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FASCISM

One of the liveliest and most controversial of living historians, Professor Taylor of Magdalen (Oxford) is the author of "The Habsburg Monarchy," "The Course of German History," "The Struggle for Mastery in Europe," and many other studies. He is also a regular and popular British TV-performer.



By A. J. P. TAYLOR

THE oddest thing about Fascism nowadays is that even its advocates have to pretend to be ashamed of it. Fascism has become a dirty word; and a speech in its favor can be identified at once by the unfailing phrase: "Of course I have no sympathy with Fascism but . . ." We have to make do with less branded words like totalitarianism, authoritarianism, demagoguery, and so on. It will save a lot of trouble when Fascism gets back into currency.

Fascism is a disease of democracy or at any rate of the mass-age. Dictatorship alone is not Fascism if it relies simply on force and has no popular backing. Fascism demands a mass-party where a few self-chosen leaders control a body of disciplined followers drawn from the disgruntled elements of society. Here is the starting-point of Fascism: a sense of grievance, social, political, national, even personal, it really does not matter what. But the psychology of resentment must be there; and if the resentment is unfounded so much the better. A Fascist party exists to express emotions, not to achieve results. Its program is a mere rigmarole of high-sounding phrases; and if any of its aims are in fact achieved then others equally irrelevant have to be hastily fished up. Hence the futility of concession or appeasement to a Fascist party or country. Indeed, concession aggravates the resentment by exposing its irrational basis. Fascism has to be kept on the boil by parades and uniforms. Its demonstrations release pent-up emotions and, at the same time, generate fresh ones rather as an



—From George Grosz's "A Little Yes and a Big No" (Dial).

THE ISMS IN 1957

EDITOR'S NOTE: *More interesting than the inevitable changes in the meanings of words is their tenacious hold on the affections. Hard knocks and hot blood may drain a word of its grammatical precision without even denting its serviceability as a weapon. People keep on dealing in words that lexicographers gave up on decades before. Elections are lost because of Rum, Romanism, and Rebellion. Communism, in particular, is a fighting word for both its protagonists and antagonists. Who can be sure that it refers to Marx's crazy dialectics, modern Russian statism, "godless materialism" or something else? To a few of our most familiar slogans we have committed ourselves so intensely that a candidate cannot afford even the attempt to define them, for fear he will give the impression that by so doing he calls them into question.*

As a small contribution to cooler passions and sharper definitions The Saturday Review has asked seven well-known writers to take a fresh look at the verbal armament of the twentieth-century, the "isms," in the hope that when we form a clear idea of what we're talking about we may win through to what we want.

atomic reactor turns out more power than it consumes. The demonstrations must threaten violence. Later they must apply violence against some element felt to be outside the Fascist community—Jews, Slavs, colored peoples. The actual choice of the victim has no practical sense. Hatred and persecution are practised for their own sake.

Fascist leaders are concerned only with power. Usually indeed they claim to be serving some national cause and boast of their patriotism. But this nationalism is not essential; and the few avowed survivors of Fascism now present themselves as having been "good Europeans" before NATO and the rest of it were ever thought of. Fascists will use any ideological cover so long as it brings them nearer to dominance over others. What do Fascist leaders do with their power when they get it? Mainly they destroy the obstacles to its unrestricted exercise. Fascists hate the Christian churches, the law courts, the trade unions, not as rivals but simply as brakes. They have nothing to put in the place of these institutions. Fascist law is merely the rule of the stronger. Fascist creeds are a jumble of dark emotions, incoherently expressed. Fascist morals, too, simply provide unlimited sexual gratification for males whose appetites are usually greater than their powers.

Is Fascism necessarily anti-Socialist or even anti-Communist? In the days when Hitler was coming to power much play was made with the idea that Fascism was the last defense of a declining capitalism. As a matter of fact, capitalism seems to get along much better in a sensible democratic community. It is true that the rich retain their riches in a Fascist state and even add to them. Probably the capitalist classes in Germany and Italy are still proportionately better off than their counterparts elsewhere as the result of Fascist rule. But though the capitalists keep their wealth, they lose their power just like everyone else; and as individuals they are equally exposed to the irrational tyranny of the Fascist bosses. Many German magnates had time to decide in a concentration camp that they had been ill-advised to finance Hitler.

Other writers turn the analysis upside down and make out that Fascism and Communism are indistinguishable. This is an unnecessary confusion. Fascism sometimes parodies Communism just as it parodies almost everything else; but it lacks the practical economic aims which make Communism a rational, though materialistic, creed. What Fascists like in socialist measures is the power they offer, not the results they produce. Where

socialists, let us say, might advocate rationing in order to secure fair shares, Fascists rejoice in the regimentation involved.

A final point is often ignored. Even Fascist leaders cannot be irrational all the time. If they were, they would be certified and locked up before they had started on their political career. Since, by definition, they have no rational principles, they are wholly selfish in their sane moments. There is no example on record of an honest Fascist leader. All of them—Hitler, Mussolini, their followers and imitators without exception—grabbed at wealth as well as power. When you find a political community in which all the leaders are corrupt, you may guess that it is on the way to Fascism. Indeed, Fascists in power (or out of it) plunder on such a gigantic scale that one is tempted to believe that they are rational after all—cheats and swindlers, not psychopaths. But this is wrong. Fascism is the irrational made vocal; and therefore any attempt to reduce it to rational terms defeats itself.

CAPITALISM

Now an executive of the McCann-Erickson Advertising Company, Mr. Gordon has had a long career as an independent businessman and essayist on the philosophy of business.



By WATSON GORDON

CAPITALISM is not what it used to be. Or else my dictionary is misleading me. My dictionary states that capitalism is an economic system in which capital and capitalists play the principal parts: a system the operation of which is entrusted to private enterprise and control under competitive conditions. Either this dictionary is farther out-of-date than I believe it to be or those who compile information for dictionaries don't get around much in political and business circles. It could be, too, that they don't read the newspapers.

In the interest of bringing ourselves up-to-date on capitalism, let's take a look at a few recent quotes in the newspapers. In February of this year Mr. Eisenhower warned that unless business and labor used restraints to reinforce the Government's efforts to curb inflation, the Government would have to impose price and wage controls. The President made it clear that he did not want controls. "A con-

trolled economy," he is reported to have said, "is not the America we know, but any intelligent man can see the direction we will have to go unless there is some wisdom exercised not only in government but throughout the whole economy."

A note of agreement came from the National Association of Manufacturers, though it seemed to shift the burden of responsibility slightly. A spokesman for this association was quoted in the *Times* as follows: "Blanket wage-price controls such as the President seems to threaten would create a state-controlled economy in America." The spokesman said that the NAM agreed with the President that the wage-price spiral must be stopped in the long-range interest of labor, management, and the American people. He proposed "thrifty government, maintenance of conditions favorable to a free market, and control of monopolistic powers of large national unions which permit the unions to demand and get unwarranted wage increases and other benefits."

Now, what has become of the cheerful self-confidence of *laissez-faire* we used to be told capitalism depends upon? We can see that what has happened to it is partly management's own doing. Back shortly after the beginning of the century management began to experiment with mass production and the production line, operations in which the individual was subordinated to the group action. It was only a step from this practice to group-solidarity and group-consciousness in relation to working conditions and wages.

At the present time this sort of group operation extends all through industry—from the inception of manufacture to assembly, from the delivery door to the receiving door of the buyer, from the office of the sales-manager to the office or home of the prospect, from the start of a research project through the laboratory to completion or abandonment, from the office of the manager through all the processes of accounting and billing, and on a broader basis all the way from unskilled labor to scientists and engineers.

These developments have been a setup for the labor leader; he is no longer just a leader of individuals, he is a leader of groups fully aware of the power which can be wielded through group-solidarity. The benefits to workers have been tremendous, though they do not, of course, make up completely for the loss of individual stature and independence.

Don't misunderstand me. Management has had its share of cream through bonuses, both cash and stock, to say nothing of huge salaries. Even