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*Dictator and Party*



*THE DICTATOR*

The idea of totalitarian dictatorship suggests that a dictator who possesses "absolute power" is placed at the head. Although this notion is pretty generally assumed to be correct and is the basis of much political discussion and policy, there have been all along sharp challenges to it; it has been variously argued that the party rather than the dictator in the Soviet Union wields the ultimate power, or that a smaller party organ, like the Politburo, has the final say. Similarly, it has been claimed that the power of Hitler or Mussolini was merely derivative, that "big business" or "the generals" were actually in charge, and that Hitler and his entourage were merely the tools of some such group. While the dictatorships of Mussolini, Hitler, and Stalin were still intact, there existed no scientifically reliable way of resolving this question, since the testimony of one observer stood flatly opposed to that of another. We are now in a more fortunate position. The documentary evidence clearly shows that Stalin, Hitler, and Mussolini were the actual rulers of their countries. Their views were decisive and the power they wielded was "absolute" in a degree perhaps more complete than ever before. And yet this documentary material likewise shows these men to have stood in a curious relationship of interdependence with their parties—a problem we shall return to further on. As for Stalin, the famous revelations of Khrushchev sought to distinguish between his personal autocracy and the leadership of the Communist Party. Even before, the large body of material which skillful research in a number of centers had developed suggested that Stalin's position, particularly after the great purges of the thirties, was decisive. A number of participants in foreign-policy confer-



ences with Soviet leaders had already noted that only Stalin was able to undertake immediately, and without consultation, far-reaching commitments. Furthermore, the personal relationships among Soviet leaders, to the extent that they were apparent at such meetings, also indicated clearly that Stalin's will could not be questioned. A similar situation seems now to have developed in Communist China. Although our sources are quite inadequate, various indications suggest that Mao Tse-tung has achieved a personal predominance comparable to that of Stalin and Hitler. His position is enhanced by the long years during which he led the Communist Party in its struggle to survive. However, his style of leadership is different. Part of his power is based upon his capacity to inspire intellectual respect. The "thought of Mao" is a source of much of the personality cult surrounding his overweening position. (346d) It has served as a cloak by providing, in Mao's own words, the collective-leadership principle as the key to Chinese leadership. (215a)

The partisan political flavor of the argument over collective leadership and the cult of personality have obscured the basic process by which a collective leadership in any hierarchic and highly bureaucratized organization is apt to yield to the dominance and eventual rule of a single man. This monocratic tendency was noted by Max Weber and has been fairly generally recognized since. The skill and hypocrisy with which both Stalin and Khrushchev, not to mention Mao, proclaimed the "principle" of collective leadership, while each allowed the cult of their own person to go forward, can most readily be explained in terms of a desire to prevent the rise of any rivals who could always, like Kao by Mao, be accused of this "cult." (240a; also Chapter 5)

A very interesting and to some extent deviant case is presented by Fidel Castro. Basically inclined toward accepting the cult of personality and lacking any effective party organization, he found that he could not handle the Cuban situation, as it evolved toward totalitarianism. Hence a "union" with the Communist Party (PSP) had to be worked out, and Castro became its secretary general, thus providing himself with that minimum of organized support that is quintessential to the totalitarian dictator. (75) The predominance of such leaders does not destroy the decisive importance of the party,

which becomes manifest at a succession crisis. But it is nonetheless very real. Stalin's autocracy was in fact made the key point of attack in Khrushchev's speech at the Twentieth Party Congress, in which he developed his points condemning Stalin's cult of personality and attendant autocratic behavior. The argument has since been toned down somewhat.

It might be objected, however, that, had Stalin's position indeed been so predominant, the transition of power following his death would not have been quite so smooth. This objection is not valid, for the transition was not altogether smooth. Stalin's death led to the attempted Beria coup, which manifested itself first of all in seizures of power by the Beria elements at the republic levels. It was only through decisive action at the very top, and almost at the last moment, that the party Presidium succeeded in decapitating the conspiracy. (37a) The fact that the Soviet system continued to maintain itself after Stalin's death is significant; however, it points not to the lesser significance of Stalin but to the higher degree of institutionalization of the totalitarian system through an elaborate bureaucratic network, operated at the top by the political lieutenants of the leader. It is they who pull the levers while the dictator calls the signals. When the dictator is gone, they are the ones to whom falls the power.

"Party ideological unity is the spiritual basis of personal dictatorship," one experienced Communist has written. (74) Ideological unity as such will be discussed later. However, it is necessary at this point in our analysis of the dictator to speak briefly of his ideological leadership. Unlike military dictators in the past, but like certain types of primitive chieftains, the totalitarian dictator is both ruler and high priest. He interprets authoritatively the doctrines upon which the movement rests. Stalin and Mao, Mussolini and Hitler, and even Tito and other lesser lights have claimed this paramount function, and their independence is both manifested and made effective in the degree of such hierocratic authority. It also embodies the dictator's ascendancy over his lieutenants. In a firmly knit totalitarian set-up, the dictator and his direct subordinates are united in ideological outlook; a breach in this unity signalizes that a particular lieutenant is no longer acceptable. "The continuance of ideological unity in the party is an unmistakable sign of the maintenance of



personal dictatorship, or the dictatorship of a small number of oligarchs who temporarily work together or maintain a balance of power," Djilas has written, and at the same time pointed out that this enforced unity signifies the culmination of the totalitarian evolution. (74a) It provides the underpinning for the bureaucratization.

Bureaucracy has an inherent trend toward concentration of power at the top, that is to say, toward monocratic leadership, in Weber's familiar term. Totalitarian dictatorship provides striking evidence. Yet the bureaucratization does not exist at the outset, and hence the question of how the totalitarian dictator acquires his power must first be considered. Obviously he does not, like autocrats in the past, get it by blood descent, military conquest, and the like (see Chapter 6 for further details). Lenin, Mussolini, and Hitler first acquired their power through initiating and leading a movement and wielding its effective controls. By fashioning the movement's ideology, the leader provides it with the mainstay of its cohesion. It is in keeping with the "laws of politics" that such leaders become the dictators, once the government is seized. Having thus achieved absolute control of the "state," they then proceed to consolidate their power—a process in which they are aided and abetted by their immediate entourage, who expect to derive considerable benefits for themselves from the situation. There is nothing unusual about this process; it closely resembles that in a constitutional democracy, when the victor at the polls takes over the actual government. But under totalitarianism there now is no alternative; for the movement's ideological commitment is absolute, and its utopian thrust calls for the total marshaling of all available power resources. Hence the "structure of government" has no real significance because the power of decision is completely concentrated in a single leader. Any constitution is merely a disguise by which a "democratic" framework is being suggested, a kind of window dressing or facade for the totalitarian reality. Such groups in the Soviet Union and the several satellites as appear in the garb of "legislative bodies" are essentially there to acclaim the decisions made. Similarly, the judicial machinery, devoid of independence, is actually part and parcel of the administrative and bureaucratic hierarchy. The very shapelessness of the vast bureaucratic machinery is part of the technique of manipulating the absolute power that the dictator and his

lieutenants have at their disposal. It is therefore necessary to say something more about these subleaders.

The significant role played in the totalitarian system by the political lieutenants of the dictator makes their coming and going a barometer of the system. These lieutenants wield the levers of control that hold the totalitarian dictatorship together and are instrumental in maintaining the dictator in power. There was a time when the crucial function of the subleaders tended to be ignored. The important role they played after Stalin's death changed all that. Sigmund Neumann's path-finding analysis (265a) has been amply borne out. He pointed to the four decisive elements that "make up the composite structure of the leader's henchmen." (209) These were the bureaucratic, feudal, democratic, and militant.

The bureaucratic element, in the light of Neumann's analysis, is the outstanding feature of the totalitarian leadership elite. (74) Modern totalitarianism, unlike the more traditional dictatorships, is a highly bureaucratized system of power. Without this complex bureaucracy the character of the system could not be maintained. The party organization in particular is a hierarchically structured political machine, and the efficient bureaucrat is indispensable to the dictator. In this respect the similarity between such men as Bormann and Malenkov is more than striking—they were both capable and efficient bureaucrats who held their positions by virtue not only of administrative ability but, and in totalitarianism this is more important, "because they were found worthy of the supreme leader's confidence." (265b)

The second characteristic of these lieutenants is their feudal type of leadership. It is perhaps not historically accurate to speak of the development of localized autocratic spheres of power as "feudal." (57) But there can be little doubt that such was the implication of the "principle of leadership" (*Führerprinzip*) in Germany, as exemplified by the *Gauleiter*. Comparable results can be observed in the conduct of *obkom* secretaries. (89) Such "feudal" vassals are not only territorially distributed; they also operate on the top levels, manipulating important levers of power such as the secret police. Himmler, Bocchini, and Beria were thus responsible for making sure that no internal challenge to the dictator's power arose, and the dictator at all times had to make certain that such posts were filled by men of unquestionable loyalty. In return, all of these lieutenants



shared in the system of spoils, and every effort was made to develop in them a vested interest in the continued maintenance of the dictator's power.

The third feature of this leadership, called "democratic" by Neumann, might more properly be designated as "oligarchic." It is not subject to the democratic process of selection and election. The fact that these lieutenants "had better not play the boss within the circle of their associates" (265) does not produce anything like the equality of opportunity characteristic of democratically organized groups. Rather, they display the typical propensities of oligarchic groups, with their intense personal rivalries, their highly developed sense of informal rank, and their esprit de corps toward outsiders. It is this feature of the group of subleaders which found expression in the sloganized principle of "collective leadership." It is risky to become too popular within such a group, as long as the sense of collective anonymity prevails; yet it is precisely behind this facade of anonymity that the emergent dictator, be it Stalin or Khrushchev, organizes his ascendancy toward predominance within and above the group. But even after such a position has been achieved by one, the rest of the group retains the oligarchic characteristics. It might be added, though it is a separate issue, that the jealousy of the dictator of any ascendant rival helps to maintain the oligarchic character of the group of lieutenants. He can fall back upon it as a safeguard against any challenge to his power and prestige.

The final element, growing out of the revolutionary character of totalitarianism, is the militancy of the leadership. The political lieutenants must act as subleaders in the struggle for achieving the totalitarian society. Each in his particular sphere, the totalitarian lieutenant will attempt to break down all resistance to the ideological goals of the regime. He will lead the "battle of the grain," strive for higher accomplishments in "socialist competition," or encourage women to increase the number of their pregnancies. And it is through his militancy, through such battles, be they local or national, that the political lieutenants are weaned, steeled, and promoted. In short, the lieutenants have the function of providing the dictator with effective links to the vast apparatus of party and government. They also share in manipulating patronage and thereby in controlling political and administrative advancement.

The resulting clientele are likely to play a significant part in intra-party power struggles.

The general aptness of this analysis is illustrated, with some obvious reservations, in the case of Soviet internal politics. The men who surrounded Stalin prior to his death, and who since have risen to the top, were precisely of this type. They provided the dictator with an efficient bureaucratic machine and substituted its filing indexes for many a machine gun. Men like Malenkov, who worked at the apex of the political apparatus, or Khrushchev, who acted for many years as a feudal vassal in the Ukraine, produced for Stalin an efficient core of loyal supporters who were not likely to challenge his political supremacy. They came to the fore only after he died. Such internal intrigues and struggles are, of course, not limited to the period after the dictator's death. The history of both the fascist and the communist regimes shows that during a dictator's lifetime much sparring for position occurs at all levels of the party. The struggles between Zhdanov and Malenkov, among Goering, Goebbels, and Himmler, are cases in point. A dictator typically encourages and even promotes such conflicts. He thereby maintains internal mobility among his following and preserves his ascendancy, preventing any rival from endangering his own power.

Khrushchev also developed his own body of able and hard-working political assistants. The careers of men like Brezhnev and Podgorny are illustrative of the efforts of Khrushchev to surround himself with efficient and trustworthy political bureaucrats. Leonid Brezhnev is typical of the newer apparatchiki of the post-Civil War generation. Born in 1906, he joined the party in 1931, studied at a metallurgical institute, and rose through a combination of party and industrial work. From the position of regional party secretary in Dnepropetrovsk, he moved to Moldavia as first secretary and then to Moscow following the Nineteenth Congress as member of the Secretariat and candidate member of the Presidium. After Stalin's death, he was dropped from both posts and appointed head of the Political Administration of the Navy. In March 1954 he assumed the post of second secretary in Kazakhstan under Ponomarenko, became first secretary a year later, and at the Twentieth Congress in 1956 was again appointed to the top party organs. In 1957 he was elected a full member of the Presidium as a reward for his support of Khrushchev in the June crisis, and he played an



important role in the industrial reorganization of 1957-58. In 1960 he left the Secretariat and became the largely ceremonial head of state. In June 1963 he returned to the Secretariat, became deputy leader of the party, and was thus put in a position to assume an important role upon Khrushchev's departure from the scene. Presumably he played a key part in the ouster of Khrushchev in October 1964, when he became head of the party.

The background of Nikolai Podgorny is in many ways similar to that of Brezhnev. Born in 1903, the son of a smelter worker, he played an active role in the creation of the Komsomol. In 1925 he was sent to study at a rabfak, a type of school established by the Soviet government to prepare workers for entry into higher educational institutions. Podgorny then went on to study at the Kiev technological institute of the food industry. He joined the Communist Party in 1930 and then held a series of important engineering positions in the Ukrainian sugar industry. In 1939 he was named deputy people's commissar of the food industry for the Ukrainian republic. In 1950 he moved into party work in the Ukraine where he rose to the position of first secretary of the Central Committee in 1957. He was elected to the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in 1956, and in 1960 became a full member of the Presidium. Long presumed to be a protégé of Khrushchev's, Podgorny apparently deserted his patron in the crisis. Now a ranking member of the Presidium and secretary of the Central Committee in charge of party cadres, he is in a position to wield enormous influence in any struggle for power. Both Podgorny and Brezhnev typify the younger generation of political lieutenants who combine technical expertise with wide experience in party affairs and whose rapid promotion in recent years was largely the result of their loyalty to Khrushchev.

Their counterparts are to be found in the satellite Communist leadership of Eastern Europe. During Stalin's life, efforts were made to focus the spotlight of totalitarian propaganda on certain local leaders and to build them up in the image of the central director, Stalin. Admittedly this was only a halfhearted attempt. They were never allowed to claim the position of the dictator in such crucial matters as ideological interpretation, and they were continually expected to affirm their allegiance to the "Teacher and Leader of World Communism." Nonetheless, men like Bierut or

Gottwald or Rakosi were pictured as outstanding leaders, and they received the major share of the allotted quotas of propaganda lime-light. Following Stalin's death and the temporary emergence of a nonpersonal type of leadership in the USSR, it was felt in Moscow that the prominence of a Bierut or Gottwald could constitute a threat to the unity of the Soviet bloc. It is indicative of the subservience of these Communist parties to Moscow that, within half a year of the proclamation of the principle of collective leadership in the Soviet Union, a de-emphasis of personal leadership was apparent in the satellites. However, since that time and in keeping with the emergence of Khrushchev as the personal leader, Gomulka managed to achieve a measure of independence for himself and his party. The extent to which this trend has gained force was revealed at the fall of Khrushchev. A number of leaders in the satellite states issued such clearly critical statements, and indeed insisted upon visiting Moscow to receive explanations, that it is perhaps no longer even very accurate to speak of these regimes as "satellite." There is much evidence to suggest that all this has happened not only because of changes of outlook in the Soviet Union, but also because of the Chinese challenge. The conflict between China and the Soviet Union has not only provided a shelter for such radical dissidents as Albania, but has also opened up room for maneuver for those regimes that on the whole still side with the Soviet Union. How large this room for maneuver has become is manifested by the regime of Georghiu-Dej in Rumania.

But even where the dependence of the satellite political lieutenants has been great, they have differed from their Soviet counterparts in an important respect. There is considerable evidence to indicate that decision making in the USSR is highly centralized and is the prerogative of the men at the top of the party apparatus—the Presidium. The Soviet political lieutenants have little discretionary power and generally operate on the basis of either direct orders or specific instructions. Their colleagues in the satellite nations naturally also operate within the framework of general Soviet policies, but these tend to be somewhat more flexible in their local application. On the other hand, the satellite leaders tend to base their decision making to a certain extent on the anticipated reaction of the central Moscow leadership, which is not able at all times to provide policy direction. This gives the national Communist leaders



a greater degree of responsibility, although also increasing their occupational risks.

Both the Soviet and the satellite political lieutenants used to fit the categories suggested by Neumann's analysis. They operated on behalf of the central leadership and in most cases were its direct appointees until Stalin's death. Since that time the situation has changed considerably, especially in Poland. It was never true in China, where Mao Tse-tung built up an independent movement. His rise to power, his leadership of the revolution, and his control over the vast masses of China puts him in a different position. Until Stalin's death, Mao Tse-tung acknowledged Stalin's ideological supremacy and in this respect appeared in the guise of an apostle. He was accordingly on an intermediary level between a political lieutenant and a totalitarian dictator in his own right. Stalin's death left Mao in unquestioned political and ideological control of the Chinese Communist Party, which until recently continued to acknowledge the common ideological as well as the power-political bonds with Moscow. He has abandoned this link now, and we shall later discuss the Soviet-Chinese antagonism. In this he has been followed and supported by Hoxha of Albania, as he was preceded by Tito who, when Moscow tried to force him into line, defied Stalin's authority in 1948 (see Chapter 27). Hence one must conclude that the lieutenantcy of the satellite leaderships was a passing phase of the overreaching extension of a totalitarian dictatorial power.

With this problem of the lieutenants clarified, let us now return to the position of the leader. Hitler, in the opinion of Alan Bullock in his carefully documented biography, exercised absolute power if ever a man did. (46b) He thus confirmed a report given by the former British ambassador, Nevile Henderson, who wrote that Goering told him that "when a decision has to be taken, none of us count more than the stones on which we are standing. It is the Führer alone who decides." (142a) In support he quotes the notorious Hans Frank as writing: "Our Constitution is the will of the Führer." The Nuremberg trials produced massive evidence in support of this conclusion. The position of Mussolini, according to Ciano's diary, was very similar. (309a) Such concentration of power in the hands of a single man proved an element of decided weakness as well as strength. A number of Hitler's gravest errors of judgment, such as the attack upon Poland and later upon the Soviet

Union, were arrived at without any kind of consultation, let alone by group decision. All available evidence suggests that, had there been such group action involved, the errors would not have been made. (122b; 123) This truly absolute power of Hitler manifested itself during the war in his assumption of military tasks for which he was wholly unprepared. He came to picture himself in the position of making ultimate decisions in this field, which proved the undoing of the German army. (143; 121)

The position of overwhelming leadership that the totalitarian dictator occupies makes it necessary to inquire into the kind of leadership he wields. It is also necessary to explore more fully the relation of the dictator to his party following. The two questions are to a considerable extent interrelated, but for purposes of clarification they must nonetheless be treated as distinct. There have been a number of approaches to the problem of leadership. One of the more comprehensive schemes of classification is that offered by Max Weber. (380) Since his theories have had so much influence, it seems desirable to state that the totalitarian leader fits none of Weber's categories. However, Hitler has been described by a number of writers as a "charismatic" leader. (263b) Since Moses, Christ, and Mohammed were typical charismatic leaders, according to Weber, neither Stalin nor Hitler nor any other totalitarian dictator fits the genuine type. Arguments to the effect that the factor common to both Hitler and Moses — their inspirational and emotional appeal to their followers — is misleading in a twofold way. In the first place, Weber's conception of genuine charisma implies a transcendent faith in God, which was characteristically lacking in Hitler himself and in the typical follower of the National Socialist creed; the same applies to Mussolini and other Fascist leaders. In the second place, the believed-in charisma is not primarily an emotional appeal, but a faith of genuine religious content, metarational in its revealed source, rational in its theology. It is the gift (charisma) of God. Not every inspirational leader is a bearer of charisma in this primary sense. Leadership of the genuinely charismatic type has been enormously important in history, but it has typically been apolitical and quite often hostile to the task of organization. (421a)

The fact that Hitler was not a charismatic leader does not mean that he was therefore *either* a "traditional" leader or a "rational-legal" leader — Max Weber's other two types. For the traditional



leader is typified by monarchs like Louis XIV or Henry VIII, while the rational-legal leader is exemplified by the president or prime minister of a constitutional democracy. (412b) The emergence of the totalitarian dictator proves the Weberian typology inadequate. This is part of the unprecedented, unique quality of totalitarian dictatorship, which has been stressed before. The problem of what kind of leadership characterizes totalitarian dictatorships therefore persists.

It is evident from the experience to date that totalitarian leadership is built upon metarational and emotional appeals that are cast in strongly rational terms. Analysis of ideology will show that this leadership is believed to be an executor of history, of forces that arise inevitably from the predestined course of social events. It is the consequent sense of mission that has led to the interpretation of this leadership as charismatic. Such a view entirely overlooks that this "appeal" is reinforced by factors that are totally absent in the case of genuine and even routinized charisma,\* more especially the control of mass communications and propaganda and the terror apparatus (see Chapters 11 and 14). Both these features fully mature only in the course of the effective seizure of total power, but they are present from the start. The early history of the Fascist and Nazi movements is replete with the technique of mass propaganda and the manipulation of coercive violence. The notorious whippings, burnings, and castor-oil orgies of the Italian Fascists are paralleled by the *Saalschlacht* (lecture-hall battles) of the Nazi storm troopers, which led to large-scale intimidation of both followers and outsiders long before the actual seizure of power. The tactics of Lenin (see Chapter 9) also were violently coercive and made of the Bolsheviks a conspiratorial military brotherhood rather than a group competing in the market place through discussion and argument. We are not implying here that the conditions of tsarist Russia were favorable to such "bourgeois" or liberal conduct; the facts are, however, that propaganda and terror cradled the Bolshevik Party, as well as the Fascist parties.

\* This analysis is not helped, but confused by introducing the category of "routinized charisma." Since totalitarian leadership was not charismatic in the genuine sense, as shown above, it could not be "routinized" evidently. But the term is of doubtful value anyway, since the concept of charisma was originally developed in an effort to cope with the problems of "routinization," with, say, organizing the church.

Still another type of totalitarian leadership, more obviously non-charismatic, is that of Stalin, who certainly cannot be discarded, although he appears in retrospect (together with Hitler) to have been an extreme type. From the period of Lenin's death to the purges of 1936-1938, there was certainly no question of a charismatic appeal exercised by Stalin on the masses. His climb to power was made possible purely by internal bureaucratic measures, augmented by firm doses of terror and propaganda, while the appeal that rationalized his claim to power was phrased in terms of collectivization, industrialization, and preservation of the Soviet Union. But this appeal was made possible only through intraparty maneuvers, and it was organization and not popularity — for Trotsky was certainly more popular — which provided the basis for Stalin's seizure and consolidation of power. Khrushchev, who also rose by means of skillful manipulation of intraparty support, saw fit to broaden the base of his legitimacy. Broadening the mass support, often misinterpreted as "democratization," constitutes a new phase in the evolution of totalitarian leadership proper, which might be called popular totalitarianism: "a diffuse system of repression more or less willingly accepted by the mass of the population." (254) It has been suggested that this is an "internalized" totalitarianism, in which most repression would be self-inflicted. Since the controls remain all-permeating and the dictator continues to have the last word, it remains a system of total power, even though the techniques are changed. The same holds true for Mao Tse-tung, except that he, like Lenin, possesses the aura of the founder of the state; he consults, he exhorts, he persuades. But his decisions are final. (228a; 215c)

As a result of the organizational interaction between the leader and his following, the peculiar nature of this leadership is inseparable from the mythical (or, perhaps more precisely, magical) identification of the leader and the led. In the early days of the Nazi movement, a book appeared that was entitled, characteristically, *Hitler — A German Movement*. (62) The concept that helped the Nazis to accomplish this feat of collective identification was the "race." The race, of course, is not to be confused with the Germans; the Aryans are to be found among a variety of peoples, and their discovery is possible only on the basis of their identification with the leader. The corresponding concept in the communist armory is



that of the proletariat, which does not consist solely of those who actually work, except in a marginal sense. By introducing the idea of class-consciousness, the actual mass of the workers is transcended, just as the Germans are in the Aryan race concept, and only those workers who are ready to identify themselves with the leader, Marx, Lenin, Stalin, are truly class-conscious and hence intrinsically involved in the process of totalitarian leadership.

There is no particular reason for inventing a weird term to designate this type of leadership, other than to say that it is "totalitarian." It represents a distinct and separate type, along with the "traditional," the "rational-legal," and the "charismatic." It may be helpful, considering the pseudo-religious emotionalism of these regimes, to designate this kind of totalitarian leadership as "pseudo-charismatic." It bears certain resemblances to still another distinct type, also not adequately developed by Weber and his followers, the "revolutionary" leader. Indeed, it may be argued that the totalitarian leader is a kind of revolutionary leader. Certainly, the characteristic features of Hitler or Stalin are more nearly comparable to those of Robespierre or Cromwell. In any case, the general problem of the typology of political leadership is properly a topic of political theory. (110a)

It may be said in conclusion that the totalitarian leader possesses more nearly absolute power than any previous type of political leader, that he is identified with his actual following, both by himself and by them, in a kind of mystical or magical union, that he is able to operate on this basis because he is backed by mass propaganda and terror, and that therefore his leadership is not to be confused with tyranny or despotism or absolutism in their historical forms.

## 4

### THE NATURE AND ROLE OF THE PARTY

To call a totalitarian leader's following a party is quite common. And yet it is a rather bewildering use of the word, for the totalitarian following is decidedly different from the kind of party usually found in constitutional democratic regimes. The totalitarian movements outwardly adopted the forms of such parties, but their inner dynamic is quite different. They do not freely recruit their membership, as democratic parties do, but institute the sort of tests that are characteristic of clubs, orders, and similar exclusive "brotherhoods." They correspondingly practice the technique of expulsion, often on the basis of an autocratic fiat by the party leader, though formal action may be taken by a party organ. In democratic party life, the expulsion, if employed at all, is the result of a formalized judicial process. Within the totalitarian party, there is also no "democracy." The party following does not even decide if it votes or elects the leadership; it is subject to autocratic direction in matters of policy and to hierarchical control in matters of leadership. Such oligarchic tendencies are marked also in democratic parties (248), but the competition between them forces the leadership to "mind" the following.

Following Max Weber, but eliminating his normative aspect of "free recruitment" from the general definition of a political party, it may be characterized as follows: a political party is a group of human beings, stably organized with the objective of securing or maintaining for its leaders the control of the government, and with the further objective of giving its members, through such control,



ideal and material benefits. (104b; 195c; 380a) It must be stably organized in order to distinguish it from temporary factions and the like; the control of the government should be understood to cover other than political government, for example, church government; and it is very important to include both ideal and material advantages, since no party can exist without some advantages of both kinds accruing to its members. The familiar distinction between parties oriented toward ideology and toward patronage is sound only if the two criteria are understood as "predominating" rather than as exclusive. But another distinction must be drawn in the light of the facts of totalitarian dictatorship, and this is the distinction which may be expressed as that between cooperative and coercive parties. The latter are exclusive (elitist), hierarchically organized, and autocratic. This too is not an absolute contrast, but a question of the prevailing tendency. (248)

These traits of the totalitarian party have at times been rationalized in terms of the fighting position of such groups. Since, generally speaking, any group organization tends to be more tightly autocratic as the group encounters more difficulty in its fight for survival, there is some ground for thus explaining the autocracy of totalitarian movements. But what concerns us primarily here is the *fact* of such autocratic leadership, not its explanation. It would, in any case, not hold after the seizure of power, for, even after the party has achieved complete control, it does not become less autocratic. On the contrary, it becomes the vehicle for transforming the entire society in its image. This well-known dynamic process shows that there are other drives involved besides the needs of a fighting group.

The first to formulate and to set in motion the operational principles of a totalitarian party was Lenin. In his fanatic insistence on strict party discipline, total obedience to the will of the leadership, and unquestioning acceptance of the ideological program (as formulated by the leader), Lenin charted the path so successfully later followed by Stalin. In his *What Is To Be Done?* (1902), Lenin outlined the centralist organizational pattern his movement was to adopt, and he rejected firmly the idea of a broad popular party with open membership. "Everyone will probably agree that 'broad democratic principles' presuppose the two following conditions: first, full publicity, and second, election to all functions. It would be absurd

to speak of a democracy without publicity, that is, a publicity which extends beyond the circle of the membership of the organization . . . No one would ever call an organization that is hidden from everyone but its members by a veil of secrecy, a democratic organization." (205e) Such an open organization, under tsarist conditions, Lenin considered unworkable, and his conviction about a disciplined paramilitary party did not waver despite the split it produced in the Marxist ranks. The basis for the first totalitarian movement was thus laid. It can be seen, insofar as Lenin was right in justifying his course by reference to conditions in tsarist Russia, that the autocracy of the tsars is thus mirrored in totalitarianism. This must be borne in mind in considering the general problem of the totalitarian party.

These organizational principles have spread throughout the Communist movement. More particularly the German Communist Party was organized along strictly hierarchical lines, exclusive and autocratic. (98.1; 100.1) Its techniques were copied by the National Socialists, as its Italian counterpart had been by the Fascists. Even though National Socialism conceived of itself as a movement, gathering many different elements (*Sammlungspartei*), it soon developed the elitist characteristics of an autocratic leadership (*Kaderpartei*). This transformation is clearly seen in the successive editions of *Mein Kampf*. Hitler at first still accepted the principle of elections within the party as long as the leader, once elected, enjoyed unquestioned authority thereafter; he dubbed it "Germanic democracy." But he later abandoned this notion in favor of the strictly autocratic leadership principle.\*

In the matured totalitarian society, the role of the party is a distinctive one, which bears little resemblance to the role of parties in democratic societies. As has been pointed out in the preceding chapter, it is the role of the party to provide a following for the dictator with which he can identify. According to a well-known phrase of Mussolini, the party has the function of the capillaries in the body; it is neither the heart nor the head, but those endings where the blood of party doctrine, party policy, and party sentiment

\* "The movement stands on all levels for the principle of Germanic democracy: election of the leader, but absolute authority of him." *Mein Kampf*, 1928, p. 364f. Five years later it reads: "The movement stands on all levels for the principle of absolute authority of the leader, combined with highest responsibility." *Mein Kampf*, 1933, p. 378f. Cited as given by Bracher, 269 (translation mine).



mingles with the rest of the body politic. In a sense, the party may be pictured as the elite of the totalitarian society, if the word elite is taken in a very neutral sense.\* In view of the total dependence of the party upon the leader at its head, it can be argued that the party does not possess a corporate existence of its own. It is in this respect comparable to the Hobbesian state, in which all the separate members of the society are severally and totally dependent upon the sovereign. But somehow such a view seems not to do justice to the collective sense of the whole, to the almost complete loss of personal identity that the party members suffer, or rather enjoy, as they feel themselves merged in the larger whole. This feeling seems to contradict another aspect of these movements, namely, the unquestioning obedience. Fascists and Nazis never wearied of repeating Mussolini's formula, "Believe, Obey, Fight"—these were the focal points of Fascist and Nazi education. In this kind of military subordination, the individual seems to confront the commander as an alien and wholly detached being. Fascist writers found the answer to this seeming paradox in what they conceived to be the "style" of the new life. This "style of living" was proclaimed in National Socialist Germany, as it had been in Italy, to be that of the "marching column," it being of little matter for what purpose the column was formed. (465a)

The Soviets, on the other hand, never weary of proclaiming that their party is a democratically organized movement composed of class-conscious workers and peasants. Unlike the Fascist parties, the organization of the Communist Party is thus designed to give the outward appearance of intraparty democracy, with the final authority resting in the hands of the party membership through the party congress. This concept was reaffirmed in the party program adopted at the Twenty-Second Congress in 1961. Not only is the party member entitled to "elect and be elected," but he may also discuss freely questions of the party's policies at meetings and in the press, and "to criticize any Communist, irrespective of the position

\* Such a usage would, however, conflict with that suggested by Lasswell and Kaplan (196), p. 201, where an elite is defined as those "with most power in a group"; it is contrasted with the "mid-elite," who are those with "less" power, and with the class that has "least" power. Following such a definition, the party would be the "mid-elite." For a more extended discussion of these problems, see 110b.

he holds." It is reaffirmed that the guiding principle is democratic centralism: there is full discussion prior to the determination of policy, but once policy is determined subsidiary organizations are expected to execute it in full. The "business-like discussion of questions of Party policy" is said to be "free" and as such an "important principle of inner-Party democracy" (Sec. 27 of the program). Yet the highest principle is collectivism, that is to say, a collective leadership as conceived by Lenin. "The supreme organ of the CPSU is the Party Congress," the program states. The congress, which is to meet at least once in four years and is composed of delegates from all the party organizations, is the highest legislative body of the party. It elects a Central Committee as its permanent organ to legislate on behalf of the congress during the lengthy intersession periods.\* The executive organ is the party Presidium, known until October 1952 as the Politburo, and the party Secretariat is the chief bureaucratic organ. The organization of the party parallels the structure of the government. Below the central organs there exist in all the republics, except the RSFSR,† party organizations, each with its own central committee, presidium, and secretariat. These in turn are broken down into regional (*oblast*) party organizations, and below this level there are city (*gorod*) organizations and rural production subdivided into ward (*raion*) organizations. The foundations of this pyramid are the primary party organizations of factories, farms, offices, schools, and any other institutions where at least three members can be found. On October 1961 there were a total of 296,444 primary party organizations.

The structure of the Communist Party was profoundly transformed by the reorganization of 1962, which divided the party into two vertical hierarchies, one agricultural and the other industrial,

\* The relevant section 35 reads: "Between congresses the CPSU Central Committee directs the activities of the Party, the local Party bodies, selects and appoints leading functionaries, directs the work of central government bodies and social organizations of working people through the party groups in them, sets up various Party organs, institutions, and enterprises and directs their activities, appoints the editors of the central newspapers and journals operating under its control, and distributes the funds of the Party budget and controls its execution." The Central Committee is to hold no less than one meeting every six months.

† The Russian republic does not have its own party congress and central committee. The subordinate party organizations are coordinated by the Central Committee of the Communist Party itself, through its Russian Bureau.



which converge only at the republic level. This reorganization, however, is intended to reinforce rather than to dilute the power of the central organs.

We see, then, that authority and decision making are highly centralized, and during the Stalinist era the power of the dictator was such as to reduce the role of the party to a minimum after 1939. The rise of Stalin was made possible by his skillful exploitation of the position of general secretary of the party. In the internal struggle for power, he knew how to manipulate the personnel of the party organization, to put his henchmen into key positions, to demote or denounce the followers of his rivals, and generally to utilize all the resources of a large organization, including its files, as so many weapons.\* During his rule, the apparat, composed of full-time party members in a position to wield the most power, steadily developed and expanded, but already by 1925 some 25,000 party members were full-time employees of the party apparat. This apparat is now estimated to number between 150,000 and 200,000. (89a) On Stalin's death a small group of individuals in the Presidium, who took over control of the party, exercised the dictatorial power together. Control over the party was for a while concentrated in the hands of this small group, but before long the first secretary of the party (and presumably chairman of the Presidium), Nikita Khrushchev, who through the Secretariat controlled the Central Committee of the party, emerged as the key figure. However, it is generally held that his power did not become as absolute as Stalin's. It is difficult to say whether this was so because of his personal preference or because of forces in the party and the government that he was unable to subdue. Certainly his power was very great, since he directed the executive sections of the Central Committee. (89b) These sections not only control the life of the party, but also supervise the functions of the respective ministries of the government. In fact, the top party leaders often assume personal direction for various phases of state activity: it was reasserted in a resolution of the Central Committee (November 23, 1962), which provided for party guidance of the national economy.

\* Khrushchev's secret speech of February 1956 revealed that even the Politburo was broken up by Stalin into smaller committees (e.g., the "Sextet" for Foreign Affairs), which Stalin himself coordinated, and that Stalin sometimes arbitrarily forbade Politburo members to attend its sessions. (174; 209b)

This bureaucratization of power is also duplicated on lower levels. The regional party committee, for instance, also reflects through its organizational pattern both the concentration of power in the hands of the party bureaucrats and the control of the state bureaucracy by the party. The regional party committee accordingly, in addition to its own secretariat, has various sections dealing with such matters as propaganda and agitation, industry, roads, agriculture, trade unions, trade organizations, and political enlightenment. It is no exaggeration to say that the regional committee is constantly in charge of the entire life of the region, through either actual direction or supervision. As a result, the party leaders are usually swamped with work. This impairs the zeal and the revolutionary quality of the party. There is constant ambivalence in party declarations on this subject; at one point, the party warns its officials against becoming too involved in operations of the governmental bureaucracy; at another, it insists that the party must see to it that the government functions properly. For instance, the official journal of the Central Committee, in an article entitled "Raise the Organizational Role of the Party Apparatus," emphasized the necessity for *supervision* and stressed that party officials should not work for others—that is, the state bureaucrats—and should guard against red tape. (434a) Yet the Central Committee explicitly urged party members "to put a decisive end to a liberal attitude toward violators of state discipline . . . to replace them by active organizers . . . to intensify the guidance of industry, to strive for concrete results in improving the work of enterprises." (419a) The division of the party into two hierarchies, intended to increase its control over industry and blurring in some sectors the distinction between government and party, will create new problems because those functionaries preoccupied with production, whether industrial or agricultural, may increasingly neglect other functions. The production committees may serve in fact to obliterate the distinction altogether. In any case, it is only natural that, if such authority is conferred upon the *party* functionary, the *government* functionary will consult him, defer to his judgment, and let him decide if he will.

The party bureaucracy is undoubtedly the hard core of the Soviet system. Without it, not only would the political regime likely crumble, but probably the entire economic life of the country would



come to a standstill. In this sense, the party bureaucracy is far more important to the system than its counterparts in both the National Socialist and Fascist states. Since the death of Stalin, the apparatus has become even more important as a mechanism of modern dictatorship. To quote a sound assessment of one of the foremost students of the Soviet scene: "the thrust of the Khrushchevian initiative was . . . to reinforce the authority of the Party apparatus . . . This reaffirmation of Party hegemony epitomizes the road by which Khrushchev traveled to supreme power. Embodying himself in the Party and proclaiming its right to unchallenged leadership, he raised his entourage of Party functionaries to heights of authority which they could not have dreamed of in Stalin's day." (89c)

This, however, does not mean that the individual party member is unimportant. On the contrary, the Communist Party puts the greatest emphasis on the individual eligibility, personal loyalty, and political consciousness of the candidate for membership. Indeed, a member must be virtuous. As *Pravda* once stated it: "It must not be forgotten that to enter the sacred door of the Party one must be spotless not only in his public life but in his personal life as well." (441c) The new party program has reaffirmed this norm. Although this ideal Party membership opens the way to greater career opportunities, it is not devoid of hardships and obligations. Indeed, one of the outstanding features of Communist Party membership is the pressure put on the members to make them active participants in the organization's collective as well as individual undertakings. This point was strongly re-emphasized at the Nineteenth and Twentieth Party Congresses, and Khrushchev spared no words in his castigation of those party members who fail to perform their tasks. Party members are accordingly expected to participate constantly in various study circles, reading sessions, special seminars, and discussions. They are utilized in stimulating "socialist competition" in their places of work. They are expected to proselytize among their relatives, friends, and colleagues. They must be active in setting up small study groups among nonmembers to familiarize them with the teachings of Marxism-Leninism.

At the regular party meetings, the prime concern of those attending is to report on the failure or success in meeting their *partnagruzka* (party duty or obligation). In such meetings the individual members must fully account for their activities, admit any shortcom-

ings, and criticize themselves. In this they are assisted, either spontaneously or by prearrangement, by their colleagues, who also report their own delinquencies. (355) These mutual self-examinations are not restricted to party performance only. The party is also a paternal institution concerned, albeit for motives of efficiency, with the moral and personal life of its members. Accordingly, such meetings quite often develop into dissecting operations in which a member's personal life is scrutinized and castigated. Excessive drinking, sexual promiscuity, vulgarity, and rudeness to subordinates or family are subjects that crop up constantly at such meetings. And all of this is recorded faithfully in extensive protocols and individual *kharakteristiki* (individual personal files), which are kept in the party archives and copies of which are forwarded to upper party organs. During periods of accentuated militancy and crisis, such sessions often produce expulsions from the party and subsequent arrests, although these are not as frequent as the imposition of reprimands. (355)

Party members are furthermore obliged to participate in the special campaigns, such as elections or production campaigns. In the course of these mass operations, the party members agitate, propagandize, and work for the fulfillment of the tasks set. This they do after work, during lunch breaks, and in their leisure time. They thus set the example for the masses with their energy, spirit of self-sacrifice, and complete devotion to the Soviet state. All this, of course, is very time-consuming and physically exhausting. One of the frequent complaints of party members, expressed after they have defected to the West and evident also in Soviet materials, is that they are overwhelmed, overburdened, overused. (13) Yet, at the same time, all this generates considerable enthusiasm. The membership is made to feel part of a constructive machine, led by dynamic leaders, achieving unprecedented goals. Their personal identity is submerged in the totality of the party, and the might of the party becomes a source of personal gratification. That this gratification frequently takes the form of more rapid promotion seems further to enhance its value, while a sense of unity and integration frequently obscures the seamier aspects of the system. Popular totalitarianism has, if anything, reinforced this function of the membership as a stimulant of popular "consensus." Trends in the Soviet Union have in this respect assimilated the Communist to



the Fascist and National Socialist system. The situation in Communist China appears very similar. (215d)

While such total identification of the party with the leader and its related capillary function is thus quite common to all totalitarian regimes, significant differences appear when we ask about the relationship of this organization to the government. This relationship is frequently pictured as simply one of control, but the actual situation is more complex. The divergence among the Soviet, Fascist, and National Socialist regimes is symbolized by the position of the leader in each. Stalin for many years and until World War II was General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. Mussolini proudly called himself for many years the *Capo del Governo* (head of the government), while Hitler was the *Führer* (leader) of the movement and president and chancellor of the Reich at the same time. The relation of the party to the government corresponded to this set of titles. In the Soviet Union, as just described, the party was and is superior to the government, and the heads of government departments were correspondingly "people's commissars." The same holds true for China and the satellites, even though different titles were and are used. In Italy the government was for many years superior to the party; this corresponded to the Hegelian emphasis on the state in fascist ideology (see Chapter 7). But, as Germino has observed, although at first Italian Fascist theorizing on the party differed notably from the National Socialist and Communist ideologies, "these contrasts became less sharp as the non-totalitarian wing of Fascism became silenced and the party, in accordance with what appear to be the imperatives of totalitarian rule, expanded to wield extensive power independently of the governmental services." He concludes that "the Fascist, Nazi and Soviet parties are of one cloth. They do not differ in kind, for each is a totalitarian single party in an advanced state of maturation." (120b) Their relation to the government nevertheless differed.

In Hitler Germany, party and government were fairly balanced in power and influence, and the same was true of Italy in the late thirties. The German situation was strikingly characterized by Ernst Fraenkel when he undertook to interpret the Nazi system as that of a "dual state" or, more properly speaking, a "dual government." One of these he designated as the "prerogative" state, in which everything was arbitrarily decided by party functionaries

from the *Führer* on down; the other was the "legal" state, which continued to function along the lines of the established legal order. Fraenkel leaves no doubt, however, that the prerogative state was more powerful in his opinion, that it had the last word in that it could at any time break into the other, set aside its rules, or superimpose others. (102b) This situation was perhaps best illustrated at the time when Hitler is said to have exclaimed, after a court had found Pastor Niemöller not guilty, that "this is the last time a German court is going to declare someone innocent whom I have declared guilty." He had Niemöller rearrested by the Gestapo. But, precisely because it was Hitler himself who had the final say and who was both leader of the party and chief of the state, something like coequal status prevailed in the lower echelons.

It seemed at the end of war, and also under Khrushchev after he assumed the title of premier, that a similar situation was developing in the Soviet Union. As premier of the Soviet Union and marshal of its armed forces, Stalin appeared in the dual role similar to that which Hitler occupied until his death. However, the party secretariat and the premiership were in different hands, making it more feasible to assess their respective roles. Ever since that time and on all levels of Soviet life, from the agricultural collectives through the secret police to the foreign ministry, the role of the party has been strengthened, as we have seen. Indeed, there are no indications that the influence of the party is on the wane. Determined efforts to revitalize its militancy, such as a new ideological campaign and a membership drive for workers and peasants, suggest clearly that the party remains the political and ideological standard bearer and continues to supervise the activities of the state apparatus. This outlook dominates the new party program. Among the first to bear the brunt of this attack resulting from a re-emphasis of party predominance were the intellectuals, who were curtly reminded that it is the party which sets their tasks and determines their doctrinal compliance. Similarly, the state officialdom was attacked for its bureaucratic attitudes and ordered to mend its ways. Symptomatic of the party's crucial role is the fact that it is the first secretary of the party who leads the agricultural "battle" for increased grain production. The resolution of 1962 cited above reconfirms this general outlook.

The administrative-political role that the party plays in the USSR, acting as a sort of superbureaucracy controlling and penetrat-



ing the purely administrative institutions, would seem to indicate that its predominance, as far as the foreseeable future is concerned, is not likely to be challenged. Periodic purges as well as new campaigns restore to the party the necessary degree of élan and consequent cohesion, while maintaining at the same time its revolutionary fervor. How to maintain this élan and revolutionary fervor was, furthermore, not nearly as acute a problem in the USSR as it was in Fascist Italy or Hitler Germany, where large numbers of people were admitted into the party by fiat. In the USSR, membership in the Communist Party still is a privilege. And while the state apparatus maintains the system in function, it is the party, or rather its leaders, which sets new goals and keeps the totalitarian grip on the population. Without it the Soviet system would become brittle and sterile and would be likely to lose its vitality. The current emphasis on *partiinnost* (partyness) serves as a reminder to those who would like to forget it.

In order to work effectively, the party must be restricted in size. To belong to it must be an honor worth striving for. Neither the Bolshevik nor the Italian Fascist Party was very large at the time power was seized by its leaders — nor was the Communist Party in China, let alone Poland or Rumania. These parties were subsequently enlarged. The Nazi Party, on the other hand, while at the outset also exclusive and restrictive, eventually made efforts to increase its size as long as it was engaged in competition with other parties. The same holds true today of the Communist Party in Italy and France, among others. In such cases, one can expect the membership after the seizure of power to be reduced; the fact that this did not happen in Germany explains in part the position the party occupied. Yet, in a sense, the blood purge of June 30, 1934, was such a reduction of party membership; the storm troopers of Captain Röhm became an inferior group in the party hierarchy. Gradually, the Elite Guards (SS) took over the functions of a totalitarian political party.

The Communist Party in the Soviet Union increased its membership very gradually during the twenties, then grew rapidly between 1928 and 1933, reaching a high of 3.5 million in 1933. It declined sharply during the purges of the thirties, although by 1941 it again reached its 1933 level. During the war there occurred a rapid step-up to about 6 million, as the leadership tried to secure greater

support for the war effort by conferring the coveted party membership on a large number of people. During some of the war months, the party actually was growing at the rate of 100,000 people per month. Since the end of the war, there has been increased concern shown by the leaders over the low political literacy of the membership and a number of local purges have occurred, particularly in the national republics. The over-all party membership remained rather static, growing slowly by the end of 1952 to 6.9 million and by the end of 1956 to about 7.6 million. It was approaching 10 million by the time of the Twenty-Second Party Congress. At present, the party constitutes almost 5 percent of the total population of the Soviet Union.

The Italian Fascists similarly represented only a small percentage of the total population. There were about a million members by 1927, somewhat over 2 percent of the population. Up to that year, the party had remained formally open. Recruitment was "free," in Weber's sense, which was logical enough, considering that not until some time after 1926 did the Fascists achieve absolute totalitarian power. Soon afterwards the ranks were closed. But they were opened again for some months in 1932-33, and some groups, such as government officials, were actually forced to join. After 1932, membership became "more than ever a necessary condition not only for government employ," but also "for all positions of any importance in industry, commerce, and culture." (309b)

The growth of the Fascist Party was due to yet another circumstance. Mussolini liked to stress youthfulness, and therefore an annual contingent of several hundred thousand members were admitted from the youth organizations. By October 1934, the party had reached 1,850,777, and by October 1939, 2,633,514, according to official figures issued by the party. This figure would still be only 5 percent of the population, but it constituted about 17.5 percent of the total electorate. Actually, during the war, membership rose even more rapidly, and by June 10, 1943, had reached 4,770,770. This was a result of the removal of all restrictions for soldiers after the outbreak of war. The Fascists, like the Soviets, soon realized their mistake and in 1943 attempted to reverse this trend, once again trying to make the party a selective one that would be composed of "fighters and believers," the custodian of the revolutionary idea. (446a) In any case, the Fascist militia, with its half million mem-



bers, was the real heart of the party, reinforced by the "old guard" and some of the more zealous youth. This militia, characteristically, always contested the secret police's monopoly of terroristic procedures.

The German party, the Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiter Partei (NSDAP), went further, both in enlarging its size and in developing a hard core of fanatics. For one thing, it was a mass party at the time of Hitler's accession to power; it had reached approximately one million by 1933. Financial as well as general political considerations led Hitler to build it into the largest political party ever built in Germany until that time, measured not only by votes but by membership as well. There was a rush into the party immediately after the seizure of power in 1933; a further expansion took place in 1937, when all government officials were forced into the party by "law." Since the Nazi Party was thus watered down into a fairly nondescript agglomeration, hardly animated by genuine enthusiasm, the inherent need for such an elite corps reasserted itself in the SS (Schutzstaffeln) of Heinrich Himmler. The SS were at first merely a part of the brown-shirted storm troopers, but after the eclipse of the latter in 1934, the SS became separate and predominant. Indeed, this closed order, rather than the National Socialist Party, must be considered the dynamic core of the Nazi system. The SS remained always quite restricted, even though during the war the organization of the Waffen-SS (see Chapter 14) diluted it somewhat. (465b)

Generally speaking, these facts show that the party and the special cadres within it will be highly selective and elitist in a totalitarian dictatorship. This tendency toward elitism reinforces the strictly hierarchical structuring of the totalitarian parties we have noted above. (240b; 209g) The rigid hierarchy and centralized power are the result of an evolutionary process; everywhere there is at first considerable impact from below; later the party following becomes more and more subdued, until finally its influence is negligible. This is part of the maturing process of totalitarian regimes. Whether it would be accurate to describe this development as the formation of a new ruling class, as Djilas and others have done, seems arguable (74a); but there can be little doubt that a gradual stratification is now occurring. Rotation of party leadership becomes a very real problem in connection with this solidifying of the

hierarchy. Both in Italy and in Germany, the fact that the same leader remained in control throughout the existence of the dictatorship undoubtedly inhibited this rotation. Yet a purge occurred in both regimes by which some of the older subleaders were eliminated. Others no doubt would have followed after the war, if several confidential statements to that effect by Hitler, Himmler, and others are allowed to stand. In the Soviet Union and the satellites, the purge has become a regular institution, while in Communist China brainwashing, that is, systematic thought control, has been substituted. But such crises notwithstanding, the party constitutes the mainstay of totalitarian dictatorship. (209a) Without his party's support, the dictator would be inconceivable; his unquestioned leadership gives the party its peculiar dynamic, indeed fanatical, devotion to the dictatorship, and the spineless attitude of subjection of its members toward the man at the top is merely the psychological counterpart to the party's ruthless assertion of the will and determination to rule and to shape the society in its image.



# 5

## YOUTH AND THE FUTURE OF THE PARTY

Modern politics is much concerned with youth. Political parties are inclined to organize youth movements, thereby encouraging the sprouting of political interest and concern at the earliest possible moment. In constitutional democracies, such party indoctrination is quite separate and apart from publicly supported "civic education," though it surely contributes to the "making of citizens." (242) In totalitarian dictatorships the two tasks are largely merged. The organized efforts to indoctrinate youth are begun at a very early age and are used for the discovering of political talent among children.

The totalitarian dictatorship, because of its sense of mission, is vitally concerned with the transmission of its power and ideological program to the younger generation. Indeed, it is upon the young that the hopes of the dictatorship are focused, and the totalitarian regime never tires of asserting that the future belongs to the youth. Feeling little or no commitment to the past, the totalitarian regimes are unrestrained in emphasizing the failures of yesterday and the utopian quality of tomorrow. Stalin put it in a way that would fit Hitler and Mussolini just as well: "The youth is our future, our hope, comrades. The youth must take our place, the place of the old people. It must carry our banner to final victory. Among the peasants there are not a few old people, borne down by the burden of the past, burdened with the habits and the recollections of the old life. Naturally, they are not always able to keep pace with the party, to keep pace with the Soviet government. But that cannot be said of our youth. They are free from the burden of the past, and it is

easiest for them to assimilate Lenin's behests." (337d) The imaginations and the energy of the youth, the leadership hopes, will thus be harnessed to aid, and later carry on, the program of totalitarian reconstruction launched by the party. The intensity of the efforts to convert and discipline youth have no parallel in the recent traditional dictatorships, which were much more concerned with the problem of immediate political and social stability. Only some philosophic utopias like the Platonic republic come close to matching the totalitarian myths for, and indoctrination of, the young.

All of the totalitarian movements have been concerned with the indoctrination of the young. *Giovinezza* was one of the key slogans in Mussolini's rhetoric. Both the Italian Fascists and their German imitators organized youth before their advent to power. When Hitler said that the National Socialist state would have to take care that it obtained, through an appropriate indoctrination of youth, a generation ready to make the final and greatest decisions on this globe, he was merely echoing views that Mussolini had expounded from the beginning. The Italian Balilla organization (ONB), although formally embodied into the governmental apparatus by the law of April 3, 1926, formed the training ground for the Fascist Party. (120c) The law establishing it declared that Fascism considers the education of youth one of the fundamental tasks of the revolution, in an "atmosphere of discipline and service to the nation." Hitler, when he came to put forward the National Youth Law on December 1, 1936, could do little better than paraphrase these sentiments, stating that on the youth depends the future of the German people (Volkstum). The age groups in the Hitler Youth (Hitlerjugend) were somewhat higher than in the Balilla, but otherwise the story was largely the same.

All Fascists stress the training of youth outside family and school for the tough life of warriors and conquerors who are continually on the march and must be ready to endure all the hardships of such an existence. Hitler proclaimed dramatically at the party meeting of 1935: "The German youth of the future must be as hard as the steel from the plants of Krupp. The development of mental capacity is only of secondary importance." Both the Balilla organization and the Hitler Youth (365) were considered essential branches of the party, even though the Balilla remained within the framework of the government until 1937, when the secretary of the Fascist Party



personally assumed the leadership of the organization. But from 1926 onward Fascist youth was actually led by a key member of the party directorate, who also directly reported to the Capo del Governo. In Germany, the Reich youth leader likewise reported directly to the Führer. However, the German youth organization always remained much more definitely a distinctive party organization. Both organizations aspired to and eventually largely achieved the total control of youth. The German law of 1936 explicitly stated that "the totality of German youth must be prepared for its future duties," but only in April 1939 was membership made obligatory for all German youth. The Balilla did the same in 1937. We do therefore find a close parallel in objectives: they are stated for the Balilla as military, physical, technical, spiritual, and cultural—a significant ranking of priorities. In keeping with this stress on the warrior task and the warrior virtues, both organizations engaged in a great deal of paramilitary activity. It is a melancholy thought that much of the idealism and love of adventure which is perhaps the best part of boyhood was thus channeled by these organizations into activities that stimulated the lower instincts. The free organizations of the democratic countries, whether boy scouts or religious or artistic groups, and even those connected with political parties, though at times outwardly resembling these youth organizations are yet very different; even when the slogans they use are similar, when they stress character and sports and the benefits of outdoor life, the purpose is individual improvement and a finer personality rather than the brute objectives of war and conquest.

The growth of these youth organizations under the inducements and pressures of the fascist regimes was striking: in January 1924, the membership of Italian youth organizations was 60,941, while in July 1937 it was 6,052,581. In Germany, the total at the end of 1932 was 107,856, while early in 1939 it was 7,728,259. Considering the relative populations of Italy and Germany, it can be seen that the Italian organization was even more successful in its effort to absorb the entire youth of the country. However, in the course of the war, the Germans caught up, and their total by 1942 approached 10 million.

Within the context of these vast organizations, a rigid selective process was organized. Boys and girls were put through various tests before they could graduate into the next higher group, and

these graduations, in Italy called *Leva Fascista*, were accompanied with solemn ceremonies and highly emotionalized totalitarian ritual. Of course, the final test was whether a member of one of the youth organizations qualified for membership in the party, or better, the SS or the Armed SS (*Waffen-SS*), Himmler's military formations (see Chapter 13). Indeed, within the Hitler Youth, by the year 1939, an inner core of superior fellows was organized, known as the *Stamm-HJ*, or trunk of the Hitler Youth. Members of this nucleus were presumably carefully selected and had to fulfill the same racial conditions that the Nazi Party insisted upon for its members. Thus was the total enlistment of youth made a key factor in the long-range maintenance of the fascist regimes. But since these regimes did not last, we cannot be sure whether these programs would have succeeded—there are some indications that they might not. But for a more conclusive story we must turn to the USSR.

According to an official Soviet interpretation, the powerful appeal of the Communist Party is derived from the fact that "it is linked with the broad masses by vital ties and is a genuine party of the people, that its policy conforms to the people's vital interests. The role of such mass organizations as the Soviet Trade Unions and the Young Communist League has greatly increased in rallying the working people around the party and educating them in the spirit of communism." (441d) This conviction again found explicit expression in the new party program of 1961. It devotes a special section (VII) to the party and the Young Communist League (*Komsomol*). It is described as a "voluntary social organization of young people." Evidence in support of this claim has not been produced; most young people like to "run with the gang," and nonparticipation would therefore be intrinsically improbable. The party no doubt takes advantage of such willing participation, even exploiting it as a first step in selecting the more promising. For such a regime, it seems essential that the process of selection begin with the young to whom the elite character of the organization has a special attraction. The youth are made to understand that membership in the organization involves a special state of communion with the Soviet body politic, and the official acceptance of a young boy or girl into the Young Pioneers (ten-to-fourteen age group) is accordingly a ceremony celebrated with pomp and solemnity, and



marks the first step in their career. That career began with membership in the Octobrists, comprising the very young children under ten years of age, from which they are graduated into the Pioneers.

After this initial period, the abler Pioneers are recommended for promotion into the Komsomol. Entrance into this organization is more difficult and hence presumably exercises all the attraction that results from competition. (89d) The Komsomol today is a mass movement embracing the great majority of the Soviet youth. It is so organized as to provide planned direction for young people from the time that they begin their education. At the age of fourteen, if considered qualified, the Pioneer is allowed to join the Komsomol proper, where the actual training for ultimate party membership begins. In fact, both in organization and in operation, the Komsomol is a younger replica of the party. The party relies heavily on it in its various propaganda and agitation campaigns, in its political controls over the military, and in educational drives. Those who are most able become party members; in the words of the Komsomol statutes, "a Komsomol member considers it the greatest of honors to become a member of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and in all his work and studies prepares himself for Party membership." (423b) Like the Fascist organizations, the Komsomol has increased steadily through the years: in 1936 it numbered 3,800,000; in 1949, 9,300,000; in 1951, 13,380,000, and in 1962 it had reached 19,400,000. (89; 86; 423c) Thus the party has ample reserves to draw upon, and only those considered most able, or, as it happens sometimes, those with the best connections, can hope to become members.

The emphasis placed on indoctrinating the young follows quite logically from the position of the Communist Party that the people, in order to be "liberated," must be made "conscious" of their role and position. The process of making them conscious ought to start at the earliest possible time, and for this reason the party, through its affiliates, must pay special attention to the young. However, unlike the Fascists, the Communists could not operate a mass youth movement prior to the seizure of power. The tsarist oppression made necessary a conspiratorial formation, and in that situation any form of organized activity for Russian youth was out of the question. Most of the conspirators were young men anyway. The first steps in organizing a youth movement were taken a year after the

Bolshevik seizure of power. In November 1918, the First Congress of what later came to be called the Komsomol was held. It was, however, not until the Second Congress, in October 1919, that the youth movement was made, in terms of both program and organization, into an affiliate of the Communist Party, a relationship continuing to this time.

The history of the Komsomol, in many respects, is a reflection of the problems and difficulties that the party faced. (89e) There was a period of disillusionment during the NEP when many young stalwarts thought the revolution was being betrayed; there was a time of considerable Trotskyite support in the ranks; then came the enthusiasm and the challenge of the First Five-Year Plan and the collectivization of agriculture. The party employed the energies of the young in combating inertia, old traditions, and the peasants in pushing through its program. The industrial center, Komsomolsk, far in eastern Asiatic Russia, was built under most difficult climatic conditions by the young Komsomolites. Then came the purges and the decimation of the thirties, particularly those of the Yezhov period. The Komsomol suffered great losses, like the party (see Chapter 15), but at the same time the purge opened up new career opportunities. When the world war came, Stalin once again relied heavily on the youth for the partisan battle and for ideological leadership in the armed forces. (208) The young Komsomolites became guerrilla leaders and political officers; many were promoted into the party membership. And after the war, they were called upon to help in the task of reconstruction.

Since 1956, the party has harnessed the Komsomol for yet another task: to combat the growing juvenile delinquency in Soviet cities. This problem, common to all urbanized societies, has become a source of major concern to the Soviet leadership, and the Komsomol is called upon to show the way to "Soviet morality." Nonetheless, there are signs that some of the revolutionary qualities of the Soviet youth are on the wane, and that even among the Komsomol there are those whose interests tend more toward jazz and good living than to efforts "to build communism." The following harangue, which was published recently in the Soviet Union, illustrates the difficulties: "A playboy is recognized by his special style of slang speech and by his manners; by his flashy clothes and impudent look . . . the female of the playboy species wears tight-fitting clothes



which reveal her figure to the point of indecency. She wears slit skirts; her lips are bright with lipstick; in the summer she is shod in Roman sandals; her hair is done in the manner of fashionable foreign actresses." (454) The Soviet press has been forced to acknowledge that even Komsomolites have been guilty of criminal activities. During the fifties, the agricultural campaign in the virgin lands (see Chapter 20) gave the Komsomol an opportunity to appeal again to the imagination of Soviet youth and to channel the energies of the younger generation into tasks that benefit the Soviet state. The Soviet press since 1955 has been full of accounts of young Komsomolites leaving the cities and going east, to build new state farms in Kazakhstan and Central Asia. This movement, although officially inspired, doubtless has occasioned enthusiasm among some of the young; many young people see in this kind of work a new opportunity for heroic struggle on behalf of communism.

That the party continues to expect the Soviet youth to lend its energies to the many and continuing tasks of building "communism" was demonstrated by the following words of Khrushchev, addressing in April 1956 the All-Union Conference of Young Builders:

Comrades! Hundreds of thousands of new workers will be required for the major construction projects of the Sixth Five-Year Plan. To provide the personnel for these construction projects the Party Central Committee and the Soviet government will appeal to Soviet youth to send their finest comrades to build the most important enterprises.

The Y.C.L. [Young Communist League] has 18,500,000 members. Will the Y.C.L., then, not be able to assign 300,000 to 500,000 members from its ranks? I believe they will be quite able to do so. (*Stormy applause.*) We believe in the energy of the Y.C.L. and the young people; we believe in their militant spirit. We know that our young people aren't afraid of cold weather or the Siberian taiga. (*Applause.*) (441q)

The situation in Communist China closely parallels the Soviet setup. The Communist Youth League is to the Chinese party what the Komsomol is to the Soviet party. It too serves as an instrument for the political and ideological indoctrination of young people, as an organization for channeling youthful energies and enthusiasms into economic and social projects useful to the party, and as a recruiting ground for future leaders. The Chinese Communist Party throughout its history has had a variety of youth groups

closely associated with it. In 1949 the New Democratic Youth League was established on a national basis as a broad organization requiring of its members only that they accept the basic principles of the "new democracy." Paralleling changes in the Chinese political scene and in the role of the party itself, the NDYL gradually became more restrictive, and its evolution was completed by the change of its name in 1957 to the Communist Youth League. Its membership rapidly increased during these years, from 3 million in June 1950 to 20 million in 1956, and by 1959 had reached 25 million. Below the CYL, as in the Soviet Union, there exists the Young Pioneer organization, grouping children under the age of fourteen. This organization has grown even more rapidly than the CYL. Its membership of 1.9 million in 1950 had soared to 50 million by 1960.

Those who have had contact with the youth of today's Communist totalitarian regimes testify that the regimes appear to have been successful in making many young people identify their future with that of the system. (240d) In view of the magnitude of the efforts just described, this is hardly surprising. However, such identification may take different lines, which are sharply in conflict with each other. Speaking generally, there is a conflict between two sets of values, both of which in some sense serve the purpose of the regime but which are also mutually exclusive. On the one hand, there is the mystique of collective life and activism and social obligations, which emerges most clearly in the notion of volunteering for work in the virgin lands. On the other hand, there is the mystique of science and technology and expertise. This tends to have individualistic implications—it is accompanied by demands for less political interference. Meetings and political activities are seen as interference. But the defenders of both points of view claim that theirs is the best way to build communism. Even so, totalitarian regimes may, given time, succeed in transforming the thinking and the attitudes of an entire society—and thus perpetuate themselves for a long while to come.

There is one further aspect of the Communist approach to youth that has assumed increasing importance in recent years. It is the world-wide cooperation of the youth groups. An international youth movement, paralleling the internal totalitarian youth organization, was set up as early as November 1919. This organization, known as KIM (Communist Youth International), after the fail-



ures of revolutionary upheavals in Germany, Poland, and Hungary did not assume world-wide importance until 1945, when the old KIM apparatus was reorganized into the World Federation of Democratic Youth (WFDY) under the control of its Soviet affiliate, the Anti-Fascist Committee of Soviet Youth, which is the foreign branch of the Komsomol. The close link existing between this organization and the Soviet Communist Party illustrated by the fact that in East Germany the WFDY organization was first set up in 1945 by Ulbricht and Hiptner, old Comintern agents. At present, the WFDY claims 83 million members, which includes the 19 million Komsomolites and many more millions in the satellite and Chinese youth organizations. Its activities, be it "anti-germ-warfare" agitation or the Stockholm peace appeal, used to follow closely the foreign-policy propaganda line of the USSR. Little is known about how the split in the world Communist movement has affected this organization. The split has brought on a crisis and its future is uncertain.

Even this cursory review shows how keen is the interest of totalitarian dictatorship in the development of youth. As such a regime succeeds in capturing the minds and the energies of the young, it will be able to build a solid foundation for an ideological consensus. It was very recently put forcefully by a Chinese leader who addressed the Ninth Congress of the Communist Youth League as follows:

The Youth of our country must carry forward the great spirit of arduous struggle of the predecessors of our revolution. They must do their utmost and make themselves the shock force of socialism . . . At the Tenth Plenum of the Eighth Central Committee of the Communist Party, Chairman Mao, our beloved leader and teacher, pointed out with great emphasis that it is necessary to strengthen the class education of youth to ensure that the revolution in our country will not be perverted in generations to come . . . It is a great strategic task of the proletarian dictatorship and also a fundamental aim of the work of the Communist Youth League to hold aloft the red banner of the great thinking of Mao Tse-tung, so as to help turn the young people of the coming generations in our country into proletarian revolutionaries. (435)

In all the totalitarian regimes, the party has assumed full responsibility for the ideological training of the younger generation and has used the youth movement both as a training ground and as

a recruiting device for ultimate party membership. Only the USSR, however, has had the opportunity to maintain its system for a longer time-span than one generation. Over this period, the Soviet leadership has devoted ceaseless efforts to assure itself of the loyalty and support of the youth. Indications are that, given the complete monopoly of communications, with constant, unremitting, and simultaneous appeals to the future through grandiose projects, it is difficult for the young to resist the totalitarian temptations.



## THE PROBLEM OF SUCCESSION

The history of government as a formal scheme of organization tends to obscure the problem of what happens when those who hold effective power disappear. The problem can be stated also as that of establishing a convincing identification between the departed ruler(s) and the newly instituted one(s). In the modern West, two schemes have predominated: that of the traditional monarchy and that of the constitutional republic; constitutional monarchy, which from the late seventeenth until the middle of the nineteenth century was seen as a happy synthesis of the schemes of Locke and Benjamin Constant, proved to be an unstable transitional form. In a monarchy of the traditional Western type, the problem of succession is solved by a law which provides that legitimate blood descent should be, as in private property, the basis of succession. This law persisted throughout the absolutist period. So strongly held were the convictions upon which it rested, that wars were fought over successions. In earlier autocracies legitimation by blood descent, implemented by the approval of a priesthood, was common. Often elaborate rituals had to be observed. In the later Roman empire, the actual control of military power, epitomized in the acclamation by the Praetorian Guard, became decisive. In a constitutional republic, the problem of succession is, in a sense, eliminated because the rulers are periodically changed as the result of constitutionally organized elections, while the constitutional order is considered as self-perpetuating under an amending procedure that the constitution itself provides for. In totalitarian dictatorships, on the other hand, the problem of succession presents itself anew with real insistence. (110c; 37c)

Insofar as totalitarian dictatorship retains the outward, formal features of a constitutional republic, it may be able to fall back upon certain procedures in the crisis necessarily precipitated by the death of the leader. In a way, this may be the most important aspect of the retention of "constitutions" in totalitarian dictatorships, apart from the propaganda value which the making of such constitutions has for pressing the claim that the totalitarian dictatorship is a democracy. But it would be folly, indeed, to assume that the succession to Lenin or Stalin was actually settled in a democratic process "from below," since all the dynamics required for the functioning of this process, like freedom of expression and competing parties, are nonexistent in the totalitarian state.

The action of the larger, more popular bodies, like the Supreme Soviet, is purely acclamatory. This still leaves open the question of how succession is to occur. The build-up of adulation for the total-leader and the development of the vacuum around him create a most dangerous hiatus the moment this mortal god dies. In the nature of things, the leader has not been able to designate a successor of his choice; even if he had, it would leave such a person without real support after the leader is dead. Indeed, such a designation might well be the kiss of death. As we have seen, persons close to Stalin were "eliminated" by the group of lieutenants that found itself in control of the actual source of physical power after the death of the leader.

The documentary evidence we have on the subject of succession is rather scanty. Besides the story of Stalin's rise to power after Lenin's death, when the Soviet Union was not yet fully developed as a totalitarian state, we have only the somewhat controversial data concerning Khrushchev's rise and fall. There is also some documentary evidence regarding potential successors to Hitler and Mussolini. This evidence allows a tentative conclusion: the problem of succession was unsolved, the question of who might take over was an open one, and there is little doubt that in Germany there would have taken place a sharp struggle between the military men and Himmler and his SS. Who would have won is hard to say. If the Soviet Union gives any clue, the army might have made common cause with certain key party leaders, such as Goering, and eliminated Himmler. That a military man took over from Hitler did not constitute a succession; the totalitarian regime was in an



advanced state of decomposition. In the case of Mussolini, the army's attempt to supersede him was foiled, but it was foiled by Nazi intervention, and so that case is even more inconclusive. It is rather interesting that earlier in his career Mussolini had sought to dictate his successor. After 1929, it was to be the Grand Council's task to pick a successor; various leaders, like Ciano, Italo Balbo, Bocchini, and Buffarini, as well as the party secretary, Starace, were mentioned from time to time. In any case, all signs point toward the conclusion that in Italy, too, a bitter struggle would have ensued among various contenders. All this is speculation, however. In fact, the case for both Hitler and Mussolini is vitiated by the fact that they were defeated in war; their successors were the victors.

Returning to the Soviet Union, it now seems pretty clear that the hiatus left after the death of Lenin was at first filled by no one. Into the breach stepped a party clique of top leaders who immediately proceeded to compete with one another for ultimate control. In light of the evidence that Fainsod and others have sifted (89f; 253b; 49b), it seems that Trotsky, who considered himself entitled to the succession, immediately aroused the mute antagonism of Stalin. The fight was focused on a disagreement of policy; whether this disagreement precipitated the antagonism or whether the antagonism begat the disagreement in policy is an idle question — the two were obviously part of the same total situation. Stalin, after isolating Trotsky and destroying his power, as well as that of his associates, then turned on those who had assisted him in this task and in turn isolated and destroyed them. At the end of three years, he emerged as the omnipotent leader in full control of the regime.

Stalin's emergence in control of total power was facilitated by the absence of an established and well-functioning state bureaucracy and by his ability, as party secretary, to manipulate the party organs. The local party organs had by the twenties already assumed important administrative functions. These functions were not infringed upon either by the secret police or by the army, then weakly organized on a territorial militia basis. (387) And insofar as the party was greatly involved in local administrative-operational problems, a central headquarters — the Secretariat and the secretary — tended to assume paramount importance in questions not only of patronage but also of occupational loyalty. Stalin's vital capacity for

such work, as well as his actual position, was hence crucially important to his seizure of power.

The situation after Stalin's death turned out to be the same as after Lenin's: a group of insiders took over control and proclaimed themselves collectively in charge.\* The fluid character of the situation thus created was demonstrated by the change which occurred in the top Soviet leadership circles after March 1953. Five distinct phases of development in the succession struggle may be distinguished between 1953 and 1956. The first stage, lasting only a few days, resulted in Malenkov's inheriting most, if not all, of Stalin's power. During this brief interlude, Malenkov basked in the sunshine of Soviet press acclamation and, more concretely, held the crucial posts of premier and party secretary. In a notorious photomontage *Pravda* portrayed him in an intimate huddle with Stalin and Mao Tse-tung; all other participants were eliminated from the original photograph. This stage, however, was short-lived. The other lieutenants quickly gathered together to prevent the emergence of a new dictator who subsequently might wish to promote his own lieutenants. Malenkov was forced to concede one of his power posts, and Khrushchev replaced him as party secretary. The principle of collective leadership was proclaimed, and *Pravda* declared that "collectivity is the highest principle of party leadership" and that "individual decisions are always or almost always one-sided decisions." (441e)

This second stage, however, was also short-lived. For obscure

\* Those readers interested in the possibilities and risks of political prediction may find it illuminating to compare what follows with the discussion in our first edition, written in 1955, on pp. 49-50: "This experience, while of course not conclusive, suggests that it would be rather risky to draw any inferences from the present state of affairs in the Soviet Union. It is too soon, presumably, to know what is going to be the outcome of the struggle over succession. But we are, in the light of the foregoing analysis of totalitarian dictatorship, justified in doubting that anything like group control or collective leadership has been permanently substituted for monocratic leadership. It is, as we have seen, at variance with the inner dynamics of the system." There is no apparent reason to suppose that it will be different this time, even though two men, Brezhnev and Kosygin, have been entrusted with the leadership of party and state. Prophets have of course once again appeared, proclaiming the emergence of a nontotalitarian system in the Soviet Union, but the sequestering of Khrushchev indicates how far from such a change the Soviet system remains. It seems more likely by far that from the group which unseated Khrushchev there will in time emerge a true successor to his autocratic pre-eminence.



reasons, Beria, the head of the secret police, felt it necessary to assure his own safety through further acquisition of power. (37d) The third phase was thus one of a power struggle between Beria and the other leaders, apparently headed by Malenkov. Despite initial successes, mirrored particularly in increased control over some of the national republics (notably Georgia and the Ukraine), Beria and his colleagues were finally arrested and liquidated. Beria's lack of prudence, possibly because of circumstances beyond his control, probably united the other leaders against him and led to his fall. His removal from the "collective leadership" necessarily involved an internal reshuffling, which inevitably produced subsequent shifts. The pattern as seen in the fourth phase brought a polarization of power between Malenkov and Khrushchev, in the respective capacities of premier and first secretary of the party, especially in view of the former's commitment to a consumer-goods policy and the latter's emphasis on agricultural and heavy industrial expansion. The fifth phase began early in 1955. Khrushchev's control of the party apparatus proved decisive, and the January 1955 session of the Central Committee fully endorsed its boss's position. Malenkov resigned early in February and Bulganin, backed by the military but a willing collaborator of Khrushchev's, became premier. At that point, the highly developed and bureaucratized state administration and the party seemed like two Greek columns supporting the edifice of the Soviet state, with collective leadership providing the arch that kept them together.

There followed the anti-Stalin campaign. (209c) This campaign began in fact a few days after his death. References to Stalin soon became quite scarce; greater emphasis began to be placed on Lenin;\* collective leadership was contrasted with the harmful effect of one-man rule. The open attack came in February 1956. At the Twentieth Party Congress Mikoyan frankly criticized a number of Stalin's basic tenets while also referring to some purged victims of Stalinism as "comrades." Then a few days later, at a secret night session of the congress, Khrushchev came out with a detailed and highly emotional attack on Stalin, charging him with a variety of offenses. These ranged from inept leadership in the war against

\* References to Lenin soon became idolatrous. At the Twentieth Congress he was constantly referred to as "the immortal teacher" and "the source of all the successes of the Party."

Hitler to charges of terrorism and murder. The stage was thus set for the disintegration of the idol. (174; 209b)

Reports of the speech spread rapidly throughout the Soviet orbit, and special meetings were held with party members to whom a Central Committee letter on this subject was read. In some places, particularly Georgia, convinced Stalinists reacted very unfavorably. There were reports of demonstrations and shootings in Tbilisi. An even greater stir occurred in the satellites, where the attacks on Stalin were more energetic. One of the secretaries of the Communist Party of Poland (United Workers' Party), Jerzy Morawski, openly wrote in the party paper of the terror and damage wrought by Stalin and of his paranoiac tendencies. In some cases past grievances were denounced and previously purged (and hanged) Communists rehabilitated.

Insofar as succession is concerned, this development makes the emergence of an absolute ruler an unlikely prospect in the immediate future. It certainly excludes the possibility of anyone's claiming the mantle of Stalin, although one cannot exclude entirely an alternative of this type. The more likely prospect, however, is that the present leadership will continue to claim that it has returned to true Leninism and has abandoned the cult of personality. But Leninism does not, as the record shows, exclude the possibility of one-man rule, and it would be possible for a new ruler to claim that he is enforcing a Leninist policy while in fact maximizing his own power. That is precisely what Khrushchev did. In the final phase of the succession crisis he succeeded in effectively strengthening his own power in the party apparatus. The Twentieth Party Congress resulted in an extensive purge of the Central Committee (about 40 percent of its members were dropped) and was preceded by similarly thorough purges of the republican central committees. At the congress Khrushchev delivered the political report in which he severely criticized some of his colleagues. He increasingly took the initiative in international affairs, while the other Soviet leaders followed. But apparently opposition gradually crystallized among them. This opposition culminated in a dramatic but abortive effort to remove Khrushchev from his key position in 1957. Why did it fail? because Khrushchev in a skillful maneuver succeeded in mobilizing the lower echelons against the top leadership. It failed because Khrushchev's rivals did not fully appreciate the decisive



role of the party as a corporate whole in determining the succession. The conflict was, as in the twenties, not merely one of personal rivalries, but also one of issues. Khrushchev favored conciliatory gestures in foreign policy, such as the re-establishment of friendly relations with Tito, while insisting on the continuing importance of heavy industry and linking both with a renewed emphasis on the world revolutionary goals. Molotov favored the Stalinist course abroad, while Kaganovich and Malenkov advocated the need for consumer goods at home. The showdown came in the summer of 1957. In June of that year the opposition, having grown to seven of the eleven members of the Presidium of the Central Committee, demanded the resignation of Khrushchev. He countered by refusing to resign unless the Central Committee itself joined in the request, counting on the solid following he had in the Central Committee. A substantial delegation from the latter demanded that a meeting be held, maintaining that the Presidium as its executive had no right to effect a change in the top leadership without its assent. Khrushchev as general secretary quickly summoned a gathering and achieved a stunning victory, 251 of the 312 members present voting to retain him. The tables were then turned on the opposition. The key oppositionists, Molotov, Malenkov, and Kaganovich, were removed from the Presidium and this body, after being enlarged to fifteen, was packed with Khrushchev followers. Then various other rivals, including Marshal Zhukov who had supported Khrushchev, were eliminated in the sequel, and the succession was settled. During the next two party congresses (the Twenty-First and Twenty-Second) such fulsome adulation was bestowed upon Khrushchev that he himself had to protest: his style remained different from Stalin's, built as it was upon the emphasis on the role of the party and its unity. As Fainsod has commented in concluding his review of these developments: "Embodying himself in the Party and proclaiming its right to unchallenged leadership, he [Khrushchev] raised his entourage of Party functionaries to heights of authority which they could not have dreamed of in Stalin's day." (89o) It is as yet hard to know whether his failure to show corresponding skill in 1964 was due to ill health, to the participation of his intimates in the plot, or to other causes, perhaps in combination with these. Many of his innovations had been opposed inside the party, and this may have led to a "ganging up" against him, although the continua-

tion of his key innovations renders this explanation rather unsatisfactory.

In view of the inconclusive nature of the empirical evidence on succession, it may be worthwhile to consider the question from the standpoint of the inherent rationale of the totalitarian system. For it would seem that succession necessarily rests upon the legitimation of a government's power. It exposes a regime's authority to its greatest strain, since the passing away of the ruler calls not only his but the system's authority into question. The broad problems of authority go beyond our present purpose, but it should be noted that authority may result from brute force; it may also be the consequence of rational persuasion or effective participation in the choice of its wielder. Authority of the kind resting on force is most readily transferred, because all that is needed is to pass on the means of coercion. (110d)

It would seem that, since the dynamic focal point of the totalitarian dictatorship is the leader-party interdependence, the party would provide the key to the succession problem, not as a democratic and cooperative group of more or less equal individuals, but as a bureaucratic apparatus with an hierarchical structure whose decisions are reinforced by a ritual of acclamation. Hitler himself spoke of a body of his lieutenants acting like the Vatican Council. (150c) With all due allowance for the fundamental differences, the doctrinal cohesion of the faithful, upon which the legitimacy of hierarchical leadership in an ecclesiastical organization rests, allows for some analogical questions. Is not the election of a spiritual head of such an organization by a group of senior members of the hierarchy an indication of how succession in totalitarian dictatorship may become formalized, if totalitarian dictatorship lasts as a governmental organization? Is not the authority of such a leader legitimized by this very choice made by his peers in the hierarchy of believers? Is not such a procedure "convincing" in terms that fit both the ideology and the power structure of the totalitarian dictatorship? Against such a hypothesis, weighty arguments have been advanced in support of the contention that the police, having gained the upper hand in the totalitarian dictatorship, will manipulate the succession. (112a; 5c) But what is the basis of such claims? Must not the police seek to demonstrate its orthodoxy, and how is it to accomplish this task, except by appealing to the party? There



may be much cynical mockery among actual power holders in such a system, but do we find even a Himmler ever abandoning the key ideological framework of the party-in-being? \*

It would seem that there is a rather simple explanation for this phenomenon. The "commissars" ruling within such a totalitarian system are eminently practical men; they are as far removed from contemplative, theoretical studies as they can be. This would predispose them to avoid ideological controversy or even reflection upon party slogans. Changes in these slogans will become necessary from time to time, but these are never a total rejection or even a rejection of the major part of the established set of formulas which have been learned by all the adherents. It would make little sense to appeal to others, to the inert and intimidated masses who are not adherents and organized in the dominant party. In short, the party would seem to fill the breach, bridging the hiatus created by the death of the leader, and only he who fully understands its role has any chance of succession. And who will win in the ensuing struggle is a question of personality, of effective control over the apparatus, and of skillful manipulation of the various competitors. The succession that involves rejuvenation at the very top of the hierarchy cannot be managed except in interaction with and support by the apparatus.

It is thus from this inner sanctum of the system, this apparatus that is its mainspring, that a new leader will finally emerge. This process of emergence may be brief or long, depending on the interaction of the many variables involved. During the interregnum of determined succession, effective leadership is provided, symbolically, by the party—as the personification of ideological unity and continuity—and, actually, by the top levels of the apparatus. Within this apparatus the fight for power, as already seen in the Soviet experience after Lenin's and Stalin's deaths, is likely to be fierce. This much it is fairly safe to predict, and it applies not only to Soviet leaders, but also to Mao Tse-tung, Tito, Gomulka, and others. In all these situations, it will be well to follow closely the maneuverings in the party, and more especially its top echelons (this generalization probably applies as well, *pari passu*, to nontotalitarian one-party regimes).

\* When he finally did, in his secret negotiations with Count Bernadotte, it was only to save his skin in the face of imminent defeat.

However, the struggle for succession is not likely to disintegrate the totalitarian system, as so many have been inclined to hope, even though the conflict is intense. For the party remains, with its cadres and its hierarchy. The appeal to party unity is a powerful one, and failure in such a struggle is apt to be fatal and consequently will be waged with caution. All of those concerned in the succession have a vested interest in the continued maintenance of the regime and are not likely to tear it apart recklessly. The closing of the ranks that occurred after Stalin's death is an illustration in point. In the initial period after the dictator's death, then, compromise and mutual adjustment are likely to be the policies followed. A political principle of mutual "no trespassing" is to prevail, with due warnings and penalties for those who trespass against their colleagues.

This, in a sense, tends to produce a frightening Orwellian image of an entire system that embraces millions—politically controlled masses, being ruled by an impersonal collective, without individual faces and individual voices. The masses have no real indication of internal relationships and developments within this closed circle. They know only what they read and see in the official newspapers, which dutifully publish on every state holiday a somber photograph of the "collective leadership"—a group of stony-faced men. Changes within that group become apparent only after they have physically manifested themselves—through fall from the apparatus and subsequent liquidation. A careful reader is then able to plot, *ex post facto*, the internal web of intrigue. But even within a few years all references to the fallen colleague are expunged from the record and he ceases to have existed.

This element of secrecy and total separation from the masses is precisely what makes unlikely the disintegration of a totalitarian system through a struggle for succession. Political struggles will occur within the apparatus as they must among men wielding power and wanting more. But no leader will be able to break out and make a mass appeal. No ideological conflict of the pretotalitarian scale of Trotsky against Stalin will be possible. Totalitarian monopoly of all communications and all weapons will make it unfeasible. The intricate system of cross-controls will make it difficult for any one leader to gain the uncontested support of a power structure, like the army, for his cause. The internal struggles are apt to be



resolved within the apparat, and only its aftermath is likely to reach the masses, as was the case with Beria and Khrushchev. By this time the question of disintegration will be meaningless. (112b)

Political power, however, is never static. The collective leadership of a totalitarian system is likely to be subject to gradual elimination of its fringe elements, and a tendency toward the emergence of central contestants in time is likely to manifest itself. The logic of power points toward its monopolization, and the history of the three Soviet successions seems to confirm this. The process of decision making, and consequent accountability, unavoidably leads to internal inequalities in the "collective leadership," and true leadership again begins to assume a personal veneer, even if still contested by two or more competitors within the closed circle of the apparat. But it is within the apparat, and not on the barricades of ideological conflict, that new totalitarian leaders are begotten, destroyed, or eventually made triumphant. This conclusion is sometimes contested in terms of the 1957 struggle, which was settled by an appeal to the Central Committee rather than within the Presidium. In this connection it is said that the appeal to special interest groups was more overt than ever before: Khrushchev's proposals clearly benefited the party and threatened the state bureaucracy, and his opponents represented the interests of the threatened groups. *Pravda* and *Izvestiya* occasionally took sides in the struggle. What then is to prevent a widening of conflict in the future and public appeals on behalf of the conflicting parties?

It seems that one of the major reasons why this will not occur is because no one leader will align himself exclusively with a single interest, but will attempt to conciliate or at least neutralize the others. In connection with Khrushchev's ouster in October 1964, many speculations and various interpretations have been advanced, stressing the role of the managerial bureaucracy, or the party bureaucracy, or the military, or sections of these groups. But what seems, in terms of succession, the most important point is that the ouster was manipulated by men who utilized the established party machinery, much as a dissident group in a British party might use this formation to overthrow the government. Lest false analogies be drawn from such an observation, it should be noted that the decision about the successor was secretly planned and that no part in choosing a successor was assigned even to the party membership at large,

let alone the electorate, which might well have opted for Khrushchev. Indeed, Khrushchev was kept virtually incommunicado, which suggests that his successor feared his or a broader challenge of their decision.