Christopher Dawson, *Beyond Politics*, New York: Sheed and Ward, 1939.

[1] The old civilization of Western Europe which was so deeply rooted in the Christian and Mediterranean past has produced something different to itself which has no roots in the experience of our race—a marvelous mechanical monster that threatens to devour the culture that created it. (5)

[2] But it is not enough for us to repudiate these evils in principle and to congratulate ourselves on the moral superiority of western democracy. For democracy . . . is no safeguard against such things: indeed in so far as democracy involves the standardization and mechanization of culture and the supremacy of the mass over the individual, it is a positive danger. (49)

[3] . . . we must remind ourselves that it was actually under democratic auspices that the totalitarian State made its first appearance nearly 150 years ago in France, and as that farseeing Liberal, de Tocqueville, pointed out more that a century ago in his study of democracy in America, the power of mass opinion exercises a more universal and irresistible tyranny over the individual mind in a democratic society than the most authoritarian of dictatorships. (84)

[4] It must be observed in this regard that if there is no ultimate truth to guide and direct political activity, then ideas and convictions can easily be manipulated for reasons of power. As history demonstrates, a democracy without values easily turns into open or thinly disguised totalitarianism. (Saint John Paul, *Centesimus Annus*)

[5] From the western political standpoint the regime of the totalitarian party State represents a brutal simplification of social life, a one-sided solution which ruthlessly sacrifices some of the highest cultural values to the cult of power. Yet this should not prevent us from recognizing that its achievements are genuine ones or from admitting the weaknesses and vices of our own liberal democratic system and the tendencies towards social degeneration which exist in democratic society. (11)

[6] If Western civilization is to be saved it is necessary to find some way of removing the divided aims, the lack of social discipline and the absence of national unity that are the weaknesses of democracy, without falling under the *tyrannis* of dictatorship and the fanatical intolerance of a totalitarian party. And we cannot do this by politics alone. No constitutional change will touch the roots of our weakness, for it is the life of society and not merely the government of society that needs reordering. (12)

[7] Our parliamentary institutions are not the artificial creation of liberal idealism, as in so many countries; they are an organic part of the life of the nation, and they have grown up century by century by the vital urge of social realities. (13)

[8] In the past Western society was made up of a number of interpenetrating orders, political, economic, cultural and religious, each of which was either autonomous or possessed a considerable degree of *de facto* independence. The political order was only a part, and in theory at least not the most important part, of the social structure, and within the political order itself the party held a relatively humble and unhonoured place. The idea that the spiritual life of society should be ruled and guided by a political party would have appeared to our ancestors a monstrous absurdity. (15)

[9] The Church is the hierophant of the divine mysteries, not the teacher of human science nor the organizer of human culture. But if it is not the Church’s business to organize culture, neither is it that of the State. It is an intermediate region which belongs to neither the one nor the other, but which has its own laws of life and its own right to self-determination and self-direction. (23)

[10] Society, says Burke, is not an artificial legal construction, it is a spiritual community, “a partnership in all science, a partnership in all art, a partnership in every virtue and in all perfection. As the ends of such a partnership cannot be obtained in many generations, it becomes a partnership not only between those who are living, but between those who are living, those who are dead and those who are yet to be born. (25)

[11] Now to-day, both as Christians and citizens, we are faced with an exceptionally difficult situation, while our outlook is limited by an historical tradition in which the original conceptions of Christian community has become weakened and obscured. We are the children of a period which marked the climax of the material prosperity and the material organization of western culture while the sense of spiritual community had reached its lowest point. The growing secularisation of culture had long since shifted the centre of men’s interests from religion to practical affairs, and the traditional religious orthodoxy was felt to be no longer in harmony with modern needs. (62)

[12] . . . to keep religion out of public life is to shut it up in a stuffy Victorian back drawing-room with the aspidistras and the antimacassars, when the streets are full of life and youth. And the result is that the religion of the Church becomes increasingly alienated from real life, while democratic society creates a new religion of the street and the forum to take its place. (104)

[13] The Liberal notion that religion was a matter of private belief and of conduct in private life, and that there is no reason why Christians should not be able to accommodate themselves to any world which treats them good-naturedly, is becoming less and less tenable. . . The problem of leading a Christian life in a non-Christian society is now very present to us. . . . It is the problem constituted by our implication in a network of institutions from which we cannot dissociate ourselves: institutions the operation of which appears no longer neutral, but non-Christian. And for the Christian who is not conscious of his dilemma—and he is in the majority—he is becoming more and more de-Christianised by all sorts of unconscious pressure: paganism holds all the most valuable advertising space. . . . in the modern world, it may turn out that the most intolerable thing for Christians is to be tolerated. (T. S. Eliot, *Idea of a Christian Society*, 21-23)

[14] It is only by the free organization of national life, according to the spirit of our institutions and traditions, but in new forms adapted to twentieth-century conditions, that we can save, not only our national being, but also the ways of life, the forms of thought and the spiritual values which are the principles of Western Civilization. (31)

[15] . . . instead of ingenious theories spun out of his head, he wrote studies full of universal wisdom. Thus, what I mean by a political philosophy is not merely even the conscious formulation of the ideal aims of a people, but the substratum of collective temperament, ways of behavior and unconscious values which provides the material for the formulation. What we are seeking is not a programme for a party, but a way of life for a people. . . . (Eliot, *Idea*, 18)

[16] If therefore we wish to maintain our existence without sacrificing our freedom, we must organize as completely as the totalitarian States have done, but in a different way. That is to say we cannot make the political party or the bureaucratic system the sole basis of organization. We must create a new institution or new institutions for the organization of national culture and these institutions must be no less free than our traditional political institutions. (57)

[17] . . . it is only so long as the State continues to exist as something separate from the community—an organization with definite functions and limited responsibilities—that the Church itself can maintain its right to exist. (113)

[18] There is no life not lived in community

And no community not lived in praise of God. (Eliot, *The Rock*)

[19] Whatever the legal position of the Church, it continues to provide the major institutions which reinforce the attachment of the citizen to the forms of civil life, and which turn his attention away from himself as individual, towards himself as social being. (Roger Scruton, *The Meaning of* Conservatism, 171-2)