

WHY HANNAH ARENDT'S IDEAS ON TOTALITARIANISM ARE HETERODOX?

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Abstract

The paper discusses the impact and present relevance of H. Arendt's work on totalitarianism for the field of the political science known as «Communism Studies» or «Soviet Studies». Competing with the theory of modernization (since the 1960s) and historical institutionalism (since the 1980s), theory of totalitarianism dominated these fields in the 1950s, and was partly rehabilitated in the 1990s after the demise of communism. However, H. Arendt's ideas on totalitarianism were never accepted without important reservations by the champions of the totalitarianism theory like Carl F. Friedrich, Zbigniew Brzezinski, Juan J. Linz, and others. H. Arendt's work on totalitarianism is unorthodox by its antipositivist methodology: her account of totalitarianism contains not only scientific, but also poetic truth on totalitarianism like that in the great antitotalitarian fiction works (by Georg Orwell, Arthur Koestler, Vasily Grossman and others). H. Arendt deviates from the presently prevailing view of Nazi totalitarianism as the reaction against and imitation of Communist totalitarianism. According to H. Arendt's genealogy, totalitarianism in Western Europe would remain real possibility even given the preemption or early demise of Communism in Russia, being rooted in the pathologies of the advanced Western modernity – anti-Semitism, imperialism and mass society. Among other deviations from orthodoxy, her separation of Stalinism from Leninism is most conspicuous, and can be explained by H. Arendt's Leftist backgrounds and influences from the 1930s.

Keywords: Hannah Arendt, communism, totalitarianism, positivism and antipositivism, political science and fictional literature, alternative history.

In our days, Hannah Arendt is considered as one of the most important Western philosophers of the 20th century. However, although philosophically educated, she was very reluctant to define herself as a philosopher. As late as in 1964, with her major philosophical work *Human Condition* already published, in the interview by Günther Gaus she protested her description as a philosopher:

«I do not belong to the circle of philosophers. My profession, if one can even speak of it at all, is political theory. I neither feel like a

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philosopher, nor do I believe that I have been accepted in the circle of philosophers, as you so kindly suppose» (Arendt, 1964/1994: 1).

Before being appreciated as an important philosopher, H. Arendt came to international fame and prominence as a political theorist with her book *The Origins of Totalitarianism (OT)*, published for the first time. It remains her most widely read and influential work.

H. Arendt was neither inventor of the word «totalitarianism», nor the first who described Hitler's Germany and Stalin's Russia as twins. This idea was part of common currency in the liberal intellectual circles already before World War II, especially in 1939–1941, as Nazi Germany and Stalinist Russia maintained a strategic partnership, established by the infamous Molotov–Ribbentrop pact in 1939 (see Gleason 1995). Shortly after 1945, as time of the censorship and self-censorship that was politically correct under conditions of Anti-Hitlerite alliance, came to the end, a flood of publications appeared that asserted basic similarity of the Nazi and Communist regimes. H. Arendt's was pioneering by designing a theory of totalitarianism as a new form of government and making this theory part of the body of knowledge called «political studies» or «political science». This contribution secures for Arendt distinctive place not only in the history of philosophy, but also in that of political science.

OT is her main contribution to the field known as «political theory». Presently, «political theory» is conceived as «normative» or «philosophical» part of political studies. H. Arendt's *OT* does not correspond exactly to this idea of «political theory», as she provides both normative (philosophical), comparative sociological and historical analysis of totalitarianism. The goal of my paper is to evaluate Arendt's work on totalitarianism as contribution to the branch of political science known as «comparative politics».

I will proceed in the following way. In the first section I will provide a kind of historical outline of this field, locating theory of totalitarianism as one of the theoretical approaches in the comparative communism studies. What is specific about the conceptualization and explanation of communism as totalitarianism? What alternative conceptualizations can there be? In the second section my question will be: what is specific about conceptualization and explanation of totalitarianism in H. Arendt's work on totalitarianism, as compared with other theoretical contributions on totalitarianism? This section is central, because it is here where I will try to identify the «heterodoxies» in H. Arendt's thinking about totalitarianism – its differences from what are more established or influential views. In the concluding third section, I will ask how useful Arendt's heterodoxies can be for current discussions on totalitarianism.

1. Theory of Totalitarianism and its Rivals in Comparative Politics

Although first communist regime was established in 1917, «prior to 1945 the subject of communist government was largely shunned by social scientists and allowed to remain almost exclusively within the domains of

journalism and historiography» (Janos, 1991: 81–82). The main reason was that during the first two decades after 1917, the number of cases (N) seemed to be 1. Communist state (Soviet Union) looked like as something without precedent, but it was not clear a case of what it is. Comparative politics is looking after generalizations. None of them is possible to establish until we find some other cases sharing crucial similarities with the case in focus. As Soviet Union advanced to the world power after World War II, and Cold War has began, the academic industry known as «area studies» was established at the U.S. research universities for comparative studies on Communism (Szanton, 2004). As Arendt's *OT* was published, it was received and read most intensely in the «area studies»¹ where it still has the status of classical work representing one of the three ways of «etic» thinking about Communism.

I am using the word «etic» here in the sense of anthropological theory, where it means the description of a form of life from the perspective of the external observer, who declines to accept the «emic» self-description of the participants in this form of life. In our case, the «emic» description of Communism is that by Communist believers themselves. The differences between three Non-Communist descriptions of Communism derive from the differences in the politics of comparison – which are cases are selected for comparison to reveal the truth about Communism that remains closed for Communists themselves. Politics of comparison is about selection of mirror. Three mirrors of Communism, used in the comparative politics, are Nazi Germany, modern Western countries themselves in their early modernizing phase, and traditional patrimonialist and neo-patrimonialist countries.

Totalitarianism theory uses first mirror in thinking about communism. It highlights the similarities between Communist countries and Nazi Germany. From this standpoint, most important features of Communism are those that communist countries share with Nazi Germany: one party dictatorship, mass terror, concentration camps, aggressive foreign policy and so on. As it foregrounds the similarities in the ideologies of Nazi and Communist regimes, theory of totalitarianism was perfect ideological weapon for the Western world in the 1950s, as tensions of Cold war were at the peak.

However, as these tensions lessened, another etic way of thinking about communism came to prominence, called «modernization» or «convergence» theory. From this point of view, most important fact about Communism is that countries where local communists came to power by their own resources (Russia, China) were economically and socially underdeveloped. They were struck in the modernization crises and state breakdowns caused by the military defeats in war against their more advanced neighbours. According to modernization theory, Communism is just one of many ways of modernization. Modernization means transition from rural, agricultural, authoritarian, religious forms of social life to urban, industrial, democratic, liberal, secular society. The peculiarity of Communist «turbomodernization» is massive use of violence to break traditional institutions and to speed up social transformation, achieving changes in the

economy in few years, while the pioneers of modernization – Western countries needed for similar changes long centuries. Classics of this way of thinking about communism are works by American historical sociologist Barrington Moore Jr. (Moore, 1950; 1954; 1966; see also Mann, 2005). B. Moore acknowledges totalitarian features of Stalinist Russia, but considers them as transitional and discovers totalitarian syndrom in many premodern polities (e. g. ancient Sparta or Geneva under Jean Calvin's rule in the 16th century; see Moore, 1958).

Admitting huge human cost of Communist «turbomodernization», proponents of the view of Communism as way into modernity are eager to draw attention that revolutionary violence has played in the breakthroughs to modernity in the pioneering countries themselves, starting with religious wars (described by Marxist historians as «bourgeois revolution») in England in the 17th century, continuing through French revolution in the 18th century with its Jacobin terror and revolutionary, then Napoleonic wars. Even United States, this empire of freedom and justice have their record of terror and civil violence, including the genocide and deportations of Indian populations, black slavery, persecutions against British loyalists while and after victorious Independence war, and the convulsions of Civil war in 1861–1865. The authors seeing in Communism nothing more but totalitarian terror are too forgetful about the past of their own countries. Early modern history of the «old good democracies» with their record of revolutionary violence provides the key to explain recent history and nearest future of Communist countries. Modernization theorists expected gradual opening, liberalization and democratization of the Communist countries, leading to the convergence with liberal democracy in the West. They see their vision of Communism finally vindicated by the relatively peaceful transition to liberal democracies in the most of former Communist countries after 1989.

However, these hopes and expectations seemed to be disappointed in the 1970s, during the so-called «stagnation time» in former USSR. At this time, the third approach in thinking about Communism emerged, called most frequently «historical institutionalism» that currently prevails in the retrospective historical sociological work on Communism (Jowitt, 1983; 1992; Hanson, 1997; Stark and Bruszt, 1998). This approach derives its distinction from the politics of comparison that suggests searching the key for understanding late Communism via its comparison with those countries in the «Third world», where modernization was unsuccessful or broke down. Behind the facade of the «modern» institutions one finds here the social reality consisting of patron-client networks and all-pervasive corruption. Historical institutionalists insisted that this type of social organization, called «neopatrimonialist», was characteristic for the late Communist countries too. They assert that Communist violent «turbomodernization» led to the impasse, as institutions created during the early phase of the regime petrified, giving rise to «Communist neotraditionalism», heralding the convergence with the Third world countries as imminent future for communist countries, that happily did not materialize for some former Communist countries after 1989–1991.

As for the early phase of Communism, they prefer to theorize it through lens of Max Weber's famous typology of domination. They classify Leninism as particular form of «charismatic domination» that was not foreseen by M. Weber himself. Ken Jowitt describes this form as «charismatic impersonalism» (Jowitt, 1983) that combines charismatic (direction of economy in «combat» style and «planned heroism») and rational-legal elements (bureaucratic government, bureaucratically directed mass party) into a relatively coherent amalgam that negates the dichotomy between «utopia» and «development» (Hanson, 1997: 19). However, like standard forms of charismatic domination, this amalgam is highly unstable, its traditionalization and routinization leading to the «neopatrimonialist» corruption, decay, and collapse.

Paradoxically, it was at the same time (the 1970s and the 1980s), when theory of totalitarianism came to new prominence, this time in the Communist countries themselves. As the dissident movement emerged here, it used the theory of totalitarianism as its deadly effective weapon. During the terminal phase of Communism in the late 1980s, description of Communism as totalitarianism became part of the common sense knowledge, transforming itself from one of the etic theories used by Western social scientists into the emic theory of the Communist societies themselves. Everybody, including some secretaries for ideology of Communist parties finally came to believe he/she is living in a «totalitarian society» – a society that is a twin to that Nazis created in Germany.

Where is the paradox? Obviously, if a society is totalitarian, no political opposition is possible in that society, and no public statements that it is «totalitarian» can be made. If such statements can be made, it means that this society is no more totalitarian. There are authors who claimed that contemporary Western societies are «totalitarian» too (e. g. Herbert Marcuse in the 1960s). This statement is false because and as much one can freely make such a statement in public. The same logic applies to the late Communist time, when the theory of totalitarianism became increasingly involved in the performative contradiction. It falsified itself by destroying its own referent at the moment when it became part of this object – its self-description, emic knowledge or part of common sense.

I will not pursue the discussion of the etic theories of Communism further. What I have said is the minimum that is necessary to locate H. Arendt's contribution (in the next section) to them and to assess its present relevance (in the closing section).

2. Arendt as Heterodox Classic of Totalitarianism Theory

As I have already pointed out in the introduction to my paper, Arendt was not the first author who classified together Soviet Communism and Nazism as two cases of «totalitarianism». However, before Arendt's *OT*, it was usual to assimilate them to the broader class of mainly premodern political systems, variously called «despoties», «tyrannies», «dictatorships» etc. As distinguishing features of such political systems the lack of the civil and political rights and of the «rule of law» was considered. The

«rule of law» is secured by the constitutional division of legislative, executive, and judicial power. «Asian despoties» were usual examples of totalitarian political systems. Another famous Cold war book – Karl R. Popper's *Open Society and Its Enemies* that was published just few years (in 1945) before Arendt's OT exemplifies this pre-Arendtian way of thinking about totalitarianism by describing ancient Greek Sparta as «totalitarian state». If one thinks about totalitarianism in this way, one is bound to describe Nazism in Germany and Stalinism in Russia as relapses from the modern, open society into the closed tribal society, caused by «strains of modern life», as K. Popper did. Famously, he argued that Plato was intellectual father of totalitarianism, by outlining in his *Republic* first project of totalitarian state and even making practical steps to materialize it.

Arendt made the distinctive and original contribution to the theorizing about totalitarianism by insisting that is totalitarianism new and unprecedented form of government, different and even incomparable with ancient and not so ancient «tyrannies», «despotisms», «dictatorships». It is possible only under modern social conditions, summarily described by H. Arendt as emergence of «mass society». She famously defines totalitarianism as «a form of government whose essence is terror and whose principle of action is the logicity of ideological thinking» (Arendt, 1951/1979: 474). Ideological thinking and totalitarian terror are about how to abolish human spontaneity and plurality by making all human beings dispensable instances of the law of movement epitomized by the totalitarian movement itself. This movement aspires to make its ideological principle true by coming to global power and transforming all society according to principles, experimentally developed in concentration camps.

«What totalitarian ideologies therefore aim at is not the transformation of society, but the transformation of human nature itself. The concentration camps are the laboratories of human nature itself» (Arendt, 1951/1979: 458).

According to Arendt, camps are the «guiding social ideal of total domination in general», and «these camps are true central institution of totalitarian organizational power» (Arendt, 1951/1979: 438).

The camps serve for the experiment of transforming human personality into something like Pavlov's dogs that were trained to eat not when they were hungry but when a bell rang. So ultimately totalitarianism is not about how to degrade human beings to mere animals, but to do something worse – to make them perverted animals:

«For Pavlov's dog, which, as we know, was trained to eat not when it was hungry but when a bell rang, was a perverted animal» (Arendt, 1951/1979: 438).

I would like to maintain that these observations contain the most deep Arendt's insight about totalitarianism, although at other places in *OT* she falls back from this insight to the weaker statement that totalitarianism is just about how to reduce human beings to mere animals. However, in

this case it would be simply «evil». Totalitarianism is not simply «evil», but «radical evil» because it is about to do something worse: to make out of human beings «perverted animals». This is to do with human beings the same evil that human beings are doing with animals by training them to perform in circus. For animals, circuses are what hell and concentration camps are for humans, because circus animals are perverted animals. Under totalitarianism, human beings undergo the same treatment that animals receive in circuses.

Arendt designs three-stage model of the logic of total domination in totalitarian hell (circus). Firstly, the juridical person is killed in human beings. In the arbitrary but systematic way, groups of individuals are stripped of all juridical rights. In totalitarian concentration camps, inmates are without any rights, differently from the inmates in the «normal» prisons. Secondly, the moral person is murdered in human beings, corrupting human solidarity and undermining moral conscience.

«Totalitarian terror achieved its most terrible triumph when it succeeded in cutting the moral person off from the individualist escape and in making the decisions of conscience absolutely questionable and equivocal» (Arendt, 1951/1979: 452).

Third and crucial phase is achieved as any vestige of human individuality, unpredictability, and spontaneity is destroyed by making human beings as human beings superfluous. It is here where ultimate goal of totalitarianism is achieved:

«Nothing then remains but ghastly marionettes with human faces, which all react with perfect reliability even when going to their own death, and which do nothing but react» (Arendt, 1951/1979: 455).

This description applies both to perpetrators and victims of totalitarian terror. Hitler, Stalin and all true Nazis and Communists are nothing but perverted animals, «ghastly marionettes with human faces» whom the amazed witnesses could observe during the famous Moscow processes in 1936–1938, as members from inner circle of Soviet leadership publicly confessed patently false and absurd charges, displaying the same behavior that one can enjoy observing tricks that perverted animals do in circus.

H. Arendt was successful at persuading the establishment in the political science departments at U. S. universities that totalitarianism is indeed a new form of government, to be distinguished both from premodern autocracies and modern non-democratic (authoritarian) governments. Most important contributions to the theory of totalitarianism in the political science after Arendt's seminal *OT* include the book by Carl J. Friedrich and Zbigniew Brzezinski *Totalitarian Dictatorship and Autocracy* (1956/1965) and that by Juan J. Linz *Totalitarian and Authoritarian Regimes*, published for the first time in 1975. Together with H. Arendt's *OT* they constitute the core of the theoretical literature on totalitarianism. They share with H. Arendt's *OT* the assumption of the novelty of the 20th century totalitarian regimes. However, they differ from H. Arendt's work on

number of aspects, embodying what I call «orthodoxy» in totalitarianism studies, and Arendt's *OT* representing heterodox, albeit seminal book on totalitarianism.²

Friedrich and Brzezinski provide the list of the six distinctive features of the totalitarian form of government. Taken together, they define an «ideal type» of totalitarianism. This list includes:

1) «an elaborate ideology consisting of an official body of doctrine covering all vital aspects of human existence to which everyone living in that society is supposed to adhere, at least passively; this ideology is characteristically focused and projected toward a perfect final state of mankind – that is to say, it contains a chiliastic claim, based upon a radical rejection of the existing society with conquest of the world for the new one» (Friedrich, Brzezinski, 1956/1965: 22);

2) a single mass party, hierarchically organized and either completely intertwined, or superior to governmental bureaucracy. Such a party is led by single dictator and consists of up to 10% total population, including a hard core of «true believers»;

3) «a system of terror, whether physical or psychic» (Friedrich, Brzezinski, 1956/1965: 22), effected by secret policy or party-directed social pressure, and directed not only against real enemies of regime but also again more or less arbitrarily selected groups and categories of population;

4) «a technologically conditioned, near-complete monopoly of control, in the hands of the party and of the government, of all means of effective mass communication, such as press, radio, and motion pictures»;

5) a similarly technologically conditioned, near-complete monopoly of the effective use of all weapons of armed combat;

6) a central control and direction of the entire economy through the bureaucratic coordination of formerly independent corporate entities, typically including most other associations and group activities» (Friedrich, Brzezinski, 1956/1965: 22).

Juan Linz's list of the features clustering into a «totalitarian syndrome» is much shorter and includes (Linz, 2000/2003: 25): (1) a monistic (also not necessary monolithic) center of power; (2) an exclusive, autonome and more or less intellectually developed ideology, which is point of identification for the ruling group, a leader or a party; (3) participation and active mobilization of masses. In Linz's conceptualization, totalitarian regime is just an extreme case of authoritarian regimes, sharing with them the same logical space that is constituted by three dimensions as listed above. While totalitarian regimes are monistic, ideological and mobilizational, there can be several varieties of authoritarian regimes depending on which combinations of values from these three dimensions they display. Authoritarian regimes tolerate limited pluralism and usually work to depoliticize and demobilize masses (e. g. military bureaucratic regimes in Latin America), although some of them (e. g. Fascist Italy under Mussolini or Baasist Irak under Saddam Hussein and Syria under Hafez Assad) may attempt to mobilize through mass «state party» and its satellite «front organizations».

Orthodox or mainstream theorists conceive totalitarianism as some specific configuration of state institutions, working according some specific rules that they try to identify and describe. For orthodox theory, totalitarianism is just another one, albeit new form politics, because they conceive politics as activities related to state government. Such conception of totalitarianism is displayed by the very title of the important contribution by Brzezinski (1956), that most probably is polemically directed against Arendt's view of totalitarianism. Brzezinski's book bears the title "*The Permanent Purge: Politics in Soviet Totalitarianism*". For H. Arendt, totalitarianism in power means the end of politics, conceived as sharing words and deeds by differing equals. For Z. Brzezinski, it is a different kind of politics.

Before coming to power, totalitarianism emerges as a movement. Differently from mainstream theorists, who focus on totalitarianism as a form of government or a political regime, the bulk of Arendt's work is dedicated to analysis of totalitarian movement and its origins, that are conceived as «elements» (distantly comparable with those in chemistry), that under specific conditions can «crystallize» into a totalitarian movement. When Arendt makes structural observations on totalitarianism, they are not about a totalitarian state or regime, but about the totalitarian movement. Totalitarian movements model themselves after the example set by secret societies. She describes their structure as consisting out of concentric spheres, beginning with the outer circle of «front» organizations, continuing with «outer» and «inner» party, and containing the dictator with his narrow clique around at its center (or on the crest of the vortex of totalitarian terror).

Members of totalitarian movements belong to different spheres or circles of totalitarian movement depending on how much they know about what is really going on. Arendt considers the efforts to identify an institutional structure of the totalitarian regime that emerges after totalitarianism comes to power as futile, because totalitarianism degrades state institutions to mere facade. With a totalitarian movement in power, the only really effective institution is the secret police that is instrumental for the realization of the very essence of the totalitarian government – to keep ideologically justified mass murder going, with ever new categories of population (including the members of the totalitarian movement itself) arbitrarily selected for extermination. Totalitarianism in Arendt's depiction is just «a political hurricane of frantic, irrational, nihilistic motion, shapeless and incapable of anything but destruction» (Canovan, 2000: 37), including the destruction of the state itself. Until totalitarianism lasts, everything remains in flux.

Denying presence of stable institutional structure both in the totalitarian movement and the totalitarian government, Arendt shares with orthodoxy the emphasis on ideology as the feature distinguishing totalitarianism from premodern autocracies and modern authoritarian regimes. Only totalitarian regimes can be described as «ideocracies», ideologies being the most important driving force of the policy of totalitarian regime. From this feature Arendt derives the rigidity and antiutilitarian features

displayed by the policies of the totalitarian leaders, her most frequently used example being the Nazi Holocaust during WWII when Jewish populations were exterminated despite all negative consequences of such policies for the conduct of war: annihilation of labour force and distraction of manpower resources. Totalitarian movements in power use state power to make their fictitious ideological worlds true, by reshaping reality with correspondence with totalitarian lies, and proving that everything is possible or that everything can be destroyed.

As the proof that everything is possible cannot succeed without bringing the whole world under their power, totalitarian movements in power can exist only expanding by means of military aggression and engaging into deadly mutual conflicts, each fighting to make true its own ideological definition of reality. As only big countries can provide sufficient resources for such policy of ruthless expansion, Arendt can find only two real historical instances of totalitarianism in power – Nazi Germany between 1933 and 1945, and Stalinist Russia between 1929 and 1953, with a pause for 1941–1945. Curiously, Arendt assumes that for the time when Stalinist Russia was engaged into the battle against Nazism, totalitarian rule was in some mysterious way suspended, and masses of perverted animals, «ghastly marionettes with human faces» populating Russian plains, were allowed to convert to normal humanity.

Orthodoxy in totalitarianism studies avoids considering elites and leaders of totalitarian regimes as automatons, driven by the «coercive force of logicity», springing from «our fear of contradicting ourselves» (Arendt, 1951/1979: 472–473). Orthodoxy defends more mundane views about the driving motives of totalitarian leaders and elites. It pinpoints that they did not hesitate to compromise opportunistically on the ideological principles when necessary. Instead of fighting unbendingly to remake reality to fit totalitarian propaganda lies, totalitarian regimes dropped old lies and circulated new ones according to circumstances and pragmatic needs. Totalitarian leaders had not simply «value-rationally» carried out their ideology «like robots programmed for destruction» (Canovan, 1992: 62), but acted displaying considerable strategic rationality.

Most famous episode of such a compromise was, of course, the strategic partnership between Stalin and Hitler in 1939–1941, with all readjustments in ideology and propaganda of Communist International that this partnership involved. Curiously, one does not find in Arendt's work the discussion of this episode, that prompted many leftist intellectuals to free themselves from the spell of Communism. Under totalitarianism, ideology was much more important than in the most cases of authoritarian and autocratic rulership, but «coercive force of logicity» was far from being the only force, driving policies of totalitarian regimes. Admitting expansionism and militarism of totalitarian regimes, orthodox theories do not consider military aggression as irresistible inner drive, leading totalitarianism to fight the entire world and end in military defeat and destruction, as Arendt seems to assume.

The disagreements of orthodoxy with Arendt themselves are motivated most strongly by the concern of orthodoxy to expand the reference

class of the concept of totalitarianism. Arendt's use of this concept impels one to consider totalitarianism as relatively shortly lasting «dark holes» in the history. Therefore, she did not describe as «totalitarian» Soviet Union and its satellites in Central and Eastern Europe after 1953, Communist China under Mao. Following H. Arendt's use of totalitarianism concept, one cannot describe as totalitarian lesser Communist states the foreign policies of which were rather isolationist and autarkic than expansive and aggressive (e. g. Albania in 1960–1990, Campuchea in 1975–1979, Cuba, North Korea). The concern to expand the reference class of totalitarianism concept explains the decision of J. Linz to drop the terror from the list of the defining features of totalitarianism, and that of C.J. Friedrich and Z. Brzezinski to attenuate the reference to terror by (weakly) disjunction of «physical or psychic» terror. Of course, if one conceives as «psychic terror» the stream of state-controlled mass media propaganda inundating populations of Communist countries, terror under Communists never ceased until Gorbachev's «glasnost». But if one sticks to Arendtian idea of «totalitarian terror» as directed not against real opponents of regime, but against arbitrarily selected categories of population (including parts of ruling elite), than one should follow her usage not to apply this concept to USSR after Stalin.

However, these differences between Arendt's ideas on totalitarianism and orthodoxy are relatively minor. They are differences merely in focus and emphasis, and are secondary with respect to the differences that can be described as primary, and are differences not of degree, but of kind. I can detect three such essential differences or Arendt's major heterodoxies. First of them will be discussed in the remainder of this section, and remaining two will be spared for concluding third section.

Perhaps most important among them is the difference in methodology. Mainstream work on totalitarianism conceives itself as positive science, proceeding from the assumption that only a kind of truth about reality is scientific truth, and commits itself to the postulate of value neutrality. H. Arendt proceeds from the assumption that scientific arguments are not sole carriers of cognitive content. From the orthodox positivistic point of view, totalitarianism is on a par with other possible subjects of positive political analysis that includes standard procedures of description, explanation, and prediction. These procedures should be separated carefully from evaluation, as differences in the fundamental values cannot be decided by empirical or philosophical argument. Arendt declines to accept this standard positivist credo. In Arendt's view, totalitarianism is so novel and unprecedented that standard instruments are simply inadequate to understand it, and demarcation line between positive research, normative evaluation, and poetic representation (fiction) should break down. Most important things about totalitarianism can be conveyed only by means of poetic or metaphoric truth. My thesis is that Arendt's work on totalitarianism makes not only grand political theory, but also great poetry.

As a matter of fact, political theorists and scholars in general were not the only and the most influential writers on totalitarianism. Deepest insights about totalitarianism were brought up by fiction writers, including

those working in the literary genre known as anti-utopia or dystopia. As I stated in the first section that late Communism – no matter whether it was still totalitarian or not – was destroyed by totalitarianism theory, I did not mean that there were the treatises of political scientists that delivered this deadly blow. Poetic or fictional truth about totalitarianism revealed in widely read fiction books killed totalitarianism or what remained after it. Most important among them include *The New Brave World* by Aldous Huxley, *We* by Leonid Zamyatin, *Darkness at Noon* by Arthur Koestler, and of course *Nineteenth Eighty-Four* and *Animal Farm* by Georg Orwell. Very important items in this list are the novels by Russian writer Vasily Grossman (1905–1964) *Life and Fate* and *Forever Flowing*. Although V. Grossman seems never having read H. Arendt, his books contain the same message about totalitarianism as Arendt's works spread: totalitarianism's basic institution is concentration camp that is about to expand, by swallowing and encompassing all society and the whole world.

Some societies might be «court societies», others «industrial societies», and there may be here «consumption society», but totalitarian society is «concentration camp society». Reading Arendt's *OT* through the lenses of Hayden White's theory of the historical imagination (White, 1973), one cannot fail to detect that Arendt's historical imagination shares with the poetic imagination of Orwell in *Nineteenth Eighty-Four* the same leading metaphor. This is the metaphor (synecdoche) of a concentration camp that provides the key to totalitarianism for both. G. Orwell book shows us in detail what it means to live in the society that is run as one huge concentration camp, and what it means to live the life that is worse than animal's life: to live like a perverted animal in totalitarian circus (or «reality show») under the gaze of Big Brother.

Arendt's antipositivistic methodology implicit in *OT* includes the assumption that totalitarianism as an object of knowledge is unique in being not fully accessible to purely scholarly understanding. The effort to understand (and destroy) totalitarianism needs the support of poetical imagination. Therefore, straddling the line that separates scholarly study from poetic imagination is not detrimental, but *conditio sine qua non* to come to terms with this particular object. Because Arendt's treatise on totalitarianism proceeds from this assumption, it makes her book qualitatively different (and much broadly read) from orthodox work on totalitarianism. As a matter of common knowledge, in her reply to Eric Voegelin, who reviewed *OT*, she confessed frankly that she did not consider value neutrality opportune and binding writing about totalitarianism.

«I parted quite consciously with the tradition of *sine ire et studio* of whose greatness I was fully aware, and to me this was a methodological necessity closely connected with my particular subject matter» (Arendt, 1953a/1994: 403).

My thesis is that the same «methodological necessity» drives Arendt even further – to break the barriers separating fiction and scholarly work. Arendt's work is unorthodox in belonging to both – the poetic (fictional) and scholarly – traditions of writing about totalitarianism. Of course,

she was writing at the time, when modernism with its strict oppositions between literature and philosophy, fact and fiction, literature and historiography was at its height. Without the risks of compromising her work in the eyes of the many all-to-important others, she could not disclose her most important deviation from prevailing orthodoxy in full. It was postmodernism that brought the theoretical deconstruction of and practical transgressions against these oppositions. Arendt was no postmodernist. However, in her writing on totalitarianism, she practised what later postmodernists preach. So OT can be described as first postmodernist – albeit only in form, and not in content – work in political theory.

Reading of Arendt's *OT* as not only a great scholarly treatise, but also a great poetry book, as a blend of scholarly hypothesis and poetic truth helps to understand and to explain some peculiarities of her work that have baffled those who have read OT as a conventional history book or purely scholarly treatise. Invoking this «methodological necessity», Arendt in her description of concentration camps takes recourse to theological language, dividing them «into three types corresponding to three Western conceptions of a life after death: Hades, Purgatory, and Hell» (Arendt, 1953a/1994: 445). Arendt is notorious for using as her sources fictional works like tales by Rudyard Kipling or Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*. She describes J. Conrad's book as «the most illuminating work on actual race experience in Africa» (Arendt, 1951/1979: 185), and finds in its hero Kurtz the prefiguration of Nazi mentality (Tsao, 2002: 590).

One can find in Arendt's book many places that read like factual falsities, if measured by standards of conventional historiography. Just a couple of examples. Somewhere Arendt writes about Stalinist terror:

«It is, for example, typical that if some prisoners in a marching column fall down and lie dying on the roadside, the soldier in charge will arrest any people he happens to find along the way and force them into column to maintain his quota» (Arendt, 1953b/1994: 301).

Even if such things did happen, the characteristic of such things as «typical» strains the imagination a bit. However, this description succeeds beautifully in conveying the message what it means to live under conditions of arbitrary terror. In another place, Arendt attributes to Soviet propaganda the lie that Moscow subway is the only one in the world.

«The assertion that the Moscow subway is the only one in the world is a lie only as long as the Bolsheviks have not the power to destroy all the others. In other words, the method of infallible prediction, more than any other totalitarian propaganda device, betrays its ultimate goal of world conquest, since only in world completely under his control could the totalitarian ruler possibly realize all his lies and make true all his prophecies» (Arendt, 1951/1979: 350).

As a matter of fact, one can find in Soviet propaganda only the statement that Moscow subway was *the best* in the world. After the conquest of Berlin and Budapest, Red Army did not attempt to destroy local subways,

and it is difficult to believe that Soviets postponed the destruction in these cities until the final victory over «world imperialism and capitalism», when all subways were scheduled to be destroyed (except the subway in Moscow). However, who may doubt that text quoted above provides very deep insight into totalitarian propaganda? Characteristically, preparing new editions of *OT*, Arendt did not bother much to update her evidential basis or make corrections of factual mistakes like the referred above. This is perfectly legitimate attitude towards the work that is conceived by its author as something more than a conventional piece of scholarly work.

The poetic side in Arendt's *OT* transpires very strongly also in the method of her political theory, described by her commentators as «fragmentary historiographical storytelling» (see Benhabib, 1990; Luban, 1983; Disch, 1993; Young-Bruehl, 1977). She should have been inspired to use this method by Walther's Benjamin's theory of «fragmentary historiography», recommended by him as a means to break the spell of the retrospective determinism inherent in the traditional storytelling. In his review of Arendt's *OT*, Eric Voegelin has described Arendt's method as one of traditional philosophy of history, because the arrangement of the material in her book was «roughly chronological» (Voegelin, 1953: 69). In her answer, Arendt rejects this description on the grounds that mode of presentation used both by traditional historiography and philosophy of history amounted to the display of the necessity in the chain of the events represented by the story (Arendt, 1953a/1994). In her opinion, such way of representation is tantamount to the justification of the phenomenon represented. This is completely unacceptable with respect to totalitarianism that deserves only destruction.

H. Arendt suggests that incoherences in her account of totalitarianism are deliberate stylistic devices used to neutralize the effects of the standard storytelling.

«The book, therefore, does not really deal with the 'origins' of totalitarianism – as its title unfortunately claims – but gives a historical account of the elements which crystallized into totalitarianism; this account is followed by an analysis of the elemental structure of totalitarian movements and domination itself. The elementary structure of totalitarianism is the hidden structure of the book, while its more apparent unity is provided by certain fundamental concepts which run like red threads through the whole» (Arendt, 1953a/1994: 403).

3. Arendt's Relevance for Current Work on the History of Totalitarianism

Referring to «unruly organization» (Tsao, 2002: 581) of H. Arendt's narrative about totalitarianism, critics mean the lacking connection between the stories told in the first («Antisemitism») and the second («Imperialism») parts of the book on the one hand and that in the third («Totalitarianism») on the other one. Antisemitism was an essential part in the Nazi ideology, and Jews were the first among other population

categories scheduled for extermination. The tide of antisemitism rose in the USSR during last years of Stalin's rule. If Stalin had lived longer, Jews could be the next target for deportations. However, in this role they were already number 5 or 6 after the Crimea Tatars, North Caucasus and Baltic peoples that were targeted by the former waves of Stalinist terror. While Nazism is antisemitic by definition or essentially, antisemitism cannot be considered as one of the elements out of which Communist totalitarianism has crystallized. So Arendt's story about the rise of the modern antisemitism can be helpful to understand Nazi totalitarianism, but not Communist totalitarianism or totalitarianism in general.

The difficulties concerning the relation between part three and part two are even greater. The second part contains the account of the crisis of national state, rise of imperialism and race thinking. However, the bulk of this material is about British imperialism, Boer racism and South Africa. Only chapter 8 about continental imperialism, pan-movements (Pan-Germanism and Pan-Slavism), tribal nationalism, and chapter 9 about stateless persons have obvious connection to H. Arendt's discussion of totalitarianism in the third part. However, the relation between Pan-Slavism and Communist totalitarianism is very tenuous, and H. Arendt's insights about racism are irrelevant for understanding Communist terror.

So one can find in Arendt's book the account of the constitutive «elements» of Nazi totalitarianism, but one cannot but miss a similar contribution for its Communist (Bolshevik) counterpart. One can explain this lack of balance either by her postmodernist proclivities *avant le lettre*, or pragmatically – by circumstances under which *OT* was produced. As a matter of fact, the book that we know as *OT* was conceived as a book about imperialism. Only after having done the bulk of the work, H. Arendt changed its subject (see Tsao, 2002). The masses of text that were written for different purpose, were included to fill out the new outline, and W. Benjamins ideas about non-conventional fragmentary historiography were very helpful to legitimate such *tour de force*.

However, this is still not the full story, because H. Arendt herself admitted the existence of the gap in the book – the lack of historical and conceptual analysis of the origins of the Communist totalitarianism. In the year when *OT* was published (1951), she submitted to the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation a research proposal for the book that should fill out this gap. The working title of this book was *Totalitarian Elements in Marxism*, and later was changed to *Karl Marx and the Tradition of Western Political Thought*. H. Arendt never completed the book. As she embarked on her Marx book project, she became convinced that the work of Marx was just culmination and the end of the entire Western philosophical tradition, gradually converging with K.R. Popper who traced origins of totalitarianism back to Plato. Her insights gained in the work on Marx book project were seminal for *The Human Condition* (1958), *Between Past and Future* (1961) and *On Revolution* (1963). All these books incorporate parts of her manuscripts that were initially produced for her book on Karl Marx and seeds of totalitarianism in his work.

While H. Arendt used her new insights and findings from the book project on K. Marx preparing new editions of *OT*, she never reworked initial text in a fundamental way. The most important change that was prompted by her research on Marx, was the addition of the chapter *Ideology and Terror: A Novel Form of Government*, which was first published separately in 1953, and then starting with the 1955 German edition of *OT* was added to subsequent editions. This addition and other revisions did not amount to change in focus: Nazi form of totalitarianism remained in foreground. This is what I consider the second out of two remaining major heterodoxies of Arendt's work, as compared with the mainstream or orthodox work on totalitarianism. Because Communist totalitarianism survived its Nazi twin that became increasingly more and more distant history, it became paradigmatic and primary case of totalitarianism in the post-Arendtian research on totalitarianism, overshadowing its Nazi counterpart. Arendt's account, that was grounded in experiences of Nazi totalitarianism and focused on it, remained exceptional, heterodox – and exactly for this reason – increasingly original.

The third and the last Arendt's major heterodoxies can be found in Arendt's account of the Communist version of totalitarianism. H. Arendt draws the line between non-totalitarian or pre-totalitarian Communism on the one hand and totalitarian Communism, that she idiosyncratically calls «Bolshevism», on the other one. Historically, «Bolsheviks» were the faction in Russian Social Democratic Labour Party (RSDLP) that emerged in 1903, when party split over the question how it should be organized during its Second Congress, held in Brussels and London in August 1903. «Bolsheviks» were a faction, led by Vladimir Lenin who promoted organizational model that was shaped after the example set by secret societies and medieval orders. Lenin advocated instituting a system of centralized control known as the «democratic centralist» model, leaving sympathizers outside the party (as part of «front organization»), and limiting party membership to a small core of professional revolutionaries. This new model of party organization provided Lenin's faction with «organizational weapon» that was its crucial advantage in the power struggles after the breakdown of Russian empire in 1917, leading to the consolidation of Bolshevik dictatorship after the victory in civil war. «Communists» were the name that Russian «Bolsheviks» have assumed in 1919.

In Arendt's account, «Bolsheviks» are Stalinist faction inside Communist party itself. She attributes to this faction the perversion of the revolutionary dictatorship established by V. Lenin. According to Arendt's account, not true Leninist Communists, but Stalinist Bolsheviks subjected Russia to the vortex of totalitarian terror, starting in 1930 with rich peasants («kulaks») as its first target. In Germany, totalitarian regime emerged out of totalitarian movement that was politically successful under conditions of the social dislocations caused by the defeat in World War I and economic crisis that ravaged world economy in 1929–1933. These dislocations transformed «class society» into a «mass society» – crowds of lonely individuals susceptible to totalitarian propaganda and manipulations. According to H. Arendt, Lenin worked to build a «class society»

in postrevolutionary Russia. The regime that was about to emerge in the postrevolutionary Russia was «bureaucratic rule».

«If the October Revolution had been permitted to follow the lines prescribed by Marx and Lenin, which was not the case, it would probably have resulted in bureaucratic rule» (Arendt, 2002: 306–307).

It was Josif Stalin who derailed Russia from this path of the development, achieving mass atomization by means of terror from above (see Arendt, 1951/1979: 318–323). This account deviates from the orthodox narrative about the rise of totalitarianism in Russia. How can one explain Arendt's pro-Soviet (sic!) and even pro-Leninist sympathies?

H. Arendt's unorthodox conception of Lenin's role can be explained most readily by her Leftist backgrounds and influences from the 1930s. The circles where Arendt got her first political experiences were Leftist, including many non-Stalinist Communists who considered *October revolution* in 1917 as one of the most important events in the history of the emancipation of humankind. H. Arendt's second husband, one time member of German Communist Party, Heinrich Blücher was part of this milieu. During her own active participation in politics in the 1930s and the 1940s, Arendt herself was leftist Zionist, sharing positive evaluation of *October revolution*. Even in her later years, as she has already positioned herself as a leading political theorist with original contribution to the strand of political theory known as «civic republicanism», that is rather close to (neo)conservatism, she described in her book *On Revolution* (Arendt, 1963) the creation of Soviets as positive achievement of Russian revolution, considering them as institutions of participatory democracy.

While H. Arendt granted that Soviets were subverted in this role by Communist domination already in Lenin's time, she never detracted from her opinion that Communist government under Lenin was bureaucratic dictatorship, but not totalitarian rule. In current research on totalitarianism, the prevailing trend is to consider Leninist party of professional revolutionaries as a germ of totalitarianism, and to consider the regime established by Lenin himself as already totalitarian (see e. g. Arato, 2002; Kohn, 2002; Lefort, 2002).

«The true creator of totalitarianism is Lenin. ... It was Lenin himself who created the institution, without which totalitarianism is inconceivable, the totalitarian party» (Castoriadis, 1997: 65).

According to Adam Michnik, «there is no non-totalitarian communism. Either it is totalitarian or it ceases to be communism» (Michnik, 1985: 47).

All or almost all theorists that contributed to the theory of totalitarianism were liberal rightists or conservatives. Left liberals or social-democrats usually reject theory of totalitarianism, revealing preference for seeing Communism through lenses of modernization theory. Leftist influences may have blinded H. Arendt to totalitarian features that the regime established by victorious Leninists has displayed already in the

1920s. However, I would also argue that Leftist backgrounds or leanings provide Arendt's view of totalitarianism with heuristic power to deliver insights that are relevant for current discussions among the exponents of the theory of totalitarianism themselves.

Before the demise of Communism, main topic in these discussions was the very content of the concept of totalitarianism. The definition of the concept mattered, because it was crucial for the classification of particular countries as totalitarian with ensuing implications for practical (foreign) policy of Western countries. Was the Soviet Union under Nikita Khrushchev or Leonid Brezhnev (still) totalitarian? What is about Hungary under Janos Kadar in the 1970s? The opinions on these questions were widely different. Invoking his particular definition of totalitarianism, Juan Linz together with Alfred Stepan argued that among all Communist countries, Poland never was totalitarian, because Polish Communists never succeeded in their attempts to control Catholic Church or reduce its influence (Linz, Stepan, 1996: 255-261). Jeane Kirkpatrick, who was United States Ambassador to the United Nations under President Ronald Reagan, argued famously that while U. S. can be on friendly relations with «authoritarian» regimes (e. g. Chile under Augusto Pinochet), this cannot be the case for «totalitarian» regimes, even if the former indulged in violations of human rights on comparable scale (Kirkpatrick, 1982).

After the demise of Communism, another topic advanced to the center in the discussions on totalitarianism that was raised during the so-called *Historikerstreit* (*historian's quarrel*) in West Germany and Austria that took place in these countries in 1986–1987 (see Baldwin, 1990; Evans, 1989; Kershaw, 1989). This was an intellectual and political controversy in West Germany about the way the *Holocaust* should be interpreted in history. During this discussion, a number of German historians, most prominent among them Ernst Nolte³, argued that the «race murder» of the Nazi death camps was a defensive reaction to the «class murder» of the Stalinist system of GULAG. If there were no Bolshevik totalitarianism and GULAG, the Nazis could not come to power in Germany, no World War II and no Auschwitz would happen (see Augstein et al., 1987/1993).

Nazist totalitarianism was just a dependent and reactive form with respect to Bolshevik totalitarianism. German people turned to Nazism seeking defense from the horrors of Bolshevism. Nazis, and before them, Fascists in Italy just took over methods of organization and political struggle invented by Bolsheviks, and used them against Bolsheviks themselves. Bolshevik inventions that were borrowed by Nazis include concentration camps that along with the secret police are considered by Arendt as central establishments of totalitarianism.

«It is a striking deficiency in the literature about nationalsocialism, that it did not know or did not want to acknowledge to what extent all those things that were done later by Nationalsocialists (with the only exception of the technical procedure of the using gas for killing) were already described in the vast literature in the early twenties: mass deportations and shootings, tortures, death camps, extermination of the whole groups according to ob-

jective criteria, public demands to annihilate millions of people without any guilt but considered as 'hostile'» (Nolte, 1986).

I would like to argue that Arendt's Nazism-centered analysis of the origins of totalitarianism is uniquely relevant for this discussion that cannot be considered as closed. Are E. Nolte and other German historians right in asserting that without the «Bolshevik menace» Nazism had no chances in Germany? Remarkably, Arendt does not even ask about the impact that Communism and Bolshevism in Russia had on the rise of Nazi totalitarian movement in Germany. One can consider this as another blind spot in her analysis related to her leftist leanings. However, this silence about the interactions and mutual influences that one totalitarian movement could exert on another can be considered also as symptomatic for her belief that emergence of Nazi regime with all its lethal consequences was independent from the fate of Russian revolution.

My thesis is that H. Arendt can be considered as paragon for the account of the rise of totalitarianism in Germany that is an alternative to Nolte's theory asserting that it was simply an effect and copy of Communist totalitarianism. Of course, Arendt denied that totalitarianism was inevitable. If her interpreters are right, the point of her fragmentary historiographical storytelling was to destroy the spells of retrospective historical determinism. The real question is, however, where is the latest point or the latest crossroad in the course events at which the totalitarian catastrophe still could be prevented. Obviously enough, there would be no «short» 20th century described by many historians as the century of totalitarianism, if World War I had been prevented. August 1914 was the moment at which the gate was opened for all disasters that have descended upon humankind in the 20th century.

What about later times? What about 1917? «If we remove Vladimir Lenin from the picture, what is left of the leading insurrectionary party?» – asks Georgi M. Derluguian from Northwestern University (Evanston, Illinois), in his thought-provoking essay *Alternative Past, Future Alternatives?*, published in Autumn 2004 issue of *Slavic Review*, where he discusses fateful constellations of events in Russian history in the 20th century (Derluguian, 2004: 539). His answer is that «Lenin in 1917 gives us the rarest example of a personality changing the course of history» (Derluguian, 2004: 539). Remove Lenin (say, by sending Terminator to the past by means of time travel machine), then there would be no October coup, no Brest-Litovsk peace, and Germany would be defeated in 1918 some months earlier than it was defeated as a matter of fact. However, one has no reason to assume that peace treatise with Germany would be made on conditions that would be less harsh than those of Versailles peace treatise in 1919, with all its potential for provoking rightist radicalism and revanchism in Germany.

At the same time, one can doubt that Constituent assembly that was elected in on November 12th, 1917 and assembled for its first meeting on January 5th, 1918 to be infamously dissolved by Bolsheviks early in the morning next day, was able to establish liberal democracy in Russia.

Proponents of the liberal parliamentary Russia «would have difficulty explaining how Russia could have become exception to the contemporary authoritarian trends and how its putative liberal government could have dealt with the worker, peasant, and national revolts while keeping at bay the militaristic ‘saviours of the Motherland’» (Derluguian, 2004: 541). Russian state in its 1914 or even larger borders (after the victory against Germany) barely could be restored without harsh suppression of the numerous nationalities on its borders (including the fledgling national Lithuanian state), such suppression leading to civil war and establishment of the military authoritarian regime reminiscent of that established by Admiral Horthy in Hungary or Francisco Franco in Spain.

First democratically legitimated government of Russia that most probably would be built by «socialist revolutionary party» («Eсers»), who had won majority of seats, most probably would be ousted out of the power by the military coup like those that are usual in Latin America or have terminated budding democratic regimes in the Eastern European countries in 1923–1938 (Bulgaria being the first, Poland the second and Lithuania the third in the series of countries where authoritarian coups took place).

The establishment of the authoritarian military or fascist regime was even more probable in the case of victory of White movement in the Civil war that was unleashed by Bolshevik coup. The restoration of the «united and indivisible Russia was on the top in the program of all White generals – Aleksandr Kolchak, Nikolai Iudenich and especially Anton Denikin, who was the closest to the military victory over Communists. Denikin’s forces fought Ukrainian nationalists just as fiercely as Communists, and they were on the brink of the military conflict with Polish army even before defeating Bolsheviks. So «one must wonder what might have been the consequences of attempted conquests of former imperial borderlands, possibly including the renewed pursuit of pan-Slavism or the Eurasianist project» (Derluguian, 2004: 541). Although Pan-Slavism as pre-totalitarian ideology was irrelevant for the rise of Communist totalitarianism, one can appreciate the insight of Arendt when she included Pan-Slavic ideas into her discussion of the origins of totalitarianism. As a matter of fact, Pan-Slavism and Eurasianism were alternative ideologies for Russian-based totalitarian movement that could take the place of Communism if Bolsheviks were crushed in the civil war.

«A fascist Russia would not have necessarily welcomed Nazi and Japanese expansionism. Geopolitical rivalry takes precedence over ideology at the level of world-historical causality» (Derluguian, 2004: 541).

Because of its harsh and humiliating conditions, the Versailles peace treatise made the resurgence of German revanchism barely avoidable. World political alliances most probably would take the shape not much different from the lines they took in World War II, including the alliance between U.S. and fascist Russia against Germany and Japan. If fascist or Pan-Slavically totalitarian Russia would not manage to stand up German onslaught, the most probable outcome would be «a dichotomous Nazi-

American cold war secured by the nuclear deterrent» (Derlugian, 2004: 542). If one would like to know what the life in the Nazi empire after Hitler's death and then probable «thaw» (similar to that that took place in Communist world after J. Stalin) would be like, one can barely find a better model than the regime of apartheid established by the Boers in South Africa. Deeply symbolically, the demise of this regime was coincident in time with the breakdown of the Communism in Eastern Europe. Over again, it is South Africa that Arendt refers to as a place where «lying under anybody's nose were many of the elements which gathered together could create a totalitarian government on the basis of racism» (Arendt, 1951/1979: 221).

To conclude, most important contribution that Arendt's *OT* made to current discussions on totalitarianism among historians is her insight that totalitarianism in the 20th century is perfectly imaginable even with Lenin and Bolsheviks «removed from the picture». If we accept Arendt's thesis that the danger of totalitarianism is immanent in the social conditions of «mass society», we cannot avoid the conclusion that it remains a real hazard even after both totalitarianisms of the 20th century are removed from the picture into the dustbin of history. However, I would like to spare the discussion of this conclusion for some other occasion in hope that it will never turn out to be true.

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- ¹ H. Arendt's work was discussed intensely in the conference on totalitarianism, held at the American Academy of Arts and Sciences in March 1953, that attracted many specialists in budding area studies. See: *Totalitarianism*. Proceedings of a Conference held at the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, March 1953. New York : Grosset and Dunlap, 1964.
- ² In the late 1970s and early 1980s this literature was expanded by contributions of the group of French authors, some of them Ex-Communists. The news about the terror that Khmer Rouge have perpetrated in Campuchea in 1975–1979 together with Alexander Solzhenitsyn's *Archipelag GULAG* was an immediate cause for this new popularity of the theory of totalitarianism. However, this literature did not attract much interest in the comparative politics. Most important contributions of the «French school» in the theorizing on totalitarianism include Besançon, 1976/1978; 1981; Castoriadis, 1981; Lefort, 1986.
- ³ This group includes also Michael Stürmer, Andreas Hillgruber, Joachim Fest, Klaus Hildebrand, Rainer Zitelmann.