

PART III

From Antagonisms to Integration

CONFLICT and integration are not simply two contradictory aspects of politics: they complement each other as well. In studying the causes of antagonisms, we discovered that many of them are somewhat ambivalent. They generate conflicts, but, in certain circumstances, they can also help to limit conflicts and promote integration. Generally speaking, integration appears in some respects to be the final result of political antagonisms, and the notion of integration plays an important role in the very development of the conflict. Every challenge to the existing social order implies a vision and a plan for a superior, more authentic social order. Every struggle contains a dream of peace and constitutes an effort to realize the dream. Many believe that conflict and integration are not opposites, but part and parcel of the same general process—that conflict naturally leads to integration, and antagonisms tend, by their very development, to self-elimination and the subsequent bringing about of social harmony.

In the classic liberal view, integration is produced by conflict, as the latter gradually develops and intensifies; the two phenomena are concomitant. Economic competition produces the greatest expansion of production and the widest distribution of manufactured goods, and continually insures the best possible economy. Political competition achieves similar results, guaranteeing that the best, the most capable, the elite, govern to the advantage of all. Political harmony—troubled only by those who are abnormal, perverse, or ill—is analogous to “eco-

conomic harmonies." For Marxists, the political struggle is also the motivating drive for social evolution, a process that will inevitably bring an end to antagonisms and the establishment of a society without conflicts. This social integration will appear only in the last phase of a very long process, in the distant future. At each stage, a partial integration is achieved—a "synthesis" between a "thesis" and its opposing "antithesis"; but the synthesis soon becomes a new cause of contradiction and conflict. Political harmony is a perpetual "becoming," which develops in a rhythmical fashion until the end of history, the final phase of communism.

This justifies our studying, in close conjunction, the forms of the political struggle and the development of political integration. We will discover, in fact, that some kinds of conflict—conflicts "within" a regime, for example—already imply a certain degree of integration, and that the first stage of integration consists in restraining the use of violence, which is to say, replacing certain forms of conflict with other forms.