

OUR PERIL OF DICTATORSHIP

By Pastor Ivan Hefl, Louisville, Kentucky

Our nation needs protection from a dictatorship that is increasingly becoming perhaps our greatest peril.

Manifestly the dictatorship is not one of fascism. Fascism springs from a class, and not from the mass of the people itself. The essence of fascism is implicit obedience to an Olympian high command that maintains the aloofness of a mythical hero. A fascist movement in England is threatened because its leader is too high-hat. But superciliousness is the hallmark of fascism. -- High-hat presidents in our country don't get away with it!

Nor is our dictatorship one of communism. Theoretically communism is not supposed to be dictatorial. All are "comrades". But actually your mob rule, run wild without any restraint of law or conscience, sooner or later focuses itself into one mind of steel. Communism, like fascism, is a driving regimentation, founded upon the plans of a perpetuating directorate, which subordinates the making of laws and the processes of the courts to the executive.

Our President's extraordinary powers have been granted without any change in fundamental democratic procedure. We are still a true republic. We have kept the faith with our traditional political institutions, and in them. The dictator of the United States is not the President. The overriding of his veto does not

Wednesday, October 28

A few moments ago I came home from "Mrs. Miniver". Till tonight I had become rather apathetic on the matter of the chaplaincy. Tonight I envisioned myself in uniform and shall once more pray that something come to pass before December 14. Up till now I've been too exhausted to pray.

On the train from Springfield to Columbus - on October 8 - I wrote you, all the way. Then I wrote of my two-hour interview with Colonel Evans at Fort Hayes. When I got home I honestly could not figure out much of what I had written. I wanted to edit the copy, but it was 4:00 a.m. of Friday when I got to bed, and things have hummed ever since. - Could I get a hotel room for Dr. Bieber for the convention? Could I get tourist home reservations for Pastor Wicklund of the Northwest Synod? Could I - ! - Two hours' sleep Friday night, and two Saturday night, and October 12 was a Bullitt County Sunday.

I reached Memorial Church too late for the sermon that Sunday night, but "Dad" Hummon was there & must leave Louisville Monday noon, so I talked with him till midnight. Monday morning was Ministerial

Association meeting with Dr. L. M. Ylvisaker guest, a Norwegian by birth, & since the War I president of the Army and Navy Chaplains' Association. A Viking in physical & spiritual stature. Would Pastor Heft drive him to Fort Knox to speak to the chaplains on the morrow? He had heard of said Pastor H's application.

Shortly after Monday midnight, just as I was fixin to go to bed, the phone rang. Billy Wisheart's mother told me that he was in the infirmary. I got there at one a.m. & left at four. At seven I was at the Brown Hotel for Dr. Y. (I have for years associated his name with ygdrasil!) He was fifteen minutes late and how I wished I could have slept that extra period! He evidently had not, in the intense rush of Monday, grasped my status, for he ever presented me to the chaplains as Pastor Heft, who will soon be in uniform. The men were all sincerely cordial in their congratulations, & I as earnestly thanked them, - and said nothing! On the way home I told him the whole case, and he seemed deeply moved. He asked me if I would accept a "Service Pastorate", that is, a pastorate in a Service Center of the National Lutheran Council. - While I was waiting for him to emerge again from the Brown Hotel I saw the Shepherdess, and gave her the news. I don't know whether I gave it coherently, so let me repeat that at Fort Hayes the near approach to the permissible limit of calcification & the "bad" history, especially the length of illness, were considered sufficient

ground, each in itself, for rejection. The two Shepherdess that the interview with the Chaplain Colonel, who is a prince among men and with God, ended on this wise: "You still wish, Mr. Heft, to stick to your decision?" "If you please, sir, appeal to the Surgeon General." "The Chaplain said, "I wish I had you in my command," and shook my hand goodby; And as I waited for the bus I felt that even though I had just lost the battle of Fort Hayes, there were compensations. Little Billy Wisheart died Friday night, the 16th. I saw but little of the convention, - I was at the hospital day & night, night & day. Wednesday midnight when I returned to the parsonage I managed to faint, came to, drenched in sweat & followed with a heavy chill & raging fever. For a brief moment I was terror-stricken. Little Billy had commenced just so; So on the morrow I visited Dr. Charles C. McCoy, B.S. Princeton 1916 & M.D. Johns Hopkins. His verdict: Overstrain & nervous exhaustion. Friday afternoon the parents calmly told me there was no hope, - the patient had lain in a coma since early Tuesday. At the bedside I prayed the Office of Commendation for the dying, the Kyrie, the Twenty-third Psalm, the Memento, a prayer of commendation. After the benediction Billy Sr. caught me. I then went to Dr. Sherill at the Seminary to ask him to write "The Chaplain, Fort Hayes, Columbus, Ohio" in my behalf. Chaplain Evans had informed me that I needed the formality of someone more such letter. Then a few moments at the Convention. Then there was my car; To this moment I know not how I got to a spot near B'ritt Shalom Synagogue. I found the car only by retracing my steps, and scrutinizing every car I passed. - That night Billy died. He was just seven when I came to Bethany. Many an hour I had spent in the home. And many an hour when withought grandpa was dying. And many an hour when it was grandpa. And now their Billy. He had wanted to enlist in the Navy but desisted when mother and grandpa's wept. He was called for induction in the Army next Monday; He was buried on a Monday. I had Vernon come to Bethany Church to sing at the funeral. "Rock of Ages" and "Come, Ye Disconsolate" were my choice. Later Vernon said, "I an (after the fashion of little Debby's pronunciation) you have converted me. Until today I had never believed in funeral sermons." Please don't ask what I said. All I remember is the text, I Thessalonians 4:14, and the outline: The Apostle tells us two things about the Saviour - He died, & He arose again; and two things about those who love and believe in Him - they are with Him. Tuesday morning I was greeted with congratulations at the Convention. I had just been

been elected to the United Lutheran Church in America's Board of Education! I was too exhausted to be thrilled over the tale how proponents of a rival nominee of some official importance had made a cause celebre of the matter, whereupon certain Synods, notably those of the Northwest, Rocky Mountains, Kansas, Nebraska, Ohio, New York and Virginia, the Carolinas and Georgia, caucused their delegations!

The Pastor who ordained me on June 12, 1919, preached in Bethany Church October 18. He was anxious to see the Old Kentucky Home so I took him there that afternoon. On Thursday I likewise took Pastor Paul Y. Livingston of New York City, and we lived again the hours we had spent together in "Concordia" ministerial association meetings in old St. John's Church, Christopher Street. Hell's Kitchen is at the west end of said street & Greenwich Village at the other!

On Sunday the 11th I told Bethany congregation of the outcome at Fort Hayes. The result made me more reconciled to said outcome. "Mother" sternberg cried openly and said, "I'm glad." Mrs. Dittbenner, nee Miss Taylor of Livingston County, said, "I'm afraid that all of us were not very patriotic." Reconciled? And yet, whenever I saw a gang of recruits toting their pathetic bundles in down-town Louisville I had to choke back my tears. - On the 11th there was a visitor from Chicago, a three days' visitor in Louisville. He said, "I think I detected a catch in your voice. And I'm sorry!"

Reconciled? Tonight I saw Mrs. Miniver. And who had urged me to see her!

As soon as I can I'll come to 2143!

Parson.

KENTUCKY DAYS : A PARSON'S MUSINGS

COLLEGE STREET in Louisville was overshadowed with closely set maples. Dr Pottingwe once said that it must be a dog's idea of paradise. In the summertime not a spear of sunlight could penetrate to the old brick pavements or to the cobblestone street. On the pavements we often walked or rather trotted, being careful to comply with the patterns, negotiating intricate steps according to prescribed formulae, lest by omission we incur bad luck. Over the hard cobblestones one at stated intervals heard the rumbling of the wheels of "express" wagons, broken by the periodic cries of darkies beseeching the purchase of "rags 'n' ole i'on". One in particular was won't to sing in lugubrious and monotonous Afro-American chant (carefully omitting the seventh note of the scale), "Dey's a great Day a-comin'." At the end of each rendition he would admonish, "Giddap dah, Nick," and Nick would unbrokenly pursue the level tenor of his way.

In the fall the dead leaves stood ankle deep on the pavements and it was our bounden duty to sweep our pavement. In New York it is the sidewalks of New York, but in Kentucky it was pavements. Small boys always said "payment" until older boys scornfully corrected them, and then they in turn scornfully corrected their juniors for the same offense. When we were compelled to sweep the "payment" it was a dire task. Heavey-heartedly we went about it, always beginning at the Miller place and ending at the Sisters', sweeping with measured strokes, and distressed if we did not get a clean job in a set number of strokes. The leaves were sent into the deep gutter, and there, piled judiciously between the trees, they were burned. When little girls passed by we would run and jump through the flames for the soul-elevation that followed their ecstatic "o-o-oh's".

Whenever we were set to the task of cleaning the pavement it was work, and we felt deeply abused by the lack of justice in this world. But often, on our own initiative, we would scour the neighborhood with rakes and brooms. The enormous piles of leaves would then be transferred, via old sacks and broken bushel-baskets, to the back yard. There we imagined ourselves Indians as we danced around the huge dancing flames. Neighbors would stand in the doorway and watch us. Because of the size of the back yard there was really little danger; yet they always watched.

At times we would vary the burning by stuffing the leaves in an old water boiler, judiciously propped up by the best clothes-line poles, after the one end had been laboriously chiseled off and an opening chiseled in the other. Into the open top we would insert handfulls of leaves and "tomp" them down. When the boiler was full, we would ignite the leaves at the bottom opening. Then we would gaze for minutes at the rich, creamy smoke that rose majestically from the top, until the first venturesome flame would dart forth, the predecessor of its roaring fellows to follow. Around this beacon of fire we would then dance in ecstasy.

One day the leaves that we packed into the boiler were rather damp. We tried to light them in the accustomed place, but decided that they would not catch. So with characteristic boyish serious abandon we deserted this project and addressed ourselves to another. Darkness fell, and supper-time came, and we went into the house utterly forgetful of the "furnace" and its contents.

That night, about midnight, there was a clang of fire-engines, and the ringing of horses hoofs on the huge granite blocks of the alley. Startled out of the sleep of the wornout just, we rushed to the back window. As we rushed, we could see the flickering shadows dancing on the walls of the room. Gee! The Sisters' shed and wash-house must be on fire! But when we reached the window we saw that the flames were pouring from the forgotten furnace!

The late Associate Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes once opined that forvirility of speech, vividness of imagination and sturdiness of profanity, one could never surpass a Southern mule-driver, searching the soul of his stubborn charges. Mr. Justice Holmes would have been one rung higher on the ladder to majesty of language could he have heard the apostrophe that those Louisville firemen addressed to that belching furnace boiler before they "clumb" back upon their engine and clanged their way back to the Roselane fire-station.

The Parson was born and raised in Kentucky. His father had a grocery at Brook and Madison. There, over the "meat-store" that was an adjacent part of the grocery, the Parson was born. The stork in those days came to the home far oftener than to the hospital.

Brook Street ~~was originally East~~ in Louisville was originally East Street. This the Parson did not know when first he laboriously deciphered the ornate and verbose billheads featuring an imposing out of the head of "a cattle". "Mother, when did Father move?....Why did he put East Street then?....When did they change it?" And so on.

The goods advertised for sale also caused perplexity. Groceries and Staples; Meats and Green Vegetables. The groceries and the meats and the green vegetables were understandable and proper. But why did Father sell staples? You nail staples on the side of the stable door to help keep the

shut. Sometimes you called a staple a steeple. A steeple is on a church.

GHOSTS I HAVE KNOWN

Mrs. Kollrose (Goldie remembering the pogrom in Russia)

ANTHONY (NAPOLEON): Surprised sniff-sniff. "Hum. I be doggone."
puzzled sniff-sniff. Puzzled wag-wag.

The same amenities-of-etiquette that pertain to the downstairs pertain likewise to this portion of the house.