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WHAT IS FASCISM



Rev. Cornelius Lucey

ITS PRINCIPLES EXPLAINED

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The
Principles
of
Fascism

By

REV. CORNELIUS LUCEY, M.A., D.D.

ALSO

FASCISM AND COMMUNISM

By REV. BERNARD GOODE

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The Principles of Fascism

REV. CORNELIUS LUCEY, M.A., D.D.,

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OUT of the welter of ideas and movements in post-War Italy Fascism emerged. Its coming was sudden and unexpected. In 1919 it was still undreamt of. By the end of 1922 all Italy was in its grip. But a few years later it was challenging—successfully challenging—Marxist leadership in the world revolutionary movement. Today it is for Marxists everywhere public enemy number one; in fact so fearsome has it become that the forces of the Left are ready to ally themselves with Religion, democratic Capitalism and all their other former bugbears in their life-and-death struggle to stay its onward sweep.

Beside such meteoric progress the growth of Marxism seemed commonplace and halting. Worse still, in addition to making Socialism look a sickly movement, a movement of the past that had failed to make good in spite of the golden opportunities created for it by the post-War anarchy, the emergence of Fascism was of itself a damaging refutation of the case traditionally made by the Marxists. In the first decades of the

present century even his bitterest opponents had half come to believe that Marx was right in his insistence that the trend of economic and social development was set irrevocably in the direction of classless collectivism. And many of them hoped for no more than to stave off the catastrophe for their own day. But now another system was in the field to the utter confounding of Marx's prophecy. Marx had envisaged no system as possible between Capitalism as he knew it and Socialism. Yet Fascism had come, though Fascism was neither the old orthodox Capitalism nor the promised Socialism. It was a new system, distinct both from the one and from the other. Giving the lie direct, therefore, to Marx, it served at once to shake the confidence of his followers and to encourage those hostile to his ideology.

Historically and ideologically Fascism may be described as the reaction to *laissez-faire* Liberalism on the one hand and Communism on the other. However, it would be a mistake to think it the exact antithesis of either system. Actually, certain elements from each of them are incorporated in its synthesis, losing their individuality to this extent only that they are subordinated to the more characteristically Fascist principles.

What are the characteristic principles of the Fascist system? This is a question not so easy to answer, partly because so much of the current literature on the system is patently propagandist, partly because Fascism is on its own showing a creed of action rather than of abstract principles, and partly, too, because the Italy of Mussolini and the Germany of Hitler—the two great Fascist countries of the moment—differ in so many respects from each other. Besides, we must bear in mind that Fascism is a complex thing. It is, in fact, a political system, an economic regime and a philosophy of life all in one. It has to be examined under all these aspects, therefore, if we are

to have an adequate grasp of its essential outlines.

If we are to take the official definition of the Communist International we must regard Fascism as "the open, terrorist dictatorship of the most reactionary, the most chauvinist, the most imperialistic elements of financial capital." In the same strain, G. D. H. Cole, the best known English-speaking economist of the Left, describes it as the system which "sets out to establish the rule of the State over the economic life of Society, with the aim, not of superseding private enterprise, but rather of helping it to retain its essential character, and, above all else, its power to exploit the workers as a subject class."¹ To the Marxist, therefore, Fascism is nothing more or less than State-supported Capitalism of the worst type. Fascists themselves, however, flatly deny that they favor Capital in any way as against Labor. But when pressed to tell us what exactly Fascism does connote, they usually refuse to commit themselves to any formal definition. For them Fascism is first and foremost a movement, an emotional reaction, an attitude to life rather than a synthesis of reasoned principles—their *credo* is in a leader and a party rather than in a program, and they find it easier to say what they stand against than what they stand for.

Only one way, therefore, lies open to us of discovering what exactly Fascism is. It is to study what Fascist leaders consistently say and do. From that we can piece together the essential elements of the movement's ideological superstructure.

The conception of the nation as the supremely real and valuable thing in the world is the pith and kernel of the whole Fascist philosophy. According to this conception it is not the individual that counts for most, as the Liberalists suppose. Nor is it any group or collectivity of individuals welded together by the economic system of the moment, as the Marx-

¹ *The Future of Socialism*, p. 199.

ists assert. What counts is the society that results from ties of blood, race, common abode, common history and common culture, namely, the nation. That nation is something above and beyond the individual men and women constituting it. It is an entity of a higher order altogether than they, its elements are, somewhat in the same way, as a human being is an entity of a higher order than the cells and organs of which he is composed. Hence to speak of the national spirit or the national soul or the national body corporate is not to speak metaphorically but literally. As the Charter of Labor—the nearest thing there is to a Constitution in Italy—puts it: “The Italian Nation is an organism having ends, a life and means superior in power and duration to the single individuals or groups of individuals composing it” (Article I). In a word, Fascism not only hypostatizes the nation but also endows it with a life beyond the span of any particular generation. It sees the nation as an unbroken unity of successive generations, a mystical being charged with a mission all its own, an organism, like all organisms, greater than the parts that go to make it up.

It is easy now to understand the Fascist preoccupation in each country with the ideas of racial purity, racial hygiene, racial culture, racial autonomy, long dead national heroes, etc. Fascism is simply nationalism run riot. It stands for the apotheosis of each distinct people with all their distinctive traits, traditions and aspirations. Hence, it cannot but be anxious to eliminate all traces of foreign influence from the national body corporate. In its eyes the internationalism preached by Communism is Communism’s most detestable and unnatural heresy.

For Fascism the individual human person is of relative importance only. As Mussolini has said: “Fascism conceives of the State as an absolute, in comparison with which all individuals or groups are

relative, only to be conceived of in their relation to the State.”² Men are not persons, each with natural rights and a destiny of his own. Rather they exist as parts of the nation for the good of the nation; and they are valuable precisely in as far as they contribute to the national well-being. Each man’s first duty, therefore, is to serve the nation. And he has individual rights only in so far as they do not conflict with the demands of the nation. Since he is thus by nature a *national* being, it follows that he will be all the truer to his nature the more he elevates himself to the heights of the national consciousness and tries to lose his own personal identity. Rosenberg, one of the accepted prophets of German National Socialism, declares: “The race-bound soul of the community is the measure of all our thoughts, voluntary aspirations and actions, the final criterion of our values.”³ We must think and judge, and hope and plan nationally rather than according to personal conviction—so we are told—for we belong body and soul, each to the nation into which he is born. That nation is the supreme reality. In conflict with its interests, the interests of individuals, groups, and classes have to be ruthlessly sacrificed—they are of no substance. In such an ideology, obviously, there is no room for the liberty of speech, liberty of the press, liberty of contract, liberty of assembly and the various other so-called natural liberties of man acclaimed by nineteenth century Liberalism.

The nation “as a moral, political and economic unit finds its integral realization in the State.”⁴ Here is another fundamental principle of the Fascist synthesis. The State is the nation organized and active. And so the allegiance which the individual owes in the abstract to the nation has to be paid in the concrete to the government. In this way Fascism, like Social-

² *The Political and Social Doctrine of Fascism.*

³ *Der Mythos des 20 Jahrhunderts.*

⁴ *Charter of Labor, Art. I.*

ism, is committed to the principle of the Totalitarian State: "Nothing against the State; nothing outside the State; everything in the State and for the State," to use the formula consecrated by Mussolini. It holds, that is, for a State which lays claim to the citizen in the totality of his being; which recognizes no rights or duties on the part of citizens other than civic rights and duties; which regards its own authority as original and absolute; which denies all independence, even in their own particular sphere, to education, art, sport, culture and the other factors that are part of the complete social life; which uses all the agencies of public information and instruction to form its citizens to its own stamp; which regiment every phase of communal life; and which brooks neither opposition to, nor criticism of, its own acts, since it presumes itself to be not merely omniscient but infallible and impeccable as well. In such a State you will find, for instance, no press but the State-controlled press, no schools but the State-controlled schools, no cinemas but the State-controlled cinemas, no athletic organizations but the State-managed organizations, no meetings, processions or public festivals except those under the aegis of the State.

Fascism and Communism are both totalitarian. Ideologically the only difference between the Fascist Totalitarian State and the Communist Totalitarian State is that for the former national well-being is the supreme value, whereas for the latter economic well-being is all-important. The national well-being does, of course, include economic well-being as one of its essential constituents. But it is not exclusively economic nor, for that matter, exclusively materialistic. It includes cultural well-being, for instance. Above all, it includes the possession of great military power, prestige, economic self-sufficiency and whatever else makes a people feared and respected in the comity of nations. Fascism in action, we may add, is much less

totalitarian than Fascism in theory—between theory and practice no such divergence exists in Communist lands, of course.

Secondly only to its hatred of internationalism is Fascism's hatred of economic materialism. "Fascism" [writes Mussolini in *The Political and Social Doctrine of Fascism*] "denies the materialist conception of happiness as a possibility, and abandons it to its inventors, the economists of the first half of the nineteenth century: that is to say, Fascism denies the validity of the equation, well-being=happiness." And before the Assembly of the National Council of Corporations in 1933, he declared: "The economic man does not exist. Man is complete: he is political, he is economic, he is religious, he is saint, he is warrior."

Fascism rejects Rousseau's theory of popular sovereignty in favor of authoritarian government, or the dictatorship of the *élite*, as it is called. It does so on the triple assumption that the right to govern depends rather on the superior excellence of some party or leader than on the consent of the governed; that majority rule spells in practice rule by the strongest class in its own special interests to the neglect of the general interests of the nation as a whole; and finally that parliamentary government is weak, unwieldy and unstable in comparison with dictatorial government. This substitution of what has come to be termed capacity rule for majority rule is the distinguishing mark of the Fascist State *vis-à-vis* the Democratic State.

What is this principle of capacity rule and how does it operate? Here is the answer of one of the most influential exponents:

The best Constitution, the form of State, is that which quite naturally assures to the better elements of the citizenship the task of guiding it and the dominant influence over it. . . . It is a doctrine which, rejecting the democratic ideal

of the masses, shall give this land (Germany) to the best people, that is to say to superior individuals . . . and must reserve, command and influence to the best heads of the nation.⁵

By capacity rule, therefore, is meant rule by the *élite*, the *élite* being the supermen, the more perfervidly race-conscious members of the community. In practice, the Fascist Party and the *élite* of each nation will be identical. The Party is the living, active embodiment of the genius of their nation—all other parties can but represent sectional and selfish interests and are accordingly to be suppressed. Leadership in the Party itself will fall naturally to the most forceful and nationally minded member of the *élite*. The emergence of this leader, the *élite* of the *élite*, is mystically conceived and explained—he simply emerges and is recognized instinctively. Then as Duce, Fuehrer, Leader, he becomes the sole source and repository of power in the State. In fact, he is the government, omniscient, infallible and impeccable, deriving his authority to rule solely from his unique identification with the racial and national soul of his people and responsible to nobody for the exercise of that authority. “Justice and Hitler’s will are one and the same thing,” according to the well-known National Socialist slogan.

Fascism, as we have said earlier, is professedly anti-intellectualist. It conceives of men as being born to act in response to instincts, emotional urges and intuitive convictions. Indeed, its leaders, particularly Hitler, have often proclaimed that their views and decisions are not reasoned out, but rather felt or seen intuitively to be right. Hence, we are not surprised that the answer to the question, “How are we to recognize those best fitted to rule?” is simply: “Their fitness is always self-evident.” In practice, this means that the Leader and ruling caste prove

⁵ Hitler in *Mein Kampf*.

themselves by their ability to reach and retain power. They rule because they are the better element in the nation; they prove they are the better element by the fact that they have been successful in obtaining power.

This principle of *élite* leadership applies to the community of nations no less than to the community within each country. Just as there is an *élite* in each nation and that *élite* proves itself by its capacity to achieve power, so it is presumed that there is also an *élite* among the nations themselves and that it proves itself by its dominating other nations. Now war is the struggle, *par excellence*, of nations for domination. Accordingly, success in war, or even readiness to engage in war, demonstrates the superiority of a people over the vanquished or pacifist peoples. "The Fascist State," Mussolini has said, "is a desire for power and domination. The aspiration towards an empire, or the expansion of nations, is a manifestation of vitality; its contrary, the spirit of withdrawal within oneself, is a sign of decadence. Peoples who are born today or who are coming back to life are imperialists." Fascist nations, therefore, are by nature and ideology aggressive, intolerant and bellicose in the international sphere.

From politics we pass onto economics and the question: "What are the distinguishing marks of the Fascist economic regime?" Fascism, as we have seen, is nationalist and totalitarian. It is only logical, therefore, that it should consider economic activity as a something to be controlled by the State and directed towards raising the status and *potential* of the nation. As the Italian Charter of Labor has proclaimed: "From the national standpoint the mass of production represents a single unit; it has a single object, namely the well-being of individuals and the development of national power" (Article II).

The well-being of the individual and the development of national power form a single object, inas-

much as the latter is conditioned by the former. To achieve greatness a people must be physically fit and mentally alert. Accordingly, when Fascism plans for human welfare it does so with an eye mainly to national greatness. For instance, speaking at Milan in 1934, Mussolini defended his program of a higher standard of living for workers solely on the ground that a lower standard would leave them unfit for sacrifice in time of war. "We have advocated," he said, "the postulate of higher social justice for all the Italian people because a people who fail to find the conditions of life worthy of the Fascist age and of European standards are a people who, at the hour of the nation's need, will be unable to give the utmost." Obviously, therefore, when it comes to choosing between national welfare and human welfare, the former is preferred—guns before butter, the people must tighten their belts if abundance of armaments and abundance of food cannot be produced at the same time.

Needless to say, Fascism does not expect industry to serve the cause of nationalism without being consciously directed, and, indeed, constrained, thereto. It supposes, therefore, a planned economy. And it supposes, of course, the planning to be done by the State. This planning must extend to every department and phase of economic life. Agriculture, commerce, banking, the arts and crafts, come within its scope equally with industry. The process of planning is a simple one. First an inventory of the available national resources in man-power, capital, raw materials and technical skill is made. Then a general economic plan for utilizing these fully in the light of the national needs is drafted. Finally, each separate occupation is directed so to increase production, or rationalize productive activities, in its own particular field as to ensure a total output of the quality and quantity prescribed for it in the national plan.

Another fundamental postulate of the Fascist ideology is that there can be no real political independence without economic independence. A nation which relies to any great extent on imported supplies of either raw materials or manufactured goods must dance to the tune of those she buys from. If she doesn't, she can be quickly forced to do so by economic boycott. And should she resort to war, she cannot but be vanquished, for either her armies will lose in the field through lack of supplies or her civilian population will be starved into collapse. Accordingly, the immediate aim of Fascist economic planning in each country is to achieve the maximum possible of economic self-sufficiency—what the Germans call *Autarkie* and for which the term *autarchy* is rapidly becoming current in English—in the shortest possible period. In the concrete this entails firstly increasing the home production of foodstuffs, particularly cereals and fats, secondly the use of synthetic home produced substitutes—synthetic rubber, lanital (artificial wool), etc., are examples—for materials that cannot be got at home, and thirdly the importation of huge reserves of such essential materials as cannot be produced under any circumstances in the fatherland and defy substitution. Such a policy obviously cannot but foster many uneconomic industries and result in a lowering of the general standard of living. However, for Fascists that is not too high a price to pay for complete national independence.

Fascist economic planning differs from Socialist planning in aim. It differs from it even still more in tactics. Fascism plans within the existing framework of private ownership and private initiative. "The Corporate State," in the words of the Italian Charter of Labor (Article VII), "considers that private enterprise in the sphere of production is the most effective and useful instrument in the interest of the nation." And in his speech in the Senate in January, 1934,

Mussolini declared: "Guild or corporative economy respects the principle of private property . . . considered in its social function." We quote these declarations not so much to show that Fascism does accept private ownership as to show why Fascism accepts it. From them we can see that, whatever Communists may say to the contrary, Fascists themselves regard Capitalism as the servant of Fascist nationalism and not vice versa. The right of private property is defended, not as a natural right, but as a civil right based on the superior efficiency of private enterprise over public enterprise as an economic system.

But though Fascism defends private property, and in particular that form of it which we call Capitalism, it does not defend the *laissez-faire* attitude of economic Liberalism towards ownership. On the contrary, it condemns that attitude roundly. In fact, it is of the very essence of the Fascist ideology to regard private ownership as sacred only in so far as it serves the national interests. Accordingly, the doctrines of Free Competition, Absolute Ownership and the like are anathema to the doctrinaire Fascist. He takes his stand instead on the principle of State Supervision. The State—so runs this principle—is entitled to "discipline" property owners and business whenever it sees fit to do so. This means in practice that it will intervene as often as private initiative is unequal to the task in hand or—and this is the distinctly Fascist clause—political interests are at stake. Such intervention by the State takes the form of control or complete management by public officials. The Fascist, therefore, recognizes a man's right to own and control property only as long as he uses that right in the interests of the people. In his eyes—though he is insistent that it is not the function of the State to conduct industry but rather to "discipline" it—property owners are just the feudatories of the nation. Their rights derive from their function in the na-

tional economy and are, in consequence, conditional on the due performance of that function.

The area of private enterprise is not so wide in Fascist countries as in the democratic capitalist countries. Foreign trade, for instance, is largely excluded from it. So too are credit and the flow of investment. All these are directly subject to State control. The currency is likewise rigorously managed. Large-scale industries in the service of national defence, such as the aircraft industry, the munitions industry and the like are, as a rule, run as public or semi-public enterprises—in Italy coal, tin, copper and nickel were created State monopolies at the start of the Abyssinian War. Even within the field of private enterprise certain restrictions, unknown in capitalist countries, obtain. For instance, the rate of profit is for all practical purposes limited—in Italy and in Germany alike, joint stock concerns may not pay more than a six per cent dividend no matter what their actual profits: the surplus over and above this figure must be loaned to the State and is not negotiable.

No account of the Fascist economic system is complete which omits mention of the large-scale public works budgeted for every year. Grandiose schemes and programs are the order of the day. Thus for instance, in Italy, land reclamation, harbor improvements, road building, housing, hydro-electric generation, the construction of public buildings, etc., have all been on a scale without parallel in capitalist countries. Everything is done in the grand manner as befitting a great nation—costs seem to be a very secondary consideration.

Fascism is not committed to any special principle in the distribution of the fruits of industry. Much emphasis, it is true, is placed on the dignity of work.

Under the Fascist regime [declared Mussolini to the Assembly of Corporations in 1936] work, in its manifold forms, becomes the gauge for the social and national utility of indi-

viduals and groups. The Fascist system can and must reduce the distances separating the several classes of producers (i. e., capitalists, wage-earners, technicians, etc.) while at the same time recognizing the ranking superiority of those on whom devolve the highest duties and who shoulder the heaviest responsibilities.

However, we are not to infer from this that Fascism denies the right to unearned income or pledges itself to a high-wage policy.

Actually, the only distinctive features of Fascist theory and practice in the sphere of wages are its insistence that a uniform rate of wages be paid by all firms engaged in the same trades—an important provision, because it prevents unfair competition by employers paying lower wages—and secondly its insistence on the right of the State to fix the rate payable, not only in case of dispute but whenever it deems fit. Should the State intervene, it has absolute discretion as regards the wage, hours, working conditions, etc., it enforces. Here, as everywhere, the principle holds that: "The Fascist State can do no wrong."

The class-struggle is the major disruptive force in modern society. Fascism recognizes it for what it is and purports to end it. In fact, the welding together of Capital and Labor is an integral part of the Fascist program.

Fascism repudiates the Socialist vision of a classless society. It is no part of its policy either to reduce all capitalists to the proletarian state or conversely to make all workers property owners. In fact, three classes instead of two are envisaged in the Fascist economic society, namely, the traditional bourgeoisie or propertied class, the wage-earning class or proletariat, and a new class comprising the technicians and scientists of industry. But despite this triple alignment, there is no room for class-war in the system, at least ideologically. Two

things preclude it. The one is the common loyalty and devotion of all these classes to the same national State. The other is the emphasis laid on the solidarity of Capital and Labor in the production process, antagonistic though their interests are when it comes to the division of the social product. Classes which have so much in common—such is the argument—cannot but collaborate. Their differences are too petty and sectional to be of account in face of the ties of blood and race and service to the nation which bind them together. Capitalists and their staffs may have conflicting interests in the matter of wages, working conditions and the like. But what are these in comparison with their larger solidarity as citizens of the same State and collaborators in the same branch of economic activity!

Class collaboration, therefore, cannot but appear more natural than class-war once it is taken for granted that none are for class and all are for State. However, Fascists take too realistic a view of employers and employes not to provide against the breakdown of this collaboration nevertheless. They forbid as treason to the nation strikes and lockouts, insisting on compulsory arbitration of all labor disputes. In this way, open rupture of the relations between employers and their workers is made impossible. Besides forbidding strike action, Fascism, in effect, denies the right of combination to the various economic classes. In Germany, for instance, all employers and all workers have to belong to the official Labor Front organization and to no other. True, in Italy freedom of professional or syndical organization is legally guaranteed by Article III of the Charter of Labor. But on closer examination it becomes evident that this freedom is *de facto* valueless, because it is no more than the bare freedom to exist and march in step with the official union. The activities that we normally associate with a trade union or employers'

federation are reserved to the State-promoted, State-controlled syndicate alone. And there is only one such syndicate for employers or wage-earners in each category of industry.

These official syndicates, needless to say, are responsible to the State and not to the individuals composing them. They are in reality only so many organs of the State for controlling the relations between Capital and Labor. The officers in them are primarily political functionaries, appointed by the State and charged with the duty of implementing State policy.

One other feature of the Fascist ideology remains to be stressed. Fascism is definitely anti-feminist. The ideal of equal rights for women and men has no place in its conception of the good social order. It is not so much, however, that Fascism rates women as being inferior in status and function to men as that it rates them to be different. Their primary social function is to be good housekeepers, good wives and good mothers. Hence, their place is in the home and their special sphere of work domestic service. They should not enter industry or the professions as long as there are men able and willing to fill the vacancies—for instance, one of the first acts of the Nazi Government in Germany was to decree that women should not exceed ten per cent. of the total student body of any university. The logicity of the emphasis on woman's duty to bear and rear large families becomes evident when we reflect on the store Fascism sets by national greatness and the way in which national greatness has come to be measured in terms of the national birth-rate. A high birth-rate is considered to testify to the youth and vitality of the national stock and to guarantee the future with the guarantee that strength of numbers gives.

The labels "Fascist" and "anti-Fascist" and the like are freely applied in these days. More often than not they are used because of their emotional value, and

used with little regard for their true meaning. To the Communist every one who is not a Communist is a Fascist, to the democrat every one who prefers authoritarian government to parliamentary government is a Fascist, to the Jew every one who is anti-Semitic is Fascist, to the friends of the Reds and their allies in Spain those who favor Franco are Fascist. The foregoing analysis is intended to safeguard readers against misleading labels of this kind by sketching for them the essential features of Fascism as a social philosophy, as a form of government, and as an economic regime. Once our people know what precisely Fascism is, they will no longer be at the mercy of the propagandist press, whether of the Left or of the Right, but will be in a position to make up their minds for themselves about the *pros* and *cons* of its ideology. And they will be enabled, too, to make up their minds all the better as to who exactly are Fascists and who are not.

Fascism and Communism

REV. BERNARD GOODE

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SEVERAL close observers of national movements have recently remarked that in practice there is a fundamental kinship between Fascism and Communism. Fascism and Communism have the same conception of the State. Both consider it as party property—indeed as nothing else than the party itself. In the days of monarchy the King imposed his sovereign will on disputing parties in the name of the common good, and even democracy reckoned that the play of conflicting interests would favor the general interest. In both cases there was at least some toleration given to minorities. The new regimes pride themselves on giving way to no such sentiment. The party is the State, and beyond there is nothing except what still remains to be absorbed or exterminated. The only difference in this respect between Communism and Fascism comes from the nature of the Party. In one case, the party is the proletariat, and outside it exist only the odious bourgeois and those incapable of managing their own affairs. In the other case, the party is the nation, so that outside the Party exist only traitors and citizens of doubtful loyalty.

Both regimes are equally totalitarian. In an article in the *Univers* M. Folliet points out that a totalitarian system means more than a dictatorship. The latter merely demands a passive and negative adhesion, but the totalitarian State demands far more; it wants positive, active, and interior adhesion from each and every citizen. Fascism and Communism wish to govern not merely the bodies of men but their souls

too. In fact they want to create "a new man, common substance, collective person, made of thousands of individuals, who march with the same step, think and feel alike, and act with the same will."

Having the same goal in view they naturally employ much the same means, the dictatorship of a party, expressed in the power of one man, a Mussolini, a Hitler, Lenin or Stalin; the suppression of liberty, even the most elementary; concentration camps, spectacular intimidation, shooting and worse. Both systems spend lavishly on propaganda; nothing is too expensive to make sure of the right formation of youth.

Even in regard to religion their attitude is fundamentally similar. Fascism pretends to respect religion, and even at times to allot it a place of dignity, but this is a matter of appearance and opportunism. How can a totalitarian power give proper place and scope to a competitive power which also claims the whole of men? For Christianity, though it allows to Caesar his due, seeks none the less the whole man and claims the ultimate word in human matters. True, Fascism has the advantage of not binding itself to the Marxist system and theoretical materialism. But in practice it is every wit as materialist as Communism. Even in Italy where Fascism has had to come to terms with the Church, it has killed the parties of Christian inspiration, eliminated Catholics as such from public life, suppressed their youth movements which were entirely inoffensive from the political point of view, and confined the clergy to their sacristies. Its policy is inspired neither by Saint Augustine nor Saint Thomas, but Machiavelli. The grave conflicts which provoked *Non abbiamo bisogno* are not forgotten. The fire still smoulders below the surface.

In any case, if one wants to see Fascism in its true state, cross the Rhine. There Catholicism is the religion of a minority, therefore undesirable, and so

everything must be done to uproot it from the German soil. German Fascism may not equal Bolshevik persecution in violence, but it surpasses it in cunning.

There are, of course, important differences. But when they are analyzed they are seen to be less essential to the system than the similarities. Communism aims at destroying religion, private property, freedom of trading, the old social grades, and the family. Fascism accommodates itself to religion when expedient, admits certain property rights although it proclaims itself anti-capitalist, and has not yet abolished the old social structure, being satisfied with the creation of a new privileged "party" class alongside the old ones. Communism is pacifist, Fascism militarist, and both prepare equally for war.

But, however striking these differences may appear at first sight they tend rapidly to disappear as Fascism advances and Communism retreats. A logic, inherent in the system, presses Fascism ever further towards state socialism. For a nationalist doctrine of economic autarchy presupposes a closed economy, and in consequence a state monopoly of foreign trade and ever increasing interference in all the details of internal commerce.

M. Folliet concludes: "The alternative, Fascism *or* Communism, to which certain people would tie us, is seen to be a monstrous joke. We admit that before the natural law Fascism presents itself less weighed with guilt than Communism, so that in certain extreme cases it might constitute that lesser evil to which one is forced to resign oneself. But we will never admit that it can be thought of as an ideal, as the perfection of human society. And we believe that in the present age, in face of the idolatry of the State, before the most powerful collectivity that has ever been known, the task of Christians is to safeguard and save the privacy of the human person."

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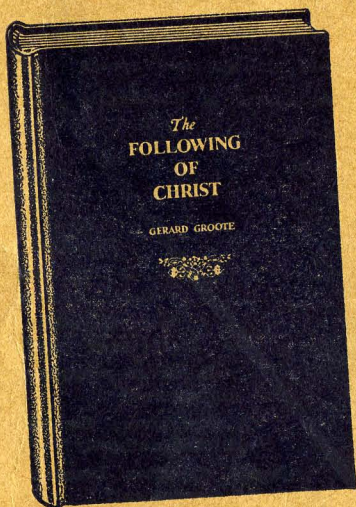
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