

THE SOCIALIST DECISION

PAUL TILLICH

The Socialist Decision

Translated by Franklin Sherman

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Introduction by John R. Stumme

The original edition of this book, Paul Tillich's most extensive work on social and political questions, was published in Germany early in the fateful year 1933, just as Adolf Hitler was coming to power. As Tillich explains in the opening paragraphs, it is both a call to the German public to consider the socialist alternative in the political and economic crises that were besetting it, and a call to socialists themselves to reconsider the deepest roots of their beliefs.

The Socialist Decision represents the culmination of nearly fifteen years' intense preoccupation by the early Tillich with the question of "religious socialism." Those who know Tillich only from his later writings in America are largely unaware of this dimension of his thought, since he turned later chiefly to psychological, ontological, and theological themes. A major portion of his earlier career, however, was devoted to the development of social theory. In his 1936 autobiographical sketch "On the Boundary," Tillich refers to his living "on the boundary between Lutheranism and socialism."¹ The tension that these alternatives imply between the religious and the political, between pessimism

1. *On the Boundary: An Autobiographical Sketch* (New York: Scribner's, 1966), pp. 74-81. This is a revised translation of the essay that appeared as part one of Tillich's *The Interpretation of History* (New York: Scribner's, 1936).

and utopianism, conservatism and radicalism, is amply illustrated in the present volume.

The historical roots of the problem lay in the chasm that had developed in the nineteenth century between the emerging industrial proletariat and the Protestant churches. The year 1848, a year of revolution, marked the decisive break. In that year Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels gave the proletariat its revolutionary charter in the *Communist Manifesto*, and at Wittenberg, over the grave of Martin Luther, J. H. Wichern replied with a counter-revolutionary "Protestant Manifesto." Wichern succeeded in making "Inner Mission" the major ecclesiastical answer to the new problems of industrialization, but his program of charitable works was a very weak response to the smoldering discontent of the proletariat. "After 1848," writes William O. Shanahan, "German Protestantism gradually lost its power to reach and stir the masses: their world and their life became increasingly alien."² The church became the ally of Prussian conservatism, supporting monarchical and authoritarian institutions and opposing democratic and social policies.

Meanwhile the urban proletariat found in an anticlerical, Marxist-shaped socialism its source of hope and power. Ferdinand Lassalle began the German labor movement in 1863 and in spite of Bismarck's Anti-Socialist Law of 1878, the Social Democratic party grew rapidly. Engels and Karl Kautsky, building on the work of Marx, provided the movement with its orthodox ideology, an ideology that either rejected religion entirely or, at best, restricted it to the private sphere. (This orthodoxy still prevailed in 1932 among what Tillich calls in this book "the older generation of socialists.") Both sides considered it a truism that "Christianity and socialism are opposed like fire and water" (August Bebel).

The son of a Lutheran parsonage in a small, walled, feudallike town in east-Elbian Prussia, the young Paul Tillich absorbed the religious and political views of his environment. Born in 1886,

2. *German Protestants Face the Social Question*, vol. 1, *The Conservative Phase: 1815-1871* (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1954), p. 193.

three years after the death of Marx and at a time when the socialist party was proscribed, he learned that socialism was "revolutionary, which meant criminal."³ His move to Berlin in 1900 and his later theological and philosophical education in Berlin, Tübingen, and Halle broadened his horizons, but did not fundamentally alter his social and political attitudes. He remained indifferent to politics, which in fact meant the acceptance of his church's conservative, nationalistic, and quietistic teachings. Shortly after the beginning of war in August 1914, Tillich, loyal to throne and altar, volunteered to serve as a chaplain in the German Imperial Army.

Tillich was initially an enthusiastic supporter of the war. His first reports to his superiors from his position on the Western front were those of a willing officer, confidently and conscientiously performing his duty. Before long, however, the serious problematic of the war became evident. The war that was to have been won in a matter of months kept dragging on and on. The experience of having to bury his officer friends and to officiate at mass burials of the troops, the horrors of combat, and the constant presence of death created a crisis in his own life. In a report in 1915 he spoke of "being broken within," and in a private letter in 1916 he wrote of "living through the actual world destruction of this time."⁴ Later he referred to his war experience as marking a "personal *kairos*" in his own life.⁵

Tillich's early world was gone forever; there was no going home. Through the war he came in direct contact with the proletariat for the first time and discovered something of its plight and bitterness. His eyes were opened to the sharp split between the classes, to the sociological limits of the church, and to the demonic power of militarism, nationalism, and capitalism.

3. "Autobiographical Reflections," in Charles W. Kegley and Robert W. Bretall, eds., *The Theology of Paul Tillich* (New York: Macmillan, 1952), p. 7.

4. "Bericht über die Monate November und Dezember 1915," *Gesammelte Werke*, vol. 13 (Stuttgart: Evangelisches Verlagswerk, 1972), p. 78. Letter to Maria Rhine, 27 November, 1916, p. 70.

5. D. Mackenzie Brown, ed., *Ultimate Concern: Tillich in Dialogue*, (New York: Harper & Row, 1965), p. 153.

After four traumatic years on the front lines, Tillich returned to a defeated Germany convinced that the old order was irretrievably destroyed.

He was not in Berlin long before a violent uprising swept through the capital city. The sudden, brief November Revolution of 1918 dethroned the kaiser and initiated a democratic republic in which the Social Democrats, who until now had always been in opposition, were the predominant power. For the first time Tillich became alive to the political situation, responding positively to the turn of events. The reaction of the church was predictable. The loss of the emperor, the supreme bishop of the church; the separation of church and state; and the political gains of their enemies shocked the church authorities. They resented their losses, longed for the past and obstructed the way of the few socialists in their midst.

Tillich, however, could no longer accept his church's political views. He recognized the need for a new religious social philosophy, one that took seriously the realities of the proletarian situation. And seeing in socialism the best resources for dealing with these realities and in constructing a new social order, Tillich made his own "socialist decision." The unlikely candidate, Paul Tillich, doctor of philosophy, Prussian Evangelical pastor, chaplain in the kaiser's army, became a socialist. In a pamphlet written at this time, Tillich urged "representatives of Christianity and the church who stand on socialist soil to enter into the socialist movement in order to pave the way for a future union of Christianity and the socialist social order." Tillich himself set out to follow what he then called "this difficult, unknown, important way."⁶

The crisis of war and revolution soon came to represent for Tillich a decisive turning point in the history of Germany and Europe. Perceiving the present moment in epochal terms, he envisioned a qualitatively new beginning arising from the rubble of defeat and chaos. "Will not a third period of Christianity beyond

6. "Der Sozialismus als Kirchenfrage," *GW*, 2 (1962), p. 19. This is a pamphlet coauthored by Tillich and Carl Richard Wegener, and first published in 1919.

Catholicism and Protestantism arise? Is not this the meaning of the 'turning of the world' [*Weltenwende*] which the world war and the revolution have brought us?" he asked rhetorically.⁷ And in his first essay on socialism (the pamphlet already referred to), he wrote:

We stand in a period of dissolution. A new age of unity is arising. Socialism will form its economic and social foundation. And Christianity stands before the task to convey to this development its moral and religious powers and thereby to initiate a great new synthesis of religion and social structure.⁸

Grasped by the consciousness of a *kairos*, a moment rich in significance, Tillich intuited the beginning of a new age where the static opposition of socialism and religion would give way to a new synthesis characterized by economic justice and an awareness of the presence of the divine in everything human.

Tillich's concern with religion and socialism thus was far more than a question of how the workers could be won back to participation in ecclesiastical institutions. Neither did he see the primary issue as that of personal allegiance, that is, whether or not it was possible to be both a Christian and a socialist. Nor was Tillich's religious socialism a veiled attempt to win the workers away from the socialist parties and philosophy for a conservative, religiously sponsored political program, or an effort to cover over the class divisions of society with the soft words of religion. Tillich's religious socialism was none of these, though others used the same label to pursue these ends. Rather his luring, encompassing vision of a new society drove him to probe the elemental roots of both socialism and Christianity and from there to criticize and to transform them both.

Soon after the November Revolution Tillich sought out other Christians who supported the revolution and endorsed socialism. The number of such people in socialist Berlin and, indeed, in all of Germany, was not large. Prior to the war no religious socialist

7. "Revolution und Kirche," *GW*, 12 (1971), p. 199. A review of an anthology of the same name, first published in *Das Neue Deutschland*, 1919.

8. "Der Sozialismus als Kirchenfrage," p. 16.

movement had existed in Germany. Christoph Blumhardt's affirmation of socialism in Württemberg at the turn of the century had had little direct impact on the German churches, although it had influenced Hermann Kutter and Leonhard Ragaz to begin a religious socialist movement in Switzerland. In Germany itself, religious socialism was a postwar phenomenon. Called forth by the revolution, it began and continued as a marginal, radical movement on the edge of the church's life.

Tillich found his initial conversational partners in a small group that had been instigated by Siegmund-Schultze's *Soziale Arbeitsgemeinschaft*, a settlement house-type organization in east Berlin. This modest, unassuming gathering, composed principally of clergy, met weekly during 1919. Here Tillich forged his friendship and working alliance with another pastor, Carl Menicke, and gradually the two formed their own circle of religious socialists.

Tillich began his teaching career in the spring term of 1919 at the University of Berlin with a lecture course significantly entitled "Christianity and the Present Social Problem." From this time onwards, he pursued his political activities from the locus of a university, first at Berlin, then at Marburg, Dresden, Leipzig, and finally Frankfurt. Tillich was not very successful in personally overcoming the distance between professor and proletariat or that between intellectual and party. He did, however, consider his affirmation of socialism as a support, directly or indirectly, of the socialist parties. And he did come to know personally most of the Social Democratic leaders, although his attitude toward their leadership was hardly enthusiastic.

One of his early contacts with a socialist party was a lecture he gave in 1919 to a group of Independent Social Democrats in Berlin-Zehlendorf, an event that prompted the Brandenburg church consistory to call on him to account for his political activities.⁹ Here as elsewhere Tillich spoke from within the orbit of

9. See "Answer to an Inquiry of the Protestant Consistory at Brandenburg," trans. Mrs. Douglas Stange, *Metanoia* (Cambridge, Massachusetts), vol. 3, no. 3 (September 1971).

"Social Democracy." He was not a supporter of Bolshevism, which, due to the success of the October Revolution of 1917 in Russia, became an important political option in Germany, especially in the early and in the last years of Weimar. Tillich was opposed to the Russian-influenced Communists; he was also critical of the Social Democrats, as is evident in *The Socialist Decision*. He considered the Social Democratic party (SPD) rigid in theory, excessively calculating in method, and unimaginative and halfhearted in politics. From the beginning, Tillich stood on the critical left wing of democratic socialism, searching for a third way beyond Marxism-Leninism and mere reformism.

The most important influence on Tillich's developing religious socialism came from the small circle of intellectuals who gathered around him and Mennicke in Berlin during the hectic first five years of the Weimar Republic. In this informal circle, which met every other week in a participant's home for intense discussion, Tillich learned the ins and outs of socialist theory and practice, debated the challenge of Karl Barth's dialectical theology, and deepened and clarified his own "theology of politics." Repulsed by the vulgar Marxism of current socialism, the members of the "Kairos Circle" shared the conviction that a rethinking of socialist fundamentals was required. This emphasis on theory, as well as the lay, secular, and nonecclesiastical character of the circle, marked it off from other groups of religious socialists. Tillich said that he "considered himself thoroughly an evangelical-Lutheran Christian" who knew how all his ideas were conditioned by that standpoint, yet he insisted that the group be open to others besides Christians.¹⁰ Many of the dozen members of the diverse circle had no attachment to the church but were drawn to the circle out of concern for the ethical and spiritual basis of socialism.

According to Eduard Heimann, Tillich was the "head" of the circle and Mennicke, who edited its little periodical, *Blätter für*

10. *Blätter für religiösen Sozialismus*, vol. 1, no. 1 (Easter 1920), p. 2 (Tillich's remarks as reported by Karl Mennicke).

religiösen Sozialismus (1920–1927), was its “heart.”¹¹ Adolf Lowe, then a civil servant, and Heimann, son of a leading Social Democratic politician and already a recognized socialist economist, provided the “substructure” for Tillich’s religious socialism. The sociologist Alexander Rüstow, a free thinker and atheist, was Tillich’s rival. “His discussions with Tillich were doubtless the highpoint of our meetings,” Heimann has remarked.¹² Another regular was Arnold Wolfers, a Swiss lawyer who was director of the new *Deutsche Hochschule für Politik* (German Academy of Politics). (The present volume began as a lecture at the *Hochschule* in October 1931). In the give and take of this company Tillich’s religious socialism matured.

The biweekly conversations of the Kairos Circle ended in 1924 when Tillich and others left Berlin for new academic positions. Tillich, however, maintained his working alliance with Mennicke, Lowe, and Heimann and continued to identify his religious socialism by reference to them. By the middle of the decade a semblance of stability was present in the republic and Tillich articulated a new sense of realism, a “believing realism,” in contrast to what he now saw as his earlier unrealistic enthusiasm. More and more cut off from the church, Tillich moved deeper into the socialist milieu, pursuing further his searching reevaluation of socialist theory from the theological point of view. Through articles, books, and lectures his ideas gained a wider hearing. He discovered some new allies among young socialists, particularly the “Hofgeismar Circle,” a group of proletarian youth who challenged the orthodoxy of the SPD, especially on the questions of state and nation. It is they to whom Tillich refers in the present treatise as “the younger generation of socialists.”

On Pentecost weekend in 1928, Tillich along with Heimann, Lowe, and Mennicke joined nearly eighty other religious social-

11. “Brief von Prof. Dr. Eduard Heimann an den Verfasser über die einzelnen Mitglieder des Kairos-Kreises,” Appendix 1 in Eberhard Amelung, *Die Gestalt der Liebe* (Gütersloh: Gerd Mohn, 1972), p. 215.

12. Ibid., p. 216. Cf. also, for a general discussion by Heimann of Tillich’s thought in this period, his essay “Tillich’s Doctrine of Religious Socialism” in Kegley and Bretall, eds., *The Theology of Paul Tillich*, pp. 312–325.

ists, young socialists and others for a three-day conference at Heppenheim-on-the-Bergstrasse (near Heidelberg) to discuss "the weakening of confidence in the life-forming power of socialist ideas in our time."¹³ United in their distress over the stagnant condition of the SPD, the participants were, however, split over the meaning of a renewed socialism. Hendrik de Man, whose writings had made him the center of controversy in German socialism, called for a non-Marxist "ethical socialism." In response, Heimann rejected an approach based only on moral appeal and argued for a dialectical socialism. This of course was also the position of Tillich. In the ensuing discussion he supported Heimann. "We stand before the decision: Do we see the coming of the *Gestalt* that is developing in the proletariat or don't we? The socialist is one who thinks that the existing tension expressed in the proletarian situation proclaims the new, developing *Gestalt*. This is dialectical thinking."¹⁴

For Tillich, dialectic and its proper understanding was the crucial element in socialist theory. Tillich believed that de Man's popular, nondialectical thinking as well as the party's mechanical interpretation of the dialectic were both inadequate. His discussion of "expectation" in *The Socialist Decision* is his most elaborate attempt to lay out the true meaning of historical dialectics, the theoretical foundation of socialism.

The spirit of Heppenheim achieved expression in the *Neue Blätter für den Sozialismus*, an independent socialist periodical that bore the subtitle "Journal for Spiritual and Political Formation." Tillich was the key person in initiating this publication and, as an editor, in shaping its direction. He persuaded the reluctant August Rathmann, a young socialist from the Hofgeismar Circle, to be managing editor. Convinced that he could not influence the socialist movement from outside the political party, Tillich joined the SPD in spite of his strong disagreement with its reformist

13. *Sozialismus aus dem Glauben* (Zürich: Rotaphel-Verlag, 1929), p. 243. This book records the discussion of the Heppenheim meeting. Others who participated included Martin Buber, Leonhard Ragaz, Hugo Sinzheimer, August Rathmann, Mennicke and Lowe.

14. *Ibid.*, p. 103.

policies. He also proposed that in order to avoid misunderstanding (from both the "religious" and "socialist" sides), the designation "religious" be omitted from the title. In January 1930, the first issue of the *Neue Blätter* appeared with Tillich contributing the lead article, "Socialism."¹⁵ The magazine was published monthly, reaching a circulation of 3,000, until June 1933 when, after repeated confiscations, the Nazis forbade its publication.

Besides regular meetings with his coworkers around the *Neue Blätter*, Tillich also took part in a more politically reserved, theoretically oriented discussion group in Frankfurt in the early 1930s. When in the Foreword to the present work he acknowledges this Frankfurt circle, he is referring to the conversation he carried on with his friends at the University, including members of the Institute of Social Research. Shortly after he had become professor of philosophy in 1929, Tillich had been instrumental in creating a new chair of "social philosophy" for Max Horkheimer, a position that allowed Horkheimer to become Director of the Institute. Tillich, Horkheimer, other members of what would become the famous "Frankfurt School"—Theodore Adorno, Leo Lowenthal, and Friedrich Pollock—and other faculty such as Karl Mannheim, Kurt Reizler, Lowe, and Mennicke, met together for what Tillich called his "Frankfurt Conversation." Tillich, though more closely related to the SPD than was the Frankfurt School, shared with the proponents of critical theory the intention to return to the Hegelian sources of the Marxist dialectic and to reconstruct socialist theory on this basis.¹⁶

Efforts to revitalize Marxist philosophy received an unexpected boost in 1932 when J. P. Mayer and Siegfried Landshut, two

15. GW, 2, pp. 139–150. See August Rathmann's "Tillich als religiöser Sozialist" in GW, 13 for a discussion of Tillich's role in the founding of the *Neue Blätter*, esp. pp. 566–7.

16. Martin Jay in his *The Dialectical Imagination* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1973) refers to the friendship the members of the Frankfurt School had with Tillich. The memorial volume *Werk und Wirken Paul Tillichs: Ein Gedenkbuch* (Stuttgart: Evangelisches Verlagswerk, 1967) contains comments on Tillich by Horkheimer and Adorno. Tillich's relationship to the Frankfurt School and their critical theory then and later is a subject that deserves further research.

contributors to the *Neue Blätter*, discovered and published Marx's hitherto unknown writings, the *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844*. These works of the young Marx confirmed Tillich's earlier insight that Marx was much more dependent on Hegel and much less the dogmatic materialist and narrow empiricist that so many of his followers had made him to be. Already in *The Socialist Decision* he appeals to the young Marx to support his own theoretical concerns. These fragments become an important source for Tillich's interpretation of Marx as a "secular prophet" and an "existentialist." Yet Tillich does not dismiss the older Marx, insisting, even in 1932, that the "real" Marx is a unity of the two, i.e., "Marx in the context of his development" (cf. below, Foreword, note 4). The present work is important, among other reasons, for its analysis and critique of Marxist theory (see especially part 3, chapter 2).

It was Tillich's special contribution to place the whole discussion of socialism within a theological perspective. In this volume the theological element is more implicit than explicit, yet it is clearly there. In offering a theological interpretation of socialism and other political realities, Tillich is utilizing some of the basic concepts that he was developing during these same years in other dimensions of his thought, for example, his broadened concept of "religion." "The decisive idea of religious socialism," he had written, "is that religion does not have to do with a specific religious sphere but with God's dealing with the world, and that therefore, it is possible that God's activity may be more clearly seen in a profane, even anti-Christian, phenomenon like socialism than in the explicitly religious sphere of the church."¹⁷ Such a view opens the way for a theological understanding of an apparently secular movement like socialism.

Tillich sees socialism, the self-expression of the proletariat, as

17. "Religious Socialism," in Paul Tillich, *Political Expectation* (New York: Harper & Row, 1971), p. 44. See also the Introduction to this volume for comments on Tillich's religious socialism by the editor of the volume, James Luther Adams.

For a thorough exposition of Tillich's understanding of religion, see his three essays collected in the volume *What is Religion?*, also ed. and intro. James Luther Adams (New York: Harper, 1969).

having given meaning to the proletariat in a meaningless world, a meaning that is ultimately religious, for it transcends the empirical and points to that which is "finally meant," to the Unconditional. Tillich was convinced that no one really understands socialism if he or she overlooks its religious dimension. But this can be overlooked, because it is hidden in nonreligious, rational forms. Thus Tillich interprets socialism as "prophetism on the soil of an autonomous, self-sufficient world" (cf. below, p. 101). His goal is to make conscious the faith working in socialism, and on this basis to transform it.

In other times, argued Tillich, this same faith had been expressed with the prophetic-eschatological symbol of the "kingdom of God." His theological interpretation turns on this symbol. One might even say that the theological thrust of his religious socialism was to discover the concrete social and political meaning of the prayer, "Thy kingdom come." The kingdom comes in history, yet remains transcendent; the kingdom is "at hand," but it cannot be possessed. Its character is paradoxical: the transcendent is not in an undialectical opposition to history, but shows its genuine transcendence by breaking into history, shattering and changing it. From the side of the human subject, the proper response is one of expectation, an attitude that looks toward the future as something promised and something demanded, as a gift and a task. Tillich relates this understanding directly to socialism:

In the struggle *against* a demonized society and *for* a meaningful society, religious socialism discerns a necessary expression for the expectation of the kingdom of God. . . . It regards this unity of the socialist dialectic, a unity of expectation and demand of that which is to come, as a conceptual unity and at the same time as a concrete and contemporary transformation of the Christian eschatological tension.¹⁸

Here in *The Socialist Decision* as nowhere else, Tillich draws upon this eschatological strand of his thought and brings it to bear on the political situation. The "prophetic" perspective, which

18. Ibid., p. 50.

he summarizes with the future-oriented symbol of expectation, gives unity and depth to the book. Tillich's elaborate discussion of expectation in many ways foreshadows the theological preoccupation with "hope" several decades later. This perspective, as he explains, has its historical source in the Jewish prophets, its anthropological roots in human existence itself, and its political significance in the socialist movement. It expresses the meaning of the "socialist principle," on the basis of which Tillich offers a subtle, internal critique of socialist theory and practice and a bold appeal to rebuild the movement.

Interestingly, Tillich structures his book on the basis of an anthropological consideration. In contrast to some other socialist intellectuals (Horkheimer, for example), Tillich sees positive value in the new interest in the question of the nature of human existence sparked by Martin Heidegger and Max Scheler. The questions that Paul Gauguin once wrote on a canvas—"From where do we come? Who are we? Where are we going?"—are ones that for Tillich are perennially significant for political theory. The question of "Whence?"—answered by "myths of origin"—is the foundation for all conservative and romantic political thinking. The question of "Whither?" or "For what end?"—the eschatological question—means the "breaking" of the myths of origin and is the root of liberal, democratic, and socialist thinking. For Tillich this second root takes precedence over the first: "the powers of origin" are subordinated to (but not eliminated by) justice. This means, for example, that the values connected with the past, such as regional, cultural, and ethnic heritages, may and should be acknowledged, but the demand of the future has priority.

Tillich's political analysis and evaluation is built on this interpretation of the "two roots" of human existence. From this starting point, Tillich offers a discerning appraisal of German society on the eve of the Nazi takeover. He presents a penetrating discussion and refutation of what he calls the "two forms of political romanticism," the conservative form represented by the Prussian landowners, the old military leaders, the Evangelical churches, and other groups in power before the November Revolution of 1919, and the revolutionary form represented by Adolf Hitler and

the middle-income groups supporting National Socialism. Both of these adhered uncritically to the myths of origin, rejecting the demand of justice. Likewise he critically examines the presuppositions of capitalist society as expressed in the "bourgeois principle," which views reality as a set of objects that can be rationally controlled. In so doing, Tillich charges, it reduces persons to things and cuts them off from the creative origins of life. Bourgeois society, he further asserts, rests on a belief in "automatic harmony"—a belief that is contradicted by the reality of the class struggle. It is the dominance of this bourgeois principle among socialists themselves, Tillich contends, that is responsible for the dilemma in which socialism finds itself, a dilemma which he seeks to address with a new formulation of the "socialist principle" that draws upon its religious roots.

Tillich explores these diverse phenomena in their social, political, economic, cultural, religious, and philosophical facets. In a fashion characteristic of Tillich, *The Socialist Decision* gives conceptual order to an immense range of human experience from a consciously developed, all-embracing perspective. And he writes this book not as a detached observer, but as one summoning his readers to decision.

The year 1932, during which the present work was written, was an ominous time marked by growing chaos and pending collapse. Depression and massive unemployment had thrown the fragile Weimar Republic into disarray. Political leadership had fallen into antirepublican, antidemocratic, antisocialist hands. On 20 July 1932, the new, reactionary Chancellor Franz von Papen (a striking example of the conservative form of political romanticism) illegally took control of the Prussian government, the last stronghold of the Social Democrats; the socialists offered no resistance. The indecisive, reformist SDP battled the dogmatic, revolutionary Communists for the loyalty of the workers while the militant, right-wing National Socialists (a parody on the concept of socialism) made impressive gains among the middle class. Tillich foresaw that the future might well be one of "barbarism." Already he recognized the possibility of war. If the militaristic, nationalistic right were victorious, insisted Tillich, "a self-

annihilating struggle of the European peoples is inevitable" (cf. below, p. 161). He believed, however, that socialism, a renewed and transformed socialism, still offered a possibility for averting this future. Germany faced a choice, and the choice was clear: either barbarism or genuine socialism. Tillich was appealing for "the socialist decision," but Germany was "deciding" for Nazism.

Tillich wrote the bulk of *The Socialist Decision* during the summer of 1932 in the mountains of Sils Maria, Switzerland, where he was vacationing with his wife Hannah and his friends Adolf Grimme, Mannheim, and Lowe.¹⁹ Grimme, a religious socialist, had been the Prussian Minister of Education from 1930 to 1932. The sociologist Mannheim and the economist Lowe were Tillich's colleagues at Frankfurt. In the morning, Tillich would go into the woods and write, and in the afternoon he and Lowe would discuss what he had written, a circumstance that accounts for his expression of special gratitude to Lowe in the Foreword. Apparently he completed the writing at the home of some friends in Potsdam.²⁰ Tillich signed the Foreword on November 9 (on the fourteenth and last anniversary of the proclamation of the "German Republic"), and he issued his announcement of the book in the December issue of the *Neue Blätter*. It was published early in 1933, appearing as part of the series *Die sozialistische Aktion*, sponsored by the *Neue Blätter*.

But it was too late. Historical events foreclosed any genuine socialist decision; on 30 January 1933, Adolf Hitler took power, and the barbaric future began. *The Socialist Decision* was suppressed and all the socialist literature of Alfred Protte, Tillich's publisher, was confiscated. Later, the remaining copies of the work were destroyed when the Protte warehouse in Potsdam was

19. The following is based on the interview with Adolf Lowe on 4 May 1972. See also Hannah Tillich, *From Time to Time* (New York: Stein and Day, 1973), p. 147.

20. Mrs. Lily Pincus, a German émigré psychotherapist living in London, in a letter to Prof. James L. Adams on 2 February 1972, wrote: "About *Die sozialistische Entscheidung*: I think you know that much of it was written in our house in Potsdam, and I remember Paulus passing up and down the garden in writing-pains."