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Totalitarianism: the Word and the Thing

1. The Italian Job

The words «totalitarian» and «totalitarianism» are derived from the Italian «totalitario» and «totalitarismo». They were first used as a play on words, a veritable conundrum, in an article entitled «Majority and Minority» by Giovanni Amendola which appeared in *Il Mondo*, May 12, 1923. The article commented on the sham elections held in the town of Sanza in southern Italy's Cilento hills, where Fascists presented two nearly identical lists of candidates and forcibly blocked the presentation of other lists. Amendola coined the adjective «totalitario» to describe the true nature of the «winner-take-all» electoral system, which in those days was being debated in Italy's lower house of parliament. Amendola didn't know, nor would he ever know, that he had bestowed to the lexicon of politics one of the most fortunate and scorching terms of the century. A word was born which, on the one hand, was destined to encompass conceptually huge swaths of an entire century, and, on the other, once ballooned by the media to gigantic proportions and greedily overexposed, fuel, in a generic, and perhaps inevitable manner, today's widely diffused «twentieth-century phobia», quintessential childhood illness of the twenty-first century. At any rate, the term's trajectory was soon rocked unexpectedly and violently.

Fascist dissident Alfredo Misuri, who in January 1924 founded the *Patria e Libertà* movement, was among the earliest to charge, in a speech before the lower house on May 29, 1923, that parliament itself risked becoming «totalitario». Three hours later Misuri was attacked and badly beaten by a squadron of stick-wielding Fascists led by Arconovaldo Bonaccorsi of Bologna. It is pretty much certain, or at least very highly probable, that Misuri had read Amendola's article, or that someone had told him about it. Over the next few months and on into 1924 the adjective was used again by Amendola (on several occasions), as well as by Augusto Monti and Piero Gobetti (in *La Rivoluzione Liberale*), and by Luigi Sturzo. In most cases it was, however, still associated with an electoral system that, thanks to the Acerbo law, had been definitively instituted on July 21, 1923. The term has both

critical and technical connotations as it is found in the daily *Il Secolo*, the Roman federalist magazine *La Critica Politica*, in Monti and Gobetti, as well as grass-roots party organ *Il Popolo*, where no hesitation was made to use, in the May 7, 1924 issue, the expression «elezioni totalitarie» («totalitarian elections») and to make a comparison with Napoleon III's plebiscites.

Amendola, however, in talking about «spirito totalitario» in an article written exactly one year after the march on Rome, and published on November 2, 1923, was also the first to use the neologism he had come up with outside the technical arena and the debate on the use that the Fascists, in cahoots with the abdicating liberalists, would make, and were already making *in rebus ipsis*, of the winner-take-all electoral mechanism. The «totalitarian spirit», a threat to liberalist civilization, was for Amendola, and for the moment limited to Italy, a passing over to another age, or even the advent of a new paradigm, a historical turnover, which was here and there so utterly regressive, of political and civil forms of cohabitation.

In an article that appeared in *La Rivoluzione Liberale* on January 2, 1925, the day before Mussolini's famous watershed speech, Lelio Basso closed the semantic circle and coined the noun «totalitarismo», synonym of the dictatorial manner of whoever, once having monopolized military power, scoops up all remaining power to transform it into a tool to be used by a single party that proclaimed itself interpreter of the unanimous will. On June 15 of that same year, Amendola noted in the regime an «ansiosa volontà totalitaria» («anxious totalitarian will»). Only one week later, on June 22, Mussolini, with an unexpected *coup de théâtre*, and with a great journalist's instinct for bold and efficacious words, and with roguish positive stress, listed among his regime's vaunts a «feroce volontà totalitaria» («fierce totalitarian will»). Considering the short span of time involved, it's clear that Mussolini – who loved to defend himself by attacking – was intent on making a reply to Amendola and aggressively capturing his terminology. It was somewhat like his January 3, 1925 outburst, when he took personal responsibility for what had happened, since the Matteotti incident. «You say we are <totalitarian>? Well, that's right. We are <totalitarian>.»

Of course, the Duce, along with the plebeian Fascist cultural hodgepodge of the early years, must have adored such an apparently Roman, and «square» word whose sound is so similar, in Italian, to «legionario». There was definitely something theatrical and histrionic in this showy, proud, perhaps imprudent, and even somewhat impudent, appropriation. In this way, however, without knowing it, and very likely not even wanting to, the Fascists, clearly considered the first arrivals on the scene, but in general also the least efficient, with regard to the experiences and practices generally alluded to by the meaning that would later be attributed to totalitarianism, were the only ones to explicitly, but also rather casually define themselves as «totalitarian». The word's aggressive sonority – and the grandiloquent timber which we can easily imagine enunciated by the Fascists

(to-ta-li-ta-rio) – thus anticipated the doctrine of Italian totalitarianism, so much that the doctrine itself was never, nor could it ever be, truly and fully developed.

2. The International Circulation

In July 1925, Giovanni Amendola, just before the attack and beating that led to his death on April 7, 1926 at a clinic in Cannes, used the adjective «totalitario» to compare Fascism and Bolshevism, intended as the total overturning of the foundations upon which the public life of European nations had rested for over a century. This was the core of the semantic fate, never linear, and above all never unilinear, of a word destined to precipitate and be consolidated into a concept the limits of which were often hazy and uncertain, but which would always be unavoidable and fundamental.

In 1926 Sturzo's writings – *L'Italia e il fascismo* – were translated in England. And with them, the words «totalitarian» and «totalitarianism» appeared in English for the first time. The London *Times* took a liking to these terms in the years to come. Though not excessive at first, this was the beginning of the two terms' good fortune in the press, which would become immense beginning in the 1940s and 1950s. And given the widespread diffusion of English, this also marked the spread of their usage worldwide. At the 1926 Congress of Lyon, Gramsci used the word «totalitarian», but only to contest Mussolini's, and Fascism's, claim to have created a regime where contradictions were to be considered erased. It did appear that Gramsci assumed the Fascists had coined the term themselves.

In 1934, one year after Hitler had risen to power, the term «totalitarian» was officially incorporated into the political science jargon of academia – in truth not without a somewhat banal description that revealed mere taxonomic intent, simply indicating single-party regimes in general – thanks to George Sabine's entry entitled «State» in the *Encyclopedia of Social Sciences*. Of course, even in Sturzo's writings, similarities between Italian Fascism and Soviet Bolshevism had been noted. Actually, it was because of this association that the adjective «totalitarian», along with the then little used noun «totalitarianism», took on a comparative dimension, which was identified for the first time by Amendola, that would constitute the main reason behind the term's good fortune and in a certain sense also its *raison d'être*. So by 1926 the axiological feature of totalitarianism had been sealed.

Giovanni Gentile, however, tried in 1928, with his article «The Philosophical Basis of Fascism» in *Foreign Affairs*, to provide theoretical body to the Duce's lexical expropriation. It came late. In April of that same year, exiled Turati wrote a powerful essay on the danger that Fascist totalitarianism posed on a world level. But it was thanks to Sturzo, who would take up the topic again in 1935, when discussing the «divinization of the State» and the «pantheistic State», that use of the term, if at first slowly, was spreading throughout the world, tinged with

negative-catastrophistic meaning by the anti-Fascists (the collapse of the liberalist paradigm) and not the self-apologetic-normalizer significance used by the Fascists (holistic and with a revolutionary-restorer drift). Between the two Sicilians, the priest from Caltagirone, without yet knowing it, and in effect without ever fully realizing it afterward, had gotten the better of the philosopher from Castelvetrano.

Curiously enough, twenty years later Luigi Sturzo seems to have forgotten Amendola's contribution, as well as his own, to the genesis and diffusion of the word, which in the meantime had become widely used throughout the world. Though he still considered the concept derived from it fundamental, in 1946 Sturzo attributed the invention to the «genialoid intuition» of Benito Mussolini, who actually, as we have seen, had come into possession of the term only in June 1925 (twenty-six months after it had been coined by Amendola).

3. Decline and Fall of Fascist Doctrine

For his part, Gentile, who already in 1927 had underscored the totalitarian character of the Fascist doctrine, picked up the term again in 1932, using it for the celebrated entry «Fascismo» in volume XIV of the *Enciclopedia Italiana*, falsely presenting the term as having been penned by Mussolini himself. And though other theoretical systematizations (such as by Alfredo Rocco) had appeared, the entry represented a more organic and more synthetic attempt to provide Fascism with a doctrinal physiognomy. However, not even on this occasion did totalitarianism find its definitive and satisfactory semantic *ubi consistam*.

On the contrary, totalitarian Fascism was actually presented as the actualization, in Gentile's particular interpretation, of the Hegelian ethical state (which was not something altogether unseen), resulting in the identity of state and individual. Indeed, in June 1933, Carlo Rosselli maintained (in an article entitled «Italia ed Europa» that appeared in *Quaderni di Giustizia e Libertà*) that the idea of the totalitarian state as formulated by Gentile, was not new or even Italian, but was derived from a philosophy used as a philosophical-juridical justification of the Prussian state during the Restoration.

It was also highly significant that the entries «Totalitarismo» and «Stato Totalitario» did not appear in the big 1940 volume *Dizionario di Politica del P.N.F.*, which was presented, in contrast to Gentile's ultra sophisticated «liberal-fascismo», as the lexical and historical-conceptual repertory of what was finally an all-Fascist doctrinal *corpus*, freed of all liberal or socialist contamination. Under the *Dizionario's* entry «Stato», however, famed jurist Carlo Costamagna, who had brought several important writings by Carl Schmitt to Italy, compared the «rule of law» and the «totalitarian state» as two poles of the same spirit. The former, present in the «Jew» Kelsen's normativistic theory, was actually, since it tended to demolish the state in the name of juridical regulation, the equivalent of universal

anarchic communism. The latter, however, a product of grand-scale national and popular revolutions, restored the state by insolubly combining sociality and the body politic, and gave confirmation of the supremacy of politics over law in general and over positive law in particular. In short, political decision-making was beyond the law.

This, however, was too little to be able to talk about anything like a complete Fascist doctrine of totalitarianism. The fact is that the word, subliminally stigmatized, had been developed *in partibus infidelium*, i.e., by anti-Fascists, and as such had been exported to the world. It was thus a word with a primitive and endogenous critical intentionality which later on, and only later on, also became taxonomic. Such intentionality was immediately picked up by the anti-Stalinists, beginning with Victor Serge in 1933, and, of course, by the anti-Nazis (among the many was well known social-democratic theoretician Rudolf Hilferding).

In the Fascist vocabulary, as well as in Gentile's own, it was instead, more than anything else, besides a rhetorical and intermittent self-definition, both a vigorous and emphatic underscoring of the regime's generically exaggerated conception of state and its holistic nature. This was certainly not the main route taken by the concept along its adventurous and varied twentieth century itineraries.

Curiously enough, the anti-Fascist beginnings of the words «totalitarian» and «totalitarianism» were for a long time underestimated, if not completely forgotten. This was obviously a consequence of the outrageous political personality of Mussolini, who had appropriated the terms, as well as a result of the diffusion of the entry in the *Enciclopedia*. But it was also due to the confusion that surrounded the concept in Italy. As Emilio Gentile noted, the concept was penalized by the fact that it was considered, during the early years of the Cold War, or when the term gained great notoriety as anti-Soviet, «a mere instrument of anti-Communist propaganda» and aimed at discrediting the USSR by comparing it to Nazi Germany.

It might even have seemed, as inferred by the Soviet press, that the term had been a product of the cold war. In *Origins of Totalitarianism* (1951) Hannah Arendt, despite being an heir to the great debate of the 1930s and early 1940s, actually denied the totalitarian nature of Italian fascism, which was considered a mere authoritarian regime that had let itself become involved, and was eventually destroyed, by the alliance with Hitlerism. According to Arendt, totalitarianism was indeed a category that incorporated only National Socialism (beginning in 1937–1938) and Stalinist Bolshevism – beginning in 1928 and continuing until Stalin's death, as Arendt claimed in the 1960s, when the Soviet regime, threatened by structural difficulties, appeared to her to have deviated from the fully totalitarian dimension of the past.

Then again, in 1972 Leonard Shapiro, in *Totalitarianism*, a book that for a certain period became almost a classic, claimed that the word was invented by Benito

Mussolini and by Giovanni Gentile. In 1973 it was Adrian Lyttelton who recovered Amendola's 1923 article in *Il Mondo*, though there was no in-depth focus on the author. And it was especially Jens Petersen, in an article published in 1975 in Italian, and later further developed and published in German, that brilliantly reconstructed, following Koselleck's great *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe* model, the anti-Fascist genesis of the word.

However, beginning in 1965, or the publication date of Alberto Aquarone's fundamental work on the organization of the totalitarian state, a consensus was being built around a previously advanced hypothesis which focused on the imperfect nature of Italian totalitarianism. This hypothesis, while taking into account Renzo De Felice's oscillations in judgement, criticized by Meir Michaelis in «Anmerkungen zum italienischen Totalitarismusbegriff» (1982), was later taken up by pretty much everyone, even, to cite an example, by Mussolini biographer Pierre Milza in 1999. And beyond.

If, however, Fascism was an imperfect brand of totalitarianism, as once again suggested by Emilio Gentile, then we must also point out that even in Berlin and Moscow perfect totalitarianism, or at any rate totalitarianism that was complete or had achieved a certain planned goal, had never existed. There were two reasons for this. The first had to do with the empirical undefinability of the conceptually ungraspable point of arrival of totalitarianism; the second reason, and this, at least in part, belongs to Gentile's synthesis, which was in line with several of the most convincing interpretations of the totalitarian phenomenon, had to do with totalitarianism's modern dynamic character, which at the same time was feverishly destructive, and potentially self-destructive, animated by the attempt to live up to its own myth and to make its erratic historical existence coincide with the not rarely misinterpreted ideological essence, which was also in perennial movement and was continuously twisted about due to inevitable revisions produced by the repetitions of history.

Anyhow, the time has come – empirical historiography reached this point some time ago – to fully realize, in conceptual terms, that the imperfection of Italian totalitarianism cannot be solely traced to institutional questions, which Aquarone's study highlighted. What it came down to was, not only did the king and the church enjoy relative autonomy, both being up to the task of contrasting the regime's would-be total invasiveness, but culture as well enjoyed relative autonomy – for example, there was the discussion that centered around Angelo d'Orsi's book on Turin between the wars – as did the upper *borghesia*, the military elite, and sectors of the public administration.

Not all of those who were accessories to Fascism were, in every circumstance, dominated by it. Nor would they ever be irreversibly sucked up into the regime's great homogenizing, annihilating belly. Clearly, the State could not incorporate all of civil society. It was only able to intertwine itself with civil society in a manner

that was authoritarian, intense and without a doubt profoundly destructive to freedom.

At any rate, totalitarianism regards not so much the state, as it does that intertwining made up of reciprocal complicity, political religions practiced though not always preached, unquestioning faith and agnosticism, visible and concrete exchanges of interest, permanent mobilization, imperial charisma and allure, and the organization of consensus and culture. And other things as well.

Not that the state's structural incapacity to absorb society was seen only in Italy. In Germany, for example, beginning in the second half of the 1980s there was the Bavarian Project and the studies of Martin Broszat; there was a branch of studies on Nazism which focused on *Alltagsgeschichte* (history of everyday life) with excellent results, restoring segments of autonomy to civil society. As for Bolshevik Russia, Sheila Fitzpatrick's *Everyday Stalinism* (1999) takes up and actually consolidates a current of Soviet cultural studies of the 1930s and the existence, which must certainly have been precarious and constantly threatened, of a society in search of moments of escape, in order to avoid the continuous suffocating pressure by the revolution from above. As it was Pope Pious XI, in a speech to members of the French Federation of Christian Trade Unions, had expressed doubt as to the completeness of the totalitarian state's character, by freely and boldly claiming that «if there is a totalitarian regime – totalitarian de facto and de jure – it is the regime of the Church, because man belongs totally to the Church, he must belong to it.»

4. The State, the Movement and the Permanent Revolution

Among the components that make Fascism imperfectly totalitarian as compared to Bolshevism and Nazism, there is, or at least we may imagine there is, Fascism's state-worshipping dimension. What allows us to isolate and understand the nature of totalitarianism is not its despotism and authoritarianism, or the invasiveness of the state, the dictatorship, and not even mass-scale political or racial violence, since such phenomena are common to various other realities and may not be traced solely to totalitarianism.

At the dramatic high point of the perception of the existence of totalitarianism, which is to say during the terrible years of the alliance between the Nazis and the USSR, and the Nazi assault against Europe, Ernst Fraenkel, who actually criticized the concept of totalitarianism, professed the existence of a dual state (*Doppelstaat*). Alongside a state that was indubitably authoritarian and a destroyer of freedom, though still based on laws (*Normenstaat*), there was another discretionary state founded upon the arbitrariness and the uncontested implementation of absolute political decision. This second state was in reality a non-state, a corrosive and destructive element situated within the heart of the law-based state.

Franz Neumann, in *Behemoth* (1942), one year after *The Dual State*, saw in totalitarianism not a hypostatical transformation of an obsessive order, but the chaos of a plurality of powers dominated by an endoconflictual and Darwinist (i.e., based on natural selection) *Führerprinzip*. Such powers had to do with the National Socialist party (the sole political party), the upper classes, the army, and the public administration, which were all struggling against one another, while at the same time all joined together by an incessant and feverish movement. In totalitarianism, then, unlike the claims of Hayek's pan-liberalist anti-artificialism (nostalgia for the age of Gladstone), there was not too much state, but too little state.

Also in 1942 Sigmund Neumann published the aptly entitled *The Permanent Revolution*, which described the phenomenology of totalitarian dynamics. The fact is that Behemoth, monster of the civil war, had taken its place on the throne of Leviathan, monster of order. Indeed, as the war situation worsened, the discretionary non-state tended to assume more weight until it progressively suffocated and crushed the state. At the center of the Nazis' *Bewegung* was not the state at all, but the German *Volk*, Hitler's master race, while at the center of the much more backward and archaic Bolshevism was the party, presided over by a cast with plebeian origins that had taken over the state, having survived with difficulty the great peasant revolution (1918–1933) and the great purges (1934–1939).

But in Italian Fascism, despite some lively movement-related quaking, the state succeeded on the whole in keeping the party at bay. Was Fascism thus a low-intensity totalitarian phenomenon, and in reality a clerical-monarchic-conservative phenomenon, while Nazism was truly revolutionary, as Bracher proposed? Or was it Fascism that was revolutionary, and Nazism reactionary, as De Felice claimed on several occasions? Was Hitler, as has been said, a weak dictator, whereas Mussolini, to contrast the totalitarian weakness of the regime, was a visibly and carnally strong dictator? And what in the formation of totalitarianism was intentional, and what was functional, and to what degree? All these questions remain open and are part of a rather lively historiographic debate.

It is certain, however, that, as Ernst Jünger had guessed in *Die totale Mobil-machung* (1930), everything had begun with the First World War. It is not useful, not even before a great book like Talmon's *The Origins of Totalitarian Democracy*, to resort to the acrobatics of the deterministic genealogism of a history of ideas aimed at hunting down over the centuries this or that ideocratic temptation or this or that utopia destined to be transformed into the opposite of itself. Indeed, it is truly hard to spot, in poor Mably and Rousseau, or even in Morus and Campanella, the primogenitors of Hitler and Stalin. This means that totalitarianism would be unthinkable without the general mobilization, without the massification of politics, without the European Civil War (i.e., the First World War, which tore Europe apart).

Totalitarianism is also unthinkable without the submission of the economy to

state control and without the same incipient democracy of the masses, whose substance is, on the one hand, denied with violence, and whose form is plebiscitarily grasped and parasitically parodied, on the other. Totalitarianism thus seems to exist as a permanent threat to democracy precisely because it is democracy's cruel brother, like Cain was to Abel. Thus, no Inca State, no oriental despotism, or Moghul Empire, no absolute monarchy, no dictatorial-Jacobin drift, no authoritarianism, no militarism, no caudillism of the past. These regimes were all, of course, non-democratic and destroyers of freedom, but most of all they were pre-democratic. Totalitarianism, in substance, is an undeniably modern phenomenon and unimaginable in a context to which, politically and historically, liberalism and democracy do not belong. From this point of view, beyond their respective ideological narrations, Fascism and Nazism, and especially the latter, are more «modern» than the USSR, which did, however, last through most of the twentieth century.

5. The Plural and the Singular

At this point, a consideration is necessary, which is also a self-criticism. More than once in recent years, I myself, like many people, have referred to «totalitarianisms» rather than totalitarianism, pluralizing the term in frequently used phrases such as «the totalitarianisms between the two wars», or worse, the «century of totalitarianisms», a decidedly misleading expression which smacks of the widespread «twentieth-century phobia» which I mentioned earlier. Now, what with the media's abuse of the term (i.e., generic abuse), I hold that the plural form, widely used I believe since the early 1990s, especially in French and Italian, is individualizing and at the same time misrepresentative and trivializing. The term is certainly semantically and politically inappropriate, all the more so if we consider that the inventor of the noun, Lelio Basso, used it as the basis for a book entitled *Due totalitarismi. Fascismo e Democrazia Cristiana* (1951).

During the second half of the twentieth century there was, of course, with political upheaval and the Cold War, frequent improper, generic, metaphoric, and finally media use (and abuse) of the term. In 1945 Adolfo Omodeo used the expression «Catholic totalitarianism», while in 1964, in *One Dimensional Man*, Herbert Marcuse, in line with the *Kulturkritik* of the Frankfurt School, gave in to the oxymoronic temptation and provocatively identified the «pacified» advanced industrial society with that which he defined as «democratic totalitarianism», an expression to be coupled with the more famous «repressive tolerance».

Moreover, the plural «totalitarianisms» renders the concept concrete in a mediocre way, turning it thus into a simple, emphasized synonym, and irrepressibly «critical» of individual regimes. Which is to say, it takes away the term's extraordinary comparative, and happily abstract power, which only the singular version possesses. Indeed – and may this not appear as a provocation – totalitarianism may never have existed. It was not a many-headed regime.

It was, and is, a word that was adventurously and usefully transformed into a concept. It was, and is, a word that alludes, in terms of meaning, to an extremely fecund comparative dimension, a dimension that sheds light on a hodgepodge of likenesses, mostly morphological and in some cases elective, though this may be said only of the relationship between Fascism and Nazism, and to a lesser extent of the Nazi-Soviet relationship during the period 1939–1941. At any rate, the word, especially in its singular form, has always retained its militant connotations and has never abandoned its nature as a *Kampfwort* («battle word»). And try as it may, political science has never really succeeded in transforming it into a vehicle for detached and sedate taxonomies. The popularity of Hannah Arendt's analysis indeed derives from not having anything in common with icy academic normalizations.

In short, to define «totalitarian» as a regime means denouncing it and *ipso facto* comparing it to other regimes which, in turn, are considered «totalitarian». That is, if I affirm that the USSR was totalitarian, I know that it possessed features which were completely autonomous, but it is my intention to stress those aspects (e.g., terror and ideological invasiveness) and trajectories (political choices over time) that make it historically contiguous to Mussolini's Italy, and even more so, in terms of concentration and intensity, to Hitler's Germany.

Of course, the Communists, even Italian Communists, have long rejected the term, which they never trusted even when used to describe Nazi-Fascism alone, because they saw in it an attempt to defame the USSR, which was implicitly compared to Fascism. Only the Italian Fascists, by taking possession, in a manner that was obviously non-comparative, of a term that was not theirs, sought to build a totalitarian regime, but with a meaning that was very different from, and in some senses antithetical to, that which the concept of totalitarianism wound up assuming in the great anti-Fascist, anti-Bolshevik and anti-Nazi debate, and later in the receptive theoretical and historiographic context.

We could say, then, that there existed a totalitarianism «of the ancients», i.e., a totalitarianism of the Fascists. And a totalitarianism «of the moderns», i.e., the phenomenon we refer to, a phenomenon which, by the way, boils down to a concept that is more and more often re-elaborated by political science, philosophy and, with more suspicion, historiography, but insolubly, and paradoxically, linked to the original invention of Giovanni Amendola.

Indeed, the totalitarianism «of the moderns» begins with the first appearance of the term, which of course went on to be developed in a polymorphous manner. Thus the expression «national roads to totalitarianism», which was fairly widely used, raises a few perplexities. In reality, there never existed any a priori totalitarian constructivism. No one has ever consciously set out to construct what we define as «totalitarianism», a critical term that helps us to perform a cathartic unmasking and tear open the ideologies' deceptive veil.

What did exist – and excuse the obviousness here – was a contradictory and protean Bolshevik, Fascist and Nazi constructivism. And to make as legible as possible the evident contiguity among phenomena separated from the steadfast empiria of every historical process, we're still there defining a posteriori totalitarian the practices and outcomes of this constructivism. Indeed, it is «contiguity» and not «affinity» that we must speak of when it comes to all three regimes. And we remain opportunely, and inevitably, prisoners of a word's militant and democratic origins.

Translated from the Italian by John Rugman

Notes

A. Aquarone, *L'organizzazione dello Stato totalitario* (Turin, 1965); F. Gentile, «Tra storia e politica. Una rassegna critica», *Giano*, no. 41 (2002), 127–146; R. Esposito, «Totalitarismo e totalitarismi», *Giano*, no. 41 (2002), 147–149; A. Panaccione, «Totalitarismo e ricerca storica», *Giano*, no. 41 (2002), 150–157; H. Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (New York, 1951); R. Aron, *Démocratie et Totalitarisme* (Paris, 1965); idem, *Machiavel et les tyrannies modernes*. Texte établi, présenté et annoté par R. Freymond (Paris, 1993); J. Bast, *Totalitärer Pluralismus* (Tübingen, 1999); R. Ben-Ghiat, *La cultura fascista* (Bologna, 2000); D. Bidussa, *La mentalità totalitaria* (Brescia, 2001); B. Bongiovanni, «Revisionismo e totalitarismo», in idem, *Da Marx alla catastrofe dei comunisti* (Milan, 2000); G. Borgognone, *James Burnham. Totalitarismo, managerialismo e teoria delle élites* (Aosta, 2000); F. Borkenau, *The Totalitarian Enemy* (London, 1940); D. Bosshart, *Politische Intellektualität und totalitäre Erfahrung* (Berlin, 1992); K.-D. Bracher, *Zeitgeschichtliche Kontroversen um Faschismus, Totalitarismus, Demokratie* (Munich, 1976); J. Burnham, *The Managerial Revolution: What is happening in the world* (New York, 1941); M. A. Cattaneo, *Terrorismo e arbitrio. Il problema giuridico nel totalitarismo* (Padova, 1998); A. Campi, ed., *Che cos'è il fascismo? Interpretazioni e prospettive di ricerca* (Rome, 2003); E. Collotti, *Fascismo, fascismi* (Florence, 1989); P. Costa, «Lo Stato totalitario: un campo semantico nella giuspubblicistica del fascismo», *Quaderni fiorentini per la storia del pensiero giuridico moderno* 28 (1999), 61–174; R. De Felice, ed., *Il fascismo. Le interpretazioni dei contemporanei e degli storici*, preface G. Sabbatucci (Rome-Bari, 1998; first ed. 1970); idem, *Le interpretazioni del fascismo* (Bari, 1969); idem, *Mussolini il rivoluzionario (1883–1920)* (Turin, 1965); A. d'Orsi, *La cultura a Torino tra le due guerre* (Turin, 2000); E. Collotti, ed., *Fascismo e antifascismo. Rimozioni, revisioni, negazioni* (Rome-Bari, 2000); K.-D. Bracher and L. Valiani, eds., *Fascismo e nazionalsocialismo* (Bologna, 1986); D. Fisichella, *Totalitarismo. Un regime del nostro tempo* (Rome, 1987); S. Fitzpatrick, *Everyday Stalinism: Ordinary Life in Extraordinary Times. Soviet Russia in the 1930s* (New York, 1999); S. Forti, *Il totalitarismo* (Rome-Bari, 2001); E. Fraenkel, *The Dual State* (New York, 1941); C. J. Friedrich and Z. Brzezinski, *Totalitarian Dictatorship and Autocracy* (New York, 1956); E. Gentile, *Il culto del littori* (Rome-Bari, 1993); idem, *Fascismo. Storia e interpretazioni* (Rome-Bari, 2002); idem, *Le origini dell'ideologia fascista (1918–1925)* (Rome-Bari, 1975); idem, *Storia del partito fascista 1919–1922. Movimento e milizia* (Rome-Bari, 1989); idem, *Le religioni della politica. Tra democrazie e totalitarismi* (Rome-Bari, 2001); idem, *La via italiana al totalitarismo. Il partito e lo stato nel regime fascista* (Rome, 1995); A. Gleason, *Totalitarianism. The Inner History of the Cold War* (Oxford, 1995); A. J. Gregor, *Interpretations of Fascism* (Morristown / WI, 1974); A. Grunenberg, ed., *Totalitäre Herrschaft und republikanische Demokratie. Fünfzig Jahre The Origins of Totalitarianism von Hannah Arendt* (Frankfurt/M. 2003); M.-I. Brudny, «Le totalitarisme: histoire du terme et statut du concept», *Communisme* no. 47–48 (1996); I. Kershaw, *The Nazi Dictatorship: Problems and Perspectives of Interpretation* (London, 1985); E. Jünger, «Die totale Mobilmachung», in *Krieg und Krieger*, ed. E. Jünger (Berlin, 1930); S. Kulesov and V. Strada, *Il fascismo russo* (Venice, 1998); L. La Rovere, *Storia dei*

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Totalitarismus: Das Wort und die Sache

Die Wörter «totalitär» und «Totalitarismus» stammen ursprünglich aus dem italienischen Antifaschismus. «*Totalitario*» ist erstmals 1923 belegt, «*Totalitarismo*» 1925. Mussolini übernahm die Termini 1925 zur Beschreibung der faschistischen Politik und des faschistischen Staates. Die von «totalitär» abgeleiteten Bildungen konnten aber weiterhin ein Spektrum von höchst unterschiedlichen Deutungen abdecken. Sie stiegen weltweit zu konzeptionellen Instrumenten auf, die ideologisch unterschiedliche, in ihrer Form aber ähnliche Regime verglichen. «Totalitarismus» ist trotz seiner «Normalisierung» als Kategorie in den politischen Wissenschaften ein «Kampfwort» geblieben, das öffentliche Anklage beinhaltet und damit seine ursprüngliche kritische Konnotation bewahrt hat.

Totalitarisme: le mot et la chose

Dérivés de l'italien, les mots «totalitaire» et «totalitarisme» furent à l'origine des termes antifascistes. «*Totalitario*» date de 1923; «*Totalitarismo*» de 1925. Mussolini les adopta en 1925 pour définir la politique fasciste et l'État fasciste. Ces mots ont donné lieu à différentes interprétations et sont devenus à travers le monde des outils conceptuels utilisés pour comparer des régimes idéologiquement distincts, mais similaires sur le plan morphologique. «Totalitarisme» connote la dénonciation et le combat (*Kampfwort*) et conserve de manière indestructible, en dépit de sa «normalisation» par la science politique, l'intentionnalité critique de ses origines.

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