songs in 1796, and Joseph Cooper Walker (d. 1810) published a similar collection in 1786. Thus folk song collecting got well under way before the drive toward cultural nationalism had started. When Haydn and Beethoven were commissioned to rewrite Scottish airs, it was not because these great composers could express the Scottish or Irish soul better than a Scot or an Irishman could. The early collectors of folk songs were interested more in music than in nationalism. There

may have been the sentiment that stirs all antiquarians, a kind of nostalgia for a partly imaginary past, the sort of thing that one finds in some of the Romantics. But sometimes one comes upon a writer like John Addington Symonds who actually believed, as Herder did, that there is a being called The People, a being that expresses itself in art. This being is not an individual; as far as one can tell, it has the arts for its special medium of communication. It “lives and acts and feels,” but where it is to be found, except in the arts, he does not tell us. The location and character of the folk varies with those who are interested in them. At times it has been anyone long enough in the grave, but in recent times the term has been applied to anyone who can twang a guitar and sing in a nasal voice. Jean Thomas, who made a serious study of the ballads being composed and sung in the mountains of Kentucky, identifies the folk with the mountainers, who make ballads about recent as well as past happenings—feuds, floods, railroad disasters, murders, and the departures of friends. These mountainers are hardly a fair sample of the American people, however. They are a vestigial group from the families of early settlers, quaint, picturesque, no doubt, and worth describing, and certainly not typical.

As a matter of fact, some writers have been well aware of the problem of finding the folk. A. L. Lloyd, one of the soberest of folk-song amateurs, in the Folk Song in England, lists the following group: as those chosen by various writers to represent the People (1) the peasants, by Bartók and his school; (2) the common people (i.e., the unlettered), by Cecil Sharp; (3) people uninfluenced by “popular and art music”; (4) the poor as contrasted with the educated; (5) the urban proletariat plus those

31. See Jean Thomas, Ballad Makin’ in the Mountains of Kentucky, p. xi. This book is a firsthand account of how ballads and hymns are actually composed by the Kentucky mountainers.
already mentioned. He himself includes among the folk songs miners’ songs and sea chanteys and is willing to differentiate folk song by the historical fact that it is “essentially an oral affair whose intrinsic character derives from the peculiarities of mouth-to-ear-to-mouth transmission.” Musically the normal folk song, he says (p. 36), and backs it up with plenty of examples, has a range of about an octave, though the range of the more ancient songs is narrower. The forms are of the simplest, short figures repeated. And since he is more interested in music than in nationalism he admits (p. 47) that folk tunes, even those thought of as essentially English, are international. The same tunes are found all over the world, just as folklore is, and he quotes Constantin Brailoiu as saying that the peculiarities of Hungarian music, as determined by Bartók and Kodály, are also found in the music of certain American Indians and even Papuans (p. 88).

Since the spread of Marxism the tendency has developed to identify the People with the working class. And indeed national cultures, so far as the Occident is concerned, are largely differentiated only by language. The nonliterary arts, architecture, painting, and sculpture, are almost alike in all countries. But obviously literature varies with the language in which it is written. The kind of music one hears in the concert halls no more varies from country to country than it did in the nineteenth century, indeed probably less so. Painting in Tokyo or Venice or New York has lost all national character. Building, similarly, has no regional distinction, and the same skyscrapers with the same rectangular façades can be seen wherever there is enough money to build them, whether it be Moscow or Chicago. This may be an argument in favor of the conclusion that it is the People, the people all united all over the world, whose soul has at last found a medium of expression. If so, it is a pretty weak argument, since fads and fashions shift in the arts as everywhere else.

32. Folk Song in England, p. 32.
Sydney Finkelstein in three books on music emphasizes the importance of general “appeal,” general in an international sense, of all music. It is in fact his main criterion of excellence. He explains what he believes to be the popular appeal of “classic” music, that is, the music of Bach, Handel, Mozart, Haydn, and Beethoven. Such composers, he maintains, had “a grasp of contemporary realities, in terms of the most humanly expressive language, functional structure, and meaningful design that were possible to the arts and best served the people of the times.”

How music can do this is discussed in another of Finkelstein’s books called How Music Expresses Ideas. In this work the author says that music contains “human imagery typical of human actions and relationships” (p. 6). These images are presumably intuitively grasped, felt, understood, by human beings, but the social (economic?) class dominant in a given society will determine what kind of music is acceptable. In Bach, says Mr. Finkelstein, there was a struggle between “the bourgeois artist addressing multitudes and the feudal craftsman-servant . . . one struggling to break through the shell of the other” (p. 32). In Beethoven “the fundamental reality was the cracking of feudalism, the victories of bourgeois democracy, the freeing of the individual from feudal servitude . . .” (p. 51). Modern music—that of Schoenberg, Hindemith, and Stravinsky—is the music of imperialism typifying “the total mystification of economic, social, and historical forces which imperialism spreads in people’s minds.” Their music shrouds the real world in mystery and declares it unreal (p. 82). Handel’s oratorios written in England celebrated “the military victories of the middle-class Whigs over their feudal enemies at home and on the continent” (p. 28). But in folk music one hears “social consciousness; the experiences and thought held in common by people who labor, suffer and triumph together.”

33. Art and Society, p. 171.
The notes and figures that make up the famous song “God rest ye merry, gentlemen” are among the most international in the Occident, found in France, Bulgaria, Scandinavia, as well as in England and the United States. The words, of course, differ. Just what are the images symbolized in this bit of music? The notes, the rhythm, the musical figures may stimulate emotions of sorrow, for instance, but what do they tell us about political and social structures? When one knows the words, naturally one can read them back into the music. But having been educated in a college the anthem of which was sung to the tune of “The Old Oaken Bucket,” I have a tendency to believe that music could be translated into almost any set of words and no one would be any the wiser. Moreover, no composer is all of a piece; he varies more or less from composition to composition. One cannot speak of Bach, Mozart, and Handel as if they were always the same. The music of Handel’s Messiah is different from that of Rodelinda, though there are undoubtedly Handelian marks in both. But the traditions of eighteenth-century music demanded that certain words be fitted to certain musical figures. Could one say that Mozart’s G-minor Symphony “served” the people of the eighteenth century any more than it served the aristocracy or the people of the twentieth century? The Requiem, to be sure, is adjusted to a Catholic ritual and thus may be imagined to be less “clemophilic” than the Jupiter Symphony or the clarinet quartette. But the words of a requiem mass in no way reflect or express a social hierarchy. The ecclesiastical hierarchy has never been said to be democratic, but surely to pray that God give rest to the deceased, whoever he may have been, is anything but “feudal.” Moreover, I doubt that it is possible ever to translate music into words. A march may set one’s feet tapping, but it does not say that armies are better than straggling mobs or war better than diplomacy. For that matter many a peaceful procession may well be accompanied by music that was written for entirely different processions.

Think of the wedding music from *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* and *Lohengrin*! Mr. Finkelstein uses the presence of folk music as evidence of anti-aristocratic feeling on the part of the composer. It is thus almost literally the *vox populi*, though transmitted through an individual. He is, for instance, willing to say that “in the music of . . . Chopin . . . the use of folk musical sources is openly bound to a proclamation of patriotism and a call to national freedom.” But though Chopin was certainly patriotic, the waltz is no more a folk dance of Poland than it is of New York, and as for dancing to Chopin’s waltzes, only a ballerina could do it. In fact, Mr. Finkelstein admits that Chopin “was sceptical of democracy” and had a “cynical attitude towards the democratic slogans of bourgeois politicians” (p. 114). The point is that music, like painting, sculpture, and all the other arts is multivalent, and its “meaning” will vary according to the ear that hears it. Haydn’s masses may not sound religious to modern American ears, but that is because most of us identify religious music with the gloomy Protestant hymns. A boy who has grown up on hymns like

```
There is a fountain filled with blood
Drawn from Emmanuel’s veins,
And sinners plunged beneath that flood
Lose all their guilty stains,
```

is not going to think of the Gloria in the Lord Nelson Mass as religious. For that matter, if the Gothic churches of Eastlake are religious, then St. Peter’s is not.

One of the difficulties in discussing the nonmusical meaning of music is that we pay more attention to words than to the notes, when there are words. In an anthology of essays called *The American Folk Scene*, practically nothing is said of music. There are twenty-nine essays reprinted in this very useful volume, but they are all about the musicians and their techniques of singing, or

about the contents of the lyrics, or historical anecdotes. This is understandable, since the music of the folk song, like that of Tin Pan Alley, is almost as simple as the counting songs of children. When one refers to Vaughan Williams, Charles Ives, and Bartók as popular composers, in the sense that their voices are the People’s voice, then one has to grant that the People are as fickle and ungrateful as they have often been accused of being. The overwhelming majority of concert-goers dislikes this kind of music and prefers that of Tchaikowsky. “What stamps a work as ‘folk,’” says Mr. Finkelstein, “is that it expresses the communal mind and becomes part of communal life, not that it is collectively created.” 37 Aside from the precise meaning of “to express,” the common people are as diverse in their minds and lives as the upper classes. Some of them seek absorption in large groups and some shun such groups; some try to climb the social ladder and some laugh at such attempts; some spend their leisure time in the free public libraries and some stay at home watching mayhem on the television screen. It is about time that we recognized the existence of individuals and hence the irreducible heterogeneity of society.

37. Ibid., p. 307.