

**THE PATERNAL
STATE IN FRANCE
AND GERMANY**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649215386

The paternal state in France and Germany by Henry Gaullieur

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NEW YORK AND LONDON
HARPER & BROTHERS PUBLISHERS
1898

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"I do not suppose any reader of mine, or many persons in England at all, have much faith in Fraternity, Equality, and the Revolutionary Millenniums preached by the French prophets in this age; but there are many movements here, too, which tend inevitably in the like direction; and good men who would stand aghast at Red Republic and its adjuncts seem to me to be travelling at full speed towards that or a similar goal."

—CARLYLE, *Letter-Day Pamphlets.*

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INTRODUCTION

It is almost an impertinence nowadays to remind a reader of past events; we travel so fast through life that old scenes, if remembered at all, are remembered only as it were by their picturesque features, by their peculiarly odd or extraordinary forms. Our allotted time is brief, and the past, with its cumbersome civilization, is ever receding from our view. Nevertheless, we all know that nothing happens by accident in human evolution; that there is a cause behind every phenomenon, be it a physical, a political, or a social one; and we know that there is a law connecting the cause with the effect recorded in past annals.

It has always struck me that the relations existing between some of the most important phenomena of French and German history, and their real, permanent causes, have never been sufficiently examined. If we all know, for instance, why the French nation overthrew its old absolute monarchy in 1793, we seldom ask ourselves why a still more absolute and despotic republic, and, later on, an absolute and despotic empire, were substituted for it. Again, we all know that the modern French and German people, borrowing parliamentary forms from England, are now using elective methods in constituting their leg-

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islative assemblies; but why these two states are struggling now with such diseases as socialism and militarism, the two modern products of their political activity, does not appear to me to have been sufficiently explained; for the alleged causes of these diseases are not causes, but effects only.

I have tried to investigate here the causes of some of the results obtained in France and Germany from the transfer to the "state" of those individual rights and privileges which English-speaking nations—and particularly the American people—have so far considered inseparable from individual welfare, and consequently indispensable to national prosperity. Originally both France and Germany had the same feudal constitution as England; but both France and Germany, by increasing gradually the authority of the "state," have obtained results totally different from those obtained in England. In both of the former countries the national government can be maintained by military force alone; were this force removed, both Paris and Berlin would become again the scene of revolutionary efforts tending to overthrow legal and constitutional authority; while in England, in the United States, or in Canada and Australia, nobody ever thinks of upsetting governments by revolutionary methods. Nevertheless, France, like the United States, is republican in form; while Germany, like England, is a monarchy. But while the English monarchy and the American republic are enjoying the blessings of internal peace, the German monarchy and the French republic have both reached the same evil results and exhibit the same sores. Consequently, it is evident that these two states must be suffering from a common cause of disease; while monarchical England and republican America must owe their present political health to a

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common doctrine entirely independent from outward forms or appearances. The French and German doctrine of state paternalism, with all its consequences, seems to me to be the common cause of the French and German national ill-health; to it alone, as we shall see by historical evidence, can we attribute not only most of all their past disasters, but also their present political misery.

A great object-lesson is contained in this past history; it may be of some interest to American readers, by showing what results are obtained by a nation as soon as the state is invested with attributes which individuals alone should possess, and with an authority which they should never abdicate. I do not pretend that the facts presented in the following pages are new, nor do I claim to have described to the reader historical events not described before by French or German writers; but in the course of my humble efforts to trace the real and true causes of these historical phenomena, I have had to study their various aspects and features; and I became convinced that the latter were not merely external "accidents" due to "national ill-luck," but that they were rather symptoms of a disease which could only be understood by a somewhat thorough investigation of the phenomena themselves.

There has been lately a tendency in the United States to attribute much curative power to the government in the treatment of social and political difficulties. For the last few years, many citizens animated by the best intentions have advocated the adoption of certain remedies—so-called populist measures—by which, in their opinion, certain troubles would infallibly be removed. But these theories, aiming to put an end in the United States to the conflict between the interests of individu-