Dictatorships

By Hermann Kantorowicz

I. The term "dictatorship" is used for denoting very different things, and we must make up our minds from the beginning in what sense we propose to use it. Such a proposal, therefore, involves a decision, and since the term does not seem to be used in any written constitution or any other legally binding text, we are free to choose one or other of the many current definitions, or to propose a new one. Nothing is more dangerously confusing than to believe terminological questions to be substantial, and vice versa, and nothing is more usual. "Nothing is more usual," said Hume, "than for philosophers to encroach on the province of grammarians, and to engage in disputes of words, while they imagine they are handling controversies of the deepest importance and concern." Nor are such absurd discussions rare in our field. In 1919-20 German and Russian Marxists debated dictatorship: the German asserted passionately that dictatorship must "necessarily" be a personal one, a party dictatorship being "logically" impossible, which the Russians equally passionately denied. But freedom never means arbitrariness, and this is also true of definitions. Every definition, though it can never be found through a lexicographical process, must be at least compatible with the usage of the particular language; and every definition, though it is never in itself true or false, must be fruitful for the purposes of the particular science, must be useful as a tool for illuminating questions, true descriptions, clear distinctions, and exhaustive classification.

These obvious requirements, the terminological and the scientific, are again not complied with by modern discussions on dictatorships, scientific or political. The German scholars, for instance, are not allowed, and the Italian ones certainly not encouraged, to call the Fascist State a dictatorial one. The latest Nazi textbook on German constitutional law defines a dictator as a ruler endowed with extraordinary powers,
but restricted to a special task or to a transitory emergency; therefore, it explains, Mr. MacDonald's national government was dictatorial, but Herr Hitler's and Signor Mussolini's rules never were dictatorships. This definition is not compatible with the usage of any language and is, therefore, terminologically objectionable. An eminent British statesman, on the other hand, declared some time ago: "The United States to-day is practically under a dictatorship. Democracy has broken down in that country. The national government of Great Britain are the present guardians of democracy." This view presupposes a conception of democracy as incompatible with a strong executive, and such a conception is not only a danger for democracy—this political question does not interest the sociologist—but also scientifically objectionable: it obscures an issue which is vital in social science, namely dictatorship versus democracy. President Roosevelt could not govern without the consent of the governed (nor, for that matter, the "Dictator of Louisiana," Senator Huey P. Long), but the men we propose to call dictators are autocrats; and Roosevelt does not forbid discussion, criticism and information, but the men we propose to call dictators govern through dictation. We must keep this in mind when we advance our own definition.

II. It will be useful to construct our concept out of three elements which we may call the political, the technological, and the historical. We propose to call that government a dictatorship which is autocratic; works through dictation; and in which the governed still remember a less autocratic or less illiberal former system. It is understood that this definition is meant not as rigid and absolute, but as elastic and relative; it applies to governments which, like every social and historical phenomenon, are in constant flux; it would, therefore, be more correct, though pedantic, to speak of a dictatorship, in so far as it is autocratic; in so far as it works through dictation; in so far as the memory of the former more democratic or liberal system is still alive.

III. Every one of these three elements demands further explanation. By autocratic I mean a government whose power is independent of the consent of the governed. This is not meant in the legal sense of a right to be independent, but, like the whole investigation, in a sociological sense. Legally speaking, no present dictator is an autocrat: none has the autonomous right to rule without the consent of the governed, none is a
sovereign dictator in his own right. All are dictators by commission: the sovereign (a people or a prince) has commissioned them, in more or less constitutional forms, with power generally with the power to deal with an extraordinary task for a more or less definite period, often with the power of intervention in the administration and the judiciary; but before or after the expiration of that period they may be recalled or compelled to resign. There are many historical examples of "commissionary" dictators as well as of "sovereign" dictators, but the only recent example of sovereign dictatorship in Europe was that of the late King Alexander of Yugoslavia since 1929, a patent dictatorship till 1931, and since then latent. Even Mussolini belongs to the commissionary type, and the King of Italy could, by law, recall him at any time (whereupon the Grand Council could propose him again). Even the Russian leaders, by still calling themselves "commissars of the people," demonstrate their intention of not being autocratic rulers in the legal sense, and indeed, the governing body, the Council of People's Commissars, are appointed by the Central Executive Committee, which is elected by the All-Union Congress of Soviets, which in its turn is elected by the lower Soviets. Even the German dictatorship is commissionary in origin as in its present competency. Its dictatorial powers were granted by the Reichstag through the Enabling Act of March 24th, 1933. "Reichslaws can be enacted by the Reichscabinet. They may deviate from the constitution.... This law becomes invalid on April 1st, 1937." This Act is still in force; the law "concerning the structure of the Reich" of February 14th, 1934, says: "The Reich government may fix new constitutional law," but it has not done so with regard to the Enabling Act. And the fact that Hitler constantly appeals to the people would be meaningless in law if he did not intend to recognise that the people has the right to express its dissatisfaction, and thus ask for his resignation.

Sociologically viewed, however, the present dictators are all autocrats. Their autocratic power is not founded on law, however far the law may have gone in recognising their position; but in fact they are independent of the consent of the governed. Quite consistently some of them have openly declared that they would disregard the event, if one of their so-called plebiscites or elections decided against them. Of course, they are not absolutely independent. They are e.g. all dependent on what in Max Weber's sociology is called the
“staff,” i.e. the organised body of professional supporters and agents, the regular or the private army, the official or the party police, and suchlike. But this is necessarily true of every imaginable kind of government: even the British, even the American Army could seize the power, if they ever wanted to do so. The staff is only one of the innumerable physical, mental and social conditions by which the dictator, like every ruler, like every mortal, is influenced. However, this does not affect his dictatorial power. Power and influence must be kept apart. A person has influence over other persons in so far as he is able to determine the will of those persons through his wishes or advice; he has power in so far as he is able to determine their behaviour, even against their will, through his orders. A hated tyrant may have great power but little influence; his banker, his general-in-chief, his mistress, his confessor may have decisive influence without any power; the former may lose his power if he is afraid to voice anything stronger than wishes or advice, the latter may lose their influence if they have the audacity to impart orders. Autocracy, therefore, is here meant only as denoting the essential difference between dictatorship and democracy, which by definition means dependency on the consent of the governed. Of course, a dictatorship may actually enjoy this consent: to govern independently of the governed does not necessarily mean to govern without their consent. It is the confusion of these two concepts which allows certain dictators, who loathe the very name of “liberalism,” to speak of the “democratic” character of their régime.

True, this independence, being in the nature of a hypothetical relation, is not always easy to ascertain, and can be judged with safety only when there has been an open fight ending with a decisive victory or defeat of the alleged dictator. Another very obvious difficulty of the diagnosis is due to the fact that a free expression of the will of the population is impossible in a dictatorship. In the case of Hitler, however, this difficulty has been overcome, to a certain degree, by the favourable results of the plebiscite in the mining districts of the Saar (January 13th, 1935), and of the elections in the most industrialised parts of Tschechoslowakia (May 19th, 1935): this evidence, though indirect and vicarious, excludes any reasonable doubt as to the popularity of the Nazi régime even among the workers in Germany proper, and perhaps also in Austria. In other
countries we can do nothing but rely on the instinctive judgment of unbiased observers. I think we may say that many of the present dictators seem to be supported by the majority of the population; certainly this is so in Turkey and Portugal, probably in Italy and Poland, possibly in Russia and Yugoslavia, but certainly not in Austria and probably not in many of the Latin-American dictatorships. A very doubtful case, which shows that both difficulties may obfuscate even the diagnosis of the dictator himself, was that of the late Field-Marshall Piłsudski. He was generally, at least outside Poland, regarded as a dictator, and consequently as an autocrat. But it is a fact that he has five times (1920, 1923, 1926, 1928, 1930) interrupted his strange career by resigning or declining all or some of the highest offices after meeting with political opposition; shortly before his death he consented to, and supported, the new Polish constitution (of spring 1935) which concentrated the whole dictatorial power not in his, the war minister’s, hands, but in those of the President, Professor Moschiki. If he did so because he could not govern against the will of the people, he should not be called an autocrat; but if, in one of those attacks of nervous excitement to which he is said to have been subject, he grossly overestimated the opposition and could have safely continued his régime, his factual position would have been that of an autocrat indeed. Now, his death has made the problem insoluble. As in medicine, so in sociology, a diagnosis is not always feasible.

IV. So much about the political element of our definition. The other elements, too, need some explanation. I speak of the technical element of “dictation” in so far as the autocrat’s opinion, the autocrat’s will, the autocrat’s emotions are forced on the governed. This requires positive as well as negative means. Negative means are the prevention and suppression of criticism as well as of frank discussion, the smashing of any opposed majority or minority will, especially if organised, and the withholding of information about anything essential that is going on within the State, or even outside the State. Aids to these means are the abolition of parliament, the forbidding of spontaneous meetings, the dissolution of parties and economic or religious organisations, the gagging of the press, the supervision of teaching in schools and universities, censorship of public and private utterances, suspension of all the guarantees of personal liberty and administration of justice, expulsion of prominent opponents, and innumerable other kinds of
constitutional, penal, administrative, procedural, military and political measures, partly legal, partly illegal. Sometimes subtle distinctions are drawn between opposition which is forbidden, and criticism which is allowed, or between "constructive" criticism which is encouraged, and "destructive" criticism which is punished.

"Violence" and "terror" are also generally mentioned in this connection—especially by the fascist enemies of communist dictatorship, and the communist enemies of fascist dictatorship, whenever they attack each other. But if we wish to make a working distinction between the legal application of criminal law (however draconic) and "violence" and "terror," we ought to restrict these expressions to the illegal application of physical force and the spread of the apprehension of such application. If we keep this in mind, we shall easily perceive that violence and terror do not characterise dictatorships as such, but their initial phase, which is generally revolutionary and, therefore, essentially illegal. If a dictatorship succeeds in passing through this critical phase it usually replaces violence and terror, to a certain degree and with frequent relapses, by even more efficient though sometimes less harsh legal measures of an administrative and judicial kind. This is the phase of "normalisation," in which the dictatorship becomes "respectable" and tries to consolidate its economic, financial and international position, which cannot but suffer during the first phase.

Military dictatorships generally content themselves with these negative means, party dictatorships employ the positive means also. They consist of imposing the opinions, the will and the emotions of the autocrat by propaganda, i.e. the creation or the moulding of public opinion by means largely emotional, illogical or unfair. The aids to these means are well known. Some are of the mass-suggestion or intoxicating brand: idolatry of national and party symbols, broadcasting of inflammatory music, gigantic mass demonstrations, an oratory, whose chief aim is the whipping up of pride or hatred, and a demagogical press. Other means are of a more sober kind: military training of the whole nation as an education to blind obedience, the cooking of school books, the spread of pseudo-scientific doctrines, and wholesale bribery of scholars, journalists, politicians.

But all this would not be sufficient to dictate to a civilised people with a recent democratic or liberal past, if a constant
and vigorous appeal were not made to lofty ideals, old, new, or renewed, like loyalty, discipline, authority, unity, power, patriotism, and to the spirit of heroic self-denial of individual rights or interests in the hands of the dictating group or person. Such is the "freedom" of which the adherents of dictatorships are always proudly and sincerely speaking: the freedom, it is true, to treat them, and if possible everybody else, at pleasure. But it is the freedom of the man or the group by whom they feel themselves represented, with whom they love to identify themselves. No wonder that the adherents of dictatorship cannot understand why other nations speak of slavery, and that they even resent the word dictatorship. On the other hand, people with deeply rooted democratic convictions find it difficult to believe in this idealistic side of dictation, and therefore tend to underrate its importance for the rise and maintenance of dictatorial power.

With religion on the wane, an appeal to ideas of a universal character would be hopeless, and indeed everywhere an egocentric glorification of one's own State, one's own nation, one's own race, one's own class, often combined with hatred or contempt for every other State, nation, race and class, have taken the place of religious sentiments. Thus every new dictatorship increases international and social anarchy, and certainly does not help to prevent warfare between States and classes. It may, however, seem doubtful if this appeal to an unselfish abandonment to a greater self, although generally and for good reasons directed to the more romantically minded youthful part of the nation, can in the long run compensate for restraints on individual liberty and self-assertion. This part of the dictatorial system has already broken down in Italy, especially among the students, formerly the stronghold of fascism; it is becoming weaker in Germany, but still seems very successful in Russia.

V. There is only one point to be explained in the third element, which we called the historical one. The two concepts united in this element—former democracy and former liberalism—do not mean the same thing. I must content myself with an example. The government of the Czars could afford to allow their people, which had never known any other régime, or at least the higher classes, a modest amount of criticism, discussion, information, and, finally, even of organised parliamentary opposition. These liberal benefits the governments of Great Britain and the United States believed it necessary to curtail for obvious military reasons during the Great War, though
nobody can doubt the democratic convictions of leaders like Mr. Lloyd George or President Wilson.

VI. This will be sufficient to explain our definition; but it must still be justified, like every other definition, in each of its three elements, on terminological and scientific grounds. Let us first consider the terminological side. There will, perhaps, be no terminological objection to the political element, autocracy. The technical element of dictatorship, dictation, is justified on the face of it, and also on etymological grounds: it seems that the Romans, who coined the word, called certain magistrates "dictators," because they had no colleagues and, therefore, were not obliged to discuss their measures like consuls, praetors, and members of assemblies. But is the historical element really necessary? I think it is: it alone justifies language in calling Oliver Cromwell a dictator, but not Henry VIII; Napoleon, but not Louis XIV; the Bolsheviks, but not the Czars. Henry VIII, Louis XIV, and the Czars were in practice independent of the consent of the governed, and did not allow them to criticise, to discuss, to oppose, except within narrow limits; but their subjects had not so lately passed through a democratic or liberal form of government that they could still remember them. This difference of accepted terminology cannot be justified by the fact that Cromwell, Napoleon and the Bolsheviks owed their power to revolution and coups d'état (which would thus become an element of the definition), for every form of government in the world, however legitimistic and immaculate it may wish to appear, has a more or less distant, a more or less glorious revolutionary past. But I concede that the definition in this point could be more fully developed; a comparison with the Tyrants of Antiquity and the Signori of the Renaissance might perhaps lead to a better formulation of this element.

VII. Our definition, can, I believe, also be justified as scientifically useful. The political element allows us to distinguish dictatorships from democracies, the technical element from liberalism, the historical element from absolutism (always with the proviso that every one of these concepts requires elastic, not rigid definition, and allows of border-line cases and transition). Dictation to which the belligerent nations have grown used in war times, accounts partly for the astonishing crop of dictatorships in these post-war times. The fact that the population still remembers the good old times of democracy and liberalism leads to the sceptical question whether it is not
only a minority which desires the rule of the majority, and explains why the elder generations are more reluctant to accept dictation than the younger ones; on the other hand, this allows us to forecast, in some cases, the future downfall of the dictatorships under the blows of the surviving democratic and liberal forces. The historical element also explains why the methods of dictation have to be more vigorously developed and more generally applied in our times than they were in the ancien régime, and why e.g. universal spying has become one of the most characteristic phenomena of modern dictatorship. In absolutist times only certain groups possessed political information or desired to form a political opposition, and therefore they alone were spied upon by the police, like the French aristocrats, the German Burschenschaften, the Italian patriots, the Russian intellectuals. Meanwhile, millions have been used to being informed, millions have been making open opposition only a short time ago, and, therefore, millions have to be spied upon by thousands, with the result that fear, suspicion, rumours, whispering, sneaking, shamming, are the atmosphere of a great part of the world from Lisbon to Vladivos-
tok. No part of the dictatorial organisation inspires such awe as the Russian Ogpu, the Italian Ovra, the German Gestapo, uncanny names denoting the secret political police. It would, however, be a gross mistake to believe that “the people” is suffocating in this atmosphere; in most States only a fraction of the population cares for political rights, and the great majority are thankful to those who rid them of responsibility.

Most of the methods of dictation have been made available by our mechanised civilisation, which places all the progress of communication, transport and publicity at the disposal of the dictator, and thus highly civilised nations are far from being dictatorship-proof. On the contrary, it is the technical element, especially in the form of mass suggestion, which thus gives the present dictatorships their characteristically modern touch (though many observers describe them as a “return to the Dark Ages”). The same element accounts for the gradual decay of scientific life under every dictatorship. Where the spirit of impartial research for truth and fearless profession of truth is replaced by that of obedience and propaganda, and even the universities are in danger of being turned into cram-
ing institutions or nurseries for political agitators, nothing else can be expected. In many fields, however remote from politics, the profession of a new and important truth means to
stand up against the public opinion of the universities or against the personal views of influential scholars or against vested interests. This demands courage, and where dictators rule, courage is discouraged, except on the battlefield, where it is commanded. This is not the atmosphere in which truth can thrive. Characters capable of finding and defending, learning and teaching the truth, must finally die out, and then the dictatorial government will lose in efficiency, as every government would. It must suffer most intensely in times like ours, in which an increasingly complicated political and economic life requires an ever better scientifically trained bureaucracy. This is one of the weakest points of dictatorship. Finally, the distinction between States believing in dictation and others that do not, explains the failure of the present attempts of establishing a "collective system" in Europe without previously creating a certain uniformity of the political structure. The disarmament negotiations, e.g. if they could be successful, would inevitably lead to the unilateral disarmament of the democratic powers, which would be forced to comply with their treaty obligations not only by the other powers, but also by criticism and opposition at home. The dictatorial powers, however, would punish any revelation of their eventual illegal armaments as high treason, and thus suppress them, while at the same time they would protect such armament by its very inofficiality against official diplomatic remonstrations. Thus "all-round disarmament" might easily end, under present conditions, with all-round dictatorship, or with all-round war, or both, and this apprehension explains the ambiguous and reluctant attitude of the democratic powers.

VIII. But the real test of the definition lies in the fact that its political element can be made the basis of a classification, a sociological distinction of types. I need scarcely explain that I use the word "type" in the sense of Max Weber as denoting "pure types" which do not claim to represent an average, still less to be an accurate image of an historical reality (which is never "pure"); they are mere simplifications for the sake of description, standards of measurement, and tools of classification. But it ought, perhaps, to be pointed out that classifications, like definitions, are neither true nor false, but can be more or less useful; and that, as a rule, several classifications, although "each" must comply with certain well-known logical requirements, are equally possible, though not equally useful for the needs of the particular science. It would be tempting to
classify dictatorships according to their ideologies, or to their economic programmes. But the immense literature on dictatorships has shown that this attempt would be premature: a great part of it is mere philosophic drawing-room talk or political propaganda. It has not even produced a handy terminology, still less a set of clear concepts, or a comprehensive classification. There are many writings allegedly on "dictatorship" which are not aware that they are only thinking of the fascist type. There are still more writings explaining dictatorships as an expression of the interests of the "capitalists," or the "lower middle classes," or considering them as "post-war phenomena," or—especially Hitlerism—as consequences of a "humiliating peace." If these authors had taken the trouble first to define and then to classify the objects of their studies, they would have easily found that dictatorships, like monarchies or republics, can be filled with almost any economic contents, no matter whether socialist, capitalist or precapitalist. Both heaven and hell are dictatorships. Dictatorships are found in post-war and pre-war times alike, among victors, vanquished and neutrals; they have been in the making for centuries, also Hitlerism, which is a necessary outcome and a perfect expression of some of the oldest German traditions. Without classification, concepts and terminology, no scientific description or comparison is feasible, and no psychological analysis, no historical research, however deep, however learned, can replace them. I therefore intend to prepare the way to a theory of dictatorships by sketching a typology of them according to their sociological structure, by attempting the thankless and unpopular task of an "osteology" of dictatorships. In this restricted sense I propose to make the political element of autocracy the basis of our sociological typology.

IX. The autocrat may be either an individual or a group; in the first case, we speak of personal, in the second of collective dictatorships. In a personal dictatorship, especially of the fascist type, the dictator rules his own staff with a high degree of independence according to the Führerprinzip. The word Führer should not be translated by "leader," but remain a foreign word in the alien atmosphere of the English-speaking democracies. The characteristic of a Führer is that he is not responsible to those below him, but only to those above him, and therefore, finally, responsible to a supreme Führer or Duce who is responsible to no man, although they generally add that they are responsible to history, to the nation, to their conscience,
to God, or some other agency deprived of efficient means of control and coercion. The supreme Führer, therefore, need not be a "superior," not an "authority," he must be a "charismatic" person in the sense of Max Weber's theory of dominion, i.e. a spell-binding person who proves his vocation to be the supreme Führer by the simple fact that he is the Führer, that his followers permit him to lead them irresponsibly, and even desire passionately to have his will imposed on them. The Führer's principle therefore means that the supreme Führer himself appoints the next Führers who themselves appoint the lower set and so on, with complete elimination of any genuine election: the pyramid stands on its point.

In a collective dictatorship, the autocrat is a group which is itself independent of the part of the nation which stands outside the group. But that does not imply that the inner structure of the group is autocratic, too. This is e.g. the case in Soviet Russia: it is a dictatorship of a group, namely of the Bolshevik party; but the party itself is ruled on democratic lines. It has no Führer, but responsible leaders, each set of leaders elects the next higher set of leaders, and each leader is responsible to those who have elected him. Here the pyramid stands on its basis. The ruthless way in which the party suppresses interior discussions proves its lack of liberal respect for individual rights, but not of democratic convictions, as such convictions go. Even the executions are performed, it seems, with the consent of the executed.

X. Collective and personal dictatorships differ in many traits which show that this classification is far from fruitless. (1) Information may be withheld from the governed, but, in order to govern, the dictators themselves must possess it. This means that in a personal dictatorship information will be restricted to the inner circle of the dictator, his highest collaborators, and their personal staff; in a collective dictatorship the whole group must be more or less informed. (2) In a personal dictatorship it is a lesser crime, if criticism is directed against principles, than when it dares to desecrate the hallowed person of the spell-binding dictator who expects and receives the ecstasies of hero-worship; in a collective dictatorship the leaders and their single measures may be freely criticised, but the principles underlying their politics are taboo. (3) Greif, though it may corrupt a democracy, as the United States demonstrates, is an essential feature of every non-democratic State, because every autocracy tends to eliminate control through press and
parliament, the most powerful agents of public opinion. But in a personal dictatorship, graft tends to reach a climax, since the control can be only exercised from above, through superiors, who fear to compromise themselves by disclosing their in-
ability to appoint trustworthy inferiors. Every disclosure is in
the last analysis a disparagement of the supreme Führer, whose fallibility is thus demonstrated, and therefore cases of graft
have a good chance of being hushed up for a long time. (4)
Finally the critical moment in every dictatorship, the death of
the dictator, is extremely dangerous in a personal dictatorship,
and may even bring it to a sudden collapse. In a collective
dictatorship this moment need not occur at all; for a group
may survive its leaders.

All these generalisations are borne out by a comparison
between a typical collective and a typical personal dictatorship.
In Soviet Russia there is more information to be had, and less
graft to be dealt with than in fascist Italy. Criticism of the
leading men is surprisingly free in Moscow, but quite impos-
sible in Rome, while the universities, which are more concerned
with principles than with living statesmen, are infinitely more
muzzled in Russia than in Italy. In Mussolini’s realm hero-
worship has already taken on all the fervour, and many forms,
of a religious cult, and even the great dignitaries of State and
party pride themselves, even (or at least) in public, of being the
loyal tools of the Duce, who indeed degrades and exalts them
at pleasure. But Stalin, the Secretary-General of the Bolshevik
party, has neither the power nor the right, nor perhaps the
wish, to impart orders to Kalinin or Molotoff; and declara-
tions on their part of being unconditionally loyal to him in
person—instead of to the party principles as embodied in the
two mythical heroes, Marx and Lenin—are not only uncon-
ceivable but would be considered treacherous. The transition
from Lenin to Stalin, difficult as it was, was fought out between
the Bolshevik diadochs without the Soviet system being ques-
tioned; but the death of Mussolini would create such a critical
situation that even his Italian enemies wish him a long life.

XI. A further classification of the types of dictatorships can
be based on the ruling or supporting groups. In a personal
dictatorship the “staff” may consist of a party, a private or
official army, a gang, a Church, the civil service and so on;
the same groups may be themselves the dictators in a system
of collective dictatorship. There is, I believe, no example in
history of the dictatorship of a class (in the Marxian sense of
the word), of which the Marxists are always speaking. Soviet Russia is, of course, not a dictatorship of the proletariat, but of a party, which is far from being the organisation of the Russian proletariat; and the so-called "dictatorship of the bourgeoisie," which in the Marxian literature serves as justification and at the same time as the dialectic "thesis" for the proletarian "antithesis," is equally non-existent. It is remarkable that the power of the bourgeoisie was never and nowhere greater than in mid-Victorian England, and this was precisely the heyday of liberalism, when political dictation was loathed and criticism and opposition, discussion and information were glorified. "Dictatorship" as applied to classes is nothing but a propagandistic exaggeration meaning paramount influence. The most frequent and important modern types are what I call the military, the party and the administrative dictatorship; in the first case the regular army is the prevailing power, in the second, a political party, in the third, the civil service (including the police). None of these groups is a class (though each of them may rule dictatorially in the interest of a class).

XII. The division into personal and collective dictatorships is a classification according to the political form of the government; the division in groups is a classification according to social forces. The latter division is not a subdivision of the former; they intersect each other. The same holds true of a third division of dictatorships, namely according to their quantitative structure. I propose to speak of a monistic type of dictatorship, in so far as only one group, e.g. a political party, or only one person, possibly supported by only one group, e.g. his private army, is ruling autocratically. The pluralistic form, therefore, would exist in so far as there exist powerful individuals within the State who are not subject to the dictator's will, or several groups competing either for collective dictatorship or for becoming the personal dictator's staff. The autocratic element, of course, requires that one group or one individual be pre-eminent, or at least a primus inter pares. The competition may be of any kind between the extremes of peacefully co-ordinated collaboration, carefully hidden intrigues and open mutual persecution. The pluralistic form may, be less efficient in the sense of those who clamour for the "strong silent man" who "gets things done" (no matter which things, and no matter at what price), and we shall see, indeed, that pluralism is one of the drawbacks of military dictatorships. But in party dictatorships the pluralistic form,
under the proviso that the competition is peaceful, displays its superiority. That critical moment of which we have spoken is less critical when some power outside the orbit of dictatorship can appoint a successor. Nobody can imagine what a sudden disappearance of the German dictator would mean, and it is quite possible that it would lead to civil war and chaos, and finally to a new type of dictatorship, probably a military one. In fascist Italy, on the other hand, the question of succession has already been provided for by statute: the list of possible successors, compiled by Mussolini, and approved by the Gran Concilio, is in the hands of the King, and even the name of the man, who would probably be appointed, is fairly certain; the crisis, dangerous as it would be, has some chances of a rapid though not necessarily peaceful solution.

Within this division, as within the other two, we may find combinations of types. Thus the strongest and most successful of all modern dictatorships, that of Kemal Ataturk in Turkey, is strictly monistic as to the political form of the rule: no person in Turkey has the slightest chance of successful disobedience. But as to the supporting social forces, his rule is pluralistic to the extreme. Although the “Ghazi’s” power was originally based on his victorious leadership of the army, he disposes with equal vigour of the civil service, the police, the Parliament and his party, which now practically embraces the whole nation. Directly or indirectly he appoints the army officers, the ministers, the officials, the members of parliament, and the higher and lower party leaders, and thus assures their peaceful and co-ordinate collaboration. We may speak in this case, to which there have been parallels in Latin America, of a totalitarian personal dictatorship.

XIII. As we have already begun to see, all these divisions intersect each other, but some further instances may be given. Thus military dictatorship (which seems to be the type preferred in the Balkans) may be either of the personal or the collective type. In the personal system the army forms the chief support of the autocrat, the nucleus of his staff; this type may perhaps be called an army leader’s dictatorship. The army leader is, of course, as a rule a general, e.g. Pilsudski in Poland, and many of the dictators in Latin America; but it may also be a king, like Alexander of Jugoslavia, or a civilian, e.g. an expert on finance, as in Portugal (Professor Salazar). Germany under Field-Marshal von Hindenburg’s first Presidency was well on the way to this type of dictatorship, and still more so
under his second term of office, till this evolution was checked by Hitler's fascist dictatorship, though perhaps not for ever. In the collective system the army is itself the autocrat, which usually means that the higher officers under the leadership of a general are the real rulers; this may be called, with a well-known Spanish expression, a _Junta_ dictatorship. The chief examples are Spain with a Junta of generals led by Primo de Rivera, Poland with its "colonels," and, perhaps, Japan. The Spanish dictatorship has been aptly called "prætorian," as it was imposed on a nation which had long ceased to be militaristically minded. This was one reason for its unusual weakness, but every modern military dictatorship is weak because it suffers from an inherent contradiction. On the one hand it is necessarily pluralistic in character: only very few of the political problems, which the government of a modern State must try to solve in one sense or another, have any connection with the interests of the army. In a modern dictatorship the army therefore is always leaning on some other social stratum, either the aristocracy, the dynasty, the clergy, as in Spain, or the dynasty and the peasantry, as in Japan, or the working classes, as the Reichswehr under General von Schleicher would perhaps have done had he remained Chancellor. On the other hand, the army, or at least modern armies, which in war time must rely upon the enthusiastic support of the whole nation, are intensely interested in keeping out of the struggle of classes and parties; only where their own vital interests are affected do they care to step into the limelight, and the military dictatorship, which had been latent (with a democratic or socialist façade), then inevitably became patent. The history of the Serbian and the Spanish Monarchy as well as of the German Republic offer interesting instances. The building of the "pocket battleship" by the unwilling German Government in 1928 was a triumph of the latent military dictatorship under Hindenburg's first term of office, and the elegant ousting of the democratic rulers of Prussia by von Papen in 1932 a triumph of the patent military dictatorship under his second term. The sovereign military dictatorship of King Alexander of Jugoslavia has passed through these two phases in inverse order.

XIV. _Party dictatorship_, too, may be of the personal or of the collective type. In both systems the ruling party strives to be more than a "part" of the nation, and to embrace the whole nation either by extinguishing certain classes or by suppressing every other party (including the confiscation of
their apparatus of funds, houses, printing presses, etc.). It is eagerly courting the masses, especially the mob (so despised by military dictatorships of the "prætorian" type), but the masses must be "united" in one spirit, the spirit of the ruling party. Thus the strife of the parties, which is not a symptom of the "party system" alone, but an unavoidable expression of opposed tendencies based on human nature and history, is driven underground. There it takes on the form of intrigues between the leading men with the aim of dominating the personal dictator or the dictatorial group, and thus leads to periodical "purges" of a more or less secret character and with more or less sanguinary methods.

The clearest case of a collective party dictatorship is the rule of the Bolshevik party in Soviet Russia. The class structure of this party is very complex: it is composed chiefly of intellectuals, industrial and agricultural labourers, small peasants, the youth of all classes, and the immense State and party bureaucracy, and it excludes the aristocratic and bourgeois classes, which it tries to extinguish. The party bureaucracy forms the staff of the party together with the Red Army, which has been so intensely bolshevised that Soviet Russia never needed a private army or the arming of the party itself. This and the exclusion of certain classes constitute the other chief structural differences between the collective bolshevik and the personal fascist dictatorships, which have, of course, much in common, as regards their ideology and economics, a point on which we need not dwell, as it has often been discussed.

The fascist dictatorship is a personal party dictatorship, more precisely: the rule of an autocratic Führer over an armed party which autocratically rules the nation. Fascism has from the very beginning successfully tried to combine certain ideals and certain interests of every class, but in Italy the higher, and in Germany the lower, middle class mentality has been slightly prevailing. There are many examples of fascist or quasi-fascist dictatorship in Europe, but we cannot deal with Hungary or the Baltic States and must restrict our remarks to the most important instances, those of Mussolini and of Hitler. Their ideology as well as their economic tendencies, which are somewhat different, and have undergone great changes, have also too often been explained to need further illustration. But it has rarely been pointed out that, if an Austrian by birth was to dictate to another State, Germany, the idea of the totalitarian State could not play the same central rôle as in Italy. It had
necessarily to be supplemented by the (old) idea of the totalitarian nation as a unit of closely related races; this explains why Italian fascism denationalises its national minorities, while German fascism strongly encourages the only racial minority which has remained under its sway to disappear. The totalitarian State, therefore, is necessarily imperialistic with regard to territories and populations, the totalitarian nation only with regard to territories which afterwards can be cleared of undesirable populations by several well-tried methods. The expulsion of the Greeks from their ancient homes in Asia Minor is perhaps only the first instance of many to come. There is, further, the important structural difference that German fascism has become monistic since the death of the Reichspräsident, who had remained a very important figure unto the last; this event also reduced the Reichswehr to a simple group within the national-socialist State, which is perfectly loyal to the Führer, at least in my opinion, which is not shared by most of the observers. Italian fascism was pluralistic from the beginning, and will probably remain so. It is by no means certain whether the Italian dictator could count on the army in case of a serious and open conflict with the dynasty. The Pope, too, has remained a strong power without whose consent the clergy cannot be dictated to.

XV. The case of Austria is rather different. Both Dollfuss (from 1932 to 1934) and von Schuschnigg have ruled autocratically—against the will of the overwhelming majority of the people—and by means of dictation, as heads of their party, the Christian Socialist party. Moreover, their economic programme, the (non-existent) corporate State, is similar to that of Mussolini and Hitler, and therefore their régime is often called "fascist." The sociological structure is, however, different. The party has always played a great, but never the paramount rôle. The régime was pluralistic in a far higher degree than that of Mussolini, to say nothing of Hitler; it could not maintain itself without the assistance of other national organisations like the Heimwehr and its leader, Prince Starhemberg, of the international forces of the Roman Catholic Church and the League of Nations, and of foreign powers. Furthermore, their own armaments were insignificant compared with those of the Heimwehr and those of the regular army. The police and the civil service are the real support of the Austrian dictatorship, which may be classified as an administrative one. There is also a difference between its two phases:
the administrative dictatorship of Dollfuss was more of the personal, that of von Schuschnigg is of the collective type. Dollfuss, not his party, enjoyed the confidence of the Church and of certain foreign powers personally, and thus became so essential for Austrian welfare and safety that he could rule his party rather autocratically; von Schuschnigg has simply been elected by the leaders of his party and can do nothing without their consent.

XVI. The typology of dictatorship is only one of the many problems which a comprehensive sociological theory would have to solve, but it is its indispensable framework. The most popular of these problems is that of the connection of dictatorship with the economic interests of certain classes; the most important of these problems would be that of the conditions for the rise, development, and decay of dictatorships. Their typology has scarcely ever been dealt with by the international literature, and this may serve as an excuse for the shortcomings of this paper which could not be more than a mere sketch, and a first attempt. But the literature, though mostly of non-sociological character, contains valuable materials and ideas for future sociological studies of every kind. These studies would have to fit out the skeleton which our "osteology" has constructed with flesh and nerves and veins, and thus transform it into a living body. As a means to this end the bibliography which here follows will, I hope, be welcome.