FOREWORD

Since its publication in 1941 *The Crisis of Our Age* has appeared in Portuguese, German, Spanish, Dutch, Czech, Norwegian, Finnish, and Japanese translations. In this new edition nothing is changed in the original text of the book. Since the historical events have been unfolding according to the diagnosis and prognosis of *The Crisis* there is no need for correction of its main propositions. The only exception, perhaps, is the cautiously expressed hypothesis that, so far as the data up to 1908 indicated, the rate of increase in scientific discoveries and inventions in the twentieth century has tended to slow down. Actually, this rate after 1908 has been increasing rather than decreasing. For this reason the hypothesis needs to be corrected. However, when the movement of scientific discoveries and inventions in the twentieth century is tied up with their trend towards increasing destructiveness, stressed in *The Crisis*, and with the danger of explosion of a new world war, then the “incorrect” hypothesis may turn out to be doubly correct. For a new world war, carried on with all the scientific—nuclear, bacteriological and other—instruments of destruction, will certainly stop for a long time scientific as well as other creativity of mankind. So much for the “correction” of this point.

In accordance with the prognosis of *The Crisis*, the central process for the last few decades has consisted in: 

a) a progressive decay of sensate culture, society, and man, and b) in an emergence and slow growth of the first components of the new—ideational or idealistic—sociocultural order.
In *science* this double process has manifested itself in: a) the mentioned increasing destructiveness of the morally irresponsible, sensate scientific achievements, and b) in a transformation of the basic theories of science in a morally responsible, ideational or idealistic direction. This change has already made today's science less materialistic, mechanistic, and deterministic—or less sensate—than it was during the preceding two centuries. For this modern science matter has become but a condensed form of energy which dematerializes into radiation. The material atom is already dissolved into more than thirty non-material, "cryptic, arcane, perplexing, enigmatic, and inscrutable" elementary particles: the electron, the proton, the photon, the mesons, etc., or into "the image of waves which turn out into the waves of probability, waves of consciousness which our thought projects afar . . . . These waves like those associated with the propagation of light quanta need no substratum in order to propagate in space-time; they undulate neither in fluid, nor in solid, nor yet in a gas." Around a bend of quantum mechanics and at the foot of the electronic ladder the basic notions of "materialistic and mechanistic science" such as: matter, objective reality, time, space, causality are no longer applicable, and the testimony of our senses largely loses its significance. As to the deterministic causality it is already replaced in the modern science by Heisenberg's principle of uncertainty, by fanciful "quanta jumps," by a mere chance relationship or—in psychosocial phenomena—by "voluntaristic," "free-willing, law of direction" exempt from causality and chance.

Similar transformations have taken place in the new, leading theories of biological, psychological, and social sciences. In contrast to the superannuated, though still intoned, clichés of mechanistic, materialistic, and deter-
ministic biology, psychology, and sociology, the rising significant theories in these disciplines clearly show that the phenomena of life, organism, personality, mind, and sociocultural processes are irreducible to, and cannot be understood as, purely materialistic, mechanistic, and sensory realities. According to these theories, they have, besides their empirical aspect, the far more important—mindfully-rational and even supersensory and super-rational—aspects. In these and other forms the most modern science has already become notably ideational or idealistic in comparison with what it was in the nineteenth century. This means an increasing replacement of the dying sensate elements of science by the new—ideational or ideational—ones.

In the field of philosophy this double process has manifested itself in increasing sterility and decline of recent materialistic, mechanistic, "positivistic," and other sensate philosophies and in the emergence and growth of "the Existential," "the Intuitive," the "Neo-Thomist," "the Integral," "the Neo-Mystical," "the Neo-Vedantist," and other philosophies congenial to the basic principles of Ideationalism or Idealism.

A similar double process has been going on in all fields of fine arts.

In the realm of religion it has shown itself in the simultaneous growth of: a) militant atheism and b) religious revival.

In ethics it has called forth: a) utter bestiality and horrible demoralization shown in the Second World War, bloody revolutions, and increasing criminality, and b) growth of moral heroism, sublime altruism, and organized movements for abolition of war, bloody strife, and injustice.

In politics the double process has resulted: a) in pro-
liferation of all kinds of tyrannical dictatorships, and b) in the slowly swelling grass-roots movements for establishment of a competent, honest, and morally responsible government of the people, by the people, and for the people.

This struggle between the forces of the previously creative but now largely outworn sensate order and the emerging, creative forces of a new—ideational or idealistic—order is proceeding relentlessly in all fields of social and cultural life. The final outcome of this epochal struggle will largely depend upon whether mankind can avoid a new world war. If the forces of the decaying sensate order start such a war, then, dissipating their remaining energy, these forces can end or greatly impede the creative progress of mankind. If this Apocalyptic catastrophe can be avoided, then the emerging creative forces will usher humanity into a new magnificent era of its history. Which of these alternative courses is going to take place depends tangibly upon every one of us.

PITIRIM A. SOROKIN

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PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The book represents in a modified form my public lectures on *The Twilight of Sensate Culture* given at the Lowell Institute in February, 1941. It is based upon four volumes of my *Social and Cultural Dynamics*. In these volumes the reader can find an ampler evidence for the conclusions reached, a more detailed analysis of the problems discussed, and a vast body of the literature concerning each problem.

For the privilege of giving the Lowell lectures I am indebted to A. Lawrence Lowell, the trustee of the Lowell Institute, and W. H. Lawrence, its curator. Without their kind invitation this book would hardly have been written. For the permission to use some of the plates, diagrams and text of my *Social and Cultural Dynamics* I bring my thanks to the American Book Company. I am indebted to the Duke University Press for the permission to reproduce a part of my address, "Socio-cultural Trends in Euro-American Culture," given at the Duke University Centennial Celebration and published by this Press in a volume, *A Century of Social Thought*; to the Georgetown University and the American Catholic Sociological Society for a similar permission to use my addresses given at the Sesquicentennial Celebration of the Georgetown University in 1939 and at the annual meeting of the Catholic Sociological Society, in December, 1940. Finally, I thank the Harvard Committee for the Research in the Social Sciences for a financial help in typing and typographical preparation of the manuscript.