



Kirill Postoutenko (ed.)

TOTALITARIAN COMMUNICATION

Hierarchies, Codes
and Messages

[transcript] Cultural and Media Studies

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Kirill Postoutenko

Prolegomena to the Study of Totalitarian Communication

KIRILL POSTOUTENKO

Introduction

This book is devoted to a double-faced concept which simultaneously looks at two different research traditions. Depending on the weight attached to one or another side, one could interpret totalitarian communication either as an attribute of totalitarian society or as a special case of social communication. Up to date, the first approach has proved to be significantly more popular, but its efficiency—some notable exceptions aside—leaves much to be desired, as many scholars may well have sensed: the recent proposal to move “beyond totalitarianism” (Geyer and Fitzpatrick 2009) was prepared by innumerable subversion attempts, including, but not limited to, the breakup of the term (“totalitarianisms”) or encroachment upon its referential jurisdiction (“*totalitarianism* and *authoritarianism*. . . / *fascism*. . . *dictatorship*. . . etc.”).

The difficulties are not confined to the fact that such a semantically vague and ideologically contested term as “totalitarianism” is neither clear enough nor sufficiently differentiated to serve as a strong a priori foundation for any sensible deductions. Nor they are limited to the general preoccupation with the large-scale practices (propaganda) and preferred communication channels (mass media). The crucial problem seems to be the underlying perception of totalitarian society as a special structure composed from ready-made political, moral and epistemic inequalities between leaders and followers, tyrants and victims, messengers and recipients etc. Communication, in this model,

merely amalgamates existing dichotomies, producing synergies needed for highlighting the gaps (something like ‘*immoral tyrannic messengers manipulate recipients*’). As long as communication is treated as a kind of courier service facility within the state apparatus, its crucial role in shaping and maintaining social distinctions and cohesions will remain unexplored. Besides, the absolutization of social and cognitive gaps within the society makes totalitarian communication at once superfluous (gaps do not change anyway), improbable (non-relational distinctions within society?) and incomparable to its non-totalitarian equivalents (no systemic identity, separable from “social structure”, is displayed).

Hence most of the authors of this volume reject this approach, explicitly or implicitly, and try to move, as much as possible, in the opposite direction. “As much as possible” means first and foremost taken for granted the basic distinction between *leaders* [*executives/rulers*] and *followers* [*subordinates/subjects*]. To be sure, this difference can (and eventually should) be formulated in communicative terms, but at this point none of us, it seems, really knows how to link its variations to any meaningful differences between totalitarian and non-totalitarian communication. All other dichotomies are seen as variables—including the very distinction between the “totalitarianism” and “democracy”. In fact, although the focus on the usual suspects (such as Nazi Germany, Soviet Union, Fascist Italy) remained in force, an attempt was made to replace the Manichean dichotomy ‘*totalitarian*’ / ‘*non-totalitarian*’ with a sliding scale. In particular, the three poster examples were juxtaposed with the cases that could be reasonably described as totalitarian by analogy (the Vichy France), as well as with borderline phenomena such as seasoned democratic systems with the extreme executive power (the ‘New Deal’ USA or France under Charles de Gaulle) or young democracies with strong kinship identities (post-Soviet Kyrgyzstan), or even democracies developed at the cost of disempowered autocracy (United Kingdom). Furthermore, an attempt was made to forgo the unfruitful fixation on the state as a whole and move *a maiori ad minus*, describing totalitarian communication through the prism of specific practices not specifically associated with totalitarianism: here the most general interactional rules (such as turn-taking or repairs discussed below) go hand in hand with the detailed study of links between the British extreme-right newspaper *Reality* and its readership, or relations between the famous Soviet writer Maxim Gorky and his proletarian apprentices.

On the whole, totalitarian communication appears to be anchored in

the political organization of society; yet the general rules of social interaction to which it conforms cannot be always directly linked to politics or governance. At the same time, the examples of the U.S. during the war and France after the war show that emerging totalitarian communication may be a reliable indicator of those authoritarian tendencies that elude social reflection and attract little notice in political analysis. Still, these findings, important as they are, stop short of describing totalitarian communication as a special kind of communicative system. This is hardly surprising, giving the breadth of approaches involved (psychology, political studies, history, sociology, linguistics), and a stable description may not be even necessary at this stage. But a step in this direction seems to be needed, if only to stake out a claim for an alternative approach to totalitarian communication and provide its working definition for further discussion. Given the specifics of this approach, it seems natural to precede this volume with a brief outlook at communication in general and then proceed to its totalitarian variation. After that, the intricacies of interdependence between totalitarian communication and its socio-political environment may be easier brought into the picture.

From Biological to Social Communication Role Exchange, Turn-Taking, Repairs

Although this project is devoted to a communicative system in its own right, it would be difficult to ignore the fact that communication is first and foremost a function of social life which has no identity of its own and no other goal than to serve its members (collectively referred to as “society”). In this sense, communication is the same sort of allopoetic system as ‘God’ or ‘market’, which fictitious self-reference is hypothesized on the slim circumstantial basis of correspondences between other-references of real social actors, *i.e.* human beings participating in social interaction (for the distinction *autopoetic/allopoetic* see: Maturana and Varela 1980: 80-81). To be sure, these correspondences, based on binding norms and expressed through highly universalized codes, are significant enough to treat the aforementioned systems as “subjects” able to “react upon themselves, “repeat”, “revise” and “complete” (the examples are borrowed from: Luhmann 1987: 213). But such a perception, at least from the sociological standpoint, is not particularly useful. In dissipative systems (which communication and society unquestionably are), the relations between the whole and its parts are rather trivial: every system

works nonstop on maintaining its integrity (organizational closeness), and every subsystem has a potential of breaking away. Communication undoubtedly has this tendency to becoming an autopoietic system; it cannot be even ruled out that it has goals extending beyond this compulsory secessionist tribe and subsequent self-preservation. But these intentions are no more relevant for social life than the intentions of God or the intentions of the market, since humans have no semiotic competence to decipher codes in which all aforementioned teleologies are expressed, or even to ascertain existence of such codes (see the same argument in a different form: Schmidt 2003: 78-79). Hence an empirical study of communication is inevitably limited to the assessment of its functions in the context of the mega-project pursued by society in general—emancipation from the environment.

From its very beginning, such an emancipation has been a dire necessity crucial for the survival of human race. Endowed with meager sensory abilities, modest physical strength, low fertility and long rearing times, humans would not have survived by simply reproducing biological identity of their specie (Vine 1975: 367). Of course, this identity has been in principle capable of adaptive changes, but within a lifetime of a single individual each of his (or her) biological utterances, being a single-valued function of gender, remained the same regardless of what was happening around it. Every new exchange of these “genotypically determined signals” (Bateson 1972: 419) was similar to the old one, could not last more than one turn, and its adaptation to environmental hazards was limited to varying frequency of the same unidirectional interaction scenario (one sperm cell → one ovum). Indeed, in each interactive act the number of spermatozoa contacting ovary is quite sufficient (around 50 million, to be precise), but they are all the same so that each ejaculation (and all ejaculations) are nothing more than mechanical repetitions of a single statement (for details see: Stent 1972: 44-45). The sheer number of messages, aimed at preemptively offsetting the poor quality of communication, created by constantly alternating environmental hazards, is functionally equivalent to the monotonous pleading for help in the dark. Alas, such pleading is rarely helpful and does little to work out a sensible rescue strategy.

Inevitably, the cooperation for the purpose of defense requires compulsory acquisition of social identity by each individual: even among plants the form and content of messages exchanged are sufficiently deregulated in order to relate the specific position of each communicator to its environment (see, for instance: Karban and Shiojiri 2009). To

be sure, biological interaction does react upon environment: in many species mating behavior occurs only at the specialized territories (so-called stamping grounds) or does not occur at all if conditions are adverse (Ardrey 1966: 69). But the participants of biological exchanges cannot select their utterance (let alone code): they are inextricably tied to their *one and only* message which may be uttered or not uttered depending on environmental conditions.

In contrast, the way to social cohesion lies through making environmental perceptions communicable, which necessarily requires that communicators X and Y are relatively free to choose between messages x and y and know of each other's freedom (see the survey of "double contingency" in: Vanderstraeten 2002). Potentially, the decoupling of speaker and message can fortify society in its battle against the all-devouring ecological macrosystem: the correlation between environmental perception and the *content* of interaction makes meaningful interaction possible (see: Andrade 1999: 148). Furthermore, diversification of codes and their adjustment to the best developed sensors of the species (for humans—sight and hearing rather than tactile and olfactory sensibility) puts at their disposal the codes with the highest throughput capacity (*symbols* and *icons*) and thus raises the chances of timely response to the common challenges.

However, these potentialities could only become actual if the deregulation measures are counterbalanced with secondary stabilization: in other words, the individual environmental scans should not only be different but also comparable. Indeed, whereas the informational value of such reports is proportional to their perceptual egocentricity, their social relevance depends on potential transferability of data perceived, which is impossible without some or other degree of allocentric universality in the code employed. In the natural language, for instance, this complementarity of speaker- and environment-based referential markers keeps together not only a single social self, where the unique *self-performance* ('I'-reference to the present communicator) can only be communicated by means of the universal *self-statement* ('I'-reference to all potential speakers), but extends to the most salient aspects of intersubjective coordination such as time ('*now*' vs. '*at 12:40*') and space ('*here*' vs. '*in Constance*').

Arguably the most important mechanism of equilibration between the individuality of a living being in society and its necessary interactive actualization is the *role exchange* which separates an autonomous living being from its societal role. Role exchange simultaneously drives

communication on various levels beginning with basic distinctions (interchangeability between 'I' vs. 'you' in *symbolic* language as opposed to irreducible *indexicality* of voice tone) and extending to the complex interaction scenarios (interchangeability of characters in the play as opposed to ritual) (see: James 1909: 217; Huizinga 1956: 32; Caillois 1958: 62; Turner 1979: 95; Goffman 1974: 129; or—in a more elaborated form—Rappaport 1999: 42). Most visible in its norm-setting functions (such as furnishing society with the cognitive and institutional background), the role exchange also serves as an impetus for a dynamic social consensus, projecting obligatory reversibility of basal communicative functions ('*speaker*'/'*addressee*') onto complex social roles ('*power*'/'*opposition*') (Huizinga 1956: 52, 87). Furthermore, combined with the sequential (sometimes called "linear") order of verbal interaction, it enables extension of a dialogue beyond a single '*utterer*'/'*listener*' exchange (Goffman 1964: 65; Sacks, Schegloff and Goffman 1974). The contribution of this *turn-taking* to the stability and integrity of social system could hardly be overestimated: at any rate, its salience goes far beyond the habitual conversational settings (Knorr Cetina 2007) and as far as stability is concerned, it beats political structures hands down (Schegloff 2006: 71). In general, is perhaps indispensable for peaceful survival as it helps to tune the form of message to the listener's cognitive expectations, which, in its turn, reduces the risk of accidental confrontations based on misunderstanding. To be sure, neither turn-taking nor communication in general are aimed at producing consensus between the parties involved (Luhmann 1987: 237; O'Connell, Kowal and Kaltenbacher 1990). Rather, as cooperation happens from time to time to counter the ruinous selfish teleologies, the consensual perception of interactional settings normally emerges when the wasteful parades of individual differences block information exchange. Furthermore, the serial allocentric generalizations of specific communicational circumstances eventually produce norms and institutions and lead to formation of "primary frameworks" (Goffman 1974: 21-39) that enable reverse stabilization of social identity through the retroactive correction of its anomalous (that is, deviant in relation to the situation) behavior (Goffman 1971: 95-187; Schegloff, Jefferson and Sacks 1977). Needless to say, the practice of *repairs*, based on the clear-cut separation between the living being and its social role, greatly decreases the centripetal tendencies within social system. As a sort of compulsory social insurance, repairs safeguard individuals from peremptory social exclusion on all levels of society from isolated interaction practices (upward or downward stylistic self-correction in a conversation) to the

moral and legal foundations of society (prevention of total social exclusion of “the possessed”—or “the incorrigible”—on respectively religious or moral grounds).

Ideally, the combinations of these three practices ensures stability an elasticity of communicative codes and customs: lending equivocal support to some wannabe-systems (such as “families”, “classes”, “national cultures”) and ignoring others, social communication ideally keeps complexity of *the* allopoetic system ‘society’ on the level optimal for its operation—ideally. But some political structures have less patience with the homeostatic properties of social systems than others, and it is worth looking at the respective modifications of the communicative subsystems that serve, or disserve, such societies.

Systemic Features of Totalitarian Communication Role Exchange is Impossible, Turn-Taking is Not Topical, Repairs Compound Errors

It would be anthropologically naive and historically untrue to couple limitations, imposed on role exchange in power relations, with specific political systems formed in Europe and America after the first World War. The alternation of norms encouraging or prohibiting role exchange in politics runs all through the European history: on the one hand, as it was possible for the thinkers of classical Antiquity to differentiate a living being from its power function (Kantorowicz 1957: 496), on the other hand, it was also natural for the 18th century peasants to believe in the miraculous powers of the king’s touch (Bloch 1924). Obviously, the dominance of ritual in politics, coupled with suppression of its playful, ironical relativizations (such as carnival), lives in every pore of traditional society. The fusion of simple communicative prevalence and long-term political authority is particularly visible in the systems which legitimacy is based, fully or in part, on transcendental references, hereditary monarchies or priestly theocracies being the most notable examples.

Nevertheless, the institutional environment of the interwar Europe notably differed from its absolutist past. Most importantly, the obligatory rotation of political elites, together with their symmetrical functional differentiation, was institutionalized in universal practices (elections) and legal norms (constitutional separation of power). These mechanisms of legitimacy maintenance, which made some forms of *role exchange* compulsory, have clashed with the authoritarian tendencies in the postwar

societies across the globe. It is well known that in some cases the conflict was resolved in favor of norms reinforcing role exchange (introduction of the two-term limit in the United States after Roosevelt presidency), whereas in others the norms were either gradually removed (*Führertum* in Nazi Germany) or—in a more paradoxical way—created anew and progressively rendered senseless (“elections” in Soviet Union).

What seems to be remarkable in the two latter cases is the role of communication in social enactment of these conflicts. If one agrees that advanced communicative systems, capable of using symbolic codes, necessarily differentiate between action and utterance and between message and information (Luhmann 1987: 193-195), then the ritualistic character of authoritarian politics reveals itself in partial suspending of these differentiations (Leach 1976: 37; Rappaport 1999: 58), which effectively implies the unity of body, its communicative role and its political power. Whereas offsetting this vast consolidation of social value in one hand by means of egalitarian interactive devices appears to be a norm observed on various communicative levels of many societies (Ruesch and Bateson 1951; Heritage 1997: 170), the cursory glance at totalitarian communication indicated its movement in the direction of the pathological scenario described in family sociology (Habermas 1974: 264): grossly overemphasized, the interactional distinction between the speaker and the audience served as a synecdoche, if not hyperbole, for the social distance separating political leader from his followers, whereas the semantic aspects of communication play a relatively minor role.

To prove this hypothesis, the comparison was made between the public speeches of “totalitarian” (Benito Mussolini (M), Adolf Hitler (H)) and “democratic” (Winston Churchill (Ch), Franklin D. Roosevelt (R)) politicians (see the table below):

Table 1: Public Speeches

	1	2	1+2	3	4	5	6	Total (%)
H1	0	0	0	7 (12.3)	0	13 (22.8)	37 (64.9)	57 (100)
H2	7 (43.7)	4 (25.0)	11 (68.7)	0	0	5 (31.3)	0	16 (100)
M1	3 (18.8)	2 (12.5)	5 (31.3)	1 (6.2)	0	21 (48.8)	16 (37.2)	43 (100)
M2	4 (40.0)	3 (30.0)	7 (70.0)	0	0	0	3 (30.0)	10 (100)
R1	0	0	0	5 (62.5)	0	1 (12.5)	2 (25.0)	8 (100)
R2	4 (7.5)	0	4 (7.5)	0	5 (9.4)	13 (24.6)	31 (58.5)	53 (100)
Ch1	2 (9.5)	1 (4.8)	3 (14.3)	8 (38.1)	0	0	10 (47.6)	21 (100)
Ch2	1 (20.0)	1 (20.0)	2 (40.0)	3 (60.0)	0	0	0	5 (100)

To reduce personal factors to a minimum, two different leaders were chosen for each group. The rhetorical production of each politician was

represented by two roughly equal text samples corresponding to the two stages of political biographies common for all the actors—seeking power in opposition (H1 (Hitler 1927), M1 (Mussolini 1918; Mussolini 1919), R1 (Roosevelt 1928; Roosevelt 1932), Ch1 (Churchill 1929; Churchill 1931a; Churchill 1931b)) and exercising it at the top of the state system (H2 (Hitler 1935; Hitler 1938; Hitler 1941), M2 (Mussolini 1934), R2 (Roosevelt 1936a; Roosevelt 1936b; Roosevelt 1943, Ch2 (Churchill 1941a). Since the idea was to compare the fixed institutionalized framework (speaking leader—listening followers) to its reflexive repercussions in the speeches, the special attention was paid to the sentences duplicating this framework within the texts by directly referring to the speaker ('*I*') and the audience ('*you*'), or to the audience ('*you*') only. Such sentences were further subdivided in accordance with the relation between the framework and the model: naturally enough, it was supposed that the '*I*'-'*you*' constructions could *uphold*, *discuss*, *undo* or *invert* inequality of communicative power inherent in the rhetorical construction of public oratory. Accordingly, the following categories (represented in the table as columns) were isolated:

1. *Upholding power inequality in action terms*—i.e., invoking a non-negotiable spatial subordination of addressees to the speaker ("You have been called together at my desire...");
2. *Upholding power inequality in speech terms*—invoking a non-negotiable communicative subordination of addressees to the speaker ("At this point, I demand your attention");
3. *Discussing power inequality in action or speech terms*—i.e. invoking a negotiable spatial or communicative subordination of addressees to the speaker ("I invite you to endorse this attitude on my part");
4. *Undoing power inequality in action of speech terms*—i.e. invoking the equilibrium between communicative or spatial positions of the speaker and addressees ("You and I know a simple fact...");
5. *Inverting power inequality in action of speech terms*—i.e. invoking a non-negotiable communicative or spatial subordination of the speaker to addressees ("You are the makers!");¹

1 | It was generally held that positive sentences with 'you' as a grammatical

6. *Unspecific references to power inequality* (“What [...] will be *your* line of moral and logical resistance then?”).

The results confirm correlation between the specific political system and a degree of uniformity of various configurations of social power. The data on Hitler after 1934 and Mussolini after 1922 shows a drastic change from self-deprecation to self-aggrandizement: in both cases, almost two-thirds of ‘I’- and ‘you’-sentences reinforce rather than offset the communicative imbalance resulting from the hierarchical construction of public speaking. The changes in Churchill and Roosevelt go in the same direction but look moderate in comparison. Finally, it is worth mentioning that the political leaders of USA and Great Britain react upon their ascension to power by activating the rhetorical mechanisms of checks and balances: whereas Roosevelt’s presidential speeches earn him the nickname of “youandme-president” (Dos Passos 1934: 17), Churchill’s oratory contains an explicit endorsement of role exchange on a political level: “As long as the Socialist Government drop all this nonsense about Socialism, nationalization of industry, fantastic expenditure and taxation, wild schemes for ‘monkeying’ with the currency and credit systems on which we depend, and as long as they do not give away the rights and interests of Britain to foreign cultures or endanger the safety and unity of the Empire, everyone will be glad that *they should have their turn* and a fair chance to see if they can make things go a little better” (Churchill 1941b: 4633).²

Having demonstrated how totalitarian communication strengthened political asymmetries by imitating, multiplying and magnifying them in preferred interactional scenarios, one should not ignore the reflexive impact of this fixed permanence of intertwined politico-interactional roles, discernible at the lower levels of communication system. In particular, the lexical layer of natural speech reacts to the decay of role-exchanging mechanisms by the abnormal growth of defamation vocabulary, built around such asymmetrical concepts as “*bloodsucker*”, “*beast*” or “*Un-mensch*” which exclude consensual use (acceptance by the other) in principle (see: Koselleck 1975). For instance, it is remarkable that in

subject in an active predicative construction invert the communicative superiority of ‘I’ even if it is not present in the sentence.

2 | Uttered by a politician not known for his disinterest in power, this remark may in fact suggest that the mutual acknowledgment and implementation of regular role exchange on various social levels may be a better characterization of “democratic” communication—as opposed to “totalitarian” one—than the traditionally highlighted “competition” (see, for instance: Aron 1965).

Franklin Roosevelt's campaign speech of 1928 where the attacks on the political adversary were expected, there was only one asymmetrical nominal construction ("reactionary element") out of nineteenth references to Republican Party (Roosevelt 1928: 55-58), whereas in a formally neutral coverage of the Trotskyite activity in Soviet Union in a Pravda editorial from August 24th, 1936, the same ratio was 30 out of 57. The rarity of nominal defamation in "democratic" communication could be linked both to the regular role exchange between "power" and "opposition" and to the smooth turn-taking as its presupposition generally observed by all competitors: under such circumstances, carrying rhetorical strife to the point of no return would be tantamount to throwing a boomerang. As it could be seen later, it might also be related to the general practice of avoiding undifferentiated personal stigmatizations which could make self- and other-corrections impossible and threaten the stability of the communicative system.

* * *

Lenin's famous equation—"Communism is the Soviet power plus electrification of the whole country" (Lenin 1920: 30-31)—gave birth to the tradition linking informational poverty of communication in totalitarian states to the disproportional development of its technological mediation (see, for instance: Gorjaeva 2000). Refined from technological fetishism (radio or television as such do not grant preferences to speakers or listeners), this argument contains a grain of historical truth: given that mass media have been started up in the 16th century and revolutionized in 20th century on demand of such informational monopolists as church and state, it was only natural that the possibility of spatio-temporal distance between the communicators was used to increase existing inequalities of communicative chances (Giesecke 2007: 206). But these praxeological observations do little to enrich our understanding of totalitarian communication as a system. In particular, it seems unclear what is the rationale behind the minimization of role exchange and amalgamation of power practices, which obviously destabilize communicative system and increase the chances of its breakup. It is also not immediately apparent how the information flows were actually modified in such a way that the increasing entropy did not blow up the system (for some time, at least).

It would be naive to attempt a general answer to these questions: the

contribution of Lorenz Erren in this volume makes it apparent that in Soviet Union at some point even the controlled dissipation of totalitarian communication (for instance, the creation of public sphere formally independent from mass media) was deemed admissible. However, this small-scale concession for various reasons could not be a universal practice, and one is tempted to search for communicative mutations on the higher levels. This brings us back to the general norm of *turn-taking*, which cannot be eliminated from communication altogether but is highly adaptable to the needs of parties involved due to its unparalleled flexibility.

It goes without saying that ceremonies greatly constrain the flexible distribution of turns (see: Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson 1974: 701, 709, 730), although the ways of specifying turns in advance normally depend on the communicative environment, ranging from individual application of general norms (shame, fear, guilt or respect) to the all-embracing external regulation—for example, in a form of bidirectional *center-terminal/terminal-center* communication network with delay times specified by center (Inose 1972: 126). But this utopian (or, rather, anti-utopian) scheme has never been realized in practice: whereas the total organization of listeners' ceremonial behavior by state media was simply beyond the capacities of Soviet and Nazi authorities (Rossi and Bauer 1952: 656; Zimmermann 2006: 442), the complete removal of coordination between the adjacent turns could never happen for communicative reasons (Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson 1974: 725; Matoesian 2005: 184): one would be hard-pressed to call “dialogue” a spatial proximity of two or more individuals whose verbal and non-verbal behaviors show no signs of interdependence. In other words, turn coordination persists in all kinds of social environment, and its specific criteria may be a significant differentiating factor: whereas the advance allocation of turns is evident in most of the “orchestrated encounters” regardless of social system (Dingwall 1980), the correlation between the adjacent “replicas” (in whatever code) sheds light on the type of information being actually transmitted in various communicative systems (Heritage 1984: 1; see also the pioneering case study: Beck 2001). As long as one isolates the major scenarios of extracting information from a message and processing it in a certain way, it seems possible to go beyond ceremony and look for the serialization of these processing schemes in less rigid acts of communication. If social systems associated with “democracy” or “totalitarianism” display the consistent divergence of scenarios across the interactional settings, this regularity of differences (or difference of

regularities) may single out the special forms of information packaging, selection and processing which make up for the constricted role exchange in totalitarian communication.

An almost random selection of ceremonial exchanges under similar circumstances could serve as a starting point (turns within each example are marked by Roman numerals):

1

- I. (Winston R. Churchill:) “I am sorry to say that I have got no definite information as to the results, but I feel they can hardly be other than satisfactory in view of the naval forces of which we dispose in the Mediterannean sphere.
- II. (Aneurin Bevan:) Will the Prime Minister use whatever methods are available to convey from the House of Commons, this Sitting Day, our admiration of the confidence in the defenders of Crete?
- III. (Winston R. Churchill:) I certainly will” (Churchill 1941: 6404).

2

- I. (Benito Musolini:) “Non restava che il terzo atteggiamento: quello che le masse operaie hanno già accolto, realizzato: quello l’adesione esplicita, chiara, schietissima allo spirito ed agli istituti della Rivoluzione fascista.
- II. (Audience:) Viva il Duce!
- III. (Benito Mussolini:) Se il secolo scorso fu il secolo della potenza del capitale, questo ventesimo è il secolo della potenza e della gloria del lavoro” (Mussolini 1934: 130).

3

(1)

- I. (Joseph Stalin appears on the tribune)
- II. (Audience:) (long standing ovation) + “Ура тов. Сталину! Да здравствует тов! Сталин! Да здравствует Великий Сталин! Великом гениу тов. Сталину ура! Виват! Рот фронт! Тов. Сталину слава!

III. (Josef Stalin:) Товарищи! Конституционная комиссия, проект которой был представлен на рассмотрение на стоящего Съезда, была образована, как известно, по специальному постановлению VII Съезда Советов Союза СССР” (Stalin 1936, 3).

(2)

I. (Joseph Stalin:) Это укрепляет веру в свои силы И мобилизует на новую борьбу для завоевания новых побед социализма.

II. (Audience:) (standing ovation) + Ура! Да здравствует товарищ Сталин! + (singing *International*) + Ура! + Да здравствует наш вождь товарищ Сталин!

III. (Joseph Stalin leaves the tribune)” (Stalin 1936, 32).

All the examples portray one and the same communicative arrangement: speakers Winston R. Churchill, Benito Mussolini and Joseph Stalin, who are also the political leaders of their respective countries, pronounce public speeches addressed to the audiences which gathered (workers on the Duomo square in Milan) or were selected (House of Commons in England, Congress of Soviets in USSR) for that occasion. The ceremonial character of this setting is based on the pre-allocation of turns, common for institutional settings from game to funerals and implying the marked asymmetry of interactional roles: whereas one of the exchange participants is generally entitled to unhindered self-selection based on loosely defined institutional relevance of his turn, others are confined to occasional responses by minimal communicative means (Goffman 1961: 29; Hahn 1999: 99). Still, this rigid frame allows for a significant variability of turn-taking practices, and the variations may point at general communicative properties of respective political systems.

1. The *first* example is a clear case of a *non-conventional interruption*:

1a: The *second* turn (Aneurin Bevan's words) is performed by *non-minimal* means (elaborate sentence requiring a response rather than exclamations, applause, whistling or booing);

1b: It cannot be categorized in simple dual terms (approval/disapproval), but rather exemplifies a *topical correlation* with the previous speaker's turn: as soon as the first speaker (the Prime Minister) has chosen the Battle of Crete as his topic, he is asked to pass information from the other speakers (Members of the House of Commons) to the absent party (the defenders of Crete). Meanwhile, the retroactive topical correlation is supplemented by the forward-looking grammatical one, since the interrogative sentence normally requires an answer in the next turn (Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson 1974: 716, 718).

1c. Despite the non-conventional character and significant distractive effect of the *second turn*, caused by its length, informational value, grammatical form and reference to the topic not covered by the first speaker, the *third turn incorporates* the *second turn* into the dialogue by a topical response which also contains approval in a form of indirect performative act (*I certainly will*).

2. The *second* example represents a *conventional interruption*:

1a. The *second turn* (the listeners' shouts "Long live the Duce!") is performed by *minimal* means (exclamation).

1b. It can be categorized in simple dual terms (approval rather than disapproval), but its *correlation* with the previous speaker's turn is predominantly *indexical*: although the exclamations are "invited" (Atkinson 1985: 409-410)—i.e., uttered in relation to the content of the speech immediately after Mussolini's praises to the proletarian sympathizers of fascism—they as such gloss over this topic and instead refer to the speaker himself.

1c. In reinforcement of ceremonial rules valid for the current setting, the *third turn incorporates the second turn* into the dialogue on the basis of its *minimality* (non-interference), although the explicit approval of the speaker by his audience and correlation (mostly indexical) of the *second turn* with the *first turn* plays some role as well. Praising or ostracizing, the audience's replica is too short and

undemanding to elicit a response, let alone to influence the content of the next turn. Accordingly, the prevalence of self-selection is manifest both in the topical correlation of the *third turn* (the tirade on the role of labor in the 19th century) with the *first turn* and in the first speaker's nonchalance of the *second turn*.

3. Lastly, the third example illustrates conventional non-interruption:

1a. The *second turn* (listeners' standing ovation, singing of the *International* and exclamation "Hurray!", "Hurray to comrade Stalin!", "Hurray to the Great Stalin!", "Hurray to the Great genius comrade Stalin!", "Viva!", "Rot Front!", "Glory to comrade Stalin!") is performed by differently coded and qualitatively extensive means which connective potential is, however, *minimal*: no response is required or even expected.

1b. It can be categorized in simple dual terms (approval rather than disapproval), and its *correlation* with the previous speaker's turn is *indexical*, as in the Mussolini case. But, unlike the previous example, this indexicality is not relative but absolute (or at least close to absoluteness). Indeed, in (1) the *second turn* starts in response to the mere appearance of silent Stalin on the tribune, preceding communication of any non-indexical information to the audience.

1c. In contrast to the two previous examples, the *second turn* is not incorporated by the *third turn* into the structure of the dialogue, and this non-incorporation seems to be an intentional technique aimed at maximizing the ceremonial character of the exchange. In particular, this maximization upgrades pre-allocation of turns from general tendency to an inviolable rule and extends it to the "spontaneous" elements of a dialogue (such as ovation or exclamations of approval). This is achieved not only by the likely scripting of the whole exchange, but by placing the *second turn* to the very last position in the dialogue (as in (2)), so that its incorporation is prevented the very interactional frame of the ceremony. Together with the evi-

dent invariance of *second turns* in (1) and (2), their position on the margins of Stalin's speech leads to complete dissociation between the adjacent turns: their connection seems to hinge solely on the all-embracing indexical reference of audience to the speaker.

One should be cautious not to over-interpret this small sample, which heuristic value at this stage consists mainly of singling out improbabilities (scenario 3 was not found in Churchill's or Mussolini's public appearances at times of their respective leaderships, and scenario 1 is absent from Stalin's rhetorical activity in his capacity of Secretary General). Nevertheless, if provisionally accepted as representative, the sample confirms the findings of the previous chapter. As with role exchange, turn-taking seems to function differently in communicative subsystems of "democratic" and "non-totalitarian" societies.

In the former case, the mutual reinforcement of interactional and social inequality is prevented by equilibration practices that set communicative values against political ones. Winston R. Churchill, the Prime Minister of Great Britain and a designated speaker in his House of Commons appearance on May 22nd, 1941, reacts to the question of his political adversary from the Left by adjusting *ad libitum* the content of his speech to the topic of the inquiry. Repeated a couple of sentences later one more time ("*I certainly will [...] I certainly will send good wishes of the House*"), this adjustment ensures not only the topical relevance of the turn change but grants temporary leadership in a dialogue to its communicatively and politically underprivileged party.

Joseph Stalin, by contrast, displays the same unity of corporeal, communicative and political supremacy that was preventing role exchange on various levels. Firstly, the only relevance in turn-taking between the Soviet leader and his audiences is built upon the audience's indexical reference to the speaker's body (Plamper 2003; Rolf 2004): in effect, this renders the symbolic information transmitted in natural language irrelevant. Secondly, the placement of the audience response outside of the speaker's narrative eliminates even the theoretical obstacles to his perpetual self-selection, widening the gap between the topical organization of the speaker's turns and the indexical organization of the audience responses. This absolutization of communicative supremacy as a thinly veiled metonymy for political power is evident in the press coverage of the 8th Congress of Soviet, where Stalin on November 25th, 1936 presenting the new Soviet Constitution to the delegates: during the

Congress, the party newspaper *Pravda* almost exclusively refers to the Soviet leader as “the speaker” (“докладчик”) whose audience extends to the “whole country” and then eventually to “the whole world”.³

Looking at this example, it is hard to avoid the impression that transmission of new information between the leader and the followers through channels with high throughput capacity (natural language being one of them) is a low priority for totalitarian communication. Rather, it is the circulation of the same pair of familiar messages affirming—depending on the viewpoint—protection or loyalty and expressed in incontestable, unequivocal non-verbal terms which gets the upper hand in the communicative process (for a general perspective, see: Barker 2001: 83; Leese 2007: 631). It is perhaps understandable that the political system containing so many asymmetries and so few mechanisms of their harmonization, stakes at reducing information flows in order to minimize the emerging complexity and maintain autopoietic closeness and homeostatic stability. (Indeed, even the better balanced systems of a similar kind react to the maximum tension by sticking to the familiar script: this is, for instance, the case of American politics at the climax of presidential electoral cycle when the candidate’s reiteration of “convictions” values higher than consistency of any kind (see: Lempert 2009: 233). But it seems also predictable that uncontrolled repetitiveness bordering on circularity, utter neglect of symbolic codes and weak differentiation between action and communication, messages and messengers start at a certain point posing serious obstacles for transmitting systemically relevant information.

One of the serial problems caused by this unorthodox distribution of contingency and stability within the system is the malfunctioning of its feedback chains—the problem generally known for its destructive potential (Wiener 1948: 235). When the more or less extensive ideological message, sent from leader to followers, undergoes reality check and comes back enriched with some relevant environmental data, the automatisms of simple indexical codes, coupled with the atrophy of complexer abstract references, sometimes present the original replica in a curiously distorted form. On a general level of code management, the fusion of concrete individuals with their political functions (leaders/followers) and communicative roles (speakers/listeners) encouraged indiscriminate (and wasteful) code-switching, common for all commu-

3 | Hitler’s discursive performance, by contrast, is presented in German media as a barely distinguishable part of his general activity (see my other article in this volume).

nication contexts centered on power maintenance (Jan 2003; see also: Gorham 2003).

Consequently, in the followers reception of the leader's political speech, all three preconditions of understanding between communicators (physical co-presence, normatively describable social distance, and conventionally coded semantics of the message) are jumbled up. This confusion of different codes is detectable on various levels of language, including the basal subject-predicate relations within a sentence. Thus in a published sample of 43 letters addressed by Soviet citizens to their leaders in 1937, the new soviet Constitution, passed at the 8th Congress of Soviets, is mentioned 10 times (Livshin, Orlov and Khlevniuk 2002: 325-392). While only a half of these references is *thematically* related to the source text (including one mistaken and two very unspecific references to "rights" and "freedoms"), *all* of the references *indexically* link the soviet General Law to the speaker who introduced it at the Congress ("Сталинская Конституция"). The latter word combination brings to mind the similar neologisms in Nazi vocabulary (from *Führereinsatz* to *Führerprinzip*), all incongruously combining the routine indexical reference to the leader's unique personality with just about any governmental activity or norm, big or important enough to justify indisputable sanction (the lists are provided in: Berning 1964: 244-247; Brackmann 1988: 77-78).

This data attests to the persistence of stabilizing communication outside of ceremonial context which, ironically, leads to the even bigger instability as the perfunctory reproduction of *protection/loyalty* exchange, common in rituals (Chwe 2001: 29; specifically for Stalinist rule see: Kertzer 1988: 181; Glebkin 1998: 93; Brooks 2000: 67), spins out of control: sticking to this trodden circular route, feedback messages fail to feed the center of the system with the crucial information about its borderline areas. This growing semantic gap between socially relevant turns in communication exchanges leaves explosive amounts of information on both ends of the system unprocessed (Hoffmann 1969; Hoffmann 1973: 203; Barry 1994: 93), so that its mere storing, let alone transporting to the top of the system, becomes a risky affair. The pressure of this risk might explain the unceasing construction of redundant and ever more secretive feedback channels, firewalled from the environment and, increasingly, from the system itself (Rosenfeldt 1991: 145). The case in point was the simultaneity of Stalin's consolidation of personal power and his personalization of security service control (see the most recent survey and analysis in: Khlevniuk 2008: 248-271). But even this single-

handed management of system was showing breakup tendencies (Rees 2002: 208), so that at the end of his rule Stalin, if we are to believe Nikita Khrushchev, mistrusted himself no less than everyone else (Khrushchev 1971: 84).

* * *

Although it has been already hinted at the link between the human ability to exchange roles and the citizens' right to retroactively adjust unfitting remarks or gestures to the situation, the same connection could perhaps be better described *a contrario*. It seems like one of the reasons for the staunch resistance of ritualistic practices to cast substitution is their semiotic underdevelopment, which reveals itself in the absolute prevalence of the whole over its parts (Rappaport 1999: 151). The fact that rituals are not to be interrupted or rolled back is probably due to the fact that their semantics cannot be subdivided into replaceable symbols with generic meanings (Baiburin 1993: 14). Indeed, the continuous script of a ritual imitates the irreversible flow of a "natural" (dissipative) system, and its halt or replay would be synonymous to death: spontaneous "backward-looking" duplication of human identity, common in reflexive thinking and repairing actions (such as apologies), has no place in rites and ceremonies.

This anthropological given makes probable the positive correlation between the resistance to role exchange and the banishment of *repairs* from social practice. The top-down argument in favor of this correlation is plausible but rather trivial and of questionable systemic relevance. Confession, the best-known institutional practice of social repair adapted in part by legal systems, had explicit "primary frameworks" (secular or sacred law) and a relatively stable pragmatic efficiency: few notable exceptions aside, every apology uttered in a European court or a confessional would improve the chances for freedom, life or at least salvation (Dülmen 1997: 45). But as soon as the explicitness, intersubjectivity and latency of norms succumbs to the self-referentiality of leaders' discourse—as was the case with the "laws" of history and nature invented by the Third Reich ideologues (Arendt 1958: 474, 477)—the number of communicative agents qualified for repair shrinks accordingly. Unsurprisingly, the banishment of other-correction on a large scale excludes it from public communication and turns backwards the timing of the remedial procedure: the conflict between social norm and

individual violation is reduced to the discrepancy between the *speaker now* and the *speaker then*, which is invariably resolved in favor of the most recent (i.e. most ideologically pertinent or strategically advantageous) position. A case in point is the history of Communist party, which was rewritten five times in fifteen years (1923-1938) in order to retroactively adjust the canonized (normative) past to the swelling of absolutism, complemented by the steady growth of the internal enemies' circle (Wolfe 1969: 296).

It seems like the opposite, bottom-up perspective on confession might shed more light on the systemic differentiations of communication in “democratic” and “totalitarian” systems by bringing into view the group of interaction agents, temporarily or permanently disadvantaged in social, political and communicative sense. Overall, the differentiation between body and social status, or between social status and communicative role seems to be the minimal precondition for the “second-order communication”—reflexivity needed for successful repair (Harré and Langenhove 1992: 396; Baecker 1999: 188): for instance, the imaginary “return” to the original state which existed before the awkward move, wrong deed or false assertion presupposes the unchangeable core of the subject (for example, its bodily integrity) which guarantees the validity of self-reference throughout the repairing process (for a summary of relevant theories see: Postoutenko 2007; Postoutenko 2010). But as long as body is indistinguishable from social status (as in Nazi racist ethnocracy), or social status is invariably tied to political role (as in Bolshevik proletarian dictatorship), the productive reflexivity of excuse ceases to exist (see respectively: Poliakov, Delacampagne and Girard 1976; Ennker 1996: 112-113; Werth 1999: 42). In such a context, the remedial communication of the “enemy” is refused any informational value and treated as yet another hostile action (Kharkhordin 2002: 52-53; Studer 2003). Small wonder that under this circumstances, repairs disappear from all but the lowest levels of interactional systems on both ends of communication. The following examples contrast this disappearance with the “normal” practices.

1. (Franklin D. Roosevelt): “And here and now I invite these nominal Republicans who find that their conscience cannot be squared with the groping and the failure of their party leaders to join hands with us” (Roosevelt 1932: 71);
2. (Adolf Hitler): “Meine Prophezeiung wird ihre Erfüllung finden,

dass durch diesen Krieg nicht die arische Menschheit vernichtet, sondern der Jude ausgerottet werden wird" (Hitler 1942, 116);

3. (Nikolai Bukharin): "Всем видно мудрое руководство страной, которое обеспечено Сталиным. С этим сознанием я жду приговора. Дело не в личных переживаниях раскаявшегося врага, а в расцвете СССР, в его международном значении" (Iodkovskii 1938: 344).

Ostensibly, it is precisely the dualism of human nature staking personal identity as an anchor of stability (*essential goodness of human being*) against its mistaken moral (*bad consciousness*) and political (*nominal Republicanism*) stance, which allows Roosevelt to suggest reconciliation via self-correction to the bitter political rival. For Hitler, by contrast, the essential faultiness of *Untermensch* makes any further differentiation pointless, any search for reversible social and political attributes misplaced and, ultimately, any self- or other correction deceptive. The last word of Nicholai Bukharin at his 1938 show trial, presents an even more curious case of non-differentiation: one of the most respected followers of Lenin refuses—in defiance of the legal tradition and common sense—to make any personal statement disputing fantastic accusations mounted against him, or at least hinting at self-correction in the future. Instead, the broken-down Bolshevik invalidates his own possible remedial statement by adopting the stance of prosecution, including not only its derisive language but also its interactional stance and even grammatical form, addressing himself in the third person ("*It's not about the personal feelings of the repentant enemy*"). At this point not only the equilibrium of the adversary trial, questionable from the start, falls apart, but the mere distribution of interactional roles turns into a perfunctory formality.

But the paradoxes of totalitarian communication arguably go beyond this simplified polarization of interactional stances, taking their roots in excessive and misapplied stabilization mechanisms of the system in general. The wobbly asymmetrical construction of authoritarian state was further destabilized by its multiple hyperbolic reenactment in communication process, but the frantic attempts to control this colossus with feet of clay by eliminating all uncertainty and doubt were automatically blocking the production of information (Shannon and Weaver 1949: 13; Cherry 1966: 171). As a result, the overdetermined and still imbalanced communicative system consisting of unchangeable roles, inflexible turn-allocation and irreparable interactional spheres was re-

duced to ceaselessly copycatting its past stability. Being out of touch with its own environment (Rittersporn, Behrends and Rolf 2003: 35), totalitarian communication could neither preempt nor adapt to external challenges and internal ruptures: the loyalty of Soviet media, for instance, was only partially useful, because they were increasingly seen by readers as “uninformative” (Dzirkals, Guistafson and Johnson 1982: 67). For such and similar reasons, perhaps, it ended up dissipating into nonviable subsystems with little relation to each other: the fruitless search of Kremlinologists for esoteric communication in Soviet media attests not so much to the misleading lastingness of the Soviet façade as to its rotten interior (Dzirkals, Guistafson and Johnson 1982: 69).

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Hierarchies

Stalinist Rule and Its Communication Practices

An Overview

LORENZ ERREN

In the present article, I will attempt to outline the communicative aspect of Stalin's dictatorship and pose for discussion a number of conclusions I reached while writing my dissertation (Erren 2008). Throughout the text, the concepts of "social relationship", "power", and "domination" [Herrschaft] will be based on the classical definitions of Max Weber. Following Niklas Luhmann, I will furthermore presuppose that social relationships, power, and domination can be established only by means of communication, while stressing the fact that under Stalin the latter largely took place in the context of a "public of physically present individuals".

***Obshchestvennost'* in Social Space and Historical Context**

The Soviet Union inherited the forms of communication and media formats that emerged in the constitutional states of the nineteenth century, where, according to Habermas, they constituted a rational, discursive "liberal public sphere" [*bürgerliche Öffentlichkeit*]. With some delay, this development also occurred in late Tsarist Russia (Habermas 1962; Hagen 1982). The dictatorship of the Bolsheviks eliminated these early beginnings. Yet even after the October Revolution, elections, popular referenda, legal hearings, Party and trade union meetings, demonstrations, newspapers, theater performances, and scientific debates all shaped

public life—without, however, constituting a “liberal public sphere”. Why then did the Bolsheviks make such efforts to keep these forms of participation alive? The allusion to a pseudo-democratic façade is as insufficient an explanation as the suggestion that they could hardly abolish the representative bodies that had mandated the political takeover in 1917 and to which the Soviet state owed its name (Carson 1956).

My thesis holds that Stalin’s political achievement consisted in his ability to create a new type of public sphere based on the inherited forms of participation. This public sphere allowed him to control, modify, and destroy social relationships and to refashion them according to his own views. Similarly to other dictators with paranoid tendencies, Stalin viewed all social relationships as potential sources of an oppositional ill will that was directed against him. The communicative structure that allowed him to avert this danger was Soviet *obshchestvennost’*. Throughout the present article, this concept will be used to refer to the local public sphere, organized and controlled by the respective Party authorities, in which the entire loyal Soviet population was meant to participate. The term was first widely used in the context of educational institutions and in those cases where the usual discourse of “Party work” or the “proletarian masses” seemed inappropriate. In the late 1930s, it belonged to the standard vocabulary of the central press. It was commonly prefixed with an adjective: *nauchnaia obshchestvennost’*, for instance, would thus designate the entirety of scientists, professors, and students who were organized in a specifically Soviet manner (see, for instance, the list of references in: Demidov 1999: 253-263).

The most important element of *obshchestvennost’* were the notorious meetings conducted in all Soviet institutions. Before describing their modes of operation in more detail, we must determine more precisely the place of *obshchestvennost’* in social space and historical context. It was initially implemented only in places where the Bolsheviks had already firmly established their rule, where they were in full control of the police as well as financial and media-related means of power, and where the above-mentioned forms of participation already existed. At first, this was only the case in large cities, where the population (especially clerks, laborers, employees, and students) could be integrated into the new public sphere in a relatively quick and uncomplicated manner. There the regime could rely on the corporate and administrative apparatus, as well as on mass organizations such as Party, trade union, and *Komsomol*. In the provinces, villages, and non-Russian borderlands, this integration was accomplished much later and only with great effort.

Soviet meetings and elections always played a significant role in this process (see: Alekseev 1929: 316-408; Anweiler 1958; Carson 1956; Leng 1973; Zaitseff 1925: 383-392; Bohn 2008: 524-549). They differed from Western parliaments in the absence of clear statutes and functions. Having emerged from meetings of striking soldiers and workers in 1917, they resembled a kind of “permanent national uprising” during the first years. Physical presence was of greater importance than the rules of procedure. Even after the introduction of the first Soviet constitution in 1918 the assemblies of the Soviets retained their meeting-like character (Gimpel’son 1995: 27). In the 1920s, the Bolsheviks viewed Soviet elections and assemblies as a “school” of political education (Carson 1956: 12; Kim 1965: 7). They perceived the election campaigns as a welcome means of gradually integrating the rural world and the Asian periphery into the Soviet communication space (Kuchkin 1962; Kukushkin 1968). The casting of votes did not occur in private, but by show of hands during election meetings. However, the Party also required the deputies to account for their work at these campaigns (Anonymous 1928d: 4). The propaganda organs viewed the representatives’ duty to personally justify themselves to the voters as proof that Soviet elections were more democratic than the parliamentary voting system (Anonymous 1935b; see also Zlatopolskii 1982: 240-250). In the 1930s, these public reports in turn took the character of solemn ritual events.

The right to vote became of great significance for the process of integration in yet another context. Anyone who had belonged to the “propertied classes”, tsarist officialdom, or the clergy, or whom the regime mistrusted for other reasons, was deprived of his voting rights and classified as a “socially alien element”. He was denied membership in the Party, the *Komsomol*, and trade unions, as well as the prospect of an attractive workplace or admission to a university. The population was thereby given a clear sign that the revolutionary struggle was continuing. Only those in possession of the right to vote could integrate themselves into Soviet *obshchestvennost’*. It was highly significant that the possession of the right to vote, of all things, became the criterion for distinguishing between loyal citizens and presumed “enemies”.

The “Great Terror” of the 1930s affected different groups of people in very different ways, depending on the nature and degree of their social integration. Groups that were poorly integrated into the “Socialist public sphere” due to their “alien” class origins or other “shortcomings,” which exhibited a large number of “alien elements”, or belonged to certain ethnicities, were increasingly likely to become victims of so-called “mass

actions” or ethnic cleansing. The largest mass operation was initiated through “operative command No. 00447” of July 30th, 1937, which allowed for the execution and arrest of nearly 270,000 citizens. Apart from the disenfranchised, the other victims of the countless mass arrests, deportations, and executions carried out by the secret services included farmers who resisted the collectivization (the so-called *kulaks*), countless ethnic groups, and eventually such fringe groups as the homeless. Members of this group of victims were typically accused of an anti-Soviet attitude, but not necessarily of plotting terrorist attacks.

On the other hand, social spaces that were closer to the center, had long been integrated into *obshchestvennost'*, and were generally not susceptible to “mass actions” (such as the state apparatus, professors, the personnel of important industrial firms and, not least, the Party elite itself) became the site of the “witch hunts” that Western scholarship has not entirely correctly defined as “purges” for some decades. Such searches explicitly focused on members of terrorist organizations who had cunningly “disguised” themselves as loyal Soviet citizens and were allegedly planning the murders of Stalin and his comrades-in-arms. The first of these campaigns of exposure was triggered in late 1934 by the fatal attack on the Leningrad Party leader Sergei Kirov. Within institutions close to Party and state, the smoothness of procedures was ensured not only by police and military means, such as registration cards, prisons, freight trains, and barbed wire, but also through the mechanisms of *obshchestvennost'*. All loyal Soviet subjects were obligated to participate in the “exposing” of “enemies, infiltrators, saboteurs, conspirators, and terrorists in disguise” by denouncing colleagues and superiors, or at least retrospectively approving of their arrest. According to the current state of knowledge, it is difficult to determine to what extent the outcome of Soviet meetings influenced the NKVD in its choice of victims. Here it suffices to point out that *obshchestvennost'* supplied the state security services with insider knowledge and social support.

Both approaches, discretely executed mass actions and the public “exposure of the enemy” alike, were directed less against the affected individuals than against the milieus and relationship networks which the regime considered potentially conducive to political opposition. In order to better survey these social landscapes, the regime carried out large-scale eliminations [*Flurbereinigungen*].

Even though *obshchestvennost'* only rarely became an arena for paranoid hunts of harmful subjects after 1938, its significance continued to increase. Until the period of *Perestroika*, it remained the most effective

instrument for the complete domination of society. It guaranteed that the regime would only have to resort to physical force in rare cases. It supported Party functionaries, factory directors, and department chairmen alike in disciplining individual members of staff. At the same time, *obshchestvennost'* allowed the regime to control whether and how successfully these officials carried out their own executive functions.

The Public Assembly (Versammlungsöffentlichkeit)

Soviet *obshchestvennost'* constituted itself by means of the assembly. All governmental and societal institutions, from the *Komsomol* group and the city council to the helm of the Party, regularly conducted meetings. Together with other forms of communication, such as wall newspapers, company bulletins, local daily news, demonstrations, and collective sponsorships, *obshchestvennost'* formed a large continuum: staff meetings were covered in newspaper articles, whose content could in turn become the topic of the next meeting. Categories of public law were largely irrelevant to this process. Questions of ordinance, jurisdiction, eligibility, and correct procedure were rarely deemed worthy of consideration.

From a formal perspective, many of these meetings corresponded to the types of committees that are found in liberal constitutional states as well. And yet their purpose was different. Whereas public authorities and enterprises in liberal societies expect their committees to ensure the competent, smooth, and above all discreet solution of any problems, Stalinist *obshchestvennost'* was primarily an institution of the political public sphere. Here, grievances were to be addressed vocally and conflicts to be resolved publicly. It was characteristic of the Stalinist assembly to outgrow its original function and sphere of competence, and to permit itself to comment on issues of world politics such as the Spanish Civil War. All the more so, it was concerned with problems that were actually relevant to a certain environment. In terms of its structure, these events were rather flexible and could easily be enriched with other forms of communication. Depending on the occasion, the assembly could assume the character of a parliamentary debate, a court hearing, a memorial service, an exam, or a school lesson.

The direction of *obshchestvennost'* was essentially incumbent upon the official functionaries of each Party cell. Apart from the cell itself, which consisted of members and candidates, they attended to a network

of other organizations, such as trade unions, the *Komsomol*, the “village poor”, as well as occasional initiative groups, whose members were invited to participate in “open Party meetings”. These officials’ reports to the higher authorities show that they understood themselves as organizers who were required to “incorporate” as many eligible people as possible into political life and who were pleased whenever they could report active participation in a high number of events. Occasionally, the quality of Party work in cells at the local level was comprehensively evaluated. A key concept of Party activism was “attentiveness”. This meant that good Party secretaries—in contrast to “ossified bureaucrats”—did not simply study files, but were expected to dedicate themselves to the people as well. In practice, officials attempted to fulfill this demand by coercing citizens in their sphere of responsibility to participate in assemblies, or even to become members in a Soviet organization.

Since hardly anyone could evade this pressure of integration in the long run, scholars and historians of the Soviet Union have frequently described the practice of meetings as an “artificial staging” or a “meaningless ritual”. In my view, however, the term “performative” (or “performance”) is more adequate. It similarly refers to the dramatics and theatricality of the spectacle, but without prematurely characterizing the latter as “artificial” or “inauthentic”. The term originates in linguistics. In the context of speech act theory, it designates statements that simultaneously describe and carry out an action, such as binding agreements, for instance. Even if it occurs in a disingenuous or coerced manner, the validity of the act is not necessarily compromised. Stalinist assemblies consisted of a succession of such performative acts. They served as the stage on which subjects had to “speak Bolshevik” or “act Soviet”, i.e. to articulate an individual standpoint in politically correct language. Everyone realized that the request to speak (whether it was meant “sincerely” or not) could have serious consequences for oneself and others, and that one could be called upon to justify statements to both the authorities and one’s environment. Actors and audience were identical; uninvolved spectators did not exist. On occasion, the plot was highly dramatic, but never fictional. The assembly was the space where the grand social drama was demonstrated and made comprehensible on a small scale, and where abstract concepts of propaganda were filled with concrete meaning.

The public assembly ensured that the Soviet authorities would not carry out their sometimes delicate assignments as “mechanical, soulless apparatuses”, but as vital corporations held together by ties of personal

obligation. At the same time, it served as an instrument of qualitative “demoscopy”. It did not conduct opinion polls and was incapable of supplying the authorities with exact statistical data. However, the assemblies provided them with enough opportunities for taking their subjects to task, provoking and pitting them against one another, and for attentively reading their faces in the process.

Political Loyalty

The most important task of the assemblies remained avoiding the emergence of opposition and providing the regime with social support. Earlier and more consistently than Carl Schmitt, the Bolsheviks understood politics of any kind as the differentiation between friend and enemy. Not only their political language, but the structure of their newly created public sphere as well was designed with the goal of continually reproducing this contrast. Whoever integrated himself into *obshchestvennost'* knew that he was thereby entering the “halls of glory” and exposing himself to a permanent compulsion to confess. Demonstrations, commemorative events, voluntary subbotnik shifts, or membership in Party-affiliated organizations (*Komsomol*, *OSOAVIAKHIM*, the Union of House Wives, and others) all represented relatively convenient opportunities to demonstrate one's political loyalty. However, Soviet propaganda demanded support “not only in word, but in deed as well”. This could encompass participation in “Socialist competition” and the “voluntary” subscription to government bonds, but also personal commitment to the enforcement of political measures such as collectivization. In the end, “deeds” referred to performative acts in the above-mentioned sense of speech act theory. Just as in democratic parliaments, the rule of the majority applied during political votes in the Soviet assemblies—with the fundamental difference, however, that the minority no longer enjoyed immunity. The transition of the Party from an unprejudiced culture of discussions and elections to a “monolithic” closeness was completed in the course of the 1920s. At that time, the Stalinist majority first illegalized the Trotskyite minority through the prohibition of fractions and then outvoted, expelled, and finally arrested its members. Nearly all Party members who had voted for the opposition even a single time after 1922 were later shot (Daniels 1962). This approach was of paradigmatic significance not only for the Party, but for all of *obshchestvennost'*. Those who did not wish to

become “Trotskyist” martyrs had to agree with the majority vote during political elections, which therefore almost always ended unanimously.

Stalin was virtually obsessed with all procedures that resulted in the political taking of sides, the formation of camps, and decisive votes. It is difficult to determine whether he actually believed that Lenin’s former comrades-in-arms were “enemy conspirators” who intended to assassinate him. It is clear, however, that he demanded proofs of loyalty from his followers and subjects that hardly fell short of those of the Old Testament God. Under Stalin, the political vote was not a civil decision-making process, but a matter of life and death. It symbolized not the fight between Stalin and his opponents, but was part of this struggle. It is therefore no coincidence that the politburo initiated the terrorist “mass actions” at the same time as the constitution overturned the voting rights restrictions that had been valid until then. One enabled the other: the “enemies” were no longer prevented from forming independent political will by legal, but by terrorist means.

Even the admissions of guilt which were demanded of Trotskyites and “right-wing dissenters” were essentially nothing else than the belated retraction of a “false” vote. But their hopes of using such retractions to reintegrate themselves into the Party would be satisfied only temporarily. In the long run, their increasingly submissive expressions of remorse did nothing but allow the propaganda to portray them as “two-faced hypocrites”. Stalin’s paranoid obsession with the notion that each drastic measure and every true advance would inevitably generate “hostile” resistance and require violent reassertion, was enacted a thousand times over in the assemblies. Where opposition failed to manifest itself, the leaders of *obshchestvennost’* knew enough ways to incite dispute through unpopular suggestions and to antagonize their audience until someone was finally provoked to an expression of disagreement. The individual could then promptly be declared an “enemy” and “defeated” in an exemplary manner. The same regime which at other times indifferently accepted the death of thousands, ascribed to each individual, however insignificant or weak, a grotesquely exaggerated importance during political elections. Whoever actually or allegedly took the side of the “enemy” during a vote would immediately attract the attention of high-ranking Party authorities. Even school children who had made ambiguous statements were occasionally forced to formally confess their guilt, to distance themselves from their actions, and to vow self-improvement (see examples in: Erren 2008: 234-235).

Skilled Party activists were intent on finding morally trustworthy wit-

nesses for the prosecution. Authority figures were to be attacked not by just anyone, but by individuals whose statements carried weight, i.e. by their previously closest co-workers, their favorite students, their best friends, and their spouse. This was to occur not anonymously, but “before the eyes of the whole world”. Such an arrangement had the piquant side effect of morally discrediting entire groups of people even on the basis of traditional norms; they thereby lost their ability to convincingly represent oppositional viewpoints. The fact that Party members not only approved the arrests of millions of people during the notorious assemblies, but generally accepted these arrests with almost no objections, speaks to the skillfulness of Stalin’s methods.

Scholarship often expresses the notion that such meetings primarily aimed at establishing a “truth” about the persons involved. This is only true in a very specific sense. The very structure of the assembly made it unsuitable for conducting insightful biographical or psychological research. In my view, the interest in the personal history of individuals was largely a pretext; it was of greater importance to determine how someone would act in the future. The “personal truth” in question was not elicited, but *produced* in this process: the individual turned into the “Stalinist subject” in the context of a conflict of loyalties, during which the individual had to decide between the interests of the regime and his fellow man, between career opportunities and one’s moral integrity. From that point on, the “truth” about any individual was firmly established by each of his decisions (for a similar account, see: Kharakhordin 1999: 164-175). The later dissident movement arose from the desire to morally resist this type of corruption.

Between Ritualization and Escalation *Obshchestvennost’* in Everyday Life

The history of the public assembly in Russia consistently reflects the traditionally complicated relationship between the center of power and local government authorities (see in details: Rosenfeldt 1990; Rees 2002). Local leaders usually made efforts to suppress or control public communication in their own sphere of responsibility. In order to accurately assess the psychological effect of the above-described assemblies, one must consider that strict authoritarian measures were generally taken for granted in Russo-Soviet administrative and labor relations, and that public criticism of superiors amounted to the flagrant violation of a

taboo. During the NEP years, even Communist Party secretaries, Soviet state officials, and “red” directors were inclined to believe that public disputes could only harm their institutions. While they could not simply abolish the institutions of *obshchestvennost'* which had been introduced during the Revolution, they were generally powerful enough to keep them under control. If anywhere, this proved difficult in the factories of the capital. The workforce there was accustomed to the representation of their interests through trade union. As a result, the postulate of “workers’ power” was occasionally interpreted to mean that foremen and other superiors in “bourgeois” attire were no longer in a position to give them orders. Sergei Iarov has described how even in these places the authorities were able to subdue workers with a paternalistic carrot-and-stick strategy. The regime increasingly reacted to strikes with lockouts and arrests, while local management disciplined their personnel with wage differentiation and the threat of dismissal. In doing so, factory managers could firmly count on the support of Party and trade union officials, who gave priority to the increase of production. If union officials paid any attention to the interests of workers at all, they were concerned with the quick and discreet resolution of conflicts. The workers soon realized that supplicating led to greater results than striking. During wage disputes they continued to defend their position in “heated debates” with the management, but always unanimously accepted their resolutions at the end of a meeting (Iarov 2006: 500-501; Ul’ianova 2001: 155).

During the NEP years, company meetings were held only rarely and not regarded very seriously. Factory supervisors preferred not to make an appearance at all, but the workers, too, were prudent enough to refrain from participating (Schattenberg 2002: 103; Schröder 1988: 116). Wall newspapers were in effect subject to pre-censorship.

No one was outraged in the least that officials were distributing elected offices at their own discretion and thereby confidently defying all conceivable organizational guidelines. No one except Stalin. When he initiated the “Great Turn” in 1928, he accused local officials of having, among other things, disregarded procedural regulations and thereby the dictates of “managerial”, “trade-union” and “Party-internal democracy”. The propaganda of the time alleged that “bourgeois” and “right-wing opportunist” officials deliberately mistreated workers in order to foment anti-Soviet sentiment. In order to put an end to activities of this kind, the new regulations demanded that every proletarian be given the opportunity to use his voting rights and to “express criticism” in wall newspapers and assemblies at any time, without any risk, and in an uncensored

manner. Thereafter, Soviet institutions were required to provide evidence proving that they “practiced democracy” according to the rules. In some places, charts were used to document how often each factory conducted meetings and how many workers had vocally participated in them (Ingulov 1928: 44-45). Party and trade union officials who had been summarily appointed were subsequently required to formally run for public office.

The authorities in charge searched for ways to comply with these demands while simultaneously avoiding escalation. They required workers to discuss critical contributions with the company or union management prior to the beginning of an assembly (see: Anonymous 1928: 1.7). It was generally considered necessary to first instruct workers on how to appropriately present any justified criticisms politely and in the proper form. Criticism should not be broad, but instead always address concrete grievances (see: Anonymous 1928c). Some institutions introduced the rule that only the lower authorities, up to the *raion* committee, could be criticized, while those superior to it were off limits (Ingulov 1928: 29-40).

The central press mocked such efforts, while simultaneously sending an equivocal message. On the one hand, it argued, “criticism from below” could only make professional life more transparent and thereby more efficient. On the other hand, the press also expressed hope that workers’ criticism would expose numerous “bourgeois opportunists” or even “saboteurs” among leading members of the personnel. Yet it was not so easy to break the workers’ reserve in 1929. They often responded to calls for criticism by requesting guarantees of immunity (Alikhanov 1928: 119). Eventually, the propaganda organs made it quite clear that they were intent on provoking scandal as such. The latter arose as soon as important Party authorities decided to participate in the organization of “workers’ criticism” themselves. They did so, for instance, by guaranteeing their support to controlling organizations such as the “Workers’ and Farmers’ Inspection” or the “light cavalry”. While public criticism was supposed to remain “objective” and “constructive”, it often devolved into a spectacle of exposure in practice. The head of the Workers’ and Farmer’s Inspection, Stalin’s friend Ordzhonikidze, for instance, spoke enthusiastically about a group of *Komsomoltsy* who had “inspected” an institution and subsequently published portraits of employees who, in their view, worked “too bureaucratically” (*Izvestiia*, December 21st, 1928, 2-3).

Stalin expected his Party functionaries to be prepared to demonstrate

the meaning of the current Party line to the organs of *obshchestvennost'* under their supervision, by means of punishments that were skillfully designed to set examples. The regime was far from satisfied when in 1929 the Ukrainian Federation of Labor Unions dissolved numerous local committees that had been improperly elected. While it was pleased with the result, it disapproved of the way it had been achieved. In its view, the Federation first should have summoned large assemblies, encouraged workers to express criticism, and relieved the officials of their offices only afterwards and before a large audience (*Izvestiia*, December 6th, 1928, 3).

Because Stalin believed that the atmosphere in both administrative agencies and factories was generally far too harmonious (the propaganda organs would lament the “lack of self-criticism” and “vigilance”), he repeatedly ordered comprehensive “purgings” (*chistki, proverki*) to be carried out. These were effective not because of the expulsion (or even arrest) of large groups of people, but due to the embarrassing manner of their implementation. A *chistka* meant that all issues pertaining to the personnel were to be publically discussed. Every employee or Party member was required to account before the collective for his social origin, political biography, professional qualifications, behavior at the workplace, as well as for his private life. The lively participation of the public was expressly desired, especially whenever the goal was to expose and punish “careerist and over-bureaucratized elements”. In 1937, similar motives prompted the regime to conduct re-elections in both the Party and the Soviets. For once, voters were actually to be given the opportunity of publically criticizing officials and even voting them out of office. The press spitefully reported about meetings in which anyone was convicted of misrepresenting one’s past or of abusing one’s position of power.

During the 1930s, the willingness of employees to become involved in the processes of *obshchestvennost'* gradually increased. In the industrial sphere, it reached its peak in connection with the Stakhanovite movement, which was, after all, created for precisely this purpose. Dietmar Neutzat has impressively demonstrated how the regime managed to install a new, more effective model of dutifulness within the framework of *obshchestvennost'* on the construction site of the Moscow Metro (Neutzat 2001). Instead of silently obeying their superiors, enthusiastic young Communists explicitly expressed their agreement with the goals of state, Party, and company management. However, they also gave proof of their loyalty by complaining about the misconduct of superiors, by independently calling into question work procedures, by addressing delicate

issues and thereby also risking conflict. They unabashedly used public posters to ridicule colleagues as “idlers” and “deficit workers”. “Within brigades, groups, and shifts, the meetings or councils on productivity established a public sphere, which the Communists and *Komsomoltsy* utilized to affirm their decisions against the majority and to silence their opponents” (Neutatz 2001: 459). However, a psychological need for dramatization became evident not only in the explicit search for “saboteurs”, “spies” and “enemies”, but even in cases where the only goal was to increase productivity. Occasionally, workers would stage “Socialist competitions” in the form of sports events, at which the participants were urged on by their colleagues. The assemblies were also used to celebrate the outstanding achievements of individual brigades and to propagate their formulas for success (Neutatz 2001: 350-352).

Even engineers seem to have adopted a “dramatic” attitude toward their work under Stalin’s rule. They no longer saw their primary task in the organization of an always smooth and safe working process, but in risky experiments and the heroic mastery of unforeseen dangers and difficulties (see: Schattenberg 2002: 420-421).

It should be noted, however, that while company-internal hierarchies were unsettled by “purges”, “Socialist competitions” and “record chases”, they always retained their paternalistic character. Dramatic moments of hysteria and chaos were in turn followed by longer periods of stability. As soon as a new management group had firmly established itself, meetings would once again be conducted less commonly and in a far less scandalous manner. The organization of elections, the holding of competitions, the submission of useful criticism from below in the form of suggestions for improvement could all continue to occur, but under the guidance and direction of the responsible bosses. These leaders attempted to neutralize *obshchestvennost’* by means of ritualization.

As a consequence, factory collectives might occasionally send the “wise leader Stalin” a ceremonial speech that was composed in the Stalin palace of culture of the Stalin factory, located at the Stalin Square in the city of Stalinsk (Rolf 2007: 225-242).

The addressee himself had a rather ambivalent attitude toward such developments. Where unanimity had replaced all conflict, *obshchestvennost’* lost both its “connection with the masses” and its ability to establish legitimacy. Precisely this occurred during the long “stagnation” in the post-war decades. Even Stalin’s successors failed to break the cycle of ritualization and renewed escalation. Mikhail Gorbachev’s attempt to

revive *obshchestvennost'* through nonviolent democratization ultimately led to its disintegration.

***Obshchestvennost'* as an Educational Institution**

The gradual integration of the populace into *obshchestvennost'* also resulted in the universal pedagogization of public life. In the 1930s, at a time when workers were desperately needed everywhere and employees could hardly buy anything with bank notes alone, the mechanisms of the labor market had lost much of their disciplining effect. In this phase, the authorities learned how to utilize “Socialist competition”, comrades’ courts and public discussions about individual job performances as a means of leverage. Union officials spoke enthusiastically about the cathartic effect of public humiliation. Workers who had committed small thefts and remained unmoved by reprimands from their superiors reportedly burst into tears when taken to task by their colleagues. At such times, *obshchestvennost'* became the stage for touching scenes of repentance and exoneration, of the type contemporaries knew from the popular courtroom drama, which was widely popular at the time.

Stalin himself did not seem to have exceedingly high expectations for the methods of Socialist collective pedagogy that aimed at the wrongdoer’s re-integration. In any case, he enacted Draconian laws that mandated years of imprisonment for even the slightest tardiness or petty theft.

Nevertheless, a general tendency to solve conflicts and challenges through pedagogical rather than political means became apparent even prior to Stalin’s death. Ministers, school children, and writers all had to anticipate the possibility of being confronted with their sins and mistakes before a public of their peers. In such cases, it was wisest to apologize, vow improvement, and to appear generally ingenuous, unsuspecting, and submissive.

On the whole, however, the Stalinist dictatorship of education should not be understood as the project of creating a “new man” in the sense of revolutionary utopias. Central elements of these utopias—such as the need to overcome national identity, the abolishment of the family or abstinence from alcohol—were soon forgotten under Stalin’s rule. One can even argue that the concept of education effective in everyday life under Stalin was merely a byproduct of the failed attempt to condition society by threat of violence. Only once the regime realized that not all

problems disappeared with the elimination of “alien elements”, did it remember that its subjects—including school children—could also be regarded as objects of education.

According to Kaganovich, one should “not beat to death” the guilty, but “thrash” them only until they bettered themselves. His statement was meant reassuringly (*Izvestiia*, November 1st, 1929). Anyone who had not been declared an “enemy” was considered susceptible to education in this sense. “Education” encompassed all measures which the authorities took with regard to the people suited for education. Under Stalin, “education” was little more than a euphemistic circumscription of the overall treatment of people that were regarded as loyal. This concept of education was entirely redundant. In practice, education preferred to use methods that are generally attributed to “poisonous” or “black pedagogy” today (Rutschky 1997). In the process, brutal methods of deterrence continued to coexist with penitent rituals of humiliation. Nevertheless, the “educational principle” rapidly gained popularity among the subjects of the regime, since it gave anyone who had been reprimanded an opportunity to “get off lightly”: the more a Soviet citizen seemed to be in need of education, the less the authorities tended to ascribe his misconduct to political motives or “ill will”.

After much effort, the regime and its subjects found a common “Bolshevik” language on this wavelength. Stalin accepted the role of the “head of the household” and of the “benevolent father and teacher”, while the citizens acted out the role of harmless children. The legitimating model of the new system of communication was thus represented not by the enlightened, rational, and Communist *Produktionskollektiv* of emancipated “new men”, but by the patriarchal extended family.

Conclusion

Soviet *obshchestvennost'* was a form of communication among physically present individuals. In this, it most closely resembles the traditional village community or the pre-modern urban public sphere. The latter presupposed the physical presence or at least the quick accessibility of its participants. It thereby differed fundamentally from the mass media public sphere of liberal democracy, which is based on methods of distancing, de-personalization, and immunization such as newspapers, ballot boxes, and free parliamentary representation. While modern mass media existed in the Soviet Union as well, they did not produce

any distance: in order to become effective, the meaning of their message first had to be discussed, explained, and realized in the participatory public sphere of *obshchestvennost'*. Mandatory meetings—rather than the newspaper, radio ether, or the regulars' table at the local bar—were the decisive sounding board for political action. In the Soviet Union, important conflicts were resolved in social spaces that typically aspired towards discretion and harmony within the context of bourgeois life. In these spaces, where everything depended on binding positions rather than non-committal and anonymously collectable opinions, the regime consolidated its social base of support. Those in attendance could be forced to take sides in person. In this manner the regime succeeded in distributing the responsibility for political crimes over an alarmingly large number of people.

Stalin's regime constantly felt itself dependent on the credibility and authority of its supporters, and thus on a resource it was unable to produce by its own powers. In the last twenty years, scholarship has increasingly focused on the fate of the individual and on whether one should speak of “atomized individuals”, enthusiastic “illiberal subjects”, or “cynical accomplices”. It is not necessary to find a conclusive answer to this question in order to comprehend Stalinism as a totalitarian system. It suffices to note, for one, that the regime positioned itself so skillfully that it was able to garner the support of believers and cynics alike. It is nowadays generally established that Stalin himself initiated and directed the Great Terror, and that it was not the consequence of any blind “radicalization from below”. However, the fact that reputable Western historians could temporarily reach the opposite conclusion speaks to the alarming effectiveness of Stalin's “publicity work” and to the regime's ability to corrupt and sway individuals (see: Getty 1993; Getty 1985; Rittersporn 1991; Thurston 1996). Furthermore, Stalin was less intent on affecting the individuals themselves than the relationships, ties, and loyalties existing among them. In his view, individual persons could be manipulated and exchanged, and were thus only of limited interest—he thought in terms of political processes, scenarios, and situations instead. A number of prominent personalities, such as Solomon Mikhoels and Osip Mandel'shtam, were eliminated simply because they “disturbed the picture” at the wrong time.

In 1926, René Fülöp-Miller characterized the “theatricalization of life” as an extremely effective means of political manipulation; the mandatory Soviet assemblies provided the stage for this “theatricalization”. As the executive producer of *obshchestvennost'*, Stalin constantly chose from

a variety of genres in order to project alternating images of triumph and disgrace. To study the biographies of his victims one must realize that their fate often depended merely on which scenario he meant to be staged at a given time. Confessions of guilt and repentance could at times be appropriate for exposing the enemy in all his “hypocritical pitifulness”. On other occasions, they allowed the ruler to present himself as a benevolent, empathetic educator who had once again chosen to temper justice with mercy.

Stalinist *obshchestvennost'* was without any doubt a panoptic mechanism of power. It was arranged in such a way that its participants were forced to monitor one another. Nevertheless, it did not have the same effect as the sophisticated disciplinary techniques Michel Foucault described in *Discipline and Punish* (Foucault 1994: 267, 278). In contrast to them, *obshchestvennost'* never guaranteed the “efficient, discrete, and sustained improvement of performance in individuals as well as all societal ‘apparatuses’”. The Stalinist participatory public sphere was not an instrument designed to implement a modern, rational-economical concept of performance. Instead, it provided the arena and the cast which allowed Stalin to stage the archaic melodrama of his politics.

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Public Communication in Totalitarian, Authoritarian and Statist Regimes

A Comparative Glance¹

JEAN K. CHALABY

Introduction

This article addresses the following issue: how distinctive was the political communication system that prevailed during the de Gaulle presidency? How democratic was it? To this end, this essay places the French political communication system in a comparative perspective and constructs a typology that contrasts different models, placing the emphasis on the ideology and elite mindset that underpin them. These types comprise totalitarianism, authoritarianism, statism and liberalism.

This article makes two main arguments. Regarding France, it shows that statism, particularly since the de Gaulle presidency, has had a lasting influence on the country's communication system. More generally, it is argued that political communication systems across the world remain fundamentally different from each other, and that the democratic model is better and freer than non-democratic ones.

Typologies of Media Systems

Over the years, several communication typologies have been developed, none more famous than the one proposed by the authors of *Four Theories*

1 | An earlier version of this Chapter was published in: *Modern & Contemporary France* 13 (3), 273-290.

of the Press half a century ago. The four models are: authoritarian, Soviet communist, libertarian and social responsibility (Siebert et al. 1963). The first two categories constitute a first cluster, communism being a radical form of authoritarianism, and the last two form another one, the social responsibility model advocating the protection of freedom of expression from the excesses of corporate capitalism. The classic study constituted a landmark in the history of communication studies and started a scholarly tradition of communication typologies (Nerone 1995; Nordenstreng 1997).

In the United States in the early 1970s, Ralph Lowenstein and John Merrill kept the original libertarian and authoritarian categories but replaced 'Soviet communist' with 'social-centralist' (in order to include all the nations of the defunct 'Eastern bloc'), and substituted 'social responsibility' for 'social-libertarian'. A fifth system was added, 'utopian', to underline that none of the existing press systems was perfect (Merrill and Lowenstein 1971). John Merrill subsequently developed his own model, organised in concentric circles converging towards two poles, anarchy and totalitarianism, and including four categories: libertarianism, democratic capitalism (which can deteriorate into state capitalism), democratic socialism (which can degenerate into state socialism) and authoritarianism (Merrill 1974: 40-43). In the following decade, William Hachten kept hold of authoritarianism and communism, widened libertarian into 'Western' and added two categories in order to reflect changes in the developing world.

'Revolutionary' designates press systems that emerge to overthrow regimes, ranging from the French clandestine press during the German occupation and the tracts of the dissidents in the Soviet Union to the newspapers that advocated nationalism and independence in the former colonies. The 'developmental' type occurs where governments of developing nations try to harness the power of communication for purposes of nation-building (Hachten 1996: 13-33). Also in the 1980s, Robert Picard split the globe into two halves, the West and developing nations, applying three and four categories to each zone respectively. In order to incorporate the Scandinavian model of public sphere management, Picard added a 'democratic socialist' category to the initial libertarian and social responsibility concepts. The developing world was divided into authoritarianism, communism and Hachten's revolutionary and developmental types (Picard 1985).

In Europe, typologies have been fewer and far between, probably because the American attempts were seen as ideologically suspicious and

as by-products of the Cold War. Preference has leant towards the contrasting of ideal types, such as James Curran's 'free-market liberal' and 'collectivist-statist', or Colin Sparks's 'communist totalitarian' and 'bourgeois democracy' (Curran 1991; Sparks and Reading 1998: 35-6). Nevertheless, Raymond Williams in the early 1960s suggested a distinction between authoritarian, paternal (a gentler form of authoritarianism), commercial (market-driven) and democratic communication systems (Williams 1976: 129-137). Denis McQuail's early work stands closest to that of American authors, completing *Four Theories* with two categories: 'development media' and 'democratic-participant' (McQuail 1983: 84-98). This typology was subsequently revised by a collaborative effort led by Kaarle Nordenstreng. The purpose was to adapt normative theories of the press to contemporary trends such as globalisation and the emergence of new media. The authors chose to restrict themselves to democratic regimes, distinguishing five paradigms, or perspectives, that overlap and can co-exist within the same media system: liberal-individualist, social responsibility, critical, administrative and cultural negotiation (Nordenstreng 1997; McQuail 2000: 160-162). More recently, Curran and Park proposed a classification that combines economic and political criteria. Types include 'transitional and mixed societies' (e.g. China and Russia), 'authoritarian neo-liberal societies' (e.g. South Korea and Taiwan), 'authoritarian regulated societies' (e.g. Egypt and Zimbabwe), 'democratic neo-liberal societies' (e.g. Japan and the United States) and 'democratic regulated societies' (e.g. Italy, Sweden and France) (Curran and Park 2000).

Intellectually stimulating as these typologies might be, the amount of criticism levelled against them raises the issue of their purpose. Do they not constitute a naive attempt to comprehend an increasingly complex reality? Are they not condemned to betray an ethnocentric vision of the world media? Much of the answer rests with the manner in which these models are constructed and applied. Three options establish the nature of a communication typology.

A model's *internal coherence* is determined by the criteria selected to distinguish different types. These criteria need to be limited in number, be made explicit, and applied in a systematic manner across the board. This theoretical underpinning is arguably the analyst's most difficult task and the Achilles heel of many models. A typology *scope* is set by two possible strategies. The 'tentpoles' route consists in selecting ideal types that constitute benchmarks among a wide array of regimes. Communication systems either constitute 'cases in point' for a partic-

ular type or can be approximated to these categories and ranged into sub-genres. Those who follow the 'continuum' strategy prefer to avoid gaps between types and try to cover as much ground as possible with the main categories. The authors of *Four Theories* took the first option, while Hachten or Curran and Park chose the second solution. Finally, the *degree of empiricism* of a typology is determined by the objects of the comparison. Some models contrast actual regimes while others consider theoretical constructs. In the face of the complexity of contemporary media systems, the trend has been to shift from systems to paradigms. For instance, Nordenstreng and colleagues have decided to contrast different concepts of the press, arguing that 'each national media system and individual media—even each individual journalist—shares more than one paradigm' (Nordenstreng 1997: 9).

The present typology focuses on the political dimension of communication systems, articulating the comparison around two series of criteria. The first set considers the balance of power between state and civil society, and between government and citizenry, and the accountability and visibility of the political elite. The three media-related indicators include the degree of freedom of expression, media independence and media pluralism. This model follows a 'tentpoles' strategy and sets clearly identifiable types around which most regimes can be located. Regarding the degree of empiricism, it contrasts the ideology and elite mindset that underpin a political communication system as much as the systems themselves. However, it is asserted that the political dimension of most media systems falls in or near these types, which remain fundamentally different from each other. It is also argued that these systems can be ranged into a hierarchy according to the criteria set for this typology, and thus that some political communication systems are freer and more democratic than others. The Russian or Egyptian political communication system is not as democratic as the French one, which in turn is not as free as the British or the American ones.

Totalitarianism Fashioning a New Order

According to Raymond Aron—one of the 20th century's most lucid observers of totalitarianism—the five major characteristics of the totalitarian phenomenon are as follows: 1. A single party retains the monopoly of political activity; 2. This party is armed with an ideology on which it

confers absolute authority and which becomes the state's official truth; 3. The totalitarian state keeps a monopoly on means of violence and of persuasion, and thus all media are state-controlled; 4. Most professional and economic activities become part of the state apparatus and are suffused with the official ideology; 5. As all activities are subjected to the official ideology, any mistake committed anywhere becomes an ideological blunder, resulting in a politicisation and 'ideological transfiguration' of all possible mistakes by any individual, in turn leading to physical and ideological terror (Aron 1965: 284-285).

Totalitarian regimes are driven by revolutionary elites, and their beliefs and techniques hold the keys to the role media play in such a system. According to the French philosopher, the three traits that best characterise totalitarian elites are their Machiavellianism, cynicism and violence (Aron 1993: 192-202). Their Machiavellianism involves a pessimistic vision of human nature, an exaltation of action, and an attitude to politics that prompt them to an aggressive amorality and exclusive will to power. The same political attitude leads totalitarian elites to deploy a range of techniques either to achieve or keep power that include the coup d'état, the destruction of parliamentary democracy, the organisation of a totalitarian party and extensive use of propaganda.

Under such conditions, all personal freedoms are annihilated, including freedom of thought and expression. The media organisations and their workers lose their independence to become the servants of a will to power that subjugates everyone and annihilates all civil society institutions. They become parts of the ideological state apparatus that embraces artistic and film production, the education system, science and religion. In the totalitarian state, the party's monopoly on the means of communication serves two broad purposes. The first is repressive in scope and helps stifle dissent and silence opposition to the party's autocratic rule. Second, it facilitates the transformation of the media into instruments of propaganda designed to indoctrinate the masses. Totalitarian parties engage in vast programmes of socialisation in order to fashion the new individual that fits in the party's vision of the new order.

The media in the defunct Soviet Union, at least during Stalin's rule, provide an archetype. All aspects of the media, from newsprint production, printing plants, newspapers and television channels were state-owned and part of the Communist Party apparatus (Hopkins 1970: 28-31). According to Mark Hopkins, the Soviet press acted as the mouthpiece of the party, conveying the ideology, indicating the latest political orientation

and publicising the views and decisions of the government and bureaucratic agencies. It did not preclude the occasional and within-limits 'criticism and self-criticism' of the government and the Party (Hopkins 1970: 34). Other tasks for the press included mass mobilisation (newspapers trying to secure support for the incoming industrial and agricultural programmes), and the prescription of the right values and behaviour:

"Accounts in the Soviet mass media of criminal trials, of hooliganism, currency speculation, pilfering, lying, cheating, loafing, drinking, wife beating, profiteering, slandering, and brawling are all lessons in how one should not behave, and Soviet press reports ordinarily are bluntly explicit in saying so. They draw a moral from the tale. In hundreds of redundant reports, the Soviet mass media sketch pictures of the worthy citizen, husband, wife, worker, Communist Party member, collective farm chairman, factory manager, schoolboy, writer, artist, government bureaucrat, and even the national leader" (Hopkins 1970: 41).

Entirely driven by the agenda of the Communist Party, the content of the Soviet media bore little relation to reality. The fundamental flaws of the communist experiment and the countless social issues, from unemployment to prostitution, were strictly off-limits and taboo (see, for example: Vitaliev 1990). The privileges of the elite, their special shops, restaurants, hotels and trains, were never mentioned either. It must have been a strange—and frustrating—experience to read a Soviet paper, but people had many reasons to buy a newspaper other than reading it.

Totalitarian regimes are largely a 20th century phenomenon, typified by the rules of the Nazi Party in Germany and of Stalin in the Soviet Union. Japan, before and during the Second World War, and China, during the Cultural Revolution, also experienced the traumas of totalitarian rule. The last remaining totalitarian regime is North Korea, to which can be added quasi-totalitarian regimes such as Belarus, Cuba, Libya and Turkmenistan. The leader of the latter country, President Niyazov, has just launched the second instalment of his book at a parliamentary ceremony, obligatory reading for adults every Saturday and for schoolchildren every day.

With the fall of Saddam Hussein disappeared one of the last major totalitarian regimes. The founder of the Baathist movement in the mid-20th century, Michel Aflaq, drew heavily on the principles of the Nazi and Soviet Communist parties (Beeston 2003). Saddam Hussein himself was a great admirer of Stalin and modelled his governance on the Russian dictator. In Russia in the 1970s, he visited every single residence once occupied by the tyrant, from the Kremlin to the numerous villas

on the Black Sea coast. He was a life-long student of Stalin, on whom he possessed a library of books that had been specially translated into Arabic. He applied the same methods to gain and retain power: unrelenting terror applied first to the party comrades and then to society at large, transforming himself into a mass murderer in the process (Sebag-Montefiore 2004). As in the Soviet Union, the state-controlled media subjected the Iraqi people to propaganda. State television offered blanket coverage of the numerous commemorative events decreed by the regime in order to rewrite history and glorify its leader. These included the 'Day of the People', 'Flag Day', 'Attitude Day', 'Day of the Noble Call' (celebrating the invasion of Kuwait), 'Science Day' (for the first Scud missile fired at Israel), the 'Day of the Great Victory' (marking the end of the Iran war), the 'Day of the Great March' and Saddam's own birthday, leading to several days of official celebration (Cases 2003: 3-4).

Authoritarianism Keeping the Legitimation Crisis Under Control

A fundamental difference between totalitarian and authoritarian regimes is that the latter are not revolutionary in character. In fact, authoritarian rulers often justify their methods by invoking the alleged threat from extremist groups. Authoritarian regimes rule conservatively because they are geared towards self-preservation and the protection of the political and financial interests of the clique of cronies that form the entourage of the leader. There is no specific constitutional arrangement for authoritarian regimes, which range from monarchies to presidential regimes and quasi-single-party systems. Some authoritarian regimes try to masquerade as democracies and organise pseudo-elections, but their nature is revealed by the longevity of the leader's rule and his ability to pass on power to his chosen heir.

The media systems that prevail in authoritarian regimes are shaped by the administration's communication needs. Authoritarian rule can never be fully justified—even less today than ever in the past—and thus these governments find themselves in a situation of perpetual legitimation crisis. In order to keep this crisis as latent as possible, they try to control the public sphere and adopt a repressive attitude towards the media. Terror and propaganda may not be as systematic and widespread as under totalitarian rule, but they are deployed with more discernment. Authoritarian regimes last longer because their use of violence—both

physical and symbolic—is rational and measured to the threat. The same authoritarian regime that may feign magnanimity towards a fringe movement will be ruthless against a significant danger.

It is not rare for these regimes to keep complete control over the broadcasting media, often through state monopoly. Commercial broadcasting companies can exist on the margin of the system but they are usually controlled either by regime cronies or cash-rich state companies from outside the media sector. The press may enjoy more freedom, but remains dominated by official newspapers. When they are allowed, opposition papers are stifled with stringent censorship rules that typically proscribe criticism of the army and government and prohibit any meaningful debate under the pretext of 'state security'. Censorship is rife and exercised through an array of means that range from administrative procedures, subsidies, taxation, intimidation and violence. The judiciary lacks any autonomy and therefore journalists brought before the judges stand no chance of a fair trial. The climate of fear breeds self-censorship, despite assurances from the regime that journalists are absolutely free to write what they please.

Censorship keeps criticism at bay, but the government needs to drum up support for a corrupt administration which is out of touch with public opinion and takes decisions that protect the interests of very few people. The official press and its sycophantic journalists are on hand to praise the government and acclaim the leader. The state broadcaster's news bulletins (protocol news followed by sport and weather) relay the good news to the illiterate millions.

While totalitarian regimes try to change the way people think because they might entertain the possibility of establishing a new order, authoritarian elites are driven by greed rather than ideology and simply seek to maintain the status quo. Thus they do not care much about what people think as long as they keep their mouths shut. This explains why the measures taken by authoritarian regimes against the media are not as drastic as under totalitarian rule. Authoritarian media systems are more open to foreign media outlets (as long as their reach is limited) and can replace relentless propaganda with escapism and entertainment. Comedy, soap operas and theatrical drama, while often laden with commissioned propaganda messages, can also provide a safety valve for those who can read between the lines. Media reporting may not diverge from reality as far as it does in a totalitarian system, but authoritarian regimes still function without a proper public sphere. Authoritarian elites are little

more accountable and have nothing to fear from public opinion and the citizenry: leaders only lose power to plotters who are regime insiders.

Authoritarian regimes are in retreat in Latin America, where a perfect historical illustration is provided by Mexico under the long rule of the Institutional Revolutionary Party from the 1930s to the 1990s (Lawson 2002). Authoritarian rule is still frequent in Africa, however, and constitutes the norm in Central Asia and the Middle East. In the latter region, power is in the hands of a few autocrats, who reign with near absolute power over hapless and destitute people, plundering the resources of their nations and amassing formidable wealth in the process.

Statism Reinforcing the Nation-State

I have previously defined statism as follows: “the system of thought and the ensemble of actions and decisions that aim at reinforcing the political, legal and symbolic means placed at the disposal of the state in order to strengthen its role and influence in the social and economic life of the nation” (Chalaby 2002: 227). Typical statist policies include inward-looking industrialisation, interference in everyday economic life, a degree of central planning, control over market mechanisms, and widespread state ownership (Wolf 2004: 130-133). These policies flourish under certain conditions, notably during the developmental periods of nations. They are often pursued by regimes that are neither (or no longer) authoritarian nor (or not yet) democratic, such as the Latin American nations in transition from military juntas in the 1970s and 1980s, and several Eastern European countries after the collapse of the Soviet Union in the early 1990s. Statist policies can also be adopted when the ruling class feel that state power, legitimacy and infrastructures need to be strengthened. In addition, the market economy is typically weak and the administration does not wish to (or cannot) embark on a liberalisation programme. This can be due to several factors, including a strong socialist heritage, the presence of powerful left-wing or communist parties, and a sense from the elite that they would lose too much of their power in a liberal economy.

Thus statism can be defined as a mode of governance to the extent that it entails a spectrum of typical policies and is fairly common in nations in transition from authoritarian to democratic rule. Although statism is a doctrine that can be found under several constitutional arrangements,

these nations often adopt a presidential constitution, which typically entails an elected legislature and a directly elected president in charge of the executive (Linz 1994: 6). This political system aims to create a strong executive by conferring key powers on the president. The ideal-typical statist political communication system presents the following features (allowing for important variations):

1. The state remains a key player in the public sphere and continues to exert strong control over public communications. Broadcasting is either under state monopoly or dominated by a very strong state broadcaster. While the press can be set free, it will be subject to tight regulation. When necessary, the government will not refrain from direct intervention to reassert its influence in times of crisis.
2. Television is mobilised for general nation-building purposes. It is considered a national institution, and the channels of the state-run television are imbued with a certain prestige. They are granted an official character, in politics as in culture. For the newly independent countries, national television is a symbol of sovereignty, like the flag, the national anthem and the seat at the United Nations. Television is also used to promote a national identity, and news and factual programmes must convey an image of the country that fits into the official imagery. History, official ceremonies, achievements in science, sport and diplomacy are evoked to celebrate the nation and bring people together under one banner.
3. Statism does preclude a level playing field in the public sphere, but is not a de facto obstacle to press freedom. Although the government will be the dominant voice in the public sphere, the opposition can have limited access to broadcasting and the press can be free. It is often the case that political parties in opposition compensate for their poor access to television by forging close links with leading and influential newspapers.
4. The signature constitutional arrangement of statist regimes, the presidential system, is a strong incentive for state control over television. By virtue of their powers and status, presidents expect and demand favourable political coverage from the state broadcaster. The outcome is biased reporting, the absence of objective analysis from journalists, and a dearth of public debates between members of the government, the public, journalists and the opposition. News reporting is dominated by protocol news, the footage

reporting the government's and the president's official activities. In addition, presidents consider as vital to their tenure their ability to establish a direct relationship with the public. They rely on their charisma to create a personal bond with their constituents; state television offers them the guarantee that they can communicate with the electorate above the heads of state dignitaries, journalists and party officials as often as necessary. Finally, control over television is a necessity for the incumbents of powerful presidencies because personal power is always more difficult to legitimise than collegial rule.

Regimes with strong statist overtones (and which have often adopted a presidential constitution) include India during the decades after independence, Latin American nations in transition from military regimes in the 1970s and 1980s, and several Central and Eastern European countries after the fall of communism, such as Croatia during the Tudjman era and the Ukraine under Kuchma. Until recently, Russia fitted perfectly into the statist model. Vladimir Putin had wrestled back control over broadcasting from the oligarchs but had set the press free. Today, the Russian president is using the Beslan disaster to consolidate power in his hands, silence the press, turn the parliament into a rubber-stamping body, revitalise the secret police and curtail regional powers. According to present evidence, it seems that Russia is returning to authoritarianism. France is the country where statist policies have had the most profound influence on the media as well as other fields of activity. The de Gaulle presidency from 1958 to 1969 can be considered the archetypal statist regime, and Gaullism the most sophisticated exposition of the doctrine. Its impact and legacy on France's political communication is examined in the last section.

Liberalism Freedom and Capitalism

One of the criticisms levelled against the authors of *Four Theories* is that their models offer different degrees of concreteness: authoritarianism is presented as a set of practices whereas the libertarian model is constructed as a body of theories. Thus it is unclear how tangible is the libertarian ideal-type: "Did 'libertarianism' define the press of the nineteenth-century United States? If so, was it because people (the public, the press, the state) believed in the libertarian theory? Or was it

because the system (ownership structures, market considerations, legal requirements) was de facto libertarian?" (Siebert et al. 1963: 18-22).

There can be no doubt of the existence of free press systems, such as those that prevail in Britain and the United States. In both countries, a body of laws protects freedom of expression and media organisations against undue political interference. Political elites are accustomed to a free press and expect public scrutiny of their management and criticism of their decisions. Spin doctoring, which seeks to influence media coverage of the government and political parties (see, for example: Cottle 2003), cannot be equated to the means of coercion deployed in other regimes. Politicians have developed news management techniques precisely because they have lost control over the media.

A liberal political communication system is based on legal principles and, above all, a balance of power between two fields: politics and the media. In Britain and the United States, liberal laws and market mechanisms have led to the emergence of a relatively independent press in the course of the 19th century. Progressively, the press emerged out of the shadows of party politics. Newspapers became self-sufficient as their growing income from sales and advertising diminished their reliance on political bribes and subsidies (Aspinall 1949: 66-102). As the relationship between the newspaper and reader became increasingly important, the tone of the press became less partisan and its content depoliticised. Editors expanded news sections, coverage of non-political topics and confined overtly partisan commentaries to editorials (Baldasty 1992). Journalists and reporters acquired new fact-centred discursive practices such as the news report and the interview (Chalaby 1996). By the end of the 19th century, *a relatively independent journalistic field* had emerged in Britain and the USA. This field has developed its own rules, norms, practices, standards and institutions, set independently from the world of politics (Chalaby 1998).

The relationship between journalists and politicians is that of interdependence. Journalists use politicians as a source of information and politicians need journalists to publicise their views. This relationship involves both collusion and conflicts between the two groups of actors. There can be convergence of interests between journalists and politicians: political correspondents may hope for better access to senior political figures, or their news organisation may pursue some regulatory favours. Politicians need the media to communicate to other elites and their electorate. Conversely, conflicts can arise between the fields of journalism and politics. Journalists can be accused of bias or inaccuracy

in their reporting, as illustrated by the standoff between the BBC and the British government following allegations made by a BBC reporter about the government's Iraq dossier in May 2003. Politicians also occasionally complain about the quality of political coverage and privacy issues.

Although liberal democracies promote freedom of expression by constantly adapting their regulatory framework, no regime is without issues concerning press freedom. In the United States, public liberties activists are on the alert following several incidents in the run-up to the presidential election, including Disney's decision not to distribute Michael Moore's *Fahrenheit 9/11* and Warner Bros.' refusal to release an anti-war documentary. The rumours that Disney did not want to anger the Bush family in order to avoid scrutiny of tax issues at its theme park in Orlando, Florida, prompted the trade magazine *Variety* to comment:

“Just imagine: Lawyers and lobbyists perennially on the qui vive to determine if any marketing gimmick, any news item, any movie, any loudmouth talkshow host could cause trouble in [Washington] D.C., jeopardize a deal in China or hurt cooperation between moguls. Such a scenario of congloms second-guessing themselves at every turn is not so far-fetched” (Guider 2004).

As real as they are, these issues must be placed in context. These instances of censorship receive a high level of publicity but remain isolated.² The side-effects of capitalism and corporate power should not distract us from the liberal foundations of democratic communication systems. In no other model do politicians have so little control over their communication environment. Their acts and decisions are subject to constant scrutiny and they live in the full glare of the public eye. The series of political scandals that have agitated British and American public life over past decades, from the Profumo scandal to the Lewinsky affair, attest to the vulnerability of politicians to public disclosure (Thompson 2000). This stands in sharp contrast to the lack of accountability enjoyed by the political personnel in non-democratic nations, notably due to the absence of media scrutiny. Beyond the controversies over sexual scandals, no other media system guarantees such transparency of decisional and political processes. From a comparative perspective, the openness of a democratic political communication system stands in sharp contrast to the opacity of non-democratic models.

2 | For instance, Disney's decision harmed the media company more than it hurt Moore and did not prevent the documentary from becoming a commercial success.

Gaullism, Statism and Political Communication

Modern France illustrates the impact statist policies can have on a political communication system. Such policies were particularly prevalent during the de Gaulle presidency (1958-69), since statism lies at the heart of the Gaullist political doctrine. In the communication field, de Gaulle spurned the chance to liberalise broadcasting twice in the course of his tenure.

Shortly after arriving in power, a first reform approved early in 1959 maintained the state monopoly in broadcasting and the control of the Ministry of Information over the Radiodiffusion-télévision française (RTF). Facing constant criticism, de Gaulle's successive ministers of information were soon pleading with him to let them confer more autonomy on the RTF. Following years of pressure from Alain Peyrefitte—the minister of information he had appointed in June 1962—de Gaulle reluctantly acquiesced to a project of reform towards the end of February 1964. The government forced it through the National Assembly in June 1964 and kept concessions to liberalism to a strict minimum. The law might have changed the name of the state broadcaster to Office de radiodiffusion-télévision française (ORTF), but it maintained the state monopoly and kept the ORTF under the 'tutelage' of the Ministry of Information. The ORTF director was still to be nominated by the Cabinet, who could dismiss him at short notice. Half of the members of the newly created board of trustees were appointed by the Cabinet as state representatives, and none of the other eight members could be appointed without the government's approval. The president of the board, Wladimir d'Ormesson, had been selected by de Gaulle himself on the grounds that he was a 'loyal servant of the State' (Peyrefitte 1997: 175).

These two 'reforms' show the hallmarks of the Gaullist broadcasting policy: state monopoly and governmental control. These policy choices originate in the statist beliefs of de Gaulle and the presidential character of the regime he inaugurated.³ Gaullism can be interpreted as the non-socialist version and a French adaptation of a set of beliefs that was common currency in post-war Europe. Time and again, de Gaulle insisted that only a powerful and centralised state could govern for the general interest and face down sectarian political parties, trade unions and lobby groups (see, for example: de Gaulle 1954: 31-36, 86-87; 1959: 14-15, 41, 53, 285-290).

3 | This article focuses on the influence of statism. On the impact of presidentialism, see: Chalaby 2002.

During his first spell in power, between 1944 and 1946, the French leader (in agreement with the rest of the political class), nationalised energy production (coal, oil, gas and electricity), the banking system, the means of transportation and the main industrial conglomerates (Bernard 1995: 56-58). He created an array of powerful institutions, governmental agencies and regulatory bodies to give the state the means to play a central role in the social, economic and cultural life of the nation. Among these creations figure the *Ecole nationale d'administration* (ENA), founded in 1945 to homogenise the recruitment and formation of the French political elite, and the *Compagnies Républicaines de Sécurité* (CRS), the anti-riot police forces (Teyssier 1995; see also: de Gaulle 1959: 330; 1970a: 145-147).⁴ When de Gaulle came back to power in May 1958, he governed France with a similar political mindset and created yet another institution that made the French state more powerful and centralised than ever: the presidency.

In this context, to keep broadcasting under state control was a matter of balance between the private and public sector. When the state is already entrusted with energy production, banking, transport and the manufacture of a variety of products ranging from cars to aeroplanes, it is logical for it to control broadcasting. Gaullism gave the state enough power, competence and responsibilities for the broadcasting media to remain a state institution and the state apparatus was vast enough to incorporate a broadcasting organisation. French television was a cog in a vast and ubiquitous state apparatus that dominated the life of the nation and that of all its citizens.

De Gaulle's statist doctrine comprises an element of dirigism, which dictates that the economy should remain under political control. It was not merely a case of keeping broadcasting in the hands of the state, but also of protecting it from the private sector and market forces. De Gaulle was adamant: "The market is not above the nation and the State. It is the nation and the State that must dominate the market" (Peyrefitte 1994: 524). With such a concept of the relationship between the state and the market, commercial broadcasting could not prosper in France. Entrepreneurs and commercial ventures were perceived as intrinsically

4 | Notwithstanding the fact that the in aftermath of the Second World War there was a large consensus in the political class to give the state a central role in rebuilding the country, these measures fully reflected de Gaulle's innermost ideological preferences. He began to justify these nationalisations during the war, notably in a lecture given at the National Defence Public Interest Committee in April 1942, and in a public address at the Royal Albert Hall, London, two months later. See: de Gaulle 1959: 329; 1970b: 176-181, 197-204.

alien to the national interest. This left the state with the sole legitimacy to oversee broadcasting and de Gaulle the freedom to choose a role for radio and television.

Television and Nation-Building

De Gaulle had several tasks in mind for broadcasting. First, he was determined to use the state's mass communication capabilities to restore its authority. He once said: "This establishment [the RTF] should be the voice of the state in France" (Peyrefitte 1994: 98). He detailed his thought to his minister of information in 1962:

"Do you think [says de Gaulle to Peyrefitte] that the Third Republic would have taken root if it had not been forceful, if it had not taken hold of primary education, secondary schools, academia, history textbooks and most newspapers? It imposed a *fait accompli* on a ruling class which was massively hostile to it: '*La Gueuse*'! The monarchists, then the majority, were divided—as the right wing always is—between three pretenders to the throne: the Orleanist, the Legitimist and the Bonapartist. Thus Thiers concluded: 'It is the Republic that is the less divisive'. For decades, they propounded this theory and impressed it on the popular mind.

The Left, the Freemasons, the unions and the Black Hussards [primary school teachers], obstinately inculcated the idea that there was no other possible regime, that it was a dereliction of civic responsibility to imagine another one, that any adversary to the regime was not a good French citizen. Even so, faced with this opposition, it took the Great War to render the Republic acceptable to almost everybody! Forty-five years after its proclamation! The new regime has been established only three and a half years. It will need much more time to become irreversible!

[...] It is not the moment for a statute for the RTF! By law, you have authority over the institution, its managers, technicians and journalists! Guard this authority! The future of the regime depends to a great extent on the way this authority will be exerted. One never knows what will happen! The time to 'decolonise', as you say, has not come yet!" (Peyrefitte 1994: 497-498).

According to de Gaulle, the Fifth Republic would crumble without the capacity to sustain the ideology needed to gain the adherence of the French people. For the president, the national broadcaster was a state institution in the full sense of the term. Broadcasting policy was not merely about keeping control over television, but about the contribution television could make to the establishment of the regime and the

restoration of the state as a central and dominant institution in modern France.

Second, de Gaulle wished to use broadcasting to reinforce France's social cohesion. This was an issue of great concern to the French leader, who remained deeply impressed by the divisions that arose between social classes in the late 1930s. He recalled the 'large fractions of the Right' leaning towards Hitler and Mussolini and vividly remembered hearing the commander-in-chief of the French Army hope that the Germans would help him maintain order (de Gaulle 1954: 37, 59, 70, 79). Once at the helm of the country, he had a genuine desire to quell these divisions and make France a united nation again.

A way to promote social cohesion was to bring people together around the idea of the nation, and thus de Gaulle was constant in his effort to foster a French national identity. He promoted the use of national symbols and multiplied the references to national history in his public addresses. He tried to engage the French people with their own nation, and television had a role to play in this effort:

"You know [de Gaulle said to the minister of information in December 1963], television can be an awful or a wonderful thing. Ben Gourion told me that, first, he was opposed to the arrival of television in Israel. He felt that television could distract his compatriots from the construction of their state. While they had to transform the desert into an oasis, enlist people in kibbutzim and in the army, television might lead them to amusement, idleness and laziness. Then, he allowed himself to be convinced that television could be useful in giving a common language and a common culture to Jews coming from all over the world. As long as he held television in his grip, it played this role. But television increasingly slipped from the hands of the state and it started to digress, talk rubbish and criticise for its own sake" (Peyrefitte 1997: 178).

This excerpt best epitomises de Gaulle's broadcasting philosophy. These convictions nurtured his determination to keep control over television and influenced his concept of good programming. This philosophy emanates from the memo below, dated February 18th, 1963, in which de Gaulle disparages the broadcast news:

"The news attaches importance to:

- the picturesque (the anecdotal is preferred to the exposition of reality);
- the pessimistic (catastrophes, massacres, crimes, are preferred to what goes well);

- individualism (the isolated case, particularly if it is malicious or offensive, is preferred to the general interest or the attitude of the majority);
- the opposition (everything that is against the established order and the activities of French public services, inside or outside the country, is preferred to that which is sanctioned, official and national)” (de Gaulle 1986: 318).

De Gaulle shows here his refusal to accept the inner logic of news and journalism. While conflicts, disasters and generally unforeseen and exceptional events are always newsworthy, de Gaulle expects broadcast journalists to focus on the normal and the traditional and to accentuate the positive in the life of the nation.

The president applied the same rules to fictional material and historical documentaries. He disliked dramas and history programmes that presented France from an unorthodox point of view. During a strike of ORTF producers in February 1965, de Gaulle instructed the minister of information to take advantage of this industrial action “to get rid of this mafia at last” (Peyrefitte 1997: 180):

“We should not let ourselves be impressed by their alleged talent! In reality, these people are decadent. They always present the catastrophic, pathetic and deplorable side of things. It is a tendency that has always characterised decadent people! One has to prevent them from indulgently showing the pathological rather than the healthy, the sluggish rather than the striving, failures rather than successes, the shames of history rather than its glories! These men show interest only in the ugly and the sensational” (Peyrefitte 1997: 180)

De Gaulle used to say that ‘there is only one history of France and only one people of France’ (Peyrefitte, interview with author, May 4th, 1999). and demanded that television programmes convey a similar vision of the nation. He was incensed when programme makers approached their subjects from an anecdotal or sensationalist angle. For instance, he reproached Stelio Lorenzi for presenting Louis XIV as if the only interesting fact about the French monarch was that he changed mistresses about every evening, “without taking into account the grandeur he gave to France, nor the influence and prestige of the nation in Europe and the world during his reign” (Peyrefitte, interview with author, May 4th, 1999). De Gaulle and his followers strove for a national television, capable of strengthening national identity and reinforcing the emotional and ideological foundations of the nation.

Conclusion

Scholars who compare democratic and non-democratic regimes often level off differences between communication systems and sometimes reserve their sharpest criticisms for the impact of 'evil' corporate capitalism on the public sphere. Colin Sparks, who accuses the authors of *Four Theories* of gross distortion and 'ideological warfare', spends the rest of his book playing down the differences between the communist and capitalist media systems (Sparks and Reading 1998: 54). Like the communist press, the British press is 'partisan' and its readership 'class-stratified', and the US press 'generally operates in a monopoly situation' (Sparks and Reading 1998: 176). The same agenda dictates the choice of contributions in Curran's and Park's edited collection. While some of their contributors strive to find virtues in the most oppressive regimes—notably Egypt and Zimbabwe—W. Lance Bennett jumps on the opportunity to argue that the American media are mostly about 'the production and reproduction of power' (Bennett 2000: 205). In *Last Rights*, John Nerone and colleagues rightly address some of the inconsistencies and inadequacies of *Four Theories*, but mostly blame the authors for their bias in favour of liberalism. The nature of power in liberal and capitalist societies, the authors contend, is not merely political but is also economic in character:

"The libertarian theory, as *Four Theories* constructs it, assumes that in the absence of state control, the media are free, that deregulation (or non regulation) necessarily coincides with liberty, and that the state is the only possible source of obstruction to media operation. What is troubling about this reasoning is that it does not concede even a theoretical benefit from rules a democratic government may enact and, much more importantly, it does not acknowledge that there are sources of control other than the state, notably the 'free market' itself. [...] A truly free press would be free not just of state intervention but also of market forces and ownership ties and a host of other material bounds" (Nerone 1995: 22, 24).

This argument, frequently voiced by the British political economy tradition, can be sourced to Raymond Williams, who opposed the 'commercial' communication system to the 'democratic' one, on the grounds that "commercial control of what can profitably be said [...] also can be a tyranny" (Williams 1976: 133). A central supposition of this viewpoint needs to be assessed. It is asserted that democratic and capitalist systems exchange a set of political constraints for commercial restrictions. The press might be nominally free in democracies, but the concentration

of ownership and the search for profit enslave newspapers to market forces and put them right back in the hands of the dominant class. All things considered, there is little difference between the Soviet *Pravda* and the *New York Times*, since both repeat the mantras of their respective dominant ideology and, *in fine*, serve the purpose of the local political elite.

As this paper has begun to show, a democratic framework is a *sine qua non* on which freedom of expression rests, and arguably all other liberties. Democratic communication systems remain much freer than those in non-democratic regimes. The issues they face are of a secondary order compared with those confronting the media in other political regimes. Corporations might have a significant presence in democratic media systems, but it is the challenge of regulatory agencies to check corporate power and make markets work for the public sphere.

It is time that we faced the inescapable truth that not all political communication systems are equal. All public spheres are not equally open and all political elites are not evenly accountable. Neither are these elites equally competent, nor do they hold the same values: some are more self-serving and corrupt than others. It is a shocking paradox that the minimising of the differences between democratic and non-democratic communication systems is often driven by the very parochial political agenda of those who have issues with their own media: they use comparative media studies to underline the alleged dangerous effects of capitalism on the democratic public sphere. Radical chic theorists underestimate the fundamental differences between democratic and non-democratic media systems, and the advantages of the latter over the former. They also underestimate the damages caused by poor governance, the misery inflicted on millions by inept and unscrupulous elites, and the suffering of those who have to endure the devastating effects of autocratic regimes.

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Performance and Management of Political Leadership in Totalitarian and Democratic Societies

The Soviet Union, Germany and the United States in 1936

KIRILL POSTOUTENKO

The political leaders discussed in this paper are Joseph Stalin, Adolf Hitler and Franklin Delano Roosevelt. Their choice was dictated by a combination of similarities and differences favorable for comparison: while all the three were chief executives in their respective countries between 1936 and 1943 (the period of observation), the first two lead the totalitarian states and the latter presided over a democratic country. An inquiry into the discursive performance of political leadership in Soviet Union, Nazi Germany and the United States of America could be the first step in comparing the performance of social power in authoritarian and non-authoritarian states.

But even this first step would be too large for a short paper. Hence I would like to discuss and evaluate specifically the myths of “active” and “omnipresent” leadership in a totalitarian state, generated by Soviet and German propagandists and taken at a face value by many historians, sociologists, political scientists and linguists. Those myths have grown in different countries and on the opposite ends of communication networks: the leader’s activity was primarily articulated *by* Hitler in his speeches, whereas the leader’s omnipresence has been staged by the amount of references *to* Stalin in Soviet public sphere. In particular, Adolf Hitler and some other Nazi functionaries have frequently used in their texts the metaphors of activity and

speed, mobility and movement (including movement for its own sake), action and dynamics (Bork 1970: 19; Faye 1987: 66-67; Voigt 1987: 64; Maas 1989: 181; Weiss 2003: 319-320; Young 1991: 81-83). Significantly, the Nazi activist language was not shared by Joseph Goebbels—Hitler’s de facto PR agent and a prominent public figure (Betz 1955: 792): it seems likely that this difference, favorable for Hitler, was not quite accidental. Joseph Stalin, in his turn, stood out of the bland communication landscape of pre-war Soviet Union by the sheer number of his iconic and symbolic appearances, including posters (at least 500,000 during his reign), books (16,500,000 in 1934 alone), postcards (10,000,000 of just one press photo taken in 1929), portraits in shop windows (2:1 in relation to Lenin at one of the main Moscow streets in 1933) and repetitions of his name in Pravda editorials (at least four times in each column between 1938 and 1951) (Alekseev 1982: 8, 114-118; Tucker 1992: 160; Sartori 1995: 195; Overy 2004; Brandenberger 2005: 253).¹ This is not to say that the images of the “active” and the “omnipresent” leader never overlapped: both Hitler and Stalin were called “ceaseless workers” in press reports, title was endlessly reverberated across the media spectrum in no less than eighteen morphological innovations such as *Führergrundsatz*, *Führerprinzip* etc., and, after all, every second issue of *Völkischer Beobachter* was decorated with the Nazi leader’s portrait (Berning 1964: 82-84; Brackman 1988: 77-78; Herz 1995: 52). However, the differentiation between highlighting action and orchestrating ubiquity was quite apparent, and it is supported by secondary linguistic and historical observations: for example, Hitler was not only admiring activity, but clearly placed the action (“fight for the worldview”) above interaction (“speaking” and “bargaining” parliaments), while Stalin has proved his omnipresence by intervening in secondary affairs far away from his competence (such as arts and sciences) (Rigby 1977: 61; Werth 1999: 40).

As valuable as this information is, it is not immediately related to Stalin’s or Hitler’s performance of political leadership, and so far it does not give us any clue as to how their self-centered discursive identities functioned in public sphere. On the one hand, Hitler’s *talking about activity* does not necessarily mean his *being active by means of talk*. On the other hand, millions of books with Stalin’s name on a cover turn

1 | The similar correlation between horizontal and vertical circulation of iconic references to the leader is noticeable in Italian context, where the postcards and magazine covers depicting the leader were in the 1920s-1930s even more ubiquitous than in Stalin’s Russia (Falasca-Zamponi 2004: 94).

him into a high priority of a state publishing industry—in the same league as Alexander Pushkin who also had some 18,000,000 of his books published in 1934-1937 (Friedberg 1962: 195)—but fail to speak for his strategy of self-legitimation. Besides, it seems rather pointless to discuss any features of totalitarianism without comparing them to the non-totalitarian environment: some similarities between Stalin's and Hitler's political performance may well be, say, the common places of power self-representation in the 20th century. Hence, to give credible answers to the question "*How the myths of leaders' activity and omnipresence in a totalitarian state are related to their actual discursive performance of political power?*" one has to take into account not only the crucial social dichotomy between the *semantics of first-person narration* and the *pragmatics of self-performance*, but also three sets of secondary distinctions:

between the *modes of orientation*: "egocentric" (1) vs. "objective" (2):

- (1) *I tell the right thing here*
- (2) *President explains New Deal at the Senate hearings*

between the *communicative roles*: "self (first person)" (1) vs. "other (third person)"(2):

- (1) [*Stalin's speech*:] *I send my greetings to the workers of Donetsk basin*
- (2) [*Pravda report*:] *Stalin sends his greetings to the workers of Donetsk basin*

between the *political systems*: "totalitarian" (1-2) vs. "non-totalitarian" (3):

- (1) *Soviet Union*
- (2) *Nazi Germany*
- (3) *United States of America.*

The materials collected and analyzed for this project address the aforementioned oppositions at different levels. It would be convenient to describe this correspondence in the reverse order:

- as has been said before, the *totalitarianism vs. non-totalitarianism* opposition was taken into consideration by choosing at least one non-totalitarian country (United States of America) as a backdrop

for discussing the totalitarian societies (Soviet Union and Nazi Germany);

- the *first-person* vs. *third-person* opposition was addressed by choosing two kinds of discursive evidence as far as performance of power was concerned. For the *self*-references to political leadership, a sample of political speeches for the period between 1936 and 1943 was selected (Hitler 1935, 1938, 1941, 1942; Stalin 1937a, 1937b, 1941, 1942, 1943; Roosevelt 1936a, 1936b, 1936c, 1936d, 1936e, 1941, 1942a, 1942b, 1943).² In its turn, the *other*-references to political leadership were studied on the material of the major newspapers in three countries (*Völkischer Beobachter*, *Pravda* and *The New York Times*) for the first three months of 1936 (first pages only).
- the differentiation between *egocentricity* vs. *objectivity* was in part overlapping with the previous opposition—but only in part: it is clear that Roosevelt could refer to himself both in the first ('*I*') and in the third ('*President*') person, but for his followers only the latter option was possible. Therefore this differentiation was studied separately from the previous one on the material of the leaders' speeches.
- Lastly, the *narration* vs. *performance* dichotomy was incorporated by the sharp distinction between the narrative descriptions' of Stalin, Hitler and Roosevelt's "activity" and "omnipresence" (summarized above) and the grammatical manifestations of these properties (presented below in the *Tables 1-4*). The grammatical definition of "omnipresence" was straightforward and purely qualitative: the more references to a particular leader were found in respective texts, the more "present" in a public culture he was considered to be. The grammatical correlate or "activity" was somewhat more complex, consisting of two functional definitions—being *a subject* and being a subject *to an object*, so that the sentences '*I g a v e a*

2 | For each leader, an approximate volume of 1000 sentences was analyzed. Since beginnings, middles and ends of political speeches show very different frequencies of self-referential statements—see, for example, the Hitler figures in Ulonska (1990: 123)—the slight inequalities in the number of sentences (928 for Hitler, 1022 for Stalin, 1101 for Roosevelt) were considered to be lesser evil than the fragmentation of sentences. The problem of choosing the proportional and homogeneous samples was exacerbated by the fact that Stalin's talks were few and Roosevelt's addresses tended to be very short.

talk' (in leader's speech) or '*Hitler was at the reception*' (in a newspaper report) would attest to the leader activity, whereas the sentences '*The reception was in my presence*' (in leader's speech), '*The talk was given by Stalin*' (in a newspaper report), '*Stalin's talk was greeted with ovation*' (in a newspaper report) and '*My participation in the reception is important*' (in leader's speech) would not.³

The impossibility of maintaining a ratio “one opposition—one table” is evident, since the different levels of language are represented by the same words, sentences and communication acts that cannot be just torn apart or divided into layers. Because of that, each table has a double identity—it incorporates one of the dichotomies discussed above and at the same time constitutes a half of another dichotomy (together, all the tables present *performance* as opposed to *narration*). Having this difficulty in mind, I formulated questions to each of the tables so that the oppositions between the tables and inside the tables would be clearly set apart:

1. How often do the respective leaders refer to themselves as objective power structures ('President', 'Chancellor', 'Secretary General' etc.) as opposed to others as objective power structures ('Government', 'Parliament', 'Court', 'Party', 'People' etc.)? (*Table 1*)
2. How often do the respective leaders refer to themselves as the individual ego-centers of discursive performance ('I'/'me'/'my') as opposed to the collective ego-centers of discursive performance ('We'/'us'/'our')? (*Table 2*)
3. How often do the respective leaders refer to themselves as egocentric power structures—agents ('I did...'/'we are...'), bystanders ('to me,...'/'for us,...'), or possessors ('my country...'/'our land...')? (*Table 3*)
4. How often do the others refer to their political leaders as objective power structures - agents ('*Hitler gave a talk*'), bystanders ('*Greetings to Stalin*'), or possessors ('*Roosevelt's speech*')? (*Table 4*)

3 | I have deliberately chosen *six* sentences, describing just *two* states of affairs—**Stalin giving a talk* and **Hitler being at a reception*. The contrast between the situations' factual similarity and their varying discursive realization underscores the differences between the communicative setting (which provides the inventory of codes) and the actual interaction (which produces social power).

The following interpretations of the *Tables* come to mind:

Table 1-2 (“Omnipresence”)

Contrary to expectations, Stalin’s presence in his own discourse appears to be much less pronounced than Hitler’s or Roosevelt’s in theirs: there are positively no “objective” references and a very few “egocentric” references to his own discourse. Hitler, by contrast, demonstrates the highest and most stable level of presence in his own discourse both as a third-person (be it ‘Chancellor’, ‘Leader of the Nation’ or ‘Head of the Government’) and as a first-person (‘I’). Roosevelt’s figures are more changeable—as has been noticed before, his first-person references to self noticeably decline during the war (Hinckley 1990: 124). However, from the purely quantitative standpoint, the self-presentation of Roosevelt in his own discourse is much closer to Hitler’s than to Stalin’s. Overall, all the three leaders, for natural linguistic reasons, prefer “egocentric” mode of self-reference to the “objective” one, and their adherence to the high (Roosevelt, Hitler) or low (Stalin) profile is consistent across both modes of orientation.

Table 3-4 (“Activity”)

The distribution of the performative roles of the three leaders in the public discourse shows the many of the same tendencies and groupings as the *Tables 1-2*: again, Stalin stands out as the least “active” of the three leaders, whereas Hitler’s “activity” level is more constant than Roosevelt’s throughout both periods of observation. At the same time, two noteworthy differences separate the results in the *Tables 3-4* from the previous data. On the one hand, in the pair Hitler-Roosevelt, Roosevelt stands as the more active leader both in *self*- and in *other*-references. On the other hand, Stalin’s “activity” figures are not as consistently low across the communicative roles as his “omnipresence” figures: one could say that the image of a very “inactive” (and very “possessive”) leader is much more manifest in Stalin’s own texts than in the newspaper reports, whereas neither Roosevelt nor Hitler figures reveal similar discrepancy between their *self*- and *other*-references to “activity”.

Table 1-4

On the whole, the results presented in the tables seem to put into question the preconceptions about the interwar political leadership formulated on the narrative basis. Firstly, the narrative of power and its actual discursive performance may be at variance: Hitler's hyper-active *self*- and *other*-presentation in public discourse is consistent with the myth of his "activity" circulated in Nazi narratives about Fuhrer, but Roosevelt's even more conspicuous activeness has no similarly evident narrative shadow. Secondly, the link between the rigid control of mass media in a totalitarian society and the maximization of the leader's presence in public discourse appears to be problematic in both directions—totalitarianism may exist without a strong individualist discourse of its leader, and vice versa. Indeed, the highest "activity" and "presence" figures characterizing the discursive performance of a political leader are split between totalitarian Nazi Germany and non-totalitarian United States of America, while Stalin's leadership, seen through the prism of Soviet public discourse, is highly ambivalent: in his own speeches Soviet leader appears rarely, in a markedly passive and non-individualistic role, but in the newspapers (and possibly in other public media as well) he is shown to be quite visible and even moderately active.

As the first discussion of the *Tables 1-4* mostly challenges the simplified views of the totalitarian leadership by offering empirical counter-evidence, it inevitable produces more questions than answers. How to explain similarities between the discursive performance of leadership in Nazi Germany and Roosevelt's America, and why such an obvious gap between the *self*- and the *other*-performance of leadership in Stalinist Russia? More specifically, how two so-called "personality cults" engendered two diametrically opposed systems of leaders' self-reference in public—one based on redundancy of 'egocentric' and 'objective' *self*-references (Hitler) and another on their demonstrable scarcity (Stalin)?

Unless the numbers presented above are accidental or unreliable, their absolute or relational similarities should point at some social affinities between the countries of Hitler and Roosevelt. In fact, many such affinities (at different levels) have been already noticed by the wartime scholars (White 1949), although structuring these likenesses has rarely been trouble-free. The most superficial resemblance (directly related to the numbers above) was the fact that both political leaders had been

significantly more self-centered in their political discourses than any of their predecessors in the respective countries (Winckler 1970: 32-36; Hinckley 1990: 109-112). What's more, Roosevelt was also head and shoulders above his precursors in dominating the public sphere: for instance, the frequency with which his name appeared on the front page of American newspapers was for his country unprecedented (Dawis 1987: 25). Unlike German dictator and Soviet tyrant, the American president had at his disposal only indirect means of media control (Keller 1995: 154; for Stalin's laborious image management see: Davies 2004), one can assume that the noticeable symmetry between *self*-reference and *other*-reference in Roosevelt's political discourse was not a product of administrative regulation from above, but rather reflected the specificity of President's political performance.

What remains unclear, though, is the level at which this specificity is being generated. Some studies derived Roosevelt's omnipresence in the media from the egocentricity of his 1936 presidential campaign which succeeded in profiling the incumbent's self as the major part of his message ('*Democratic program*' = '*first and foremost Roosevelt's personality*') and reduced the plurality of choices to the single contradictory opposition (presidential election = '*voting for Roosevelt*' vs. '*voting against Roosevelt*') (White 1949: 173; Crowell 1950: 48-49). Other scholars see the affinity at a deeper level, pointing at Roosevelt's unparalleled and often unconstitutional use of direct presidential action such as executive orders, presidential messages to Congress, appointments by decrees and vetoes: in 1930s alone, Roosevelt vetoed 505 measures passed by Congress, which was 30% of all the vetoes since the beginnings of American presidency (Dawis 1987: 24-25; Cooper 2002: 40; Howell 2003: 6; Schivelbusch 2005: 23-24, 40). Given these proportions, it is hardly surprising that the similarities between Roosevelt's New Deal, Mussolini's fascism, Hitler's National Socialism and Stalin's Bolshevism were widely (and sometimes sympathetically) discussed in all the respective countries, except for Soviet Union (Schivelbusch 2005: 25-30).

It is impossible to deny that Roosevelt's power performance was at variance with many norms, traditions and discursive practices of democratic leadership: the fact that the President's name *and* activity were at the center of media attention throughout his term, reveals not only Roosevelt's self-centered model of political campaigning, but also his egocentric praxis of government. But it would be a gross and useless simplification to call his presidency "totalitarian", or to ascribe "totalitarianism" to American political system of the 1930s-1940s. Individualism

and obsessive self-referentiality of the leader's discursive performance undeniably attests to the authoritarian tendencies of the social system, but could hardly be its major indicator: Indeed, Stalin's discursive performance of power was clearly not individualistic, but his public image and executive style were: for most of his tenure, Soviet dictator was prone to micro-management and distrusted any collective body or self-conscious social group (see: Werth 1999: 40; Ennker 1996: 117; Gill 1980: 171; Khlevniuk 2005: 117). Since it is evidently impossible to establish a simple one-to-one correspondence between the reflexivity of the leader's public discourse and the self-centeredness of his managerial activity (see: Tosi 1982: 224), it seems practical to subject to a more elaborate analysis both hypostases of public power performance, and compare their interrelations in every case. The distinction, including the breakdown to subcategories, could be presented in the following way:

- In terms of *social performance (1)*, all the three chief executives could be called *charismatic* rulers, each willing—albeit to a different degree—to stake his mantle of the prophet against traditions and laws (Weber 1920: 140-143). However, charismatic leadership in modern society is usually intertwined with *bureaucratic* and (less often) *patriarchal* power performance, and its stability is unthinkable without some stabilization—Weber's *Veralltäglichung*—by means of *tradition* or *law* (institutions).
- From the standpoint of *organizational management (2)*, Stalin, Hitler and Roosevelt played in their respective countries the role of *transformational* leaders: highly visible among their followers, they all claimed possession of the great “visions” unachievable without followers' sacrifices, and were prone to use the chain of command to speed up the arrival of the happy future (Burns 1978: 121; Kirkpatrick and Locke 1996: 45; Tosi 1982: 225). Nevertheless, as the pure execution of power is only possible in the case of absolute, transcendental legitimacy (like Divine rule), transformational leadership style is inevitably combined with *transactional* one, based on leader's communicative exchanges and bargains with followers (Howell and Hall-Merenda 1999: 681).

Obviously, not only the two major objectives of power performance may be at odds with each other in every single case of political leadership, but even within the categories the performance may be inconsistent, varying between different forms, media and areas of interaction. This

inconsistency is particularly striking in Stalinist Russia (where *self-* and *other-*references to the leader are so much unlike), but it may also come to surface in two other countries if one looks closer at their interactional norms and organizational properties.

Stalin (1): *Charismatic Leadership (with some Elements of Traditionalism) and its Bureaucratic Stabilization*

Stalin's charismatic rule was undoubtedly the most radical assault on traditions and institutions, as its formative part consisted of progressive usurpation of power at different levels. At first, Bolsheviks came to power in an anti-monarchic coup d'état as a tiny group in a broad coalition of political forces, but managed to force out the majority by means of terror (see, for example: Fitzpatrick 2008: 49-68). Later on, the same kind of power monopolization occurred on personal level: being just one of several dozen Bolsheviks close to Lenin—he unquestionable leader of the party and Head of State in 1917-1922—Stalin cunningly and ruthlessly forced himself into a position of his only heir, having gradually stifled or exterminated all the competitors (see, for instance: Ulam 1989: 234-286). Unsurprisingly, the charismatic leadership of Stalin was from the outset complicated by restrictions and incongruities. The paradoxical nature of his *inherited charisma*—messianic communism taken over from Lenin who, in his turn, adopted it from Karl Marx—made it difficult for Stalin to prioritize his prophetic role (Thompson 1988: 103). Besides, the tendency to treat Lenin as a communist Messiah was already apparent in 1918, after the assassination attempt on his life (Ovsiankov 1992: 188; Tumarkin 1997: 81). Unwilling to take a risk of removing the figure of Lenin from the center of Bolshevik ideology, the party oligarchy after some hesitation has opted for the construction of the curious “twin cult” of a dead and a living ruler which stressed the hereditary nature of greatness (*‘Stalin is Lenin of our time’*) (Gill 1980: 169; Rees 2004: 9; Harris 2005: 75).⁴ For that purpose, a laborious effort of retroactively inventing the new “myth of the creation” (*‘Stalin as a leader of Bolshevik revolu-*

4 | On the importance of double portraits of Lenin-Stalin at this period see: Sartorti 1995: 196. In the Nazi performance of power, the streamlining of leadership performance *and* leadership discourse took place in 1934 following the death of German president Paul von Hindenburg and the murder of Hitler's only potential rival, Ernst Roehm (Mommsen 1981: 43). In the *Triumph of Will* (1935)—the famous staged documentary of Leni Riefenstahl—the Fuhrer was the only protagonist (Dolezel and Loiperberger 1995: 84-88).

tion') was launched around 1929, Stalin's 50th anniversary (Ovsiannkov 1992: 200; Ennker 1996: 94; Suny 1997: 39; Ennker 2004: 85). Besides, the strong rationalist tendencies of Marxism, retained by Bolshevik ideology and rhetoric (Widmer 1987: 74; Sedov 1989: 441; Rees 2004: 16), prevented Stalin from assuming the role of an individual mystagogue, although his trumped-up status of the "coryphaeus of all sciences"—a sort of Robespierre's *Culte de la Raison* come alive—was in many ways a simple translation of this role into non-mystical terms (Pollock 2006: 1). Lastly, the strong collectivist pathos of Bolshevik rhetoric precluded abolition of collective bodies within Party and State, although their role and size during Stalin's rule was steadily diminishing (Werth 1999: 39; Ennker 1996: 108, 116).

The role of tradition in Stalin's discursive performance of leadership was limited to transmitting charismatic power from the earlier leader of Bolshevism—any other kind of traditionalism would have inevitably compromised the revolutionary nature of Bolshevik teleology. On the other hand, the active role of ordinary citizens in the Marxist ideology made their purely passive, shadowy representation in Stalin's power discourse as unlikely as the opposition between the hyper-active leader and the passive environment, so prevalent in Hitler's discursive self-performance (Andrain 1972: 201). In fact, the speeches of Soviet leader are full of tautological litanies to "masses".⁵ Given these differences between respective ideological environments, it seems natural that Stalin and his milieu opted for the bureaucratic routinization of charismatic leadership (Weber 1920: 143; Kofler 1970: 39; Kershaw 1994: 38; Ennker 1996: 102; Kershaw and Lewin 1997: 21; Rees 2004: 3) which had no immediate relation to tradition and entailed no 'hero-worship' (in Thomas Carlyle's terms).⁶ That said, at certain periods of cult formation and transformation Stalin could not resist the populist temptation to boost his leadership by demonizing "bureaucracy" (Werth 1999: 42; Ennker 1996: 102). But the direct expression of Stalin's leadership in political discourse occurred mostly in the field of *other*-reference, where other scenarios of power stabilization were tried—for instance, the patriarchal one ('*Stalin, our beloved father... [teacher...]*') (see: Sartorti 1995: 204; Günther 1997; Ennker 2004: 90; Walker 2004: 58). It should be

5 | "We should not, if for a single minute, weaken our bonds with masses" (Stalin 1937b: 226).

6 | On the other hand, the cult of *Duce*, clearly focused upon the personality of Benito Mussolini, recycled the preexisting bureaucratic structures of the Italian state (Bach 1990).

noted, however, that both in Stalin's own discourse and in the media, bureaucratic tendency prevailed. Whereas Hitler's forms of discursive *self-* and *other-*performance reflected his neo-romantic, anti-institutional stance, legitimated primarily by metahistorical *ordo ordonans* and only conditionally by his followers' approval (Galtung 1987: 52, 54), Stalin's individuality was seen in a Soviet discourse more as an alternative institution (such as 'universal authorship' or 'national fatherhood') than as a personal self (Inkeles 1962: 25; Tucker 1992: 31), although from the middle of 1930s this institutional roles were somewhat personalized (Ennker 1996: 106). In this circuitous way, Stalin's political supremacy was reconciled with his negative self-positioning in his own discourse (Tucker 1972: 146; Fairhurst 2007: 109-110; for the similar dialectics in Lenin's discursive performance of power see: Ovsiannkov 1992: 192).

Hitler (1): *Charismatic Leadership (with some Reminders of Legal Power) and its Traditionalist Stabilization*

In contrast to Stalin, Hitler's charismatic rule was from its very beginning full of prophetic self-fashioning and anti-traditionalist pathos, but its break with the institutional power was late and gradual. In a way typical for messianic ideologies, the political demand for a Savior coming from afar existed before the major candidates have shown up (Cohn 1970: 281-286): for instance, such Northern European ideologues as Hendrik de Man or Ernst Junger expressed their yearning for Fuhrer long before Hitler became well-known figure (see, for instance: Lepsius 1986: 56-57; Kershaw 1987: 13). Although Hitler first tried to fulfill these expectations in a Beer Hall Putsch of 1923, he came to power a decade later in a democratic election which gave his party an undisputed majority (Kershaw 1994: 34; Bessel 1995: 16), and it took the Nazi leader another three years to adjust his *self-*performance to the mystical cult created around his personality by Goebbels and other propagandists (Gruchmann 1973: 188; Kershaw 1987: 82; Dolezel and Loiperdinger 1995: 86). At the same time German Chancellor little by little took away the legal and (to a lesser extent) the traditional foundations of his rule, having taken away the legislative powers of Reichstag and institutionalized his party nickname (Fuhrer) as an official title (Rebentisch 1989: 44; Bessel 1995: 22).

Hitler opted for charismatic leadership as a means to eliminate cyclical, competitive and impersonal character of power in a democratic society which presented a direct threat to direct fulfillment of a radical

teleology. The tendency to style state power as a personal Self, purified of all institutional objectifications (Lepsius 1986: 60), is manifest not only in Hitler's general scenarios of power performance, such as aversion to any written, formalized, "bureaucratic" forms of power execution (Gruchmann 1973: 198; Paterson 1981: 439; Rebentisch 1989: 29), but also on the low levels of his public discourse: in this vein, his taking the *personal* oath of allegiance from the Armed Forces (Burrin 1999: 57) corresponds to saturation of political speeches with unusually intimate self-characterizations ("my brain", "my sensations", "my patience" etc. (Hitler 1941: 104, 108; Hitler 1938: 3)). If the unrestrained individuality of supreme political will was intended in Hitler's Germany to serve as a *subject* of power performance (Rebentisch 1989: 37), then its *predicate* was seen in the ultimate objectivity of the *Laws of Nature and History* (Arendt 1958: 474, 477). In this vein, the elimination of *agens* in repetitive passive constructions (*It is clear to all that...*)—together with pervasive nominalization (*Mobilization goes forward...*)—serves as a backdrop for the Führer's solitary *Ich* (Voigt 1978: 287-288; Winckler 1970: 42; Bork 1970: 47; Maas 1989: 173). In its turn, this "objectification" of political discourse serves as a precondition for the dialectical self-overcoming of charismatic leadership—its routinization (Weber 1920: 143). To be sure, Stalin (or, for that matter, Benito Mussolini or Nicolae Ceaușescu) also practiced in his public discourse nominalization and passive constructions for the very same purpose (Ilie 1998; Danler 2006; Weiss 1995: 344). However, as the mechanisms of this routinization were not quite the same, their linguistic expression varied accordingly. In Hitler's texts, "tradition" the abundance of lexical, morphological and syntactic archaisms suggest traditional roots of the charismatic power, aimed at securing the latter's stability in the absence of institutional or legal mechanisms of power performance (see: Berning 1962: 71, 116; Bork 1970: 260; Weiss 1986: 288; Rees 2004: 16), whereas the same stabilization function in Stalin's public discourse is performed by bureaucratic vocabulary and syntax (Weiss 1994: 384).

Roosevelt (1): *Legal Leadership* (with some Elements of *Charismatic Power*) and its Internal Stability (Relational and Conditional)

Roosevelt's charismatic rule is the most problematic of all the three since none of its major components is as strong, explicit or personalized as

in the two previous cases. Indeed, the American president's challenges to the institutional order, while being serious, did not go far beyond the conventional populist means: the flood of executive orders, vetoes and presidential decrees hampered Congress and *de facto* introduced the state of emergency in economics, but neither words nor other actions of the President hinted at replacement of Constitution or regular elections with another source of personal legitimacy (Schivelbusch 2005: 40, 65). Without a doubt, Roosevelt was not above using old or introducing the new techniques of modern communication which granted to the leader communicative supremacy at the expense of the audience: like Hitler and Stalin, he was tireless in training his voice, rehearsing his speeches and also the first in his office to deliver them via radio (Ulonska 1990; Dawis 1987: 4; Bessel 1995: 18; Schivelbusch 2005: 56-58;). What's more, with his office Roosevelt inherited the spiritualistic individualism of American presidential discourse, centered upon the divine blessing of the Nation and—*eo ipso*—its sole leader (Hinckley 1990: 131-133). However, Roosevelt's use of these performative techniques, typical for charismatic leadership (Kirkpatrick and Locke 1996: 38), was clearly subordinate to the legal framework of American presidency. As a populist, he frequently resorted to some of the gadgets of charismatic leadership in order to highlight his closeness to the "people" and the distance from "bureaucracy", but even his own political discourse contests this opposition: in the texts analyzed in *Tables 1-4*, references to 'Government' eclipse the references to 'American people' in all texts except the two last war addresses. Roosevelt's self-legitimation through voice, eloquence and medial accessibility was conditional and temporary; it worked only insofar as the president's basic legitimacy was confirmed by the last popular election and enacted by existing administrative structures.

Stalin (2): Transformational leadership with some elements of transactional leadership

The earlier discussion of political leadership seemed to confirm its interactional nature: apparently, no leader, king or president, can reign without habitual legitimation, provided in a dialogue with followers in-lands and peers abroad (van Dijk 1988: 256; Barker 2001: 83). However, the erosion of political representation in totalitarian states causes irregularity of legitimation procedures. Monopolization of communicative chances inevitably leads to the breakup of feedback chains between

ruler and the followers, and the gap between the imagined and real constituency grows as fast as their real difference blurs: the interaction with the inner circle of advisers becomes indistinguishable from the mass demonstration. This over-projection of *self*-reference into *other*-reference breeds withdrawal, delusion and paranoia—the states in which political fictions, produced for propagandist use, take the place of observation and analysis: Stalin's suspicion that the member of his inner circle, the half-literate Marshal Clement Voroshilov was the British agent, is the case in point (Tucker 1992: 41-44). This grotesque example illustrates the dead end of purely transformational leadership, cut off from any legitimating exchanges with followers, and points at its potential threat to organizational stability: small wonder that even the cowardly and complacent Bolshevik establishment at the end sabotaged such paranoid actions of Soviet leader as zealous extermination of peasantry in 1929-1930 or the mass terror of 1937-1938 (Ennker 1996: 95). But for the most part of Stalin's rule, the relation between the transformational core and the transactional periphery of his power was somewhat more stable and regular. The general public was *a priori* excluded from any kind of spontaneous political communication and relegated to the role of statist at staged *other*-references to the leader. Whereas secret police (directly supervised by Stalin) prevented ordinary citizens from any spontaneous contact with the leader, the latter, in turn, was prohibited from walking the streets (the decision issued by Politburo on Stalin's own initiative (Werth 1999: 42, 44; Khlevniuk 2005: 111). As for the transactional basis of Stalin's leadership, it was expectedly formed around the small size, high-level bureaucratic structures, such as Secretariat and Special office of the Bolshevik Party Central Committee (Ennker 1996: 107; Ennker 2004: 169; Harris 2005: 64). The line between the *transformational* chain of command and *transactional* bargaining ground was drawn arbitrarily: while the actual discussions with uncertain outcome usually took place between Stalin and his trusted advisers and holders of various government posts, such as Viacheslav Molotov (Skriabin), Lazar Kaganovitch or Klement Voroshilov, the other Secretariat members were in most cases "asked" to stamp the decision *post factum* and pass it over to the larger collective bodies—such as Politburo or Central Committee itself—for institutionalization and ceremonial confirmation (Werth 1999: 39; Khlevniuk 1996: 83; Ennker 2004: 178; Getty 2005: 86, 99; Khlevniuk 2005: 110).

Hitler (2): *Transformational* leadership with some elements of *transactional* leadership

The functional equivalent of Stalin's paranoia was Hitler's *mania grandiosa*. Supported by fuzzy logic of official propaganda (which referred to Nazi leader as the '*will*' of their '*action*'), and obedient legal theory (which treated law as the simple codification of the Fuhrer's *Wille*—Giara 1999: 249), the Fuhrer came to believe that his volition was indeed a source of national power (Vondung 1979: 398). The fact that this lunacy was not stopped until it thoroughly destroyed the state foundations speaks for the extreme weakness of the transactional mechanisms in the system of political leadership. Some barriers that Hitler erected between himself and his followers were reminiscent of Stalin's measures (such as complete disappearance from public sphere in 1942, explained away by excessive workload (Kershaw 1987: 121; Volmert 1989: 139; Bohse 1988: 127)). But Hitler was much more consistent than Stalin in purging spontaneous political bargaining from the public communication: in the last ten years of his political career, the German leader not only increasingly detached himself from everyday political business but also steadfastly demolished all remaining areas of transactional politics such as collective bodies or councils: in fact, governance was reduced to Hitler's personal orders given to 100 highest officers and four bureaucratic bodies, all vying for the Fuhrer's attention (Nyomarkay 1967: 145; Gruchmann 1973: 192; Neumann 1977; Mommsen 1981: 59; Kershaw 1985: 73, 84; Burrin 1999: 63-64; Overy 2004: 111-113). The inefficiency and arbitrariness of such leadership was obvious, but, in all probability, the economical and political failings of transformational leadership with little transactional elements were seen by Hitler (and Stalin) as tolerable side-effects of this system of power representation, compared to its relatively stable performative advantages (Howell 1999: 683, 690).

Roosevelt (2): *Transactional* leadership with some elements of *transformational* leadership

If totalitarian conventions of power performance inherited from European monarchies the clear division between the transcendental competence of the individual rulers and the purely instrumental function of their followers, the founders of American nation saw the whole nation the subject of messianic accomplishment. Accordingly, the strength

of the country's highest office was derived not from the leader's visionary intuition communicated to and approved by ordinary citizens, but from his ability to successfully bargain for his objectives with as many citizens as possible. Indeed, the classical treatise of Richard Neustadt, widely seen as an apology of strong executive power of Rooseveltian kind, equates presidential strength with negotiating successes: using communicative preferences of executive power, the president should be able to persuade others that their social interests are best served by fulfilling his political goals (Neustadt 1960). Unmistakable in Roosevelt's presidential addresses, this distinctive combination of transformational messianism with transactional activity brings to light the crucial difference between his and Hitler's *self*-performance of political power. Neither American president nor Nazi leader shy away from portraying themselves as prophets, although Hitler (*I have often happened to be a prophet in my life*) feels more comfortable in this role than Roosevelt (*[My] prophecy is in the process of being fulfilled*) (Hitler 1941: 103; Roosevelt 1943: 329). At the same time, Hitler's speeches were characterized by a monological structure typical for orations (*Here I am a speaker of the whole German nation*), while Roosevelt frequently inserted into his addresses the second-person references to his listeners (*You and I know now...*), having earned from John Dos Passos the derisive title of "you-and-me president" (Hitler 1938: 1; Roosevelt 1936b: 162; Schivelbusch 2005: 58-59). As much as the subject-predicate scheme employed by Hitler embodied his unidirectional approach to political communication discussed above (higher wisdom communicated by leader to his all-to-human subjects), Roosevelt's inclusion of listeners into his master narrative signaled the consensual nature of his message perfected in numerous interactions with his followers.

It looks like the association of totalitarian leaders with *activity* and *omnipresence* in its simple form cannot be confirmed or disproved by empirical data: the very same reference to leaders (such as pronouns *We* or *my*, or proper names *Stalin*) may have very different meanings depending on communicative environments, ideological conventions or organizational principles, and cannot serve as unambiguous correlates of this or that performative strategy. The attempt to get rid of one-dimensional characterization of political discourse prevalent in its narratological interpretations, resulted in a more compound explanation of data on 'activity' and 'omnipresence' of leaders in Soviet Union, Nazi Germany and United States in 1936-1943.

For example, Stalin's *first-person* reticence, juxtaposed with the bac-

chanalia of *third-person* references to him in media, clearly attests to the disparity of collectivist ideology and individualist power system in Soviet Union. In any transparent public sphere such a blatant discrepancy would damage the credibility of official doctrine or—inversely—put into question the sincerity of “popular support”, but such external evaluations (abundant in the West), were seen by Stalin as lesser evil than moving the shaky foundations of his historical and popular legitimacies). But the very same scarcity of demonstrative pronouns ‘*I*’ and ‘*we*’ in Stalin’s public discourse, projected onto the relative abundance of possessive pronouns (‘*my*’ and ‘*our*’) in the very same texts and similar constructions in the media (‘*Stalin’s words*’), points at a different property of Stalin’s discursive performance of power—the necessity of the leader canonization, which stems not only from the general tendency to routinization of charismatic leadership, but also from the questionable legitimacy of his own power. The fact the leader is portrayed in his own discourse and public media more as a depository of invaluable knowledge (‘*Stalin’s wise instructions*’) than an agent of history seems to be an important part of this canonizing effort which deserves to be studied in more detail (for the relevant insights see: Tucker 1972: 157; Brandenberger 2005: 251).

Another double juxtaposition could better explain the policemy of the leaders’ first-person references as indicators of political and organizational conditions. The similar ratios ‘activity’/‘possession’ in *first-* and *other-*references to Roosevelt and Stalin in public discourse (*Tables 3-4*) hints at the likeness of the two leaders’ discursive performance of power but the comparative analysis of their state management reveals profound difference between the monological ‘*I*’ of the transformational leader, used in orders and revelations (‘*I*’, and the dialogical ‘*I*’ of the transactional leader, employed in a context of narrative equality (‘*I and you*’). Furthermore, as the unflinching egocentricity of Hitler’s first-person public discourse and its extension into the sphere of the personal (see above) could be explained by progressive deinstitutionalization of power in charismatic leadership, Roosevelt’s interactional stance is surely linked to the role-taking nature of democratic politics which sees first-person statements of a ruler as a mere tool of political bargaining from the position of power. Again, the exact room taken in Roosevelt’s speeches by this rhetorical figure of ‘conversation partner’ has yet to be studied in depth. To sum up, Roosevelt’s discursive space of power could be compared to a perennial construction site, whereas the fitting alle-

gories for Hitler's and Stalin's power performance by means of language would respectively be a stadium and a mausoleum.

Table 1: Third-person-references to specific power structures in the leaders' texts (100% = all references to power structures in a given text)

		Executive 1 (President)	Executive 2 (Government)	Legislative (Parliament)	Judicial (Court)	Supplementary (Party)	Direct (People)
1	Hitler 1)	13.7	21.6	7.9	0.0	3.9	52.9
2	Hitler 2)	16.7	0.0	8.3	0.0	0.0	75.0
3	Hitler Pre-War 1)+2)	14.4	17.5	7.9	0.0	3.3	57.1
4	Hitler 3)	33.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	16.7	50.0
5	Hitler 4)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0
6	Hitler Wartime 3)+4)	26.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	13.3	60.0
7	Hitler Total 1)+2)+3)+4)	11.7	19.5	6.5	0.0	5.2	57.1
8	Stalin 5)	0.0	27.0	0.0	0.0	71.4	1.6
9	Stalin 6)	0.0	21.7	0.0	0.0	73.6	4.7
10	Stalin Pre-War 5)+6)	0.0	23.7	0.0	0.0	72.8	3.6
11	Stalin 7)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0
12	Stalin 8)	0.0	55.6	0.0	0.0	44.4	0.0
13	Stalin 9)	0.0	4.5	0.0	0.0	31.9	63.6
14	Stalin Wartime 7)+8)+9)	0.0	16.2	0.0	0.0	29.7	54.1
15	Stalin Total 5)+6+7)+8)+9)	0.0	22.4	0.0	0.0	65.0	12.6
16	Roosevelt 10)	13.3	23.3	53.3	0.0		10.0
17	Roosevelt 11)	0.0	10.0	0.0	0.0		0.0
18	Roosevelt 12)	0.0	78.6	12.5	0.0		0.0
19	Roosevelt 13)	0.0	87.5	12.5	0.0		0.0
20	Roosevelt 14)	27.2	45.4	9.0	0.0		18.2
21	10)+11)+12)+13)+14)	9.0	56.4	24.3	1.3		9.0
22	Roosevelt 15)	28.6	28.6	42.8	0.0		0.0
23	Roosevelt 16)	0.0	50.0	30.0	0.0		20.0
24	Roosevelt 17)	0.0	20.0	20.0	0.0		60.0
25	Roosevelt 18)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0		100.0
26	15)+16)+17)+18)	7.7	30.8	26.9	0.0		34.6
27	10)+11)+12)+13)+14)+15)+16)+17)+18)	8.6	52.0	25.0	1.0		15.4

Table 2: Singular vs. plural self-references in leaders' texts (in %)

	Texts	I-Me-My	We-Us-Our
1	1) Hitler 1935	45.2	54.8
2	2) Hitler 1938	69.8	30.2
3	Hitler Pre-War 1)+2)	48.5	52.8
4	3) Hitler 1941	47.2	52.8
5	4) Hitler 1942	56.5	43.5
6	Hitler Wartime 3)+4)	48.3	51.7
7	5) Stalin 1937a	3.6	96.4
8	6) Stalin 1937b	11.8	88.2
9	Stalin Pre-War 5)+6)	6.1	93.1
10	7) Stalin 1941	2.1	97.9
11	8) Stalin 1942	7.8	92.2
12	9) Stalin 1943	1.6	98.4
13	Stalin Wartime 7)+8)+9)	3.8	96.2
14	10) Roosevelt 1936a	39.8	60.2
15	11) Roosevelt 1936b	37.7	62.3
16	12) Roosevelt 1936c	37.1	62.9
17	13) Roosevelt 1936d	23.4	76.6
18	14) Roosevelt 1936e	42.6	57.4
19	Roosevelt Pre-War 10)+11)+12)+13)+14)	37.1	62.9
20	15) Roosevelt 1941	18.5	81.5
21	16) Roosevelt 1942a	7.7	92.3
22	17) Roosevelt 1942b	15.9	84.1
23	18) Roosevelt 1943	26.8	73.2
24	Roosevelt Wartime 17)+18)+19)	15.0	85.0

*Table 3: Activity, presence and possession:
three forms of grammatical self-references in the leaders speeches
(100% = all reflexive statements in a given text)*

	Texts	Activity [I-We] (I think...)	Presence [Me-Us] (it was said to me)	Possession [My-Ours] (our mission)
1	1) Hitler 1935	60.4	16.5	23.1
2	2) Hitler 1938	68.2	11.1	20.6
3	Hitler Pre-War 1)+2)	62.0	15.4	22.6
4	3) Hitler 1941	64.2	13.7	22.1
5	4) Hitler 1942	37.0	28.2	34.8
6	Hitler Wartime 3)+4)	61.4	15.0	23.6
7	5) Stalin 1937a	17.2	16.4	66.4
8	6) Stalin 1937b	26.9	16.1	57.0
9	Stalin Pre-War 5)+6)	21.0	16.3	62.7
10	7) Stalin 1941	14.4	10.3	75.3
11	8) Stalin 1942	22.1	13.0	64.9
12	9) Stalin 1943	16.1	9.7	74.2
13	Stalin Wartime 7)+8)+9)	17.4	11.0	71.6
14	10) Roosevelt 1936a	86.4	3.4	10.2
15	11) Roosevelt 1936b	83.0	1.9	15.1
16	12) Roosevelt 1936c	56.5	12.9	30.6
17	13) Roosevelt 1936d	57.9	18.7	23.4
18	14) Roosevelt 1936e	78.8	9.2	12.0
19	Roosevelt Pre-War 10)+11)+12)+13)+14)	73.8	9.1	17.1
20	15) Roosevelt 1941	55.6	12.9	31.5
21	16) Roosevelt 1942a	58.1	11.1	30.8
22	17) Roosevelt 1942b	63.0	7.3	29.7
23	18) Roosevelt 1943	68.3	7.3	24.4
24	Roosevelt Wartime 17)+18)+19)	60.0	10.0	30.0

*Table 4: Activity, presence and possession:
three syntactic forms of reference to the leaders*

	Texts	Activity Hitler gave a talk	Presence Greetings to Stalin	Possession Roosevelt's speech	Total (100%)
1	Roosevelt	556 (59.9%)	140 (15.0%)	234 (25.1%)	930
2	Stalin	237 (30.5%)	224 (28.8%)	317 (40.7%)	778
3	Hitler	308 (43.0%)	175 (24.4%)	233 (32.5%)	716

*Source: Völkischer Beobachter 1936 January-March (Hitler);
Pravda 1936 January-March (Stalin);
New York Times 1936 January-March (Roosevelt).*

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Codes

The Duce in the Street

Illumination in Fascism

NANNI BALTZER

Theatrical Lighting Effects

Various occurrences of everyday life, especially from the 1920s and 1930s, attest to the attractiveness and fascination of light. Pervasive enthusiasm for theatrical light effects—think of pavilions of electricity at world exhibitions or the works of artists like Man Ray—was promoted by the rapid progress of light technology. It was also this technical progress that was at the roots of photography published in the *Rivista Illustrata del 'Popolo d'Italia'* in May 1933: “Giuoco di riflettori”. Obviously the publishers assumed that the image *as such*—without captions or any relation to the rest of the journal—would fascinate the reader (see: *Figure 1*).

The title emphasizes the formal interplay of the light beams, but it might be as well showing an anti aircraft floodlight. As a matter of fact, though, “Giuoco di riflettori” by Hans Finsler was taken as a part of a series of pictures at the “Zürcher Lichtwoche” (Zurich light week). The “Zürcher Lichtwoche” took place in October 1932—a few months before the publication of the photography in the *Rivista Illustrata del 'Popolo d'Italia'*. Hans Finsler had just emigrated from Halle an der Saale in Germany to Switzerland in order to teach photography at the “Zürcher Kunstgewerbeschule” instead of “Burg Giebichenstein”. He thoroughly documented the “Zürcher Lichtwoche”. The “Zürcher Lichtwoche” was an elaborate and expensive exhibition. Its aim was to show the new possibilities of electrical light for artistic effects in urban development (see: *Figure 2*).

Figure 1: Hans Finsler, "Gioco di riflettori"



Source: Rivista Illustrata del 'Popolo d'Italia', Mai 1933: 88

Figure 2: Zürcher Lichtwoche, October 1st -9th, 1932



Source: Photoglob

The motto of the “Zürcher Lichtwoche” was therefore: “Technology and art shake hands”. Together with technicians and an electric power company, influential contemporary artists like Max Bill or Augusto Giacometti helped planning the exhibition. Besides the exhibition and the contest, though, many other attractions—swimming fountain of light, an amusement park, night excursions, spectacular neon signs and temporarily illuminated streets, buildings and shop windows—drew the public into town at night.

Shortly before the “Zürcher Lichtwoche” in 1931, the book *Italia nuova Architettura nuova* was published. Virgilio Marchi, a futurist and friend of Tommaso Marinetti, but also a writer, an architect and movie set designer of about sixty films and numerous plays, was asking the book’s readers why the festive illumination of church facades did not transfer to profane architecture. Marchi advocated the illumination of urban spaces as carried out in Zürich shortly after.

Marchi however had another goal than the city council of Zürich: by using floodlights to send light beams to the sky and God, he hoped to “elevate the soul into the realm of mysticism”.¹ Not that Marchi’s thoughts

1 | “Al fine di un articolo riguardante la scenotecnica delle rappresentazioni sacre all’aperto mi domandavo: ‘Perché non si deve fare della luce moderna un inno che dai riflettori salga in alto come da tanti turricoli d’argento?’ Io intendevo

were new. The idea of linking the Divine (heavenly) with the earthly by means of light is many thousand years old. It can be traced back to the ancient Egypt where the apex of the obelisk was coated with gold, so that the sunlight would reflect and make a connection to the sun god through light. Interesting about Marchi's thoughts is his idea of secularization combined with the desire for mysticism. He puts sacred events on a level with theater and profane architecture which require both drama and mysticism. Surely, the illumination of St. Peter's Basilica with floodlights and hundreds of torches a few years before the publication of Marchi's article—during the Anno Santo 1925—must have been a good example for both drama and mysticism (Marra 2000: 159).

Mysticism was an important reason for the success of all of the following examples of fascist illuminations, although its working was all but explicit. Mussolini himself uttered his opinion regarding this crucial, but elusive ingredient in 1932, when he said to Emil Ludwig, the noted German biographer: "The mystical and the political side depend on each other. The first is dry without the second; the second without the first decays in the flags' wind" (Ludwig 1932: 123-124; transl. by the author).

The Fascists knew how to use the mystical power of light and they did so on several occasions, for example on the anniversary of the March on Rome, October 28th, or during the "Anniversario della Vittoria", November 4th (see the photo documentation in *L'illustrazione italiana*, November 12th, 1933, on page 765). During my research I discovered another example for the use of theatrical light effects which, at the first glance, had nothing to do with politics or religion. For the opening of the exhibition "Esposizione Aeronautica Italiana", floodlights were installed on the Milano Dome square to illuminate the artificial wafts of mist (see: *Figure 3 and 4*).²

Even though these kind of illumination was a popular, eye-catching

dare alla luce elettrica un senso mistico [...] come si fa con la luce medesima sul teatro drammatico. S'intende che l'architettura religiosa e non religiosa é implicata nel problema, come fonte di partenza o come schermo di arrivo. L'osservazione veniva da certe illuminazioni di chiese per le grandi festività. [...] il fine dell'illuminazione ha un che il teatrale analogo a quella della luce nelle sacre rappresentazioni" (Marchi, "Elevare l'anima trascinandola nel regno mistico.", in Marchi 1997: 71; transl. by the author.).

2 | The project not only reminds one of the present-day artificial stagings of nature as Olafur Eliasson's artificial evening sun in a veil of mist, in the Tate Modern, to where the visitors could escape the London winter, but even more so of baroque spectacles. In 1794, such a spectacle took place on the "Felseninsel" in the Wörlitz Park of Count Leopold III, Friedrich Franz von Anhalt-Dessau, when the volcano, created by Friedrich Wilhelm von Erdmannsdorff, smoked, glowed and spat. See:

Figure 3: Atmospheric “mis en scène”, Dome square, Milan, on the occasion of the opening of the Esposizione aeronautica italiana, June 16th, 1934



Source: AEM (Azienda Elettrica Municipale), Archivio Fotografico

and an important instrument of fascist propaganda, it was scarcely discussed in scientific literature; on the rare occasions it was, its analysis was dissolved in a greater research field of attempted sacredness of Fascism (Randone 1933: 41-45).³ This work is the first thorough research on illumination in Fascism (see: Baltzer 2009). For the sake of explicitness, I will specifically focus on just one example.

Vorstand der Kulturstiftung DessauWörlitz 2005; for the festivities of the re-opening of the restored island Stein in September 2005, several eruptions were staged.

3 | In Gentile's standard work concerning the sacralisation of Fascism, the light effects on the Milan Dom Square are briefly mentioned (Gentile 2003: 153-155). From 1926, according to Gentile, the celebrations always followed a similar pattern, they were organised by the Fascist Party and executed under the control of the Police.

Figure 4: Atmospheric “*mis en scène*”, Dome square, Milan, on the occasion of the opening of the *Esposizione aeronautica italiana*, June 16th, 1934



Source: AEM (Azienda Elettrica Municipale), Archivio Fotografico

Illuminations on October 28th

Since 1926, the anniversary of the march to Rome on October 28th, 1922 was giving the population a reason for an annual celebration. Fascist organisations, like militia, unions, youth organisations, as well as widows and orphans, the decorated and the wounded took their part in the rigidly organised routine of the day. The celebration was given a military note in order to cater to the population's taste: the “Foglio d'ordini” of the fascist party highlighted “the idea that at the base of the fascist revolution stood the military, which guaranteed life and progress to every citizen”.⁴

A strict schedule shaped the festive occasion: the morning was meant for the religiously inspired part with fascist rites, the commemoration of the fallen, the parades and the speech of the Duce, which was transmitted by Radio to every corner of Italy. The afternoon belonged to the popular *fête* with dancing, music and excursions to the countryside. Fi-

4 | PNF, “Foglio d'ordini” (10, October 9th, 1926), here cit. after Gentile 2003: 152-153: “[...] per dare a tutti 'l'idea della formidabile compagine di forze che stanno alla base della Rivoluzione Fascista e ne garantiscono contro chiunque la vita e lo sviluppo”.

nally, in the presence of Mussolini, a military parade including airplane squadrons and deployment of the fascist formations would take place.

All over Italy, fascists assembled in the evening to commemorate their fallen colleagues; as for the general public, *son et lumière* was another important part of the program. In all the larger Italian cities there was a screening of films in honour of Mussolini, complemented by projections of fascist slogans (such as “W il Duce”) and symbols (“fascio”), lighting of roads and public squares, illumination of public buildings (decorated with flags), marches of torch-carriers through the streets and fires on the hill (Gentile 2003: 152-155). As we will see, city centres were transformed by illuminated ephemeral structures into a veritable “theatre of light”.

Milano, October 28th, 1933

In the following, I will concentrate on one of these “illuminazioni”, namely the one that took place in the evening of October 28th, 1933, in Milano. On the anniversary of the march to Rome, *L'Illustrazione italiana* reported, “the crowds flocked to the Dome Square in order to watch the illumination, unimpressed by the pouring rain”.⁵ Here, the local electricity station (Azienda Elettrica Municipale) had transformed the Dome Square with the help of colossal candelabras and flowers into a *giardino luminoso* (see: *Figure 5 and 6*).

The illuminations in each year were similar to the ones a year before. In 1932, the monumental writing DUX was projected onto Piazza del Duomo. In 1934 fountains were transformed into illuminated cakes, and in 1936 the the monumental light inscription “W IL DUCE” “FONDATEORE DEL'IMPERO” embellished the fronts of the surrounding palazzi and the arch of the Gallerie Vittorio Emmanuele II (see: *Figures 7, 8 and 9*). (The reason for this slogan originated on May 5th, 1936 when Italian army conquered Addis Abeba, and four days later Mussolini proclaimed the Italian Emporium).

What makes the illuminazioni of the year 1933 especially interesting is an approximately thirty meter high, square-edged black and white portrait of Mussolini, which was attached to the resplendent façade

5 | “La folla [...] è accorsa la sera del 28 ottobre, sfidando l'acqua torrenziale, ad ammirare l'illuminazione della Piazza del Duomo.”, in: *L'Illustrazione italiana*, (November 12th, 1933: 765; transl. by the author).

Giorgio Di Genova authenticates the portrait already in 1922 and 1923 in *Numero*, respectively in 420. Somewhat later, the same portrait can be found as a decoration on a ceramic plate, approx. 1926, anonymous (di Genova 1997: 15, 84).

Figure 5: Installation of the illumination on the occasion of the anniversary of the March on Rome, October 28th, 1933



Source: AEM (Azienda Elettrica Municipale), Archivio Fotografico

of the Milan Cathedral, and, as part of the evening illuminations, was highlighted by floodlights (see: *Figure 10*).

With his usual piercing look, but strangely un-statesmanlike, the Duce looked his people in the eyes. Even within the very wide stylistic range of Duce portraits, this portrait is unusual (Bardi 1933: 5; see: *Figure 11*).⁶ It can be found in periodicals of the early twenties and even on a ceramic plate (around 1926) which with its inscription points at the total absence of *sfumature-nuances*, stating on the edge of the plate “l’uomo che non ammette sfumature/o bianco nero/con noi o contro di noi”. (“The man, who does not allow shades of grey/either black or white/with us or against us”).

The portrait could have its origin in stencil printing normally used for pavement graffiti (see: *Figure 12*). The remaining images of the portrait on the façade of the cathedral invite the assumption that it is a painted cardboard taken from a photographic copy, which was illuminated by floodlighting at twilight (see: *Figure 13*).

Unfortunately we cannot learn much more from the contemporary

6 | Should one interpret Mussolini’s piercing look as “seeing-eye”? See the interpretation of general Moshe Dayan’s look on the battlefield—in the direction of the viewer of the photograph—by Otto Karl Werckmeister (2005: 26).

reports because they mention only overall “illuminazioni” and do not refer to any technical details. As far as I know, the whole scenery was unique; never before or after a portrait of Mussolini was shown on a church façade.⁷

The Cathedral Square as a *lieu de spectacle* was an inviting space for mass gatherings, being the locus of unity and division since early days of Milan not just as a geographical centre in a town, built in concentric circles, but also in economic, social and cultural respects: even today the medieval Broletto, the seat of worldly power and justice, and the Opera (the Teatro alla Scala) stand immediately next to the Cathedral Square. The Square is mainly bordered by the Palazzo Carminati, the Portici Meridionali resp. Settentrionali with the archway of the gallerie Vittorio Emanuele II. The *manica lunga* (long sleeve) of the Palazzo Reale stood on the opposite side until 1933 and was later replaced by the Arengario, the portal-like fascist building.

With clear borders on all four sides the Cathedral Square fulfils a basic requirement for hosting compact mass gatherings, as was formulated by Franz Dröge and Michael Müller in their work *Power of Beauty* (1995):

7 | At least, I could not make out another case, neither in sources nor in secondary literature. The portrait alone, without the church façade in the background, was presented again: in November 1933 in Ascoli Piena (a piece of cardboard or some kind of sheet). In baroque times, churches were, under certain circumstances, certainly used as a background for non-ecclesiastical events, e.g. on the occasion of a birth, a wedding or a death, and included in the organisation of festivities (parades). But Elisabeth Kieven points out (e-mail to the author, November 23rd, 2008) that on the occasion of canonisations, the façades were decorated with scenes from the life of the saints, on the other hand, in honour of secular rulers, coats of arms and emblems were part of festive decorations on façades. There are no portraits of secular rulers known on church façades. The adornment on the occasion of the birth of the french Dauphin by Gian Lorenzo Bernini (together with Jean Paul Schor), an ephemeral construction which extend along the incline from the Piazza di Spagna up to the façade of the Trinità dei Monti, with the central piece adorned by a large dolphin as a symbol for the successor to the throne, is well known. But the difference in the case described by me consists of the fact that, in Fascism, the church façade was usurped for an event which was completely independent from the Church, whereas in baroque times the Church was an integral part of the festivities. Regarding ephemeral architecture of festivities, see: Kessel 1995. Regarding the inclusion of the façade into the festivities see Boiteux, “Fêtes et traditions espagnoles à Rome au XVIIe siècle” (Fagiolo and Madonna 1992: 117-134) and Montserrat Moli Frigola, “Donne, candele, lacrime e morte: funerali di regine spagnole nell’Italia del Seicento” (Fagiolo and Madonna 1992: 135-158). Further to festive architecture in baroque times see also: Fagiolo and Spagnesi 1982; Maurizio e Marcello Fagiolo dell’Arco 1967. Unfortunately, the new publication of Bonnemaison and Macy (2008), in this context is unprofitable.

“It [the architecture] encloses the mass, which may not dissolve” (Dröge and Müller 1995: 321). The Piazza del Duomo is not only ideal for mass meetings, it is also unique Virgilio Vercelloni (1989) says: “Due to the failure of the Bonaparte Forum, the dome square remained the only significant urban space where crowds could gather. From the union of Italy until the development of new means of communication in the past decades the dome square continued to be the only place, where political and religious events could take place. During Fascism it was the place for mass rites” (see: *Figure 14*).⁸

Space through Light

It is a common knowledge that light installations for the effective staging of mass marches became well known due to their prevalence in Nazi Germany, but it was already in 1936 that Albert Speer’s “Lichtdom” contributed to the dramatic techniques of the Reichsparteitag on the Nurnberg Zeppelin field. In Italy, on the contrary, the light had already been used for several years as an unalienable part of propaganda events. True, the effect and power of the “Lichtdom” were incomparably stronger than that of the Italians (see: *Figure 15*).⁹ But Speer built a new closed space and had not illuminated an existing building with the floodlight beams which shone for several kilometres in the night sky.

Speer himself wrote about the occurrence: “The sharply defined 130 Rays, put around the field in distances of only 12 meters, were visible up to an altitude of six to eight kilometres and melt up there into a shining expanse. This resulted in an impression of a huge space, in which the single beams appeared to be gigantic pillars of endlessly high outer walls” (Speer 1969: 71). Speer’s light domes tied people together and thus prevented the masses from fraying and disintegration.¹⁰ What the

8 | “Il fallimento del progetto giacobino di creare il Foro Bonaparte [. . .], fa sì che la piazza del Duomo conservi il significato di unico luogo urbano deputato ad accogliere la riunione di massa. Dall’Unità d’Italia sino alla diffusione dei nuovi strumenti di comunicazione degli ultimi decenni, la piazza del Duomo resta il solo contenitore capace di ospitare le grandi manifestazioni politiche e religiose. Durante gli anni del fascismo al potere è il luogo deputato per i suoi riti di massa” (Vercelloni 1989: 55; transl. by the author).

9 | Regarding the idea, the planning and the execution of the light dome, see: Krauter 1997; the work includes a good overview of the reception of Speer’s light architecture before, resp. after 1945.

10 | “[Die Begrenzung der Masse] ist neben der Erzeugung der mystischen Stimmung auch die Aufgabe des Lichtdoms” (Dröge and Müller 1995: 321).

architecture of the dome square guaranteed in Milano, was constructed on the Zeppelin field in the shape of a light dome: the light formed an immaterial wall. Such physical materials as stone and glass were replaced by the architecture of light: this new building material replaced both the church-room and the candlelight and produced a semi-religious atmosphere. The sheer grandeur of the light-dome generated a “depersonalisation of the human being” (Speer 1979: 42), as Albert Speer stated. More than that: “[...] the creation of the so-called ‘light-dome’ in Nurnberg was for him [Hitler]—and for me [Speer] a culmination of making an impression on human beings, especially from a political view, with the goal of categorization and subordination of man—in order to *eliminate his personality*” (Speer 1979: 30-31; emphasis NB).¹¹ The fials of the cathedral of light pointed into the Divine night sky, and the mystical mood contributed, in its turn, to making the masses susceptible to the National Socialist message.

The use of light for propagandistic means is thus common to both dictatorships is. In both régimes, the light contributes, as a symbol of the Divine, to the sacralization of profane events.¹² Whereas on the Zeppelin-field the sacral architecture was constructed by light, fascism used the church façade—or so it seems—solely as a carrier for the gigantic portrait of the Duce. But behind the temporary occupation of the church façade by the fascist state stood more than a mere pragmatism, as I will demonstrate shortly.

Sacralisation of Fascism

Just as equally important as the unification of the masses appeared to be their ordering, given in the Italian case by the portrait of Mussolini. The masses, as stated by Elias Canetti, exist as long as they move in uniformity into a determined direction. “The direction which is common to all members fortifies the feeling of equality. [...] For [...] the existence [of the masses], the direction is an absolute necessity. The fear of disintegration, which always plays an active part, makes it possible to direct

11 | Speer's light architecture did not find any direct following in Italy. One building, however, appears to be a reminiscence of Speer's light architecture. The italian pavillion of the Roman architect Marcello Piacentini at the World exhibition in Paris 1937, situated directly on the Seine, was illuminated at night in such a way that the almost cubic façade, structured by loggias, doubled in size and was turned into a lighthouse by the reflection in the river.

12 | See also Marchi, “Architetture pirotecniche”, in: Marchi 1997: 71-79.

them unto any kind of target. The masses exist, as long as they have an unreachable target” (Canetti 1985: 26-27).¹³ In the discussed case, the unreachable target dominated the façade of the dome: Mussolini, the outstanding personification of Fascism, was worshipped like a God after years of single-minded propaganda.

Gustave Le Bon, whose publication “Psychology of the masses” (1911) can be regarded as a kind of working instruction for the domination of the masses, opined that an individual in the crowd could only be impressed if the religious basis is provided (Le Bon 1982: 36). And further: “For the masses, either one has to be God or one is nothing” (Le Bon 1982: 48). Mussolini seemed to carry out these instructions, when in 1926 he prepared the apotheosis of Fascism and his own person with the following motto: “Fascism is not only a party, but a regime, not only a regime, but a faith, not just a faith, but a religion that captivates the laborers”.¹⁴

Part of the fascist, quasi-religious rites were for instance Decalogues and actual prayers for and/or *to* the leader.¹⁵ Mussolini counted, by the supernatural abilities attested to him, as the person to be addressed with problems of any kind. One of the authors of numerous fascist prayers, Alessandro Melchiori, issued a recommendation: “If you, comrade, experience bitter moments due to miserable earthly circumstances, raise your spirit and say your prayer”¹⁶—not to god, but *to* and *for* the Duce, as Melchiori expounds in a “Prayer to the Duce”:

13 | Gustave Le Bon already formulated: “under certain circumstances and only under these circumstances, the gathering of people possesses new, completely different qualities from the qualities of the single people who form this gathering. The conscious personality fades, the feelings and thoughts of all the individuals are orientated towards the same direction” (Le Bon 1982: 10).

14 | “Il Fascismo non è soltanto un partito, è un regime, non è soltanto un regime ma una fede, non è soltanto una fede ma una religione che sta conquistando le masse lavoratrici del popolo italiano” (Mussolini’s speech in Pesaro, August 8th, 1926, PNF 1939: 35).

15 | With regard to the appropriation of christian symbols by Fascism reference is made at this point to the new Fascist chronology which begins, instead with the birth of Christ, with the march on Rome on October 28th, 1922, and the “Befana”, i.e. the feast of the Epiphany on which occasion presents are given to the children, which was renamed in 1928 into “Befana fascista”: 1931 the “Befana fascista” was moved from January 6th to Christmas Day, whereupon the celebration was named “Natale del Duce”. See: Gentile 2003: 156.

16 | “E allora, o camerata, quando tu hai [...] degli istanti di amarezza per piccole e miserevoli cose terrene, esalta il tuo spirito ed elèva la tua preghiera” (Melchiori 1935: 182; here after Galeotti 2000: 30).

“Prayer to the Duce

For you, oh Duce, who is the life, the hope, the assurance for a new Italy,
For you, oh Duce, who makes hardship easy and the lowliest service an honour,
For you, oh Duce who sees and hears everything as a leader due to your mind, as
a father due to your heart,
You, whom I love more than anything else in the world
You, who has given me a strong, formidable and great fatherland,
You, to whom, for the joy of a moment, for a smile from the distance, for the
certainty that you will hear me, I offer, in all humility, my life, oh Duce.”¹⁷

In these prayers Mussolini not only equated with God, but was put in His place, as also in the sculpture “The empire arises from the duce’s mind” by Ferruccio Vecchi, “L’Impero balza dalla mente del Duce”, (1939-40) which was shown at the Biennale in Venice in 1940. A gigantic head (Mussolini) rising from a naked muscular-martial figure armed with sword and fascio. The reference to the features of Mussolini is unmistakable: the creator is the Maker of himself, combining fascism and the Emporium (see: *Figure 16*).¹⁸

Lutz Klinkhammer, in his study of the relationship between the fascist liturgy and the Catholic religion, denies the existence of a “feda fascista” (fascist faith) (Klinkhammer 2003: 73-90)¹⁹ comparable to the catholic faith. Klinkhammer’s further thesis—that Mussolini has never been attributed extraterrestrial qualities—must be rejected: his statement is at variance not only with the afore-mentioned “Prayer to the Duce”, but also with numerous statements putting Mussolini on God’s level, as in the “Creed of Belief” of Massimo Bontempelli (Galeotti 2000: 19-26). Bontempelli (1878-1960), a writer, dramatist, critic and founder (together with Curzio Malaparte) of the literary journal *900*, was in the 1930’s a highly influential personality in the Italian culture. Under the title of “literary politics” Bontempelli published personal dogma-statements, reminiscent of the mechanistic belief in progress espoused by futurists:

17 | “Preghiera al Duce/Per Te, o Duce, che sei la vita, la speranza, la certezza dell’Italia nuova; per Te, o Duce, che rendi lieve la fatica, e nobile ogni più umile servizio; per Te, o Duce, che tutto vedi e tutto senti col Tuo genio di Capo e col Tuo cuore di Padre; a Te che io amo più di ogni altra cosa al mondo; a Te che m’hai dato una Patria forte, temuta e grande; a Te, per la gioia di un istante, per un sorriso intravisto di lontano, per la certezza che Tu m’odi, io offro in umiltà la mia vita, o Duce” (Melchiori 1935: 182; here after Galeotti 2000: 30).

18 | Not to be confused with the sculpture “The Fascism” by Aroldo Bellini, a gigantic figure on a pedestal resembling Mussolini. This, appr. 100 meters high, was to have been erected behind the Foro Mussolini on Monte Mario. See: Benton 1996: 126-127.

19 | Although I think that a Fascist faith existed, one can hardly speak of Fascism as a religion.

“1° I believe in fascism as a daily revolution, 2° I believe in Rome-Italy as motor and balance for Europe, 3° I believe in the passion, the unforeseen and the war, 4° I believe in Mussolini, the God without prophets.”²⁰

Mussolini thus required neither herald nor mediator, because, as it is clear from Bontempelli's creed of belief, the Duce was himself the God on earth, reminding of Le Bon's statement “For the masses one must [...] be God”.²¹

Religion as the Foundation for Totalitarian Regimes

Mussolini puts himself, his regime and the City of Rome on the same level as the Impero of the ancient emperors and the Roma restaurata of the popes. In order to anchor the image of a seamless, continual tradition in the collective memory of the population, the propaganda machinery of Fascism had explicitly and extensively drawn upon the repertoire of its mighty predecessors. The recourse was taken either to the antiquity or to the forms, rituals and symbols of Catholicism.²² Suffice to mention “Befana”—the Feast of Epiphany on which presents are handed over to the children - which was renamed in 1928 to “Befana fascista”. In 1931, the “Befana fascista” was shifted from January 6th to the Christmas Day, whereupon the Feast was baptized “Natale del Duce”.

By integrating religious elements into its propaganda, fascism could lean upon positively charged acts and pictures which for had been anchored for centuries in the collective memory of the people. In that

20 | “La mia fede fascista io per mio conto me la sono tradotta così: 1° Credo nel Fascismo come rivoluzione quotidiana; 2° Credo in Roma-Italia motrice ed equilibratrice d'Europa; 3° Credo nella passione, nella improvvisazione e nella guerra; 4° Credo in Mussolini Dio senza profeti” (Massimo Bontempelli, “Politica letteraria”, in: *Quaderni di segnalazione* 1933 III (Aug.-Sept.): 28, here cit. after: Galeotti 2000: 28).

21 | In Biondi (1973: 217), God still exists next to Mussolini, but then it states regarding the Duce: “Discese a Roma: il terzo giorno ristabilì lo Stato, [...]”—the image of the creator could not be more obvious.

22 | “E un equivoco fu il ‘mussolinismo’, con gli anni. Capo e popolo s’intesero di prim’acchito, ma rimasero a questo. Il regime, che non volle essere ‘rappresentativo’, si fermò alla ‘rappresentazione’. Cessò di essere un regime, per divenire una regia. La mimica spontanea dell’uomo si fissò nei gesti, che la folla amava. Si sono viste folle chiederglieli, questi gesti; e estasiarsene. Il ‘mussolinismo’ era divenuto un rito, una liturgia” (Giuseppe Bottai, entry in diary on March 3rd, 1946, in: Bottai 1988: 317). Literature regarding the sacralisation of Fascism (selection): Gentile 2003; Le Bon 1982; Klinkhammer 2003: 73-90. Primarily regarding Germany, marginally also regarding Italy, see: Mosse 1993.

way totalitarian regimes, like Fascism, develop, in the words of Matthias Behrens, “[...] a myth and a cultist life (rites, liturgy, sacral language, music); both are to help with the realization of the ideological, moral, summoning action and cause an intensity of the experience corresponding with the totalitarian demands” (Behrens 1997: 260).

Excursus Moscow

With regard to this phenomenon of taking over images and rituals anchored in the people as a basis of new innovations, I should like to make a short side trip to Moscow. In the early 1930s, on the May 1st of every year, the monumental portraits of Lenin and Stalin (sometimes of Marx and Engels as well), as large as 25 meters high, were displayed and illuminated with floodlights in the evening (see: *Figure 17*).²³

Here on this picture, we see Gustav Klutis's monumental photographs of Lenin and Stalin, made for May 1st, 1932, in nocturnal illumination in front of the Hotel Metropol on the Sverdlov Square in Moscow. Between the figures, a model of the Dnjepr barrage can be recognised. On the reproduction of the dam Lenin's slogan can be read: “Communism is Soviet Power plus the electrification of the whole country” (Taylor 1996: 249).

Brandon Taylor describes the figures in his essay “Concentrated photographic effects, painting and iconic elevation” (Taylor 1996: 249-252) as the contemporary forms of the traditional Russian icons. One has to imagine this graphically: the figures about 25 meters high depicted on the photo boards, are traced back to the small icons (see: *Figure 18*).

In fact, both the Soviet leaders and, occasionally, saints are depicted as complete figures facing each other. Position and status of the tablets held in the hand of the saints are compared by Taylor to the writings on the coffer-dam wall. Taylor sees major affinities between the giant communist photos and icons in the “great potential for public effect” and the “auratic elevation of the two leaders” (Taylor 1996: 251). To that end, he writes: “The modern variation shows both Soviet leaders elevated to saints and, insinuated by the unfurling liturgy of electrification in their

23 | The full body portraits of Lenin and Stalin measured appr. 25m x 10m; they are put together from innumerable single foto tiles, each measuring 50 x 60cm. The whole installation was put up by 200 workers, photo technicians, retouche specialists, statics specialists, etc. see: Taylor 1996: 249.

midst, in a figurative as well as a literal sense to be in possession of power through the word” (Taylor 1996).

The reason for seeing parallelisms in icons and fascist visuality lies obviously in the potential of these representations to serve as a foundation for a regime in construction. The paraphrasing of the well-known form leads at the same time to the communication of the rituals associated therewith. If one considers, consequently, the icons as a connecting link between the viewer and the portrayed divinities, that endows the gigantic photo figures with the meanings from the divine domain.

It can hardly be doubted that the object of the monumental photographs lies in the admiration, veneration and stylization of the superhumanness (or superhuman greatness) of the persons depicted. Hence, communism makes use of the discourse of the Orthodox Church to transfer the religious practices and effects—such as veneration and belief—onto politics.

The Portrait of the Duce on the Church Façade Fascism and Catholicism

It is clear that the phenomenon of the sacralisation of politics does not confine itself to Mussolini’s Italy, but the direct competition between Mussolini and the pope has some highly specific outcomes. “The Duce is always right”²⁴ was a standard saying, and his absolute domination, not unusual in dictatorships—had never been contested publicly. The only nationwide counterpart that Mussolini had to cope with was the Pope who resided in the immediate neighbourhood of Mussolini. In catholic Italy, especially in papal Rome, the rivalry was omnipresent and acute; Mussolini’s claim to power did not stop at the borders of the secular power.

Nevertheless, (and notwithstanding the dictum “Fascism is a religion”), the Mussolini regime can hardly be spoken of as a religion, as Emilio Gentile proposed (Ufficio Propaganda del Partito Nazionale Fascista 1923: 7). Rather, one is tempted to agree with Alexander Nützenadel that the adoption of religious rituals and symbols had been a “superficial adaptation” and not “the formation of independent religious faith contents” (Nützenadel 2000: 128).

24 | The sentence can originally be found in “Endecalogo” by Leo Longanesi from 1926 and became, in the following years, the most widely circulated catch phrase (decalogue) of Fascism.

Without discussing the thesis of Nützenadel, formulated retrospectively, I would like to show that the Portrait of the Duce on the façade of the Dome of Milan was first of all a contemporary attempt to produce the new faith content by means of a “superficial adaptation” in the literal sense of the word (see: *Figure 19*).

From the forecourt over the entrance area up to the altar at the church crossing the room continually gains in sacral importance. This *promenade architecturale*, normally perambulated by church-goers (from the square through the door into the church interior, then through the nave to the crossing) is reduced in our example to the relationship between the dome square and the portrait applied to the façade.

In this way, both the sacral message of the church-interior and the one of the façade become irrelevant; the spatial apogee of the sacral hierarchy is shifted from the altar to the forecourt: here resides Mussolini, here are the people who capture from the necessary distance the monumental portrait of the leader at his height. Here, on the *parvis*—the word used both for the paradise and for the forecourt of the dome, the mass faces the leader and, as one could say with Dröge and Müller, recognises itself in him: “Architecture is the counterpart of the mass, in which it reflects itself and recognises itself”.²⁵

The sacral iconographic program of the dome-façade was superimposed by the portrait of the Duce. Therewith, the secular iconography steps into the immediate neighbourhood of the religious one. The importance of this fascist act lays in transferring religious images onto profane context, using them as a foundation, but also as a legitimation for the relatively young regime.

It is clear that Fascism could never displace Catholic faith. Likewise, for Mussolini it must have been clear that a frontal attack on the church would be fruitless if not outright counter-productive. At least some profit should have been made from pictures of the catholic religion, though, so that the faith in Fascism, incapable of replacing catholic faith, would at least stand on a par with it. In our case this equality was embodied with the help of an icon of the Catholic church on it—the Milanese Dome: for a moment, the two powers were literally on the same level (Taylor 1996: 249-252).

The light-photo-montage in Milan shows clearly that Mussolini, despite the Lateran treaties of 1929 which declared Catholicism the state

25 | “Die Architektur ist das Gegenüber der Masse, in dem sie sich spiegelt und erkennt” (Dröge and Müller 1995: 321).

religion of Italy, was not prepared to leave to the Catholic Church its terrain without benefiting from it.

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Figure 6: Installation of the illumination on the occasion of the anniversary of the March on Rome, October 28th, 1933



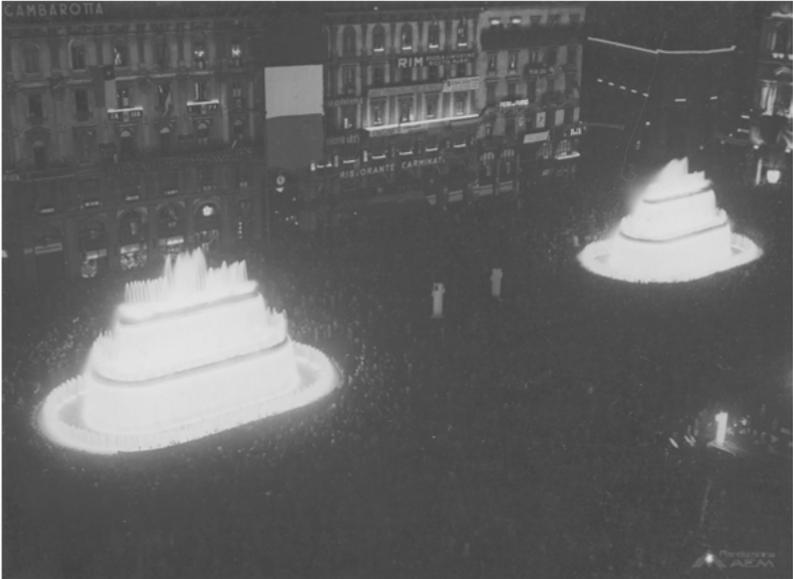
Source: AEM (Azienda Elettrica Municipale), Archivio Fotografico

Figure 7: Illumination on the occasion of the anniversary of the March on Rome, October 28th, 1932



Source: AEM (Azienda Elettrica Municipale), Archivio Fotografico

Figure 8: Illumination on the occasion of the anniversary of the March on Rome, October 28th, 1934



Source: AEM (Azienda Elettrica Municipale), Archivio Fotografico

Figure 9: Illumination on the occasion of the anniversary of the March on Rome, October 28th, 1936



Source: AEM (Azienda Elettrica Municipale), Archivio Fotografico

Figure 10: Vincenzo Carrese, "Milano saluta il Duce", photography, October 28th, 1933



Source: Rivista Illustrata del "Popolo d'Italia", November, 1933: 13

Figure 11: Ceramic plate, ca. 1926



Figure 12: Pier Maria Bardi, "Origini"



Source: *Quadrante*, October, 1933: 5

Figure 13: Illumination on the occasion of the anniversary of the March on Rome, October 28th, 1933



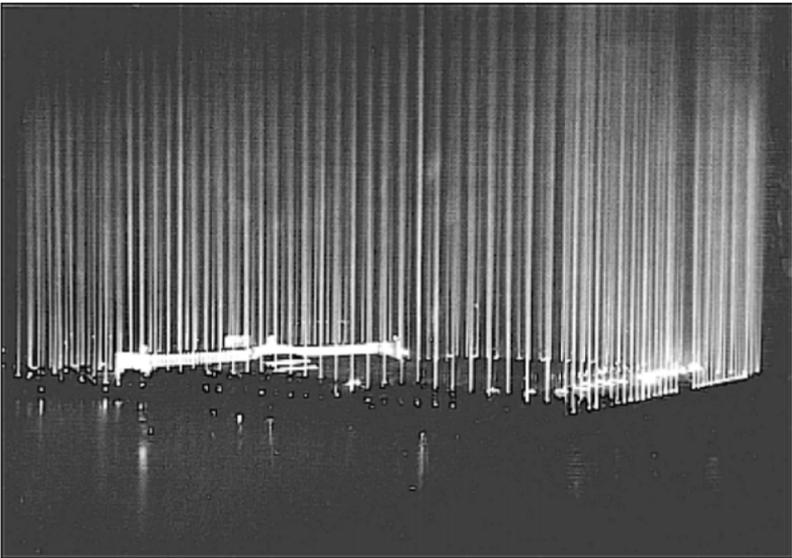
Source: AEM (Azienda Elettrica Municipale), Archivio Fotografico

Figure 14: Mario Stroppa, "La piazza del Duomo allestita per la visita del Duce", pencil on paper, 36 x 78 cm, 1932



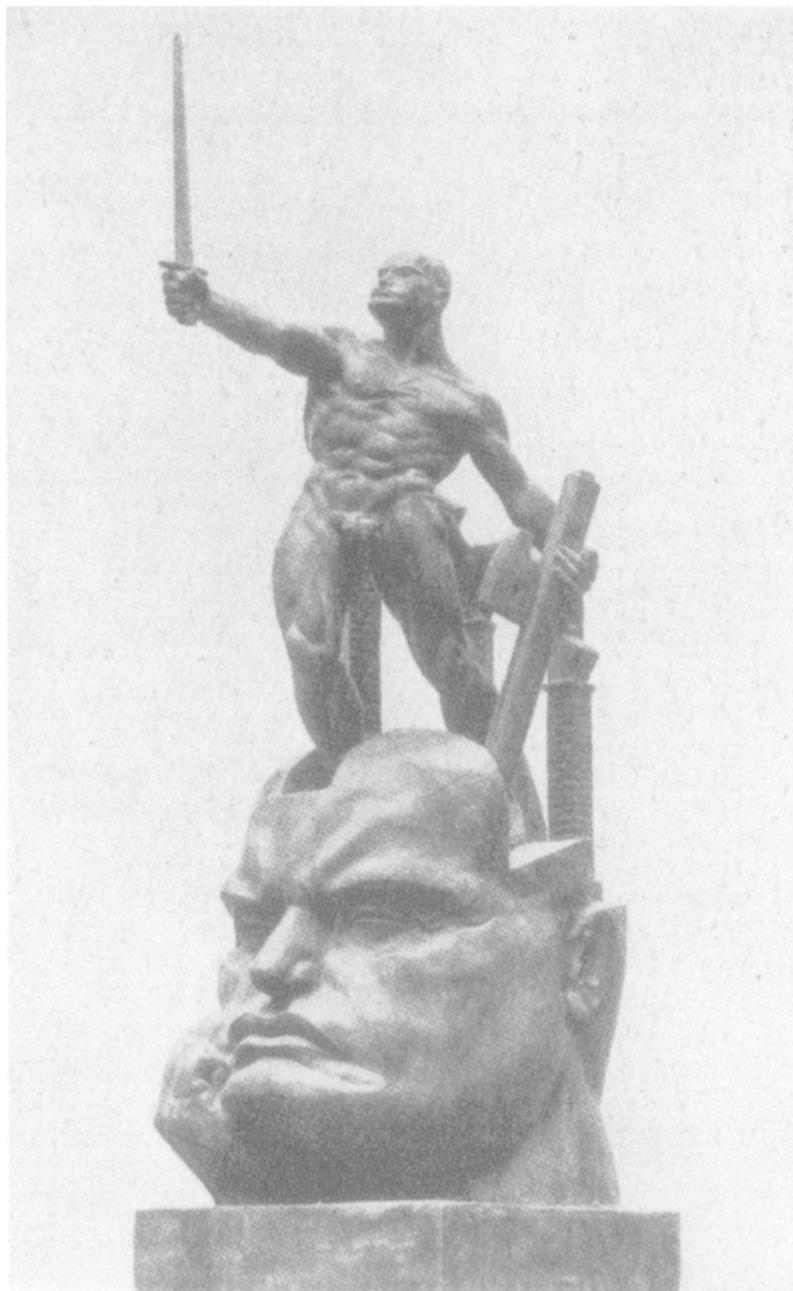
Source: Virgilio Vercelloni, *La storia del paesaggio urbano di Milano*, Mailand: Edizioni L'Archivoltò 1989: 55

Figure 15: Anti-aircraft beams on the Zeppelin field, 1937



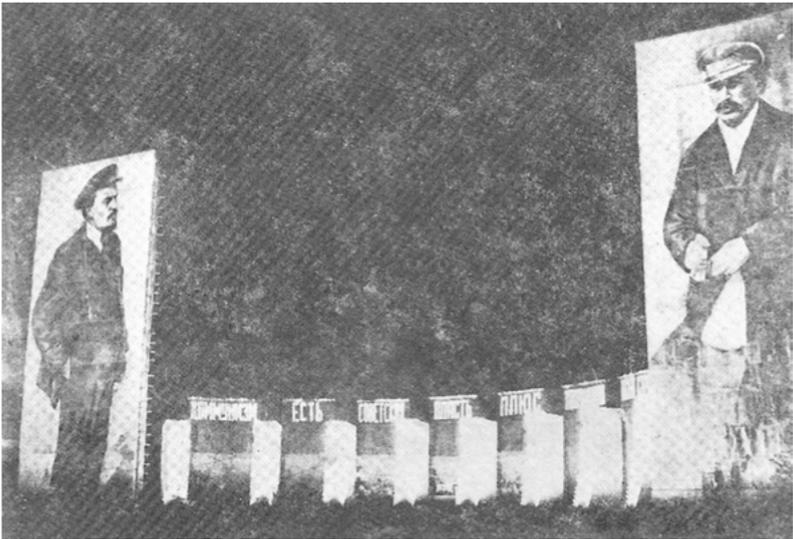
Source: *Centrum Industriekultur Nürnberg* 1992: 66.

Figure 16: Ferruccio Vecchi, "L'Impero balza dalla mente del Duce", 1939-40



Source: Genova 1997: 25.

Figure 17: Gustav Klutss, monumental photographs of Lenin and Stalin for May 1st, 1932



Source: Taylor, B. 1996: 249.

Figure 18: Russian Icons, School of Dionissij, The Saints John Chrysostom and Basili the Great, 16th century



Source: Taylor 1996: 249.

Figure 19: Illumination on the occasion of the anniversary of the March on Rome, October 28th, 1933.



Source: AEM (Azienda Elettrica Municipale), Archivio Fotografico

Audio Media in the Service of the Totalitarian State?

DMITRI ZAKHARINE

State Totalitarianism or Media Totalitarianism?

The question concerning the logical relationship between the structures and media of totalitarianism has been treated controversially in contemporary scholarship. A large part of the relevant publications (represented by Hannah Arendt and Leonard Schapiro)¹ defines totalitarian power primarily as the power of a charismatic leader over the unwilling majority and, following Aristotle's concept of tyranny, sees the latter as rooted in structures of political order.² A second corpus of research increasingly interprets totalitarianism as technological power and associates

1 | See: Hannah Arendt (1951: 465): "[...] totalitarian government in its initial stages must behave like a tyranny and raze the boundaries of man-made law". See: Leonard Schapiro (1972: 118): "Totalitarianism is a new form of dictatorship which grew up in the conditions of mass democracy after the First World war. It was characterized by the predominance of the leader of the victorious movement, who with the aid of his subordinate elite and a manipulated ideology aimed at total control over state, society and the individual". Peter Burke indicated certain similarities between leaders of totalitarian regimes (in the twentieth century) and absolutist regimes (in the seventeenth century) in *The Fabrication of Louis XIV* (Burke 1992: 203): "The contrast between 17th-century leaders and 20th-century ones is not a contrast between rhetoric and truth. It is a contrast between two styles of rhetoric". See: Gleason (1995: 7): "Although the term *totalitarianism* has been widely used outside the academic community and has wide currency today, one seldom sees it any longer used analytically in the pages of a scholarly monograph or journal".

2 | "Any monarchy must necessarily be a tyranny of this sort if it is rules in unchallenged fashion over persons who are similar or better and with a view to its own advantage and not that of the ruled. Hence [it is rule over persons who are] unwilling; for no free person would willingly tolerate this sort of rule" (Aristotle 1984: 4-10-1295ff).

it with scientific inventions in the field of telecommunications. In this second corpus, the radio, the loudspeaker and sound film, i.e. media forms that realize the principle of optical sound recording, are assigned a structuralizing function with regard to the reproduction and continuity of totalitarian power.

Established trends in philosophical anthropology and the philosophy of media seem convinced that acoustic and audiovisual media have a particular affinity for exercising political power. One of their main arguments holds that humans have two eyelids, but no “earlids”. Since man cannot evade auditory impact, the source of totalitarian power is said to inhere in the involuntary acoustic guidance of attention. As early as in the nineteenth-century discourses of *Zivilisationskritik*, hearing was treated as a sense of extreme passibility and at the same time as a guarantor of authentic perception. For indigenous peoples, auditory sensations are supposed to have been action-guiding to a greater degree than visual sensations. Based on this theory, Nietzsche attempted to derive the meaning of Greek tragedy from the spirit of music in 1872. At around the same time, the sociologist Georg Simmel (1882) noted “that in all primitive peoples [...] music [...] plays a key role”. Cultural historian Egon Friedell (1949) later maintained that “the receptivity and sensitivity of the Greeks to the power of sound [was] downright pathological”. While it is no longer desired to reflect on the finer differences between the universals of acoustic perception and socially constructed listening contexts, contemporary cultural studies has by and large subscribed to the above-mentioned theories of philosophy and philosophical anthropology.³

In the 1960s, media studies pioneer Marshall McLuhan established the “monopolistic effect” of the radio by bringing concepts such as “auditory space” and *Lebensraum* into a close relationship with one another.⁴ In McLuhan’s work, the famous analogy between the radio and the tribal drum applies first and foremost to the public listening cultures of developing nations. While England and America were supposedly “immune” to the radio “due to the influence of alphabetic writing and industrialization”, the radio embodied “an archaic force [...] for the peoples of Africa, India, China and Russia”. In these places, the radio “evoked archaic tribal ghosts of the most vigorous sort” and returned the fragmented individ-

3 | See: Welsch (1993: 99): “It follows that we are especially in need of protection acoustically”.

4 | See: McLuhan (1964: 298): “It is the top item on radio, showering us with fountains of auditory space or *lebensraum*”.

ual to the cradle of the collective environment of voices (McLuhan 1968: 340-345).

The tradition of the concept of media totalitarianism elaborated in McLuhan's writings has produced a number of recent studies on acoustic communication. These treat the "new media" (but above all electro-acoustic media) as "hot" in terms of their high potential for effecting integration. Thus Cornelia Epping-Jäger, for instance, views the loudspeaker as the source of "a medially configured vocal power". Using the term "Loud/Speaker *dispositif*", she analyzes the consolidation process of the technical parameters of acoustic media and the power claims of political elites. Through her analysis of Hitler's self-portrayals, Epping-Jäger arrives at the conclusion that the Loud/Speaker *dispositif* generated the "phonocentrism of National Socialist political communication" and promoted the internalization of power as an acoustic form of experience of the *Volksgemeinschaft*.⁵

Unlike Epping-Jäger, Inge Marszolek shows that the communal reception of both radio and loudspeaker voices would have been destined to fail without the cooperation of both listeners and producers of sound. Implanted in private rooms, the radio eluded total control: it could be switched on and off. One could avoid the infiltration of totalitarian vocal power into private spaces through the self-guided adjustment of volume. As numerous memoirs from the time of National Socialism document, this option was often exercised. The *Volksempfänger* was instantly silenced "as soon as a loud voice resounded from it" (Marszolek 2005: 67). For this reason, political speeches were reduced in favor of entertainment programs by 1935. According to Marszolek, mass presentations with a powerful acoustic component increasingly lost their prominence after 1935 and were reserved for only a few major National Socialist events (Marszolek 2005: 63).

It is always popular and, with certain reservations, even sensible to express alarm about the power produced by innovative technological solutions. However, scholarship has thus far failed to provide an empirical basis for equating concepts such as acoustics and totalitarianism. But the argument for the totality of the radio or the loudspeaker is valid only if it can be proven that both listeners and those who let listen use

5 | The public spaces in which the parades of the Nazis took place were organized so that none of the audience members were more than 75 meters away from a loudspeaker. Hitler's voice was amplified 50,000 volt, so that it could dominate the space of 500,000 square meters on Berlin's Tempelhof Field (Epping-Jäger 2003: 100; Epping-Jäger 2006, 166).

and interpret these media in a certain culturally coded manner. This requires greater insight into the nature of social agreements about the use of acoustic media in the context of repressive power regimes.

The present article attempts to show that the relationship between the audio media and the listening contexts of totalitarianism should be treated as contingent. Based on an analysis of early film sound projects in the Soviet Union, it intends to demonstrate how, on the one hand, electro-acoustic media were used to reconfigure traditional soundscapes and how, on the other hand, local (social, mytho-religious) semantics of sound entered into the constitution of such electro-acoustic soundscapes.

The Totality of Voice in the Eastern Christian Interpretation of Sound

The human voice constitutes a basic two-channeled identification system, which allows the establishing of a correlation between the production and the reception of sounds: I hear myself, therefore I produce sounds; I produce sounds, therefore I hear them. The projection of this production-reception schema onto the environment accounts for the “channel purism” [*Kanalpurismus*] of many religious systems. To this day, the differentiation between sounds whose source is human and all other sounds remains essential to such religions as Islam and Eastern Christianity. Thus, for instance, in Russian churches the use of musical instruments is not allowed for the reason that instruments are unable to pray. Protestantism knows of a similar dilemma, though it observes this difference less rigorously.

Since the Early Middle Ages, Catholic priests (similarly to Russian clergymen and Muslim muezzins, or callers to prayer), were expected to have special capabilities in the interpretation of sound.⁶ But only in Western regions did musicians of the sixteenth and seventeenth century supersede religious interpreters who conveyed sacred messages using their voice. In the cultural contexts of both Western and Eastern Christianity, collective acoustic signal-calls stood in a relationship of

6 | See: Murray R. Schafer (1999: 215): “Throughout history the range of the human voice has provided an important module in determining the grouping of human settlements. For instance, it conditioned the ‘long’ farm of early North American settlers, where the houses were placed within shouting distance of one another in case of surprise attack, and the fields ran back from them in a narrow strip”.

reference to the human voice for many centuries.⁷ As late as in 1737, a church intendant in the Bourbonnais (according to the account of Lucien Febvre) had the bells of his city lowered and flogged by the hangman in medieval fashion, because they had dared to ring out against the royal guard (Febvre 1942: 322). In Russia, church bells were ensouled and treated as living beings much longer and more consistently than in the West. As a result, they were punished for conveying heretical messages by being thrown to the ground, flogged and carried off to Siberia after having their loop (*ear* in Russian) beaten off and their clapper (*tongue* in Russian) torn out.⁸ In places where complex social ties emerged more slowly, and where the writing-based learning process in the realm of acoustics did not occur linearly, the animistic interpretation of sound survived longer than in Western Europe. Even in the twenty-first century, the Russian church still practices customs in which un-enlivened church bells receive names and are mourned in memorial services. In 2002, for instance, the name of incumbent Russian president Vladimir Putin was engraved on the bells of the Holy Trinity-St. Sergius Monastery in Zagorsk, one of Russia's most important churches.

When the acoustic community acknowledges the arbitrary nature of sound symbols, it is reflected in national policy regarding both un-enlivened and enlivened sound objects. Political power relies on the collective conviction that sound symbols lose their magical power when the sacred source of sound is exchanged or replaced by another source.

7 | Claude-Levi-Strauss reconstructed the prototypical, symmetrically arranged model of sound perception by analyzing the sender-recipient schemata found in mythology: "In the myths mentioned so far, the protagonists are receivers of noise; in other contexts, they turn into producers of noise" (Levi-Strauss 1976: 211).

8 | Russian history tells of numerous bells that were "corporally" executed in this manner. The first of these is the bell of the Novgorod *veche* (people's assembly), which was dismantled, "arrested" and carried off to Moscow in 1478 by order of Ivan III. Another famous story concerns a bell from Uglich that was flogged with the knout in 1593 and taken to Tobolsk. The bell was said to have heralded bad news about the murder of Tsarevich Dmitrii. As punishment, the people threw the bell to the ground from the belfry, tore out its clapper, beat loose the loop of the bell and publically struck it twelve times with the knout on the town's main square. Afterwards, the bell was locked into the Tobolsk prison. In the second half of the eighteenth century, the bell of the Moscow Kremlin was punished for similar reasons and in similar fashion. During the Moscow Plague Riot of 1771, a large number of people had gathered under the bells. When Empress Catharine II was unable to find the conspirators (i.e. those who had rung the bell), she ordered that the bell itself be punished. First the "tongue" (clapper) of the bell was removed. The bell then hung at the Kremlin without a clapper until 1803. Today it is located at the armory in Moscow (Raushenbakh 1985: 304ff; Bondarenko 1998: 499ff).

This collectively shared belief can explain the particular status of original sound recordings in the Soviet Union of the 1930s. The struggle of the first Soviet sound engineers to depict the industrial sound environment in the format of original sound was based primarily on ideological rather than technical reasons. These, if not determined directly by it, had much in common with the religious beliefs of the Russian Orthodox Church.

In the 1930s, film theorists outside the Soviet Union were of very different opinions regarding the extent to which original sound recording was not only feasible, but also necessary for generating an authentic sound-film effect. The pioneer of sound-film theory Béla Bálazs expressed skepticism about the viewer's ability to distinguish between original versus studio sound (1926).⁹ Christian Metz later took a similar position: "In principle, nothing distinguishes a shot heard in a film from a shot heard on the street".¹⁰ In complete opposition to this, Williams argued that, unlike studio sound, original sound transmitted the traces of the acoustic context of a recording: "'identical' sounds (voices, instruments) seem different in different acoustic environments" (Williams 1980: 53).

Modern sound recording techniques (Dolby) allow the capturing of the subtlest nuances of a soundscape. In this process, the volume of low sounds is raised while noise is strongly reduced. The nuances of the soundscape could therefore be imitated in the studio as well, by blending recordings and special sound effects created with a synthesizer.¹¹ To this day, sound film can and must dispense with original sound recordings for two reasons. First, the ambient noise contained in every original sound recording is often perceived as distracting by viewers. Second, ambient noise is superfluous during playback because the eye's corrective function neutralizes its effect. While looking at a screen that shows a running horse, one will easily identify the rattling of nutshells with the sound of hooves. One of the paradoxes of sound recording consists of the fact that studio sound often seems more effective than original sound. In the United States, England and Germany, early sound film often managed without recordings of original sound. In fact, studio

9 | See: Bálazs 1926-1931: 161: "Sound is cannot be depicted [...]. Not the image of [actor's] voice but the voice itself is shown".

10 | See: Metz 1975: 158: "Rien ne distingue en principe un coup de feu entendu dans un film d'un coup de feu entendu dans la rue".

11 | See: Flückiger 2002: 73: "One could imagine techniques that would eliminate this difference [between original and recorded sound]. It is also conceivable that the physical properties of original sound and recorded sound could coincide completely".

sound recordings were utilized much more consistently at the time than in today's film shootings.¹²

Soon after the first experimental sound films were introduced into Soviet culture, inventors of the first sound-film camera and formalistically-minded film interpreters claimed that the nature and function of Soviet sound film were essentially different from its German and American prototypes. While the talkie and the musical were of primary significance in the West, the proletarian cinema of the Soviet Union instead specialized in reproducing the sound picture of the heroic industrial workday (Sokolov 1930: 59; Shorin 1941: 90ff; Andrievskii 1931: 21).

When pioneer of Soviet sound film Dziga Vertov (Denis Kaufman) composed the "Sound March" for his film *The Donbass Symphony* in 1929, he provided the recordings of his sound sources with attributes that revealed an animistic understanding of the sound environment.¹³ The director rarely invented such attributes himself, however, drawing them from current newspaper articles instead.¹⁴ "The furious sound of the church bell rings out with new force;" "Suddenly one hears the strange whimper of a flying cross;" "A cry of pure delight escapes the orchestra"; or "The knocking sounds of the billet being forged" (Vertov 1929-1930: 1-6).¹⁵

12 | In his journal from the early 1930s, the American film director Rouben Mamoulian admits that, due to high production costs, original sound was used only rarely in American cinema: "In *Applause* unfortunately the traffic noises had to be made on the set. It was pathetic, and it still is pathetic when I hear it. But for the subway scenes we got permission to shoot in the subway. Those sounds were authentically recorded. We also shot in Pennsylvania Station, and I did a scene on the top of a skyscraper by breaking the law" (Cameron 1980: 90).

13 | The acoustic connotations of the artistic name invented by Dennis Kaufman, the descendant of a Jewish family from Bialystok (Poland), speak for themselves. The first name "Dziga" was meant to suggest the noise of the film editing machine (dz...dz...dz...), while the name "Vertov" is derived from the Russian root "vert" (*to turn*).

14 | Vertov 1929-1931, 5. See the following excerpt from an article in the *Red Army* newspaper from April 12th, 1923: "Suddenly the booming sounds of the bells ring out in the club-house. [...] One can hear the hoarse bass voices of the priests, accompanied by a pitiful crowd of old religious women. 'Long live the Internationale, brothers'—one hears inside the clubhouse. [...] To the astonishment of the priests and the believers, this passionate and powerful song resounded from the bell tower: 'Not God, nor Tsar, nor hero.' Thus the *komsomoltsy* sing from the bell tower of the monastery. A few old women make the sign of the cross.—Are those perhaps angels singing?" (Anonymous 1923: 1).

15 | Vertov countered reproaches by his opponents that characterized the industrial noises in *The Donbass Symphony* as monotonous and boring with the argument that the sounds in his film are "not at all monotonous; they are unusual [...] the

The attempt of totalitarian propaganda to exaggerate the collective belief in an animistic sound environment, and to replace Christian sound media with those of the Bolsheviks, implied an understanding of Bolshevism as a doctrine of enlightenment that filled an inanimate environment with spirit. Thus, the enervating sound of the factory siren came to replace the metallic ringing of the church bell. In 1923, professional musician Mikhail Gnesin, a 1914 graduate in composition from the St. Petersburg Conservatory, was the first to speak of “communist bells”. He was later to become the founder of Soviet music criticism in the USSR. In the same year, another representative of the musical avant-garde, Arsenii Avraamov, composed an entire symphony using factory sirens. Two immense open-air events, in Baku (Azerbaijan) and Moscow, made use of the pipes of every factory, the foghorns of the entire Caspian navy, as well as two artillery divisions.

In light of the demystification of Christian sound media, optical sound recording increasingly acquired a significant function and quasi-religious impact. Not surprisingly, the passing of a decree on church congregations in 1929, the drafting of the secret resolution “On the Regulation of the Church Bells” on December 6th, 1929, the subsequent dismantling of church bells, as well as the first Soviet attempts in the sphere of sound film (1929) all coincided.¹⁶ Workers’ decisions about the prohibition of bell ringing were frequently made in movie theaters following screenings of antireligious propaganda films.¹⁷ In the course of implementing party decisions, church bells were thrown to the ground by the Soviet Militia (similarly to medieval times), after their clappers

industrial workers read these sounds as meaningful signs [*smyslovye znaki*]” (Vertov 1930-1931: 83). See also Vertov’s answer to the criticism of the Kiev film factory administration: “A worker that has been employed in manufacturing for years will recognize the sound of any factory. When he hears the sounds produced by the power plant, he will know that it sounds like the plant in Donbass” (Vertov 1930-1931, 59).

16 | See the following excerpt from this resolution: “The bell ringing practiced by the priests throughout the district contradicts the principle of the separation of church and state insofar as it infringes on the rights of the broad non-religious masses, prevents work and disturbs the workers in their free time. Under these circumstances, and based on requests stemming from the broad working masses (whose intellectual needs have increased in recent times), our administration must take highly restrictive and prohibitive measures regarding the ringing of church bells” (NKVD: Ob uregulirovani kolokol'nogo zvonka).

17 | For instance, a gathering of audience members took place at the movie theater “Vostok” in Yoshkar-Ola (Mari El) on April 19th, 1932. The viewers in the assembly are said to have demanded the legal prohibition of bell ringing.

(*tongues* in Russian) had been removed.¹⁸ The devout reacted to the desecration of bells with ritual lament.¹⁹

The implementation of animistic standards of perception in original sound recording techniques presupposed an aesthetic principle that determined the nature of early Soviet documentary newsreels [*dokumental'nye khroniki*]. The camera crew in which the inventor of the first Soviet sound-film camera, Shorin, collaborated with Vertov, often used the single portable camera available at the time to record the voices of both birds and Soviet party functionaries in a same session. In his memoirs, Shorin liked to compare sound recording to a pre-modern form of hunting, using the ambiguous verb “to capture” to describe two distinct practices (“capturing with a trap” and “capturing with the microphone”).

The second of the two accessible cameras that enabled original sound recording in nature was placed at the disposal of the Department of Documentary Film by the Shorin-Vertov team. Immediately thereafter, the state commissioned the Moscow film director Erofeev to produce original sound recordings in the Pamir Mountains. From a practical point of view, the goal of the laborious expedition into a region with “no electricity and no technical assistance” was difficult to comprehend (Shorin 1941: 91). It was clear that the entire range of supposed mountain sounds

18 | See the report of a clergyman who witnessed the dismantling of bells: “On the evening of April 19 [1935], a brigade of workers appeared. This time the watchman had the keys to the temple. He handed them over and the workers began to dismount the bells. But because it soon got dark the workers merely managed to take down the clapper of the large bell and to throw it to the ground. At night, the community spokesman convinced the men to return the clapper to the belfry, which they did. [...] Early in the morning came a group of four workers who had thrown down the clapper the night before. When they discovered that the large bell's clapper had been returned to its initial place, they began removing all of the bells, beginning with the smaller ones. At around this time, about fifty women gathered next to the belfry, protesting and crying very loudly, which did not help at first. But eventually the workers stopped and simply dropped their tools. They descended from the belfry and at the exit encountered a group of women that were crying loudly and reviling the workers as vampires. After that, the workers marched off to the village soviet, where they phoned to request Militia troops. Later, two armed militiamen arrived on horse and threatened the women with violence and the use of weapons” (Damaskin 2002: 167-183).

19 | See the following eyewitness report (Voronezh district): “The toppled bells were mourned by the peasant women like the deceased. Led by members of State security and a delegate of the Communist Party, a group of peasants arrived from Voronezh and went up the bell tower. When the women from the village noticed that the drunk peasants were preparing something on the tower, and were trying to lower and throw down the church bells, they began to wail even more loudly, as during an attack of the Tatars” (Annenkov 1990: 160).

could be recorded in a studio or, at most, in a Moscow suburb. The Soviet state nevertheless insisted on original sound recordings. This approach had the ideological objective of opening the ears of the masses and of completely sensitizing societal perception to the infiltration of latent messages from the natural landscape.

Dissolving the Boundary Between the Sonic Weapon and Sound Aesthetics

Soviet experiments with audio media reveal a scientific culture whose ideological platform was based on an enlightenment faith of Eastern Christian provenance that had been equipped with technological attributes and symbols. Such a scientific culture exhibits, on the one hand, a continued tendency toward its dedifferentiation from religion, art and politics. On the other hand, it demonstrates a certain degree of reflexive scientification (see: Kozulin 1984; Weiner 1999; Berstejn 2001; Busky 2002; Andrews 2003). This scientification creates conditions under which societal introspection begins to regard science not as a source of solutions, but as a source of scientific problems. According to Beck (1986), this leads to the de-monopolization of scientific knowledge claims: science becomes more and more *necessary*, but at the same time less and less *sufficient* for the socially binding definition of truth.

With some reservations, one can argue that the concept of a psychotronic weapon, which was already coined by the scientific utopias of the 1920s, influenced later Soviet experiments in the field of radio-hypnosis. The 1920s through 1930s witnessed the large-scale Soviet experiments of Lazarev, Bekhterev and Kazhinskii, who studied brain waves that were assumed to be capable of transmitting both thoughts and transcendental messages over long distances. For proletarian theatre performances, devices such as “Fonofot” were constructed (1924). These can be considered the prototypes of later technologies of behavior control whose objective was to manipulate the aesthetic impressions of the audience by psycho-physiological means.²⁰

As in the case of many technological innovations, the motivation for research in the sphere of sound-wave radiation in the 1930s through the 1940s was based on military interests. Accordingly, public scientific

20 | See: Zapiska izobretatelia instrumenta Fonofot (1924). See about psychotronic [non lethal] weapons: Defense News 1993, Defense Electronics 1995; Alexander 1995; Smirnov/Beznosiuk/Zhuravlev 1995.

disputes had first to determine which electro-technical inventions fell into the category of entertainment and which were to be classified as weapons. The scientific experiments of the late 1920s in the sphere of entertainment focused primarily on analyzing sonic waves 1) whose frequency fell below the threshold of sensitivity (*infrasound*) or above this threshold (*ultrasound*) and 2) whose intensity remained below the threshold of audibility (10 dB—breathing) or ranged above the acoustic threshold of pain (130 dB—an aircraft engine).

Even before the invention of optical sound recording, Soviet physicists and artists alike anticipated the emergence of a medium that would erase the boundary between aesthetics and physiology. At the time, sonic weapons were the focus of scientific studies in both the realm of theater arts and the military sector. In 1928, the same year in which sound film appeared, the Red Army General Headquarters distributed a secret informational brochure about German and French military experiments with sound waves for the purpose of destroying the enemy both mentally and physically.²¹

While early experiments in the field of optical sound recording were

21 | The original text of the manual reads as follows: "Lately we are receiving information about experiments aiming at the solution of new tactical goals. These concern the effect of invisible waves over a long distance. The concrete question is not the impact of electricity but the impact of sound waves, or more precisely—the development of a device that generates certain sound waves, which are barely audible to the human ear. The data at our disposal allow us to conclude that such a device has already been developed in France. It produces ultrasound waves that are transmitted in the form of a beam of rays. The effect of these waves on the nervous system is very strong. In large crowds [...] such waves trigger the urge to flee. According to the information we have received, the operating principle of this device is based on a commonly known nervous reaction that can be produced in anyone. This reaction is caused when piercing sounds, such the scraping of a piece of metal on a smooth surface, are heard at close distance. Whoever hears such a sound has goosebumps and is forced to grind his teeth. These are barely audible sounds. But based on their extremely sharp effect they are almost equal to ultrasound. If the oscillation frequency exceeds 50000 per second, one can no longer hear the whistling sounds. However, a far-reaching effect on the nervous system is immediately noticeable. We have no technical specifications about the structure of the device. But we are receiving information (from Germany as well) on how the idea of such a device is to be realized. The Germans are likewise conducting experiments that aim to employ ultrasound waves in signaling systems. The descriptions of these experiments indicate that [...] ultrasound waves of low intensity do not cause any damage. But if the intensity of the waves increases, their effect on the skin can cause agonizing pain. Sonic generators of higher capacity could also be used as a military weapon" ("Voennoe ispol'zovanie noveishikh dostizhenii tekhniki" ["The Military Use of the Newest Achievements of Technology" 1928]).

still being conducted in the Soviet Union, the effect of high-frequency sound waves was openly discussed as a boundary problem of warfare and musical aesthetics. The Soviet musical avant-garde made a significant contribution to experiments on the military use of sound waves, for instance. The name of the engineer Lev Termen (Leo Theremin) is associated not only with the invention of the *Termenvox* (an electronic musical instrument that can be played without physical contact). More importantly, Termen was famous in his time as a developer of signaling and eavesdropping systems. For many years, the KGB used his *Buran* device to intercept the conversations of foreign embassy workers.²²

As the sound engineer for the first Soviet sound film, *The Five Year Plan (Plan for Great Works, 1929)*, the composer Arsenii Avraamov worked with the “oscillation formula of the *membrana basilaris*, the acoustic organ responsible for the perception of music”. Avraamov was of the opinion that “the composer who applied such a formula could literally deafen the listener”.²³ He believed that the impact of Dziga Vertov’s *Donbass Symphony* could have been much more striking if the sound of the film had been produced by means of electro-acoustic synthesis, instead of using original sound recordings (Avraamov 1939: 316). Similar to the military studies cited above, the composer was primarily concerned with the piercing gliding sounds of the upper frequency range (beginning at circa 3,000 Hz). Beyond the acoustic effect, such a “differential music” was supposed to cause the body to tremble and the facial muscles to contract.²⁴

Whereas the first American sound film studio originated in the con-

22 | Over many years, Leo Theremin worked for the KGB and Soviet intelligence. In 1926, he developed an experimental device with a wireless connection that served as a project for the first television set. See the following excerpt from an interrogation of Termen, who was later arrested as a “spy”: “I worked on developing a new apparatus that was intended to be used for eavesdropping on the personnel of foreign embassies inside their rooms. The device was aimed at the windowpanes. Based on the recorded oscillations, one could determine what was being discussed in the room” (Anfilov 1962: 192ff; Kaplunova 1988: 2).

23 | See: Avraamov 1916: 85: “Only few people realize that the physiological structure of the ear requires careful handling of the notes of the fourth octave [...]. This is of enormous practical significance, because [...] having switched to the register of e4-c4, the composer [can] literally deafen his listener [...]”.

24 | See: Avraamov 1939: 319: “This ‘differential music’ (we have called it thus by analogy with differential analysis in mathematics, since differential analysis has introduced the concept of infinitely small numbers) could solve the problems science is currently facing [...]. It possesses such resources as we used to merely ‘suspect.’ [...] We know that ‘glissando’ [gliding sound, D. Z.] is a highly effective tool [...]. Nature itself has invented it: the howl of the jackals, the whistling of wind and storm,

text of silent film production in Hollywood and the first German sound film studio in the context of silent film production in Babelsberg, Soviet sound film was subordinated to the Radio Institute from the very beginning; as a result, its production studios were located at the Central Telegraph Building. Even though pre-revolutionary Russian silent film studios such as the *Mosfilm* studio established around 1924 were also available for the development of sound film in the USSR, the Soviet administration chose a different option.²⁵ Their decision was based on the theory of so-called electro-acoustic telepathy, in which recently discovered cerebral radiations were over-generalized as a type of universal energy. Around 1920, Petr Lazarev had first observed brain-generated electromagnetic waves with a frequency range of 10 to 50 Hz. From these, the scientist deduced the human ability to transmit thoughts across distances in the form of electromagnetic waves (Lazarev 1920: 6). In 1924, Bernard Kazhinskii conducted an experiment in the applied laboratory for zoological psychology that studied the transmission of telepathic commands from humans to dogs (Kazhinskii 1928). A hypnotized dog was supposed to jump onto a chair in response to the unspoken command of the scientist. Although the results of the study remained inconclusive, the idea of cerebral radiation inspired broad layers of the intelligentsia to a new conceptualization of the Soviet public.

It is highly indicative that the majority of sound engineers who actively developed early Soviet sound film were university-educated neuropsychologists. Dziga Vertov and Abram Room studied this subject at the Institute of Neuropsychology in St. Petersburg.²⁶ The terms “Radio-Eye”²⁷ and “Radio-Ear”²⁸, which Vertov used to define the functions of

and the sighing, groaning and squealing of man are all examples of glissando in nature”.

25 | In all, three silent film factories existed in Moscow. The main film studio of Khazhnonkov was renamed the “First Factory of State Cinema” after the Revolution. Already in 1924, the film studio “Mosfilm” was opened by combining the First and Third Film Factories.

26 | In the years 1914 to 1917, Abram Room studied at the St. Petersburg Institute of Neuropsychology. From 1917 to 1922, he continued his scientific career at the medical faculty of Saratov State University, while simultaneously working as an instructor at the Theatre Workshop.

27 | See: Vertov 1924: 118: “Several years ago we posed the question of the *radioukho* (‘Radio-Ear’, D.Z.) and *radioglaz* (‘Radio-Eye’, D. Z.) and the invention of sound film has preempted this question”. See: Zakharine 2009a; Zakharine 2009b.

28 | See: Vertov 1966: 55: “We will state it once more: the eye and the ear. The ear cannot see; the eye cannot listen. The division of functions”. Vertov most likely adopted the concept of the division of functions of eye and ear from Helmholtz. Helmholtz developed the “concept of non-overlapping qualitative spheres” [*sich nicht*

Soviet sound media, alluded to Beliaev's novel *The Radio-Brain*, published in excerpts in the *Red Newspaper* from 1926 to 1929 (see: Beliaev 1928: Chapter 17). The novel told of a self-controlled psychotronic apparatus (a "small screen [...] for reading minds") that learned to program the behavior of Soviet citizens. Through the use of direct and indirect citations, the novel popularized the ideas of Lazarev and Kazhinskii, who interpreted the effect of cerebral radiation in terms of electronic telepathy.²⁹

Influenced by new publications in the sphere of electro-acoustic telepathy, film theorists such as Sergei Eizenshtein, who had initially been critical about the future of the talkie, revised their montage theories (1929). According to Eizenshtein's confession, this revision took place "in unison with what was taking place in acoustics". Montage technique would henceforth contain "a physiological component [...] just like music whose effects are caused by the overtones". In the work of Eizenshtein, the new concept of overtone montage [*obertonnyi montazh*] implied the broadening of sensory stimuli beyond the limits of the screen. Film became a medium that was meant to put the viewer into uncontrollable states. Thus, according to Eizenshtein's account, the film *The General Line* (1929) was created based on "the collision and combination of individual stimuli [...]". When the director was shooting scenes of mowing peasants, he moved the camera slightly from side to side. Afterwards he laughed "with all his soul" as he "secretly observed the audience in the movie theater". Sitting in their seats, they were rocking from side to side, at first slowly, then "faster and faster, as the images on the screen became shorter and shorter" (Eizenshtein 1929: 504).³⁰

Not long before the appearance of the first Soviet sound film in 1929, the Association of Workers of Revolutionary Cinema (ARRK) was engaged in discussing of Stalin's directive on the state of Soviet film. This directive intended to "replace" the traditional vodka business as a source of na-

überschneidende Qualitätskreise] which enclose the processing of stimuli: "The same ethereal vibrations that appear as light to the eye are felt as warmth by the skin. The same aerial vibrations that the skin perceives as a light touch are perceived as sound by the ear" (Helmholtz 1959: 16).

29 | See the following excerpt from the novel: "'Yes', Takh replied quietly. 'I've already said that I found a material that would help receive these waves. I have defined these waves as 'C-waves' or 'C-rays' (from the word *cerebrum*, Latin for 'brain'). [...] C-waves of infinitely short length are reminiscent of the x-rays that serve to illuminate the screen'" (Beliaev 1928: Chapter 17).

30 | The question to what extent Eizenshtein's concept of overtone montage could also be understood as a parody of mainstream discourse can not be discussed in any detail in this article.

tional tax revenues “with radio and film” (CPSU 1928: 60).³¹ The Soviet film industry was faced with the task of eliminating, in short order, the disparity between tax revenues stemming from the sale of alcohol and from film distribution. In accordance with Lemberg’s plan, which was supported by the workers’ assembly, “film was to replace vodka”. Among the most significant arguments in favor of this replacement strategy were the results of surveys conducted in the Kharkov region. These polls documented a “large interest among the population” in film screenings, which the people referred to as “misty pictures” [*tumannye kartiny*].

In the debates led by the ARRK in 1929 and 1930, the physio-aesthetic effect of sound film was understood in connection with Ivan Pavlov’s theory of reflexes.³² The film director Abram Room advanced the argument that sound film would be ideally suited to the implementation of reflexology in cinematic practice. In his view, film directors had to capture the nerve reflexes of the actors in order to meet the new demands of the sound camera as a cognitive medium. Room based his ideas on the parallel depiction of animal and human reflexes in a film by Pudovkin that reconstructed and demonstrated the procedure of Pavlov’s experiments with dogs.³³

The comparison between animal and human reflexes became the topic of scientific news from various fields of research shortly before the emergence of sound film. For instance, the first part of the documentary film *The Achievements of Soviet Science* (1929), entitled *Experience with the Acclimatization of Monkeys at the Sukhumi Zoo*, showed a Sacred Baboon that had been born at the zoo. The second part of the film (*The Great Mute Begins to Talk*) then introduced Tager and Shorin, the in-

31 | Stalin’s directive took up an idea posited by Trotsky: “The state can integrate [film] into the spheres of leisure and national education more and more by opposing cinema to alcohol and turning film into its own source of income” (Trotskii 1927: 23). In a lecture from March 7th, 1929 entitled “Vodka and Cinema”, Lemberg (a member of the ARRK) expressed the problem of the disproportionate distribution of income as follows: “Whereas the national income from film production comes to no more than 20 million rubles, tax revenues from *Tsentrosport* in the years 1925-1926 amounted to 370 million” (Lemberg 1929: 3).

32 | In the years 1924-1925, Room designed the Course of Lectures on Reflexology for the audience of the Meyerhold Theatre.

33 | See: Room 1929: 16: “Just as in the case of the dog that salivates after seeing a picture of food, light is considered a stimulus in the case of the actor [...]. Such great men as Bekhterev and Pavlov relied on Darwin in their research. They did not work with actors; they worked with animals. [Therefore] we need a psychological laboratory for the purely cinematographic study of man; we should study the reflexes of film actors”.

ventors of the first Soviet sound film cameras.³⁴ Many of the audience members knew the goal of breeding apes at the Georgian zoo from overt newspaper publications. Based on a theory advanced by the veterinarian Dr. Ivanov, scientists planned to transplant the male reproductive glands of apes into the bodies of the old Bolsheviks in order to retard the aging process.³⁵ The images of sound film cameras alluded to another scientific miracle, which consisted of the “ensouling” of the silent film camera. Consequently, it remained for the audience to conceive of sound film as a medium that could infinitely extend the human capacity for cognition.³⁶ By analogy, apes were presented as the source of the animalistic sexual virility of the future man.

In conclusion, it can be argued that the consolidation of the concepts of totalitarian power and of the total medium in the Soviet Union of the 1930s occurred in two ways. The first was the hermeneutic approach, which concerned the interpretation of the sound environment. The latter allowed archaic animistic interpretations of sound, which had been partially predetermined by Eastern Christian church doctrine, to resurface in the sound symbols, used by radio and sound film compositions. Consequently, the idea of church bells as living beings was projected onto the factory siren. The second approach was a scientism that promoted the dedifferentiation of physics and religion. Inspired by inventions in the realms of ultrasound, cerebral radiation and the study of reflexes, scientifically trained sound engineers theorized acoustic sound media as an alternative to psychoactive substances. Such theories implied the dissolution of the boundary between aesthetics and physiology on the one hand and between the public and the individual on the other hand. The two approaches indicated here allow for the conclusion that the electro-acoustic types of media that are viewed as playing a decisive role in Soviet totalitarianism are, in fact, in continuity with the interpretive schemata established by local cultural contexts. So-

34 | The film is located at the Russian State Documentary Film and Photo Archive (Code 1-2087).

35 | See: Shishkin 2003: 17ff. The book gives a detailed account of Soviet biologists' experiments with transplanting ape glands. Following a series of failed experiments, both Stalin and Zinov'ev lost confidence in the veterinarian Ivanov, who had planned the rejuvenation of the Bolshevik elites. The doctor was arrested.

36 | In the discussion that occurred following Room's lecture at the Association of Revolutionary Film-Workers in 1929, one worker (Kirshon) suggested combining the innovative theory of reflexes with the initial experiences in the field of scoring silent films: “The formation of reflexes must be taken into consideration, and here we see that German filmmakers do just that, by using music to evoke specific moods and states” (Room 1929: 30).

viet audio media stood in the service of totalitarian power only insofar as they invoked the traditional sound symbols of Old Russia and relied on the customary cooperation between expert networks in both the natural sciences and the humanities.

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**The Birth of Socialist Realism
out of the Spirit of Radiophonia**
Maxim Gorky's Project "Literaturnaja ucება"

JURIJ MURAŠOV

This article is an attempt to combine a general media theory with a microanalysis of textual strategies. Firstly, I will offer some broad theoretical considerations on the role of media in Soviet culture. Secondly, I will try to show how the birth of Socialist Realism in Russia is linked to the radio and how its understanding can be based on a specific poetics of radiophonia. Finally, the third part will present a short microanalysis of Gorky's editing work on a manuscript sent to him by a young writer. This analysis will show how radiophonic poetics work in the concrete literary praxis.

Outline of a General Media Theory of Soviet Culture

The connection between the October Revolution in Russia and Soviet culture on the one hand, and the media revolution of the twentieth century on the other hand, is evident. Normally this connection is analyzed from a political and institutional perspective. Modern mass media, especially radio and film, but also mass printing, are considered to be instruments used by political leaders to influence and manipulate the masses in terms of Soviet socialist (totalitarian) ideology (Murašov and Witte 2003: 17-38).

Here I would like to propose a different point of view that focuses above all on structural components of communication—especially radio and film—reshaped in the Soviet culture of the 1930s under the impression of the new mass media. My argument holds that the new Soviet communication utopia is rooted in the well-known Platonic attempt to overcome those semantic and pragmatic unreliabilities of communication which result from the process of technologizing the word through writing and (in analogy to Plato's view) typography.

This paradoxical and therefore never realizable project is both the foundation and the moving force of the strange and complicated process called “sovietization”, which was pervasive during the 1930s in the Russian cultural system, having absorbed art and literature, science, philosophy, economy, law and justice, ethics, political power and, finally, love. Remarkably, it was not the plots, topics and contents that were most affected by socialist and Marxist ideology, but rather the *modi* and logics of representation and communication.

The media- and communication-based reconstruction of Soviet culture is helpful in explaining the late and very slow development and expansion of writing and typography in Russia. For a long time, print culture in Russia remained under the control of either the Orthodox Christian institutions or the Tsarist administration. Only beginning in the 1830s, the so-called “epoch of Smirdin” (named after a famous publishing magnate), publishing became a form of independent economic activity. The delayed process of social extension, institutionalization and mental internalization of the effects of writing and typography is the reason for the late functional differentiation of cultural spheres and subsystems such as law, economics, political power and love in Russia. The sceptical and sometimes downright obstructionist attitude towards the technologically processed word, complemented by the artificial imitation of orality in discourse, can be found in the specific poetological strategies of nineteenth-century Russian literature, such as Gogol's *skaz*, Dostoevsky's “polyphony” and even Tolstoy's rhetorical device of estrangement (*ostranenie*), which culminated in the writer's late rejection of his own oeuvre and his corresponding moralistic anti-aestheticism.

This delayed institutional and mental recognition of writing and typography, together with the notorious skepticism towards both of them, explain the unprecedented popularity that new electronic media, especially radio, gained in Russia during the media revolution. Those media produced the so-called “secondary orality” which promised to overcome semantic and pragmatic treacherousness of writing and print by eradi-

cating such menaces of Russian culture as formalisation and abstraction, semantic ambiguity and individualization.

At the same time, the political and social concepts and utopian ideas of the nineteenth century were adjusted to the potential of the new media at the beginning of the twentieth century. It suffices to mention Lenin's famous definition of communism as socialism plus electrification, or the characterization of radio as a "megaphone of the Revolution".

While during the utopian avant-garde period of Russian culture (from the late 1910s through the early 1920s) the connection between the new media and Soviet society remained more or less a declaration of intent, the situation changed considerably in the following decade: new electronic media, especially radio and film, but also traditional print media, became relevant in a technological, institutional and social sense. Two simultaneous processes are particularly visible: the traditional Russian scepticism towards writing and print culture increased, while at the same time the new Soviet attitude towards orality within the framework of literacy led to the paradoxically-schizoid mode of communication that began to permeate all spheres and discourses of Soviet culture. Most importantly, from that point on every self-definition and self-description of the Russian cultural system had to be based on this new Soviet oral mode of communication.¹

A Media Theory of the Socialist Realism

When we look at literature from the point of view of functional analysis, we may define it as a subsystem within modern culture which regulates and elaborates its strategies of dealing with the semantic and pragmatic complexities of the speech production, such as interrelation of language and writing, or the intricate eye-ear asymmetry of the production of meaning. From this point of view, it becomes apparent why the sphere of literature is so structurally relevant for all discourses and functional subsystems of modern culture. Furthermore, we are able to understand why even in comparison to the nineteenth century the relevance of literature in the Soviet era increased and acquired a key role in all self-definitions of the Soviet cultural system. Soviet literature had the paradoxical task of popularizing and practicing the new "secondary

1 | For several years now there has been an increasing interest in the acoustic, electroacoustic and acousmatic dimensions of Soviet culture, see especially: Gorham 2003; Gorjaeva 2007.

orality” by utilizing writing and print media. This refers to the social and mental adoption of an attitude towards writing that suppresses the specific hermeneutic effects of the written and visualized word, producing abstraction, formalization, semantic ambiguity, individualization, self-reflection and introspection.

This anxious rejection of the hermeneutic efficacy of the written word is common in Russian culture of the first (and perhaps even second) half of the twentieth century. It is noticeable in the texts of writers and intellectuals of all ideological stripes, from Mikhail Bakhtin to Nikolai Ostrovskii and from Vladimir Nabokov to Andrei Platonov. But the most impressive illustration is provided by the linguistic theory of Nikolai Marr, elevated by Stalin to the status of official doctrine. In one particular case, Marr identifies writing with the bourgeois class enemy against whom Soviet linguistics must guard itself:

[...] To this day, writing is the old enemy [...] and evil adversary in the science about language. [...] There was a time when writing, and written language as such, obscured language. Living speech escaped of attention of scholars, which was entirely preoccupied with written language.

“[...] письмо—старый враг [...] и злой соперник до наших дней в науке о языке. [...] Было время, когда письмо и вообще письменность заслоняло язык. Живая речь выходила из орбиты исследовательского внимания, захваченного целиком интересом к письменному языку” (Marr 1936: 353).²

At the same time, in Soviet culture of the late 1920s to early 1930s literature appears to be the foundation on which the new Soviet mode of communication as such, paradoxically oriented towards orality, was built. This construction connected literary production and its reception with the mass medium of the radio. One should note that this connection still remains largely unexplored, despite an abundance of research on the emergence of Socialist Realism and the first Congress of Soviet Writers.

Two examples may illustrate this close connection between the institutionalization of radio as a mass medium and the emergence of Socialist Realism in the beginning of the 1930s. The first is a quote taken from the editorial article “Pisatel’ i radio” in the radio journal *Govorit SSSR*:

For millions of people, the Congress of Soviet Writers has raised in all its depth and breadth the question of creativity, of the production of high mastery, of great ideas, great art and great simplicity.

2 | See for a more detailed analysis Morašov 2000a: 599-609.

By presenting their works on the radio, the writers put into practice the basic principle of Socialist Realism—creative work for the masses.

“С’езд советских писателей во всю глубину и ширь поставил вопрос о творчестве для миллионов, о продукции высокого мастерства, больших идей, большого искусства, большой простоты.

Выступая со своими произведениями на радио, писатели осуществляют основной принцип социалистического реализма—творчество для масс” (Anonymous 1934: 3).

The second example is an enthusiastic statement by the writer Marietta Šaginjan:

We writers must learn to communicate by means not only of the written, but also of the spoken word. When I speak before the microphone, I have a keen sense of being connected with millions of people, and I direct the word into space with a feeling of real, responsible aim. That is the enormous significance of the writer’s work for the radio.

“Нам, писателям, нужно научиться общению не только через написанное, но и через произнесенное слово. Когда я говорю перед микрофоном, у меня острое ощущение связи с миллионами людей, и я направляю слово в пространство с чувством реального, ответственного придела. В этом огромное значение работы писателя для радио” (Anonymous 1934: 7).

In contrast to the various avant-garde poetics which all focus—even in writing and visual culture—on the oral and otherwise sound word, Socialist Realism means a writing project par excellence which simulates an oral narration thus deletes all traces of its own discursive genesis in the process of text production. From this point of view, Social Realism with its keywords like ‘massovost’, ‘narodnost’, ‘ponjatnost’, ‘partijnost’, ‘tipizacija’, ‘položitel’nyj geroj’ can be characterized as the poetics of radiophonia.

Maxim Gorky’s Project “Literaturnaja učeba”

A highly significant effort to institutionalize the structural relevance of literature in Soviet culture is Maxim Gorky’s project “Literaturnaja učeba”, which attempts to engage the masses of uneducated workers in the active production of literature. The genesis of the project (including

its institutional and political aspects) is well described in Evgenij Dobrenko's book *Formovka sovetskogo pisatelja* (Dobrenko 1999), which gives a lively impression of the megalomaniac scope of the project.

Yet what has not been analyzed so far is Gorky's concrete pedagogical involvement in his own project—for example, his corrections and editing of manuscripts sent to him by young and aspiring writers.³

Gorky's editorial practice is highly interesting because it shows his own work on language and specific effects of writing. The writer's editing of his admirers' manuscripts shows how the radiophonic poetics of Socialist Realism regulates textual and editorial practice.

To illustrate this point, I would like to refer to Gorky's editorial work on the manuscript of a novel "Vor" ("The Thief") sent to him by the young writer Michail V. Luzgin (1899-1942). "The Thief" describes a moral and political development of the protagonist Pogodin, who manages to get out of a criminal milieu, develops mature political consciousness and finally joins the Bolshevik party. This case is remarkable, because it is one of the rare cases, when a manuscript received in this way managed to sustain Gorky's severe criticism. In 1936 the novel was published in two parts under the titles *Medvezhatnik* (The Apartment Robber) and *Oshibka* (The Mistake) in the collection *The Bolshevtsy. Essays on the History of the Iagoda Labor Commune of the NKVD (Bolshevtsy. Oчерki po istorii bolshevskoi imeni G. G. Iagoda trudokommuny NKVD)* in the series *History of Plants and Factories (Istoriia fabrik i zavodov)*. Luzgin's 86 page-long typescript retains Gorky's pencil corrections made in different colors (red, blue, black) which makes it likely that Gorky went over Luzgin's text three times (Luzgin 1936).⁴

Looking at Gorky's corrections, one has to acknowledge his high professionalism as editor and proofreader able to work thoroughly and with a remarkable consistency. It is also remarkable that Gorky's corrections are not explicitly ideological but rather stylistic ones, concerning textual and narrative structure. In his essays published in the journal *Literaturnaja ucheba* Gorky repeatedly pointed out how important the "technique of writing", orthography and the basics of rhetorics and stilistics were.⁵

When we look at Gorky's corrections we see that he consistently elimi-

3 | Hereafter I rely upon the results of the research project on Social Realism carried out at the University of Constance together with Natalia Borisova and Tomaš Liptak and supported by the German Scientific Foundation (DFG).

4 | This material was found by Tomaš Liptak.

5 | See Gorky's characterization in Makar'ev (1932: 5): "[...] для него [Горького] вопрос о мировоззренческой учебе автора неотделим от вопроса о его технической учебе" ([...] for him [Gorky] the question of the

nates all elements of narration and textual structure that may function as recursive loops of self-reflection and self-observation in the narrative process. He also lets down all elements of the text hinting at the inner ambivalence of the protagonist which may stake his inner feelings and self-reflection against the plot and narrative logic:

Note the following example of Gorky's corrections:

Luzgin's original:

His meeting with Muromtsev, despite the impudent words about his parents, left Pogodin with a feeling that resembled sympathy.

“От встречи с Муромцевым, несмотря на нахальные его слова насчет родителей, у Погодина осталось чувство схожее с симпатией к нему.” (Luzgin 1936: 4).

Gorky's corrected version:

The conversation with Muromtsev left Pogodin with a feeling resembling sympathy for the old man.

“От беседы с Муромцевым, у Погодина осталось чувство похожее на симпатию к старику.”

Here we find an interesting detail: Gorky replaces the “meeting with Muromtsev” (“встречи с Муромцевым”) with a “conversation” (“беседа с Муромцевым”) reducing the complex encounter, which may have included both verbal and visual elements, to a simple verbal exchange. For him, it is the verbal impression that is relevant for the protagonist's judgement. Unacceptable for Gorky is the personal, self-reflecting perspective of the protagonist which may run counter the logic of the plot and the intentions of the objective narrator:

Luzgin's original:

He even wondered if he should not join the Bolsheviks and offer them his services. A wariness acquired through the years, the knowledge that everything would not end today or tomorrow, and an intuitive, sharp sense of protest unclear even to himself, stopped him.

ideological training of the author is inseparable from the question about his technical training).

“Он даже подумал не пойти ли к большевикам, не предложить ли им свои услуги. Годами выработанная осторожность, сознание, что все это кончится не сегодня, завтра и стихийное неясное самому острое чувство протеста останавливали его.” (Luzgin 1936: 25)

Gorky's corrected version:

A wariness acquired through the years, the knowledge that everything would not end today or tomorrow, and an intuitive, sharp sense of protest unclear even to himself, stopped him from joining the Bolsheviks.

“Годами выработанная осторожность, сознание, что все это кончится не сегодня, завтра и стихийное неясное самому острое чувство протеста останавливали его идти с большевиками.”

This example shows how Gorky changes the entire perspective of the narration by eliminating the following sentence: “He even wondered if he should not join the Bolsheviks and offer them his services” (“Он даже подумал не пойти ли к большевикам, не предложить ли им свои услуги”). Instead of immediate acquaintance with the protagonist's self-reflection (“He even wondered” (“Он даже подумал”)) the reader is confronted with his behavior through the eyes of an “objective narrator” in the course of his teleological movement towards membership in the Bolshevik party. Gorky pays attention even to short sentences which may weaken the plot by referring to the protagonist's self-reflection; he crosses out, for instance, the following short sentence: He realized that he would spend his last hours in Voronezh (Он понял, что в Воронеже проводит последние часы). In other cases, Gorky tries to define the plot structure of the novel more sharply and to increase the speed of narration by deleting the protagonist's introspections and loops of self-reflection (see: *Figure 1*):

It was so obvious to Pogodin, and so clearly did he see the future toward which the communists were striving, when each would have that which he needed and perhaps the very word “carouse” might fall out of use. But how unbelievably difficult it was to explain this to others!

“Так очевидно это было Погодину, так отчетливо рисовалось ему то будущее, к которому стремятся коммунисты, когда каждый будет иметь все ему нужное, и может быть самое слово ‘кутить’ перестанут понимать. Но как невероятно трудно было это объяснить другим.” (Luzgin 1936: 33)

The following is another example in which a self-reflective passage is deleted in its entirety (see: *Figure 2*):

And in the end, who could say to whom it is known? Mistakes occur even in the shrewdest calculations of the wisest of men. Perhaps everything Pogodin had believed to be immutable, an inevitability, or a law, contained a blunder lesser men would someday laugh about. Is life not richer, more inventive and more sly than all of one's intentions?

“И кто наконец может знать, кому это известно? И в самих тонких расчетах самих умных мудрецов случаются ошибки. Может быть во всем, во что поверил Погодин как в непреложное, как в неизбежность, как в закон имеется промах, над которым когда нибудь буду смеяться ребятишки. Разве жизнь не богаче, не изобретательнее, не хитрее любых предположений?” (Luzgin 1936: 42)

The first of these deleted passages characteristically discloses the difficulties of externalizing and communicating mental pictures and utopian ideas that point at certain structural problems of communication.. A similar attempt by Gorky to strengthen the plot can be found in his fine-tuning of the following sentence:

Pogodin waited as though he had asked someone—not himself, but someone who loves to think everything over, who does not hurry with his answer.

“Погодин ждал, точно спросил кого то, не себя, человека, который любит обдумать все, который не торопится с ответом.” (Luzgin 1936: 47)

Here is Gorky's revised version:

Pogodin asked not himself, but someone who loves to think everything over and who does not hurry with his answer.

“Погодин спрашивал, не себя, а—человека, который любит обдумать все который не торопится с ответом.”

In the place of confrontation between the empirically observable behaviour “waited” (“ждал”) and the possibility of the protagonist's inner self-questioning, there remains a single fact of life—he “asked” (“спрашивал”). Now the act of self-questioning seems to be externalized and orientated towards a moral authority.

Besides eliminating and shortening text pieces potentially leading to the breakup of the plot into two (inner mental sphere and an external sphere of action and behaviour) Gorky does not shy away from adding passages linking the inner mental disposition to the active, externally observable emotional reactions.

Luzgin's original:

Well, that won't happen, Pogodin will manage to deal with it, he hardly restrained himself.

“Ну, этого то не случится, с этим Погодин сумеет справиться, он с трудом сдерживал себя.” (Luzgin 1936: 50)

Gorky's corrected version:

Well, that won't happen, Pogodin will manage to deal with it. He wanted to sing, dance, laugh. He could hardly restrain himself.

“Ну, этого то не случится, с этим Погодин сумеет справиться ему. Хотелось петь, плясать, смеяться. Он с трудом сдерживал себя.”

In another case, Gorky introduces aesthetic judgments into the plot by adding to the narrative structure the interplay of cause and effect:

Luzgin's original:

Pogodin read her poems by Bal'mont and Blok. Dusia listened obediently, her little child-like brow furrowed intently.

“Погодин читал ей стихотворения Бальмонта и Блока. Дуся слушала напряженно сморщив детский лобик.” (Luzgin 1936: 21)

Gorky's corrected version:

Pogodin read her poems by Bal'mont and Blok. The gloomy lines evoked melancholy and sadness. Dusia listened obediently, her little child-like brow furrowed intently.

“Погодин читал ей стихотворения Бальмонта и Блока. Сумеречные стихи будили печаль и грусть. Дуся покорно слушала Напряженно сморщив децкий лобик.”

Systematically purging self-reflection from the edited texts, Gorky is equally harsh in his treatment of references to literature, language, writing and the problems of representation. The following passage is an example in which the self-reflection of the protagonist acquires an evidently metapoetic dimension that signifies the problems of representing mental dispositions through the written word. It is entirely deleted by Gorky (see: Figure 3):

Well, you envied the Muromtsevs because you didn't wish to work for them, because you considered it happiness to be able to live without working, while someone else works. Isn't it so? Am I not right? So admit it, dear Aleksei Nikolaevich, admit it. Now you no longer need to pretend—were you happy? In all honesty—were you happy? Were you or not? If Pogodin had been able to write stories instead of letters he would have covered many pages and would have told the story of a paltry, difficult, humiliating and meaningless life.

“Да потому, что вы не желая работать на Муромцевых завидовали им, потому что вы считали счастьем когда можно жить не работая, когда работает кто-то другой. Так? Правда? Ну так признавайтесь дорогой Алексей Хиколаевич, признавайтесь, теперь уже не приходится отвертываться: оыли вы счастливы? По совести—были счастливы? Были или нет? И если бы умел Погодин писать не письма, а повести, исписал бы он много страниц, рассказал бы историю жизни ничтожной, тяжелой, обидной, бессмысленной.” (Luzgin 1936: 47)

A highly interesting deletion of a text passage is shown by the following example (see: Figure 4): Here Gorky furiously excises all traces of the evil resulting from the protagonist's confrontation of the process of introspection and self-reflection. This example is interesting because it echoes an old Russian Orthodox tradition of writing and representation, in which the depiction of evil becomes taboo—in contrast to the Western view exemplified by Saint Augustine or Rousseau, which sees the representation of evil in writing as an agent of change or the promise of cathartic redemption. We can find the remnants of this apophatic stance in Nikolai Karamzin's famous essay “*Čto nužno avtoru*” (1794/1795) as well as in Lev Tolstoy's anti-aesthetics discussed above, but the tradition surely remains in force in Russia at the end of the 19th century, and even later, as we see in the example above.

Conclusion

Summing up our observations on Maxim Gorky's editing and correcting of Mikhail Luzgin's manuscript of *The Thief*, we may state that the renowned editor reacts very sensitively to all textual elements that indicate alternating structures and include some recursive or self-reflecting plot movements. This is remarkable insofar as we know that the written word, as a visual medium, works as a generator of differences, which become observable in the process of writing and reading. In writing, the production of meaning is essentially accompanied by the experience of differences, of broken, unstable and hybrid identities. While in oral performance the differential structure of sense-making seems to be eliminated by the volatility of the word being pronounced and sounding in time (or sometimes even under the extra time pressure), in the process of writing the production of meaning is not an external and technical procedure, but rather an event and a corporeal as well as mental experience.

In his editing work on Luzgin's text, Gorky achieves the simulation of an oral narration by deleting all traces of the text's written genesis. In this way, Gorky's project of "literaturnaja ucbeba" finally implements the poetics of radiophonia in Luzgin's novel and creates a text of Socialist Realism which tries to deny its own origin from writing and wants the reader to believe in immaterial processes of sense-making and communication. At this point, the poetics of radiophonia and Gorky's "Literaturnaja ucbeba" join the general production of a totalitarian ideology.

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Figure 1

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ходимости что то предпринять, на что то решиться все неотступнее преследовало его. Он даже сказал об этом в камере, когда сидел в бутирках. Будь это не Погодин, а ктонибудь другой, его наверно подняли бы на смех.

- Да неужели вы не видите? Погодин даже облокотился на койке, так велика была его горячность. Неужели вы не понимаете? Украсть можно, пожалуйста! Но ^{как} продать. Кому продать? Продать будет нельзя.

Так очевидно это было Погодину так отчетливо рисовалось ему то будущее, к которому стремятся коммунисты, когда каждый будет иметь все ему нужное, и может быть самое слово ^{идеальное} "идеальное" перестанут понимать. Но как невероятно трудно было это объяснить другим. Сашка Соловей насмешливо фыркнул и что ска- зал сквозь зубы чего Погодин не расслышал. Васкин раскачивался на своей койке обняв колени и положив на руки голову. Он равнодушно, негромко гнусавил:

Но ~~наком~~ кричу ура,
 Пришла желанная пора -
 свобода, свобода!
 И стал работы ^{искать} искать
 Пока не смог совсем таскать
 Я ноги, я ноги..

И тот, которого собственно и хотелось убедить в чем то Погодину, старик Василий Ковал / он был стариком когда Погодин бегал еще мальчиком, он был опытным вором, когда Погодин не умел еще стащить буханку хлеба с мужицкого воеза, ответил ему с горечью и осуждением из под седых прокуренных усов:

- Умный ты человек, Алексей Николаевич, ну не

Figure 2

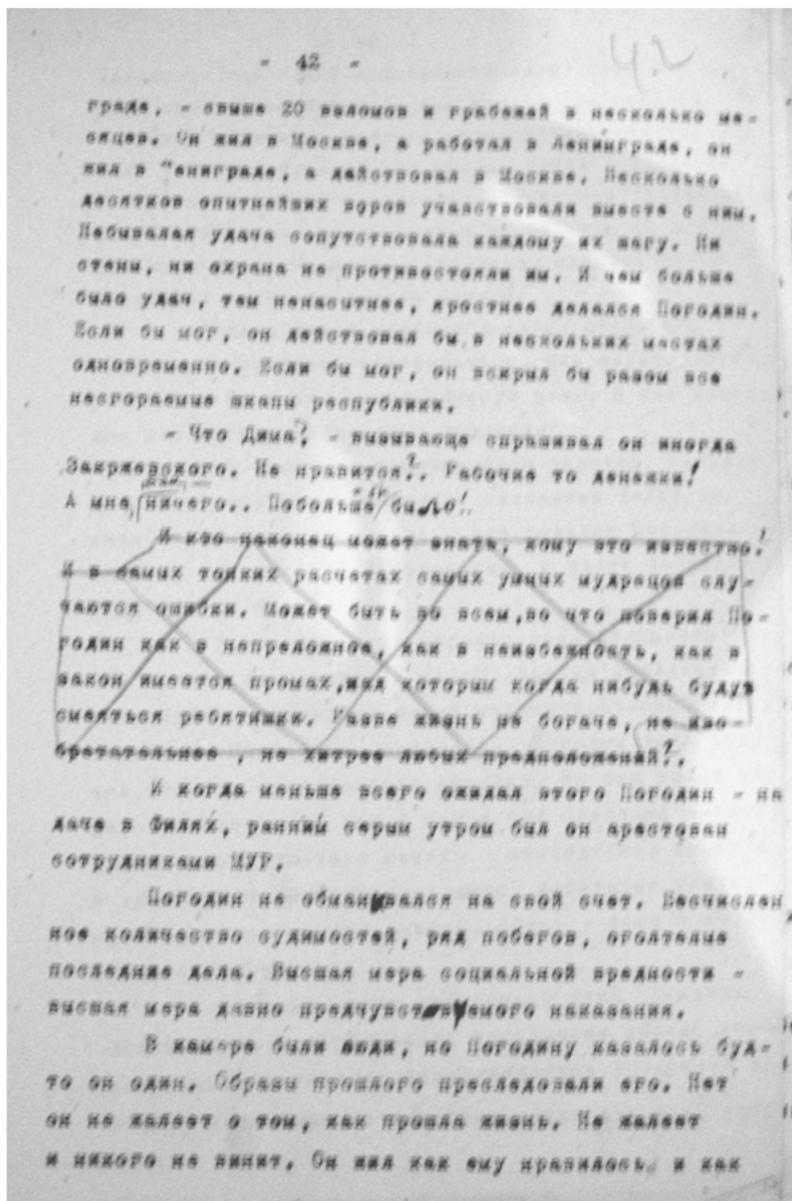


Figure 3

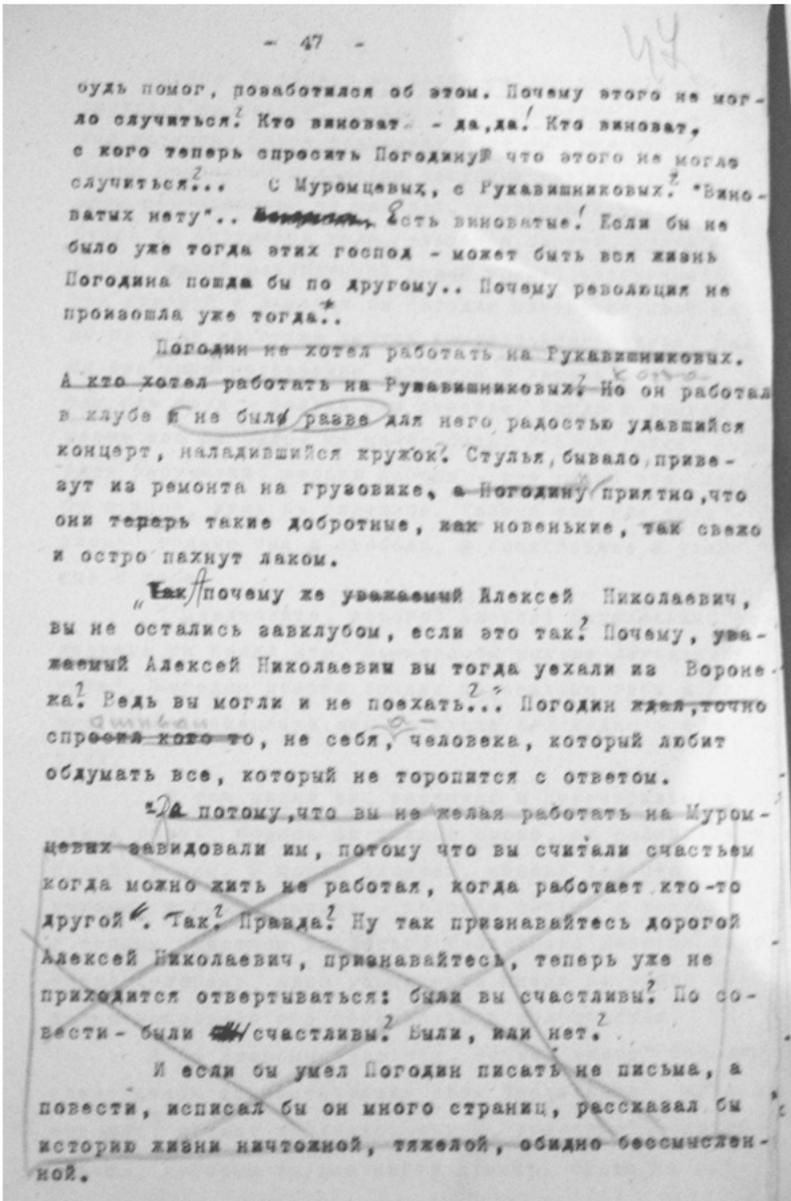


Figure 4

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тельств! А что еще? Что было еще в жизни? Где есть нечто, о чем мог бы сказать Погодин: "Вот это, я, вот для чего я жил"... Зато он ловко умел прятаться когда его ошарались изловить, еще ловче умел убежать, когда уже поймали... ~~Вот для чего я жил...~~

~~Вот для чего я жил...~~

Нет - вычеркнуть, выбросить эту великую неправду. Не должно быть лжи в его письме.

" Я понимал, писал Погодин, что при социализме шалман немислим. Что там, где все работают не может быть воров. Но это не мешало мне воровать, потому что я всю жизнь не любил и не хотел работать. "

И вновь сомнения охватили Погодина. Да так ли, да правильно ли это? Как невероятно трудно, оказывается говорить правду. Может быть и он не всегда не любил работать.. Помнится после того, как убежал от дядьки мечтой Алешки стало сделаться матросом. Там где жил дядька был крестьянин, который прежде служил во флоте. Погодин стащил у шапочника на базаре безкозырку с двумя черными ленточками, с золотом по околышу. Он с гордостью носил ее. Он представлял себя на корабле среди будущего моря. Вазумеется он совершал разные подвиги, которые наумляли всех. Он и всю жизнь был не безразличен к морю. Что же Погодин не мог бы стать матросом? Если бы кто ни-

Messages

Totalitarian Propaganda as Discourse

A Comparative Look at Austria and France in the Fascist Era

ALEXANDER HANISCH-WOLFRAM

Introduction

Throughout the 20th century, propaganda has been a key term and a key concept of political communications studies;¹ in certain respects, propaganda research actually stood at the cradle of this field of social science (Bussemer: 2005: 379-385). At the same time, propaganda as a specific mode of communication was at the centre of totalitarianism as a political phenomenon, which attained its peak in the first half of the same century. Totalitarian propaganda—best explored in the cases of National Socialism and Soviet Communism—had the function of creating consensus between political leadership and the masses.

In this paper, totalitarian propaganda will first be identified as a specific type of political communication which can be described and analyzed as a discourse. However, the theoretical position will be presented in such a way as to make it clear that the discourse-analytical approach represents only one possible way of operationalizing the underlying theoretical concept of propaganda. In what follows, the proposed definition will be further described in theoretical terms and operationalised along the so-called “dimensions of propaganda”. Concerning the empirical part, the focus will be placed on a restricted choice of these dimensions, in order to be able to go into more detail and depth in presenting the examples. The two texts chosen for a comparative illustration of the

1 | For an overview over the traditions of propaganda theory and research: Bussemer: 2005.

approach are two speeches pronounced under comparable historical circumstances (in Austria in the 1930s and in France in the early 1940s). In conclusion, the perspectives of the approach described will be elaborated.

Defining (Totalitarian) Propaganda

There have been various “waves” or phases in propaganda research throughout the 20th century, each of them having its own definitions of “propaganda”—or even explicitly refusing to define the term or the phenomenon.² This, in combination with the ubiquitousness of the term in political debate, has led to a certain degree of confusion about what “propaganda” can mean, should mean or must not mean. The model of propaganda research proposed here has the basic aim of laying out an interdisciplinary theory of propaganda as a basis for empirical social research.³ The central theoretical concept on which this theoretical approach to propaganda is based is “collective identity” (Giesen 1999; Straub 1998; Wodak, Cillia and Reisigl 1998: 47-71). Thus, propaganda shall be defined here as the *strategically planned attempt to construct, spread and implement a certain collective identity, combined with the use of various forms of pressure or even violence.*

The degree of detail and complexity in the elaboration of this identity can vary, as can the use of pressure or force to implement it. This, in consequence, leads to a broad variety of types of propaganda, one of them being totalitarian propaganda.

Within this broad variety of types, totalitarian propaganda is the most elaborated and most complex one. Totalitarian propaganda consequently is to be understood as a complex and elaborated communication strategy aimed at promoting and implementing a collective identity encompassing (nearly) all aspects of life—from political opinions and attitudes to values and ways of life in the private sphere.⁴

For theoretical description as well as for empirical analysis, different

2 | For a short overview over the main paradigmes: Bussemer 2005: 43-60.

3 | For a more detailed elaboration of this propaganda model: Hanisch-Wolfram: 2006a: 3-73; Hanisch-Wolfram 2007: 55-98.

4 | As the phenomenon of totalitarianism in general, totalitarian propaganda also touches upon the question of the relationship between the public and the private spheres. As a detailed discussion of this issue would lead beyond the objective of this paper, it shall just be noted that in general this relationship itself has to be understood as a discursive construction; totalitarianism basically aims

dimensions of propaganda can be specified. These dimensions belong to different levels of communicating propaganda, some of them referring to modes of communication and other pointing at its content. These dimensions are:

1. Myths and rituals (Hanisch-Wolfram 2006a: 45-53; Hanisch-Wolfram 2007: 65-77). Myths⁵ play a central role in (totalitarian) propaganda as they provide a basis of belonging together which is not in danger of being questioned. What is communicated as a myth lies beyond verification and also beyond the need for legitimization. Myths provide answers to the questions of the collective's roots, origins, common characteristics and goals, they may even give reasons for the "choice" of the enemies. Propagandistic myths can take various forms, from simple key words hinting at whole narratives or stereotypes, to the historical key dates and events or symbolic places. Ritual serves as an actualization of the contents narrated in mythic communication. In rituals, myths are arranged in order to visualize their meaning and importance for the contemporary social life. Examples of such rituals include manifestations of memorial culture or the organization of (political) events in symbolic historical areas.
2. Signs and symbols (Hanisch-Wolfram 2006a: 55-57; Hanisch-Wolfram 2007: 77-81; Frutiger 2006). As with personalization, this dimension of propaganda is essentially reduction of complexity. In this case, the visualization is not realized by presenting a certain person or group of persons, but by establishing and then propagating certain graphic designs or symbols. These symbols have a twofold function: firstly, they represent an element of the ideology being propagated (or even this ideology as a whole, as e.g. the swastika); secondly, they enable the propagandist (especially if this is a regime already in power) to be omnipresent on a symbolic level.
3. The construction of the "Other" (Hanisch-Wolfram 2006a: 42-45;

at abolishing the differentiation between the public and the private, and so does totalitarian propaganda.

5 | It would lead too far here to discuss in depth the various concepts and definitions of the "myth"; basically, "myth" shall be defined here as a concept of a (great) narrative that is used in social discourse in an axiomatic way. Myths in this sense need not be legitimized or proven, they are themselves the basis of legitimation and proof.

Hanisch-Wolfram 2007: 81-86). For a given (or “planned”) group to define itself, it is first of all necessary to define what it is not—or what it must not be or become. This central operation of group identification (Karall 2001; Luhmann 1994) is intensified within propaganda communication by the construction of an enemy—something or someone not only different but hostile (Wendt 2006; Schlee 2006). This “other” has to be combatted in order to stabilize the group. The intensity of this combat varies from discrimination to planned annihilation.

4. Construction of the common history (Hanisch-Wolfram 2006a: 49-51; Hanisch-Wolfram 2007: 71-73). This dimension of propaganda is closely linked to mythic communication. Narrating the past always implies a choice of events, in some cases even the definition of what is to be seen as a historical event and what is not (Chris 1997: 17-64, 367-436; a constructivist perspective is elaborated e.g. in: Assmann 1999). In case of propaganda, this choice is made with the aim of supporting the collective identity to be implemented. As a positive choice, this means the commemoration of certain events, processes and dates linked to this identity; as a negative choice, it implies the radical elimination of all events, persons or dates conflicting with this identity, from collective memory. This may mean re-writing history books and destroying or building monuments (Menkovic 1999; for the authoritarian regime in Austria, discussed as one of the examples below see: Grassegger 1998), but also re-interpreting historical events in order to make them fit into the intended definition of social cohesion.
5. Personalization of propaganda elements (Hanisch-Wolfram 2006a: 53-55; Hanisch-Wolfram 2007: 86-89). This dimension of propaganda is basically a strategy of reduction in complexity. Ideological dogmas, historical references or myths are reduced to a given person, name or image. This person or image, after being effectively established by propaganda, then stands for its recipients for the entire cluster of conscious or unconscious references, values, stereotypes and connotations. As with historical dates, there might be established a pantheon of canonized persons which express the core of the collective identity to be implemented in a human form (Behrenbeck 1996; For one of the examples discussed below see: Cointet 2002). The most prominent example of this type of

propaganda communication is the cult of “great leaders”—from Lenin and Stalin to Hitler or Mao.

It seems quite obvious that these dimensions of propaganda are intended to be ideal types which are rarely realized as such; usually, they are combined, with large overlapping areas. For example, a given personalization can at the same time be a personalized myth—as was the case with Hitler oder Mao. Another example might be the use of symbols or personalizations which take their roots from collective historical traditions. Finally, the definitions and presentations of enemies are often personalized and legitimized through historical references.

Totalitarian Propaganda as Discourse

Basically, the theoretical approach to the phenomenon of propaganda delineated above is meant to be an interdisciplinary approach to the foundations of various (social) scientific disciplines working on propaganda. A common definition can make it possible to reach a higher level of comparability regarding the results of specific studies, which then in turn can be a basis for further development of the theoretical approach as such.

In this paper, the specific methodological approach chosen is a discourse-analytical study of propaganda (Hanisch-Wolfram 2006b; Hanisch-Wolfram 2007:184-205). In this vein, propaganda can be understood as a socio-political discourse, with a focus on its verbal form(s). It has to be underlined again that this is the only possible way of implementing the proposed theoretical concept in the concrete empirical research.

Although discourse analysis—especially the Critical Discourse Analysis,⁶ focuses primarily on questions of social power (political power being understood as one of its forms), it has until now quite rarely taken up the issue of propaganda (Hanisch-Wolfram 2006b: 86-87). At first sight, this is quite surprising, as propaganda is one of the most prominent and (in other disciplines) most researched political phenomena, at least as far as 20th century is concerned. One of the reasons reason for this lack of interest might be the fixation of CDA on various forms of

6 | It is impossible to give a selected bibliography for (Critical) Discourse Analysis here. For a general overview, which is related to the approach(es) used in this study, see among others: Fairclough 1995; Fairclough 2001; Jäger 1993; Wodak and Meyer 2001.

hidden social power making, aimed at disclosing the invisible forces of social control. Having this specific task in mind, it seems more natural that propaganda as a form of social control or a way of exerting social power is a too “overt” phenomenon to come into the focus of critical discourse analysis.

However, at the same time, CDA provides a set of methods which can be made very fruitful for propaganda analysis and make it possible to deliver innovative research results. Its basic interest fits in with the outlined concept of propaganda: “CDA may be defined as fundamentally concerned with analysing opaque as well as transparent structural relationships of dominance, discrimination, power and control as manifested in language” (Wodak 2001: 2). The concept of “text” used by CDA expresses the same social-constructivist approach that governs a concept of propaganda as the construction of collective identity. It is not only the text as such that is to be analyzed, but the relationship between producers, recipients and channels of communication, as well as the process of constructing common definitions of reality emerging from interaction between these three (Hanisch-Wolfram 2007: 110). Basically, it can be stated that “propaganda discourse” refers to the production, dissemination and reception of specific propaganda texts that are intended to spread and implement a certain definition of collective identity (and, henceforth, of social reality), accompanied by various forms of control *in* and *over* discourse as well as other, non-discursive forms of social control.

The question of power *in* and *over* discourse relates to the control a propagandist strives to exert over political communication (Fairclough and Wodak 1997: 272-273). Power over discourse refers to the 1) ways of controlling its accessibility, 2) eligible participants and 3) extent of participation. In order to control political discourse and freely spread propaganda, the propagandist will seek to exert a rather drastic power over discourse, which means a lot of discrimination and exclusion. In the case of totalitarian propaganda, the access to discourse will be restricted to those recognized as loyal to the regime in power and thereby officially sanctioned to take part in this discourse (in the Third Reich, for instance, this was regulated mainly by the so-called “Schriftleitergesetz”⁷). Power *in* discourse, on the other hand, implies controlling the content of discourse, including the breakdown of vocabulary into words to be used

7 | For the implementation of this law in Austria after March 1938, see: Hausjell 1993: 40-53.

and words to be avoided. In totalitarian propaganda, there might even be a precise catalogue of allowed and forbidden notions (as was the case, again, with the Third Reich). Through this control over ways of communication, definitions of reality can be manipulated as certain terms are no longer parts of discourse, whereas other terms, due to their connotations, are the references to the description of social reality. On the other hand, the terms excluded from propaganda discourse can—as such—become symbols of resistance and opposition.

The basic discursive strategy of propaganda discourse is a constructive strategy which first of all aims at constructing and implementing a certain collective identity (Wodak, Cillia and Reisigl 1998: 82-86). Beyond this constructive strategy, other strategies of discourse can also come into play, especially if the propagandist already holds power—as is the case with totalitarian propaganda. In this case, there can also be strategies of conservation aimed at stabilizing and strengthening the regime in power (Wodak, Cillia and Reisigl 1998: 87-88).

The realization of a propaganda discourse cannot, however, simply aim at putting pressure on the recipients in order to reach its goal. For a common definition of reality and, in particular, of planned identity, the recipients have to be convinced that they voluntarily take part in this identity—even though power and coercion are, in fact, the key elements in its implementation. This can be realized through a strictly controlled social discourse, a major part of it being the propaganda discourse. In its turn, the most controlled form of discourse is reached in the form of totalitarian discourse.

The dimensions of propaganda described above can be understood as strata of discourse. Generally, the strata of discourse—a concept elaborated by the Duisburg school of discourse analysis (Jäger 1993: 181-187, 208-209)—are to be seen as different components and facets of one discourse which are inextricably tied together and can only be fully understood in this perspective. This matches the dimensions of propaganda outlined above, which also have to be understood as ideal types which in practice exist only overlapping with one another and therefore must be interpreted in the context of the other facets of the intervoven whole realized in a given text.

This short outline of a discourse-analytical approach to propaganda research should have shown in what ways different concepts of critical discourse analysis can lend theoretical as well as methodological support for propaganda analysis; its aim was also to demonstrate that the study of propaganda can open up a new field of research for discourse analysis.

Illustration **Austria and France in the Fascist Era**

Focus of the Illustration

As already mentioned, the elaboration of the empirical examples illustrating the concept described above will be focused on a limited choice of the “dimensions” of propaganda. This will make it possible to elaborate the comparison in more depth and detail. Besides, as there is always an interplay between the different dimensions of propaganda, the other ones which are not focused on explicitly will not be neglected completely.

The dimension chosen for a more detailed interpretation is the propagandistic myth. The main reason for this choice can be seen in the fact that quite often the myths realized in a given propaganda text represent a kind of nucleus or core of the propagandistic topoi realized in this text. Another reason is that propagandistic myths are particularly close to other dimensions of propaganda. One will rarely find a myth in a given piece of propaganda which is not linked to at least one of its other dimensions. Thus, the interwovenness of the different dimensions of propaganda can be best illustrated through an analysis of propaganda myths. This analysis would lead to elaboration of the basic typology of propaganda myths, which, in their elaborated form, should be understood as no more than ideal types which in reality are closely knit together, with large overlapping areas.

As the focus in the following empirical analysis will be put on propaganda myths, the other dimensions will only be discussed in a rather general way. Despite this generality, though, it could be discerned to what extent the interconnectedness between the different dimensions represents a central characteristic of propaganda discourse and what forms the other dimensions can take.

A Comparative look at Austria and France

The two texts chosen for a comparative empirical analysis are taken from the propaganda discourses of the two state systems which are not the classical full-blown totalitarian regimes and have therefore largely eluded the grasp of propaganda research. These systems are the authoritarian quasi-fascist regime in Austria (1933-1938) (Talos and Neugebauer 2005; concerning the Propaganda of the regime, see: Kriechbaumer 2002; Hanisch-Wolfram 2006a: 252-266) and the Vichy regime in France, led

by Marshall Pétain (1940-1944) (Cointet 2003; Paxton 1997; Azéma and Bédarida 1992; concerning the Propaganda of the Vichy regime see: Rossignol 1991). Regarding the respective historical contexts, there is a considerable degree of comparability between the two as both regimes existed in the context of the rising fascism (or quasi-fascism) in Central and Western Europe, which, in its turn, was overshadowed by the rise and peak of National Socialism in Germany. They were also both influenced by the Nazi Regime, albeit in very different ways and situations.

The Austrian text chosen is a speech held by chancellor Engelbert Dollfuß in Vienna on September 11th, 1933 in which he sets out the ideological foundation of the new regime.⁸ The French example is an address given by Philippe Pétain on August 12th, 1941 (known as the address about “le vent mauvais”), in which he legitimized the political project of his regime and severely criticised an oppositional mood of the general population.⁹

The comparative analysis undertaken in the following will be structured in such a way that those types of myths elaborated in both texts will be described first, followed by those types of myths which are only elaborated in one of the texts. Possible reasons for the differences will be discussed, and finally the already mentioned typology of myths will be outlined. This typology will go beyond the myths analyzed on the basis of the two chosen texts, because several types of propaganda myths are not present in these examples.

A first type of propaganda myth develop in both texts is the legitimizing myth (pertaining to the regime in power), combined with a sacrifice topos. In the case of the Pétain text, this myth is extremely personalized: Pétain describes his taking power as a sacrifice (“don de ma personne”), which he has to make in order to fulfill a duty.¹⁰ His career and image as a war hero (he was known to the French public as the general who defeated Germans at Verdun in 1915) surely affected the use of these topoi of sacrifice and duty. In sum, Pétain presents himself as the saviour of his country—a role he had already played in 1915. In the speech of Dollfuß, on the other hand, a similar myth is elaborated more in relation to a collective leadership: compared to the large number of “I”s in the Pétain text, Dollfuß generally prefers to use “we” as self-reference. There

8 | The text is published in: Berchtold 1967: 427-433.

9 | For a detailed discourse analytical study of the text: Hanisch-Wolfram 2007: 289-317.

10 | For the role of Pétain in Vichy Propaganda see: Rossignol 1991: 77-112; for a more general discussion see: Cointet 2002.

are two myths legitimizing the regime construed by Dollfuß. First, the new leadership is described as the result of God's will, which makes the whole enterprise mythological and sacred due to its mere existence. Second, the group of leaders now in power is characterized as being ready to sacrifice themselves ("opferbereit").

In sum, although the same myth is unwrapped in both texts, there are also significant differences. In the Austrian text, the new regime is referred to as a collective and is described (and legitimized) in religious, sacralizing terms. In the French text, on the other hand, Pétain as an individual leader is the focus of the myth, and the aspect of sacrifice is set more in military than in religious terms (although there certainly was a great deal of sacralizing Pétain the leader in Vichy propaganda).

A second type of myth which can be identified in both texts is the historical myth, which, however, has significant variations. In the Austrian text, the feudal structure of the early Modern Ages is presented as a harmonious, calm and just social order which ceased to exist in the course of the French Revolution (presented as the symbolic end of the Golden Age) (Kriechbaumer 2002: 49-53). This positive description of a distant historic era has a legitimizing function: the Golden Age is to be restored by the regime in power. This connection between the past and the future is one major function of the propaganda myth: the regime strengthening or stabilizing its power places itself in the flow of time linking its future projects to the past legitimating foundations. Another dimension of propaganda which is more or less explicitly linked to this myth is the rejection of various ideologies arising in the 19th century.

In the Pétain text, in contrast, the historical myth is much less pronounced, being referred to only implicitly. Within the elaboration of the myth of the National Revolution and the myth of the war as a challenge (which will both be discussed below), the immediate past of the Third Republic (which ended in 1940) is described as the "ancien régime", i.e. the regime which had to be overcome in order to restore the glory of the nation. Thus, the motive for elaborating this historical myth is the same as in the Dollfuß text, but it is only mentioned implicitly and, even more importantly, within a framework of a negative historical myth.

Two other myths, or types of myths, in both texts include the dimension of a projected future. First, there is the creation of a new order—a goal which is rendered non-debatable by being presented as a myth. In the case of Vichy propaganda, the key term is the project of the "National Revolution" ("la Révolution Nationale" (Rossignol 1991: 113-166)), which is, from that standpoint, is a "National Renovation" for it strives to

restore the Golden Age of France by abolishing the disastrous effects of the French Revolution. The equivalent of this ideological project in concrete, “real” politics is the “new order” (“l’ordre nouveau”) which as such is also presented as a myth. These two myths legitimize and support each other, in a way, they are interdependent in describing the future realization of the National Revolution (which, as Pétain states, remains uncompleted): the necessary to establish the new order is legitimized by the need to bring about the National Revolution. This Revolution stands as a kind of transcendent aim which is to be reached by creating a new social structure. This myth also shows the connection between different dimensions of propaganda. Pétain enumerates two main reasons why the National Revolution has not yet been fully realised: firstly, it is the absence of the prisoners of war (which is by itself a strongly personalized myth), and, secondly, the loyalty of some to the “ancien régime”.

In the Austrian text, this mythologized creation of a new order is explicitly linked to the mythologized past: the new order to be created is the restoration of the old feudal social order, which was already mentioned as an idealized past which had been lost. Unlike Pétain, Dollfuß overtly formulates the claim to restore a past situation. The difference can be illustrated on the level of the terms used in the texts: whereas Dollfuß refers to the notions connoting the social structure of the early Modern Age (“ständisch”), Pétain uses the term “révolution” which at least suggests a radical, progressive change—even if, in fact, both political projects are of a conservative nature aimed at restoring the old political structures.

The second kind of future-oriented myths developed in both texts is the description of a mythologized challenge or task. In the Dollfuß text this, on the one hand, is the already mentioned restoration of the old feudal social order and, on the other hand, the topos of a religious mission which Austria has to fulfill. Since these political (or ideological) plans and projects are not presented as the political will or projects of a certain social group, but rather as duties which the entire society has to fulfill, they become sacred tasks or challenges. This, in turn, places them beyond any debate or criticism, underscoring their totalitarian nature: opposition is no longer seen as the expression of a different political opinion, but rather as a violation of the sacred, a sin.

In the case of Pétain’s text, this sacralization of the regime’s political project, is even more elaborated. The first part of it is the already mentioned project of the National Revolution and the “ordre nouveau” as its political equivalent. This project is described by the *Chef de l’Etat*

not merely in terms of political plans or concepts, but as a historic duty of all Frenchmen to restore the former glory of France and to arrest the political, cultural and social decline in the country triggered by the French Revolution and its consequences; National Revolution, so to speak, is the last chance of the French to save their nation. The topos of a mythologized task is overtly inscribed by Pétain in the actual political context—the war is presented as a challenge. Here again, we see a strong military undercurrent of Vichy propaganda, which paints the war and occupation resulting from not primarily as a disaster or a catastrophe but rather as a challenge which the French nation has to withstand, if the nation at all is worthy of restoring of its Golden Age. In this respect, the elaboration of this sacralized challenge has the function of exhortation.

Finally, there is a fourth propaganda myth of this category: throughout the text, the vision of a new, emerging Europe is mentioned (Rossignol 1991: 177-185). The leading role of Germany within this new Europe is taken for granted—and in any case, the challenge for the French nation is to prove itself again worthy of taking part in this “new Europe”—a construction to be finished after the end of the war. The role of the French nation within this new Europe outlined by Pétain contradicts in many aspects the restoration of French *grandeur* in the course of the National Revolution. The contradiction, however, can be seen as typical for propaganda discourse, known to gloss over conflicting claims and facts by sacralizing diffuse ideas, terms and projects. Because the latter are parts of a transcendent political sphere, there is no need for a reflection on their compatibility with reality—as long as propaganda works.

In addition, there are three types of myths which can only be identified in the Austrian text. The first is the ontological propaganda myth—a discursive element claiming that certain characteristics belong “naturally” to individuals or collectives. These characteristic traits are presented not as the results of processes, but rather as the natural or god-given traits. The first such myth in the Dollfuß text is the myth of Austria’s German character. That Austria is part of the German nation, and that it is a German state, is, according to Dollfuß, so self-evident that it goes without saying (which he does nonetheless). This stressing of the German character of Austria is at least partly rooted in the fact that the authoritarian regime had constituted itself after the Nazi seizure of power in Germany and that it should have been seen, from its beginnings, as a rival to the German model. The Dollfuß regime intended to present Austria as the “better Germany”, as the guardian of the “true” German character. In this

context a sub-myth had to be identified—that of the Christian-German character of Austria (Kriechbaumer 2002: 49-53). Austria as a state and part of the German people is described and defined as the better Germany precisely because it defines itself not only as a German state but also as a Christian (i. e. Catholic) state. The definition of what is German is thus transferred into the sphere of religion, for the “true” German character is represented as being Christian as well. Whether everyone in Germany or Austria perceived “German” to be defined in this way is of no interest to propaganda discourse: it is not claimed that Austria *should* be a German and Christian state, but that it *is*—by nature—a German and a Christian state. This, in the logic of this propagandistic discourse, is not a question of consent or dissent, but of natural characteristics.

The second ontological myth to be found in the text is closely linked to the first one: it is the myth of the religious and Christian nature of man. This myth is clearly to be interpreted in close relation to the one mentioned above: as the human being is said to be religious by nature and the Austrian regime claims to be a Christian/Catholic regime (unlike Nazism in Germany), the Austrian regime, unlike the Nazi regime, corresponds to the nature of the human being. The conclusion “our regime fits the human condition” need not be stated—its confirmation can be left to recipients. In any case, this ontological myth strengthens the ideological orientation of the regime and its propaganda myth of being the “better Germany”.

Another type of myth, quite similar to the ontological myth, is the myth of positive or negative characteristic traits—which are not ascribed to an individual or a collective, but are given a great amount of importance and an incotestable value in propaganda discourse. In the case of the Dollfuß text, this is realized in two cases: the myth of calm and order and the myth of honesty. Both characteristics are presented as being extremely positive and—of course—as being characteristic traits of the social situation established by the regime. What is typical about this type of propaganda myth is that there is no explanation of what is meant by this term or what its points of reference are; it is just a term that is presented as positive or negative and that can be attached to a person, a regime, a situation etc. It is this vagueness that hinders discourse and makes this value statement a propaganda myth.

Finally, a third type of propaganda myth, found only in the Austrian example, is the mythologization of abstract concepts—in this case the concept of “Heimat” (a German word simultaneously referring to home, home country, nation, region, descent etc.). At the same time, this is

a semantic myth, a term or word transformed into a myth; in the case of such a propaganda myth, the connotations which are evoked in the minds of the recipients are of utmost importance: for every recipient, there is a whole cluster of connotations, so that with the use of one single term or concept, a broad variety of feelings, ideas and value judgements can be triggered. In propaganda discourse, the propagandist will seek to manipulate and control discourse in such a way that those connotations will be strengthened—ideally, to the point of exclusiveness which would fit into his definition of social reality and collective identity.

Finally, there is one type of myth present only in the text from the Vichy propaganda: the personalized myth. There are three different myths of this category in this text; first and most prominent, there is the myth of Philippe Pétain as the saviour of France (which was already mentioned above). This myth is a typical example of the mythologization of a political leader in (totalitarian) propaganda—one might even claim that propaganda is totalitarian to the degree the respective leader is sacralized. In the case of Pétain's person there is also a strong military aspect, but nonetheless the aspect of sacrifice (“don de la personne”) is of great importance. That there is no equivalent myth elaborated in the Dollfuß text is not typical for the propaganda of the authoritarian Austrian regime, which also puts its leading figure at the forefront, with the intensity greatly increased after Dollfuß's death in 1934 (“the dead man leads us”) (Kriechbaumer 2002: 57-59, 64-66).

A second personalized myth in the Pétain text is the myth of the prisoners of war (“prisonniers de guerre”). They are presented as a significant element of social cohesion and a role model for the ideal character, sacrificial and patriotic at once. This personalized myth has also a transcendent character, as those on whom the myth is built are not present in France, they are away from home—and this further strengthens their character of being role models (especially regarding the topos of sacrifice). The third personalized myth which is only briefly mentioned in the text is that of the farmers, the “paysans”. This has to be seen in connection with Pétain's personal roots in a rural area and the ideology of the National Revolution which stressed the importance of the French soil and farmers as guardians of this soil.

A Typology of Propaganda Myths

On the basis of the comparative analysis undertaken above, and of other results of discourse-analytical propaganda research, it is possible to

formulate a typology of propaganda myths—which is intended to be open for further development on the basis of further research. At this stage, the following propaganda myths may be differentiated:

- The *mythologized term, notion or concept*. One key word or notion can be transformed into a myth in order to “freeze” its connotations and constrain variety of meanings. In this respect, the aspect of power *in* and *over* discourse is of great importance, since the propaganda apparatus will seek to minimize the range of different connotations to a reduced spectrum which is compatible with the intended social identity. In the case of an imaginary complete success of totalitarian propaganda, all words uses and meanings are dictated by the propagandist. The *mythologization of abstract concepts* can be seen as a sub-category of this myth; it is a type of myth which also serves as a support of and legitimization for other myths or other dimensions of propaganda.
- The *personalized myth*. This myth is closely linked to the propaganda dimension of personalisation. In certain cases, such a personalization can be heightened into a myth—with the person in question then being beyond any debate or criticism. This quite often goes hand in hand with the sacralization of a leading figure, which is very typical for totalitarian regimes.
- *Historical myths*. In conjunction with the construction of a common past as one dimension of propaganda, certain events, periods or processes of this past can be transformed into a myth. This generally concerns those parts of the common past which are defined as having a key role—which can also be a negative one, as is the case with the French Revolution in both texts discussed above. Besides, a canon of historical events and processes forming a historical myth is established by propaganda: certain facts or events are assigned fixed definitions and non-debatable (within propaganda discourse) interpretations.
- The *myth of the origins or descent*. A common descent or origin is an important aspect of strengthening social cohesion and to giving more weight to the collective identity constructed by propaganda. In most cases, this common descent is more or less a fiction, as it is either far from reality or beyond the possibility of being proven, or both. In the case of a propaganda myth, a certain theory of common origins is propagated and excluded from debate.

- The *legitimatory myth*. This type of myth is generally used to support other dimensions of propaganda and form the basis for concrete political action. Without the necessity of being proven, these myths provide a set of reasons why the regime in question is in power, why it must stay in power and why it is legitimate for this regime to realise its political projects. The legitimatory myth is often combined with other myths, especially historical myths.
- The *ontological myth*. This myth ascribes to individuals, collectives, places etc. certain characteristics which—as was outlined above—are not presented as the result of processes or influences which are seen as natural or God-given. When applied to specific persons and things, these characteristic traits cannot be debated or altered. Other dimensions of propaganda and political action can then be build upon these characteristics: for instance, the enemy can be constructed in such a way that the differences between the group and the “others” would seem insurmountable, and so these “others” represent a danger which must be fought because communication and compromise are impossible. One type of myth very closely linked to this one is the aforementioned *myth of certain characteristics* which are then linked in a more or less absolute way to the specific value judgements.
- The *myth of the collective future*. These myths refer to “historical missions”, the destiny of a collective and other similar concepts. They can take the form of challenges, unavoidable destinies or duties which have to be fulfilled. In combination with myths of origin, historical myths and ontological myths, propaganda discourse can chart on on the basis of propaganda myths alone an axis of temporal continuity of the collective.
- *Local myths*. Just as persons can be the objects of mythologization, certain places or regions can also provide the starting point for the creation of propaganda myths. In the elaborated propaganda myth, this geographical point of reference then is connoted to the specific events, persons, values etc. In consequence, the mention of this geographical term in propaganda discourse triggers an entire set of connotations for the recipients of this discourse. The places, being the point of reference for local myths, generally also play an important role in propaganda rituals.
- *Object myths*. The mythical objects regularly play a role within

propaganda rituals. In such cases, artefacts serve as the points of reference for propaganda myths, the underlying semiotic process being equivalent to the case of the local myth or the personalized myth.

Conclusion

This paper had two intentions—to present a theoretical approach to the phenomenon of (totalitarian) propaganda on an interdisciplinary basis and to outline the specific approach of discourse-analytical propaganda research. The second is seen as an illustration of one possibility of operationalizing the outlined concept.

Due to the limited space, one of the described dimensions of propaganda was chosen as a focus. The choice fell on the propaganda myth as one central dimension of propaganda which was frequently is closely linked and interwoven with other dimensions of propaganda. This interdependence between the different dimensions of propaganda is to be seen as a significant element of this theoretical approach. The distinction between these dimensions has its reason primarily in practical analytical needs and the need to operationalize the theoretical concept. After the analysis of a given piece of propaganda, the different dimensions of propaganda have to be put together again with the aim of envisioning the whole palette of the propaganda in question. Each piece of propaganda analysed subsequently can then deliver further pieces for this mosaic and add details to the whole picture of the propaganda discourse. This concerns empirical data as well as theoretical questions.

What is also of importance for the concept proposed in this paper is that propaganda is not simply to be interpreted as one form of political communication, but as a complex process of social engineering and an attempt to create and implement a more or less artificial collective identity. It is evident that propaganda will hardly be successful in implementing a collective identity constructed out of void; it has to be anchored in pre-existing social structures, value and belief systems, social hierarchies and so forth. The more complex such a propagated collective identity is, the more aspects of the individual's life it touches upon, and the more this propaganda can be labelled 'totalitarian'. "True" totalitarian propaganda will not stop at manipulating social lives and political attitudes of the individuals concerned, but will also seek to influence their private lives. Perhaps the most tragic empirical example

here is the antisemitic propaganda of the Nazi regime, which was aimed at positioning Jews as pariahs even in the most intimate spheres.

Just as totalitarianism has to be understood as a phenomenon of social engineering, of profound manipulation of people's attitudes, values and self-definitions, propaganda—and especially totalitarian propaganda—is a phenomenon of social communication with the potential of influencing to a high degree the definition of individual and especially collective identities. Discourse-analytical propaganda research is one way of uncovering this process, especially due to the critical impetus of discourse analysis. Further pursuing this approach can be fruitful for both sides (propaganda research and discourse analysis)—and subsequently for the social study of propaganda in general.

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Violence, Communication and Imagination

Pre-Modern, Totalitarian and Liberal-Democratic Torture

WERNER BINDER

This contribution examines the practice of torture from a comparative perspective and with regard to its communicative realization in public and related social imaginaries. Nowadays, at the beginning of the 21st century, a state will rarely call its own practices “torture”, but that was not always the case. In European history torture has often been considered to be an integral part of judicial processes. It was only in the last 200 years that “torture” became a primarily negative concept, a label habitually applied to the actions of political opponents. While specific torture techniques traveled unseen between Liberal democracies as well as totalitarian states, their representatives accused each other publicly of using torture. The rising stigmatization of torture combined with its monitoring by politicians and NGOs forced the torture specialists, especially in democracies, to invent new stealth techniques. These penal practices, leaving literally no traces on human bodies, were quickly adapted by some totalitarian states and retain their significance in our time (see: Rejali 2007).

How do we account for the communicative stigmatization of torture and its consequences? I will argue that we can only explain this transformation by referring to the changes in semantic structures and providing cultural explanations. The practice and prohibition of torture is regulated by the moral and cultural order of a society. This societal order is not only a complex of communicative actions, social norms or legal texts,

but also a social imaginary. The notion of the imaginary foundations of society goes back to Cornelius Castoriadis' *Imaginary Institution of Society* (1987), though I will be drawing primarily upon the concept of the social imaginary as outlined by Charles Taylor, who defines it as "the way ordinary people imagine their 'social' surroundings" (Taylor 2005: 23). Taylor conceives social imaginaries as a non-theoretical phenomena "carried in images, stories and legends" that are—in contrast to theories—"shared by large groups of people" or even "whole societies". Social imaginaries form the cultural background of a society as they enable "common practices and a widely shared sense of legitimacy". Not only physical practices like torture, but also communication is embedded in and legitimized by social imaginaries. The following study seeks to answer the following question: in what way is the historical change and the empirical variety of torture connected to the particular social imaginaries?

I will start with a brief historical and sociological account on some variations of torture from the Greek Antiquity to the early modernity in France. I will show that the different meanings and functions of torture can only be understood through their embedding in particular imaginations of truth, pain and social status. Not only the rise, but also the fall of torture (including its empirical decline and legal abolishment in the course of modernity) is connected to certain social imaginaries. Still, as we all know, torture didn't vanish with the rise of modernity, but merely changed its form. The rest of this study focuses on the similarities and differences of torture practices, communication on torture and related social imaginaries in totalitarian regimes and liberal democracies.

The second part will discuss the role of torture in the Stalinist show trials and purges as an example of totalitarian torture, whereas the third part focuses on the role of torture in the War on Terror as an example of liberal democratic torture. I will show that both cases differ significantly not only in regard to their imagining of torture, truth and state, but also in terms of communication strategies. The Soviet authorities used torture primarily against their own people, whereas the United States tortured almost exclusively non-Americans. The Soviet Union tried to produce false confessions, whereas the Americans wanted reliable information for intelligence purposes. Still, there are also striking similarities. Torture appears in both cases to be an appropriate reaction to a national crisis—in a double sense. The Stalinist excesses of violence are not only responses to the early failures of the Soviet Union, but have to be understood as social mechanisms that reproduce the

liminal structure of a revolutionary belief community (Riegel 1987). In a similar way should the use of torture in the War on Terror be regarded as a symbolic transgression in response to 9/11 (Holmes 2006), and not only as a rational instrument of counterterrorism. Far from being purely instrumental or even rational, the practice of torture allows the production and reproduction of certain social imaginaries.

Legal Torture in Pre- and Early Modern Times

Torture was widespread in many pre-modern societies, especially those with comparatively rationalized and elaborated legal systems. In respect to the legal use of torture, we have to distinguish between the judicial torture as a means of truth-seeking and the penal torture as corporeal punishment for the crimes committed. This chapter will focus primarily on the judicial torture, starting with its use among the old Greeks.

Basanos—Judicial Torture in Ancient Greece

In Greek, torture was called *basanos* which means “touchstone”. This word originally referred to a dark-colored stone that was used to test the purity of gold. Later, the use of torture as a legal technique of truth-seeking was named after the stone. The possible subjects of torture in a Greek polis were defined by their social status; only slaves and in exceptional cases foreigners were tortured. Full citizens, for example, could demand the torture of a slave—of their own or of someone else—in order to prove their innocence before the court. The testimony of a tortured slave not only became equal to the evidence provided by free citizens (Peters 1985: 13), but even surpassed it (DuBois 1991: 65). The virtue of a citizen as someone who possesses reason becomes a vice before the court as it enables him to give false testimony—even under torture. Instead, a slave “recognizes reason without possessing it himself” and therefore his body “must be forced to utter the truth” (DuBois 1991: 66). Thus the body of a slave granted an immediate access to the truth without the reflection and possible distortion that accompanies the possession of reason. This truth extracted from the body could then be used as a piece of evidence in a judicial procedure.

Two aspects and corresponding functions of Greek torture can be distinguished. On the one hand, the use of torture was regulated by the hierarchical differentiation of society, on the other hand torture was

informed by a specific imagination of truth. Page DuBois argues that judicial torture became particularly important in the 5th century BC. At that time, the boundaries between free citizens and slaves became blurred and narratives of enslavement started to haunt the social imaginaries of the Greek city states (DuBois 1991: 63-64). Torture therefore served as a classificatory ritual reproducing the hierarchies between men and women, citizens and foreigners, Greeks and barbarians, free men and slaves. But that is only a half of the truth. The practice of *basanos* was also connected to the Greek concept of truth, *aletheia* that was linked to “hiddenness, secrecy, female potentiality, the tempting, enclosed interiority of the human body” (DuBois 1991: 91). Truth was a hidden secret that had to be wrested from the mere appearance of things.¹ In the case of torture, the truth was hidden in the body of the slave and had to be extracted by physical coercion.

In contrast to the Greek mainstream, Plato proposed a dialogical theory of truth that remained for a long time an elitist fantasy with little impact on the wider social imaginary. Some critics of torture also questioned the specific link between torture and truth. Aristotle remarked in his *Rhetoric* that people under torture’s compulsion lie “as often as they tell the truth, sometimes persistently refusing to tell the truth, sometimes recklessly making a false charge in order to be let off sooner” (quoted in: DuBois 1991: 67). Later, the Romans incorporated *tortura* into their law built on similar premises. Again, torture against slaves was predominant, though later it was also applied to the full citizens of a lower social standing. The only difference to the Greek case is that the use of torture was restricted to criminal proceedings (Peters 1985: 20).

Catholicism and the Rise of Torture in Late Medieval Times

The systematic use of torture vanished with the fall of the Roman Empire. During the Dark Ages up to the 12th century, “irrational” legal practices such as ordeals (especially duels among conflicting parties) dominated Europe. But during the 12th century a “legal revolution” accompanied by a religious change took place (Peters 1985: 40-44). In 1215, the fourth *Consilium Lateranum* declared religious confession as mandatory for each Catholic once a year. A breach of this duty was in principle enough

1 | Martin Heidegger adopts this Greek concept of truth in his *Being and Time* (§44). He translates *aletheia* as uncoveredness (“Unverborgenheit”) and the pursuit of truth as a violent act of appropriation (“Raub”): “Das Seiende wird der Verborgenheit entrissen. Die jeweilige faktische Entdecktheit ist gleichsam immer ein Raub” (Heidegger 1986: 222).

to pass as a heretic. In the same period, the idea of the purgatory was penetrating the ordinary peoples' beliefs (Le Goff 1984). The purgatory moved later from the realm of popular imaginaries to the sphere of elite theology and was canonized in 1336 by the bull *Benedictus Deus*.

Also martyrdom as a testimony of religious truth and as a cultural pattern to follow played an important role for the rise of torture. Here, the late medieval reception of early Christian legends of martyrdom is of great interest (Schirrmester 2000). The *Legenda Aurea*, a collection of Saints' lives published by the Dominican monk Jacobus de Voragine (1239-1298), became the most popular religious book—probably more widespread than the Bible. In medieval passion plays, the suffering of the Saints was reenacted for the purpose of remembrance and also as an encouragement to follow their example (Hammer 2009). This deep connection between torture, pain and religious truth was not only carried and reproduced by folk narratives and performances; it was also elaborated in contemporary systems of theology. According to the religious doctrine of the already mentioned Jacobus de Voragine (who was also a professor of theology), it was not the body itself, but its suffering that could bear witness to the truth (Schirrmester 2000: 141). Legends about Saints and the institutionalization of the shrift provided a painful paradigm for confessions. The tales of suffering in the purgatory and lives of martyrs reveal the spiritual and moral value attributed to pain. Taking this cultural background into account, it is hardly surprising that torture was reintroduced in the 12th century.

In late medieval thinking, there was an analogy between shrift and torture, confessor and torturer. There is also a strong connection between torture and truth, though it differs from the Greek conception. In the medieval case, truth should not have been extracted but had to be rather spelled out by the victim. The tortured subject was not a neutral vehicle of truth (like a slave), but had to participate actively in the process of its revelation. And it has always been the body of the accused person that has been tortured—not the body of an innocent bystander. Also, the immortal soul of the perpetrator was at stake. His obdurate body had to be forced to speak truth for the sake of his own soul. We see that in contrast to the Greek and Roman antiquity where torture was used to attain evidence from a body as objective source beyond doubt, in Medieval Europe it enabled obtaining a confession from the alleged perpetrator. Unlike the Ancient Greek *basanos*—"the testing of gold"—medieval torture was not so much a technique of extracting truth as, in Foucault's words, "the ritual of producing truth" (Foucault 1979: 38).

Torture in Early Modernity and its Abolishment

The late medieval concept of torture outlasted the beginnings of modernity. From a procedural point of view, coerced confessions were simply indispensable (Langbein 2006). As long as it was impossible to convict people with indirect evidence, there were no functional equivalents to confessions. Only after a change in the imagination of truth rendered indirect evidence permissible, torture lost its medieval status as the “Queen of Proofs”. Once the indirect proof was possible, torture was no longer needed and could—in principle—be abandoned. In order to account for this institutional change, we need to investigate the modern concept and imagination of truth. I will mention only two influential theories of truth that had profound impacts on the modern social imaginary: the deductive reasoning of Descartes and the empiricism of Bacon. Descartes founded modern philosophy on the principle of radical doubt and thus coined a new conception of truth that was incompatible with the confession as the queen of proofs. He also advocated a strict dualism of body and soul that cut the medieval bond between torture and truth. Bacon’s idea of reading the world like a book was similarly influential. His understanding of truth not only paved the way to modern sciences, but also enabled changes in the legal system. Bacon’s empiricism allowed the use of indirect evidence, thus fostering modern criminology and the success of the detective novel.

Michel Foucault’s *Discipline and Punish*, as well as Lisa Silverman’s study on torture in early modern France show that judicial (and penal) torture persisted for a long time in early modernity. Silverman analyzed the use of torture in the *Parlement* of Toulouse from 1600 to 1788, a time where torture was neither mandatory nor arbitrarily used in court. She explains the rise and decline of torture during that period by taking historical circumstances and shifting cultural patterns into account. Her book can partly be read as a refutation of Elain Scarry’s unhistorical approach to torture in the *Body in Pain* (1985). Whereas Scarry starts from the anthropological assumption that pain is a pure negativity and the unmaking of the world, Silverman shows that the practice of torture was embedded in a social imaginary that was characterized by a “valorization of pain” (Silverman 2001: 111-130). During the period she researched, the religious life in Toulouse was dominated by lay confraternities that practiced flagellations. Silverman shows that there was a spiritual value attributed to pain that also affected the practice of torture. Though it is very likely that many judges were also part of confraterni-

ties that practiced the “self-torture” of flagellation, it is more important that the valorization of pain was shared by a wider audience. Silverman takes into account not only the imagination of pain but also the understanding of truth as existential knowledge inside the body. Pain and suffering were conceived as ways to gain access to an embodied truth—and to the sacred. The judicial discourse in early modern France was modeled upon the hegemonic religious discourse which remained quite similar up to late medieval times. Later, a reevaluation of pain led to the abandonment of torture. In the 18th century, the shared cultural framework that attributed positive meanings to the experience of pain ceased to exist; instead, suffering became an unnecessary and ultimate evil to be banished from the world.² Silverman emphasizes the influence of the medical discourse on the social imagination of pain, but also the impact of the scientific discourse on the understanding of truth (Silverman 2001: 133-152). Truth was no longer conceived as something buried in the body, but as something to be constructed. Cartesianism in philosophy and medicine conceptualized the body as a pure machine with no connection to the sacred.

Besides judicial torture employed to obtain legal truth, there was also penal torture as corporeal punishment and public spectacle. In Foucault's description of the death of Damien, we see torture as an instrument to inflict pain and cause death, but also as a political ritual of sovereignty (Foucault 1979). In late medieval as well as in early modern times, the body was the location of punishment. The body of the tortured was conceived as a reversed image of the political body of the king. Torture as a public ceremony and ritualized spectacle gives us a taste of the political function contemporary forms of torture assume: exercising torture means manifestation and inscription of the sovereign's power. According to Foucault, there was a penal revolution in the 18th century that not only led to the abandonment of ceremonial torture and public executions, but also to the birth of the prison. Foucault explains this revolution as a shift from the power of the sovereign to the more efficient disciplinary power. An alternative explanation is suggested by Philip Smith who argues that the unruly behavior of the crowd dis-

2 | This change can be described as a shift from the positive to the negative transcendence (Giesen 2005). In this approach, pain is no longer a way to the positive transcendence of God but a secularized negative experience to be avoided at all costs. Not only was the purgatory banished by the Reformation, but also the Catholic Church recently reinterpreted this concept as a voluntary act of cleansing. The change in the imagination of the purgatory followed cultural changes in the evaluation of pain.

turbed the public performance of sovereignty and justice (Smith 2008: 34-56). Foucault describes the abandonment of torture and corporeal punishment as a disciplinary process that enhances the efficiency of the penal system.¹ The body stops being a prison of the soul it was in medieval theology; instead, the soul becomes the prison of the body. Smith shows that this disciplinary process is connected to the broader modern narrative of rationalization (Smith 2008). We have to conceive rationalization and disenchantment as cultural patterns that inspired the charismatic movements of modernity. In the following chapter, we will turn to Soviet Union as a totalitarian state to discuss the outcomes of such a charismatic movement.

Soviet Totalitarian Torture in the Stalin Era

In the following chapter, I will focus on the role of torture in totalitarian regimes. However, a general discussion of totalitarian torture seems to be an impossible task given the diversity of totalitarianisms in terms of ideology and social imaginary. Therefore, I will restrict myself to the use of torture in the early days of the Soviet Union, in the Moscow show trials and the Great Terror, though these findings might not apply to other cases. Nevertheless, I will try to introduce a comparative dimension by discussing some crucial differences between Soviet communism and German fascism—as far as they concern both the imagination and the practice of torture.

Totalitarianisms and Torture

The huge differences among totalitarian regimes in terms of their dominant social imaginaries become obvious if we compare fascism and communism. Fascism is a counter-modern movement though its historical form was only possible in modernity. Communism, in contrast, has always presented itself as a genuine modern movement grounded in the “science” of political economy. Nevertheless, this self-description is rather deceiving. On the one hand, an important intellectual roots of modern communism was indeed Marxism, which Parsons described as “the extreme of rationalistic radicalism” (Parsons 1967: 119). On the other hand, every communist regime was also shaped by traditions, which in the case of the Soviet Union was the Orthodox religious background. It’s also important to note that fascism stood on the side of pre-modern

particularism, whereas communism conceived itself as the champion of modern universalism. This ideological difference is reflected by the fact that fascist torture was less systematic and not so much in need of justification compared with Soviet torture. Philip Smith has shown that the codes of fascist discourses openly favored hierarchy over equality, emotional attachment over rational reasoning, exclusiveness over inclusiveness, power over law (Smith 1998: 127). The communist civil discourse had instead many codes with liberal democracies in common—for example, the public commitment to equality, reason, inclusiveness and legality. The code of law was particularly important in the communication of totalitarian systems, though it was often used as a disguise for political conflicts and the raw use of power. However, as far torture is concerned, communism and liberal democracy differ strongly in the way the relations of political community and individual person are imagined.

The liberal democratic imaginary is characterized by the belief in the sacredness of the individual, most notably in terms of his civil and human rights. Like National Socialism, early Marxism opposed the notion of universal human rights but did so for very different reasons. In National Socialism, not only racial differences overshadowed the idea of a shared humanity but also the very notion of universalism was rejected. Marxism, on the contrary, was from the very beginning concerned with the well-being of all human beings, though its priority was not the liberal pursuit of happiness but the liberation of mankind from alienation and poverty caused by the capitalist mode of production. Marx noted in *The Jewish Question* that civil and human rights are bourgeois since they reproduce the imagination of society consisting of atomized individuals, along with capitalism (Marx 1981: 347-370). In a true communism, according to Marx, the political and the societal community become one and the conception of human rights superfluous. Therefore, in communist regimes the individual person had to be subjected to the political community. The Marxists roots of the Soviet Union led to an official condemnation of human rights which persisted until after the Second World War when the Soviet authorities ratified the Declaration of Universal Human Rights. If we take this ideological background into account, we get an ambiguous picture of Soviet torture. On the one hand, the rule of law was official policy, so one should not have expected the judicial practice of torture. On the other hand, individual persons were clearly subjected to the political community, which might have facilitated the political uses of torture.

Coerced Confessions in the Moscow Show Trials (1936-38)

As already noted, the legal role of confessions, coerced or not, decreased with the rise of modernity. The Soviet Union was no exception: the use of torture was prohibited as an unlawful practice, and its usefulness was deemed questionable (probably due to the scientific imagination of truth that has pervaded modern criminology). Still, the Soviet imaginary of objectivity was a very special variation on the theme of scientific truth. Andrej Vyshinsky, Stalin's legal expert and later Soviet foreign minister, claimed in his *Theory of Legal Proofs* that the application of the dialectic method enables the judge to grasp not only the abstract and formal truth of bourgeois law but also the concrete and material truth (Vyshinsky 1955: 231-232). Vyshinsky, who was also the mastermind behind the show trials of Moscow, criticized explicitly the idea of the confession as the ultimate evidence (Vyshinsky 1955: 276). He agreed with the much maligned bourgeois law that confessions had to be voluntary and that coerced testimonies possessed no legal value. He further argued that the Soviet system had no need for confession as evidence as long as other forms of evidence proved the objective guilt of the accused. He stresses that other forms of evidence are a must and grants confession only a marginal significance. Still, according to Vyshinsky, confessions retained moral value and might have influenced judges' verdicts, even if the individual confession was irreparably subjective—in contrast to the objective truth established by the hard facts, which had some legal value as a witness account (Vyshinsky 1955: 276). How does this legal theory fit with the well-known practice of torture in the Soviet Union? Particularly during Stalin's purges, many party members became victims of imprisonment, torture and execution. I will try to give an answer to this question by addressing the role of torture in the Moscow show trials, the Great Terror and the trials against the Rightist-bloc.

The Moscow show trials usually refer to the legal proceedings against the Trotskyite-Zinovievite-bloc, charged by the chief prosecutor Vyshinsky for the murder of Sergei Kirov and the planned extermination of Soviet elites (see 1936). These charges blend the alleged traitors inside the party with other national and international enemies. The public confessions of the accused were used not only as subjective admissions of guilt but also as witness accounts necessary for incriminating others. Still, these witness accounts had to be backed by hard evidence proving involvement of the accused in counterrevolutionary activities. On February 24th, 1956, Nikita Khrushchev, the first secretary of Communist Party of Soviet Union, revealed in his famous speech at the XXth Party Congress

On Overcoming Personality Cult and Its Consequences that Kirov was murdered on behalf of Stalin, having stated further that the evidence in respective trials was faked and that the confessions were obtained by torture:

“Now, when the cases of some of these so-called “spies” and “saboteurs” were examined, it was found that all their cases were fabricated. The confessions of guilt of many of those arrested and charged with enemy activity were gained with the help of cruel and inhuman tortures” (Khrushchev 1956: 27).

These confessions were not used as proofs in a legal sense: the “objective” guilt of the accused was already established on the basis of fabricated evidence. However, their confessions had not only subjective or moral significance, but also public and political meanings for national and international audiences. Overall, these coerced confessions from the Stalin era bear only a superficial resemblance to the confessions in medieval times. The latter had been an integral part of the legal system, whereas the former were primarily used for propaganda reasons. The fact that most of these confessions were obtained by coercion had to be hidden from the public. First of all, the show trials contributed to the imagination of the Soviet state as threatened by internal and external enemies, the so called counterrevolutionary and bourgeois forces. In this context, the concept of the “enemy of the people” attributed by Khrushchev to Stalin (Khrushchev 1956: 14) plays an important role. Second, the public confessions demonstrated the Soviet rule of law and criminalistic expertise. Though the confessions were of legal value, they proved in the eye of the public, with the exception of some keen observers, that the Soviet prosecutors had access to the truth and an objective knowledge about these cases.³

Important for the broader social context of the show trials was the extraordinary role of self-criticism and confession of guilt in the public sphere of the Soviet Union (for the following see: Erren 2008). In the 1920s the victorious revolutionary party of the Bolsheviks faced a serious crisis splitting it into right and left factions. After an initial period of debates, dissent and crucial votes, political factions inside the party were forbidden and dissenters were turned into heretics. Under these conditions, public self-criticism and confessions evolved as mechanisms that

3 | Large parts of international press were convinced of the lawfulness of the Moscow trials. Even NGO's like the *ligue des droits de l'homme* had the general impression that the trial was an “expression of justice itself”. A counter-perception emerged only later (see: Schrader 1995: 36-38).

allowed dissenters to re-integrate themselves into the new party line. These public rituals strengthened the legitimacy of the party leadership and fostered the imagination of the party as a monolithic and unified bloc. By confessing one could show his unquestioned loyalty to the party which became the criteria of being a “true Bolshevik”. Those who refused to capitulate, were declared to be counterrevolutionaries. Erren argues further that the Soviet culture of confessions was influenced by religious patterns of canonic truth, heresy and guilt (Erren 2008: 19, 85-86).⁴ Self-criticism or *samokritika* emerged only in 1928 as a central concept in the Soviet public sphere, though it was retrospectively declared that it had always been a part of the Bolshevik tradition. This new culture of self-criticism spread to the factories, on wall newspapers, in academia and also played an important role in the purges of the thirties. Even Khrushchev himself adapted this model of self-criticism to debunk Stalin’s personality, as well as to legitimize his own rule.

Torture in Gulags and during the Great Terror (1937-1938)

The use of torture in the Soviet Union was not restricted to the preparation for the show trials, but played an important role in the Soviet prison camps. In *Gulag Archipelago*, Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn remarked that torture had always been a common practice in Soviet Russia (Solzhenitsyn 2002). He argued further that torture had been rarely used to discover truth, obtain a confession or gain information. Instead, it served the psychological purpose of breaking individual’s will. But the destruction of subjectivities, in its turn, played crucial role in formulating the “objective truth” of the regime. The case of the Katyn massacre and its cover-up shows that torture was also used to intimidate eyewitnesses whose accounts contradicted the official version of the Soviet government. This Polish case also shows that the Soviet Union practiced torture not only against their own citizens. They used torture against the populations of occupied territories too, for example in the prison camps of the SBZ, which later became the German Democratic Republic (Erler 1998: 178-179). The use of torture by the Soviet authorities remained for quite a

4 | Other cultural sources from the Russian tradition are also important for the understanding of self-criticism as a part of a broader social imaginary—for example, the dialectics of guilt and confession in Dostoevsky’s *Crime and Punishment*. Nevertheless, this moral stand was very alien to of Marxism. For this reason, some Bolsheviks condemned the rituals of confession as expressions of the “disdained Russian soul” and even feared the return of “Dostoevskian moods (*dostoevščina*)” (Erren 2008: 379).

long time a well-kept secret and a taboo topic in public communication. Thus communication on torture was confined to private stories, gossip and rumors.

Between 1928 and 1936, the so called *convoyeur* techniques—an array of clean torture methods hugely different from the whipping practices of the Czarist police—became part of the torture repertoire of the secret police in the Soviet Union, NKVD (Rejali 2007: 88). Key elements of the *convoyeur* techniques were sleep deprivation, relay interrogations and stress-inducing positions such as forced standing (*vystoika*) or forced sitting (*vysadka*):

“Living in an overcrowded, unsanitary prisons on meager rations was a torture in itself that broke many people. But often it was not enough to obtain confessions, so the NKVD turned to physical torture. There are many documents and published testimonies about this, Memoirs and archival documents show a gruesome picture of crimes committed in NKVD prisons. One of the most frequent forms of interrogation was the “conveyor” method, where several investigators took turns in the nonstop interrogation of a prisoner for several days without sleep, forcing the prisoner to stand or sit in uncomfortable positions. Often such conveyor interrogations involved beatings and other forms of torture” (Khlevniuk 2004: 151).

According to Darius Rejali, the Soviet torturers have not developed these techniques on their own but most likely learned them from the police systems of Western democracies. It is quite probable that some of the later NKVD torturers had been themselves subject to these tortures as socialist detainees in Western police stations and prisons. After World War II, these techniques spread further to the secret polices in the other countries of the Warsaw Pact.

During the so called Great Terror, from July 1937 to November 1938, hundreds of thousands of people were arrested, tortured and executed. The crucial document for the Great Terror was the order no. 00447 concerned with the persecution of “former kulaks, criminals, and other anti-Soviet elements” that also quantitatively defined the “contingents to be repressed” (see: Khlevniuk 2004: 145). The arrests and murders were based on quotas differing according to region and from group to group. These limits were consecutively raised—sometimes on request of the local governments, sometimes by the center in Moscow when they had the impression that the local government showed not enough engagement in the fulfillment of the plan. Initially, the execution of 75,950 and the imprisonment of 193,000 people was planned (Binner

et al. 2009: 45). At the end, more than 800,000 people died as a consequence of the Great Terror. There were two categories of people, on the one hand former “kulaks and other hostile elements” to be killed, on the other hand “criminals and less hostile elements” for imprisonment. These lists were extended on request to include diverse “hostile elements” such as priests and former members of anti-Bolshevik organizations. Many people from these categories were already registered as not allowed to vote (*lišency*), in particular the kulaks that were imprisoned and later released in the wake of the de-kulakization in the early thirties. This allowed the NKVD to arrest them easily and systematically; others were arrested because of denunciations or as the result of forced witness accounts. The most important legal institution in the Great Terror were the *trojki*, the committees consisting of three people, created during the de-kulakization in the early thirties, that were empowered to convict people outside of the court.

The coerced confessions obtained by torture were necessary to produce evidence against the arrested people in order to fulfill the quotas of killings and imprisonments. The prisoners were tortured until they signed fake documents (in some cases even blank sheets of paper) that suggested or proved their membership in a counterrevolutionary organization, thus creating the pretext for further interrogations (for examples see: Khlevniuk 2004: 156). The introduction of the “mass conveyor” sped up immensely the production of confessions. This particularities of the torture technique are disclosed in a report on the “illegal methods of investigation” in Turkmenia:

“For the mass conveyor, dozens of arrested people were lined up facing the wall in a special room. A designated person on duty for the conveyor prevented them from falling asleep or lying down until they agreed to give the testimony required by the investigator. The stubborn individuals under arrest were also subject to beating handcuffing or bonding. A large number of cases have been uncovered where the arrested were kept on the conveyor for thirty-forty days without sleep” (quoted from: Khlevniuk 2004: 158-159).

During the interrogations, beatings were quite common; many of them resulted in deaths. The existence of these murders has usually been concealed by faked death reports. Among the arrested and tortured were also women with babies, as well as foreign diplomats. The report claims that some interrogators boasted to be particularly cruel and therefore efficient:

“In the NKVD department of the Kerbinsk district, its chief, Lopukhov, and officer

Ovcharov systematically beat inmates on the conveyor. According to his own testimony, Ovcharov, while drunk, broke two stools over the heads of the prisoners, and within one hour made all fifteen people confess to espionage” (quoted from: Khlevniuk 2004: 159).

The conveyor technique was very effective in the mass production of confessions, but not particularly useful in intelligence gathering. In the first place, the extorted confessions were used to justify further arrests and interrogations. Their second use was providing witness reports and evidence against the other inmates, since the coerced confessions of the latter were not enough to convict the confessors. Along with deliberate denunciations, the non-voluntary witness reports played an important role in the trials against the so-called “hostile elements”.

Whereas the manifest goal of the Great Terror was the repression of non-conformists, a rather latent function was the specification of an enemy image that was in danger of being unmasked as pure ideology (see: Binner et al. 2009: 377). One may also understand the Great Terror as a reaction towards the economic and political failures of Stalinism (Žižek 1999). Because the authority and truth of the party was beyond question, these failures had to be explained as acts of sabotage of political opponents. In order to rescue the party, scapegoats were needed.

The Great Terror stopped when Yezhov had to step back as chief of the NKVD. The state of exception was abandoned and “socialist legality” restored again, whereas the *trojka* and the NKVD became scapegoats for the excesses of violence that happened. The *trojka* were abolished; many members were convicted and sentenced to death as the former prosecutors became themselves victims of the system (Binner et al. 2009: 697-699). The NKVD was accused of using confessions as the solemn basis for convictions without substantiating the allegation with additional evidence, for faking evidence, for distorting testimonies and coercing false testimony (see: Binner et al. 2009: 481-482, 542ff.). Nevertheless, Stalin himself intervened in these investigations and accusations on behalf of the former torturers by defending the use of violence as legitimate in exceptional circumstances (for example against “enemies of the people”). He argued further that the Soviet Union cannot afford to dispose of torture when its enemies, the bourgeois intelligence agencies, have no such moral inhibitions (see: Binner et al. 2009: 515-516).

The Trials against Bukharin and Yezhov (1937-1940)

I will conclude the discussion of Soviet torture with the trials against the so-called “Rightist bloc” at the end of the thirties, restricting myself to the prominent cases against two old Bolsheviks, Bukharin and Yezhov. One may start with Yezhov, the commander of the Great Terror, who was arrested in April 1939. At the beginning of 1940 he confessed to be an English and Polish spy, though later he withdrew this confession in front of the USSR Supreme Court (Getty and Naumov 1999: 560-562). In this statement, to the court, he repudiated all the accusations against him, but remained nevertheless realistic about his conviction: “My fate is obvious”. Quite probable that torture was used to obtain his first confession, in particular as he begs his prosecutors: “shoot me quietly, without tormenting”.⁵ Yezhov closes his statement with a last wish:

“I request that Stalin be informed that I have never in my political life deceived the party, a fact known to thousands of persons who know my honesty and modesty. I request that Stalin be informed that I am a victim of circumstances and nothing more, yet here enemies I have overlooked may have also a hand in this. Tell Stalin that I shall die with his name on my lips” (Getty and Naumov 1999: 562).

Till the very end, Yezhov was willing to believe that Stalin had nothing to do with the accusations against him and that his death would only serve his own enemies. Bukharin, who had been arrested in March 1937, began to confess three months thereafter, but was not so naïve. In contrast to Yezhov, he declared in a private letter to Stalin that he had no intention of recanting his confession in public, instead he pledged for a personal acknowledgement of his innocence (Getty and Naumov 1999: 556-560). How to account for this split between public confession and personal innocence? Here Žižek’s illuminating interpretation of the letter may be helpful (Žižek 1999). Bukharin believed he was acting like a good Bolshevik in accordance to the code of communism by sacrificing his individual interest for the greater good of the party and the proletarian revolution. While accepting the “objective necessity” of his death, he still clung to his subjective innocence and personal truth, which was unacceptable for Stalin and the party. The subordination of the individual has to be complete, the sacrifice total and the official truth has to become the objective truth. As the truth of the party is only loosely connected to

5 | Truth to be told, the word for torment used here, *mucheniiia*, does not necessarily imply physical torture (cf. Getty and Naumov 1999: 562, fn.15).

a world of facts, the show trials contributed to a revision of history and to the imagination and construction of state power.⁶

How did Stalin survive these paranoid purges and violent excesses as a political leader? First of all, it seems that the people and the party readily accepted the Manichaeian narrative offered as explanation. The never-ending revolution was conceived as a battle between good and evil, a drama with conspiracies, treason and acts of sabotage. But even considering the obvious mistakes and grave excesses, Stalin's position was pretty secure. He never appeared as the man in charge for these persecutions, but as someone who called publicly for moderation. Stalin also profited from a social imaginary going back to the Czarist times, namely the narrative of the “good king”, who is surrounded by ill-willed counselors and betrayed by corrupt enforcers (see: Stöltgen 1997). Even Yezhov, who regarded himself as the victim of a conspiracy, explicitly exempted Stalin from his allegations.

National Socialist Torture

Let me briefly address the problem of Nazi torture. In comparison to Soviet torture, the practice of torture in the German National Socialism has striking differences. First of all, compared with the genocide of European Jews and Gypsies, political opponents and disabled persons, the Nazi government did not use torture proper systematically:

“The Nazis used torture primarily against individuals from whom they needed information, such as Resistance members, and against Jehovah's Witnesses, to force them to name other members of their religion. When information was not needed, the Nazis more often used mass killings and reprisals, instead of torture, to intimidate and control conquered people” (Einolf 2007: 111).

Apparently, the Nazi use of torture was practiced ad hoc and motivated by a situational information asymmetry, lacking ideological functions. According to Darius Rejali, there are two distinctive features of Nazi torture. On the hand, “German security services showed little interest in clean tortures”; on the other hand, these techniques had very little systematic coherence, but “varied from region to region” (Rejali 2007: 95). The Nazis often used overt violence like whipping and beatings in interrogations and before executions, which shows that they didn't care

6 | The quintessence of this totalitarian imagination of torture is found in Orwell's 1984. Here, torture is revealed as the core of the totalitarian state, a practice revealing its absolute power and sovereign truth.

about leaving traces.⁷ We can also add that “German people” as defined in Nazi racial terms—had little to fear from the Nazi Regime if they were not active in the political opposition to the regime (as, for example, Communists were). This circumstance has its roots both in the particularism of the Nazi ideology and in its racist imaginary: fragmentary thinking diminished the importance of truth, an essentially universal concept, and the definition of enemy was constructed first and foremost along racial lines. All in all, National Socialism was not so much in need of establishing an official truth in the Soviet sense. The relation of torture and truth was more about information than about ideology—which is also the case in the liberal-democratic society to which we turn now.

Liberal-Democratic Torture in the American War on Terror

Liberal-democracies differ from totalitarian regimes in many respects. Most important is probably the existence of an autonomous public sphere and the protection of individuals from the state by the rule of law—not only in political theory but also in practice. Still, the rights of individuals were first of all conceived as civil rights and not necessarily as human rights. The discourse of civil society distinguishes sharply between citizens and enemies (Alexander 1998); if torture is to be applied, it is generally used against “enemies” and “aliens” (see: Einolf 2007). The case in point is the use of torture in Algiers by the French—a colonial exercise of power in a liberation war against an enemy that was considered a different “specie”. Colonialism shares a certain racist ideology with the Nazi Government, even if it differs in other aspects. Jaques Massu, commander of the French troops in Algiers in 1957, gave name and birth to the concept of *massuisme*—the justification of torture as a counter-terrorist measure in exceptional circumstances. We will see that this is a typical pattern of justification in liberal democracies: the United States used a similar argument in the War on Terror, which will be discussed as a case study of liberal-democratic torture.

7 | For an overview on the use of torture in Nazi Germany and the Nazi-occupied Europe see Rejali (2007: 91-107). He points out that the most refined torture techniques—such as the “bath tub” or electric torture—where only found in the occupied France and actually borrowed from the French penal tradition.

The Academic Torture Debate after 9/11

In order to understand the possibilities and the dilemmas of liberal-democratic torture, it is helpful to take a look at the recent debates. Steven Lukes argued in his article *Liberal Democratic Torture* that the absolute prohibition of torture is indispensable for liberal democratic societies because the practice of torture would undermine their democratic and liberal foundations (Lukes 2006). According to Lukes, there is no such thing as “liberal-democratic torture”: liberal societies respect individuals, and democratic societies base their political decisions on public discourse. Torture not only violates the human dignity and individual rights, but its open practice endangers the normative foundations of society whereas the secret practice of torture would not be accepted in a democracy. Though a liberal society might coexist with the secret use of torture by the state, a liberal democratic society cannot do so. Lukes’ statement is normative rather than empirical, but it does tell something about the moral order and communicative codes of democratic societies. The civil sphere of liberal democracies favors openness over secrecy and individual rights over state power (see: Alexander 2006; Alexander and Smith 1993).

Still, the application of these and similar postulates leads to paradoxes if important values such as “innocent lives” are at stake. Lukes recognizes these dilemmas of an absolute prohibition of torture and argues that in such cases torture should be personally accounted for: though the acts of torture should be punished, the legal system might take exceptional and mitigating circumstances into account. This, as we will see, is a rather typical strategy of coping with the dilemmas of liberal democratic torture: In general, Lukes tends to reify the concept of torture while neglecting its communicative construction. The British sociologist Geoffrey Brahm Levey responded critically to Lukes’ article (see also: Lukes 2007). He argues that though torture might be morally wrong, its practice is not necessary incompatible with the liberal and democratic code. Levey suggests that torture can be rendered democratically accountable by legal procedures and political elections, for example the “torture warrants” proposed by Alan Dershowitz (2002). Following this line of thought, torture becomes a problem of dirty hands, of weighing “bigger” and “lesser” evils (see also: Ignatieff 2004).

Torture and coerced confessions indisputably lost legitimacy in the last centuries. Not only the Soviet Union, also the United States had no use for judicial torture in a legal sense. Still, there are different com-

municative codes in these regimes. Whereas totalitarian regimes like the Soviet government demand painful sacrifices and public demonstrations of humility from individuals, liberal democracies like the United States try to avoid pain and death of their citizens at all costs. The only thing that can legitimate the use of torture in liberal democracies is therefore the prevention of pain and death. Torture in the War on Terror was only legitimized as a discussion topic when it became a technique of information gathering for security reasons. Though torture was banished as legal technique, it came back as a practice of the military, the police and the secret service. Yes, torture violates liberal principles, but this can be perceived as a “lesser evil” in certain circumstances. The epistemic basis of torture as interrogation technique is the informational asymmetry between the state and his enemies. Evidently, this concept of information is different from the antique and medieval notion of a hidden truth.

In the United States, the individual rights of citizens have a particularly strong tradition. The bill of rights from 1791 guarantees that no one has to provide evidence against oneself at the court, rendering confessions legally useless (Amendment V), grants to everyone a speedy, public and fair trial (Amendment VI) and prohibits any cruel or unusual form of punishment (including torture, Amendment VIII). Individual rights are also prevalent in political folklore devoted to moral integrity: they say that George Washington refused to torture British soldiers in the Independence War, whereas the British had no such inhibitions (Mayer 2008: 80-81).

Two parallel strategies of communicating torture in the American War on Terror emerge. First, the attorneys working for the Bush administration proposed a very narrow definition of torture that would allow the United States to use several interrogation techniques close to torture. The respective secret memorandums were published only in the wake of the Abu Ghraib torture scandal. Second, the harsh interrogation techniques were justified by a state of exception—the War on Terror. In 1992, Niklas Luhmann discussed the ticking bomb scenario as a hypothetical case: should one torture in order to prevent the explosion of a nuclear weapon in a big city (Luhmann 2008)? A long time, this problem was merely a product of sociological imagination and philosophical reasoning, but with 9/11 it became a part of a wider social imaginary. Torture became not only a legitimate topic in academic circles, but also in public sphere and popular culture.

US Torture Policies after 9/11

Torture did not remain a subject of academic discussions, but was employed by US forces to counter the threat of terrorism. After 9/11, the legal ground for this practice was prepared by the attorneys of the American government. Two weeks after 9/11, John C. Yoo wrote a Memo to the President that strengthened his constitutional authority:

“Neither statute, however, can place any limits on the President’s determinations as to any terrorist threat, the amount of military force to be used in response, or the method, timing, and the nature of the response. These decisions, under our Constitution, are for the President alone to make” (Yoo 2005: 24).

Not only has the President the right to undertake military operations against suspected terrorists and nations supporting them, but also to nations that pose a seemingly similar threat (for example possessing weapons of mass destruction). Memorandas for the detention of suspected terrorists (Bush 2005), for the denial of habeas corpus to the inmates of Guantánamo Bay (Philbin and Yoo 2005) and for depriving the captives in the War on Terror from their “prisoners of war” status (Bybee 2005a; Yoo and Delabunty 2005) followed. The Geneva conventions were reinterpreted in such a way that suspected terrorists were no longer conceived as soldiers, but were reclassified as “unlawful combatants”. As if the framing of counterterrorism as war was not enough to signal the state of exception, disguising of enemy soldiers as unlawful combatants doubled this exceptionality.

The re-interpretation of torture was not a purely arbitrary act, but became possible by the ambiguities of the prohibition itself. Let us consider Article 5 of the “UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights” and the “UN Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment”. Here, the use of torture is explicitly forbidden under any circumstances. But the very definition of torture as “intended to inflict severe physical and mental pain or suffering” is quite ambiguous. What is “severe pain”? When does pain start to become severe? What is meant by “intended”? A memorandum to the President of the U.S. from August 2002 tries to give an answer by concluding that torture...

[...] covers only extreme acts. Severe pain is generally of the kind difficult for the victim to endure. Where the pain is physical, it must be an intensity akin to that which accompanies serious physical injury such as death or organ failure. Severe mental pain requires suffering not just at the moment of infliction but it

also requires lasting psychological harm, such as seen in mental disorders like the post-traumatic stress disorder. [...] Because the acts inflicting torture are extreme, there is a significant range of acts that though they might constitute cruel, inhumane, or degrading treatment or punishment fail to rise to the level of torture” (Bybee 2005b: 213-214).

Note that severe physical and mental harm should be considered “specifically intended” to become torture. If the interrogator is in a good faith that he has no such intentions, he does not violate the statutes even if he actually inflicts lasting damage upon his victim. More than that, “a good faith belief need not be a reasonable one” (Bybee 2005b: 175). Though the torture definition is narrowed down, Bybee continues to argue that the outright prohibition of torture “under the circumstances of the current war against al Qaeda and its allies [...] may be unconstitutional [sic! W. B.]” and that “necessity or self-defense could provide justifications that would eliminate any criminal liability” even for those acts falling under a narrow definition of torture (Bybee 2005b: 214). Exceptional torture remains as a backup strategy. The definition of torture is narrowed down to extreme acts, whereas a significant range of cruel, inhumane and degrading treatment is relegated to the legally unproblematic term “harsh interrogation technique”.

The prison Camp at Guantánamo Bay in Cuba became symptomatic for the use of torture and interrogation techniques in the War on Terror. Among the approved torture techniques for GTMO were isolation, sensory and sleep deprivation, removal of clothing, inducing stress by the use of dogs and female interrogators, finally the use of mild, non injurious physical contact (Greenberg and Dratel 2005: 1239). Another technique actually used in Guantánamo prison was waterboarding—a torture simulating drowning. The exceptional status of Guantánamo Bay was publicly known, but the general public was unaware of details. This gap was filled with the ticking bomb fantasy in popular media including movies and TV series. In contrast to the classical scenario in which the ticking bomb was defused by the hero just in time, in the new version the hero had to torture the villain beforehand. After 9/11, the “torture/savior-fusion” (Holmes 2006: 128) became an important narrative element, most prominently embodied in the figure of Jack Bauer from the American TV series *24*.

Communicative Strategies of Liberal Democratic Torture

The United States government used several communication strategies to cope with the problem of liberal democratic torture. First it used a very narrow definition of torture that—as critics might say—refrained from calling torture by its name and left room for the dubious “harsh interrogation techniques”. The Abu Ghraib scandal in 2004 showed a second, slightly different strategy. The publicized acts of torture were quickly framed by US army and American government as cases of “abuse”. This terminology implied that the incidents at the Abu Ghraib prison were not part of a widespread and systematic torture practice, but rather some isolated, if illegal, accidents. In the course of the scandal, this terminology was more and more adopted by the American media that some scholars feel even inclined to speak of “indexing” (Bennett et al. 2006). As the reelection of George W. Bush in the same year has shown, the US army and the government successfully exculpated themselves by rendering the perpetrators of those acts individually accountable. Evidently, this strategy was quite similar to the scapegoating of the NKVD officers in the aftermath of the Great Terror.

A third communicative strategy aimed at rendering torture harmless was its branding as exception and transgression.⁸ In the War on Terror not only the state of exception was mobilized to justify the use of harsh interrogation techniques and torture; these practices were also packaged as transgressions to communicate the state of exception. The term “transgression” is useful to account for the symbolic power unleashed by a transgression of law. Jean Baudrillard described 9/11 as a “death-gift” of the terrorists, as a global event, a singular case of a huge symbolic impact (Baudrillard 2003). He argued further that there could be hardly an adequate response to such a gift. Stephen Holmes pointed out that we can understand the use of torture in the War on Terror as this kind of symbolic response to 9/11: torture works precisely because it defies the rule of law (Holmes 2006). The actual practice of torture was—at

8 | Lukes' normativism as well as Levey's calculus of torture fail to account for torture as exception and transgression. In this connection, the political theology of Carl Schmitt (2005) and the works on the sacred by the *Collège de Sociologie* deserve mentioning: Georges Bataille (2001) and Roger Caillois (2001) have shown that transgressions occur in particular periods and do not always endanger the general moral order. The anthropologist Victor Turner came to similar insights arguing that social structure is often accompanied by phenomena of anti-structure and liminality (Turner 1969). Liminality renders the ordinary rules invalid and often reverses them; it enables for transgressions while at the same time preserving the norm.

least until the Abu Ghraib photographs—disclosed from the eye of the public. Still, there was a public knowledge of these affairs. Especially the installment of the prison camp at Guantánamo Bay in the months following the terrorist attack on the World Trade Center, was an open secret. Why was this shadowy camp - outside the American territory, but under American control—widely accepted? Apparently, the worries about national security framed by the “ticking bomb narrative”, provided a justification for Guantánamo Bay and torture in general.

To strip alleged terrorists from their rights can be regarded as a more or less adequate reaction to terrorist attacks in liberal societies precisely because it transgresses liberal norms. Building camps for the interrogation of alleged terrorists far from public surveillance is a symbolically significant reaction, because it violates the norms of a democratic public sphere. Beyond sacred prohibition and profane calculus, there seems to be a dark fascination regarding the transgression of torture in liberal democracies. Given the right framing, even the breach of seemingly indispensable norms can have a positive communicative value. Not only the application of norms is culturally set, also the recognition of exceptions and transgressions is shaped by cultural patterns. It is a question of compelling narratives, convincing performances and shocking images as the case of 9/11 shows. The change in the practice of torture was accompanied by a cultural transformation of the social imaginary. This is also suggested by Levey (2007), when he refers metaphorically to the “religious change” that has taken place in America after 9/11, and Lukes (2007) agrees.

The plausibility of the Ticking Bomb Scenario is of course dependent on a particular relation between truth and torture. Nowadays, the medieval spiritual connection between torture and truth is replaced by a technological imagination. In the American case, the scientification of torture established a new connection between truth and body. A good example is the American research on psychological torture, but also on other forms of modern “stealth torture”. The use of psychotropic drugs and truth serums reestablishes the connection between body and mind that was cut by the Cartesian dualism. The US military also experimented with technical devices like the lie detector in order to force the body to give reliable information. Still, the truth here are only pieces of information that might yield some usable intelligence for the secret services. There is no whole truth, no confession that ends the torture. Though the ticking bomb scenario that suggests a crucial piece of information is hidden inside the prisoners body, in principle any information

might be of value for the torturers. This torture never stops; there is no confession and no foreseeable death that marks an end to the suffering. As long as the tortured body might yield further information, there is no reason to let him go. Only the external logic of the Supreme Court or a policy change can bring the indefinite detention to an end.

Conclusion

Hierarchies, Codes and Messages of Torture

The practice of torture seems, at least in relatively complex societies, to be constant throughout history. But we also seen that the configuration of torture, body, truth and pain changed in the course of history. We can't investigate torture as an isolated practice; we have to take the socio-historical circumstances such as religious practices and status hierarchies into account. Last but not least, these practices belong to a particular social imaginary. The analysis has shown that torture is always embedded in webs of narratives and images that give them a widely shared sense of legitimacy. Also the social functions of torture differ: while in pre-modern and early-modern times, torture had primarily a legal function, modern torture seems instead to fulfill a political function. I will summarize some findings on that with regard to social hierarchies, cultural codes and communicative messages.

Many studies have shown that hierarchy plays a crucial role in the practice of torture. For torture in the Antiquity, the difference between citizen and slave was decisive and in fact reproduced by torture. In the late medieval times, this hierarchy continued to exist and nobles were less often tortured. Other social hierarchies became also important, for example the social stigmatization of heretics, the suspicion towards Jewish and Muslim converts during the Inquisition and the role of gender in the witch hunts. Nevertheless, Christian religion provided an interpretative frame that shifted the meaning of torture from dishonor to spiritual cleansing which led to a more egalitarian practice of torture. In liberal democratic societies, like France or the US, the difference between citizen and non-citizen (or enemy) is important. Torture is nearly exclusively used against outsiders and often fueled by a racist imagination of the alien Other. What is particularly interesting about the case of Soviet torture is its universal egalitarianism: in principle no one was protected from torture—possibly, not even Stalin himself. Hierarchies still played an important role, but the aftermath of the Great Terror shows

that those in high positions could end up on the dock and that some prominent torturers have been in the end tortured themselves. Torture is not only affected by social hierarchies, but also plays a crucial role in reproducing those hierarchies. It not only separates citizens from slaves and other non-citizens, it helps society to construct its hostile others disguising them as heretics, counterrevolutionaries or terrorists.

With respect to the cultural coding of torture, we see variations in the evaluation of pain and in the imagination of truth. On the one hand, the evaluation of pain with regard to social groups varied; the pain of slaves or of colonial others is different from the pain of citizens. On the other hand, the universal evaluation of pain changed with time from the valorization and spiritualization of pain in late medieval and early modern times to its pure negativity in late Modernity. One can also observe different codings in the communication and imagination of truth. According to the Ancient Greeks, truth was something to be extracted from the neutral body of a slave, which differed from the concept of active participation expected from the confessor in Christian Europe. The confession of guilt focused on a religious understanding of truth in its relation to soul and God. The scientific conception of truth is different from the pre-modern torture imaginations: in the US, for instance, truth is tied to the concept of information and the assumed information asymmetry between state and tortured person is crucial. In the Soviet State, truth was also imagined as scientific and objective: the function of Soviet confession was not to eliminate the information asymmetry but to symbolize the objectivity of the official truth. The truth that manifests itself in Soviet torture was not the subjective truth of the tortured, but the objective truth of the state. The supposedly scientific truth was in fact a political perversion of truth.

Finally, the communication on torture conveyed varying messages to different audiences. The antique and medieval tortures were no secrets at all, but widely recognized and accepted practices. Therefore the message of torture was quite unambiguous, defined by their function in legal procedures. The modern use of torture is much more ambivalent. Even Soviet torture had to remain invisible; it was prohibited by the law, but nevertheless frequently practiced. It was crucial for the success of the show trials that the confessions observed by the national and international audiences appeared not to be coerced. And when the practice of torture was publicized, after the Great Terror (and especially after Stalin's death), the message conveyed exculpated its communicator: torture was presented as the work of spies and traitors, as the

grave excess of a few misguided officers, or even as the consequence of the megalomania of a single leader. In liberal democracies, where torture is also practiced secretly, a similar communication strategy surfaced during the Abu Ghraib scandal, where the systematic torture was broken down to individual abuse cases. Still, the public rhetoric in liberal democracies allows—quite similarly to the revolutionary rhetoric of communism—for a partial recognition and justification of torture. The existence of Guantánamo Bay was an open secret; though the torture itself was not visible, it was a common knowledge that “harsh interrogation techniques” were employed there. Hence the communication on torture in liberal democracies, and, to a lesser degree, in totalitarian regimes, has a very distinctive message: The transgression of liberal principles signals a state of exception.

We see that torture in different historical contexts and societies was not only endowed with differing meanings, but fulfilled also different social functions. In our contemporary society, torture may have lost its legal function, but its political function is more visible than ever. Therefore torture and its communication contributes to the imagination of state power in totalitarian regimes as well as in liberal democratic security regimes.

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The Lure of Fascism?

Extremist Ideology in the Newspaper *Reality* Before WWII

JOHN RICHARDSON

Although a great deal of research has been published examining British fascism during the 1930s, the vast majority of this work, perhaps necessarily, has focused on various party literatures as the definitive voices of the political parties. Aside from the infamous support that Rothermere and the *Daily Mail* provided the British Union of Fascists, thus far, there has been comparatively little examination of the circulation of totalitarian ideologies in the wider national culture.¹ Even the current ‘cultural turn’ in fascist studies tends to focus analytic attention on the officially ratified outputs of explicitly named fascist parties (see: Gottlieb and Linehan, 2004). Inevitably, I would argue, this impoverishes our understanding of fascism—of its origins, its growth, its success, and the potentials for its recurrence. In relation to the British fascist tradition, “it is impossible to understand organised hostility to minority groups without reference to wider cultural traditions in British society” (Kushner and Lunn 1989: 5). And these cultural traditions need not be an epoch’s ‘big hitters’ and ‘leading lights’. Indeed, we could make a case that all “cultural epochs depend on their backstage staff as much as their top billers and it is often the lesser lights who contribute more fully to an era’s *Zeitgeist*” (Bradshaw 2004: 145). This is because cultural and political ‘leading lights’ are, necessarily, in some sense extraordinary; for an

1 | Notable exceptions are Pugh (2006) and Stone (2003), though Stone’s work focuses on British responses to Nazism from 1933, while the present chapter examines texts published at the end of 1932.

examination of the cultural and political assumptions of an epoch, it is sometimes a good idea to try to seek out the sources that have somehow fallen into the background. The newspaper *Reality* is exactly such a source.

Britain Cultural and Political Contexts

Like Stone (2002: 2), I am concerned to “challenge the view [...] which dismisses British fascism as a pale imitation of continental counterparts, and as an irrelevance in British political history”. Part of this re-evaluation of the significance of fascism to British political, and *cultural*, history, lies in showing that British fascism is not a mini-epochal episode, limited to the years immediately prior to the Second World War. In fact, in Britain, there are “well developed indigenous tradition of ways of thinking, which, while they cannot be called ‘fascist’ [...] can certainly be called ‘proto-fascist’” (Stone 2002: 2). For around forty years before the First World War “the ideas that prepared the ground for fascism were abundantly in evidence in British politics and society; like other European countries Britain had a pre-fascist tradition” (Pugh 2006: 7). Mirroring fascist movements on mainland Europe, this British pre-fascist tradition developed from movements of the radical right, and drew their strength from sections of the British establishment. Largely a loose coalition of middle and upper class ultra-conservatives, the beliefs of the Edwardian radical right were shaped by a particular interpretation of the ‘national interest’. They were angered by the erosion of aristocratic government (and the enactment of the 1911 Parliament Act in particular), dismayed by a widespread sense of Imperial decline (and a corresponding desire to strengthen British Imperial power) and horrified by increasing working class activism and enfranchisement. More specifically, “most of them supported tariff reform, compulsory military service, an expansion of the army and navy [...] an end to ‘alien’ immigration and armed resistance to Home Rule in Ireland” (Thurlow 2006: 4). For many on the right, motivated as it ostensibly was by “the aim of restoring a sense of community, nationhood, kingship and hereditary leadership, fascism presented itself as a return to English traditions, not as an alien innovation” (Pugh 2006: 10).

In fact an opposition to ‘alien influence’ in British life was a central rallying call of the British radical right from the beginnings of the Twen-

tieth Century. 1901 saw the formation of The British Brothers League (BBL), a 'muscular Christian' organization which, for the next 5 years, conducted a very successful agitation against Jewish refugees fleeing pogroms in Russia and Eastern Europe. At its height, the organization had a membership of around 12,000, and presented a 45,000 signature petition to parliament in 1902 demanding an end to immigration (Cohen 2006). Like later fascist parties, the stronghold of the BBL was in the East of London, and they organised large public meetings and demonstrations across Stepney, Shoreditch and Bethnal Green. At one meeting in January 1902, over 4,000 supporters marched through Hackney, then a significant Jewish community, holding a banner reading 'Britain for the British' and accompanied by the beating of drums (Cohen 2006: 28). And, in case the antisemitism of their provocation and intimidation were not immediately apparent, speakers at the rally detailed an early version of the antisemitic 'Jewish world conspiracy theory' for the crowd: Arnold White, a central member of the BBL, railed against "these great European financiers [who] hold the fate of nations in the hollow of their hands and are unanimously against any country" (Cohen 2006: 28).

The political lobbying of the BBL led eventually to the implementation of the 1905 Aliens Act, the first piece of undeniably racist British legislation, which based this racism on an economically based discourse in support of native employment. This legislative success effectively pulled the plug on the BBL, and membership took a steep decline. However radical right agitation, in general, was in no way shrinking at this time. By 1909, the Anti-Socialist Union was one of a whole slew of radical rightist organisations formed to reverse the hard-fought successes secured by the labour movement. Immediately before, during and following the First World War, additional 'patriotic' radical right groups were formed, such as the National League for Clean Government, Henry Page Croft's National Party and H. Rider Haggard's anti-Bolshevik, Liberty League. By far the most significant of these was The Britons, formed in 1918 by Henry Hamilton Beamish as a 'patriotic' organisation dedicated to the eradication of 'alien'—that is, Jewish—influences from British life. From 1922 The Britons acted as a publisher and clearing house for various antisemitic books, such as *The Protocols*, and pamphlets including *Jewry Über Alles* and *The Hidden Hand*, as did the Duke of Northumberland's Boswell Press, which published the newspaper *The Patriot* from 1922 to 1950.

Following the First World War, explicitly named fascist parties took up the fight for "restrictions on 'alien' immigration, by which they usually

meant Jewish immigration” (Lunn 1989: 150), with the British Fascists using the slogan ‘Britain for the British’ in their 1925 Manifesto. Eventually, with the formation of the British Union of Fascists, launched in October 1932 by Sir Oswald Mosley, Britain acquired a “mature form of Fascist phenomenon” (Thurlow 1989: 92). In keeping with the standard duplicitous campaign strategy adopted by fascists elsewhere (c.f. Mannheim 1960), Thurlow (2006: 62) argues that “from the beginning the BUF exhibited a Janus-faced appearance: it was a movement which was intellectually the most coherent and rational of all the fascist parties in Europe in its early years, yet whose aggressive style and vigorous self-defence attracted political violence”. It was a party that spoke, and acted, in different ways according to who was being addressed: to the left, Mosley emphasised the ‘revolutionary’ features of BUF political programme, whilst to the right he emphasised authority, order and stability. Political-philosophical arguments were employed to woo intellectual recruits, whilst for Mosley’s ‘Biff Boys’, it was “the excitement and potential violence which the BUF seemed to offer which proved the biggest recruiting spur” (Thurlow 2006: 67).

By the end of 1934 the BUF had consolidated a leadership cult centred on a charismatic orator; a political programme that adopted the ‘corporate state’ as its core economic policy; a paramilitary ‘defence’ force who wore a blackshirt uniform and were billeted and trained at Black House, at up to 200 men at a time; and employed extreme antisemitic propaganda and violent agitation against Jewish businesses and communities (Linehan 2000; Renton 1999; Williams 2007). In these ways, the BUF exhibited many of the classic characteristics of an ‘authentic’ fascist party. Coupled with the substantial financial support received from Mussolini (Baldoli 2003; Pugh 2006), the scale and professionalism of party propaganda and the, at points, large number of party members, the BUF was arguably the only fascist organisation “with any pretention to significance in inter-war Britain” (Thurlow 2006: 61). However, as Pugh (2006: 73) reminds us:

“Although none of them achieved a very large following, the emergence of the British Fascists [in 1923] the National Fascisti [in 1924], the Imperial Fascist League [in 1928] and the English Mistry [in 1930] reminds us that, well before the emergence of Mosley’s much better-known organisation in 1932, Britain had already generated an extensive range of experiments with fascist movements”.

Accordingly, Mosley should be viewed as the inheritor of an older reactionary tradition in British politics, which he repackaged and ‘rebranded’

as a ‘modern movement’. The sample of *Reality* examined in this chapter was published immediately prior to, and concurrent with, this rebranding of British political reaction.

Reality **The Newspaper**

Reality was printed by Nuneaton Newspapers LTD, for the proprietors Richard Edmunds and R. H. Linton. Only the first 20 issues of the newspaper appear to be extant—the first published on Saturday July 2nd, 1932, running through to November 12th, 1932.² Any reliable information regarding the ownership and production of the newspaper has been impossible to come by: there is no record of the newspaper in Companies House, West Midlands Newsplan, or Willing’s Press Guide, nor are there entries for the proprietors in the biographical database of British journalism, *Scoop!* The same is the case for the newspaper’s sale, distribution and circulation—though, if the addresses on the letters to the editor can be believed, *Reality* appears to have been distributed both across the United Kingdom as well as in the Imperial Dominions. The reporting themes and foci of the newspaper are squarely fixed on national and international issues and events, particularly issues relating to the British Empire. However, this chapter will concentrate on its reporting of domestic politics. It is a professionally produced newspaper—there are only a handful of typographical errors across the 20 issues; it includes work from a number of correspondents, several of whom have a weekly column, a cartoonist and two reviews editors (theatre and books), all suggesting that it was a well resourced publication. In addition *Reality* almost definitely employed a production designer, given the development of an increasingly sophisticated design aesthetic across the 5 months.

This chapter’s synoptic examination of *Reality*, picks out key ideological and argumentative themes that relate to the development of the British fascist tradition and its relations to wider cultural and political contexts. However, it should be noted at the outset that *Reality* never labelled itself as ‘fascist’—quite the contrary. On several occasions, articles and editorials in the paper explicitly stated that the paper wasn’t aligned with any particular party or ideology. Of course, as the work of Billig (1978) and others have shown, this does mean that it *wasn’t* fascist (see also: Copsey 2007, 2008; Nugent and King 1979; Richardson

2 | The British Library at Colindale also has only these same 20 Issues in its archive (1932 LON 786; catalogue system number 013934956).

2010; Richardson and Wodak 2009; Taylor 1979). However it does pose a problem in *identifying* themes or arguments as ‘fascist’, or even ‘proto-fascist’. This is because, as Renton (1999: 27) has noted, “many of the [ideological] ideas that characterise fascism are not in themselves distinctive”. Indeed, “Many of the ideas of fascism are the commonplaces of all reactionaries, but they are used in a different way” (Sparks, 1974: 16). As Billig (1978: 6) points out:

“It is possible to be a racist or an antisemite without necessarily being fascist [...] Similarly, fascism is not to be equated with traditionalism or arch-conservatism. Conservatives might support fascist movements in the hope that a new fascist state would be a reincarnation of past ideals. However, traditionalism is neither a sufficient, or necessary, condition of fascism”.

Rather, fascism differs from the traditionalism or conservatism of conventional right-wing parties “not so much in its ideas but in that it is an extra-parliamentary mass movement which seeks the road to power through armed attacks on its opponents” (Sparks 1974: 16). It is this extra-parliamentary, or paramilitary, character of the fascist movement that fascist ideologues have traditionally been careful of acknowledging in print, and this is perhaps particularly the case for British variant, even during the 1920s and 30s (Thurlow 2006). However, there is some evidence, in the sample of the newspaper, of *implicit support* for violent attacks on the political opponents of fascist regimes abroad—principally on Communists—through the ways that such attacks are practically euphemised out of existence. There are also some examples of writers in *Reality* fantasising about, or *proposing*, that such attacks be emulated on British soil. Such ambitions locate the ideological commitments of the writers beyond the pale of (even radical) democratic political tradition and, when coupled with further political assumptions and goals (c.f. nationalism, anti-egalitarianism, anti-Marxism, statism and support for the maintenance of capitalism), implicitly ally the text to a fascist political programme. Accordingly, the following examination of newspaper *Reality* is structured across three sections:

- texts which indicate an ideological commitment to radical right-wing politics;
- texts which reveal ‘proto-fascist’ ideological sympathies;
- texts which imply fascist sympathies.

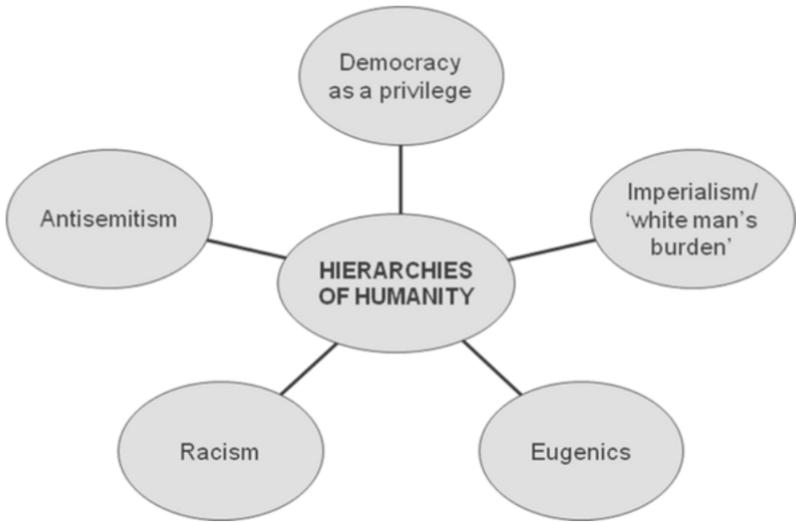
The distinction between proto-fascism and fascism proper is often difficult to draw. To an extent, the whole notion of a proto-fascism is based on ‘foreshadowing’, an analytic failing in which the past is read from the standpoint of what followed (Bernstein 1994; also see: Stone 2003). After all, what is typically assumed to make an idea, argument or movement ‘proto-fascist’ rather than ‘simply’ radical right-wing, is that this idea (and so on) provided the ideological groundwork for a subsequent fascist movement. Here, I use the term slightly differently: a text was taken to indicate an ideological commitment to radical right-wing politics if it included *a constellation of ideas or arguments* typical of such a movement at this time. Thus, a commitment to eugenics may not, in and of itself, be sufficient to ally the writer to radical right-wing politics; however, a commitment to eugenics and Imperialism, or eugenics *and* a rigid adherence to class hierarchy, invariably would (see: Stone 2001). On the other hand, a text was considered to reveal ‘proto-fascist’ ideological sympathies if it advocated *policies*, and not simply ideas, typical of fascist parties (e.g. the corporative state), but did so within the bounds of democratic discourse. Finally, a text was considered to indicate fascist sympathies if it advanced either ideas or arguments typical of fascist argumentation, or advocated policies typical of fascist parties, and did so in such a way that entailed violence or a direct threat to democracy and personal freedom.

Radical Right-Wing

Radical right-wing ideological texts in *Reality* were dominated by a constellation of themes which branched off a central belief, and argument, for the inequality of humans. In other words, they presupposed, or explicitly advanced, arguments that a hierarchy exists which innately places some human groups above others, thereby granting the ‘superior humans’ a hereditary right to rule. From that key bedrock assumption, there are further more detailed and specific arguments: that some people are too stupid to be allowed to govern themselves, or even to vote; support for Imperialism and for the British Empire as a civilising project; a belief in biological heredity and a support for eugenics (and what we could euphemistically call ‘selective breeding’); for racism, of both the cultural and biological kinds; and for antisemitism.

Each of the newspaper’s bedrock radical right themes were expressed and discussed in a variety of ways, often combining two or more ar-

Figure 1: Radical right-wing ideological themes



guments. Some of the more striking arguments are, understandably, the more extreme examples. For instance, Issue 7 (August 13th, 1932) includes a remarkably racist article on Australian Aboriginal cannibals, whom the text refers to as *Australia's most primitive savages*. First, in an implicit indexing of the policy of the lost generation, this article suggests that such Aboriginal children should be taken from their parents for their own protection. And, in case the eugenicist aims of this are missed, the text ends by stating that there is “no hope for the ‘abo’ in European civilisation. Only with the total disappearance of the race will such ghastly horrors die out”. However, the presuppositions in the more throw-away comments are no less revealing. For example, the ‘Books of the Week’ feature in Issue 17 (October 22nd, 1932) includes a review of Evelyn Waugh’s book ‘Black Mischief’, which the reviewer describes as “a brilliant show up of the British weakness for teaching backward coloured races how to govern themselves”.

The argumentation included in domestic reporting also reveals the arch-conservatism of the newspaper, at a time when political elites were still reeling following the enfranchisement of millions of working class and female voters in 1918, and had woken up “to the realisation that [their] grip on power had suddenly become greatly imperilled” (Pugh 2006: 30). Pugh (2006: 30) points out that, for conservative critics and

commentators, this new electorate—now totalling over 21 million, up from merely 8 million before the war—“posed a threat by virtue of the social class, gender and even age of the new voters. [...] They depicted democracy as dangerous and perverse because it handed power to the least able”. Such views were not only the preserve of the radical fringe, but also advanced by mainstream and establishment figures. An editorial in Lord Rothermere’s *Daily Mail* (April 7th, 1927), for example, argued “quite a large number of people now possess the vote who ought never have been given it”.

The class composition of the new electorate was a matter of particular concern, given the 1917 October Revolution in Russia, economic depression, labour militancy and fears that the British working class were susceptible to Communist influence. In the pages of *Reality*, this fear frequently translated into aggressive negative stereotyping of the working class as feckless, self-interested and “Hoodwinked” by Union leaders so ignorant of the proper workings of the world, that their new-found power had a potentially destabilising influence on the Nation. For example, one front page editorial argued “A situation exists to-day which is definitely dangerous. The murmurings of the multitude can be heard by anyone who has the desire to listen, and these rumblings of discontent can be directly traceable to the underhand methods of unscrupulous agitators” (*The employer and the man*, July 30th, 1932: 1). Another particularly virulent anti-working class article (*Hope for the Welsh Coal Industry*, October 22nd, 1932: 4) employs fantasies of working class opulence and decadent consumption as part of its elitist, anti-union and anti-Marxist argumentation. The report sets up this criticism by first detailing the development of the Welsh coal industry, and that “Local mine owners took pride in the fact that Welsh steam coal was the finest obtainable”. Unfortunately, with this success “came the shadow of the Unions”—“Dangerous iconoclasts” imbued “with Karl Marx doctrines”. Instead of meeting “*in common with their masters*, the repercussions of trade stagnation” (emphasis added), these Union “leaders merely sought the limelight and were more interested in bringing the world, including the hated bosses, to a common level of poverty rather than of prosperity”. The workers, meanwhile, are represented as constituted, predominantly, by the least worthy human beings—the best of the working class having perished in the Great War:

“With their passing, the scum of other industrial areas, who preferred to dig rather than to fight, invaded the fields and displaced those who had left. [...] Money flowed into the homes, but all too often was it expended upon articles of value. [...] Champagne displaced beer as the best form of liquid refreshment, while

many women with surplus pounds in their pockets, in their pathetic uneducated snobbery, covered their perfectly sound teeth with gold”.

No doubt a great deal of this vitriol directed towards miners, and coal mining communities more generally, was due to their central role in industrial disputes over the previous ten years—specifically the ‘Triple Alliance’ of miners, railway and transport workers unions in 1921 and the General Strike in 1926, which brought the country to a standstill, due to solidarity and widespread support from working class communities (Pugh 2006). The strike officially only lasted nine days, however the miners held out for another 6 months, cementing their reputation for provocative industrial action. Disparaging the miners in this way—by casting doubts on their patriotism, accusing them of cowardice and implying they had personally profited from the War—is clearly intended to undermine any lingering sense of sympathy that the reader of *Reality* may feel towards them. Coincidentally, on page 7 of this same issue, there featured an article extolling the virtues of Champagne—a “favourite drink of Popes and Kings”, which “still holds its place as one of the most delectable drinks the world knows” (*The Wines of Champagne*, October 22nd, 1932: 7). Drunk by “Byron, Moore and Rogers”, “the wit of Sheridan and Curran was often quickened by France’s supreme wine”, Champagne “is consumed throughout the world”. Though if you are a miner in South Wales and you drink it, you should expect to be attacked in print.

Proto-Fascism

Standing between these articles, and those we can more confidently ascribe the label ‘fascist’, are texts which appear to advance an embryonic argument in favour of a Corporate/Corporative State. In these articles, class distinctions are acknowledged, but only in order to try to demonstrate that both employer and worker share a common interest—the maintenance of capitalism. Industrial relations are also discussed with reference to these two political-economic groups—employer and worker—but in a way that individualises, and reduces the wage relation to that of contract and wage. In the paper’s account, the Unions are almost universally cast as a dangerous and undesirable influence on an easily led mass—they are “fanatic”, “hysterical” and “aggressive” and a “pernicious influence on the honest but simple-minded man” because

their approach is apparently against the interests of workers (*The employer and the man*, July 30th, 1932: 1). Further, “because of the credulity of their listeners, we must recognise these lizards to be a menace to industrial peace.” The foundation of this industrial peace, accordingly, lies not in “fostering class distinction by continually sectionalising Society into WORKERS and BOSSES”, but rather in Trade Unions “creating constructive proposals, whereby their members could, by enthusiasm and co-operation, become managerially and financially interested in the undertakings in which they are employed”. What is needed, the editorial concludes, is a situation where “employer and employee get together and solve the problem of their own business [...] then we shall see the dawn of a new era, in which BOSSES and WORKERS exist no more, but everyone labours in a cause common to all; that of the betterment of the Nation”.

Similarly, the front-page editorial in Issue 9 opens by noting that the on-going Weavers dispute in Lancashire “brings one to sympathise wholeheartedly with the capitalist outlook” (*Wage cuts and dividends*, August 27th, 1932: 1). Despite the cotton industry being “admirably equipped, scientifically and mechanically”, the Unions “have attempted to dominate industry, and by so doing have strangled capitalist enterprise”. They create “havoc” through their self-interest and lack of foresight—but then this editorial goes on to acknowledge “the other side of the picture”. In order to maintain “paying dividends of 15 per cent” during the economic depression, “some firms” cut their “wage bills, amounting often to many thousands of pounds, which amply repays their loss of turnover”. This bourgeois understanding of the zero-sum game between wages and profits is illustrated by a cartoon accompanying the text: a fat, Top-Hatted capitalist pictured on one side of the image celebrating a 20 per cent dividend, and a Bowler-Hatted white collar worker on the other holding the notification of his 10 per cent wage cut.

The editorial concludes with a judgment and gentle proposal for change: “It is successful businesses such as these, which enforce wage cuts to keep up dividends, that are a discredit to the Capitalist system. Capital, Labour. On both sides of the fence there is drastic need for reform”. So, while vitriol is heaped onto the denunciation of Unions, any similar argumentative strength is lacking when criticising such employers, and certainly not the imperatives of capitalism that structure such unscrupulous profiteering. In fact, while such unprincipled businesses are a “discredit” to the system, they are still described as “successful”,

which does raise the question why they would agree to any reform—even reform of the indefinite kind proposed in this article.

Political Antisemitism

Whilst these texts do appear to owe some debt to Fascist political-economic theory, particularly the Italian ‘Corporate State’, they are not explicitly aligned with or identified as fascist. As suggested earlier in the chapter, antisemitism is also not distinctively fascist. However, political antisemitism—proposing political or economic policy based on antisemitic ideas, arguments or theories — is nevertheless closely allied with British fascism, being a key feature of anti-alien, anti-Bolshevik campaigning since the early 1920s and the central component of the racial fascism of Arnold Leese and the Imperial Fascist League.

Several articles draw, in a casual way, on antisemitic assumptions. For example, a book review of *Leah's Lover*, suggests the plot of the book “Deals with the age old problem of love between a Jew and a Gentile”, and that the lead character Leah has a “quick brain and grasp of business, inherited from her Jewish forefathers” (*The best of the books*, July 16th, 1932: 10). Drawing on a similar antisemitic trope, Arthur Harrington wrote an article for Issue 10 on “Schemes of the Moneylender” which, “for the sake of argument”, proposed a hypothetical example of “a professional usurer” called Mr Abel who lends Mr Smith money and “sucks the latter dry”; it also claims that dock districts of London, Liverpool and Hull are home to female moneylenders, labelled “the female shyllock” (“*Come into my parlour*”, September 3rd 1932: 2). The front-page editorial of Issue 14, (*War and Our Imperial Destiny*, October 1st, 1932: 1) also includes a startling antisemitic aside. The editorial itself is based on two observations and a resolving argument: first, that the League of Nations is dead in the water; second, that war clouds continue to gather in Germany, Italy and Japan; but, thirdly, that English speaking nations can take the place of the League of Nations if “we can extend the spirit of the two minutes silence [of Armistice Day] to our ordinary life and make the horrors of another World war and its inevitable repercussions apparent to all”. In this regard, the sentiment, if not the logic, of the editorial is admirable. However, near the bottom of the first column is a section which reads:

“SEMITIC USURERS

In far off New Zealand is a peace-loving pastoral community striving, in spite of the stranglehold of semitic London usurers, to make of these chaotic post war years a period of prosperity”.

Nowhere else does this antisemitic stereotype figure in the article, and even here the stereotype doesn't contribute to the argument about celebrating Armistice Day across the Empire. This, perhaps more than any other article, indicates the extent to which antisemitism, at least to some people, was an everyday, knee-jerk response—an always-present, to be called on in this casual, off hand way.

This antisemitism received a full-page treatment 3 issues later, where the paper decried the *Jewish menace to industry*—the industry, in this case, being furniture production (October 22nd 1932: 1). The essence of the argument is provided near the end of the report: “The Jews are dominating one of our finest industries. They are ruining our great traditions of the past, and turning a great craft solely to commercial gain”. In more detail, the author Richard Edmonds argues that the hire purchase system, and the manufacture and marketing of furniture to “those of slender means”

[...] has presented an opportunity for the very worst types of business men to corner a trade for which neither their mental nor cultural upbringing has ever fitted them. I mean by this the bulk of the Jewish population in the East End of London. Drawn from all over Central Europe, in many instances the very dregs of a race which in other fields can point with pride to its achievements [...] They are] cut price semites, employers of sweated labour, who make for the Gentile business an economic impossibility. [...] Business morality among these people finds no place. A British code of honesty in no way binds them down. Rather it is their advantage”.

This text trades on familiar antisemitic *topoi*: the Jews as a ‘race’, Jews and economic exploitation (particularly the exploitation of Gentiles), Jews and shoddy work, Jews and criminality, and so on, as part of an argument that can only be seen as part of a wider vilification of Jewish communities (predominantly, though not solely, refugees) in London’s East End. It also utilises arguments frequently used in contemporary reactionary discourse (and not solely of the far-right): the valorisation of craft production, taking jobs that belong to ‘Us’, and our tolerance and “code of honesty” being used as weapons against us.

The following issue of the newspaper published four lengthy letters from British Jews complaining about the editorial’s antisemitism (*Mr Lazarus wants an apology*, October 29th, 1932: 3). One of these letters argued that Edmonds “obviously suffers from a very severe attack of racial prejudice” whilst another picked up on the intersections of antisemitism and class prejudice in the editorial: “It is not usual for our critics to attack only East End Jewry and refer to these Jews as being a different

people from those who live in the West End [...] Well, sir, if you attack the bulk of the Jewish population of the East End of London, you attack world Jewry—Jews rich and poor—old and young”. However, providing Jews (and only Jews) with a right of reply is used by the newspapers as an opportunity to further drive a rhetorical wedge between Jew and Gentile—between what *they* think (and do) and what *we* know:

[...] many manufacturers both in High Wycombe and London have congratulated us upon the truth of our remarks. From the Jewish element, however, we have received numerous criticisms, all of a somewhat wild nature [...] It is an extraordinary thing that whenever an attack is made on any section of the Jewish community, members of the race invariably rise in defence of what in their own minds they appear to consider as a general indictment against the people as a whole. [...] We regret that Jewish readers should have so distorted in their minds what was after all a perfectly fair and honest criticism”.

This argument—printed prior to, and therefore prefacing the letters—shifts *Reality's* standpoint in a straight-forwardly fallacious way: the original argument was clearly directed against Jewish furniture makers, who, *by virtue of their Jewishness*, were producing poor quality, cheap furniture and pricing English artisan producers out the market. The critical letters did not take the newspaper to task for a fallacious part-for-whole argument, arguing it was unfair to tar all Jewish furniture makers with the brush of a few ‘sheisters’; rather, they responded critically to the fallacious (and indeed antisemitic) whole-for-part argument regarding the degenerate *Jewishness* of Jewish furniture makers.

(Sympathising with) Fascism

The British Union of Fascists was launched at the start of October 1932 and, coincidentally perhaps, from Issue 14 (October 1st, 1932—containing the front-page editorial *War and our imperial destiny*, above) there is a noticeable change in the tone and ideological alignment of the paper. Across the sample as a whole there is a subordinate discourse praising the achievements of Italian fascism, however nearer the start of the sample such comments are brief, unelaborated and uttered *sotto voce*. For example, in Issue 4, Mussolini is described as acting with “more than a little sound reasoning”. “Perhaps”, the article continues, “Signor Mussolini recognises that no lasting good for Italy can come of his domination, unless he trains the men to carry on the work he has so ably

begun". The nature of "the work", and the manner in which it was 'carried out', are notable for their absence. In Issue 7, a hagiography of Signor Dino Grandi (the then-Italian ambassador to London) praises him as "a vigorous fighter of Socialism and Communism"; in contrast these political opponents of fascism are described as "a destructive mob". The upshot of such comments, is that the systematic violence used against the political opponents of Fascism is either ignored or euphemised to such a point that it amounts to tacit support.

From the start of October, longer compliments and comments were offered regarding the virtues of Fascism. Issue 14 itself states "Italy, in spite of a World depression, is riding the crest of a wave of national confidence. Mussolini has given the people a new virility, sooner or later it must find expression" (*War and our imperial destiny*, October 1st, 1932). In Issue 20, a full page article headlined *Mussolini and the making of Modern Italy: Ten years of progress* (November 12th, 1932: 5), heaps praise upon praise on 10 years of Mussolini's fascist government—a government whose first achievement, the text reminds us, was defeating Communism. It reads: "Ten years ago Communism was rife throughout Italy. Many prophesied an upheaval such as had taken place in Russia. That danger was scotched. Mussolini gave Italy a new soul". 'Scotching' Communists in the UK also appear to be an ambition of the newspaper. It is argued for in several articles in this later period of the sample, and fantasised about in this cartoon of John Bull—the conservative national personification of the United Kingdom—as a policeman, striking a Union leader with a truncheon (see: *Figure 2*).

The cartoon relates to the National Hunger March of September—October 1932, which arrived at Hyde Park on October 27th. The spectre of the threat of Communism looms large in *Reality's* account of the march, and perhaps for good reason.³ The march, which was organised by the National Unemployed Workers Movement (a front organisation created by the Communist Party of Great Britain), attracted the largest support for any of the hunger marches staged during the 1920s and 30s. Despite receiving very little attention from news media on their way to London, the marchers were joined in Hyde Park by a crowd of around 100,000 supporters (Cronin 1984). Their arrival in the capital was met with "an almost blanket condemnation as a threat to public order, verging upon the hysterical in the case of some of the more conservative

3 | The column *Seen, Said and Done* by Pall Mall in this same issue argues: "The riots in London are symptoms of the undertow of Communism, which is far more menacing than is generally realised" (October 29th, 1932).

Figure 2: John Bull "speaks" with violence



Source: *Reality*, October 29th, 1932: 3.

press” (Stephenson and Cook 1979: 173), in addition to the Metropolitan Police’s “most intensive public order precautions since 1848” (Thurlow 2006: 63). The Union leader in the cartoon—having dropped his flag declaring that he is a “Red”—is criticised by John Bull in familiar terms for the newspaper: he has “never done any work” (rather ironic, given that this was a National *Unemployed Workers Movement*), that he “only seek[s] the limelight” and is the first to run away when it comes to “a real fight”. The newspaper, on the other hand, appears to be itching for such a fight.

The launch of the BUF was greeted with a cautious optimism by the newspaper. On October 29th they gave their front-page editorial to discussing the policies of the new party, in a text that seems designed to reassure the reader (*Mosley and the future of fascism: Some sound points in the new Party's policy*, October 29th, 1932: 1). The editorial is complimentary about Mosley in populist, anti-establishment terms, arguing: “none could accuse him of licking the boots of those in superior political positions with a view to ensuring his own personal advancement”. As the lead paragraph states: “A great deal of nonsense has been talked regarding the British Fascists. They have been accused of bellicose nationalism, indicted as revolutionaries, and have been attacked by the Jews for anti-semiticism [sic]. In an interview with Mr Patrick Moir, a leader of the party, he has informed us of the lack of truth in these rumours”. The article itself then picks up on these points and reiterates that they’re false—usually formulated as apparent disclaimers, using words like ‘although’. For example:

“*Although* members of the party have come to blows with the Jewish element, Sir Oswald has definitely stated that his intentions are not in any way anti-semitic”.

These manoeuvres are labelled ‘apparent’ disclaimers because the structure of their discourse is such that the ostensible function of the utterance—conceding a point, emoting empathy, and so on—is immediately flouted by the accompanying clauses (van Dijk et al. 1997: 170). Such disclaimers are used by participants “in an effort to forestall negative inferences by others, and to project an image of rationality, objectivity and fairness” (Kleiner 1998: 206)—and in this case, to claim that the party does not harbour antisemitic intentions, even while acknowledging antisemitic violence. As a part of this reassurance, the article equivocates the political end goals of the party, stating: “In their political programme, the primary object of the party is the reorganisation of Parliamentary Representation”—not the *abolition* of Parliament,

Figure 3: "Mosley and the future of fascism"

No. 18 REGISTERED AS A NEWSPAPER LONDON, OCTOBER 29th, 1932 TWOPENCE

MOSLEY AND THE FUTURE OF FASCISM

SOME SOUND POINTS IN THE NEW PARTY'S POLICY

A GREAT deal of nonsense has been talked regarding the British Fascists. They have been accused of bellicose nationalism, indicted as revolutionaries, and have been attacked by the Jews for anti-semitism. In an interview with Mr. Patrick Meir, a leader of the party, he has informed us of the lack of truth in these rumours, and has told us of the actual programme mapped out by Sir Oswald Mosley and his colleagues for industrial and Parliamentary re-organisation.

As a political figure, Sir Oswald Mosley has up to now undergone a somewhat chequered career, but the straightforward manner in which he has proceeded in Parliament has earned him respect, if not always support, from both the working and moneyed classes.

He has never sought office or, indeed, attempted to retain it against the run of his convictions, and none could accuse him of lacking the boldness of those in superior political positions with a view to ensuring his own personal advancement.

Whatever his worst enemies may say against him, they could not, in justice, accuse him of egotism; in this one respect alone he places himself outside the usual run of British politicians.

There have been, and still are, many doubters of his sincerity.

The average working man has frequently expressed surprise that Mosley, a man of inherited wealth and position, should espouse so ardently a cause, the rights of which, his birth and upbringing must needs render it difficult to appreciate.

WHERE WORDS FAILED.

If there are those who will hold him in distrust to-day, it may be that his actions during the last few months will convince where words have failed. It remains to be seen.

His immediate future rests in the hands of those who are willing to support the cause with which he has now associated himself.

By this we mean the British Union of Fascists.

"Reality" as a newspaper, is interested in the advancement of no particular party, but observing, as we do, the growing strength of the Fascists now that Sir Oswald has assumed their leadership, we feel it necessary to make some reference to the policy of Parliamentary and industrial reforms which they are now advocating.

Respecting the aim of Hitler, the Nazi leader, in relation to his attitude towards youth, and helping in the

policy of Mussolini as regards the need for closer co-operation between Parliament and Industry, the British Union of Fascists has come into being in much the same manner as the two vast Italian and German organisations bearing the same name.

Beyond this it is entirely pro-British in its outlook, believes only in a revolution of political thought, and although interested, has no intention of advancing the political beliefs of Benito Mussolini.

Although members of the party have come to blows with the Jewish element, Sir Oswald has definitely stated that his intentions are not in any way anti-semitic.

It has also been said of the British Fascists that they are a militant organ-

ism is regarded at the present moment as a step which would be fatal both to Britain and her Dominion.

In their political programme the primary object of the party is the re-organisation of Parliamentary Representation with a view to granting industry a more adequate voice in the direction of the country's affairs.

INDUSTRIAL REPRESENTATIVES.

They call for the abolition of constituencies as we know them to-day, and the substitution in their place of an electoral system which would allow of each industry electing representatives according to its size and the degree of its importance.

By this means it is anticipated that the election of members on the grounds of personal popularity, and who are often in no way fitted for office, except by reason of a certain superficial command of rhetoric, would be obviated, and men who really know the needs of the

reduction in manufacturing and marketing costs.

It is impossible in the limited space we have at our disposal, to outline the whole policy of the British Fascists, but the following points given to us by their organisation should give some idea of the reforms they have in mind.

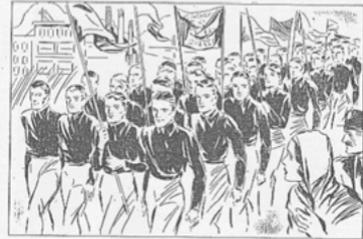
DORA TO BE REMOVED.

1. Prohibition of Bank and Lock-out.
2. Refusal to allow bankers to place handcaps in the way of industrial progress.
3. No surrender to Italian agitators.
4. Governmental action to break the stranglehold of Indian money-lenders upon the peasantry.
5. Dues, and other checks upon our liberty, to be removed.
6. Restrictions to be allowed to remain only where the action of the individual will interfere with the well-being of the State.
7. Free exchange of goods with the Empire to give us necessary food supplies.
8. Taxation to be lighter for those with money invested in speculative shares.
9. The raising of wages and the employment of the workless upon industrial development schemes.
10. Concentration of our manufacturers upon the home market.

This summary, it is to be hoped, has made clear some of the points in the party's programme. It is no revolutionary policy, and although open in many of its views to considerable argument, may be said, as far as it goes, to be well balanced and constructive. We shall watch its future with more than ordinary interest.



Sir Oswald Mosley.



A March of the British Fascists. What Mosley Visions.

isation, attempting to surrender to a dangerous degree the spirit of Nationalism.

After discussing the matter with a leader of the Party, Mr. Patrick Meir, we are convinced that bellicose militarism is not intended to play any part in their activities, although disarmament which they represented in their place.

With regard to Capitalism and individual enterprise the Fascists are of the opinion that it should be given every opportunity, but suggest that in some instances where industrialists are agreeable, Nationalisation might make for a

Source: Reality, October 29th, 1932.

which Mosley argued for quite openly in his own books. This duplicitous strategy mirrored that of the German Nazi Party, in that they chose to present themselves “as a virile fighting force ready to respond to a national emergency while also insisting on their intention to acquire power by institutional means” (Pugh 2006: 73). This virility is indexed in this article by the phalanx of marching Blackshirts streaming past the observer, and off into the distance on the right of the cartoon. The final line of the article picks up on this fig leaf political reasonableness, using a form of expression which is quintessentially of its time: “It is no revolutionary policy, and although open in many of its views to considerable argument, may be said, as far as it goes, to be well balanced and constructive. We shall watch its future with more than ordinary interest”.

Dreaming of a Pogrom

he clearest indication of the hardening ideological line of the paper, towards the end of the 20-issue sample *Reality* published texts contemplating violence against British Jews. Issue 15, printed a week after the launch of the BUF, included an article headlined *Jews and Fascists* reporting the “Fascist campaign in Great Britain, heralded by the publication last week of ‘The Greater Britain’ [...] is now being extended from London by the formation of bands of ‘storm troops’ in towns throughout the country” (October 8th, 1932: 5). The report explicitly states “most of his blackshirts have adopted an anti-Semitic attitude [...] that Jewry exercises too great an influence in British and Imperial affairs”. Rather than criticising or contradicting this point, the newspaper instead confirms it, arguing: “Few will deny that Jewish financial interests are as powerful in Britain today as they ever have been”. The report also approvingly quotes Mosley’s book *The Greater Britain* where “he himself has something to say about ‘money power’. ‘At present we have within the nation an influence, largely controlled by alien interests, which arrogates itself a power above the Press’”. The text ends with the rather pregnant remark, couched in bourgeois nicety:

“Will the launching of a Fascist campaign result in a wave of anti-Semitic feeling throughout the Empire, such as Germany has experienced under the Hitlerites? Tolerance towards the Jews has been the policy of England since Charles II’s time. Within the next few months the public may be called upon to decide whether that policy it to be continued”.

A couple of other articles were far less equivocal in arguing that the time has come to do something about the Jews. In one article, *Reality*

questions the belief of “self-complacent democrats” that “a movement like Hitler’s is impossible in this country” (“*Gentiles Only*”, November 5th, 1932: 13). Quoting eight accommodation adverts stipulating “Gentiles only” and “No Jews”, from one page of the *Hackney and Kingsland Gazette*, the newspaper recommends “It would probably pay the British Union of Fascists to go on a recruiting expedition round these districts”. The front page editorial on the Jewish menace to the furniture industry (October 22nd, 1932) provoked a significant response from letter writers—the four critical letters referred to above were followed by two letters praising their position (*Vox Pop*, November 5th, 1932: 5). Together, the two letters are a textbook case of the contradictions typical of antisemitic discourse: “the Jew” in these texts—echoing *Der Jude* of Germanic discourse—is simultaneously a wealthy usurer and the “poor unshorn and unsavoury children of the Ghetto” whose “presence is often a menace and an injury to the English working classes” (Silberner 1952: 40-41). Thus, the second letter railed against “the foreign Jew” who, wherever they go in London, “the neighbourhood soon looks dilapidated and wretched”. The first provides a more detailed, and threatening, complaint:

“Having come in contact in business with hundreds of Jews in London, and knowing full well the conditions in which they work their employees, it is no wonder that they can turn out the cheap shoddy products which we find displayed in several retail shops in different parts of the country. [...] I happened to be on a stand at the Radio Exhibition this year, and listened to the tales of woe from hundreds of radio retailers and factors and heard the expression used, ‘*If only England had a Hitler*’ to clear some of the Jewish parasites out of the country. [emphasis added]”.

The final line of this extract is startling, particularly given the date it was written. Published almost three months before Hitler was made Chancellor and significantly ahead of either Dugdale’s abridged English translation of *Mein Kampf* (October 1933) or the serialisation of *Mein Kampf* in *The Times* (July 24-28 1933), which helped bring Nazi ideology into the popular British consciousness, this letter writer was suitably informed to predict the planned Nazi *Judenrein*. But more than this, the editors of the newspaper also recognised this prediction as accurate, or perhaps convincing—otherwise the letter is unlikely to have been published. Such an observation almost renders ‘foreshadowing’ an acceptable analytic position in this case: certainly, we could not suggest that the writers, and editors, of this newspaper were aware of the full implications of the Nazi’s ‘final solution’. However, they were at least fa-

miliar with the Nazi's violent antisemitism—and were content to publish this letter calling for similar course of action in the UK.

Discussion

Throughout the sample, *Reality* frequently drew on, and emphasised, a number of key ideological assumptions and arguments. The central argumentative theme was the inborn inequality of human beings—that personal and social characteristics derive from biological inheritance with certain personal/social/biological characteristics being judged to be more or less valuable. The most popular sub-variant of this heredity-as-hierarchy dealt with 'race', 'racial' difference and its presumed import for culture and civilisation. Such ideological arguments were typically realized in, and through, articles on the Empire and Britain's Imperial Dominions: articles on particular people who played an influential role in the formation and success of the Empire (at least, the success *for Us!*); of a detailed preoccupation with the British Empire Economic Conference that took place in Ottawa in 1932; and of apocryphal tales of good, stout Indians who gave their lives for civilisation, protecting their Imperial Masters (and white women) at the Northern frontier. Some of these stories ennoble 'the Indian' to a degree that contradicts the racism contained elsewhere in the paper—though, it should go without saying that this human value is contingent on their continued sacrifice in the service of (our) King and Country.

That said, the political content of the newspaper did change over the 20 issues in this sample. Broadly speaking, towards the start of the sample, articles tend to focus more on discussing 'the problem'—in criticising the 'feeble minded' and identifying a range of economic and political problems that Britain currently faced. Later, there is a partial shift towards offering an *explanation* and a *solution* to these problems: the explanation centred on the influence of disruptive political and economic elements. Domestically this was Communists and the Unions; in Ireland it was very definitely Eamon De Valera and Irish Republicans; in India it was Gandhi and 'Indian agitators'. The newspaper's solution is couched in terms of 'common sense', which initially centred on greater cooperation between worker and employer; in the final 5 issues, this shifted, and appeared to rest with the policies of the BUF which had, apparently, already been successfully road tested in Italy. Unfortunately the sample ends before we can really see if this allegiance becomes more

firmly established, and the newspaper moves more fully and consistently from the politics of the radical right and towards fascism. However, Issue 20 there featured an article written by Patrick Moir, described again as a leader of the party. Here, he is given a quarter page to advance the BUF view on the employment and current exploitation of youth. This, the growing acceptance of the utility of political antisemitism and the increasing number of complimentary articles about Mussolini's Italy, signal this growing convergence of the paper with fascist politics.

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Post-Totalitarian Communication?

Uneasy Communication in the Authoritarian State

The Case of Hizb ut-Tahrir in Kyrgyzstan

IRINA WOLF

Introduction

This article partly draws on the preliminary findings of the project on coverage of Hizb ut-Tahrir organization (further HT) in British, German and Kyrgyz quality newspapers in 2002-2007, and partly on findings of the research thoroughly presented elsewhere (Wolf 2006), which attempted to analyze the coverage of HT in *Vechernii Bishkek* (further VB) during 2001-2005. The aim is to illustrate who gets to speak on the pages of VB, private yet not independent national Kyrgyz daily, about the controversial organization; what kind of message the general public received about HT from this progovernment newspaper in critical for Kyrgyzstan time; and, to compare and contrast how the same event—a series of suicide bombings in Uzbekistan in 2004 allegedly committed by HT—was covered in VB, the British daily *The Times*, and the German daily *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* (further FAZ). Since in Great Britain HT operates legally, as of this writing, and in Germany and Kyrgyzstan the group is prohibited since 2003 it would be crucial to establish how the same event was covered in democratic and nondemocratic societies with different legal status of HT.

For better understanding of aims and findings of the research I first provide a short introduction to the Kyrgyz press, HT in general and HT in Central Asia in particular. Then I explain methodology of research that included quantitative and qualitative methods of media content analysis as well as interviews of four VB journalists. Finally, I provide

findings pertaining to coverage of HT in VB in 2002-2005; illustrate the differences on how terrorist acts in Uzbekistan were covered in three countries; and, argue that reflection of government position on HT and related matters in its coverage in the Kyrgyz daily is a clear indication of how the authoritarian state exercises its power in determining what the general public would know about the controversial organization and how journalists are constrained by the state and practices of self-censorship.

On the Kyrgyz Press

After gaining its independence in 1991, Kyrgyzstan showed signs of opening up its political and economic spheres after 70 years of a totalitarian Soviet rule and, unlike other Central Asian states, was called “the island of democracy” (Anderson 1999). The illusion of democratic development lasted not long and in 1999 Kyrgyzstan entered the zone of “semi-consolidated autocracy” slowly moving towards “consolidated autocracy” (Freedom House cited in: Kulikova 2001: 45). In 2008, according to the Freedom House rating with 1 representing the highest level of democratic progress and 7 the lowest, Kyrgyzstan’s democracy score was 5.93, which was very close to the score of Russia (5.96) (Freedom House 2008). For a number of scholars Kyrgyzstan also remains to be the authoritarian state with the authoritarian media system (Chalaby 2009; McGlinchey 2009; Schatz 2006; Gunn 2003).

Since 1991 the Kyrgyz media have undergone many important transformations, but they are still far from playing a role of a fourth estate as they should in a democratic state. Thus, the number of regularly published newspapers grew from 50 in 1991 to roughly 250 in 2007 with about 1000 being officially registered (Public Association “Journalists” 2008: 18); the monopoly of the only printing house inherited from the Soviet Union was shattered by establishment of a competitive printing house by Freedom House in 2003; the development of internet allowed reaching out audiences and effectively shaping public opinions to the extent of triggering mass discontents (Kulikova and Perlmutter 2007); finally, in May 2007 the government gave up the direct ownership of the public television as well as some media outlets. At the same time as Manzella and Yacher (2005, 439) put it:

“the news media of the Kyrgyz Republic [...] has yet to reaggregate fully into the current social system and has yet to become fully a member of the culture of the Western press [...] Trapped as it is within the second stage of a rite of passage, the Kyrgyz Republic media’s liminality is manifested by the lack of unified notion, or definition, of what news is, or at least what it should be”.

To understand media markets in the post-Soviet Central Asia, it is crucial to highlight the differences between ‘independent’, ‘privately owned’ and ‘oppositional’ media players in the region. As Allison puts it:

“While many newspapers and media are privately owned, few are independent. The term ‘independent’ connotes a freedom of thought or lack of bias difficult to find in Central Asia, as media-outlets are extremely pro-governmental because their owners are members of the ruling elite. However, there are several oppositional media outlets in each country, and many of these are owned by oppositional politicians; thus, while their content is not progovernmental, the journalists are still propagandistic tools of certain political figures” (Krimsky cited in: Allison 2006: 94).

Gross and Kenny (2008) also support this argument:

“In Western journalism, ‘independence’ means that news outlets are free from political, financial, or governmental interference [...] In Central Asia, however, an ‘independent newspaper’ is often confused with an ‘anti-government press’. That is, to be seen as independent a news outlet often believes it must be viewed as opposed to the ruling government, whatever its policies” (Gross and Kenny 2008, 56).

Thus, media coverage of any issue in Kyrgyzstan remains highly partisan and increasingly sensationalist in nature with the oppositional newspapers practicing what the Western press would regard as “advocacy-style journalism” (Manzella and Yacher 2005: 433); journalists are known “for writing stories that help their publication owners settle political scores” (Kenny and Gross 2008: 521).

The hurdles that media face in Kyrgyzstan from the state include complicated media registration and frequency licensing, censorship and difficult access to information, often persecution for libel and defamation, high taxes, etc. (Allison 2005). The situation is further exacerbated by the low professionalism of journalists and media managers, which has decreased since Soviet times notwithstanding the fact that Europe and the USA spent millions of dollars “in the hopes of developing a Western-style press in Central Asia” (Kenny and Gross 2008: 516). The reasons for that are numerous. Freedman and Chang (2007: 358) highlight “governmental restraints and self-censorship [...] scarce resources for independent news organizations; low salaries for journalists and teachers of journalism; lack of media independence; low public trust in the integrity of the media; lack of public expectations of fairness, accuracy and balance; inadequate training; and the lingering adverse

impacts of the Soviet model of journalism practice.” Kenny and Gross (Kenny and Gross 2008: 517) add: “it is not authoritarian governments alone that thwart Central Asian journalists, however. Region-wide social norms, based on the traditions of clan and family, urge reporters toward avoiding the critical, nosy behaviour of a journalism grounded in democracy’s public accountability. The upshot is simple, if not disturbing: Journalism, the handmaiden and facilitator of Western democracy, is languishing badly in Central Asia”. Finally, as Allison (2006: 106-107) observes:

“Journalists play into authorities’ hands by not following laws [...] Journalists are sometimes careless, sometimes intentional in their legal infractions [...] tax evasion is rampant [...] Journalists’ materials are frequently libelous by Western standards; frequently lacking facts, they would not stand up in Western courts any more than they do in Central Asia [...] editors and journalists often violate international codes of journalism ethics by taking paid articles, also called ‘PR’ or ‘ordered’ articles”.

Having shortly introduced Kyrgyzstan, the Kyrgyz media market and hardships that the journalists face in Kyrgyzstan I would like to proceed to introducing Hizb ut-Tahrir.

On Hizb Ut-Tahrir Al Islami

“Hizb ut-Tahrir al-Islami”, translated from Arabic, means the “Party of Islamic Liberation”. A plenty of research papers, articles, reports and books have been written on this organization. Those of International Crisis Group (2002; 2003a; 2003b; 2009), Baran (2004a; 2004b; 2006), Karagianis (2005; 2006a; 2006b; 2007), Maliach (2006a; 2006b), Bakker (2007), Morgan (2007; 2008), Mayer (2004), Siddiqui (2004), Khamidov (2003) are just a small selection of works available to the English speaking community.

In short, HT is a radical Islamist organization or, in their own words, “a political party with Islam as its ideology” (Taqiuddin 1999, 23). It was founded in the Jordanian-ruled East Jerusalem suburb in 1952 by Sheikh Taqiuddin al-Nabhani (1909-1977), the Palestinian Islamic legal scholar and political activist, with the aim to liberate Palestine and to re-institute the Islamic Caliphate that was destroyed by Mustafa Kemal (Atatürk) in 1924. While it is estimated that HT operates secretly in around 45 countries (Morgan 2007; Langkjer 2006), it has been banned as an extremist organization in countries throughout Europe (Germany and Nether-

lands), Central Asia (Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan), Middle East (Jordan, Syria, Egypt), South Asia (India and Pakistan), Northern Africa (Tunisia and Libya) and in Turkey. In Tajikistan and Russia HT has been banned as a terrorist party (Borogan 2007). While HT has been legalized in May 2006 in Lebanon (Maliach 2006a), as of this writing it is allowed to operate freely in Great Britain, Denmark, the United States, Canada, Australia, the United Arab Emirates, Sudan, and Yemen. Reportedly, in August 2007 HT also re-emerged as a 'new' political player in Palestinian politics, bringing thousands of people on the streets to protest against peace negotiations with Israel; according to some political commentators, HT became a real challenge to the weakening Hamas in the West Bank (Prusher 2008). Whereas some researchers cite HT's headquarters being based in Jordan, the organization legally maintains its office in London that has a tendency to speak on behalf of the whole group and appears to be an ideological nerve centre of the organization (International Crisis Group 2003a; Baran, Starr, and Cornell 2006; Horton 2006; Bergin and Townsend 2007; Mandaville 2007: 266).

One should not, however, perceive HT as a political party in its classical Western meaning. HT is not registered as a party anywhere; it rejects any kind of political structure and refuses to participate in the ruling system of the government. Aiming at reinstating Islamic Caliphate HT set up a three-stage program. After winning support of a sufficient number of people who believe in the ideas of HT and forming the Party group, HT aims to work with the Muslim community by carrying the message of Islam in all spheres of life. The final stage is re-establishment of the Caliphate, implementation of Islam generally and comprehensively and carrying it as a message to the world (Taquiddin 1999). It is believed that HT is currently in the second stage of the process at least in the Arab and Central Asian countries (Mayer 2004; Swick 2005).

"The Caliphate will be led by a Caliph appointed by the Muslim community, who will swear allegiance to him. The Caliph will rule according to the Koran and the Sunnah (the practices of the Prophet that have become sanctified customs) and he will be obligated to disseminate Islam through Da'wa (propaganda) and militant Jihad" (Taquiddin quoted in: Maliach 2006a).

Whereas the ideas of Taquiddin appear to be utopian at the modern time, the modernized message of Imran Waheed, the HT chief media advisor in Britain, may sound appealing to masses, especially Muslim immigrant communities in Europe and population of Central Asia, who are longing for justice.

“Our aim is to re-establish the Islamic Caliphate in the Muslim world. Our vision of the Islamic Caliphate is one of an independent state with an elected and accountable leader, an independent judiciary, political parties, the rule of law and equal rights for minority groups. Citizens of a caliphate have every right to be involved in politics and hold the ruler accountable for his actions. The role of the ruler (caliph) is to be a servant to the masses who governs them with justice” (Paraipan quoted in Whine 2006: 3).

However, the most controversial point about HT is its position on the use of violence in meeting their political ends. Whereas HT claims to be a non-violent organization that rejects terrorist means in achieving its goals, it openly accepts carrying out militant Jihad after the establishment of the Caliphate. Roy once noted that for HT “position against the launching of jihad is purely tactical. The organization believes that the time has not yet come for jihad, but that it is a compulsory duty for any Muslim” (Roy 2004: 256). Meanwhile, HT has been spotted using radical vocabulary of terrorist organizations and praising terrorist acts against the West. Baran went to the extent of claiming that “HT today serves as a de facto conveyor belt for terrorists” because “HT is part of an elegant division of labour. The group itself is active in the ideological preparation of the Muslims, while other organizations handle the planning and execution of terrorist attacks” (Baran 2004a: 11). A number of known more radical spin offs of HT—British al-Muhajiroun and presumably Uzbek Akramiya—certainly lend support to this argument.

On Hizb Ut-Tahrir in Central Asia

The first reports on HT in Central Asia suggested that after seven decades of Soviet official atheism, Islamic revival filled up the vacuum left behind by the Communist system and allowed such groups as HT easy access to former ‘Muslim atheists’, a paradoxical expression describing a person in Central Asia, who was born Muslim but has not observed five pillars of Islam (McBrien and Pelkmans 2008: 87). As a Soviet legacy ‘Muslimness’ was intimately tied to national identity of Central Asians without much of religious content in it (McBrien and Pelkmans 2008: 90; Williams 2004: 130); it changed, however, very quickly. If in 1996 55.3 percent of ethnic Kyrgyz and 87.1 percent of ethnic Uzbeks in Kyrgyzstan identified themselves as Muslims, then in 2007 97.5 percent and 99.1 percent of surveyed ethnic Kyrgyz and Uzbeks respectively reported that they were Muslims (McGlinchey 2009: 17). Currently, the scholars argue that it is

rather bad economic conditions, low political culture, absence of civil society to channel public initiatives, limited excess to power and a wide spread suppression of freedom of speech that played into the hands of HT, helping it to spread its appealing message of justice (International Crisis Group 2003a; Karagiannis 2005; 2006a; 2006b; 2007; Khamidov 2003; Mihalka 2006).

Since HT, while operating in a certain country, attempts to meet the demands of the local population, its activities and spheres of influence in Central Asia differ to a great extent from those in Europe. The core differences lie in HT helping the local populations to overcome economic hardships by setting up mutual aid associations and charity programs (McGlinchey 2009) as well as creating a public space for discussing everyday issues or as Baran puts it, “In a region with limited access to a free press, HT’s discussion of everyday issues provides a much needed outlet for news and opinion. HT continuously promotes a message of ‘justice’ against what many Central Asians view as their corrupt and repressive state structures” (Baran 2004a, 86).

Furthermore, unlike in Europe, in Central Asia the most effective way of recruitment of new members takes place not on the university campuses but in prisons. Since HT is outlawed in all Central Asian countries, it is enough for a local citizen to carry or keep HT leaflets to be arrested and imprisoned. Thus, the common tactic of HT became to get arrested, appeal to sympathy from the local populations, get publicity and start propaganda in prisons. Because traditionally the Central Asian people, especially in Ferghana Valley, have extended family and community sense, an arrest of a person gets quick publicity and it evokes resentment among local population. In this regard Baran commented:

“Since the late 1990s, prisons have become the best places to convert people to radical Islam. The vast majority of inmates deeply resent the establishment. There is also a serious torture problem in Central Asian prisons, especially in Uzbekistan. After enduring such treatment, even the least religious individual is susceptible to HT recruitment efforts. Those who are jailed for small offenses may develop close contacts with HT members while in prison and over time begin to identify with party ideology. By the time they leave prison, former petty criminals can become strong Islamists tied to the larger HT” (Baran 2004a: 86).

Due to the clandestine nature of the party and the tendencies of regimes to exaggerate extremist groups’ presence and threat as an excuse for authoritarian responses and policies, the real number of HT members in Central Asia cannot be ascertained (International Crisis Group 2003a:

1-54; Esposito 2002: 113). Baran et al. (2006: 24) claimed that “HT is numerically strongest in Uzbekistan, with estimates there ranging from 7,000 up to 60,000 members. There are 3,000-5,000 members in both Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. The number in Kazakhstan is no more than a few hundred”. While the head of the Kyrgyz State Agency on Religious Affairs claimed there were 15,000 HT activists in Kyrgyzstan in 2008, the ICG experts estimate the HT membership in Kyrgyzstan in 2009 to be as much as 7,000-8,000, of whom some 800 to 2,000 could be women (International Crisis Group 2009: 6). Whereas the early reports on HT’s activities in Kyrgyzstan stressed their prevalence in the Kyrgyz southern provinces and overwhelmingly ethnic Uzbek membership of the organization¹ (International Crisis Group 2003a; Karagiannis 2005; Grebenschikov 2002), the more recent studies indicate that HT continuously gains support in the northern part of Kyrgyzstan—at least in Bishkek, Karakol and Ak Terek—and that among the Kyrgyz population (McGlinchey 2009).

Research questions

RQ1: Who gets to speak on the pages of private yet not independent Kyrgyz newspaper about the controversial organization? RQ2: What kind of message the general public received through this pro-government newspaper? RQ3: How was the same event—suicide bombings in Uzbekistan in 2004—covered in Kyrgyz *Vechernii Bishkek*, British *The Times* and German *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*?

Methodology

Sources of Research

VB is one of a few newspapers in Kyrgyzstan that provide qualitative political information on a regular basis. Published in Russian language since 1974, *VB* has the highest circulation in the country, i.e. 8,000 issues

1 | The higher number of Uzbeks sympathizing with HT compared with those of Kyrgyz people was explained by Grebenschikov (2002) by the fact that Kyrgyzstan was not able to provide the population in the South with print media, textbooks at school, and other channels, from which the Uzbek part of population could generate information in their language. In early 2000s the informational vacuum that could not be filled by the Kyrgyz officials have been filled by the HT leaflets, which contained information on the urgent political, social, and economic developments in the region and the world.

daily from Monday to Thursday and 62,000 issues on Friday (www.vb.kg); it is the only national newspaper that maintains electronic archives since 1998; during 2001-2005 VB published 215 articles containing at least one reference to HT, which is considerably more than any other qualitative newspaper in the country²; and, although this newspaper was privately owned by different people during the timeframe of the research, it always remained loyal to the government.³

Additionally, I analyze the articles covering the suicide bombings in Uzbekistan and containing at least one reference to HT that were published in the British daily *The Times* and the German daily *FAZ* from March 30th to April 7th, 2004. These outlets were selected for the study because in comparison to other similar newspapers in respective countries, they provided the widest coverage of the event mentioning HT.

Timeframe of the Research

The timeframe of the research—2001-2005—reflect the important years in the Kyrgyz history. Following the terrorist attacks on the USA on September 11, 2001 (further 9/11) the Western allies launched military operations in Afghanistan and Iraq and for that purpose established military bases in Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan. ‘Combating local Muslim extremists’ as part of anti-terrorism measures soon became high on the political agendas of Central Asian regimes, who often found a good excuse to implement their authoritarian policies or to suppress civil oppositions. On March 24th, 2005 following the ousting of the former President Akaev from his office, the feeling of democratic change was in the air. There was a hope that the authoritative rule would seize as Kurmanbek Bakiev won presidential elections in July 2005. The articles published in 2001 before 9/11 and in 2005 after March 24th are also

2 | During the same period MSN, a private national newspaper with the second highest circulation after *VB*, published 114 articles that contained reference to HT (www.msn.kg). *Slovo Kyrgyzstana*, a state owned newspaper that maintains electronic archives only since 2004, published 30 relevant articles in 2004-2005 (www.sk.kg). MSN and *Slovo Kyrgyzstana* were issued 2 and 3 times per week respectively.

3 | In May 2001 Adil Toigonbaev, the son-in-law of Askar Akaev, at that time the President of the Kyrgyz Republic, allegedly unlawfully appropriated the shares of *VB* from the private entrepreneur Aleksandr Kim, thus, assuring loyalty of the newspapers to the government. In August 2005, shortly after the forceful change of the Kyrgyz government, Kim legally demanded reconsideration of *VB* ownership and won the case in the court. As the new government headed by Kurmanbek Bakiev indirectly allowed restoration of Kim's ownership of *VB*, the newspaper again became loyal to the government, that is to Akaev's successor.

included in the sample in order to establish whether those events had specific influence on HT coverage in *VB*.

Methods of Research

The sample included every article published in *VB* from January 1st, 2005 to December 31st, 2005, in which the name ‘Hizb ut-Tahrir’ was mentioned at least once. The method of research was two-fold—quantitative and qualitative. The classical quantitative analysis (Neuendorf 2002; Stempel 1981) included coding articles on predefined variables ‘year’, ‘author’, ‘content’ and ‘tone’. ‘Year’ variable was encoded in five categories corresponding to the five years of the research timeframe. The ‘author’ variable first contained the last names of the journalists that were later assigned to six categories: 1) Erlan Satybekov, 2) Shuhrat Abbasov, 3) Ravshan Umarov⁴, 4) Urii Kuzmiyh, 5) others, and 6) not attributed articles. The ‘content’ variable first contained different thematic descriptions of articles that were later grouped in three categories: 1) ‘arrests’—short news articles usually about arrests of the HT members, 2) ‘informative’—articles often containing some descriptive information about the HT organization and its activities in the region and abroad, and 3) ‘irrelevant’—articles that contained references to HT but were, nevertheless, irrelevant to the HT organization per se.

The ‘tone’ variable was encoded in three categories that represented sets of terms and information used in relation to HT: 1) neutral, 2) negative, 3) very negative. ‘Neutral’ articles usually contained little or no descriptive terms and information related to HT; they usually referred to it as the religious or political organization aiming at building a Caliphate. ‘Negative’ articles contained such reference to HT as ‘prohibited organization’, ‘clandestine organization’, ‘spreading leaflets of an anticonstitutional content’ and ‘government is concerned (or alarmed) because of HT activities’. ‘Very negative’ articles contained such references to the organization as ‘religious extremists’, ‘terrorists’, ‘radicals’, ‘religious fanatics’, or ‘threat to the state and/or people’. A ‘positive’ category was excluded from the categorization since no article fell into that category.

The qualitative analysis included closer consideration of selected articles as well as semi-structured interviews with four *VB* journalists who wrote about half of all articles. Interviews with Erlan Satybekov, deputy editor-in-chief of *VB*; Urii Kuzmiyh, a *VB* journalist in charge of crime

4 | Shuhrat Abbasov and Ravshan Umarov are pseudonyms used to protect the respective authors’ identities.

stories; Shuhrat Abbasov and Ravshan Umarov, *VB* journalists based in Osh, the southern oblast of Kyrgyzstan—were conducted to explain the quantitative findings and to address the issues of self-censorship of journalists. The inter-coder reliability sample consisted of every 10th article. Simple percent agreement for “content” and “tone” variables was 93.2%.

Findings and Discussion

RQ1: Who gets to Speak on the Pages of Private yet not Independent Kyrgyz Newspaper about the Controversial Organization?

Journalists

Of 215 articles, Erlan Satybekov wrote 39 (18.1%) articles, Shuhrat Abbasov wrote 20 (9.3%) articles, Ravshan Umarov wrote 23 (10.7%) articles, Urii Kuzminyh wrote 13 (6.0%) articles, 12 (5.6%) were written by Asel Otorbaeva, 15 (7.0%) by Daniyar Karimov, 13 (6.0%) by Urii Kuzminyh, 46 (21.4%) by 29 other authors, and 47 (21.9%) articles were not attributed. As expected, the majority of articles were bylines of journalists rather than routine reports of the press agencies. However, a small circle of journalists wrote about a half of all articles. Satybekov, who has an undergraduate degree in journalism, has lectured in the USA on religious extremism and terrorism in Central Asia, and has traveled to Israel and other countries to learn more about religious extremism. He joined *VB* in 2001 and was considered by his colleagues to be an expert in questions pertaining to Muslim extremism. Umarov and Abbasov, *VB* journalists based in Osh, southern part of Kyrgyzstan, are close relatives. They wrote about HT as part of their job covering events in the southern part of the country. These three journalists confirmed that they wrote articles about HT voluntarily, and have never been requested by editor-in-chief to submit additional articles. Umarov and Abbasov joined *VB* in 2000. Kuzminyh has been responsible for crime stories since 1995 as he joined *VB*. He saw his job as reporting information he received from law enforcement agencies without adding analytical information. Otorbaeva and Karimov were not interviewed since they were not available at the time of the research phase.

Law Enforcement Bodies

It was expected that 47 articles without attribution were either editorials or, perhaps, the names of authors were intentionally not published for certain reasons. Four interviewed journalists said that their names were always published whenever they submitted a publication. Satybekov suggested that absence of attribution was rather a technical problem. According to him, if the same author wrote several articles on the same page, only the last article contained information about the author. This situation might not have been taken into account when the articles were published on the web page. The qualitative analysis of these articles revealed, however, that the overwhelming majority of them were short crime stories about arrests of HT members supposedly provided by law enforcement bodies from the southern regions of the country. Therefore, the voice behind approximately one fourth of all articles on HT—unattributed articles and those written by Kuzminyh—was that of law enforcement officials reporting about criminal offenses of HT members or people allegedly supporting this group.

Hizb ut-Tahrir

Since HT in Central Asia was stigmatized as ‘a terrorist organization’ after 2001 and officially banned in 2003 it was expected that the voice of HT itself would hardly be heard from the outlet loyal to the government. However, publication of two lengthy interviews with HT members was de facto giving the floor to extremists to present their views on certain topics that they would otherwise have to spread clandestinely through leaflets. Satybekov’s interview of Rahimjan Charikov, the imprisoned HT member was published in *VB* on September 26th, 2001. Satybekov’s questions revealed HT’s objectives, ideology and reasons of HT being banned in many countries. Charikov’s answers presented HT views on the 9/11 terrorist attacks in the USA, relation of the Uzbek president Karimov to Mustafa Kemal Ataturk, and terrorist attacks in Uzbekistan in 1999. Another interview of a HT member was published in *VB* on July 22nd, 2005, i.e. shortly after the presidential elections in Kyrgyzstan. Satybekov wrote the questions and Hamidov conducted the interview with Diler Djumabaev, an entrepreneur and the press-attaché of HT. Several questions of Satybekov provided basic information about HT’s membership, strategies, objectives, and ideology. Other questions were specifically aimed at finding out HT’s views on the presidential elections in Kyrgyzstan; the March events in Kyrgyzstan that resulted in

seizure of the government by opposition leaders; on Andijan events in Uzbekistan⁵; the American airbase in Kyrgyzstan; and, the bombings in London. Additional research on HT coverage in *VB* in 2006 and 2007 revealed that the newspaper provided space for two more interviews with HT members revealing the relations and attitudes of HT to Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan and HT strategy of cooperation with mass media in Kyrgyzstan.

Whereas publication of interview with HT members was seen by Satybekov as an opportunity “[...] to hear the voice on the other side, and at the same time to increase the popularity of the newspaper” (Interview with Satybekov), the second interview was published only three weeks after the Kyrgyz law “On preventing extremist activity” was adopted. According to this law, the mass media were not allowed to spread extremist materials or to undertake extremist activities. Although publication of interviews with HT members openly spreading their message might be seen as giving a platform to extremists, Satybekov stated that neither he nor the *VB* editor-in-chief were approached by state officials.

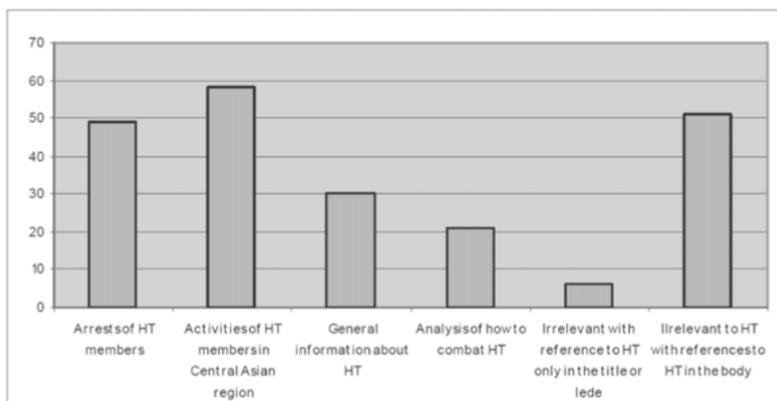
In comparison, in Germany where the organization is banned since January 2003, the quality press often published very informative articles about HT but never in a form of interview with the German HT members.⁶ In Britain, where the organization is legal, interviews with, refutations by, and articles of the HT members appeared more often.⁷ Thus, notwithstanding the fact that Germany is a democratic state with independent media and HT members were never imprisoned there, the public space was never given directly to HT. In Kyrgyzstan, where people get arrested for merely having an HT leaflet in a pocket, the press, in

5 | In May, 2005 the governmental forces of Uzbekistan massacred several hundreds of protestors in the main square of Andijan, who gathered to protest against the unfair trial over 23 businessmen allegedly belonging to Akramiya group, a spin off of HT.

6 | This statement is based on quantitative analysis of 226 articles that contained at least one reference to HT and were published in *tageszeitung*, *Frankfurter Rundschau*, *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* and *Die Welt* in 2002-2007. Preliminary findings of qualitative analysis revealed that in 2005 *Die Welt* published one interview with the Briton of Pakistani origin, who started his Islamist path from joining HT at the age of 17 (Taseer 2005), and one narrative report of German journalist, who met HT member in Kyrgyzstan shortly before the presidential elections in Kyrgyzstan (Quiring 2005).

7 | This statement is based on quantitative analysis of 396 articles that contained at least one reference to HT and were published in *The Daily Telegraph*, *The Times*, *The Guardian*, *The Financial Times* and *The Independent* in 2002-2007.

Figure 1: Content of articles (N=215)



a paradoxical way, allowed HT to speak to the wide audience from its pages.

RQ2: What kind of Message the General Public Received through this Pro-Government Newspaper?

Content

Of 215 articles, 49 (22.8%) articles were about arrests of HT members, 109 (50.7%) articles were ‘informative’, and 57 (26.5%) articles were mainly ‘irrelevant’ to the topic. Of 109 ‘informative’ articles written during five years, 58 (53%) articles were primarily focused on describing activities of HT in the Central Asian region, 30 (17.8%) articles provided general information about the HT organization, and 21 (12.5%) articles, apart from providing relevant information on HT, focused on how to combat it. Of 57 articles mainly irrelevant to HT, six (10.5%) contained references to HT in the titles or ledes of the articles, but nowhere else in the bodies of articles, 51 (80.5%) contained references to HT in their bodies; 29 (50.95%) of these 57 articles contained references to HT in the context of terrorism. For graphic presentation see: Figure 1.

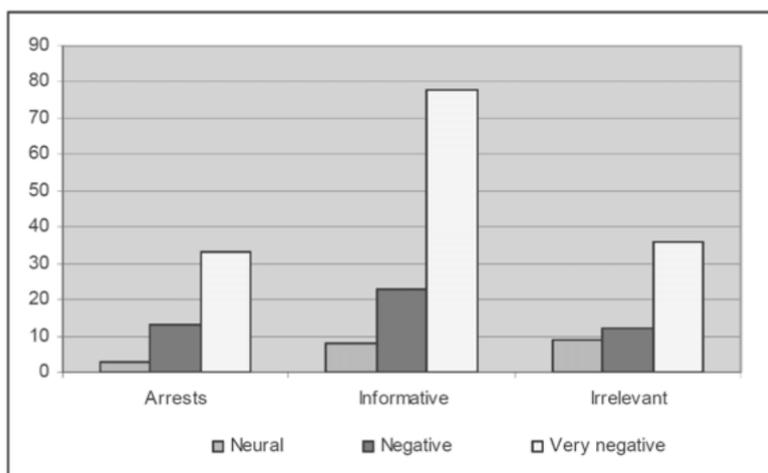
The qualitative analysis of articles about ‘arrests of HT members’ revealed that they were mainly once corresponding to Wright’s (1997: 104) term “the front-end/back-end stories”. Those are stories that covered arrests of HT members or supporters but usually had no follow up coverage of whether those people were later imprisoned, acquitted or immediately released. Although the number of ‘informative articles’ was high,

VB published only 10 articles during 2001-2005 providing exhaustive information on the organization, including historical information on the origin of HT, its ideology and objectives, the types of its activities, reasons why it has been banned in various parts of the world, location of its headquarters, and/or its attitude towards violence and various forms of government. The rest of articles were rather a mixture of use of HT name and a description of HT organization with various degrees of relevance to the focal points of articles. However, as was pointed out earlier, the authors of more than half of mainly irrelevant articles mentioned HT name purely in 'terrorism' context. As expected, coverage of HT was event-driven and the number of articles mentioning the group increased at the times of important international or national events.

The content of articles was carefully weighted and discussed prior to publication by Abbasov and Umarov in Osh. They tried to avoid mentioning such delicate questions as the ethnic identity of HT members. Being ethnic Uzbeks themselves, they explained during interviews that highlighting the Uzbek ethnicity of HT members might have escalated conflict between the Kyrgyz and the Uzbeks and lead to violence. Indeed, although revealing the fact that majority of HT members were at that time the ethnic Uzbeks was not prohibited by any official regulation of the state, the journalists at *VB* did not write about it. In fact, in 2001 and 2002 there were no references to HT members being Uzbeks. In 2003 in two articles it was mentioned that HT leaflets were in both Kyrgyz and Uzbek languages and in one that HT usually propagated among the Uzbek population in the south. In 2004 there was one reference to an arrested HT member being identified as the Uzbek, and one reference to expropriated HT leaflets in the Uzbek language. In 2005 two articles contained references to HT leaflets published in the Uzbek language.

Umarov said that possession of arms by HT members was another issue to be considered before publication since it had not yet been proved by law enforcement bodies. However, in a number of articles journalists referred both to discovery of arms and to HT, although they did not directly accuse HT of possessing arms. Such references were done obliquely, so that readers could themselves infer that the discovered arms belonged to HT. In this connection, Umarov stated that in *VB* there were only two people who have a real grasp of HT issues—Satybekov and himself—and some journalists from the north of the country lacking in-depth knowledge of the organization are sometimes too harsh in their references to the group.

Figure 2: Content by tone (N=215)

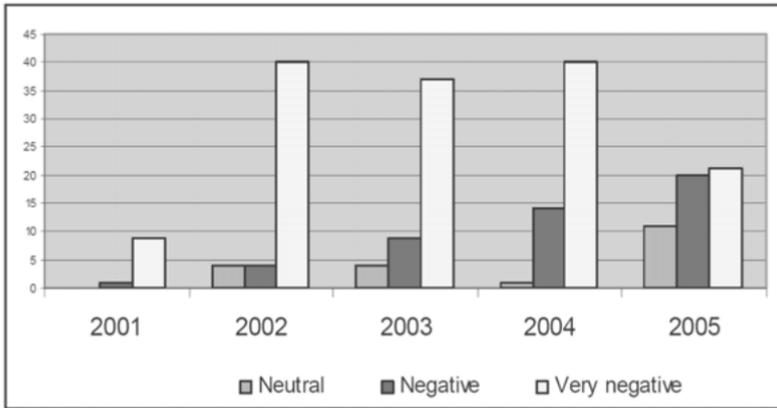


Tone

Of 215 articles, 20 (9.3%) contained neutral references to HT, 48 (22.3%) contained negative and 127 (68.4%) contained very negative references to HT. Of 49 articles about arrests of HT members, three (6.1%) articles contained neutral references to HT, 13 (26.5%) contained negative references and 33 (67.3%) very negative references to HT. Of 109 informative articles, 8 (7.3%) articles contained neutral references to HT, 23 (21.1%) contained negative, and 78 (71.6%) contained very negative references to HT. Of 57 articles mainly irrelevant to HT, 9 (15.8%) articles contained neutral references to HT, 12 (21.1%) contained negative, and 36 (63.2%) very negative references to HT. The relationship between tone and content was not statistically significant. For graphic presentation of data see: Figure 2.

Of 10 articles published in 2001, none of them contained neutral references HT, 1 (10.0%) contained negative references, and 9 (90.0%) contained very negative references to HT. Of 48 articles published in 2002, 4 (8.3%) contained neutral references, 4 (8.3%) contained negative references, and 40 (83.3%) contained very negative references to HT. Of 50 articles published in 2003, 4 (8.0%) contained neutral references, 9 (18.0%) contained negative references, and 37 (74.0%) very negative references to HT. Of 55 articles published in 2004, 1 (1.8%) contained neutral reference, 14 (25.5%) contained negative references, and 40 (72.7%)

Figure 3: Tone by year (N=215)



contained very negative references to HT. Of 52 articles published in 2005, 11 (21.2%) contained neutral reference, 20 (38.5%) contained negative references, and 21 (40.4%) contained very reference to HT. The relation between variables “tone” and “year” was statistically significant ($\chi^2(8, N = 215) = 32,445, p < .01$) with the tone of articles becoming more neutral over years. For graphic presentation of data see: Figure 3.

As mentioned, the category ‘positive’ tone has been excluded from the coding book because none of the articles contained any positive remarks about HT. Positive attitude toward the organization could have been expressed through mentioning that members of this organization help each other in addressing such issues as unemployment, religious education, funerals, medical care, etc. Satybekov and Umavrov noted that there were some positive aspects about HT that could be covered. They said, for example, that in the southern part of Kyrgyzstan the group was known for charitable activities. There was a case when members organized a big meal for the local population. HT members can count on the financial support from the organization in case of emergency or medical need. The referents said that such information could not, however, be published in *VB* because “[...] the end goals of this organization are well known [...]” (Interview with Umarov) and “[...] *VB* doesn’t do promotion of the HT organization” (Interview with Satybekov). To compare, similarly to the Kyrgyz press the German press contained no

references to any positive activity of HT unlike the British press, in which such references were rare but present.⁸

The assumption that articles became more neutral over years because the number of articles about arrests of HT members has also grown over years was not supported. Although such articles provided little or no information about HT's goals, activities and they were almost never neutral in tone except in 2005, when the articles with neutral tone could be observed regardless of the content of the articles. Apparently, that such difference in coverage of HT could be attributed to the change of the Kyrgyz government and VB directorship in 2005. The four interviewees were of the view that changes of the Kyrgyz government in March 2005, and of the VB directorship in August 2005, influenced neither the content nor the tone of references to HT in VB (Interviews with Satybekov, Abbasov, Umarov, and Kuzminyh). However, the quantitative analysis shows that in 2005 VB coverage of HT was more balanced, with the number of the articles written in a "neutral tone" having drastically grown. The qualitative analysis of articles reveals that after the opposition seized power, VB stopped referring to the former opposition having contacts with and support of, the HT organization.

RQ3: How was the same Event—Suicide Bombings in Uzbekistan in 2004—Covered in the Kyrgyz *Vechernii Bishkek*, British *The Times* and German *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*?

A series of suicide bombings by four women in Uzbekistan in spring 2004 that took lives of more than 40 people was quickly attributed by the Uzbek president Karimov to Islamist terrorists, including the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan and HT. As VB covered the event, the sources of information used by journalists were primarily those of the press service of the Uzbek president and the Uzbek security service. Such articles obviously contained pure propaganda against the HT group, although the HT's denial of their participation in the bombings was mentioned once. Thus, among other articles there were a reprint of the then president Karimov's statement about the terrorist acts, the report of the Uzbek security services about criminal activities of HT in the region and the interview with the worker of the press service of the Uzbek president.

At the same time the British daily *The Times* published five articles

8 | Of 396 examined articles from the British press 11 contained remarks about positive activities of HT.

on the topic that referred to HT: four by Giles Whittell from Tashkent and one by Richard Beeston from Britain. The general tendency was that the authors mentioned blames of the Uzbek government against HT quoting or referring to the Uzbek authorities; HT's denial of having anything to do with this violent event, in particular, and claims of being a peaceful organization in general; HT being legal in Great Britain and them blaming the Uzbek authorities for violence. The authors also referred to human rights organizations stressing how the Uzbek regime exercised routine torture against thousands of Muslim dissidents. Finally, the journalists highlighted several times that the Americans should be embarrassed if they decide to release more than USD 50 million in aid for Uzbekistan that is dependent on human rights improvements in the country. Finally, in the last article on the topic, Whittell (2004) provided a lengthy emotional and detailed report of cases of torture of HT members in the Uzbek prisons, the report that would hardly ever see publication in Kyrgyzstan.

“The woman closes her eyes and explains how it got there. ‘He didn’t want to confess to praying five times a day because he didn’t consider it a crime, so they put long metal spikes in a canvas bag and beat him with it. Still he didn’t confess, so they attached electrodes to his abdomen. Still he didn’t confess, he didn’t die. So he was put into 25 litres of boiling water, in a bath. When his skin was off they poured disinfectant on him. They removed his fingernails and broke his nose and teeth. There was nowhere on his body that was not covered with bruising and signs of torture.’ His name was Muzafar Avazov. Hers is Fatima Mukhadirova. She is one of several thousand mothers whose sons and husbands have been taken from them for defying the authority of the flatly unrepentant Government of Uzbekistan [...] Avazov’s crime was to have been linked to those radicals; specifically to the Hizb ut-Tahrir sect, which seeks to replace Uzbekistan with an Islamic caliphate under the Sharia Muslim legal system” (Whittell 2004: 6).

The coverage of the event in the German daily *FAZ* was not as emotional as in *The Times*. However, similar to the British daily, the frame of the poor records of Uzbekistan in human rights prevailed over the frame of HT being the state’s enemy number one. Thus, *FAZ* covered the bombings mentioning HT in three articles by Markus Wehner from Moscow. Similar to the British coverage, the journalist first illustrated the general situation in places of bombings and referred to the Uzbek authorities blaming HT for violence. He mentioned HT’s official response denying the involvement, stressed their official rejection of violence in meeting their goal of Caliphate restoration in Central Asia and quoted HT saying

that the tyrannical Uzbek regime has staged such events in the past as well in order to suppress the legitimate Islamic political opposition. (Wehner 2004a: 7) Wehner mentioned the case of Avazov only shortly and referred to it in the context of records of Human Rights Watch about 7000 sympathizers of HT in the Uzbek prisons and routine torture practices by the Uzbek authorities. Noteworthy is the fact that in sub-title of one of three articles Wehner takes position and blames the Uzbek government for provoking extremism that it fights later on (Wehner 2004b: 10).

It appears that the different legal status of HT in Britain and Germany hardly had any impact on how HT-related event happening abroad was covered by the press. Perhaps the proximity of Kyrgyzstan to Uzbekistan and dependence of the former on the natural resources on the latter influenced on how the controversial issues are portrayed in the press. This proposition, however, only reinforces the argument that the press in Kyrgyzstan is heavily dependent on state politics and willingly or unwillingly supports it on its pages.

Conclusion

The aim of this study was to establish who was allowed to speak on the pages of private yet not independent Kyrgyz daily about the proscribed organization HT during 2001-2005. Further, it was necessary to establish what kind of message the general public in Kyrgyzstan received from this pro-government newspaper. Finally, it seemed relevant to find out how the same event—suicide bombings in Uzbekistan in Spring 2004—was covered in democratic (British and German) and non-democratic (Kyrgyz) societies. It appears that about a half of all articles mentioning HT at least once were written by a small circle of journalists, one of which was editor-in-chief, another was a reporter on crime stories, and two were close relatives based in the Southern part of Kyrgyzstan, who were cross checking material on HT prior to publication in order to avoid controversial or sensitive remarks. Material for about a quarter of all articles was supplied by law-enforcement officials and was mainly about arrests of HT members or sympathizers. Another quarter of articles were mainly irrelevant to HT organization often mentioning it in the context of ‘terrorism’. While half of articles were more or less informative on HT, only ten of them provided detailed information about the origin and goals of the organization. The overwhelming majority of articles

were written in very negative tones, i.e. referring to HT as religious extremists, terrorists, radicals and/or religious fanatics. Whereas not a single positive aspect of HT activities (like charity or employment activities) was covered, even the number of articles that referred to HT in neutral terms—Muslim religious or political organization aiming at building a Caliphate—was very low. The growing number of articles with the neutral references to HT over years was attributed to the changes of the Kyrgyz government and the VB directorship in 2005.

While the personal positions of the journalists seem to have influenced on how they portrayed the HT, the role of the Kyrgyz government in setting the agenda for the private yet not independent newspaper should not be underestimated. The comparison of how VB covered suicide bombings in neighbouring Uzbekistan in spring 2004 with coverage of the same event in the British *The Times* (where HT is legal) and the German *FAZ* (where HT is banned) lent support to the argument that coverage of HT-related issues depends not so much on the legal status of the organization as on independence of media and journalists from state's pressures to write about the banned organization in very negative terms and covering only those aspects of the events that are in line with the wider state's policies. The further investigations and broader analysis of HT coverage in three countries would shed more light on uneasy communication between HT, mass media and states.

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Afterthoughts on “Totalitarian” Communication

ANDREAS LANGENOHL

The essays in this volume are united in the attempt to disentangle the notion of totalitarian communication from that of totalitarianism, that is, from totalitarian social and political orders. This is, to be sure, a formidable task since the attribute “totalitarian” has been designed in political theory to refer to societies or political orders in toto. According to Friedrich’s and Brzezinski’s (1965: 17) early work *Totalitarian Dictatorship and Autocracy*, the former “emerges as a system of rule for realizing totalist intentions under modern political and technical conditions.” Hannah Arendt, who attempted to track down the historical predecessors of totalitarian rule, made explicit its totalizing and holistic tendencies by arguing that “total domination is the only form of government with which coexistence is not possible” (Arendt 1966: xi-xii). Abbott Gleason, in reconstructing the history of concept “totalitarianism” starting with the rise of Mussolini, notes: “There is some overlap between ‘totality’, grasping/understanding the world as an integral whole, and ‘totalitarianism’, making it a whole” (Gleason 1995: 9) In this tradition, the notions “totalitarian societies” or “totalitarian political orders” have always tilted toward pleonasm, because the qualifier “totalitarian”, if taken seriously, could signify nothing less than societies or political orders as wholes. Therefore, any strategy to retain the “totalitarian” while abandoning the notion of society or political order has to take issue with the idea that elements of totalitarianism could not be decoupled from

their respective totalizing order, precisely because those elements only gain their meanings as parts of that order.

No other concept than “communication” could have fit better into the announced radical departure from the holistic understandings of totalitarianism. Communication, in a very basic sociological sense, encompasses not only intentions of the sender or the content and structure of the message but also the ways messages are being perceived, as well as the ways they are put to work. In this sense, the notion of communication is different from the concepts such as “discourse”, which can perfectly do without the idea that perception is important, precisely because they are imagined as being effective per se. A social-scientific communication model that includes the idea of perception is very much at odds with some very fundamental features of the notion of totalitarianism, as the latter, by virtue of its holism and functionalism, cannot but imply a consonance, or at least a match, between what is articulated, what is understood, and what are the effects of communication.

A corollary of this is the impossibility to use the qualifier “totalitarian” for the noun “communication” except than in quotation marks. “Totalitarian” is derived from “totalitarianism” as indicating a society and political order as a whole, not just communication or any other of its parts. If one still wishes to use the attribute “totalitarian” for analytical purposes without plunging into functionalism, one probably has to leave behind the synchronous order in which the functionality of totalitarianism was deemed to come to surface, and search for entry points beyond that order and synchrony itself.

1

The intention of the remarks at hand is to give an example for such strategy, namely, to observe “totalitarian” communication from the standpoint of its overcoming, its remnants, and its afterlife. Empirically, the reference is made to the traces of certain “totalitarian” patterns of public communication in post-Soviet Russia. What is the gain of viewing this communication patterns as post-“totalitarian” for understanding their social meaning in their contemporary context and for coming to terms with their “totalitarian” predecessors? I will start with an example from the public debates about the meaning of the “Great Patriotic War” memories for post-Soviet Russia, as they were articulated during the 1990s (cf. for the next three paragraphs: Langenohl 2000, 2002, 2005).

At the end of the 1980s, the latent contradiction between official and non-official remembrance of the Great Patriotic War typical the memory dynamics between the end of war and the end of the USSR (Tumarkin 1994; Zubkova 1995), erupted into a conflict. The critique of Stalinism served as a catalyst. As the official myth of the "cult of personality", in which the Communist Party of the Soviet Union was portrayed as the major victim of Stalin and his entourage, has made its public debut (which, among other things, led to the 1991 ban on the CPSU), the official narrative of the Party's collective sacrifice on behalf of a better social order has become questioned. One can roughly distinguish between the two competing interpretations of the Great Patriotic War since perestroika.

First, intellectuals of the communist or the so-called "national-patriotic" creed insisted on deriving a civic and religious set of norms and values (love for the motherland, a willingness to make sacrifices, the feeling of have fought for the right thing) from the war experience and the USSR victory. This interpretation, in regard to its content, continued the official commemoration rituals and semantics of the Soviet Union and saw them as a prototype of such identifying memory. Its followers accused their opponents of being traitors and desecrating the memory of the war dead. The death in war was thus interpreted as sacrifice; historical persons (for instance, the Marshal Zhukov) served as heroic identification figures. By commemorating the war in their writings and statements, the intellectuals like Aleksandr Panarin, Vladimir Bogomolov, Kseniia Mialo or Gennadii Gusev, identified nation (*natsiia, narod*) and government with a strong, autonomous and self-sufficient state (*gosudarstvennost'*) the "natural" unity of which had to be expressed by a war remembrance.

Alternative interpretation was promoted by the intellectuals denying to the Soviet order any legitimacy. They stressed the political, military and moral failures of the Soviet leadership during wartime, which in their opinion "unnecessarily" and dramatically increased the number of deaths in the war. One of the main catchwords was the "clumsy war" [*bezdarinaia voina*] which, according to this interpretation, costed Soviet troops and civilians an extraordinarily number of unnecessary deaths, for which Stalin and the political-military elite should have been held responsible. The most radical position in this respect was held by writers like Georgii Vladimov (*General i ego armiiia*, 1994) and Viktor Astaf'ev (*Prokliaty i ubity*, 1992), who almost iconoclastically denied any significance of the Soviet victory. According to them, millions of soldiers and citizens did not sacrifice their lives on behalf of a greater good, but became victims (and involuntary saviors) of a terrorist regime,

strengthened by its victory over Nazism, they even strengthened. Such views entailed an opposition between people and polity, the climax of which was seen in the Great Patriotic War. The opposite views were branded by this group as biased in favor of “Stalinism”.

2

In order to highlight the communicative specifics of the public discussion outlined in the last section, and to relate it to the question of “totalitarian” communication, it is worth making some theoretical and methodological remarks. Let us start with theory. In order to understand about what contemporary communicative practices tell us about former “totalitarian” communication we need a theory of time and tradition. This does not necessarily imply that we need a model of how “totalitarian” communication evolves and disintegrates. Such a model would still operate within the limits of systemic functionalism, and we might feel bound to misinterpret the collapse of the Soviet Union as an example of “adaptive upgrading” as envisioned (or hallucinated) by Talcott Parsons: “This system may evolve toward an approximate equivalent of the British parliamentary system of the eighteenth century” (Parsons 1971: 127). Rather, we might ask the question what the remnants of Soviet system tell us about its functioning. That is, we might search for the imprintings of totalitarianism in the post-totalitarian development.

Postcolonial literary theory gives us the first hint. Homi Bhabha, for instance, holds that the full social and cultural meaning of certain aspects of colonialism becomes only apparent in a cultural, political and epistemic space that bears the consequences of colonialism after its demise (Bhabha and Comaroff 2002). He refers to psychoanalysis and the notion of the symptom in order to project historical colonial constellations against the backdrop of their cultural (particularly literary) consequences at the present time. One may receive inspiration from this reference without being necessarily confined to a psychoanalytical model of temporality: a theoretical notion of time might be of help in coming to terms with “totalitarian” communication from the vantage point of what came after. One may, for instance, ask how a certain communicative style of public address, common among contemporary post-Soviet intellectuals, might be interpreted as the consequence of the *end* of totalitarianism - in particular, the end of some of its communicative structures. In other words, in order to understand the working of

“totalitarian” communication, we ought to see what totalitarianism has left behind, and why.

3

Now pone could move on to methodology. It is possible to account for the totalitarian structure of empirical communicative constellations through investigating it as a particular mold of some general communicative features. While working on public communication in Post-Soviet Russia (s. section 1), I have used a sociological model of communication that focused on the transformative (“performative”) effects of communication in interactive and institutional settings. This model both depicts certain key features of communication, and projects those features on post-“totalitarian” communication in Russia. This paves the way for the third, and final, step, in which the structures of public communication in Russia will be interpreted as a remnant of the Soviet public sphere, or a product of its communicative mechanisms.

In this, I am referring to the work by sociologist Max Miller, who has tried to combine the speech act-based grounding of sociality in language, as developed by Jürgen Habermas, with the empirical research on communicative interactions within children groups (Miller 1986: 1990). Miller’s aim was to shed empirical light on the socialization processes in which, according to Habermas, subjects acquire the ability not only to act according to norms, but also to reflect on them and thus arrive at a “post-traditional” (Habermas 1998), or “reason-based” (vernünftige), identity (Habermas 1976). While Habermas, referring to the models of socialization into norms and value judgments, developed by George Herbert Mead, Jean Piaget and Lawrence Kohlberg (Habermas 1984: 67-69; Habermas 1987: 58-60, 97-100, 174), writes the possibility of post-traditional type of socialization and identity into the context of the macro-societal processes of systemic differentiation (Habermas 1987), Miller’s fine-grained conversation analysis makes such processes empirically visible not as individual achievements but as collective learning.

The notion of learning, in Miller’s approach, is not tied to any theory of personality development, a passage through stages of moral consciousness, or any other path-like concepts of individual personality. He sees interactional processes neither as mere extensions of pre-existing communicative, cultural, social, or other frames, nor as collisions among individually tempered psychic structures, but as a dynamic commu-

nicative process in which the normative grounds of communication be altered in the process of interaction (Miller 1990: 92). Learning, in this approach, has a decisively sociological meaning. Far from being encribed into an perennial social “frame” or into the individual’s psychic economy, learning lurks in a precarious setting of mutual interaction. Even if collective learning may be inhibited by certain social frames or the personality traits of interlocutors, the social process in which learning takes place follows an interactional logic.

Miller develops his theory of collective learning from the vantage point of three special types of learning which he jointly calls “communicative blockades of learning” (*kommunikative Lernblockade*, Miller 1990: 92). The default functioning of collective learning processes is an interactive process in which the normative grounds of communication can be altered and rearticulated while interaction is going on. Further, these grounds are given perspective through the introduction of one-sided learning process privileging certain highly specific ways of collective learning. What distinguishes encompassing learning processes is precisely the absence of those learning blockades. These “blockades” are learning processes in their own right, because they may very well lead to a reformulation of the moral grounds of the conversation. What turns them into “blockades” is, according to Miller, their non-communicative rationality - that is, their tendency to eschew argumentative reasoning. The notion of the blockade is not designed to denounce certain communicative patterns, but rather to highlight the empirical preconditions of collective learning based on communicative rationality. This clearly sets Miller apart from that of Habermas, since he is much more interested in facts of communicative rationality than in its potentiality (cf. Miller 1986: 13).

Miller distinguishes between the three specified learning mechanisms, or “blockades” of collective learning that prevent communicative rationality from manifesting itself (Miller 1990: 92-3). “Authoritarian learning” inhibits the argumentative reformulation of the normative and cognitive grounds of the interaction on the basis of an identification of truth with power. “Ideological learning” labels any contrary position as being corrupted by non-argumentative reasoning (for instance, special interests), robbing it of the possibility to be true. Finally, “regressive learning” puts obstacles to communicative rationalization because it allows for deemphasizing obvious contradictions between different value judgments, which are instead claimed to form a single, coherent, and homogeneous position.

4

It is this sociological understanding of learning that makes Miller’s concept applicable to the analysis and of private conversations and public discussions alike (cf. Miller 1986: 24). In studies devoted to the discursive remembrance of the Great Patriotic War in post-Soviet Russia, I have argued that what characterizes the post-Soviet debate about the Great Patriotic War has been (in the 1990s at least) an ideological learning blockade separating anti-Soviet and pro-Soviet camps (s. section 1). Those two positions not only presented interpretations of War diametrically opposed each other, but also denied each other the right for public expression by ascribing to the opponent special interests incompatible with truth. Without going into much detail, it is interesting to pose the general question: in what sense could this ideological blockade of collective learning be interpreted as a remnant of “totalitarian” communication in the Soviet Union, and what does it tell us about the latter’s structure?

The most important thing here is that it is *only* ideological learning that has persisted from the Soviet to the post-Soviet phase. There is a certain plausibility in assuming that, in the context of the Soviet Union, ideological learning was saturated with both authoritarian and regressive forms of learning. As for the former, there existed institutions and persons to whom authority in ideological disputes about the truth was ascribed, the most prominent and efficient of which being Stalin (cf. Yurchak 2006). With respect to the latter, glossing over some crucial contradictions always inherent in Soviet doctrine was an everyday business in the regulated public sphere of the Soviet Union. It was only ideological learning that survived the demise of the Soviet Union and the disentanglement of political and discursive power that came with it.

5

It seems that in order to return to a grandly holistic picture of totalitarianism, we have taken a long detour in which all three learning blockades add up to a monolithic structure that allegedly governed the whole of society, polity, and culture of the Soviet Union. Still, upon closer inspection, we can see that only ideological learning has survived until post-Soviet Russia, having been less weakened by the dramatic institutional shifts accompanying the demise of the Soviet Union than the two other forms.

Consequently, it is the most useful of all the three for understanding the communicative structure of the Soviet public sphere. This adaptability of ideological learning has to do with the fact that its enabling conditions reside neither in its societal or political institutionalization (as with authoritarian learning) nor in the semantic content of what is articulated (as with regressive learning). While authoritarian learning was stripped of its influence with the demise of the party/state institutions of the USSR, regressive learning sank in glaring criticism once the authoritarian framework was removed. In contrast to both, the resources for ideological learning seem to reside in the *performative gain* that two or more parties can accumulate in a mutual ideological argumentation. Indeed, it may be reasonable to continue (or reengage in) ideological learning even after the authoritarian power structures are gone and the semantic patterns radically changed, because all the parties in a dispute can benefit from it. While in the Soviet Union ideology-criticism was contingent upon party power and state intervention, during the 1990s it has been grounded in the positive-sum game between opposing political positions and attitudes, for instance, between defenders and deniers of the glory of the victory in the Great Patriotic War. Both sides benefited from the ideological structure of the argumentation, with the profit consisting mainly in the agonal consolidation of public agencies.

Admittedly, ideological blockades are able to constitute relationships and positions in the public sphere merely on the basis of their communicative reciprocity, jointly raising the heat by denying each other the right to speak. In this sense, ideological structures display a higher degree of performativity than an authoritarian or regressive learning. Authoritarian learning depends on the availability of power resources other than communication. Regressive strategies in a dispute are directed not so much at one another as at followers that have to be sold convincing stories. Regressive learning, in its turn, has the communicative structure of a sermon, not of a conversation. Only ideological learning has the performative potential to constitute mutually consolidating positions by the sheer force of dispute. Ideological learning, thus, is the most self-sufficient of learning blockades, one that is able not only to go on after drastic institutional changes, but also to realize its socially constitutive potential in an environment free of totalitarianism proper.

This brings us back to the theoretical context of this short essay, namely to the concept of temporality that is needed to understand “totalitarian” communication beyond the functionalist approach to totalitarianism. The provided survey of the (post-)“totalitarian” communication in the USSR and in post-Soviet Russia shows that the ideological learning blockade is not only the most self-sufficient communicative structure of public communication at our times, but that its potential to generate positions solely through communicative acts has only flourished after the disappearance of the authoritarian and the regressive learning blockades. In other words, while all three blockades of collective learning were at work in the Soviet political and societal order—albeit to different degrees and under different historical circumstances—the potential power and performative productivity of ideological learning had been conditioned by regressive and authoritarian learning. If, thus, one accepts the argument that structural features of society may only become visible in their social and cultural meanings affecting later societal constellations, one comes to a conclusion that ideological learning not only preserved but radicalized the communicative structure which was controlled before by other communicative constellations.

Picturing Soviet social and political order as an always precarious, and changing, regime of checks and balances between ideological, authoritarian, and regressive learning, this interpretation gives another blow to the holistic understanding of totalitarianism. The hermetically sealed and functionally regulated environment that traditional totalitarianism theory had made us believe has never existed. The analysis of “totalitarian” communication interferes with this fiction, reminding us of the precariousness of political and social orders which upheaval radicalizes some of their features while letting others down.

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AUTHORS

Baltzer, Nanni, is a posdoctoral scholar at the Institute of Art History, University of Zurich (Switzerland). She worked as a researched assistant at the ETH Zürich, Canadian Centre for Architecture (Montréal), and at the Accademia di architettura (Mendrisio), and held various teaching positions at the University of Zurich and at the Zurich School of Arts. She also served as an assistant director, curator of the International Photo Section and editor of the Catalogue at the 9th International Biennale for Architecture (Venice, 2004). Nanni Baltzer is a recipient of the Swiss Art Award 2006; she published widely on the history of art, architecture and photography.

Binder, Werner received his M.A. with honors in 2006 after six years of studies in sociology, philosophy, and literature at the universities of Mannheim, Potsdam, and Berlin. His Master's thesis on the relevance of ethnic and religious categories in the Turkish community in Germany was published as *Herkunft als Stigma, Emblem und Tabu* in 2008. He is a junior lecturer and research assistant at the University of Konstanz, teaching courses in sociology and conducting research for his Ph. D. project on the Abu Ghraib scandal. Other fields of interest are social and cultural theory, hermeneutics and interpretation theory, visual sociology and sociology of morality.

Chalaby, Jean K. is a Reader in the Department of Sociology at City University, London. He is the author of *The Invention of Journalism* (1998), *The de Gaulle Presidency and the Media* (2002) and *Transnational*

Television in Europe: Reconfiguring Global Communications Networks (2009). He is also the editor of *Transnational Television Worldwide* (2005) and has published extensively on a wide range of media-related topics.

Hanisch-Wolfram, Alexander is the Research Leader of the project “Protestants and Slovenes in Carinthia” at the Protestant Academy of Carinthia (Feldkirchen, Austria) and a research coordinator of the exhibition “500 years of protestantism in Carinthia” planned for 2011. He studied communication sciences, political science, linguistics, history and human rights at Vienna, Venice and Luxemburg. Major book publications include *Postalische Identitätskonstruktionen. Briefmarken als Medien totalitärer Propaganda* (2006), *Pensez français, pensez Pétain! Diskursanalytische Studien zur Vichy-Propaganda* (2007) and *Geschichte der Pfarrgemeinde Waiern 1808-2008* (2008).

Langenohl, Andreas is the Director of the research group “Idioms of Social Analysis” at the Center of Excellence 16 “Cultural Foundations of Integration” (University of Konstanz, Germany). He received his doctoral and habilitation degrees from the University of Giessen (Germany) and had research appointments and guest professorships at Universities of Ghent, Zurich and Lucerne as well as Cornell University. He has been working on practices of collective memory in post-Soviet Russia, modernization theory, sociology of financial markets, and epistemology of social sciences. Major recent publications include *Tradition und Gesellschaftskritik. Eine Rekonstruktion der Modernisierungstheorie* (2007), *“In the long run we are all dead”: Imaginary Time in Financial Market Narratives* (2008) and *The Imagination of Europe in Twin Town Activities: Rethinking Political Culture in the European Union* (2009).

Erren, Lorenz is a Research Fellow and librarian at the German Historical Institute in Moscow. He studied history in Berlin, Strassburg, Moscow and Tuebingen. Book publication: *“Selbstkritik” und Schuldbekennntnis. Kommunikation und Herrschaft unter Stalin* (2008).

Murašov, Jurij is a Chair of Slavic Literatures and Literary Studies at the University of Konstanz. He published extensively on film theory, poetics and history of Soviet media. Book publications include *Jenseits der Mimesis. Russische Literaturtheorie im 18. und 19. Jahrhundert. Von M. V. Lomonosov zu V. G. Belinskij* (1993) and *Im Namen des Dionysos:*

Zur Mythopoetik im russischen Symbolismus am Beispiel von Vjaceslav Ivanov (1999).

Postoutenko, Kirill is Chair of Sociology and Anthropology at Smolny College (St.Petersburg) and a DAAD Guest Professor of Sociology at the University of Konstanz. He taught at various institutions in Russia, Germany and United States of America and was a research fellow in Munich, New York, Graz/Vienna, London and Paris. Major research interests include theory and history of poetry, historical sociology of identity and social history of 20th century Europe. Book publications: *'Onegin' Text in Russian Literature* (1998, in Russian) and *Soviet Culture: Codes and Messages* (2010, forthcoming).

Richardson, John is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Social Sciences, Loughborough University . He is co-editor of the online journal *Studies in Language and Capitalism*, and on the editorial board of the journals *Discourse and Society*, *Social Semiotics* and the *Journal of Language and Politics*. His research interests include structured social inequalities, British fascism, racism in journalism, (critical) discourse analysis, and argumentation. His recent publications include the book *Analysing Newspapers: An Approach from Critical Discourse Analysis* (2007), special issues of the journals *Journalism Studies*, *Social Semiotics* and *Critical Discourse Studies*, and articles on the discourse analysis of newspapers, readers' letters and party political leaflets.

Wolf, Irina is a psychologist and a staff member of the Peace Research Group at the University of Konstanz, where she works on her Ph. D. dissertation on the coverage of *Hizb ut-Tahrir* in German, British and Kyrgyz quality newspapers. She has obtained her bachelor degree in International and Comparative Politics from the American University in Central Asia, Bishkek, and has an MA in Political Science from the OSCE Academy, Bishkek. Research interests include constructive conflict coverage, conflict resolution and media content analysis. Recent publications: *Examining the Andijan Conflict According to the Transcend Approach* (2008) and *Democratization of Kyrgyzstan Through Reform of the Electoral System* (2009).

Zakharine, Dmitri is a sociologist, historian and media scholar who currently works as a Senior Research Fellow at the Universities of Konstanz and Zurich. His main fields of interest are cultural anthropology, semi-

otics and film Studies. Book publications include *European Scholarly Methods in the Tradition of Ancient Russian Grammars* (1995, in Russian) and *Von Angesicht zu Angesicht: Der Wandel direkter Kommunikation in der ost- und westeuropäischen Neuzeit* (2005). His present book project is devoted to the evolution of “acoustic communities” and the mediation of soundscapes in the 20th century.