

EDITORIALS

The Thing Has Roots

(Pathfinder)
If it was not clear ten years ago, if it was not clear five years ago, if it was not clear one year ago, it should be clear now that 20th Century civilization is caught in the middle of an epochal struggle. The struggle is not new; it has been going on for a long time, but this week's events merely dramatized it.

Full implications as grave as any the world has faced, the struggle between two ideas—the idea of democracy on one hand and the idea of dictatorship on the other. Two philosophies are clashing in a way that directly affects not one nation, and not all people, but all nations and all peoples. One is a philosophy that dignifies the individual human spirit, by setting up liberty of conscience as a way of life. The other is a philosophy that represses or repudiates the individual by setting up a single leader called "The Dictator" or a small group of men called "The Authoritarian State." Beyond the oratory and threats that characterize it, the meanings of this struggle run deep. There is no one who can afford to watch it with indifference.

In 1932, years after he had established his one-man rule in Italy, Benito Mussolini summed up the issue in words that were at once a challenge and a prediction. Writing in the *Enciclopedia Italiana* he said:

"If the 19th century was the century of the individual, it may be said that the present is the century of 'collectivism' and, therefore, the century of the state.... It may be said that each century has its own doctrine, then a thousand predictions point to Fascism as the doctrine of the present century."

To all who have followed these changing times since the tragedy of the World War, Mussolini's words must seem especially striking today. The basic idea of Fascism, Nazism, Russian Communism—in short, the idea of the authoritarian state—has spread to all corners of the world. At this time 50 percent of the inhabitable areas of the earth and 55 percent of the earth's population are under the shadow of dictatorship in one form or another. This has come about not over a long period of years but in the relatively short time since the World War. There are ideas in history, and the present one is moving fast, and no country seems entirely free of its pressures. Pulling first this way and then that, it must eventually sweep away either democracy or the dictators who now appear to be in the ascendant.

On the surface, it seems difficult to understand how and why whole nations have yielded their liberties to the dictates of a few played itself these past few years, the authoritarian state has filled democratic peoples with horror, without means to achieve its ends. It has broken treaties; it has violated the rights and stolen the territories of peaceful nations; it has destroyed individual liberty wherever it exists; it has regimented the masses, burned books, exiled scholars, taken control of the press and radio, forced schools into line. All this it has done to make the state "total," to unify it, to make it strong for conquest or aggression. And it has done more than that. It has set up its own rods; it has lampooned Christianity; it has sought to make all religion harmful to its domination; it has tawdry, cynical and irreligious standards. It has persecuted minorities; it has proclaimed racial theories that all honest scientists have branded as a lie; it has stood before the world, notably in Germany, and declared that truth is only of secondary importance, that the pursuit of it must be stopped whenever it runs counter to what "The Dictator" thinks or to what "The Authoritarian State" orders. It has stood before the world and tried to turn back the clock, tried to reverse the accumulated experience of centuries. To the democracies it has shouted that democracy is dead, that individual liberty is "Bolshevism," that ends justify means, that the all-powerful state has a right to control its subjects with an iron will. And for dictators inside its own borders, it has devised cruel punishments, built concentration camps and perfected "the blood purge." All in all, judging by its outward symbols and the color of its internal thought, it represents a long backward step in the history of man's struggle for freedom and the self-rule that guarantees freedom.

But it is of little value simply to deplore and condemn this type of government. The great disconcerting fact is that it is growing, and apparently is still growing. History is clear on that point. The democracies that came to flower in the last 100 years have been wilting, fading and dying one by one. In their place have risen despoticisms as well-enriched and as vicious as any that existed in an earlier day. And whether or not you call them *quidam* Caesars, the despots who are rising in the present time are spreading their influence everywhere.

The spread of dictatorship may reasonably be likened to the spread of disease. In the modern world, the spread has become all epidemic, and it is not enough to call the epidemic bitter names. It is something that must be attacked as science attacks a plague. The cause must be found if the growth is to be wiped.

The causes of dictatorship cannot be simplified in a few words or a few books, but they can be brought within a broad outline and, to that extent at least, they can be approached with reason. The first thing to be remembered is that most of today's dictators came to power with the enthusiastic welcome of the people they now rule. Indeed, even today there is no important sign indicating that they are without popular support. This curious mass toleration of liberty-destroying forces is not altogether difficult to understand. In those countries now controlled by the Hitler, the Mussolini and the Stalin, there had been weak democracies. In addition to that, before the democracies, there had been long years of absolutism in government. Accordingly, the sudden rise of despotic leaders did not mean a great deal to peoples who had not been long accustomed to self-rule. Instead, because their short-lived democracies had failed to solve pressing problems, because unrest and unhappiness were widespread, they embraced dictatorships and did not hesitate to barter their liberties for economic securities.

The pity of all this is that the security thus obtained cannot last; it must be temporary because the policies followed by most dictators are policies that lead to disaster—economic disaster, social disaster, political disaster. Armaments programs constitute a case in point. Germany's feverish arms building, for example, is diverting national wealth into non-productive fields, and regimented Germans must almost certainly pay the eventual price of war or crushing taxation or both. Nevertheless, the advance of the authoritarian state cannot be stopped by pointing out to those who live under it that a day of reckoning lies ahead. No sermonizing of this sort will help; the authoritarian idea will continue to menace the peace of the world just as long as its roots are allowed to thrive. As has been repeatedly asserted by partisans of the strength of dictatorship has grown out of economic frictions that exist everywhere. Thus, Germany, Italy and Japan are "have-not" nations determined to enrich themselves. Hence, they are on the aggressive for new commercial outlets, new sources of raw materials, new territory in which to conduct world trade. The Hitler and Mussolini did not simply materialize out of nothing. The times produced them much more than they produced the times. They personally whole nations in unrest because of economic frictions that led to unrest. As long as world trade is frozen, as long as world wealth is improperly distributed, just as long will the dictators exist. Unless, this situation is rectified, Mussolini's idea may emerge as the dominant doctrine of the century, the great day-carrying force of a free civilization.

Ingratitude

We can be thankful to a friend for a few acres, or a little money; and yet for the freedom and comfort of the world, and for the great benefits of our being, our life, health, and reason, we look upon ourselves as under no obligation.—Seneca.

Forbearance

It is a noble and great thing to cover the blemishes; and to excuse the failings of a friend; to draw a curtain before his stains; and to display his perfections; to bury his weaknesses in silence, but to proclaim his virtues from the house-top.—South.

"OR ELSE—"

By VIC YARDMAN

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"RECKON," said old Nate Hurst, "that you two are a couple of these gangster fellows I hear about so much about. You," he added, nodding toward the chubby-faced young man, "must be Boris Picato. An' you little jigger, must be Sammy, Picato's bodyguard."

The chubby-faced man grinned, but said nothing.

Sammy sneered: "Now ain't he smart, though? What else do you know about us, gramp?"

Old Nate ran a hand through his tousled gray hair.

"You're bad-uns," he continued placidly. "I reckon right now you're bidin' your time to take the Fenmore bank an' shoot it a' pile o' clerks. You're awaitin' out here till they quiet down, an' while you're awaitin' you figure mebbe you can swag a little extra change by makin' me tell where 'is I got my gold mine an' my little pile o' dust hid away."

Sammy opened his mouth in mild amazement.

"Well, by jingoes," he began, but the chubby-faced man cut in on him.

"Shut up, Sammy!"

He turned to old Nate. "Mister, either you're a plumb damn fool or you're plenty smart. Anyway you guessed right. We heard you struck it rich and we aim to relieve you of some of that dough. I'll make our stop in this stinking desert less irksome, more profitable."

The chubby-faced man was no longer grinning.

His right hand was thrust in the pocket of his jacket. Sammy's hand was likewise concealed, and there wasn't any doubt in old Nate's mind what those pockets contained.

He scratched his head again and looked dubious.

It was part of his plan to look dubious and plenty dumb. Otherwise he wouldn't stand a chance. He was thinking already that that remark the chubby-faced man had made about him being plenty smart showed that already they might be on to him, and that was bad.

After a moment, he said:

"I guess you jiggers got ways to make a fellow talk. Leastwise I heard tell, an' I'm an old man, an' ain't hankerin' to have my ears shot off."

He looked worried and seemed to consider.

"Tell you what I'll do, boys. I'll agree to show you the mine if you'll promise to leave me a share for grub-stake myself. Ain't no use in me wantin' to live less you do, so—"

"Sure," the chubby-faced man cut in.

He was grinning again.

"We'll leave you your share, Pop. Where's the cache?"

Old Nate nodded and squinted toward the mountains that reared their naked peaks out of the desert to the north.

Sammy and the chubby-faced man took advantage of the moment to exchange winks.

"She's over there in the mountains," Nate said.

He glanced at the shifty, black coupe in which the gangsters had overtaken him and shook his head.

"You'll have to leave that there automobile here an' follow after me an' Lop-ears," he told them. "There ain't no road."

"No road?"

The chubby-faced man looked serious, but Sammy said: "Pop, hell, them mountains ain't mo' n' five miles away, Boris. Reckon we can walk it if this old coot can."

Nate didn't wait to hear Boris' reply, but picked up a pebble and shied it at Lop-ears.

The burro tossed its head, brayed once and then started off at a shambling gait toward the mountains.

Old Nate plodded along behind, occasionally shying a pebble at the animal.

Behind him the chubby-faced man and Sammy hesitated for a doubtful minute.

"It looks," said Boris, "as though we've either got to follow, or shoot him down for nothing. Aid shootin' now would be any good at all. Come on, Sammy."

It was early morning when the strange cavalcade began its trek across the desert.

Before two hours had passed the rising sun had burned away the last trace of the previous night's coolness.

The air was like the inside of an oven, mercilessly hot.

The two men in store clothes and low-cut shoes were suffering.

They had discarded their coats and loosened their collars.

They staggered rather than walked, and their mouths were open.

No sweat poured from their faces, because the sun absorbed any excess moisture as soon as it appeared.

Their skins, pasty-looking to start with, were burned a brilliant red. Blisters were on their feet.

Every movement of face or body was agony.

Presently Sammy, lagging several feet behind the chubby-faced man, sank to his knees.

then swung back toward Old Nate and his burro, now some distance ahead.

"Hey you!" he called huskily.

"Come back here!"

It was the fifth time he had demanded a halt, and now he held a blue automobile in his hand, and there was sweat in his eyes.

Old Nate turned with a questioning look on his tanned and wrinkled face.

He took in the tableau behind him, and came shambling back.

"Shucks," he said mildly. "The little fellow looks plumb tuckered."

"We're both tuckered, you danged old chiseler!"

Boris thrust the nose of his automatic into Old Nate's stomach.

"Now get the. Either you turn at this mine of yours within the next ten minutes, or else—"

Old Nate cackled.

"Or else—?" He repeated the words to himself.

He grinned, remembering that once a city chap had explained that "or else" meant something pretty bad in gangland.

But presently he stopped grinning and turned to look at the mountains.

They appeared to be as far away as they had back on the automobile road. Ten minutes, he reflected. Ten minutes wasn't very long, but—

He looked critically at Picato, then at Sammy. The latter was bab-

bling incoherently, asking for water.

Nate said, indicating the gun:

"You'd better put that thing away, son. It won't do you no good to shoot me. You can't find the mine yourself, an' without water you couldn't get back, so I reckon I got you about where I want you."

Picato snarled in as ugly a manner as he could without causing too much pain to his face.

"Listen, you shivverin' son of a desert rat. I'd just as soon shoot you as—"

But Old Nate was plodding back toward the burro.

His attitude was disinterested, confident.

Picato raised the automatic, and turned it again. An oath escaped his lips.

An hour later Old Nate's attention was attracted by a shot.

He stopped and turned.

Two hundred yards behind, the chubby-faced man was on his knees in the desert sand.

As the old man watched, Picato half lifted the automatic, swayed, straightened again and then plunged forward on his face.

He moved once, half dragged himself to a sitting posture, but the hand which held the automatic was needed to brace his body.

A minute passed, and then the gangster slowly sank back, curled up on the blistering hot sand as one does who is terribly tired and has

at last found a restful place to sleep.

Far, far behind another speck on the desert floor indicated the prone, almost lifeless figure of Sammy, the bodyguard.

Old Nate sighed.

"Now wouldn't yuh think," he muttered, "the two smart jiggers like them would know better? Wouldn't yuh think so, though?"

He sighed again, picked up a pebble and lifted it at Lop-ears. "Git along with yuh, yuh good-far-nuthin' bag o' bones. We gotta reach them there mountains by sundown today, or else—"

He chuckled, plodding contentedly along after the old burro.

Potato Growers Invited To Better Crop Meeting

Potato growers interested in a better 1938 crop through the use of better seed are invited to attend meetings next week. Men in 19 counties in southeastern Michigan are to meet at noon Thursday, March 24, in Pontiac. For 19 south-western Michigan counties there will be a noon meeting in Grand Rapids Friday, March 25. "Such a little difference is evident this year between certified seed stock prices and prices for good table stock that growers can find it wise to use better seed for the 1938 crop," says H. C. Moore, potato specialist of Michigan State

College.
Growers in the following counties are invited to the Pontiac meeting: Bay, Huron, Sanilac, Tuscola, Saginaw, Gratiot, Clinton, Shiawassee, Genesee, Lapeer, St. Clair, Macomb, Oakland, Livingston, Ingham, Washtenaw, Wayne, Monroe and Lenawee.

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Services held in Redford High School Auditorium, Grand River Avenue at Six Mile Road.
Sunday Services at 10:30 a. m. Sunday School at same hour for pupils up to age of 20 years.
8 o'clock include testimonies of Christian Science healing.
A Branch of The Mother Church, The First Church of Christ, Scientist, in Boston, Massachusetts.
Free to the public. 17370 Lahser Road.
The Bible, works of Mary Baker Eddy, and authorized Christian Science Literature may be read, borrowed or purchased.
You are cordially invited



THE GOOD EARTH... & The Harvest

EACH year since 1930 the utilities of Michigan have led the entire nation in the number of farms electrified. In the last eight years, the number of farms served by THE DETROIT EDISON COMPANY has tripled. Here is the record:

Year	Old Territory	New Thumb Territory
1929	8,759	(Detroit Edison began serving it Nov. 1, 1935)
1930	9,796	
1931	10,305	
1932	12,408	
1933	14,167	
1934	17,178	1,750
1935	18,760	3,370
1936	20,339	6,818

Note that the number of farms served in the Thumb increased by 5,156 or 310 per cent in the twenty-six months since The Detroit Edison Company began to serve it. To bring electricity to these 5,156

customers, the Company built 1,497 miles of farm line.

To farm families, electricity is even more important than to city dwellers, for on the farm electricity shoulders many burdens that city people never carry. Electricity performs over 100 tasks for the farm and the farm home. It eliminates much drudgery from farm life. For 10 or 15 cents a day, electricity performs such tasks as pumping and carrying water, the back-breaking labor of washday, cooking, grinding cattle feed, milking cows, and

a score of other chores. The electric rates the farmer pays to us are exactly the same as the city residence pays—resulting in an average of 3.47c per kilowatt-hour for farms—and this rate includes without charge lamp renewals and many fussy little repairs to appliances.

The farmer tilling the land, who sows the seed and reaps the harvest, is a vital part of the economic system. And any group of farmers in the Detroit Edison service area who want electricity have always been able to get our service by a fair contribution to the cost of building the necessary line. In Michigan farm electrification has been a reality for ten years.

The Detroit Edison Company

