

causers and Scottish Don Quixotes, listens to the youthful solipsism of one of the Stern brothers and the aesthetic humanitarianism of the other, realizes with true premonition, and some envy, that an Irish comrade has already picked up the scent of the cause for which he will be martyred. He also comes across, by a chance that the author obviously means to be no chance at all but the true hand of fate, a cousin of his own, an old laird who invites him to Scotland. But this introduction to love is, also, premature, and John comes away from Assynt in Scotland more bemused and unsettled than ever.

At the end of this first book, and under the influence of music, which he is just beginning to understand, John knows he will go back: "Go southward now away from me, if you will," his country says to him, in the song of the dark swan of Tuonela; "but my calling will bring you back", and he knows that "daffodils and the green world" which would have been his if he could have married his young love would not have offered him enough. And, again, if this is a little too neat, a little too explicit a rounding-off to do justice to the subtlety of issues in the real world, there is something more heart-warming and stirring here than we are accustomed to receive at the hands of our novelists: Mr. Mackenzie is not afraid to give us his word, to make us a promise. If the Fate he fears, perhaps once more in the form of a world upheaval, cuts across his plan, the non-completion of the book will not be his failure. Once again he will have been forced to put aside his responsibility as a writer to take up his responsibility as a man.

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The Totalitarian Régimes
An Essay in Essential Distinctions

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THE journalists and historians of liberal bias, who write most of the current literature treating of the new totalitarian and authoritarian states of Europe, are instructing American readers today in a new and but lately acquired doctrine. It is this: that the conflict of Fascism and Communism (which until almost yesterday many of these writers were declaring in high alarm to be the exclusive set of alternatives confronting the bankrupt order of capitalist liberalism) is a sham conflict, that these things are at bottom identical, and that the real issue is now seen clearly to be democracy *versus* dictatorship. This, we are told, is the essential distinction, and therefore the truly significant classification of political communities today.

On the one hand, say these writers (Hamilton Fish Armstrong, Albert Jay Nock, James Truslow Adams, Westbrook Pegler — that rigorous thinker! — and countless others), you have popular representative government, under which liberty obtains and men are citizens who cannot be arbitrarily robbed, beaten,

exiled, murdered, or even indoctrinated (the supreme infamy!) by irresponsible state bosses. On the other hand you have despotic political terrorism under which the citizen is but a miserable subject with no voice in making the decisions of the state and no means for resisting its tyranny. It is *We or They*, as Mr. Armstrong defined the issue in his popular little book of last year. Ideological differences to be sure exist amongst these tyrannies, but are without important significance, since in reality the Fascist-Communist alternative is a Hobson's choice. The vital issue and therefore the essential line of distinction is dictatorship or democracy. "The former may be an autocracy or an oligarchy," says Mr. Adams. "It may be communistic in its stated philosophy, as in Russia, or Nazi as in Germany, or Fascist as in Italy, or something else as in the many dictator countries in Europe. But in whatever guise it may cloak itself, its outstanding feature is that the ordinary citizen comes to have practically nothing to say about the government or laws under which he lives."

I chose that text almost at random. Scores of American publicists have said and are saying every day the same thing, almost in the same words. And indeed it is not surprising that liberal writers should come at length to this judgement of the political scene. They hated instinctively the thing called Fascism from the moment of its appearance and now the news out of Russia is fast dispelling last illusions about "the great social experiment". The Bolshevik *Realpolitikers*, it appears, are getting rid of some of the more objectionable ideologues, the soldier and bureaucrat have returned to power, and the Cossack is once more in

his saddle. Wherefore does Russia begin again to look scandalously like herself and hence to stink as of old in all liberal nostrils; wherefore has one more effort to create a terrestrial Utopia issued in the common sort of despotism that callously exterminates those unfortunate ones who annoy it. This fact, it is sad to remember, many liberals were unable to perceive for so long as the Moscow terror was visited primarily upon reactionary peasants and priests. But they see it now and shrink back in horror, cursing the whole Bolshevik business as Fascism in a red disguise. And that this should be their ultimate reaction to the state of Stalin and Voroshilov is not, I repeat, surprising, because the detestation of arms and personal authority — no less than hatred of brutality and despotism — is a mark of the liberal mind.

But the main reason why the liberal writers see Bolshevism, National Socialism, and Fascism as compounded of the same essential stuff is to be found in the subjective test which they apply in making their political distinctions and classifications. To the real liberal there are only two kinds of rule in the state: that which limits his liberty to do what he pleases and that which does not. For at heart he is anti-state; that is, however much he may approve (for reasons of social utility) the expansion of administration, he dislikes genuine politics and inclines toward Mr. Nock's anarchistic doctrine of the state as man's enemy. For he cannot abide independent political authority, capable of coercion, and therefore with power to rule. That is "dictatorship", and to him dictators, Hitler, Mussolini, Stalin — yes, even the debonair Mr. Roosevelt — all look alike.

Nor is the liberal alone in holding this view. Many unpolitically minded clericals share it, being ever wary of the state as a potential enemy of the Church, and conceiving the essential nature of any political régime to be found in its attitude toward clerical privilege. Indeed, if clericalism be defined (as I think it should) as that kind of political activity which is exclusively preoccupied with defending clerical persons from any subjection to secular authority, then plainly it is somewhat analogous with liberalism. Each is anti-state, in that each regards the state rather as an unfortunate necessity than as a positive and desirable good. So it is that to many Catholics also the new authoritarian régimes appear as merely different brands of the same offensive commodity. Thus Mr. Raoul Desvergne, Catholic and Liberty League propagandist, repeatedly attacks our new Federal state with its positive policies for the national welfare as a potential enemy of religious liberty. He believes that President Roosevelt has set us on a course that leads to totalitarianism, which in his judgement is everywhere the same essential thing. "Communism, Nazism, and Fascism", he told the Catholic Summer School at Cliff Haven this year, "are the expressions of the same fundamental philosophy — the absolute supremacy of the state over the political, social, economic, cultural, and religious life of the individual." The common denominator and essential stuff of all three despotic systems is, he believes, the worship of the omnipotent state.

Very much the same viewpoint has been expressed by Dr. Paul Kiniery, of Loyola University, in a recent essay in *The Catholic World*.

Fascism [he wrote] is essentially as materialistic as

Communism. Fascism has no more respect for the dignity of the individual than has Communism. Under Fascism the state is deified almost to the same extent that it is under Communism. . . . The upper and middle classes have been exterminated under Communism. Under Fascism they are exploited out of existence. One process is rapid; the other is slower. . . . From these remarks it would appear that Communism and Fascism, while they may appear to be so opposed to one another that even the world cannot contain both simultaneously have in reality so much in common that neither can be acceptable to us. . . . Each of the two systems tends to be anti-religious as a matter of policy and as a means of strengthening the state. Any organization which makes the slightest claim to the service of the individual is an enemy of the all-powerful state. . . . Communism and Fascism have both been militaristic. Each is a threat to the peace of the world. . . . Each one, with its advocacy of totalitarianism, is a long step backward in the path which mankind has been travelling toward a better life. . . . Communism and Fascism are in reality two roads to the same goal; ruin and the utter destruction of everything that a true Catholic and an upright American citizen holds beyond price.

Now it is not the main purpose of this essay to join issue with these writers over the merits or demerits of Communism, National Socialism, and Fascism. For all that concerns us here, these may very well be a trinity of evils which good Catholics and good Americans will be wise to shun. Neither is there here any wish to deny that the democracy *versus* dictatorship issue is a real issue, although I should prefer to call this the issue of genuine government *versus* anarchy. The purpose is rather to insist that this subjectivist view of the new states is not a clear view, and that in it there is

that common weakness of thought which issues in failure to perceive essential distinctions of category, in the invention of false distinctions or undue emphasis upon those of minor significance, and therefore in the drawing of a veil of obscurity over reality. Communism, National Socialism, and Fascism may indeed be evil; they may be equally evil; they may have numerous affinities and similarities; but they are essentially different and cannot be resolved by the same common denominator. To establish that as truth is the aim of this essay.

II

Now the argument is not to be made by drawing out the numerous ideological differences and insisting upon the determinative importance of these. Ideologies have indeed proved themselves to be, as Waldemar Gurian insisted in his *Future of Bolshevism*, instruments for party control of the state and the masses, rather than intellectual convictions firmly held or social objectives resolutely pursued. Moreover, it may be said that the essential nature of any historical activity is never to be found wholly in the sphere of ideas, since men are moved by passion and appetite even more strongly than by ideal forces. No, it will not do to contrast, say, the twenty-five point program of the Nazis with the Communist Manifesto and affirm that therein lies the essential difference between the two things which Berlin and Moscow represent today.

But if, instead of ideological systems, we consider certain attitudes of mind, which predispose men to accept this or that ideology, and certain fundamental assumptions, on which the ideologies are based, we can

then, I think, lay hold on some genuinely essential distinctions.

Let us do this with respect to the state and the concepts men have of the rôle and proper purposes of the state in the social community. Why does it exist? Is it of temporary or permanent social necessity? Is it an indispensable evil or a positive good? Is it autonomous and sovereign within its sphere, or is it rather an instrument for use by an authority of higher command? Men give differing answers to these questions, very much as they do when similar questions are put concerning the Church; for they believe or disbelieve in the state, and oppose or tolerate or warmly accept it, in accordance with their fundamental attitudes and mental postulates, even as they reject, tolerate, or accept the Church. Thus the anarchist regards the state as a coercive weapon of the exploiting class, therefore as an enemy of the human community, an evil thing which should be destroyed. And he takes this view because of his underlying assumption of the perfectibility of men once all restraints on them have been removed. He pursues, in other words, a vision that is ultimately derivative from and dependent on a certain concept of the nature of man and society.

The liberal, with his distrust of strong and extensive government, tends toward a similar although less extreme position; for he regards the state as potentially hostile to the most precious individual liberties and affirms therefore that the best government is the least government. He will not admit, with Aristotle, that the purpose of the state is to promote the virtue of men, but will say, with Locke, that it exists to defend their private autonomies. So does he view it as an in-

dispensable evil rather than as a positive good. Moreover, he does not think of the state as an independent and autonomous authority in the community, but as an agency to do the bidding of the several private autonomies that constitute the community. Thus he thinks of the state rather as *administration* than as *government* and has a strongly nominalist concept of it, tending to deny it all corporate reality, tending also to deny that it can properly have interests of its own higher than and differing from the sum of private interests that sustain it.

Such are the assumptions on which the liberal mind, more often than not unwittingly, poses its political beliefs. The individual is taken as the sole reality of society, and the whole business of politics is to serve not his true needs (of which he may be but dimly aware) but his expressed wishes; which leads in logic to such a view of the state as Mr. Rudolf Rocker recently expressed in his *Nationalism and Culture*: "The history of the state is the history of human oppression. . . . Let us not deceive ourselves: it is not the form of the state, it is the state itself which creates the evil and continually nourishes and fosters it." Liberalism, in reality, wants no state, but only administration; it is at bottom anarchistic in tendency and therefore essentially anti-political in character. It conceives the state as an instrument in the service of private interests and appetites, not as the guardian and promoter of the general community good.

But to conserve and advance this latter is the very essence of genuine politics, and those who, in allegiance to the central political tradition of Western civilization, perceive and acknowledge this truth do

so from a quite different set of postulates. For not only do they recognize the organic nature of society and the abstract reality of the state, but they affirm the political nature of man and the consequent necessity of the state in the human community — and not as an indispensable evil but as a positive good, without which man would be something less than man. Such postulates are at bottom religious, which is the reason why we may say that differing conceptions of the nature and purposes of the state set men in fundamental opposition one to another no less than do differing religions. For in truth all political differences which cut deeply are rooted in opposing visions of reality. This we shall see in contrasting the Communist, Nazi, and Fascist concepts of the state.

III

The contrast is best seen, I believe, by examining into the party-state relations in these so-called totalitarian régimes. Let us do this now, considering first the Soviet Union, where the Marxian doctrine of the state reigns as political orthodoxy.

This doctrine derives from the class-struggle interpretation of history and social development, in which the state appears as a weapon forged by the exigencies of an unceasing war of classes for possession of the means of economic production. The owner-exploiter class devised the state to defend its hold on productive property, and the exploited class seeks ever to wrest away this weapon. The conflict is the dynamic principle of history, a process which is to culminate in the proletarian capture of the state and, by coercive use of it, the establishment of a universal, classless, Com-

unist society; whereupon, its destiny fulfilled, the state "withers away" in Utopian anarchy and the atheistic kingdom of man over all reality.

It is thus plain that Communism as a doctrine is essentially anti-political in the meaning that I have here attached to that adjective. It denies the permanent necessity and positive good of the state in the social community, and it denies to the state an autonomous sovereignty within its own sphere, affirming on the contrary that it is properly an instrument for use by an authority of higher command. That authority, separate and external to the state, is the Party: executive of the sovereign proletarian will and custodian of an orthodox ideology.

Now this minority group may or may not care sincerely about their professed ideology and ideal social objectives; but there can be no doubt that the Party does determine the purposes and ends of political activity. It does fix social doctrine; it does determine education; it does lay its ruling hand upon all institutional agencies that form new human generations. Nor is there any aspect of cultural activity, of the life of the mind and spirit, over which it disclaims the right to rule; since questions of religion and transcendental reality, no less than secular matters, come within the scope of its affirmations. Soviet society is thus ruled by the Party rather than the state, and the position of the Party is perfectly analogous to that of a Church in a theocratic order, as, for example, early Calvinist society wherein the ecclesiastical power was above the civil and utilized the latter as an instrumental means for establishing the reign of the saints. It is true, of course, as I have already pointed out, that signs now

appear indicating the gradual emancipation of Stalinist Russia from Party rule and the return of the state to the exercise of its own independent authority. But it is still too early to say that this has actually come about. Stalin still rules as master of the Party rather than as head of the state, and his successive bloody purges are not to be interpreted as the subjection of Party to state but as disciplinary actions within the Party. Bolshevism has not yet become genuinely political, and we do not know that it will ever issue as such.

Now in turning to the Nazi Reich we are quickly struck by a meaningful similarity to Bolshevism with respect to party and state relations. And herein lies a deep affinity between Communism and National Socialism which it is not my intention to deny. To be sure, there is no clear Nazi doctrine of the state comparable to the Marxist doctrine, but National Socialism has also an anti-political character in that it views the state as primarily a revolutionary instrument at the service of the Party. As Professor Henri Lichtenberger, in his admirable *The Third Reich*, has said:

Hitler was guided above all by a principle which lay at the very base of his conception of the National Socialist Revolution: his conception of the necessary dualism of state and party. National Socialism for Hitler rested fundamentally on a *Weltanschauung*. "The National Socialist idea," he said, "has its organizing base in the Party." The Party represents "the political conscience, the political conceptions, and the political will of the nation." It is the Party which has placed the state at the service of the National Socialist *Weltanschauung*, and it is the Party which ought to set the final goals in all domains of life and harmonize public life with national duty.

Plainly this means that the Party is neither within the state nor subject to its disciplinary action, but is something apart from and necessarily superior to the state. Hitler has affirmed that "all Germans are to be formed by the ideological principles of National Socialism, that the better National Socialists are to become members of the Party, and that, finally, the better members of the Party are to assume direction of the state". To the *Führer*, therefore, the Party has not been and is not to be a mere instrumental activity of the nation for rebuilding and vindicating the sovereign autonomy of the state; but is instead an independent, all-powerful organism determining the ends of political activity, doctrine, education, and the life of the mind and spirit.

Thus the National Socialist Party, like the Communist Party, does not dedicate itself to a mission primarily political, but undertakes to create a new cultural life and to indoctrinate the mind of society with a particular view of reality. Its stated ideology may be the merest rubbish and with no great significance in determining the concrete acts of government, but the *Weltanschauung* on which that ideology reposes is of fundamental and decisive importance in fixing the nature of National Socialism, which is at bottom a religious manifestation. Pantheistic racialism, subjectivist mysticism, these are the underlying assumptions and mental attitudes of a Germany in revolt against both the Catholic and Jacobin-Marxist traditions. It would be lacking in rigor of thought, therefore, to adopt unreservedly the view of Dr. Gurian that Bolshevism and National Socialism are fundamentally one thing because each affirms that the supreme end of

human activity is service to the social-political order and the realization of a particular social ideal. These movements are expressions of differing affirmations of the nature of reality, of opposing mental attitudes and postulates.

I should prefer to say that what we have in them are two heresies which differ deeply in spirit but yet have a great deal in common, as indeed have all great heretical revolts against the Catholic tradition. And their chief common feature is precisely this theocratic form which each inevitably assumes. For the National Socialist Party in Germany, like its spiritual opposite in Russia, has a position in society analogous with a church in a theocratic order. True it is that the law of December 1st, 1933, declared the Party to be "the very incarnation of the idea of the state" and to be "indissolubly united to the state", but this union is not a merging of identities, still less a subordination of the Party to the state. This has neither come nor given sign of coming. And therefore the Nazi movement remains without a primarily political character, in which fact one may discern, not to be sure its identity, but certainly its near affinity with Russian Communism.

We come now to Italian Fascism and to perceive therein a profound and essential difference, not only from Bolshevism but also from the falsely called Fascism of Germany. For Italian Fascism does possess a primarily political character and cannot in any way be described as a religious movement. It has neither ideology nor *Weltanschauung* that can be called peculiarly its own; and in Italy there is no party rule of the state.

The Fascist Party arose within the framework of

parliamentary liberalism and therein attacked the old party conflict as destructive of the authority of the state. It warred upon the party system and for long was even reluctant to take the name of party for itself. It was devoid of dogma and fixed vision of any particular social ideal; it was therefore thoroughly pragmatist and without any other program than to deal practically with concrete problems as they arose. Thus in 1919 when Mussolini founded the *Fascio di Combattimento* at Milan and began to draw into a union other *Fasci*, springing up spontaneously over the country, he declared: "The *Fasci* are not, do not wish to be, and cannot become a party. The *Fasci* are a temporary organization of all those who accept specific solutions of specific present problems." A year later he wrote that the *Fasci* neither could nor should be a party because they did not feel themselves tied "to any specific doctrine or dogma". He spoke of his followers rather as "an athletic body of free men" and called them the "gypsies of Italian politics". To be sure he presently went on to the formation of a political party and to the adoption of a party program, but the movement never lost its opportunist and un-dogmatic character. "What do we propose?" he asked rhetorically in 1921 (after the Party had come into being). "We say it without false modesty: to govern the nation. With what program? With the program necessary to assure the moral and material greatness of the Italian people."

This movement was thus exclusively political, and if it had also an economic and ethical significance, that is only because political activity properly includes an economic and ethical mission. But it made no religious

affirmation, nor had it any concept of reality and of human nature to propagate as its own. It therefore was not a new religion, and the Duce declared many times that the Party is "not a Church". That is the reason why Fascism has not resulted in either a party-state dualism or in a party-dominated state. For once the revolution had created the new Fascist State, the Party came within the state and passed under its authority. Within three years after the march on Rome this relationship had been established in fact, and when, in 1928, the Party was merged juridically with the state by the assignment of a constitutional position to the Grand Fascist Council, the state had absorbed the Party in law as well as in fact. So that we find these words in the preamble of the revised Party constitution of 1929: "The National Fascist Party is a civil militia, at the service of the state [*al servizio dello Stato*]. Its objective is to realize the greatness of the Italian people." The Party is, in short, nothing more than an organ of the state for defense, political education, social services, and recruitment of state officers. The small volume entitled *Il Partito Nazionale Fascista*, published by the Party last year in its series of *Testi per i corsi di preparazione politica* makes this fact perfectly clear.

To re-establish the autonomous state as the directing intelligence of the secular life of the national community, that sums up the whole of the Fascist mission, which has been happily free of strange dogmas concerning the mysteries of reality. It has dealt with men as they are rather than as perhaps they should be; and it evinced from the start that concrete intelligence which recognizes politics as the art of the possible.

Hence its realism combined with its exclusively political character to afford it escape from those clashes with traditional religion which, from their inner essential nature, neither National Socialism nor Communism can avoid.

Such is the gulf that separates the Fascist State from the totalitarian régimes of northern and eastern Europe. Hitler is a prophet and Stalin is a pope of the modern Muscovite religion, but Mussolini is a man of tradition with whom Aristotle or St. Thomas or Machiavelli might without too great difficulty feel at ease; and the essential characters of the three régimes are faithfully reflected in their respective leaders. Liberals who say all these things are one, and who can discern no essential distinction among modern states save that of dictatorship and democracy, simply make confusion of categories and miss seeing the boundary line between politics and religion.

IV

In the light of things present, and with knowledge of experience in the past, several indications for the future of these totalitarian régimes may be read with some measure of confidence.

There will probably come in Russia and Germany a gradual reduction of the Party to state obedience, or to some subordinate position like that which the Party has already willingly assumed in Italy. We might almost say, indeed, that unless the Nazi and Communist régimes are violently destroyed, this development is inevitable; since all such religious movements in the past have been brought at length under the dominion of their own political instruments. It is in their nature

to be either subdued or destroyed by that which they create. Thus Protestantism called upon secular power to vindicate itself against the papal Church and presently found that it had raised up not a servant but a master. Revolutionary Jacobinism not only created but was mastered by what it made, the Napoleonic state; and we might cite other examples to show that such a development lies in the very logic of events. For although the revolutionary party, with its *Weltanschauung* and ideology, creates the state anew as its instrument of advance, the men of the state discover sooner or later that if they would govern successfully they must deal with facts instead of theories. Their political action must pass from the abstract to the concrete; they must face reality and deal with society as it is rather than as they have ideologically conceived it to be. Dogmatic thought, proper indeed in revealed religion, is soon found to be too stiffly narrow for an effective grappling with that diversity and complexity which marks all social life. And when this discovery is made, the men of the state, holding the instruments of power, turn upon the ideologues.

Then the party goes under. But all depends of course upon the vitality of whatever new religion the party has striven to implant in the minds of men. For so long as this is strong and enduring the party will keep the upper hand. So may we be reasonably certain that neither Russia nor Germany will be delivered from party rule until their present insane religions have been exploded in the general mind of society. Probably this process is now in course and we will see the ultimate passing of all pretense that the Soviet and Third Reich are anything other than the familiar

Russian and Prussian despotisms ruling over peoples who are sadly deficient in knowledge of human freedom.

But the outlook for Italy is not the same, because the destinies of Fascism are not linked with the fortunes of a heresy. There the state can adapt itself to changes in historical life; it is more flexible, more living, better related organically to a social life permeated with a consciousness of freedom, therefore more truly popular and less dependent on the person of the leader. Present indications are that the Fascist State will grow steadily less dictatorial as it consolidates its representative base anew on the corporate realities of Italian society. For Fascism, considered as an historical process in the life of Italy rather than as an irrational extravagance of revolutionary thought, is fundamentally Italian, Catholic, and realist, and hence linked inseparably with the soundest traditions of our civilization. He who has been formed by these should know the difference between what is merely strong government, competent to its task, and what is actual despotism.

But to the liberal, I fear, all this goes unperceived. And so will he doubtless continue his fight for democracy against dictatorship, not even suspecting the existence of the real issues which today divide the West.

Maule's Curse

Hawthorne and the Problem of Allegory

YVOR WINTERS

At the moment of execution — with the halter about his neck and while Colonel Pyncheon sat on horseback, grimly gazing at the scene — Maule had addressed him from the scaffold, and uttered a prophecy, of which history as well as fireside tradition, has preserved the very words. "God," said the dying man, pointing his finger, with a ghastly look, at the undismayed countenance of his enemy, "God will give him blood to drink!" — *The House of the Seven Gables*.

OF HAWTHORNE's three most important long works — *The Scarlet Letter*, *The House of the Seven Gables*, and *The Marble Faun* — the first is pure allegory, and the other two are impure novels, or novels with unassimilated moral elements. The first is faultless, in scheme and in detail; it is one of the chief masterpieces of English prose. The second and third are interesting, the third in particular, but both are failures, and neither would suffice to give the author very high place in the history of prose fiction. Hawthorne's sketches and short stories, at best, are slight romances; either they lack meaning, as in the case of Higginbotham's *Catastrophe*, or they lack real embodiment, as in the case of *The Birthmark*, being a measure of both, as does *The Minister's Black Veil*, they yet seem incapable of justifying the intensity of the method, their very brevity and attendant simplification, perhaps, working against them. The