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Outcomes**

**The Reaction Against Individualism and the Origins of  
Corporatism**

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## The Reaction Against Individualism and the Origins of Corporatism.

### The Distant Origins of Corporatism.

Corporatism describes society as an organic body, an *'institutional arrangement for linking the associational organized interests of civil society with the decisional structures of the state'*.<sup>1</sup> As *"true and proper organs of the state they direct and coordinate labor and capital in matters of common interest"*<sup>2</sup> It has a long history with modernized versions which intend to separate it from any fascist connection and define it as persons living in society that participate in policy decisions only if they are organized through associations. In all cases, corporatist policies are a plan for economic stagnation.

Corporatism became a system of interest representation in which the constituent units are organized into a limited number of singular, compulsory, noncompetitive, hierarchically ordered and functionally differentiated categories that are created, recognized or licensed by the state and granted a deliberate representational monopoly within their respective categories in exchange for observing certain controls on their selection of leaders and articulation of demands and supports.

This puzzling and multipurpose institution had a distant origin, and it is a consequence of the religious upheaval of the sixteenth century.

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<sup>1</sup> Phillippe Schmitter, 'Still the Century of Corporatism?' (1974) 36 Review of Politics 85 at 86.

<sup>2</sup> Wiarda, Howard J (1996). Corporatism and Comparative Politics: The Other Great Ism. P. 27.

### **“The Slaves of Some Defunct ... Theologian.”<sup>3</sup>**

Following Keynes’ metaphor modern ideas can have remote and forgotten origins, so is the case with modern corporatism. Max Weber, in a classic book<sup>4</sup>, initiated the generalized association between the protestant ethic and the spirit of capitalism—the first as the foundation of the other. The present paper has a different view; it inquires into the origin of capitalism’s main opponent: corporatism. In spite of remote reference to medieval times by corporatist advocates, the origin of modern corporatism can be traced to the Counter Reformation<sup>5</sup>. In its very thorough effort to attack the Protestant Reformation and secular modernity, the Counter Reformation established the basis for the consolidated myths of corporatism<sup>6</sup> in the second part of the sixteenth century. Many, if not all, the trends of modern corporatism appeared in the late sixteenth century as a retort to the Reformation and the Renaissance; also as a firm reaction against Pico della Mirandola and Machiavelli as much as against Luther. Although the foundations of this doctrine were religious in its origin, it had a wider scope that developed

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<sup>3</sup> With apologies to Keynes: *The General Theory of Employment, Interest and Money* (1936) Ch. 24 “Concluding Notes” p. 383-384, *“But apart from this contemporary mood, the ideas of economists and political philosophers, both when they are right and when they are wrong, are more powerful than is commonly understood. Indeed the world is ruled by little else. Practical men, who believe themselves to be quite exempt from any intellectual influences, are usually the slaves of some defunct economist. Madmen in authority, who hear voices in the air, are distilling their frenzy from some academic scribbler of a few years back.”*

<sup>4</sup> *The Protestant Ethic and The Spirit of Capitalism*.  
Translated by Talcott Parsons. Charles Scribner’s Sons. New York.

<sup>5</sup> Counter Reformation is the period of a strong opposition to the Protestant Reformation, beginning with the Council of Trent (1545–1563) and ending at the close of the Thirty Years’ War (1648).

<sup>6</sup> A political myth is “an ideologically marked narrative which purports to give a true account of a set of past, present, or predicted political events and which is accepted as valid in its essentials by a social group”. (Flood, Christopher. *Political Myth*. 2001. Routledge. p. 44).

and advanced over the centuries into a strong economic and social ideology opposing individualism, pluralism and the market economy. The unforeseen consequence was that corporatist societies were to be condemned in the future to permanent economic stagnation. Therefore, and perhaps unexpectedly the intellectual origins of the modern stagnation of corporatist societies can be traced to the theological debate at the end of the sixteenth century.

### **The Origins of Modern Individualism. Pico della Mirandola.**

We can trace the origins of modern individualism and pluralism to *Pico Della Mirandola*.

<sup>7</sup>His idea that men could ascend the chain of being through the exercise of their intellectual capacities was a profound endorsement of the dignity of human existence. The root of this dignity lay in his assertion that only human beings could change themselves through their own free will. This was a major difference with the doctrine of predestination.

The free will of the individual included:

1. The inalienable right to discrepancy,
2. The respect for cultural and religious diversity and, finally,
3. The right to growth and enrichment of life based on differentiation.<sup>8</sup>

Pico della Mirandola's *Oration on the Dignity of Man* reflects on the idea of the individual's free and creative powers. Pico begins by imagining that God explained to man his unique position at the Creation. Man is '*constrained by no limits and endowed with his own free will.*' He is able '*with freedom of choice to create and mold their own characters.*' Pico

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<sup>7</sup> *The Oration on the Dignity of Man (Oratio de hominis dignitate)* First complete edition 1496.

<sup>8</sup> M. V. Dougherty (ed) *Pico della Mirandola New Essays*. Cambridge University Press 2008.

rejects the association of Fortune with Providence, and instead, he treats fortune as a lawlike force accepting that human responsibility plays a far greater role in the flux of events. In some aspects, *The Hominis dignitate* was an introduction of the 900 theses, but Pico's fight for individual freedom had a terrible price: He died from poisoning.

### **The Critic of Scholasticism. Lorenzo Valla, the 'praecursor Lutheri'.**

During the middle ages, the fundamental philosophical school was Scholasticism –the method of St. Thomas Aquinas. The Quattrocento humanists criticized Scholasticism and paved the way for the innovation of modernism and reform. This was done very strongly by Lorenzo Valla, who in March of 1447, after having agreed to deliver an oration *In praise of St. Thomas Aquinas*, proceeded to turn his title into a sneering irony. He argued that while we must concede the Angelic Doctor his saintly virtues, we cannot avoid noticing that *'the holy man's knowledge was for the most part of trifling consequence,'* since he devoted himself almost entirely to *'the petty reasonings of dialecticians'* without ever seeing that such preoccupations are mere *'obstacles in the way of better kinds of knowledge.'*<sup>9</sup> These and many other criticisms to Scholasticism were deeply rejected in the Counter Reformation, in fact Cardinal Bellarmine calls Valla 'praecursor Lutheri'.

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<sup>9</sup>Lorenzo Valla: *Umanesimo, riforma e controriforma : studi e testi*, 2002, by Salvatore Ignazio Camporeale, 150–152.

## Machiavelli.

The vast importance of Machiavelli in modern political thought very much exceeds the search of the origins of corporatism, but his relevance here emerges from the fierce attack staged in the Council of Trent and its aftermath in the Counter Reformation. He was considered a heretic and enemy of religion in equal standing with Luther. They were contemporaries: *The Prince* was written in 1513 and *The Discourses on the First Ten Books of Titus Livy* in 1517, the same year of the 95 theses. Both books were a deep alteration of medieval political thought: *The Prince* took the external form of the “advice to princes,” a traditional medieval treatise on the virtues of the sovereign,<sup>10</sup> but instead indicated the birth of political science as separate from moral and religious considerations. In *The Discourses*, he studies the origins and consolidation of the Roman Republic, introducing republicanism into modern political thought. In this way, Machiavelli was a major source of the republicanism that spread throughout England and America in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.<sup>11</sup> Machiavelli’s realism and encouragement to innovate and control one’s own fortune were an extraordinary change to the rigidity of medieval social structure.

All this was anathema to the Counter Reformation. Both in the Council of Trent and later through philosophers and scholars as Giovanni Botero; Justus Lipsius; Pedro de Ribadeneira; and, Diego Saavedra Fajardo;

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<sup>10</sup> The *specula principum*, or mirror of princes: political writing during since the Early Middle Ages, to the Renaissance. Texts which directly instruct kings or lesser rulers on certain aspects of rule and behavior. It had the remote ancestor in Aristotle being the tutor of Alexander the Great. As is the case of Thomas Aquinas *De regno ad regem Cypri or De regimine principum* 1267, John of Salisbury, *Policraticus* (1159). Egidio Romano, *De regimine principum*. (1292). Don Juan Manuel, *El Conde Lucanor* (1335) Baldassare Castiglione. *Il Cortigiano*. (1528).

<sup>11</sup> Pocock, J.G.A. (1975), *The Machiavellian Moment: Florentine Political Thought and the Atlantic Republican Tradition*, Princeton new ed. 2003.

Machiavelli were treated together with Luther as the main enemies of Dogma.

## Luther

On All Hallows' Eve of 1517, Martin Luther, an angry Augustinian friar and professor of theology, nailed a sheet of paper on the door of the church attached to the local lord's castle in the provincial Wittenberg

University within the German state of Saxony. It proclaimed, according to academic custom, his willingness to debate a series of propositions in public. Friar Martin focused his anger on the sale of indulgences. It was a strong attack to the Church's hierarchy, since these papal dispensations, confirmed by paper certificates, replaced the traditional medieval conviction that prayer, repentance, good works, and pilgrimage could atone in some measure for sin and thus reduce the amount of time a person would need to spend after death in Purgatory. Through indulgences, remission from sins could simply be purchased from a papal agent, for oneself or for another person, whether alive or deceased. This sale of indulgences was triggered by the election of Albert of Brandenburg, archbishop elector of Mainz—one of the main political figures of the Holy Roman Empire and Luther's bishop—who was in debt to Jakob Fugger, financier of his election.

This first act can be considered in its two consequences. On one hand, Luther established his main contribution to political thought: his defense of individualism against hierarchy through his revolutionary idea that all baptized men were priests.<sup>12</sup> On the other, the religious movement of the Reformation, created later in the century a reaction, the Counter Reformation, a theological and political movement which was the genesis of corporatism.

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<sup>12</sup> *We are all consecrated priests through Baptism.* Martin Luther. *To the Christian Nobility of the German Nation.* 1520

The religious equality of all with no intermediaries in the relation to God and the establishment of the basis for religious pluralism was the origin of political pluralism and the end of the myths of unity and hierarchy.

In Luther's words:

*How then if they are forced to admit that we are all equally priests, as many of us as are baptized, and by this way we truly are; while to them is committed only the Ministry (ministerium) and consented to by us (nostro consensu)? If they recognize this they would know that they have no right to exercise power over us (ius imperii, in what has not been committed to them) except insofar as we may have granted it to them, for thus it says in 1 Peter 2, "You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a priestly kingdom." In this way we are all priests, as many of us as are Christians.<sup>13</sup>*

## **The Ethos of Martin Luther**

Luther was not a man of system; one might almost say that he abhorred systems and organization— indeed, he established a religion with an ethos of its own. This was different both from the Catholic hierarchy and also from other reformers like John Calvin. The real hidden strength of Lutheranism lay in its ways of worship. As a religion of practice rather than of theory, its strength was in its informality, its respect of the individual, and granting of independence to the individual. Every person was a priest. This constituted the definite breaking of hierarchy. This religious and political pluralism went against the strong authoritarianism of the Renaissance modernity, both religious and secular. If his rebellion created the ethos of pluralism and capitalism, the reaction against it planted the seed of corporatism.

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<sup>13</sup> Martin Luther. *De captivitate Babylonica ecclesiae praeludium* [Prelude concerning the Babylonian Captivity of the church], Weimar Ausgabe 6, 564.6–1.

## The Counter Reformation, the search for unity and the origin of corporatism.

### **The Council of Trent.**

The Pope and Spanish, Italian and south German bishops saw Protestantism as a revolt against the unity of the Church. They considered Catholic doctrine and practice as needing to be rescued from this religious rebellion, rather than adjusted to its criticisms. A council called to deal with dangers coming from northern and western Europe turned out to be an assembly of Dominican and Jesuit theologians who envisioned a new economic and political system, and at the same time a new religious enterprise. Since it was the time of great discoveries in America and Asia, the Counter Reformation went beyond the scope of Europe.

Two visions appeared in this council summoned at Trento. Emperor Charles V thought that a purging of abuses would in itself reconcile the Protestants. The majority, as well as the emperor, did indeed want reform given priority over doctrinal definition. But Pope Paul III had ordered his legates to adopt the contrary procedure, and this plan had wide support. No general council in history has lasted as long as Trento. Opened at the end of 1545, it held its last session eighteen years later, in December 1563. Against the view of the King of Spain, who wanted it to continue still longer, and against several popes, Julius III, Marcellus II, Paul IV, the Council opposed all compromise or negotiations with Protestantism. Upon Paul IV's death in 1559, the new Medici pope was elected, Pius IV, with his secretary and nephew, St. Carlo Borromeo.

By now the political background was different. In 1555, Charles V had been compelled to give up all hope of re-Catholicizing Germany, and by the Peace of Augsburg, to acquiesce in the control of religion within each princely state by its ruler, thus consolidating the religious divisions of

the empire that were to continue until the present day. The next year, he abdicated to be succeeded as king of Spain by his son Philip and as emperor by his brother Ferdinand.

By the end of the Council, the breach with Protestantism was widened and religious unity in Europe by means of the Council was impossible. The closing sessions of Trent were devoted to a reform by which it was hoped that a renovated Catholicism would win back the dissidents individually. This had already started through the activity of the soldiers of the Counter Reformation, the Company of Jesus.

On the practical side, the reforms of Trento did much to centralize the Church, which had been built up more and more during the middle ages. Philip II said that his bishops had gone to Trent as bishops and returned as parish priests.

Matters with which the Council did not find opportunity to deal were formally remitted to the Pope for final decision, in other words, centralizing all decisions. This was the case with liturgical reform; in 1568 and 1570, Pius V issued conservatively revised editions of the Roman breviary and missal, the use of which was imposed in all dioceses and religious orders which could not claim an antiquity of more than two centuries for their peculiar rites. Even more important was the *Catechismus Romanus*, published by the same Pope in 1556, which put into simple form the teachings of Trento and provided parish priests with a standard of doctrine to be taught to their flocks.

In 1542, Paul III had set up the Congregation of the Holy Office—the Inquisition in its post-medieval form. Besides hunting down and punishing heresy, it had wide powers of passing doctrinal judgments. It was complemented in 1587 by the Congregation of the Index, which took over the duties of supervising the Index of books judged immoral or heretical, which Catholics were forbidden to read, published by Pius IV in

1564 in accordance with decisions of the Council. By means of these bureaucratic institutions, a closer control than had previously been possible of the whole workings of the Church by the Roman curia was gradually established.

The Company of Jesus, founded by a soldier St. Ignatius Loyola, seconded by an extraordinary missionary St. Francis Xavier became, through the Fourth Vow, a legion of the Holy See. It had great opposition in France. In the seventeenth century, the Jansenist movement confronted the principles of the Counter reformation. Blaise Pascal in particular criticized the Company of Jesus in his book *Les Provinciales*.<sup>14</sup> France had a more active recognition of the individual than other Catholic nations.

### **The New World.**

In the New World that discovery had opened to Catholic missions, and in which the Jesuits from many nations were pioneers, the Counter Reformation had a vast expansion. The revival of theology in the Spanish Peninsula, which is such a striking feature of the later sixteenth century, played its part; for the great theologians had much to say about rights of conquest. Great teachers like Vitoria and Suarez energetically defended the rights of non-Christian natives on the basis of natural law and a fortiori of those who became Christians. They allowed colonization on the theory that the unity and sociability of the human race ruled out exclusiveness, but that same principle implied that the colonists had a

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<sup>14</sup> PROVINCIAL LETTERS: moral teachings of the Jesuit fathers opposed to the Latin Vulgate and the Church of Rome. 1656. He criticizes the Jesuits for changing the Gospel to suit different peoples. Fifth letter: "...because strict Gospel maxims are fitted to govern some sorts of persons, they use them on the occasions to which they are suitable. But as these maxims are not in accordance with the views of most people, they, in those cases, abandon them..."

duty to share their good things, and notably the faith, with the original inhabitants. Thus, in a sense missions were a condition of lawful imperialism.

The feeling for rigid orthodoxy was too strong among even saintly characters in Catholic countries. The fact that the Inquisition was an integral part of the Church's structure, as reformed by the Council of Trent, shows this. The Council had not legislated about the Inquisition. It was unnecessary for them to do so, since this medieval institution had been reorganized by Pope Paul III in 1542 under the Sacred Congregation of the Roman and Universal Inquisition or Holy Office—a committee of cardinals who acted as final judges in all matters of faith and supervised the work of discovering and punishing heresy throughout the Roman church, so far as the civil power would allow. Of this tendency, the notorious Spanish Inquisition is the supreme example.

### **The Company of Jesus.**

As mentioned before the Company of Jesus was created on September 27<sup>th</sup>. 1540 and is a product of the spirit of the Counter Reformation. The Jesuit work for education, of both clergy and laity, was in every way as important as their pastoral activities and missionary efforts. Their colleges were 'pontifical', since the Society depended directly upon the Holy See; and, provided that the good will of the secular authorities could be obtained, their work was not hindered by the inertia or traditionalism of local ecclesiastical authorities. The content, no less than the organization, of Jesuit teaching was of vital importance. For future priests, they provided a full grounding in theology of the traditional scholastic type, reinforced by studies of immediate pastoral importance, such as moral theology and the technique of preaching and instruction.

Men at an earlier stage of their training and those destined for the life of laymen made full use of the humanist ideals of the Renaissance and of

the educational techniques developed by the humanists. The *Ratio Studiorum*, published by the Society in 1599, contained a full scheme of regulations for both lower and higher education; based equally upon theory and experience, its solidity can be judged by the fact that it was felt to need no further revision down to the suppression of the Society of Jesus in 1773. It covered every aspect of education, from classroom technique and discipline, together with provision for games and exercise, to the content of studies. Liberal education was the initial aim both for members of the Society itself and for future priests, as well as the future lay elite of the Church. The success of this may be judged, not merely from the galaxy of scholars—in mathematics, astronomy, history, linguistics and other disciplines as well as in the theological field—produced within the Society, but also from its distinguished lay alumni. But in all cases this education fulfilled the Jesuit motto “*Ad maiorem Dei gloriam.*” (*To the greater glory of God*). A rule of universality, unity with no individualisms accepted and hierarchy respected by the obedience to the Supreme Pontiff.

As in the Middle Ages, universities still played a vital role in Catholic life and were the ultimate force behind pastoral training. The foundation of seminaries, which indeed were often closely associated with universities, did nothing to undermine Catholic influence and often enhanced it; for the days had gone by when the ordinary parish priest was often barely literate and thereby isolated from academic life. As in medieval times, too, the religious orders, which played such a big part in evangelization and specialized pastoral work, were closely associated with university life and to some extent dominated it. The great theologians were almost all members of one or the other of the orders. Thus, from the universities, there spread down to the layman through the clergy, regular or secular, religious instruction of a far more systematic and intensive type than had been available before the Reformation.

The religious control of the universities made all knowledge dependent on theological influence.

### **The Revival of Thomism. The Rigid Philosophy.**

Contemporary with the Council in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, there occurred a remarkable revival of Scholasticism, the reestablishment of St Thomas Aquinas three hundred years after his death in 1274. The revival of Neo Thomism included the predominance of Spaniards; among the names of importance were Francisco de Vitoria, Domingo de Soto, Melchor Cano, and Francisco Suarez. It is a reflection of the intellectual schism produced by the Reformation that to this day the work of these great thinkers, who are comparable to the great scholastic names of the Middle Ages, is scarcely known outside the Catholic church.

Vitoria had the attitude of Erasmus, whom he greatly admired, before the advance of the Reformation made Erasmus suspect. This caused the Inquisition to persecute Erasmians in Spain, many Erasmians were persecuted and in cases burnt at the stake.

The revival of Thomism was central in the ideology of the Counter Reformation. Its origin in the sixteenth century is contemporary to Luther and can be traced to the teachings of the Dominican theologian and philosopher Francisco de Vitoria (1485-1546) both in Paris and Salamanca. He published nothing, but his influence could be recognized through his pupils, among them were Melchor Cano and Domingo de Soto. Soto was among the most important of Vitoria's numerous disciples. He resigned his Chair in Salamanca in order to obey the summons from Emperor Charles V to attend the Council of Trent in

1545. There he was to play a prominent part acting as the Imperial theologian.

During the second half of the sixteenth century, the doctrines proposed by the Dominicans began to be taken up by their main rivals, the Company of Jesus, who went on to propagate them with unparalleled energy in Italy, France and Spain. The most important Italian Jesuit was Cardinal (made Saint and Doctor of the Church in 1930) Roberto Belarmino. His *Controversies (Disputationes de controversiis christianae fidei)* first published between 1581 and 1592 constitutes the most learned and comprehensive of the numerous Jesuit attacks on the political as well as theological fundamentals of the Lutheran faith.

The Jesuits had an oath of complete allegiance to the Pope (the Fourth Vow) and had a particular dedication to the teaching and tutoring of future elites in Spanish universities and in America and Asia. An impressive stream of philosophers and theologians appeared, among them Pedro de Ribadeneyra (1527 – 1611), the contradictor of Machiavelli and author of a book about the Christian Prince.<sup>15</sup>

Probably the greatest Jesuit philosophers were Luis de Molina (1535- 1600) and Francisco Suarez (1548-1617).

The Thomist philosophers confronted two major Lutheran doctrines. One, the doctrine of the *sola scriptura*, is the freedom to interpret the Bible and the rejection of tradition; the other, the doctrine of the *congregatio fidelium*, is the rejection of hierarchy and the denial of the law-making powers of authority. This intellectual freedom to interpret the Bible with rejection of tradition and authority in addition to the opposition of hierarchy are the principal enemies of the Counter

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<sup>15</sup> *Tratado de la religión y virtudes que debe tener el príncipe cristiano para gobernar y conservar sus Estados. Contra lo que Nicolás Machiavelo y los políticos de este tiempo enseñan* (Madrid, 1595)

Reformation and the origins of modern Corporatism. Cardinal Bellarmine wrote, “*The Lutherans have made the Church invisible*”<sup>16</sup>. Putting authority, hierarchy and organization over individualism and pluralism, he was in this blind to the importance of individualism and pluralism in societies. In the future, this doctrine would favor a visible state with visible companies and visible trade unions as the perfect economic system. The “invisible” individuals had to accept these corporations and the system created by them.

Francisco de Vitoria<sup>17</sup> suggested that Lutherans claimed that ‘evangelical liberty constitutes an impediment on kingly power’ making them proto- Republicans. Domingo de Soto insists in this republican effect of Lutheranism.<sup>18</sup>

Saint Roberto Belarmino, S.J. (4 October 1542 – 17 September 1621) was an Italian Jesuit and a cardinal of the Catholic Church. He was one of the most important figures in the Counter Reformation. Belarmino had great recognition in the twentieth century and was canonized by Pope Pius XI in 1930; the following year, he was declared a Doctor of the Church. (Pius was a great defender of the theory of unity in the doctrines of the Church, and his Encyclical letter *Quadragesimo Anno (1931)*, has a profound Corporatist influence.) Cardinal Belarmino was involved in the argument between James I of England and the papacy, the case of Galileo, and the trial of Giordano Bruno.

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<sup>16</sup> On Councils: Their Nature and Authority (De Controversiis) vol. II p. 317.

<sup>17</sup> In one of his classes on Civil power. *De potestate civili, 1528*. Vitoria was in the origin of International law developed in his idea of “republic of the whole world” (*res publica totius orbis*). Also a protector of the American Indians. In *De Jure belli Hispanorum in barbaros, 1532*.

<sup>18</sup> Domingo de Soto (1494 – November 15, 1560) was a Dominican priest and Scholastic theologian who defended the price differential in usury as compatible with “just price” from the perspective of the Thomists.

He held powerful positions including the Confessor of Holy Roman Emperor Charles V and the emperor’s representative at the Council of Trent.

He appeared in the meetings of the Holy Office starting with the session of March 24, 1597. He intervened in the Roman inquisitorial process against Giordano Bruno (1548-1600), which lasted eight years. In January 1599, he proposed the writing of eight propositions that were presented to Bruno to be read. From April 5, 1599, Belarmino appeared in the sessions as a cardinal. Immediately after his appointment as cardinal, Pope Clement VIII made him a cardinal inquisitor. Finally, Giordano Bruno refused to retract his opinions in favor of other worlds apart from Earth that human beings reincarnate and that Satan would finally be saved by God. Roberto Belarmino was one of the seven cardinals of the Holy Office who judged Bruno and who participated in the meeting in which he was condemned a heretic to be burned alive at the stake.

In 1616, on the orders of Paul V, Belarmino summoned Galileo, notified him of a forthcoming decree of the Congregation of the Index condemning the Copernican doctrine of the mobility of the Earth and the immobility of the Sun, and ordered him to abandon it. Galileo agreed to do so. Belarmino wrote to heliocentrist Paolo Antonio Foscarini in 1615:

*The Council [of Trent] prohibits interpreting Scripture against the common consensus of the Holy Fathers; and if Your Paternity wants to read not only the Holy Fathers, but also the modern commentaries on Genesis, the Psalms, Ecclesiastes, and Joshua, you will find all agreeing in the literal interpretation that the sun is in heaven and turns around the earth with great speed, and that the earth is very far from heaven and sits motionless at the center of the world.* <sup>19</sup>

On April 26, 1969, Pope Paul VI created the cardinal title “San Roberto Belarmino”. Cardinal Jorge Mario Bergoglio was the title-holder of that cardinal chair when he was elected pope in 2013.

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<sup>19</sup> Bellarmine’s letter of 12 April 1615 to Foscarini, translated in Finocchiaro, Maurice A. (ed.) (1989). *The Galileo Affair: a Documentary History*. Berkeley: U. California P. pp. 67–8.

## **The Rejection of Luther and Machiavelli.**

The Counter Reformers were very active in the opposition to Machiavelli believing that his ideas converged with the ones by Luther. Since both were concerned, although for very different reasons, in rejecting the existence of a law of nature as the appropriate moral basis of political life, this natural law was defined and unified in its description by the Church. The natural law as described by Aquinas in the *Summa Theologiae*<sup>20</sup> is administered by the structure of the Church and the positive law of the different States could not go against it. In the works of the Jesuit writers of this period, there is a coupling of Luther and Machiavelli as the two founding fathers of the modern state. Ribadeneyra in his *Christian Prince* of 1595 is the first to associate the names of these two reformers.

## **The *Philosophia Perennis*.<sup>21</sup>**

A rigid order, religious, social or political, needs a rigid and unchanged philosophical foundation. This is the case of the *philosophia perennis*. *Philosophia* is Latin for Philosophy and *perennis* is Latin for “through the ages.” *Philosophia perennis* (Lat., ‘perennial philosophy’) was originally introduced as a term (by Agostino Steuco) in 1540 to describe what the school of Padua and Scholasticism had in common. The term since then

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<sup>20</sup> It forms questions 90–108 of the *Prima Secundæ* (“First Part of the Second Part”) of the *Summa Theologiae*.

<sup>21</sup> A group of universal philosophical problems, principles, and ideas (as concepts of God, freedom, and immortality) that perennially constitutes the primary subject matter of philosophical thought : the foundations of Roman Catholic Christian principles especially as philosophically formulated by St. Thomas Aquinas and Neothomists. Merriam – Webster. New Collegiate Dictionary.

has had various technical applications, e.g. to what Greek and medieval philosophy have in common, or to Thomism as a whole.<sup>22</sup>

Agostino Steuco (in Latin Agostinus Steuchus or Eugubinus) (1497– 1548), was an Italian humanist, Old Testament scholar, Counter Reformation polemicist and antiquarian, and Vatican Librarian until his death in 1548. His major work entitled *De perenni philosophia*, dedicated to Paul III, attempted to show that many of the ideas expounded by the sages, poets, and philosophers from classical antiquity were in essential harmony with the central tenets of the Catholic faith. This work has a slight polemical edge to it, as Steuco crafted a number of his arguments to lend support to several theological positions that had recently come under question in Italy by reformers and critics of the traditional Catholic faith. In 1547, Steuco was sent by Paul III to attend the Council of Trent, where he could be counted upon to uphold papal prerogatives and authority.

In the traditional vision after the Council of Trent, the perennial philosophy, *...is the natural wisdom of the ages that came down to us from the pagan Greeks and was refined by the supernatural wisdom of Revelation.*

*The values in education that Catholics held for centuries — those which were attacked by the Protestant Revolt, the “Enlightenment,” the French Revolution, the Marxist uprising, and the skepticism of the present age — are sorely needed if the Faith and those who profess it are to claim their rightful place in education. These values are needed to improve man as man in the natural order, as well as to understand man as a child of God in the supernatural order.*<sup>23</sup>

The Counter Reformation also influenced the arts as part of centralizing the social order.

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<sup>22</sup> Concise Oxford Dictionary of World Religions 1997, originally published by Oxford University Press 1997.

<sup>23</sup> BR. FRANCIS MALUF, M.I.C.M. Catholicism.org.

## **‘Baroque Catholicism:’ The Culture of the Counter Reformation.**

The Counter Reformation controlled all aspects of human life including the arts and sciences. And indeed, it had some of the flamboyance of its favorite architectural style, the Baroque.

At the same time in Counter Reformation social order, only the military and sacred orders were the appropriate activities for the upper and educated classes. The “*hidalgo*”<sup>24</sup> could not work, that was for lesser echelons of society or to inferior races. Particularly, they could not enter in financial matters, since usury was a sin. Only arms or religious orders were the correct activities. Cervantes wrote in *Don Quixote The Discourse on Arms and Letters that Don Quixote gave*.<sup>25</sup> In this discourse the profession of the *hidalgo* was mainly arms and secondarily letters, with no possibility for trade, or other activities.

## **The Control of Ideas: The *Index Librorum Prohibitorum***

Although the Index existed in a first version (the Pauline Index) and was promulgated by Pope Paul IV in 1559, limiting the freedom of enquiry in the Catholic world, it was replaced by what was called the Tridentine Index (authorized at the Council of Trent)<sup>26</sup> This remained the basis of all later lists. The Index was finally and formally abolished on June 14, 1966 by Pope Paul VI. *Motu Proprio Integrae servandae*

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<sup>24</sup> The nobleman in old Spanish.

<sup>25</sup> Don Quijote de la Mancha, I. CAPÍTULO XXXVIII *Que trata del curioso discurso que hizo don Quijote de las armas y las letras*.

<sup>26</sup> Grendler, Paul F. “Printing and censorship” in *The Cambridge History of Renaissance Philosophy*, Charles B. Schmitt, ed. (Cambridge University Press, 1988, ISBN 978-0- 52139748-3) pp. 45–46.

To administer the Index, a special congregation was created in 1571, the Sacred Congregation of the Index, which had the specific task to investigate those writings that were denounced in Rome as being not exempt of errors, to update the list of Pope Pius IV regularly and also to make lists of required corrections in case a writing was not to be condemned absolutely but only in need of correction; it was then listed with a mitigating clause (e.g., *donec corrigatur* (forbidden until corrected) or *donec expurgetur* (forbidden until purged)).

Some of the scientific theories in works that were on early editions of the Index have long been routinely taught at Catholic universities worldwide; for example, the general prohibition of books advocating heliocentrism was only removed from the Index in 1758. Some atheists, such as Schopenhauer and Nietzsche, were not included due to the Council of Trent rule that heretical works are *ipso facto* forbidden.

Spain had its own Index Librorum Prohibitorum which corresponded largely to the Church's <sup>27</sup> but also included a list of books that were allowed once the forbidden part (sometimes a single sentence) was removed or "expurgated."<sup>28</sup>

The list of scientific and philosophical books put in the Index includes the main works in the seventeenth century onwards, and indicates the nefarious influence of the Counter Reformation in preventing discoveries and innovation. In its brutality, it indicates the extent that these preliminary corporatist doctrines had in securing the economic stagnation of vast regions of the world.

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<sup>27</sup> C. B. Schmitt, Quentin Skinner, Eckhard Kessler, Renaissance Philosophy'' (Cambridge University Press 1988 p. 48

<sup>28</sup> Bernardo de Sandoval Cardenal Arzobispo de Toledo. Index Librorum et Expurgatorum. Madrid 1612

A very short list of famous books in the Index is surprising event today, Kepler's New Astronomy, his Epitome of Copernican Astronomy, and his World Harmony were quickly placed on the Index after their publication. Other noteworthy intellectual figures on the Index include Nicolas Malebranche, Machiavelli, Montaigne, Voltaire, Denis Diderot, Victor Hugo, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Emanuel Swedenborg, Baruch Spinoza, Immanuel Kant, David Hume, René Descartes, Francis Bacon, Thomas Browne, John Milton, John Locke, Nicolaus Copernicus, Galileo Galilei, Blaise Pascal, and Hugo Grotius.

### **Corporatist Ideas into the Nineteenth Century: Jaime Balmes.**

A vivid description of the Counter Reformation doctrine and its evolution into corporatism is made probably unwillingly by Jaime Balmes. This Spanish philosopher wrote, in 1842-1845, the book "*El Protestantismo comparado con el Catolicismo en sus relaciones con la Civilización Europea*,"<sup>29</sup> a defense of Catholicism on the grounds that it represents the spirit of obedience or order, as opposed to Protestantism, the spirit of revolt or anarchy.

This tract constituted, in the nineteenth century, an argument in favor of the central role of Catholicism in the development of modern society. However, when read with modern eyes, it is a serious defense of corporatism and hierarchy against individualism. All the political myths of modern corporatism are described in the conflict between Counter Reformation Catholicism and the Protestant Reformation. Curiously enough, Max Weber does not mention this in his classic on The

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<sup>29</sup> Protestantism and Catholicity compared in their Effects on the Civilization of Europe, 3 vols., 1842–1844, 6th edition, 1879; English translation in 1849 and also in 1856 by Charles Ignatius White.

Protestant Ethic, which is a strong comparison of the two religions and their influence in society and economics.

### **The Need for Stability.**

On the instability of Protestant philosophy against the more rigid Catholic vision, variation and change is the characteristic of dynamism in society.

*“Protestantism must tremble: The History of the Variations! A history of variations must be a history of error.”*

*‘If there be any thing constant in Protestantism, it is undoubtedly the substitution of private judgment for public and lawful authority.’ Protestantism, when viewed in a mass, appears only a shapeless collection of innumerable sects, all opposed to each other, and agreeing only in one point, viz. in protesting against the authority of the Church. (p.27)*

### **Europe in the Middle Ages.**

*Europe was then composed of a number of immense states, cast, so to speak, in the same mold, resembling each other in ideas, manners, laws and institutions, drawn together incessantly by an active communication which was kept up alternately by rival and common interests; knowledge found in the Latin language [was?] an easy means of diffusion p. 30*

*For more than eighteen hundred years, the Church has been stationary in her dogmas, and it is no equivocal proof that she possesses the truth: the truth is unchangeable, because it is one.*

### **The Danger of Change.**

*There is no middle path; either civilized nations must remain Catholic, or run through all the forms of error. A man of free and active mind will remain tranquil in the peaceful regions of truth, or he will seek for it with restlessness and disquietude.*

### **The Search for Unity.**

*Another prodigy, too little attended to, and of no less importance when the nature of the human mind is taken into account, is, **the unity of the Church's doctrines, pervading, as it does, all her various instructions, and the number of great minds which this unity has always enclosed within her bosom.** P. 38. (Highlighted in the original)*

### **Obedience to a Charismatic Leadership.**

*To explain to us how the Church has been able to show us a phenomenon, constantly existing, so opposed to the ever-varying spirit of the human mind; let them tell us by what secret talisman the Sovereign Pontiffs have been able to do what other men have found impossible. Those men, who bowed their heads at the command of the Vatican, who have laid aside their own opinions to adopt those of a man called the Pope, were not simple and ignorant men. An extraordinary combination of knowledge in union with faith, of genius in submission to authority, and of discussion without breach of unity... This phenomenon, which we have seen realized in the Catholic Church, and which is not found elsewhere, only proves that there has always been in the Church a fixed system, which has been developed with uniform regularity. The Church knew that union is the source of strength; that union cannot exist without unity of doctrine; and that unity cannot be preserved without submission to authority. This simple observation established, and constantly maintained, the principle of submission. (p. 39)*

*All the philosophic sects have disappeared, one after another. The Church alone remains. When we consider the fickleness and inconstancy of the*

*human mind, do not this system, this consistency, and these fixed principles, speak volumes to the philosopher and man of good sense?*

### **Authority in Religion and Society.**

*If you deprive the human mind of the support of authority of some kind or other on what can it depend? Abandoned to its own delirious dreams, it is forced again into the gloomy paths which led the philosophers of the ancient schools to chaos. Reason and experience are here agreed. If you substitute the private judgment of Protestants for the authority of the Church, all the great questions respecting God and man remain without solution. All the difficulties are left; the mind is in darkness, and seeks in vain for a light to guide it in safety: stunned by the voices of a hundred schools, who dispute without being able to throw any light on the subject, it relapses into that state of discouragement and prostration in which Christianity found it, and from which, with so much exertion, she had withdrawn it. Doubt, Pyrrhonism, and indifference become the lot of the greatest minds; vain theories, hypothetical systems, and dreams take possession of men of more moderate abilities; the ignorant are reduced to superstitions and absurdities. (p. 44)*

### **The Limits of Human Science.**

*Why should we deceive ourselves? By fancying that we know what we are really ignorant of? Why forget the inconstancy and variableness of our minds, and conceal the fact, that with respect to many things, even of those with which we are supposed to be acquainted, we have but confused ideas? How delusive is our knowledge, and what exaggerated notions we have of our progress in information? Does not one day contradict what another had affirmed?*

*What have those geniuses who have descended to the foundations of science, and risen by the boldest flights to the loftiest speculations, told*

*us? After having reached the utmost limits of the space which it is permitted to the human mind to range over, after having trodden the most secret paths of science, and sailed on the vast ocean of moral and physical nature, the greatest minds of all ages have returned dissatisfied with the results. They have seen a beautiful illusion appear before their eyes, the brilliant image which enchanted them has vanished; when they thought they were about to enter a region of light, they have found themselves surrounded with darkness, and they have viewed with affright the extent of their ignorance.*

### **The Weakness of Intellect.**

*It is for this reason that the greatest minds have so little confidence in the strength of the human intellect, although they cannot but be fully aware that they are superior to other men.*

*Catholicism says to man "Thy intellect is weak, thou hast need of a guide in many things." Protestantism says to him, "Thou art surrounded by light, walk as thou wilt; thou canst not have a better guide than thyself." (p. 49)*

In these short phrases, several of the foundations of corporatism appear; they evolved later in the nineteenth century and in the refurbished movements in the twentieth.

## **The Corporatist Myths. The Myth of Unity**

### **Individual Autonomy and Free Will.**

The Counter Reformation's insistence on the idea of unity as the basis for the organization of society transcended into modern corporatism. The rejection of individual autonomy, free will and pluralism, already

anathema for Counter Reformers, is consolidated in modern corporatism within the ideas of the organized community, the common good against individual greed and others.

Corporatism denies the idea of the autonomy of free will that is central to constitutional thought and to private law, particularly in the law of contracts. Modern corporatism is centered in the idea that the state represents the common good against the private good of individuals ruled by greed.<sup>30</sup>

## Hierarchy.

The Council of Trent describes the Church as a hierarchical and law-making authority under the control of the Pope. In this way, the papacy received an absolute ascendancy in the Church as a result of the Council. The visible Church is unquestionably an independent legislative authority, operating its own code of canon law in parallel and never in subjection to the civil law of states. At the same time, the Church recognizes and administers natural law of a higher hierarchy than the positive, actual law of the different states. In this way natural is of a higher level and it regulates behavior in every aspect of life, even against the rules of positive law. These includes matters of the economic organization of society, the relation of enterprises and trade unions, the

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<sup>30</sup> This idea of the common good and that individuals must conform to it has a long tradition, for example St. Thomas Aquinas indicates in the Summa Theologica:

*Every part is ordered to the whole, as something imperfect ordered to something perfect. And so it is naturally for the sake of the whole. For this reason we see that if it is good for the health of the human body as a whole to amputate some member, for example, if it is gangrenous and will spread disease to other members, it is praiseworthy and healthy for it to be removed. Any particular person is compared to the entire community as a part to the whole. And so if a man poses a danger to the community and is corrupting it because of some wrong-doing, it is praiseworthy and healthy that he should be slain to preserve the common good: a little leaven spoils the whole mass, as we read in Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians, 5, 6. Summa Theologica II-II, 64, 2.*

creation of new companies, and economic competition. Society is transformed into an organized community.

Although hierarchical, corporatism is not a pure justification of dictatorship; it shows a political and economic theory as its backing, and in a way, it is the main challenge to a capitalist society as it is to the rule of law.

Hierarchy prevents innovation. New ideas and products are not easily accepted unless it is inside the regulation of the state. Although scientific research is promoted, especially by public and not private funding, the translation of the results of the research into new products by new enterprises is not admitted. Acknowledged companies can innovate but only according to the conditions established in the collective bargaining between the state; businesses, through their natural representatives— that is organizations or corporations; and the workers through their trade unions. In Italy, *Gerarchia* (Hierarchy) was a monthly fascist journal published between 1922 and 1943.<sup>31</sup>

Finding or re-establishing the national values is also an argument used by corporatism; in other words, find the idea of law in the Real Nation and not in the ‘caricature’ of the assemblies. The need of an elite which knows the public interest and the national spirit, associated with the idea of the ‘national bourgeoisie’ with no intermediate organism or legal fiction could interpose itself between the leader and the people of the Nation. Corporatist ideology changes the elementary concepts of an open democratic society, the citizen is changed into a ‘worker’ or ‘producer’, and the word of reference to people of similar ideas is ‘companion’.

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<sup>31</sup> *Gerarchia* was founded in January 1922 by Benito Mussolini. The magazine was the unofficial organ of the regime at that time and was instrumental in making Italy a totalitarian state. It published monthly reviews. Mussolini was listed on the magazine’s masthead as its editor-in-chief.

In the attack against individualism and pluralism, corporatism is the distant heir of a long tradition of political thought initiated in the attack to the American and French revolutions, indicating the impossibility of rationalizing political power. Those enemies of the revolutions that considered the impossibility of submitting governments to an abstract logic, since the equilibrium of societies and its prosperity could only be found in the respect of traditions and in the safeguards of their historical originality, were called *Reactionaries*. These were the ideas behind the elegant pages of Joseph de Maistre<sup>32</sup> and in the dogmatic ones of the Viscount de Bonald<sup>33</sup>, Juan Donoso Cortes<sup>34</sup>; they would influence nationalist thought through the twentieth century both in Europe through Gaetano Mosca<sup>35</sup> and Charles Maurras<sup>36</sup>

## The Charismatic Forms of Power

### **The Counter Reformation and the Rejection of pluralism.**

The opposition between charismatic leadership and pluralism is also a feature of the Counter Reformation. It stood in the rejection of Conciliarism against the charismatic guidance of the Pope as Vicar of Christ. The Conciliar movement centered on the three general (or ecumenical) councils of Pisa (1409), Constance (1414–18), and Basle

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<sup>32</sup> See The Works of Joseph de Maistre. New York 1965. Particularly the Study on Sovereignty p. 93 and The Saint Petersburg Diaries. P. 183. E.M. Cioran. Joseph de Maistre. An Essay on reactionary thought. In Anathemas and Admirations. Quartet Books 1992, p. 22.

<sup>33</sup> Louis Gabriel Ambroise, Vicomte de Bonald. Theorie du pouvoir politique et religieux 3 vols., 1796.

<sup>34</sup> Juan Donoso Cortés, marqués de Valdegamas. Lecciones de derecho politico (1837). In his Political Theology (1922), Carl Schmitt devotes large portions of his final chapter (“On the Counterrevolutionary Philosophy of the State”) to Donoso Cortés, praising him for recognizing the importance of the decision and of the concept of sovereignty. He also influenced Georges Sorel.

<sup>35</sup> In his book Elementi di scienza politica published in 1896, translated as *The Ruling Class*, he is credited as the developer of the theory of elites. He influenced American authors as Seymour Martin Lipset and C. Wright Mills.

<sup>36</sup> See Charles Maurras. Romantisme et Revolution. Realités. In Oeuvres Capitales. Essais Politiques. Flammarion. Paris 1973.

(1431–49). It declared the superiority of a general council of the Church over the papacy, formulated in the decree *Haec Sancta of 1415*, and tried to make general councils a regular feature of the Western Church.

The debate between the Conciliar movement and the hierarchy of the Church in the Council of Trent is the origin of the distinction between pluralism and corporatism. Cardinal Belarmino indicated in his treatise *Concerning Councils* that the Church was ‘*a living and visible body with living members*’; it is no less in need of being guided and directed by a ‘*single head and shepherd of the entire Church*’<sup>37</sup>

This hierarchical view was also directed to a strict doctrine. Biblical studies were forbidden. In Trent, the prelates denounced the humanist attack on the authority of the Vulgate and the corresponding demand for a new and reliable translation of the Bible. The tradition was stronger than certitude. The Vulgate<sup>38</sup> was held as authoritative and “no one should dare or presume under any pretext whatsoever to reject it.”<sup>39</sup>

The ideology was to be a return to Scholasticism and the denial of humanism; only theological controversy could be accepted following the Thomist philosophy—no scientific investigation, only the interpretation of Aristotle, and definitely no innovation.

With reference to natural law, de Soto indicated it was ‘*imprinted in our minds*’ by the hand of God himself, that creates an ‘*innate sense of justice*’. Since it came directly from the hand of God, no significant

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<sup>37</sup> Vol II p. 317.

<sup>38</sup> The work of St Jerome, who in 382 had been commissioned by Pope Damasus I to revise the Vetus Latina (“Old Latin”) Gospels then in use by the Roman Church. Jerome, on his own initiative, extended this work of revision and translation to include most of the Books of the Bible, and once published, the new version was widely adopted and eventually eclipsed the Vetus Latina; so that by the 13th century, it took over from the former version the appellation of “versio vulgata” (the “version commonly used”) or in Latin as “Vulgata.”

<sup>39</sup> Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent, The Fourth Session, 1546

change could be possible, and no innovation, nor the acceptance of new rules and new legal and political systems.

These ideas reemerge in the modern corporatist view of the populist and charismatic leadership, as opposed to a democratic government.

### **The State, the Common Good and Political Power.**

In the corporatist vision, the State represents the common good so individual interests are always submitted to the interest of the state, even in legal process where the state has privileges over ordinary citizens. Law is despised, the principles of the spontaneity of the new law combined with the principle of the total autonomy of the will of the leader weakens constitutional structures, specially ideas like separation of powers and checks and balances. The great jurist of corporatism to this day is Carl Schmitt, an admirer of the Spanish theologians of the sixteenth century, mainly by his defense of the concentration of presidential power vis-à-vis Parliamentary or congressional limitations.<sup>40</sup> The President is the hierarchic head of the State, and represents its unity. Parliamentary debate on the contrary brings political competition and raises and breaks the national unity.

### **The Jumble of Corporatism. Old Ideas in Modern Formulas.**

This connection between extremely different governmental institutions, from traditional authoritarian regimes to modern populist versions is not an accidental coincidence; they all include an open attack on pluralism

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<sup>40</sup> For a contemporary application of Schmitt's ideas on presidential power and the Constitution see *The Executive Unbound: After the Madisonian Republic*. Eric A. Posner, Adrian Vermeule. Oxford University Press. 2011. P. 4 and 113 onwards.

and competition in the creation and search for prosperity. They despise the innovation and creativity of the dynamic segments of society as an attack to the natural equilibrium. Innovation is not easily accepted unless it is inside the regulation of the state. Although scientific research is promoted, especially by public and not private funding, the translation of the results of the research into new products by new enterprises is not admitted. Acknowledged companies can innovate but only according to the conditions established in the collective bargaining between the state; businesses through their natural representatives— that is organizations or corporations; and the workers through their trade unions. This long and sad story could be called “A Study in Failure,” since that is the consequence of the political and economic stagnation caused by corporatism. The feeling of despair that the stagnation that corporatism imposes on its sufferers brings to the mind the poem by Konstatin Kavafis.

#### WALLS

*Without consideration, without pity, without shame, they built around me great and towering walls.*

*And now I am sitting and despairing here.*

*I think of nothing else: this fate is gnawing at my mind; for I had many things to do out there.*

*When they were building the walls, how could I not be aware?*

*Yet never did I hear clatter of builders, or any sound. Imperceptibly, they shut me off from the world outside.*