I WANT TO discuss the role of the political party in the democratic state and compare it with the place of the political party in a communist dictatorship. Although many are inclined to look somewhat askance at political parties and to regard them at best as a sort of tolerated evil, history shows us no way for democratic peoples to organize and express their ideas except through such parties and everywhere “politics” is the lubricating oil of government.

“Politics” acts as the intermediary between a state and its citizens, as the interpretative medium in which ideas are talked over and decisions reached. Everywhere that is, where democratic ideas themselves rule, for in a dictatorship the free, open competition of ideas is crushed and in its place is substituted the maneuver and intrigue of a palace guard.

Opposition in a democracy is not a crime, an evil sin to be hunted down by a political police and punished in secret courts and dread concentration camps. It is the essence of democracy that those who, today, oppose may, tomorrow, govern. That is why ... some people in the United States may be praising President Truman, others may be denouncing him—the citizens may hear them both and make their choice. Indeed he may like neither point-of-view and speak out for himself...

Henry Wallace, a former United States vice-president, may condemn the Marshall Plan for European recovery—do you think any man in a communist-dominated state would dare speak up in favor of this blue-

By Richard M. Scammon

print for prosperity in Europe? This is the freedom of the democratic idea and this is its power. Democracy is strong because its political forces are free.

Consider then the position in the communist state. The first act of any communist regime must be to neutralize, then to eliminate, all “opposition” parties, for the idea of “opposition” is hateful to the dogma of dictatorial rule. When one man or one group of men has assumed for itself the power to declare what is right and what is wrong it is inconceivable that there be any “opposition.”

In each communist state the same story of oppression and enslavement is repeated, verse by verse and chapter by chapter. The parliamentary immunity of legislators is removed and opposition political leaders are soon brought to trial for alleged treason to the people’s will. Treason indeed it is, for anyone who disagrees with the tenets of the communist dictatorship is automatically a traitor, and the books of history are filled with the pages of these trials.

Where these so-called trials are not sufficient, a police terror is instituted—midnight visitations, 20- and 30- and 40-hour “interrogations” of those suspected of harboring democratic ideas are the rule. A new “thought police” comes into being whose duty it is to hunt down and stamp out any vestige of that idea of opposition which the democratic state realizes is the true measure of strength and decency.

While the dictatorship is in its early stages, it may not be wise to completely destroy the facade of democracy, for too many people have faith in simple democracy and distrust the “one party” dogma of the would-be dictatorship. For awhile, puppet political parties may be tolerated with puppet leaders and puppet programs. Naturally, these puppet parties are not expected to be strong—they do not get their proper share of newspaper space, of paper supplies, of gasoline for election campaigns. Indeed, if any of them should actually develop real strength, they will soon find that their leaders are disappearing along with those of the persecuted democratic parties. But soon the rack of history turns again and the members of these puppet parties who are truly democrats flee, or are imprisoned, or simply become quiet and leave the field of political action to the police, the concentration

Politics in a democracy means free, open competition of ideas. But in a dictatorship such competition of ideas is crushed and replaced with the maneuver and intrigue of a palace guard. So stated Mr. Richard M. Scammon in a radio broadcast to the German people. His speech, the fifth in the MG series on “Freedom vs. Totalitarianism,” is reprinted here.

Mr. Scammon, who spoke from Berlin on 11 December, is chief of the Elections and Political Parties Branch, Civil Administration Division, OMGUS.
camp guards, and the single monolithic communist party.

Unfortunately some of these puppet leaders may protest, may claim that they have been deceived, may defend themselves by saying that they did not recognize the true dictatorial character of the regime in the early days of which they took part. But the criteria—the check points—of a democratic political party system are not difficult to list. They may be stated simply that every citizen may know in which direction the state is moving.

First and foremost, political parties must have the right to assemble for public and private gatherings, free from the interference of state authority or private persons. Not only must the state be neutral as among the various competing parties, but it must guarantee them a fair hearing before the citizens.

It has often been a tactic of would-be dictatorships to employ strong-arm gangs to break up opposition meetings and to intimidate speakers and audience. Behind the iron curtain in eastern Europe may be found case after case to demonstrate this point.

Truck-loads of communist party thugs arrive suddenly at a peaceful meeting of democratic citizens. Clubs are brought out, men and women beaten—all in the manner typical of the worst excesses of Fascism, for indeed this is the new Fascism, with a coat of red paint. A police which will not suppress these gangs is a police under the control of the enemies of democracy.

Secondly, the political parties must have the right to publish and print freely and fairly; their newspapers and magazines must not be subject to arbitrary confiscation or to partisan censorship; if such supplies as paper, gasoline, office-space and similar items are scarce, then the distribution of these supplies as among the various parties must be fair, based upon population represented, membership, votes polled or some such equitable system. For a communist dictatorship the whole idea of a press with any opinion other than that of the communist state is unthinkable.

Unified and controlled, the newspapers of the one-party state sing the praises of the state and the newspapers of other parties just don’t exist. Behind the iron curtain the method may be state paper rationing, perhaps a forced strike, perhaps beatings of newsstand operators—finally all papers not willing to be cogs in the new communist machine are simply outlawed and their property taken over à la Nazi by the dictatorship.

Moreover, it is typical of the early stages of communist dictatorship that the tolerated parties are not allowed anything like a reasonable share of these scarce supplies. The favored communist-line party almost always gets special treatment—extra paper rations, extra gasoline, larger offices.

Thirdly, leaders and members of the political parties must enjoy full personal freedom and liberty. They must not be subject to arbitrary arrest and confinement nor to trial on trumped-up charges. There must be no threat of “protective custody” and accusations against them must be treated as would those against any citizen not associated with a political party. If tried, proceedings in the courts must be public, and the accused must have adequate counsel and an impartial verdict.

The last two years in eastern Europe under communist control offer an unhappy wealth of material for such farcical trials. Hundreds of men and women whose only crime was to stand up for these rights taken for granted in any civilized democratic society have been tortured, imprisoned, and killed for their beliefs. The charges against them make a laughing-stock of their accusers: “... attempting to turn back the will of history ...”, “... crimes against the state ...”, “... organizing a peasant group ...” To the citizens of a democratic state, it may seem unnecessary to detail these obvious personal rights, but to the dictator they are anathema.

Stripped of a perverted judiciary and a corrupt police, the totalitarian state has little with which to maintain its existence against the will of the citizen for freedom and political liberty.

Fourthly, the political parties, and, indeed, all the people, must have the right to freely nominate for public office persons of their own choosing and to seek the votes of their fellow-citizens for these candidates.

In communist-dominated Europe, where the full force of dictatorship has not yet been felt and the state leadership feels it must still have a front of democracy, the tolerated puppet parties are limited as to their candidates.

Perhaps it is suddenly discovered that a Kreis organization “... has not been officially registered ...” and so the party cannot nominate candidates; perhaps candidates are nominated but are persuaded by a few beatings that they had better withdraw; perhaps the party leaders are called in by the police or the army and told it would be better if they joined with the minority communist party to put up a “patriotic national front” list of candidates, the majority of which somehow always happen to be communists.

If they don’t do this, they are told, the police and the army will find it impossible to protect them from the outraged will of the masses—meaning a truck-load of communist party gunmen. Limitation of the right to nominate candidates to puppet parties and front organizations is the denial of political freedom and the negation of popular will.

WITH THIS LAST right stands equally the principle of the secret ballot and of free elections. For many years tyranny sought to exclude the people from power by restricting the right to vote, by limiting the suffrage to this class or that. Today dictatorship has a new approach. Now it is the duty of the enslaved citizen of the totalitarian state to vote.

To Germans with experience of the Hitler regime the election tactics of communist dictatorship may seem very similar to ones they have known before, and indeed they are. It needs no great imagination to guess the fate of the electors of an election district in which half the ballots cast turned out to be blank—whether the
dictatorship be Hitlerite, or communist.

But not many voters in a totalitarian system will even dare to cast a blank or invalid ballot—perhaps the ballots are numbered, perhaps it has been suggested that it would be wise to sign the ballot, and lists of voters will be closely checked to see the names for whom no signed ballot is in the voting box.

Other methods are also available—it may be that the ballots are printed on thin, transparent paper so that the election officials can easily see how the voter cast his ballot. Or a new system may be used—voters will march to the police and cast their ballots openly as a “demonstration of solidarity” for the communist state, and woe be it that citizen who chooses to actually go behind a screen to mark his ballot.

The technique used differs, yes, but the idea remains the same—to prostitute and destroy the rights of free men and free women so that the single totalitarian party—be it red or brown—can boast of the 99 percent of the people who voted and of the 99.9 percent who support it. These figures are as false as the system which produces them—they are figures of fear and of terror, worthless to an honest man.

Communism has never come to power by a popular vote, by democratic methods. It has never had the majority in a fair competition of democratic political parties. It can achieve dominance only in the intrigues and machinations of power politics—black tactics, intimidation, bribery, force and the threat of force.

These are the weapons of the seekers of totalitarian power. Every democrat must watch for them and must frustrate them by asserting his own democratic rights. In their defeat he will know his own strength, for it is the democracies and their competition of ideas which are truly strong.

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Occupational Activities

Network were reproduced in the German language and carried by the five stations.

Theater — Two American plays opened in Germany — “Life with Father” by Howard Lindsay and Russel Crouse, in Bremen, and “Pur- sue Happiness” by Lawrence Langner, in Heidelberg. Both productions were well-received by the public and press... An analysis of audience reaction to American plays produced in Bavaria showed “First Legion,” “Thunder Rock,” “On Borrowed Time,” “The Voice of the Turtle,” and “Our Town” leading in popular appeal.

Education — The Bavarian Ministry of Education has introduced Hebrew instruction as an elective subject in the humanistic secondary schools... Courses in religion are now required for all pupils in the Bavarian elementary, vocational, intermediate, and secondary schools.

Literature — The Hessian Ministry of Education issued a statement to all publishers in the Land that only new manuscripts will be considered for publication after 1 April. Earlier texts, however, which are standard works may still be published. The ministry also stated that non-Hessian authors and publishers will receive consideration equal to that given to those residing in the Land.

Youth Activities — Steps were taken in Bavaria to form a Girl Scout organization consisting of the St. George Girl Scouts (Catholics), Evangelical Girl Scouts, and the Alliance of German Girl Scouts (non-confessional), in order that the program and policy of these groups may be coordinated in line with those of the International organization... The Hessian Youth Hostel Association offered the facilities of its hostels to the youth groups for a variety of activities, canceling the restriction that only hikers could be accommodated.

Religious Affairs — Military Government granted permission for the reopening of the Evangelical Lutheran Free Church Seminary at Frankfurt-Oberursel, Hessa.

Public Health — Incidence rates for tuberculosis, scarlet fever, and poliomyelitis were higher in November than the year before, while all other important communicable diseases had the same or lower rates... Influenza “listening posts” have been set up for the detection of early signs of the development of an outbreak this winter.

Public Welfare — The first emigration center under German operation for processing Germans going to the United States was opened in Bremen.

Plant Dismantling

Dismantling of the 69 industrial plants made available for reparations from the US Zone under the revised Bizonal Level of Industry Plan is to be completed by 31 March 1948. These plants are in addition to the war and advance delivery plants previously made available.

As of 10 December the scheduled dismantling was in progress in 12 of the 69 plants, and had been completed in three more factories in Hesse.

In Adlerwerke vorm. Kleyer A.G., Frankfurt, primarily a producer of automobiles, all machinery for producing new cars has been removed, but the factory has been allowed to retain its equipment for producing bicycles, office machines, and spare parts for the Adler automobiles already in service.

Hass und Sohn, and Fraenkische Eisenwerke, both steel plants in Sinn and Niederscheid, respectively, have been required to contribute one two-ton converter each for reparations.

Coin Holdings Drop

A shortage of small denomination currency caused by hoarding of small coins by the German population with the apparent belief that coins will fare better than bank notes during a currency reform, reduced the coin holdings in Bavaria, Wurttemberg-Baden, and Hessian banks from RM 4,358,000 in September 1945 to RM 173,000 in August 1947.

Under quadrirpartite supervision, the mint in Berlin reopened in late November, and the mints in Munich and Stuttgart began in early December to strike five- and ten-pfennig coins.