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CHAPTER V: TOTALITARIANISM

Shall I tell you why we have brought you here? To cure you! To make you sane! Will you understand, Winston, that no one whom we bring to this place ever leaves our hands uncured? We are not interested in those stupid crimes that you have committed. The Party is not interested in the overt act: the thought is all we care about. We do not merely destroy our enemies, we change them. Do you understand what I mean by that?' No one whom we bring to this place ever stands out against us. Everyone is washed clean. Even those three miserable traitors in whose innocence you once believed -- Jones, Aaronson, and Rutherford -- in the end we broke them down. I took part in their interrogation myself. I saw them gradually worn down, whimpering, grovelling, weeping -- and in the end it was not with pain or fear, only with penitence. By the time we had finished with them they were only the shells of men. There was nothing left in them except sorrow for what they had done, and love of Big Brother. It was touching to see how they loved him. They begged to be shot quickly, so that they could die while their minds were still clean.

-1984²⁵⁶

5.1. Methodology

The methodology employed thus far, with respect to authoritarianism and fascism, has seen a gradual shift from the empirical to the normative. One of the reasons underlying this shift is that classical forms of authoritarianism can be more easily described in empirical terms due to the fact the different forms of tribalism, monarchy, tyranny and dictatorship generally operated along the same lines and were mostly founded on principals of utilitarianism and reason. Because of this uniformity, albeit in the largest sense, it is possible to

²⁵⁶ Orwell, Pynchon, and Fromm, *Nineteen Eighty-Four: A Novel*, p. 277.

verify their normative structure by examining the empirical data available. With the advent of fascism however, and its incorporation of the irrational as a principle of action, the empirical commonalities between the different appearances of fascism became less important. Our ability to understand the actions of the fascist relied more on their normative structure than our understanding of their concrete actions, which often contradicted their mentality because of their utilitarian readiness to sacrifice the little beliefs they actually had in favour of attaining a position of power. Now that we are turning our attention to the central theme of this part of this research, totalitarianism, this problem becomes even more evident. As I will show, totalitarianism is in essence a movement which endeavours to turn reality into the image of its fantasy ideology, an ideology which cannot be corrected by the demands of reality, but which alters reality in order to comply with the ideology. As such, the facts that emanate from reality can only be interpreted from *within* the confines of the ideology. In other words, one cannot judge the actions of totalitarian movements by adopting a non-totalitarian viewpoint. This is of the upmost importance if one is to understand the *raison d'être* of Islamist movements.

Furthermore, this factor becomes all the more important as their power grows. Much like fascism, totalitarian movements had to work their way into power before they could execute their grand plan for the fabrication of Utopia; and in their way to power they adopted the same practical stance as fascist movements, that is, adaptation and pragmatism. This not only makes it hard for us to separate fascism and totalitarianism from each other, but it can also lead us to believe that the two are basically the same. The difference between the two however becomes evident once a position of power is obtained; this is when the totalitarian 'experiment' actually starts.

The approach I will therefore use in the description of totalitarianism is as follows:

Firstly, in paragraph 5.2 I will give an overview of the different schools of thought on totalitarianism, these consist of both the empirical as well as the normative approach. This paragraph should give us a clear indication of the boundaries and content of the concept of totalitarianism.

In paragraph 5.3 I will expand on the empirical theory of Juan J. Linz in the same way as I have done with the previous chapters.

Thirdly, in paragraph 5.4 I will focus on the normative theories of primarily Hannah Arendt and, to a somewhat lesser degree those of Eric Voegelin and Claude Lefort, and use them to explain totalitarianism in terms of its implementation of the Gnostic speculation. I will do so by ordering the arguments put forth by Arendt, Lefort and Voegelin according to Voegelin's schematic of the Gnostic speculation as described in chapter three. This approach runs through the second part of the book as well thus providing a unified structure which will give the reader clarity in this complex subject matter. In so doing I intend to complement the static model of the empirical theory with the dynamic model of totalitarianism as an evolving political process. I will do so by explain how the totalitarian notions of ideology, terror and lawfulness correspond to the Gnostic's search for order and the salvation of mankind. This description then ends with an image of the totalitarian movement at the height of power, its institutions, its ultimate ends, and what happens if the fire of revolution slowly dims. Can we then still call it a totalitarian society? In so doing we will get an understanding of the life cycle of totalitarian movements which we can then apply to that of Islamist movements.

Fourthly; in paragraph 5.5 and 5.6 I will present a short summary of our findings, an ideal type definition of totalitarianism and a schematic which represents the different forms totalitarianism can assume. With this schematic we should be able to identify whether or not an Islamist movement bears resemblance to a totalitarian

movement, and if so, in what stage of development it is. This will also give us an idea about its relative strengths and weaknesses.

5.2 What is totalitarianism? An overview of existing theories

According to research done in 1971, there were around 660 works on the subject of totalitarianism at that time.²⁵⁷ Since the fall of the Soviet Union, a multitude of new theories have been devised that can be added to these 660 works. Needless to say, an inquiry into all of these theories and their respective differences is outside the scope of this chapter. There are however, a few authors whose works have defined the framework of the totalitarian paradigm. Just as with any other political philosophy, the exact point of origin of totalitarian thought is hard, if at all possible, to identify. Some writers see it predominantly as a phenomenon closely related to modernity (Arendt²⁵⁸, Linz²⁵⁹, Bärtsch²⁶⁰, Friedrich²⁶¹, Brzezinski²⁶², Hayek²⁶³, Bauman²⁶⁴, Griffin²⁶⁵) whilst others trace its origin back to certain aspects of the French revolution and the Jacobins (Talmon²⁶⁶, van

²⁵⁷ Ernst Nolte “The three versions of the theory of totalitarianism and the significance of the historical genetic version” in Achim Siegel, ed., *The Totalitarian Paradigm after the End of Communism: Towards a Theoretical Reassessment*, vol. 65, Poznań Studies in the Philosophy of the Sciences and the Humanities. (Amsterdam ; Atlanta, GA: Rodopi, 1998), p. 109. Nolte refers to: Martin Jänicke, *Totalitäre Herrschaft; Anatomie Eines Politischen Begriffes* (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 1971).

²⁵⁸ Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*.

²⁵⁹ Linz, *Totalitarian and Authoritarian Regimes*.

²⁶⁰ Bärtsch, *Die Politische Religion Des Nationalsozialismus: Die Religiöse Dimension Der Ns-Ideologie in Den Schriften Von Dieter Eckart, Joseph Goebbels, Alfred Rosenberg Und Adolf Hitler*.

²⁶¹ Friedrich and Brzezinski, *Totalitarian Dictatorship and Autocracy*.

²⁶² Brzezinski, *Ideology and Power in Soviet Politics*.

²⁶³ Hayek, *The Road to Serfdom*.

²⁶⁴ Bauman, *Modernity and the Holocaust*.

²⁶⁵ Griffin, *Modernism and Fascism: The Sense of a Beginning under Mussolini and Hitler*.

²⁶⁶ Talmon, *The Origins of Totalitarian Democracy*.

Ree²⁶⁷), aspects of medieval theology (Voegelin²⁶⁸, Versluis²⁶⁹) or even as far back as Plato (Arendt, Popper²⁷⁰). Of course this list is far from exhaustive and serves merely to indicate the multitude of theories regarding the totalitarian phenomenon. Furthermore, these theories oftentimes do not contradict each other but rather emphasize different elements in the genealogy of totalitarian thinking.

A second observation is that these theories can also be divided according to their approach namely the normative approach (Arendt, Talmon, Versluis, Voegelin, Hayek, van Ree, Bärsch) and the empirical approach (Linz, Friedrich, Brzezinski, van Ree). As I will explain, each approach has its own strengths and weaknesses and may apply to a greater extent to totalitarian movements in a certain stage of its development, but lose ground in other stages.

According to the German historian Ernst Nolte there are three main varieties of theories regarding the totalitarian phenomenon namely, the Socio-religious version, the Historical-Genetic version and the Political Science-Structural version.²⁷¹ Although out of the 660 plus theories that are available, any type of subdivision can be made, I will stick with Nolte's division due to reasons of limited space and overview.

5.2.1 The Socio-religious Version

This theory, according to Nolte, focuses on the question whether or not "there were powerful forces of genuine enthusiasm at work from

²⁶⁷ Ree, *The Political Thought of Joseph Stalin: A Study in Twentieth-Century Revolutionary Patriotism*, Erik van Ree, *Wereldrevolutie: De Communistische Beweging Van Marx Tot Kim Jong Il* (Amsterdam, Antwerpen: Mets & Schilt; Standaard, 2005).

²⁶⁸ Voegelin and Henningsen, *Modernity without Restraint*.

²⁶⁹ Versluis, *The New Inquisitions: Heretic-Hunting and the Intellectual Origins of Modern Totalitarianism*.

²⁷⁰ Karl Raimund Popper, *The Open Society and Its Enemies*, 2 vols. (London: Routledge, 2003).

²⁷¹ Ernst Nolte in Siegel, ed., *The Totalitarian Paradigm after the End of Communism: Towards a Theoretical Reassessment*, p. 109.

which the terror and will to annihilate first resulted”, and whether there is a link between these forces and the liberal states from which they emerged.²⁷² The question here is not what a totalitarian state looks like in terms of its offices, laws and its formal structure, but rather the question focuses on the destructive element that is central to the totalitarian mindset. Where does it come from?

One of its proponents is Erich Voegelin who describes these movements as we have already seen as ‘*political religions*’ or ‘*ersatz religionen*’, which itself is reminiscent of Carl Schmitt’s thoughts on the nature of the modern state: “all significant concepts of the modern theory of the state are secularized theological concepts”.²⁷³

Voegelin identified commonalities between political religions movements and ancient Gnosticism. The root of this Gnostic impulse was a sense of alienation; a conceptual approach shared by, amongst others, Arendt, which describes the detachment of man towards society, a feeling of being uprooted, loneliness and atomization. The origin of this alienation lies in the disorder of the world, a disorder which borders on unlimited plurality effectively making man an isolated individual with no common bonds or structures that unify him with his fellow men and in which he is not a part of something that transcends his individual life. Both Arendt and Voegelin link this alienation to the advent of modernity and industrialism.

The effects of this alienation are twofold:

The first is the belief that this disorder can be overcome through the attainment of extraordinary insight into the reality of human existence. Something which Voegelin called Gnostic speculation and which I described in chapter three. Unlike the fascists mentality, the Gnostic speculation is a transcendent point of reference, since it exists regardless of the will of man, yet it is also immanent in that it exists in

²⁷² Ibid.

²⁷³ Schmitt, *Political Theology: Four Chapters on the Concept of Sovereignty*.

reality, it actively shapes life on a real level. As such it attains many of the characteristics of natural law. The problem with this law however, is that it is not being implemented by man, and this is the Gnostic's explanation for the deficiencies of human existence.

The second is the logical consequence of this discovered answer to the worlds ailments, namely the implementation of this speculation in society that will ultimately restore order and harmony to the world, in other words the aim is to "*Immanentize the Eschaton*". The Eschaton refers to the eschatology inherent in the Gnostic speculation. If the world is guided, being shaped and subject to a motion inherent in nature itself by a transcendent yet immanent law, the end result of that that process of motion is Utopia. The Eschaton is therefore that state of mankind in which the Gnostic's law of motion has been allowed to shape mankind into its final end product. It is in fact the end of history itself.²⁷⁴

Political religions are therefore not religious in the sense of acknowledging and centring on the existence of God; rather, 'the transcendent' in their view is not God but history, the law of nature, *volk* or the idea the class. It should be said however that at least in the case of National Socialism, the elite of the movement had a conception of Gnostic speculation that bordered on the truly religious.²⁷⁵ Norman Cohn follows this line of thinking and traces the roots of totalitarian fanaticism back to medieval revolutionary Messianism.²⁷⁶ He sees the common core of the totalitarian

²⁷⁴ "If it is the law of nature to eliminate everything that is harmful and unfit to live, it would mean the end of nature itself if new categories of the harmful and unfit-to-live could not be found." Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, p. 464.

²⁷⁵ Bärsch, *Die Politische Religion Des Nationalsozialismus: Die Religiöse Dimension Der Ns-Ideologie in Den Schriften Von Dieter Eckart, Joseph Goebbels, Alfred Rosenberg Und Adolf Hitler*. Hesemann and Meiser, *Hitlers Religion: Die Fatale Heilslehre Des Nationalsozialismus*.

²⁷⁶ Norman Cohn, *The Pursuit of the Millennium: Revolutionary Millenarians and Mystical Anarchists of the Middle Ages* (London: Pimlico, 2004).

movements as a fanatical will to cleanse the world of evil by driving out the representatives of depravity. According to Cohn this tradition of apocalyptic fanaticism was passed down, secularized and re-activated, to Lenin and Hitler.²⁷⁷ In this case we can duly speak of political theology, the movement takes over the role of the church as the vessel through which divine revelation is propagated amongst the believers and spread amongst the unbelievers. In addition, like the church, the totalitarian political theology has its heretics, its existential enemies which stand in the way of the kingdom of God on earth. Compared to the witch hunts, religious persecutions, inquisitions and holy wars that have marked religious movements, the modern totalitarian movement does not seem all that modern. The main shift is from actual revelation (for as far as one believes in such a thing) to secular Gnostic revelation. Truth is no longer transcendent but is immanent. The leader is no longer a divinely appointed prophet but a man who has gained insight in the formula for self and world salvation, and who simply has been placed in a position of power from which he can accelerate the coming of this secular 'kingdom of God'. He is neither divine nor irreplaceable but rather a functionary of the truth who can be replaced if necessary. Again we should not be deluded by the form in which these movements present themselves. All the leaders of the totalitarian movements of the past were presented to the people as if they were prophets and deity at the same time, the dual body of the king was symbolically reinstated. The cult of personality worship we have come to know from the Nazi and Communist experience is a familiar example. In truth however, these displays of secularized worship were meant for propagandistic usage, they aimed to fill the audience with reverence and devout obedience, beyond whose boundaries lies the domain of the heretic. In reality however, these men were replaceable in terms of their knowledge of the Gnostic speculation. They were more difficult to replace as the

²⁷⁷ Siegel, ed., *The Totalitarian Paradigm after the End of Communism: Towards a Theoretical Reassessment*, p. 119.

grand organizers of the totalitarian movement, a far more practical dimension.

The political movements that derive from this line of thought fill the void between ethics and human action created by secularization and the rise of a scientific, rather than a religious worldview. By filling this void with their chiliastic, messianic and totalistic ideology and by adopting many of the characteristics and instruments of a religion these movements act as an atheist religion or “*ersatz religion*” claiming to be the conduit to a transcendent yet immanent truth. As such these movements are a radical answer to this feeling of alienation; where man was first only one *amongst* many, detached and alone, he can now be one *of* many, a part of a bigger whole that transcends him and gives his life a direction and meaning. It would however be wrong to think that these movements exist to benefit mankind; for sure this is what they would argue in their propaganda which they employ to secure a position of power. The true agenda however is not the immediate benefit of their electorate or the creation of a fascist like ethical state, which deals with problems as they appear, but the creation of *society* which is dominated in every aspect by the totalitarian movement and its ideology. It is the movement’s sole function *not* to attain power for power’s sake, but to forcefully order life to such a degree that unfolding historical or natural processes inherent in the Gnostic speculation are allowed to run freely throughout mankind, shaping it in every way it deems necessary. The totalitarian movement therefore is not concerned with the wellbeing of this generation or the generations to come, whom it considers as mere *raw material* on which to build Utopia, but with the perfection of the human species in its entirety, regardless of location or place in time. This is elaborated in greater detail in the paragraph dealing with the thoughts of Hannah Arendt. Hence Nolte’s argument that there were ‘powerful forces of genuine enthusiasm at work from which the terror and will to annihilate first resulted’ seems intrinsically linked to the nature of the Gnostic speculation.

The willingness to annihilate, the enthusiastic reaction of the masses to the war cry's and calls for extermination of the undesired, those who have been defined as being 'evil', or 'heretical' by the movement, is not particularly new. Since religion for over a number of centuries had seen its influence decline, a new type of religion was able to fill that void. However, upon closer inspection it does not seem like such a great shift. The same division in believer and heretic is still there and the same passion that once created the inquisition was now able to create a secret police. The crusades or jihad raids against infidels do not seem to differ that much from war for *lebensraum* or for the liberation of the international proletariat. Versluis in this respect makes a strong case for this type of comparison when he argues that the inquisition was actually a form of heretic hunting, fuelled by the church's ideology but with the backing of a state apparatus.²⁷⁸ Whereas in medieval times the church had an alliance with the state, the totalitarian movement, as a secular church, has taken over the state apparatus and uses its institutions to further its own goal of the eradication of the heretics to its fullest extent. The hatred for the heretics or enemies of this secular theology, that the indoctrinated masses or at least the vanguard of the movement felt, is thus not quite unimaginable. Yet it should also be noted that prior to the full scale totalitarian indoctrination of the masses, the atmosphere in society itself created the opportunity for genocide.²⁷⁹ Totalitarian movements do not appear out of thin blue air, but usually are merely those movements who are most successful in turning an already existing and broadly accepted civilian mentality into a fully fledged ideological motivated state enterprise. It is often

²⁷⁸ Versluis, *The New Inquisitions: Heretic-Hunting and the Intellectual Origins of Modern Totalitarianism*.

²⁷⁹ See for an example of the voluntary participation of ordinary, un-indoctrinated civilians in the holocaust: Daniel Jonah Goldhagen, *Hitler's Willing Executioners: Ordinary Germans and the Holocaust*, 1st ed. (New York: Knopf: Distributed by Random House, 1996), Christopher R. Browning, *Ordinary Men: Reserve Police Battalion 101 and the Final Solution in Poland*, 1st ed. (New York: HarperCollins, 1992).

the front organization and the parallel organizations, the intellectual friends and fellowtravellers of the totalitarian movement who pave the way for the 'coming out of the shadows' of that totalitarian movement. If one would study the history of the NSDAP, one would find that the groundwork for the Nazi ideology had been laid down 50 years before. The same can be said about the bolshevists and Marx.

The Socio-religious theory thus seems to be quite appropriate for dealing with Islamism in the light of the totalitarian paradigm. Regardless whether one sees Islamism as a misuse of Islam for political reasons, in which case it can be interpreted as an immanent political religion, an *ersatz religion*, or as a political manifestation of Islam, in which it can be analyzed as a revolutionary Messianism, the Socio-religious theorem offers an interesting perspective on Islamist movements. Like Christianity before it, Islamism has its own notions of heretics, existential enemies and historically has already proved its willingness to purge its lands of the physical existence of these enemies.

As such this theory has a lot to offer but it does not seem to offer much explanation in the sense of the institutional and practical dimensions of the evolution of such movements. I therefore find that this model's primary value lies in aiding our understanding of the phenomenon of political religions and their respective ideologies as either a form of "*ersatz religion*" or political expression of religion, and as an explanation for the urge to annihilate, but not as a conceptual model able to deal specifically with totalitarianism as a mode of political organization.

5.2.2 The Historical-Genetic Version

Unlike the socio-religious theory, the historical genetic theory does not concern itself with the similarities between totalitarianism and religion. This theory, as proposed by amongst others Jacob Talmon, and Erik van Ree, traces the origins of totalitarian thought back to Rousseau's conception of a total democracy, entailing complete

agreement between all individual wills and the General Will, and Robespierre's actualization of these principles in the French revolution. This agreement consequently leaves no room for individual dissenting opinions but rather "forces men to be free" through:

the total alienation of each associate, together with all his rights, to the whole community; for, in the first place, as each gives himself absolutely, the conditions are the same for all; and, this being so, no one has any interest in making them burdensome to others.²⁸⁰

By relinquishing the private interest of the individual to the whole community, the contracting parties theoretically attain the power to act as one, thereby liberating the many from the tyranny of the few, ensuring the optimum freedom for society as a whole. This collectivization as a means to attain true freedom automatically and inescapably created its own class of enemies namely those who did not "understand" the wisdom of this contract, and thus refused to relinquish their private rights to the collective. The Hayekian emphasis on the absence of force and insistence on voluntary agreement is reversed. The refusal to cooperate undermines the axiomatic assumed freedom of the whole community which de facto makes those who refuse to comply enemies of the community. As such the social contract attained a majoritarian, egalitarian and dictatorial quality which is epitomized by this classic and ominous quote from Robespierre, which seems to epitomize the totalitarian spirit *avant la lettre*:

If virtue be the spring of a popular government in times of peace, the spring of that government during a revolution is

²⁸⁰ Jean Jacques Rousseau, *the social contract*, 1762, book I part 6.

virtue combined with terror [...] The government in a revolution is the despotism of liberty against tyranny.²⁸¹

Jacob Talmon²⁸², and more contemporary, Erik van Ree²⁸³, interpret totalitarianism as a product of an evolution which started with Rousseau, Robespierre and the Jacobins, and culminated in totalitarianism especially in the form of Communism. In his extensive analysis of the roots of communist legal-political philosophy, Erik van Ree notes that in the eyes of some Jacobins, the failure of Robespierre's dictatorship of Virtue was the result of his failure to abolish private property.

This analysis provided the starting point for the growth of the communist branch from the Jacobin tree. It also fortified the notion of the revolutionary minority dictatorship.

From here on the Jacobin worldview would be elaborated in Marxism and Leninism and thus formed the foundation for Stalinism. Erik van Ree comments that "what Stalinism essentially did was to drive Leninism to its radical conclusions". In so doing, Stalin gave a 'totalitarian interpretation of the united popular will' which was 'practically indistinguishable from the Jacobin ethic of virtue'.²⁸⁴ The revolutionary minority dictatorship, to which I will later refer as the totalitarian vanguard movement, is an indispensable element in the fabrication of the totalitarian society, that is, that society which reflects the totalitarian aspiration of total control and in which all individuals are unable to resist the dictates of the totalitarian movement. Van Ree explains that the pivotal role of this minority dictatorship is

²⁸¹ Maximilien Robespierre, "Report on the Principles of Political Morality: Intended to Direct the National Convention in the Internal Administration of the Republic," in *Western Societies, a Documentary History*, ed. B. Tierney and J. Scott (Minnesota: Knopf, 1984), p. 220.

²⁸² Talmon, *The Origins of Totalitarian Democracy*.

²⁸³ Ree, *The Political Thought of Joseph Stalin: A Study in Twentieth-Century Revolutionary Patriotism*.

²⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 273, 279.

not merely the age old desire to stifle opposition, but a new and thoroughly modern desire to control man's spirits as well. For people whose opinions were deemed to be "formed under a regime of inequality were unsuitable to elect their leaders. The general will ought to be expressed temporarily by an agency other than the popular assemblies. Popular sovereignty ought to be prepared by an educational dictatorship."²⁸⁵

As we will turn to Islamism and the Islamist vanguard movements in Part Two of this study, it will become apparent that this emphasis on the educational aspect of the revolutionary minority dictatorship is shared by Islamist groups. In order to act on behalf of the general will and the 'good of the people' the totalitarian movement does not draw its knowledge from the people, but forces it upon them. The movement already knows what 'the good' is, i.e. the Gnostic speculation, or the Islamists interpretation of Islam, but it cannot enact this formula for self- and world salvation when the population itself is not yet imbued with it. Fabricating Utopia, therefore, first of all requires the education of the new man and the elimination of all those who oppose this transformation of society as a whole. That this ultimately leads to a policy of political violence and repression becomes obvious when we examine Stalin's own words:

the dictatorship of the proletariat does not differ essentially from the dictatorship of any other class, for the proletarian state is a machine for the suppression of the bourgeoisie [...] it is the dictatorship of the exploited majority over the exploiting minority.²⁸⁶

Closely aligned to Talmon and van Ree is Isaiah Berlin who also traces the origin of totalitarian thought back to Rousseau's conception of democracy and the ensuing counter-Enlightenment thinkers of the

²⁸⁵ Ibid., p. 23.

²⁸⁶ Joseph Stalin, The dictatorship of the proletariat, 1939 in: Mussolini, "Fundamental Ideas," p. 212.

Romantic age.²⁸⁷ Berlin proposes that from the Enlightenment came two alternative conceptions of freedom namely negative and positive freedom. Whilst negative freedom coincides with the Hobbesian idea that ‘a free man is he that is not hindered to do what he hath the will to do’, positive freedom refers to the freedom that men need to fulfil their potential.²⁸⁸ Berlin was highly suspicious of positive freedom since it could easily be conceived in a fashion whereby the state ‘forced men to be free’ through social engineering. In totalitarian systems negative freedom is minimized whilst positive freedom in its Rousseauian interpretation is enforced to the fullest, in which the full force of the movement is dedicated towards making men ‘free’. Totalitarianism in this sense is a remarkable combination between romanticism on the one hand and scientific engineering of society on the other. Whilst the totalitarian movements in their propaganda appealed greatly to romantic notions in practice their actions betray the most perverted form of a scientific approach to human nature.

What is striking is the similarity and at the same time dissimilarity between the totalitarian conception of Rousseau’s General Will and Robespierre’s terror as virtue on the one hand, and the fascist mentality on the other. Fascism, as we saw earlier, is a form of ultra-nationalism in that it places the highest value on the group, while at the same time moulding them together in the social body which is the state. The fascist’s ethical state therefore is the representative of the people regardless of their particularity. Transgressions are sanctioned by terror, but terror never becomes the institute of the General Will as such, terror is not the prime virtue of the ethical state, it is merely a function of it used to eradicate opposition but not to transform mankind as such. In that respect it bears little resemblance to the Gnostic speculation as we will see shortly. Furthermore, whilst the fascist state proclaims to be the social body of the people, and claims

²⁸⁷ Berlin and Hardy, *Political Ideas in the Romantic Age: Their Rise and Influence on Modern Thought*.

²⁸⁸ Isaiah Berlin, *Two Concepts of Liberty* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1958).

to function as the effecting agent of its General Will, it is essentially highly elitist. Fascism does not claim to be the rule of the majority, nor is it even interested in the majority.²⁸⁹

Notwithstanding the fascist disdain for majoritarianism, there are a number of ways in which we can interpret the General Will. It either is truly the General Will *of* the people, however that might be articulated, or it is the will of the people as it *should* be, by which I mean that it refers to some sort of pseudo-transcendent principle such as justice or the Gnostic speculation, or it is the immanent will of the leadership which is supposed to imbue the people with the same values, as in fascism. Whilst totalitarian regimes objectify the General Will in their representation of the Gnostic speculation, fascist do so in the representation of the will of the leadership, which according to their own statements is separate from the actual will of the majority. Furthermore, another difference between fascism and totalitarianism is that fascism never develops a program or ontological worldview through which the General Will can truly be actualized and although it emphasizes a positive conception of freedom, it doesn't seem to implement it in any structural way. It stands to reason however that both the fascists and the totalitarian movements interpret the concept of the General Will as being detached from the people themselves. Whilst in fascism it is supplanted by the will of the leadership *over* the people for the perceived benefit *of* the people, totalitarianism's concept of the General Will does not emanate *from* the people through their collective choices, or from the will of the

²⁸⁹ I repeat Mussolini's earlier quoted description of fascism: "fascism is therefore opposed to that form of democracy which equates a nation to the majority, lowering it to the level of the largest number; but it is the purest form of democracy if the nation be considered-as it should be- from the point of view of quality rather than quantity, as an idea, the mightiest because the most ethical, the most coherent, the truest, expressing itself in a people as the conscience and the will of the few, if not indeed, of one, and ending to express itself in the conscience of and the will of the mass," Mussolini: *The Doctrine Of fascism* in: Mussolini, "Fundamental Ideas," p. 221.

leadership, but it is present as a natural law, intrinsic to being itself, and to which the movement and the leadership itself is subservient. Considering this I would suggest that the General Will as represented by Robespierre in his writings is the closest aligned to the totalitarian concept.²⁹⁰ It stands to reason that the third alternative; the General Will as actually coming from the population and existing for the population has never been achieved by either the fascist, totalitarian movements or Robespierre himself.

The close connection between Robespierre's Jacobin revolution and totalitarian revolution seems to have found its way well beyond the borders of Europe. When one reads the writings of Kim Il Sung, Pol Pot, Sayyid Qutb, Zawahiri or Khomeini, the same type of language can be easily identified and is the running theme of their respective works. The concept of the General Will as the ultimate representation of 'the good', the suppression of the individual, and the relentless destruction of the enemies of this type of 'freedom' by a vanguard of revolutionaries through revolutionary terror is all too striking to be disregarded. This theoretical approach therefore seems to be a very valid one and will later on find use as we try to evaluate the totalitarian content of Islamist movements. Although these movements may never have heard of Robespierre or the Jacobins, and may have developed a similar theory all on their own, its use of the same matrix of concepts is a clear sign of at least some structural similarity.

5.2.3 The Political Science-Structural Version

This version can be seen as the "classic" theory of totalitarianism. Its most eminent proponents are the aforementioned Hannah Arendt, Juan J. Linz, and especially Carl Friedrich and Zbigniew Brzezinski. In essence this theory makes a comparison between the distinguishing attributes of 'totalitarian' and 'free' states and consequently places

²⁹⁰ Robespierre and Žižek, *Virtue and Terror*.

Communism and National Socialism on the same side.²⁹¹ As I have said earlier, it deserves mention that this approach has remained highly controversial during the cold war era mainly because it classifies Communism in the same category as National Socialism. This was very unpopular amongst left leaning academia which rather made a distinction between capitalist totalitarianism and its direct opponent namely Marxist free states.

To complicate the already daunting task of making a taxonomy of totalitarianism, I will divide the political science structuralist theory into two camps. For the further use of this chapter, I shall call these the two schools of totalitarian theories. These consist of the empirical theories, headed by Friedrich, Brzezinski and Linz on the one hand, and the normative political-philosophical theories, headed by Arendt, Lefort and Voegelin on the other.

The focus of the normative school is on fundamentally different evaluations of concepts such as freedom, individuality, pluralism, peace and the seat of power, law and knowledge by totalitarian and non-totalitarian orders of being. This difference in the use of such common concept will become all the more important when we come to the phenomenon of doublespeak and in particular, doublespeak as employed by Islamist movements. The normative theories try to describe the intellectual essence and roots of totalitarianism. We have already seen some of these names in the other theories described by Cohn and I will focus myself here primarily on Arendt and secondarily on Lefort.

The empirical school offers concrete political, economical and legal criteria to which a totalitarian regime ought to comply and as such complements the normative school which for the greater part lacks

²⁹¹ Nolte uses the term fascism instead of National Socialism, as I have explained previously, these two concepts are often intermingled but in my opinion are two different things, often times even diametrically opposed to one another.

such criteria. Both of these schools have different strengths and weaknesses of which we need to be aware, if we are to compare Islamist movements with totalitarian movements. The deficit of the empirical school is that it's mainly interested in full blown totalitarian movements at the height of their power. The deficit of the normative school is that it does not have the clear criteria of the empirical school.

In order to clarify some essential boundaries that separate full blown totalitarian movements from non-totalitarian forms of political organization I will start by a brief description of the concrete criteria offered by the Empirical school of thought.

5.3 The state-centred empirical approach

The starting point is Brzezinski's definition of 1962. It offers an essentialist definition without the clear criteria which later empirical theories would have:

Totalitarianism is a new form of government falling into the general classification of dictatorship, a system in which technologically advanced instruments of political power are wielded without restraint by centralized leadership of an elite movement for the purpose of affecting a total social revolution including the conditioning of man on the basis of certain arbitrary ideological assumptions, proclaimed by the leadership in an atmosphere of coerced unanimity of the entire population.²⁹²

In 1965, Friedrich and Brzezinski in their authoritative book *Totalitarian dictatorship and autocracy*, defined totalitarianism by means of a six point list of criteria which reads as follows:

²⁹² Brzezinski, *Ideology and Power in Soviet Politics*. Quoted from Linz, *Totalitarian and Authoritarian Regimes*, p. 66. Zbigniew Brzezinski (b. 1928) served as United States National Security Advisor to President Jimmy Carter from 1977 to 1981.

- 1: an autocratic ideology
- 2: a dictatorially led single unified mass party
- 3: a policy of terror (after the death of Stalin changed to 'a fully developed secret police')
- 4: a monopoly on the means of communication
- 5: a monopoly on arms
- 6: a centrally-run economy²⁹³

Friedrich made a variant on this definition in 1969²⁹⁴

- 1: a totalist ideology
- 2: a single party committed to this ideology and usually led by one man, the dictator
- 3: a fully developed secret police and three kinds of monopoly; or more precisely monistic control; namely that of Mass communications, Operational weapons, and All organizations including economic ones, thus involving a centrally planned economy

Brzezinski's 1962 definition already explains some of the concepts used by Friedrich and him in the 1965 and Friedrich's 1969 definition. To end the overview of the development of the empirical school's definition, I will include Linz' definition from his 1975 book "*Totalitarian and authoritarian regimes*" which incorporates the

²⁹³ Friedrich and Brzezinski, *Totalitarian Dictatorship and Autocracy*.

²⁹⁴ Ibid., p. 126. quoted from Linz, *Totalitarian and Authoritarian Regimes*, p. 65. Carl Friedrich (1901-1984) is widely considered to be one of the foremost political theorists in the area of totalitarianism.

previous definitions from Brzezinski and Friedrich and expands on them:

1. There is a monistic but not monolithic centre of power, and whatever pluralism of institutions or groups exists derives its legitimacy from that centre, is largely controlled by it, and is mostly a political creation rather than an outgrowth of the dynamics of the pre-existing society.
2. There is an exclusive, autonomous, and more or less intellectually elaborate ideology with which the ruling group or leader, and the party serving the leaders, identify and which they use as a basis for policies or manipulate to legitimize them. The ideology has some boundaries beyond which lies heterodoxy that does not remain unsanctioned. The ideology goes beyond a particular program or definition of the boundaries of legitimate political action, to provide, presumably, some ultimate meaning, sense of historical purpose, and interpretation of social reality.
3. Citizen participation in and active mobilization for political and collective tasks are encouraged, demanded, rewarded, and channelled through a single party and many monopolistic secondary groups. Passive obedience and apathy retreat into the role of “parochials” and “subjects”, characteristic of many authoritarian regimes, are considered undesirable by the rulers.²⁹⁵

All of these definitions are clearly designed to analyze a totalitarian movement at the height of its power and evolution. As such they offer a valuable analytical tool for evaluating the totalitarian content of self-proclaimed Islamic states, such as Iran, Saudi-Arabia or Sudan. I

²⁹⁵ Linz, *Totalitarian and Authoritarian Regimes*, p. 75.

will, in so far as such a thing is possible, briefly discuss the points from Linz' theory in the same way as I did with his definition of authoritarianism and use the concepts derived from his definition of authoritarianism and Arendt's cluster of analytical concepts.

5.3.1 Linz' definition of totalitarianism

First point: The distribution of power

There is a monistic but not monolithic centre of power, and whatever pluralism of institutions or groups exists derives its legitimacy from that centre, is largely controlled by it, and is mostly a political creation rather than an outgrowth of the dynamics of the pre-existing society.²⁹⁶

A monistic centre of power means that there is no plurality in the governing layer, all political power is firmly lodged in the party which controls the state, and the party itself is headed by the leader, usually the dictator or more accurately, the totalitarian leader.²⁹⁷ The phase in which there still existed plurality in the form of opposition or competition for the seat of power has been passed and the position of the leader is undisputed. In authoritarian regimes, as we have seen, the authoritarian ruler still has to take into consideration the demands of the interest groups that support him. In totalitarianism this is most definitely not the case. All political power rests with him and him alone. If we look at the position of Mao, Stalin or Hitler, the meaning of monistic becomes clear. Although these leaders depended on their leadership core to carry out their commands, the leadership core itself only had power insofar as the leader gave them that power. As the frequent purges that typify totalitarianism suggest, the leadership core or entourage is highly expendable and holds no autonomous source of power, nor is it, due to the frequent purges,

²⁹⁶ Ibid.

²⁹⁷ "Only when the party organization is superior or equal to the government can we speak of a totalitarian system." Ibid., p. 94.

able to form a circle of power of their own. If we apply this definition to, for example, a democracy such as the Netherlands, we would see that the leadership is highly transitory, highly pluralistic and due to a division of power there is no monistic centre of power to speak of. In full blown totalitarian systems all power, be it the legislative, executive, judiciary or military is vested solely in the leader.

The relation between movement, party and state

Whilst we until now have spoken mainly of the totalitarian movement, it is imperative to make the distinction between the movement, the party and the state. The term 'movement' refers to the entire totalitarian organization, with all its sub-organizations aimed at mobilization and penetration of society, of which the party is the central element. Linz comments on the nature of the totalitarian party:

The totalitarian party, as a unique type of organization, distinguishes most clearly the modern forms of autocracy from any traditional absolutist regime and from a great variety of other nondemocratic governments [...] The theoretical model of the totalitarian party has been widely imitated, but only under very special circumstances can we say that the single party is a totalitarian party.²⁹⁸

Adolf Hitler commented on the relationship between the state and the party, which is notorious for its ambiguity, as follows: "the state represents no end but a means, the precondition for the existence of a higher humanity is not the state but the nation possessing the necessary ability."²⁹⁹ The nation or *volk* is in the example of the Nazi's

²⁹⁸ Ibid., pp. 79-80.

²⁹⁹ "It is therefore the first obligation of the new movement standing on the ground of folkish world view to make sure that the conception of the nature and purpose of the state attains a uniform and clear character. Thus the basic realization is: that the state represents no end but a means. It is, to be sure, the premise for the formation of higher human culture, but not its cause, which lies exclusively in the existence of a race capable of culture [...]"

represented by the party. It is therefore the party which must control the state.

What we see here in the world of Adolf Hitler, and it was not different in Stalinist USSR or in other totalitarian societies, is the view on the state not as an end, as it is in fascism, but as a means to a higher end; the purification of the race, the classless society et cetera. It is important to remember that in the Utopia of the Marxist ideology, the state was supposed to wither away and die. The conquest of the state is therefore not the central aim of the totalitarian movement but merely a phase in its road to completing its ideological goals. When the party, as the political centre of activity of the totalitarian movement, has successfully eradicated opposition, it begins its takeover of the pre-totalitarian state mechanism. Only when the state is subordinate to the party, when it no longer has any autonomous existence outside of the party, can the totalitarian appropriation of political power be deemed successful.

The superiority of the state apparatus, even when manned by party members, characterizes a pre-totalitarian phase of the regime, a failure of the totalitarian drive, as in the case of Italy, or the transition to a post-totalitarian system.³⁰⁰

The monistic centre of power to which Linz refers is therefore not the state, but the party, at which head stands the totalitarian leader. What then is the exact function of the party when it has successfully played its role in obtaining control over the state?

The primacy of the party

Firstly; "foremost among its functions is the politicization of the masses, their incorporation, in-cadrating, integration, conscientization, and conversion, and their reciprocals, the detachment from other bonds, the destruction of the autonomy of

thus the precondition for the existence of a higher humanity is not the state but the nation possessing the necessary ability" Ibid., pp. 80,95.

³⁰⁰ Ibid., p. 94.

other organizations, uprooting of other values and de-socialization. It achieves this through a mixture of education, propaganda and coercion.”³⁰¹

Secondly; the party functions as the centre for recruitment, testing, selecting and training of the new political elite.³⁰²

Thirdly; another major function is to control the variety of specialized functions that can become independent, non-political centres of power.³⁰³ We should understand that the origins of the party as a vanguard organization have imbued it with a history of secrecy and infiltration. This third function is the institutionalization of this history in the party itself. Always afraid of conspiracies directed against the party and its leadership, the party itself has its own security service, such as the *sicherheitsdienst* or SD under the Nazi's, *Angkar* under Pol Pot or the *NKVD* in communist USSR. Its triple function is to spy on society, to spy on those organizations that are remnants from the old society that were not destroyed in the takeover by the totalitarian movement, such as the army, and lastly to spy on the party and its sub-organizations itself. As much as the totalitarian party was hostile to everyone and everything that did not identify itself with the movement, so it is hostile to everyone and anything that might potentially become a threat to its ideological integrity. We could draw a biological analogy here and call it a hyper-aggressive auto-immune system, constantly searching for new categories of enemies, theoretical or actual. What is important to remember about these three functions of the party is that the first two are expressly named by the Islamist ideologists we will come to analyze in the second part of this book. The third function is implied *inter alia*. It is most interesting to note that these Islamist ideologues feel very little hesitation in proclaiming this aspiration to have a movement which is set up along these three criteria.

³⁰¹ *Ibid.*, p. 91.

³⁰² *Ibid.*, p. 92.

³⁰³ *Ibid.*, p. 93.

The importance of parallel and front organizations

The adjective, 'not monolithic' means that although all power rests in the leader, the ranks beneath him are not organized in the same manner. There is no single office that deals with legal issues, police issues or military issues but rather, we can see a vast multiplication of offices. The Latin phrase "Divide et Impera" is a core element of totalitarian organization. Totalitarian organization involves a great deal of multiplication of offices. This process of duplication is twofold: It is firstly executed in society as a whole; usually in the phase in which the movement still has to compete for power and is focused on mobilization, meaning it creates within its own ranks duplicates of organizations in the non-totalitarian world. The reason for this is twofold.

The external dimension

Before the movement assumed power it had to compete with other political and un-political forces in society. One way to deal with this problem was to create copies of official organizations, known as parallel organizations, within its own ranks. The parallel organizations represented an alternative to the traditional existing non-totalitarian organizations. Unlike the latter, the totalitarian parallel organizations are imbued with the totalitarian spirit whilst maintaining a friendly unorthodox and respectable appearance. Especially the front organizations are designed to mislead the audience about the true nature of the totalitarian movement. The difference between the front and parallel organizations is that the latter will be incorporated into the movement when power is attained whilst the front organizations will largely be disbanded or used as emissaries. Both function as a means of drawing the masses into the movements, acquainting them with some of its more benign beliefs, and in the background, disrupting the social fabric of the non-totalitarian society. This can vary from charitable, cultural and educational organizations which provide services under the banner of the party, to the more violent means of disrupting society. Take for instance the establishment of the Nazi's Sturmabteilung, the SA. Established as a

Para-military police force to oppose communist groups it quickly assumed the task of copying certain police and army functions, but outside of state control and as an organization of the totalitarian movement itself. The copying of non-totalitarian organizations as a means of penetrating society, undermining traditional forms of political and non-political organization, mass mobilization and rendering acceptable the particular strand of totalitarian thought, could expand to any sort of organization. In the end, it was the goal of the movement to have a copy of nearly every conceivable type of organization but shaped in its totalitarian image. In so doing, when the movement finally took over the state, it didn't *need* to fill its offices with party members, it already had a fully functioning state apparatus within its own organization which was developed by and staffed with exclusively party-members. As such, the movement ensured itself of a loyal collection of parallel organizations that could replace the state's and the traditional social organizations and institutions overnight. After assuming power, the state's original organizations were purged, staffed with side-tracked party members, and its most important organs replaced by the parallel organizations. Likewise, in society itself, the already existing non-totalitarian social organizations would fall victim to the parallel organizations of the movement which now claimed exclusivity. As such both the realm of the political and the realm of society itself were purged of non-totalitarian influences.

The internal dimension

After the takeover of the state apparatus, the party continued this process of duplication within its own ranks. Through this multiplication of offices the leader ensures that no single office can ever become a competitor to his power, or that he has to rely on a particular office for his commands to be executed. Instead of, for example, one single police force, there could be three. By constantly shifting the amount of power the leader invests in one of these offices he ensures that the other two can be purged and his command will still be executed, as we can see, for example, in the killing of Ernst

Rohm in 1934, one year after the Nazi takeover of official state powers. By repeating this process ad infinitum all possibility for the organization of opposition from within the movement itself is eliminated. Furthermore, since the leader is the only one who actually knows at any given time which office is imbued with which amount of capability, the leader becomes omniscient and omnipotent. In addition, the citizens themselves can never be sure which office represents the true will of the leadership, thus ensuring a constant state of insecurity which, as we will see, is another hallmark of totalitarian organization. One should notice that whilst the totalitarian movement proclaims to be the salvation for all those who feel alone and powerless to change their life, it actually brings about a very much increased and purposefully designed sense of loneliness and impotence.

The result is that all official organizations in a totalitarian state, barred perhaps for the most harmless, are an outgrowth of the totalitarian movement and not of the pre-existing, non-totalitarian society. The multiplication of these organizations ensures that whilst the centre of power is monolithic, the party with at its head the leader, the organization of that monistic centre is non-monolithic.

Second point: Ideology

There is an exclusive, autonomous, and more or less intellectually elaborate ideology with which the ruling group or leader, and the party serving the leaders, identify and which they use as a basis for policies or manipulate to legitimize them. The ideology has some boundaries beyond which lies heterodoxy that does not remain unsanctioned. The ideology goes beyond a particular program or definition of the boundaries of legitimate political action, to provide, presumably, some ultimate meaning, sense of historical.³⁰⁴

³⁰⁴ Ibid., p. 75.

Here we can see the implementation of the previously mentioned Gnostic speculation. The exclusivity of the ideology indicates that no other form of ideology, mentality, theology or any other means of validating and legitimizing political power is allowed.³⁰⁵ The ideology is the corner stone of every single aspect of society and thus permeates society and the individual to the fullest. In that sense the ideology not only occupies, in the form of the party, but also appropriates the seat of power, law and knowledge. The adjective 'autonomous' indicates that this ideology rests solely on itself and is for instance not dependant on validation by external doctrines such as those provided for by the pre-totalitarian church. As we have discussed in the paragraph about authoritarianism, authority, the inner conviction of the citizen that its rulers should be followed, cannot be established by coercion or violence. It needs to be a truly inner conviction. The invention of a political religion or *ersatz religion* intends to copy not only the salvation aspects of a religion, but also a religious claim to authority based. Whereas in a religion, this claim can be formed on the basis of divinely revealed scripture, the totalitarian movement bases it on its knowledge of a strictly non-metaphysical transcendence, i.e. racial theory or dialectical materialism. In other words, the totalitarian movement is the prophet of a new, non-metaphysical transcendence which it seeks to immanentize. The Gnostic speculation intends to convince, if

³⁰⁵ Hesemann and Bärsch in their respective studies of the religious aspects of National Socialism have clearly shown that the Nazi's even tried to copy the institution of the church, be it protestant or catholic, into a new totalitarian version called "positive Christianity", a form of Christianity purged from its Jewish connotations and tailor made to exalt the Aryan race as the true carrier of Christianity. Hesemann and Meiser, *Hitlers Religion: Die Fatale Heilslehre Des Nationalsozialismus*, P. Alter, C. E. Barsch, and P. Berghoff, *Die Konstruktion Der Nation Gegen Die Juden* (W. Fink, 1999), Bärsch, *Die Politische Religion Des Nationalsozialismus: Die Religiöse Dimension Der Ns-Ideologie In Den Schriften Von Dieter Eckart, Joseph Goebbels, Alfred Rosenberg Und Adolf Hitler*, ———, *Der Junge Goebbels: Erlösung Und Vernichtung*.

need be by force, the citizenry of the historical necessity of the totalitarian movement's agenda. Unlike the authoritarian and fascist mentality, and unlike moral or political ideals, totalitarian ideologies are well defined, pseudo-scientific programs intended to provide a detailed account of how life should be organized. I will explain the phenomenon of the totalitarian ideology more in depth shortly in my description of Arendt's influence on totalitarianism research. Unlike the authoritarian and fascist mentality, and wide array of moral and political ideas we all know, totalitarian ideologies demand an influence on everyday life that breaks down the barrier between the public and private. It removes all the barriers between the individual and the collective and render all equally powerless to resist the full transformation of the old non-totalitarian into the 'new man'. This is where the duplication of all forms of social organization plays an important role for these are the carriers which imbue society with the totalitarian ideology. Failure to comply to the edicts of this ideology is equal to active opposition in the same way as the private interest of the citizens hamper the functioning of the General Will in Rousseau's and particularly Robespierre's interpretation of the just society. Those who choose to disregard this totalist concept of the organization of life transgress against the General Will and must therefore be 'forced to be free' or simply eliminated since they oppose the proper functioning of the totalitarian movement. In effect, the ideology forms as the basis for the movements claim to authority, legitimizes its rule and forms the basis for the movement's conception of positive liberty and Utopian engineering.

Third point: Mobilization

Citizen participation in and active mobilization for political and collective tasks are encouraged, demanded, rewarded, and channelled through a single party and many monopolistic secondary groups. Passive obedience and apathy, retreat into

the role of “parochials” and “subjects”, characteristic of many authoritarian regimes, are considered undesirable by the rulers.³⁰⁶

Unlike authoritarian regimes which hope to instil some sort of passivism or apathy in large parts of the ruled, totalitarian regimes build on the fascist conception and exaltation of the individuals and collective ‘will to power’.³⁰⁷ Demanding total compliance with the movement’s ideology means that every citizen who does not wholeheartedly surrender himself to the ideology and voluntarily participates in the advance of the totalitarian cause thereby betrays lack of ideological fervour and in effect becomes a traitor to that cause. By using the methods of mass mobilization pioneered by the fascist, the totalitarian movement’s demands that all citizens become totally submerged in the totalitarian ideology and way of life. To ensure that all those who were not members of the totalitarian movements before its ascent to power are reformed into true totalitarian men, the movement monopolizes all of societies social and political organizations; youth movements, labour unions, cultural organizations and even religious organizations are either eliminated or supplanted by the movements own parallel organizations, thereby ensuring its total grasp on society and eliminating all forms of pre-existing non-totalitarian organization. Directed by, and owing their very existence to the movements leadership, these new organizations too, undergo the multiplication process that ensures that no one really knows who is next to be purged, thereby ensuring an ever increasing need to show one’s fanatical enthusiasm for the movements ideology and leadership. The mass displays of support we have come to know for instance from North-Korea should therefore

³⁰⁶ Linz, *Totalitarian and Authoritarian Regimes*, p. 75.

³⁰⁷ “The terror of tyranny reaches an end once it has paralyzed or even totally dispensed with all public life and made private individuals out of all citizens, stripping them of interest in and a connection with public affairs. Tyrannical terror has come to an end when it has imposed a graveyard peace on a country” Arendt, “Mankind and Terror,” p. 298.

be seen as a frantic effort on the side of the people to show their enthusiasm for the party, lest they be judged to be wanting. The permeation of this principle goes so far as to demand of everyone to be an active agent of the party, which means, that one is not only encouraged but obliged under the penalty of severe punishment, to inform on family, friends, relatives or co-workers whose ideological dedication seems to fall short of the levels proscribed.

Whilst on the one hand the population is 'encouraged', or threatened if you like, to display ever increasing levels of enthusiasm and passionate support, the party, in another example of its duplication of offices, also actively strives to imbue society with the infrastructure of its secret police on a decentralized level. It achieves this through the appointment of 'a large number of functionaries close to the masses, the heads of cells and local organizations', leaders of local groups, cell leaders and block leaders. Linz gives us a figure to indicate the level of this decentralization in Nazi Germany of 1939:

28,367 leaders of local groups, 89,378 cell leaders, 463,048
block leaders³⁰⁸

In fact, this system of voluntary denouncers and decentralized police agents ran so well that the Nazi's secret police: "could get along with a ratio of about one police officer for ten thousand to fifteen thousand citizens."³⁰⁹ With mass mobilization ensured by the complete penetration of society by the party, which is the central coordinating centre of the movement at large, we can now say that party is not an entity which sits *outside* of society, the party *is* society.

5.3.2 Summary

The empirical school's theory offers valuable insight into the structural organization of the totalitarian movements once it has gained its position of absolute power, and in some respects also with

³⁰⁸ Linz, *Totalitarian and Authoritarian Regimes*, p. 84.

³⁰⁹ Paxton, *The Anatomy of Fascism*, p. 133.

regard to its path to power. Pluralism in both the governing layer and in society in general has been obliterated through the purges, elimination and supplanting of all pre-existing forms of organization. Through a consistent multiplication of organizations and offices, and the introduction of policing on every level of the state, party and society, the totalitarian movement in this stage has successfully implemented its goal of elimination of plurality as such. All power is now vested in the omniscient and omnipotent leader from whom all power, law and knowledge of right and wrong emanates.

Responsibility is of course non-existent since the movement is merely the channel between the immanentized Gnostic speculative concept of 'truth' and the vast body of the masses who will become its unfailing carrier. The connection to Robespierre and the Jacobins is clear; all individual interests can only collide with the interest of the General Will which in turn is wholly divorced from any real world experience. The totalitarian movement, as the embodiment of this General Will is not interested in being accountable towards those who are being ruled, but is merely interested in the fabrication of that perfectly just order, Utopia. Those citizens who would demand some sort of responsibility from the movement thereby indicate their faltering enthusiasm and support for that movement, thereby revealing themselves to be potential defectors, heretics or apostates.

The relationship towards the state is also made clear; the state is not the object of the totalitarian grab to power, but merely an instrument in that pursuit, a necessary step in its evolution. If we contrast totalitarianism according to this theory with fascism, we can see that the differences are as follows:

The state, unlike in fascism, is merely an instrument of the party and the party, which is the heart of the movement, needs to subjugate the state apparatus before we can speak of a totalitarian society. The party also has to direct the movement as a whole in such a direction that all facets of the pre-existing non-totalitarian order are obliterated, integrated or replaced by totalitarian copies. This too is

an ambition that is outside of the scope of fascism, which is content in having some sort of power balance with interest groups. In totalitarian societies, there are no interest groups, there is *only* the party. Furthermore, the guiding principle to action of totalitarianism is the ideology which generally consists of a pseudo-scientific, autonomous guide book to perfection and as such, amounts to far more than a mere mentality. Totalitarianism does however appeal to such a mentality but only insofar as it aids its attempts at mass mobilization, it does not however, form the core of its beliefs.

5.4 The Normative political-philosophical approach of Arendt

The analysis of the totalitarian phenomenon by means of the normative political-philosophical approach is structured as follows. As we have seen, Voegelin construes the Gnostic's search for order along the six following points:

1. The Gnostic is dissatisfied with his situation;
2. The belief that the drawbacks of the situation can be attributed to the fact that the world is intrinsically poorly organized;
3. The belief that salvation from the evil of the world is possible;
4. The belief that the order of being will have to be changed in a historical process;
5. The belief that this salvational act is possible through man's own effort;
6. It is the task of the Gnostic to seek out the prescription for such a change in the order of being and discover the formula for self and world salvation.³¹⁰

³¹⁰ Voegelin, "Ersatz Religion," p. 298.

I will use this schematic as the blueprint for a model of totalitarianism with which we can compare the different Islamist ideologies. In order to do that, each of these six points will be clarified by reference to the work of Arendt, Lefort and Voegelin. Whilst the empirical model gives us a static snapshot idea of the totalitarian movement at the height of power, this model will give us a model of a dynamic evolving movement. Both of the models are true, and each has its benefits and drawbacks. The static empirical model is ideally suited to verify certain institutional criteria in full blown totalitarian movements but offers little in understanding in terms of the how and why of totalitarianism. The dynamic model fulfils this need whilst at the same time describing the movement at the height of its power as well, albeit without the institutional criteria. In my opinion, this dynamic model is better suited to deal with Islamist movements and ideologies and will therefore be used in the second part of this book.

	Voegelin	reformulated	As a paragraph
1	The Gnostic is dissatisfied with his situation	The fall from Eden and the identification of the formula for self and world salvation, the ideology	Ideological thinking
2	The belief that the drawbacks of the situation can be attributed to the fact that the world is intrinsically poorly organized	The observation that the world is in disorder, the fall from Eden	The law of nature or history and the law of movement
3	The belief that salvation from the evil of the world is possible	The reasons for the fall from Eden: the abandonment of the edicts of the ideology and the existence of existential enemies	idem
4	The belief that the order of being will have to be changed in a historical process	The belief that salvation from the evil of the world and a return to Eden is possible	From fascism to totalitarianism
5	The belief that this salvational act is possible through man's own effort	Changing the order of being in a historical process: manufacturing mankind according to the edicts of the ideology	Ideology and terror
6	It is the task of the Gnostic to seek out the prescription for such a change in the order of being and discover the formula for self and world salvation	The belief that this salvational act is not only a possibility but an existential requirement imposed upon mankind by the law of nature or history and the law of movement.	Idem

In order to make this model work a small reformulation is necessary. As we saw in chapter three, the dissatisfaction of the Gnostic is a result of the pluralism, anomie and loneliness of man in the modern society. The fascist movements we discussed in chapter four showed us that a belief in salvation, through political organization was being effectuated. This culminated in the formation of totalitarian thought and action. In order for me to lucidly progress through this schematic I

will therefore reformulate it in the following manner. The left column indicates Voegelin's original schematic. The middle column shows my reformulation of that schematic which starts with the identification of the formula for self and world salvation rather than ending with it. The reason for this is simple; the life of the totalitarian movement begins not with the search for order but with the discovery of the formula for that order. The totalitarian movement is in essence a movement built around the desire to implement this formula and thus this point is the starting point of our reformulated schematic. When we analyze the Islamist movements this schematic will also start with their specific formula for self- and world salvation, Islam, since this is the entire *raison d'être* of these movements. On the right column is the name of the paragraph in which I will discuss the topic at hand.

Each of these points will be explained by use of Arendt's, Lefort's and Voegelin's theories on totalitarianism. I will however use the theories of Arendt as the guiding motif, augmented by Lefort and Voegelin. The reason for laying the emphasis on Arendt is that she was the first person to write retrospectively and all-inclusively on the totalitarian phenomenon. Her main work 'The origins of Totalitarianism' starts with an overview of 17th, 18th and 19th century thought and socio-economic developments and in particular the role of imperialism and anti-Semitism in the formation of totalitarian thought. It then proceeds to describe the rise to power of the totalitarian movement, mostly in the appearance of National Socialism, from its starting point of a revolutionary vanguard party, all the way to the height of its power when it carried out its experiments in total domination. Lefort has a more limited approach, but uses much of the same analytical tools and emphasizes the Communist example. I return to him later, when we describe totalitarianism at the height of power, and in its post-revolutionary phase since that is what Lefort describes more than Arendt. In my analyses of the thoughts of Arendt and Lefort, I will make periodic references to Voegelin's Gnostic search for order. The different points of his schematic are thus explained by the

theories of the normative school of thought of Arendt and Lefort, and substantiated by the empirical theory, thus forming an integrated whole which can be applied to the study of Islamism.

In order to bridge the gap between theory and practice I will intermittently refer to the practical examples history has provided through the well documented evolution of the National Socialist movement and the communist movements in Stalinist Russia and Pol Pot's Khmer rouge regime.

5.4.1 Ideological thinking

I have mentioned the words ideology and ideological thinking a number of times, but what does it actually mean? It is often used to indicate idealism but as I have stated in the general introduction and will elaborate here, idealism and ideology are two very different things. One can negotiate or peacefully co-exist with an idealist, but not with an ideologue. An Ideology is the hallmark of totalitarian thinking, and the first principle of totalitarian action.

The formula for self and world salvation is derived from a process which Arendt calls ideological thinking. According to Arendt, ideological thinking is a process in which a strict logical deduction is applied to an axiomatic premise, either a Gnostic speculation or a divine revelation. This deduction produces a binding and totalistic program for political action aimed at the fabrication of an entirely new and monolithically virtuous society which necessitates the widespread and perpetual use of terror. I will explain this in the coming paragraphs. In this sense we can understand why so many have drawn the roots of totalitarianism to the Jacobines as exemplified in Robespierre's statement:

The attribute of popular government in a revolution is at one and the same time virtue and terror. Virtue without terror is fatal; terror without virtue is impotent. The terror is nothing

but justice, prompt, severe, inflexible; it is thus an emanation of virtue.³¹¹

Arendt defines totalitarianism as:

a system of government whose essence is terror and whose principal of action is the logicity of ideological thinking.³¹²

What Arendt means by ‘the logicity of ideological thinking’ is the following; an ideology according to Arendt³¹³:

[..] is quite literally what its name indicates: it is the logic of an idea. Its subject matter is history, to which the ‘idea’ is applied; the result of this application is not a body of

³¹¹ Robespierre and Zizek, *Virtue and Terror*, p. 115.

³¹² Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, p. 474.

³¹³ Perhaps one of the greatest contributions of Arendt to the discussion of totalitarianism is her use of strict definitions and strict descriptions of particular concepts which she uses in her analytical conceptual matrix. As I have already stated before, the term totalitarianism itself has been the victim of inflation due to its being used to describe everything from dictatorships to fascism. Arendt’s strict adherence to accurate descriptions of concepts can only help to further delineate the true nature of totalitarianism and I will try to integrate it into these chapters as correctly as possible. Having said that, it is important to note the difference between ‘idealism’ and ‘ideology’. All too often quite innocuous strands of political thought, such as liberalism or social-democracy, are labelled as ‘ideologies’ whilst in fact they cannot be seen as such if we adopt Arendt’s definition of an ideology. Rather, we should refer to these strands of political thought as idealism, since the way in which these idealistic parties try to shape society to conform to their ‘ideal’ is not by violence, coercion, indoctrination or extermination of all unwanted enemies, but by political discourse, dialogue, compromise and elections. Ideologies, in the definition of Arendt, do not allow for such niceties since they are axiomatic, unalterable dictates of a higher order than human will or ratio. We can know these dictates, we can even understand them, but we cannot rewrite them if we are to take them seriously for they are imbedded in the reality of human existence in the same way as the attributes of the divine are embedded in the concept of divinity. The course of action they imply, what Arendt refers to as the logical deduction, is not optional.

statements about something that is, but the unfolding of a process which is in constant change.³¹⁴

The act of identifying the *idea* that governs all human existence, the Gnostic speculation, should not be confused with totalitarianism as such. The discovery of this idea, according to Voegelin is, merely the first step along the Gnostic's path to deliverance:

If man is to be delivered from the world, the possibility of deliverance must first be established in the order of being. [...] In modern Gnosticism it is accomplished through the assumption of an absolute spirit that in the dialectical unfolding of consciousness proceeds from alienation to consciousness of itself. [...] The instrument of salvation is Gnosis itself, knowledge. Since according to the Gnostic ontology entanglement with the world is brought about by *agnoia*, ignorance, the soul will be able to disentangle itself through knowledge of its true life and its condition of alienness in this world.³¹⁵

The concept of *agnoia* which Voegelin uses here, are mirrored in Islam and Islamism. There they are the concepts of *fitrah*, man's inborn Islamic nature, and ignorance of *fitrah*, *jahiliyaah*, which is the cause of all the ailments in the world. To continue, the discovery of these ideas as being some ultimate all-governing truth on existence does not mean these ideas in themselves are totalitarian.

The ideologies that are carried out by totalitarian governments with unswerving and unprecedented consistency are not inherently totalitarian and are much older than the system in which they have found their full expression.

What makes ideas totalitarian, what makes them 'ideologies' is not their content, but the *interpretation* of that idea in the form of strict

³¹⁴ Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, p. 469.

³¹⁵ Voegelin and Henningsen, *Modernity without Restraint*, pp. 255-256.

logical deduction, which Arendt calls ‘ideological thinking’, and its actualization in society.³¹⁶

Ideological thinking orders facts into an absolutely logical procedure which starts from an axiomatically accepted premise, deducing everything else from it; that is, it proceeds with a consistency that exists nowhere in the realm of reality.³¹⁷

The idea itself, for instance race theory or Marxist-Leninism, is elevated to an axiomatic *unalterable* premise, a most supreme ‘truth’ from which everything else is deduced, and which thus forms a closed system of statements about the reality of existence. This means that in the worldview of an ideologue, the world itself is *only* viewed and understood through the ideology; no fact derived from the realm of experience outside of the ideology can falsify or interfere with the ideology. For lack of a better analogy, one could compare it to trying to convince a severely paranoid individual that his worldview is incorrect: this would merely strengthen the paranoid person’s conviction that you too are conspiring against him. If a man is afflicted by such a condition, any fact derived from the real world is solely viewed through that lens and excludes the possibility of falsification. One either agrees with the paranoid delusion, or is on the side of the ‘enemy’, no other option exists. Seeing that the paranoid individual is convinced of his life or death struggle, all those who do not subscribe to his views are enemies, and out of a sense of self preservation the need to get rid of one’s enemies is born. Likewise, in the ideological worldview, all of man’s actions too are evaluated according to the all encompassing values of the ideology; thus creating a thoroughly

³¹⁶ “This stringent logicity as a guide to action permeates the whole structure of totalitarian movements and governments. It is exclusively the work of Hitler and Stalin who, although they did not add a single new thought to the ideas and propaganda slogans of their movements, for this reason alone must be considered ideologists of the greatest importance.” Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, p. 472.

³¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 471.

binary world divided between the actions needed to bring salvation to mankind and the actions that are opposed to it and which cannot remain unsanctioned. This explains why ideological terror is never a reaction against perceived injustices; rather it is the inescapable consequence of the ideological worldview which divided men into enemies or allies by the fact of its construction.

This process and its consequences are exemplified in the novel 1984, in the discussion between Winston, the non-totalitarian man, and the totalitarian man par excellence, the interrogator O'Brien:

This mechanism is exemplified in the novel 1984 in the discussion between Winston and his interrogator O'Brien:

Reality exists in the human mind, and nowhere else. Not in the individual mind, which can make mistakes, and in any case soon perishes: only in the mind of the Party, which is collective and immortal. Whatever the Party holds to be the truth, is truth. It is impossible to see reality except by looking through the eyes of the Party. That is the fact that you have got to relearn, Winston. It needs an act of self-destruction, an effort of the will. You must humble yourself before you can become sane. [...] Shall I tell you why we have brought you here? To cure you! To make you sane! Will you understand, Winston, that no one whom we bring to this place ever leaves our hands uncured? We are not interested in those stupid crimes that you have committed. The Party is not interested in the overt act: the thought is all we care about. We do not merely destroy our enemies, we change them. Do you understand what I mean by that?' No one whom we bring to this place ever stands out against us. Everyone is washed clean.³¹⁸

³¹⁸ Orwell, Pynchon, and Fromm, *Nineteen Eighty-Four: A Novel*, pp. 309-310. Chapter 19.

As such, a system of secular beliefs, but with the religious characteristic of infallibility is constructed, which immediately after its discovery is elevated beyond all questioning and falsification.³¹⁹

[..]in this capacity ideological thinking becomes independent of all experience from which it cannot learn anything new even if it is a question of something what has just come to pass. Hence ideological thinking becomes emancipated from the reality [..]³²⁰

To which Voegelin adds:

The system is justified by the fact of its construction; the possibility of calling into question the construction of systems, as such, is not acknowledged. That the form of science is the system must be assumed as beyond all question.³²¹

It is this totalist interpretation of the Gnostic speculation, which happens within the confines of a strict logicity, which allows the totalitarian interpreter, for it is he who makes the idea totalitarian, to understand reality as an expression or actualization of this idea and which thus explains and predicts all past, present and future phenomena we see in reality.³²² The mystery, open-endedness and unpredictability of human experience, the essence of the Hayekian uncertainty-principle and the foundation of the liberal democracy, is eliminated by the construction of this system, nothing exists outside of this system, hence the connotation 'totalitarian':

³¹⁹ See also on the prohibition of questioning: Voegelin and Henningsen, *Modernity without Restraint*. in: Science, politics and Gnosticism. Chapter 2

³²⁰ Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, p. 470.

³²¹ Voegelin and Henningsen, *Modernity without Restraint*, p. 247.

³²² "The movement of history and the logical process of this notion are supposed to correspond to each other so that whatever happens, happens according to the logic of one 'idea'. However, the only possible movement in the realm of logic is the process of deduction from a premise." Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, p. 469.

Ideologies pretend to know the mysteries of the whole historical process-the secrets of the past, the intricacies of the present, the uncertainties of the future- because of the logic inherent in their respective ideas.³²³

This reduction of all possible knowledge to a single idea which is deemed to be able to explain all the variations in existence is the pre-condition for the remaking of mankind into a strictly homogenous creature. Only when *plurality* itself is abolished can this idea, which forms the basis of the totalitarian worldview, be applied to all equally. What makes the Gnostic speculation an ideology in Arendt's sense is its exclusivity and its process of logical deduction, the 'ideological thinking', which turns the speculation into an all explaining and uncompromising system of thought, and ultimately into a program of political action. As such, the ideology becomes the most supreme 'total' expression of knowledge. This knowledge not only explains the events witnessed in the human experience, past, present and future; but it claims that the speculation is the acting agent behind these events. It is the *Prima Causa*. Thus, in order for men to find self and world salvation, the Gnostic has to first find the hidden order in nature, the prima cause to which logical deduction is applied. The resulting ideology is the formula for self and world salvation and forms the political program of the totalitarian party.

5.4.2 The law of Nature or History, and the law of Movement: Practical Examples

In chapter three, I already spoke about the observation of disorder and chaos in the different ailments that were attributed to the advent of modernity: the loneliness, anomie, and general despair that marked the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th century. Several remedies to this disorder were given either through the National Socialist interpretation of race or through the communist interpretation of the class struggle. These observations of the causes of disorder were not static. They were evolving patterns that moved

³²³ Ibid.

history as a whole forward. They were always there but had only to be discovered in order to explain the fact emanating from reality. The unfolding process that the Gnostic has uncovered, the mystical law that governs all of humanities affairs, is what Arendt calls '*the law of Nature or History*'. The mechanism by which this premise transforms the world towards some ultimate end-state is called '*the law of movement*'.³²⁴ The Nazis, in their perverted interpretation of Darwin's theory of evolution, understood the biological movements within nature, of which man is a part, as an unfolding historicist and deterministic process that preordained the Aryan race, or *Volk*, as the true inheritor of the earth, thereby signing the death warrant of all other races.³²⁵ Communism on the other hand, saw a similar mechanism at work, not based on race, but on class distinctions.³²⁶

³²⁴ Villa, *Politics, Philosophy, Terror: Essays on the Thought of Hannah Arendt*, p. 17.

³²⁵ For more background on the intellectual roots of Nazism, the following books were either co-responsible for creating its intellectual foundations or describe those foundations in greater detail than I can do there: Hesemann and Meiser, *Hitlers Religion: Die Fatale Heilslehre Des Nationalsozialismus*, Bärsch, *Die Politische Religion Des Nationalsozialismus: Die Religiöse Dimension Der Ns-Ideologie in Den Schriften Von Dieter Eckart, Joseph Goebbels, Alfred Rosenberg Und Adolf Hitler*, A. de Gobineau, *An Essay on the Inequality of the Human Races* (1855), Llobera, *The Making of Totalitarian Thought*, August Rohling, *Der Talmudjude 6e Aufl* (Münster: 1877), Adolf Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, 2 vols. (München: F. Eher nachf., 1925), Nicholas Goodrick-Clarke, *The Occult Roots of Nazism: The Ariosophists of Austria and Germany 1890-1935* (Wellingborough, Northamptonshire: Aquarian Press, 1985). See also footnote 328

³²⁶ A similar list of books can be given for Communism's intellectual ancestry: Ree, *The Political Thought of Joseph Stalin: A Study in Twentieth-Century Revolutionary Patriotism*, K Marks and F Engels, *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, trans. Samuel Moore, Authorized tr. (by S. Moore) ed. (Lond.: 1888), Leon Trotsky, John G. Wright, and Brian Pearce, *The Permanent Revolution and Results and Prospects* (London,: 1982), Joseph Stalin, *Foundations of Leninism*, Little Lenin Library (New York,: International publishers, 1932), Vladimir Ilich Lenin, *Imperialism. The State and Revolution* (New York,: Vanguard Press, 1929), Lenin, *What Is to Be Done? Burning Questions of Our Movement*, Vladimir Ilich Lenin, *The State and Revolution: Marxist Teaching*

The only truly significant normative difference between Nazism and Communism is that the latter substituted race by class, but apart from this difference the communists operated along the very same deterministic ideological line of thinking.³²⁷ This deterministic process is called ‘the law of Nature’ in Nazism, and ‘the law of History’ in Communism. The same phenomenon can be seen in Islamism which substitutes the Nazi of *Volk* with that of the Islamic collective body, the *ummah*, and substitutes the Law of Nature with the Law of Shari’ah. These laws have nothing to do with human will or understanding but are rather the hidden pattern imbedded in human existence itself and thus are a *force* of nature or history. To the Gnostic, man does not reside out of the boundaries of nature and hence history, he does not exist as opposed to nature, he is a part of nature and as such has a role to play in the movement inherent in nature.³²⁸ When man submits to these laws natural justice will reign, when man defies these laws chaos will ensue. Hence the Gnostic’s contention that the world is in disorder because of its poor organization. The formula for self- and world salvation is thus mainly found in identifying these laws of Nature and History and making mankind submit to them, to ‘force them to be free’. By the act of identifying this law of Nature or History, its inherent law of motion becomes knowable and now man, as an actor in this grand scheme,

on the State and the Task of the Proletariat in the Revolution (London: G. Allen & Unwin, 1919).

³²⁷ Arendt, commenting on the law of movement inherent in Darwin’s and Marx’s work: “If one considers, not the actual achievement, but the basic philosophies of both men, it turns out that ultimately the movement of history and the movement of nature are one and the same.” Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, p. 463. She furthermore quotes Friedrich Engels: “Just as Darwin discovered the law of development of organic life, so Marx discovered the law of development of human history.” p. 463f

³²⁸ The Gnostic: “Construes the order of being as a process of nature complete in itself. Nature is in a state of becoming, and in the course of its development it has brought forth man [...] in the development of nature a special role had developed upon man. This being, which itself is nature, also stand over against nature and assists it in its development by human labor[.]” Voegelin and Henningsen, *Modernity without Restraint*, p. 262.

can choose to accelerated or impede this motion. Since acting against it causes chaos for one's fellow man it becomes a moral duty to force all men to comply with these laws. The disorder in the world is therefore above all a result of mankind having abandoned the law of Nature or History. It is due to his own freedom to choose or to follow his whimsical desires that these laws have become ignored and since every man acts in this way, society as a whole has entered a state of disorder. If one wants to reconstitute order, the plurality of man must be limited and his freedom to choose according to his own volition and whimsical desires must be abolished. Only when society as a whole becomes truly unified into a 'unity of will and action', when all of its resources and human capital are aimed at the singular goal of fabricating a new order of being modelled on the formula of self and world salvation, can man hope to escape from the disorder in the world. Before any of this can happen, the pluralism that lies at the very foundation of the disorder has to be removed from the order of being; man has to be made into 'one man of gigantic dimensions.'³²⁹

In order to give a practical example of how Voegelin's theory of the Gnostic speculation corresponds to Arendt's 'logicality of ideological thinking', and to explain why these mechanism can shape an ideology that leads to a government 'whose essence is terror', I will give a short summary of the way in which this process took place in the Nazi and communist movement. In the second part of this study I will go into the details of this process in Islamism in great length. Here I will suffice with a summary of how this occurs in Nazism and Communism.

5.4.2.1 The foundations of the Nazi ideology

The ideologue Alfred Rosenberg summarized the basic premise on which the Nazi ideology was built as follows.

³²⁹ Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, p. 466.

The meaning of world history has radiated out from the north over the whole world, borne by a blue-eyed blond race which in several great waves determined the spiritual face of the world.³³⁰

This statement summarizes the pseudo-scientific ideas which lay at the foundation of the Nazi movement and which predated it by a considerable margin. It is the discovery of race as the prime cause for mankind's evolution; the hidden motive behind the movement of history itself. As mentioned earlier, Voegelin pointed described this phenomenon as an inner-worldly *realissimum*:

[..]when god is invisible behind the world, the contents of the world will become new gods, when the symbols of transcendent religiosity are banned, new symbols develop from the inner-worldly language of science to take their place.³³¹

³³⁰ Alfred Rosenberg quoted (1893-1946) was one of the chief ideologues of the Nazi movement and served as the Reich Ministry for the Occupied Eastern Territories during the war. Quoted in United States. Office of Chief of Counsel for the Prosecution of Axis Criminality. et al., *Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression*. Volume 1, chapter 7 It is difficult to imagine the genocidal policies of the Nazi's without the influence of Rosenberg. A prolific writer on the issue of German national rebirth, positive Christianity, race theory and palingenesis, his works bridged the gap between the virulently anti-Semitic and pagan Thule Gemeinschaft and the formation of the Nazi movement. See for instance: Alfred Rosenberg, *Die Religion Des Meister Eckehart* (München: Hoheneichen-Verlag, 1934), ———, *Der Mythos Des 20. Jahrhunderts* (München: Hoheneichen-Verlag, 1935), Alfred Rosenberg and Thilo von Trotha, *Blut Und Ehre, Ein Kampf Für Deutsche Wiedergeburt*, 13. aufl. ed. (München,: F. Eher nachf., 1937), Ludwig Ferdinand Clauss, Alfred Rosenberg, and Third Reich Collection (Library of Congress), *Die Nordische Seele: Eine Einführung in Die Rassenseelenkunde*, 7., durchgesehene und erweiterte Aufl. ed. (München: J.F. Lehmanns Verlag, 1939), Alfred Rosenberg, *Die Spur Des Juden Im Wandel Der Zeiten*, 4. Aufl. ed. (München,: Zentralverlag der NSDAP., F. Eher Nachf., 1939).

³³¹ Voegelin, "Political Religions," p. 60. Voegelin uses the terms "inner-worldly religion", "ersatz-religionen" and "political-religions" to indicate this process. Interestingly enough when one reads the works of early fascists and

This new found 'faith' in race theory functioned to the early Nazi movement as a substitute for religion, what Voegelin called an *ersatz religion*. This *ersatz religion* on the one hand lacks any reference to the metaphysical; it refers to a thoroughly physical-biological phenomenon. On the other hand it transcends the individual and even the community of men at a particular point in time. As such, I refer to secular totalitarianism's *ersatz religion* as a non-metaphysical transcendence. I will contrast this later with Islamism which does refer to a metaphysical transcendence.

A new faith is arising today: the myth of the blood, the faith, *to defend with the blood* the divine essence of man. The faith, embodied in clearest knowledge that the Nordic blood represents that mysterium which has replaced and overcome the old sacraments.³³²

Note that Rosenberg explicitly states that this faith of the blood has 'replaced and overcome the old sacraments'. Now that the hidden motive behind human existence has been discovered, Nature's designation of the Aryan race as the chosen race, a religious community can be formed, a new *ecclesia* for a new faith: the *Volk*. The disorder in society is then attributed to those actions which are in opposition to the new faith, *racial impurity* and the enemies of the race, in particular the Jews. The *ecclesia* is then confronted with an apocalyptical scenario:

We stand today before a definitive decision. Either through a new experience and cultivation of the old blood, coupled with an enhanced fighting will, we will rise to a purificatory action, or the last Germanic- western values of morality and state-

especially totalitarian ideologues, the similarity between their language and religious language is striking. See for instance Bärsch's analyses of Goebbels' use of religious vocabulary and imagery in: Bärsch, *Der Junge Goebbels: Erlösung Und Vernichtung*.

³³² United States. Office of Chief of Counsel for the Prosecution of Axis Criminality. et al., *Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression*. Alfred Rosenberg

culture shall sink away in the filthy human masses of the big cities, become stunted on the sterile burning asphalt of a bestialized inhumanity, or trickle away as a horrific agent in the form of emigrants bastardizing themselves in South America, China, Dutch East India, Africa.³³³

The fall from the Garden of Eden, the original sin was the decision of individual men to mingle with other races and to allow the Jews to interfere with the Aryan community. The restoration of racial purity and the expulsion of the undesired elements thus became the condition for racial restoration, or *palingenesis*. The NSDAP party program of 1920 stipulated in points 4 and 6 that:

A member of the race can only be one who is of German blood, without consideration of creed. Consequently no Jew can be a member of the race. [...] The right to determine matters concerning administration and law belongs only to the citizen; therefore, we demand that every public office of any sort whatsoever, whether in the Reich, the county or municipality, be filled only by citizens.³³⁴

In this way German society, and the societies that came to fall under German Nazi rule, automatically would ostracize all those who did not belong to their ecclesia. The point to take note of is that this process is applied to masses, not individuals. Particular instances of guilt or innocence of some sort of crime are irrelevant. What is relevant is that the guilt of the individual, let alone the class to which he supposedly belongs, is constituted not by real world facts but by the ideology and its inner logic. It were the Nazi ideologues who 'discovered' workings of race theory and thus came to the distinction between *Volk* and its enemies. These enemies committed crimes that only existed in the mind of the ideologues and yet this ideology soon would be drawn to its most radical logical conclusions and be

³³³ Ibid.

³³⁴ Ibid.

implemented as state policy. Here a break occurs with fascism. Unlike fascism, which sought to sacralize the state under the banner of the fascist virtues and which was opposed to any form of utopian social engineering, Nazi totalitarianism sought to sacralize the *Volk* and enlist the state as a means of achieving its utopian goals.

The new thought puts folk and race higher than the state and its forms. It declares protection of the folk more important than protection of a religious denomination, a class, the monarchy, or the republic; it sees in treason against the folk a greater crime than treason against the state.³³⁵

The state thus becomes an instrument of the party; a means to an end and not an end in itself. The party in its turn is nothing more than the ecclesia of the *ersatz religion* under the heading of its prophet, the Führer. The Führer finally, is the conduit between the realm of transcendence and the realm of immanence, the prophet who translates the edicts of the Law of Nature into policy. Rudolph Hess described the role of the Führer in this new faith as follows:

He was always right and will always be right. The National Socialism of us all is anchored in the uncritical loyalty, in the devotion to the Fuehrer that does not ask for the wherefore in the individual case, in the tacit performance of his commands. We believe that the Fuehrer is fulfilling a divine mission to German destiny! This belief is beyond challenge.³³⁶

How does this concept of mission relate to the people? Does authority stem from the people or should it be located elsewhere?

The Führer-Reich of the (German) people is founded on the recognition that the true will of the people cannot be disclosed through parliamentary votes and plebiscites but that

³³⁵ Alfred Rosenberg quoted in *Ibid.*

³³⁶ Address by Hess in 1934, quoted in *Ibid.*

the will of the people in its pure and uncorrupted form can only be expressed through the Führer.³³⁷

Whilst seemingly the 'will of the people' is the source of authority, this is in essence a lie. The 'will of the people' is not the aggregate of all individual wills, nor is it the outcome of a democratic process. In order to understand what it is one must understand the *logicality of ideological thinking* that lies behind it. The 'will of the people' is first of all limited to the will of the Nazi ecclesia since the ideology stipulates that there exist only two categories of people namely; the *Volk* and its enemies. This ecclesia in turn is not to be seen as a collection of individuals with differing individual needs but as the faceless timeless collective body that is the carrier of, and acts in accordance with the Law of Nature, the ideology of race theory. Since only members of the race that do not oppose this Law of Nature can be citizens, it means that 'the will of the people' is identical to the will of ideology. The will of the people must therefore always be identical to the will of the ideology. Those who would think or act in defiance of the ideology stop being a part of the ecclesia and thus can only be seen as the enemies of 'the people'. In addition, since the ideology stipulates that salvation requires that all enemies of 'the people' must be eliminated, any deviation from the ideology would become suicidal. When totalitarian movements speak of freedom, justice, equality and liberty of 'the people' it is always construed in this sense and thus form the anti-thesis of how we understand these concepts in the context of modern human rights treaties. Islamist movements follow this logic when they speak of freedom, resistance to tyranny and justice and one should not be fooled into thinking that they refer to those concepts as understood by human rights treaties.

The salvation of the ecclesia, as the true 'will of the people' thus demands the elimination of the enemies of the people. These mechanisms of the ideological way of thinking apply to all totalitarian movements but I will restrict myself here to the

³³⁷ Ibid.

practical expression the Nazi's gave to it. According to the Nazi's, disorder emanates from two distinct categories of enemies of mankind. Both of these categories are existential enemies with which I mean to indicate that the birth of the totalitarian ideology automatically creates these enemies. The coming into being of the totalitarian movement not only creates a class of enemies which only exist within the mindset of the ideology, but it also creates the need for their elimination as well. If the whole *raison d'être* of the totalitarian movement is the salvation of the ecclesia, then the elimination of the enemy is equal to the 'will of the people'. This creates a perpetual motion in which new enemies need to be invented and destroyed in order to explain the chaos in the world and legitimize the continuing need for the totalitarian movements reign. It is one of the many paradoxes that typify totalitarianism.

The first category of enemies pertain to those who have diverted from the laws of nature and acted in opposition to the 'will of the people' as the Nazi's saw it. They can be either those who actively oppose Nazi rule, or those who in their thinking or speaking betray a sufficient lack of adherence to the ideological demands placed upon them. I will return to this in greater detail in paragraph 5.4.4. Hermann Göring in 1934, one year *after* the successful grab for power by the Nazi's, noted with reference to these enemies:

Fellow Germans, my measures will not be crippled by any judicial thinking. My measures will not be crippled by any bureaucracy. Here, I don't have to give justice, my mission is only to destroy and exterminate, nothing more! This struggle, fellow Germans, will be a struggle against chaos and such a struggle, I shall not conduct with the power of any police. A bourgeoisie state might have done that. Certainly, I shall use the power of the State and the police to the utmost, my dear Communists! So you won't draw any false conclusions; but the struggle to the death, in which my fist will grasp your necks, I

shall lead with those down there, those are the Brown Shirts.³³⁸

That this was no mere rhetoric soon became apparent as the Nazi's in 1936 enacted the law on the secret state police, the Gestapo. The secret police in both Nazism and Communism functions as the revolutionary vanguard that translates the policies of the ideologues into practice. Islamist movements, which have remained movements of opposition for the most part, do not feature this element because of their lack of state power. However, the violence and terror we know from non-state Islamists vanguard groups such as al-Qaeda is founded upon the same ideological legal-political strain of thought as the formation of the Gestapo or its communist counterpart, the NKVD.

The Nazi secret state police had as its foremost duty not the protection of the individuals who comprised the ecclesia, but the duty to 'investigate and to combat in the entire territory of the State all tendencies inimical to the State'. Furthermore it declared 'that orders in matters of the Secret State Police were not subject to the review of the administrative courts'.

On the same date, 10 February 1936, a decree for the execution of said law was issued by Goering as Prussian Prime Minister and by Frick as Minister of the Interior. This decree provided that the Gestapo [...] was the centralized agency for collecting political intelligence in the field of political police, and that it administered the concentration camps. The Gestapo was given authority to make police investigations in cases of criminal attacks upon Party as well as upon State.³³⁹

In referring to the above law, the Nazi jurist, Dr. Werner Best, who was responsible for the legal aspects of the implementation of the Nazi ideology for the Gestapo, commented:

³³⁸ Ibid. Volume 1, chapter 7

³³⁹ Ibid. Volume 2, chapter 6.

Not the State in its outward organic appearance but the tasks of the leadership in the sense of the National-Socialist idea is the object of protection.³⁴⁰

Likewise Dr. Guertner, Reich Minister of Justice, stated with respect to these laws:

National Socialism substitutes for the idea of formal wrong, the idea of factual wrong. [...] Even without the threat of punishment, every violation of the goals toward which the community is striving is a wrong per se. As a result, the law ceases to be an exclusive source for the determination of right or wrong.³⁴¹

What this amounted to was a state in which all boundaries of positive law were eradicated in order to render men impotent in the face of the party and its ideological principles of action. It is not positive law which decides on guilt or innocence but the Law of Nature. The new totalitarian laws no longer seek to provide a stable realm for men to live in, but seek to stabilize men so that the Law of Nature and movement can flow through them unhindered. The direct translation of that law's edicts into practice cannot be hindered by any boundaries of positive law. As we will see in Part Two of this study, the very nature of the Islamists' Law of Shari'ah places some high hurdles to the formation of a similar totalitarian disregard for positive law since the Shari'ah itself offers protection against unwarranted persecution. The very foundation of the Islamist enterprise therefore also forms its main obstacles in the path towards becoming a fully fledged *totalitarian* movement.

The terror of the Gestapo was, however, mainly directed at the external enemy. This category is constituted not by any deliberate action against the totalitarian movement, but because the totalitarian ideology has deemed them an enemy. The very fact that the Nazi's

³⁴⁰ Ibid.

³⁴¹ Ibid.

saw in nature an unfolding process based on race automatically classified people according to race. If one belonged to the wrong race one was an existential external enemy regardless of what one thought, did or did not do. In short, one cannot escape being labelled an enemy, and once one has been labelled as such there is no redemption. The whole action of labelling someone or a whole category of people as an enemy is founded upon criteria which exist and have validity *only* in the confined realm of the ideology. It is the product of the logicity of ideological thinking and has little if anything to do with any fact derived from the non-totalitarian outside world.

On the 30th of January 1939, Hitler declared:

If the international Jewish financiers within and without Europe succeed in plunging the nations once more into a world war, the result will not be the Bolshevization of the world and the victory of Jewry, but the obliteration of the Jewish race in Europe.³⁴²

What mattered was not if such a thing as 'international Jewish financiers' even existed, and even if they did, it mattered not whether or not they declared a war against the *Volk*; what mattered was that in the framework of the ideology they did exist and *had* to have committed acts of aggression against the *Volk* in order to explain the disorder in the world. Even more so, the very existence of the Jew is an act of aggression against the *Volk*. It is the invention of an enemy and the attribution of all the world's evils to that enemy which forms the hallmark of ideological thinking. When this thinking forms the basis for policy, the stage is set for genocide. It is exactly this type of thinking about the Jews in particular which runs through Islamists writings and is exceedingly alarming since the Nazi example proved that such a translation of ideology into policy is very well possible.

³⁴² Ibid. Volume 1, chapter 12.

This in turn leads to the concept of totalitarian morality and its adjoining concepts of *totalitarian* freedom, justice and resistance to tyranny. If the laws of nature or history are understood as having determined unequivocally that a certain race or a certain class was heading for extinction in the long run, that the whole body of human history was a representation of this process and its inevitable outcome, then this knowledge could, and in the eyes of the totalitarian interpreter *should* be used to accelerate this process in order to fabricate its end result: Utopia. The problem was that it could take millennia for this deterministic process to reach its natural end. The Nazis and Communists drew the only possible conclusion from this mode of *ideological thinking*: the accelerated execution of nature's death sentence as a morally necessary and logical step towards the completion of the process inherent to the fabric of nature. Tyranny, un-freedom and injustice is everything that stops this process from unfolding. This line of ideological thinking dictates a new morality namely that the killing of those 'unsuited for survival' is necessary and morally right; a new moral standard that was ultimately reflected in its laws as well. Therefore, when Arendt states that totalitarianism is a form of government whose essence is terror, she is saying that:

Terror is the realization of the law of movement; its chief aim is to make it possible for the force of nature or history to race freely through mankind, unhindered by any spontaneous action. As such, terror seeks to stabilize men in order to liberate the forces of nature or history. It is this movement which singles out the foes of mankind against whom terror is let loose, and no free action of either opposition or sympathy can be permitted to interfere with the elimination of the objective enemy of history or nature, of the class or race. Guilt and innocence become senseless notions.³⁴³

³⁴³ Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, p. 465.

It is here that the fascist mentality and the totalitarian ideology part ways. The fascist never *thought* in an ideological sense, they did not know any Laws of Nature or Laws of Movement and were not interested in fabricating Utopia. They were solely interested in forming a state based on a mentality and principles of violence and heroism. The Nazi's, however, drew the premises of Nazism to their most radical logical conclusion: the extermination of the internal and external enemies. The prophet-leader of the Nazi *ersatz religion*, Hitler, had already declared that the Jew was the enemy of the *Volk* and that his elimination was the precondition for salvation. The Nazi movement, as the representative of the Law of Nature and the ecclesia, had in the eyes of Hitler the task to see to it that:

[..] that at least in our country he (the Jew, D.S.) be recognized as the most mortal enemy and that the struggle against him may show, like a flaming beacon of a better era, to other nations too, the road to salvation for a struggling Aryan mankind.³⁴⁴

This depiction of a chiliastic struggle for survival and salvation all takes place in the mind of the ideologue and has little if any bearing on reality. Preparing the masses for the task at hand requires on the one hand a level of indoctrination that permeates every facet of society, and on the other hand the modern means of state control and enforcement. The latter was the domain of the Gestapo, the former fell upon a wide stratum of state, party and commissioned organizations. Their task was to imbue the society as a whole with the 'new faith' and to prepare the mind of the public for the ruthless actions which needed to follow.³⁴⁵ It should be reminded that totalitarianism, unlike authoritarian forms of political organization,

³⁴⁴ Quoted from *Mein Kampf* in: United States. Office of Chief of Counsel for the Prosecution of Axis Criminality. et al., *Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression*. Volume 1, chapter 12.

³⁴⁵ I will spend considerable time explaining the occurrence of this concept in Islamism in the form of the Qutbian da'wa organizations.

insists on active citizen participation and mass mobilization. Acts of denunciation and betrayal are not only commendable, they might be the only thing with which one can prove one's loyalty to party doctrine. This theme of fabricating the consent of the masses plays in Communism and Islamism as well. The masses are thought to be in a state of *agnouia*, they lack race or class consciousness in Nazism and Communism, or are in a state of *jahiliyaah* in Islamism. This ignorance of the masses is as much a hurdle towards salvation as the existence of the internal or external enemies is. As stated earlier, van Ree remarks that: the pivotal role of this minority dictatorship is not merely the age old desire to stifle opposition, but a new and thoroughly modern desire to control man's spirits as well. For people whose opinions were deemed to be "formed under a regime of inequality were unsuitable to elect their leaders. The general will ought to be expressed temporarily by an agency other than the popular assemblies. Popular sovereignty ought to be prepared by an educational dictatorship."³⁴⁶ Thus the masses are subjected to a constant reshaping of the public conscience through the many front and parallel organizations that monopolized all forms of public life. Building upon the methods of mass mobilization and manipulation as pioneered by the fascists, the secular totalitarian movements, and in part the Islamist movements, used grandiose public displays of party loyalty that were devised upon the example of religious gatherings and ceremonies. Especially in secular totalitarian movements, the deification of religious figures and theology is substituted by equal displays of the deification of the prophet-leader and the doctrines of his new faith. The object is always the same: the reshaping of the old man into the new totalitarian man, a man who will not hesitate to act upon the party's edicts. Similarly, Islamist movements aim to transform Muslims into Islamist Muslims, a process which poses a threat to Muslims and non-Muslims alike.

³⁴⁶ Ree, *The Political Thought of Joseph Stalin: A Study in Twentieth-Century Revolutionary Patriotism*, p. 23.

With regards to the Jews and other races unfit for survival, the mobilization of the masses for the act of purification requires that the masses be imbued with the teaching of race theory. They have to be absorbed into the party which constantly seeks to enlarge its grip on every level of society. The NSDAP Party Organization Book declares:

The Party as an instrument of ideological education, must grow to be the Leader Corps [...] of the German Nation. This Leader Corps is responsible for the complete penetration of the German Nation with the National Socialist spirit.³⁴⁷

Whilst the masses still had to be transformed into the model of the new national-socialist man, the party itself already harboured the nucleus of these new men in the form of the SS. It was the SS which led the Gestapo and formed the true revolutionary vanguard of the Nazi movement. These men needed no explanation as to the nature of their task and the morality which was required of them. Hans Frank, the governor general of occupied Poland remarked at the end of 1941, a time in which the mobilized killing squads, the *einsatzgruppen*, were already decimating the Jewish population of the East:

My attitude towards the Jews will, therefore, be based only on the expectation that they must disappear. They must be done away with. I have entered negotiations to have them deported to the East. A great discussion concerning that question will take place in Berlin in January, to which I am going to delegate the State Secretary Dr. Buehler. That discussion is to take place in the Reich Security Main Office with SS-Lt. General Heydrich. A great Jewish migration will begin, in any case.

The morality of the SS as expressed by Frank exemplified the notion of totalitarian morality:

³⁴⁷ United States. Office of Chief of Counsel for the Prosecution of Axis Criminality. et al., *Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression*. Volume 1, chapter 7

Before I continue, I want to beg you to agree with me on the following formula: We will principally have pity on the German people only. [...] Gentlemen, I must ask you to rid yourself of all feeling of pity. We must annihilate the Jews, wherever we find them and wherever it is possible, in order to maintain there the structure of the Reich as a whole.³⁴⁸

Thus the salvation of the ecclesia depended on the adoption of a new moral code which was not immoral, or even amoral, but thoroughly moral, albeit a morality we might find despicable. The words 'migration' and 'deportation' are Nazi euphemism for annihilation. The 'great discussion' to which Frank refers is the Wannsee conference held only a few months later in 1942. At this conference the SS, acting on instructions of the party leadership, finalized the transition from ideology to policy and came to the following procedural conclusions for the industrial destruction of the European Jewry. It reflects their particular 'natural selection' views even when considering the possibility of Jews surviving the planned genocide.

Approximately 11 million Jews will be involved in the final solution of the European Jewish question [...] In the course of the practical execution of the final solution, Europe will be combed through from west to east. [...] Under proper guidance, in the course of the final solution the Jews are to be allocated for appropriate labor in the East. Able-bodied Jews, separated according to sex, will be taken in large work columns to these areas for work on roads, in the course of which action doubtless a large portion will be eliminated by natural causes. The possible final remnant will, since it will undoubtedly consist of the most resistant portion, have to be treated accordingly, because it is the product of natural selection and would, if released, act as a the seed of a new Jewish revival.³⁴⁹

³⁴⁸ Ibid.

³⁴⁹ M. Roseman, *The Villa, the Lake, the Meeting: Wannsee and the Final Solution* (New York: Penguin Books, 2003), p. 113.

In summary, the Nazi movement incorporated much of the vocabulary of religion. The concepts of the prophet-leader, the new faith, the new ecclesia, the heretic, the religious enemy, the iconography of religion, they are all in some way present in the discourse of the Nazi movement. That is not to say they *are* religious or have incorporated the religious *meaning* of those concepts into their own vocabulary. While there may be historical precedent in religious traditions for heretic hunting and the blind obedience to a transcendent law, the contents of the Nazi ideology are thoroughly irreligious and thoroughly modern. First of all, the means for implementing their policies necessitated the existence of the state apparatus and an emancipated bureaucracy, that is, a bureaucracy which does not form an interest group of its own nor is dependent on other interest groups, i.e. it is totally subservient to the leadership of the state. It requires the means of mass communication, mass mobilization and mass repression. The very concept of the masses and the ability to even think in terms of masses instead of interest groups and individuals is itself a modern phenomenon. The pseudo-scientifically designed all encompassing content of the Nazi and Communist ideologies, their social-Darwinism and social-engineering are all products of modernity. Whilst secular totalitarianisms might borrow concepts from pre-existing religious traditions, it transforms them and creates in their place something entirely new and unprecedented: the actual fabrication of Utopia. What remains however is the validity of Voegelin's analysis of these forms of totalitarianisms as *Ersatz Religionen*.

In the following paragraph I will very briefly outline the logicity of ideological thinking and the appearance of the Gnostic speculation in Marx' and Engels' Communist Manifesto. Part Two of this study will feature three in depth analyses of similar works in the Islamists discourse.

5.4.2.2 The foundations of the Communist ideology

The *Communist Manifesto*, written in 1874, forms the basis of all Communist movements. Whilst not all the crimes of Stalinism, Maoism, North-Korean Stalinism or the Khmer Rouge can be attributed to the *Communist Manifesto*, it did lay the foundations for the ideologies that would inspire these movements. The manifesto starts with a quintessential Gnostic speculative axiom, that is, the reduction ad absurdum of all the worlds' history into one unfalsifiable axiom:

The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles.³⁵⁰

This speculation, like the Nazi's faith of the blood, claims to accurately represent the whole essence of human development. It claims to capture the essential nature of the forces that drive humanity:

The theoretical conclusions of the Communists are in no way based on ideas or principles that have been invented, or discovered, by this or that would-be universal reformer. They merely express, in general terms, actual relations springing from an existing class struggle, from a historical movement going on under our very eyes. The abolition of existing property relations is not at all a distinctive feature of communism.³⁵¹

More visible than in the Nazi discourse; the *Communist Manifesto* repeatedly expresses the concept of the Law of History and the Law of movement. History to Marx and Engels is a constant struggle, an oscillating movement between two opposing forces:

Freeman and slave, patrician and plebeian, lord and serf, guild-master and journeyman, in a word, oppressor and oppressed, stood in constant opposition to one another,

³⁵⁰ K. Marx et al., *Manifesto: Three Classic Essays on How to Change the World* (New York: Ocean, 2005), p. 30.

³⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 44.

carried on an uninterrupted, now hidden, now open fight, a fight that each time ended, either in a revolutionary reconstitution of society at large, or in the common ruin of the contending classes.³⁵²

It is only in our current time that this class antagonism has created a near binary division in society. The *Communist Manifesto* then prophesizes an historical confrontation of truly revolutionary proportions. The fall from Eden and the original sin is located in the concept of private property. This creates the oscillating tensions between oppressor and the oppressed. Communism seeks to lead the new ecclesia back to the Garden of Eden, its palingenetic utopian mission, through the abolition of private property. Whilst the Jacobins of the French Revolution also sought to abolish private interests in favour of the *volonté générale*, van Ree rightfully remarks that their revolution, according to the communists, did not go far enough. It failed to end class antagonisms through the abolition of private property, which the communists saw as the seed of despair.

This analysis provided the starting point for the growth of the communist branch from the Jacobin tree. It also fortified the notion of the revolutionary minority dictatorship.³⁵³

The manifesto aims to fulfil this need of abolishing private property through a clash between the two opposing forces:

Our epoch, the epoch of the bourgeoisie, possesses, however, this distinct feature: it has simplified class antagonisms. Society as a whole is more and more splitting up into two great hostile camps, into two great classes directly facing each other — Bourgeoisie and Proletariat.³⁵⁴

³⁵² Ibid.

³⁵³ Ree, *The Political Thought of Joseph Stalin: A Study in Twentieth-Century Revolutionary Patriotism*, pp. 273, 279.

³⁵⁴ Marx et al., *Manifesto: Three Classic Essays on How to Change the World*, p. 44.

Whether any of this is true or not is again quite irrelevant. What matters is that the Communist ideologues believe it to be true and make that belief the basis of their policy. Voegelin in his critique on Marx writes:

Gnosis desires dominion over being, in order to seize control of being the Gnostic construes his system. The building of systems is a Gnostic form of reasoning, not a philosophical one [...] The system is justified by the fact of its construction; the possibility of calling into question the construction of systems as such, is not acknowledged. That the form of science is the system must be assumed as beyond all question. We are confronted here with the same phenomenon of the suppression of questions that we met in Marx. But we now see more clearly that an essential connection exists between the suppression of questions and the construction of a system. Whoever reduces being to a system cannot permit questions that invalidate systems as forms of reasoning [...] For Marx, however, reason is not the reason of man but in the perversion of symbols, the standpoint of his system. His questioner is supposed to cease to be man: he is to become socialist man.³⁵⁵

The doctrine of this new faith thus preaches eternal class antagonism which can only be ended by the abolition of private property. The abolition of private property becomes the precondition for salvation. The bourgeois class opposes this endeavour whilst the proletariat endorses it. Again we see the thinking in classes of people, not in terms of individuals; the new ecclesia and its enemies. The image of the bourgeoisie has remarkable resemblances to some of the counter-enlightenment most recognizable themes: a feeling of alienation, the perceived depreciation of man's worth and his instrumentalization at the behest of cold calculated greed:

³⁵⁵ Voegelin, "Science, Politics and Gnosticism," pp. 273-274.

The bourgeoisie, wherever it has got the upper hand [...] has left remaining no other nexus between man and man than naked self-interest, than callous “cash payment”. It has drowned the most heavenly ecstasies of religious fervour, of chivalrous enthusiasm, of philistine sentimentalism, in the icy water of egotistical calculation. It has resolved personal worth into exchange value, and in place of the numberless indefeasible chartered freedoms, has set up that single, unconscionable freedom — Free Trade. In one word, for exploitation, veiled by religious and political illusions, it has substituted naked, shameless, direct, brutal exploitation. [...] The bourgeoisie has torn away from the family its sentimental veil, and has reduced the family relation to a mere money relation. [...] All fixed, fast-frozen relations, with their train of ancient and venerable prejudices and opinions, are swept away, all new-formed ones become antiquated before they can ossify. All that is solid melts into air, all that is holy is profaned, and man is at last compelled to face with sober senses his real conditions of life, and his relations with his kind.³⁵⁶

While this description only features marginally in Nazism, it is a major theme in Islamist writings. The depiction of the Western world in Islamist literature is largely a repackaging of the Manifesto’s underlying themes. In fact, much of the Communist conceptual vocabulary and framework is mirrored in Islamist literature as we will come to see. From the definition of the enemy follows the definition of the new community.

Of all the classes that stand face to face with the bourgeoisie today, the proletariat alone is a really revolutionary class. The other classes decay and finally disappear in the face of Modern Industry; the proletariat is its special and essential

³⁵⁶ Marx et al., *Manifesto: Three Classic Essays on How to Change the World*, p. 32.

product.³⁵⁷ In one word, you reproach us with intending to do away with your property. Precisely so; that is just what we intend.³⁵⁸

The Manifesto is very clear on the imminent threat of society wide clashes that would follow from this depiction of a world divided into binary camps. Just as the Nazi's formulated their war as a means of defence against world Jewry, so too the communists see themselves as being on a mission of protecting the proletariat against the collective force of the bourgeoisie. Again, the very foundation of this premise and its subsequent compartmentalization of whole classes of people as either enemy or friend are never truly questioned. Rather, the communist draw these premises to their logical conclusions.

In depicting the most general phases of the development of the proletariat, we traced the more or less veiled civil war, raging within existing society, up to the point where that war breaks out into open revolution, and where the violent overthrow of the bourgeoisie lays the foundation for the sway of the proletariat.[..]The immediate aim of the Communists is the same as that of all other proletarian parties: formation of the proletariat into a class, overthrow of the bourgeois supremacy, conquest of political power by the proletariat.³⁵⁹

What does this civil war truly entail? Is it merely the appropriation of private property and the means of production by the Communist party, or is there a more totalistic aspiration to it? As with the Nazi's, the Communist goal is the elimination of the old man and the creation of a new sort of man. In practice this means the abolition of bourgeois man and all social bourgeois concepts.

³⁵⁷ Ibid., p. 41.

³⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 45.

³⁵⁹ Ibid., p. 44.

And the abolition of this state of things is called by the bourgeois, abolition of individuality and freedom! And rightly so. The abolition of bourgeois individuality, bourgeois independence, and bourgeois freedom is undoubtedly aimed at. [...] You must, therefore, confess that by “individual” you mean no other person than the bourgeois, than the middle-class owner of property. This person must, indeed, be swept out of the way, and made impossible. [...] The bourgeois family will vanish as a matter of course when its complement vanishes, and both will vanish with the vanishing of capital.³⁶⁰

The Manifesto thus not only speaks of a technical process by which property and the means of production are collectivized, it also means the elimination of a certain type of person and its concomitant social concepts of freedom, individuality and family. That this was no mere rhetoric has been proven by the myriad of Communist movements which arose from this line of thinking. Especially in the Stalinist version of Communism is the forceful subjugation of the individual into the collective particularly visible.³⁶¹ This did not stop at his physical subjugation to the state

³⁶⁰ Ibid., p. 48.

³⁶¹ For a more extensive analysis of the different streams of communism I refer to: Ree, *Wereldrevolutie: De Communistische Beweging Van Marx Tot Kim Jong Il*. The practical implementation of the policies as I described them can be found in amongst others: A. Dallin, G. W. Breslauer, and American Council of Learned Societies. Planning Group on Comparative Communist Studies, *Political Terror in Communist Systems* (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 1970), Aleksandr Isaevich Solzhenitsyn, *The Gulag Archipelago 1918-1956: An Experiment in Literary Investigation*, 1st Perennial Classics ed. (New York: Perennial, 2002), Anne Applebaum, *Gulag: A History* (New York: Doubleday, 2003), Jinyi Luo, *The Chinese Cultural Revolution Reconsidered: Beyond Purge and Holocaust* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003). Chapter 5, Chandler, *Voices from S-21 : Terror and History in Pol Pot's Secret Prison*, Erik Cornell, *North Korea under Communism: Report of an Envoy to Paradise* (London; New York, NY: RoutledgeCurzon, 2002), United States Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, *North Korea the Hidden Gulag: Putting Human Rights on the North Korea Policy Agenda 2003*, Hyung-chan Kim and

but demanded that his entire being be reformed and incorporated into the collective: bourgeois man, that is everything that is not communist man, had to be abolished. The *Communist Manifesto*, which itself was in part built upon the foundations of the French revolution, laid the foundation for the Leninist vanguard model of communist revolutionary action. This in paved the way for Stalinism in all its different varieties. In that development we can witness an increasing willingness to draw the underlying premises to their utmost radical logical conclusions. Erik van Ree comments that “what Stalinism essentially did was to drive Leninism to its radical conclusions”. In so doing, Stalin gave a ‘totalitarian interpretation of the united popular will’ which was ‘practically indistinguishable from the Jacobin ethic of virtue’.³⁶²

Communism in its earliest forms did not have the prophet-leadership cult that Nazism had. Instead, it focussed more on the role of independent communist committee’s which struggled for the same cause. Although under Stalin the leadership cult did form and can nowadays still be witnessed in North-Korea, it is not a defining hallmark of Communism as such. Perhaps this can be attributed to Communism’s disdain for fascist virtues which it deemed a by product of bourgeois nihilism. Nevertheless, the fully blown Communist movements can all be described much in the same way as we have done with Nazism. There is a new faith, a new ecclesia, a corresponding transcendent Law of History and movement which are being let loose on a population in order to fabricate some mystical and palingenetic Utopia.

The previous two paragraphs have aimed to give some practical background to Voegelin and Arendt’s theories on

Dong-khu Kim, *Human Remolding in North Korea: A Social History of Education* (Lanham, Maryland: University Press of America, 2005), J Feffer, "North Korea and the Politics of Famine," in *FPIF Special Report* (Foreign policy in focus, 2006).

³⁶² Ree, *The Political Thought of Joseph Stalin: A Study in Twentieth-Century Revolutionary Patriotism*, pp. 273, 279.

respectively the Gnostic speculation and the logicity of ideological thinking. The following paragraphs seek to step back from the specific content of Nazism and Communism and focus rather on the more general characteristics of totalitarianism as a form of legal-political thought and form of political organization.

5.4.3. From fascism to totalitarianism

Like the fascists, both Nazism and Communism, who both share a lot of fascist elements in their earliest stages of development, were intensely dissatisfied with the status quo. The ailments of their day, in their view, stemmed largely from either oppression by the bourgeoisie or from a loss of ethnic purity, both of these ailments could however be ameliorated by radically altering the structure of society, by changing *the order of being*. This process of alteration was within the realm of possibilities in that it was *conceivable*, but was it also *achievable*? Was there, in other words, a hope for salvation? The process of fabricating Utopia, of bringing mankind as a whole back into the Garden of Eden is an enterprise that needed to fundamentally change the order of being and thus required a tremendous amount of social economical and political power. In practical terms, it needed a central plan lead by a single movement that could combine the strength of all those it claimed to represent. The unity of action and purpose thus arises from the *unity of the people*, which must be fabricated before the experiment in totalitarian control and fabrication can even start. This fabrication is not based on a random selection of principles but is thoroughly justified and legitimized through an appeal to morality. If we are to understand the quintessential nature of totalitarianism we must first learn to look at the world through its eyes, to think as they do. This is where the empirical models falls short of expectations. I will therefore give some examples of the totalitarian morality so that we can understand the logicity of its political actions.

What makes an ideology totalitarian is as we saw, the strict logicity with which the ideologue finds in the ideology a program for the

salvation of the world ailments: A plan by which the world is transformed into what the ideology predicts is going to be its final end-state, Utopia.³⁶³ From their ruthless application of logic to the premise, ruthless in the sense that it is impervious the will of and needs of individual people, an infinite number of decrees could be deduced that dictated every human action. Every human action can thus be viewed in light of this new morality, thereby dividing man in absolute Manichean categories of good and evil, of totalitarian styled men, and existential enemies.³⁶⁴

Totalitarian lawfulness and jurisdiction

The mere fact that a 'system' by which Utopia is going to be fabricated is erected alone testifies to the totalitarian radically positive conception of freedom. Man is no longer free to do as he will within the boundaries of the law, but he becomes completely encapsulated within the confines of a law that does not concern itself with the concept of individuality or even the present and coming generations of man. Man becomes the subject of a motion to which he is not considered to offer any resistance.

Laws were established to be boundaries [...] and to remain static, enabling men to move within them: under totalitarian conditions, on the contrary, every means is taken to "stabilize" men, to make *them* static, in order to prevent any unforeseen,

³⁶³ "This stringent logicity as a guide to action permeates the whole structure of totalitarian movements and governments. It is exclusively the work of Hitler and Stalin who, although they did not add a single new thought to the ideas and propaganda slogans of their movements, for this reason alone must be considered ideologists of the greatest importance". Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, p. 472.

³⁶⁴ Friedrich A. von Hayek, *The Road to Serfdom*, Routledge Classics (London: Routledge, 2001). p. 62 "To direct all our activities according to a single plan presupposes that every one of our needs is given its rank in an order of values which must be complete enough to make it possible to decide between all the different courses between which the planner has to choose, it presupposes, in short, the existence of a complete ethical code in which all the different human values are allotted their due place."

free, or spontaneous acts that might hinder freely racing terror.³⁶⁵

It follows that in order to ensure that the law of movement can 'race through humanity unopposed', the space between the private and the public has to be completely obliterated and that all public and private life has to be subjected to the edicts of these laws of motion. Here the true *totalitarian* nature of this type of thinking reveals itself. The totalitarian movements, which exists solely to accelerate the fabrication of humanity, stands above and over humanity, and is the central organ for the actualization and fulfilment of the law of motion. As long as we regard lawfulness as meaning that the people are individuals bestowed with rights that separate and protect them from one another, as a concept which creates a private realm in which the individual can be his own sovereign, we are firmly outside of the realm of totalitarian thinking. Totalitarian lawfulness should be understood not as a movement 'for and by the people' but over and against the people. It does not aim to safeguard the individual's rights but to safeguard the law of motion which much be allowed to use the individual as the raw material for the fabrication of Utopia as it sees fit.

From the totalitarian claim for self and world salvation also follows the totalitarian conception of jurisdiction. Since the constitution of the totalitarian ideology automatically and inescapably creates a dichotomy between the new totalitarian men and their existential enemies, and thus divides the world into two camps, its jurisdiction is in principle global. For if it was to allow some realms of non-totalitarian reality to exist then it would commit treason against its own principle: the salvation of all mankind. In other words, totalitarian jurisdiction is *universal* and *perpetual*.³⁶⁶

³⁶⁵ Arendt, "On the Nature of Totalitarianism: An Essay in Understanding," p. 343.

Totalitarian morality

Although these regimes are often described as being a-moral vehicles that serve power hungry dictators, they are in fact highly moralistic. Instead of being subordinate to the whimsical desires of individual men, they are exclusively preoccupied with bringing mankind in line with the highest moral dictum from which all legitimacy and authority emanates. Therefore, totalitarian movements *in principle* do not differ from any other movement that claims to strive towards universal salvation through the purification of mankind. It is through the ruthless application of logic to the axiomatic premise, and through the modern means of social engineering on a previously impossible scale, that totalitarian movements set themselves apart from any other experiment aimed at fabricating Utopia. Totalitarianism *requires* the destruction of all the traditional boundaries of individual freedom, individual spheres of autonomy, the boundaries between public and private life because the plan for the fabrication of mankind which it develops, needs to be imposed on society as a whole, unobstructed by boundaries of any kind. Totalitarian morality demands the total invasion of the social body. This cannot take place without first having achieved a monopoly on power, for it is power, both political and social power, which enables this fabrication.

The overlap with fascism

In their rise to power, totalitarian movements often display many characteristics of fascism, thereby leading many observers to believe that it actually is fascist in nature. Although Communism proclaims to be anti-fascist in nature, it cannot mask the fact that in the phase in which it has to mobilize the masses and eradicate opposition; it displays a conspicuous amount of fascist characteristics. One should realize that the fascist movements and the Nazi and Communist forms

³⁶⁶ "The claim to global rule is identical to the claim establishing a new and universally valid law on earth. In consequence, all foreign politics are, to the totalitarian mind, disguised domestic politics, and all foreign wars are, in fact, civil wars." *Ibid.*, p. 333.

of totalitarianism all began to take shape during roughly the same period in time and in reaction to many of the same predicaments of their respective societies. Islamism too, as we will see, came from similar sets of circumstances. The difference between these three movements should therefore not be placed in its organizational structure preceding the attainment of power, for they all resemble each other in that respect, but in the way they envision their long term aims and their application of power once a monopoly on power has actually been achieved. It is in this vision of how they eventually will use their power that the totalitarian and fascist movements part ways.

As I have shown in the chapter on fascism; fascism adopts a mentality as its principle of action. The mentality is often diffuse, undefined, uncodified, appeals predominantly to romantic notions about struggle, violence and heroism but is, most importantly, devoid of any form of ideological thinking or Utopian ambition. Hence, although totalitarian movements resemble fascism in their pre-power stage of development in respect of their appeal to the fascist mentality, what separates them is that this resemblance is the core of fascism, while it is in contrast, merely an outer facade, a mobilizational tool in totalitarian movements.³⁶⁷ Tyranny, dictatorship and fascism all strive to political power for *worldly* ends. Although of these three Fascisms has the highest claim to an ethical state, it lacks the ambition to 'immanentize the Eschaton'. fascism in the words of Mussolini expressly rejected 'the teleological notion that at some future in time the human family will secure a final settlement of all its difficulties.'³⁶⁸ Goebbels reiterated this fundamental difference when he stated that

³⁶⁷ The Nazi's SA for instance was clearly a fascist entity which was employed to conquer the streets and intimidate opposition just as the *fasci di Combattimenti* were employed in fascist Italy. As soon as the NSDAP gained a monopoly on power however, the Nazi's were quick to purge and subjugate the SA to the party and replace it with the ideological, non-fascist, SS.

³⁶⁸ Mussolini, "Fundamental Ideas," p. 206.

fascism is ‘nothing like National Socialism. While the latter goes deep down to the roots, fascism is only a superficial thing.’³⁶⁹

In their outward appearance however, totalitarian movements, apart from their use of fascist-like mentalities, adopt another important fascist concept: the use of organized violence and terror. There are however essential differences between authoritarian and fascist terror and totalitarian terror.

5.4.4 Ideology and terror

Apart from the mentality as a mobilizational tool, another element totalitarian movements have in common with fascism is their open display of violence, intimidation and terror.³⁷⁰ Within the academic discussion on the nature of totalitarian movements, a point of disagreement is the precise function of terror. Following the death of Stalin and the transformation of the Soviet system of governance to a more bureaucratic Moloch, authors like Linz,³⁷¹ Friedrich³⁷² and Brzezinski³⁷³ adapted the totalitarian paradigm to such a degree that terror was excluded from its defining characteristics. The reasoning behind this was the idea that terror was mainly a means of suppressing opposition and, since opposition was already nearly impossible, the movement could do without it. Although my research suggests that there are numerous reasons to assume that such a system would lose its defining characteristic, namely the forceful fabrication of Utopia in favour of the stability of the regime in

³⁶⁹ R. Bideleux and I. Jeffries, *A History of Eastern Europe: Crisis and Change* (Sydney: Routledge, 2007), p. 378.

³⁷⁰ “Totalitarian terror is so often confused with the intimidation measures of tyranny or the terror of civil wars and revolutions because the totalitarian regimes we are familiar with developed directly out of civil wars and one-party dictatorships and in their beginnings, before they became totalitarian, used terror in precisely the same way as other despotic regimes we know from history” in Arendt, *Essays in Understanding 1930-1954: Formation, Exile, and Totalitarianism*. p. 298 In “Mankind and Terror”

³⁷¹ Linz, *Totalitarian and Authoritarian Regimes*.

³⁷² Friedrich and Brzezinski, *Totalitarian Dictatorship and Autocracy*.

³⁷³ Brzezinski, *Ideology and Power in Soviet Politics*..

question, this discussion is mainly of interest when it regards full-fledged totalitarian party-states in which no political plurality exists.³⁷⁴ Islamist movements however, are predominantly movements without a monopoly on power or even a single national base of operations; instead, they are most often transnational movements of opposition.³⁷⁵ Having said that, Islamist movements emphasize repeatedly that their objectives are in no way hampered by any considerations of stability of political rule. In that sense Islamist terror mimics totalitarian terror. Its prime objective is not the fabrication of a stable regime it is the fabrication of a new order of being. As long as that order is not built, and this in actuality can never be truly built as we will come to see, terror cannot cease, not even for the benefit of the regime. An important note to make is that unlike non-religious forms of totalitarianism, Islamist movements have the added benefit of the promise of a reward for martyrdom. In fact, as I will show in part two of this research, this idea of, *Shahada*, martyrdom plays a very important role both in mobilizing the masses for terrorist activities and as a goal unto itself. This religious component is obviously lacking in non-religious forms of totalitarianism and the lack of a reward for self-sacrifice therefore has to be compensated by indoctrination.³⁷⁶

³⁷⁴ "Stalin...used extreme methods and mass repressions at a time when the Revolution was already victorious, when the Soviet state was strengthened, when our Party was politically consolidated and had strengthened itself both numerically and ideologically". N. Khrushchev, "On the Personality Cult and Its Consequences" (paper presented at the twentieth party congress, 1956) in: Dallin, Breslauer, and Studies, *Political Terror in Communist Systems*, p. 116. Arendt in addition reiterates the quintessential and often misunderstood character trait of all totalitarian movements, namely: "What totalitarianism assumes is not power nor enrichment nor even political survival." Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, p. 464.

³⁷⁵ I will return to the issue of transnational totalitarian movements in the next part of this study.

³⁷⁶ I have deliberately not engaged in any discussion of religion in general, comparative assessments of religious concepts as they re-appear in totalitarianism, or on specific theological concepts such as martyrdom in *all*

Practical terror

religions for a number of reasons. First of which is that this study is dedicated to understanding the potential totalitarian nature and the potential appeal of *Islamist* movements. Seeing that Islamist movements in my opinion currently form the only novel and viable totalitarian phenomenon to speak off, any such larger discussion would sidetrack enormously from the research question at hand, whilst this would not be justifiable in light of that question. Furthermore, as the second part of this study will attest, answering any such questions, even when confined to one religious tradition, presupposes a great deal of knowledge about its canonical scriptures and the reception of those scriptures in the authoritative exegeses, religious laws and theological viewpoints that have developed on their basis. Whilst anyone can interpret any given text for themselves and thus arrive at something which would resemble a totalitarian ideology, the criteria which such an ideology must meet is that it is at least internally logically coherent and consistent.

Especially if we want to attribute such an interpretation to a religion we have to be sure that within the greater system of the specific religious thought to which it appeals, it cannot be such an unorthodox interpretation that it stops being a product of that religious tradition. The entire second part of this study is dedicated to showing that when it comes to Islamism, such an inner logical coherency and consistency exists, *and* that is not so radically different from the Islamic orthodoxy, in all of its dominant varieties over the last 1400 years, that it can readily be dismissed as being un-Islamic. The study of the different canonical texts, the reception thereof amongst the clerical scholars, and understanding how those reflect in the promulgation of the varying opinions on Islamic laws were necessary before I felt confident in stating that one could justifiably speak of a form of totalitarianism that was based on Islam, i.e. Islamism, instead of a movement based on a perversion thereof.

Doing the same for other religions, let alone making a comparative study into the reception of concepts such as martyrdom or religious violence in the different religious traditions would be well outside of the scope of the research question at hand and would require an entirely different study. For those interested in the specific subject of martyrdom in religion I refer to the work of amongst others: Cliteur, *The Secular Outlook: In Defense of Moral and Political Secularism*. Chapter two, J. W. Henten and F. Avemarie, *Martyrdom and Noble Death: Selected Texts from Graeco-Roman, Jewish, and Christian Antiquity* (London: Routledge, 2002), M. J. Cormack, *Sacrificing the Self: Perspectives on Martyrdom and Religion* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), P. Middleton, *Martyrdom: A Guide for the Perplexed* (London: Continuum Intl Pub Group, 2011).

There are in broad terms, two forms of terror: practical terror and totalitarian ideological terror. The first, practical terror is common to all authoritarian regimes. Its main focus is the elimination of opposition, intimidation, coercion and the display of power for propagandistic use. It can also be used by non-state aligned terrorist organizations that have real world ambitions such as the IRA, ETA or other separatist groups.³⁷⁷ Practical terror occurs in totalitarian regimes *only* in the earlier stages of the development, which is before its position of power is undisputed, or when the totalitarian party's position of power is in decline. One could say that in the life cycle of totalitarian movements, practical terror thus forms the birth pains and towards the end of its life cycle the dying convulsions. Only after all opposition is gone and the monopoly on power has been attained does totalitarian terror begin to differentiate from terror in other forms of authoritarianism. On the nature of practical terror Arendt states:

If we single out the two forms of terror that have been historically the most effective and politically the bloodiest- the terror of tyranny and the terror of revolution – we soon see that they are directed towards an end and find an end. The terror of tyranny reaches an end once it has paralyzed or even totally dispensed with all public life and made private individuals out of all citizens, stripping them of interest in and a connection with public affairs....Tyrannical terror comes to an end when it has imposed a graveyard peace on a country. The end of a revolution is a new code of laws – or counter revolution. The terror finds its end when the opposition is

³⁷⁷ See for a more elaborate discussion of the differences between the various forms of terrorism: U. Rosenthal, "Terrorisme.", E Muller, "Modern Terrorism and Modern Counter Terrorism in the Netherlands," in *Terrorism: Ideology, Law, Policy*, ed. Geliijn Molier, Afshin Ellian, and David Suurland (Dordrecht: Republic of Letters, 2011), van der Wilt, "In Search of Motive: Conceptual Hazards in the Quest for a Proper Definition of Terrorism".

destroyed, when nobody dares lift a finger, or when the revolution has exhausted all reserves of strength.³⁷⁸

Whilst practical terror is thus aimed at the elimination of *real* opposition and is thus always linked to the experiences and demands of *reality*; totalitarian ideological terror only comes into being once all forms of real opposition have been vanquished. This is the quintessential nature of terror in totalitarianism which separates totalitarianism from any other form of political rule.

The turning point that decides whether a one-party system will remain a dictatorship or develop into a form of totalitarian rule always comes when every last trace of active or passive opposition in the country has been drowned in blood and terror. Genuinely totalitarian terror, however, sets in only when the regime has no more enemies who can be arrested and tortured to death and when even the different classes of suspects are eliminated and can no longer be taken into "protective custody". [The] First characteristic of totalitarian terror- [...]it does not shrink but grows as the opposition is reduced.³⁷⁹

In totalitarianism, the goal of political power is not some worldly end but the immanentization of the Eschaton, to bring the process that runs throughout history to its ultimate end. When the totalitarian movement has gained a monopoly on power, and has thus destroyed all existing opposition, when the *need* for practical terror no longer exists, *then* the totalitarian experiment in total domination begins. It is this forced fabrication of Utopia, a revolution aimed at the whole of mankind, that is unique to totalitarianism at the height of its power and which I shall call ideological terror. I shall now discuss four *appearances* of this ideological type of terror, which Arendt identifies as being the essence of totalitarianism and Voegelin sees as the actual

³⁷⁸ Arendt, "Mankind and Terror," p. 298.

³⁷⁹ ———, *Essays in Understanding 1930-1954: Formation, Exile, and Totalitarianism*, p. 299.

fabrication of a new order of being, the implementation of the Gnostic's formula for self and world salvation. The relevance of the following subdivision will become all the more apparent when we discuss Islamist terrorism.

Ideology and terror: four aspects of totalitarian terror

As stated, ideological terror has four main functions. Firstly: as a means of fabricating mankind, secondly, as a means of abolishing internal plurality and external enemies, thirdly, terror against the concept of the political and fourthly, terror as an end in itself. The terror we can see in Islamist movements conforms to these four functions although their application is often limited due to the fact that Islamist movements, by enlarge, are still movements of opposition which lack the power to fully implement their programs of action. The four points which I will mention here are indicative of a fully grown totalitarian movement.

1. Terror as a means of fabricating mankind

The ideology and the process of ideological thinking which we have discussed so far, invariably leads to a number of features which are distinctly totalitarian, that is, they appear in no other form of government we know of and they form the core of the totalitarian *raison d'être*.

At the heart of ideological terror lies the desire to fabricate mankind. As we saw earlier, totalitarian lawfulness and morality dictate that the totalitarian movement has but one goal: to let the law of movement rage freely through mankind. Mankind in its present condition is merely the raw material on which Utopia is built and therefore superfluous. Totalitarian laws therefore do not stabilize society; they stabilize men so that they can offer no resistance when they are engulfed in a constant movement towards a presupposed end goal, Utopia.³⁸⁰ In order to achieve this goal, men must be stripped of

³⁸⁰ "At this point the fundamental difference between totalitarian and all other conceptions of law comes to light. It is true that Nature or History, as

everything that protects them from one another, every political, civil and human right they might have. Furthermore, their private life must be abolished. Every act becomes a public act which is open to collective criticism and punishment. In short, all the defences man has, all his private recluses, his hiding places in which he can withdraw from the outside world must be torn down so as to make him impotent against collective machinery of the totalitarian party. Only when man is truly defenceless, when even his own family *will* betray him if needed, can the totalitarian experiment in the fabrication of a new man begin. In the words of O'Brien in *1984*: "Power is tearing human minds to pieces and putting them together again in new shapes of your own choosing."³⁸¹ The formula by which the human mind is rearranged *is* the ideology. The ideal of fabricating mankind thus depends on the victory over the internal and external enemy. Only when those are defeated can Utopia be fabricated. This type of terror is unknown to states or non-state actors that employ practical terror; it serves no purpose for their cause. In addition, totalitarian ideological terror is by definition limitless to such a degree that even the laws of the land are subservient to its cause. There is no hiding place and no notion of guilt or innocence can protect an individual from this wave of terror which is unleashed upon society. It goes without saying that the body count of this type of terror is in principle

the source of authority for positive laws, could traditionally reveal itself to man, be it as the *lumen natural* in natural law or as the voice of conscience in historically revealed religious law. This, however, hardly made human beings walking embodiments of these laws. On the contrary, these laws remained distinct- as the authority which demanded obedience- from the actions of men. [...]In the totalitarian interpretation, all laws become laws of movement. Nature or History are no longer stabilizing sources of authority for laws governing the actions of mortal men, but are themselves movements.[...] the very term "law" has changed in meaning; from denoting the framework of stability within which human actions were supposed to, and were permitted to, take place, it has become the very expression of these motions themselves."Ibid, — — —, "On the Nature of Totalitarianism: An Essay in Understanding," pp. 340-341.

³⁸¹ Orwell, Pynchon, and Fromm, *Nineteen Eighty-Four: A Novel*, p. 276. Chapter 19.

limitless, as shown by the merciless reign of terror unleashed upon an utterly pacified population in the USSR under Stalin, Maoist China, the killing fields of Pol Pot and the extermination camps of the Nazi's. It is important to note that such levels of violence are never the a priori formulated goal of totalitarian movements, but the inescapable consequence of their 'logicality of ideological thinking'.

2. Terror as a means of abolishing internal plurality and external enemies

The internal enemy

The internal enemy is that individual who lives within reach of the totalitarian movement. He does not have to be in the geographical territory of the totalitarian movement, it suffices that he belongs to the class or race upon whose behalf the totalitarian movement claims to operate. In National Socialism all Aryans who do not follow the racist ideology are internal enemies regardless of where they might live. For communist this applies to the proletariat and for Islamist ideologues, as we will see, this applies to all Muslims. Before Utopia can be fabricated, this internal enemy must be vanquished and this requires the elimination of all forms of political and social *plurality*. According to Lefort, the essential characteristic of totalitarianism is as follows:

[..] it is a *form of society*, that form in which all activities are immediately linked to one another, deliberately presented as modalities of a single world; that form in which a system of values predominates absolutely, such that every individual or collective undertaking must necessarily find in it a coefficient of reality; that form in which, lastly, the dominant model exercises a total physical and spiritual constraint on the behaviour of private individuals." [..] "The process of identification between power and society, the process of homogenizing the social space, the process of enclosing both

society and power are linked together to constitute the totalitarian system.³⁸²

This total self-identification of society with itself is, according to both Lefort and Arendt is symbolized and at the same time actualized in the party.³⁸³ The Party, headed by the leader, or what Lefort refers to as *Egocrat*, represents both the People-as-One and Power-as-One; meaning, there is no social body outside the party and no power outside the party. The symbolic seat of power thus becomes occupied *and* appropriated. The ideology does the same with the symbolic seat of law and knowledge which it both represents. How then does this party create the ideal unity of the People-as-One it claims to represent? It does so by forcefully removing the traditional barriers that shield the individual from the outside world. Even his private thoughts become the subject of collective evaluation and, if needed, punishment.³⁸⁴

By absorbing the individual into the collective and rendering him utterly naked and defenceless, robbing him of his right to even *be* an individual distinct from the collective, the *atomization* and *alienation* the movement claimed to resolve is finally revealed to be essential quality of the totalitarian society. The self identification of society and the integration of all spheres of existence into the totalitarian movement can only come about when all men are equally impotent,

³⁸² Lefort and Thompson, eds., *The Political Forms of Modern Society: Bureaucracy, Democracy, Totalitarianism*, pp. 284-285.

³⁸³ "It is something other than an apparatus of coercion, something other than a caste of bureaucrats, something other than an ideological movement designed to proclaim the sacred historical mission of the state, although it *also* connotes all those features. It is the essential agent of totalitarianism." *Ibid.*, p. 79.

³⁸⁴ "[...] Every activity, from the most modest to the most important is actualized and presented as a moment of a collective project. Not only do individuals seem to lose in the party the status that differentiates them in civil life, thus becoming, 'comrades', social beings, but they are also called upon to share their experience, to expose their activity and that of their milieu to a collective judgment that gives them meaning." *Ibid.*, p. 81.

superfluous and defenceless and one can longer differentiate between individuals.³⁸⁵

This part is essential, totalitarian ideological terror is first and foremost aimed at those in whose name it claims to operate. In order for the totalitarian movement to be able to begin its grand experiment in fabricating a new order of being it must first know that the masses which it controls are the unfailing transmission belts between the party leadership's ideology and the real world. Men must become powerless and insignificant to the point of disappearance. Only when this mindset is imbued within them, when no realm of autonomy or privacy from the public realm is left, when every action is a public action open to collective condemnation and punishment, when everyone feels equally powerless in the face of the movement can this experiment begin.³⁸⁶ The novel *1984* by George Orwell describes with unparalleled clarity this process of making men

³⁸⁵ "It is obvious that a proselytizing mass movement must break down all existing group ties if it is to win a considerable following. The ideal potential convert is the individual who stands alone, who has no collective body he can blend with and lose himself in and so mask the pettiness, meaninglessness and shabbiness of his individual existence. Where a mass movement finds the corporate pattern of family, tribe, country, [...] in a state of disruption and decay, it moves in and gathers the harvest. Where it finds the corporate pattern in good repair, it must attack and disrupt." Hoffer, *The True Believer; Thoughts on the Nature of Mass Movements*, p. 35.

³⁸⁶ This is no mere theoretical rhetoric but the actual practice of totalitarian policy. The fact that the secret police, which is the heart of any totalitarian movement in power, carries out its reign of terror in open daylight, is known to anyone, is designed to instill the fear of the omnipotence of the movement. The secret police, with its spies and enforced cooperation from the masses leaves no realm untouched. A famous example took place during Pol Pot's reign of terror. A couple fell in love with each other without the express and prior consent of Angkar, the secret police. Thus Angkar forced the parents and family of these adolescents to kill them in the most brutal fashion. The lesson that had to be learned was not that one shouldn't oppose Angkar, the lesson to be learned was that even the parents were 'transformed' into beings who could be relied upon to carry out orders from the party even against their own children.

impotent and the reasons for this impotence.³⁸⁷ Whilst this may sound like mere theoretical ponderings over the nature of totalitarianism, it is not. In Pol Pot's torture facility, *tuol sleng*, also known as S-21, the interrogators manual stipulated, and survivors confirmed that the victim must not be put to death before he understands and agrees with the reason why he is to be put to death.

The purpose of doing torture is to get their responses. It's not something we do for the fun of it. Thus we must make them hurt so they will respond quickly. Another purpose is to break them psychologically and make them lose their will. It's not something that is done out of individual anger or self-satisfaction. Thus we beat them to make them afraid but absolutely not to kill them. [...]. Politics is very important whereas torture is secondary. Thus the question of doing politics takes the lead at all times. Even when questioning it is always necessary to do constant propaganda.³⁸⁸

³⁸⁷ In this scene in *1984* the totalitarian apparatchik O'Brien explains to Wilson, the arrested civilian, why he is being tortured." 'You are a flaw in the pattern, Winston. You are a stain that must be wiped out. Did I not tell you just now that we are different from the persecutors of the past? We are not content with negative obedience, nor even with the most abject submission. When finally you surrender to us, it must be of your own free will. We do not destroy the heretic because he resists us: so long as he resists us we never destroy him. We convert him, we capture his inner mind, we reshape him. We burn all evil and all illusion out of him; we bring him over to our side, not in appearance, but genuinely, heart and soul. We make him one of ourselves before we kill him. It is intolerable to us that an erroneous thought should exist anywhere in the world, however secret and powerless it may be. [...] You will be hollow. We shall squeeze you empty, and then we shall fill you with ourselves.'" Orwell, Pynchon, and Fromm, *Nineteen Eighty-Four: A Novel*, p. 265. Chapter 19

³⁸⁸ It has been reported that of the circa 50.00 people that went through S-21's gates, which knew no distinction in terms of rank within the party, position, sex, or age, only 7 people survived. Chandler, *Voices from S-21 : Terror and History in Pol Pot's Secret Prison*.

Totalitarian movements, when they have vanquished the internal enemy and thus have appropriated power, use the full thrust of the social, economical, cultural and political organizations which they have developed in their rise to power, to submit men to edicts of the party.³⁸⁹ Unlike fascism, however, which also claimed to rescue mankind from its loneliness, its atomization and its political impotence, the totalitarian movement, in the boldest betrayal of entrusted authority ever witnessed, willingly perfects this misery through its campaign of terror. Totalitarian terror explicitly aims to make *all* men, not just its enemies, equally impotent, equally alone, equally atomized and superfluous and thus equally unable to resist the brutal law of movement which the totalitarian movement now unleashes upon them. After all opposition has been vanquished, terror first gazes its eyes upon all those who still constitute an individual, who have not entered the fold of the social body, the image of the People-as-One.³⁹⁰

³⁸⁹ "The first of these points is obviously the party. After having been the mould of the totalitarian project, it becomes, once the regime has been established, the privileged agent of the process of identification between the power and the people, and of the process of homogenization of the social field. But it carried out these functions only by combining itself with innumerable mass organisms. Thus while on the one hand it penetrates into every part of the state edifice, to the point of dislocating its conventional articulations and using it as a mere façade for political power, on the other hand it produces dozens or hundreds of micro-bodies, whose essence is that their nature seems to be distinct from its own, in such a way as to stimulate the specificity and autonomy of purely social, that is non-political relations, but which are in fact consubstantial with it." Lefort and Thompson, eds., *The Political Forms of Modern Society: Bureaucracy, Democracy, Totalitarianism*, pp. 289-290.

³⁹⁰ "Terror was not a means of defence used by a handful of individuals whose privileges were threatened by existing social forces, it was constitutive of a new social force whose emergence presupposed a violent uprooting from the terrain of the old society and whose survival required the daily sacrifice of new members to the unity of the already formed organism." *Ibid.*, pp. 66, 286.

By terrorizing society as a whole, by punishing every sign of their individuality, their claims to an autonomous sphere of life outside of the People-as-One, the movement thus fabricates what so far had only existed on the level of the fantasy, a unity of equally impotent, superfluous specimens of the species.³⁹¹ By erecting a plethora of secret services, spy organizations and relying on its intricate web of sub- and parallel organizations, the totalitarian movement forced the population into ever increasing degrees of fanaticism, if only to save their own skin. What counted was not the particular guilt of those arrested, but that the system worked. The regime of Pol pot, Hitler, Stalin, Mao and Kim Jong Il all attest to the mindboggling efficiency of this network of organizations who found themselves in the position of exacting terror against basically themselves.

Total terror substitutes for the boundaries and channels of communication between individuals a band of iron which holds them so tightly together that it is as though their plurality has disappeared into one man of gigantic dimensions.³⁹²

As such, the totalitarian movement, which claims to represent the entire social-body in itself, eradicates all signs of plurality that hitherto existed outside of its sphere of influence. By making all men equally impotent, the movement assures itself that its process of

³⁹¹ According to Arendt the concentration camps served this purpose of eradicating plurality in that they were "Meant to make human beings in their infinite variety and their unique individuality superfluous. [...] the camps serve, amongst other purposes, as laboratories in which human beings of the most varied kinds are reduced to an always constant collection of reactions and reflexes. This process is carried so far that any one of these bundles of reactions can be exchanged for any other and so far that no specific person is killed, no one with a name, an unmistakable identity, a life of one particular cast or another and with certain attitudes and impulses, but, rather, a completely undistinguishable and undefinable specimen of the species *homo sapiens*" Arendt, "Mankind and Terror," p. 304.

³⁹² ———, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, p. 466.

actualizing the law of movement can go on unhindered by any act of individuality.³⁹³ This resulted in what Lefort described as follows:

The proletariat was master of a power of which it happened to be complete dispossessed. [...] The masses, in *their* name, have no say in their own exploitation. [...] thus the propaganda teaches, day in and day out, the opposite of what it is intended to preach [...] it has to prove to itself and to those it dominates that what it does is not contrary to what it says. [...] Prisoner of its own language, it imagines that it is not a class, that it responds to the needs of the community as a whole."³⁹⁴

Now the problem arises that the party itself, which is the acting agent behind the extermination of the internal enemy, itself becomes an internal enemy. Even though it claims to be the representation of the social unity, it is itself staffed and operated by individuals. These individuals through their work for the party stand to differentiate themselves from the impotent and homogenous masses through their accumulation of power. The party therefore is equally subject to systematic purges and terror. This is a feature that we can see in all totalitarian movements. The function of the purges is not to eliminate opposition, but to assure the party leadership that its edicts will be carried out no matter what *because* all are equally impotent.³⁹⁵ What

³⁹³ "Totalitarian terror, then, is no longer a means to an end; it is the very essence of such a government. Its ultimate political goal is to form and maintain a society, whether one dominated by a particular race or one in which classes and nations no longer exist, in which every individual would be nothing other than a specimen of the species." — — —, "Mankind and Terror," pp. 305-306.

³⁹⁴ Lefort and Thompson, eds., *The Political Forms of Modern Society: Bureaucracy, Democracy, Totalitarianism*, pp. 53, 76-77.

³⁹⁵ "These purges [...] test whether the government can actually depend on the ideological training of its bureaucracy, whether the internal coercion created by indoctrination corresponds to the external coercion of terror by forcing the individual to participate unquestioningly in the show trials and thus fall completely in line with the regime no matter what monstrosities it commits." *Ibid.*

the leadership needs above all is to prevent the creation within the party bureaucracy of autonomous circles of power; the frequent purges were designed to prevent this from happening and at the same time it intended to fill the bureaucracy with the same loneliness and atomization that it had helped create itself in society. Only in those conditions, when both the party, the movement it heads, and society as a whole are fused together into this People-as-One, the giant social body which Arendt calls 'one man of gigantic proportions' can the leadership undertake its experiment in total domination and fabrication of mankind.³⁹⁶ Totalitarianism therefore, besides eliminating the enemies of 'the people', eliminates the whole concept of individuality and plurality in every layer of society and thus eliminates the foundation of the political. In order to ensure that this state of desperate fanatical obedience and blind faith in the edicts of the leadership is permeated throughout society by non-violent means the totalitarian movements enlists all its organizations into its efforts at indoctrination. Unlike propaganda, which is directed at the non-

³⁹⁶ "In the absence of Stalinist terror, the development of the bureaucracy was inconceivable. In other words, it is to acknowledge that, over and above the manoeuvres of Stalin, the factional struggles within the leadership and the massive purges carried out at every level of society; there was the necessity to fuse every stratum of the bureaucracy into the mould of a new ruling class. [...]The functionaries can merely translate the ideas of the leadership into figures, deduce the consequences from the principles, transmit, apply. [...] This infinite distance between the state and the bureaucrats has another unexpected consequence: unless they become opponents the bureaucrats are never in a position to criticize established rule. In a formal way, this criticism is inscribed in the mode of existence of bureaucracy: since each individual is the state, each individual is invited by right, to direct, that is, to compare this actual activity with the socially fixed objectives. But, in reality, to criticize means to divorce oneself from the bureaucratic community. Since the bureaucrat is a member of the state, any deviation on his part is effectively a threat to the system. This also explains why any serious malfunction in production was necessarily expressed by a massive purge of bureaucrats, technicians, scientist or trade union cadres, whose deviation from the norm (whether intended or not) betrayed opposition to the state." Lefort and Thompson, eds., *The Political Forms of Modern Society: Bureaucracy, Democracy, Totalitarianism*, pp. 68-69, 76-77.

totalitarian world and is merely a pretty facade to lure in the naive, the ignorant or those who hope that their lives may benefit from party leadership, indoctrination is reserved for those who are already absorbed into the movement. The aim of indoctrination is to instill the feeling of loneliness, impotence and total dependency on the party to such a degree that the individual will carry out any act demanded of him by the party without interference from his own individual considerations. Indoctrination, when successful, assures the party that the individual, for the lack of a better term, has ceased to be. In its place comes the totalitarian man. Totalitarianism's ideological terror therefore leaves no realm of existence untouched and extends to the citizens and the party itself alike.

The external enemy

The external enemy is constituted both by the ideology, i.e. enemies of the race or class, as well as by the necessity for the constant invention of new classes of enemies. I will go into this shortly. What is important for now is that totalitarian lawfulness is not interested in particular individual guilt or innocence, for those are concepts related to the individual's free will and action. Totalitarian laws are aimed at the reshaping of mankind itself; it is a collective enterprise for which particular notions of guilt or innocence are utterly irrelevant. Those who are deemed to be guilty are not judged on the basis of objective positive laws but on the basis of the law of Nature or History which have judged them to be unfit for survival. In other words, the death sentence is not proclaimed because of any particular action on the side of the victim, but simply because the ideology has dictated that his death is needed in order for Utopia to be built.

The definition of the enemy is constitutive of the identity of the people [...] The campaign against the enemies of the people is seen as a form of prophylaxis: the integrity of the body depends on the elimination of its enemies.³⁹⁷

³⁹⁷ Ibid., pp. 286-287.

Totalitarian laws are therefore foremost laws of elimination.³⁹⁸

[..] These ideologies always result in the same “law” of elimination of the individuals for the sake for the sake of the process or progress of the species.³⁹⁹

One can see this principle at work in the extermination camps or Gulag system which, if it were only due to its sheer size and lack of judicial process were machines for the extermination of whole groups or classes irrespective of their individuality and individual guilt or innocence.⁴⁰⁰ It is only now, when all have become politically impotent, unable to form any opposition worth noting that the totalitarian essence is finally revealed. With the entire social body forcefully united into the movement, with all power appropriated by the party and its leader, it now becomes clear that what was proclaimed before this stage was propaganda, and now the true face of totalitarianism emerges:

A system of government whose essence is terror and whose principal of action is the logicity of ideological thinking.⁴⁰¹

3. Terror against the concept of the political

The third appearance of totalitarian terror is linked to the idea that the totalitarian revolution will create heaven or Utopia on earth. This

³⁹⁸ “If it is the law of nature to eliminate what is harmful and unfit for life, a logically consistent racial politics cannot be well served by one-time terrorist eradications of certain races, for if no new categories of parasitic and unfit lives can be found that would mean the end of nature altogether- or at least the end of a racial politics that seeks to serve such a law of motion in human nature. “ Arendt, "Mankind and Terror," p. 306.

³⁹⁹ ———, "On the Nature of Totalitarianism: An Essay in Understanding," p. 341.

⁴⁰⁰ “Terror that is directed against neither suspects nor enemies of the regime can turn only to absolutely innocent people who have done nothing wrong and in the literal sense of the word do not know why they are being arrested, send to concentration camps, or liquidated” ———, "Mankind and Terror," p. 299.

⁴⁰¹ ———, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, p. 474.

is based, as we saw, on abstract reasoning and logical deduction from an axiomatic premise, not from a real world experience gained from or susceptible to trial and error. If divine revelation, due to its emanation from God, is raised beyond all doubt so is the Gnostic speculation, as an inner-worldly religion, an untouchable emanation of a perceived historicist and deterministic process.⁴⁰²

The system is justified by the fact of its construction; the possibility of calling into question the construction of systems, as such, is not acknowledged. That the form of science is the system must be assumed as beyond all questions.⁴⁰³

This leads to a prohibition on questions and on unbelief, thus effectively eliminating at the very least, the public appearance of the faculty of private thinking. Since totalitarianism is concerned with transforming reality into the image of their ideology, its main focus is not the will of man but the execution of the law of nature and history. As such, not only those who question or deny the totalitarian ideology become enemies, but in fact everyone who is not the *perfect* embodiment of the ideology. The mere act of thinking for oneself becomes an act of treason. The paranoia that the party instils on society infects the party as well. In reality, this means that practically all are enemies, all are sinners, if not now, then *maybe* tomorrow. In order to prove ones loyalty, and save ones existence, the individual in a totalitarian society is required to demonstrate ever increasing fanaticism. It is for this reason, that it is not uncommon in totalitarian societies for children to betray their parents or parents kill their children for the sole reason that the movement has dictated its ideological necessity. This feature of totalitarian terror sets it apart from any other known form of terror. No longer interested in suppressing *actual* opposition, totalitarian ideological terror reshapes men into a new model of mankind regardless of guilt or innocence. As such the concept of guilt, of criminal law, of boundaries between the

⁴⁰² Voegelin and Henningsen, *Modernity without Restraint*, p. 33.

⁴⁰³ *Ibid.*, p. 274.

public and private become obliterated. The faculty of judgment however cannot be destroyed just by exterior terror; it has to be made impossible by a combination of the latter and a carefully devised program of *organized forgetfulness*. Lee Harris in his book *Civilization and its enemies* describes the process by which human experiences over time lose their 'living link' with present day generations.⁴⁰⁴ Through this loss of the link between the theoretical knowledge we now have and the real world experiences that spawned this knowledge, the underlying truth and value of this knowledge are lost. The actual experience of for example dictatorship is lost when the generation that lived under such a system of government is gone, what is left is the theoretical knowledge that this generation has passed on onto the next generation. With the passing of time this knowledge will acquire an increasing level of dogma, without the real world knowledge of what it actually is like to live under such a system. Because of this forgetfulness, unavoidable with the passing of time, the *raison d'être* of the dogma is increasingly in danger of being lost.

When generation upon generation can live in the safety of a democracy, the horrors of dictatorship will soon be forgotten. When the lessons of the living experience of dictatorship are lost, the dogma is in danger of losing its constituting value; it could become a relic, an empty shell which is perceived to have no value for contemporary times. As such, what was once unimaginable can become imaginable again. *It is through the activity of remembrance that the cognitive immune systems of societies are constituted.* Forgetfulness therefore undermines these safety mechanisms and will allow for mistakes of the past to be repeated. It's by virtue of our collective experiences that we know that some proposed solutions to man's troubles, be they political, social or economical, will work and others will not. Remembrance therefore is a vital constituting factor in forming political thought and enabling private judgement. Without

⁴⁰⁴ Harris, *Civilization and Its Enemies: The Next Stage of History*, p. xii.

remembrance, the link between actual and theoretical knowledge becomes severed, allowing for experiments in thought to occur that would impose themselves on politics without being hampered by the lessons and the cognitive immune systems develop through centuries of human experiences.⁴⁰⁵ The paradox is that precisely because a dictatorship is unimaginable, it becomes imaginable. If man was a *tabula rasa*, devoid of memory, everything would be possible.⁴⁰⁶

⁴⁰⁵ See also Ellian's analysis of totalitarianism, judgement and forgetfulness in: Afshin Ellian, *Een Onderzoek Naar De Waarheids- En Verzoeningscommissie Van Zuid-Afrika* (Nijmegen: Wolf Legal Productions, 2003). On remembrance and politics in general see: M. Pakier, Strath B., *A European Memory? Contested Histories and Politics of Remembrance* (Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2010), D. E. Lorey and W. H. Beezley, *Genocide, Collective Violence, and Popular Memory: The Politics of Remembrance in the Twentieth Century* (Lenham: SR Books, 2002), Avishai Margalit, *The Ethics of Memory* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2002).

⁴⁰⁶ Imagine a philosopher pondering on the merits of the dissolution of property rights. By annulling the right to private property all goods would become the property of all, thereby establishing a happy communion of people sharing everything for the good of all. Devoid of selfish and private interests that would otherwise lead to bloody conflict and disproportionate accumulation of wealth on the one side, and poverty on the other, history could finally march on towards establishing heaven on earth. Such an altruistic worldview could be very appealing were it not for the fact that everywhere one looks in the world people have developed some sort of individual property right and seem more interested with their private interests than that of mankind at large. Even though this imagined Utopia seems quite appealing, the reality of the accumulated human experiences indicates that such a worldview would have a very slim chance of being accepted in the real world. Unfortunately for our good natured philosopher, humankind is not endowed with such altruistic characteristics. Therefore, in order for such a worldview to become reality one would have to change the very nature of mankind itself. A sensible philosopher would concede that his imagined Utopia would have no chance of success in the real world and leave it at that. History however, amongst others in the form of Communism, shown that there are men willing, at the costs of brutal repression and millions of lives, to undertake such experiments in altering the human nature.

Whenever legal and political philosophical thought, whose subject matter is the organization of mankind, is isolated from the realm of real world human experiences, the chances of the results being inhuman are greatly increased. It is only through the act of remembrance that the link between thought and reality is established. Arendt noted this danger inherent in the relationship between philosophy and politics when she said:

thought itself arises out of incidents of living experience and must remain bound to them as the only guideposts by which to take its bearings⁴⁰⁷

In her book *The human condition*⁴⁰⁸ she argues that when philosophers have turned their attention to the messy confused world of politics in which there is always the competing pluralistic contest of opinions (*doxai*), their primary aim has not been to understand politics, but rather to impose the “absolute standards” of philosophy on politics.⁴⁰⁹ Whether her grim description of the philosopher’s attitude towards politics is a valid one is something which is open to debate. What is noteworthy for now is her description of a process which, in its most uncompromising form, accurately describes what happens in totalitarian thought; relying on axiomatic premises the totalitarian ideology deduces through the use of stringent logicality precepts to be applied directly onto society. No ‘real world’ experience is allowed to interfere with the logical inner consistency of the totalitarian ideology. One must ‘forget’ that such a thing as the real world ever existed. Where the experiences of the real world differ from those implied by the totalitarian ideology, the former is made to conform to the latter resulting in an unrelenting effort to

⁴⁰⁷ Hannah Arendt, *Between past and future, six exercises in political thought* Hannah Arendt, *Between Past and Future: Six Exercises in Political Thought* (London,: Faber and Faber, 1961), p. 14.

⁴⁰⁸ Arendt, *The Human Condition*.

⁴⁰⁹ Dana Richard Villa, *The Cambridge Companion to Hannah Arendt* (Cambridge, U.K. ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 280.

fabricate and reshape reality into the image of the fantasy world of the ideology.

In order to accomplish the transformation of the 'real world' into the imagined reality, any reference to, or experience derived from the real world has to be abolished from the collective memory of the society on which this experiment is carried out. In essence, the totalitarian movement has to *create absolute forgetfulness* so that the only frame of reference available to the citizens becomes the 'reality' of the fantasy world that has been dictated to them by the totalitarian movement itself. Within this confined, self-explanatory and self-sustaining universe nothing remains that could indicate the ideology's failure. This explains why the cultural revolution of Mao or the autarkic experiments of Pol Pot aimed, and necessarily had to aim, at destroying the cultural legacy of previous generations⁴¹⁰. In the words of the Central Committee of the Chinese communist party:

Although the bourgeoisie has been overthrown, it is still trying to use the old ideas, culture, customs, and habits of the exploiting classes to corrupt the masses, capture their minds, and endeavour to stage a comeback. The proletariat must do just the opposite: It must meet head-on every challenge of the bourgeoisie in the ideological field and use the new ideas, culture, customs, and habits of the proletariat to change the mental outlook of the whole of society.⁴¹¹

Under the guise of this banner all that was indicative of the pre-communist mindset had to be destroyed in order to monopolize the citizen's frame of reference whereby they would be able to judge the

⁴¹⁰ This phenomenon also occurred under the totalitarian guise of Nazi Germany, Stalinist Russia and North-Korea. For reasons of clarity I have restricted the examples to China and Cambodia because this phenomenon, for a variety of social-political and historical reasons, was most apparent in these situations.

⁴¹¹ Central Committee of the Communist Party of China (CPC) : "Decision Concerning the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution", august 8th 1966

communist party's activities. The only thing one needed or was allowed to remember was that whatever existed before Communism was absolutely negative. Referring to the past in any other way was deemed indicative of counter-revolutionary thought and placed the individual which entertained such thoughts within the stratum of the enemy of the people.⁴¹² Pol Pot's regime was a most effective example of this Maoist policy. The ruthless execution of all those who had or appeared to have had some sort of living connection with the non-autarkic, non-peasant way of life, via their ability to speak foreign languages, their basic education or their city life, enabled the regime to destroy the ability to refer to anything else then the model of life the regime propagated.⁴¹³

By destroying the living links with the past, the regime was in effect able to rewrite the past to fit their needs. Through the monopolization of the past, the activity of remembrance becomes a tool used to legitimize the present and dictate the future. The artificial creation of forgetfulness aims to put the knowledge of past, present and future solely in the hands of the movement's elite, leaving the

⁴¹² Locard, *Le "Petit Livre Rouge" De Pol Pot, Ou, Les Paroles De L'angkar, Entendues Dans Le Cambodge Des Khmers Rouges Du 17 Avril 1975 Au 7 Janvier 1979*. This book cites a myriad of Khmer Rouge slogans. In relationship to the destruction of the past, Locard cites a famous slogan: "Completely get rid of all the castoffs from imperialist, feudal and reactionary days!" *Ibid.*, p. 14.

⁴¹³ Indicative of this ruthlessness is the fact that people whose hands were too smooth, or wore glasses were deemed to be intellectuals, bourgeois, and were shot, their families included. The only imaginable reason for this kind of destruction of the educated class, or those only suspected of belonging to this class, is to rid society of any element that could endanger the regime by referring to a non-totalitarian reality. A further indication of the extent to which Pol Pot was willing to murder his own people for the sake of the community is the following slogan: "You can arrest someone by mistake; never release him by mistake". Arrest, in this example, really meant a certain death sentence since trial or criminal proceedings were not necessary in the perfectly wise and all knowing communist Utopia. The only class worthy of life was the peasant class; uneducated and un-worldly it formed the closest thing to a *tabula rasa* the regime was aiming to create.

individual completely alienated from any form of reference other than that provided to him by the party. Ever weary of betrayal, the recourse to a dialogue with his fellow citizen becomes well nigh impossible thereby further enhancing the isolation and atomization of the individual. Although totalitarian movements are mass movements professing brotherly love, at their core they are movements which aim to destroy the channels of communication between men. There can be no communication in the present because of the inability of freedom of speech, nor can there be communication with the past, necessary for contemplation and thinking, due to the inability of remembrance. As such the individual becomes exclusively dependant on the movement alone.⁴¹⁴

The *forced forgetfulness* that totalitarianism imposes on society is effectuated by its systematic use of *indoctrination*. Thinking and

⁴¹⁴ The novel *1984* depicts the following conversation between the interrogator O'Brien and the accused citizen Wilson: " Does the past exist concretely, in space? Is there somewhere or other a place, a world of solid objects, where the past is still happening?' 'No.' 'Then where does the past exist, if at all?' 'In records. It is written down.' 'In records. And----?' 'In the mind. In human memories.' 'In memory. Very well, then. We, the Party, control all records, and we control all memories. Then we control the past, do we not?' [...]How can you control memory? You have not controlled mine!' [...]That is what has brought you here. You are here because you have failed in humility, in self-discipline. You would not make the act of submission which is the price of sanity. You preferred to be a lunatic, a minority of one. Only the disciplined mind can see reality, Winston. You believe that reality is something objective, external, existing in its own right. You also believe that the nature of reality is self-evident. When you delude yourself into thinking that you see something, you assume that everyone else sees the same thing as you. But I tell you, Winston, that reality is not external. Reality exists in the human mind, and nowhere else. Not in the individual mind, which can make mistakes, and in any case soon perishes: only in the mind of the Party, which is collective and immortal. Whatever the Party holds to be the truth, is truth. It is impossible to see reality except by looking through the eyes of the Party. That is the fact that you have got to relearn, Winston. It needs an act of self-destruction, an effort of the will. You must humble yourself before you can become sane."Orwell, Pynchon, and Fromm, *Nineteen Eighty-Four: A Novel*, p. 272. Chapter 19.

judging, which to Arendt form the basis of all political activity is a process which leads to understanding, it gives us a place in this world which is our own and differs from person to person.⁴¹⁵ Its results are never the same and it is this plurality which forms the basis of the political. Totalitarianism on the other hand substitutes thinking and judging with indoctrination.

It transcends the comparatively solid realm of facts and figures, from whose infinity it seeks to escape, as a short-cut in the transcending process itself, which it arbitrarily interrupts by pronouncing apodictic statements as though they had the reliability of facts and figures, it destroys the activity of understanding altogether.⁴¹⁶

The destruction of remembrance is necessary in order to negate the possibility of thinking and judging. It equals the destruction of the fabric of society, guaranteeing the movement's absolute control over their powerless subjects. Since totalitarian movement's main objective is to transform reality into fiction, through the process I have briefly described above, it can be inferred that the amount of control needed is near total. The component of forced forgetfulness alone is enough to legitimize the abolition of freedom of thought, freedom of speech, freedom of press, freedom of association or freedom of religion to mention just a few. As I will show in the next part of this research, even Islamist movements that are nowhere near a position of a monopoly on power, will insist on the abolition of these freedoms.

The most long lived totalitarian regime we know of, North-Korea, for this reason alone should be deemed as the perfect example of the function of forced forgetfulness. It has succeeded in isolating its population from any information regarding the outside world and

⁴¹⁵ Hannah Arendt, "Understanding and Politics," in *Responsibility and Judgment*, ed. Jerome Kohn (New York: Schocken Books, 2003), p. 308.

⁴¹⁶ Ibid.

through constant indoctrination has swallowed up a whole country into the fictitious realm of fantasy. Life inside its concentration camps has been designed to sever the bonds of family to such a degree that the solidarity which is normal between family members has been forced to be forgotten, man can be drilled to such an extent that they will betray those bonds effortlessly when asked to do so.⁴¹⁷

4. Terror as an end in itself: universal and perpetual?

A fourth aspect of totalitarian terror and which marks the fabrication of the new order of being, is connected with the war on judgment but deserves its own place due to its solitary importance. The mere existence of a world outside of the totalitarian universe contests its claim to truth. Nothing is feared more by the totalitarian regimes than a non-totalitarian reality that could prove its flaws.⁴¹⁸ Simply put, if the ideology dictates that all non-proletarian societies are in disorder and corrupt and only the communist proletarian Utopia is worthy of existence, then this image would be severely undermined if it turned out that the non-communist world is actually doing much better than the communist Utopia is. It is only in isolation that the totalitarian reality cannot be falsified. For this reason the totalitarian revolution will always be *de facto* under threat from the non-totalitarian world and it is because of this that its quest for domination is truly universal. In the words of Trotsky in his definition of the permanent state of the revolution:

The completion of the socialist revolution within national limits is unthinkable. The socialist revolution begins on the national arena; it unfolds on the international arena, and is

⁴¹⁷ See for detailed accounts on the North-Korean experiment in fabricating forced forgetfulness: Cornell, *North Korea under Communism: Report of an Envoy to Paradise*, Kim and Kim, *Human Remolding in North Korea: A Social History of Education, North Korea the Hidden Gulag: Putting Human Rights on the North Korea Policy Agenda*

⁴¹⁸ This is the reason that totalitarian regimes such as the USSR and North-Korea painstakingly shield their subjects from any contact with the outside world.

completed on the world arena. Thus, the socialist revolution becomes a permanent revolution in a newer and broader sense of the word; it attains completion, only in the final victory of the new society on our entire planet.⁴¹⁹

Totalitarian terror therefore, *ultimately*, extends to both the non-totalitarian world and to those who are not yet fully indoctrinated enough to act out the movements edicts without thinking. It is clear that both do not form a true enemy in the sense of opposition, but are enemies because of ideological necessity.

As a consequence of the totalitarian monopoly on truth, any possible failure of the revolution cannot be explained by any fault inherent in the ideology but can only be attributed to some outside force, i.e. sabotage, conspiracy and counter-revolutionary activity.⁴²⁰ Since it is unlikely that either heaven or Utopia will be created, the revolution will constantly have to identify or invent new categories of enemies who impede the revolution, for if there were no enemies left to blame it would become apparent that the ideology is flawed.⁴²¹ Whilst the totalitarian *raison d'être* is to be found in the future Utopia, its principal connection to the present is located in the identification and subsequent extermination of the enemy that impedes the movement

⁴¹⁹ L. Trotsky, *The Permanent Revolution & Results and Prospects*, trans. L. Nichol (Seattle: Red Letter Press, 2010), p. 303.

⁴²⁰ "The more a regime attempts to transform the social order to create the "new man", to change the values of the people, and the greater the speed with which it attempts to achieve those ends, the greater the perception of the resistance to those changes, the more the terror." Linz, *Totalitarian and Authoritarian Regimes*, p. 112.

⁴²¹ "Totalitarian politics which proceed to follow the recipes of ideologies has unmasked the true nature of these movements insofar as it clearly showed that there could be no end to this process. If it is the law of nature to eliminate everything that is harmful and unfit to live, it would mean the end of nature itself if new categories of the harmful and unfit could not be found [...] In other words, the law of killing by which totalitarian movements seize and exercise power would remain a law of movement even if they succeeded in making all of humanity subject to their rule." Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, p. 464.

towards Utopia, whether they be Jews, capitalists or bourgeoisie. Every single totalitarian movement in history has gone through this process of identification and extermination precisely because it is a logical necessity of the totalitarian paradigm. It was the very existence of the gas chambers, the Gulag and the killing fields in which killing was indiscriminate of particular guilt or innocence that proved that ideological terror was solely conceived for the purpose of releasing the forces of nature.⁴²² In addition, if no new enemies are identified, that is, if stability is re-introduced into society, the regime would have to be responsible, accountable for its actions. In addition, since the entire totalitarian enterprise is situated in the realm of fantasy, and built upon total submission of the individual and his unflinching conditioned obedience, the totalitarian regime would not survive such a reintroduction of classical political concepts of responsibility and political scrutiny. It runs counter to its very existence. The only choice that is left then, in my view, is to invent new categories of enemies, or change its regime from revolutionary totalitarian, that phase in which terror and fabrication of society are fully implemented, to post-totalitarian bureaucracy. This necessary continuation of terror is underscored by both Arendt and Lefort in their analysis of respectively Nazi and Stalinist totalitarianism.^{423 424}

⁴²² "This principle was most fully realized in the gas chambers which, if only because of their enormous capacity, could not be intended for individual cases but only for people in general." Ibid., p. 449.

⁴²³ Arendt underlines this position when she states: "Totalitarian politics which proceed to follow the recipes of ideologies has unmasked the true nature of these movements insofar as it clearly showed that there could be no end to this process. If it is the law of nature to eliminate everything that is harmful and unfit to live, it would mean the end of nature itself if new categories of the harmful and unfit-to-live could not be found; [...] In other words, the law of killing by which totalitarian movements seize and exercise power would remain a law of movement even if they ever succeeded in making all of humanity subject to their rule." Ibid., p. 464.

⁴²⁴ "Finally just as the identity of the people and the integrity of the body depend on a constant struggle against alien or parasitical elements, the virtue of the organization presupposes the idea of disorganization, of an ever

So can there be an end to terror? Can a revolutionary totalitarian movement enter a phase in which the rule of law returns and yet, the totalitarian character of the movement is preserved?

For Hannah Arendt, and more implicitly also Lefort, totalitarianism is signified by its connection between ideology and boundless terror. This stands at odds with the empirical school's strain of thought which maintains that terror is *not* a hallmark of totalitarianism. It does not deny the role terror plays in the practical sense of eliminating opposition, but it assumes that a terror free totalitarian system is possible due to the return to the rule of law. This is Linz' conception of a post-totalitarian bureaucracy, and can also be seen in the definition provided by Friedrich and Brzezinski, which allow for a return to positive law. In their view, this system is still a totalitarian movement but in my view it is distinctly different from it.⁴²⁵

Linz sees terror as playing its most important role in the consolidation of totalitarian power, obliterating any actual and potential opposition. After these aims have been achieved the role of terror is severely diminished and bound by law to such a degree that we are no longer talking about terror but about the application of criminal law and

threatening chaos, of elements likely to disturb or sabotage the laws of socialism [...] So it is understandable that the constitution of the People-as-One requires the incessant production of enemies. It is not only necessary to convert, at the level of the phantasy [sic], real adversaries of the regime, real opponents into figures of the evil other: it is also necessary to invent them." Lefort and Thompson, eds., *The Political Forms of Modern Society: Bureaucracy, Democracy, Totalitarianism*, p. 80.

⁴²⁵ "Even with laws that punish behaviour considered legal in other societies [...] the definition of such acts as crimes, the exclusion of retroactive application of the law, combined with a minimum of procedural guarantees for the defendant, independence of the judiciary from direct intervention of the authorities, and restraints on the police, would allow the citizen who does not contest the regime to live without fear. A regime with those characteristics could still be highly monopolistic in its power structure [and] be guided by ideological commitment and demand and reward active participation in its organizations. It would be, in our view, totalitarianism without terror" Linz, *Totalitarian and Authoritarian Regimes*.p. 101

criminal proceedings. It is for this reason that terror is not included in Linz' definition of totalitarianism.⁴²⁶

In this respect I would like to remind ourselves of the words of Trotsky when he spoke about the relation between revolutionary and positive law:

The formal law is subordinate to the law of the revolution. There might be collisions and discrepancies between the formal commands of laws and those of the proletarian revolution[.] This collision must be solved only by the subordination of the formal commands of law to those of party policy.⁴²⁷

And Stalin:

The dictatorship of the proletariat is the rule – unrestricted by law and based on force- of the proletariat over the bourgeoisie.⁴²⁸

This perception of revolutionary law versus positive law is shared by the Maoist, the Khmer Rouge, Kim il Sung-ism and the Nazi's. But let's suppose that after the revolutionary phase, when all opposition is indeed vanquished, most of its class or race enemies have been exterminated, the social unity is at least symbolically established, can at that point a return to the rule of law be imaginable?

I agree with Linz that we may find a point in the evolution of the USSR or communist China where after the death of Stalin or Mao, certain

⁴²⁶ Ibid., pp. 74,101.

⁴²⁷ Ibid., pp. 104,105.

⁴²⁸ Quoted from Stephen Eric Bronner, *Twentieth Century Political Theory: A Reader*, 2nd ed. (New York; London: Routledge, 2006), p. 212. Original from Joseph Stalin, *The Dictatorship of the Proletariat* (New York,: International publishers, 1936).

procedural checks on government powers were enacted.⁴²⁹ It is my contention that this evolution did not take place because of some ideological necessity but in critical opposition towards it. We must keep in mind the enormous strain the ideology imposed on resources and human life, not in the least the lives of those surrounding the leader of the totalitarian movement. History has shown that all those who could be counted as the inner circle of the leader also had the highest probability of not surviving the ever ongoing purges.⁴³⁰ If we look at the developments in China and the USSR after the death of Mao and Stalin we can clearly see a pattern whereby the new leadership distances itself from the demands made by the ideology which resulted in a more realistic approach to everyday demands of the government. In this scenario we are reminded of the words of Hannah Arendt when she mentioned that the totalitarian movement sees every form of 'legal or governmental structure' as a 'handicap'. It is the anti-thesis of the internal dynamics of the totalitarian enterprise.⁴³¹ When this new leadership chose to distance itself, if not totally then certainly in part, of the demands of the ideology, it entered a phase Linz calls the 'post-totalitarian bureaucracy'. If the

⁴²⁹ Linz, *Totalitarian and Authoritarian Regimes*, p. 101.

⁴³⁰ In the now famous speech by Khrushchev *On the personality cult and its consequences*, Stalin indicated the danger of being in his inner circle: "Stalin acted not through persuasion, explanation and patient cooperation with people, but by imposing his concepts and demanding absolute submission to his opinion. Whoever opposed these concepts or tried to prove his [own] viewpoint and the correctness of his [own] position was doomed to removal from the leadership collective and to subsequent moral and physical annihilation." N Khrushchev, "On the Personality Cult and Its Consequences," in *Documents in Western Civilization: Since 1648*, ed. Donald Kagan (New Jersey: Pearson/Prentice Hall, 2003), p. 434.

⁴³¹ "One should not forget that only a building can have a structure, but that a movement- if the word is to be taken as seriously and as literally as the Nazi's meant it- can have only a direction, and that any form of legal or governmental structure can be only a handicap to a movement which is being propelled with increasing speed in a certain direction." Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, p. 464.

sole raison d'être of totalitarianism is to '*immanentize the Eschaton*' then any activity from the part of the leadership that forms an obstacle to this goal is certainly blasphemy. It was typically totalitarian, in Arendt's conception of it, that Stalin increased the terror not in the period of consolidation but rather at the height of the Communists party's power, when all opposition was unthinkable.⁴³² The same phenomenon can be found in German, Cambodian and North-Korean totalitarianism.

Stalin [...] used extreme methods and mass repressions at a time when the Revolution was already victorious, when the Soviet state was strengthened [...] when our Party was politically consolidated and had strengthened itself both numerically and ideologically.⁴³³

Linz underlines this argument and states:

The more a regime attempts to transform the social order to create the "new man", to change the values of the people, and the greater the speed with which it attempts to achieve those ends, the greater the perception of the resistance to those changes, the more the terror.⁴³⁴

When political or even physical survival of the ruling elite takes precedence over the mechanism by which Utopia should be fabricated, then the totalitarian movement degrades into a bureaucratic entity without any ideological or even democratic legitimacy. What remains is an entity deprived of the revolutionary spirit which erected it and gave it purpose.

Claude Lefort comments on this problem by referring to the Polish crisis of 1968 when numerous segments of society, they of course still

⁴³² "[The] First characteristic of totalitarian terror- [...]it does not shrink but grows as the opposition is reduced."——, "Mankind and Terror," p. 299.

⁴³³ Khrushchev quoted from T. H. Rigby, *The Stalin Dictatorship* (Sydney: Taylor & Francis, 1968), p. 34.

⁴³⁴ Linz, *Totalitarian and Authoritarian Regimes*, p. 112.

existed in reality, went to the streets to protest communist rule. Lefort, like Arendt, observes that such a manifestation of contestation of power is unimaginable under the ideal type of totalitarianism:⁴³⁵

Lefort does not maintain that totalitarian systems are insurmountable, that the basic capacity for human action can ever be extinguished by totalitarian terror; what he does think however, and I agree with him, is that he rules out the possibility for totalitarianism *without* terror. Should terror be restrained by rules of positive law, than this is not a sign of a maturing of totalitarian rule but rather ‘a crack in the totalitarian system’ of oppression.⁴³⁶

It is therefore my view that post-totalitarian bureaucracy and the demise of terror go against the very essence of the logicity of ideological thinking and the fabrication of Utopia. Ideology *needs* terror and vice versa. The post-totalitarian bureaucratic phase marks the end of the totalitarian movement. It is however thinkable that a midway may be found between totalitarianism in its revolutionary phase, and Linz’ depiction of post-totalitarian bureaucracy. It may well be that a regime which symbolically refers to itself as the sole representative of the People-as-One whilst retaining its function of

⁴³⁵ “Finally in contrast to democracy, the totalitarian system is constituted and maintained only by excluding every form of contestation. In this sense, as soon as these forms find sufficient strength to express themselves, they renew the test of its legitimacy at the same time as they mobilize themselves for specific objectives. A right is invented which opens up a field of action and thought freed from the tutelage of power. Thus the polish workers expect not only those measures which would satisfy their demands: they are also giving themselves an unlimited capacity for taking initiatives. Their demand is not only for a specific object, but also for the right to make demands. In short, the popular dynamic is not developing within the limits of the regime. [...] This dynamic has already moved beyond the closed space of totalitarianism.” Lefort and Thompson, eds., *The Political Forms of Modern Society: Bureaucracy, Democracy, Totalitarianism*, p. 311.

⁴³⁶ “The logic of totalitarianism is not to be found in the context of Poland. [...] the establishment of a democratic Communism, in which social conflict and opposition would be institutionalized. What we are observing, by contrast, is a *crack* in the totalitarian system.” *Ibid.*, p. 315.

the power-as-One can continue to rule without having to fall back on the extensive terror from the revolutionary phase. It is conceivable that such a society, which would still in its outward propaganda and inward indoctrination claim adherence to the laws of Nature or History, could function with a minimum of terror directed at opposition and with minimal attempts at forcing an opening into the political scene. It could even have minimal rules of procedure regarding 'elections', in the most cynical way of course, and a minimal legal framework to deal with issues deemed not central to the totalitarian ideological course. However, such a society, precisely due to its concessions to positive laws, minimal norms of political representation, limited responsibility, its loss of absolute and unconditional power, and most importantly of all, its abandonment of the forceful fabrication of Utopia, would *not* be in accordance to any known theory of totalitarianism. I do not see how any such society could even constitute a novel form of totalitarianism for it goes against the most fundamental attributes of what the authors discussed attribute to such a society. What can happen is that this society uses some of the instruments of fascist and totalitarian domination and control whilst abandoning the core characteristics of totalitarianism. In that case it becomes an empty facade decorated with slogans which have long lost their meaning and which exercises power for the sake of its own survival and for the survival of the ruling classes, thus destroying the people-as-one and the power-as-one. At the very best this would be a post-totalitarian bureaucracy. The example of North-Korea, which is by my definition the only totalitarian society in existence today, shows that ideological terror is as much a constitutive necessity of totalitarianism as is ideological thinking. In North-Korea there are no hardliners or reformers, there is only the party and its leadership. Positive laws are subservient to revolutionary law, responsibility towards the citizenship is lacking, purges are frequent and if needed, and this is solely through the prism of ideological thinking, North-Korea has shown a willingness and capacity to engage in campaigns of terror that have caused millions of

its own citizens to lose their lives without this having resulted in any form of noteworthy uprising in society, the military or the party. North-Korea is the prime example of the impotent society which totalitarianism seeks to establish.

5.5 The transformative nature of totalitarianism

The following schematic represent the different stages of the formation of the totalitarian movement we have discussed in this chapter. It is of course a highly idealized schema, giving a rough indication of the structural similarities between the known totalitarian movements. On the top horizontal bar I have separated different phases of the movement's existence ranging from its beginnings as a vanguard movement, to its withering away as a post-totalitarian bureaucracy. On the left vertical bar, are the elements we have discussed that make up the totalitarian phenomenon. These elements are derived from both the empirical as well as the normative theories. The schema itself indicates to what extent these elements are represented in the different phases.

	Phase I Formation of the Vanguard movement	Phase II Mobilization
Ideology	Present yet lacking definition: more akin to fascist mentality than pseudo-scientific total chiliastic ideology	Developed but veiled in order to assure acceptability, only known to inner circle
Function of terror	Practical and Limited: focused on intimidation of opponents, display of strength	Practical and widespread: aims to undermine the power and efficiency of the state, vanquish opposition and draw the masses into the movement
Mobilization	Very limited: Focused on recruitment of vanguard	Increasing: aim is to gather followers. Increasing capacity for mobilization. Widespread formation of parallel organizations
Indoctrination	Absent	Limited to the vanguard, inner circle but slowly stretching out into parallel organizations
Propaganda	Limited	Fierce: the function of the parallel organizations is to disseminate propaganda and aid mobilization and social acceptance
Plurality in the layer of those who govern	High: Has to compete for political power, minority position amongst many other parties	High: Still in competition for political power
Plurality in layer of the governed	High: No control over civil society	High: Aims to dominate <i>and</i> undermine civil society through the creation of parallel- and front organizations

	Phase III Height of power	Phase IV Post-totalitarian
Ideology	Fully developed and openly declared: clear on its intentions whilst it may still remain secretive of its full inhuman ideological implications	Only adhered to in name: fabrication of society has taken a backseat to real world demands
Function of terror	Ideological and institutionalized: All opposition is impossible and un-imaginable, terror is institutionalized, replaces positive law, fabricates mankind into the image of the ideology	Practical and limited: Terror is degraded to a means of police control over society or abolished by positive law. The forceful fabrication of the perfect society is no longer an objective
Mobilization	Permanent and mandatory: Forced participation in organs of the totalitarian movement. Political apathy is considered to be evidence of resistance	Mandatory but limited to apathetic displays of support
Indoctrination	Systematically implemented throughout all layers of society through organs of the state or party	Decreases analogous to the decrease in ideological fervour
Propaganda	Limited: Used in territories where the people are not yet under its control. Replaced by indoctrination when control is achieved.	Superficial: Due to an increasing lack of ideological fervour, propaganda increases as a tool used to justify the regime
Plurality in the layer of those who govern	Non-existent: The movement is the only existing political power, no plurality of power within government, deliberate high levels of plurality within movement yet still obedient to the undisputed power of the leader.	Slowly increasing: Power is shifted from the party led by the dictator to a massive increasingly monolithical bureaucratic entity
Plurality in layer of the governed	Non-existent No pre-existing element of civil society is permitted to exist without being incorporated into the movement.	Moderate, some plurality allowed as long as it does not threaten the integrity of the social body. Slowly increasing Increasing demand for autonomous civil participation decreases monopoly on power

5.6 Summary

From its intellectual roots in 17th-20th century intellectual thought to the elements present in authoritarianism and fascism, the totalitarian phenomenon rests on a long history of developments in the intellectual political field. Yet, as Arendt states, the actual event of totalitarianism explodes our common understanding of politics.

"While our common sense is perplexed when confronted with actions which are neither passion inspired nor utilitarian, our ethics is unable to cope with crimes which the ten commandments did not foresee."⁴³⁷ To formulate a single definition which honours both these traditional roots and at the same time can give evidence to totalitarianism's radical nature seems almost impossible. In its most essentialist form I would argue that Arendt's depiction of 'a form of government whose essence is terror and whose principal of action is the logicity of ideological thinking' is indeed the most accurate. Unfortunately this definition does very little to explain the totalitarian phenomenon on its own merit. What is needed is an explanation of Arendt's definition through Voegelin's schematic for the Gnostic search for order and augmented by the normative and empirical theories of totalitarianism. I will therefore attempt to give a discursive definition of totalitarianism which strives to incorporate all the elements we have discussed thus far.

Totalitarianism is a revolutionary form of politics which finds its principle of action through a process of stringent and exclusivist logical deduction from an axiomatic premise, the Gnostic speculation or A religious precept, the law of Nature or History, from which a program for the fabrication of mankind into its perceived ultimate end state of Utopia is deduced, the law of movement, and which will ultimately forcefully, and without the recourse to representation or responsibility, be executed on a society which is in every respect dominated by a totalitarian movement that proclaims to be that

⁴³⁷ Arendt, "Social Science Techniques and the Study of Concentration Camps," p. 243.

society's sole and perfected representative. This principle of action transcends the mere intra-human quality of the fascist mentality and forms a totalist ethical code in which man is not judged on his individual action but on the value accorded to him by the laws which have been discovered in the totalitarian ideologues process of logical deduction. Totalitarianism, like the Gnostic speculation, aspires to bring salvation to a world plagued by a loss of social cohesion, moral degradation, religious, class or ethnic humiliation, widespread feelings of loneliness and impotence and finds the cause thereof in the discrepancy between individual free will and the edicts of the laws of Nature or History. The object of the totalitarian movements is to bring mankind back into the fold of that law of Nature or History in order to recreate an imagined perfect past, Palingenesis, or future, secular or religious chiasm, by forcefully eliminating all possibility of resistance to the law of movement.

In practical terms, totalitarianism starts out as vanguard movement of opposition that derives many of its mobilizational and operational mechanisms from fascism but which differs from fascism in that it seeks to subjugate the state to its own acting agent, the party. Like fascism and dictatorships, the movement is headed by a party at which's head sit the leader, Unlike fascism, however, the leader is neither a source of law, power or knowledge but merely the supreme interpreter of that law of Nature or History in which the symbolical seat of power, law and knowledge actually resides. Outside of the leadership of the party, no autonomous source of power, law or knowledge can be found or tolerated, the totalitarian movement is therefore an entity that claims dominion over man in its entirety and for its best interest, but is willing to sacrifice entire generations to the cause of fabricating Utopia. The fabrication of mankind is actualized in the light of the law of movement through systematic, institutionalized, widespread and unrestrained terror through all layers of society, in which no one, not even the leadership, is indispensable. Two categories of enemies have to be confronted: the internal and the external enemy. Both are existential enemies in the

sense that the totalitarian movements existence depends on their existence as well as on their continued annihilation. The internal enemies are those who belong to that class of people whom the movement is claiming to protect, the race or the class. The external enemy is conversely constituted by those who do not belong to this category. This categorization is impervious to consent or dissent from the individual involved. In particular the external enemy is not classified as such based upon any action on the part of that person, rather he is classified as such purely due to his not belonging to the aforementioned class or race. Individual notions of guilt and innocence thereby become null and void. The annihilation of the internal enemy is construed upon the fact that pluralism and the human freedom to choose one's own destiny has led to the abandonment of the laws of nature or history and thus have created to the state of disorder perceived in society. This disorder can only be alleviated by diminishing plurality to such an extent that men become essentially indistinguishable from one another.

Furthermore, since the totalitarian movement is not subservient to the wishes of the people, does not derive its legitimacy from their consent, but rather is legitimized by its knowledge of the formula for self and world salvation, it bears no responsibility towards the population over which it rules. Insofar as power cannot be established through propaganda and indoctrination in the form of authority, it is established through violence with the express intent of fabricating authority. The internal enemy is therefore robbed of all the boundaries that separate him from the collective body, rendering him utterly impotent in the face of the power of the movement. The removal of plurality depends as much on the artificial creation of impotence and loneliness as it does on the eradication of the possibility for individual thought and judgment. The formula for self and world salvation is a closed system wholly divorced from reality which allows for no deviations in thought, judgment or action. The dominion of the totalitarian movement must therefore extend not only to the physical realm of existence but also to that realm in which

thoughts and judgements are formed. This requires a permanent indoctrination and absorption of the whole of the individual into the collective body and its boundaries. Since men are born as non-totalitarian men, this process can never end. Since the end result of this process is an individual with no capacity for autonomous behaviour or thought, all men have in essence become superfluous and interchangeable.

The stages through which the movement must go before its ambition can be accomplished are such that they often seem to contradict each other. The initial fascist stage with its emphasis on mentality and propaganda is contrasted with the totalitarian movement at the height of its power, in which it emphasizes ideology and indoctrination. The fascist practical terror too is abolished when totalitarianism is at its height and has replaced it with ideological terror. It is therefore imperative that understand the evolution a totalitarian movement must go through without making the mistake of misclassifying it as something which it is not.

The totalitarian movement's beginnings are rooted in the fascist notions of creative violence, collectivism, anti-rationalism, practical terror and the techniques of mass mobilization pioneered by the fascist movement. From this starting position the totalitarian movement creates a society which is imbued with the totalitarian movement at every level thus replacing the non-totalitarian society with a totalitarian one in a gradual process of saturation, replacement and annihilation. At the height of its power the totalitarian movement is the sole source of power law and knowledge in society. It owes no responsibility to the ones it governs, has no competitors to its claim of sovereignty or limits on the power with it yields. Outside of the category of race or class which the movement aims to protect lies the domain of the external enemy. The external enemy is needed to constitute the own social body as much as it is needed to explain the failings of the movement in fabricating Utopia through their accusations of sabotage or opposition. Since the totalitarian

worldview is wholly separated from reality, the process of fabricating Utopia is bound to be confronted with facts derived from reality which the movement cannot explain. Thus these discrepancies must be accredited to the external enemy and their agents who in turn ensure that the external enemy is a category which must exist even if it objectively does not. The war against the external enemy is thus also a perpetual war. Totalitarian terror only comes into existence when all opposition has been annihilated and resistance is in principle impossible. Due to this real-world absence of real opposition to the movement, the failure to actualize the envisioned Utopia can be only explained in the totalitarian worldview as an ever increasing opposition to its dominion thus sparking even greater terror. Totalitarian terror increases whenever actual opposition decreases. The final result which flows from this attempt at total domination is in the case of a success a society in which every individual is superfluous and the perfect unflinching conduit of the edicts of the law of movement. This requires a constant fabrication of new totalitarian men on the one hand and a fabrication of existential enemies on the other. Thus the totalitarian war against reality itself is universal and perpetual. If the move to total domination however fails then the movement will mostly likely see an abrupt end to all of its institutions and forms of political organization as it moves to a democratic society, or it reverts to a fascist type form of society. In both cases the *ability* and *willingness* to fabricate Utopia along the lines indicated above have disappeared. What may be left in the fascist like society is the use of the instruments of practical terror and a half-hearted reference to the law of nature or history, but in fact without the ability and willingness to fabricate Utopia totalitarianism loses its defining characteristics of ideology and terror.