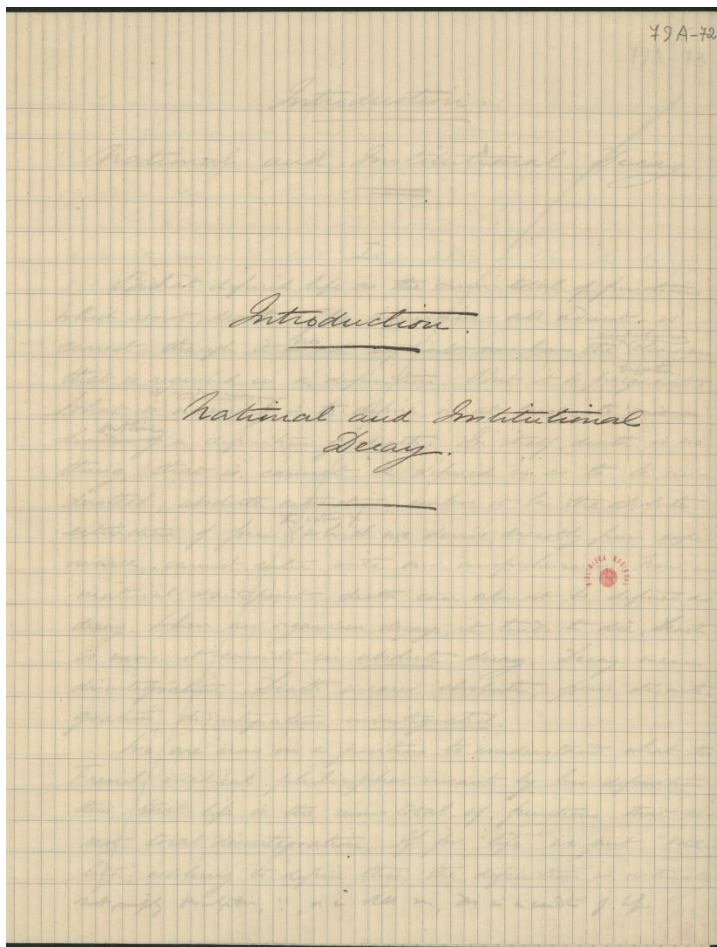


The Portuguese Regicide  
and the Political Situation  
in Portugal.

Alexander Search.

BNP/E3, 79A - 72<sup>o</sup>



Transcrição

Introduction.

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National and Institutional  
Decay.

BNP/E3, 79A - 73<sup>o</sup>

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79A-73

Introduction.

National and Institutional Decay.

I.

What defined life as the sum-total of functions which resist death. The definition - all admit - is correct, though it <sup>is not</sup> ~~is not~~ explicit <sup>comprehensive</sup> ~~comprehensive~~ <sup>clearness</sup> ~~clearness~~ that is required in a definition. But it is pregnant <sup>suggestive</sup>. What is necessary <sup>super-necessary</sup> ~~is~~ <sup>it renders necessary</sup> is to define, or, at least, to give a shadow of outline a definition of death. In itself death is nothing, that is, cannot be defined so as to be understood; absolute extinction, unless it be the absolute extinction of form, the notion of which we derive directly from experience, cannot enter into our comprehension. From a material standpoint death can almost be defined as decay. When an organism decays, it tends to die. Death is more: it consists in absolute decay. Decay means disintegration. Death means absolute, pure disintegration, disintegration unintegrated.

We are now in a position to understand what the French medical philosopher meant by his definition: this, that life is the sum-total of functions that resist total disintegration. If for "life" we put "vitality," wishing to define this, the definition is, naturally, not simply disintegration, "as all men," <sup>as all men</sup>, "is a condition of life."

Transcrição

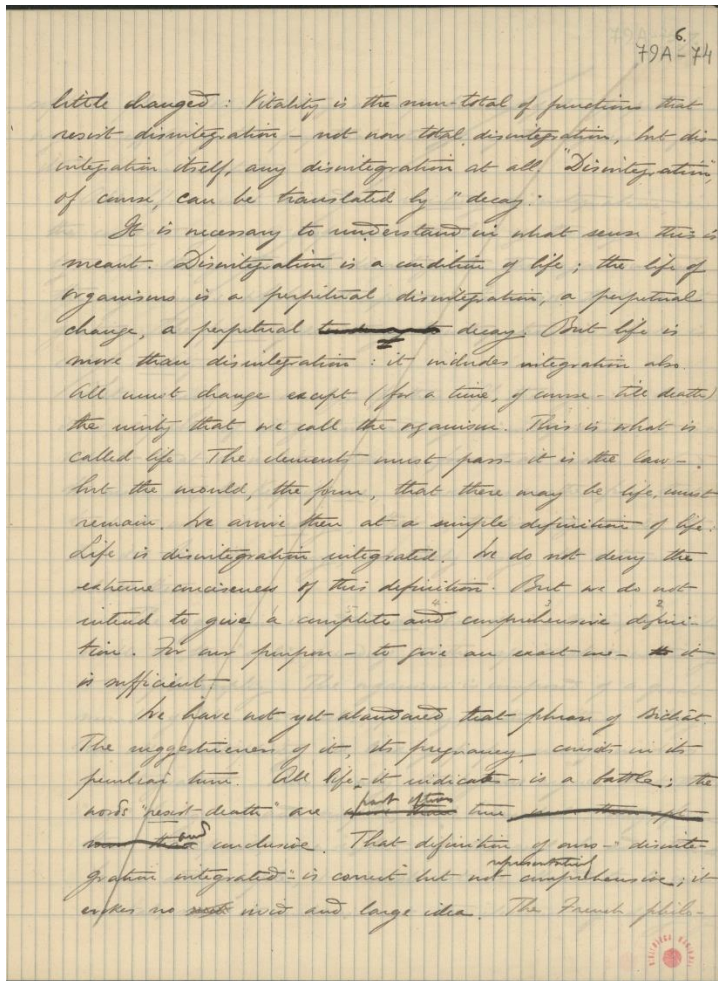
Introduction.

National and Institutional Decay.

I.

Bichât defined life as the sum-total of functions which resist death. The definition - all admit - is correct, though it ~~is~~ has not explicit nor has the comprehensive clearness that is required in a definition. But it is pregnant <sup>/suggestive\</sup>. What is necessary <sup>/super-necessary\</sup> ~~is~~ <sup>/it renders necessary\</sup> is to define, or, at least, to give a shadow of outline a definition of death. In itself death is nothing, that is, cannot be defined so as to be understood; absolute extinction, unless it be the absolute extinction of form, the notion of which we derive directly from experience, cannot enter into our comprehension. From a material standpoint, death can almost be defined as decay. When an organism decays, it tends to die. Death is more: it consists in absolute decay. Decay means disintegration. Death means absolute, pure disintegration, *disintegration unintegrated*.

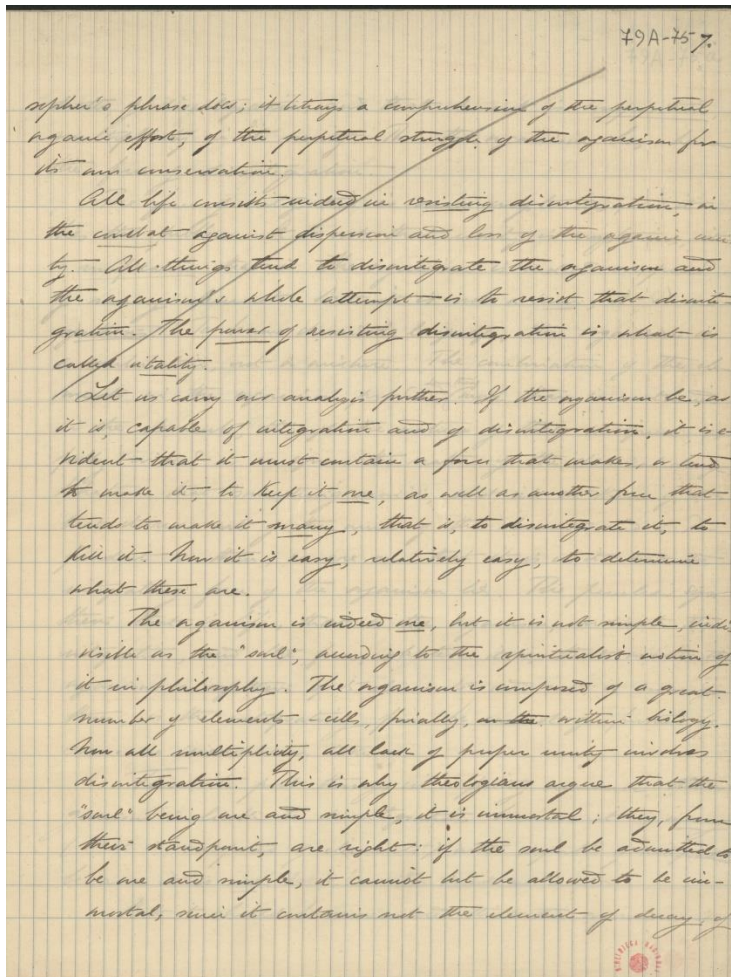
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little changed: Vitality is the sum-total of functions that resist disintegration - not now total disintegration, but disintegration itself, any disintegration at all. "Disintegration," of course, can be translated by "decay."

It is necessary to understand in what sense this is meant. Disintegration is a condition of life; the life of organisms is a perpetual disintegration, a perpetual change, a perpetual ~~tendency to~~ decay. But life is more than disintegration: it includes integration also. All must change except (for a time, of course - till death) the unity that we call the organism. This is what is called life. The elements must pass - it is the law - but the mould, the form, that there may be life, must remain. We arrive then at a simple definition of life: Life is disintegration integrated. We do not deny the extreme conciseness of this definition. But we do not intend to give a complete and comprehensive definition. For our purpose - to give an exact one - ~~th~~ it is sufficient.

We have not yet abandoned that phrase of Bichat. The suggestiveness of it, its pregnancy, consists in its peculiar tune. All life, it indicates - is a battle; the words "resist death" are ~~more than most often true, more than apt some than~~ <sup>representative</sup> and conclusive. That definition of ours - "disintegration integrated" - is correct but not <sup>representative</sup> comprehensive; it evokes no ~~such~~ vivid and large idea. The French philo-

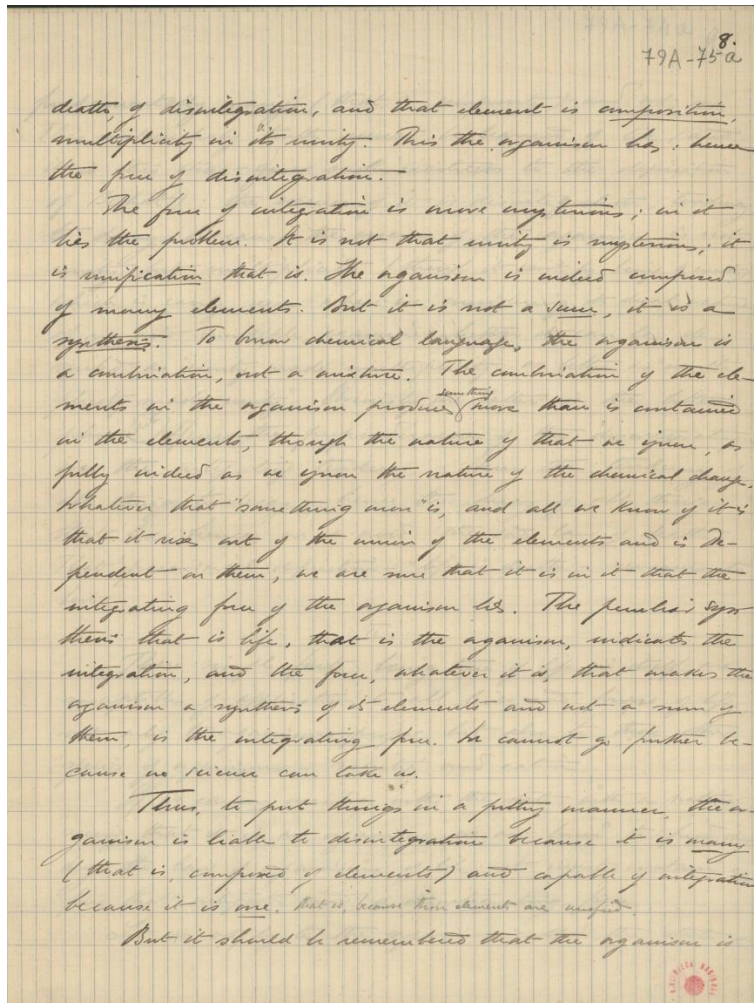


sopher's phrase does; it betrays a comprehension of the perpetual organic effort, of the perpetual struggle of the organism for its own conservation.

All life consists indeed in ~~resisting~~ disintegration, in the combat against dispersion and loss of the organic unity. All things tend to disintegrate the organism and the organism's whole attempt is to resist that disintegration. The power of ~~resisting~~ disintegration is what is called vitality.

Let us carry our analysis further. If the organism be, as it is, capable of integration and of disintegration, it is evident that it must contain a force that makes, or tends to make it, to keep it one, as well as another force that tends to make it many, that is, to disintegrate it, to kill it. Now it is easy, relatively easy, to determine what these are.

The organism is indeed one, but it is not simple, indivisible as the "soul," according to the spiritualist notion of it in philosophy. The organism is composed of a great number of elements - cells, finally, ~~on the~~ within biology. Now all multiplicity, all lack of proper unity involves disintegration. This is why theologians argue that the "soul" being one and simple, it is immortal; they, from their standpoint, are right: if the soul be admitted to be one and simple, it cannot but be allowed to be immortal, since it contains not the element of decay of

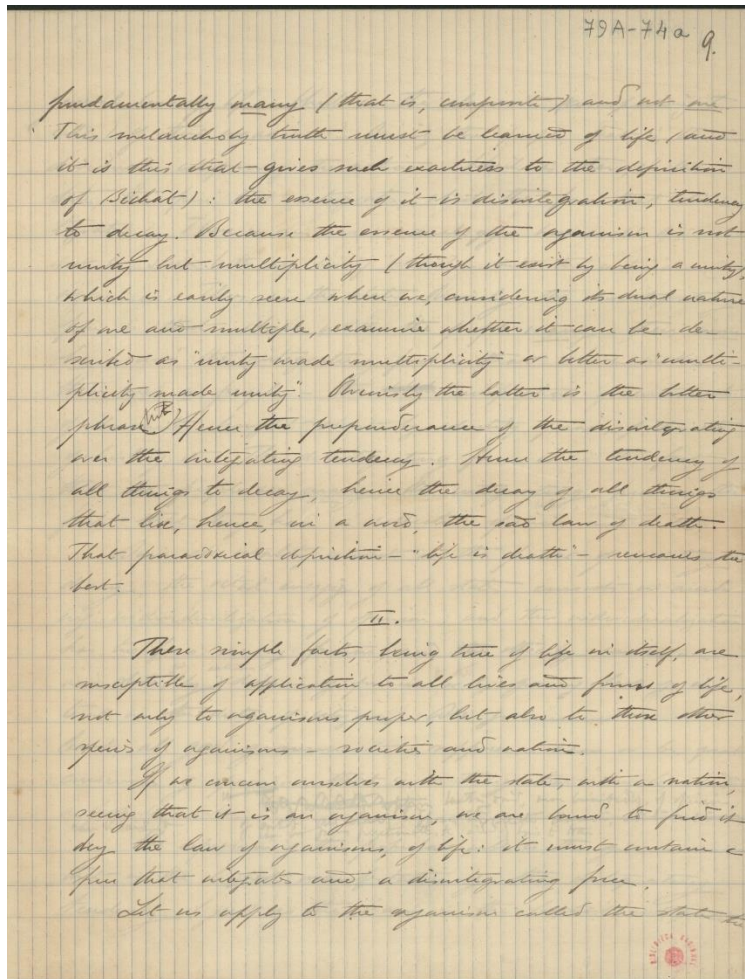


death, of disintegration, and that element is composition, multiplicity in its unity. This the organism has: hence the force of disintegration.

The force of integration is more mysterious; in it lies the problem. It is not that unity is mysterious; it is unification that is. The organism is indeed composed of many elements. But it is not a sum, it is a synthesis. To borrow chemical language, the organism is a combination, not a mixture. The combination of the elements in the organism produces some things more than is contained in the elements, though the nature of that we ignore, as fully indeed as we ignore the nature of the chemical change. Whatever that "something more" is, and all we know of it is that it rises out of the union of the elements and is dependent on them, we are sure that it is in it that the integrating force of the organism lies. The peculiar synthesis that is life, that is the organism, indicates the integration, and the force, whatever it is, that makes the organism a synthesis of its elements and not a sum of them, is the integrating force. We cannot go further because no science can take us.

Thus, to put things in a fitting manner, the organism is liable to disintegration because it is many (that is, composed of elements) and capable of integration because it is one, that is, because those elements are unified.

But it should be remembered that the organism is



fundamentally *many* (that is, composite) and not *one*. This melancholy truth must be learned of life (and it is this that gives such exactness to the definition of Bichât): the essence of it is disintegration, tendency to decay. Because the essence of the organism is not unity but multiplicity (though it exists by being a unity), which is easily seen when we, considering its dual nature of one and multiple, examine whether it can be described as "unity made multiplicity" or better as "multiplicity made unity." Obviously the latter is the better phrase. /Unto\ Hence the preponderance of the disintegrating over the integrating tendency. Hence the tendency of all things to decay, hence the decay of all things that live, hence, in a word, the sad law of death. That paradoxical definition - "life is death" - remains the best.

## II.

These simple facts, being true of life in itself, are susceptible of application to all lives and forms of life, not only to organisms proper, but also to those other species of organisms - societies and nations.

If we concern ourselves with the state, with a nation, seeing that it is an organism, we are bound to find it obey the law of organisms, of life: it must contain a force that integrates and a disintegrating force.

Let us apply to the organism called the state the

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general law of life. Which are the elements (corresponding to cells) of this organism? Obviously the people, that is, the individuals composing the nation. Which is then, in the state, the force that integrates, which the force that disintegrates? There is an exact analogy - how could there not be, since both are living "bodies"? - with the individual organism. Thus, in the state, obviously, the disintegrating force is that which makes the people many - their number - and the integrating force is that which makes them one, a people - the whole unification of sentiments, of character brought about by identity of race, of climate, of history, etc. The disintegrating force is in the fact that the people are many; the integrating force in the fact that they have a collective opinion and will.

Since all vitality consists in the power of resisting decay, the vital energy of all states consists in avoiding individualization of opinion; and this individualization has two forms: one by faction, and the other by carelessness and sloth, one by extreme division of opinions, ~~or~~ the other by growing lack of interest in the duties of a citizen. All government - at least, all good government - supposes a more or less great consciousness of opinion, that is, a thing that can be called a popular will. ~~All nationality supposes~~ What is said, more limitedly, of opinion can be said, more {...} of sentiment, all nationality supposes an active collective character, collective sentiment, when this grows proportionate, the |\*individually basis to totter. |

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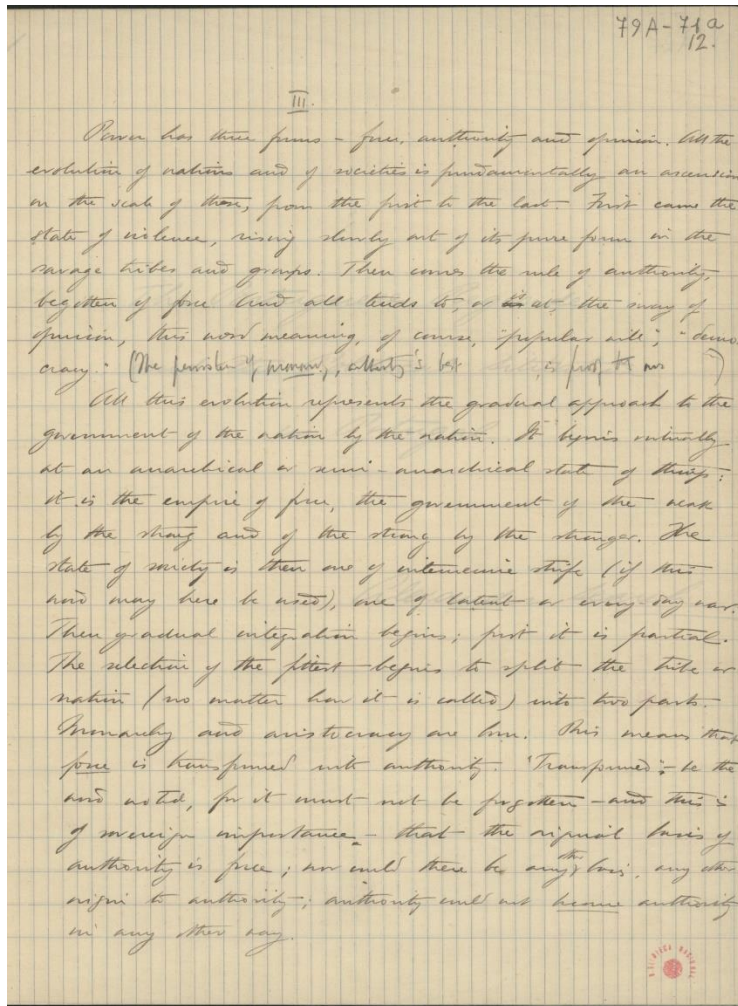
The government representing the will of the people (we have been speaking, of course, of an internally free country) and the "will of the people" representing the integrating tendency in the state, that which gives it, though composed of a large number of elements, its unity; if the government (in the exact sense of the governing, not of the governors) be consistently incapable, troubled, incoherent, the conclusion to be drawn is that the activity of disintegration is becoming greater than the contrary form of activity, and that the country is in decay. The death of the state - it is hardly necessary to add - were where everyone should do as he liked, following his will to its end. Why? Because this were the abolition of the collective will and substitution of the individual one: hence complete disintegration.

All this we have said of the decay of the states may mean or not the decay brought about merely in their governing powers. If we deal with a free nation, obviously the decay in the governing powers means a decay in the whole nation; if in a nation not free, the decay of governing powers, of powers proper, does not of necessity involve national decay, but certainly the decay of the institutions, of the groups that command, and whose state does not of necessity represent the state of the people. We will now proceed to study institutional, as contrasted with national, decadence.

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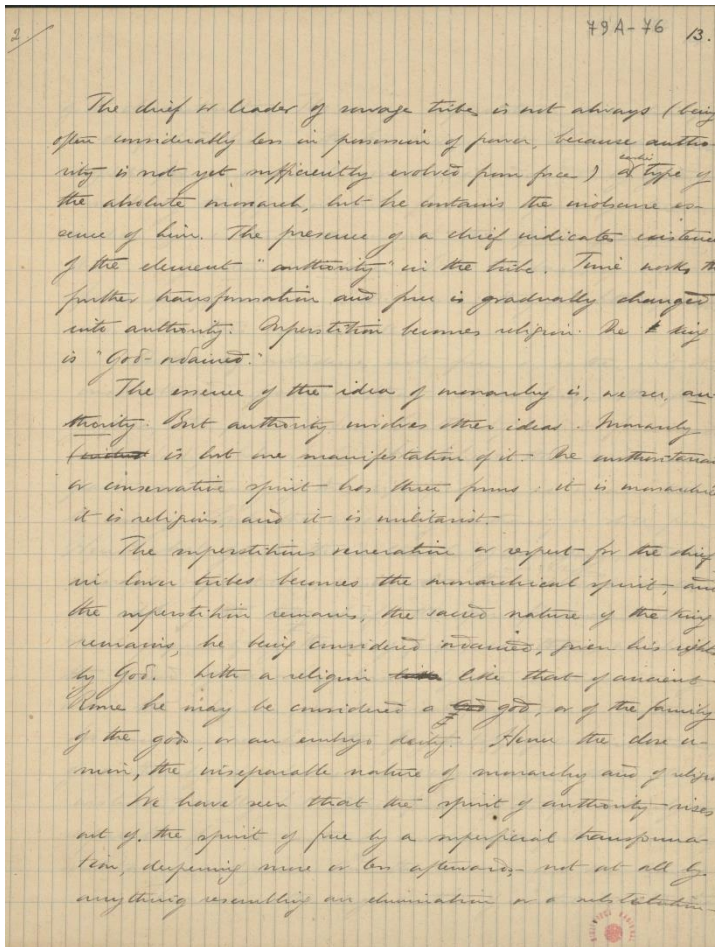
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### III.

Power has three forms - force, authority and opinion. All the evolution of nations and of societies is fundamentally an ascension on the scale of those, from the first to the last. First came the state of violence, rising slowly out of its pure form in the savage tribes and groups. Then comes the rule of authority, begotten of force. And all tends to, or as is at, the sway of opinion, this word meaning, of course, "popular will," "democracy." (The persistence of monarchy, authority's best {...}, is proof that our {...})

All this evolution represents the gradual approach to the government of the nation by the nation. It begins virtually at an anarchical or semi-anarchical state of things: it is the empire of force, the government of the weak by the strong and of the strong by the stronger. The state of society is then one of |\*intermissive| strife (if this word may here be used), one of |latent| or every-day war. Then gradual integration begins; first it is partial. The selection of the fittest begins to split the tribe or nation (no matter how it is called) into two parts. Monarchy and aristocracy are born. This means that |force| is transformed with authority. "Transformed" - be the word noted, for it must not be forgotten - and this is of sovereign importance - that the original basis of authority is force; nor would there be any other basis, any other origin to authority; authority would not become authority in any other way.



The chief or leader of savage tribes is not always (being often considerably less in possession of power, because authority is not yet sufficiently evolved from force) an earlier type of the absolute monarch, but he contains the † essence of him. The presence of a chief indicates existence of the element "authority" in the tribe. Time works the further transformation and force is gradually changed into authority. Superstition becomes religion. The king is "god-ordained."

The essence of the idea of monarchy is, we see, authority. But authority involves other ideas. Monarchy ~~is~~ is but one manifestation of it. The authoritarian or conservative spirit has three forms: it is monarchical, it is religious, and it is militarist.

The superstitious veneration or respect for the chief in lower tribes becomes the monarchical spirit, and the superstition remains, the sacred nature of the king remains, he being considered ordained, given his rights, by God. With a religion ~~like~~ like that of ancient Rome he may be considered a ~~god~~ god, or of the family of the gods, or an embryo deity. Hence the close union, the inseparable nature of monarchy and of religion.

We have seen that the spirit of authority rises out of the spirit of force by a superficial transformation, deepening more or less afterwards, not at all by anything resembling an elimination or a substitution

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of its characteristics. The savage superstitious veneration for a chief had become the less savage but <sup>quite as</sup> more quite as superstitious respect for a monarch conceived as ordained by God. Similarly the oppressive and ferocious spirit of the earlier age is turned down into the spirit of conquest, that is, of external violence. But the basis of both forms of aggressiveness is the same; they are both aggressiveness, and this contains all.

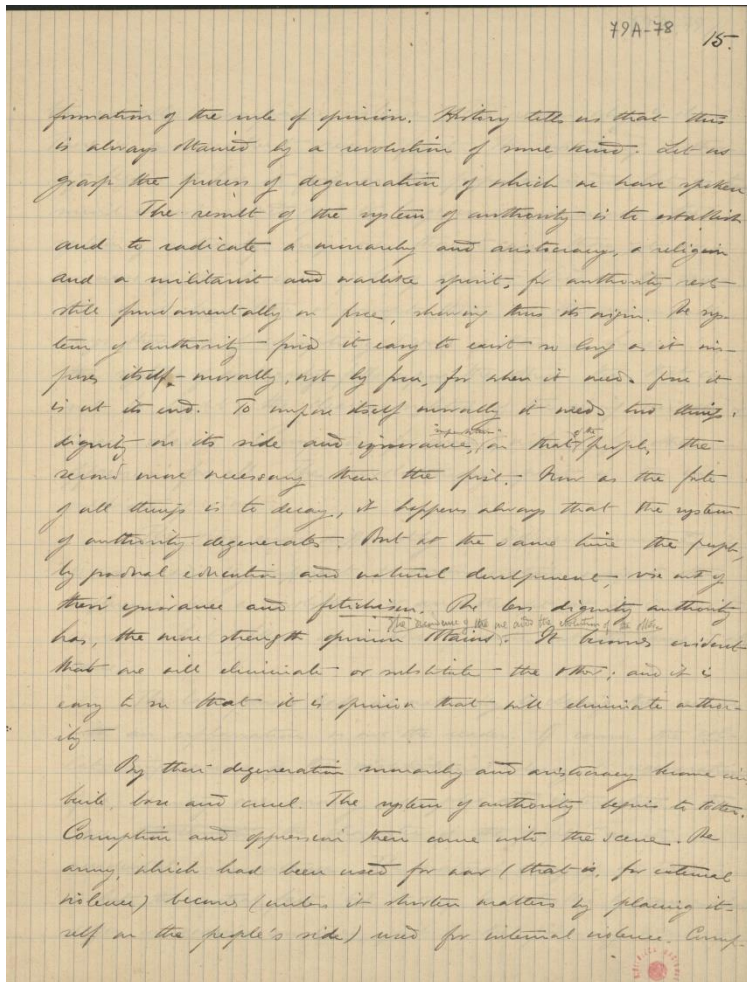
Authority introduces into force, or, rather, into the instincts and passions that characterize the period of force, the factor "order." Authority is but force made, not orderly, but ordered. We believe these words impart something of the significance we mean them to convey. But the essence of authority is still force. Hence what goes is the "externals" of savagery, the incoherent superstitious instinct that, almost makes an idol of the ~~king~~ chief, the fierce pugnacity and constant pugnacity of the age of force; all these, which bear the brand of disorder, become by the introduction of order, the religious, monarchical, militant instinct. We can now see how the psychology of conservation, of authority, involves in its very essence these three instincts, really but three forms of itself, entirely inseparable from it, entirely constitutive of it: monarchy, militarism, religion. And the last is not the least.

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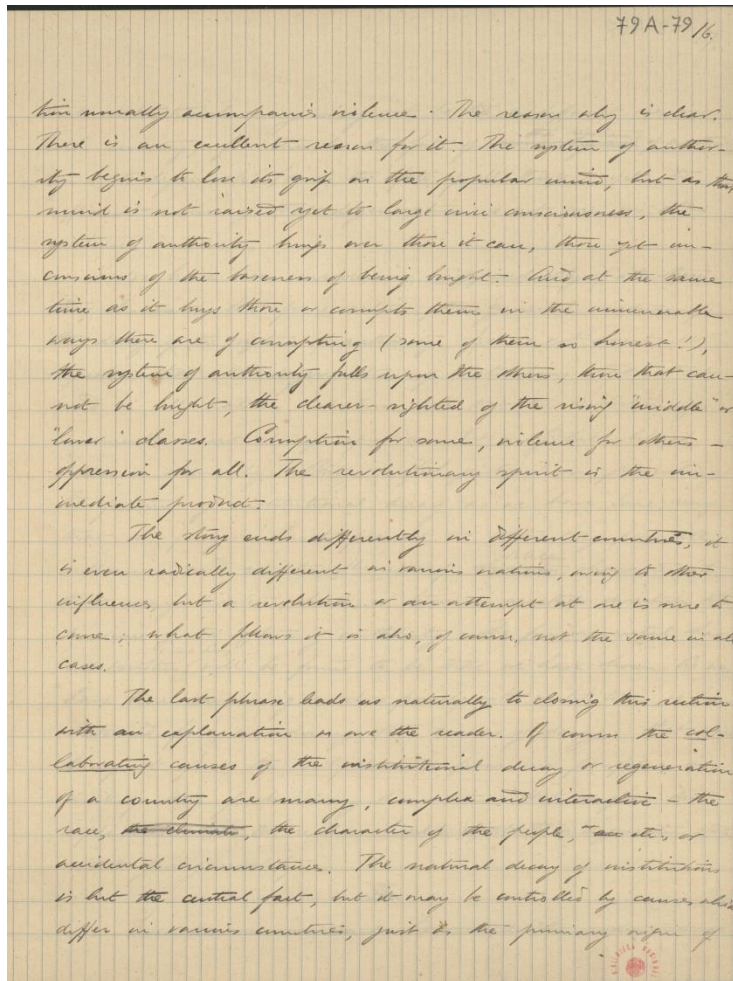
Then comes the degeneration of authority and the



formation of the rule of opinion. History tells us that this is always obtained by a revolution of the same kind. Let us grasp the process of degeneration of which we have spoken.

The result of the system of authority is to establish and to radicate a monarchy and aristocracy, a religion and a militarist and warlike spirit, for authority rests still fundamentally on force, showing thus its origin. The system of authority finds it easy to exist so long as it imposes itself, - morally, not by force, for when it needs force it is not its end. To impose itself morally it needs two things: dignity on its side and ignorance, "superstition" on that of the peoples the second more necessary than the first. Now as the fate of all things is to decay, it happens always that the system of authority degenerates. But at the same time the people, by gradual education and natural development, rise out of their ignorance and [fetichism]. The less dignity authority has, the more strength opinion obtains. The decadence of the one aids the evolution of the other. It becomes evident that one will eliminate or substitute the other; and it is easy to see that it is opinion that will eliminate authority.

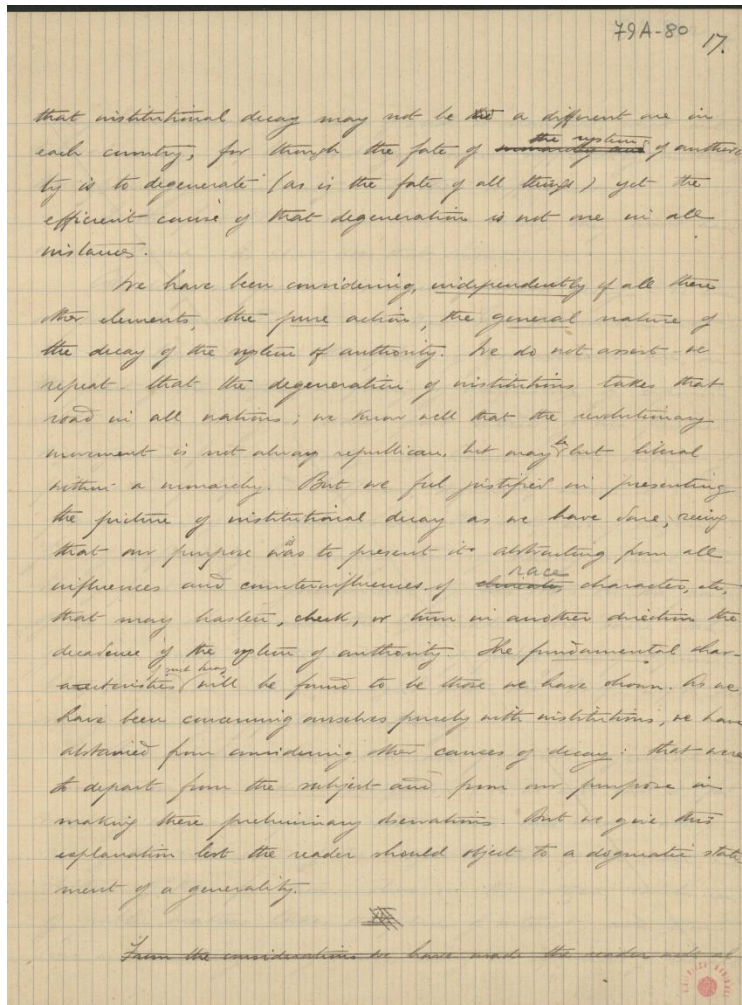
By their degeneration monarchy and aristocracy become imbecile, base and cruel. The system of authority begins to totter. Corruption and oppression then come into the scene. The army, which had been used for war (that is, for external violence) becomes (unless it shortens matters by placing itself on the people's side) used for internal violence. Corrup-



tion normally accompanies violence. The reason why is clear. There is an excellent reason for it. The system of authority begins to lose its grip on the popular mind, but as that mind is not raised yet to large civic consciousness, the system of authority hangs over those it can, those yet unconscious of the baseness of being bought. And at the same time as it buys those or corrupts them in the innumerable ways there are of corrupting (some of them so honest!), the system of authority falls upon the others, those that cannot be bought, the clear-sighted of the rising "middle" or "lower" classes. Corruption for some, violence for others - oppression for all. The revolutionary spirit is the immediate product.

The story ends differently in different countries, it is even radically different in various nations, owing to the other influences, but a revolution or an attempt at one is sure to come; what follows it is also, of course, not the same in all cases.

The last phrase leads us naturally to closing this section with an explanation as owed the reader. Of course the collaborating causes of the institutional decay or regeneration of a country are many, complex and interactive - the race, ~~the~~ <sup>the</sup> climate, the character of the people, ~~the~~ <sup>the</sup> etc., or accidental circumstances. The natural decay of institutions is but the central fact, but it may be controlled by causes which differ in various countries, just as the primary origin of

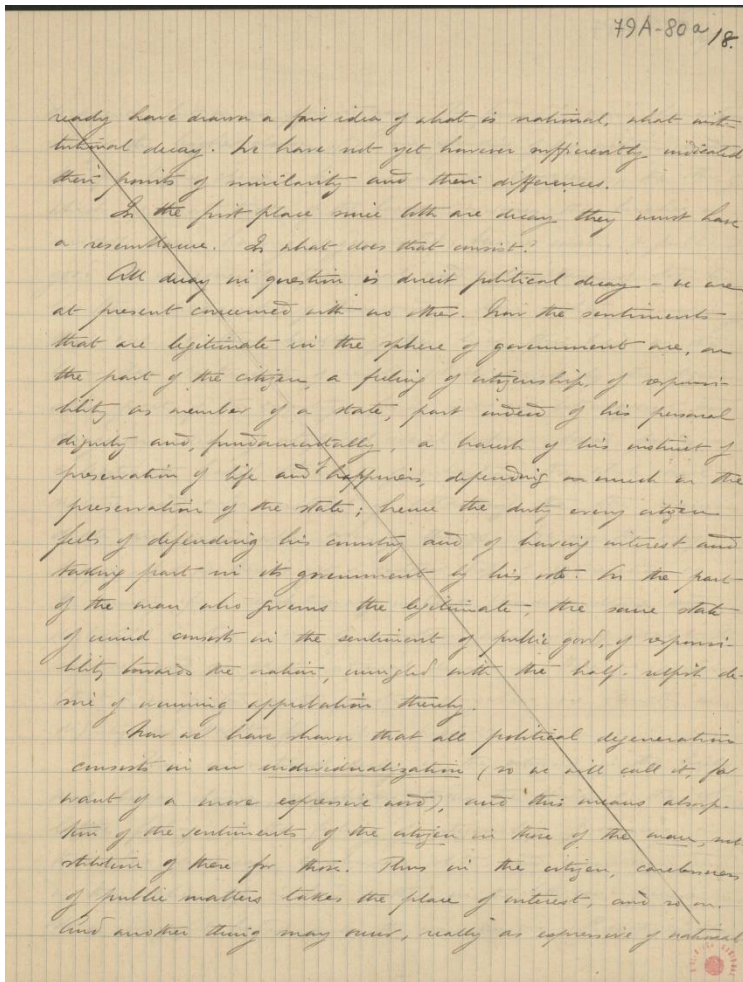


that institutional decay may not be ~~the~~ a different one in each country, for though the fate of ~~the system~~ <sup>the system</sup> of authority is to degenerate (as is the fate of all things) yet the efficient cause of that degeneration is not one in all instances.

We have been considering *independently* of all these other elements, the *pure* action, the *general* nature of the decay of the system of authority. We do not assert - we repeat - that the degeneration of institutions takes that road in all nations; we know well that the revolutionary movement is not always republican, but may be but liberal within a monarchy. But we feel justified in presenting a picture of institutional decay as we have done, seeing that our purpose was <sup>/is\</sup> to present it abstracting from all the influences and counterinfluences of ~~elimate~~ race, character, etc., that may hasten, check, or turn in another direction the decadence of the system of authority. The *fundamental* characteristics of such decay will be found to be those we have shown. As we have been concerning ourselves purely with institutions, we have abstained from considering other causes of decay: that were to depart from the subject and from our purpose in making these preliminary observations. But we give this explanation lest the reader should object to a dogmatic statement of a generality.

IV

~~From the considerations we have made the reader will al-~~

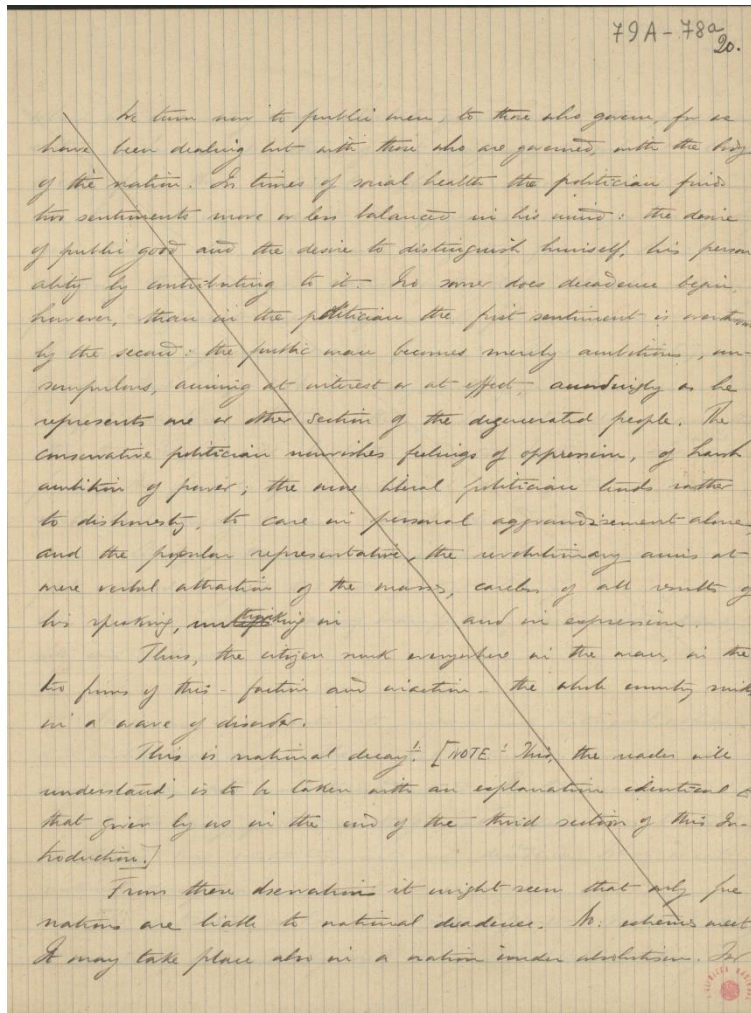


ready have drawn a fair idea of what is national, what institutional decay. We have not yet however sufficiently indicated their points of similarity and their differences.

In the first place since both are decay they must have a resemblance. In what does that consist?

All decay in question is direct political decay - we are at present concerned with no other. Now the sentiments that are legitimate in the sphere of government are, on the part of the citizen, a feeling of citizenship, of responsibility as member of a state, part indeed of his personal dignity and, fundamentally, a branch of his instinct of preservation of life and happiness, depending on much on the preservation of the state; hence the duty every citizen feels of defending his country and of having interest and taking part in its government by his vote. On the part of the man who governs the legitimate, the same state of mind consists in the sentiment of public good, of responsibility towards the nation, mingled with the half-selfish desire of winning approbation thereby.

Now we have shown that all political degeneration consists in an individualization (so we will call it, for want of a more expressive word), and this means absorption of the sentiments of the citizen in those of the man, substitution of these for those. Thus in the citizen, carelessness of public matters takes place of interest, and so on. And another thing may occur, really as expressive of national



We turn now to public men, to those who govern, for we have been dealing but with those who are governed, with the body of the nation. In times of social health the politician finds two sentiments more or less balanced in his mind: the desire of public good and the desire to distinguish himself, his personality by contributing to it. No sooner does decadence begin, however, than in the politician the first sentiment is overthrown by the second: the public man becomes merely ambitious, unscrupulous, aiming at interest or at effect, accordingly as he represents one or other section of the degenerated people. The conservative politician nourishes feelings of oppression, of harsh ambition of power; the more liberal politician tends rather to dishonesty, to care in personal aggrandisement alone, and the popular representative, the revolutionary aims at mere verbal attraction of the masses, careless of all results of his speaking, un~~re~~thinking in {...} and in expression.

Thus, the citizen sunk everywhere in the man, in the two forms of this - faction and inaction - the whole community sinks in a wave of disorder.

This is national decay.<sup>1</sup> [NOTE.<sup>1</sup> This, the reader will understand, is to be taken with an explanation identical to that given by us in the end of the third section of this Introduction.]

From these observations it might seem that only free nations are liable to national decadence. No: extremes meet. It may take place also in a nation under absolutism. For

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When in a country under absolute government the people are either so base as in their great majority to submit, to abdicate from their natural rights, or so weak as to be unable to withdraw or resist the oppressors, it is just as if they consented in the government, as if they gave it their aid, making their common cause with it. "He who is not for me is against me" ~~says~~ <sup>is an old phrase</sup>; here it is "he who is not against me is for me". There is a Portuguese proverb that says - "He who says nothing gives his consent"; it is applicable here. Between this kind of national decay and the other there is, as will be better understood further on, <sup>and</sup> ~~one~~ a radical difference: the first is pure national decay; the second is institutional decay because national decadence.

Analyzing the matter well, we find that the true and complete national decay is this last, for that taking place in free nations is more want to be ~~among~~ <sup>manifested</sup> by faction rather than by sloth and carelessness.

- IV. -

We are now in a position to compare and distinguish national and institutional decay. The essential distinction between them is easy to make and easier to understand. In the second section we studied the decay of states in its general features; in the third we showed how institutions enter into decadence. What we call national decay remains then to be examined.

The distinction, we have said, is not difficult. National decay is essentially and initially social decay; institutional decay is

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22.

initially and essentially political decadence. In these words lies the whole distinction. In the term "social decay," we embody of course the decadence of all activities that uphold a society, including itself. The decadence of government in free countries is produced by the social decay. In countries not free yet in decay or going thither, the decadence of government produces the other forms of decay that we have called social decadence.

It is obvious, ~~next~~ we believe, that the expression "national decay" conveys the idea of an origin and not of a condition; that is to say, what we call "national decadence" does not mean that the decay is complete or incomplete, advanced or not - it means merely that such decay has a national (or, social), as opposed to institutional, origin - origin, be it noted.

This genetic classification of decadences made, we have to consider the classification according to extension of decay, and this is simpler yet, the divisions being naturally decay complete and incomplete. To this we might add - why, will soon be seen a "semi"-complete" decadence.

Complete is distinguished from incomplete decay by the presence (in the latter) of sufficient elements of regeneration, elements tending to integration.

Two roads lead to complete decadence. One - the direct and national one - is that of national decay; the other is by institutional. The reason is simple. Institutional decadence involves slightly a national decadence, because to be possible it needs that the people be not perfectly healthy and conscious, and this con-

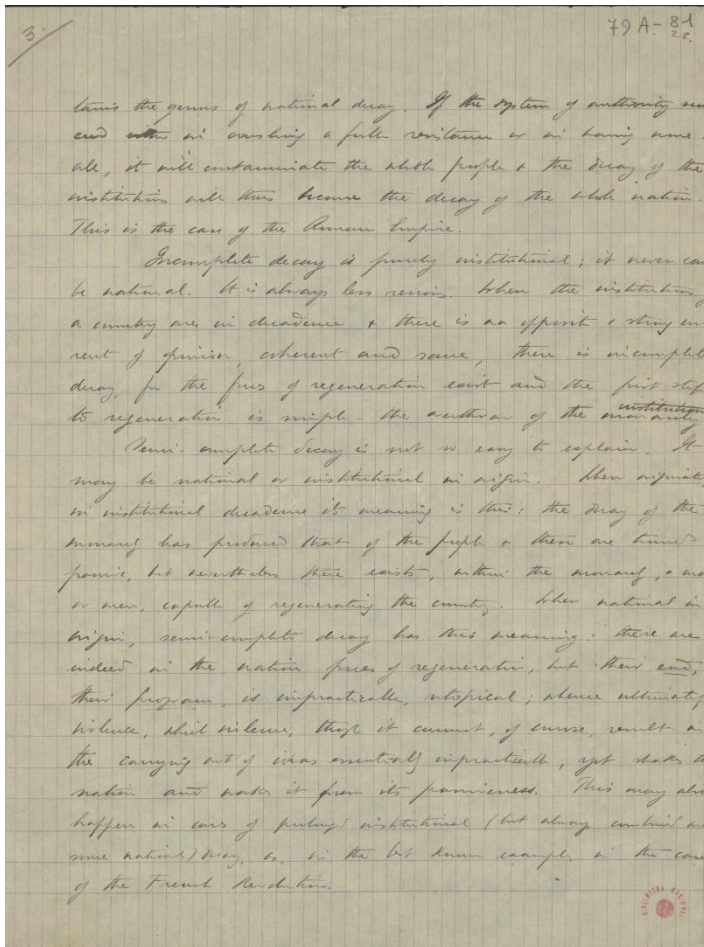
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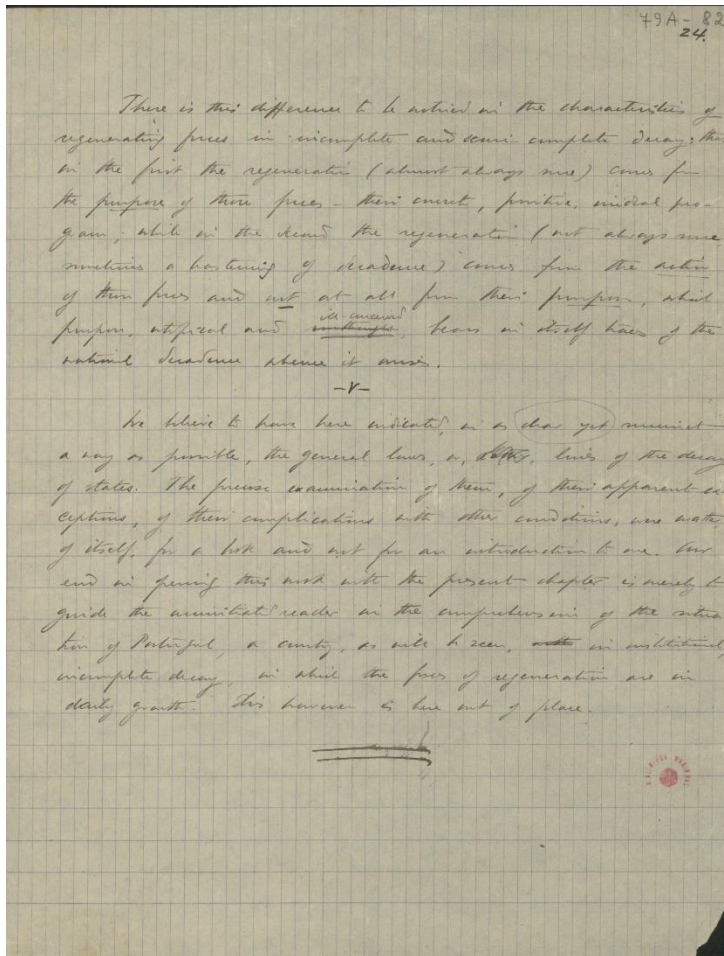
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tains the genus of national decay. If the system of authority seemed either in crushing a public resistance or in having none at all, it will contaminate the whole people and the decay of the institutions will thus become the decay of the whole nation. This is the case of the Roman Empire.

Incomplete decay is purely institutional; it never can be national. It is always less serious. When the institutions of a country are in decadence and there is an opposite and strong current of opinion, coherent and sane, there is incomplete decay, for the forces of regeneration exist and the first step to regeneration is simple - the overthrow of the monarchy /institution\.

Semi-complete decay is not so easy to explain. It may be national or institutional in origin. When originating in institutional decadence its meaning is this: the decay of the monarchy has produced that of the people and these are turned passive, but nevertheless there exists, within the monarchy, a man or men, capable of regenerating the country. When national in origin, semi-complete decay has this meaning: there are indeed in the nation forces of regeneration, but their end, their program, is impracticable, utopical; whence ultimately violence, which violence, though it cannot, of course, result in the carrying out of ideas essentially impracticable, yet shakes the nation and wakes it from its passiveness. This may also happen in cases of prolonged institutional (but always combined with some national) decay, as, in the best known examples, in the case of the French Revolution.



There is this difference to be noticed in the characteristics of regenerating forces in incomplete and semi-complete decay: that in the first the regeneration (almost always sure) comes from the purpose of those forces - their concrete, positive, individual program; while in the second the regeneration (not always sure sometimes a hastening of decadence) comes from the action of those forces and not at all from their purpose, which purpose, utopical and ~~unthought~~ ill-conceived, bears in itself traces of the national decadence whence it arises.

- V -

We believe to have here indicated, in as clear yet succinct a way as possible, the general laws, or, rather, lines of the decay of states. The precise examination of them, of their apparent exceptions, of their complications with other conditions, were matter, of itself, for a book and not for an introduction to one. Our end in opening this work with the present chapter is merely to guide the uninitiated reader in the comprehension of the situation of Portugal, a country, as will be seen, ~~with~~ in institutional, incomplete decay, in which the forces of regeneration are in daily growth. This however is here out of place.

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## DIREITOS ASSOCIADOS

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