

tion is ultimately defeated, within the movement its practical consequence is that the entourage of the Leader, in case of disagreement with him, will never be very sure of their own opinions, since they believe sincerely that their disagreements do not really matter, that even the maddest device has a fair chance of success if properly organized. The point of their loyalty is not that they believe the Leader is infallible, but that they are convinced that everybody who commands the instruments of violence with the superior methods of totalitarian organization can become infallible. This delusion is greatly strengthened when totalitarian regimes hold the power to demonstrate the relativity of success and failure, and to show how a loss in substance can become a gain in organization. (The fantastic mismanagement of industrial enterprise in Soviet Russia led to the atomization of the working class, and the terrifying mistreatment of civilian prisoners in Eastern territories under Nazi occupation, though it caused a "deplorable loss of labor," "thinking in terms of generations, [was] not to be regretted."¹¹⁴) Moreover, the decision regarding success and failure under totalitarian circumstances is very largely a matter of organized and terrorized public opinion. In a totally fictitious world, failures need not be recorded, admitted, and remembered. Factuality itself depends for its continued existence upon the existence of the nontotalitarian world.

¹¹⁴ Himmler in his speech at Posen, *Nazi Conspiracy*, IV, 558.

Arendt, Hannah. The Origins of Totalitarianism.
New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1979,
Ch. 12-13, pp. 389-479.

CHAPTER TWELVE: Totalitarianism in Power

WHEN A MOVEMENT, international in organization, all-comprehensive in its ideological scope, and global in its political aspiration, seizes power in one country, it obviously puts itself in a paradoxical situation. The socialist movement was spared this crisis, first, because the national question—and that meant the strategic problem involved in the revolution—had been curiously neglected by Marx and Engels, and, secondly, because it faced governmental problems only after the first World War had divested the Second International of its authority over the national members, which everywhere had accepted the primacy of national sentiments over international solidarity as an unalterable fact. In other words, when the time came for the socialist movements to seize power in their respective countries, they had already been transformed into national parties.

This transformation never occurred in the totalitarian, the Bolshevik and the Nazi movements. At the time it seized power the danger to the movement lay in the fact that, on one hand, it might become "ossified" by taking over the state machine and frozen into a form of absolute government,¹ and that, on the other hand, its freedom of movement might be limited by the borders of the territory in which it came to power. To a totalitarian movement, both dangers are equally deadly: a development toward absolutism would put an end to the movement's interior drive, and a development toward nationalism would frustrate its exterior expansion, without which the movement cannot survive. The form of government the two movements developed, or, rather, which almost automatically developed from their double claim to total domination and global rule, is best characterized by Trotsky's slogan of "permanent revolution" although Trotsky's theory was no more than a socialist forecast of a series of revolutions, from the antifeudal bourgeois to the antibourgeois proletarian, which would spread from one country to the other.² Only the term itself suggests "per-

¹ The Nazis fully realized that the seizure of power might lead to the establishment of absolutism. "National Socialism, however, has not spearheaded the struggle against liberalism in order to bog down in absolutism and start the game all over again" (Werner Best, *Die deutsche Polizei*, p. 20). The warning expressed here, as in countless other places, is directed against the state's claim to be absolute.

² Trotsky's theory, first pronounced in 1905, did of course not differ from the revolutionary strategy of all Leninists in whose eyes "Russia herself was merely the first domain, the first rampart, of international revolution: her interests were to be subordinated to the supernational strategy of militant socialism. For the time being, however, the boundaries of both Russia and victorious socialism were the same" (Isaac Deutscher, *Stalin. A Political Biography*, New York and London, 1949, p. 243).

manency," with all its semi-anarchistic implications, and is, strictly speaking, a misnomer; yet even Lenin was more impressed by the term than by its theoretical content. In the Soviet Union, at any rate, revolutions, in the form of general purges, became a permanent institution of the Stalin regime after 1934.³ Here, as in other instances, Stalin concentrated his attacks on Trotsky's half-forgotten slogan precisely because he had decided to use this technique.⁴ In Nazi Germany, a similar tendency toward permanent revolution was clearly discernible though the Nazis did not have time to realize it to the same extent. Characteristically enough, their "permanent revolution" also started with the liquidation of the party faction which had dared to proclaim openly the "next stage of the revolution"⁵—

³ The year 1934 is significant because of the new Party statute, announced at the Seventeenth Party Congress, which provided that "periodic . . . purges are to [be] carried out for the systematic cleansing of the Party." (Quoted from A. Avtorkhanov, "Social Differentiation and Contradictions in the Party," *Bulletin of the Institute for the Study of the USSR*, Munich, February, 1956.)—The party purges during the early years of the Russian Revolution have nothing in common with their later totalitarian perversion into an instrument of permanent instability. The first purges were conducted by local control commissions before an open forum to which party and non-party members had free access. They were planned as a democratic control organ against bureaucratic corruption in the party and "were to serve as a substitute for real elections" (Deutscher, *op. cit.*, pp. 233-34).—An excellent short survey of the development of the purges can be found in Avtorkhanov's recent article which also refutes the legend that the murder of Kirov gave rise to the new policy. The general purge had begun before Kirov's death which was no more than a "convenient pretext to give it added drive." In view of the many "inexplicable and mysterious" circumstances surrounding Kirov's murder, one suspects that the "convenient pretext" was carefully planned and executed by Stalin himself. See Khrushchev's "Speech on Stalin," *New York Times*, June 5, 1956.

⁴ Deutscher, *op. cit.*, p. 282, describes the first attack on Trotsky's "permanent revolution" and Stalin's counterformulation of "socialism in one country" as an accident of political maneuvering. In 1924, Stalin's "immediate purpose was to discredit Trotsky. . . . Searching in Trotsky's past, the triumvirs came across the theory of 'permanent revolution,' which he had formulated in 1905. . . . It was in the course of that polemic that Stalin arrived at his formula of 'socialism in one country.'"

⁵ The liquidation of the Röhm faction in June, 1934, was preceded by a short interval of stabilization. At the beginning of the year, Rudolf Diels, the chief of the political police in Berlin, could report that there were no more illegal ("revolutionary") arrests by the SA and that older arrests of this kind were being investigated. (Nazi Conspiracy. U. S. Government. Washington, 1946, V, 205.) In April, 1934, Reichsminister of the Interior Wilhelm Frick, an old member of the Nazi Party, issued a decree to place restrictions upon the exercise of "protective custody" (*ibid.*, III, 555) in consideration of the "stabilization of the national situation." (See *Das Archiv*, April, 1934, p. 31.) This decree, however, was never published (*Nazi Conspiracy*, VII, 1099; II, 259). The political police of Prussia had prepared a special report on the excesses of the SA for Hitler in the year 1933 and suggested the prosecution of the SA leaders named therein.

Hitler solved the situation by killing these SA leaders without legal proceedings and discharging all those police officers who had opposed the SA. (See the sworn affidavit of Rudolf Diels, *ibid.*, V, 224.) In this manner he had safeguarded himself completely against all legalization and stabilization. Among the numerous jurists who enthusiastically served the "National Socialist idea" only very few comprehended what was really at stake. In this group belongs primarily Theodor Maunz, whose essay

and precisely because "the Fuehrer and his old guard knew that the real struggle had just begun."⁶ Here, instead of the Bolshevik concept of permanent revolution, we find the notion of a racial "selection which can never stand still" thus requiring a constant radicalization of the standards by which the selection, *i.e.*, the extermination of the unfit, is carried out.⁷ The point is that both Hitler and Stalin held out promises of stability in order to hide their intention of creating a state of permanent instability.

There could have been no better solution for the perplexities inherent in the co-existence of a government and a movement, of both a totalitarian claim and limited power in a limited territory, of ostensible membership in a comity of nations in which each respects the other's sovereignty and claim to world rule, than this formula stripped of its original content. For the totalitarian ruler is confronted with a dual task which at first appears contradictory to the point of absurdity: he must establish the fictitious world of the movement as a tangible working reality of everyday life, and he must, on the other hand, prevent this new world from developing a new stability; for a stabilization of its laws and institutions would surely liquidate the movement itself and with it the hope for eventual world conquest. The totalitarian ruler must, at any price, prevent normalization from reaching the point where a new way of life could develop—one which might, after a time, lose its bastard qualities and take its place among the widely differing and profoundly contrasting ways of life of the nations of the earth. The moment the revolutionary institutions became a national way of life (that moment when Hitler's claim that Nazism is not an export commodity or Stalin's that socialism can be built in one country, would be more than an attempt to fool the nontotalitarian world), totalitarianism would lose its "total" quality and become subject to the law of the nations, according to which each possesses a specific territory, people, and historical tradition which relates it to other nations—a plurality which *ipso facto* refutes every contention that any specific form of government is absolutely valid.

Practically speaking, the paradox of totalitarianism in power is that the possession of all instruments of governmental power and violence in one country is not an unmixed blessing for a totalitarian movement. Its disregard

Ordnung und Recht der Polizei (Hamburg, 1943) is quoted with approval even by those authors, who, like Paul Werner, belonged to the higher Fuehrer Corps of the SS.

⁶ Robert Ley, *Der Weg zur Ordensburg* (undated, about 1936). "Special edition for the Fuehrer Corps of the Party . . . Not for free sale."

⁷ Heinrich Himmler, "Die Schutzstaffel," in *Grundlagen, Aufbau und Wirtschaftsplanung des nationalsozialistischen Staates*, Nr. 7b. This constant radicalization of the principle of racial selection can be found in all phases of Nazi policy. Thus, the first to be exterminated were the full Jews, to be followed by those who were half-Jewish and one-quarter Jewish; or first the insane, to be followed by the incurably sick and, eventually, by all families in which there were any "incurably sick." The selection which can never stand still" did not stop before the SS itself, either. A Fuehrer decree dated May 19, 1943, ordered that all men who were bound to foreigners by family ties, marriage or friendship were to be eliminated from state, party, Wehrmacht and economy; this affected 1,200 SS leaders (see Hoover Library Archives, Himmler File, Folder 330).

for facts, its strict adherence to the rules of a fictitious world, becomes steadily more difficult to maintain, yet remains as essential as it was before. Power means a direct confrontation with reality, and totalitarianism in power is constantly concerned with overcoming this challenge. Propaganda and organization no longer suffice to assert that the impossible is possible, that the incredible is true, that an insane consistency rules the world; the chief psychological support of totalitarian fiction—the active resentment of the status quo, which the masses refused to accept as the only possible world—is no longer there; every bit of factual information that leaks through the iron curtain, set up against the ever-threatening flood of reality from the other, nontotalitarian side, is a greater menace to totalitarian domination than counterpropaganda has been to totalitarian movements.

The struggle for total domination of the total population of the earth, the elimination of every competing nontotalitarian reality, is inherent in the totalitarian regimes themselves; if they do not pursue global rule as their ultimate goal, they are only too likely to lose whatever power they have already seized. Even a single individual can be absolutely and reliably dominated only under global totalitarian conditions. Ascendancy to power therefore means primarily the establishment of official and officially recognized headquarters (or branches in the case of satellite countries) for the movement and the acquisition of a kind of laboratory in which to carry out the experiment with or rather against reality, the experiment in organizing a people for ultimate purposes which disregard individuality as well as nationality, under conditions which are admittedly not perfect but are sufficient for important partial results. Totalitarianism in power uses the state administration for its long-range goal of world conquest and for the direction of the branches of the movement; it establishes the secret police as the executors and guardians of its domestic experiment in constantly transforming reality into fiction; and it finally erects concentration camps as special laboratories to carry through its experiment in total domination.

1: *The So-called Totalitarian State*

HISTORY TEACHES THAT rise to power and responsibility affects deeply the nature of revolutionary parties. Experience and common sense were perfectly justified in expecting that totalitarianism in power would gradually lose its revolutionary momentum and utopian character, that the everyday business of government and the possession of real power would moderate the pre-claims of the movements and gradually destroy the fictitious world of their organizations. It seems, after all, to be in the very nature of things, personal or public, that extreme demands and goals are checked by objective conditions; and reality, taken as a whole, is only to a very small extent determined by the inclination toward fiction of a mass society of atomized individuals.

Many of the errors of the nontotalitarian world in its diplomatic dealings with totalitarian governments (the most conspicuous ones being confidence in the Munich pact with Hitler and the Yalta agreements with Stalin) can clearly be traced to an experience and a common sense which suddenly proved to have lost its grasp on reality. Contrary to all expectations, important concessions and greatly heightened international prestige did not help to reintegrate the totalitarian countries into the comity of nations or induce them to abandon their lying complaint that the whole world had solidly lined up against them. And far from preventing this, diplomatic victories clearly precipitated their recourse to the instruments of violence and resulted in all instances in increased hostility against the powers that had shown themselves willing to compromise.

These disappointments suffered by statesmen and diplomats find their parallel in the earlier disillusionment of benevolent observers and sympathizers with the new revolutionary governments. What they had looked forward to was the establishment of new institutions and the creation of a new code of law which, no matter how revolutionary in content, would lead to a stabilization of conditions and thus check the momentum of the totalitarian movements at least in the countries where they had seized power. What happened instead was that terror increased both in Soviet Russia and Nazi Germany in inverse ratio to the existence of internal political opposition, so that it looked as though political opposition had not been the pretext of terror (as liberal accusers of the regime were wont to assert) but the last impediment to its full fury.⁸

Even more disturbing was the handling of the constitutional question by the totalitarian regimes. In the early years of their power the Nazis let loose an avalanche of laws and decrees, but they never bothered to abolish offi-

⁸It is common knowledge that in Russia "the repression of socialists and anarchists had grown in severity in the same ratio as the country became pacified" (Anton Ciliga, *The Russian Enigma*, London, 1940, p. 244). Deutscher, *op. cit.*, p. 218, thinks that the reason for the vanishing of the "libertarian spirit of the revolution" at the moment of victory could be found in a changed attitude of the peasants: they turned against Bolshevism "the more resolutely the more they became confident that the power of the landlords and the White generals had been broken." This explanation seems rather weak in view of the dimensions which terror was to assume after 1930. It also fails to take into account that full terror did not break loose in the twenties but in the thirties, when the opposition of the peasant classes was no longer an active factor in the situation.—Khrushchev, too (*op. cit.*), notes that "extreme repressive measures were not used" against the opposition during the fight against the Trotskyites and the Bukharinites, but that "the repression against them began" much later after they had long been defeated.

Terror by the Nazi regime reached its peak during the war, when the German nation was actually "united." Its preparation goes back to 1936 when all organized interior resistance had vanished and Himmler proposed an expansion of the concentration camps. Characteristic of this spirit of oppression regardless of resistance is Himmler's speech at Kharkov before the SS leaders in 1943: "We have only one task, . . . to carry on the racial struggle without mercy. . . . We will never let that excellent weapon, the dread and terrible reputation which preceded us in the battles for Kharkov, fade, but will constantly add new meaning to it" (*Nazi Conspiracy*, IV, 572 ff.).

cially the Weimar constitution; they even left the civil services more or less intact—a fact which induced many native and foreign observers to hope for restraint of the party and for rapid normalization of the new regime. But when with the issuance of the Nuremberg Laws this development had come to an end, it turned out that the Nazis themselves showed no concern whatsoever about their own legislation. Rather, there was “only the constant going ahead on the road toward ever-new fields,” so that finally the “purpose and scope of the secret state police” as well as of all other state or party institutions created by the Nazis could “in no manner be covered by the laws and regulations issued for them.”⁹ In practice, this permanent state of lawlessness found expression in the fact that “a number of valid regulations [were] no longer made public.”¹⁰ Theoretically, it corresponded to Hitler's dictum that “the total state must not know any difference between law and ethics”;¹¹ because if it assumed that the valid law is identical with the ethics common to all and springing from their consciences, then there is indeed no further necessity for public decrees. The Soviet Union, where the prerevolutionary civil services had been exterminated in the revolution and the regime had paid scant attention to constitutional questions during the period of revolutionary change, even went to the trouble of issuing an entirely new and very elaborate constitution in 1936 (“a veil of liberal phrases and premises over the guillotine in the background”¹²), an event which was hailed in Russia and abroad as the conclusion of the revolutionary period. Yet the publication of the constitution turned out to be the beginning of the gigantic superpurge which in nearly two years liquidated the existing administration and erased all traces of normal life and economic recovery which had developed in the four years after the liquidation of kulaks and

⁹ See Theodor Maunz, *op. cit.*, pp. 5 and 49.—How little the Nazis thought of the laws and regulations they themselves had issued, and which were regularly published by W. Hoche under the title of *Die Gesetzgebung des Kabinetts Hitler* (Berlin, 1933 ff.), may be gathered from a random remark made by one of their constitutional jurists. He felt that in spite of the absence of a comprehensive new legal order there nevertheless had occurred a “comprehensive reform” (see Ernst R. Huber, “Die deutsche Polizei,” in *Zeitschrift für die gesamte Staatswissenschaft*, Band 101, 1940/1, p. 273 ff.).

¹⁰ Maunz, *op. cit.*, p. 49. To my knowledge, Maunz is the only one among Nazi authors who has mentioned this circumstance and sufficiently emphasized it. Only by going through the five volumes of *Verfügungen, Anordnungen, Bekanntgaben*, which were collected and printed during the war by the party chancellery on instructions of Martin Bormann, is it possible to obtain an insight into this secret legislation by which Germany in fact was governed. According to the preface, the volumes were “meant solely for internal party work and to be treated as confidential.” Four of these evidently very rare volumes, compared to which the Hoche collection of the legislation of Hitler's cabinet is merely a façade, are in the Hoover Library.

¹¹ This was the Fuehrer's “warning” to the jurists in 1933, quoted by Hans Frank, *Nationalsozialistische Leitsätze für ein neues deutsches Strafrecht*, Zweiter Teil, 1936, p. 8.

¹² Deutscher, *op. cit.*, p. 381.—There were earlier attempts at establishing a constitution, in 1918 and 1924. The constitutional reform in 1944 under which some of the Soviet Republics were to have their own foreign representatives and their own armies was a tactical maneuver designed to assure the Soviet Union of some additional votes in the United Nations.

enforced collectivization of the rural population.¹³ From then on, the constitution of 1936 played exactly the same role the Weimar constitution played under the Nazi regime: it was completely disregarded but never abolished; the only difference was that Stalin could afford one more absurdity—with the exception of Vishinsky, all those who had drafted the never-repudiated constitution were executed as traitors.

What strikes the observer of the totalitarian state is certainly not its monolithic structure. On the contrary, all serious students of the subject agree at least on the co-existence (or the conflict) of a dual authority, the party and the state. Many, moreover, have stressed the peculiar “shapelessness” of the totalitarian government.¹⁴ Thomas Masaryk saw early that “the so-called Bolshevik system has never been anything but a complete absence of system”;¹⁵ and it is perfectly true that “even an expert would be driven mad if he tried to unravel the relationships between Party and State” in the Third Reich.¹⁶ It has also been frequently observed that the relationship between the two sources of authority, between state and party, is one of ostensible and real authority, so that the government machine is usually pictured as the powerless façade which hides and protects the real power of the party.¹⁷

¹³ See Deutscher, *op. cit.*, p. 375.—Upon close reading of Stalin's speech concerning the constitution (his report to the Extraordinary Eighth Soviet Congress of November 25, 1936) it becomes evident that it was never meant to be definitive. Stalin stated explicitly: “This is the framework of our constitution at the given historical moment. Thus the draft of the new constitution represents the sum total of the road already traveled, the sum total of achievements already existing.” In other words, the constitution was already dated the moment it was announced, and was merely of historical interest. That this is not just an arbitrary interpretation is proved by Molotov, who in his speech about the constitution picks up Stalin's theme and underlines the provisional nature of the whole matter: “We have realized only the first, the lower phase, of Communism. Even this first phase of Communism, Socialism, is by no means completed; only its skeletal structure has been erected” (see *Die Verfassung des Sozialistischen Staates der Arbeiter und Bauern*, Editions Prométhée, Strasbourg, 1937, pp. 42 and 84).

¹⁴ “German constitutional life is thus characterized by its utter shapelessness, in contrast to Italy” (Franz Neumann, *Behemoth*, 1942, Appendix, p. 521).

¹⁵ Quoted from Boris Souvarine, *Stalin: A Critical Survey of Bolshevism*, New York 1939, p. 695.

¹⁶ Stephen H. Roberts, *The House that Hitler Built*, London, 1939, p. 72.

¹⁷ Justice Robert H. Jackson, in his opening speech at the Nuremberg Trials, based his description of the political structure of Nazi Germany consistently on the co-existence of “two governments in Germany—the real and the ostensible. The forms of the German Republic were maintained for a time and it was the outward and visible government. But the real authority in the State was outside of and above the law and rested in the Leadership Corps of the Nazi Party” (*Nazi Conspiracy*, 1, 125). See also the distinction of Roberts, *op. cit.*, p. 101, between the party and a shadow state: “Hitler obviously leans toward increasing the duplication of functions.”

Students of Nazi Germany seem agreed that the state had only ostensible authority. For the only exception, see Ernst Fraenkel, *The Dual State*, New York and London, 1941, who claims the co-existence of a “normative and a prerogative state” living in constant friction as “competitive and not complementary parts of the German Reich.” According to Fraenkel, the normative state was maintained by the Nazis for the promotion of the capitalist order and private property and had full authority in all economic matters, while the prerogative state of the party ruled supreme in all political matters.

All levels of the administrative machine in the Third Reich were subject to a curious duplication of offices. With a fantastic thoroughness, the Nazis made sure that every function of the state administration would be duplicated by some party organ:¹⁸ the Weimar division of Germany into states and provinces was duplicated by the Nazi division into *Gaue* whose borderlines, however, did not coincide, so that every given locality belonged, even geographically, to two altogether different administrative units.¹⁹ Nor was the duplication of functions abandoned when, after 1933, outstanding Nazis occupied the official ministries of the state; when Frick, for instance, became Minister of the Interior or Guertner Minister of Justice. These old and trusted party members, once they had embarked upon official nonparty careers, lost their power and became as uninfluential as other civil servants. Both came under the factual authority of Himmler, the rising chief of the police, who normally would have been subordinate to the Minister of the Interior.²⁰ Better known abroad has been the fate of the old German Foreign Affairs Office in the Wilhelmstrasse. The Nazis left its personnel nearly untouched and of course never abolished it; yet at the same time they maintained the prepower Foreign Affairs Bureau of the Party, headed by Rosenberg;²¹ and since this office had specialized in maintaining contacts with Fascist organizations in Eastern Europe and the Balkans, they set up another

¹⁸ "For those positions of state power which the National Socialists could not occupy with their own people, they created corresponding 'shadow offices' in their own party organization, in this way setting up a second state beside the state . . ." (Konrad Heiden, *Der Fuehrer: Hitler's Rise to Power*, Boston, 1944, p. 616).

¹⁹ O. C. Giles, *The Gestapo*, Oxford Pamphlets on World Affairs, No. 36, 1940, describes the constant overlapping of party and state departments.

²⁰ Characteristic is a memo of Minister of the Interior Frick, who resented the fact that Himmler, the leader of the SS, should have superior power. See *Nazi Conspiracy*, III, 547.—Noteworthy in this respect also are Rosenberg's notes about a discussion with Hitler in 1942: Rosenberg had never before the war held a state position but belonged to the intimate circle around Hitler. Now that he had become Reichsminister for the Eastern Occupied Territories, he was constantly confronted with "direct actions" of other plenipotentiaries (chiefly SS-men) who overlooked him because he now belonged to the ostensible apparatus of the state. See *ibid.*, IV, 65 ff. The same happened to Hans Frank, Governor General of Poland. There were only two cases in which the attainment of ministerial rank did not entail any loss of power and prestige: that of Minister of Propaganda Goebbels, and of Minister of the Interior Himmler. As regards Himmler, we possess a memorandum, presumably from the year 1935, which illustrates the systematic singlemindedness of the Nazis in regulating the relations between party and state. This memorandum, which apparently originated in Hitler's immediate entourage and was found among the correspondence of the *Reichsadjutantur* of the Fuehrer and the Gestapo, contains a warning against making Himmler state secretary of the Ministry of the Interior because in that case he could "no longer be a political leader" and "would be alienated from the party." Here, too, we find mention of the technical principle regulating the relations between party and state: "A *Reichsleiter* [a high party functionary] must not be subordinated to a *Reichsminister* [a high state functionary]." (The undated, unsigned memorandum, entitled *Die geheime Staatspolizei*, can be found in the archives of the Hoover Library, File P. Wiedemann.)

²¹ See the "Brief Report on Activities of Rosenberg's Foreign Affairs Bureau of the Party from 1933 to 1943," *ibid.*, III, 27 ff.

organ to compete with the office in the Wilhelmstrasse, the so-called Ribbentrop Bureau, which handled foreign affairs in the West, and survived the departure of its chief as Ambassador to England, that is, his incorporation into the official apparatus of the Wilhelmstrasse. Finally, in addition to these party institutions, the Foreign Office received another duplication in the form of an SS Office, which was responsible "for negotiations with all racially Germanic groups in Denmark, Norway, Belgium and the Netherlands."²² These examples prove that for the Nazis the duplication of offices was a matter of principle and not just an expedient for providing jobs for party members.

The same division between a real and an ostensible government developed from very different beginnings in Soviet Russia.²³ The ostensible government originally sprang from the All-Russian Soviet Congress, which during the civil war lost its influence and power to the Bolshevik party. This process started when the Red Army was made autonomous and the secret political police re-established as an organ of the party, and not of the Soviet Congress;²⁴ it was completed in 1923, during the first year of Stalin's General Secretaryship.²⁵ From then on, the Soviets became the shadow government in whose midst, through cells formed by Bolshevik party members, functioned the representatives of real power who were appointed and responsible to the Central Committee in Moscow. The crucial point in the later development was not the conquest of the Soviets by the party, but the fact that "although it would have presented no difficulties, the Bolsheviks did not abolish the Soviets and used them as the decorative outward symbol of their authority."²⁶

The co-existence of an ostensible and a real government therefore was partly the outcome of the revolution itself and preceded Stalin's totalitarian dictatorship. Yet while the Nazis simply retained the existing administration and deprived it of all power, Stalin had to revive his shadow government, which in the early thirties had lost all its functions and was half forgotten

²² Based on a Fuehrer decree of August 12, 1942. See *Verfügungen, Anordnungen, Bekanntgaben*, op. cit., Nr. A 54/42.

²³ "Behind the ostensible government was a real government," which Victor Kravchenko (*I Chose Freedom: The Personal Life of a Soviet Official*, New York, 1946, p. 111) saw in the "secret police system."

²⁴ See Arthur Rosenberg, *A History of Bolshevism*, London, 1934, chapter vi. "There are in reality two political edifices in Russia that rise parallel to one another: the shadow government of the Soviets and the *de facto* government of the Bolshevik Party."

²⁵ Deutscher, op. cit., pp. 255-256, sums up Stalin's report to the Twelfth Party Congress about the work of the personnel department during his first year in the General Secretariat: "The year before only 27 per cent of the regional leaders of the trade unions were members of the party. At present 57 per cent of them were Communists. The percentage of Communists in the management of co-operatives had risen from 5 to 50 per cent; and in the commanding staffs of the armed forces from 16 to 24. The same happened in all other institutions which Stalin described as the 'transmission belts' connecting the party with the people."

²⁶ Arthur Rosenberg, op. cit., loc. cit.

in Russia; he introduced the Soviet constitution as the symbol of the existence as well as the powerlessness of the Soviets. (None of its paragraphs ever had the slightest practical significance for life and jurisdiction in Russia.) The ostensible Russian government, utterly lacking the glamour of tradition so necessary for a façade, apparently needed the sacred halo of written law. The totalitarian defiance of law and legality (which "in spite of the greatest changes . . . still [remain] the expression of a permanently desired order")²⁷ found in the written Soviet constitution, as in the never-repudiated Weimar constitution, a permanent background for its own lawlessness, the permanent challenge to the nontotalitarian world and its standards whose helplessness and impotence could be demonstrated daily.²⁸

Duplication of offices and division of authority, the co-existence of real and ostensible power, are sufficient to create confusion but not to explain the "shapelessness" of the whole structure. One should not forget that only a building can have a structure, but that a movement—if the word is to be taken as seriously and as literally as the Nazis meant it—can have only a direction, and that any form of legal or governmental structure can be only a handicap to a movement which is being propelled with increasing speed in a certain direction. Even in the prepower stage the totalitarian movements represented those masses that were no longer willing to live in any kind of structure, regardless of its nature; masses that had started to move in order to flood the legal and geographical borders securely determined by the government. Therefore, judged by our conceptions of government and state structure, these movements, so long as they find themselves physically still limited to a specific territory, necessarily must try to destroy all structure; and for this willful destruction a mere duplication of all offices into party and state institutions would not be sufficient. Since duplication involves a relationship between the façade of the state and the inner core of the party, it, too, would eventually result in some kind of structure, where the relationship between party and state would automatically end in a legal regulation which restricts and stabilizes their respective authority.²⁹

²⁷ Maunz, *op. cit.*, p. 12.

²⁸ The jurist and Obersturmbannführer, Professor R. Hoehn, has expressed this in the following words: "And there was still another thing which foreigners, but Germans, too, had to get used to: namely, that the task of the secret state police was taken over by a community of persons who originated within the movement, and continue to be rooted in it. That the term state police actually makes no allowance for this fact shall be mentioned here only in passing" (*Grundfragen der deutschen Polizei*, Report on the Constitutive Session of the Committee on Police Law of the Academy for German Law, October 11, 1936. Hamburg, 1937, with contributions by Frank, Himmler and Hoehn).

²⁹ For example, such an attempt to circumscribe the separate responsibilities and to counter the "anarchy of authority" was made by Hans Frank in *Recht und Verwaltung*, 1939, and again in an address titled *Technik des Staates*, in 1941. He expressed the opinion that "legal guarantees" were not the "prerogative of liberal systems of government" and that the administration should continue to be governed, as before, by the laws of the Reich, which now were inspired and guided by the program of the National Socialist party. It was precisely because he wanted to prevent such a new legal order at any price that Hitler never acknowledged the program of the Nazi

As a matter of fact, duplication of offices, seemingly the result of the party-state problem in all one-party dictatorships, is only the most conspicuous sign of a more complicated phenomenon that is better defined as multiplication of offices than duplication. The Nazis were not content to establish *Gaue* in addition to the old provinces, but also introduced a great many other geographical divisions in accordance with the different party organizations: the territorial units of the SA were neither co-extensive with the *Gaue* nor with the provinces; they differed, moreover, from those of the SS and none of them corresponded to the zones dividing the Hitler Youth.³⁰ To this geographical confusion must be added the fact that the original relationship between real and ostensible power repeated itself throughout, albeit in an ever-changing way. The inhabitant of Hitler's Third Reich lived not only under the simultaneous and often conflicting authorities of competing powers, such as the civil services, the party, the SA, and the SS; he could never be sure and was never explicitly told whose authority he was supposed to place above all others. He had to develop a kind of sixth sense to know at a given moment whom to obey and whom to disregard.

Those, on the other hand, who had to execute the orders which the leadership, in the interest of the movement, regarded as genuinely necessary—in contradistinction to governmental measures, such orders were of course entrusted only to the party's elite formations—were not much better off. Mostly such orders were "intentionally vague, and given in the expectation that their recipient would recognize the intent of the order giver, and act accordingly";³¹ for the elite formations were by no means merely obli-

party. Of party members who made such proposals he was wont to speak with contempt, describing them as "eternally tied to the past," as persons "who are unable to leap across their own shadow" (Felix Kersten, *Totenkopf und Treue*, Hamburg).

³⁰ "The 32 *Gaue* . . . do not coincide with the administrative or military regions, or even the 21 divisions of the SA, or the 10 regions of the SS, or the 23 zones of the Hitler Youth. . . . Such discrepancies are the more remarkable because there is no reason for them" (Roberts, *op. cit.*, p. 98).

³¹ Nuremberg Documents, PS 3063 in the Centre de Documentation Juive in Paris. The document is a report of the supreme party court about "events and party court proceedings connected with the antisemitic demonstrations of November 9, 1938." On the basis of investigations by the police and the office of the Attorney General the supreme court came to the conclusion that "the verbal instructions of the Reichspropagandaleiter must have been understood by all party leaders to mean that, to the outside, the party did not wish to appear as the instigator of the demonstration, but in reality was to organize and carry it through. . . . The re-examination of the command echelons has shown . . . that the active National Socialist molded in the prepower struggle [*Kampfzeit*] takes it for granted that actions in which the party does not wish to appear in the role of organizer are not ordered with unequivocal clarity and down to the last detail. Hence he is accustomed to understand that an order may mean more than its verbal content, just as it has more or less become routine with the order giver, in the interests of the party . . . not to say everything and only to intimate what he wants to achieve by the order. . . . Thus, the . . . orders—for instance, not the Jew Grünspan but all Jewry must be blamed for the death of Party Comrade vom Rath, . . . pistols should be brought along, . . . every SA-man now ought to know what he had to do—were understood by a number of subleaders to mean that Jewish blood would now have to be shed for the blood of

gated to obey the orders of the Fuehrer (this was mandatory for all existing organizations anyway), but "to execute the will of the leadership."⁸² And, as can be gathered from the lengthy proceedings concerning "excesses" before the party courts, this was by no means one and the same thing. The only difference was that the elite formations, thanks to their special indoctrination for such purposes, had been trained to understand that certain "hints meant more than their mere verbal contents."⁸³

Technically speaking, the movement within the apparatus of totalitarian domination derives its mobility from the fact that the leadership constantly shifts the actual center of power, often to other organizations, but without dissolving or even publicly exposing the groups that have thus been deprived of their power. In the early period of the Nazi regime, immediately after the Reichstag fire, the SA was the real authority and the party the ostensible one; power then shifted from the SA to the SS and finally from the SS to the Security Service.⁸⁴ The point is that none of the organs of power was ever deprived of its right to pretend that it embodied the will of the Leader.⁸⁵ But not only was the will of the Leader so unstable that compared with it the whims of Oriental despots are a shining example of steadfastness; the consistent and ever-changing division between real secret authority and ostensible open representation made the actual seat of power a mystery by definition, and this to such an extent that the members of the ruling clique themselves could never be absolutely sure of their own position in the secret power hierarchy. Alfred Rosenberg, for instance, despite his long career in the party and his impressive accumulation of ostensible power and offices in the party hierarchy, still talked about the creation of a series of Eastern European States

Party Comrade vom Rath. . . . Particularly significant is the end of the report, in which the supreme party court quite openly takes exception to these methods: "It is another question whether, in the interest of discipline, the order that is intentionally vague, and given in the expectation that its recipient will recognize the intent of the order giver and act accordingly, must not be relegated to the past." Here, too, there were persons who, in Hitler's words, "were unable to leap across their own shadow" and insisted upon legislative measures, because they did not understand that not the order but the will of the Fuehrer was the supreme law. Here, the difference between the mentality of the elite formations and the party agencies is particularly clear.

⁸² Best (*op. cit.*) puts it this way: "So long as the police execute this will of the leadership, they are acting within the law; if the will of the leadership is transgressed, then not the police, but a member of the police, has committed a violation."

⁸³ See footnote 31.

⁸⁴ In 1933, after the Reichstag fire, "SA leaders were more powerful than Gauleiter. They also refused obedience to Göring." See Rudolf Diels's sworn affidavit in *Nazi Conspiracy*, V, 224; Diels was chief of the political police under Göring.

⁸⁵ The SA obviously resented its loss of rank and power in the Nazi hierarchy and tried desperately to keep up appearances. In their magazines—*Der SA-Mann*, *Das Archiv*, etc.—many indications, veiled and unveiled, of this impotent rivalry with the SS can be found. More interesting is that Hitler still in 1936, when the SA had already lost its power, would assure them in a speech: "All that you are, you are through me; and all that I am, I am through you alone." See Ernst Bayer, *Die SA*, Berlin, 1938. Translation quoted from *Nazi Conspiracy*, IV, 782.

as a security wall against Moscow at a time when those invested with real power had already decided that no state structure would succeed the defeat of the Soviet Union and that the population of the Eastern occupied territories had become definitely stateless and could therefore be exterminated.⁸⁶ In other words, since knowledge of whom to obey and a comparatively permanent settlement of hierarchy would introduce an element of stability which is essentially absent from totalitarian rule, the Nazis constantly disavowed real authority whenever it had come into the open and created new instances of government compared with which the former became a shadow government—a game which obviously could go indefinitely. One of the most important technical differences between the Soviet and the National Socialist system is that Stalin, whenever he shifted the power emphasis within his own movement from one apparatus to another, had the tendency to liquidate the apparatus together with its staff, while Hitler, in spite of his contemptuous comments on people who "are unable to leap across their own shadows,"⁸⁷ was perfectly willing to continue using these shadows even though in another function.

The multiplication of offices was extremely useful for the constant shifting of power; the longer, moreover, a totalitarian regime stays in power, the greater becomes the number of offices and the possibility of jobs exclusively dependent upon the movement, since no office is abolished when its authority is liquidated. The Nazi regime started this multiplication with an initial co-ordination of all existing associations, societies, and institutions. The interesting thing in this nation-wide manipulation was that co-ordination did not signify incorporation into the already existing respective party organizations. The result was that up to the end of the regime, there were not one, but two National Socialist student organizations, two Nazi women's organizations, two Nazi organizations for university professors, lawyers, physicians, and so forth.⁸⁸ It was by no means sure, however, that in all cases the original party organization would be more powerful than its co-

⁸⁶ Compare Rosenberg's speech of June, 1941: "I believe that our political task will consist of . . . organizing these peoples in certain types of political bodies . . . and building them up against Moscow" with the "Undated Memorandum for the Administration in the Occupied Eastern Territories": "With the dissolution of the USSR after her defeat, no body politic is left in the Eastern territories and therefore . . . no citizenship for their population" (*Trial of the Major War Criminals*, Nuremberg, 1947, XXVI, p. 616 and 604, respectively).

⁸⁷ *Hitlers Tischgespräche*, Bonn, 1951, p. 213. Usually, Hitler meant some high-ranking Nazi functionaries who had their reservations about murdering all those without compunctions, whom he described as "human junk [*Gesox*]" (see p. 248 ff. and *passim*).

⁸⁸ For the variety of overlapping party organizations, see *Rang-und Organisationsliste der NSDAP*, Stuttgart, 1947, and *Nazi Conspiracy*, I, 178, which distinguishes four main categories: 1. *Gliederungen der NSDAP*, which had existed before its rise to power; 2. *Angeschlossene Verbände der NSDAP*, which comprise those societies which had been co-ordinated; 3. *Betreute Organisationen der NSDAP*; and 4. *Weitere nationalsozialistische Organisationen*. In nearly every category, one finds a different students', women's, teachers', and workers' organization.

ordinated counterpart.³⁹ Nor could anybody predict with any assurance which party organ would rise in the ranks of the internal party hierarchy.⁴⁰

A classical instance of this planned shapelessness occurred in the organization of scientific antisemitism. In 1933, an institute for study of the Jewish question (Institut zur Erforschung der Judenfrage) was founded in Munich which, since the Jewish question presumably had determined the whole of German history, quickly enlarged into a research institute for modern German history. Headed by the well-known historian Walter Frank, it transformed the traditional universities into seats of ostensible learning or façades. In 1940, another institute for the study of the Jewish question was founded in Frankfurt, headed by Alfred Rosenberg, whose standing as a party member was considerably higher. The Munich institute consequently was relegated to a shadowy existence; the Frankfurt, not the Munich institution was supposed to receive the treasures from looted European Jewish collections and become the seat of a comprehensive library on Judaism. Yet, when these collections actually arrived in Germany a few years later, their most precious parts went not to Frankfurt, but to Berlin, where they were received by Himmler's special Gestapo department for the liquidation (not merely the study) of the Jewish question, which was headed by Eichmann. None of the older institutions was ever abolished, so that in 1944 the situation was this: behind the façade of the universities' history departments stood threateningly the more real power of the Munich institute, behind which rose Rosenberg's institute in Frankfurt, and only behind these three façades, hidden and protected by them, lay the real center of authority, the *Reichssicherheitshauptamt*, a special division of the Gestapo.

The façade of the Soviet government, despite its written constitution, is even less impressive, erected even more exclusively for foreign observation than the state administration which the Nazis inherited and retained from the Weimar Republic. Lacking the Nazis' original accumulation of offices in the period of co-ordination, the Soviet regime relies even more on constant creation of new offices to put the former centers of power in the shadow. The gigantic increase of the bureaucratic apparatus, inherent in this method, is checked by repeated liquidation through purges. Nevertheless, in Russia, too, we can distinguish at least three strictly separate organizations: the Soviet or state apparatus, the party apparatus, and the NKVD apparatus, each of which has its own independent department of economy, a political

³⁹ The gigantic organization for public works, headed by Todt and later led by Albert Speer, was created by Hitler outside of all party hierarchies and affiliations. This organization might have been used against the authority of party or even police organizations. It is noteworthy that Speer could risk pointing out to Hitler (during a conference in 1942) the impossibility of organizing production under Himmler's regime, and even demand jurisdiction over slave labor and concentration camps. See *Nazi Conspiracy*, I, 916-917.

⁴⁰ Such an innocuous and unimportant society, for instance, as the NSKK (the National Socialist corps of automobilists founded in 1930) was suddenly elevated, in 1933, to the status of an elite formation, sharing with the SA and the SS the privilege of an independent affiliated unit of the party. Nothing followed this rise in the ranks of the Nazi hierarchy; retrospectively, it looks like an idle threat to the SA and SS.

department, a ministry of education and culture, a military department, etc.⁴¹

In Russia, the ostensible power of the party bureaucracy as against the real power of the secret police corresponds to the original duplication of party and state as known in Nazi Germany, and the multiplication becomes evident only in the secret police itself, with its extremely complicated, widely ramified network of agents, in which one department is always assigned to supervising and spying on another. Every enterprise in the Soviet Union has its special department of the secret police, which spies on party members and ordinary personnel alike. Co-existent with this department is another police division of the party itself, which again watches everybody, including the agents of the NKVD, and whose members are not known to the rival body. Added to these two espionage organizations must be the unions in the factories, which must see to it that the workers fulfill their prescribed quotas. Far more important than these apparatuses, however, is "the special department" of the NKVD which represents "an NKVD within the NKVD," i.e., a secret police within the secret police.⁴² All reports of these competing police agencies ultimately end up in the Moscow Central Committee and the Politburo. Here it is decided which of the reports is decisive and which of the police divisions shall be entitled to carry out the respective police measures. Neither the average inhabitant of the country nor any one of the police departments knows, of course, what decision will be made; today it may be the special division of the NKVD, tomorrow the party's network of agents; the day after, it may be the local committees or one of the regional bodies. Among all these departments there exists no legally rooted hierarchy of power or authority; the only certainty is that eventually one of them will be chosen to embody "the will of the leadership."

The only rule of which everybody in a totalitarian state may be sure is that the more visible government agencies are, the less power they carry, and the less is known of the existence of an institution, the more powerful it will ultimately turn out to be. According to this rule, the Soviets, recognized by a written constitution as the highest authority of the state, have less power than the Bolshevik party; the Bolshevik party, which recruits its members openly and is recognized as the ruling class, has less power than the secret police. Real power begins where secrecy begins. In this respect the Nazi and the Bolshevik states were very much alike; their difference lay chiefly in the monopolization and centralization of secret police services in Himmler on one hand, and the maze of apparently unrelated and unconnected police activities in Russia on the other.

⁴¹ F. Beck and W. Godin, *Russian Purge and the Extraction of Confession*, 1951, p. 153.

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 159 ff.—According to other reports, there are different examples of the staggering multiplication of the Soviet police apparatus, primarily the local and regional associations of the NKVD, which work independently of one another and which have their counterparts in the local and regional networks of party agents. It is in the nature of things that we know considerably less about Russian conditions than we do about those in Nazi Germany, especially as far as organizational details are concerned.

If we consider the totalitarian state solely as an instrument of power and leave aside questions of administrative efficiency, industrial capacity, and economic productivity, then its shapelessness turns out to be an ideally suited instrument for the realization of the so-called Leader principle. A continuous competition between offices, whose functions not only overlap but which are charged with identical tasks,⁴³ gives opposition or sabotage almost no chance to become effective; a swift change of emphasis which relegates one office to the shadow and elevates another to authority can solve all problems without anybody's becoming aware of the change or of the fact that opposition had existed, the additional advantage of the system being that the opposing office is likely never to learn of its defeat, since it is either not abolished at all (as in the case of the Nazi regime) or it is liquidated much later and without any apparent connection with the specific matter. This can be done all the more easily since nobody, except those few initiated, knows the exact relationship between the authorities. Only once in a while does the nontotalitarian world catch a glimpse of these conditions, as when a high official abroad confesses that an obscure clerk in the Embassy had been his immediate superior. In retrospect it is often possible to determine why such a sudden loss of power occurred, or, rather, that it occurred at all. For instance, it is not hard to understand today why at the outbreak of war people like Alfred Rosenberg or Hans Frank were removed to state positions and thus eliminated from the real center of power, namely, the Fuehrer's inner circle.⁴⁴ The important thing is that they not only did not know the reasons for these moves, but presumably did not even suspect that such apparently exalted positions as Governor General of Poland or Reichsminister for all Eastern territories did not signify the climax but the end of their National Socialist careers.

The Leader principle does not establish a hierarchy in the totalitarian state any more than it does in the totalitarian movement; authority is not filtered down from the top through all intervening layers to the bottom of the body politic as is the case in authoritarian regimes. The factual reason is that there is no hierarchy without authority and that, in spite of the numerous misunderstandings concerning the so-called "authoritarian personality," the principle of authority is in all important respects diametrically opposed to that of totalitarian domination. Quite apart from its origin

⁴³ According to the testimony of one of his former employees (*Nazi Conspiracy*, VI, 461), it was "a specialty of Himmler to give one task to two different people."

⁴⁴ In the aforementioned address (see footnote 29) Hans Frank showed that at some point he wanted to stabilize the movement, and his numerous complaints as Governor General of Poland testify to a total lack of understanding of the deliberately anti-utilitarian tendencies of Nazi policy. He cannot understand why the subjected peoples are not exploited but exterminated. Rosenberg, in the eyes of Hitler, was racially unreliable because he meant to establish satellite states in the conquered Eastern territories and did not understand that Hitler's population policy aimed at depopulating these territories.

in Roman history, authority, no matter in what form, always is meant to restrict or limit freedom, but never to abolish it. Totalitarian domination, however, aims at abolishing freedom, even at eliminating human spontaneity in general, and by no means at a restriction of freedom no matter how tyrannical. Technically, this absence of any authority or hierarchy in the totalitarian system is shown by the fact that between the supreme power (the Fuehrer) and the ruled there are no reliable intervening levels, each of which would receive its due share of authority and obedience. The will of the Fuehrer can be embodied everywhere and at all times, and he himself is not tied to any hierarchy, not even the one he might have established himself. Therefore, it is not accurate to say that the movement, after its seizure of power, founds a multiplicity of principalities in whose realm each little leader is free to do as he pleases and to imitate the big leader at the top.⁴⁵ The Nazi claim that "the party is the order of fuehrers"⁴⁶ was an ordinary lie. Just as the infinite multiplication of offices and confusion of authority leads to a state of affairs in which every citizen feels himself directly confronted with the will of the Leader, who arbitrarily chooses the executing organ of his decisions, so the one and a half million "fuehrers" throughout the Third Reich⁴⁷ knew very well that their authority derived directly from Hitler without the intervening levels of a functioning hierarchy.⁴⁸ The direct dependence was real and the intervening hierarchy, certainly of social importance, was an ostensible, spurious imitation of an authoritarian state.

The Leader's absolute monopoly of power and authority is most conspicuous in the relationship between him and his chief of police, who in a totalitarian country occupies the most powerful public position. Yet despite the enormous material and organizational power at his disposal as the head of a veritable police army and of the elite formations, the chief of police apparently is in no position ever to seize power and himself become the ruler of the country. Thus prior to Hitler's fall, Himmler never dreamed of touching Hitler's claim to leadership⁴⁹ and was never proposed

⁴⁵ The notion of a division into "little principalities" which formed "a pyramid of power outside the law with the Fuehrer at its apex" is Robert H. Jackson's. See chapter xii of *Nazi Conspiracy*, II, 1 ff. In order to avoid the establishment of such an authoritarian state, Hitler, as early as 1934, issued the following party decree: "The form of address 'Mein Fuehrer' is reserved for the Fuehrer alone. I herewith forbid all subleaders of the NSDAP to allow themselves to be addressed as 'Mein Reichsleiter,' etc., either in words or in writing. Rather, the form of address has to be Pg. [Party Comrade] . . . or Gauleiter, etc." See *Verfügungen, Anordnungen, Bekanntgaben*, *op. cit.*, decree of August 20, 1934.

⁴⁶ See the *Organisationsbuch der NSDAP*.

⁴⁷ See Chart 14 in Vol. VIII of *Nazi Conspiracy*.

⁴⁸ All oaths in the party as well as the elite formations were taken on the person of Adolf Hitler.

⁴⁹ The first step of Himmler in this direction occurred in the fall of 1944, when he ordered on his own initiative that the gas installations in the extermination camps

as Hitler's successor. Even more interesting in this context is Beria's ill-fated attempt at seizing power after Stalin's death. Although Stalin had never permitted any of his police chiefs to enjoy a position comparable to that of Himmler during the last years of Nazi rule, Beria, too, disposed of enough troops to challenge the rule of the party after Stalin's death simply by occupying the whole of Moscow and all accesses to the Kremlin; nobody except the Red Army might have disrupted his claim to power and this would have led to a bloody civil war whose outcome would by no means have been assured. The point is that Beria voluntarily abandoned all his positions only a few days later even though he must have known that he would forfeit his life because for a matter of days he had dared to play off the power of the police against the power of the party.⁵⁰

This lack of absolute power of course does not prevent the chief of police from organizing his enormous apparatus in accordance with totalitarian power principles. Thus it is most remarkable to see how Himmler after his appointment began the reorganization of the German police by introducing into the hitherto centralized apparatus of the secret police the multiplication of offices—*i.e.*, he apparently did what all experts of power who preceded the totalitarian regimes would have feared as decentralization leading to a diminution of power. To the service of the Gestapo Himmler first added the Security Service, originally a division of the SS and founded as an inner-party police body. While the main offices of the Gestapo and the Security Service were eventually centralized in Berlin, the regional branches of these two huge secret services retained their separate identities and each reported directly to Himmler's own office in Berlin.⁵¹ In the course of the war, Himmler added two more intelligence services: one consisted of so-called inspectors who were supposed to control and coordinate the Security Service with the police and who were subject to the jurisdiction of the SS; the second was a specifically military intelligence bureau which acted independently of the Reich's military forces and finally succeeded in absorbing the army's own military intelligence.⁵²

The complete absence of successful or unsuccessful palace revolutions is one of the most remarkable characteristics of totalitarian dictatorships

be dismantled and the mass slaughter be stopped. This was his way of initiating peace negotiations with the Western powers. Interestingly enough, Hitler apparently was never informed of these preparations; it seems that no one dared tell him that one of his most important war aims had already been given up. See Léon Poliakov, *Bréviaire de la Haine*, 1951, p. 232.

⁵⁰ For the events following Stalin's death, see Harrison E. Salisbury, *American in Russia*, New York, 1955.

⁵¹ See the excellent analysis of the structure of the Nazi police in *Nazi Conspiracy*, II, 250 ff., esp. p. 256.

⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 252.

(With one exception no dissatisfied Nazis took part in the military conspiracy against Hitler of July, 1944.) On the surface, the Leader principle seems to invite bloody changes of personal power without a change of regime. This is but one of many indications that the totalitarian form of government has very little to do with lust for power or even the desire for a power-generating machine, with the game of power for power's sake which has been characteristic of the last stages of imperialist rule. Technically speaking, however, it is one of the most important indications that totalitarian government, all appearances notwithstanding, is not rule by a clique or a gang.⁵³ The evidence of Hitler's as well as Stalin's dictatorship points clearly to the fact that isolation of atomized individuals provides not only the mass basis for totalitarian rule, but is carried through to the very top of the whole structure. Stalin has shot almost everybody who could claim to belong to the ruling clique and has moved the members of the Politburo back and forth whenever a clique was on the point of consolidating itself. Hitler destroyed cliques in Nazi Germany with less drastic means—the only bloody purge having been directed against the Röhm clique which indeed was firmly kept together through the homosexuality of its leading members; he prevented their formation by constant shifts in power and authority, and frequent changes of intimates in his immediate surroundings, so that all former solidarity between those who had come into power with him quickly evaporated. It seems obvious, moreover, that the monstrous unfaithfulness which is reported in almost identical terms as the outstanding trait in both Hitler's and Stalin's characters did not allow them to preside over anything so lasting and durable as a clique. However that may be, the point is that there exists no interrelationship between those holding office; they are not bound together by equal status in a political hierarchy or the relationship between superiors and inferiors, or even the uncertain loyalties of gangsters. In Soviet Russia, everybody knows that the top manager of a big industrial concern can as well as the Minister of Foreign Affairs be demoted any day to the lowest social and political status, and that a complete unknown may step into his place. The gangster complicity, on the other hand, which played some role in the early stages of the Nazi dictatorship, loses all cohesive force, for totalitarianism uses its power precisely

⁵³ Franz Neumann, *op. cit.*, pp. 521 ff., is doubtful "whether Germany can be called a State. It is far more a gang where the leaders are perpetually compelled to agree after disagreements." Konrad Heiden's works on Nazi Germany are representative for the theory of government by a clique.—As regards the formation of cliques around Hitler, *The Bormann Letters*, published by Trevor-Roper, are quite enlightening. In the trial of the doctors (the United States vs. Karl Brandt *et al.*, hearing of May 13, 1947), Victor Brack testified that as early as 1933 Bormann, acting no doubt on Hitler's orders, had begun to organize a group of persons who stood above state and party.

to spread this complicity through the population until it has organized the guilt of the whole people under its domination.⁶⁴

The absence of a ruling clique has made the question of a successor to the totalitarian dictator especially baffling and troublesome. It is true that this issue has plagued all usurpers, and it is quite characteristic that none of the totalitarian dictators ever tried the old method of establishing a dynasty and appointing their sons. Against Hitler's numerous and therefore self-defeating appointments stands Stalin's method, which made the succession one of the most dangerous honors in the Soviet Union. Under totalitarian conditions, knowledge of the labyrinth of transmission belts equals supreme power, and every appointed successor who actually comes to know what is going on is automatically removed after a certain time. A valid and comparatively permanent appointment would indeed presuppose the existence of a clique whose members would share the Leader's monopoly of knowledge of what is going on, which the Leader must avoid by all means. Hitler once explained this in his own terms to the supreme commanders of the Wehrmacht, who in the midst of the turmoil of war were presumably racking their brains over this problem: "As the ultimate factor I must, in all modesty, name my own person: irreplaceable. . . . The destiny of the Reich depends on me alone."⁶⁵ There is no need to look for any irony in the word modesty; the totalitarian leader, in marked contrast to all former usurpers, despots and tyrants, seems to believe that the question of his succession is not overly important, that no special qualities or training are needed for the job, that the country will eventually obey anybody who happens to hold the appointment at the moment of his death, and that no power-thirsty rivals will dispute his legitimacy.⁶⁶

As techniques of government, the totalitarian devices appear simple and

⁶⁴ Compare the author's contribution to the discussion of the problem of German guilt: "Organized Guilt," in *Jewish Frontier*, January, 1945.

⁶⁵ In a speech of November 23, 1939, quoted from *Trial of Major War Criminals*, Vol. 26, p. 332. That this pronouncement was more than a hysterical aberration dictated by chance is apparent from Himmler's speech (the stenographic transcript can be found in the archives of the Hoover Library, Himmler File, Folder 332) at the conference of mayors at Posen in March, 1944. It says: "What values can we place onto the scales of history? The value of our own people. . . . The second, I would almost say, even greater value is the unique person of our Fuehrer Adolf Hitler, . . . who for the first time after two thousand years . . . was sent to the Germanic race as a great leader. . . ."

⁶⁶ See Hitler's statements on this question in *Hitlers Tischgespräche*, pp. 253 f. and 222 f.: The new Fuehrer would have to be elected by a "senate"; the guiding principle for the Fuehrer's election must be that any discussion among the personalities participating in the election should cease for the duration of the proceedings. Within three hours Wehrmacht, party and all civil servants will have to be newly sworn in. "He had no illusions about the fact that in this election of the supreme head of the state there might not always be an outstanding Fuehrer personality at the helm of the Reich." But this entailed no dangers, "so long as the over-all machinery functions properly."

ingeniously effective. They assure not only an absolute power monopoly, but unparalleled certainty that all commands will always be carried out; the multiplicity of the transmission belts, the confusion of the hierarchy, secure the dictator's complete independence of all his inferiors and make possible the swift and surprising changes in policy for which totalitarianism has become famous. The body politic of the country is shock-proof because of its shapelessness.

The reasons why such extraordinary efficiency was never tried before are as simple as the device itself. The multiplication of offices destroys all sense of responsibility and competence; it is not merely a tremendously burdensome and unproductive increase of administration, but actually hinders productivity because conflicting orders constantly delay real work until the order of the Leader has decided the matter. The fanaticism of the elite cadres, absolutely essential for the functioning of the movement, abolishes systematically all genuine interest in specific jobs and produces a mentality which sees every conceivable action as an instrument for something entirely different.⁶⁷ And this mentality is not confined to the elite but gradually pervades the entire population, the most intimate details of whose life and death depend upon political decisions—that is, upon causes and ulterior motives which have nothing to do with performance. Constant removal, demotion, and promotion make reliable teamwork impossible and prevent the development of experience. Economically speaking, slave labor is a luxury which Russia should not be able to afford; in a time of acute shortage of technical skill, the camps were filled with "highly qualified engineers [who] compete for the right to do plumbing jobs, repair clocks, electric lighting and telephone."⁶⁸ But then, from a purely utilitarian point of view, Russia should not have been able to afford the purges in the thirties that interrupted a long-awaited economic recovery, or the physical destruction of the Red Army general staff, which led almost to a defeat in the Russian-Finnish war.

Conditions in Germany were different in degree. In the beginning, the Nazis showed a certain tendency to retain technical and administrative skill, to allow profits in business, and to dominate economically without too much interference. At the outbreak of the war Germany was not yet completely totalitarianized, and if one accepts preparation for war as a rational motive, it must be conceded that until roughly 1942 her economy was allowed to

⁶⁷ One of the guiding principles for the SS formulated by Himmler himself reads: "No task exists for its own sake." See Gunter d'Alquen, *Die SS. Geschichte, Aufgabe und Organisation der Schutzstaffeln der NSDAP*, 1939, in *Schriften der Hochschule für Politik*.

⁶⁸ See David J. Dallin and Boris I. Nicolaevsky, *Forced Labor in Russia*, 1947, who also report that during the war when mobilization had created an acute problem of manpower, the death rate in the labor camps was about 40 per cent during one year. In general, they estimate that the output of a worker in the camps is below 50 per cent of that of a free laborer.

function more or less rationally. The preparation for war in itself is not anti-utilitarian, despite its prohibitive costs,⁶⁰ for it may indeed be much "cheaper to seize the wealth and resources of other nations by conquest than to buy them from foreign countries or produce them at home."⁶⁰ Economic laws of investment and production, of stabilizing gains and profits, and of exhaustion do not apply if one intends in any event to replenish the depleted home economy with loot from other countries; it is quite true, and the sympathizing German people were perfectly aware of it, that the famous Nazi slogan of "guns or butter" actually meant "butter through guns."⁶¹ It was not until 1942 that the rules of totalitarian domination began to outweigh all other considerations.

The radicalization began immediately at the outbreak of war; one may even surmise that one of Hitler's reasons for provoking this war was that it enabled him to accelerate the development in a manner that would have been unthinkable in peacetime.⁶² The remarkable thing about this process, however, is that it was by no means checked by such a shattering defeat as Stalingrad, and that the danger of losing the war altogether was only another incentive to throw overboard all utilitarian considerations and make an all-out attempt to realize through ruthless total organization the goals of totalitarian racial ideology, no matter for how short a time.⁶³ After Stalingrad, the elite formations which had been strictly separated from the people were greatly

⁶⁰ Thomas Reveille, *The Spoil of Europe*, 1941, estimates that Germany during the first year of war was able to cover her entire preparatory war expenses of the years 1933 to 1939.

⁶¹ William Ebenstein, *The Nazi State*, p. 257.

⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 270.

⁶³ This is supported by the fact that the decree to murder all incurably sick was issued on the day the war broke out, but even more so by Hitler's statements during the war, quoted by Goebbels (*The Goebbels Diaries*, ed. Louis P. Lochner, 1948) to the effect that "the war had made possible for us the solution of a whole series of problems that could never have been solved in normal times," and that, no matter how the war turned out, "the Jews will certainly be the losers" (p. 314).

⁶⁴ The Wehrmacht of course tried time and again to explain to the various party organs the dangers of a war conduct in which commands were issued with utter disregard for all military, civilian and economic necessities (see, for instance, Poliakov, *op. cit.*, p. 321). But even many high Nazi functionaries had difficulty understanding this neglect of all objective economic and military factors in the situation. They had to be told time and again that "economic considerations should fundamentally remain unconsidered in the settlement of the [Jewish] problem" (*Nazi Conspiracy*, VI, 402), but still would complain that the interruption of a big building program in Poland "would not have happened if the many thousands of Jews working at it had not been deported. Now the order is given that the Jews will have to be removed from the armament projects. I hope that this . . . order will soon be cancelled, for then the situation will be still worse." This hope of Hans Frank, Governor General of Poland, was as little fulfilled as his later expectations of a militarily more sensible policy toward Poles and Ukrainians. His complaints are interesting (see his *Diary in Nazi Conspiracy*, IV, 902 ff.) because he is frightened exclusively by the anti-utilitarian aspect of Nazi policies during the war. "Once we have won the war, then for all care, mince-meat can be made of the Poles and the Ukrainians and all the others who run around here. . . ."

expanded; the ban on party membership for those in the armed forces was lifted and the military command was subordinated to SS commanders. The jealously guarded crime monopoly of the SS was abandoned and soldiers were assigned at will to duties of mass murder.⁶⁴ Neither military, nor economic, nor political considerations were allowed to interfere with the costly and troublesome program of mass exterminations and deportations.

If one considers these last years of Nazi rule and their version of a "five-year plan," which they had no time to carry out but which aimed at the extermination of the Polish and Ukrainian people, of 170 million Russians (as mentioned in one plan), the intelligentsia of Western Europe such as the Dutch and the people of Alsace and Lorraine, as well as of all those Germans who would be disqualified under the prospective Reich health bill or the planned "community alien law," the analogy to the Bolshevik five-year plan of 1929, the first year of clear-cut totalitarian dictatorship in Russia, is almost inescapable. Vulgar eugenic slogans in one case, high-sounding economic phrases in the other, were the prelude to "a piece of prodigious insanity, in which all rules of logic and principles of economics were turned upside down."⁶⁵

To be sure, totalitarian dictators do not consciously embark upon the road to insanity. The point is rather that our bewilderment about the anti-utilitarian character of the totalitarian state structure springs from the mistaken notion that we are dealing with a normal state after all—a bureaucracy, a tyranny, a dictatorship—from our overlooking the emphatic assertions by totalitarian rulers that they consider the country where they happened to seize power only the temporary headquarters of the international movement on the road to world conquest, that they reckon victories and defeats in terms of centuries or millennia, and that the global interests always overrule the local interests of their own territory.⁶⁶ The famous "Right is what is

⁶⁴ Originally, only special units of the SS—the Death Head formations—were employed in the concentration camps. Later replacements came from the Armed SS divisions. From 1944 on, units of the regular armed forces were also employed but usually incorporated in the Armed SS. (See the Affidavit of a former SS official of the concentration camp of Neuengamme in *Nazi Conspiracy*, VII, 211.) How the active presence of the Wehrmacht made itself felt in the concentration camps has been described in Odd Nansen's concentration camp diary *Day After Day*, London, 1949. Unfortunately, it shows that these regular army troops were at least as brutal as the SS.

⁶⁵ Deutscher, *op. cit.*, p. 326. This quotation carries weight because it comes from the most benevolent of Stalin's non-Communist biographers.

⁶⁶ The Nazis were especially fond of reckoning in terms of millennia. Himmler's pronouncements that SS-men were solely interested in "ideological questions whose importance counted in terms of decades and centuries" and that they "served a cause which in two thousand years occurred only once" are repeated, with slight variations, throughout the entire indoctrination material issued by the SS-Hauptamt-Schulungsamt (*Wesen und Aufgabe der SS und der Polizei*, p. 160).—As for the Bolshevik version, the best reference is the program of the Communist International as formulated by Stalin as early as 1928 at the Party Congress in Moscow. Particularly interesting is the evaluation of the Soviet Union as "the basis for the world movement, the center of international revolution, the greatest factor in world history. In the USSR, the world proletariat for the first time acquires a country . . ." (quoted from

good for the German people" was meant only for mass propaganda; Nazis were told that "Right is what is good for the movement,"⁶⁷ and these two interests did by no means always coincide. The Nazis did not think that the Germans were a master race, to whom the world belonged, but that they should be led by a master race, as should all other nations, and that this race was only on the point of being born.⁶⁸ Not the Germans were the dawn of the master race, but the SS.⁶⁹ The "Germanic world empire," as Himmler said, or the "Aryan" world empire, as Hitler would have put it, was in any event still centuries off.⁷⁰ For the "movement" it was more important to demonstrate that it was possible to fabricate a race by annihilating other "races" than to win a war with limited aims. What strikes the outside observer as a "piece of prodigious insanity" is nothing but the consequence of the absolute primacy of the movement not only over the state, but also over the nation, the people and the positions of power held by the rulers themselves. The reason why the ingenious devices of totalitarian rule, with their absolute and unsurpassed concentration of power in the hands of a single man, were never tried out before, is that no ordinary tyrant was ever mad enough to discard all limited and local interests—economic, national, human, military—in favor of a purely fictitious reality in some indefinite distant future.

Since totalitarianism in power remains faithful to the original tenets of the movement, the striking similarities between the organizational devices of the movement and the so-called totalitarian state are hardly surprising. The division between party members and fellow-travelers organized in front

W. H. Chamberlin, *Blueprint for World Conquest*, 1946, where the programs of the Third International are reprinted verbatim).

⁶⁷ This change of the official motto can be found in the *Organisationsbuch der NSDAP*, p. 7.

⁶⁸ See Heiden, *op. cit.*, p. 722.—Hitler stated in a speech of November 23, 1937, before the future political leaders at the Ordensburg Sonthofen: Not "ridiculously small tribes, tiny countries, states or dynasties . . . but only races [can] function as world conquerors. A race, however—at least in the conscious sense—we still have to become" (see *Hitlers Tischgespräche*, p. 445).—In complete harmony with this by no means accidental phrasing is a decree of August 9, 1941, in which Hitler prohibited the further use of the term "German race" because it would lead to the "sacrifice of the racial idea as such in favor of a mere nationality principle, and to the destruction of important conceptual preconditions of our whole racial and folk policy" (*Verfügungen, Anordnungen, Bekanntgaben*). It is obvious that the concept of a German race would have constituted an impediment to the progressive "selection" and extermination of undesirable parts among the German population which in those very years was being planned for the future.

⁶⁹ Himmler consequently "very soon formed a Germanic SS in the various countries" whom he told: "We do not expect you to become German out of opportunism. But we do expect you to subordinate your national ideal to the greater racial and historical ideal, to the Germanic Reich" (Heiden, *op. cit.*). Its future task would be to form through "the most copious breeding" a "racial superstratum" which in another twenty to thirty years would "present the whole of Europe with its leading class" (Himmler's speech at the meeting of the SS Major Generals at Posen in 1943, in *Nazi Conspiracy*, IV, 558 ff.).

⁷⁰ Himmler, *ibid.*, p. 572.

organizations, far from disappearing, leads to the "co-ordination" of the whole population, who are now organized as sympathizers. The tremendous increase in sympathizers is checked by limiting party strength to a privileged "class" of a few millions and creating a superparty of several hundred thousand, the elite formations. Multiplication of offices, duplication of functions, and adaptation of the party-sympathizer relationship to the new conditions mean simply that the peculiar onion-like structure of the movement, in which every layer was the front of the next more militant formation, is retained. The state machine is transformed into a front organization of sympathizing bureaucrats whose function in domestic affairs is to spread confidence among the masses of merely co-ordinated citizens and whose foreign affairs consist in fooling the outside, nontotalitarian world. The Leader, in his dual capacity as chief of the state and leader of the movement, again combines in his person the acme of militant ruthlessness and confidence-inspiring normality.

One of the important differences between a totalitarian movement and a totalitarian state is that the totalitarian dictator can and must practice the totalitarian art of lying more consistently and on a larger scale than the leader of a movement. This is partly the automatic consequence of swelling the ranks of fellow-travelers, and is partly due to the fact that unpleasant statements by a statesman are not as easily revoked as those of a demagogic party leader. For this purpose, Hitler chose to fall back, without any detours, on the old-fashioned nationalism which he had denounced many times before his ascent to power; by posing as a violent nationalist, claiming that National Socialism was not an "export commodity," he appeased Germans and non-Germans alike and implied that Nazi ambitions would be satisfied when the traditional demands of a nationalist German foreign policy—return of territories ceded in the Versailles treaties, *Anschluss* of Austria, annexation of the German-speaking parts of Bohemia—were fulfilled. Stalin likewise reckoned with both Russian public opinion and the non-Russian world when he invented his theory of "socialism in one country" and threw the onus of world revolution on Trotsky.⁷¹

Systematic lying to the whole world can be safely carried out only under the conditions of totalitarian rule, where the fictitious quality of everyday reality makes propaganda largely superfluous. In their prepower stage the movements can never afford to hide their true goals to the same degree—after all, they are meant to inspire mass organizations. But, given the possibility to exterminate Jews like bedbugs, namely, by poison gas, it is no longer necessary to propagate that Jews are bedbugs;⁷² given the power to teach a whole nation the history of the Russian Revolution without men-

⁷¹ Deutscher, *op. cit.*, describes Stalin's remarkable "sensibility to all those psychological undercurrents . . . of which he set himself up as a mouthpiece" (p. 292). "The very name of Trotsky's theory, 'permanent revolution,' sounded like an ominous warning to a tired generation. . . . Stalin appealed directly to the horror of risk and uncertainty that had taken possession of many Bolsheviks" (p. 291).

⁷² Thus Hitler could afford to use the favorite cliché "decent Jew" once he had begun to exterminate them, namely, in December, 1941, in the *Tischgespräche*, p. 346.

tioning the name of Trotsky, there is no further need for propaganda against Trotsky. But the use of the methods for carrying out the ideological goals can be "expected" only from those who are "ideologically utterly firm"—whether they have acquired such firmness in the Comintern schools or the special Nazi indoctrination centers—even if these goals continue to be publicized. On such occasions it invariably turns out that the mere sympathizers never realize what is happening.⁷³ This leads to the paradox that "the secret society in broad daylight" is never more conspiratory in character and methods than after it has been recognized as a full-fledged member of the comity of nations. It is only logical that Hitler, prior to his seizure of power, resisted all attempts to organize the party and even the elite formations on a conspiratory basis; yet after 1933 he was quite eager to help transform the SS into a kind of secret society.⁷⁴ Similarly, the Moscow-directed Communist parties, in marked contrast to their predecessors, show a curious tendency to prefer the conditions of conspiracy even where complete legality is possible.⁷⁵ The more conspicuous the power of totalitarianism the more secret become its true goals. To know the ultimate aims of Hitler's rule in Germany, it was much wiser to rely on his propaganda speeches and *Mein Kampf* than on the oratory of the Chancellor of the Third Reich; just as it would have been wiser to distrust Stalin's words about "socialism in one country," invented for the passing purpose of seizing power after Lenin's death, and to take more seriously his repeated hostility to democratic countries. The totalitarian dictators have proved that they knew only too well the danger inherent in their pose of normality; that is, the danger of a true nationalist policy or of actually building socialism in one country. This they try to overcome through a permanent and consistent discrepancy between reassuring words and the reality of

⁷³ Hitler, therefore, speaking to members of the General Staff (Blomberg, Fritsch, Raeder) and high-ranking civilians (Neurath, Göring) in November, 1937, could permit himself to state openly that he needed depopulated space and reject the idea of conquering alien peoples. That this would automatically result in a policy of exterminating such peoples was evidently not realized by any one of his listeners.

⁷⁴ This began with an order in July, 1934, by which the SS was elevated to the rank of an independent organization within the NSDAP, and completed by a top secret decree of August, 1938, which declared that the SS special formations, the Death Head Units and the Shock Troops (*Verfügungstruppen*) were neither part of the army nor of the police; the Death Head Units had "to clear up special tasks of police nature" and the Shock Troops were "a standing armed unit exclusively at my disposal" (*Nazi Conspiracy*, III, 459). Two subsequent decrees of October, 1939, and April, 1940, established special jurisdiction in general matters for all SS members (*ibid.*, II, 184). From then on all pamphlets issued by the SS indoctrination office carry such notations as "Solely for use of the police." "Not for publication," "Exclusively for leaders and those entrusted with ideological education." It would be worth while to compile a bibliography of the voluminous secret literature, which includes a great many legislative measures, that was printed during the Nazi era. Interestingly enough, there is not a single SA booklet among this type of literature, and this is probably the most conclusive proof that after 1934 the SA ceased to be an elite formation.

⁷⁵ Compare Franz Borkenau, "Die neue Komintern," in *Der Monat*, Berlin, 1949, Heft 4.

rule, by consciously developing a method of always doing the opposite of what they say.⁷⁶ Stalin has carried this art of balance, which demands more skill than the ordinary routine of diplomacy, to the point where a moderation in foreign policy or the political line of the Comintern is almost invariably accompanied by radical purges in the Russian party. It was certainly more than coincidence that the Popular Front policy and the drafting of the comparatively liberal Soviet constitution were accompanied by the Moscow Trials.

Evidence that totalitarian governments aspire to conquer the globe and bring all countries on earth under their domination can be found repeatedly in Nazi and Bolshevik literature. Yet these ideological programs, inherited from pretotalitarian movements (from the supranationalist antisemitic parties and the Pan-German dreams of empire in the case of the Nazis, from the international concept of revolutionary socialism in the case of the Bolsheviks) are not decisive. What is decisive is that totalitarian regimes really conduct their foreign policy on the consistent assumption that they will eventually achieve this ultimate goal, and never lose sight of it no matter how distant it may appear or how seriously its "ideal" demands may conflict with the necessities of the moment. They therefore consider no country as permanently foreign, but, on the contrary, every country as their potential territory. Rise to power, the fact that in one country the fictitious world of the movement has become a tangible reality, creates a relationship to other nations which is similar to the situation of the totalitarian party under non-totalitarian rule: the tangible reality of the fiction, backed by internationally recognized state power, can be exported the same way contempt for parliament could be imported into a nontotalitarian parliament. In this respect, the prewar "solution" of the Jewish question was the outstanding export commodity of Nazi Germany: expulsion of Jews carried an important portion of Nazism into other countries; by forcing Jews to leave the Reich passportless and penniless, the legend of the Wandering Jew was realized, and by forcing the Jews into uncompromising hostility against them, the Nazis had created the pretext for taking a passionate interest in all nations' domestic policies.⁷⁷

How seriously the Nazis took their conspiratorial fiction, according to which they were the future rulers of the world, came to light in 1940 when—despite necessity, and in the face of all their all-too-real chances of winning over the occupied peoples of Europe—they started their depopulation policies in the Eastern territories, regardless of loss of manpower and serious military consequences, and introduced legislation which with retroactive

⁷⁶ Instances are too obvious and too numerous to be quoted. This tactic, however, should not be simply identified with the enormous lack of faithfulness and truthfulness which all biographers of Hitler and Stalin report as outstanding traits of their character.

⁷⁷ See the Circular Letter from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to all German authorities abroad of January, 1939, in *Nazi Conspiracy*, VI, 87 ff.

force exported part of the Third Reich's penal code into the Western occupied countries.⁷⁸ There was hardly a more effective way of publicizing the Nazi claim to world rule than punishing as high treason every utterance or action against the Third Reich, no matter when, where, or by whom it had been made. Nazi law treated the whole world as falling potentially under its jurisdiction, so that the occupying army was no longer an instrument of conquest that carried with it the new law of the conqueror, but an executive organ which enforced a law which already supposedly existed for everyone.

The assumption that Nazi law was binding beyond the German border and the punishment of non-Germans were more than mere devices of oppression. Totalitarian regimes are not afraid of the logical implications of world conquest even if they work the other way around and are detrimental to their own peoples' interests. Logically, it is indisputable that a plan for world conquest involves the abolition of differences between the conquering mother country and the conquered territories, as well as the difference between foreign and domestic politics, upon which all existing nontotalitarian institutions and all international intercourse are based. If the totalitarian conqueror conducts himself everywhere as though he were at home, by the same token he must treat his own population as though he were a foreign conqueror.⁷⁹ And it is perfectly true that the totalitarian movement seizes power in much the same sense as a foreign conqueror may occupy a country which he governs not for its own sake but for the benefit of something or somebody else. The Nazis behaved like foreign conquerors in Germany when, against all national interests, they tried and half succeeded in converting their defeat into a final catastrophe for the whole German people; similarly in case of victory, they intended to extend their extermination politics into the ranks of "racially unfit" Germans.⁸⁰

A similar attitude seems to have inspired Soviet foreign policy after the war. The cost of its aggressiveness to the Russian people themselves is

⁷⁸ In 1940, the Nazi government decreed that offenses ranging from high treason against the Reich to "malicious agitatorial utterances against leading persons of the State or the Nazi Party" should be punished with retroactive force in all German occupied territories, no matter whether they had been committed by Germans or by natives of these countries. See Giles, *op. cit.*—For the disastrous consequences of the Nazi "Siedlungspolitik" in Poland and the Ukraine, see *Triul. op. cit.*, Vols. XXVI and XXIX.

⁷⁹ The term is Kravchenko's, *op. cit.*, p. 303, who, describing conditions in Russia after the superpurge of 1936-1938, remarks: "Had a foreign conqueror taken over the machinery of Soviet life . . . the change could hardly have been more thorough or more cruel."

⁸⁰ Hitler contemplated during the war the introduction of a National Health Bill: "After national X-ray examination, the Fuehrer is to be given a list of sick persons, particularly those with lung and heart diseases. On the basis of the new Reich Health Law . . . these families will no longer be able to remain among the public and can no longer be allowed to produce children. What will happen to these families will be the subject of further orders of the Fuehrer." It does not need much imagination to guess what these further orders would have been. The number of people no longer allowed "to remain among the public" would have formed a considerable portion of the German population (*Nazi Conspiracy*, VI, 175).

prohibitive: it has foregone the great postwar loan from the United States which would have enabled Russia to reconstruct devastated areas and industrialize the country in a rational, productive way. The extension of Comintern governments throughout the Balkans and the occupation of large Eastern territories brought no tangible benefits, but on the contrary strained Russian resources still further. But this policy certainly served the interests of the Bolshevik movement, which has spread over almost half of the inhabited world.

Like a foreign conqueror, the totalitarian dictator regards the natural and industrial riches of each country, including his own, as a source of loot and a means of preparing the next step of aggressive expansion. Since this economy of systematic spoliation is carried out for the sake of the movement and not of the nation, no people and no territory, as the potential beneficiary, can possibly set a saturation point to the process. The totalitarian dictator is like a foreign conqueror who comes from nowhere, and his looting is likely to benefit nobody. Distribution of the spoils is calculated not to strengthen the economy of the home country but only as a temporary tactical maneuver. For economic purposes, the totalitarian regimes are as much at home in their countries as the proverbial swarms of locusts. The fact that the totalitarian dictator rules his own country like a foreign conqueror makes matters worse because it adds to ruthlessness an efficiency which is conspicuously lacking in tyrannies in alien surroundings. Stalin's war against the Ukraine in the early thirties was twice as effective as the terribly bloody German invasion and occupation.⁸¹ This is the reason why totalitarianism prefers quisling governments to direct rule despite the obvious dangers of such regimes.

The trouble with totalitarian regimes is not that they play power politics in an especially ruthless way, but that behind their politics is hidden an entirely new and unprecedented concept of power, just as behind their *Realpolitik* lies an entirely new and unprecedented concept of reality. Supreme disregard for immediate consequences rather than ruthlessness; rootlessness and neglect of national interests rather than nationalism; contempt for utilitarian motives rather than unconsidered pursuit of self-interest; "idealism," i.e., their unwavering faith in an ideological fictitious world, rather than lust

⁸¹ The total number of Russian dead in four years of war is estimated at between 12 and 21 million. Stalin exterminated in a single year in the Ukraine alone about 8 million people (estimate). See *Communism in Action*. U. S. Government, Washington, 1946, House Document No. 754, pp. 140-141.—Unlike the Nazi regime which kept rather accurate accounts on the number of its victims, there are no reliable figures for the millions of people who were killed in the Russian system. Nevertheless the following estimate, quoted by Souvarine, *op. cit.*, p. 669, carries some weight insofar as it stems from Walter Krivitsky, who had direct access to the information contained in the GPU files. According to these figures the census of 1937 in the Soviet Union, which Soviet statisticians had expected to reach 171 million persons, showed that there were actually only 145 millions. This would point to a loss in population of 26 millions, a figure which does not include the losses quoted above.

for power—these have all introduced into international politics a new and more disturbing factor than mere aggressiveness would have been able to do.

Power, as conceived by totalitarianism, lies exclusively in the force produced through organization. Just as Stalin saw every institution, independent of its actual function, only as a "transmission belt connecting the party with the people"⁸² and honestly believed that the most precious treasures of the Soviet Union were not the riches of its soil or the productive capacity of its huge manpower, but the "cadres" of the party⁸³ (*i.e.*, the police), so Hitler, as early as 1929, saw the "great thing" of the movement in the fact that sixty thousand men "have outwardly become almost a unit, that actually these members are uniform not only in ideas, but that even the facial expression is almost the same. Look at these laughing eyes, this fanatical enthusiasm and you will discover . . . how a hundred thousand men in a movement become a single type."⁸⁴ Whatever connection power had in the minds of Western men with earthly possessions, with wealth, treasures, and riches, has been dissolved into a kind of dematerialized mechanism whose every move generates power as friction or galvanic currents generate electricity. The totalitarian division of states into Have and Have-not countries is more than a demagogic device; those who make it are actually convinced that the power of material possessions is negligible and only stands in the way of the development of organizational power. To Stalin constant growth and development of police cadres were incomparably more important than the oil in Baku, the coal and ore in the Urals, the granaries in the Ukraine, or the potential treasures of Siberia—in short the development of Russia's full power arsenal. The same mentality led Hitler to sacrifice all Germany to the cadres of the SS; he did not consider the war lost when German cities lay in rubble and industrial capacity was destroyed, but only when he learned that the SS troops were no longer reliable.⁸⁵ To a man who believed in organizational omnipotence against all mere material factors, military or economic, and who, moreover, calculated the eventual victory of his enterprise in centuries, defeat was not military catastrophe or threatened starvation of the population, but only the destruction of the elite formations which were supposed to carry the conspiracy for world rule through a line of generations to its eventual end.

The structurelessness of the totalitarian state, its neglect of material

⁸² Deutscher, *op. cit.*, p. 256.

⁸³ B. Souvarine, *op. cit.*, p. 605, quotes Stalin as saying at the height of terror in 1937: "You must reach the understanding that of all the precious assets existing in the world, the most precious and decisive are the cadres." All reports show that in Soviet Russia the secret police must be regarded as the real elite formation of the party. Characteristic for this nature of the police is that since the early twenties NKVD agents were "not recruited on a voluntary basis," but drawn from the ranks of the party. Furthermore, "the NKVD could not be chosen as a career" (see Beck and Godin, *op. cit.*, p. 160).

⁸⁴ Quoted from Heiden, *op. cit.*, p. 311.

⁸⁵ According to reports of the last meeting, Hitler decided to commit suicide after he had learned that the SS troops could no longer be trusted. See H. R. Trevor-Roper, *The Last Days of Hitler*, 1947, pp. 116 ff.

interests, its emancipation from the profit motive, and its nonutilitarian attitudes in general have more than anything else contributed to making contemporary politics well-nigh unpredictable. The inability of the non-totalitarian world to grasp a mentality which functions independently of all calculable action in terms of men and material, and is completely indifferent to national interest and the well-being of its people, shows itself in a curious dilemma of judgment: those who rightly understand the terrible efficiency of totalitarian organization and police are likely to overestimate the material force of totalitarian countries, while those who understand the wasteful incompetence of totalitarian economics are likely to underestimate the power potential which can be created in disregard of all material factors.

II: *The Secret Police*

UP TO NOW we know only two authentic forms of totalitarian domination: the dictatorship of National Socialism after 1938, and the dictatorship of Bolshevism since 1930. These forms of domination differ basically from other kinds of dictatorial, despotic or tyrannical rule; and even though they have developed, with a certain continuity, from party dictatorships, their essentially totalitarian features are new and cannot be derived from one-party systems. The goal of one-party systems is not only to seize the government administration but, by filling all offices with party members, to achieve a complete amalgamation of state and party, so that after the seizure of power the party becomes a kind of propaganda organization for the government. This system is "total" only in a negative sense, namely, in that the ruling party will tolerate no other parties, no opposition and no freedom of political opinion. Once a party dictatorship has come to power, it leaves the original power relationship between state and party intact; the government and the army exercise the same power as before, and the "revolution" consists only in the fact that all government positions are now occupied by party members. In all these cases the power of the party rests on a monopoly guaranteed by the state and the party no longer possesses its own power center.

The revolution initiated by the totalitarian movements after they have seized power is of a considerably more radical nature. From the start, they consciously strive to maintain the essential differences between state and movement and to prevent the "revolutionary" institutions of the movement from being absorbed by the government.⁸⁶ The problem of seizing the state

⁸⁶ Hitler frequently commented on the relationship between state and party, and always emphasized that not the state, but the race, or the "united folk community," was of primary importance (cf. the afore-quoted speech, reprinted as annex to the *Tischgespräche*). In his speech at the Nuremberg Parteitag of 1935, he gave this theory its most succinct expression: "It is not the state that commands us, but we who command the state." It is self-evident that, in practice, such powers of command are possible only if the institutions of the party remain independent from those of the state.

machine without amalgamating with it is solved by permitting only those party members whose importance for the movement is secondary to rise in the state hierarchy. All real power is vested in the institutions of the movement, and outside the state and military apparatuses. It is inside the movement, which remains the center of action of the country, that all decisions are made; the official civil services are often not even informed of what is going on, and party members with the ambition to rise to the rank of ministers have in all cases paid for such "bourgeois" wishes with the loss of their influence on the movement and of the confidence of its leaders.

Totalitarianism in power uses the state as its outward façade, to represent the country in the nontotalitarian world. As such, the totalitarian state is the logical heir of the totalitarian movement from which it borrows its organizational structure. Totalitarian rulers deal with nontotalitarian governments in the same way they dealt with parliamentary parties or intra-party factions before their rise to power and, though on an enlarged international scene, are again faced with the double problem of shielding the fictitious world of the movement (or the totalitarian country) from the impact of factuality and of presenting a semblance of normality and common sense to the normal outside world.

Above the state and behind the façades of ostensible power, in a maze of multiplied offices, underlying all shifts of authority and in a chaos of inefficiency, lies the power nucleus of the country, the superefficient and super-competent services of the secret police.^{66a} The emphasis on the police as the sole organ of power, and the corresponding neglect of the seemingly greater power arsenal of the army, which is characteristic of all totalitarian regimes, can still be partially explained by the totalitarian aspiration to world rule and its conscious abolition of the distinction between a foreign country and a home country, between foreign and domestic affairs. The military forces, trained to fight a foreign aggressor, have always been a dubious instrument for civil-war purposes; even under totalitarian conditions they find it difficult to regard their own people with the eyes of a foreign conqueror.⁶⁷ More important in this respect, however, is that their value becomes dubious even in time of war. Since the totalitarian ruler conducts his policies on the assumption of an eventual world government, he treats the victims of his aggression as though they were rebels, guilty of high treason, and consequently prefers to rule occupied territories with police, and not with military forces.

Even before the movement seizes power, it possesses a secret police and spy service with branches in various countries. Later its agents receive more money and authority than the regular military intelligence service and are

^{66a} Otto Gauweiler, *Rechtseinrichtungen und Rechtsaufgaben der Bewegung*, 1939, notes expressly that Himmler's special position as Reichsfuehrer-SS and head of the German police rested on the fact that the police administration had achieved "a genuineness of party and state" which was not even attempted anywhere else in the government.

⁶⁷ During the peasant revolts of the twenties in Russia, Voroshilov allegedly refused the support of the Red Army; this led to the introduction of special divisions of the GPU for punitive expeditions. See Ciliga, *op. cit.*, p. 95.

frequently the secret chiefs of embassies and consulates abroad.⁶⁸ Its main tasks consist in forming fifth columns, directing the branches of the movement, influencing the domestic policies of the respective countries, and generally preparing for the time when the totalitarian ruler—after overthrow of the government or military victory—can openly feel at home. In other words, the international branches of the secret police are the transmission belts which constantly transform the ostensibly foreign policy of the totalitarian state into the potentially domestic business of the totalitarian movement.

These functions, however, which the secret police fulfill in order to prepare the totalitarian utopia of world rule, are secondary to those required for the present realization of the totalitarian fiction in one country. The dominant role of the secret police in the domestic politics of totalitarian countries has naturally contributed much to the common misconception of totalitarianism. All despotisms rely heavily on secret services and feel more threatened by their own than by any foreign people. However, this analogy between totalitarianism and despotism holds only for the first stages of totalitarian rule, when there is still a political opposition. In this as in other respects totalitarianism takes advantage of, and gives conscious support to, nontotalitarian misconceptions, no matter how uncomplimentary they may be. Himmler, in his famous speech to the Reichswehr staff in 1937, assumed the role of an ordinary tyrant when he explained the constant expansion of the police forces by assuming the existence of a "fourth theater in case of war, internal Germany."⁶⁹ Similarly, Stalin at almost the same moment half succeeded in convincing the old Bolshevik guard, whose "confessions" he needed, of a war threat against the Soviet Union and, consequently, an emergency in which the country must remain united even behind a despot. The most striking aspect of these statements was that both were made after all political opposition had been extinguished, that the secret services were expanded when actually no opponents were left to be spied upon. When war came, Himmler neither needed nor used his SS troops in Germany itself, except for the running of concentration camps and policing of foreign slave labor; the bulk of the armed SS served at the Eastern front where they were used for "special assignments"—usually mass murder—and the enforcement of policy which frequently ran counter to the military as well as the Nazi civilian hierarchy. Like the secret police of the Soviet Union, the SS formations usually arrived after the military forces had pacified the conquered territory and had dealt with outright political opposition.

In the first stages of a totalitarian regime, however, the secret police and the party's elite formations still play a role similar to that in other forms of dictatorship and the well-known terror regimes of the past; and the excessive cruelty of their methods is unparalleled only in the history of modern

⁶⁸ In 1935, the Gestapo agents abroad received 20 million marks while the regular espionage service of the Reichswehr had to get along with a budget of 8 million. See Pierre Dehillotte, *Gestapo*, Paris, 1940, p. 11.

⁶⁹ See *Nazi Conspiracy*, IV, 616 ff.

Western countries. The first stage of ferreting out secret enemies and hunting down former opponents is usually combined with drafting the entire population into front organizations and re-educating old party members for voluntary espionage services, so that the rather dubious sympathies of the drafted sympathizers need not worry the specially trained cadres of the police. It is during this stage that a neighbor gradually becomes a more dangerous enemy to one who happens to harbor "dangerous thoughts" than are the officially appointed police agents. The end of the first stage comes with the liquidation of open and secret resistance in any organized form; it can be set at about 1935 in Germany and approximately 1930 in Soviet Russia.

Only after the extermination of real enemies has been completed and the hunt for "objective enemies" begun does terror become the actual content of totalitarian regimes. Under the pretext of building socialism in one country, or using a given territory as a laboratory for a revolutionary experiment, or realizing the *Volksgemeinschaft*, the second claim of totalitarianism, the claim to total domination, is carried out. And although theoretically total domination is possible only under the conditions of world rule, the totalitarian regimes have proved that this part of the totalitarian utopia can be realized almost to perfection, because it is temporarily independent of defeat or victory. Thus Hitler could rejoice even in the midst of military setbacks over the extermination of Jews and the establishment of death factories; no matter what the final outcome, without the war it would never have been possible "to burn the bridges" and to realize some of the goals of the totalitarian movement.⁶⁰

The elite formations of the Nazi movement and the "cadres" of the Bolshevik movement serve the goal of total domination rather than the security of the regime in power. Just as the totalitarian claim to world rule is only in appearance the same as imperialist expansion, so the claim to total domination only seems familiar to the student of despotism. If the chief difference between totalitarian and imperialist expansion is that the former recognizes no difference between a home and a foreign country, then the chief difference between a despotic and a totalitarian secret police is that the latter does not hunt secret thoughts and does not use the old method of secret services, the method of provocation.⁶¹

Since the totalitarian secret police begins its career after the pacification of the country, it always appears entirely superfluous to all outside observers—or, on the contrary, misleads them into thinking that there is some secret

⁶⁰ See note 62.

⁶¹ Maurice Laporte, *Histoire de l'Okhrana*, Paris, 1935, rightly called the method of provocation "the foundation stone" of the secret police (p. 19).

In Soviet Russia, provocation, far from being the secret weapon of the secret police, has been used as the widely propagandized public method of the regime to gauge the temper of public opinion. The reluctance of the population to avail itself of the periodically recurring invitations to criticize or react to "liberal" interludes in the terror regime shows that such gestures are understood as provocation on a mass scale. Provocation has indeed become the totalitarian version of public opinion polls.

resistance.⁶² The superfluousness of secret services is nothing new; they have always been haunted by the need to prove their usefulness and keep their jobs after their original task had been completed. The methods used for this purpose have made the study of the history of revolutions a rather difficult enterprise. It appears, for example, that there was not a single anti-government action under the reign of Louis Napoleon which had not been inspired by the police itself.⁶³ Similarly, the role of secret agents in all revolutionary parties in Czarist Russia strongly suggests that without their "inspiring" provocative actions the course of the Russian revolutionary movement would have been far less successful.⁶⁴ Provocation, in other words, helped as much to maintain the continuity of tradition as it did to disrupt time and again the organization of the revolution.

This dubious role of provocation might have been one reason why the totalitarian rulers discarded it. Provocation, moreover, is clearly necessary only on the assumption that suspicion is not sufficient for arrest and punishment. None of the totalitarian rulers, of course, ever dreamed of conditions in which he would have to resort to provocation in order to trap somebody he thought to be an enemy. More important than these technical considerations is the fact that totalitarianism defined its enemies ideologically before it seized power, so that categories of the "suspects" were not established through police information. Thus the Jews in Nazi Germany or the descendants of the former ruling classes in Soviet Russia were not really suspected of any hostile action; they had been declared "objective" enemies of the regime in accordance with its ideology.

The chief difference between the despotic and the totalitarian secret police lies in the difference between the "suspect" and the "objective enemy." The latter is defined by the policy of the government and not by his own desire to overthrow it.⁶⁵ He is never an individual whose dangerous thoughts must be

⁶² Interesting in this respect are the attempts made by Nazi civil servants in Germany to reduce the competence and the personnel of the Gestapo on the ground that Nazification of the country had been achieved, so that Himmler, who on the contrary wanted to expand the secret services at this moment (around 1934), had to exaggerate the danger coming from the "internal enemies." See *Nazi Conspiracy*, II, 259; V, 205; III, 547.

⁶³ See Gallier-Boissière, *Mysteries of the French Secret Police*, 1938, p. 234.

⁶⁴ It seems, after all, no accident that the foundation of the Okhrana in 1880 ushered in a period of unsurpassed revolutionary activities in Russia. In order to prove its usefulness, it had occasionally to organize murders, and its agents "served despite themselves the ideas of those whom they denounced. . . . If a pamphlet was distributed by a police agent or if the execution of a minister was organized by an Azev—the result was the same" (M. Laporte, *op. cit.*, p. 25). The more important executions moreover seem to have been police jobs—Stolypin and von Plehve. Decisive for the revolutionary tradition was the fact that in times of calm the police agents had to "stir up anew the energies and stimulate the zeal" of the revolutionaries (*ibid.*, p. 71).

See also Bertram D. Wolfe, *Three Who Made A Revolution: Lenin, Trotsky, Stalin*, 1948, who calls this phenomenon "Police Socialism."

⁶⁵ Hans Frank, who later became Governor General of Poland, made a typical differentiation between a person "dangerous to the State" and a person who is "hostile to the State." The former implies an objective quality which is independent of will

provoked or whose past justifies suspicion, but a "carrier of tendencies" like the carrier of a disease.⁹⁶ Practically speaking, the totalitarian ruler proceeds like a man who persistently insults another man until everybody knows that the latter is his enemy, so that he can, with some plausibility, go and kill him in self-defense. This certainly is a little crude, but it works—as everybody will know who ever watched how certain successful careerists eliminate competitors.

The introduction of the notion of "objective enemy" is much more decisive for the functioning of totalitarian regimes than the ideological definition of the respective categories. If it were only a matter of hating Jews or bourgeois, the totalitarian regimes could, after the commission of one gigantic crime, return, as it were, to the rules of normal life and government. As we know, the opposite is the case. The category of objective enemies outlives the first ideologically determined foes of the movement; new objective enemies are discovered according to changing circumstances: the Nazis, foreseeing the completion of Jewish extermination, had already taken the necessary preliminary steps for the liquidation of the Polish people, while Hitler even planned the decimation of certain categories of Germans;⁹⁷ the Bolsheviks, having started with descendants of the former ruling classes, directed their full terror against the kulaks (in the early thirties), who in turn were followed by Russians of Polish origin (between 1936 and 1938), the Tartars and the Volga Germans during the war, former prisoners of war and units of the occupational forces of the Red Army after the war, and Russian Jewry after the establishment of a Jewish state. The choice of such categories is never entirely arbitrary; since they are publicized and used for propaganda purposes of the movement abroad, they must appear plausible as possible enemies; the choice of a particular category may even be due

and behavior; the political police of the Nazis is concerned not just with actions hostile to the state but with "all attempts—no matter what their aim—which in their effects endanger the State." See *Deutsches Verwaltungsrecht*, pp. 420-430. Translation quoted from *Nazi Conspiracy*, IV, 881 ff.—In the words of Maunz, *op. cit.*, p. 44: "By eliminating dangerous persons, the security measure . . . means to ward off a state of danger to the national community, independently of any offense that may have been committed by these persons. [It is a question of] warding off an *objective* danger."

⁹⁶ R. Hoehn, a Nazi jurist and member of the SS, said in an obituary on Reinhard Heydrich, who prior to his rule of Czechoslovakia had been one of the closest collaborators with Himmler: He regarded his opponents "not as individuals but as carriers of tendencies endangering the state and therefore beyond the pale of the national community." In *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* of June 6, 1942; quoted from E. Kohn: Bramstedt, *Dictatorship and Political Police*, London, 1945.

⁹⁷ As early as 1941, during a staff meeting in Hitler's headquarters, it was proposed to impose upon the Polish population those regulations by which the Jews had been prepared for the extermination camps: change of names if these were of German origin; death sentences for sexual intercourse between Germans and Poles (*Rassenschande*); obligation to wear a P-sign in Germany similar to the Yellow Star for Jews. See *Nazi Conspiracy*, VIII, 237 ff., and Hans Frank's diary in *Trial*, *op. cit.*, XXIX, 683. Naturally, the Poles themselves soon began to worry about what would happen to them when the Nazis had finished the extermination of the Jews (*Nazi Conspiracy*, IV, 916).—For Hitler's plans regarding the German people, see note 80.

to certain propaganda needs of the movement at large—as for instance the sudden entirely unprecedented emergence of governmental antisemitism in the Soviet Union, which may be calculated to win sympathies for the Soviet Union in the European satellite countries. The show trials which require subjective confessions of guilt from "objectively" identified enemies are meant for these purposes; they can best be staged with those who have received a totalitarian indoctrination that enables them "subjectively" to understand their own "objective" harmfulness and to confess "for the sake of the cause."⁹⁸ The concept of the "objective opponent," whose identity changes according to the prevailing circumstances—so that, as soon as one category is liquidated, war may be declared on another—corresponds exactly to the factual situation reiterated time and again by totalitarian rulers: namely, that their regime is not a government in any traditional sense, but a *movement*, whose advance constantly meets with new obstacles that have to be eliminated. So far as one may speak at all of any legal thinking within the totalitarian system, the "objective opponent" is its central idea.

Closely connected with this transformation of the suspect into the objective enemy is the change of position of the secret police in the totalitarian state. The secret services have rightly been called a state within the state, and this not only in despotisms but also under constitutional or semiconstitutional governments. The mere possession of secret information has always given this branch a decisive superiority over all other branches of the civil services and constituted an open threat to members of the government.⁹⁹ The totalitarian police, on the contrary, is totally subject to the will of the Leader, who alone can decide who the next potential enemy will be and who, as Stalin did, can also single out cadres of the secret police for liquidation. Since the police are no longer permitted to use provocation, they have been deprived of the only available means of perpetuating themselves independently of the government and have become entirely dependent on the higher authorities for the safeguarding of their jobs. Like the army in a nontotalitarian state, the police in totalitarian countries merely execute political policy and have lost all the prerogatives which they held under despotic bureaucracies.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁸ Beck and Godin, *op. cit.*, p. 87, speak of the "objective characteristics" which invited arrest in the USSR; among them was membership in the NKVD (p. 153). Subjective insight into the objective necessity of arrest and confession could most easily be achieved with former members of the secret police. In the words of an ex-NKVD agent: "My superiors know me and my work well enough, and if the party and the NKVD now require me to confess to such things they must have good reasons for what they are doing. My duty as a loyal Soviet citizen is not to withhold the confession required of me" (*ibid.*, p. 231).

⁹⁹ Well known is the situation in France where ministers lived in constant fear of the secret "*dosiers*" of the police. For the situation in Czarist Russia, see Laporte, *op. cit.*, pp. 22-23: "Eventually the Okhrana will wield a power far superior to the power of the more regular authorities. . . . The Okhrana . . . will inform the Czar of what it chooses to."

¹⁰⁰ "Unlike the Okhrana, which had been a state within a state, the GPU is a department of the Soviet government; . . . and its activities are much less independent" (Roger N. Baldwin, "Political Police," in *Encyclopedia of Social Sciences*).

The task of the totalitarian police is not to discover crimes, but to be on hand when the government decides to arrest a certain category of the population. Their chief political distinction is that they alone are in the confidence of the highest authority and know which political line will be enforced. This does not apply only to matters of high policy, such as the liquidation of a whole class or ethnic group (only the cadres of the GPU knew the actual goal of the Soviet government in the early thirties and only the SS formations knew that the Jews were to be exterminated in the early forties); the point about everyday life under totalitarian conditions is that only the agents of the NKVD in an industrial enterprise are informed of what Moscow wants when it orders, for instance, a speed-up in the fabrication of pipes—whether it simply wants more pipes, or to ruin the director of the factory, or to liquidate the whole management, or to abolish this particular factory, or, finally, to have this order repeated all over the nation so that a new purge can begin.

One of the reasons for the duplication of secret services whose agents are unknown to each other is that total domination needs the most extreme flexibility: to use our example, Moscow may not yet know, when it gives its order for pipes, whether it wants pipes—which are always needed—or a purge. Multiplication of secret services makes last-minute changes possible, so that one branch may be preparing to bestow the Order of Lenin on the director of the factory while another makes arrangements for his arrest. The efficiency of the police consists in the fact that such contradictory assignments can be prepared simultaneously.

Under totalitarian, as under other regimes, the secret police has a monopoly on certain vital information. But the kind of knowledge that can be possessed only by the police has undergone an important change: the police are no longer concerned with knowing what is going on in the heads of future victims (most of the time they ignore who these victims will be), and the police have become the trustees of the greatest state secrets. This automatically means a great improvement in prestige and position, even though it is accompanied by a definite loss of real power. The secret services no longer know anything that the Leader does not know better; in terms of power, they have sunk to the level of the executioner.

From a legal point of view, even more interesting than the change from the suspect to the objective enemy is the totalitarian replacement of the suspected offense by the possible crime. The possible crime is no more subjective than the objective enemy. While the suspect is arrested because he is thought to be capable of committing a crime that more or less fits his personality (or his suspected personality),¹⁰¹ the totalitarian version of the

¹⁰¹ Typical of the concept of the suspect is the following story related by C. Pobyedonostzev in *L'Autocratie Russe: Mémoires politiques, correspondance officielle et documents inédits . . . 1881-1894*, Paris, 1927: General Cherevin of the Okhrana is asked, because the opposing party has hired a Jewish lawyer, to intervene in favor of a lady who is about to lose a lawsuit. Says the General: "The same night I ordered the arrest of this cursed Jew and held him as a so-called politically suspect person. . . . After all, could I treat in the same manner friends and a dirty Jew who may be innocent today but who was guilty yesterday or will be guilty tomorrow?"

possible crime is based on the logical anticipation of objective developments. The Moscow Trials of the old Bolshevik guard and the chiefs of the Red Army were classic examples of punishment for possible crimes. Behind the fantastic, fabricated charges one can easily detect the following logical calculation: developments in the Soviet Union might lead to a crisis, a crisis might lead to the overthrow of Stalin's dictatorship, this might weaken the country's military force and possibly bring about a situation in which the new government would have to sign a truce or even conclude an alliance with Hitler. Whereupon Stalin proceeded to declare that a plot for the overthrow of the government and a conspiracy with Hitler existed.¹⁰² Against these "objective," though entirely improbable, possibilities stood only "subjective" factors, such as the trustworthiness of the accused, their fatigue, their inability to understand what was going on, their firm conviction that without Stalin everything would be lost, their sincere hatred of Fascism—that is, a number of factual details which naturally lacked the consistency of the fictitious, logical, possible crime. Totalitarianism's central assumption that everything is possible thus leads through consistent elimination of all factual restraints to the absurd and terrible consequence that every crime the rulers can conceive of must be punished, regardless of whether or not it has been committed. The possible crime, like the objective enemy, is of course beyond the competence of the police, who can neither discover, invent, nor provoke it. Here again the secret services depend entirely upon the political authorities. Their independence as a state within the state is gone.

Only in one respect does the totalitarian secret police still resemble closely the secret services of nontotalitarian countries. The secret police has traditionally, *i.e.*, since Fouché, profited from its victims and has augmented the official state-authorized budget from certain unorthodox sources simply by assuming a position of partnership in activities it was supposed to suppress, such as gambling and prostitution.¹⁰³ These illegal methods of financing itself, ranging from friendly acceptance of bribes to outright blackmail, were a

¹⁰² The charges in the Moscow Trials "were based . . . on a grotesquely brutalized and distorting anticipation of possible developments. [Stalin's] reasoning probably developed along the following lines: they may want to overthrow me in a crisis—I shall charge them with having made the attempt. . . . A change of government may weaken Russia's fighting capacity; and if they succeed, they may be compelled to sign a truce with Hitler, and perhaps even agree to a cession of territory. . . . I shall accuse them of having entered already into a treacherous alliance with Germany and ceded Soviet territory." This is I. Deutscher's brilliant explanation of the Moscow Trials, *op. cit.*, p. 377.

A good example of the Nazi version of the possible crime can be found in Hans Frank, *op. cit.*: "A complete catalogue of attempts 'dangerous to the State' can never be drawn up because it can never be foreseen what may endanger the leadership and the people some time in the future." (Translation quoted from *Nazi Conspiracy*, IV, 881.)

¹⁰³ The criminal methods of the secret police are of course no monopoly of the French tradition. In Austria, for example, the feared political police under Maria Theresa was organized by Kaunitz from the cadres of the so-called "chastity commissars" who used to live by blackmail. See Moritz Bermann, *Maria Theresia und Kaiser Joseph II*, Vienna-Leipzig, 1881. I owe this reference to Robert Pick.

prominent factor in freeing the secret services from the public authorities and strengthened their position as a state within the state. It is curious to see that the financing of police activities with income from its victims has survived all other changes. In Soviet Russia, the NKVD is almost entirely dependent upon the exploitation of slave labor which, indeed, seems to yield no other profit and to serve no other purpose but the financing of the huge secret apparatus.¹⁰⁴ Himmler first financed his SS troops, who were the cadres of the Nazi secret police, through the confiscation of Jewish property; he then concluded an agreement with Darré, the Minister of Agriculture, by which Himmler received the several hundred million marks which Darré earned annually by buying agricultural commodities cheaply abroad and selling them at fixed prices in Germany.¹⁰⁵ This source of regular income disappeared of course during the war; Albert Speer, the successor of Todt and the greatest employer of manpower in Germany after 1942, proposed a similar deal to Himmler in 1942; if Himmler agreed to release from SS authority the imported slave laborers whose work had been remarkably inefficient, the Speer organization would give him a certain percentage of the profits for the SS.¹⁰⁶ To such more or less regular sources of income, Himmler added the old blackmail methods of secret services in times of financial crisis: in their communities SS units formed groups of "Friends of the SS" who had to "volunteer" the necessary funds for the needs of the local SS men.¹⁰⁷ (It is noteworthy that in its various financial operations the Nazi secret police did not exploit its prisoners. Except in the last years of the war, when the use of human material in the concentration camps was no longer determined by Himmler alone, work in the camps "had no rational purpose except that of increasing the burden and torture of the unfortunate prisoners."¹⁰⁸)

However, these financial irregularities are the sole, and not very important, traces of the secret police tradition. They are possible because of

¹⁰⁴ That the huge police organization is paid with profits from slave labor is certain; surprising is that the police budget seems not even entirely covered by it; Kravchenko, *op. cit.*, mentions special taxes, imposed by the NKVD on convicted citizens who continue to live and work in freedom.

¹⁰⁵ See Fritz Thyssen, *I Paid Hitler*, London, 1941.

¹⁰⁶ See *Nazi Conspiracy*, I, 916-917.—The economic activity of the SS was consolidated in a central office for economic and administrative affairs. To the Treasury and Internal Revenue, the SS declared its financial assets as "party property earmarked for special purposes" (letter of May 5, 1943, quoted from M. Wolfson, *Uebersicht der Gliederung verbrecherischer Nazi-Organisationen*, *Omnis*, December, 1947).

¹⁰⁷ See Kohn-Bramstedt, *op. cit.*, p. 112.—The blackmail motive is clearly revealed if we consider that this kind of fund-raising was always organized by local SS units in the localities where they were stationed. See *Der Weg der SS*, issued by the SS-Hauptamt-Schulungsamt (undated), p. 14.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 124.—Certain compromises in this respect were made for those requirements pertaining to the maintenance of the camps and the personal needs of the SS. See Wolfson, *op. cit.*, letter of September 19, 1941, from Oswald Pohl, head of the WVH (*Wirtschafts- und Verwaltungs-Hauptamt*) to the Reichskommissar for price control. It seems that all these economic activities in the concentration camps developed only during the war and under the pressure of acute labor shortage.

the general contempt of totalitarian regimes for economic and financial matters, so that methods which under normal conditions would be illegal, and would distinguish the secret police from other more respectable departments of the administration, no longer indicate that we are dealing here with a department which enjoys independence, is not controlled by other authorities, lives in an atmosphere of irregularity, nonrespectability, and insecurity. The position of the totalitarian secret police, on the contrary, has been completely stabilized, and its services are wholly integrated in the administration. Not only is the organization *not* beyond the pale of the law, but, rather, it is the embodiment of the law, and its respectability is above suspicion. It no longer organizes murders on its own initiative, no longer provokes offenses against state and society, and it sternly proceeds against all forms of bribery, blackmail and irregular financial gains. The moral lecture, coupled with very tangible threats, that Himmler could permit himself to deliver to his men in the middle of the war—"We had the moral right . . . to wipe out this [Jewish] people bent on wiping us out, but we do not have the right to enrich ourselves in any manner whatsoever, be it by a fur coat, a watch, a single mark, or a cigarette"¹⁰⁹—strikes a note that one would look for in vain in the history of the secret police. If it still is concerned with "dangerous thoughts," they are hardly ones which the suspected persons know to be dangerous; the regimentation of all intellectual and artistic life demands a constant re-establishment and revision of standards which naturally is accompanied by repeated eliminations of intellectuals whose "dangerous thoughts" usually consist in certain ideas that were still entirely orthodox the day before. While, therefore, its police function in the accepted meaning of the word has become superfluous, the economic function of the secret police, sometimes thought to have replaced the first, is even more dubious. It is undeniable, to be sure, that the NKVD periodically rounds up a percentage of the Soviet population and sends them into camps which are known under the flattering misnomer of forced-labor camps;¹¹⁰ yet although it is quite possible that this is the Soviet Union's

¹⁰⁹ Himmler's speech of October, 1943, at Posen, *International Military Trials*, Nuremberg, 1945-46, Vol. 29, p. 146.

¹¹⁰ "Bek Bulat (the pen name of a former Soviet professor) has been able to study documents of the North Caucasian NKVD. From these documents it was obvious that in June, 1937, when the great purge was at its apex, the government prescribed the local NKVDs to have a certain percentage of the population arrested. . . . The percentage varied from one province to the other, reaching 5 per cent in the least loyal areas. The average for the whole of the Soviet Union was about 3 per cent." Reported by David J. Dallin in *The New Leader*, January 8, 1949.—Beck and Godin, *op. cit.*, p. 239, arrive at a slightly divergent and quite plausible assumption, according to which "arrests were planned as follows: The NKVD files covered practically the whole population, and everyone was classified in a category. Thus statistics were available in every town showing how many former Whites, members of opposing parties, etc., were living in them. All incriminating material collected . . . and gathered from prisoners' confessions was also entered in the files, and each person's card was marked to show how dangerous he was considered; this depending on the amount of suspicious or incriminating material appearing in his file. As the statistics were regu-

way of solving its unemployment problem, it is also generally known that the output in those camps is infinitely lower than that of ordinary Soviet labor and hardly suffices to pay the expenses of the police apparatus.

Neither dubious nor superfluous is the political function of the secret police, the "best organized and the most efficient" of all government departments,¹¹¹ in the power apparatus of the totalitarian regime. It constitutes the true executive branch of the government through which all orders are transmitted. Through the net of secret agents, the totalitarian ruler has created for himself a directly executive transmission belt which, in distinction to the onion-like structure of the ostensible hierarchy, is completely severed and isolated from all other institutions.¹¹² In this sense, the secret police agents are the only openly ruling class in totalitarian countries and their standards and scale of values permeate the entire texture of totalitarian society.

From this viewpoint, it may not be too surprising that certain peculiar qualities of the secret police are general qualities of totalitarian society rather than peculiarities of the totalitarian secret police. The category of the suspect thus embraces under totalitarian conditions the total population; every thought that deviates from the officially prescribed and permanently changing line is already suspect, no matter in which field of human activity it occurs. Simply because of their capacity to think, human beings are suspects by definition, and this suspicion cannot be diverted by exemplary behavior, for the human capacity to think is also a capacity to change one's mind. Since, moreover, it is impossible ever to know beyond doubt another man's heart—torture in this context is only the desperate and eternally futile attempt to achieve what cannot be achieved—suspicion can no longer be allayed if neither a community of values nor the predictabilities of self-interest exist as social (as distinguished from merely psychological) realities. Mutual suspicion, therefore, permeates all social relationships in totalitarian countries and creates an all-pervasive atmosphere even outside the special purview of the secret police.

In totalitarian regimes provocation, once only the specialty of the secret agent, becomes a method of dealing with his neighbor which everybody, willingly or unwillingly, is forced to follow. Everyone, in a way, is the *agent*

lary reported to higher authorities, it was possible to arrange a purge at any moment, with full knowledge of the exact number of persons in each category."

¹¹¹ Baldwin, *op. cit.*

¹¹² The Russian secret-police cadres were as much at the "personal disposal" of Stalin as the SS Shock Troops (*Verfügungstrippen*) were at the personal disposal of Hitler. Both, even if they are called to serve with the military forces in time of war, live under their own special jurisdiction. The special "marriage laws" which served to segregate the SS from the rest of the population, were the first and most fundamental regulations which Himmler introduced when he took over the reorganization of the SS. Even prior to Himmler's marriage laws, in 1927, the SS was instructed by official decree "never [to participate] in discussions at membership meetings" (*Der Weg der SS, op. cit.*). The same conduct is reported about the members of the NKVD, who kept deliberately to themselves and above all did not associate with other sections of the party aristocracy (Beck and Godin, *op. cit.*, p. 163).

provocateur of everyone else; for obviously everybody will call himself an *agent provocateur* if ever an ordinary friendly exchange of "dangerous thoughts" (or what in the meantime have become dangerous thoughts) should come to the attention of the authorities. Collaboration of the population in denouncing political opponents and volunteer service as stool pigeons are certainly not unprecedented, but in totalitarian countries they are so well organized that the work of specialists is almost superfluous. In a system of ubiquitous spying, where everybody may be a police agent and each individual feels himself under constant surveillance; under circumstances, moreover, where careers are extremely insecure and where the most spectacular ascents and falls have become everyday occurrences, every word becomes equivocal and subject to retrospective "interpretation."

The most striking illustration of the permeation of totalitarian society with secret police methods and standards can be found in the matter of careers. The double agent in nontotalitarian regimes served the cause he was supposed to combat almost as much as, and sometimes more than, the authorities. Frequently he harbored a sort of double ambition: he wanted to rise in the ranks of the revolutionary parties as well as in the ranks of the services. In order to win promotion in both fields, he had only to adopt certain methods which in a normal society belong to the secret daydreams of the small employee who depends on seniority for advancement: through his connections with the police, he could certainly eliminate his rivals and superiors in the party, and through his connections with the revolutionaries he had at least a chance to get rid of his chief in the police.¹¹³ If we consider the career conditions in present Russian society, the similarity to such methods is striking. Not only do almost all higher officials owe their positions to purges that removed their predecessors, but promotions in all walks of life are accelerated in this way. About every ten years, a nation-wide purge makes room for the new generation, freshly graduated and hungry for jobs. The government has itself established those conditions for advancement which the police agent formerly had to create.

This regular violent turnover of the whole gigantic administrative machine, while it prevents the development of competence, has many advantages: it assures the relative youth of officials and prevents a stabilization of conditions which, at least in time of peace, are fraught with danger for totalitarian rule; by eliminating seniority and merit, it prevents the development of the loyalties that usually tie younger staff members to their elders, upon whose opinion and good will their advancement depends; it eliminates once and for all the dangers of unemployment and assures everyone of a job compatible with his education. Thus, in 1939, after the gigantic purge in the Soviet Union had come to an end, Stalin could note with great satisfaction that "the Party was able to promote to leading posts in State or Party affairs more than 500,000 young Bolsheviks."¹¹⁴ The humiliation

¹¹³ Typical is the splendid career of police agent Malinovsky, who ended as deputy of the Bolsheviks in parliament. See Bertram D. Wolfe, *op. cit.*, chapter xxxi.

¹¹⁴ Quoted from Avtorkhanov, *op. cit.*

implicit in owing a job to the unjust elimination of one's predecessor has the same demoralizing effect that the elimination of the Jews had upon the German professions: it makes every jobholder a conscious accomplice in the crimes of the government, their beneficiary whether he likes it or not, with the result that the more sensitive the humiliated individual happens to be, the more ardently he will defend the regime. In other words, this system is the logical outgrowth of the Leader principle in its full implications and the best possible guarantee for loyalty, in that it makes every new generation depend for its livelihood on the current political line of the Leader which started the job-creating purge. It also realizes the identity of public and private interests, of which defenders of the Soviet Union used to be so proud (or, in the Nazi version, the abolition of the private sphere of life), insofar as every individual of any consequence owes his whole existence to the political interest of the regime; and when this factual identity of interest is broken and the next purge has swept him out of office, the regime makes sure that he disappears from the world of the living. In a not very different way, the double agent was identified with the cause of the revolution (without which he would lose his job), and not only with the secret police; in that sphere, too, a spectacular rise could end only in an anonymous death, since it was rather unlikely that the double game could be played forever. The totalitarian government, when it set such conditions for promotion in all careers as had previously prevailed only among social outcasts, has effected one of the most far-reaching changes in social psychology. The psychology of the double agent, who was willing to pay the price of a short life for the exalted existence of a few years at the peak, has necessarily become the philosophy in personal matters of the whole post-revolutionary generation in Russia, and to a lesser but still very dangerous extent, in postwar Germany.

This is the society, permeated by standards and living by methods which once had been the monopoly of the secret police, in which the totalitarian secret police functions. Only in the initial stages, when a struggle for power is still going on, are its victims those who can be suspected of opposition. It then embarks upon its totalitarian career with the persecution of the objective enemy, which may be the Jews or the Poles (as in the case of the Nazis) or so-called "counter-revolutionaries"—an accusation which "in Soviet Russia . . . is established . . . before any question as to [the] behavior [of the accused] has arisen at all"—who may be people who at any time owned a shop or a house or "had parents or grandparents who owned such things,"¹¹⁵ or who happened to belong to one of the Red Army occupational forces, or were Russians of Polish origin. Only in its last and fully totalitarian stage are the concepts of the objective enemy and the logically possible crime abandoned, the victims chosen completely at random and, even without being accused, declared unfit to live. This new category of "undesirables" may consist, as in the case of the Nazis, of the mentally ill or persons with lung and heart disease, or in the Soviet Union, of

¹¹⁵ *The Dark Side of the Moon*, New York, 1947.

people who happen to have been taken up in that percentage, varying from one province to another, which is ordered to be deported.

This consistent arbitrariness negates human freedom more efficiently than any tyranny ever could. One had at least to be an enemy of tyranny in order to be punished by it. Freedom of opinion was not abolished for those who were brave enough to risk their necks. Theoretically, the choice of opposition remains in totalitarian regimes too; but such freedom is almost invalidated if committing a voluntary act only assures a "punishment" that everyone else may have to bear anyway. Freedom in this system has not only dwindled down to its last and apparently still indestructible guarantee, the possibility of suicide, but has lost its distinctive mark because the consequences of its exercise are shared with completely innocent people. If Hitler had had the time to realize his dream of a General German Health Bill, the man suffering from a lung disease would have been subject to the same fate as a Communist in the early and a Jew in the later years of the Nazi regime. Similarly, the opponent of the regime in Russia, suffering the same fate as millions of people who are chosen for concentration camps to make up certain quotas, only relieves the police of the burden of arbitrary choice. The innocent and the guilty are equally undesirable.

The change in the concept of crime and criminals determines the new and terrible methods of the totalitarian secret police. Criminals are punished, undesirables disappear from the face of the earth; the only trace which they leave behind is the memory of those who knew and loved them, and one of the most difficult tasks of the secret police is to make sure that even such traces will disappear together with the condemned man.

The Okhrana, the Czarist predecessor of the GPU, is reported to have invented a filing system in which every suspect was noted on a large card in the center of which his name was surrounded by a red circle; his political friends were designated by smaller red circles and his nonpolitical acquaintances by green ones; brown circles indicated persons in contact with friends of the suspect but not known to him personally; cross-relationships between the suspect's friends, political and nonpolitical, and the friends of his friends were indicated by lines between the respective circles.¹¹⁶ Obviously the limitations of this method are set only by the size of the filing cards, and, theoretically, a gigantic single sheet could show the relations and cross-relationships of the entire population. And this is the utopian goal of the totalitarian secret police. It has given up the traditional old police dream which the lie detector is still supposed to realize, and no longer tries to find out who is who, or who thinks what. (The lie detector is perhaps the most graphic example of the fascination that this dream apparently exerts over the mentality of all policemen; for obviously the complicated measuring equipment can hardly establish anything except the cold-blooded or nervous temperament of its victims. Actually, the feeble-minded reasoning underlying the use of this mechanism can only be explained by the irrational wish that some form of mind reading were possible after all.) This old dream

¹¹⁶ See Laporte, *op. cit.*, p. 39.

was terrible enough and since time immemorial has invariably led to torture and the most abominable cruelties. There was only one thing in its favor: it asked for the impossible. The modern dream of the totalitarian police, with its modern techniques, is incomparably more terrible. Now the police dreams that one look at the gigantic map on the office wall should suffice at any given moment to establish who is related to whom and in what degree of intimacy; and, theoretically, this dream is not unrealizable although its technical execution is bound to be somewhat difficult. If this map really did exist, not even memory would stand in the way of the totalitarian claim to domination; such a map might make it possible to obliterate people without any traces, as if they had never existed at all.

If the reports of arrested NKVD agents can be trusted, the Russian secret police has come uncomfortably close to this ideal of totalitarian rule. The police has secret dossiers about each inhabitant of the vast country, carefully listing the many relationships that exist between people, from chance acquaintances to genuine friendship to family relations; for it is only to discover these relationships that the defendants, whose "crimes" have anyway been established "objectively" prior to their arrest, are questioned so closely. Finally, as for the gift of memory so dangerous to totalitarian rule, foreign observers feel that "if it is true that elephants never forget, Russians seem to us to be the very opposite of elephants. . . . Soviet Russian psychology seems to make forgetfulness really possible."¹¹⁷

How important to the total-domination apparatus this complete disappearance of its victims is can be seen in those instances where, for one reason or another, the regime was confronted with the memory of survivors. During the war, one SS commandant made the terrible mistake of informing a French woman of her husband's death in a German concentration camp; this slip caused a small avalanche of orders and instructions to all camp commandants, warning them that under no circumstances was information ever to be given to the outside world.¹¹⁸ The point is that, as far as the French widow was concerned, her husband had supposedly ceased to live at the moment of his arrest, or rather had ceased ever to have lived. Similarly, the Soviet police officers, accustomed to this system since their birth, could only stare in amazement at those people in occupied Poland who tried desperately to find out what had happened to their friends and relatives under arrest.¹¹⁹

In totalitarian countries all places of detention ruled by the police are made to be veritable holes of oblivion into which people stumble by accident and without leaving behind them such ordinary traces of former existence as a body and a grave. Compared with this newest invention for doing away with people, the old-fashioned method of murder, political or criminal, is inefficient indeed. The murderer leaves behind him a corpse, and although he tries to efface the traces of his own identity, he has no power to erase the

¹¹⁷ Beck and Godin, *op. cit.*, pp. 234 and 127.

¹¹⁸ See *Nazi Conspiracy*, VII, 84 ff.

¹¹⁹ *The Dark Side of the Moon*.

identity of his victim from the memory of the surviving world. The operation of the secret police, on the contrary, miraculously sees to it that the victim never existed at all.

The connection between secret police and secret societies is obvious. The establishment of the former always needed and used the argument of dangers arising from the existence of the latter. The totalitarian secret police is the first in history which neither needs nor uses these old-fashioned pretexts of all tyrants. The anonymity of its victims, who cannot be called enemies of the regime and whose identity is unknown to the persecutors until the arbitrary decision of the government eliminates them from the world of the living and exterminates their memory from the world of the dead, is beyond all secrecy, beyond the strictest silence, beyond the greatest mastery of double life that the discipline of conspiratory societies used to impose upon their members.

The totalitarian movements which, during their rise to power, imitate certain organizational features of secret societies and yet establish themselves in broad daylight, create a true secret society only after their ascendancy to rule. The secret society of totalitarian regimes is the secret police; the only strictly guarded secret in a totalitarian country, the only esoteric knowledge that exists, concerns the operations of the police and the conditions in the concentration camps.¹²⁰ Of course the population at large and the party members specifically know all the general facts—that concentration camps exist, that people disappear, that innocent persons are arrested; at the same time, every person in a totalitarian country knows also that it is the greatest crime ever to talk about these "secrets." Inasmuch as man depends for his knowledge upon the affirmation and comprehension of his fellow-men, this generally shared but individually guarded, this never-communicated information loses its quality of reality and assumes the nature of a mere nightmare. Only those who are in possession of the strictly esoteric knowledge concerning the eventual new categories of undesirables and the operational methods of the cadres are in a position to communicate with each other about what actually constitutes the reality for all. They alone are in a position to believe in what they know to be true. This is their secret, and in order to guard this secret they are established as a secret organization. They remain members even if this secret organization arrests them, forces them to make confessions, and finally liquidates them. So long as they guard the secret they belong to the elite, and as a rule they do not betray it even when they are in the prisons and concentration camps.¹²¹

We already have noted that one of the many paradoxes that offend the

¹²⁰ "There was little in the SS that was not secret. The greatest secret was the practices in the concentration camps. Not even members of the Gestapo were admitted . . . to the camps without a special permit" (Eugen Kogon, *Der SS-Staat*, Munich, 1946, p. 297).

¹²¹ Beck and Godin, *op. cit.*, p. 169, report how the arrested NKVD officials "took the greatest care never to reveal any NKVD secrets."

common sense of the nontotalitarian world is the seemingly irrational use which totalitarianism makes of conspiratory methods. The totalitarian movements, apparently persecuted by the police, very sparingly use methods of conspiracy for the overthrow of the government in their struggle for power, whereas totalitarianism in power, after it has been recognized by all governments and seemingly outgrown its revolutionary stage, develops a true secret police as the nucleus of its government and power. It seems that official recognition is felt to be a greater menace to the conspiracy content of the totalitarian movement, a menace of interior disintegration, than the half-hearted police measures of nontotalitarian regimes.

The truth of the matter is that totalitarian leaders, though they are convinced that they must follow consistently the fiction and the rules of the fictitious world which were laid down during their struggle for power, discover only gradually the full implications of this fictitious world and its rules. Their faith in human omnipotence, their conviction that everything can be done through organization, carries them into experiments which human imaginations may have outlined but human activity certainly never realized. Their hideous discoveries in the realm of the possible are inspired by an ideological scientificity which has proved to be less controlled by reason and less willing to recognize factuality than the wildest fantasies of prescientific and prephilosophical speculation. They establish the secret society which now no longer operates in broad daylight, the society of the secret police or the political soldier or the ideologically trained fighter, in order to be able to carry out the indecent experimental inquiry into what is possible.

The totalitarian conspiracy against the nontotalitarian world, on the other hand, its claim to world domination, remains as open and unguarded under conditions of totalitarian rule as in the totalitarian movements. It is practically impressed upon the co-ordinated population of "sympathizers" in the form of a supposed conspiracy of the whole world against their own country. The totalitarian dichotomy is propagated by making it a duty for every national abroad to report home as though he were a secret agent, and by treating every foreigner as a spy for his home government.¹²² It is for the practical realization of this dichotomy rather than because of specific secrets, military and other, that iron curtains separate the inhabitants of a totalitarian country from the rest of the world. Their real secret, the concentration camps, those laboratories in the experiment of total domination, is shielded by the totalitarian regimes from the eyes of their own people as well as from all others.

For a considerable length of time the normality of the normal world is the most efficient protection against disclosure of totalitarian mass crimes. "Normal men don't know that everything is possible,"¹²³ refuse to believe

¹²² Typical is the following dialogue reported in *Dark Side of the Moon*: "To an admission that one had ever been outside Poland the next question invariably was: 'And for whom were you spying? . . . One man . . . asked: 'But you too have foreign visitors. Do you suppose they are all spies?' The answer was: 'What do you think? Do you imagine we are so naïve as not to be perfectly aware of it?'"

¹²³ David Rousset, *The Other Kingdom*, New York, 1947.

their eyes and ears in the face of the monstrous, just as the mass men did not trust theirs in the face of a normal reality in which no place was left for them.¹²⁴ The reason why the totalitarian regimes can get so far toward realizing a fictitious, topsy-turvy world is that the outside nontotalitarian world, which always comprises a great part of the population of the totalitarian country itself, indulges also in wishful thinking and shirks reality in the face of real insanity just as much as the masses do in the face of the normal world. This common-sense disinclination to believe the monstrous is constantly strengthened by the totalitarian ruler himself, who makes sure that no reliable statistics, no controllable facts and figures are ever published, so that there are only subjective, uncontrollable, and unreliable reports about the places of the living dead.

Because of this policy, the results of the totalitarian experiment are only partially known. Although we have enough reports from concentration camps to assess the possibilities of total domination and to catch a glimpse into the abyss of the "possible," we do not know the extent of character transformation under a totalitarian regime. We know even less how many of the normal people around us would be willing to accept the totalitarian way of life—that is, to pay the price of a considerably shorter life for the assured fulfillment of all their career dreams. It is easy to realize the extent to which totalitarian propaganda and even some totalitarian institutions answer the needs of the new homeless masses, but it is almost impossible to know how many of them, if they are further exposed to a constant threat of unemployment, will gladly acquiesce to a "population policy" that consists of regular elimination of surplus people, and how many, once they have fully grasped their growing incapacity to bear the burdens of modern life, will gladly conform to a system that, together with spontaneity, eliminates responsibility.

In other words, while we know the operation and the specific function of the totalitarian secret police, we do not know how well or to what an extent the "secret" of this secret society corresponds to the secret desires and the secret complicities of the masses in our time.

III: Total Domination

THE CONCENTRATION and extermination camps of totalitarian regimes serve as the laboratories in which the fundamental belief of totalitarianism that everything is possible is being verified. Compared with this, all other experiments are secondary in importance—including those in the field of

¹²⁴ The Nazis were well aware of the protective wall of incredulity which surrounded their enterprise. A secret report to Rosenberg about the massacre of 5,000 Jews in 1943 states explicitly: "Imagine only that these occurrences would become known to the other side and exploited by them. Most likely such propaganda would have no effect only because people who hear and read about it simply would not be ready to believe it" (*Nazi Conspiracy*, I, 1001).

medicine whose horrors are recorded in detail in the trials against the physicians of the Third Reich—although it is characteristic that these laboratories were used for experiments of every kind.

Total domination, which strives to organize the infinite plurality and differentiation of human beings as if all of humanity were just one individual, is possible only if each and every person can be reduced to a never-changing identity of reactions, so that each of these bundles of reactions can be exchanged at random for any other. The problem is to fabricate something that does not exist, namely, a kind of human species resembling other animal species whose only "freedom" would consist in "preserving the species."¹²⁵ Totalitarian domination attempts to achieve this goal both through ideological indoctrination of the elite formations and through absolute terror in the camps; and the atrocities for which the elite formations are ruthlessly used become, as it were, the practical application of the ideological indoctrination—the testing ground in which the latter must prove itself—while the appalling spectacle of the camps themselves is supposed to furnish the "theoretical" verification of the ideology.

The camps are meant not only to exterminate people and degrade human beings, but also serve the ghastly experiment of eliminating, under scientifically controlled conditions, spontaneity itself as an expression of human behavior and of transforming the human personality into a mere thing, into something that even animals are not; for Pavlov's dog, which, as we know, was trained to eat not when it was hungry but when a bell rang, was a perverted animal.

Under normal circumstances this can never be accomplished, because spontaneity can never be entirely eliminated insofar as it is connected not only with human freedom but with life itself, in the sense of simply keeping alive. It is only in the concentration camps that such an experiment is at all possible, and therefore they are not only "*la société la plus totalitaire encore réalisée*" (David Rousset) but the guiding social ideal of total domination in general. Just as the stability of the totalitarian regime depends on the isolation of the fictitious world of the movement from the outside world, so the experiment of total domination in the concentration camps depends on sealing off the latter against the world of all others, the world of the living in general, even against the outside world of a country under totalitarian rule. This isolation explains the peculiar unreality and lack of credibility that characterize all reports from the concentration camps and constitute one of the main difficulties for the true understanding of totalitarian domination, which stands or falls with the existence of these concentration and extermination camps; for, unlikely as it may sound, these camps are the true central institution of totalitarian organizational power.

¹²⁵ In the *Tischgespräche*, Hitler mentions several times that he "[strives] for a condition in which each individual knows that he lives and dies for the preservation of his species" (p. 349). See also p. 347: "A fly lays millions of eggs, all of which perish. But the flies remain."

There are numerous reports by survivors.¹²⁶ The more authentic they are, the less they attempt to communicate things that evade human understanding and human experience—sufferings, that is, that transform men into "uncomplaining animals."¹²⁷ None of these reports inspires those passions of outrage and sympathy through which men have always been mobilized for justice. On the contrary, anyone speaking or writing about concentration camps is still regarded as suspect; and if the speaker has resolutely returned to the world of the living, he himself is often assailed by doubts with regard to his own truthfulness, as though he had mistaken a nightmare for reality.¹²⁸

This doubt of people concerning themselves and the reality of their own experience only reveals what the Nazis have always known: that men determined to commit crimes will find it expedient to organize them on the vastest, most improbable scale. Not only because this renders all punishments provided by the legal system inadequate and absurd; but because the very immensity of the crimes guarantees that the murderers who proclaim their innocence with all manner of lies will be more readily believed than the victims who tell the truth. The Nazis did not even consider it necessary to keep this discovery to themselves. Hitler circulated millions of copies of his book in which he stated that to be successful, a lie must be enormous—which did not prevent people from believing him as, similarly, the Nazis' proclamations, repeated *ad nauseam*, that the Jews would be exterminated like bedbugs (*i.e.*, with poison gas), prevented anybody from *not* believing them.

There is a great temptation to explain away the intrinsically incredible

¹²⁶ The best reports on Nazi concentration camps are David Rousset, *Les Jours de Notre Mort*, Paris, 1947; Eugen Kogon, *op. cit.*; Bruno Bettelheim, "On Dachau and Buchenwald" (from May, 1938, to April, 1939), in *Nazi Conspiracy*, VII, 824 ff. For Soviet concentration camps, see the excellent collection of reports by Polish survivors published under the title *The Dark Side of the Moon*; also David J. Dallin, *op. cit.*, though his reports are sometimes less convincing because they come from "prominent" personalities who are intent on drawing up manifestos and indictments.

¹²⁷ *The Dark Side of the Moon*; the introduction also stresses this peculiar lack of communication: "They record but do not communicate."

¹²⁸ See especially Bruno Bettelheim, *op. cit.* "It seemed as if I had become convinced that these horrible and degrading experiences somehow did not happen to 'me' as subject but to 'me' as an object. This experience was corroborated by the statements of other prisoners. . . . It was as if I watched things happening in which I only vaguely participated. . . . 'This cannot be true, such things just do not happen.' . . . The prisoners had to convince themselves that this was real, was really happening and not just a nightmare. They were never wholly successful."

See also Rousset, *op. cit.*, p. 213. ". . . Those who haven't seen it with their own eyes can't believe it. Did you yourself, before you came here, take the rumors about the gas chambers seriously?"

"No, I said.

". . . You see? Well, they're all like you. The lot of them in Paris, London, New York, even at Birkenau, right outside the crematoriums . . . still incredulous, five minutes before they were sent down into the cellar of the crematorium. . . ."

by means of liberal rationalizations. In each one of us, there lurks such a liberal, wheedling us with the voice of common sense. The road to totalitarian domination leads through many intermediate stages for which we can find numerous analogies and precedents. The extraordinarily bloody terror during the initial stage of totalitarian rule serves indeed the exclusive purpose of defeating the opponent and rendering all further opposition impossible; but total terror is launched only after this initial stage has been overcome and the regime no longer has anything to fear from the opposition. In this context it has been frequently remarked that in such a case the means have become the end, but this is after all only an admission, in paradoxical disguise, that the category "the end justifies the means" no longer applies, that terror has lost its "purpose," that it is no longer the means to frighten people. Nor does the explanation suffice that the revolution, as in the case of the French Revolution, was devouring its own children, for the terror continues even after everybody who might be described as a child of the revolution in one capacity or another—the Russian factions, the power centers of party, the army, the bureaucracy—has long since been devoured. Many things that nowadays have become the specialty of totalitarian government are only too well known from the study of history. There have almost always been wars of aggression; the massacre of hostile populations after a victory went unchecked until the Romans mitigated it by introducing the *parcere subjectis*; through centuries the extermination of native peoples went hand in hand with the colonization of the Americas, Australia and Africa; slavery is one of the oldest institutions of mankind and all empires of antiquity were based on the labor of state-owned slaves who erected their public buildings. Not even concentration camps are an invention of totalitarian movements. They emerge for the first time during the Boer War, at the beginning of the century, and continued to be used in South Africa as well as India for "undesirable elements"; here, too, we first find the term "protective custody" which was later adopted by the Third Reich. These camps correspond in many respects to the concentration camps at the beginning of totalitarian rule; they were used for "suspects" whose offenses could not be proved and who could not be sentenced by ordinary process of law. All this clearly points to totalitarian methods of domination; all these are elements they utilize, develop and crystallize on the basis of the nihilistic principle that "everything is permitted," which they inherited and already take for granted. But wherever these new forms of domination assume their authentically totalitarian structure they transcend this principle, which is still tied to the utilitarian motives and self-interest of the rulers, and try their hand in a realm that up to now has been completely unknown to us: the realm where "everything is possible." And, characteristically enough, this is precisely the realm that cannot be limited by either utilitarian motives or self-interest, regardless of the latter's content.

What runs counter to common sense is not the nihilistic principle that "everything is permitted," which was already contained in the nineteenth-century utilitarian conception of common sense. What common sense and

"normal people" refuse to believe is that everything is possible.¹²⁹ We attempt to understand elements in present or recollected experience that simply surpass our powers of understanding. We attempt to classify as criminal a thing which, as we all feel, no such category was ever intended to cover. What meaning has the concept of murder when we are confronted with the mass production of corpses? We attempt to understand the behavior of concentration-camp inmates and SS-men psychologically, when the very thing that must be realized is that the psyche *can* be destroyed even without the destruction of the physical man; that, indeed, psyche, character, and individuality seem under certain circumstances to express themselves only through the rapidity or slowness with which they disintegrate.¹³⁰ The end result in any case is inanimate men, *i.e.*, men who can no longer be psychologically understood, whose return to the psychologically or otherwise intelligibly human world closely resembles the resurrection of Lazarus. All statements of common sense, whether of a psychological or sociological nature, serve only to encourage those who think it "superficial" to "dwell on horrors."¹³¹

If it is true that the concentration camps are the most consequential institution of totalitarian rule, "dwelling on horrors" would seem to be indispensable for the understanding of totalitarianism. But recollection can no more do this than can the uncommunicative eyewitness report. In both these genres there is an inherent tendency to run away from the experience; instinctively or rationally, both types of writer are so much aware of the terrible abyss that separates the world of the living from that of the living dead, that they cannot supply anything more than a series of remembered occurrences that must seem just as incredible to those who relate them as to their audience. Only the fearful imagination of those who have been aroused by such reports but have not actually been smitten in their own flesh, of those who are consequently free from the bestial, desperate terror which, when confronted by real, present horror, inexorably paralyzes everything that is not mere reaction, can afford to keep thinking about horrors. Such thoughts are useful only for the perception of political contexts and the mobilization of political passions. A change of personality of any sort whatever can no more be induced by thinking about horrors than by the real experience of horror. The reduction of a man to a bundle of reactions separates him as radically as mental disease from everything within him that is personality or character. When, like Lazarus, he rises from the dead, he finds his personality or character unchanged, just as he had left it.

Just as the horror, or the dwelling on it, cannot affect a change of character in him, cannot make men better or worse, thus it cannot become the basis of a political community or party in a narrower sense. The attempts to build up a European elite with a program of intra-European understanding based on the common European experience of the concentration camps have

¹²⁹ The first to understand this was Rousset in his *Univers Concentrationnaire*, 1947.

¹³⁰ Rousset, *op. cit.*, p. 587.

¹³¹ See Georges Bataille in *Critique*, January, 1948, p. 72.

founded in much the same manner as the attempts following the first World War to draw political conclusions from the international experience of the front generation. In both cases it turned out that the experiences themselves can communicate no more than nihilistic banalities.¹³² Political consequences such as postwar pacifism, for example, derived from the general fear of war, not from the experiences in war. Instead of producing a pacifism devoid of reality, the insight into the structure of modern wars, guided and mobilized by fear, might have led to the realization that the only standard for a necessary war is the fight against conditions under which people no longer wish to live—and our experiences with the tormenting hell of the totalitarian camps have enlightened us only too well about the possibility of such conditions.¹³³ Thus the fear of concentration camps and the resulting insight into the nature of total domination might serve to invalidate all obsolete political differentiations from right to left and to introduce beside and above them the politically most important yardstick for judging events in our time, namely: whether they serve totalitarian domination or not.

In any event, the fearful imagination has the great advantage to dissolve the sophistic-dialectical interpretations of politics which are all based on the superstition that something good might result from evil. Such dialectical acrobatics had at least a semblance of justification so long as the worst that man could inflict upon man was murder. But, as we know today, murder is only a limited evil. The murderer who kills a man—a man who has to die anyway—still moves within the realm of life and death familiar to us; both have indeed a necessary connection on which the dialectic is founded, even if it is not always conscious of it. The murderer leaves a corpse behind and does not pretend that his victim has never existed; if he wipes out any traces, they are those of his own identity, and not the memory and grief of the persons who loved his victim; he destroys a life, but he does not destroy the fact of existence itself.

The Nazis, with the precision peculiar to them, used to register their operations in the concentration camps under the heading "under cover of the night (*Nacht und Nebel*)."¹³⁴ The radicalism of measures to treat people as if they had never existed and to make them disappear in the literal sense of the word is frequently not apparent at first glance, because both the German and the Russian system are not uniform but consist of a series of categories in which people are treated very differently. In the case of Germany, these different categories used to exist in the same camp, but without coming into contact with each other; frequently, the isolation between the categories was even stricter than the isolation from the outside world. Thus, out of racial considerations, Scandinavian nationals during the war were

¹³² Rousset's book contains many such "insights" into human "nature," based chiefly on the observation that after a while the mentality of the inmates is scarcely distinguishable from that of the camp guards.

¹³³ In order to avoid misunderstandings it may be appropriate to add that with the invention of the hydrogen bomb the whole war question has undergone another decisive change. A discussion of this question is of course beyond the theme of this book.

quite differently treated by the Germans than the members of other peoples, although the former were outspoken enemies of the Nazis. The latter in turn were divided into those whose "extermination" was immediately on the agenda, as in the case of the Jews, or could be expected in the predictable future, as in the case of the Poles, Russians and Ukrainians, and into those who were not yet covered by instructions about such an over-all "final solution," as in the case of the French and Belgians. In Russia, on the other hand, we must distinguish three more or less independent systems. First, there are the authentic forced-labor groups that live in relative freedom and are sentenced for limited periods. Secondly, there are the concentration camps in which the human material is ruthlessly exploited and the mortality rate is extremely high, but which are essentially organized for labor purposes. And, thirdly, there are the annihilation camps in which the inmates are systematically wiped out through starvation and neglect.

The real horror of the concentration and extermination camps lies in the fact that the inmates, even if they happen to keep alive, are more effectively cut-off from the world of the living than if they had died, because terror enforces oblivion. Here, murder is as impersonal as the squashing of a gnat. Someone may die as the result of systematic torture or starvation, or because the camp is overcrowded and superfluous human material must be liquidated. Conversely, it may happen that due to a shortage of new human shipments the danger arises that the camps become depopulated and that the order is now given to reduce the death rate at any price.¹³⁴ David Rousset called his report on the period in a German concentration camp "*Les Jours de Notre Mort*," and it is indeed as if there were a possibility to give permanence to the process of dying itself and to enforce a condition in which both death and life are obstructed equally effectively.

It is the appearance of some radical evil, previously unknown to us, that puts an end to the notion of developments and transformations of qualities. Here, there are neither political nor historical nor simply moral standards but, at the most, the realization that something seems to be involved in modern politics that actually should never be involved in politics as we used to understand it, namely all or nothing—all, and that is an undetermined infinity of forms of human living-together, or nothing, for a victory of the concentration-camp system would mean the same inexorable doom for human beings as the use of the hydrogen bomb would mean the doom of the human race.

¹³⁴ This happened in Germany toward the end of 1942, whereupon Himmler served notice to all camp commandants "to reduce the death rate at all costs." For it had turned out that of the 136,000 new arrivals, 70,000 were already dead on reaching the camp or died immediately thereafter. See *Nazi Conspiracy*, IV, Annex II.—Later reports from Soviet Russian camps unanimously confirm that after 1949—that is, when Stalin was still alive—the death rate in the concentration camps, which previously had reached up to 60 per cent of the inmates, was systematically lowered, presumably due to a general and acute labor shortage in the Soviet Union. This improvement in living conditions should not be confused with the crisis of the regime after Stalin's death which, characteristically enough, first made itself felt in the concentration camps. Cf. Wilhelm Starlinger, *Grenzen der Sowjetmacht*, Würzburg, 1955.

There are no parallels to the life in the concentration camps. Its horror can never be fully embraced by the imagination for the very reason that it stands outside of life and death. It can never be fully reported for the very reason that the survivor returns to the world of the living, which makes it impossible for him to believe fully in his own past experiences. It is as though he had a story to tell of another planet, for the status of the inmates in the world of the living, where nobody is supposed to know if they are alive or dead, is such that it is as though they had never been born. Therefore all parallels create confusion and distract attention from what is essential. Forced labor in prisons and penal colonies, banishment, slavery, all seem for a moment to offer helpful comparisons, but on closer examination lead nowhere.

Forced labor as a punishment is limited as to time and intensity. The convict retains his rights over his body; he is not absolutely tortured and he is not absolutely dominated. Banishment banishes only from one part of the world to another part of the world, also inhabited by human beings; it does not exclude from the human world altogether. Throughout history slavery has been an institution within a social order; slaves were not, like concentration-camp inmates, withdrawn from the sight and hence the protection of their fellow-men; as instruments of labor they had a definite price and as property a definite value. The concentration-camp inmate has no price, because he can always be replaced; nobody knows to whom he belongs, because he is never seen. From the point of view of normal society he is absolutely superfluous, although in times of acute labor shortage, as in Russia and in Germany during the war, he is used for work.

The concentration camp as an institution was not established for the sake of any possible labor yield; the only permanent economic function of the camps has been the financing of their own supervisory apparatus; thus from the economic point of view the concentration camps exist mostly for their own sake. Any work that has been performed could have been done much better and more cheaply under different conditions.¹³⁵ Especially Russia, whose concentration camps are mostly described as forced-labor camps because Soviet bureaucracy has chosen to dignify them with this name, reveals most clearly that forced labor is not the primary issue; forced labor is the normal condition of all Russian workers, who have no freedom of movement and can be arbitrarily drafted for work to any place at any time.

¹³⁵ See Kogon, *op. cit.*, p. 58: "A large part of the work exacted in the concentration camps was useless, either it was superfluous or it was so miserably planned that it had to be done over two or three times." Also Bettelheim, *op. cit.*, pp. 831-32: "New prisoners particularly were forced to perform nonsensical tasks. . . . They felt debased . . . and preferred even harder work when it produced something useful. . . ." Even Dallin, who has built his whole book on the thesis that the purpose of Russian camps is to provide cheap labor, is forced to admit the inefficiency of camp labor, *op. cit.*, p. 105.—The current theories about the Russian camp system as an economic measure for providing a cheap labor supply would stand clearly refuted if recent reports on mass amnesties and the abolition of concentration camps should prove to be true. For if the camps had served an important economic purpose, the regime certainly could not have afforded their rapid liquidation without grave consequences for the whole economic system.

The incredibility of the horrors is closely bound up with their economic uselessness. The Nazis carried this uselessness to the point of open anti-utility when in the midst of the war, despite the shortage of building material and rolling stock, they set up enormous, costly extermination factories and transported millions of people back and forth.¹³⁶ In the eyes of a strictly utilitarian world the obvious contradiction between these acts and military expediency gave the whole enterprise an air of mad unreality.

This atmosphere of madness and unreality, created by an apparent lack of purpose, is the real iron curtain which hides all forms of concentration camps from the eyes of the world. Seen from outside, they and the things that happen in them can be described only in images drawn from a life after death, that is, a life removed from earthly purposes. Concentration camps can very aptly be divided into three types corresponding to three basic Western conceptions of a life after death: Hades, Purgatory, and Hell. To Hades correspond those relatively mild forms, once popular even in non-totalitarian countries, for getting undesirable elements of all sorts—refugees, stateless persons, the asocial and the unemployed—out of the way; as DP camps, which are nothing other than camps for persons who have become superfluous and bothersome, they have survived the war. Purgatory is represented by the Soviet Union's labor camps, where neglect is combined with chaotic forced labor. Hell in the most literal sense was embodied by those types of camp perfected by the Nazis, in which the whole of life was thoroughly and systematically organized with a view to the greatest possible torment.

All three types have one thing in common: the human masses sealed off in them are treated as if they no longer existed, as if what happened to them were no longer of any interest to anybody, as if they were already dead and some evil spirit gone mad were amusing himself by stopping them for a while between life and death before admitting them to eternal peace.

It is not so much the barbed wire as the skillfully manufactured unreality of those whom it fences in that provokes such enormous cruelties and ultimately makes extermination look like a perfectly normal measure. Everything that was done in the camps is known to us from the world of perverse, malignant fantasies. The difficult thing to understand is that, like such fantasies, these gruesome crimes took place in a phantom world, which, however, has materialized, as it were, into a world which is complete with all sensual data of reality but lacks that structure of consequence and responsibility without which reality remains for us a mass of incomprehensible data. The result is that a place has been established where men can be tortured and slaughtered, and yet neither the tormentors nor the tormented, and least of

¹³⁶ Apart from the millions of people whom the Nazis transported to the extermination camps, they constantly attempted new colonization plans—transported Germans from Germany or the occupied territories to the East for colonization purposes. This was of course a serious handicap for military actions and economic exploitation. For the numerous discussions on these subjects and the constant conflict between the Nazi civilian hierarchy in the Eastern occupied territories and the SS hierarchy see especially Vol. XXIX of *Trial of the Major War Criminals*, Nuremberg, 1947.

all the outsider, can be aware that what is happening is anything more than a cruel game or an absurd dream.¹³⁷

The films which the Allies circulated in Germany and elsewhere after the war showed clearly that this atmosphere of insanity and unreality is not dispelled by pure reportage. To the unprejudiced observer these pictures are just about as convincing as snapshots of mysterious substances taken at spiritualist séances.¹³⁸ Common sense reacted to the horrors of Buchenwald and Auschwitz with the plausible argument: "What crime must these people have committed that such things were done to them!"; or, in Germany and Austria, in the midst of starvation, overpopulation, and general hatred: "Too bad that they've stopped gassing the Jews"; and everywhere with the skeptical shrug that greets ineffectual propaganda.

If the propaganda of truth fails to convince the average person because it is too monstrous, it is positively dangerous to those who know from their own imaginings what they themselves are capable of doing and who are therefore perfectly willing to believe in the reality of what they have seen. Suddenly it becomes evident that things which for thousands of years the human imagination had banished to a realm beyond human competence can be manufactured right here on earth, that Hell and Purgatory, and even a shadow of their perpetual duration, can be established by the most modern methods of destruction and therapy. To these people (and they are more numerous in any large city than we like to admit) the totalitarian hell proves only that the power of man is greater than they ever dared to think, and that man can realize hellish fantasies without making the sky fall or the earth open.

These analogies, repeated in many reports from the world of the dying,¹³⁹ seem to express more than a desperate attempt at saying what is outside the realm of human speech. Nothing perhaps distinguishes modern masses as radically from those of previous centuries as the loss of faith in a Last Judgment: the worst have lost their fear and the best have lost their hope. Unable as yet to live without fear and hope, these masses are attracted by every effort which seems to promise a man-made fabrication of the Paradise they had longed for and of the Hell they had feared. Just as the popularized features of Marx's classless society have a queer resemblance to the Messie-

¹³⁷ Bettelheim, *op. cit.*, notes that the guards in the camps embraced an attitude toward the atmosphere of unreality similar to that of the prisoners themselves.

¹³⁸ It is of some importance to realize that all pictures of concentration camps are misleading insofar as they show the camps in their last stages, at the moment the Allied troops marched in. There were no death camps in Germany proper, and at that point all extermination equipment had already been dismantled. On the other hand, what provoked the outrage of the Allies most and what gives the films their special horror—namely, the sight of the human skeletons—was not at all typical for the German concentration camps; extermination was handled systematically by gas, not by starvation. The condition of the camps was a result of the war events during the final months: Himmler had ordered the evacuation of all extermination camps in the East; the German camps were consequently vastly overcrowded, and he was no longer in a position to assure the food supply in Germany.

¹³⁹ That life in a concentration camp was simply a dragged-out process of dying is stressed by Rousset, *op. cit.*, *passim*.

anic Age, so the reality of concentration camps resembles nothing so much as medieval pictures of Hell.

The one thing that cannot be reproduced is what made the traditional conceptions of Hell tolerable to man: the Last Judgment, the idea of an absolute standard of justice combined with the infinite possibility of grace. For in the human estimation there is no crime and no sin commensurable with the everlasting torments of Hell. Hence the discomfiture of common sense, which asks: What crime must these people have committed in order to suffer so inhumanly? Hence also the absolute innocence of the victims: no man ever deserved this. Hence finally the grotesque haphazardness with which concentration-camp victims were chosen in the perfected terror state: such "punishment" can, with equal justice and injustice, be inflicted on anyone.

In comparison with the insane end-result—concentration-camp society—the process by which men are prepared for this end, and the methods by which individuals are adapted to these conditions, are transparent and logical. The insane mass manufacture of corpses is preceded by the historically and politically intelligible preparation of living corpses. The impetus and what is more important, the silent consent to such unprecedented conditions are the products of those events which in a period of political disintegration suddenly and unexpectedly made hundreds of thousands of human beings homeless, stateless, outlawed and unwanted, while millions of human beings were made economically superfluous and socially burdensome by unemployment. This in turn could only happen because the Rights of Man, which had never been philosophically established but merely formulated, which had never been politically secured but merely proclaimed, have, in their traditional form, lost all validity.

The first essential step on the road to total domination is to kill the juridical person in man. This was done, on the one hand, by putting certain categories of people outside the protection of the law and forcing at the same time, through the instrument of denationalization, the nontotalitarian world into recognition of lawlessness; it was done, on the other, by placing the concentration camp outside the normal penal system, and by selecting its inmates outside the normal judicial procedure in which a definite crime entails a predictable penalty. Thus criminals, who for other reasons are an essential element in concentration-camp society, are ordinarily sent to a camp only on completion of their prison sentence. Under all circumstances totalitarian domination sees to it that the categories gathered in the camps—Jews, carriers of diseases, representatives of dying classes—have already lost their capacity for both normal or criminal action. Propagandistically this means that the "protective custody" is handled as a "preventive police measure,"¹⁴⁰ that is, a measure that deprives people of the ability to act. Deviations from this rule in Russia must be attributed to the catastrophic shortage of prisons and to a desire, so far unrealized, to trans-

¹⁴⁰ Maunz, *op. cit.*, p. 50, insists that criminals should never be sent to the camps for the time of their regular sentences.

form the whole penal system into a system of concentration camps.¹⁴¹

The inclusion of criminals is necessary in order to make plausible the propagandistic claim of the movement that the institution exists for asocial elements.¹⁴² Criminals do not properly belong in the concentration camps, if only because it is harder to kill the juridical person in a man who is guilty of some crime than in a totally innocent person. If they constitute a permanent category among the inmates, it is a concession of the totalitarian state to the prejudices of society, which can in this way most readily be accustomed to the existence of the camps. In order, on the other hand, to keep the camp system itself intact, it is essential as long as there is a penal system in the country that criminals should be sent to the camps only on completion of their sentence, that is when they are actually entitled to their freedom. Under no circumstances must the concentration camp become a calculable punishment for definite offenses.

The amalgamation of criminals with all other categories has moreover the advantage of making it shockingly evident to all other arrivals that they have landed on the lowest level of society. It soon turns out, to be sure, that they have every reason to envy the lowest thief and murderer; but meanwhile the lowest level is a good beginning. Moreover it is an effective means of camouflage: this happens only to criminals and nothing worse is happening than what deservedly happens to criminals.

The criminals everywhere constitute the aristocracy of the camps. (In Germany, during the war, they were replaced in the leadership by the Communists, because not even a minimum of rational work could be performed under the chaotic conditions created by a criminal administration. This was merely a temporary transformation of concentration camps into forced-labor camps, a thoroughly atypical phenomenon of limited duration.)¹⁴³ What places the criminals in the leadership is not so much the affinity between supervisory personnel and criminal elements—in the Soviet Union apparently the supervisors are not, like the SS, a special elite trained to commit crimes¹⁴⁴—as the fact that only criminals have been sent to the camp in

¹⁴¹ The shortage of prison space in Russia has been such that in the year 1925-26, only 36 per cent of all court sentences could be carried out. See Dallin, *op. cit.*, p. 158 ff.

¹⁴² "Gestapo and SS have always attached great importance to mixing the categories of inmates in the camps. In no camp have the inmates belonged exclusively to one category" (Kogon, *op. cit.*, p. 19).

In Russia, it has also been customary from the beginning to mix political prisoners and criminals. During the first ten years of Soviet power, the Left political groups enjoyed certain privileges; only with the full development of the totalitarian character of the regime "after the end of the twenties, the politicals were even officially treated as inferior to the common criminals" (Dallin, *op. cit.*, p. 177 ff.).

¹⁴³ Rousset's book suffers from his overestimation of the influence of the German Communists, who dominated the internal administration of Buchenwald during the war.

¹⁴⁴ See for instance the testimony of Mrs. Buber-Neumann (former wife of the German Communist Heinz Neumann), who survived Soviet and German concentration camps: "The Russians never . . . evinced the sadistic streak of the Nazis. . . . Our Russian guards were decent men and not sadists, but they faithfully fulfilled the requirements of the inhuman system" (*Under Two Dictators*).

connection with some definite activity. They at least know why they are in a concentration camp and therefore have kept a remnant of their juridical person. For the politicals this is only subjectively true; their actions, insofar as they were actions and not mere opinions or someone else's vague suspicions, or accidental membership in a politically disapproved group, are as a rule not covered by the normal legal system of the country and not juridically defined.¹⁴⁵

To the amalgam of politicals and criminals with which concentration camps in Russia and Germany started out, was added at an early date a third element which was soon to constitute the majority of all concentration-camp inmates. This largest group has consisted ever since of people who had done nothing whatsoever that, either in their own consciousness or the consciousness of their tormenters, had any rational connection with their arrest. In Germany, after 1938, this element was represented by masses of Jews, in Russia by any groups which, for any reason having nothing to do with their actions, had incurred the disfavor of the authorities. These groups, innocent in every sense, are the most suitable for thorough experimentation in disfranchisement and destruction of the juridical person, and therefore they are both qualitatively and quantitatively the most essential category of the camp population. This principle was most fully realized in the gas chambers which, if only because of their enormous capacity, could not be intended for individual cases but only for people in general. In this connection, the following dialogue sums up the situation of the individual: "For what purpose, may I ask, do the gas chambers exist?"—"For what purpose were you born?"¹⁴⁶ It is this third group of the totally innocent who in every case fare the worst in the camps. Criminals and politicals are assimilated to this category; thus deprived of the protective distinction that comes of their having done something, they are utterly exposed to the arbitrary. The ultimate goal, partly achieved in the Soviet Union and clearly indicated in the last phases of Nazi terror, is to have the whole camp population composed of this category of innocent people.

Contrasting with the complete haphazardness with which the inmates are selected are the categories, meaningless in themselves but useful from the standpoint of organization, into which they are usually divided on their arrival. In the German camps there were criminals, politicals, asocial elements, religious offenders, and Jews, all distinguished by insignia. When the French set up concentration camps after the Spanish Civil War, they immediately introduced the typical totalitarian amalgam of politicals with criminals and the innocent (in this case the stateless), and despite their inexperience proved remarkably inventive in creating meaningless categories of inmates.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁵ Bruno Bettelheim, "Behavior in Extreme Situations," in *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology*, Vol. XXXVIII, No. 4, 1943, describes the self-esteem of the criminals and the political prisoners as compared with those who have not done anything. The latter "were least able to withstand the initial shock," the first to disintegrate. Bettelheim blames this on their middle-class origin.

¹⁴⁶ Rousset, *op. cit.*, p. 71.

¹⁴⁷ For conditions in French concentration camps, see Arthur Koestler, *Scum of the Earth*, 1941.

Originally devised in order to prevent any growth of solidarity among the inmates, this technique proved particularly valuable because no one could know whether his own category was better or worse than someone else's. In Germany this eternally shifting though pedantically organized edifice was given an appearance of solidity by the fact that under any and all circumstances the Jews were the lowest category. The gruesome and grotesque part of it was that the inmates identified themselves with these categories, as though they represented a last authentic remnant of their juridical person. Even if we disregard all other circumstances, it is no wonder that a Communist of 1933 should have come out of the camps more Communist than he went in, a Jew more Jewish, and, in France, the wife of a Foreign Legionary more convinced of the value of the Foreign Legion; it would seem as though these categories promised some last shred of predictable treatment, as though they embodied some last and hence most fundamental juridical identity.

While the classification of inmates by categories is only a tactical, organizational measure, the arbitrary selection of victims indicates the essential principle of the institution. If the concentration camps had been dependent on the existence of political adversaries, they would scarcely have survived the first years of the totalitarian regimes. One only has to take a look at the number of inmates at Buchenwald in the years after 1936 in order to understand how absolutely necessary the element of the innocent was for the continued existence of the camps. "The camps would have died out if in making its arrests the Gestapo had considered only the principle of opposition,"¹⁴⁸ and toward the end of 1937 Buchenwald, with less than 1,000 inmates, was close to dying out until the November pogroms brought more than 20,000 new arrivals.¹⁴⁹ In Germany, this element of the innocent was furnished in vast numbers by the Jews after 1938; in Russia, it consisted of random groups of the population which for some reason entirely unconnected with their actions had fallen into disgrace.¹⁵⁰ But if in Germany the really totalitarian type of concentration camp with its enormous majority of completely "innocent" inmates was not established until 1938, in Russia it goes back to the early thirties, since up to 1930 the majority of the concentration-camp population still consisted of criminals, counterrevolutionaries and "politicals" (meaning, in this case, members of deviationist factions). Since then there have been so many innocent people in the camps that it is difficult to classify them—persons who had some sort of contact with a foreign country, Russians of Polish origin (particularly in the years 1936 to 1938), peasants whose villages for some economic reason were liquidated, deported nationalities, demobilized soldiers of the Red Army who happened to belong to regiments that stayed too long abroad as occupation forces or had become prisoners of war in Germany, etc. But the

¹⁴⁸ Kogon, *op. cit.*, p. 6.

¹⁴⁹ See *Nazi Conspiracy*, IV, 800 ff.

¹⁵⁰ Beck and Godin, *op. cit.*, state explicitly that "opponents constituted only a relatively small proportion of the [Russian] prison population" (p. 87), and that there was no connection whatever between "a man's imprisonment and any offense" (p. 95).

existence of a political opposition is for a concentration-camp system only a pretext, and the purpose of the system is not achieved even when, under the most monstrous terror, the population becomes more or less voluntarily co-ordinated, *i.e.*, relinquishes its political rights. The aim of an arbitrary system is to destroy the civil rights of the whole population, who ultimately become just as outlawed in their own country as the stateless and homeless. The destruction of a man's rights, the killing of the juridical person in him, is a prerequisite for dominating him entirely. And this applies not only to special categories such as criminals, political opponents, Jews, homosexuals, on whom the early experiments were made, but to every inhabitant of a totalitarian state. Free consent is as much an obstacle to total domination as free opposition.¹⁵¹ The arbitrary arrest which chooses among innocent people destroys the validity of free consent, just as torture—as distinguished from death—destroys the possibility of opposition.

Any, even the most tyrannical, restriction of this arbitrary persecution to certain opinions of a religious or political nature, to certain modes of intellectual or erotic social behavior, to certain freshly invented "crimes," would render the camps superfluous, because in the long run no attitude and no opinion can withstand the threat of so much horror; and above all it would make for a new system of justice, which, given any stability at all, could not fail to produce a new juridical person in man, that would elude the totalitarian domination. The so-called "*Volksgnutzen*" of the Nazis, constantly fluctuating (because what is useful today can be injurious tomorrow) and the eternally shifting party line of the Soviet Union which, being retroactive, almost daily makes new groups of people available for the concentration camps, are the only guaranty for the continued existence of the concentration camps, and hence for the continued total disfranchisement of man.

The next decisive step in the preparation of living corpses is the murder of the moral person in man. This is done in the main by making martyrdom, for the first time in history, impossible: "How many people here still believe that a protest has even historic importance? This skepticism is the real masterpiece of the SS. Their great accomplishment. They have corrupted all human solidarity. Here the night has fallen on the future. When no witnesses are left, there can be no testimony. To demonstrate when death can no longer be postponed is an attempt to give death a meaning, to act beyond one's own death. In order to be successful, a gesture must have social meaning. There are hundreds of thousands of us here, all living in absolute solitude. That is why we are subdued no matter what happens."¹⁵²

¹⁵¹ Bruno Bettelheim, "On Dachau and Buchenwald," when discussing the fact that most prisoners "made their peace with the values of the Gestapo," emphasizes that "this was not the result of propaganda . . . the Gestapo insisted that it would prevent them from expressing their feelings anyway" (pp. 834-35).

Himmler explicitly prohibited propaganda of any kind in the camps. "Education consists of discipline, never of any kind of instruction on an ideological basis." "On Organization and Obligation of the SS and the Police," in *National-politischer Lehrgang der Wehrmacht*, 1937. Quoted from *Nazi Conspiracy*, IV, 616 ff.

¹⁵² Rousset, *op. cit.*, p. 464.

The camps and the murder of political adversaries are only part of organized oblivion that not only embraces carriers of public opinion such as the spoken and the written word, but extends even to the families and friends of the victim. Grief and remembrance are forbidden. In the Soviet Union a woman will sue for divorce immediately after her husband's arrest in order to save the lives of her children; if her husband chances to come back, she will indignantly turn him out of the house.¹⁵³ The Western world has hitherto, even in its darkest periods, granted the slain enemy the right to be remembered as a self-evident acknowledgment of the fact that we are all men (and *only* men). It is only because even Achilles set out for Hector's funeral, only because the most despotic governments honored the slain enemy, only because the Romans allowed the Christians to write their martyrologies, only because the Church kept its heretics alive in the memory of men, that all was not lost and never could be lost. The concentration camps, by making death itself anonymous (making it impossible to find out whether a prisoner is dead or alive) robbed death of its meaning as the end of a fulfilled life. In a sense they took away the individual's own death, proving that henceforth nothing belonged to him and he belonged to no one. His death merely set a seal on the fact that he had never really existed.

This attack on the moral person might still have been opposed by man's conscience which tells him that it is better to die a victim than to live as a bureaucrat of murder. Totalitarian terror achieved its most terrible triumph when it succeeded in cutting the moral person off from the individualist escape and in making the decisions of conscience absolutely questionable and equivocal. When a man is faced with the alternative of betraying and thus murdering his friends or of sending his wife and children, for whom he is in every sense responsible, to their death; when even suicide would mean the immediate murder of his own family—how is he to decide? The alternative is no longer between good and evil, but between murder and murder. Who could solve the moral dilemma of the Greek mother, who was allowed by the Nazis to choose which of her three children should be killed?¹⁵⁴

Through the creation of conditions under which conscience ceases to be adequate and to do good becomes utterly impossible, the consciously organized complicity of all men in the crimes of totalitarian regimes is extended to the victims and thus made really total. The SS implicated concentration-camp inmates—criminals, politicals, Jews—in their crimes by making them responsible for a large part of the administration, thus confronting them with the hopeless dilemma whether to send their friends to their death, or to help murder other men who happened to be strangers, and forcing them, in any event, to behave like murderers.¹⁵⁵ The point is not only that hatred is diverted from those who are guilty (the *capos* were more hated than the

¹⁵³ See the report of Sergei Malakhov in Dallin, *op. cit.*, pp. 20 ff.

¹⁵⁴ See Albert Camus in *Twice A Year*, 1947.

¹⁵⁵ Rousset's book, *op. cit.*, consists largely of discussions of this dilemma by prisoners.

SS), but that the distinguishing line between persecutor and persecuted, between the murderer and his victim, is constantly blurred.¹⁵⁶

Once the moral person has been killed, the one thing that still prevents men from being made into living corpses is the differentiation of the individual, his unique identity. In a sterile form such individuality can be preserved through a persistent stoicism, and it is certain that many men under totalitarian rule have taken and are each day still taking refuge in this absolute isolation of a personality without rights or conscience. There is no doubt that this part of the human person, precisely because it depends so essentially on nature and on forces that cannot be controlled by the will, is the hardest to destroy (and when destroyed is most easily repaired).¹⁵⁷

The methods of dealing with this uniqueness of the human person are numerous and we shall not attempt to list them. They begin with the monstrous conditions in the transports to the camps, when hundreds of human beings are packed into a cattle-car stark naked, glued to each other, and shunted back and forth over the countryside for days on end; they continue upon arrival at the camp, the well-organized shock of the first hours, the shaving of the head, the grotesque camp clothing; and they end in the utterly unimaginable tortures so gauged as not to kill the body, at any event not quickly. The aim of all these methods, in any case, is to manipulate the human body—with its infinite possibilities of suffering—in such a way as to make it destroy the human person as inexorably as do certain mental diseases of organic origin.

It is here that the utter lunacy of the entire process becomes most apparent. Torture, to be sure, is an essential feature of the whole totalitarian police and judiciary apparatus; it is used every day to make people talk. This type of torture, since it pursues a definite, rational aim, has certain limitations: either the prisoner talks within a certain time, or he is killed. To this rationally conducted torture another, irrational, sadistic type was added in the first Nazi concentration camps and in the cellars of the Gestapo. Carried on for the most part by the SA, it pursued no aims and was not systematic, but depended on the initiative of largely abnormal elements. The mortality was so high that only a few concentration-camp inmates of 1933 survived these first years. This type of torture seemed to be not so much a calculated political institution as a concession of the regime to its criminal and abnormal elements, who were thus rewarded for services rendered. Behind the blind bestiality of the SA, there often lay a deep hatred and resentment against all those who were socially, intellectually, or physically better

¹⁵⁶ Bettelheim, *op. cit.*, describes the process by which the guards as well as the prisoners became "conditioned" to the life in the camp and were afraid of returning to the outer world.

Rousset, therefore, is right when he insists that the truth is that "victim and executioner are alike ignoble; the lesson of the camps is the brotherhood of abjection" (p. 388).

¹⁵⁷ Bettelheim, *op. cit.*, describes how "the main concern of the new prisoners seemed to be to remain intact as a personality" while the problem of the old prisoners was "how to live as well as possible within the camp."

off than themselves, and who now, as if in fulfillment of their wildest dreams, were in their power. This resentment, which never died out entirely in the camps, strikes us as a last remnant of humanly understandable feeling.¹⁰⁸

The real horror began, however, when the SS took over the administration of the camps. The old spontaneous bestiality gave way to an absolutely cold and systematic destruction of human bodies, calculated to destroy human dignity; death was avoided or postponed indefinitely. The camps were no longer amusement parks for beasts in human form, that is, for men who really belonged in mental institutions and prisons; the reverse became true: they were turned into "drill grounds," on which perfectly normal men were trained to be full-fledged members of the SS.¹⁰⁹

The killing of man's individuality, of the uniqueness shaped in equal parts by nature, will, and destiny, which has become so self-evident a premise for all human relations that even identical twins inspire a certain uneasiness, creates a horror that vastly overshadows the outrage of the juridical-political person and the despair of the moral person. It is this horror that gives rise

¹⁰⁸ Rousset, *op. cit.*, p. 390, reports an SS-man haranguing a professor as follows: "You used to be a professor. Well, you're no professor now. You're no big shot any more. You're nothing but a little runt now. Just as little as you can be. I'm the big fellow now."

¹⁰⁹ Kogon, *op. cit.*, p. 6, speaks of the possibility that the camps will be maintained as training and experimental grounds for the SS. He also gives a good report on the difference between the early camps administered by the SA and the later ones under the SS. "None of these first camps had more than a thousand inmates. . . . Life in them begged all description. The accounts of the few old prisoners who survived those years agree that there was scarcely any form of sadistic perversion that was not practiced by the SA men. But they were all acts of individual bestiality, there was still no fully organized cold system, embracing masses of men. This was the accomplishment of the SS" (p. 7).

This new mechanized system eased the feeling of responsibility as much as was humanly possible. When, for instance, the order came to kill every day several hundred Russian prisoners, the slaughter was performed by shooting through a hole without seeing the victim. (See Ernest Feder, "Essai sur la Psychologie de la Terreur," in *Synthèses*, Brussels, 1946.) On the other hand, perversion was artificially produced in otherwise normal men. Rousset reports the following from a SS guard: "Usually, I keep on hitting until I ejaculate. I have a wife and three children in Breslau. I used to be perfectly normal. That's what they've made of me. Now when they give me a pass out of here, I don't go home. I don't dare look my wife in the face" (p. 273). —The documents from the Hitler era contain numerous testimonials for the average normality of those entrusted with carrying out Hitler's program of extermination. A good collection is found in Léon Poliakov's "The Weapon of Antisemitism," published by UNESCO in *The Third Reich*, London, 1955. Most of the men in the units used for these purposes were not volunteers but had been drafted from the ordinary police for these special assignments. But even trained SS-men found this kind of duty worse than front-line fighting. In his report of a mass execution by the SS, an eyewitness gives high praise to this troop which had been so "idealistic" that it was able to bear "the entire extermination without the help of liquor."

That one wanted to eliminate all personal motives and passions during the "exterminations" and hence keep the cruelties to a minimum is revealed by the fact that a group of doctors and engineers entrusted with handling the gas installations were making constant improvements that were not only designed to raise the productive capacity of the corpse factories but also to accelerate and ease the agony of death.

to the nihilistic generalizations which maintain plausibly enough that essentially all men alike are beasts.¹⁰⁰ Actually the experience of the concentration camps does show that human beings can be transformed into specimens of the human animal, and that man's "nature" is only "human" insofar as it opens up to man the possibility of becoming something highly unnatural, that is, a man.

After murder of the moral person and annihilation of the juridical person, the destruction of the individuality is almost always successful. Conceivably some laws of mass psychology may be found to explain why millions of human beings allowed themselves to be marched unresistingly into the gas chambers, although these laws would explain nothing else but the destruction of individuality. It is more significant that those individually condemned to death very seldom attempted to take one of their executioners with them, that there were scarcely any serious revolts, and that even in the moment of liberation there were very few spontaneous massacres of SS men. For to destroy individuality is to destroy spontaneity, man's power to begin something new out of his own resources, something that cannot be explained on the basis of reactions to environment and events.¹⁰¹ Nothing then remains but ghastly marionettes with human faces, which all behave like the dog in Pavlov's experiments, which all react with perfect reliability even when going to their own death, and which do nothing but react. This is the real triumph of the system: "The triumph of the SS demands that the tortured victim allow himself to be led to the noose without protesting, that he renounce and abandon himself to the point of ceasing to affirm his identity. And it is not for nothing. It is not gratuitously, out of sheer sadism, that the SS men desire his defeat. They know that the system which succeeds in destroying its victim before he mounts the scaffold . . . is incomparably the best for keeping a whole people in slavery. In submission. Nothing is more terrible than these processions of human beings going like dummies to their death. The man who sees this says to himself: 'For them to be thus reduced, what power must be concealed in the hands of the masters,' and he turns away, full of bitterness but defeated."¹⁰²

If we take totalitarian aspirations seriously and refuse to be misled by the

¹⁰⁰ This is very prominent in Rousset's work. "The social conditions of life in the camps have transformed the great mass of inmates, both the Germans and the deportees, regardless of their previous social position and education . . . into a degenerate rabble, entirely submissive to the primitive reflexes of the animal instinct" (p. 183).

¹⁰¹ In this context also belongs the astonishing rarity of suicides in the camps. Suicide occurred far more often before arrest and deportation than in the camp itself, which is of course partly explained by the fact that every attempt was made to prevent suicides which are, after all, spontaneous acts. From the statistical material for Buchenwald (*Nazi Conspiracy*, IV, 800 ff.) it is evident that scarcely more than one-half per cent of the deaths could be traced to suicide, that frequently there were only two suicides per year, although in the same year the total number of deaths reached 3,516. The reports from Russian camps mention the same phenomenon. Cf., for instance, Starlinger, *op. cit.*, p. 57.

¹⁰² Rousset, *op. cit.*, p. 525.

common-sense assertion that they are utopian and unrealizable, it develops that the society of the dying established in the camps is the only form of society in which it is possible to dominate man entirely. Those who aspire to total domination must liquidate all spontaneity, such as the mere existence of individuality will always engender, and track it down in its most private forms, regardless of how unpolitical and harmless these may seem. Pavlov's dog, the human specimen reduced to the most elementary reactions, the bundle of reactions that can always be liquidated and replaced by other bundles of reactions that behave in exactly the same way, is the model "citizen" of a totalitarian state; and such a citizen can be produced only imperfectly outside of the camps.

The uselessness of the camps, their cynically admitted anti-utility, is only apparent. In reality they are more essential to the preservation of the regime's power than any of its other institutions. Without concentration camps, without the undefined fear they inspire and the very well-defined training they offer in totalitarian domination, which can nowhere else be fully tested with all of its most radical possibilities, a totalitarian state can neither inspire its nuclear troops with fanaticism nor maintain a whole people in complete apathy. The dominating and the dominated would only too quickly sink back into the "old bourgeois routine"; after early "excesses," they would succumb to everyday life with its human laws; in short, they would develop in the direction which all observers counseled by common sense were so prone to predict. The tragic fallacy of all these prophecies, originating in a world that was still safe, was to suppose that there was such a thing as one human nature established for all time, to identify this human nature with history, and thus to declare that the idea of total domination was not only inhuman but also unrealistic. Meanwhile we have learned that the power of man is so great that he really can be what he wishes to be.

It is in the very nature of totalitarian regimes to demand unlimited power. Such power can only be secured if literally all men, without a single exception, are reliably dominated in every aspect of their life. In the realm of foreign affairs new neutral territories must constantly be subjugated, while at home ever-new human groups must be mastered in expanding concentration camps, or, when circumstances require liquidated to make room for others. The question of opposition is unimportant both in foreign and domestic affairs. Any neutrality, indeed any spontaneously given friendship, is from the standpoint of totalitarian domination just as dangerous as open hostility, precisely because spontaneity as such, with its incalculability, is the greatest of all obstacles to total domination over man. The Communists of non-Communist countries, who fled or were called to Moscow, learned by bitter experience that they constituted a menace to the Soviet Union. Convinced Communists are in this sense, which alone has any reality today, just as ridiculous and just as menacing to the regime in Russia, as, for example, the convinced Nazis of the Röhm faction were to the Nazis.

What makes conviction and opinion of any sort so ridiculous and dangerous under totalitarian conditions is that totalitarian regimes take the

greatest pride in having no need of them, or of any human help of any kind. Men insofar as they are more than animal reaction and fulfillment of functions are entirely superfluous to totalitarian regimes. Totalitarianism strives not toward despotic rule over men, but toward a system in which men are superfluous. Total power can be achieved and safeguarded only in a world of conditioned reflexes, of marionettes without the slightest trace of spontaneity. Precisely because man's resources are so great, he can be fully dominated only when he becomes a specimen of the animal-species man.

Therefore character is a threat and even the most unjust legal rules are an obstacle; but individuality, anything indeed that distinguishes one man from another, is intolerable. As long as all men have not been made equally superfluous—and this has been accomplished only in concentration camps—the ideal of totalitarian domination has not been achieved. Totalitarian states strive constantly, though never with complete success, to establish the superfluity of man—by the arbitrary selection of various groups for concentration camps, by constant purges of the ruling apparatus, by mass liquidations. Common sense protests desperately that the masses are submissive and that all this gigantic apparatus of terror is therefore superfluous; if they were capable of telling the truth, the totalitarian rulers would reply: The apparatus seems superfluous to you only because it serves to make men superfluous.

The totalitarian attempt to make men superfluous reflects the experience of modern masses of their superfluity on an overcrowded earth. The world of the dying, in which men are taught they are superfluous through a way of life in which punishment is meted out without connection with crime, in which exploitation is practiced without profit, and where work is performed without product, is a place where senselessness is daily produced anew. Yet, within the framework of the totalitarian ideology, nothing could be more sensible and logical; if the inmates are vermin, it is logical that they should be killed by poison gas; if they are degenerate, they should not be allowed to contaminate the population; if they have "slave-like souls" (Himmler), no one should waste his time trying to re-educate them. Seen through the eyes of the ideology, the trouble with the camps is almost that they make too much sense, that the execution of the doctrine is too consistent.

While the totalitarian regimes are thus resolutely and cynically emptying the world of the only thing that makes sense to the utilitarian expectations of common sense, they impose upon it at the same time a kind of super-sense which the ideologies actually always meant when they pretended to have found the key to history or the solution to the riddles of the universe. Over and above the senselessness of totalitarian society is enthroned the ridiculous supersense of its ideological superstition. Ideologies are harmless, uncritical, and arbitrary opinions only as long as they are not believed in seriously. Once their claim to total validity is taken literally they become the nuclei of logical systems in which, as in the systems of paranoiacs, everything follows comprehensibly and even compulsorily once the first premise

is accepted. The insanity of such systems lies not only in their first premise but in the very logicity with which they are constructed. The curious logicity of all isms, their simple-minded trust in the salvational value of stubborn devotion without regard for specific, varying factors, already harbors the first germs of totalitarian contempt for reality and factuality.

Common sense trained in utilitarian thinking is helpless against this ideological supersense, since totalitarian regimes establish a functioning world of no-sense. The ideological contempt for factuality still contained the proud assumption of human mastery over the world; it is, after all, contempt for reality which makes possible changing the world, the erection of the human artifice. What destroys the element of pride in the totalitarian contempt for reality (and thereby distinguishes it radically from revolutionary theories and attitudes) is the supersense which gives the contempt for reality its cogency, logicity, and consistency. What makes a truly totalitarian device out of the Bolshevik claim that the present Russian system is superior to all others is the fact that the totalitarian ruler draws from this claim the logically impeccable conclusion that without this system people never could have built such a wonderful thing as, let us say, a subway; from this, he again draws the logical conclusion that anyone who knows of the existence of the Paris subway is a suspect because he may cause people to doubt that one can do things only in the Bolshevik way. This leads to the final conclusion that in order to remain a loyal Bolshevik, you have to destroy the Paris subway. Nothing matters but consistency.

With these new structures, built on the strength of supersense and driven by the motor of logicity, we are indeed at the end of the bourgeois era of profits and power, as well as at the end of imperialism and expansion. The aggressiveness of totalitarianism springs not from lust for power, and if it feverishly seeks to expand, it does so neither for expansion's sake nor for profit, but only for ideological reasons: to make the world consistent, to prove that its respective supersense has been right.

It is chiefly for the sake of this supersense, for the sake of complete consistency, that it is necessary for totalitarianism to destroy every trace of what we commonly call human dignity. For respect for human dignity implies the recognition of my fellow-men or our fellow-nations as subjects, as builders of worlds or cobuilders of a common world. No ideology which aims at the explanation of all historical events of the past and at mapping out the course of all events of the future can bear the unpredictability which springs from the fact that men are creative, that they can bring forward something so new that nobody ever foresaw it.

What totalitarian ideologies therefore aim at is not the transformation of the outside world or the revolutionizing transmutation of society, but the transformation of human nature itself. The concentration camps are the laboratories where changes in human nature are tested, and their shamefulness therefore is not just the business of their inmates and those who run them according to strictly "scientific" standards; it is the concern of all men. Suffering, of which there has been always too much on earth, is not

the issue, nor is the number of victims. Human nature as such is at stake, and even though it seems that these experiments succeed not in changing man but only in destroying him, by creating a society in which the nihilistic banality of *homo homini lupus* is consistently realized, one should bear in mind the necessary limitations to an experiment which requires global control in order to show conclusive results.

Until now the totalitarian belief that everything is possible seems to have proved only that everything can be destroyed. Yet, in their effort to prove that everything is possible, totalitarian regimes have discovered without knowing it that there are crimes which men can neither punish nor forgive. When the impossible was made possible it became the unpunishable, unforgivable absolute evil which could no longer be understood and explained by the evil motives of self-interest, greed, covetousness, resentment, lust for power, and cowardice; and which therefore anger could not revenge, love could not endure, friendship could not forgive. Just as the victims in the death factories or the holes of oblivion are no longer "human" in the eyes of their executioners, so this newest species of criminals is beyond the pale even of solidarity in human sinfulness.

It is inherent in our entire philosophical tradition that we cannot conceive of a "radical evil," and this is true both for Christian theology, which conceded even to the Devil himself a celestial origin, as well as for Kant, the only philosopher who, in the word he coined for it, at least must have suspected the existence of this evil even though he immediately rationalized it in the concept of a "perverted ill will" that could be explained by comprehensible motives. Therefore, we actually have nothing to fall back on in order to understand a phenomenon that nevertheless confronts us with its overpowering reality and breaks down all standards we know. There is only one thing that seems to be discernible: we may say that radical evil has emerged in connection with a system in which all men have become equally superfluous. The manipulators of this system believe in their own superfluousness as much as in that of all others, and the totalitarian murderers are all the more dangerous because they do not care if they themselves are alive or dead, if they ever lived or never were born. The danger of the corpse factories and holes of oblivion is that today, with populations and homelessness everywhere on the increase, masses of people are continuously rendered superfluous if we continue to think of our world in utilitarian terms. Political, social, and economic events everywhere are in a silent conspiracy with totalitarian instruments devised for making men superfluous. The implied temptation is well understood by the utilitarian common sense of the masses, who in most countries are too desperate to retain much fear of death. The Nazis and the Bolsheviks can be sure that their factories of annihilation which demonstrate the swiftest solution to the problem of overpopulation, of economically superfluous and socially rootless human masses, are as much of an attraction as a warning. Totalitarian solutions may well survive the fall of totalitarian regimes in the form of strong temptations which will come up whenever it seems impossible to alleviate political, social, or economic misery in a manner worthy of man.

Ideology and Terror: A Novel Form of Government

IN THE PRECEDING chapters we emphasized repeatedly that the means of total domination are not only more drastic but that totalitarianism differs essentially from other forms of political oppression known to us such as despotism, tyranny and dictatorship. Wherever it rose to power, it developed entirely new political institutions and destroyed all social, legal and political traditions of the country. No matter what the specifically national tradition or the particular spiritual source of its ideology, totalitarian government always transformed classes into masses, supplanted the party system, not by one-party dictatorships, but by a mass movement, shifted the center of power from the army to the police, and established a foreign policy openly directed toward world domination. Present totalitarian governments have developed from one-party systems; whenever these became truly totalitarian, they started to operate according to a system of values so radically different from all others, that none of our traditional legal, moral, or common sense utilitarian categories could any longer help us to come to terms with, or judge, or predict their course of action.

If it is true that the elements of totalitarianism can be found by retracing the history and analyzing the political implications of what we usually call the crisis of our century, then the conclusion is unavoidable that this crisis is no mere threat from the outside, no mere result of some aggressive foreign policy of either Germany or Russia, and that it will no more disappear with the death of Stalin than it disappeared with the fall of Nazi Germany. It may even be that the true predicaments of our time will assume their authentic form—though not necessarily the cruelest—only when totalitarianism has become a thing of the past.

It is in the line of such reflections to raise the question whether totalitarian government, born of this crisis and at the same time its clearest and only unequivocal symptom, is merely a makeshift arrangement, which borrows its methods of intimidation, its means of organization and its instruments of violence from the well-known political arsenal of tyranny, despotism and dictatorships, and owes its existence only to the deplorable, but perhaps accidental failure of the traditional political forces—liberal or conservative, national or socialist, republican or monarchist, authoritarian or democratic. Or whether, on the contrary, there is such a thing as the *nature* of totali-

tan government, whether it has its own essence and can be compared with and defined like other forms of government such as Western thought has known and recognized since the times of ancient philosophy. If this is true, then the entirely new and unprecedented forms of totalitarian organization and course of action must rest on one of the few basic experiences which men can have whenever they live together, and are concerned with public affairs. If there is a basic experience which finds its political expression in totalitarian domination, then, in view of the novelty of the totalitarian form of government, this must be an experience which, for whatever reason, has never before served as the foundation of a body politic and whose general mood—although it may be familiar in every other respect—never before has pervaded, and directed the handling of, public affairs.

If we consider this in terms of the history of ideas, it seems extremely unlikely. For the forms of government under which men live have been very few; they were discovered early, classified by the Greeks and have proved extraordinarily long-lived. If we apply these findings, whose fundamental idea, despite many variations, did not change in the two and a half thousand years that separate Plato from Kant, we are tempted at once to interpret totalitarianism as some modern form of tyranny, that is a lawless government where power is wielded by one man. Arbitrary power, unrestricted by law, wielded in the interest of the ruler and hostile to the interests of the governed, on one hand, fear as the principle of action, namely fear of the people by the ruler and fear of the ruler by the people, on the other—these have been the hallmarks of tyranny throughout our tradition.

Instead of saying that totalitarian government is unprecedented, we could also say that it has exploded the very alternative on which all definitions of the essence of governments have been based in political philosophy, that is the alternative between lawful and lawless government, between arbitrary and legitimate power. That lawful government and legitimate power, on one side, lawlessness and arbitrary power on the other, belonged together and were inseparable has never been questioned. Yet, totalitarian rule confronts us with a totally different kind of government. It defies, it is true, all positive laws, even to the extreme of defying those which it has itself established (as in the case of the Soviet Constitution of 1936, to quote only the most outstanding example) or which it did not care to abolish (as in the case of the Weimar Constitution which the Nazi government never revoked). But it operates neither without guidance of law nor is it arbitrary, for it claims to obey strictly and unequivocally those laws of Nature or of History from which all positive laws always have been supposed to spring.

It is the monstrous, yet seemingly unanswerable claim of totalitarian rule that, far from being "lawless," it goes to the sources of authority from which positive laws received their ultimate legitimation, that far from being arbitrary it is more obedient to these suprahuman forces than any government ever was before, and that far from wielding its power in the interest of one man, it is quite prepared to sacrifice everybody's vital immediate interests to the execution of what it assumes to be the law of History or the law of

Nature. Its defiance of positive laws claims to be a higher form of legitimacy which, since it is inspired by the sources themselves, can do away with petty legality. Totalitarian lawfulness pretends to have found a way to establish the rule of justice on earth—something which the legality of positive law admittedly could never attain. The discrepancy between legality and justice could never be bridged because the standards of right and wrong into which positive law translates its own source of authority—"natural law" governing the whole universe, or divine law revealed in human history, or customs and traditions expressing the law common to the sentiments of all men—are necessarily general and must be valid for a countless and unpredictable number of cases, so that each concrete individual case with its unrepeatable set of circumstances somehow escapes it.

Totalitarian lawfulness, defying legality and pretending to establish the direct reign of justice on earth, executes the law of History or of Nature without translating it into standards of right and wrong for individual behavior. It applies the law directly to mankind without bothering with the behavior of men. The law of Nature or the law of History, if properly executed, is expected to produce mankind as its end product; and this expectation lies behind the claim to global rule of all totalitarian governments. Totalitarian policy claims to transform the human species into an active unflinching carrier of a law to which human beings otherwise would only passively and reluctantly be subjected. If it is true that the link between totalitarian countries and the civilized world was broken through the monstrous crimes of totalitarian regimes, it is also true that this criminality was not due to simple aggressiveness, ruthlessness, warfare and treachery, but to a conscious break of that *consensus iuris* which, according to Cicero, constitutes a "people," and which, as international law, in modern times has constituted the civilized world insofar as it remains the foundation-stone of international relations even under the conditions of war. Both moral judgment and legal punishment presuppose this basic consent; the criminal can be judged justly only because he takes part in the *consensus iuris*, and even the revealed law of God can function among men only when they listen and consent to it.

At this point the fundamental difference between the totalitarian and all other concepts of law comes to light. Totalitarian policy does not replace one set of laws with another, does not establish its own *consensus iuris*, does not create, by one revolution, a new form of legality. Its defiance of all, even its own positive laws implies that it believes it can do without any *consensus iuris* whatever, and still not resign itself to the tyrannical state of lawlessness, arbitrariness and fear. It can do without the *consensus iuris* because it promises to release the fulfillment of law from all action and will of man; and it promises justice on earth because it claims to make mankind itself the embodiment of the law.

This identification of man and law, which seems to cancel the discrepancy between legality and justice that has plagued legal thought since ancient times, has nothing in common with the *lumen naturale* or the voice of con-

science, by which Nature or Divinity as the sources of authority for the *ius naturale* or the historically revealed commands of God, are supposed to announce their authority in man himself. This never made man a walking embodiment of the law, but on the contrary remained distinct from him as the authority which demanded consent and obedience. Nature or Divinity as the source of authority for positive laws were thought of as permanent and eternal; positive laws were changing and changeable according to circumstances, but they possessed a relative permanence as compared with the much more rapidly changing actions of men; and they derived this permanence from the eternal presence of their source of authority. Positive laws, therefore, are primarily designed to function as stabilizing factors for the ever changing movements of men.

In the interpretation of totalitarianism, all laws have become laws of movement. When the Nazis talked about the law of nature or when the Bolsheviks talk about the law of history, neither nature nor history is any longer the stabilizing source of authority for the actions of mortal men; they are movements in themselves. Underlying the Nazis' belief in race laws as the expression of the law of nature in man, is Darwin's idea of man as the product of a natural development which does not necessarily stop with the present species of human beings, just as under the Bolsheviks' belief in class-struggle as the expression of the law of history lies Marx's notion of society as the product of a gigantic historical movement which races according to its own law of motion to the end of historical times when it will abolish itself.

The difference between Marx's historical and Darwin's naturalistic approach has frequently been pointed out, usually and rightly in favor of Marx. This has led us to forget the great and positive interest Marx took in Darwin's theories; Engels could not think of a greater compliment to Marx's scholarly achievements than to call him the "Darwin of history."¹ If one considers, not the actual achievement, but the basic philosophies of both men, it turns out that ultimately the movement of history and the movement of nature are one and the same. Darwin's introduction of the concept of development into nature, his insistence that, at least in the field of biology, natural movement is not circular but unilinear, moving in an infinitely progressing direction, means in fact that nature is, as it were, being swept into history, that natural life is considered to be historical. The "natural" law of the survival of the fittest is just as much a historical law and could be used as such by racism as Marx's law of the survival of the most progressive class. Marx's class struggle, on the other hand, as the driving force of history is only the outward expression of the development

¹ In his funeral speech on Marx, Engels said: "Just as Darwin discovered the law of development of organic life, so Marx discovered the law of development of human history." A similar comment is found in Engels' introduction to the edition of the *Communist Manifesto* in 1890, and in his introduction to the *Ursprung der Familie*, he once more mentions "Darwin's theory of evolution" and "Marx's theory of surplus value" side by side.

of productive forces which in turn have their origin in the "labor-power" of men. Labor, according to Marx, is not a historical but a natural-biological force—released through man's "metabolism with nature" by which he conserves his individual life and reproduces the species.² Engels saw the affinity between the basic convictions of the two men very clearly because he understood the decisive role which the concept of development played in both theories. The tremendous intellectual change which took place in the middle of the last century consisted in the refusal to view or accept anything "as it is" and in the consistent interpretation of everything as being only a stage of some further development. Whether the driving force of this development was called nature or history is relatively secondary. In these ideologies, the term "law" itself changed its meaning: from expressing the framework of stability within which human actions and motions can take place, it became the expression of the motion itself.

Totalitarian politics which proceeded to follow the recipes of ideologies has unmasked the true nature of these movements insofar as it clearly showed that there could be no end to this process. If it is the law of nature to eliminate everything that is harmful and unfit to live, it would mean the end of nature itself if new categories of the harmful and unfit-to-live could not be found; if it is the law of history that in a class struggle certain classes "wither away," it would mean the end of human history itself if rudimentary new classes did not form, so that they in turn could "wither away" under the hands of totalitarian rulers. In other words, the law of killing by which totalitarian movements seize and exercise power would remain a law of the movement even if they ever succeeded in making all of humanity subject to their rule.

By lawful government we understand a body politic in which positive laws are needed to translate and realize the immutable *ius naturale* or the eternal commandments of God into standards of right and wrong. Only in these standards, in the body of positive laws of each country, do the *ius naturale* or the Commandments of God achieve their political reality. In the body politic of totalitarian government, this place of positive laws is taken by total terror, which is designed to translate into reality the law of movement of history or nature. Just as positive laws, though they define transgressions, are independent of them—the absence of crimes in any society does not render laws superfluous but, on the contrary, signifies their most perfect rule—so terror in totalitarian government has ceased to be a mere means for the suppression of opposition, though it is also used for such purposes. Terror becomes total when it becomes independent of all opposition; it rules supreme when nobody any longer stands in its way. If lawfulness is the essence of non-tyrannical government and lawlessness is the essence of tyranny, then terror is the essence of totalitarian domination.

² For Marx's labor concept as "an eternal nature-imposed necessity, without which there can be no metabolism between man and nature, and therefore no life," see *Capital*, Vol. I, Part I, ch. 1 and 5. The quoted passage is from ch. 1, section 2.

Terror is the realization of the law of movement; its chief aim is to make it possible for the force of nature or of history to race freely through mankind, unhindered by any spontaneous human action. As such, terror seeks to "stabilize" men in order to liberate the forces of nature or history. It is this movement which singles out the foes of mankind against whom terror is let loose, and no free action of either opposition or sympathy can be permitted to interfere with the elimination of the "objective enemy" of History or Nature, of the class or the race. Guilt and innocence become senseless notions; "guilty" is he who stands in the way of the natural or historical process which has passed judgment over "inferior races," over individuals "unfit to live," over "dying classes and decadent peoples." Terror executes these judgments, and before its court, all concerned are subjectively innocent: the murdered because they did nothing against the system, and the murderers because they do not really murder but execute a death sentence pronounced by some higher tribunal. The rulers themselves do not claim to be just or wise, but only to execute historical or natural laws; they do not apply laws, but execute a movement in accordance with its inherent law. Terror is lawfulness, if law is the law of the movement of some suprahuman force, Nature or History.

Terror as the execution of a law of movement whose ultimate goal is not the welfare of men or the interest of one man but the fabrication of mankind, eliminates individuals for the sake of the species, sacrifices the "parts" for the sake of the "whole." The suprahuman force of Nature or History has its own beginning and its own end, so that it can be hindered only by the new beginning and the individual end which the life of each man actually is.

Positive laws in constitutional government are designed to erect boundaries and establish channels of communication between men whose community is continually endangered by the new men born into it. With each new birth, a new beginning is born into the world, a new world has potentially come into being. The stability of the laws corresponds to the constant motion of all human affairs, a motion which can never end as long as men are born and die. The laws hedge in each new beginning and at the same time assure its freedom of movement, the potentiality of something entirely new and unpredictable; the boundaries of positive laws are for the political existence of man what memory is for his historical existence: they guarantee the pre-existence of a common world, the reality of some continuity which transcends the individual life span of each generation, absorbs all new origins and is nourished by them.

Total terror is so easily mistaken for a symptom of tyrannical government because totalitarian government in its initial stages must behave like a tyranny and raze the boundaries of man-made law. But total terror leaves no arbitrary lawlessness behind it and does not rage for the sake of some arbitrary will or for the sake of despotic power of one man against all, least of all for the sake of a war of all against all. It substitutes for the boundaries and channels of communication between individual men a band of iron which holds them so tightly together that it is as though their plurality

had disappeared into One Man of gigantic dimensions. To abolish the fences of laws between men—as tyranny does—means to take away man's liberties and destroy freedom as a living political reality; for the space between men as it is hedged in by laws, is the living space of freedom. Total terror uses this old instrument of tyranny but destroys at the same time also the lawless, fenceless wilderness of fear and suspicion which tyranny leaves behind. This desert, to be sure, is no longer a living space of freedom, but it still provides some room for the fear-guided movements and suspicion-ridden actions of its inhabitants.

By pressing men against each other, total terror destroys the space between them; compared to the condition within its iron band, even the desert of tyranny, insofar as it is still some kind of space, appears like a guarantee of freedom. Totalitarian government does not just curtail liberties or abolish essential freedoms; nor does it, at least to our limited knowledge, succeed in eradicating the love for freedom from the hearts of man. It destroys the one essential prerequisite of all freedom which is simply the capacity of motion which cannot exist without space.

Total terror, the essence of totalitarian government, exists neither for nor against men. It is supposed to provide the forces of nature or history with an incomparable instrument to accelerate their movement. This movement, proceeding according to its own law, cannot in the long run be hindered; eventually its force will always prove more powerful than the most powerful forces engendered by the actions and the will of men. But it can be slowed down and is slowed down almost inevitably by the freedom of man, which even totalitarian rulers cannot deny, for this freedom—irrelevant and arbitrary as they may deem it—is identical with the fact that men are being born and that therefore each of them *is* a new beginning, begins, in a sense, the world anew. From the totalitarian point of view, the fact that men are born and die can be only regarded as an annoying interference with higher forces. Terror, therefore, as the obedient servant of natural or historical movement has to eliminate from the process not only freedom in any specific sense, but the very source of freedom which is given with the fact of the birth of man and resides in his capacity to make a new beginning. In the iron band of terror, which destroys the plurality of men and makes out of many the One who unflinchingly will act as though he himself were part of the course of history or nature, a device has been found not only to liberate the historical and natural forces, but to accelerate them to a speed they never would reach if left to themselves. Practically speaking, this means that terror executes on the spot the death sentences which Nature is supposed to have pronounced on races or individuals who are "unfit to live," or History on "dying classes," without waiting for the slower and less efficient processes of nature or history themselves.

In this concept, where the essence of government itself has become motion, a very old problem of political thought seems to have found a solution similar to the one already noted for the discrepancy between legality and justice. If the essence of government is defined as lawfulness, and if it is

understood that laws are the stabilizing forces in the public affairs of men (as indeed it always has been since Plato invoked Zeus, the god of the boundaries, in his *Laws*), then the problem of movement of the body politic and the actions of its citizens arises. Lawfulness sets limitations to actions, but does not inspire them; the greatness, but also the perplexity of laws in free societies is that they only tell what one should not, but never what one should do. The necessary movement of a body politic can never be found in its essence if only because this essence—again since Plato—has always been defined with a view to its permanence. Duration seemed one of the surest yardsticks for the goodness of a government. It is still for Montesquieu the supreme proof for the badness of tyranny that only tyrannies are liable to be destroyed from within, to decline by themselves, whereas all other governments are destroyed through exterior circumstances. Therefore what the definition of governments always needed was what Montesquieu called a "principle of action" which, different in each form of government, would inspire government and citizens alike in their public activity and serve as a criterion, beyond the merely negative yardstick of lawfulness, for judging all action in public affairs. Such guiding principles and criteria of action are, according to Montesquieu, honor in a monarchy, virtue in a republic and fear in a tyranny.

In a perfect totalitarian government, where all men have become One Man, where all action aims at the acceleration of the movement of nature or history, where every single act is the execution of a death sentence which Nature or History has already pronounced, that is, under conditions where terror can be completely relied upon to keep the movement in constant motion, no principle of action separate from its essence would be needed at all. Yet as long as totalitarian rule has not conquered the earth and with the iron band of terror made each single man a part of one mankind, terror in its double function as essence of government and principle, not of action, but of motion, cannot be fully realized. Just as lawfulness in constitutional government is insufficient to inspire and guide men's actions, so terror in totalitarian government is not sufficient to inspire and guide human behavior.

While under present conditions totalitarian domination still shares with other forms of government the need for a guide for the behavior of its citizens in public affairs, it does not need and could not even use a principle of action strictly speaking, since it will eliminate precisely the capacity of man to act. Under conditions of total terror not even fear can any longer serve as an advisor of how to behave, because terror chooses its victims without reference to individual actions or thoughts, exclusively in accordance with the objective necessity of the natural or historical process. Under totalitarian conditions, fear probably is more widespread than ever before; but fear has lost its practical usefulness when actions guided by it can no longer help to avoid the dangers man fears. The same is true for sympathy or support of the regime; for total terror not only selects its victims according to objective standards; it chooses its executioners with as complete a disregard as possible for the candidate's conviction and sympathies. The

consistent elimination of conviction as a motive for action has become a matter of record since the great purges in Soviet Russia and the satellite countries. The aim of totalitarian education has never been to instill convictions but to destroy the capacity to form any. The introduction of purely objective criteria into the selective system of the SS troops was Himmler's great organizational invention; he selected the candidates from photographs according to purely racial criteria. Nature itself decided, not only who was to be eliminated, but also who was to be trained as an executioner.

No guiding principle of behavior, taken itself from the realm of human action, such as virtue, honor, fear, is necessary or can be useful to set into motion a body politic which no longer uses terror as a means of intimidation, but whose essence *is* terror. In its stead, it has introduced an entirely new principle into public affairs that dispenses with human will to action altogether and appeals to the craving need for some insight into the law of movement according to which the terror functions and upon which, therefore, all private destinies depend.

The inhabitants of a totalitarian country are thrown into and caught in the process of nature or history for the sake of accelerating its movement; as such, they can only be executioners or victims of its inherent law. The process may decide that those who today eliminate races and individuals or the members of dying classes and decadent peoples are tomorrow those who must be sacrificed. What totalitarian rule needs to guide the behavior of its subjects is a preparation to fit each of them equally well for the role of executioner and the role of victim. This two-sided preparation, the substitute for a principle of action, is the ideology.

Ideologies—isms which to the satisfaction of their adherents can explain everything and every occurrence by deducing it from a single premise—are a very recent phenomenon and, for many decades, played a negligible role in political life. Only with the wisdom of hindsight can we discover in them certain elements which have made them so disturbingly useful for totalitarian rule. Not before Hitler and Stalin were the great political potentialities of the ideologies discovered.

Ideologies are known for their scientific character: they combine the scientific approach with results of philosophical relevance and pretend to be scientific philosophy. The word "ideology" seems to imply that an idea can become the subject matter of a science just as animals are the subject matter of zoology, and that the suffix *-logy* in ideology, as in zoology, indicates nothing but the *logoi*, the scientific statements made on it. If this were true, an ideology would indeed be a pseudo-science and a pseudo-philosophy, transgressing at the same time the limitations of science and the limitations of philosophy. Deism, for example, would then be the ideology which treats the idea of God, with which philosophy is concerned, in the scientific manner of theology for which God is a revealed reality. (A theology which is not based on revelation as a given reality but treats God as an idea would be as mad as a zoology which is no longer sure of the physical,

tangible existence of animals.) Yet we know that this is only part of the truth. Deism, though it denies divine revelation, does not simply make "scientific" statements on a God which is only an "idea," but uses the idea of God in order to explain the course of the world. The "ideas" of isms—race in racism, God in deism, etc.—never form the subject matter of the ideologies and the suffix *-logy* never indicates simply a body of "scientific" statements.

An ideology is quite literally what its name indicates: it is the logic of an idea. Its subject matter is history, to which the "idea" is applied; the result of this application is not a body of statements about something that *is*, but the unfolding of a process which is in constant change. The ideology treats the course of events as though it followed the same "law" as the logical exposition of its "idea." Ideologies pretend to know the mysteries of the whole historical process—the secrets of the past, the intricacies of the present, the uncertainties of the future—because of the logic inherent in their respective ideas.

Ideologies are never interested in the miracle of being. They are historical, concerned with becoming and perishing, with the rise and fall of cultures, even if they try to explain history by some "law of nature." The word "race" in racism does not signify any genuine curiosity about the human races as a field for scientific exploration, but is the "idea" by which the movement of history is explained as one consistent process.

The "idea" of an ideology is neither Plato's eternal essence grasped by the eyes of the mind nor Kant's regulative principle of reason but has become an instrument of explanation. To an ideology, history does not appear in the light of an idea (which would imply that history is seen *sub specie* of some ideal eternity which itself is beyond historical motion) but as something which can be calculated by it. What fits the "idea" into this new role is its own "logic," that is a movement which is the consequence of the "idea" itself and needs no outside factor to set it into motion. Racism is the belief that there is a motion inherent in the very idea of race, just as deism is the belief that a motion is inherent in the very notion of God.

The movement of history and the logical process of this notion are supposed to correspond to each other, so that whatever happens, happens according to the logic of one "idea." However, the only possible movement in the realm of logic is the process of deduction from a premise. Dialectical logic, with its process from thesis through antithesis to synthesis which in turn becomes the thesis of the next dialectical movement, is not different in principle, once an ideology gets hold of it; the first thesis becomes the premise and its advantage for ideological explanation is that this dialectical device can explain away factual contradictions as stages of one identical, consistent movement.

As soon as logic as a movement of thought—and not as a necessary control of thinking—is applied to an idea, this idea is transformed into a premise. Ideological world explanations performed this operation long before it became so eminently fruitful for totalitarian reasoning. The purely nega-

tive coercion of logic, the prohibition of contradictions, became "productive" so that a whole line of thought could be initiated, and forced upon the mind, by drawing conclusions in the manner of mere argumentation. This argumentative process could be interrupted neither by a new idea (which would have been another premise with a different set of consequences) nor by a new experience. Ideologies always assume that one idea is sufficient to explain everything in the development from the premise, and that no experience can teach anything because everything is comprehended in this consistent process of logical deduction. The danger in exchanging the necessary insecurity of philosophical thought for the total explanation of an ideology and its *Weltanschauung*, is not even so much the risk of falling for some usually vulgar, always uncritical assumption as of exchanging the freedom inherent in man's capacity to think for the strait jacket of logic with which man can force himself almost as violently as he is forced by some outside power.

The *Weltanschauungen* and ideologies of the nineteenth century are not in themselves totalitarian, and although racism and communism have become the decisive ideologies of the twentieth century they were not, in principle, any "more totalitarian" than the others; it happened because the elements of experience on which they were originally based—the struggle between the races for world domination, and the struggle between the classes for political power in the respective countries—turned out to be politically more important than those of other ideologies. In this sense the ideological victory of racism and communism over all other isms was decided before the totalitarian movements took hold of precisely these ideologies. On the other hand, all ideologies contain totalitarian elements, but these are fully developed only by totalitarian movements, and this creates the deceptive impression that only racism and communism are totalitarian in character. The truth is, rather, that the real nature of all ideologies was revealed only in the role that the ideology plays in the apparatus of totalitarian domination. Seen from this aspect, there appear three specifically totalitarian elements that are peculiar to all ideological thinking.

First, in their claim to total explanation, ideologies have the tendency to explain not what is, but what becomes, what is born and passes away. They are in all cases concerned solely with the element of motion, that is, with history in the customary sense of the word. Ideologies are always oriented toward history, even when, as in the case of racism, they seemingly proceed from the premise of nature; here, nature serves merely to explain historical matters and reduce them to matters of nature. The claim to total explanation promises to explain all historical happenings, the total explanation of the past, the total knowledge of the present, and the reliable prediction of the future. Secondly, in this capacity ideological thinking becomes independent of all experience from which it cannot learn anything new even if it is a question of something that has just come to pass. Hence ideological thinking becomes emancipated from the reality that we perceive with our five senses, and insists on a "truer" reality concealed behind all perceptible

things, dominating them from this place of concealment and requiring a sixth sense that enables us to become aware of it. The sixth sense is provided by precisely the ideology, that particular ideological indoctrination which is taught by the educational institutions, established exclusively for this purpose, to train the "political soldiers" in the *Ordensburgen* of the Nazis or the schools of the Comintern and the Cominform. The propaganda of the totalitarian movement also serves to emancipate thought from experience and reality; it always strives to inject a secret meaning into every public, tangible event and to suspect a secret intent behind every public political act. Once the movements have come to power, they proceed to change reality in accordance with their ideological claims. The concept of enmity is replaced by that of conspiracy, and this produces a mentality in which reality—real enmity or real friendship—is no longer experienced and understood in its own terms but is automatically assumed to signify something else.

Thirdly, since the ideologies have no power to transform reality, they achieve this emancipation of thought from experience through certain methods of demonstration. Ideological thinking orders facts into an absolutely logical procedure which starts from an axiomatically accepted premise, deducing everything else from it; that is, it proceeds with a consistency that exists nowhere in the realm of reality. The deducing may proceed logically or dialectically; in either case it involves a consistent process of argumentation which, because it thinks in terms of a process, is supposed to be able to comprehend the movement of the suprahuman, natural or historical processes. Comprehension is achieved by the mind's imitating, either logically or dialectically, the laws of "scientifically" established movements with which through the process of imitation it becomes integrated. Ideological argumentation, always a kind of logical deduction, corresponds to the two aforementioned elements of the ideologies—the element of movement and of emancipation from reality and experience—first, because its thought movement does not spring from experience but is self-generated, and, secondly, because it transforms the one and only point that is taken and accepted from experienced reality into an axiomatic premise, leaving from then on the subsequent argumentation process completely untouched from any further experience. Once it has established its premise, its point of departure, experiences no longer interfere with ideological thinking, nor can it be taught by reality.

The device both totalitarian rulers used to transform their respective ideologies into weapons with which each of their subjects could force himself into step with the terror movement was deceptively simple and inconspicuous: they took them dead seriously, took pride the one in his supreme gift for "ice cold reasoning" (Hitler) and the other in the "mercilessness of his dialectics," and proceeded to drive ideological implications into extremes of logical consistency which, to the onlooker, looked preposterously "primitive" and absurd: a "dying class" consisted of people condemned to death; races that are "unfit to live" were to be exterminated. Whoever agreed that

there are such things as "dying classes" and did not draw the consequence of killing their members, or that the right to live had something to do with race and did not draw the consequence of killing "unfit races," was plainly either stupid or a coward. This stringent logicity as a guide to action permeates the whole structure of totalitarian movements and governments. It is exclusively the work of Hitler and Stalin who, although they did not add a single new thought to the ideas and propaganda slogans of their movements, for this reason alone must be considered ideologists of the greatest importance.

What distinguished these new totalitarian ideologists from their predecessors was that it was no longer primarily the "idea" of the ideology—the struggle of classes and the exploitation of the workers or the struggle of races and the care for Germanic peoples—which appealed to them, but the logical process which could be developed from it. According to Stalin, neither the idea nor the oratory but "the irresistible force of logic thoroughly overpowered [Lenin's] audience." The power, which Marx thought was born when the idea seized the masses, was discovered to reside, not in the idea itself, but in its logical process which "like a mighty tentacle seizes you on all sides as in a vise and from whose grip you are powerless to tear yourself away; you must either surrender or make up your mind to utter defeat."³ Only when the realization of the ideological aims, the classless society or the master race, was at stake, could this force show itself. In the process of realization, the original substance upon which the ideologies based themselves as long as they had to appeal to the masses—the exploitation of the workers or the national aspirations of Germany—is gradually lost, devoured as it were by the process itself: in perfect accordance with "ice cold reasoning" and the "irresistible force of logic," the workers lost under Bolshevik rule even those rights they had been granted under Tsarist oppression and the German people suffered a kind of warfare which did not pay the slightest regard to the minimum requirements for survival of the German nation. It is in the nature of ideological politics—and is not simply a betrayal committed for the sake of self-interest or lust for power—that the real content of the ideology (the working class or the Germanic peoples), which originally had brought about the "idea" (the struggle of classes as the law of history or the struggle of races as the law of nature), is devoured by the logic with which the "idea" is carried out.

The preparation of victims and executioners which totalitarianism requires in place of Montesquieu's principle of action is not the ideology itself—racism or dialectical materialism—but its inherent logicity. The most persuasive argument in this respect, an argument of which Hitler like Stalin was very fond, is: You can't say A without saying B and C and so on, down to the end of the murderous alphabet. Here, the coercive force of logicity

³ Stalin's speech of January 28, 1924; quoted from Lenin, *Selected Works*, Vol. I, p. 33, Moscow, 1947.—It is interesting to note that Stalin's "logic" is among the few qualities that Khrushchev praises in his devastating speech at the Twentieth Party Congress.

seems to have its source; it springs from our fear of contradicting ourselves. To the extent that the Bolshevik purge succeeds in making its victims confess to crimes they never committed, it relies chiefly on this basic fear and argues as follows: We are all agreed on the premise that history is a struggle of classes and on the role of the Party in its conduct. You know therefore that, historically speaking, the Party is always right (in the words of Trotsky: "We can only be right with and by the Party, for history has provided no other way of being in the right."). At this historical moment, that is in accordance with the law of history, certain crimes are due to be committed which the Party, knowing the law of history, must punish. For these crimes, the Party needs criminals; it may be that the Party, though knowing the crimes, does not quite know the criminals; more important than to be sure about the criminals is to punish the crimes, because without such punishment, History will not be advanced but may even be hindered in its course. You, therefore, either have committed the crimes or have been called by the Party to play the role of the criminal—in either case, you have objectively become an enemy of the Party. If you don't confess, you cease to help History through the Party, and have become a real enemy.—The coercive force of the argument is: if you refuse, you contradict yourself and, through this contradiction, render your whole life meaningless; the A which you said dominates your whole life through the consequences of B and C which it logically engenders.

Totalitarian rulers rely on the compulsion with which we can compel ourselves, for the limited mobilization of people which even they still need; this inner compulsion is the tyranny of logicity against which nothing stands but the great capacity of men to start something new. The tyranny of logicity begins with the mind's submission to logic as a never-ending process, on which man relies in order to engender his thoughts. By this submission, he surrenders his inner freedom as he surrenders his freedom of movement when he bows down to an outward tyranny. Freedom as an inner capacity of man is identical with the capacity to begin, just as freedom as a political reality is identical with a space of movement between men. Over the beginning, no logic, no cogent deduction can have any power, because its chain presupposes, in the form of a premise, the beginning. As terror is needed lest with the birth of each new human being a new beginning arise and raise its voice in the world, so the self-coercive force of logicity is mobilized lest anybody ever start thinking—which as the freest and purest of all human activities is the very opposite of the compulsory process of deduction. Totalitarian government can be safe only to the extent that it can mobilize man's own will power in order to force him into that gigantic movement of History or Nature which supposedly uses mankind as its material and knows neither birth nor death.

The compulsion of total terror on one side, which, with its iron band, presses masses of isolated men together *and* supports them in a world which has become a wilderness for them, and the self-coercive force of logical deduction on the other, which prepares each individual in his lonely isola-

tion against all others, correspond to each other and need each other in order to set the terror-ruled movement into motion and keep it moving. Just as terror, even in its pre-total, merely tyrannical form ruins all relationships between men, so the self-compulsion of ideological thinking ruins all relationships with reality. The preparation has succeeded when people have lost contact with their fellow men as well as the reality around them; for together with these contacts, men lose the capacity of both experience and thought. The ideal subject of totalitarian rule is not the convinced Nazi or the convinced Communist, but people for whom the distinction between fact and fiction (*i.e.*, the reality of experience) and the distinction between true and false (*i.e.*, the standards of thought) no longer exist.

The question we raised at the start of these considerations and to which we now return is what kind of basic experience in the living-together of men permeates a form of government whose essence is terror and whose principle of action is the logicality of ideological thinking. That such a combination was never used before in the varied forms of political domination is obvious. Still, the basic experience on which it rests must be human and known to men, insofar as even this most "original" of all political bodies has been devised by, and is somehow answering the needs of, men.

It has frequently been observed that terror can rule absolutely only over men who are isolated against each other and that, therefore, one of the primary concerns of all tyrannical government is to bring this isolation about. Isolation may be the beginning of terror; it certainly is its most fertile ground; it always is its result. This isolation is, as it were, pretotalitarian; its hallmark is impotence insofar as power always comes from men acting together, "acting in concert" (Burke); isolated men are powerless by definition.

Isolation and impotence, that is the fundamental inability to act at all, have always been characteristic of tyrannies. Political contacts between men are severed in tyrannical government and the human capacities for action and power are frustrated. But not all contacts between men are broken and not all human capacities destroyed. The whole sphere of private life with the capacities for experience, fabrication and thought are left intact. We know that the iron band of total terror leaves no space for such private life and that the self-coercion of totalitarian logic destroys man's capacity for experience and thought just as certainly as his capacity for action.

What we call isolation in the political sphere, is called loneliness in the sphere of social intercourse. Isolation and loneliness are not the same. I can be isolated—that is in a situation in which I cannot act, because there is nobody who will act with me—without being lonely; and I can be lonely—that is in a situation in which I as a person feel myself deserted by all human companionship—without being isolated. Isolation is that impasse into which men are driven when the political sphere of their lives, where they act together in the pursuit of a common concern, is destroyed. Yet isolation, though destructive of power and the capacity for action, not only leaves intact but is required for all so-called productive activities of men.

Man insofar as he is *homo faber* tends to isolate himself with his work, that is to leave temporarily the realm of politics. Fabrication (*poiesis*, the making of things), as distinguished from action (*praxis*) on one hand and sheer labor on the other, is always performed in a certain isolation from common concerns, no matter whether the result is a piece of craftsmanship or of art. In isolation, man remains in contact with the world as the human artifice; only when the most elementary form of human creativity, which is the capacity to add something of one's own to the common world, is destroyed, isolation becomes altogether unbearable. This can happen in a world whose chief values are dictated by labor, that is where all human activities have been transformed into laboring. Under such conditions, only the sheer effort of labor which is the effort to keep alive is left and the relationship with the world as a human artifice is broken. Isolated man who lost his place in the political realm of action is deserted by the world of things as well, if he is no longer recognized as *homo faber* but treated as an *animal laborans* whose necessary "metabolism with nature" is of concern to no one. Isolation then becomes loneliness. Tyranny based on isolation generally leaves the productive capacities of man intact; a tyranny over "laborers," however, as for instance the rule over slaves in antiquity, would automatically be a rule over lonely, not only isolated, men and tend to be totalitarian.

While isolation concerns only the political realm of life, loneliness concerns human life as a whole. Totalitarian government, like all tyrannies, certainly could not exist without destroying the public realm of life, that is, without destroying, by isolating men, their political capacities. But totalitarian domination as a form of government is new in that it is not content with this isolation and destroys private life as well. It bases itself on loneliness, on the experience of not belonging to the world at all, which is among the most radical and desperate experiences of man.

Loneliness, the common ground for terror, the essence of totalitarian government, and for ideology or logicality, the preparation of its executioners and victims, is closely connected with uprootedness and superfluosity which have been the curse of modern masses since the beginning of the industrial revolution and have become acute with the rise of imperialism at the end of the last century and the break-down of political institutions and social traditions in our own time. To be uprooted means to have no place in the world, recognized and guaranteed by others; to be superfluous means not to belong to the world at all. Uprootedness can be the preliminary condition for superfluosity, just as isolation can (but must not) be the preliminary condition for loneliness. Taken in itself, without consideration of its recent historical causes and its new role in politics, loneliness is at the same time contrary to the basic requirements of the human condition and one of the fundamental experiences of every human life. Even the experience of the materially and sensually given world depends upon my being in contact with other men, upon our *common* sense which regulates and controls all other senses and without which each of us would

be enclosed in his own particularity of sense data which in themselves are unreliable and treacherous. Only because we have common sense, that is only because not one man, but men in the plural inhabit the earth can we trust our immediate sensual experience. Yet, we have only to remind ourselves that one day we shall have to leave this common world which will go on as before and for whose continuity we are superfluous in order to realize loneliness, the experience of being abandoned by everything and everybody.

Loneliness is not solitude. Solitude requires being alone whereas loneliness shows itself most sharply in company with others. Apart from a few stray remarks—usually framed in a paradoxical mood like Cato's statement (reported by Cicero, *De Re Publica*, I, 17): *numquam minus solum esse quam cum solus esset*, "never was he less alone than when he was alone," or, rather, "never was he less lonely than when he was in solitude"—it seems that Epictetus, the emancipated slave philosopher of Greek origin, was the first to distinguish between loneliness and solitude. His discovery, in a way, was accidental, his chief interest being neither solitude nor loneliness, but being alone (*monos*) in the sense of absolute independence. As Epictetus sees it (*Dissertationes*, Book 3, ch. 13) the lonely man (*eremos*) finds himself surrounded by others with whom he cannot establish contact or to whose hostility he is exposed. The solitary man, on the contrary, is alone and therefore "can be together with himself" since men have the capacity of "talking with themselves." In solitude, in other words, I am "by myself," together with my self, and therefore two-in-one, whereas in loneliness I am actually one, deserted by all others. All thinking, strictly speaking, is done in solitude and is a dialogue between me and myself; but this dialogue of the two-in-one does not lose contact with the world of my fellow-men because they are represented in the self with whom I lead the dialogue of thought. The problem of solitude is that this two-in-one needs the others in order to become one again: one unchangeable individual whose identity can never be mistaken for that of any other. For the confirmation of my identity I depend entirely upon other people; and it is the great saving grace of companionship for solitary men that it makes them "whole" again, saves them from the dialogue of thought in which one remains always equivocal, restores the identity which makes them speak with the single voice of one unexchangeable person.

Solitude can become loneliness; this happens when all by myself I am deserted by my own self. Solitary men have always been in danger of loneliness, when they can no longer find the redeeming grace of companionship to save them from duality and equivocality and doubt. Historically, it seems as though this danger became sufficiently great to be noticed by others and recorded by history only in the nineteenth century. It showed itself clearly when philosophers, for whom alone solitude is a way of life and a condition of work, were no longer content with the fact that "philosophy is only for the few" and began to insist that nobody "understands" them. Character-

istic in this respect is the anecdote reported from Hegel's deathbed which hardly could have been told of any great philosopher before him: "Nobody has understood me except one; and he also misunderstood." Conversely, there is always the chance that a lonely man finds himself and starts the thinking dialogue of solitude. This seems to have happened to Nietzsche in Sils Maria when he conceived *Zarathustra*. In two poems ("Sils Maria" and "Aus hohen Bergen") he tells of the empty expectation and the yearning waiting of the lonely until suddenly "*um Mittag war's, da wurde Eins zu Zwei . . . Nun feiern wir, vereinten Siegs gewiss, / das Fest der Feste; / Freund Zarathustra kam, der Gast der Gäste!*" ("Noon was, when One became Two . . . Certain of united victory we celebrate the feast of feasts; friend Zarathustra came, the guest of guests.")

What makes loneliness so unbearable is the loss of one's own self which can be realized in solitude, but confirmed in its identity only by the trusting and trustworthy company of my equals. In this situation, man loses trust in himself as the partner of his thoughts and that elementary confidence in the world which is necessary to make experiences at all. Self and world, capacity for thought and experience are lost at the same time.

The only capacity of the human mind which needs neither the self nor the other nor the world in order to function safely and which is as independent of experience as it is of thinking is the ability of logical reasoning whose premise is the self-evident. The elementary rules of cogent evidence, the truism that two and two equals four cannot be perverted even under the conditions of absolute loneliness. It is the only reliable "truth" human beings can fall back upon once they have lost the mutual guarantee, the common sense, men need in order to experience and live and know their way in a common world. But this "truth" is empty or rather no truth at all, because it does not reveal anything. (To define consistency as truth as some modern logicians do means to deny the existence of truth.) Under the conditions of loneliness, therefore, the self-evident is no longer just a means of the intellect and begins to be productive, to develop its own lines of "thought." That thought processes characterized by strict self-evident logicity, from which apparently there is no escape, have some connection with loneliness was once noticed by Luther (whose experiences in the phenomena of solitude and loneliness probably were second to no one's and who once dared to say that "there must be a God because man needs one being whom he can trust") in a little-known remark on the Bible text "it is not good that man should be alone": A lonely man, says Luther, "always deduces one thing from the other and thinks everything to the worst."⁴ The famous extremism of totalitarian movements, far from having anything to do with true radicalism, consists indeed in this "thinking everything to the worst," in this deducing process which always arrives at the worst possible conclusions.

⁴ "Ein solcher (sc. einsamer) Mensch folgert immer eins aus dem andern und denkt alles zum Argsten." In *Erbauliche Schriften*, "Warum die Einsamkeit zu fliehen?"

What prepares men for totalitarian domination in the non-totalitarian world is the fact that loneliness, once a borderline experience usually suffered in certain marginal social conditions like old age, has become an everyday experience of the evergrowing masses of our century. The merciless process into which totalitarianism drives and organizes the masses looks like a suicidal escape from this reality. The "ice-cold reasoning" and the "mighty tentacle" of dialectics which "seizes you as in a vise" appears like a last support in a world where nobody is reliable and nothing can be relied upon. It is the inner coercion whose only content is the strict avoidance of contradictions that seems to confirm a man's identity outside all relationships with others. It fits him into the iron band of terror even when he is alone, and totalitarian domination tries never to leave him alone except in the extreme situation of solitary confinement. By destroying all space between men and pressing men against each other, even the productive potentialities of isolation are annihilated; by teaching and glorifying the logical reasoning of loneliness where man knows that he will be utterly lost if ever he lets go of the first premise from which the whole process is being started, even the slim chances that loneliness may be transformed into solitude and logic into thought are obliterated. If this practice is compared with that of tyranny, it seems as if a way had been found to set the desert itself in motion, to let loose a sand storm that could cover all parts of the inhabited earth.

The conditions under which we exist today in the field of politics are indeed threatened by these devastating sand storms. Their danger is not that they might establish a permanent world. Totalitarian domination, like tyranny, bears the germs of its own destruction. Just as fear and the impotence from which fear springs are antipolitical principles and throw men into a situation contrary to political action, so loneliness and the logical-ideological deducing the worst that comes from it represent an anti-social situation and harbor a principle destructive for all human living-together. Nevertheless, organized loneliness is considerably more dangerous than the unorganized impotence of all those who are ruled by the tyrannical and arbitrary will of a single man. Its danger is that it threatens to ravage the world as we know it—a world which everywhere seems to have come to an end—before a new beginning rising from this end has had time to assert itself.

Apart from such considerations—which as predictions are of little avail and less consolation—there remains the fact that the crisis of our time and its central experience have brought forth an entirely new form of government which as a potentiality and an ever-present danger is only too likely to stay with us from now on, just as other forms of government which came about at different historical moments and rested on different fundamental experiences have stayed with mankind regardless of temporary defeats—monarchies, and republics, tyrannies, dictatorships and despotism.

But there remains also the truth that every end in history necessarily contains a new beginning; this beginning is the promise, the only "message"

which the end can ever produce. Beginning, before it becomes a historical event, is the supreme capacity of man; politically, it is identical with man's freedom. *Initium ut esset homo creatus est*—"that a beginning be made man was created" said Augustine.⁵ This beginning is guaranteed by each new birth; it is indeed every man.

⁵ *De Civitate Dei*, Book 12, chapter 20.

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Part Three: Totalitarianism

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