

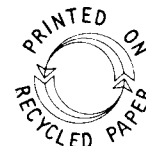
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**ON THE DECLINE AND FALL OF EMPIRES:  
THE ROMAN EMPIRE AND WESTERN  
IMPERIALISM COMPARED**

**Johan Galtung, Tore Heiestad, and Eric Ruge**



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Geneva, June 1979

Johan Galtung

This paper is being circulated in a pre-publication form to elicit comments from readers and generate dialogue on the subject at this stage of the research.

" . . . the decline of Rome was the natural and inevitable effect of immoderate greatness. Prosperity ripened the principle of decay; the causes of destruction multiplied with the extent of conquest; and, as soon as time or accident had removed the artificial supports, the stupendous fabric yielded to the pressure of its own weight."

Edward Gibbon

"I think of what happened to Greece and Rome, and you see what is left — only the pillars. What has happened, of course is that the great civilizations of the past, as they have become wealthy, as they have lost their will to live, to improve, they have become subject to the decadence that eventually destroys the civilization. The United States is now reaching that period. I am convinced, however, that we have the vitality, I believe we have the courage, I believe we have the strength out through this heartland and across this Nation that will see to it that America not only is rich and strong, but that it is healthy in terms of moral and spiritual strength."

Richard M. Nixon (1971)

## I. INTRODUCTION

The fall of the Roman Empire has fascinated more social scientists than Edward Gibbon, who concluded his major historical work in Lausanne just before the French Revolution. To draw parallels to the contemporary situation was not his major concern; he was concerned with the fall of the Roman Empire as such, but evidently also felt that there was much to learn from it.<sup>1</sup> However, for the history of the Roman Empire to be useful as a heuristic there have to be deep similarities.<sup>2</sup> The other system should be an empire built in a not too dissimilar manner that evidently has passed its apogee and may be facing a decline, even a fall. The thesis of the present paper is, in short, that the Roman Empire presents parallels with the contemporary situation in which the western world finds itself so deep and so dense that it is warranted to use it as a basis for speculation about regularities in the life cycle of empires.<sup>3</sup>

We shall only be drawing on the western experience. Comparative studies of non-western empires (the Incas and the Aztecs in America; possibly the Mali empire in Africa; definitely the Egyptian, Ottoman, and Persian empires — themselves, perhaps, semi-western; the various Mongol/Mogul imperial constructions; some of the Chinese dynasties) should be extremely rewarding here, both in revealing similarities and dissimilarities. But we shall concentrate on the West. And two major characteristics of the western empires, not necessarily totally monopolized by the West but at least not so clearly expressed in any other empire construction to our knowledge, should be pointed out. First, the lack of limitation,<sup>4</sup> pushing the borders of the empires beyond any limit, as far as (and even further than) technology and military force can carry. Then, the tendency not only to tax and

exploit barbarian lands and barbarians but also to westernize<sup>5</sup> and even incorporate at least part of them. These two points will be made use of in what follows; they are crucial for the reasoning, as a list of common denominators for empires from the West.

## II. THE RISE AND DECLINE OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE: A ROUGH CHARACTERIZATION

Underlying it all, at some stage, was — possibly — a vision of that tiny unit founded on the seven hills of Rome as the centre of something much bigger. Moreover, this vision must have been legitimated by an underlying culture or cosmology, and certainly reinforced by successful excursions and expansion. For, if some notion of that kind had not been there in advance, the entity would have remained very limited and more geared towards defence against the external world — encapsulating — than towards unfolding = Entwicklung. But it was centrifugal rather than centripetal. Images of that kind might have been a part of the heritage from the Etruscan or Hellenistic exercises. No doubt they were more successfully implemented under the Romans, particularly under the Antonines, than under the possible predecessors as holders of such images.

Against the knowledge of what happened in the various phases of the Roman Empire and the western empires of our times (although we have not seen the end of them yet) the story may now even have a ring of the obvious. For the moment centralized expansion is decided upon, militarily, politically, economically, culturally, communicationswise, and socially, a number of consequences will follow.

First of all, it should be remembered that the expansion in territory is some function of the square of the distance from the centre; it is not a linear function of that distance.<sup>6</sup> There is not only an external border to be defended against outer enemies; there is also an internal territory to be controlled against the inner foes of the regime. Even if there are no overt hostilities engaged in by outer or inner enemies, the control machinery still has to be maintained, and it is costly.

A part of that control machinery is the central bureaucracy, which can be maintained only if sufficient surplus is channelled upwards in society.<sup>7</sup> There are two main models for obtaining this: taking away local assets through piracy and robbery (of minerals, money, pieces of art, cattle, people), sometimes under the formula of "taxation," and central control over some kinds of production and trade in such a way that major fruits accrue to the centre. It is assumed that all empires make use of these methods, but in very different proportions, and that the colour and tone of an empire very much depend on which method prevails. Thus, local taxation is compatible with maintenance of the local system of production; it may even become a contractual obligation under which something has to be paid in return for "protection."<sup>8</sup> Centralized exploitation through expanding economic and other cycles will tend to erode the local society, economically and also culturally. In either case there may be "colonization" in the sense that the military/political command is firmly in the hands of (envoys from) the centre; for that reason, they may look alike. But in the latter type there will be long-distance cycles not only for military and political decision-making but also for economic and cultural values. This will make for a much denser communicative network radiating from the centre to the periphery, and for much more social transformation, including acculturation.

Given the assumption from the Introduction that western imperialism is characterized by a decision and a desire to convert, not only to dominate, the second type should predominate in the evolution of western empires. The first type is too limited, too contractual. It can be legitimated through the formula "I offer you protection against enemies and others who want to treat you like I do; you pay me for that in commodities and products, in cash, and/or in human capital (slaves, gladiators, raw material for human sacrifice)." But western imperialism seems to have asked for more, in fact for others to see themselves as living in a society the centre of which is in the West. There has been some kind of wish that others should not only be dominated and subjugated but see — and even want to see — themselves as dependent on a western centre for fresh supplies of superior goods

and services, culture, etc. The legitimating formula might be something like this: "I offer you protection not only against external enemies but also against dependency on nature with all its hazards and hostilities, in return for exchange relations with me." In short, dependency on the centre rather than on the nature.

Obviously, in the case of the Roman Empire both methods were used. The provinces had to contribute taxes in order to maintain an ever-increasing superstructure,<sup>9</sup> a bureaucracy exercising political-military tasks. At the same time, exploitation cycles were set up whereby net value accumulated in the centre. In the case of the Roman Empire the first method was by far the most important one. The right term is probably "plunder." The most important objects, it seems, were people, who were conquered and sold to plantation owners, and foodstuffs, grain. The provinces had to contribute taxes in order to maintain an ever-increasing superstructure, a bureaucracy and an army exercising political-military tasks. The net result, of course, was that the periphery, the provinces, were impoverished and the centre(s) enriched. But the mechanism was not, or only to a very little extent, trade in our sense. The economic cycles were short; the oikos ("household") was to a large extent self-sufficient; the city with its hinterland constituted a system of autarkeia. Labour was unfree and at least in large periods abundant enough not to encourage any search for labour-extensive forms of production. Long-distance trade was in luxuries and, importantly, in grain for big cities, handled by the state, for the centre. By "centre," then, is not necessarily meant Rome but also the many sub-centres. The major reason why the system functioned for such a long time was probably that so many individuals were "romanized," having Latin as their language and Roman mores as their Weltanschauung, themselves being part, more and more, of the vast superstructure, a combination of the centre in the centre and the centre in the periphery,<sup>10</sup> that had to be maintained by the system. Thus, when surplus had to be transmitted to the centre, this also includes local sub-centres; the centre was Rome.<sup>11</sup>

Without slaves the system would not have worked, for it was based on a



combination of unfree labour producing goods locally and free people thereby liberated for less menial tasks.<sup>12</sup> There was an enormous empire to draw upon for taxes and raw factors of production,<sup>13</sup> and there must have been an overwhelming superstructure, unproductive in material terms, that should be fed and kept loyal. A major part of this superstructure, then, in addition to the bureaucracy must have been what today would have been called "elite": major landowners, tradespeople, and an increasing sector of intellectuals, entertainers, etc., producing forms of understanding and legitimation for the entire enterprise.

The stability of this empire construction must have depended on some relatively complex balances. On the one hand, the income to the centres must have been sufficient to maintain the superstructures; on the other, the amount of value flowing out of the periphery must not have been so much as to create impossible conditions, either of apathy or of mutiny, that the superstructure could no longer handle by its combination of co-optation into brotherhoods of loyalty, rewarding the individuals who performed well in the system (including occasionally freeing slaves and gladiators), and punishment, crude repression. If we now assume that the superstructure had a tendency to grow — if not much because of Parkinson's law, then because of the need to reward individuals — the economic value flowing into the centre would have to grow too. This either could be taken from the periphery of the Roman Empire, the periphery of the centre or the periphery of the periphery, by exhorting them to work harder and/or taxing them more heavily; or could be provided by expanding the empire, acquiring more barbarian soil for exploitation, in the double sense of that word. Either method works as far as it does: till periphery or barbarian resistance in the form of mutiny, defence, and withdrawal become more than the superstructure can handle. It is at that point that the outer limits of the system are reached.

Thus, with this combination of plunder and massive use of slaves, "proletarianization" was the inevitable consequence: partly of small farmers/peasants, partly of artisans, and also of freed slaves without

belongingness in some autarkic unit. As the land was too depleted and too much incorporated in the economic cycles to carry additional burdens of people, they had to flock to the cities, partly as a cause, partly as a consequence of the twin institution known as panem<sup>14</sup> et circenses,<sup>15</sup> "bread and circus." The bread was free, nobody should starve, and the expenses must have been considerable. Although the costs of the entertainment may have been negligible at the crucial point, the amphitheatre itself, it is hard to imagine that this could have covered all the hidden expenses in getting the raw material for the entertainment — the human beings and the beasts — to the place, fed, and trained and prepared.

To this should then be added the constraints set by nature.<sup>16</sup> In an expanding empire, with new soil relatively easily available, care about the soil would seem wasted. When the soil was exhausted, there was always the possibility of going farther out. But if the grains produced "farther out" were then exported to the centres — e.g., to Rome — the minerals in that soil would be exported with the grain. Consumed in Rome, they could theoretically be used to enrich soil around Rome, but there was no such mechanism: The manure went straight into the sewers and was lost, and with it much of the minerals, both at the place of production and the place of consumption. This, in turn, produced conditions that added more people to the landless proletariat, maybe not because they did not have land but because of land made useless.<sup>17</sup>

As a consequence of all this it can be seen that there was a necessity for the Roman Empire not only to have expanded but to continue to expand. Only by that method was it possible to keep the system without changing any fundamental aspect of it. Important in this connection must have been the second basic point mentioned in the Introduction: the notion of unlimited expansion. Expansionism had no built-in inner stop signal. There were no brakes; only roadblocks could stop it — the barbarians.

It is now fairly easy to see what had to happen later. There were

limited possibilities for the system to develop further than it had already done in internal exploitation and internal markets, and external exploitation and external markets. The materially unproductive superstructure<sup>18</sup> — today possibly identified as military machinery, education, and social security — must have grown more quickly than the income accruing from an expanding system. When the vast internal proletariat could no longer be paid off through panem et circenses, mutiny or withdrawal would have to be the result. When the vast military forces were no longer adequate to the task, the pressures from the barbarian "invasions" (which, of course, were primarily efforts to reconquer what once was barbarian) could no longer so efficiently be counteracted. Under such conditions it is obvious that some of the outlying provinces would be interested in a policy of self-reliance,<sup>19</sup> the centres in the periphery calculating that they would be better off this way than depending on a weakened Rome.<sup>20</sup> Obviously, some of them could make common cause with the barbarians in this connection, and did.<sup>21</sup>

What is left then is the centre in the Centre: What should they do? That the military would gradually take over goes without saying: If the problems were defined as primarily military problems, stemming the invasions from the barbarians, military people would easily gain the upper hand in deciding who should be emperors, commanding both the beginning and the end of a reign. But this must have added to the demand of an unproductive superstructure and hence stimulated the quest for further expansion; the dilemma precisely being that the Roman Empire was overexpanded (and hence vulnerable) and underexpanded (and hence unable to keep its own superstructure) at the same time.

What other policy options were open to them? They could try to reverse the agricultural policy by land reform, giving more soil back to small-scale farmers, by ecologically more rational procedures, and in general by trying to keep people on the land rather than having to feed them in the cities. The trouble with such measures, which were all tried but were usually seen as coming "too late," was that they were not intraparadigmatic. In a sense they were the beginnings of

the next period, the Middle Ages, based on much smaller and relatively self-sufficient units. A Roman Empire based on such units would no longer be a Roman Empire, and this point must have been felt by the centre in the Centre.<sup>22</sup>

One might speculate that they could have contracted voluntarily, to more defensible positions, both militarily and economically.<sup>23</sup> But this does not seem to be a policy option that comes easily. If it were taken at all, it would be as the result of effective mutiny and withdrawal (increased self-sufficiency) of the periphery rather than as the result of autonomous decisions by the centre. For one thing, the very process of romanization would be against it: The outlying provinces were increasingly Roman; they were parts of the empire not to be abandoned. If the empire were based only on taxation, it might have been easier, for some tax-collectors can more easily be recalled. But an empire based on the extensive and deep building of bridgeheads with the same standards and style of life as the centre in the Centre would be much more difficult to dismantle.<sup>24</sup>

It is hard to escape the feeling that the centre in the Centre of the Roman Empire tried practically speaking everything possible; all attempts failed, and they gradually lost the faith in their own enterprise. In this connection circenses should also be mentioned. Entertainment, highly emotionally loaded, no doubt emotionally exhausting, makes human beings into observers instead of participants.<sup>25</sup> The local economic costs may be negligible, the social costs considerable. It is not only a question of the time that could have been spent otherwise but also a question of the entire social and mental energy that could have gone into participation rather than observation. Energy that under another economic system could have been used to till the soil productively or for small-scale artisanry must have been expended on the tribunes of the Colosseum, and in vast quantities. In short, the opportunity costs were considerable.

However, another factor must have been even more important: an alternative ethos, coming from primitive Christianity. Rome had done

the only sensible thing to do with Christianity: When they could not beat it, they made a concordat with Christianity, as state religion, with the usual promise that the religion might be exercised freely, even to the point of proselytizing to the very periphery of the Roman Empire and beyond,<sup>26</sup> under the protection of the Roman machinery – in return for loyalty to the system. And yet original Christianity must have been lingering on:<sup>27</sup> more transcendental, less mundane; more inner-directed, less outer-directed; more bent on intensive devotion to God in small groups,<sup>28</sup> even self-sufficient ones (the origin of the monasterial practice), than on big hierarchies where the structure after some time commands much more attention than the message.<sup>29</sup>

In short, there were good reasons for the "loss of faith" or a "loss of spirit": The techniques at the disposal of the system had been used and failed; much potentially constructive energy had been dissipated into useless directions from the point of view of empire-building; and alternative conceptualizations of the world had been presented, and perverted, but perhaps not entirely successfully. Hence, it is not so strange that they were still enjoying la dolce vita and circenses when the barbarians were pounding on the gates:<sup>30</sup> They must simply have started losing faith in their own enterprise. If nothing succeeds like success, then nothing fails like failure either – because either affects the entire Weltanschauung, the conceptual pattern within which phenomena are understood.

The year +476, the fall of the western Roman Empire, is only one milestone in a process that started much earlier and ended some time later. Evidently, the barbarians did not want to destroy the Roman Empire,<sup>31</sup> perhaps not even to conquer it – but they definitely wanted to live in it, and not only to get the much-needed soil and refuge from the invading Huns. The barbarian form of social organization was much more based on smaller self-sufficient units; so when they started settling on the grounds of the former Roman Empire, a very important mutual exchange of fundamental cultures/structures must have taken place. The centrifugal, expanding wave from the Roman Empire must have been

rolling on, and must increasingly have become the cosmology of the barbarians. But as the barbarians settled in the Roman Empire, some fundamental compatibility between their structure/culture and the inverted, centripetal inward-looking, structure/culture that the Romans had been more or less forced into became the basis of the Middle Ages as we know them.<sup>32</sup>

It is then assumed that the centrifugal, expansionist ethos must have hit the peripheries of the Roman Empire, as a pattern, as an image of how things can be done, to be implemented when conditions are ripe. Some centuries after the fall of Romulus Augustulus, the western part had been relatively well divided between the empire of Charlemagne in the north and the Arab empire in the south, with the Ebro as one dividing line. Later on (eastern Europe is always behind), the Ottoman Empire did a corresponding job for the Eastern Roman Empire — in fact as much as one millennium later on. But neither of the three, nor the various German/Roman constructions, had the same deep structure as the Roman Empire, based on both methods of extracting surplus at the same time, heavily centralized, with firm control from the centre. The others were looser constructions, permitting, perhaps even fostering, a substantial amount of diversity within their limits as long as taxes were paid. Thus, they were all entirely compatible with the inward-looking small units with little trade among them that characterized the Middle Ages — at least till the Middle Ages Renaissance.

Having now some image of the contradictions that brought the empire down, we can perhaps fruitfully put one question: Who were the carriers of the new social order, the post-Roman order? Of course, after the system collapsed, they were all more or less forced to live in the new order, but some must have done it with more enthusiasm than others, even to the point of having built it. And it cannot have been the elite barbarians, for some of them had already been co-opted, even to the rank of generals in the Roman armies (one reason why they did not fight so efficiently?). It looks as if what they wanted, as already mentioned, was to enjoy the Roman Empire, and not only its soil but

what today we would refer to as its "civilization."<sup>33</sup> The best for them would probably have been to have its teeth extracted, full rights to live within its borders without being exploited, but still have the whole machinery run by Romans capable enough to keep its goods and services flowing so as to provide at least for elite barbarians the life of the Roman upper classes.

It cannot have been the internal proletariat in the Roman Empire either, for they probably had very similar visions: nothing basically wrong with the Roman Empire except that they were at the bottom instead of at the top. Since the system did provide for some individual mobility, what they might have wanted would have been mobility channels less clogged, more open to the individual underdog, perhaps also improved conditions in general. (We do not know to what extent there was a proletarian consciousness, a solidarity — the histories of the Spartacus revolt are very ambiguous on this point).<sup>34</sup>

That leaves us with the two extremes: the Roman elite on the one hand and the barbarian masses on the other. The latter had already a pattern of life; there were slaves among them, and there were also serfs, very well known figures in northeastern Europe at that time.<sup>35</sup> The small, self-sufficient unit was also part of reality. And on the Roman elite side, what would have been more natural when all their efforts failed, when fatigue really set in, than to pack up and leave, and build their big, today highly interesting, villas<sup>36</sup> way out in the countryside — e.g., on Dalmatian islands? They could not till the ground alone; they needed the coloni for that, and that was already a pattern sufficiently compatible with the barbarian serf to fuse into one new structure.<sup>37</sup>

However, that was not enough. The structure became much more than a refuge during times of trouble, a place to hold out till times were normal again and imperialist pursuits could be continued. Something had also happened to the cosmology itself,<sup>38</sup> and here it is tempting to draw on the monastic element, the primitive Christianity that had survived the seemingly successful efforts at co-optation into the

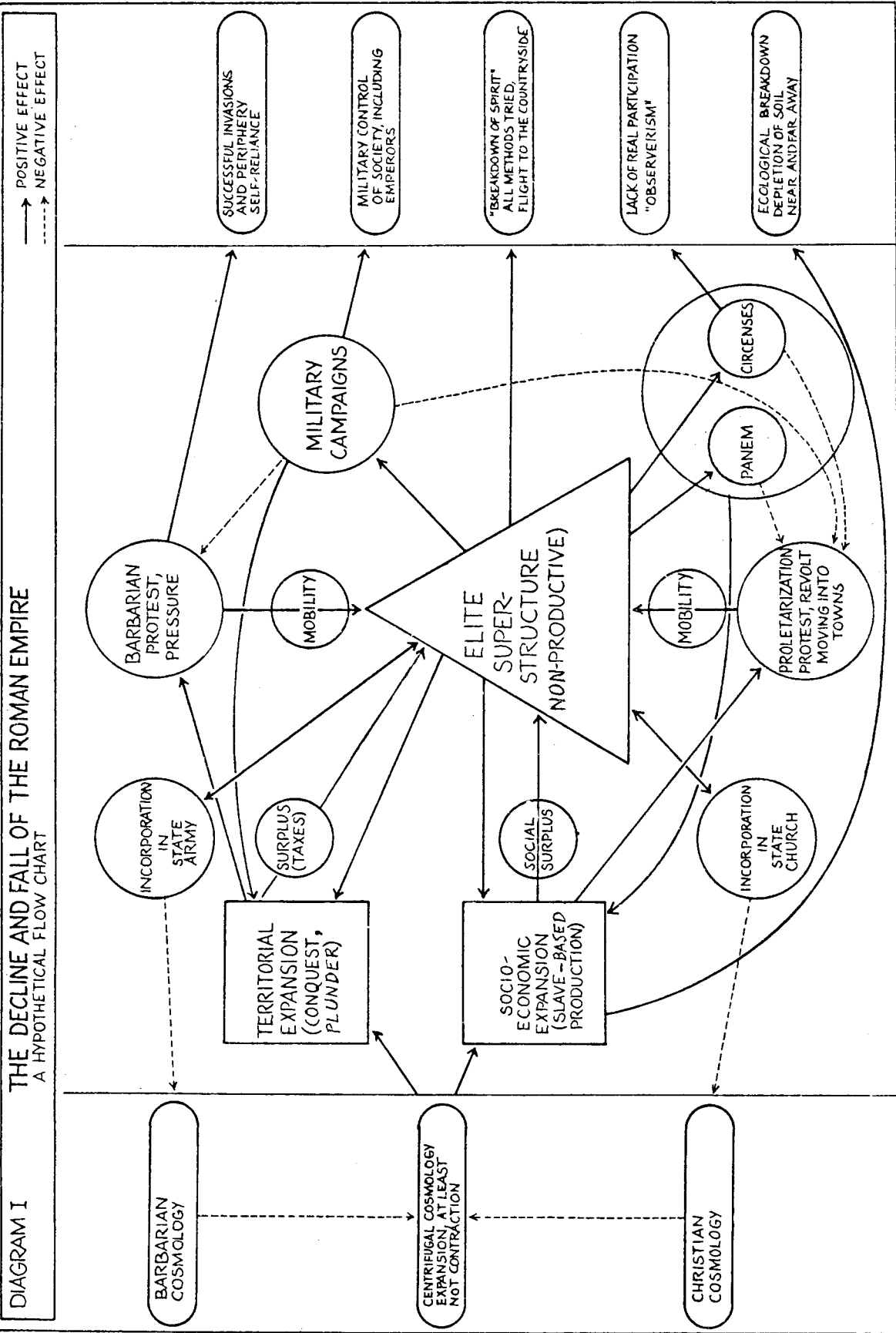
Catholic Church. It can probably be maintained that the bifurcation of Christianity into the hierarchical, centralized wing directed from Rome and the much more egalitarian and decentralized division into a number of monastic orders was a projection onto the scene of religious behaviour of the two contrasting cosmologies: the centralizing and centrifugal, and decentralizing and centripetal. A modus vivendi would have to be found between the two, and this is what much of church history is about — in addition to the obvious fact that there had to be a religious liberation from Rome corresponding to the economic upsurge by the burghers of Transalpina — in other words the Protestant Reformation, with the predictable effort to reconquer referred to as the Counter-reformation. Anyhow, highly transcendental mediaeval Christianity was needed for the legitimation of the new form, and was available much before that structure came into being, as original Christianity was older than the decline of the Roman Empire.

Hence, one tentative conclusion would be that the carriers of the new form were located in the centre of the old form, probably for the simple reason that it was for them more than for anybody else that the old form had become impossible. Others may choose alternative forms as a method of fighting against peripherization, as a way of gaining autonomy — this does not mean that they have truly rejected imperialism as a form, because they have not yet tried running it. They have seen it operating; they have suffered from it, not the least by witnessing others enjoying the fruits of their own labour. Is it strange if they would once like to be in the same position, either by peripherizing the centre or by peripherizing somebody else?

In concluding this section, let us then try to address ourselves to a much more difficult question: What was the cause of the decline and fall of the Roman Empire? We shall try to show that this is not a very well phrased question, but not a meaningless one either.

Consider Diagram I, giving a hypothetical flow chart of causes and effects relating to the decline and fall of the Roman Empire. It is organized so as to reflect the text: There are two major types of





expansion — territorial to exact value, and the use of slave-based production in order to get social surplus — both of them maintaining an increasing elite superstructure that is materially unproductive. It is then assumed that this superstructure feeds back on the two types of expansion and that these in turn lead to increasing barbarian protest and pressure, and to increasing proletarianization with protest and revolt. To handle them, even more superstructure is needed: to administer military campaigns in order to counteract the barbarians, and to administer panem et circenses in order to counteract the protests and the revolts from the internal proletariat. The military campaign may result in more territorial expansion, at least up to a certain point, and the quest for bread in an even further increase in the scale of economic activity, again up to a certain point. Ultimately all of this leads to such phenomena as ecological breakdown,<sup>39</sup> lack of real participation in society, a general breakdown of spirit, increasing military control of society, and finally to successful invasions by the barbarians.<sup>40</sup>

So, looking at the chart, what is "the cause of the decline and fall of the Roman Empire"? It cannot be one of the five items to the right since what they have taken together might be said to be neither the cause nor the effect but simply a description of what is meant by "breakdown." Then one can look at the points in the middle of the diagram, and put forward such theses as "The cause was a too heavy superstructure for the economy to carry," or "The cause was the practice of distributing free bread," or "The cause was all the implications of the entertainment." But these are only relatively obvious consequences of what happens when one starts expanding anyhow — unless, that is, there is some kind of ability to feel and sense when "enough is enough." Hence, if one should be looking for something called the cause, it might be better to look further to the left in the diagram, to expansion itself — but in that case not so much expansion as a material manifestation, geographically in territorial space and economically with expanded economic cycles, as expansion as a part of a cosmology — this term being understood both in its material and ideal senses.

But that leads into another difficulty: That cosmology is in a sense what the Roman Empire was about. In other words, one is led towards the conclusion that the Roman Empire was the cause of its own decline, and that decline may be a part of empire-building; in other words, that contraction is the other side of a coin the first side of which is expansion.<sup>41</sup> And this is the position we would prefer to take: There is a "family of things" that constituted the Roman Empire; it had its own internal logic; it was consistent; but it could not last forever because it had built into it its own contradictions to the point of destruction.

But imagine now that this "coin" looked different in a very special sense: that the decline was already included in the cosmology — in other words, that the cosmology had built into it the idea "Sometimes it goes up in this world; then it may remain stable; and sometimes it goes down — and all of this is perfectly natural, perfectly normal." In that case, the "decline" would no longer be a decline but a contraction, a phase in a pulsating empire, perhaps more like a breathing organism than one which constantly inhales. If contraction phases were already built into the programme, there would, in theory, be no frustration, no panic, no "breakdown of spirit."<sup>42</sup> Even the elite in the superstructure, materially non-productive, would have been prepared to sacrifice in what today is called living standard, believing that the world is so made that the lean years will follow upon the fat years, then to be followed by fat years again.<sup>43</sup> The Roman elite did not seem to apply this view, common in ancient history, to their own situation. But in that case, obviously, this would not have been the Roman Empire! It would have been something else, possibly closer to the Egyptian and Chinese constructions. Even the much more modest version of this, a cosmology with a built-in stop signal, with a self-regulation in the big, not only in the small (the negative arrows in the chart), was alien to the cosmology of the Roman Empire. Hence, decline and fall were built into it as a consequence of a lack of constraint, modesty, sense of proportion.<sup>44</sup>

Our conclusion, then, is that to ask for the cause of the decline is a

little like asking for the cause of death of old human beings. For biological organisms it seems useful to think in terms of a general process of aging, weakening the body; finally death is brought about by some affliction that in a young, healthy body might have been of minor significance. To list that affliction as the cause of death is epistemologically mainly an expression of how poorly the process of aging is understood. Correspondingly, to lift out of the flow chart one of the many variables, elevating it to the status of cause of the decline would tend to highlight a part of the total process at the expense of the systemic nature of what went on. Pragmatically it might also be dangerous; it would lead to an overconcentration on that factor, efforts to change the system at that particular point, perhaps prolonging its life as is done today with human bodies, inserting artificial body parts, but not in any essential way changing the basic programme of the system.

This is not the place to go into more detail about the successor system, the mediaeval society, except for one thing: If the Roman Empire was an exaggeration in one direction, perhaps mediaeval society was an exaggeration, at least partly, in the opposite direction. Instead of total expansion, total contraction — with the exception of the overlayers from the Roman Empire,<sup>45</sup> the Roman Church, and imitations such as the Carolingian Empire.

Can the Roman Empire, or its decline, be said to be the cause of this new formation? Perhaps, but it may not be very useful to introduce causation as a metaphor; that should better refer to less complex entities and more clear connections. A system is born, unfolds itself, and goes down; another system is born. From one to the other there is a transformation; instead of one "family of things" there is another "family of things." One can pick out one phenomenon in the preceding formation — e.g., the tendency of the Roman elite to escape and settle in their villas — and one phenomenon in the succeeding formation — e.g., the manor system — and establish some kind of causal connection between the two. It is not our conviction that this leads to a good historical understanding of what happened since it leaves out the

entire context and the cosmology that gives legitimacy and meaning to the elements in the two formations. Without that cosmology, partly expressed as a material structure, partly as a collectively shared sense of what is natural and normal, the formations would only be integrated in a mechanical sense, as if they were populated by beings who were no longer human, with no consciousness and no conscience, merely robots. And that is perhaps precisely what happened towards the end: The cosmology was undermined; it was still expressed materially in the structure of things but not ideally in the structure of ideals — the two worlds were no longer sufficiently isomorphic. And maybe that is the real meaning of what is metaphorically referred to by so many historians as the "breakdown of spirit" — the cosmology no longer had a solid grip on the human soul. Cosmology without implementation means that there is a job to be done; a structure no longer legitimated by deep ideology may mean that the job has been overdone. However, in the Roman case loss of control and loss of spirit probably went hand in hand, being the material and ideal sides of the decline respectively.

### III. THE RISE AND DECLINE OF WESTERN DOMINANCE: A SHORT CHARACTERIZATION

It goes almost without saying that the new western imperialism would have to come out of peripheries in space and time: from northern Europe, and many centuries after the apocalyptic events in what was at that time the centre of the West, Rome. Of course, there was also a short burst of imperialism in Italy itself — the Italian city-states, during a period roughly dating from the beginning of the "Middle Ages Renaissance" till, say, around 1550 when the Italian city-states were effectively destroyed in external and internal warfare.<sup>46</sup> Perhaps they were also victims of their own perfection, or their image as being perfect; perhaps exactly because at a certain stage they saw themselves as the renaissance of the best of antiquity. Maybe they discovered too late the various tricks engaged in by the burghers farther to the north, in Flanders, the Netherlands, England; such "tricks" as making economic use of the new territories opened through the Great Discoveries, consistently importing raw materials, consistently exporting processed goods, cashing in on the added value.<sup>47</sup> Of course, Spain was also from early on in this period the centre of an enormous empire, but seems to have made a very basic mistake: seeing the empire merely as a source of extraction of tribute, of taxation — not as a market. Spain became rich, had others do its manufacturing and processing, proudly being able to buy from all corners of the world, not understanding that through this process it was living on borrowed time, systematically underdeveloping itself.<sup>48</sup>

At any rate, it was in northern Europe that the capital accumulation took place that later on could be invested into the industrial revolution, thereby creating conditions of mass-manufacturing, a tremendous multiplier of the international division of labour

mechanism already made use of for centuries. And thus it continued till our days, with France essentially doing the same in the empire of its creation, in jealous competition with the British; with Germany desperately trying to do the same, piecing together an empire before the First World War, then losing it again, building up an enormous one under Hitler towards the East (Ostmark), and losing it as rapidly as it was built.

More interesting, in a sense, was the entry of today's two superpowers on the scene: the United States of America and the Soviet Union.<sup>49</sup> The United States clearly reversed the trade pattern although not completely: It still exports some raw material and imports processed goods, but some of the processed goods it does export occupy such a central position in the social and economic construction of "modern" societies (military hardware, computers, for a long period cars, etc.) that they have given to the United States considerable leverage. Once the formula had been discovered and used as a basis for redirecting the recently independent colonies, the size of the American economy became an important factor, as well as its capacity for internal expansion, both in terms of territory and in terms of population, an expansion imparting a momentum to the total socio-economic machinery that could then be transmitted to international operations. Something of the same has no doubt been the case for the Soviet Union: They had and still have a Far East concept just as the United States had a Far West notion.<sup>50</sup> But the Soviet Union has not in any sense been successful in reversing its position in the international division of labour, still being essentially a commodity dealer on the international market.

This is not the place to describe the various stages in the process of building western empires,<sup>51</sup> except to note the following points: First, they satisfy the two conditions mentioned in the Introduction — the tendency to be world-encompassing, to expand till they are stopped (by road-blocks rather than by brakes, to use that metaphor again), and the tendency to convert the periphery, in the sense of imposing both new social structures and new attitudes and beliefs, even

cosmologies. And then there is this fascinating phenomenon of how a country/people touched by imperialism in the sense of having been its periphery engages in a liberation process in order to obtain autonomy, then itself launches into expansionist and exploitative ventures, emanating waves of domination that ultimately may reach the old centre, even engulf and peripherize it. Of course, Rome itself was once such a periphery. The Romans were barbarians relative to Hellenic and Hellenistic expansion, and they also had the Etruscan model to draw upon.<sup>52</sup> Correspondingly one may talk about American and Soviet imperialism as being reactive, and the European Community as building on old structures in trying to pull together whatever might remain of French, German, Italian, Belgian, Dutch, British, and Danish imperialism into one co-ordinated unit, partly to counteract the US, partly to counteract the Soviet Union, definitely to dominate the Third World.<sup>53</sup>

Predictably, there are non-western reactions of the same type, Japan being the first case in time, its wave of economic imperialism today flooding the old centres with almost all kinds of goods. If this is a second-generation wave, like the waves from the US and the Soviet Union, then the waves now emanating from "los quatro japoncitos" (South Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Singapore — literally) will not fail to make their impact.<sup>54</sup> And the New International Economic Order can be seen as a setting for more such wave movements and more generations.

To be discussed, however, is to what extent one can say that there is a high level of parallelism between the decline and fall of the Roman Empire and the decline and possible fall of the western empires, meaning first of all the countries in the European Community, second the United States, and third the Soviet Union. Here it should be noted immediately that these three, although all of them western in a civilizational sense, obviously are in different stages of their life cycles as empires — possibly with western Europe in a stage of senescence, the United States reaching old age, and the Soviet Union in its maturity (a less apocalyptic vision for western Europe would make the three somewhat younger, still maintaining the order: the Soviet



Union on its way up,<sup>55</sup> the United States just about passing its apogee, western Europe in a state of decadence, but not yet senescence). Further, it should of course be noted that there is a close relationship between the United States and western Europe and a conflict with the Soviet Union. Thus, the decline and even fall of the eastern part of the West may come somewhat later — but certainly not as much as 1,000 years later as was the case with the Eastern Roman Empire — we only point this out in order to show once more that the use of Roman history might be useful in generating hypotheses.<sup>56</sup>

How, then, should one envisage western imperialism, comparable with the Roman Empire, yet with its distinct specificities? One approach would be as indicated below.

The Renaissance was a reactivation of the old cosmology, even more centrifugal, expansionist, inspiring both geopolitical and socio-economic expansion. The geopolitical expansion is usually known as colonialism, and the socio-economic expansion as imperialism; the former is a spill-over beyond national borders of the state built by bureaucrats, the latter a spill-over, also beyond national borders, of the corporations built by capitalists.

This distinction, however, is too sharp, for one major characteristic of western imperialism is the co-operation between state and corporation, between bureaucrats and capitalists.<sup>57</sup> Capitalism supported the state with taxes, more or less willingly; the state in return provided military protection for expanding economic cycles both inside and outside the national territory, placed major orders (e.g., for uniforms, arms, public buildings), and served as the ultimate guarantee that there would be something to fall back upon in case of total bankruptcy.<sup>58</sup> Together they had a stake in extracting surplus produced in the overseas territories and through proletarianization in general, at home and abroad. Thus, it is the co-operative rather than a competitive nature of relationship between state and corporations that should be seen as a major characteristic of western imperialism, and in this perspective the political conflicts as to the precise

rules of that game appear as less significant. Of course, to private corporations it makes a difference whether the state provides the three services mentioned above, including building infrastructure in a much broader sense than just supplying military protection, or in fact takes over corporations, starting doing business itself. And to the state it matters when corporations dictate policies: Borderlines between state and capital become more blurred.

Two phases should be distinguished: from the building of governmental to the building of inter-governmental organizations at the state level, and from the building of national to the building of transnational corporations at the other level. In either case co-operation between the levels takes place, regardless of whether the inter-governmental organization or the transnational corporation comes first (probably usually the latter because of its much higher level of flexibility). And as this process grows and the size of the state and the corporation, nationally and internationally, takes on more and more overwhelming proportions, there will be an increasing need for intellectuals who produce forms of understanding of these phenomena, who deliver, for example, laws and regulations to the bureaucrats, and natural and social science "laws" to the capitalists, "planning" for a more predictable world in which expansion can continue unabated.<sup>59</sup> In conclusion this adds up to a huge superstructure of bureaucrats, capitalists, and intellectuals, the nucleus of the western imperialist formula, to be supported by the surplus extracted through geopolitical and socio-economic expansion.

Of course, it led to "unrest" — both the "native" reaction to geopolitical expansion and the "proletarian" reaction to a socio-economic expansion, with world trade and machine industry playing a dominant role, particularly after the industrial revolution. In either case, co-optation was used as a method to contain the unrest, but the "trickling upwards" in the form of individual social mobility from native and proletarian layers of the total system always proved insufficient. Other methods had to be used, predominantly military campaigns against the "natives," and against the proletarians a number

of tactics that deserve more explicit mention.

Some of these tactics were soft; some of them were tough. Among the latter were the police campaigns, the efforts to quell strikes and riots; among the former, welfare-state measures (the panem of the Roman Empire) and mass entertainment (the circenses): sports, movies, radio/TV.

But there were also more subtle measures, particularly a gradual building of shared interest with the elite in the superstructure.<sup>60</sup> The formula increasingly developing was the idea that "we in the West, elite and masses, will after all go up together and go down together, so we can just as well fight for the common cause."<sup>61</sup> The proletariat wanted more of a share, and the welfare state was a way of meeting this demand. But the other party also wanted more; as a consequence the cake had to grow, which means that expansion had to continue.

All of this, then, becomes particularly dramatic in the years after the Second World War, when the process known as decolonization set in. The process was important: There was a form of direct taxation in return for "protection" that no longer could be exercised. But the consequence was also obvious: To compensate for this loss there had to be a much more concentrated effort along the lines of socio-economic expansion. Consequently, as one might have predicted, the upsurge of transnational corporations was the logical answer to decolonization, a concentration on the second expansion platform when the first was yielding.<sup>62</sup> There is something dramatic in this, a system being amputated on one leg, fortifying the second, vulnerable, but limping forward with great enthusiasm.

Essentially this means that market relations become of predominant importance and they involve ultimately a question of relations between supply and demand, between production and consumption. It is no longer sufficient, as during the age of colonialism, to engage in territorial expansion in order to provide the necessary surplus, partly to maintain the considerable elite, partly to keep the restive

proletariat at bay, even incorporating increasing numbers of them in the elite. Economic expansion is needed, which means that both consumption and production have to expand, both demand and supply, and demand has to expand so as to outstrip the supply; otherwise a crisis will ensue. To assume that demand and supply can be in static equilibrium is to assume that non-productive superstructures remain constant both in numbers and in average consumption demand, and that the costs of keeping the proletariat also remain constant (to mention only one factor: that salaries are kept constant, in real terms). But even the assumption of a dynamic equilibrium might not be enough: There has to be an image of at least potential demand leading actual supply in order for the production of goods and services to be stepped up with a reasonable probability that the market will function.

Given an expansionist cosmology, it should be possible to meet these conditions, at least for some time. Not only will an increase in production output be considered normal, natural; the same will apply to an increase in demand, in consumption in general. One may ridicule the person who adds transistor radio number 6, watch or clock number 5, TV set number 3, and car number 2 to his household equipment, but it nevertheless happens all the time.<sup>63</sup> Through stimulation of the internal market and of the external market demands may build up, and as a result production will be stimulated, and vice versa. The profits from this will have to be increasingly shared with the external elite and be used to placate the external proletariat, thereby constituting patterns not too different from territorial, geopolitical expansion of yesteryear. Substituting for the military campaigns at the end of the colonial period (the Viet-Nam war will probably stand out in history as the major case in mind)<sup>64</sup> will come an increasing tendency to build the state-corporation alliance in non-western countries around military governments, one reason being the high level of compatibility between the social logic of the modern military as an institution and the modern capitalist corporation.<sup>65</sup>

Given all of this then, what, if anything, could threaten the stability of this arrangement? What could, if possible, make the demand lower

than the supply produced by the western-dominated production centres? From the simple logic used above there could be two sources of "trouble": decreased demand, and a decreasing supply of production factors to meet the demand. The possibility of decreasing demand in the internal market is well known today: A certain consumption fatigue has set in in some parts of the population of the western centre, perhaps particularly among upper/middle-class intellectual youths — but even though this might sound like a small group, they are important because they may be taste-setters for the future. In some countries consumption fatigue has perhaps reached more general layers of the population; but to this it should also be added that although some parts of the population react to over-consumption, other parts may feel very strongly that they are under-consumers, and still other parts may constitute a potential internal market once they have been made to conceive of themselves as under-consumers (perhaps particularly older people, children, marginal groups).

Given a western cosmology, almost all of the non-western world should and could also conceive of expansion in its consumption as normal and natural: Few things look as immoral to the standard western eye as the native who works till noon, declares that he has earned enough money for his needs, and engages in what to the West looks like "leisure" the rest of the day, uninterested in increasing his purchasing power in the market further. Thus, the major task of western corporations has probably been to stimulate demand by bringing into the communities, at a high level, models of increased consumption.<sup>66</sup>

However this may be, it is obvious that the major threat to the western expansion is not so much in the field of limited demand as in the field of competition from new centres of production. With production facilities increasingly located outside the western nucleus, with technology increasingly transferred and understood (although much remains in this field), with demand increasingly stimulated (the famous "revolution of rising expectations"), and above all with the elites in the non-western countries increasingly adapting to and accepting fully a western cosmology, it would be a miracle if these

elites should not increasingly get the idea of running the economic cycles themselves. This holds for their internal markets, and in the longer run (and the time has already come) for external markets, both in the old western periphery and in the western centre. And with this, second-generation imperialism is brought into being, and we are in the situation described in the beginning of this section. It should only be added that in order to run these economic cycles one of the first things these elites have to do is to get control over their own production factors, meaning their own raw materials — particularly energy, capital, labour, and research capacity. The sum total of the instruments for acquiring this control, often in a very gradual manner, is today known as the New International Economic Order. One little remark should perhaps be added since it is not spelt out in those instruments: labour. Is it to be expected that in the long run the non-West will accept western interference with its labour market? Will it accept western use of foreign labour at home or abroad in order to make its products more competitive relative to non-western-made products? Will it accept western efforts to introduce standards such as minimum salaries in the non-West, thereby increasing the costs and decreasing the competitiveness of the non-West on the world market? Or will it resort to automation, like the West.<sup>67</sup>

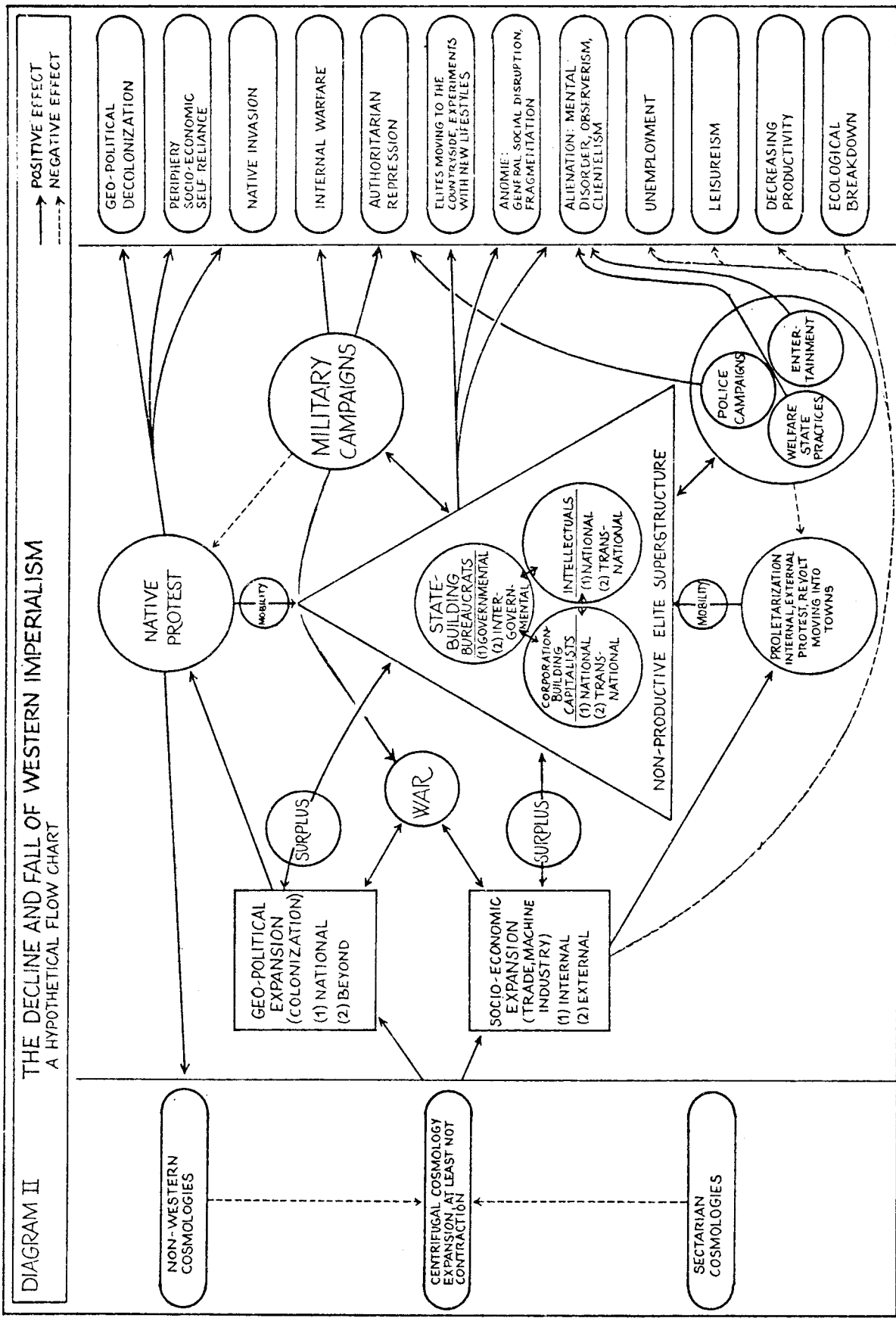
Again, however that may be, the thesis is one of increased self-reliance in the old western periphery, a decreasing flow of raw factors from non-West to West, and a decrease of the external market available to the West, even with population growth (which is tapering off anyhow). And this is where the crisis comes in: The supply outstrips the demand, unless more demand can be created. The possibility of expanding the internal market has already been mentioned, but there is the other major possibility: the use of destruction in order to create a more acceptable balance between demand and supply. From the Great Depression the method of destroying goods that already have been produced is well known, and actually used by farmers quite often when the market is depressed. From the Great Wars (the First and Second World Wars) in particular the method of going much further, destroying not only goods but capital goods (or anything for that matter) so as

to produce at least a demand for reconstruction if not for further consumption expansion, is equally well known. Any rational analysis of the situation in which the western world finds itself today would include this in a scenario, which, of course in no way means accepting it.<sup>68</sup> In view of the gravity of this possibility (certainly not only a logical one but also one that empirically has played a considerable role), an intensified search for other alternatives becomes a survival necessity.

Most of these alternatives will be in the direction of decreased supply: decreasing the production particularly of goods, by decreasing either the number of workers, the number of work hours, or productivity. The first possibility is known as unemployment, the second as expansion of free time, and the third entails nothing less than a general shift of mode of production. Of these six approaches we would see the three that aim at increasing the demand as intrinsic to western imperialism: expansion of the internal market, expansion of the external market, not to mention war itself, and not only for geopolitical conquest but also to stimulate socio-economic expansion regardless of geopolitical conquest of other parts of the system. But the other three, aiming at decreasing supply, are counter-paradigmatic; they are contracting rather than expanding approaches. Consequently, we list both unemployment, leisurism, and decreasing productivity among the signs of decline, even of the fall of western imperialism. It should be noted that leisurism equals obligatory non-work.

In Diagram II an effort has been made to depict these processes, following the logic of the corresponding diagram for the fall of the Roman Empire.

In the left-hand column, in a central position, is the expansionist, centrifugal cosmology that is postulated for the whole period. It is being eroded both from the outside and from the inside by "non-western cosmologies," with which the West always had some contact and always was, at least verbally, fascinated,<sup>69</sup> and by what are here called "sectarian cosmologies," by which we mean not only the Christian





sects that have survived as carriers of a more fundamentalist Christianity but also lay orientations in that direction — such as some brands of anarchism, of pacifism, not to mention the millions of people scattered around in the vast periphery of the western centre, rural communities, mountain villages, etc., not much touched by western expansionism either materially or spiritually. They represent the soft side of the West, perhaps only few of them aware of corresponding mentalities and structures in other corners of the world.<sup>70</sup>

In the middle of the diagram, then, is a representation of the normal working of western imperialism. In the centre is the expanding non-productive superstructure, divided between the three institutions/elites. It has to be fed and kept. The natives coming under its geopolitical expansion had to produce enough surplus to pay for the military campaigns against them; the proletarians produced internally and externally through socio-economic expansion similarly had to produce enough surplus to pay for their own policing, and later on for welfare-state integration. (The entertainment, presumably, the proletarians pay for directly.)

Then there is the third column, listing a total of 12 types of forms or symptoms of decline and fall — in other words indicators that the system as described in the middle has not attained either a static or a dynamic equilibrium. In the centre of these 12 is what is here seen as the final sign of breakdown: the elite moving to the countryside, experimenting with new life-styles. But first there are five indicators of a more geopolitical nature: the decolonization that by and large already has taken place; periphery socio-economic self-reliance, which brings to mind the New International Economic Order; "native invasions," which today bring to mind the foreign workers from overseas, particularly in the centres of the British and French parts of general western imperialism; internal warfare in the West when there are no more unconquered territories left, bringing to mind the First and Second World Wars and to some extent also the "cold" wars; the fascist repression needed to mobilize national energies in an imperialist direction, bringing particularly to mind the German expansion eastwards

having Ostomark as its intended periphery, and a high likelihood in coming years of authoritarian repression, re-emerging in the centre of western imperialism in an effort to counteract the problems in this column in the diagram.<sup>71</sup>

The problems continue with more socio-economic reactions: general social disruption or anomie (increasing crime, normlessness of various kinds, alcoholism, etc.); the various forms of alienation,<sup>72</sup> expressed as excessive "observerism" and possibly also taking the form of increasing mental disorder; increasing unemployment; "leisurism" as an enforced new mode of life; and ultimately decreasing productivity as a new way of handling decreasing production.<sup>73</sup> To this should then also be added the various symptoms of ecological breakdown, in spite of the ability of the system to shift from one type of ecological balance to another (e.g., from physical via chemical to thermic).

Of course, these two diagrams do not constitute any kind of "proof" that the two situations are identical or similar. After all, they have been drawn in such a way as to emphasize the similarity, historical situations being so complex that no inventories of "similarities" and "dissimilarities" can be made with any pretention of completeness. That, however, is not the major point. The major point is the high level of isomorphism of the total configurations<sup>74</sup> rather than an element-to-element correspondence. What we have tried to emphasize is the similarity in mechanisms, both the mechanisms that keep the systems stable for a long period and those that eventually destabilize them. Thus, in both cases there was the basic task of keeping a rapidly increasing and materially non-productive superstructure, and that could only be done by having barbarians/natives, and internal and external proletariats, pay for it with their work and whatever else was available in their vicinity. In neither case did they like this very much; that posed the problem of how to placate them — there were hard ways and soft ways of doing this. The rest is a question of balance: Is enough surplus produced to maintain the elite and to control the unrest, or are the sources of surplus eventually being over-squeezed so that they deliver only a dwindling trickle to support

an ever-expanding superstructure? And, does so much of the surplus have to be diverted into placating the internal and external proletariats and natives/barbarians that this also puts the brakes on the superstructure? That modern western imperialism has more mechanisms at its disposal (or at least tries to make it look like that), that it is more extended in space, does not affect the isomorphism — or the isomorphism hypothesis, to be more correct. The basic mechanisms may still be similar.

What, then, are major dissimilarities? If we should point to one, it would probably have to be the lack of unity in the western nucleus. It is rather as if the Roman Empire should have been administered by an Italy somewhat similar to the Italy of the city-states of 1350-1550, in constant rivalry and competition, often in direct warfare with each other. Also, some are early starters, others are late-comers, and some are even reactive imperialists, such as the Soviet Union, or Moscow, to be more precise<sup>75</sup> (one peculiarity of the Moscow imperialism is that it has secured contiguity for itself; the periphery is geographically continuous with the centre and for that reason looks less colonial since it does not correspond to the classical "overseas" model). This should be reflected in a better model of western imperialism, essentially using the same basic point of departure, but one for Spain, one for Portugal, one for England, one for France, one for Germany, etc. In using such a model as this, however, it would be obvious that what one is talking about would be the members and candidate members of the European Community, and it would not be too difficult to extend it to include the even more famous case of reactive imperialism: the United States. Moreover, capitalism as a world system has a unit the states do not (as yet) have — with the centre (so far) in the West, the significant Japanese variety notwithstanding.<sup>76</sup>

Needless to say, this means that the concept of "internal warfare" as a symptom of decline needs some elaboration: We have preferred to regard it as internal warfare in a tacit western imperialism rather than as external warfare between various national western imperialisms. The major defence of that thesis would be based on the high level of

integration between western countries, particularly between the elite in these countries – economically, politically, militarily, culturally, etc. The integration may take the form of incorporation, but it is quite clear that western countries have never in modern times treated each other as they treat, or at least have treated, Third World countries. Even for Nazi Germany this was clear: The brutality exercised eastwards was never matched by anything similar in the Nazi German excursion towards the West. The European Community is itself a clear example of the deeper unity of purpose, particularly in a period when clearly marked territorial division of the Third World into colonial empires is no longer possible and it may as a compensation pay off to engage in joint socio-economic expansion, particularly in inter-governmental state co-operation when it comes to building infrastructures that will facilitate the expansion of transnational corporations. Nevertheless, it is quite clear that the famous western "unity in diversity" has its limits, particularly when the concept of the West is extended so as to include eastern Europe and Russia.<sup>77</sup> With that inclusion a lag hypothesis must be introduced: There is lack of unity, and eastern Europe depends less on Third World trade than does western Europe, hence is less vulnerable – but, as mentioned above, the concept of eastern Europe as a latecomer was by no means unknown to Roman history.

Then there is a second dissimilarity: The mechanism for impoverishing the periphery and enriching the centres differs. The distinction has been made between two types of mechanisms: roughly speaking, one based on territorial, geopolitical control that can serve as a basis for plunder (ad hoc) and taxation (institutionalized); the other based on central control of the socio-economic construction. The Roman Empire and western imperialism both make use of the first approach, and one of the most important objects of plunder is human beings to be used as slaves. The centre is enriched, partly by material objects and materials taken from elsewhere, partly by means of unfree labour to carry out the dirty, heavy, boring, and degrading work – slaves, serfs, and all the varieties up to the "guest worker" of our days. But in saying so, we are already touching on the socio-economic construction,

the whole system of division of labour. The Romans did not use trade to an extent comparable with our period in the history of western imperialism (but probably comparable with earlier periods, such as right after the discoveries). But division of labour there was: By moving human beings from the periphery to the centre, exploiting them on the plantations of Italy, including forcing them to die for the sake of entertaining free citizens, the Romans were also exploiting the periphery — somewhat in the same way as when raw material is taken from the periphery and used for centre purposes in the centre.

Capitalism and capitalist imperialism add a tremendous efficiency, both in extension and in depth, to this. It belongs to the picture that with the loss of territorial control over the overseas periphery the West had to compensate by stepping up capitalist penetration — that is the present phase (alternative approach: territorial exploitation of the internal periphery). Thus there are differences in the nature and relative weight given to the mechanisms of centre-periphery formation, otherwise the similarities would have been trivial! The basic features from our perspective remain the same: a system that has to expand to solve its major problems, that of defence against internal and external proletariats and that of feeding an expanding, materially non-productive superstructure. The latter can only happen at the expense of nature, external proletariat, and internal proletariat — or by increasing productivity. Rome fell on the first three and was unable to engage in the fourth — western imperialism runs into difficulties on all four counts.

Something should be said about the time perspective of all this, of particular interest to the present generation. Two hypotheses might be launched: "Quick up, quick down," and, "Slow up, slow down." The first brings to mind such phenomena as Attila the Hun and Hitler the Teuton, and the theory might be relatively simple: It takes time, much patient work, and much more than sheer expansionism and brutality if one wants to build an empire. An empire has to be built with a certain finesse. The military and the police should be kept in the background; they should not dominate the picture as they did or may be

said to have done in the two examples given.

The other thesis, "Slow up, slow down," is more problematic. It is probably reasonable to think in terms of a multiplying effect due to the communication and transportation revolution. Of course, one can argue both ways where this factor is concerned. On the one hand it facilitates the control of the periphery: Signals of unrest, even revolt in internal and external proletariats, can be recorded immediately, analysed, and translated into quick action of the soft or hard variety as the case may be. Other factors being constant, this would work in the direction of increased communication and transportation facilities prolonging empires rather than shortening their life span.

But then there are all the other factors. The signals of unrest and revolt are also transmitted to other parts of internal and external proletariats, serving to raise consciousness, to stimulate mobilization, even as a learning model of confrontation activity. Most important in this connection is the realization of having the same master, the same dominant class. This would work not only in geographical space but also in social space: Women may start understanding that their situation is not so very different from that of the industrial proletariat or, even more clearly, from the serfs of feudalism. Very young people and very old people start understanding that their situation is not too different from that of women, and so on and so forth. Thus, the communication and transportation revolutions have as a consequence that the centre may at times be confronted with solidary unrest not only in geographical space but also eventually in social space, so that farmers, workers, ethnic minorities, women, the young, the old, the less educated all revolt at the same time — to use categories from modern industrial societies (and one could add the handicapped, the ill, the mentally ill). Although this may be said not to have happened so far, it is definitely a possibility for the future. Thus, in the Moscow empire one may perhaps identify isolated points of unrest labelled "ethnic minorities," "peasants," and "intelligentsia," scattered around in geographical and social space.

It is hard to see how a regime could survive a crystallization into joint, well mobilized confrontation with all three. Knowing this, regimes will see to it that the controls over communication and transportation facilities are maintained, thus proving their importance.

But the communication/transportation revolution not only changes conditions in the periphery; it also modifies the centre. It makes centre life not only more visible but also more accessible, at least for spectators. It is less shrouded in mystery, more available for everybody to see in mass media and on close inspection through travel: The life of the rich in Miami Beach hotels is more visible and to a higher percentage of the population — it is assumed — than the life of the rich in the châteaux de Loire in earlier ages. Geographical mobility almost has to imply social mobility; otherwise social unrest would increase even further. There has to be evidence that it is possible to pass through the gate, or at least to scale the wall, into the rich man's garden, and as an equal, not as a servant or a thief. And this also works in the centre: Increased visibility stimulates the appetite for centre life, but also for super-centre lives inside the centre — at least as long as a cosmology of expansionism prevails.

Thus, the net balance of this analysis would be that the communication/transportation revolution would shorten the life span of empires:<sup>78</sup> It multiplies the speed and facility of control, but it also multiplies the processes of consciousness formation and mobilization, and in addition accelerates centre demand for increasing surplus that has to be produced somewhere — that "somewhere" ultimately becoming the sources of revolt. Just as there are internal and external proletariats, there are internal and external bourgeoisies, scattered around the world, comparing life-styles, equalizing upwards rather than downwards.

However, again the point should be made that the strength of western imperialism, in spite of all this, lies in its multi-centred structure. There has been much talk of the trriage model,<sup>79</sup> of letting periphery countries that cannot take off economically sink, putting the others into the lifeboat, presumably towed by a solid western ship. But this

model could also apply to the centre: Letting the centre countries that no longer are able to produce sufficient surplus for their elite – e.g., because the proletariat has exacted such salaries that the production of the country no longer is competitive abroad – simply sink because they are bankrupt, while other parts of western imperialism go on as long as they can. In this process one could then imagine, ultimately, that the outward expansionist wave of western imperialism generates a multiplicity of centres all around its former periphery, leaving a big sink-hole in the middle, the tomb in which the centre of the first wave is buried.<sup>80</sup>

So, what is the cause of the decline of western imperialism? The answer will have to be exactly the same as for the case of the Roman Empire: It is not a very well formulated question. The effects are already to a large extent there for many to see, but they are effects, not causes. Correspondingly, it is hard to put one's finger on any particular relationship in the flow chart in the middle of Diagram II: They are all interwoven, all a part of the same logic. At one point in time there may be an imbalance here, at another point in time an imbalance there – but these are the minor circumstances. The major "circumstance" is that logic itself: the cosmology. And that cosmology is in itself challenged by both internal and external sources – the famous hippie trail to Nepal at the end of the 1960s and early 1970s being a historical encounter of a new and an old culture spun around the same basic theme.<sup>81</sup> That the recruitment into the new culture in the West was from the upper classes and the upper middle classes, from youth predestined to become members of the centre, even the super-centre, should surprise only the very naive: They were exactly the ones who had seen the "breakdown of the spirit" in the eyes of their parents, who had tasted their life-style and found it wanting.<sup>82</sup> In searching for a new base, it was to the Third World they had to go, but not to the new Third World touched by the imperialist wave and wanting itself to become a centre, but to the old Third World (if that term makes any sense at all). And what they were looking for was, of course, not only a culture but a complete cosmology, a "scheme of things" that would be more inner-directed,



more centripetal, even more transcendental.<sup>83</sup> That they tended to settle in the countryside on small farms, more or less self-reliant, should also surprise nobody — nor should it surprise anybody that they did not "win" in the sense of the whole West immediately changing into their pattern. Processes are not that quick.

Hence, we are left with the same conclusion: The cause of the decline and fall of western imperialism is western imperialism itself, or, in other words, its ever-expanding or at least never-contracting cosmology. One would even expect that an imperialism of this kind would step up its economic expansion and exploitation so as to more than compensate for geopolitical losses, and that it would fall into deep pessimism and frustration if these efforts are thwarted (the 1973 oil shock depression?). And the carriers of a new social formation are, of course, found in the centre of the Centre — not in any other group not yet through with the patterns set by western imperialism, only aching to get into better positions or to do it themselves. The routines of a cosmology have to be run through — to express it in computer language — they have to be tried out before one is through and starts looking for a new programme, a new "way of doing things." Revolts may be made by the masses; transformations are made by the elite who understand how to make use of the revolts. Together they constitute revolutions, rare — for they presuppose a general fatigue and accumulation of "problems" at a level so high that the system is simply given up, ultimately even by its most aggressive social carriers. Which does not mean that this will happen tomorrow or next year — after all, the Roman Empire also took a long time in dying and perhaps never became quite dead. The direction is unmistakable, perhaps even the why and the how — but not the when and the where.<sup>84</sup> Which is not the same as saying that capitalism or imperialism, even of the western type, will disappear from the world — only that the control positions will no longer be in the West.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

What we have tried to show in the preceding pages is that the Roman Empire of nearly two millennia ago and western imperialism of the last five centuries are two species of the same genus. As such one would expect their life patterns to exhibit similarities. One such similarity would be that if one declined and fell, so presumably will the other also. The question then often arises: Is this a pessimistic view? Obviously the answer depends on for whom. Since few in the former British colonies seem today to be lamenting the decline and fall of Pax Britannica, and the same seems to apply to the Communauté français, it can probably be predicted that the same will apply, by and large, to western imperialism as a whole. Few will be crying for its return.

However, the curious thing is that not so many people seem to be nostalgic about the imperial past inside Britain or inside France either. From the point of view of the proletariat this is not strange: They actually have a materially much better life now than during the heyday of imperialism, in spite of the circumstance that imperialism was not Britain or France exploiting the colonies, but elite centres of Britain and France (helped by certain centres overseas) exploiting all the rest. In fact, what happened was probably an example of what has been mentioned above: Liberation processes are contagious; decolonization stimulated further steps in the direction of welfare states<sup>85</sup> (which had as an immediate consequence a shared worker interest in the maintenance of socio-economic expansion abroad), ultimately also touching off the many revolts of the national minorities inside the West.

But even the centre in the Centre, apart from some very special groups, does not seem to have been so badly touched by the events. After all, it must also have been to some extent liberating no longer to have the burden of running one fourth or one fifth of the world on one's shoulders, certainly reaping the harvests, but at the price of terrible concerns and troubles.<sup>86</sup> The point may, therefore, be made that human beings perhaps are not made for the exigences of western expansionism: always higher up, always more, never resting contented. Some might see this as an argument in favour of leisurism, but it does not work that way either: Leisurism does not give, in the long run, the same satisfaction as work (as distinct from having a "job").<sup>87</sup> We mention all this for the obvious reason that in a successor society to western imperialism — more based on smaller, self-sufficient units, more centripetal cosmologies — there might be considerable psychological liberation for the western elite — which, of course, is one reason why their sons and daughters initiate such experiments in alternative lifestyles.

Does that mean that we are entering the Dark Middle Ages? And would that not be a pessimistic view? The problem is, of course, whether the Dark Middle Ages were that dark, or only appear dark in the light of generations (historians among them) to whom expansionist, centrifugal cosmology is taken for granted, defining life in that period as highly abnormal, highly unnatural. The metaphors that are used have to do with this: One talks about the "rise" and "fall" of imperialism but not about the "rise" and the "fall" of the Middle Ages — they are seen as an interlude between normal states of affairs. Generations trying to think differently might reverse this and talk about the decline of the Middle Ages into the Renaissance and the rise of humanity after western imperialism.<sup>88</sup>

Second, the argument often raised that "if there is no materially non-productive elite beyond a critical size, the masterpieces of civilization would not be produced" could also be seen in the same light. There is of course the moral aspect: What is the value of the monuments of the past in architecture, in literature and the fine arts,

in music, if the price paid had to be exploitation of millions of small people bending their backs in the fields, in the mines, in the sweat-shops of the factories?<sup>89</sup> Is it worth the price? Perhaps a better way of putting the question would be: Are there other ways in which cultural products are produced that are not based on exploitation? And this opens up an enormous range of answers, where one cue might be the degree of division of labour between culture producers and culture consumers, intimately linked to the materially non-productive super-structure to some extent monopolizing the production of cultural products, turning others into consumers. In short, there are many other models fusing other types of work with art, many of them known also from the "darkest" part of the Middle Ages, different from the elitist civilization model that is a concomitant of western expansionism and division of labour in general.

For these and other reasons it is difficult to conceive of the image given in the preceding sections as a pessimistic one. Rather, one might be tempted to think in the opposite direction: Something in centrifugal western cosmology is to the world community of human beings somewhat like cancer is to the human body – uncontrolled growth. This is not the same as to say Occident = Accident.<sup>90</sup> As we have emphasized, the centrifugal cosmology is only one side of the total western cosmology,<sup>91</sup> the problem being that two parts are not harmoniously balanced inside persons or societies or epoch. In the next period the West might play a more equitable part in the total world community – unless, that is, other parts of the world then play the western role, subjugating the West as she has subjugated them. And this is probably the problem that is going to worry the West more than anything else, even more than the various aspects of the economic crises.<sup>92</sup> Will they treat us as badly as we treated them?

Finally, one reflection on the question "Can one learn from history?": The argument emerging from these pages is certainly that "western imperialism has had its time"; to that point there is an element of determinism in what has been said. But a conclusion of that type leaves open a respectable range of action alternatives.<sup>93</sup> To use

language based on the organism analogy, if the patient is very, very old and quite ill, shall we prolong life artificially by inserting synthetic body pieces? Shall we let nature run her course and opt for a death in beauty? Shall we perhaps speed up the process through euthanasia? Or — shall we focus on the children, seeing to it that they become healthy, thriving, and strong, autonomous, neither flattering the big nor trampling on the small? Our personal inclination would be "death in beauty" and "focus on the children," and we think, incidentally, that such organism analogies may be quite useful. Neither unemployment/war in cyclical interchange as a response to economic crises nor the modern counterparts of internal market stimulation with leisurism would add up to more than artificial life prolongation. And to learn from history should mean not only to learn how to preserve something old but also how to give easier birth to something new — otherwise the entire exercise would be of very limited value.<sup>94</sup>

## NOTES

The present paper is an outcome of the Trends in Western Civilization Program at the Chair in Conflict and Peace Research, University of Oslo, and an input to the Project on Goals, Processes, and Indicators of Development of the United Nations University. It grew out of a lecture series given by Johan Galtung during the winter term 1977/78 at the Institut Universitaire d'Études du Développement, Geneva, on "Macro-histoire et la civilisation occidentale." It has been presented in seminars at the universities of Turin, Basel, Zurich, Bologna, Mannheim, Berlin, and Penang; at conferences in Stockholm, the Hague, and Gummersbach; and in its present shape at the Nordic Conference on Methods of Historical Research, Leikanger, 22-24 May 1978, the Max Planck Institut Conference in Starnberg, 7-9 August 1978, and the Third GPID Research Meeting, Geneva, 2-8 October 1978. We are indebted to discussants at all these places — particularly Bjørn Qviller, Oslo, and Uffe Østergård, Århus/Firenze. The responsibility for the views expressed rests with the authors.

1. As Herbert Butterfield says, "Sometimes, when the human race has gone through one of its colossal chapters of experience, men in the afterperiod have been so appalled by the catastrophe, so obsessed by the memory of it . . ." (The New York Review of Books, 20 April 1978). For recent books on Edward Gibbon and his "lawful revolution," see Lynn White Jr., ed., The Transformation of the Roman World: Gibbon's Problem after Two Centuries (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1966); F.W. Wallbank, The Awful Revolution: The Decline of the Roman Empire in the West (Liverpool, 1969); Michael Grant, The Fall of the Roman Empire: A Reappraisal (Radnor, Pa., 1976); Glen Bowersock et al., eds., Edward Gibbon and the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire (Cambridge, Mass., 1977).
2. Such similarities have been observed also by performers of politics. A remarkable case is that of former US President Richard M. Nixon, whose famous Kansas City speech of 6 July 1971, from which the title page quote is taken (from Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents, 12 July 1971, p. 1039; italics ours), contains a peculiar kind of foresight and insight — perhaps involuntary. Watergate struck two years later.
3. We have been very much inspired by the article by Edward Goldsmith, "The Fall of the Roman Empire," The Ecologist, July 1975, pp. 196-

206, and, after our article was written, by L. Stavrianos, The Promise of the Coming Dark Age (San Francisco, 1976). But the master in making heuristic uses of the history of the Roman Empire is and remains Gibbon — even to the point that his works may carry some causal weight, as self-fulfilling prophecies.

4. Cf. Gibbon on "immoderate greatness": "The rise of a city, which swelled into an empire, may deserve, as a singular prodigy, the reflection of a philosophic mind. But the decline of Rome was a natural and inevitable effect of immoderate greatness. Prosperity ripened the principle of decay; the causes of destruction multiplied with the extent of conquest; and as soon as time or accident had removed the artificial supports, the stupendous fabric yielded to the pressure of its own weight. The story of its ruin is simple and obvious; and instead of inquiring why the Roman empire was destroyed, we should rather be surprised that it had subsisted so long." (A History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, ed. J. Bury [London, 1901], vol. IV, p. 161.)
5. Characterized by a lack of limitation, notwithstanding the Mongols and the Japanese, who are commonly invoked as examples to the contrary. As for the Mongols, cf. Håkon Stang, "Cinggis Hān and the Role of a Legend: Rise of the Central Asian Idea of World Domination," Papers, Chair in Conflict and Peace Research, University of Oslo (1979). As for the Japanese they did not lack limitations in earlier periods — cf. George B. Sansom, The Western World and Japan (London 1950), and A History of Japan, 1615-1867 (London 1964) and in recent times Japanese imperialism does not satisfy both criteria at the same time: It is world-wide, but then only economic; it serves to "Japanize," but then only in East Asia.

A typical case of imposing alien structures on conquered territories is the process of "romanization" north of the Alps: In the north the Romans stuck to their traditional food at great expense to themselves. Roman agriculture in the north exploited mainly the dry (and poor) soil that gave conditions resembling the Mediterranean countries. Thereby they avoided developing heavier agricultural machinery like the heavy plough. Cf. Lynn White, Jr., "Conclusion: The Temple of Jupiter Revisited," Lynn White, Jr., ed., The Transformation of the Roman World, (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1966); R.G. Collingwood, "Roman Britain" in Tenney Frank, ed., An Economic Survey of Ancient Rome (Baltimore, 1933), vol. 3; R.G. Collingwood and Myers, Roman Britain and the English Settlement, Oxford English History (Oxford 1937), vol. 1; C.S. Stevens, "Agriculture and Rural Life in the Later Roman Empire," in M.M. Postan and E.E. Rich, eds., The Cambridge Economic History, vol. 1 (1952), pp. 89-117.

As George Duby says, "For we should be wrong in thinking that a human society feeds on what the surrounding land is best suited to produce. Society is a prisoner of practices passed on from generation to generation and altered only with difficulty.

Consequently it endeavours to overcome the limitations of soil and climate in order to produce at all costs foodstuffs that its customs and rites ordain." (The Early Growth of the European Economy, trans. H.B. Clarke [Ithaca, N.Y., 1974], p. 17.)

According to Duby, the Romano-Germanic encounter in history was a "collision between two strikingly different dietary traditions," and it was only the breakdown of the western Roman empire which made real synthesis between the two traditions possible. Cf. also Edward Hyams's succinct conclusion, "Fortunately for the soil, the Roman Empire was falling to pieces" (Soil and Civilization [London, 1952], p. 248), and his discussion generally on the inappropriateness of Roman farming methods in Northern Europe (pp. 244-249). Today, westernization of Third World countries in the form of the "green revolution" offers parallel cases.

The Roman language also penetrated Europe. The notable cases are not only those languages that vanished but also those that survived. About Welsh it can be said that, had not Celtic languages persisted elsewhere, it would have been conceived of as a Roman residue — cf. Jeffrey B. Russell "Celt and Teuton," in Lynn White, Jr., ed., The Transformation of the Roman World: Gibbon's Problem after Two Centuries (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1966), pp. 232-265.

6. "The question of the size of political units seems never to attract among historians and sociologists the attention which it deserves" (Mark Elvin, The Pattern of the Chinese Past [London, 1973], p. 17). The best introduction to the question is probably Leopold Kohr's remarkably unknown book The Breakdown of Nations (London, 1957). For an economic perspective, see E.A.G. Robinson, Economic Consequences of the Size of Nations (London, 1960). The Roman Empire is discussed in H.A. Innis, The Bias of Communication (Toronto, 1951), pp. 11-15 and 113-119, and in his Empire and Communication (Oxford, 1950).

7. For the financial situation of the Roman Empire, see A.H.M. Jones, The Later Roman Empire (Oxford, 1964), p. 466, and A. Bernardi, "The Economic Problems of the Roman Empire at the Time of Its Decline," in C. Cipolla, ed., The Decline of Empires (London, 1970), pp. 16-83. Financial resources could be raised internally or externally. Internally by taxes or by excises on trade, externally by excises or by the spoils of conquests. Actually, choices were far more limited. Not only did the economic conditions in the empire allow only a limited amount of trade and thereby excises; also social conditions worked against taxes as a solution. This left the traditional and flexible solution of conquest, which in itself involved some delicate balances. On the one hand, conquest was expensive and incurred further outlays on defence; on the other, the empire obtained booty and various resources for exploitation.

". . . inelastic markets and traditional methods of technology and agricultural organization blocked any significant growth in productivity, in what we could call the gross national product,



and therefore any steady increase in the yield from indirect taxes. When, for whatever reason, the demands on the available food, on the public treasury and on the contributions of the wealthy . . . outran public resources too far, the ancient world had only two possible responses: one was to reduce the population by sending it out; the other was to bring in additional means from outside, in the form of booty and tribute. Both, as I have already said, were stop-gaps, not solutions." (Finley, The Ancient Economy [London, 1973], p. 175.) The areas conquered in turn, required imperial defence. And this defence was the main channel into which resources were allocated. And here the stopgap solutions had to come to an end: "From the middle of the third century, the numerical inadequacy of the armies who had to resist continuing and growing Germanic and Persian incursions could not long have escaped the notice of those responsible for the empire. Nothing could be done: neither the available manpower nor food production nor transport could bear a burden greater than the one imposed by Diocletian, when he doubled the army's strength, at least on paper. . . . But nothing could be done to raise the productivity of the empire as a whole or to redistribute the load. For that a complete structural transformation would have been required." (Ibid., pp. 148-49.)

8. The logic of protection is interesting. It is the mafia logic from The Godfather of the offer that cannot be rejected since the alternative to accepting protection, against a fee, is to suffer at the hands of the would-be protector. In more refined protection markets there might be a club of the strong, co-operating according to the principle "I attack those who have rejected your protection on the condition that you do the same when I have difficulties with mine."
9. Stavrianos writes, "The Romans exploited their subjugated lands by outright confiscation of bullion and art objects, siphoning off of raw materials and foodstuffs, and wholesale enslavement of conquered peoples, who were sold in multitudes to plantation owners in Italy. Cicero warned his compatriots of the bitter alienation of the provincials in language that sounds uncomfortably familiar today: 'Words cannot express, gentlemen, how bitterly hated we are among foreign nations because of the wanton and outrageous conduct of the men whom in recent years we have sent to govern them. . . . They look about for rich and flourishing cities that they may find an occasion for a war against them to satisfy their lust for plunder. . . .'" (Op. cit., pp. 7-8.) And Max Weber writes, "The much-praised Roman roads were not used for anything resembling modern trade, nor was the Roman postal system. . . . To be near a Roman road was considered a misfortune rather than an advantage, for it brought billeting and vermin. In short: Roman roads served the army, not commerce" — our comment: and to transport the fruits of plunder. (The Agrarian Sociology of Ancient Civilizations [New Left Books, London, 1976], p. 392.) The whole chapter "The Social Causes of the Decline of Ancient Civilizations," pp. 389-411, is very instructive.

As to the destination of the value accumulated through these mechanisms the quantitatively dominant element in the superstructure was of course the army — 650,000 men including the navy for the period after Diocletian. This must have been in the vicinity of 1 per cent of the total population in the empire (cf. note 12). For information about the size of the superstructure, see A.H.M. Jones (op. cit.), chapters 12, 15, 16, 17, 22, and 25, and by the same author, Augustus (London, 1970). An assessment of the size of the superstructure might be constructed along the lines devised in Jones, "The Economic Basis of the Athenian Democracy," in Past and Present, 1 (1952), pp. 13-31 (also appearing in Jones, Athenian Democracy [Oxford, 1964], pp. 3-20), and "The Athens of Demosthenes," in Athenian Democracy, pp. 23-38. "Military requirements and military expenditure thus became the permanent, dominant concern of the emperors, and the limit to their military activity was set by the maximum amount they could squeeze in taxation and compulsory labour or compulsory deliveries. . . ." (Moses I. Finley, The Ancient Economy [London, 1973], pp. 90-91.) A further recipient was the "ever-increasing" bureaucracy: "The increasing requirements can be attributed in the first instance to that iron law of absolutist bureaucracy that it grows both in number and in the expensiveness of its life-style. From the imperial court down there were, decade by decade, more men to support from public funds, and a steadily growing rate of luxury." (Ibid., p. 90.)

The character of the surplus acquired deserves some mention. Although the Roman Empire was a unique structure among ancient societies, the economic conditions of the ordinary city was not without relevance to the empire. As for the sources of surplus, the accent is on the non-commercial sources. Finley states, "To sum up: essentially the ability of ancient cities to pay for their food, metals, slaves and other necessities rested on four variables: the amount of local agricultural production, that is, of the produce of the city's own rural area; the presence or absence of special resources, silver above all, but also other metals or particularly desirable wines or oil-bearing plants; the invisible exports of trade and tourism; and fourth, the income from land ownership and empire, rents, taxes, tribute, gifts from clients and subjects. The contribution of manufactures were negligible; it is only a false model that drives historians in search of them where they are unattested, and did not exist." (Ibid., p. 139.)

10. For an application of centre-periphery thinking to the Roman Empire, with critical evaluation of that type of perspective, see Patrick Bruun, "Erövring och kontroll av periferi från centrum: Det romerske imperiet," in Studier i historisk metode 10, Periferi og sentrum i historien (Oslo, 1975). For a general theory, see Johan Galtung, "A Structural Theory of Imperialism," Journal of Peace Research, vol. 8 (1971), pp. 81-117.
11. In A.H.M. Jones's words, "The basic economic weakness of the empire was that too few producers supported too many idle mouths."

(The Later Roman Empire, p. 1045.) The primitive means of transport and of production increased this burden. And in Finley's summary of the socio-economic development during the empire: ". . . [the] Roman conquest and the creation of the vast Roman empire . . . was a fundamental political change in the first instance. In the fiscal field . . . the greater share of the fiscal burden passed from the wealthier sector of the population to the poorer, with an accompanying depression in the status of the latter. . . . We can not trace the process decade by decade, but in the third century A.D. it had visibly happened. Meantime the possibilities of further external solutions, of still more conquests followed by colonization, gradually came to an end: the available resources simply did not permit any more, as Trajan's disastrous Parthian expeditions demonstrated, if demonstrations were required." (Moses I. Finley, The Ancient Economy [London, 1973], pp. 175-176.)

12. "Free labour in the cities coexisted with unfree labour in the country; there was free division of labour producing goods for exchange on the urban market, and there was also unfree labour organized to produce goods on and for rural estates, as in the Middle Ages," says Max Weber (op. cit., pp. 392-393). It should be noted that slavery may not even have paid: most authors see it as an explanation of why technology did not develop much during the history of the Roman Empire. But slavery has an obvious social consequence, at least potentially: because some people are freed from material production, they may, possibly, become nonmaterially productive — in arts and statecraft, in science and religion, and so on.

The number of slaves is uncertain, as two sources of information, taxes and military service, have little relevance to slaves. It appears to have been one third to one fourth of the population in communities with a dense slave population, such as Athens, Corinth, and Pergamon at their respective peaks of prosperity. From Asia Minor and Greece slavery as a mode of production spread to Italy and North Africa. The proportion of slaves can hardly have been very high in the empire at large. Slavery in agriculture was above all an Italian phenomenon, apart from overseers. Slaves were never much employed in the great eastern provinces. Slaves dominated the domestic services; they were prominent in administration and management, and were employed to some extent in crafts and trade. But the importance of slavery in the economy and as a social phenomenon cannot be expressed by sheer proportion of a total population, in the Roman Empire any more than in the USA in the 1850s. On slavery, cf. A.H.M. Jones, "Slavery in the Ancient World," in M.I. Finley, ed., Slavery in Classical Antiquity (New York, 1968), and the other articles in this book.

The opportunity costs of slavery must have been considerable. Apart from the social stigma slavery placed upon "its" economic sectors, it pressed wages towards the level of subsistence, destroying a part of the market for processed goods (incidentally increasing the economic significance of the army), and probably

made small-scale industrial establishments more profitable. Cf. F.W. Wallbank, The Awful Revolution: The Decline of the Roman Empire in the West (Liverpool, 1969). Technologically, the Fall seems to have had a liberating effect. See for instance Robert-Henri Bautier, The Economic Development in Medieval Europe (London, 1971) for the relatively rapid technological development in the early Middle Ages.

13. For information about the size of the population of the empire, see Josiah C. Russell, "Late Ancient and Medieval Population," in Transactions from the American Philosophical Society (Philadelphia, 1958); and K.J. Beloch, Bevölkerungsgeschichte der griechisch-römischen Welt (Leipzig, 1886). Both Russell and Beloch apply cautious, low estimates; higher numbers will appear in books of other authors.
14. "The regular imports of foreign grain were a life-line without which the capital could not exist," F.W. Wallbank, "Trade and Industry under the Later Roman Empire in the West," chap. 2 in M.M. Postan and E.E. Rich, eds., The Cambridge Economic History, vol. 2, Trade and Industry in the Middle Ages, pp. 33-85. The imports are here given at 17 million bushels (approximately 400,000 tons, dependent on type), which should be enough for one million inhabitants. See also "Social Policy," in A.H.M. Jones, Augustus (London, 1970), pp. 131 ff., and Jones, The Later Roman Empire (Oxford, 1964), pp. 1045 ff. It appears that 240,000 persons were entitled to free bread in Rome during the reign of Augustus. Constantine instituted free issue for 80,000 in Constantinople. In addition Antioch, Alexandria, and possibly Carthage were kept at peace by similar issues.
15. Almost half the population of Rome could be accommodated in the circuses and theatres; cf. Lewis Mumford, The City in History (Harmondsworth, 1961), p. 271; see also J. Carcopino, Daily Life in Ancient Rome (London, 1941). We can compare this with the density of modern cinemas. Only television has created something equal on so large a scale.
16. For a general discussion, see Krzyztof Pornian, "Les limites écologiques des civilisations," Social Science Information, vol. 15 (1976), no. 1.
17. See Edward Goldsmith, "The Fall of the Roman Empire," pp. 202-203, on "Soil deterioration."
18. When Diocletian "quadrupled" the army and administration, he must have added considerably to the burden. And it is evident from A.H.M. Jones, The Later Roman Empire, that he was not far off this mark. Real wages fell for soldiers, but the burden must have doubled compared with the 100s. Under Justinian the empire drew one third of the gross product as revenue, in addition came then local landowners and expenses for seed. Or, in Finlay's summary of the process, ". . . before the end of the second

century, external pressures began, which could not be resisted forever. The army could not be enlarged beyond an inadequate limit because the land could not stand further depletion of manpower: the situation on the land had deteriorated because taxes and liturgies were too high, burdens were too great chiefly because the military demands were increasing. A vicious circle of evils was in full swing. The ancient world was hastened to its end by its social and political structure, its deeply embedded and institutionalized value system, and, underpinning the whole, the organization and exploitation of its productive forces. There, if one wishes, is an economic explanation of the end of the ancient world." (Moses I. Finley, The Ancient Economy [London, 1973], p. 176.)

19. Not only were political links disrupted; the economic ties might have weakened as well. There was a tendency towards reduction of inter-provincial trade and towards the creation of large and rather self-sufficient trading areas within the limits of which the bulk of trade took place. During the early empire the various parts developed their production, the counterpart to which was the decline of Italy. When old needs were filled, new needs did not arise. The major factor in the economic circulation was the huge amount of products drawn towards the frontiers to satisfy military needs. As the frontier provinces developed production to sustain their occupation army, even this stream slowed down. Cf. F.W. Wallbank, "Trade and Industry under the Later Roman Empire in the West," chap. 2 in M.M. Postan and E.E. Rich, eds., The Cambridge Economic History, vol. 2, Trade and Industry in the Middle Ages, pp. 33-85; and George Collingwood, "Roman Britain," in Frank Tenney, ed., An Economic Survey of Ancient Rome, vol. 3 (Baltimore, 1936).
20. For a strategic analysis of decline and fall, see E.N. Luttwak, The Grand Strategy of the Roman Empire (Johns Hopkins University Press, 1977); reviewed in The Times Literary Supplement, 10 February 1978, pp. 154-155, by P.A. Brunt, who says, "Luttwak remarks that it sacrificed provincial security for the security as a whole" and that "the provincials can be excused for their failure to accept the logic of the system."
21. The population rioted and allied themselves with the barbarians. Obviously the discontent was widespread. See E.A. Thompson, "Peasants Revolts in Late Roman Gaul and Spain," in M.I. Finley, ed., Studies in Ancient Society (London and Boston, 1974), pp. 304 ff., on the Bacaudae. Apart from endemic dissatisfaction, the revolts were, precipitated by plague and barbarian attacks, and started in the 180s. Rural slaves and serfs tended to merge in their resistance, and were joined by deserters and ruined farmers. Bacaudae risings are reported from the 210s and during the general crisis in the 260s and 280s. By effectively isolating the parts of Gaul from each other, the Roman generals quelled the revolt, but there were renewed activities during the 360s and 370s, and from the Germanic inroad 407 the Bacaudae became

actively endemic and formed the basis for a state in their stronghold on the lower Loire. For their relations with Attila, see J.F.C. Fuller, The Decisive Battles of the Western World, ed. John Terraine (London, 1970), vol. 1, p. 204.

22. Like the mental encapsulation there was an economic; cf. Aurelio Bernardi, *op. cit.*, especially the conclusion: "The bankruptcy of the enormous State at the same time as small privileged groups, while they evade taxation, heap up riches and create around their villas economic and social microcosms, completely cut off from the central authority. It was the end of the Roman World. It was the beginning of the Middle Ages" (pp. 82-83).
23. The financial situation of the Roman Empire was hardly ever "sound." The main economic problem was, if not the relation between resources and external/internal challenges, at least the relation between the resources at the hands of the government for defence purposes and these challenges. In some periods, mainly under Antoninus Pius and in Byzantium in the late 400s, the government succeeded in building up a reserve in bullion, but when war started it was rapidly squandered. Cf. A.H.M. Jones, The Later Roman Empire, chap. 1. Revenue was regularly supplied by debasing currency. Although other aims can be attributed to the earliest "adjustments," this seems a fair evaluation of what took place. The effects of the debasement might be overstated. As an item possessing metal value besides being symbolic money, old coin retained its value. Only those forced to accept bad coin for their products were at a loss. Cf. F.W. Wallbank, "Trade and Industry under the Later Roman Empire in the West," chap. 2 in M.M. Postan and E.E. Rich, eds., The Cambridge Economic History, vol. 2, Trade and Industry in the Middle Ages, pp. 33-85. But the falling real wage of soldiers might have had tremendous effects on demand, by forcing them towards a subsistence diet, reducing their demands for industrial products despite the increments in their number. Cf. Mortimer Chambers, "Crisis of the Third Century," in Lynn White, Jr., ed., The Transformation of the Roman World (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1966), pp. 30-58. Added to insecurity, falling trade because of increased self-reliance, and a decline of "urban spirit," we have here another cause of a waning market to contribute to the decline of production and of towns.
24. See J. Galtung, *op. cit.*, "On Mechanisms for Maintaining Imperial Constructions."
25. See E. Goldsmith, *op. cit.*, pp. 200-201, on "Public Games." A basic point here would be the extent to which watching others do something becomes more real than doing it oneself, because it is better staged and managed, more densely packed with emotion, etc. As for the watching, see also Michael Grant, The Gladiators (Harmondsworth, 1971), pp. 102-108, on "The Attitudes of Rulers and Spectators." Lewis Mumford observes, "Roman life, for all its claims of peace, centred more and more on the imposing rituals

of extermination. In the pursuit of sensations sufficiently sharp to cover momentarily the emptiness and meaninglessness of their parasitic existence, the Romans took to staging chariot races, . . . naval battles, . . . theatrical pantomines in which the strip tease and lewder sexual acts were performed in public. . . . The whole effort reaches a pinnacle in the gladiatorial spectacles where the agents of this regime applied a diabolic inventiveness to human torture and human extermination." (The City in History [Harmondsworth, 1961], p. 266.)

26. Proselytizing was vital for the survival of the pre-Constantine Church, given the bad relation between the Christians and the population at large. By proselytizing in the countryside after the persecution in the 250s the town-based church got a less exposed basis in the countryside. In fact, Christianity became the religion of the rural masses in a few, but important provinces. Cf. W.H.C. Freund, "The Failure of Persecution in the Roman Empire," in Past and Present, no. 16 (1959), and in M.I. Finley ed., Studies in Ancient Society (London and Boston, 1974), pp. 263 ff. For a very concise analysis of the attractiveness of Christianity, see E.R. Dodds, Pagan and Christian in an Age of Anxiety (Cambridge, 1965), pp. 132-138.
27. Even official Christianity retained several anti-state features, such as opposition to military service. As late as 313 the Council of Arles decided to exclude politicians from communion. Most important was the general orientation, the consciousness of having separate loyalties and first priorities which transcended the Roman state. Public attention was distracted from the political demands of Empire. Thus, "no real Christian historiography founded on the political experience of Herodotus, Thucydides, Livy and Tacitus was transmitted to the Middle Ages." (A. Momigliano, ed., The Conflict between Paganism and Christianity in the Fourth Century [Oxford, 1963], p. 89.)
28. And this was in line with the encapsulating tendencies, with more important consequences in local life than monasticism: ". . . the Christian Church of the fourth century may well have contributed to the decline of the Roman empire by encouraging that tendency of many small men to live in yet smaller worlds which is, perhaps, more dangerous for a society than the desertation of the world by the few." (Peter Brown, Religion and Society in the Age of Saint Augustine [London, 1972], p. 148.)
29. The alternative ethos of Christianity was regarded as atheism, an affront to decency. After the first persecution directed by the government, 249-260, Christianity became a part of the establishment 260-303. The misery in this period led the people to despise their old gods; paganism survived, in many provinces among the town-aristocracy. The social antagonism evident in these changes led to sectarian activities as well as to apocalyptic movements. Cf. W.H.C. Freud, "The Failure of Persecution in the Roman Empire," in Past and Present, no. 16 (1959), also in M.I. Finley,

- ed., Studies in Ancient Society (London and Boston, 1974), pp. 263 ff.
30. Cases in point: "The residents at Carthage were taken by surprise on the amphitheatre when the Vandals attacked. The patricians of Cologne were sitting at a banquet when the barbarians were already near their walls." (Carlo M. Cipolla, ed., The Economic Decline of Empires [London, 1970], p. 12.)
  31. "The aim of the invaders was not to destroy the Roman Empire, but to occupy and enjoy it. By and large what they preserved far exceeded what they destroyed or what they brought that was new." (Henri Pirenne, Medieval Cities [Princeton, 1952], p. 8.) This can be seen against the following background: "By the fourth century the frontier provinces of the Danube were as much part of Romania [i.e., the Roman Empire] as any other, and so the only 'barbarian' was the one across the military frontier, faced directly, for the first time, with a society whose higher standard of living and intolerance of his way of life must have seemed to increase with every development of the third and fourth centuries. 'Envy,' not the aimless motion of tribes, drew the barbarians to a land where the bait — the great villas and Imperial residences of Pannonia and the Rhineland — dangled provocatively close." (Peter Brown, op. cit., pp. 60-61).
  32. See Solomon Katz, The Decline of Rome and the Rise of Medieval Europe (Ithaca, 1955), particularly the excellent chapter "Europe in Transition," pp. 85-137. For a striking comparison with China see P. Anderson, Passages from Antiquity to Feudalism (London, 1974), p. 225, note 19.
  33. Solomon Katz, op. cit., pp. 101-103.
  34. See Joseph Vogt, Ancient Slavery and the Ideal of Man (Oxford, 1974), chap. 3, "The Structure of Ancient Slave Wars." As for the official vengeance after the Spartacus revolt: "Six thousand prisoners were crucified along the Appian Way, from Rome all the way to Capua, where the outbreak had begun." (M. Grant, The Gladiators [Harmondsworth, 1971], p. 24.)
  35. Solomon Katz gives a description of the "Origins and Society of the Barbarians" (op. cit., pp. 98-101), based on Tacitus' famous Germania, describing the "tall, redhaired, blue-eyed Germans."
  36. The greatest prosperity in Britain came in the 300s and was based on the villas — forerunners among other things of the woollen industrial establishments in the Middle Ages. Equipped with furnaces, foundries, and facilities for bronze-working, enamel-, harness-, leather-, and pottery-making, they spread over the western part of the empire and the upper Danube territories, but apparently not into the southern Balkans. Cf. Norman J.G. Pounds, An Historical Geography of Europe, 450 B.C.-A.D. 1330 (Cambridge, 1973), and F.W. Wallbank, op. cit., pp. 33-85.



37. Solomon Katz expresses it this way: "The large estates or villas of the Later Empire, which were cultivated by half-free coloni, continued into the Middle Ages, and by a fusion of Roman and German elements became the manorial system of that period." (Op. cit., p. 144.) And, "The system of large estates owned by nobles and worked by coloni was adopted by the invaders, who largely replaced the Romans as landowners." (Ibid., p. 107.) On the one hand, slaves were freed; on the other, substantial parts of the rural population moved towards serf status, the late imperial "colonate." Cf. A.H.M. Jones, "The Roman Colonate," in Past and Present, no. 13 (1958), also in M.I. Finley, ed., Studies in Ancient Society, pp. 288 ff. This process was producing an agricultural worker compatible with the barbarian serf. The large estates accounted for a substantial part of the agricultural area, and the coloni formed a predominant, but not exclusive, mode of production, especially in the west. The plight of the government and the landowners worked together in the struggle for securing greater control over the coloni, in particular tying them to the soil. Designed as a fiscal measure connected with Diocletian's tax reform, the system met the landowners' need for better control over the agricultural workers when they faced the general shortage of labour.

And the nobility retreated to the villas: The measures of Diocletian "entailed not only a heavy burden on the lower classes but also a reduction in the economic potential of the wealthy class just below the political and social élite. . . . And the élite finally responded by retiring to their estates into a condition of maximum self-sufficiency, withdrawing their customs from the industrial producers in the city and adding to the damage already wreaked by the government." (Finley, The Ancient Economy [London, 1973], pp. 160-161.)

38. Compare for instance the ancient interest in the world beyond its borders with the mediaeval indifference to exotica during the first crusade; cf. Joseph R. Levenson, "Introduction," in Levenson, ed., European Expansion and the Counter-Example of Asia, 1300-1600 (Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1967).
39. One aspect of ecological breakdown is disease. Epidemics entered the Roman Empire from abroad as every civilization seems to support its "own," distinct "population" of diseases. Besides, micro-organisms might have their whole life-cycles in human beings, but also partly in animals and nature. So ecological changes might induce a former non-human micro-organism to live on human organisms, wholly or partly. Malaria is here a case. Other ecological changes might alter the track of micro-organisms within the body, or give opportunities to new variants. Cf. William McNeill, Plagues and Peoples (New York, 1976).

Thus, late Roman disease-history is also a result of parasites interacting with their changing environment: "The long land frontiers were manned by garrisons scattered at strategic points; from these frontier garrisons stretched back the filaments of

the spider's web, the sea routes from Africa and Egypt, the straight, legionary-made roads, all of which led to Rome.

"Herein lay the makings of disaster. A vast hinterland hiding unknown secrets, among them the micro-organisms of foreign disease; troops who attacked into that hinterland and were attacked by the inhabitants; free transit by ship or along roads specifically built for speedy travel, at the centre a concentrated population living a highly civilized life yet lacking the most rudimentary means of combating infection. Given a conjunction of circumstances such as this, it is little wonder that the story of the last centuries of Roman power is a long tale of plague." (Frederick Cartwright, *Disease and History* [London, 1972], p. 11.)

Roman civilization seems more affected by disease in the later empire than earlier. Cf. McNeill, *op. cit.* After a major outbreak of epidemics in A.D. 65, a new calamity occurred in A.D. 79, perhaps malaria and anthrax, bovine-human sicknesses, that, while preferring cattle, can prey on the human population as well if once established and the ecological conditions are altered. After the A.D. 125 epidemics came the very serious ones of 163-189, perhaps small-pox, another cattle disease adapting to human beings. After the widespread ravages of this epidemic, a new one struck the empire in 251, recurring at least until 266. The plague coincided with the greatest crisis in the history of the empire. After the epidemics of 455, 467, and 480, came a plague that, like those of 165 and 251, recurred several times. This can be identified with the Black Death. It reached Constantinople in 543, recurring for decades. Cf. Josiah Cox Russell, "Late Ancient and Mediaeval Population," in Transactions from the American Philosophical Society (Philadelphia, 1958).

Thereafter conditions apparently changed: "The medieval world experienced no further pandemics of plague for many centuries. This is astonishing because there were frequent outbreaks in the Near East." Cf. Henry F. Sigerist, Civilization and Disease, 3rd ed. (Ithaca, N.Y., 1945), p. 115.

40. Barbarian invasions are normally preceded by transfer of technology and general know-how to the barbarians and transfer of barbarians as soldiers, colonists, and generals into the empire. An assimilation had to take place before the decline and fall of the empire. In Braudel's phrase, "The barbarians had to knock ten times." Or, as Gibbon assumed, "Europe is secure from any future irruption of barbarians, since, before they can conquer, they must cease to be barbarous" — cited in A.D. Momigliano, "Gibbon's Contribution to Historical Method," in his Studies in Historiography (London, 1969), pp. 40-55, citation on p. 50.

The Chinese Empire faced much the same sort of challenge, and scholars recognize some sort of "technological proliferation." Over time technology would diffuse to the barbarians and shift the balance in their favour, placing intolerable strain upon the defences of the empire. Cf. Mark Elvin, The Pattern of the

Chinese Past (London, 1973). Obviously, the Roman Empire worked under similar conditions. Cf. also Tore Heiestad, "Nomad Migration in Eurasian History," Paper no. 45, Trends in Western Civilization Project, no. 13, Chair in Conflict and Peace Research University of Oslo (1977).

41. The development of the cities offers examples of very material expansion/contraction phases. In Hadrian's time for the foundations of new cities in the Po valley 1,500 km<sup>2</sup> territory was allowed to each city, 1,000 km<sup>2</sup> in the plain, in Baetica in southern Spain, a densely "urbanized" area, 600 km<sup>2</sup> to each city, and 300 km<sup>2</sup> in the Guadalquivir Valley. Small cities of about 2,000 inhabitants predominated. Cf. Norman G. Pounds, An Historical Geography of Europe, 450 B.C.-A.D. 1330 (Cambridge, 1973), pp. 116 ff. Later cities contracted to a fraction of these sizes. To give some examples:

	Area in decares	
	Second Century	Fourth Century
Autun	2,000	100-110
Nimes	2,200	80
Bordeaux	1,500	320

Cf. Kirsten Köllmann Buchholz, Raum und Bevölkerung in der Weltgeschichte (Würzburg, 1968), and Pounds, op. cit., p. 166 ff.

42. In A.H.M. Jones' words: "The most depressing feature of the later empire is the apparent absence of public spirit." (The Later Roman Empire, p. 1058.) "Even more striking evidence of the lack of public spirit is the inertia of the civil population, high and low, in the face of the barbarian invasions. . . . The loyalty of the upper classes was, however, of a very passive character." (Ibid., p. 1059.) "More usually those who could, fled to safer places" rather than resist. (Ibid., p. 1059.)
43. Official Christianity did not contribute to a more realistic cosmology in this respect. From the beginning of our era, the prophecies of the apocalyptic wing of the persecuted Christian movement made the decline of Rome a central issue as a precursor to the coveted millennium. Accused of actually bringing about the the downfall of the empire by its hostility and disruptive activity, the Church gave its doctrines an entirely new twist after its recognition. The preservation of the empire was now as instrumental to Christian purposes as its decline had earlier been. "Quando cadet Roma, cadet et mundus." So formidable was the optimism around A.D. 400 that the "Fall" of the empire went unnoticed: How insignificant was not, in Origen's eyes, Alaric's three days' occupation of a Rome which had been occupied for six months by the Gauls 800 years earlier! Cf. F.W. Wallbank, The Awful Revolution: The Decline of the Roman Empire in the West (Liverpool, 1969), pp. 11-12.

44. This applied to architecture as well: "What was lacking in the Roman scheme was a built-in system of control, applied at the centre no less than in the new colonial towns. . . . In the repeated decay and breakdown of one civilization after another, after it has achieved power and centralized control, one may read the failure to reach an organic solution to the problem of quantity." (Lewis Mumford, The City in History [Harmondsworth, 1961], p. 277.)
45. For the survival of the Eastern Empire, see Speros Vryonis, Jr., "Hellas Resurgent," in Lynn White, Jr., The Transformation of the Roman World, pp. 92-118; Miriam Lichtheim, "Autonomy versus Unity in the Christian East," also in Lynn White, Jr., pp. 119-146; and Norman H. Baynes, The Byzantine Empire (London, 1958).
46. Carlo M. Cipolla gives this summary characteristic: "Then suddenly, between 1494 and 1538, the Horsemen of the Apocalypse descended upon Italy. The country became the battlefield for an international conflict which involved Spain, France and what we would today call Germany. With the war came famines, epidemics, destruction of capital and disruption of trade." (Before the Industrial Revolution: European Society and Economy, 1000-1700 [Methuen, London, 1976], p. 236.)
47. See Cipolla, op. cit., pp. 224-273, for an analysis of "The Rise of the Northern Low Countries" and "The Rise of England."
48. See Cipolla, op. cit., pp. 233-236, for an analysis of "The Decline of Spain" — a section that could profitably be read by leaders of today's Third World countries spending their resources on the importation of manufactured goods instead of building up the capacity to make such goods themselves. Spanish affluence came to rely on bullion, not on productive power. The schemes to establish a national textile industry were wrecked by the Mesta. As for a major export item, foodstuffs (which the colonists could not do without), the inelasticity in Spanish agricultural production drew foreigners into the market. Industrially processed goods were mainly supplied by foreigners, and Spain took a middleman's profit. Spain's ability to purchase, rather than produce, drew — or forced — workers into tertiary sectors. Cf. especially Pierre Vilar, "The Age of Don Quixote," in Peter Earle, ed., Essays in European Economic History, 1500-1800 (Oxford, 1974), pp. 100-112; J.H. Elliot, Imperial Spain, 1469-1716 (Harmondsworth, 1976), esp. pp. 308-320 and 291-300; Jaime Vicens Vives, "The Decline of Spain in the Seventeenth Century," in Carlo Cipolla, ed., The Economic Decline of Empires (London, 1970), pp. 121-167.
49. A successful case of futurology: The global rise of the US and Russia was, according to Denis de Rougemont (The Idea of Europe [London and New York 1966], p. 258), predicted by Napoleon and several others, such as Johannes von Müller (1797), Abbé de Pradt (1823), Tocqueville (1835), Sainte-Beuve (1847), C. Cattaneo

- (1848), E. von Lasauxl (1856), J.R. Seeley (1883), Henry Adams (1900). Generally, these authors presented the European predicament as the choice between the "mass democracy" of American preponderance and the "servitude" of Russian hegemony.
50. One basic difference between the US and the USSR is precisely that the Soviet "frontier" is still largely an "open" one for settlement and investment; cf. Violet Conolly, Siberia Today and Tomorrow: A Study of Economic Resources, Problems and Achievements (London, 1974). For a bibliographic commentary on the frontier perspective on western history, see Erik Rudeng, "Patterns of Western History: Unity in Diversity," Trends in Western Civilization Programme, no. 8, Chair in Conflict and Peace Research, University of Oslo (1975), pp. 54-56.
  51. Suffice it to mention only one fundamental difference between traditional empires of the Roman type and capitalism: ". . . the secret of capitalism was in the establishment of the division of labour within the framework of a world-economy that was not an empire. . . ." (Immanuel Wallerstein, The Modern World-System [New York, 1974], p. 127, cf. p. 348.)
  52. For an account of the interface between the Etruscans and the Romans, see R.M. Ogilvie, Early Rome and the Etruscans (London, 1975).
  53. For an analysis of this, see Johan Galtung, The European Community: A Superpower in the Making (Allen & Unwin, London, 1973).
  54. And there are, of course, more on the way: the formerly "sub-imperial" supporters of the US in particular, and the West more generally — Brazil, Nigeria, Iran/Saudi Arabia, possibly India, all countries that increasingly are developing their own independent policies.
  55. This is the Chinese perspective on the Soviet Union. We have our doubts, but it may be true still for some time. The fruits of economic growth have not yet turned into the bitterness of overdevelopment — but that cannot be far away — at the same time as the inner contradictions are building up.
  56. For this to happen, eastern Europe would probably have to reorganize itself into a pattern that is much less centralized and Moscow-dependent, economically, politically, militarily.
  57. For a general account of the process of bureaucratization, see Henry Jacoby, Die Bürokratisierung der Welt (Neuwied and Berlin, 1969). Examples of early state/private-company connections are the chartered East India companies in several European countries. An interesting case study is K.N. Chanduri, The English East India Company: The Study of an Early Joint-Stock Company, 1600-1640 (London, 1965); and cf. Michael Howard, War in European History (London, 1976), pp. 51-52.

58. For an excellent discussion of the role of the state as "an essential component of the development of modern capitalism," see Immanuel Wallerstein, The Modern World-System (New York, 1974), pp. 133-62. Cf. Michael Howard, *op. cit.*, pp. 49, 58, 64-65, 68-69, 81, etc.
59. The quest for a more predictable world, and hence the special role of intellectuals, goes to the core of western development. For the tradition of Stoic logic and Roman law, see Joseph C. Smith, "The Theoretical Constructs of Western Contractual Law," in Northrop and Livingston, eds., Cross-Cultural Understanding: Epistemology in Anthropology (New York, 1964), e.g. p. 259: "Western contractual legal science . . . is future oriented and a law of movement concerned with the creation, transfer, and extinction of legal relations and prediction of this future movement."
- It was precisely these interrelated themes of western law — rationality, predictability, planning, investment, bureaucracy, intellectuals — which were combined in Max Weber's analysis of western civilization; cf. G. Abrahamowski, Das Geschichtsbild Max Webers: Universalgeschichte am Leitfaden des okzidentalen Rationalisierungsprozesses (Stuttgart, 1966).
60. Cf. J. Galtung, "Limits to Growth and Class Consciousness," Journal of Peace Research, vol. 10 (1973), pp. 101-114.
61. Johan Galtung, "A Structural Theory of Imperialism," Journal of Peace Research, vol. 3 (1971), pp. 81-117, introduction on harmony and disharmony between the various groups constituted by the structure of imperialism. The basic harmony is between the centre in the Centre and the centre in the Periphery, with the periphery in the Centre following them, at some distance. The basic disharmony is between all these three and the bottom of the system, the periphery in the Periphery according to the model.
62. In The Economist, 4 February 1978, pp. 78-79, a report is given of some of the findings of the Comparative Multinational Enterprise Project (Harvard Business School and Centre of Education in International Management in Geneva) on the number of foreign manufacturing subsidiaries set up or acquired per year by 187 American multinationals and 199 non-American (meaning British, continental European, and Japanese). From a low below 100 till the mid-fifties both curves shoot up quickly and are above 500 at the end of the 1960s, with the non-Americans continuing to grow and the Americans to drop — non-Americans for various reasons probably becoming more acceptable, seen as less imperialist.
63. Vance Packard, The Waste Makers (New York, 1960), sets forth the programme for this development.
64. An interesting outcome of post-Viet-Nam US strategic thinking is the recent widely acclaimed book by Edward N. Luttwak — himself a specialist in contemporary international relations — The Grand

Strategy of the Roman Empire (Baltimore, 1977). In the preface of this book Luttwak states his dissatisfaction with the Clausewitzian primacy of offensive warfare, which implies "a sharp distinction between the state of peace and the state of war." According to Luttwak, "We, like the Romans, face the prospect not of decisive conflict, but of a permanent state of war, albeit limited. We, like the Romans, must actively protect an advanced society against a variety of threats rather than concentrate on destroying the forces of our enemies in battle." This means avoiding application of direct military force, building up a variety of threats and "flexible responses," and blurring the lines between "military" and "civil" means, between "conventional" and nuclear weapons. Of course, the logic of such thinking is to subordinate societal planning to military strategy and strategists. It remains to be seen whether the modern magnates of multinational enterprises will, in the end, prove as obstructive to such a grand strategy as were their Roman predecessors.

65. For more details on this, see Johan Galtung, "Military Formations and Social Formations: A Structural Analysis," Paper no. 66, Chair in Conflict and Peace Research, University of Oslo (1978). The modern military regimes are supreme examples of the truth in Burckhardt's dictum to the effect that "the new tyrannies will be in the hands of military commandos who will call themselves republican." (Quoted by R. Nisbet, Twilight of Authority [New York, 1975], p. 7.)
66. For an interesting study of infrastructure designed to westernize and increase consumption in Third World countries, see Karl T. Sauvart, "Multinational Enterprises and the Transmission of Culture: The International Supply of Advertising Services and Business Education," Journal of Peace Research, vol. 13 (1976), pp. 49-65.
67. For an excellent discussion of the significance of mobile labour in the present world system, see Folker Fröbel, Jürgen Heinrichs, and Otto Kreye, Die neue internationale Arbeitsleitung (Hamburg, 1977).
68. As the SIPRI Yearbooks remind us, the exponential arms race and transfer of arms to Third World countries make scenarios of major wars highly probable. In this respect the present global system of superpowers is very dissimilar from what confronted the Roman Empire. But in the end the result may be similar — the consumption of western military technology on western (including USSR) soil, the third chapter of western self-destruction after two world wars. For discussions of scenarios, see C.F. von Weizsäcker, Wege in der Gefahr (Munich, 1976).
69. Cf., for example, M.L. West, Early Greek Philosophy and the Orient (Oxford, 1971), and D. Sinar, Orientalism and History (Cambridge, 1954).

70. These upsurges of Eastern religion and mysticism, of interest in parapsychology and astrology, of fascination with the submerged occultist traditions of the West, etc. are not factors to be lumped together at random, but they can nevertheless be seen as various reactions against the dominant cosmology and life-style. The degree to which the new sub-cultures have pervaded western societies is generally totally underrated, precisely because they often are matters of "private life." The turning towards the soul finds its most striking expressions in the new preoccupation with death, the so-called "death-awareness movement." Since 1964 the number of publications on death has jumped from 400 to more than 4,000. Courses on death and dying are taught at more than 1,000 US colleges and schools. (Robert Rulton in Newsweek, 1 May 1978.) In our view, the widespread preoccupation with death and the rise of "thanatology" will only intensify the soul-seeking need for "meaning," and we share Franz Borkenau's idea that "changes in the popular attitude towards death mark great epochs of historical evolution." ("The Concept of Death," in Robert Fulton, ed., Death and Identity [New York, 1965], p. 42.) For a particularly interesting critique of modern western concepts of death, see Jean Ziegler, Les vivants et la mort (Paris, 1975).
71. Inefficient bureaucratization to solve problems of social fragmentation cannot go on indefinitely; cf. D.S. Elgin and R.A. Bushnell, "The Limits to Complexity: Are Bureaucracies Becoming Unmanageable?", The Futurist, vol. 11 (1977), no. 6. In circumstances of bureaucratic dysfunctionality charismatic-authoritarian solutions will easily assert themselves, and the exponential ascendancy of the military and police sectors of western (and other) countries only increases the parallelism with that most militarized society — the Roman Empire. In the US poll after poll has revealed the military to possess more public confidence than any other class or sector. In Robert Nisbet's analysis, "the recipe for militarism in a society is basically twilight of authority in the civil sphere." (Twilight of Authority, p. 146, and more generally the important sections of "War and Western Values" and "The Romanization of the West.")
72. A conspicuous aspect of alienation in our time is the loss of confidence in governments and politicians. For analyses of US opinion polls, see Sissela Bok, Lying: Moral Choice in Public and Private Life (New York, 1978). Robert Nisbet regards the increase of institutionalized lying in government as a simple function of the expansion of bureaucracy: ". . . the vastly greater number of opportunities for embarrassing mistakes bound to occur . . . put a premium upon concealment. . . ." And parliamentary democracy, with its stress on public accountability, "carries a larger potential for deception than is likely in other forms of government. . . ." (Twilight of Authority [New York, 1975], p. 17.)

Typical of the late Roman alienation from the body politic was not only the withdrawal of the rich to the countryside but also to the attending to their own property and private life; cf. Michael



Grant, The Fall of the Roman Empire: A Reappraisal (Radnor, Pa., 1976), pp. 126-130. The laments of Sidonius Apollinaris: "Do not bring a slur on the nobility by staying so constantly in the country!" is today dramatically echoed in R. Sennett, The Fall of Public Man (Cambridge, 1977), and A. Brittan, The Privatised World (London, 1977). Senator Adlai Stevenson III, among several others, has recently expressed serious doubts whether the US Senate and other representative institutions "are equal to the demands of Government in the late 20th century. . . . It is getting harder than ever to get anyone with sense to run for office." (Time, 8 May 1978.)

73. The perspective of mentalités is only too easily omitted from analyses of politico-economic changes. For a short presentation by one of the Annales historians, see Jacque Le Goff, "Mentalities: A New Field for Historians," Social Science Information, vol. 13 (1974), pp. 81-97. From a somewhat comparable angle Kib Fowles has tried to predict changes of mentality on the basis of advertising patterns: Mass Advertising as Social Forecast: A Method for Future Research (Westport, Conn., 1976).
74. Obviously, we do not adhere to Lord Bryce's famous dictum that "the chief practical use of history is to deliver us from plausible historical analogies." But analogies are not pretensions of exact repetitions of events or structures. They may, however, give suggestions of a certain scale of events, a certain complexity or constellation of forces. Thus, the lack of relevant analogies goes to the very core of the Romans' predicament. The false analogies implied in the inane optimism of Ammianus, Ausonius, Symmachus, Claudian, and several others revealed "a sluggish insensitivity to current developments — which Gibbon noted and found highly significant." (Michael Grant, The Fall of the Roman Empire: A Reappraisal [Radnor, Pa., 1976], p. 288.)
75. See J. Galtung, "Social Imperialism and Sub-Imperialism: Continuities in the Structural Theory of Imperialism," Papers no. 22, Chair in Conflict and Peace Research, University of Oslo (1975).
76. See J. Galtung, "Japan and Future World Politics," Journal of Peace Research, vol. 10 (1973), pp. 81-117, for an effort to point out some of the specificities of the Japanese version of imperialism, and capitalism for that matter. What the Japanese example shows, however, is that capitalism is adaptable to other cultures and structures, perhaps not to all, but at least to some.
77. The position of Russia and eastern Europe in relation to the concept of "western civilization" has always been ambiguous, both to East Europeans and to West Europeans. The deep historical, structural differences between the two parts of Europe are clearly brought out in Perry Anderson, Lineages of the Absolutist State (London, 1974). For studies on the nevertheless very real

East/West European links, see O. Halecki, The Limits and Divisions of European History (London, 1951), and G. Barraclough, ed., Eastern and Western Europe in the Middle Ages (London, 1970). As for the history of the various self-images of Europe, see Denis de Rougemont, The Idea of Europe (New York and London, 1966). For discussions of related literature and the question of "The reality of the traditional western self-image," see Erik Rudeng, "Patterns of Western History: Unity in Diversity," Trends in Western Civilization Program, no. 8, Chair in Conflict and Peace Research, University of Oslo (1975).

78. Cf. note 40 above. Of course the global system of superpowers (competing for alliance with and influence in Third World countries) and the sheer commercialization of advanced technology through multinational corporations' arms sale will only speed up the communication/transportation processes.
79. For a critical examination of the triage model, see Susan George, How the Other Half Dies (London, 1977).
80. It should be pointed out that the system is made in such a way that workers are laid off first, particularly the women, the old and the young; bureaucrats, capitalists, and intellectuals may not get new jobs but rarely lose the jobs they have. But this does not mean that they should feel totally safe: The state, or the corporation, may go bankrupt; the paychecks may come at irregular and ever-increasing intervals; and so on.
81. The "hippie trail" is also known as the Asian Highway, from Istanbul via Tehran and Kabul down to the Indus and Ganges plains.
82. It is now commonly acknowledged that the social background of the terrorists, for instance, whose challenge of the Western society is total (at least as long as they are in opposition) tends towards "upper middle class."
83. A classical description of the breakdown of moral order and the search for the values of "inner life" is given by Sir Gilbert Murray in his Five Stages of Greek Religion (London, 1935), especially chap. 4, "The Failure of Nerve." According to Sir Gilbert, the end of the Hellenistic Age was "a period based on the consciousness of manifold failure. . . . It not only had behind it the failure of the Olympian theology and of the free city-state . . . it lived through the gradual realization of two other failures — the failure of human government, even when backed by the power of Rome or the wealth of Egypt, to achieve a good life for man; and lastly the failure of the great propaganda of Hellenism. . . . This sense of failure, this progressive loss of hope in the world, in sober calculation, and in organized human effort, threw the later Greek back upon his own soul, upon the pursuit of personal holiness, upon emotions, mysteries and revelations, upon the comparative neglect of this transitory and imperfect world. . . ." (Pp. 3-4.)

84. This theme is developed further in the section "A theory of structural fatigue," Galtung, Heiestad, and Rudeng, "On the Last 2500 Years of Western History," in the New Cambridge Modern History, Companion Volume, chap. 13, in press.
85. Before the 1978 election in France Le Figaro (6 March 1978, p. 2) published a survey of how the living standard had increased in France in the period 1960-1977.
86. A case in point is the relative relief with which the British lost India — "the diadem of the Empire." This relief was prepared already by 1925, when E.M. Forster issued A Passage to India, where the "twilight of the double vision" is abundantly displayed. A similar, almost therapeutic function was fulfilled by the Beatles when they replaced "Rule Britannia, Britannia Rule the Waves" with "Love Is All You Need." For an interesting analysis of the state of Britain in the 1970s, see Tom Nairn, The Break-Up of Britain: Crisis and Neo-Nationalism (London, 1977), particularly chap. 1, "The Twilight of the British State."
87. For the job/work distinction, see J. Galtung, "Alternative Lifestyles in Rich Countries," Development Dialogue, vol. 1 (1976), pp. 83-98. Modern leisurism is also different from those "blessings of leisure — unknown to the West, which either works or idles" which are hinted at in A Passage to India.
88. The message already contained in a book title: L. Stavrianos, The Promise of the Coming Dark Age (San Francisco, 1976). According to Stavrianos, "By the tenth century the Western Europeans serf was enjoying a level of living significantly better than that of the proletarian during the height of Augustan Rome." Professor Stavrianos's book can be read as a sort of counter-catalogue to Rostovtzeff's pessimistic idea that the main phenomenon which underlies the process of decline is gradual absorption of the educated classes by the masses and the consequent simplification of all the functions of political, social, economic, and intellectual life, which we call the barbarization of the ancient world. (M. Rostovtzeff, Social and Economic History of the Roman Empire [Oxford, 1926], p. 486.)
89. The Chinese have made a practice of organizing very instructive exhibits next to all major memorials (such as the Ming tombs), demonstrating exactly what the opportunity costs were: With these materials and this amount of labour so many houses could have been constructed for so and so many. . . .
90. The title of the second chapter in Roger Garaudy's Pour une dialogue des civilisations (Paris, 1977); also the subtitle of the book is L'Occident est un accident.
91. For an elaboration of this theme, see Galtung, Heiestad, and Rudeng, op. cit.

92. It is difficult to have a firm opinion on this. The ultimate protection for the West may not be its military strength — the West may not be able to maintain it, nor may it want to — but the sacred character of the West from the point of view of those who want to copy the West. To Gibbon's point (op. cit., pp. 164 and 167) that "the savage nations of the globe are the common enemies of civilized society," and "Europe is now secure from any future irruption of Barbarians; since, before they can conquer, they must cease to be barbarous," we could add: Before the Third World can conquer, they must become western in general and capitalist in particular — and then it does not really matter very much. What it adds up to is mainly that the centres move — to the São Paulos, Lagos, Tehrans, Singapores, Hong Kongs, Taipeis, and Seouls in addition to the Tokyos — and that the old West becomes a respected periphery, a museum piece, much like the châteaux de Loire, something to esteem and venerate.
93. The industrialists' typical alternative is well expressed by Yves Lulan: "Our best bet, it seems, is to hope that a whole series of discoveries in the '80s will transform the world as the first two industrial revolutions transformed Europe and America. . . . The timing is urgent. For the last 50 years, we have been relying on the same technological sources for our continued economic growth. . . ." ("Of Machines and Men," Newsweek, 8 May 1978.)
94. One sort of history which is presently very much needed is the history of social experiments, cultural alternatives, and restructuring of community life in times of crisis. In a period when the cities of the West, especially in the US, seem to be dramatically decaying, the vital task of restoring real communities also requires historical perspective. But the practical consequences for research do not come easy to us, because — as Robert Nisbet very correctly observes — "one of the most grievous casualties of modern times is the true utopian mentality. . . ." (Twilight of Authority, p. 234.)

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