Decolonising 'Decolonisation' With Mphahlele

Es'kia Mphahlele – Ills.: unisa.ac.sa

Es'kia Mphahlele was a writer, activist, organiser and teacher committed to the view that 'Afrikan humanness' is the real key to our freedom.
This week marks the 10th anniversary of Es'kia Mphahlele's death.

Mphahlele (1919-2008) was a writer of fiction, a journalist, a cultural activist, an organiser and, above all, a teacher. The main aim of his fiction and non-fiction work was dealing with what he characterised as the "first exile" – from home culture and ways of understanding the world – from which victims of colonisation suffered. Mphahlele argued that colonised people should begin by overcoming "first exile" if they are to develop decolonising theories and practices. In an era in which the decolonisation of politics and knowledge has captured the imagination of many people, we would do well to recall Mphahlele's work.

The focus on "first exile" is important because the ultimate aim of colonisation is to separate colonised people from their sources of economic autonomy, ways of understanding the world, and, ultimately, from themselves. The primary "spiritual striving" of victims of colonisation, not just colonialism, is a striving against what the great African-American intellectual WEB du Bois called double consciousness. Similar ideas were developed closer to home. Writing in the 1940s, HIE Dhlomo explained that successfully colonised individuals are 'neither-nor' characters who "are neither wholly African nor fully Europeanised". Dhlomo showed that the double consciousness of these characters was evident in their use of "European measuring rods for success, culture, goodness, greatness".

In a settler colonial context, the work of colonisation would be achieved when leaders of the colonised people calibrate their demands to Western-style multiparty democracy, civil rights and, therefore, the integration of the elite layer of the colonised people into the historically white world. In such a context, the world and privileges of the settler minority are legitimised and guaranteed, while 'uncivilised' people, the majority of the population, continue to exist on the underside of the new society.

When the 'decolonial' is fundamentally shaped by the colonial
But not all projects of self-determination take the lived experiences and ideas of this majority seriously. Some are attached to colonialist ideas or obsessed with whiteness, leading to 'radical' projects that recenter what they aim to challenge.

In the first case, seemingly decolonial projects repeat colonialist ideas about the inherent differences between black and white; the uniqueness of 'black culture' and its supposedly essential traits; and the need to retrieve 'native' discourses; forgetting that 'the native' comes into being only when the settler arrives and that 'native' discourse is constituted by what Congolese philosopher VY Mudimbe calls the "colonial library" – colonial experts of various kinds.

In the second case, the black radical's 'colonial mentality' manifests in projects whose main aim is to shame historical colonisers by constantly repeating anti-black discourses that the black man is not human and cannot coexist with humanity. This trend can be seen in certain strands of Afro-pessimism.

The important point here is that decolonisation often needs to be decolonised itself. In South Africa, no other thinker grappled with this dilemma more than Mphahlele.

'Being born black in this country … is a political event'
Mphahlele's life and thoughts span the colonial, apartheid and post-apartheid eras. He is a premier theorist on the predicaments facing "neither-nor" elites. Mphahlele showed that the problem of 'colonial mentality' could be surmounted only by a genuine, if painful, voyage into the self. It is this voyage that enables what Amílcar Cabral called the "return to the source".

Mphahlele has described his life as one of "exiles and homecomings". At the age of five, he was wrenched from the urban life of Marabastad and taken to a "black reserve" on barren land in a rural area. A few years later, he was taken back to

Marabastad. This childhood experience impressed upon him a duality and an ambivalence that would constitute a "never-ending dialogue" between his rural and urban streams of consciousness. Mphahlele's main philosophical contribution was, firstly, to demonstrate that colonised persons are saddled with two layers of hybridity: the often-disagreeable negotiation between the ancestral spirit and the urban-setting sensibility, and the tug-of-war between the ancestral and Western consciousnesses. In his philosophical and creative writings, Mphahlele demonstrated the many ramifications of these dizzying forms of hybridity: "Ambivalence, ambivalence. Always having to maintain equilibrium. You walk with this double personality as a colonised man … The pendulum swings between revulsion and attraction … Ambivalence."

Like many colonised people, Mphahlele thought the only way he could overcome this enervating sense of ambivalence was to master the tools of Western modernity and assimilate into the white world. In 1935, he received a scholarship to study at a prestigious Christian mission school for black students. But Mphahlele soon realised the journey and process of receiving Western education led to another form of homelessness and, as a result, increased spiritual restlessness. Aligning himself with the theme of Ambiguous Adventure, Cheikh Hamidou Kane's acclaimed novel, Mphahlele wrote that journeying into this new world was similar to undertaking "an adventure into the night".

The process of receiving a Western education helped Mphahlele not only to master the tools of Western modernity, but also to begin to subject colonialist discourse to intense scrutiny, and in the process, re-evaluate himself and the world. Mphahlele observed that the further he progressed with Western education, the more he developed intellectual apparatuses to question some of the myths of Christianity and European civilisation. When he turned 21, Mphahlele abandoned Christianity and became a non-believer.

Mphahlele's initial radicalism is evident in the slant he adopted when he co-founded an independent African-run newspaper, The Voice of Africa, or simply The Voice, which was explicitly African nationalist, in 1949. The Voice exposed the hypocrisy of white liberals and criticised the ANC for being elitist and assimilationist. Mphahlele and his co-editors anticipated one of the central tenets of Black Consciousness by rejecting a reformist vision in which "both races can live in this country peacefully, not as masters and servants, but as partners, the white race playing the role of senior partner". Mphahlele and his co-editors also

rejected the emergent politics of nativism encapsulated in the slogan, "Africa for Africans". Rather, they advocated for cooperation and unity among all oppressed peoples, including people classified as Indians and coloureds. Not to be mistaken for assimilated intellectuals, Mphahlele and his co-editors combined this rejection of the politics of radical alterity with a disavowal of the myths of colonisation. From 1951, Mphahlele penned a five-part series titled "What it means to be a black man", in which he dismissed the moralising pretences of Western civilisation by exposing the ways in which the South African legal system subjugated black people.

Self-imposed exile
The apartheid authorities dismissed Mphahlele from his teaching job when he mobilised against the Bantu Education Act. After this, The Voice stopped being circulated. This prompted Mphahlele to undertake his first journey into physical exile, taking up a teaching post in Lesotho in 1954. He returned to South Africa in 1955, obtaining a masters degree in English with distinction. His dissertation was a critique of representations of black and white characters in South African literature.

Barred from teaching, Mphahlele joined Drum magazine as a fiction editor, subeditor and political reporter, but he never became part of the Drum gang. He quit the magazine after two years because he regarded the bohemian, multiracial and interracial life on the border of the black world and the white world to be idealistic and meaningless. The Drum gang acted as if apartheid did not exist, as if racial categorisation did not exist, and consequently often ridiculed overt political mobilisation. In the context of apartheid, this kind of interstitial living got the colonised only so far because it shied away from confronting questions of identity, double consciousness, ambivalence and non-belonging.

For one whose consciousness had been raised, the only possibility that remained was to mobilise politically to try to bring about political change. But Mphahlele's involvement in the ANC's politics of integration convinced him that such politics recentered white people and would never result in meaningful change. He took up a teaching post in Nigeria. This act of self-exile began a 20-year period in which he sought belonging and spiritual succour in a proudly black diasporan world, in which he was involved in all major moments of constitution and becoming. He was involved in the Sophiatown renaissance in Johannesburg in the 1950s; the West African Anglophone cultural renaissance in the late 1950s, when he was teaching

and writing in Nigeria; the Négritude movement, when he was a director of an international cultural centre in Paris in the 1960s; and in the Black Arts movement and "negro literature" when he was a professor of literature in the United States in the early 1970s. In all these engagements, Mphahlele launched trenchant critiques of "black radicalism" and various projects of epistemic and political self-determination. It could be said that Mphahlele's chief preoccupation was to decolonise decolonisation.

While teaching, coediting an African literary magazine and mobilising against apartheid, Mphahlele wrote his most significant work of non-fiction, African Image (1962). His intentions with this book were to engage in self-determination to redefine the terms of engagement between himself and colonists. African Image aimed to deconstruct the false image colonialist discourse had imposed on Africa and Africans. More importantly, Mphahlele wished to offer a demystified notion of Africanness. African Image contains one of the first sustained critiques of the Négritude movement and the dominant strand of Pan-Africanism at the time. Mphahlele observed that these Négritude and Pan-African leaders were engaged in a process of "auto-colonising" the non-elite majority by elaborating a static notion of "African culture". Rather than learning from the unassimilated majority, "the source", these elites deployed an aggressive, anti-Western discourse that was nevertheless a colonialist discourse because it was based on "anthropological creepy crawlies".

Mphahlele's main publication in the US was a collection of essays that engaged critically with the dilemma of whether Americans of African descent should seek a cultural and symbolic return to Africa, or assert their identity as black Americans. The crux of his argument in Voices in the Whirlwind (1973) was that black Americans must seek their self-realisation in the US. But he feared that most black poetry was excessively bitter and too focused on protest to enable this.

Mphahlele's decolonising vision
In 1977, Mphahlele and his wife, Rebecca, ended their 21 years of self-exile and returned to apartheid South Africa. The main impulse behind Mphahlele's decision to return was his realisation that the only durable way an alienated person could deal with the state of self-alienation and double consciousness was by 'returning to the source'. Mphahlele put his efforts into teaching, hosting writing workshops, and other conscientisation processes. He cofounded black people-only programmes, including the Pan-African Writers Association and the

Council for Black Education and Research, which were explicitly inspired by the Black Consciousness movement. These programmes aimed to showcase and cultivate black self-reliance, self-pride and self-determination, and thus shift black people's consciousness beyond the poetics of bitterness and hatred of white people. Mphahlele argued that the process of Africanising academic curricula needed to start at the school level, and that its main philosophical basis had to be 'Afrikan humanness'.

On the eve of South Africa's transitional period – in keynote addresses, speeches, book prefaces and introductions, and a monthly magazine column – Mphahlele advanced the argument that the main aims of the political transition ought to be the forging of a conducive environment for the reassertion of Afrikan humanness and Afrikan becoming. He observed that the use of the language of non-racialism and the hastiness surrounding 'the reconciliation project' constrained these objectives.

Mphahlele warned that constitutional negotiations between black and white elites would result in a transition from white domination to white hegemony. Today, as the 'unassimilated majority' assert their demands from the underside of society with growing force, the limits of that transition are evident to all. But, as Mphahlele anticipated, a decolonial project focused on whiteness, or repeating colonial ideas of Africa and blackness, cannot enable a genuine return to 'the source'.

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Polycracy As An A-System Of Rule? Displacements And Replacements Of The Political In An Unbounded Dictatorship

Abstract

The concept of polycracy is beset by a number of paradoxes: it designates a form of political rule in the absence of such rule. In such circumstances, a multiplicity of social formations, economic and financial agencies and operational functions install themselves anomically at local level and extend independently of and beyond policy and legislation. In doing so, they split and supplant frameworks of the state and of political and societal institutions. This article sets out to trace the lineages of the concept of polycracy and its instantiations in a system of rule that involves a process of political de-structuring. More specifically, the question explored here is what *takes place* in the destroyed political space and what *takes its place* in the unbounded state of the Nazi dictatorship.

Introduction
Even with historical hindsight, the phenomenon termed "totalitarianism" presents a number of conundrums. To start off with, it resists definition. To describe it as a

"system of rule" risks contradiction (see Kershaw 1999, 222), because "a-systematicity" is its most pertinent characteristic. As a particular type of modern dictatorship, it has invited comparisons, yet such comparisons remain limited and general (considering e.g. the limited comparability of the National Socialist regime in Germany and the Stalinist regime in the Soviet Union—see Kershaw 1999). The process of political disintegration described by it is bound to leave the concept under-theorised (see Kershaw 1991, 98) and possibly even to impress itself on the theorist as incomprehensible (see Arendt [1951] 1994, viii), both conceptually and politically. In this article, we propose to put one of the elements specifying "totalitarianism" to the test: Can "polycracy" provide a specifying criterion for the definition of "totalitarianism"? If so, how would it have to be conceptualised in order to be able to account for the simultaneous diffraction and concentration of structures and agencies that reconfigure governance for conditions of geopolitical expansion, invasion, annexation and occupation; total mobilisation for war; and population relocations, forced labour and genocide?

The term "polycracy", as Walther Hofer points out, is of recent coinage. It designates social and political processes unlike those described by any of the classical theories of political organisation (Hofer 1986, 249; see also Arendt [1951] 1994, 461; also Schmitt 2000, 66) or system or type of rule.

Writing in the aftermath of war and genocide in the late 1940s, Hannah Arendt ventures this description: "We always suspected, but we now know that the [National Socialist] regime was never 'monolithic' but 'consciously constructed around overlapping, duplicating, and parallel functions' …" (Arendt [1951] 1994, xxxii–xxxiii; also 404 fn. 8).

What she pinpoints here had, in fact, been articulated by Carl Schmitt even before the Second World War in his prescient analyses of the Nazi dictatorship (1933) and by Ernst Fraenkel and Franz Neumann during the course of the War and in its immediate aftermath. The multi-levelled dynamic functioning of the Nazi regime became the subject of further investigation in the 1960s and 70s, first by Klaus Hildebrand, Karl Bracher and Peter Hüttenberger and later by Ian Kershaw. Even as they differed in the details of their analysis, all of these historians and political theorists either explicitly or implicitly returned to Johannes Popitz's concept of "polycracy", coined in the late 1920s to take account of the decline of the German state during the late Weimar period.

"Polycracy"—A conceptual–political history

Popitz held on to a substantive universal idea of the state against its devolution and dissolution into concrete orders and functions. In his positions in the Finance Ministry in the latter half of the 1920s, he was intent on clearing up Weimar's "administrative confusions" (see Kennedy 2004, 147; also Schmitt 2000, 62 fn. 4) and on restoring the authority of a centralised state.

Carl Schmitt's conversations with Johannes Popitz (the friendship with whom Schmitt only reluctantly admitted to) trace the decline of the state in the Weimar Republic with its proliferation of special interests, political parties and particularist movements. Popitz views this process as the replacement of "the state as the source of order and the locus of authoritative decisions ... by the notion of 'free competition' and 'the self-organisation of society'" (see Kennedy 2004, 33). This defines Popitz's notion of polycracy. "Pressures from within the private sector and the party politics of the Reichstag had created," he argued in 1927, "a 'polycratic' system that displaced parliamentary democratic will formation" (Kennedy 2004, 147). What these "diverse forms of economic organisations and public/private partnerships" had in common was the "fact that they retained a degree of independence from the state" while assuming responsibility for "important public functions" (Kennedy 2004, 142 fn. 3).

While, for Popitz, polycracy is tied up with the expanding role of "private interests" in the "private sector" of the economy and in party-political manoeuvring in the Reichstag, for Schmitt it emerges, in the first instance, from a plurality of social power complexes dividing up the unity of the state (see Schmitt [1931] 1988, 178) and transcending territorial boundaries and the formation of political will (Schmitt [1931] 1996, 4). This occurs, Schmitt elaborates, where the division between state and society, government and people that still characterises the state of the nineteenth century is levelled and where the state itself becomes identified with elements of society, appearing as the "self-organisation" of society. In this configuration, the relative autonomy and neutrality of the state vis-à-vis society, the economy and social interest groups disappear and state, society and the economy cease to exist as relatively separate spheres.

Schmitt argues that a thoroughgoing transformation of the Weimar state in relation to society renders all social and economic problems as political problems:
The society-become-state turns into an economic state, a cultural state, a ... welfare state,a provisioning state; the state-become-self-organising society, which

has thereby become inseparable from it, seizes upon all social processes, i.e. everything concerning human interactions. Within this configuration, there is no arena left, in relation to which the state can maintain strict neutrality in the sense of non-intervention. The parties, in which different social interests and tendencies are organised, form the society-turned-party state itself. And to the extent that there are economically, faith and culturally-based parties, there is no way for the state to remain neutral in relation to the economic, religious, and cultural domains. Within the state that has become the self-organisation of society, there is nothing that does not, at least potentially, become a matter for the state and politics. (Schmitt [1931] 1996, 4; see also Schmitt [1931] 1988, 172)

Schmitt traces this development in three stages: from the absolutist state of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries through the liberal or neutral state of the nineteenth century to the "total state" of the identity of state and society in the late Weimar Republic (Schmitt [1931] 1996, 79).

The political extrapolations from Popitz's initially predominantly economic account of "polycracy" do not, therefore, represent a sleight of hand on Schmitt's part. Instead, they arise from the dissolution of the sovereignty of the state in its capitulation to "social power complexes" that Schmitt, writing in 1931, observes, while bridling at this very observation.

Late Weimar's plurality of social power complexes, interest groups and political parties degenerates into what Schmitt terms a "quantitatively total state" or a "weak state" (Schmitt [1933] 1994, 213). During the late Weimar period, the state effaced itself in ceding its unity to a plurality of "*totale Weltanschauungsparteien*", in the first instance, each of which strove to usurp political totality and to subordinate the state to its own purposes. Growing out of the state and blasting their way through it, they themselves became independent entities, displacing the role of the state in organising society and dissolving the distinction between state and society.

Polycracy for Schmitt also arises with the dissolution of a unitary political will into myriad social power complexes, which are best exemplified in the private sector of the economy, in the second instance. In the economic sphere, polycracy comes to characterise the state-cum-economy. It is here that parliamentary political processes are losing their definitive role for the state as they are being overtaken by an economy that is subject to a plurality of particularist interests

and private law (see Schmitt [1931] 1996, 88, 110).

This process paves the way for the rupture which transcends the unitary power symbolised in the Constitution, neutralising the state and law in the process. Law is emptied, perverted and potentially dissolved (Bracher 1962, 50; see also Iakovu 2009, 439) through post hoc legitimations of unjust measures. Self-governing particularist social and "political" entities with total claims escape state circumscription, legal definition and control, political institutions and also parliamentary debate and legislature. Such entities proliferate wildly and widely at local level, that is, in municipal and communal committees and associations whose interests gain social facticity through compromises, agreements, tactics, special measures and directives, determinations of quotas, and the corresponding apportionment of offices, incomes and privileges (see Schmitt [1931] 1996, 88, 110). In 1931, Schmitt specifies this turn towards the quantitatively total state as being distinct from the "qualitatively total state" of Fascist Italy. In the latter state, the party reasserts the sovereignty of the state and strengthens the state in its monopoly of power.

The implosion of the political registered in Schmitt's writings of the late 1920s and early 1930s does, indeed, present the attempt at its theorisation with imponderabilities. The same process that advances the recession of the state tendentially abolishes the independence and critical distance of any attempt at its theorisation. The receding normative horizon of the state leaves the investigation of this process beholden to what it describes (see Sigmund Neumann [1942] 1965, xviii; also Schmitt 2000, 77, 92–101); this confronts the theorist with the paradox of developing critical perspectives on a dynamic process of dissolution that engulfs its very theorisation.

"Polycracy" within the Frame of Totalitarianism
The notion of polycracy, in its early conceptualisations in the context of the dissolution of the Weimar state and constitutionalism with quantitatively total power, is largely absent from subsequent framings of totalitarianism in four broad themes. These themes have become prevalent both in a substantial body of scholarly literature and in political affiliation and activism:
– A generic understanding of totalitarianism as total (state-political) domination, usually designated as "fascism" or as "total state" or "totalitarian state".
– The Comintern ideologeme, which construes National Socialism as

"fascism", associating it with Italian Fascism, which (following Lenin's 1916 characterisation of imperialism as the highest stage of capitalism) it had characterised in 1924 as the orchestration of expansion and war on the part of the most reactionary and powerful groups within highly concentrated finance capital, in the service of capitalist interests and imperialist aims in the final

stage of bourgeois-capitalist rule. Re-editing it for a response to National Socialism, the Comintern's Seventh Congress (1935) resolution speaks of National Socialism qua fascism—as the "terroristic dictatorship of the most reactionary, chauvinistic, and imperialist elements of finance capital" (Dimitrov [1935] 1972, 86–119).

– The principal Cold War ideologeme, which constructs an unqualified analogy and assimilates an earlier understanding of Hitler and the role of the National Socialist German Workers' Party (NSDAP) to a later understanding of Stalin and the role of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) within the Comintern.

– The division of historiographical explanations of the conditions for the emergence of Nazi totalitarianism and genocide into (politically based) intentionalism, on the one hand, and (socially–economically based) functionalism, on the other, in the series of debates in the 1980s that has become known as the Historikerstreit. [i]

An analysis of polycracy and of its horizontal power relations is forestalled in these framings, focusing as they do either on total political domination or on the subordination of economic interests of capital to the political priorities of National Socialism, or on the primacy of socio-economic determinants. In any and all of these cases, totalitarianism is construed as a centripetal force that determines relationships of super- and subordination. A circularity arises from the dualism construed between politics and economy/industry for which the duality of state–society is being brought in as a template through the back door, even though it had been declared out of explanatory purchase for totalitarianism. This is because the polycratic relationships unique to totalitarian rule arise within a novel triadic formation of state, party and "people" (Volksgemeinschaft) (see Schmitt 1933) following the transition from Weimar's party-political plurality to the primacy of a single totalitarian party.

To be able to embark on a conceptualisation of totalitarian polycracy, we would

need to return to some of the inferences that Schmitt draws from Popitz's economic notion of "polycracy". Along with these extrapolations, we would need to consider a shift from primarily economic (Popitz) sites to political and legal (Schmitt) domains of application, without granting determinacy to any of these instances. If polycracy were to be described in terms of the disintegration of the state, initially by its splitting into multiple (not simply dual) centres ("poly-") whose relationships form power structures ("-cracy"), then the task would be to investigate their locations and interrelationships (rather than identifying—usually dualistically and hierarchically conceived—power blocs as commanding heights:see Czichon 1968, 168–192; also Buchheim and Scherner 2006, 391).

Bringing the concept of polycracy to bear on the understanding of totalitarianism would therefore not amount so much to introducing a centrifugal force nor to shifting the balance from the frequently asserted "primacy of politics" (as Tim Mason would have it: 1968, 194) towards functionalism (as Eberhard Czichon would have it: 1968, 168–192). It would amount to redirecting the analysis so as to take account of a profound reorganisation of the relationship between state, society, economy and ideology in a totalitarian party-dynamic, unbounded movement (see Schulz 1962, 375). This movement transforms the role of each one of these instances as they are being set in motion in relation to the other elements and as they are grafted onto local conditions and societal histories (see Hüttenberger 1976, 426; also Schulz 1962, 459, 579, 599).

Franz Neumann provides us with a point of departure for analysing these transformations. He argues that following the 1933 Machtergreifung, "society cease[d] to be distinguished from the state; it [was] totally permeated and determined by [boundless] political power" and, more specifically, by what he calls a "monopolistic party" (1957, 245). The polycratic dimension of totalitarian rule manifested itself in the dynamic character of "rastlose Aktion" (restless action) evinced in ever-changing appointments, competencies, domains, directives, functions, special powers and decrees (see Arendt [1951] 1994, 404 fn. 8). Hans Mommsen (1966), Peter Hüttenberger (1976, 417–442) and, more recently, Donald Bloxham (2001, 25–60) draw attention to the proliferation of special powers: newly appointed functionaries in newly created administrative positions, "rival interests and groups vying for power even across official boundaries of jurisdiction" (Bloxham 2001, 37). Rather than abolishing a vertical axis of power, rival interests and groups have become concretely implicit in the

horizontal relationships—as, for instance, in the case "where rival paladins competed for Hitler's favour and where success depended on the degree to which they anticipated and fulfilled his wishes" (Hofer 1986, 236). This would entail the involvement of the Führer in horizontal relationships, not as principle but as personification of an imagined "will" (see Franz Neumann [1942, 1944] 2009, 447, also 469; Iakovu 2009, 435). Hofer elaborates on such "working towards the Führer":

The rivalries were directed not against Hitler but for him. They very often originated in a rival's desire to make a better impression on his Führer by striving to execute his plans as faithfully and promptly as possible. These rivalries by no means necessarily impaired the efficient prosecution of Hitler's aims—on the contrary .... (1986, 229)

Even the repressive apparatus, although effective—especially in regard to population groups targeted for disenfranchisement, isolation, persecution and, in certain instances, extermination—was neither "monolithic" nor fully integrated (Siegel 1988, 83). In fact, it relied to a significant extent on initiatives on the part of party activists at local level and on the part of the Gauleiter at regional level, reinforced in turn by legislative measures taken at national level (Schaarschmidt 2017, 226, 229).

In Nazi Germany, polycratic relationships manifested themselves in accordance with an additional condition, which can be identified as definitive only through its paradoxical effect: stabilisation through movement, effectiveness through inefficiency. Or, to be more precise, effectiveness through the combination of the efficiency of conventional bureaucracy, under the partial disintegration of structures of the state (see Reichardt and Seibel 2011, 9) and their replacement by reintegrating and steering mechanisms, including personalisation, informalisation and ideologisation (Reichardt and Seibel 2011, 18; also Schaarschmidt 2017, 224), rather than efficiency as a condition of effectiveness. Early attempts to capture this element identify the driving forces of
totalitarianism as "permanent revolution" (Sigmund Neumann), "social movement" (Rudolf Heberle) and "laws of movement" (Hannah Arendt) (see Sauer 1962, 689).

A Totalitarian Dynamic
Totalitarian rule, even if understood as domination, does not entirely, and perhaps not even primarily, rely on vertical relationships of super- and subordination. A

notion of vertical relationality is at least relativised, if not transformed, in our understanding, if we take a closer look at horizontal relationships and at the kinds of social exchange and competition that form their conduits (see Volckart 2003, 175; also Cary 2002, 557).

Conversely, if we were to specify polycracy by reference to plural power structures, we would have to retain a horizon of monocracy. But in retaining a monocratic axis, we would have to confront the challenge of thinking monocracy without invoking "the state" as its foundation. Responding to this challenge, Hüttenberger suggests that *"Herrschaftsträger"* be interpreted as nodes of agencies that exercise political functions structured in overlapping, competing and continuously changing, dynamically expanding, contracting, and internally differentiating and concentrating networks (see Hüttenberger 1976, 422).

Such nodes could take different forms.

The first and most striking form would be the multiplication of offices between party and state. This was not to be understood as a symmetrical dualism between the National Socialist Party acting outside the bounds of any norms and rules, on the one hand, and a rational–bureaucratic state, on the other; rather, it should be understood as an emerging hybrid form of political organisation connecting state, party and industry (see Reichardt and Seibel 2011, 12). As Hannah Arendt observes, "with a fantastic thoroughness [and as a matter of principle], the Nazis made sure that every function of the state administration would be duplicated by some party organ" ([1951] 1994, 396), creating a division of authority. But it did not remain at the level of mere duplication: the Nazi party multiplied its offices and functions, creating a proliferation of ever-changing power structures charged with identical tasks, while nominally retaining pre-existing offices. Centres of power, while constantly shifting, remained a mystery, "to such an extent that the members of the ruling clique themselves could never be absolutely sure of their own position …" (Arendt [1951] 1994, 400).

The sites in this network in which the nodes were particularly densely concentrated—in the ministries, for instance—have been relatively well described, even in their overlapping and conflicting domains, authorities and competencies, convergences and divergences. This was the case, for example, with the "interests" and functions of the SS *Reichssicherheitshauptamt* (RSHA) ("Reich Security Main Office") and the *Wirtschaftsverwaltungshauptamt* (WVHA) (SS "Economic and Administration Head Office"); of the *Reichswehr* ("Reich armed

forces") and industry; of the *Reichswehr* and the *Reichssiedlungsamt*; of Albert Speer's Armaments Ministry, on the one hand, and the Inspectorate of the Concentration Camps (*Inspektion der Konzentrationslager* or *IKL*), WVHA, RSHA, *Wehrmacht* and private corporations, on the other (Bloxham 2001, 26–28).

Polycracy between Economics and Politics
Less well understood is what Franz Neumann refers to as "polycracy" in the context of the processes of concentration, cartelisation and monopolisation in the economy under totalitarianism, for which he coins the term "Totalitarian Monopoly Capitalism" ([1942, 1944] 2009, 261). Neumann cites the Hermann Goering Ore Mining and Iron Works Corporation Ltd ("*Reichswerke, A.G. für Erzbergbau und Eisenhütten, Hermann Goering*"), a nominally state-controlled Nazi conglomerate, as an instance of a "party economy" that he interprets as a political, rather than an economic, phenomenon ([1942, 1944] 2009, 301). However, the provisions of the law on forced cartelisation were inconsistently applied, to uneven effect. The "planning" of the "planned economy" was often haphazard, chaotic and contradictory (Buchheim and Scherner 2006, 410).

Recent scholarship has challenged the notion of a "party economy" understood as a co-ordinated initiative to appropriate private capital and industry in a consistent drive towards nationalisation. The party shifted its focus to macroeconomic priorities and to measures aimed both at maximising the exploitation of existing means of production, including those of the occupied territories, and at controlling and rationing the apportionment of raw materials (Abelhauser 2002, 26). Bloxham cites the example of the tensions within the complex of SS institutions: between those "officials directly involved in industry [who] wished for the primacy of economics" and the "SS hierarchy", many of whom "worked solely for the victory of ideology" (2001, 42).

In the corporate sector, the promotion of autarky, expansion and armament "fragmented corporate interests and created new coalitions between subsets of executives and specific government or military agencies". It meant breaking down "linear divisions over output strategies between firms and the state" and "replac[ing] them with battles fought out within the firms" in which party-political objectives often prevailed (Hayes 2009, 39). Thus, the same framework of regimentation contained uncoordinated economic decisions (Franz Neumann [1942, 1944] 2009, 314). These were partly structured by ideological precepts, partly enacted on the basis of considerations of short-term versus long-term

market expectations (see Scherner 2002, 431, 434, 445, 447, 448; also Buchheim and Scherner 2006, 411) and partly adhered to as decrees and warnings imbued with the force of command.

Polycracy in Occupation Regimes
Numerous studies have devoted themselves to tracing the convergences and divergences of polycratic diffusion in the processes of restructuring governance and economic strategies in the Reich; but political analysis of the dynamic social and political structures, agencies and processes in societies under occupation is scarce in comparison.

While a number of highly acclaimed studies on the economic–social–ideological policies, practices and rationalisation of forced labour in occupied Poland have appeared (see e.g. Stefanski 2005, 38–67; also Allen 1965; Tooze 2006), these tend to mushroom in an apparently theoretical no-man's-land and remain shy of the task of a historical–political investigation relating the occupation to a theory of modern dictatorship (Evans 1983, 101).

On the other hand, some of the classical studies of the Nazi dictatorship that appeared during and after the War, including some ground-breaking analyses in the 1950s and 1960s, tend to treat the occupation as an extension and expansion of the unbounded dynamic forces of National Socialism (see Arendt [1951] 1994, 422; also Bracher, Sauer and Schulz 1962, 12).

This may indeed be said of the reliance of the German war effort on the increasingly brutal exploitation of foreign economies, of the extraction of resources from occupied territories, of the costs of occupation and of the war effort imposed on occupied countries' economies. It may also be said of the progressive multilateralisation of clearing systems' facilitating unpaid exports (see Fonzi 2012, 157–158) for the purposes of shoring up the war economy (Fonzi 2012, 158) and of the increase in clearing debt leading to rising inflation (Fonzi 2012, 156, 161).

But the idea of expansion, extension and radicalisation, if considered as a political dynamic, is questionable. National imperialism, on the latter account, mobilises and diverts the internal dynamics and problems to the external expansion and seizure of assets (Bracher 1962, 230); this starts with the subordination of foreign relationships to the requirement of stabilising the totalitarian dictatorship internally, and is followed by militant external expansion

of the internal dynamic (Bracher 1962, 240). While acknowledging that it was expansion—virtually "limitless extension in time and space" (Neumann [1942] 1965, 3)—that created continuing dynamism and transformations both within and concentrically around the Reich, these studies remain strangely focused
on polycratic aspects of the administrative and governmental dynamics internal to the Reich. Within these dynamics, social and political structures, while being neutralised, levelled and in certain instances obliterated, continued to enjoy some salience in historical memory, action orientations, local-level organisational arrangements and the identification of traditional elites in the civil service (Seibel 2011, 244–245).

Invasion and occupation on the model of "extension" and "expansion" are also described in terms of "export" ["of the 'systemlessness' … that characterised the Nazi dictatorship … from the Reich to occupied Europe" (Kirk 2003, 205)] and "replacement" (Kershaw 1993, 109). In a political–theoretical account, polycracy is thought to be magnified, escalated, intensified and radicalised in the occupied territories (Kershaw 1993, 109, 115, 117, 118; see also Mommsen's idea of "cumulative radicalisation" 1976, 785–790).

On closer inspection, however, these terms turn out to be inadequate, even misleading. They presuppose that it is the *same dynamic*, emerging from the same socio-political matrices characterising the internal processes of social and political dissolution and reintegration, that finds extension, expansion and radicalisation in and through Nazi Germany's *Wehrmacht*, *Einsatzgruppen* and occupation forces' invasion, annexation and occupation of other European territories.

Wolf Gruner and Jörg Osterloh have launched a similar critique of widely held notions about the intensification of the Nazi regime's anti-Jewish policies with successive annexations between 1939 and 1944. Instead, they suggest,
the key to understanding the intensification of anti-Jewish policy in the course of the Nazi regime's annexations, on the one hand, and the inconsistency of regional measures, on the other, lies precisely in these mutual actions between local, regional, and central persecutory measures. (Gruner and Osterloh 2015, 4)

Transformations of the Totalitarian Dynamic in its Expansion
In attempting to get to grips with the phenomenon of polycracy under the Nazi annexation and occupation of Poland, we can, at this stage, outline only a few

tentative steps towards an analysis. Nevertheless, these tentative steps would suggest some ideas that could reorientate the hitherto largely functionalist [ii] analyses of Nazi dictatorship in its expansion. We venture to suggest that an understanding of polycracy in the Nazi annexation and occupation of Poland would have to move away from notions of "expansion" or "extension" of the political dynamic internal to the Reich to a notion of specific qualitative "transformations" within this dynamic itself in the occupation of Poland.

In order to be able to mount these considerations, we would need to retrace the steps in the early conceptualisations of "polycracy" and "quantitative totality" in the late Weimar Republic. Even though polycracy, forming part of the dynamic of totalitarianism, is perceived by its early theorists as an unprecedented phenomenon, it is not without its social basis—namely, a plurality of social power complexes hollowing out and neutralising the unity of the state as they divide it up and subordinate it to particularist interests, which in turn make a claim on totality. *Weltanschauungsparteien*, in their own claim to totality, juxtapose themselves to, model themselves on and become parasitic upon state institutions, which they then proceed to hollow out.

No such antecedents can be made out in the annexation and occupation of Polish territories (as delineated by the post-World War I borders) by Nazi-German military and administrative forces. In fact, the structures of the Polish state and society were fragmented and displaced, and the regional authorities installed were more tightly linked to the centralised structures of administrative control than to those of the local administration (see Schaarschmidt 2017, 232). These centralised structures included the higher-level party organisations such as the Higher SS and Police Leaders (HSSP) and the SS Security Service (SD). While no recognisable continuity with previously existing *institutions* was maintained, totalitarian rule over the (re-)annexed and occupied
territories was differentially grafted onto locally specific conditions which were newly created geo- and biopolitically. This was achieved by drawing and redrawing provincial and administrative borders in line with ideologically constructed and forcibly implemented demographic ordering, with the corresponding differential extractive, distributive, policing, labour and genocidal regimes (see Gross 2000a, 15).

Societal transformation was concretely and violently enacted in direct correspondence with totalising political–ideological blueprints. Without mediation

or organisation through even shells or distant memories of social and political institutions, or through a total party or parties, at a distance from the *Führerkult* or any impressionability of charismatic leadership to bundle polycratic forces, and without a mass movement orientated to the Führer to provide direction to centrifugal dynamism, the implosion of the political becomes all the more violent. In the process, ideology, politics and economics are forced together to such an extent that settlement policy and genocide, Lebensraum and ghettoisation, productivity of labour and extermination through labour lose the aspect of contradiction; instead, they become integral to a nexus of genocide, economic extraction and exploitation, and population relocation and settlement policy.

Under conditions of occupation, a new form of dictatorship cannot graft itself onto power complexes that, while constituting deep cleavages in society, have hitherto not found politically organised forms. In particular, it cannot do so without the dramatic reorganisation of social structures and the abolition of political institutions, local administrations and parties; of market exchanges and the social division of labour; or of relatively regulated currencies, prices and wages.

Moreover, at a distance from charismatic leadership and in the absence of a total party growing out of concentrated social power complexes, mobilisation for total war, settlement policy, forced population relocations, expropriation and genocide provide a strong monocratic axis in the occupied Eastern territories. But such a monocratic axis is not readily couched in terms of centres of power and ideology capable of mass mobilisation in those territories (see Schmitt [1947, 1958] 2003, 433). The three mechanisms that reintegrated the National Socialist administration, identified by Reichardt and Seibel (2011, 18) as personalisation (through the *Führerprinzip*), informalisation (through the dynamism of the National Socialist *movement*) and ideologisation ("total" political orientation along the lines of *nationalsozialistische Weltanschauung*), cannot be said to function as reintegration mechanisms in the administration of societies under occupation.

Corruption as Integrating Factor
Yet we cannot infer or conclude that the occupation was a monolithic imposition of "colonial or foreign domination", because even the occupation administration had to rely on networks of coordination reaching into the society over which it ruled rather than on rigid hierarchical lines of command. Moreover, as Jan Gross

shows,

just as there are differences in responses to occupation by different groups within the subjugated society, there are also a variety of interest groups in the administration of the occupying power. (1979, 50)

Even the SS's own adherence to party structures and decrees in the occupied territories was vague. The NSDAP failed to "fulfil its function of informal control over the administration" (Gross 1979, 57). While it achieved regional centralisation, it failed to coordinate various regions, thus spawning administrative chaos:

A direct consequence of centralisation was, paradoxically, the inability of the central authorities to provide overall guidance or to shape binding policies. They were, instead, lost in a maze of detail. (Gross 1979, 53)

In undertaking the task "to reconstruct the process by which a society was destroyed and to offer an analysis of the forms of collective life that appeared in its stead" (Gross 1979, 44), Gross redirects the categories for analysing the monocratic axis away from the normativity that has hitherto bound the state to constituted and organised human collectives. In a move no less bold than that of his predecessors—Hannah Arendt and Franz Neumann—in thinking the unthinkable, he charts a path for thinking the parasitism of totalitarianism in its different forms. Summing up the modi operandi of the occupying regime, he points to corruption as "the single most characteristic social phenomenon in a society under occupation" (1979, 145). Focusing on the occupation
regime in the Generalgouvernement, he explains,

... corruption acquired nomic quality in the GG and established social bonds where only coercion would otherwise have existed. It may be viewed as the only system within which exchange, transaction, and reciprocity take place. Corruption thus emerges as the principal mode of integration, in much the same way as ... economic exchange, a legal system, or, finally, the state in a modern polity. Consequently ... the peculiar general phenomenon of a corrupt state can be distinguished from, merely, the corruption of state officials. (1979, 145)

Cooperation with Occupying Regimes as (Re-)organisational Factor
Forms of cooperation, likewise, achieved *politically* structuring effects in Nazi occupation regimes in the Polish territories. As a possibility for action, cooperation arises contingently, yet not coincidentally. It is defined by a generalised asymmetry and inequality between occupiers and occupied who enter

into relationships on the basis of a limited set of converging objectives (e.g. ideological affinities) among otherwise heterogeneous interests.[iii] The occupying forces concede a limited extent of independent interests and goals to the occupied, based on the recognition of the latter's local knowledge and historical situatedness; this in turn provides for limited autonomous agency on the part of members of the occupied society. Such agency and influence are

limited in the sense that they serve the power and interests of the occupying regime. They emerge

at the intersection between the occupier's [continuously shifting] intent and the occupied's perception [without amounting to a shared interpretation] about the range of options at their disposal. (Gross 2000a, 26)

Cooperation is thus embedded in the historical, social and political conditions of the occupied society, but it is circumscribed by the occupying regime (Gross 2000a, 24); yet—and here it displays one aspect of its relationship to a monocratic axis of power—it is instrumental in the thoroughgoing demographic, social, political and economic reorganisation of the occupied society (Tauber 2006, 13; also Röhr 2006, 28, 29, 37; Gross 2000a, 21–23). Another aspect of its relationship to a monocratic axis arises from the displacement of the psychic conditions of agency under conditions of political and social disintegration: to the extent that cooperating individuals are situated within the disintegration that circumscribes their active agency of co-operation, they tend to continue to uphold the vision of integration into a tightly structured social order. Such integration they find more readily in the organisation of the occupying regime than in the society disarticulated under the occupation (see Sartre [1945] 1949, 49).

The occupying forces, in their turn, to some extent relied on cooperative relationships with existing social, educational and cultural agencies, among them the Central Welfare Council consisting of former office-bearers of the government and administration of the Second Polish Republic, and with members of the Polish Red Cross and the Polish underground state (Friedrich 2003, 127). That these networks attained a systemic restructuring character rather than simply a local, situational and contingent one is borne out by the fact that the Polish underground state, formed from politically diverse factions opposed to the Nazi take-over shortly after the invasion of Poland in 1939, crafted the prototype for the mono-ethnic nation state that was to take shape after the war (Friedrich 2003, 133).

What the bundling of polycracy through the leader principle effected in the fashioning of new instruments of power internal to the Reich, we would argue, was what corruption, cooperation, the seizing of opportunities and the forging of connections for comparative advantages and influence, for access to resources and for enrichment (Reichardt and Seibel 2011, 15) led to: the administration and coordination of economic activity in the occupied territories. Such nodal connections made for a dynamic and flexible form of governance (as opposed to more codified forms of bureaucratic proceduralism) in the context of an "unbounded dictatorship".

Beyond "Polycracy"
Returning to the question of the explanatory purchase of the concept of "polycracy", we have shown its close implication in National Socialist totalitarianism, whose character of rule it defines. This is in contradistinction to other forms of modern dictatorship, such as the Italian–Fascist corporate state idea (with the "Party above parties" seizing the state machine: see Arendt ([1951] 1994, 258–259) and the Soviet party-state (with its duplication of offices between state and party).

The catalyst to the differentiation of Nazi totalitarianism from the dictatorships in Italy (1922–1943) and the Soviet Union (1926–1953) was what Carl Schmitt described as the quantitatively total state of the late Weimar Republic with its myriad social power complexes. Whereas Johannes Popitz adduced "polycracy" to conceptualise the expanding role of particularist private interests and law in the economy taking over public functions, Carl Schmitt extended and transferred the concept from its application to primarily economic sites to the analysis of political and legal domains in the late Weimar period.

However, the ambit of this analysis of polycracy has remained largely confined to the power dynamics internal to the Reich. The dynamic of "cumulative radicalisation" has been slanted functionalistically in the accounts of the exploitation of invaded, annexed or conquered occupied territories in the service of the German war economy. As a result, the political restructuring of societies under occupation remains under-theorised and, along with it, the extent to which the political dynamics of polycracy attain a degree of autonomy from polycracy's economic functionality in societies restructured under National Socialist governance. The resulting lacunae have been vastly consequential—not least in the expansive "grey zones" beyond the camps, on the one hand, and the notion of

"nations" of victims, on the other (see Gross 2000a; also 2000b, 116).

Addressing these lacunae is a task that this article set itself.

Notes

[i] The positions in this debate were initially differentiated and labelled by Timothy Mason as "intentionalist" and "functionalist", with the names of Andreas Hillgruber, Klaus Hildebrandt and Eberhard Jaeckel being associated with the former (and Daniel Goldhagen emerging at a later point as an extreme intentionalist) and those of Hans Mommsen, Martin Broszat and Mason himself with the latter (Mason, 1981) (and Götz Aly emerging at a later point as an extreme functionalist). The terms, positions and conceptualisations have been elaborated in the ensuing debates, initiated notably by Yehuda Bauer and Ian Kershaw, to the point where the labels "intentionalist" and "functionalist" appear simplistic and distorting. The attempted synthesis talks of the "cumulative radicalisation" of policies and their implementation generated by competing agencies with overlapping competencies and authorisations and "working towards the Führer" on the basis of their own interpretations of their mission.

[ii] It would appear that the accounts of "cumulative radicalisation" which were to chart a path beyond or out of the horns of the "intentionalism"–"functionalism" debates are themselves slanted towards functionalism in seeking to align a political dynamic of polycracy with an economic account of the escalating brutalisation in the exploitation of the occupied territories (see e.g. Fonzi 2012, 156, 158, 161, 163–164, 178). However, the account of this alignment was partly modified by the claim of a contradiction between economic and political goals (Fonzi 2012, 172, 178).

[iii] A major converging interest was the elimination of competition with Jewish retail traders and the expropriation or appropriation of Polish Jews' accommodation, property, jobs, businesses and money, driven by agricultural production teams and Polish national–radical movements. Another major converging interest was the anti-communism advocated in the course of the attempt to build up social services in cooperation with the occupying forces. This attempt was embraced by sections of the peasantry, Polish radical nationalist movements, the land-owning nobility and former government functionaries (see Friedrich 2003, 124, 127, 131, 132, 134). In the putative concern to "re-establish and maintain law and order", villagers were being mobilised by village elders, mayors, forestry officials and fire brigadiers to participate in the

persecution of their Jewish fellow-citizens (Friedrich 2003, 147).

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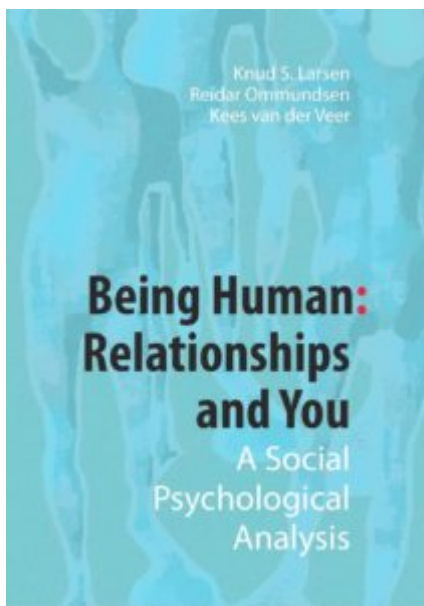
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Being Human: Relationships And You ~ A Social Psychological Analysis – Preface & Contents

Preface

This book represents a new look at social psychology and relationships for the discerning reader and university student. The title of the book argues forcefully that the very nature of being human is defined by our relationships with others, our lovers, family, and our functional or dysfunctional interactions.

Written in easy to follow logical progression the volume covers all major topical areas of social psychology, with results of empirical research of the most recent years included. A common project between American and European social psychologists the book seeks to build a bridge between research findings in both regions of the world. In doing so the interpretations of the research takes a critical stand toward dysfunction in modern societies, and in particular the consequences of endless war and repression.

Including topics as varied as an overview of the theoretical domains of social psychology and recent research on morality, justice and the law, the book promises a stimulating introduction to contemporary views of what it means to be human.

A major emphasis of the book is the effect of culture in all major topical areas of social psychology including conceptions of the self, attraction, relationships and love, social cognition, attitude formation and behavior, influences of group

membership, social influence, persuasion, hostile images, aggression and altruism, and moral behavior.

Table of contents

"Therefore this reading has a rare and valuable feature, that of making a link between American and European social psychology: "Being human: Relationships and you" is an excellent example of how the two lines of thought are actually articulated…it is clearly written, using a professional yet assessable language and therefore easy to read by even the non-specialist public…always pointing to the fact that social psychology is not "just a science" but it deals with issues that constitute the substance of our existence as humans".

Hannah Arendt's Theory of Totalitarianism – Part One

Hannah Arendt – Ills. Ingrid Bouws

Hannah Arendt wrote *The Origins of Totalitarianism* in 1949, by which time the world had been confronted with evidence of the Nazi apparatus of terror and destruction. The revelations of the atrocities were met with a high degree of incredulous probing despite a considerable body of evidence and a vast caché of recorded images. The individual capacity for comprehension was overwhelmed, and the nature and extent of these programmes added to the surreal nature of the revelations. In the case of the dedicated death camps of the so-called *Aktion Reinhard*, comparatively sparse documentation and very low survival rates obscured their significance in the immediate post-war years. The remaining death camps, Majdanek and Auschwitz, were both captured virtually intact. They were thus widely reported, whereas public knowledge of Auschwitz was already widespread in Germany and the Allied countries during the war.[i] In the case of Auschwitz, the evidence was lodged in still largely intact and meticulous archives. Nonetheless it had the effect of throwing into relief the machinery of destruction rather than its anonymous victims, for the extermination system had not only eliminated human biological life but had also systematically expunged cumulative life histories and any trace of prior existence whatsoever, ending with the

destruction of almost all traces of the dedicated extermination camps themselves, just prior to the Soviet invasion.

Although Arendt does not view genocide as a condition of totalitarian rule, she does argue that the 'totalitarian methods of domination' are uniquely suited to programmes of mass extermination (Arendt 1979: 440). Moreover, unlike previous regimes of terror, totalitarianism does not merely aim to eliminate physical life. Rather, 'total terror' is preceded by the abolition of civil and political rights, exclusion from public life, confiscation of property and, finally, the deportation and murder of entire extended families and their surrounding communities. In other words, total terror aims to eliminate the total life-world of the species, leaving few survivors either willing or able to relate their stories. In the case of the Nazi genocide, widespread complicity in Germany and the occupied territories meant that non-Jews were reluctant to share their knowledge or relate their experiences – an ingenious strategy that was seriously challenged only by Germany's post-war generation coming to maturity during the 1960s. Conversely, many survivors were disinclined to speak out. Often, memories had become repressed for fear that they would not be believed, out of the 'shame' of survival, or because of the trauma suffered. Incredulity was thus both a prevalent and understandable human reaction to the attempted total destruction of entire peoples, and in the post-war era the success of this Nazi strategy reinforced a culture of denial that perpetuated the victimisation of the survivors. In *The Drowned and the Saved* Primo Levi records the prescient words of one of his persecutors in Auschwitz:

However this war may end, we have won the war against you; none of you will be left to bear witness, but even if someone were to survive, the world will not believe him. There will be perhaps suspicions, discussions, research by historians, but there will be no certainties, because we will destroy the evidence together with you. (Levi 1988: 11)

Here was unambiguous proof of the sheer *'logicality'* of systematic genocide. The silence following the war was therefore quite literal, and the publication of *Origins* in 1951 could not and did not set out to bridge that chasm in the human imagination. It did, however, establish Arendt as the most authoritative and controversial theorist of the totalitarian.

The path leading to Arendt's first major published work was nonetheless a long

one. From being a somewhat politically disengaged youth, Arendt during the early 1930s experienced the world as a German-Jewish intellectual confronted with the Third Reich, first as a citizen escaping into exile in 1933 and later as a New York intellectual receiving news of the *'Final Solution of the Jewish Question'.* As a refugee in Paris from 1933 to 1941 Arendt was dispatched to an internment camp, an experience that forever impressed upon her the inherently tenuous status of the *'new kind of human being created by contemporary history'*, those who *'are put into concentration camps by their foes and into internment camps by their friends'* (Arendt in Young-Bruehl 1982: 152). However, the much-noted emphasis given National Socialism in *Origins* cannot be wholly ascribed to Arendt's German origins and experience of Nazism.**[ii]** Rather, it is partly a function of the wealth of documentary evidence captured by the conquering Allies, together with the extensive first-hand accounts, memoirs, and interviews of Nazis in the immediate post-war period. Of course, the personal does inform Arendt's writing. From an early stage in its development, Arendt was sensitive to the inherent danger of dismissing Nazi ideology as an incoherent form of virulent nationalism. She viewed Nazi ideology, as indeed *all* totalitarian ideologies, as both coherent and internally consistent. These characteristics, combined with a relentless *'logicality'*, underpinned the capacity to inspire a superstitious mass resignation born in terror.

As we have seen, Arendt was not the first theorist to reject the generic concept of *'fascism'*, nor was *Origins* the first work to explore important similarities between the Nazi and Stalinist dictatorships. In both of these respects, Carl Schmitt anticipates Arendt's reflections by almost two decades. Nevertheless, *Origins* yields a whole range of innovative insights that Schmitt could not have developed beyond a preliminary analysis in the 1933 work *Staat, Bewegung, Volk*. In a 1957 postscript to the 1933 essay *Further Development of the Total State in Germany*, Schmitt acknowledges Arendt's post-war interpretation as closely akin to his own theory of total dictatorship. Thus he argues that

In the sociological and ideological analyses of totalitarianism qua novel contemporary phenomenon (Hannah Arendt, Talmon, C. J. Friedrich, Brzezinski) a dialectical moment may be discerned in the evolution of terminology. If the concept of totality is not merely quantitative but instead consists of a specific intensity of organised power, then it is not the state, but strictly a party that constitutes the subject and protagonist of totalitarianism. In these circumstances,

part of the erstwhile totality confronts the latter as a new totality and demotes the state to a mere quantitative totality. Accordingly, the historical dialectic brings about a negation of the erstwhile totality by a part thereof, whereas the latter asserts its status as something more than the pre-existing totality. In this sense, there are no totalitarian states, only totalitarian parties. (*) (Schmitt 1973: 366f)

My intention in this essay is to build on the thematic concerns present in Schmitt's seminal writings on Fascism and National Socialism, whilst shifting the focus to Arendt's distinctive totalitarianism thesis.**[iii]** Whereas Schmitt theorises the inversion of the party-state relationship, and the political primacy accorded the movement as incorporating both, Arendt integrates this defining structural innovation of totalitarian rule into her account of the role of ideology and terror in the actualisation of 'total domination'. Schmitt's prescient insights into the totalitarian assault upon the bourgeois nation-state manifests itself in his late-Weimar writing as a presentiment for 'a most awful expansion and a murderous imperialism' soon to engulf Europe (Schmitt 1999e: 205).**[iv]** Arendt, in turn, analyses that catastrophe in such innovative terms that her theory of totalitarianism has ever since defied easy categorisation, owing in no small part to her deeply philosophical premises only subsequently explicated in a series of important essays and her next major work, *The Human Condition* (1958). This is quite apparent in the central philosophical train of thought at work in *Origins*, which describes the progressive 'de-worlding' of the world by way of a 'gigantic apparatus of terror … that serves to make man superfluous' (Arendt 1979: 457). Equally important, however, is Arendt's thesis of the foreclosure of the field of politics consequent upon the total *claim* that totalitarian regimes make on their populations. This will be the guiding theme of this chapter. Although that total 'claim' is backed by a coercive regime of terror, it also engages a dynamic of plebiscitary mobilisation unique to totalitarian regimes. The comprehensiveness of this control and manipulation 'politicises' all facets of social experience whilst simultaneously extracting the organised 'consent' of the populace in accordance with pre-set ideological goals. Totalitarian rule is thus distinguished from the mere imposition of an arbitrary personal will characteristic of tyranny, instead actively mobilising the population, even as it eliminates coexisting loyalties as well as autonomous institutional and social spaces.

Nazism and Stalinism
Writing in the immediate post-war era, Arendt enjoyed an obvious advantage over

the pioneering theorists of the 1930s and early 1940s, for she was able to engage her philosophical training to gauge the existential impact of Hitler's rule on German society. Arendt was guided in her analysis by the conviction that the political forces at work in post-World War One Europe were guided neither by 'common sense' nor by 'self-interest'. These forces, epitomised by the 'totalitarian movements', were thus imbued with an unprecedented potential for destructiveness (Arendt 1979: vii). However, during the post-World War Two period, Arendt mistook a general mood of despair for her own sense of an 'ill-defined, general agreement that the essential structure of all civilisations is at a breaking point' (ibid.: vii), for the world that survived the cataclysm of Nazi rule included many intellectuals who strained to portray Stalin's pre- and post-war reign of terror as an unfortunate adjunct of the revolutionary transformation of society. The publication of Arendt's comparative study of Nazism and Stalinism at the height of the Cold War meant that her views were interpreted, if they were noted at all outside America, through the distorting prism of the reigning ideological presuppositions of her age. *Origins* routinely elicited the charge of Cold War-mongering, not least of all by those least flattered by the comparison. In the ideologically charged atmosphere of global contest, little attention was paid to the resumption of terror in the post-war Soviet Union and Arendt's interpretation of the 'sheer insanity' entailed in the 'logicality' of ideological thinking (Arendt,1979: 473) found little resonance in the Western academy, especially during the 1960s and 1970s at the height of a resurgent Marxist discourse. It was only with the collapse of Soviet Communism in 1989 that scholars would embark upon a fundamental reassessment of the Stalin years, a project that is still in process.

It was not without irony, therefore, that many partisans of the Soviet cause felt themselves compelled to defend all of Soviet history, as indeed the unfolding of the promise of the October Revolution, a view shared as axiomatic by anti-Communists. Arendt's rejection of causal interpretations of history eluded minds more attuned to the great nineteenth century meta-narratives of liberal progress and historical dialectics. Her refusal to concede anything to the seed of totalitarian ideology, and its harvest of untold corpses, met with widespread incomprehension and hostility. If it would be another forty years before Arendt's theory of totalitarianism would receive the serious consideration that it so richly deserves. Jerome Kohn identifies an important reason for the quite extraordinary animus of Arendt's many critics. Arendt's outrage at totalitarianism was, in his

words,

... not a subjective emotional reaction foisted on a purportedly 'value free' scientific analysis; her anger is inherent in her judgement of a form of government that defaced the human world on whose behalf she sought to expose Nazism and Stalinism for what they were and what they did. (Kohn 2002: 629)

Reflecting on the question of 'origins' that has so excited several generations of her critics, one detects an element of 'bewilderment' in Arendt's 1958 observation that

... finally, it dawned on me that I was not engaged in writing a historical book, even though large parts of it clearly contain historical analyses, but a political book, in which whatever was of past history not only was seen from the vantage-point of the present, but would not have become visible at all without the light which the event, the emergence of totalitarianism, shed on it. In other words the 'origins' in the first and second part of the book are not causes that inevitably lead to certain effects; rather they became origins only after the event had taken place (Arendt 1958: 1).

Arendt had thought it impossible to write 'history, not in order to save and conserve and render fit for remembrance, but on the contrary, in order to destroy' (Arendt,1958: 1). In that, fortunately, she was wrong. In fact she devoted the rest of her life to proving herself wrong insofar as all of her subsequent works are an intervention, a quite extraordinary flowering of 'the human capacity to begin, that power to think and act in ways that are new' (Canovan 2000: 27).

'Working reality'
My analysis of Arendt's theory of totalitarianism begins where she did, briefly tracing the contours of her complex interpretation of nineteenth century anti-Semitism and imperialism. Arendt's approach of prefacing her analysis of totalitarianism with lengthy excurses into nineteenth century European history has been much criticised, and misunderstood.[v] Thus her extensive analyses of anti-Semitism and imperialism in the first two parts of *Origins* are often misread as an argument for causality, as well as being held to account for the 'imbalance' in her treatment of Nazism and Stalinism. For her critics point to the markedly different forms of and roles played by anti-Semitism and imperialism in German and Soviet history. In this regard, Bernard Crick takes to task those critics who

fail to grasp Arendt's 'general philosophical position', which pointedly eschews the notion of a 'unique and necessary line of development toward what occurred. This is where the "model-builders", with their pretence at causality, go astray in reading her' (Crick 1979: 30). Rather than seeking the 'causes' of totalitarianism, Arendt explores the ways in which totalitarian movements not only exploit 'clichés of ideological explanation' to mobilise their followers, but also how they transform these ideologies into a 'working reality' by means of novel organisational forms and devices (Arendt 1979: 384). In other words, Arendt has something to say of general theoretical and philosophical significance and she is not attempting to write a comparative history of the Nazi and Stalinist dictatorships. Within the limits imposed by the acknowledged lack of reliable sources about the inner workings especially of Stalin's dictatorship, Arendt is nonetheless able to construct a compelling case for viewing the Nazi and Stalinist dictatorships as *sui generis*. At the heart of her account lies her insight that both dictatorships revealed a proclivity for transforming ideological systems of thought into deductive principles of action.

Critics on both the historical Left and Right have also, and quite rightly, stressed that the contents of the Nazi and Stalinist ideologies are fundamentally distinct; a fact of which Arendt was well aware. Arendt also concedes the 'shocking originality' of Nazi ideology, which, unlike communism, owed nothing to our 'respectable tradition' (Arendt in Young-Bruehl 1982: 276).**[vi]** However, whereas most commentators reduce totalitarian ideologies to their pedagogical functions, Arendt argues that in addition to being total 'instruments of explanation', these ideologies yield up the 'organisational principles' of the totalitarian system of government (Arendt 1979: 469). In other words, the organising principles of 'race' and 'class' in the Nazi and Stalinist ideologies respectively determine not just the organisation of the movement but of society as a whole. In this way, they identify categories of 'objective enemies' who are first isolated and then expunged totally from society. This process may generate both refugees and corpses. However, from the point of view of the leadership of the totalitarian movements, ideology is the basis of 'organisation', and these 'men consider everything and everybody in terms of organization' (Arendt 1979: 387).

In the final part of this essay, I address Arendt's analysis of the relation between ideology and terror, widely acknowledged as the touchstone of her totalitarianism thesis, which leads directly into her interpretation of the phenomenon of the

concentration camp system as the site of the experiment in 'total domination'. Whereas the link between terror and the concentration camp system is hardly controversial, both the impact of terror on the general populace in totalitarian societies and Arendt's concept of 'total domination' are far more so. We should note here that Arendt distinguishes between different forms of terror, arguing that the destruction of the public realm (and hence also of the capacity to act and to form relations of power) characteristic of tyrannical rule should not be conflated with the total destruction of the individual's capacity to establish private and social relations, which is coincident with the novel totalitarian condition of 'total domination'. Totalitarian rule transforms a condition of 'isolation' into an all-pervasive sense of 'loneliness' (ibid.: 474-5). Moreover, unlike solitude, which requires that the individual be alone, loneliness manifests 'itself most sharply in company with others' (ibid.: 476).

These distinctions have important ramifications for Arendt's concept of power, which she defines as the acting and speaking together of individuals, as constituting a public realm. The destruction of the public realm of politics by tyrannical government condemns both the tyrant and his subjects to a condition of isolation, arbitrary rule and powerlessness. Conversely, although totalitarianism, like tyranny, eliminates the public realm, it also eliminates the ground for sustainable relations of power. By destroying the 'inner spontaneity' (ibid.: 245) of individuals, totalitarian rule dominates human beings from within. The destruction of the individual capacity for action complements a complex dynamic of ideological compulsion and popular plebiscitary rule that implicates the totalitarian subjects in the policies of the regime. Moreover, the incremental radicalisation of the regime's policies is facilitated by the elimination of 'the distance between the rulers and the ruled and achieves a condition in which power and the will to power, as we understand them, play no role, or at best a secondary role' (ibid.: 325).

A declaration of war on ideology
Once the human collective is redefined in terms of the ideological imperatives of race or class – i.e., once the positive laws and stabilising institutions of political authority of the sovereign state are displaced by the primacy of a dynamic totalitarian movement – the impediments to total terror are removed and the reordering of society can proceed towards its preordained end. For Arendt, total terror constitutes a condition in which the 'consciously organized complicity of all

men in the crimes of the totalitarian regimes is extended to the victims and thus made really total... forcing them, in any event, to behave like murderers' (ibid.: 452). Although the order of terror varied between totalitarian societies and within these societies over time, and although total terror was only ever approximated in their respective camp systems, Arendt's concerns are of a different order. Certainly the Soviet purges and Nazi street massacres in Eastern Europe attest to the potential for a regime of violent terror. Nonetheless, Arendt argues that the relation established between the ruler and the ruled – established by the novel device of total domination – is both more complex and equivocal than it might appear. Thus the primary victims are only the most explicit target of the regime's terror, for these categories of 'objective enemy' are wont to be changed, or supplemented, over time, and members of the general populace can never be quite sure that they will not fall into some future category of 'objective enemy'. Moreover, unlike the tyrant, the totalitarian dictator is typically a popular figure and thus bound to his potential victims, who constitute society.

Ideology plays a crucial role in all of this. Moreover, it would not be an exaggeration to claim that *Origins* is a declaration of war on ideology. However, as Margaret Canovan has noted, it is also a proof of a profound and troubling paradox. For totalitarianism

... illustrated the human capacity to begin, that power to think and act in ways that are new, contingent, and unpredictable that looms so large in [Arendt's] mature political theory. But the paradox of totalitarian novelty was that it represented an assault on that very ability to act and think as a unique individual. (Canovan 2000: 27)

Reading *Origins*, one has a strong sense that Arendt despaired of the obtuseness of a generation of European intellectuals enslaved to ideology; the 'psychological toys' that wrought unprecedented misery and destruction. Conversely, it is not difficult to imagine what she would have made of the fraught historians' debates of the past two decades, both within Germany and about the Stalinist phase of Soviet rule, whose putative social scientific objectivity has done much to reinvent the wheel. In the process, old gripes about *Origins* have been rehashed rather unimaginatively and the 'debunking' exercise has gathered pace with ever more incognisant broadsides at a caricature of a work of extraordinary depth and brilliance.

In what follows, I will provide my own interpretation of the work followed, in chapter five of *Hannah Arendt's Response to the Crisis of her Times*, by a critical assessment of Arendt's most important detractors, whose ideological and personal biases in my view encumber their interpretation of a complex and difficult text. Throughout, my analysis of *Origins* will alert the reader to key elements of Arendt's post-*Origins* theoretical project, introduced in chapter two. The most important of these elements is Arendt's theorisation of totalitarianism's radical assault upon human individuality. The latter constitutes the very fundament of Arendt's post-*Origins* theoretical project, which articulates a pluralistic theory of the public realm that is both profound and topical. Whereas chapter two in *Hannah Arendt's Response to the Crisis of her Time* was concerned with Arendt's interpretation of the devaluation of politics in the long Western tradition of political philosophy, this essay will narrow the focus to her analysis of the destruction of the political in twentieth century totalitarian regimes. I address this aspect of Arendt's political thought more explicitly in the final chapter six of *Hannah Arendt's Response to the Crisis of her Time*, where I argue that one of the most perplexing and intriguing dimensions of Arendt's political thought is her apparent antipathy for the Continental European nation-state. For on the one hand, she argues that the nation-state, which has become virtually synonymous with political modernity, constitutes a barrier to the anti-state ambitions of the totalitarian movements. On the other hand, however, she is scathingly critical of the nation-state, which she views as something akin to an excrescence of political modernity. It is my contention that it is by grasping this curious paradox in one of history's greatest partisans of the political way of life that we may begin to understand and appreciate the true genius of Hannah Arendt's 'narrative', as it winds its way from the unspeakable horror of our darkest age to the light of a simple truth: that 'not one man, but men in the plural inhabit the earth' (Arendt 1979: 476).

Totalitarianism and the nation-state

The modern European nation-state is accorded great significance by Arendt as an obstacle to totalitarian rule. Yet this fact, which is often overlooked, is also routinely misinterpreted as suggesting that Arendt was a proponent of the unitary nation-state or that despite herself, she embraced the *Rechtstaat* of her supposedly 'erstwhile philosophical enemy Hegel' (Villa 2007: 42). However, as I shall argue in the remainder of this study, nothing could be further from the truth. Arendt's reflections on the nation-state do confirm that she regarded the

stable institutions of the state as antithetical to totalitarian rule. However, in her attempts to come to terms with the totalitarian phenomenon, she embarked upon a fundamental reassessment of the modern nation-state that culminated in her embrace of the federal principle, as it emerged in the writings of the Founding Fathers and in the early political settlement that constituted the United States of America. It is nonetheless also true that this theoretical turn remained largely implicit in *Origins*. And it is this fact, in my view, that has led many commentators astray as they struggled to discern in this work just what Arendt proposed as an alternative to the sovereign nation-state in the wake of mankind's greatest ever disaster. To understand why Arendt viewed the nation-state as part of the problem rather than as part of its solution, we need firstly to understand why Arendt rejected the nation-state as a basis for reconstituting the political in the wake of totalitarianism. Moreover, her most concise formulation of the fundamental problem underlying her totalitarianism thesis is not contained in *Origins*, but in a little noted but highly significant essay published shortly after the war.

The brief review of J.T. Delos's book *La Nation*, which appeared in *The Review of Politics* in January 1946, is a *tour de force* of subtle argumentation and a seminal explication of Arendt's totalitarianism thesis. Arendt, in terms strikingly similar to Schmitt's late-Weimar works, analyses three phenomena of the 'modern world' that marked a break with Europe's pre-modern feudal order. Arendt, as far as I am aware, for the first time, broaches the complex question of the relation between 'nation', 'state' and 'nationalism', and the changing nature of this relation in nineteenth century Europe – an analysis that is subsequently incorporated into *Origins*. In the latter work, Arendt introduces her classic analysis of the *decline* of the nation-state, which culminates in her account of the crippling impact of both European imperialism and the First World War on the comity of European nation-states. It is these latter historical developments that Arendt highlights in *Origins*, arguing that the disintegration of the nation-state under the impact of these events bore 'nearly all the elements necessary for the subsequent rise of the totalitarian movements and governments' (Arendt 1979: xxi). To understand how Arendt came to this view, the modest little essay in question proves to be highly instructive.

As with so many other seemingly jaded topics of political thought, Arendt breathes new life into the well-worn question of Europe's transition from the feudal period to the modern age of the nation-state, even wresting from this question novel insights that were to constitute key elements of her theory of totalitarianism. She contends, firstly, that political modernity displaced traditional universal claims of civilisation with a 'particular, national civilisation'. Secondly, she identifies a theme that was to play an important and controversial role in her analysis of totalitarianism: namely the emergence of 'masses' whose 'atomisation' was a prerequisite of both imperialistic domination and totalitarianism. Finally, she acknowledges that modern civilisation is grounded in the 'reconstitution of the state (after the period of feudalism)', which however 'does not solve the fundamental problem of the state: the origin and legality of its power' (Arendt 1946c: 207, 208). Arendt also contrasts definitions of 'nation' and 'state'. Whereas a nation is defined as a people connected by past labour and a shared history, constitutive of a 'closed society to which one belongs by right of birth', the state is an 'open society, ruling over a territory where its power protects and makes the law'. Conversely, Arendt argues, *nationalism*, or the 'conquest of the state through the nation', emerged simultaneously with the nineteenth century national state. Henceforth, the identification of nation and state generated a tension between the territorial state *qua* legal institution protecting the rights of citizens and the rights of nationals. As a legal institution, the state only recognises the rights of citizens, no matter what their nationality. As a 'power institution', however, the territorial state 'may claim more territory and become aggressive – an attitude which is quite alien to the national body which, on the contrary, has put an end to migrations'. Thus, the melding of state and nation continually endangers the 'old dream' of a pacified community of sovereign nations, since it combines the principle of sovereign nationhood with the 'enterprise of power' (ibid.: 208), and which the ideology of nationalism imbues with a paradoxical urge towards nation-state imperialist expansion.

This brief review is fascinating for several reasons. Arendt engages an enduring preoccupation with the interrelation between nation, state, nationalism, imperialism and totalitarianism. There is an unmistakably Schmittian flavour in her description of the nineteenth century phenomenon of liberal individualism, which in its original conception envisages the state supposedly ruling over 'mere individuals, over an atomised society whose very atomisation it was called upon to protect. But this modern state was also a '"strong state" which through its

growing tendency towards centralisation monopolised the whole of political life', drawing on the 'cement of national sentiment' (ibid.: 209) to reconcile the logic of a powerful centralised state and an atomised liberal society:

As the sovereignty of the nation was shaped after the model of the sovereignty of the individual, so the sovereignty of the state as national state was the representative and (in its totalitarian forms) the monopolizer of both. The state conquered by the nation became the supreme individual before which all other individuals had to bow. (ibid.: 209)

Up to this point, Arendt's argument seems to be little more than a restatement of the common view of Western European 'totalitarianism' *qua* powerful state, infused with an extreme nationalist ideology, such as we find in the Fascist dictatorship. Arendt even provides us with a working definition of Fascism insofar as she speaks of a powerful national state 'monopolising' the sovereignty of the individual. What is interesting in this argument is the subtle shift from a sovereign state representing the sovereignty of the nation and individual, to a state transformed into an instrument of the nation, and as subordinating 'all laws and the legal institutions of the state' to the welfare of the nation. From this, Arendt draws the conclusion that it is 'quite erroneous to see the evil of our times in a deification of the state', rather than in the conquest of the state by the nation (ibid.: 209).**[vii]**

Although Arendt, in this review, does not yet make an explicit distinction between Fascism and National Socialism, she is nonetheless concerned with the emergence of totalitarian 'movements' and the 'first forms of totalitarianism' marking the transition from the 'nation-state' to the 'totalitarian state', as 'nationalism becomes fascism' (ibid.: 210).**[viii]** However, the real interest of this intervention lies in Arendt's brief account of how this transition comes about by way of the transformation, or perversion, of the Hegelian concept of the state. Arendt argues that the conquest of the state by the nation was preceded by the adoption of the principle of the 'sovereignty of the nation', which in turn was modelled after the sovereignty of the individual. For as long as the state retained its sovereign power and political primacy, this development went unnoticed. However, the rise of nationalism during the nineteenth century undermined the sovereignty of the state until, finally, the nation asserted its sovereignty over the state. By successfully challenging the sovereignty of the state, the nation not only asserted its sovereignty over the state, but also fundamentally transformed the

state. For it was distinctive of the Hegelian conception of the state that the 'Idea' existed as an independent entity 'above' the state, rather than being identified with the state. Conversely, whereas the identification of nation and state did not eliminate the Hegelian 'conception as a whole', it nonetheless replaced the Hegelian 'Idea', variously, with the 'idea of the nation, the Spirit of the people, the Soul of the race, or other equivalents' (ibid.: 209).

Arendt argues that what now occurs is that the 'Idea', deprived of its autonomous or transcendent character, becomes identified with an 'absolute principle', which in turn is realised in 'the movement of history' itself. Henceforth,

… all modern political theories which lead to totalitarianism present an immersion of an absolute principle into reality in the form of a historical movement; and it is this absoluteness, which they pretend to embody, which gives them their 'right' of priority over the individual conscience. (Arendt 1946c: 209)

The 'individualisation of the moral universal within a collective', conceived in Hegel's theory of state and history, thus survives in a perverted form in the modern mass movements, once their ideologies are stripped of their Hegelian idealism. The totalitarian movements are 'charged with philosophy', taking possession of the 'idea' – be it of nation, race, or class – which is realised in the movement itself. Whereas liberal parliamentary parties typically pursue objectives or ends 'outside' of themselves, totalitarian movements effect the identification of means and ends. In Arendt's quotation of Delos that 'the characteristic of totalitarianism is not only to absorb man within the group, but also to surrender him to becoming' (Delos in ibid.: 210), we encounter what was soon to become a fundamental tenet of her theory of totalitarianism. Against this 'seeming reality of the general and the universal', she argues, 'the particular reality of the individual person appears, indeed, as a *quantité négligeable*, submerged in the stream of public life which, since it is organized as a movement, is the universal itself' (ibid.). This extraordinary passage articulates Arendt's sense of individuals in totalitarian societies surrendered to a process of becoming, actualised by their absorption into the totalitarian movement and swept along by the ineluctable laws of Nature or History, into the gas chambers and Gulags of her generation.

*The relation between nationalism and totalitarianism*
This brief review also presages the major themes of Arendt's post-*Origins* political thought, and their relation to her yet to be articulated theory of totalitarianism.

Thus, Arendt highlights the problem of reconciling the individual's rights as man, citizen, and national; a paradox magnified rather than resolved by the ideology of nationalism, and one that is indeed a touchstone of early twenty-first century political thought. Anticipating a key finding of *Origins*, Arendt argues that totalitarianism has exposed the folly inherent in attempts to reconcile nation and state. In her view, the only justification of the state is its function as 'the supreme protector of a law which guarantees man his rights as man, his rights as citizen and his rights as a national', subject however to the proviso that '*the rights of man and citizen are primary rights, whereas the rights of nationals are derived and implied in them*' (ibid.; emphasis added). She contends, accordingly, that the post-war refashioning of legal state institutions presupposes the *distinction* between the citizen and the national, between the political order and the national order. In an era characterised by the countervailing forces of 'growing unity' and 'growing national consciousness of peoples', Arendt, anticipating the central thesis of her 1963 work *On Revolution*, proposes the federal principle, whose logic transforms nationality into a 'personal status rather than a territorial one' (ibid.). This is a crucial dimension of Arendt's post-*Origins* political thought that flows directly from her analysis of totalitarianism and her political pluralism, drawing on the experience of the only successful revolution of modern times – the American War of Independence.

Arendt concludes her review by criticising Delos for focusing on the relation between nationalism and totalitarianism, whilst occluding the question of imperialism. Critics have long decried Arendt's 'preoccupation' with imperialism as an 'element' in the crystalline structure of European totalitarianism. This is especially true of historians, who mistakenly interpret Arendt's analysis of imperialism as a history of imperialist politics, rather than a brilliant and highly original interpretation of a mentality – of 'brutality and megalomania' – that would 'destroy the political body of the nation-state' (Arendt 1979: 124, 125).**[ix]** This mentality, although hardly totalitarian, presaged the totalitarian conviction that 'everything is possible', a mode of apprehending the world that drew much of its energy from the limitless destructiveness wrought by the First World War. The notion of a 'movement' itself bespeaks the expansiveness of the imperialist mentality, and the historical forces unleashed by Europe's orgy of violence – a universal becoming that is antithetical to 'stable worldly structures'. I earlier noted Arendt's notion of the identification of means and ends as characteristic of modern mass 'movements', a development that eliminates the distinction between

the institution of the political party and its objectives. In her view, the identification of means and ends goes to the heart of the totalitarian assumption of 'eternal dynamism', which overflows all spatial and historical boundaries, and the totalitarian conception of the political, which is stripped of all humanly recognisable utilitarian goals. The boundless dynamism of totalitarian rule is antithetical to the liberal institutionalisation of political rule as well as its territorially finite state, whose legal guarantees of civil and political rights presuppose a stable constitutional order. In his *Second Book: The Unpublished Sequel*, Hitler provides a succinct description of the liberal state's dystopic opposite:

The foreign policy of the bourgeois world is in truth always only focused on borders, whereas the National Socialist movement, in contrast, will pursue a policy focused on space ... The National Socialist movement ... knows no Germanization ... but only the expansion of our own people ... The national conception will not be determined by previous patriotic notions of state, but rather by ethnic and racial conceptions. The German borders of 1914 ... represented something just as unfinished as peoples' borders always are. The division of territory on the earth is always the momentary result of a struggle and an evolution that is in no way finished, but that naturally continues to progress. (Hitler in Bartov 2004: 4)
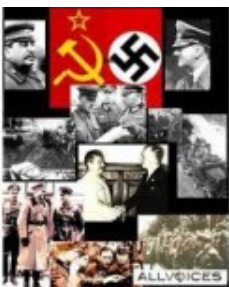
National Socialism
Fascism

Arendt could not have known this work when she wrote either the review in question or *Origins*, since the manuscript was discovered in 1958 and published only in 1961. Yet there is an uncanny resonance between her analysis of the internal contradictions of the nation-state and Hitler's stated goals.[x] Hitler dismisses the bourgeois notion of a stabilised, territorially delimited state. Nazi expansionism, moreover, 'knows no Germanization' and therefore eschews the

Roman model of a politically integrated and naturalised imperial domain, proposing instead an ethnically and racially exclusive movement, which eliminates obstacles to a continuously expanding Aryan realm. Rather than incorporating territories and their native populations into a proposed new *Reich*, Hitler envisaged an exclusive racial elite 'cleansing' territories for settlement by 'our own people'. Thus 'the National Socialist movement... will never see in the subjugated, so-called Germanised, Czechs or Poles a national, let alone folkish, strengthening, but only the racial weakening of our own people' (Hitler 1961: 45). Hitler, it should be noted, wrote this in 1928.

From this perspective, the idealisation of the state is not only antithetical to the Nazi project but would in fact constitute a deliverance from its most radical objectives. Hitler early on identified the bourgeois territorial state first and foremost as an obstacle to his ideological goals. Conversely, Arendt theorises these objectives in terms of a totalitarian movement subordinating the state to the 'ideas' of nation, race, or class in pre-1925 Fascism, Nazism and post-1929 Stalinism, respectively:

The state, even as a one-party dictatorship, was felt to be in the way of the ever-changing needs of an ever-growing movement ... while the 'party above parties' wanted only to seize the state machine, the true movement aimed at its destruction; while the former still recognized the state as highest authority once its representation had fallen into the hands of the members of one party (as in Mussolini's Italy), the latter recognised the movement as independent of and superior in authority to the state. (Arendt 1979: 260)

The importance of this statement, in my view, exceeds the merely controversial claim that totalitarian regimes are, strictly speaking, not state forms at all.

Arendt is arguing that however imperfectly, the modern nation-state has performed the function of the ancient *polis*. By attacking the institutions of the state, the totalitarian movements gauged, correctly as it turned out, the one great vulnerability of the bourgeois nation-state in the post-World War One era; namely, its complete lack of defences in the face of extra-parliamentary and extra-legal challenges to state authority. In Arendt's view, Western European totalitarian movements exploited the conditions of 'mass society' born of the 'decay of the Continental party system [that] went hand in hand with a decline of the prestige of the nation-state ... and it is obvious that the more rigid the country's class

system, the more class-conscious its people had been, the more dramatic and dangerous was this breakdown' (ibid.: 261-2). The masses springing from the cataclysm of total war were distinguished from the rabble of former centuries by the fact that they were 'masses' in a strict sense, without

*... common interests to bind them together or any kind of common 'consent' which, according to Cicero, constitutes inter-est, that which is between men, ranging all the way from material to spiritual and other matters. (Arendt 1953c: 406)***[xi]**

In Germany's case, at least during the late Weimar period, the party system could no longer fulfil its function of ordering the public world and the class system had begun to disintegrate (Arendt 1979: 260-1). Developments in the Soviet Union were markedly different and more complex, although there too, war and revolution had shattered its neo-feudal class system. Yet Arendt's central point in this regard is that Lenin's 'revolutionary dictatorship', whatever its totalitarian elements and proclivities, remained bound to attempts to stabilise the revolution and restore a semblance of rational policy calculation. For this reason, Arendt stresses Stalin's 'second revolution' of 1929 and the purges of the 1930s, which targeted residual class loyalties and social hierarchies in a campaign that was geared to securing Stalin's unchallenged, total authority. However, before I address this dimension of Arendt's totalitarianism thesis, we need to look more closely at Arendt's controversial account of developments in nineteenth century Europe, which she addresses in the first two parts of *Origins*, and which many commentators have misconstrued as 'causal' elements in the genesis of Europe's inter-war crises.

Anti-semitism and imperialism in nineteenth-century Europe

Bolshevism and Nazism at the height of their power outgrew mere tribal nationalism and had little use for those who were still actually convinced of it in principle, rather than as mere propaganda material. (Hannah Arendt)

In her introduction to the original edition of *Origins*, Arendt identifies the 'spurious grandeur of "historical necessity"' (Arendt 1979: viii) as the antithesis of political thought and action. For Arendt, comprehension does not entail 'deducing the unprecedented from precedents' but rather 'facing up to' events, without submitting to the view that they are somehow preordained (ibid.). The

'emancipation from reality and experience' (ibid.: 471) effected by ideological argumentation degrades our political faculties. For this reason, Maurice Cranston argues, *Origins* refrains from any 'naïve empiricist notion of causality in history, and in looking for "origins", seeks only to locate the factors which led up to totalitarianism and make it intelligible' (Cranston 1982: 58).

This is not a view that is universally shared. Agnes Heller, for example, argues that Arendt views totalitarianism as 'the offspring of our modern, Western culture' (Heller 1989a: 253) and as such 'could only emerge after all previous events of modernity had all unfolded' (ibid.: 254).**[xii]** On the basis of these assumptions, Heller goes on to criticise Arendt for a residual evolutionism insofar as she allegedly 'attributed [a] certain kind of necessity to the factual sequence of historical events' (ibid.: 253).**[xiii]** The passage in question, referred to above in a different context, appears in the Preface to the first edition of *Origins* in which Arendt alludes to 'The subterranean stream of Western history [that] has finally come to the surface and usurped the dignity of our tradition' (Arendt 1979: ix). And yet this passage is deserving of a contextual reading. Heller, righting Arendt's wrong, proposes an alternative perspective, suggesting that 'the fact that history unfolds in a certain way does not prove that it could not have been otherwise' (Heller 1989a: 254). Indeed, as Arendt repeatedly stresses, comprehension means

… examining and bearing consciously the burden that events have placed upon us – neither denying their existence nor submitting meekly to their weight as though everything that in fact happened could not have happened otherwise. (Arendt 1979: xiv; emphasis added)

Arendt is arguing that we assume responsibility for events that have already unfolded, that past deeds are irreversible and future developments unknowable given the radical contingencies of life. From this perspective, and given what we know of the historical circumstances, totalitarianism was not an inevitable outcome of Europe's long series of inter-war crises, although these certainly aided the formation and ascendancy of totalitarian movements. Still, for Arendt the lessons and conclusions to be drawn from Europe's cataclysm of war and revolution do not include the surrender to a logic of inevitability, according to which totalitarianism is 'explained' as the preordained outcome of historical forces inherent in 'political modernity'. The irreversibility of what happened does not mean that it could not have happened differently. It is Heller, after all, and

not Arendt who ventures the opinion that the 'totalitarian option had been present since the dawn of modernity' (Heller 1989a: 254).

In the 1967 Preface to Part One of *Origins*, Arendt explains herself:

Since only the final crystallizing catastrophe brought these subterranean trends into the open and to public notice, there has been a tendency to simply equate totalitarianism with its elements and origins – as though every outburst of antisemitism or racism or imperialism could be identified as 'totalitarianism'. (Arendt 1979: xv)

As countervailing undercurrents or tributaries of mainstream European developments during the nineteenth century the 'elements' that later 'crystallized in the novel totalitarian phenomenon' – post-Enlightenment racism and nation-state imperialism – were scarcely noticed. Still, 'hidden from the light of the public and the attention of enlightened men, they had been able to gather an entirely unexpected virulence' (ibid.) until, finally, the catastrophic impact and revolutionary afterlife of the First World War thrust them into prominence. In retrospect, Arendt regretted the choice of title, arguing that *Origins* 'does not really deal with the "origins" of totalitarianism – as its title unfortunately claims – but gives an historical account of the elements which crystallized into totalitarianism' (Arendt in Kateb 1984: 55). Accordingly, as Benhabib notes, the title of the book constitutes a 'misnomer ' (Benhabib 1994: 114), one that has played no small part in the misreading of Arendt's central arguments.

The two key elements
The two key 'elements' that feature prominently in *Origins* are 'anti-Semitism' and 'imperialism'. Unsurprisingly, Arendt presents a novel interpretation of both, steering a wide berth around the prevailing clichés then current in the literature. This is especially true of her controversial account of the former, which distinguishes between historical forms of religious and social anti-Semitism on the one hand, and the Nazi ideology of biological racism on the other. She contends that prior to the advent of Nazism, anti-Semitism played a purely secondary role in European history and politics, and was of far less significance than the phenomena of imperialism and class politics. In this view, the first time the 'Jewish Question' assumed importance in the national politics of a country was following the Nazi seizure of power, and it was preceded by meticulous groundwork during the 1920s, that saw the Nazis elevate anti-Semitism from

gutter politics to the organising principle, firstly, of the Nazi totalitarian movement, and subsequently of the Nazi dictatorship. None of this would have been possible, or at least very likely, would it not have been for the devastation of total war, which transformed the landscape of possibilities in post-war Germany much as the Bolshevik Revolution – itself no small miracle of history – blasted away the detritus of a reified tradition.

From a present-day perspective, the Nazi genocide of European Jewry, Sinti and Roma, and homosexuals seems all but inevitable. Yet despite the enormity and sheer horror of the Nazi mass crimes, they entered popular Western consciousness relatively late, and only began to play a central role in Western historiography more than a decade after the war. Arendt wrote and lectured extensively about the Nazi mass crimes during the final war years, whereas following the war her focus shifted to theorising the 'radical discontinuity' and novelty of the totalitarian system of government (Kateb 1984: 55; see 149; Benhabib 1994: 119). Arendt repeatedly returned to the theme of historical contingency; her view, that is, that 'the story told by [history] is a story with many beginnings but no end' (Arendt 1953b: 399). Her distinctive historical sensibility contrasts powerfully with what Villa terms 'Hegelian-type teleologies, whether of progress or doom' (Villa 1999: 181). In various different contexts, and in all of her works, Arendt challenges deterministic philosophies of history that reduce the unprecedented to precedents. In the aforementioned 1967 Preface, Arendt describes all such approaches as no less 'misleading in the search for historical truth' as they are 'pernicious for political judgement'. She illustrates this point with a startling analogy. If we were to reduce National Socialism to racism, moreover employing the latter term indiscriminately, then we might reasonably conclude from the racism characteristic of government in the Southern states of the United States that 'large areas of the United States have been under totalitarian rule for more than a century'. Hence, to grasp the radical novelty of Nazi ideology, we need to acknowledge the distinction between 'pre-totalitarian and totalitarian' forms of racism and anti-Semitism. Only in this way will we be able to understand the role played by Nazi biological racism in the regime's ideological and organisational innovations. For the cataclysm that was Nazi rule was a fusion of novel forms of ideology and political organisation, which attained its most concentrated expression in the death factories for the production of human corpses. If this destructive phenomenon could now *seem* to have been predictable, this is only because we have recovered our senses following the first

shock of discovery.

The complexity of Arendt's analysis of anti-Semitism mirrors the welter of conflicting social and political forces at work in nineteenth century Europe, which were all tied, in one way or another, to the emergence of modern European imperialism and the concomitant decline of the nation-state during the last quarter of the century. Arendt contends that the acquisition of empire undermined the national political institutions of the imperial states and fundamentally transformed the balance of forces and interests that had sustained the latter for much of political modernity. This was particularly evident in changing popular attitudes towards Western European Jewry, which mirrored the declining influence of the Jewish bourgeoisie in Europe's royal houses. Arendt cites an interesting precedent in this regard. For Tocqueville's analysis of revolutionary France similarly pointed to the coincidence of popular hatred for the aristocracy and the dissolution of the latter's political power. In other words, resentment was a function of the growing disjunction between the aristocracy's great wealth and privilege on the one hand, and its rapidly declining political power on the other. For the state of 'wealth without power or aloofness without a policy' are felt to be parasitical by masses accustomed to associating wealth with sovereign power, even if that association often enough consists in a relation between oppressor and oppressed (Arendt 1979: 4). Similarly, European Jewry was tolerated within the national body politic for as long as its pseudo-bourgeoisie served a demonstrable public function in the comity of European nation-states. This 'function' was derived from its close economic ties to Europe's royal houses and state institutions. When Continental Europe's class system began to break down and her nation-state system began to disintegrate during the late nineteenth century, the various Jewish bourgeoisies lost their public functions and influence without suffering a concomitant loss of material wealth. Moreover, unlike the Christian bourgeoisie, the class of privileged Jews had never been accepted into Europe's class system, which itself contradicted the principle of equality upon which the modern state was founded. In other words, the Jewish elite did not even belong to a class of oppressors, whereas 'even exploitation and oppression still make society work and establish some kind of order' (ibid.: 5).

A caricature of Alfred Dreyfus 'The Traitor'

Arendt is suggesting that hatred of Europe's Christian bourgeoisie stemmed from its role in the exploitation and oppression of the masses. Conversely, their Jewish counterparts were, first and foremost, ethnic and religious outsiders whose tenuous social status was an exclusive function of their economic usefulness. Once they had been deprived of their privileged access to the aristocracy, they were bereft of any 'useful' function. Henceforth, growing anti-Jewish sentiment could be exploited by a new class of political parties and movements, whose anti-Semitism was no longer merely social or religious in nature, but now assumed a distinctive 'ideological' character. Arendt cites the Dreyfus Affair as emblematic of this new mentality and of the changed political circumstances; a 'foregleam of the twentieth century', insofar as the domestic politics of a modern state 'was crystallized in the issue of antisemitism' (ibid.: 93, 94). This signified the transformation of social and religious anti-Semitism into a political creed that served as the organising principle of mass political movements. These movements were now able to exploit and manipulate popular anti-Semitism as they propagated their ideologies of the 'alien Jew' and a Jewish world conspiracy. Arendt notes the striking fact that persecution of European Jewry intensified in an inverse relation to its declining political influence, for Europe's Jewish communities had become 'powerless or power-losing groups' (ibid.: 5).

Ideological scientificality
Anti-Semitism had become infected by what Arendt terms 'ideological scientificality' or a form of political discourse that was released 'from the control of the present' by positing an inevitable historical outcome, which is by its very nature immune to all tests of validity (ibid.: 346). This mode of ideological argumentation was but one step removed from its totalitarian incarnation, for the

Nazis infused this device with a prophetic quality whose infallibility derived from the fact that their policies were geared to realising their stated ideological goals. By transforming the 'idea' – race in racism – into an all-encompassing explanation of the unfolding 'movement' of history, which in turn was realised through the application of 'total terror', the Nazis eliminated all competing 'ideas', as well as all contradictions and obstacles that might stand in the way of an ideological vision and reality (ibid.: 469). I will address the relation in Arendt's thought between totalitarian ideology and total terror in greater detail below. In the present context, however, I should like to stress Arendt's related argument that the 'only direct, unadulterated consequence of nineteenth-century anti-Semitic movements was not Nazism but, on the contrary, Zionism' (ibid.: xv). For Zionism emerged as a form of 'counter-ideology' and a political response to the age-old problem of European social and religious anti-Semitism. Conversely, such relation as there was between Zionism and Nazi racism was limited to the exploitation of Zionism and conventional anti-Semitism by the Nazi movement to foster and underscore its claims of a global Jewish conspiracy. In this way a peculiar triangular dialectic was established between anti-Semitism, Zionism and Nazism, that was only finally resolved with the establishment of Israel in 1948.

Thus, pre-Nazi anti-Semitism served as a virtual palette for propagandists, who manipulated the history of Jewry in ways that reinforced the urgency of the so-called 'Jewish question' (ibid.: 6-7, 355). Moreover, the Nazi movement revolutionised the function of ideology, and ideologized the 'Jewish question', by transforming mere anti-Semitic 'opinion' into an immutable 'principle of self-definition' (ibid.: 356). Identity, rather than being a social, religious or economic category, was redefined in objective, 'scientific' terms as the biological-racial characteristics of the individual on the one hand, and as the imperative of conserving the racial characteristics of the master species or *Volk* on the other. For the first time in history, racism had become the organising principle of a mass political movement, and would soon also become the binding ideology of a totalitarian system of government. By displacing sovereign political authority from the state to the totalitarian movement, the German state was redefined as a '"means" for the conservation of the race, [just] as the state, according to Bolshevik propaganda, is only an instrument in the struggle of classes' (ibid.: 357).

One other aspect of Arendt's engagement with the question of anti-Semitism in

Origins should be noted here. Although Arendt's interpretation of Nazi racism focuses quite heavily on the question of anti-Semitism, this is largely a reflection of the status of European Jewry as the principal target of the Nazi genocide. However, once her focus shifted to the broader category and implications of Nazi biological racism, she stressed that there were also other categories of victims of the Nazi genocide, which moreover reveals the truly unprecedented nature of Nazi ambitions. Thus for example, in the 1963 work *Eichmann in Jerusalem*, Arendt argues that Eichmann was guilty of the extermination of Sinti and Roma 'in exactly the same way he was guilty of the extermination of the Jews' (Arendt 1964e: 245). This is still regarded by many as a controversial statement, although it should not be. Nazi racism did not just envisage the extermination of European Jewry but aimed at a total reordering of the racial demographics of occupied Europe. Hitler had already begun to implement his '*Generalplan Ost*' prior to Germany's defeat. The policy envisaged the resettlement of millions of SS cadres, beginning with the elite 'Order of Heinrich Himmler', and entailed 'ethnic cleansing' on an unprecedented scale and the expansion of the camp system across the occupied territories of the East (Schulte 2001: 287, 307-09, 334-51, 376-8; Browning 2004: 240-1). Hence, the ultimate goal of Hitler's race-ideology entailed even greater horrors and considerably greater numbers of potential victims. It was only Hitler's defeat in 1945 that spared the world from the broader goals of the 'Final Solution'.

Imperialism, the topic of the second part of *Origins*, played a more direct role in mainstream European politics between 1884 and the outbreak of World War One. It was, moreover, the most significant element leading Europe into the catastrophe of total war. Arendt focuses on the anomalies of nation-state imperialism, which set the stage for a global war, in whose wake social and political institutions were shattered and entirely new categories of 'superfluous' humanity were generated. However, Arendt's interest does not lie in the history of imperialism's warmongering as much as in its hubris of intent. She argues that conquest and empire are destined to end in tyranny unless they are based primarily upon law; law, that is, as understood by the Roman Republic as integrating, rather than merely assimilating the heterogeneous conquered peoples as subjects of a common polity. The dilemma posed by overseas conquest was that it contradicted and ultimately undermined the national principle of 'a homogenous population's active consent to its government', which ever since the dawn of political modernity had constituted the *raison d'être* of the nation-state.

Thus Europe's imperial ambitions, propelled by the economically driven rush for resources and markets, were not matched by a viable political model of imperial rule. The exclusion of the extra-national territories and peoples from the body politic of the conquering powers meant that rather than grounding their rule in the principle of justice, the imperial states were reduced to forcibly extracting the 'consent' of the subject peoples to their own subjugation (Arendt 1979: 125). This device of rule impacted most directly on the colonial entities. Nonetheless, in the wake of the First World War, Europe, too, experienced the condition of 'statelessness' and all that went with the loss of constitutionally guaranteed national rights. Millions of displaced refugees were generated by policies of expulsion from former national territories and the loss of these territories. This was accompanied by widespread economic crises, which in turn generated social conflict and dislocation. These conditions were antithetical to Europe's Enlightenment understanding of a socially integrated and politically secured citizenship. They also resembled conditions that had been generated by the imperial powers in their colonial possessions.

Arendt's analysis of modern imperialism investigates the parallels between the impact of empire on the subjugated peoples and the impact of total war on the peoples of the imperial powers. Moreover, it targets modern imperialism's idealisation of 'power', which went hand in hand with the instrumentalization of violence. In other words violence, rather than serving the ends of law and its enforcement, 'turns into a destructive principle that will not stop until there is nothing left to violate' (ibid.: 137). If we recall, for Arendt violence and force are antithetical to her concept of power, which she defines as the acting and speaking together of the citizenry. In Europe's imperial domain, however, the 'power export' mobilised the state's instruments of violence, the police and the army, which were liberated from the control and constraints imposed by national institutions, becoming themselves 'national representatives' in undeveloped countries (ibid.: 136). Therefore, at the outset of the imperialist adventure, institutions that performed constitutionally proscribed and prescribed functions in Western societies were deprived of their proper function and invested with enormous sovereign powers. Restricted to the realm of empire, these developments were destructive enough, since the logic of unlimited expansion forestalls the establishment of enduring and stabilising political structures, and 'its logical consequence is the destruction of all living communities, those of the conquered peoples as well as of the people at home' (ibid.: 137). Still, in the

relatively short life span of the European empires, the national institutions of the imperial states, though corrupted by empire, withstood its corrosive effects. The same cannot be said of their totalitarian successors. In their expansionary phases, both Germany and the Soviet Union

... dissolved and destroyed all politically stabilized structures, their own as well as those of other peoples. The mere export of [imperialist] violence made the servants into masters without giving them the master's prerogative: the possible creation of something new. Monopolistic concentration and tremendous accumulation of violence at home made the servants [of totalitarianism] active agents in the destruction, until finally totalitarian expansion became a nation- and people-destroying force. (ibid.: 138)

Whereas European imperialism legitimated the violent excesses of an anti-political conception of power reduced to a function of political domination, totalitarianism eliminated the political institutions which control the exercise of power, and which are intended to serve the political community.

Arendt's analysis of imperialism's pre-totalitarian power principle is complemented by a novel interpretation of what she terms 'race-thinking', whose key elements are traceable to various strands of eighteenth century European thought, but whose emergence during the nineteenth century brought it into conflict with the competing ideologies of 'class-thinking'. These two dominant strains of political thought now competed for dominance in the collective consciousness of European peoples. Around the time of the 'Scramble for Africa', following the Berlin conference of 1884, race-thinking flourished as a corollary of imperialistic policies. Arendt cites Count Arthur de Gobineau as the most important progenitor of all modern race theories. His 'frankly ridiculous' doctrine is described as the product of a 'frustrated nobleman and romantic intellectual'. But for all that Gobineau may have 'invented racism almost by accident' (ibid.: 172), his ideas proved particularly influential fifty years after their formulation, in 1853 – at a time, that is, when European dominance of the globe was at its height. Gobineau's 'doctrine of decay' was never biological in the manner of Nazi racism, since it posited that mere acceptance of the ideology of race was proof positive that an individual was 'well-bred'. Nonetheless, it inspired a generation of European intellectuals, amongst whom may be counted very respectable figures indeed. Arendt's point, however, is that Gobinism's amalgamation of race and 'elite' concepts energised 'the inherent irresponsibility of romantic opinions',

since it resonated with the latter's preoccupation with the 'self' and the romantic yearning to impart 'inner experiences' with universal 'historical significance' (ibid.: 175).

Joseph Arthur de Gobineau

Race-thinking

In re-functionalising pre-modern 'race-thinking', National Socialism installed 'a race of princes' as the subjects of this history – a substitute aristocracy, the Aryans, whose function was to rescue society from the levelling effects of democracy. Conceived in these social terms, Gobinism, though distinct from Nazism's biological racism, appealed to turn-of-the-century intellectuals preoccupied with the problem of *decadence* and overwhelmed by a pessimistic mood that revolved around the notion of the inevitable decline of Western civilisation. Gobineau's ideas would also find considerable resonance in a later generation of Germans, whose trauma of despair in the wake of the Great War gradually made way for a radical ideology of redemption, which adopted Gobineau's category of race and adapted it to the biological 'necessities' underpinning an ideology of 'racial hygiene'. For this generation of racial thinkers, the logic of purity henceforth demanded that the pure be rescued, that the impure must be destroyed as a matter of course, thereby actually setting in motion 'the "inevitable" decay of mankind in a supreme effort to destroy it' (ibid.: 173).

For race-thinking to make the transition to racism, and thence to becoming a fully-fledged ideology in Arendt's sense, the preoccupations of nineteenth century romantics and intellectual adventurers underwent, firstly, a political marriage of convenience with imperialistic policies and, secondly, were seized upon by '"scientific" preachers':

For an ideology differs from a simple opinion in that it claims to possess either the

key to history, or the solution for all the 'riddles of the universe', or the intimate knowledge of the hidden universal laws which are supposed to rule nature and man. (ibid.: 159)

Ideologies in this sense are not theoretical doctrines but come into existence and are perpetuated as a 'political weapon'. Their 'scientific aspect' serves as a foil for the spurious basis of supposedly infallible arguments, whose great power of persuasion derives from their logical construction. None of the nineteenth century ideologies, Arendt argues, were predestined to triumph over the others. Instead, they coexisted as a matter of course in the liberal polity, some gaining prominence with unfolding events such as the 'Scramble for Africa', others emerging as fully fledged ideologies in the wake of the Bolshevik Revolution and the First World War. Arendt nonetheless acknowledges the predominance in early twentieth century Europe of the secular ideas of 'race' and 'class', whose ascendancy was a function of their appeal to the experiences and desires of the masses engaged in or affected by political conflicts between Europe's nation-states and amongst its social classes. These ideologies thus enjoyed the advantage that they resonated with existing social and political realities, predating and preceding the adoption by the totalitarian movements of the ideas of race and class as the mobilising and organising principles of their revolutionary movements (ibid.: 159, 160).

Arendt's extensive analysis of race-thinking and racism, like her treatment of colonialism and imperialism, targets the political dimension and impact that modes of thought, immersed in the historical experiences of conquering and dominating, being conquered and being dominated, were to have on post-war Europe. To the extent that race-thinking was an historical adjunct to European imperialism, it had already become politicised, although none of the imperial powers had adopted the notion of racial domination itself as a core value of the national political culture of their countries. Still, Arendt argues that the destructive potential of these ideologies was prefigured in the thinking of the modern imperialists and in the mentality of the imperial elites and bureaucratic foot-soldiers. Arendt views the injunction 'exterminate the brutes' as more than a literary device, whereas Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* conveys the brutish mentality of the times, which was put to devastating effect in 'the most terrible massacres in recent history'. Particularly Germany's African domain and the Belgian Congo were the scenes of 'wild murdering' and decimation. Ignorant

settlers and brutal adventurers responded ruthlessly to a humanity that 'so frightened and humiliated the immigrants that they no longer cared to belong to the same human species' (ibid.: 185). Racism and bureaucracy developed on parallel tracks, and they converged in the practice of 'administrative massacres'.

The key factor here is that race-thinking and racism fulfilled a legitimating function vis-à-vis imperial policy without of its own accord generating new conflicts or producing 'new categories of political thinking' (ibid.: 183). In Arendt's view, even champions of the 'race' idea, such as Gobineau and Disraeli, were ill-equipped to fathom the true significance of the novel experiences of European settlers, whose 'brutal deeds and active bestiality' were neither acknowledged nor understood, but which nonetheless had a pernicious effect on the European body politic (ibid.: 183). Race-thinking and racism were home-grown European ideologies, yet they gathered an 'unexpected virulence' in the context of colonial policy, and the conflicts between the colonial powers, for whom the lives of the indigenous populations counted as little more than expendable labour power. In other words, 'an abyss' had opened up 'between men of brilliant and facile conceptions and men of brutal deeds and active bestiality which no intellectual explanation is able to bridge' (ibid.). Viewed as a justification rather than as a principle of political action, race-thinking did not become the driving force of European imperialism during the nineteenth century. Still, whether defined culturally, linguistically, geographically, or biologically, once a particular race seized upon racial domination as the organising principle of its national polity there was no predicting the inherent force of its destructiveness. In this sense, 'class-thinking' was a variation on the theme of radical identity politics, and following the Bolshevik Revolution the idea of class made its transition from a Marxist critique of relations of class domination to a policy of exterminating so-called counter-revolutionary classes.

The gradual substitution of race for nation was set in motion during the late imperial era. Conversely, the advent of modern bureaucracy as a substitute for government shattered the constraints against power accumulation that had been put in place by a liberal regime of limited government (ibid.: 186). In other words, modern bureaucracy revolutionised the state, expanding its reach and ability to control society (and colonies) in ways not envisaged by the proponents of the modern European nation-state. When applied to Europe's imperial domain, a regime of 'aimless process' (ibid.: 216) provided the colonial administrator with

an effective device for instilling order, without having to resort to the customary homeland practice of enforcing the rule of law. Once the enormous power potential of an administrative regime was freed of legal constraints and was placed in the hands of colonial administrators, a limitless horizon of administrative decrees replaced the customary legal and institutional constraints that form the basis of all forms of civilised government. This was a new experience for modern man, one that introduced into politics the 'superstition of a possible and magic identification of man with the forces of history' (ibid.). 'The law of expansion', the boundless terrain of imperialistic ambition, and the belief that the realisation of empire entailed entry into 'the stream of historical necessity' – of being 'embraced and driven by some big movement' (ibid.: 220) – promoted a new sense and intoxication with serving a power greater than oneself. Arendt quotes revealing passages from T. E. Lawrence, who at the end of his career seemed as uncomprehending of his true 'function' as he was desolate in its absence (ibid.: 218-21).[14]

Still, in Arendt's view, even this archetype of the modern adventurer 'had not yet been seized by the fanaticism of an ideology of movement' (ibid.: 220), although he did seem to believe that he was an instrument of 'historical necessity' – a functionary of secret forces prevailing in the world independent of human will or design. Although Lawrence was very much a product of his era, for Arendt he also represents a transitional figure, whose willing participation in a cause transcending individual interest and purpose heralded a later generation of adventurers thrown into prominence by the First World War. In the wake of Europe's disaster, novel political movements emerged armed with both fully fledged ideologies and forms of bureaucratic organisation that would prove more destructive than anything produced by Europe's imperialist ambitions. The power potential of these new entities resided in their discovery that ideologies become 'political weapons' in the hands of totalitarian movements. The Bolshevik Revolution was of particular significance in this regard, since it manifested, for the first time, the new power structure of a modern revolutionary dictatorship, which although pre-totalitarian in Arendt's sense, saw ideology assume the role once played by 'opinion' and 'interest' in the handling of public affairs. Ideologies in their totalitarian forms are by definition impervious to the 'undetermined infinity of forms of living-together' (ibid.: 443). Arendt contends that what the Soviet Union lacked under Lenin was a leadership devoted, as a matter of principle, to a policy of mass terror (see especially ibid.: 305-23, 379-80). The

levelling and equalising force of totalitarian terror targets individuality, plurality, natality, spontaneity, and freedom – our distinctly human traits – reordering human relations in accordance with the ideological imperatives of 'total domination'. A philosophical term which is commonly misunderstood in the secondary literature as suggesting an idealistic conception of 'total power', 'total domination' constitutes the touchstone of Arendt's theory of totalitarianism and the mirror image of her post-*Origins* theorisation of action and politics. Ideology and terror constitute complementary devices in the hands of totalitarian movements, which always seek to fabricate 'something that does not exist, namely, a kind of human species resembling other animal species' (ibid.: 438). In other words, the complex relation between ideology and terror goes to the heart of Arendt's account of 'the *event* of totalitarian domination itself' (ibid.: 405). I will explore the important relation between ideology and terror below. Firstly, however, I would like to make certain preliminary observations about Arendt's reasons for emphasising the 'function', rather than the distinct contents of various totalitarian ideologies, for one of the most persistent criticisms of Arendt's theory of totalitarianism is that she disregards the important differences, notably, between the Nazi and Stalinist ideologies.

Ideology: Eliding the great left-right divide
Arendt's analysis of ideology in Origins engages with the complex interplay between nineteenth century European anti-Semitism, race-thinking and imperialism, a perspective that has attracted the charge of 'Eurocentrism'. The broadly European context of Origins is a function of its historical and theoretical subject matter, rather than evidence either of historical bias or of an indifference to the violence wrought on non-European societies. For better or worse, Europe's global hegemony was a fact of its imperial reach and economic power. Arendt emphasises throughout that modern European imperialism was distinct from both classical empire building and assimilationist conquest. Instead, the European powers subjected conquered territories and peoples to a novel form of colonial administration, that was quite distinct from, and subordinate to, the domestic institutions of the imperial powers (Arendt 1979: 130-2). Arendt's analysis of European 'colonial imperialism' thus weaves a complex tale of some of the key trends and events in European history that were coincident with the disintegration of the nation-state, a process that contained within itself 'nearly all the elements necessary for the subsequent rise of the totalitarian movements and governments' (ibid.: xxi). The argument mounted by some critics, that Arendt's

extensive analysis of anti-Semitism points to an imbalance between her analyses of Nazism and Stalinism overlooks an underlying strategy of Arendt's book, for what she is attempting to do is to chart the transformation of nineteenth century ideologies into fully-fledged totalitarian ideologies. Having brutally suppressed its imperial domain and twice unleashed world war it is, Arendt argues, precisely in Europe that 'a new political principle' was most urgently to be sought, one that would complement a 'new law on earth, whose validity this time must comprehend the whole of humanity' (ibid.: ix).

Against this historical and theoretical backdrop, the third and final part of *Origins* takes up the question of totalitarianism *per se*. The whole question of totalitarianism seems first to be intimated in Arendt's essays of 1944, at a time when Germany's military defeat was a foregone conclusion, whereas the full extent of its mass crimes remained hidden. Moreover, whereas Arendt's focus shifted to the Soviet Union in the early stages of the Cold War, this was true of most observers and theorists, irrespective of their political views and ideological biases. While many Western Marxists earnestly debated Stalin's putative Marxist credentials, Arendt was more interested in what the Stalinist dictatorship was actually doing rather than what it said it was doing. With the benefit of hindsight, it is indeed striking that very few Western intellectuals were troubled by the relation between terror and ideology in the Stalinist system of government, which constituted the central focus of Arendt's analysis. The absence in *Origins* of a sustained analysis of the fraught relationship between Marx's thought and Stalin's totalitarian ideology is indicative of Arendt's view that Stalinism was not principally a problem for Marxist theory. Instead, she focuses on the perceived manifestation of a phenomenon with which Hitler had just acquainted Europe and much of the world. For a world at war was preoccupied with defeating the Nazi regime, of which far more was known, both during the war and throughout the entire post-war era, than with the sprawling Soviet behemoth. But even the Nazi terror enjoyed little attention from academics in the immediate post-war years, the energies of a few dedicated researchers notwithstanding. Although this phenomenon is not unrelated to the fragmentary evidence of the extermination machine that had once existed in occupied Europe, it cannot be wholly explained in these terms.

Arendt's concerns, then, were of an altogether different order than the polemics on either side of the post-war ideological divide. In her view, both the proponents

and critics of the Stalinist phenomenon failed to grasp the sheer novelty of Soviet totalitarianism and hence neither side in the ongoing controversy understood what was at stake, theoretically and politically, in the Cold War conflict. Debate especially in the Western academy revolved around the question of Stalin's Marxist credentials, whereas his regime of terror was more often than not hijacked for propaganda purposes. Arendt's approach was both more balanced and nuanced. On the one hand, she dismissed the notion of a direct line of descent between Marx's political thought and Stalinist totalitarianism. On the other hand, however, she acknowledged the Enlightenment inspiration of Bolshevik ideals, whilst nonetheless arguing that Lenin had perverted the ideals for which he had fought. This complex link between Lenin's ideals and Marx's thought and Lenin's construction of an apparatus of terror that was to be the defining feature of the Stalin years, is a major subtext of Arendt's post-*Origins* philosophical inquiry. In Arendt's view, the absence of any such link between Nazism and the Enlightenment was manifest. Moreover, she took to task all those commentators who equated Nazism and Fascism, for in her view they thereby grossly underestimated the novelty and virulence of Hitler's ideology and system of rule. *Origins* owes much of its emphasis upon Nazism to this concern, which also entailed refuting a direct line of descent between Europe's history of Church-inspired anti-Semitism and Nazi race ideology – an approach that earned Arendt quite a number of enemies. If the Dreyfus affair in late nineteenth century France affirmed the potential that Jew-hatred held as the motor of annihilation, that potential was actualised only once a totalitarian movement had seized upon biological racism as the organising concept of its ideology.

Arendt's totalitarianism thesis has been targeted most especially by those writing in the Marxist tradition. In my view, the reasons for this are not difficult to fathom. Those loyal to the Bolshevik revolutionary project were forced either to abandon their revolutionary ideals to the Stalinist involution, or to concede that the revolution had failed. Since Arendt clearly viewed the Bolshevik Revolution as a failure, her critics were wont to dismiss her views as indicative of her ignorance of Soviet politics and history at best. Arendt was neither a historian nor a specialist in Russian history. Nevertheless, Arendt makes a convincing case for a comparative analysis of the Nazi and Stalinist totalitarianism, even if it would be more than a generation before many of her erstwhile critics would grudgingly (and as we shall see in the next chapter, also often unwittingly) concede that she had grasped the essential dynamic of Stalinist rule. *Origins*, therefore, is not a

work of history, but a study of the nature of totalitarian ideologies, the emergence of totalitarian movements, and their transformation as governing parties. Only if we grasp her general approach does it become possible to integrate her arguments in the first two parts of *Origins* with the third part dealing with totalitarianism *per se*. In short, Arendt would like us to see that just as Hitler's biological racism constituted a fundamental break with nineteenth century anti-Semitism and race doctrines, Stalin cannot simply be viewed merely as consolidating Lenin's revolutionary dictatorship, but that he in fact radically transformed it. What I think is important here is the sense in which any 'idea', once seized upon by a totalitarian movement, becomes the basis not only of its ideology but also of its total reorganisation of society.

Arendt could not have known in detail the course of events in the Soviet Union any more than her Western colleagues did. Still, there was sufficient evidence of mass terror for any fair-minded observer to conclude that the self-image of the dictatorship was hardly an appropriate basis upon which to write history, still less to make judgements about the nature of Bolshevik rule. It also needs to be stressed that Arendt held a concept of totalitarian ideology that was not principally concerned with the 'content' of the ideology, but with its function within the totalitarian system of rule. Although ideologies are not unique to totalitarian regimes, they perform a very particular function.

Ideologies
Arendt defines ideologies as 'isms which to the satisfaction of their adherents can explain everything and every occurrence by deducing it from a single premise' (ibid.: 468). Although these 'isms' can be traced to the worldviews and ideologies of the nineteenth century, they are not in themselves totalitarian. Still, by force of historical events and social trends, racism and communism had come to dominate the ideological landscape of twentieth century Europe. Arendt argues that neither ideology was any more totalitarian than the many non-starters, which either lacked an appreciable following or did not possess a sufficient degree of popular resonance. Nonetheless, all ideologies have totalitarian 'elements' and become totalitarian only insofar as they are mobilised by a totalitarian movement and transformed into instruments of totalitarian domination (ibid.: 470). In their totalitarian forms, racism and communism became political weapons and devices of rule. Hence, Nazi

... race ideology was no longer a matter of mere opinion or argument or even

fanaticism, but constituted the actual living reality ... The Nazis, as distinguished from other racists, did not so much believe in the truth of racism as desire to change the world into a race reality. (Arendt 1954a: 351; emphasis added)

Similarly, Stalin transformed Lenin's dictatorship of a vanguard party into a terror regime targeting all social layers and remnants of classes that had survived the first decade of Bolshevik rule, therewith realising, 'albeit in an unexpected form, the ideological socialist belief about dying classes' (ibid.: 351). Seized by totalitarian movements as templates of a future perfect, ideological systems of belief are transformed into deductive principles of action. Whereas the axiomatic 'idea' underpinning these ideologies varies, in practice the 'ideas' of race or class perform the same organising and reductive function and are therefore virtually interchangeable. Of course historically the distinction between race- and class-thinking is of great relevance, determining, *inter alia*, the primary victims of the terror. Arendt acknowledges that Nazi ideology was historically unprecedented and perhaps also uniquely destructive insofar as it tended by its very nature to be genocidal. Stalin's terror, although more complex and ideologically fraught than the Nazi regime of terror, proved to be no less destructive for those reasons.

Les Adler and Thomas Patterson long ago challenged Arendt for 'avoiding' what they term

... the important distinction between one system proclaiming a humanistic ideology and failing to live up to its ideal and the other living up to its antihumanistic and destructive ideology only too well. (Adler and Paterson 1970: 1049)

In other words, the authors wish to stress the supposed Marxist pedigree of Stalin's ideology, an approach that has the no doubt unintended effect of impeaching Marx's philosophy rather than demonstrating the humanist content, or even intent, of Stalin's rather bloody path to enlightenment. Whereas these critics distinguish between two ostensibly unrelated systems of ideas, Arendt was more concerned to explain how it was that Stalin transformed Lenin's one-party dictatorship into a totalitarian dictatorship, and why Stalin's terror regime cannot be portrayed merely as a failure to live up to Bolshevik revolutionary ideals. In her view, the premise of all such argumentation – that Stalin somehow unleashed successive waves of terror in order to achieve humanist ideals – betrays an unwillingness to face up to the true nature of Stalin's rule.

Others, such as Robert Tucker, charge Arendt with misreading the apparent close relation between Stalinism and the general category of 'communist ideology'. Tucker acknowledges Arendt's concept of totalitarian ideology and concedes Arendt's view that the totalitarian dictator fulfils a largely functional role in the totalitarian regime, as the initiator and driving force behind the practice of totalitarian terror. Tucker nonetheless posits a category of the paranoid 'personality type' of the totalitarian dictator (Tucker 1965: 564), arguing that if Stalin's terror was a function of his 'paranoid personality',

... then the explanations of totalitarian terror in terms of functional requisites of totalitarianism as a system or a general ideological fanaticism in the ruling elite would appear to have been basically erroneous – a conclusion which derives further strength from the fact that the ruling elite in post-Stalin Russia remains committed to the Communist ideology. (ibid.: 571)

The problem with this interpretation is twofold. Firstly, Tucker implies a degree of continuity between the ruling elites under Stalin and during the post-Stalin era that is contradicted by the evidence of the decimation of Stalin's inner-circle immediately following his death. For Arendt, moreover, the 'ruling elite' in totalitarian dictatorships is not coterminous with the formal state or party hierarchies, but consists of the dictator's 'inner-circle' whose control of the levers of power is dependent on the unpredictable calculations of the Leader, who presides over a 'fluctuating hierarchy' that keeps 'the organisation in a state of fluidity' (Arendt 1979: 368, 369). The pecking-order within this inner-circle, as well as of the movement more generally, is determined by the dictator. It follows that any change of leadership would potentially dramatically alter the nature of the regime itself.

Secondly, Tucker does not define 'Communist ideology'; he merely argues that Stalin 'wove' his private vision of reality

... into the pre-existing Marxist-Leninist ideology during the show trials of 1936-1938, which for Stalin were a dramatization of his conspiracy view of Soviet and contemporary world history. The original party ideology was thus transformed according to Stalin's own dictates into the highly 'personalized' new version of Soviet ideology. (Tucker 1965: 568)

In other words, Tucker displaces the functions of total terror and ideology onto

the person of the dictator, who is after all the author of both. There is common ground here between Tucker and Arendt, but there is also a fundamental disagreement. Clearly any form of dictatorship is by definition highly 'personalised' and it is notoriously difficult to assess the impact on any given dictatorship of the personal motives and personality traits of the dictator. Tucker may well be right that 'paranoia' played an important role in both dictatorships. Still, we can no more think our way into Stalin's mind than we can into Hitler's. But we can examine the nature of their dictatorships and analyse the role played in both by formal state structures, ideology, terror, and so on. In other words, it would seem obvious that neither Hitler nor Stalin was 'rational', insofar as their political decisions were solely determined by their ideological preconceptions and 'paranoid' tendencies. Still, if 'paranoia' did play a key role in the mass crimes of their dictatorships, and even if it is a distinguishing criterion of totalitarian rule, the nature of a dictatorship is not simply an extension of the personality of the dictator.
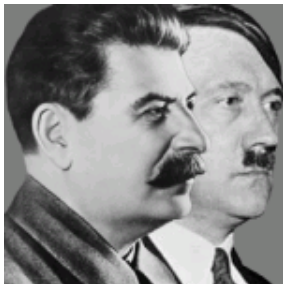
Stalin – Hitler

Revolutionary and totalitarian dictatorship
It falls to Tucker to explain the relevance of his observation of the post-Stalin regime's continued commitment to the 'Communist ideology', when he nonetheless adopts Arendt's distinction between Lenin's 'revolutionary dictatorship' and Stalin's 'totalitarian dictatorship' (ibid.: 556). Tucker, moreover, draws a distinction between 'dictatorial terror' and 'totalitarian terror' (ibid.: 561) and in an earlier article makes the same case for Stalin's organisational innovations, arguing that 'what we carelessly call "the Soviet political system" is best seen and analysed as a historical succession of political systems [Leninist, Stalinist, and post-Stalinist] within a broadly continuous *institutional* framework' (Tucker 1961b: 381; emphasis added). But if Stalin's dictatorship was both organisationally and ideologically distinct from both antecedent and successor regimes, moreover introducing 'totalitarian terror', the 'ruling elite's' 'continued'

commitment to 'Communist ideology' could only be interpreted as a renewed commitment to Marxist-Leninism, purged of Stalin's 'personalised' reworking of the 'pre-existing' doctrine and accompanied by the abandonment of his system of rule. To be clear on this point, it is not my intention here to refute Tucker's view that we need to better understand the personality type of the totalitarian dictator, if such a thing is possible. Nevertheless, Tucker cannot elevate the personality of the dictator, Stalin, to a position of primacy, argue that Stalinist ideology and terror were distinctively totalitarian, and simultaneously claim that the process of detotalitarianization following Stalin's death belies the continuity of the ruling elite's Communist ideology – without drawing the implicit conclusion. Either Stalin's personal rule was totalitarian, or it was not. Either post-Stalin Communist ideology was also Stalin's ideology, or it was not. In other words, either totalitarian rule came to a (virtual) end with the dictator's death, or it was never truly tied to the person of the dictator in the first place.**[xv]** Arendt consistently rejects the view that totalitarianism can be understood in terms merely of personalising the evil of the regime. This is particularly evident in her analysis of the novel organisational devices of totalitarian rule.**[xvi]** She nonetheless does insist upon the central role of the dictator in all totalitarian regimes, although she views Hitler and Stalin as a new breed of dictator. Moreover, she recognises the sheer force of will that drove these men along their chosen trajectories,**[xvii]** and her account does suggest that the regimes they created disintegrated upon their deaths. But we have only the Stalinist case as evidence of this, since Hitler's death coincided with Nazi Germany's total defeat and occupation.

If Arendt's concept of totalitarian ideology is often misinterpreted, nonetheless the mainstream anti-Marxist camp was never quite reconciled to the view that the Stalinist dictatorship faithfully reflected the project of emancipation that Marx, especially in his more youthful writings, had envisaged. Still, both sides to the Cold War dispute exploited Stalin's putative Marxist credentials for propaganda purposes. Western anti-Communist propaganda seized upon Stalin's supposed faithful adherence to Marxist doctrine as evidence that Marxism is inherently terroristic. Western Marxists, and especially adherents of the so-called 'New Left' during the 1960s, clung to the notion of a historically determined transition to true democracy. This indefinitely-postponed future provided a foil for challenging any attempt to critique the actually existing practices in the Soviet Union, which in the case of the Stalinist period were more often than not simply denied, and in subsequent years subjected to tortuous and inconclusive historical and doctrinal

debates. In that sense, writing in the late 1940s to early 1950s, Arendt was challenging an impregnable edifice of denial, itself a function of the circus going on in Washington at the time. Arendt rightly dismissed both sides as ideologically blinkered and intellectually dishonest, stressing not only that which was known about Stalin's terror but also his relation to the Marxist-Leninist tradition, to which he laid claim but to which he also did extreme violence. Marxism was an alibi rather than a basis of Stalin's political programme, and if he paid little more than lip service to the ideals of the Bolshevik revolutionary programme itself, there were few pre-war Western Marxists willing unambiguously and unconditionally to point this out, not least of all to themselves. Still, Arendt's central point was that the Nazi and Stalinist systems of government were comparable, and that their ideologies, although clearly distinct, were important not for their presumed content, but instead for their narrow political function. This is a view echoed, for example, by Martin Broszat who similarly argues that the comparative analysis of the National Socialist and Stalinist systems of government is theoretically justified, despite important differences between their societies and ideologies (Institut 1980: 35).

Arendt challenges the thesis of a continuity between Marx's thought and Stalin's ideology, whilst nonetheless highlighting the totalitarian elements of Marxism-Leninism that formed the basis of Stalinism, without collapsing the former into the latter. This was bound to be controversial. The purpose of this essay has been to stress Arendt's general approach rather than to provide an in-depth analysis of her controversial view that Stalin fundamentally transformed the system of government spawned by the Bolshevik Revolution. In the following section, I will analyse Arendt's even more controversial contention that rather than their content, totalitarian ideologies are principally distinguished by their function in the establishment of a regime of total domination.

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NOTES

i. Auschwitz and Majdanek were unique insofar as they also served as concentration and slave labour camps. Moreover, Auschwitz belonged to the largest industrial complex in all of occupied Europe, and it was composed of three main camps: the original concentration camp, Auschwitz I; Auschwitz II or

Birkenau, the largest of the camps and the centre of extermination; and Auschwitz III or Monowitz, which was a dedicated slave labour camp directly attached to the industrial installations. During the immediate post-war years, the dedicated extermination camps of the *Aktion Reinhard* programme – Treblinka, Sobibor and Belzec – were much less frequently mentioned. This was because they were comparatively small operations that were entirely dismantled prior to the Soviet invasion, and because very few inmates of these camps survived. Unlike Auschwitz, these camps were distinguished by their secret locations and the majority of their staff managed to escape arrest in the immediate post-war years. Nevertheless, the story of the belated acknowledgement of the existence of these camps is somewhat puzzling. For in 1942, reports in the English-language newspaper *Polish Fortnightly Review*, published by the Polish government-in-exile, repeatedly referred to these camps as 'extermination facilities'. Moreover, the exiled Polish government advised its Allied counterparts of the mass extermination of the Jews by no later than December 1942. Mass exterminations began later in Auschwitz than in the other dedicated death camps, whereas reports about 'Auschwitz' and 'Birkenau' during 1943 failed to register that these were two sub-camps of the greater Auschwitz complex. This link was first conclusively established in a June 1944 report of the Jewish Agency in Geneva, which cited eyewitness accounts by Rudi Vrba and Alfred Wetzlar, who had escaped from Auschwitz-Birkenau in April 1944. There were other, and earlier, first-hand accounts. Thus the Polish underground published the first book on Auschwitz, *Oboz Smierci* (Camp of Death), in 1942, prior to the commencement of mass killings, whereas throughout 1943 a steady stream of information about the camp's various activities was transmitted by the Polish resistance (Van Pelt 2002: 144-5).

ii. The charge that *Origins* fails to make an adequate case for the comparative analysis of Nazi and Stalinist totalitarianism will be dealt with in chapter five (see also De Mildt 1996; Browning 1995).

iii. As we have seen, *Origins* certainly was not, as Walter Laqueur claims, 'the first in the field', a claim made in the same paragraph in which he notes that 'during the previous decade others had pointed to the specific character of totalitarianism – Ernst Fraenkel and Franz Neumann, Waldemar Gurian and Franz Borkenau, Boris Souvarine, Rudolf Hilferding, and others, including Russian writers such as Georgi Fyodotov' (Laqueur 2001: 51).

iv. Arendt's post-war analysis characterises this murderous imperialistic impulse as a product of totalitarian rulers who typically 'consider the country where they

happened to seize power only the temporary headquarters of the international movement on the road to world conquest, that they reckon victories and defeats in terms of centuries or millennia, and that global interests always overrule the local interests of their own territory' (Arendt 1979: 411).

v. In view of the scope and complexity of Arendt's subject matter, it is indeed puzzling how Walter Laqueur could claim that 'what was new and ingenious in Arendt's book was not relevant to her topic – the long and far-fetched discourses on the Dreyfus trial and French anti-Semitism, on D'Israeli, Cecil Rhodes, Lawrence of Arabia, and British imperialism – for it was not in these countries that totalitarianism came to power' (Laqueur 2001: 51). The radicalising impact of the Dreyfus affair; the distinction between social and religious anti-Semitism and biological racism; the impact of imperialism on Europe's national states; and the mentality of figures such as Rhodes – he would 'colonise the planets' – all of these are irrelevant to the First World War that spawned Europe's inter-war radicalism and her ideologies of *Lebensraum* and world revolution?

vi. Having articulated this view in *Origins*, Arendt turned to a study of the 'Totalitarian Elements of Marxism', which she never completed, but whose themes were incorporated notably in *The Human Condition* and *On Revolution*, as well as in several important essays and lectures. At a time when it was quite unheard of in America, Arendt argued that Marxism is inextricably bound up with the chief tenets of Western political philosophy.

vii. Schmitt distinguishes between the ancient *polis* and the state proper, which emerged in sixteenth century Europe in the wake of the Renaissance, humanism, Reformation and counter-Reformation; a product of 'neutralising' and 'secularising' occidental rationalism on the one hand (Schmitt 1988a: 271; also Schmitt 1991: 19), and on the other monarchical absolutism, which centralised political power and forged a unified, post-feudal state (Schmitt 1978: 204). If we recall, Schmitt presents the key transitions in modern European history in schematic terms as a series of successive 'dominant spheres', corresponding to the progressive secularisation of the European state. Hence, the theology and metaphysics of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, respectively, was followed by the eighteenth century world of humanism and rationalism, which in turn gave way to the 'economism' characteristic of the nineteenth century (Schmitt 1993: 130-4). He argues that the secularisation of the public sphere coincided with both the triumph of the 'natural' sciences and the emergence of the liberal *Rechtstaat*, in the wake of the French Revolution. The secular institutions of the liberal state grew out of a popular yearning for a free realm of

public debate and exchange, which would underpin the state's political authority and inform its decision-making processes. However, two forces now emerged to undermine both the political neutrality of the state and the bourgeois social contract, which presupposed both the social and economic hegemony of the enfranchised and ideologically coherent middle classes and the relegation of social and economic questions to the depoliticised sphere of civil society. Thus, the division of labour, which was introduced by the process of industrialisation, was accompanied by the democratisation of society. The resulting social cleavages gave rise to extra-parliamentary corporate structures and associations, whose 'politicisation' undermined the sovereign political authority of the state (Schmitt 1928: 151-2). Thus, the classic liberal state was transformed into a weak, interventionist, quantitatively total state, whose role was restricted to mediating between society's organised interests and parties.

viii. Arendt's focus in the review is Western Europe. Nevertheless, she notes that 'all one party systems follow the basic pattern of "movements"' (Arendt 1946c: 209), an implicit reference to her characteristic distinction between totalitarian movements and totalitarian regimes. Whereas the Fascist, Bolshevik, and Nazi parties all constituted totalitarian movements, it was only under the rule of Hitler and Stalin that totalitarian rule finally took hold.

ix. Arendt's interest in Cecil Rhodes centred on his claim that 'I would annex the planets if I could' (Arendt 1979: 124), an ambition Arendt never doubted.

x. In the 1954 article 'Dream and Nightmare' Arendt notes Hitler's pre-war 'promise that he would liquidate Europe's obsolete nation-state system and build a united Europe' (Arendt 1954e: 417).

xi. In this post-war exchange with Eric Voegelin, Arendt introduces key themes of the 1958 work, *The Human Condition*. She argues that the plight of the modern masses revolves around the destruction of binding common interests that are the basis of human solidarity. Without this '*inter–est*' both bringing together and distinguishing them as individuals, the atomised masses fall prey to totalitarian 'consolidation'. Hence Arendt's view that that totalitarianism 'is identical with a much more radical liquidation of freedom as a political and as a human reality than anything we have ever witnessed before' (Arendt 1953c: 408).

xii. It is not clear how Heller would account for Soviet totalitarianism, which emerged in a society that could hardly have been described either as Western or 'modern', in Heller's sense of that term.

xiii. See Young-Bruehl's discussion of Waldemar Gurian and David Riesman's sense that *Origins* might imply 'the inevitability of totalitarianism' (Young-Bruehl

1982: 251).

xiv. Arendt's reflections on Cecil Rhodes and T. E. Lawrence draw on her interpretation Franz Kafka, whose interpretation of bureaucracy and the modern administrative regime influenced Arendt's notion of 'pre-totalitarian' rule and her understanding of the dynamics of modern mass movements (see e.g. Arendt 1979: 245; Arendt 1944a; see Danoff 2000).

xv. Different problems present themselves in another of Tucker's articles of 1961, in which he claims that Arendt never definitively distinguished the Leninist and Stalinist regimes, but instead implies that 'the communist political system, established by Lenin and the Bolshevik Party, *is what it became* after Stalin revolutionized it and transformed it into a Stalinist political system' (Tucker 1961a: 282). In fact, Arendt argues quite the contrary, rejecting a teleological interpretation of the Bolshevik Revolution as inherently totalitarian (see e.g. Arendt 1953e: 364-7). Her point, to put it in vulgar terms, is that Stalin needn't have happened, although he or someone like him would probably not have been elected Prime Minister of Britain (see Arendt 1979: 308).

xvi. See Arendt's incisive comparative description of Hitler's and Stalin's functions as 'the Leader' in relation to the organisational imperatives of their totalitarian movements (1979: 373-81).

xvii. See e.g. Arendt's analysis of *Hitler's Table Talk* (1951: 291-5).

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In September 2011, *Professor Anthony Court* of the College of Graduate Studies was awarded the UNISA Press, *Hidding Currie* prize for 2010. The Hidding Currie prize is awarded annually for academic or artistic work of the highest quality

which contributes to the understanding or development of the discipline. Professor Court's book, entitled *"Hannah Arendt's Response to the Crisis of Her Times"*, was published in 2008 by Rozenberg Publishers, Amsterdam, and republished by UNISA Press in 2009. The book appeared in the bi-national SAVUSA Series, which aims to publish scientific, yet broadly accessible texts on historical and contemporary issues.

Professor Court's interest in Hannah Arendt's political thought grew out of his undergraduate studies in political philosophy and international relations at Munich University's Geschwister Scholl Institute in the 1980s. During this period, there was a resurgent interest in Arendt's political thought generally and her theory of totalitarianism more particularly. The author notes that Arendt's novel contributions to twentieth century political thought resist easy categorisation. Nevertheless, in his view there are few thinkers in Western history who share Arendt's unwavering sense for the political. A central argument of the book is that Arendt's theory of totalitarianism and her theory of politics can be traced back to her personal experience of the twentieth century phenomenon of "total domination". Although much of Arendt's early writings consist of reflections upon the harrowing phenomena of Nazi and Stalinist totalitarianism, "total war" and genocide, Arendt's later works articulate a pluralistic theory of politics that is grounded in her concept of "natality". In Arendt's own words, new "beginnings" are without end, and each new beginning "is guaranteed by each new birth; it is indeed every man".

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Tiny Bouts Of Contentment. Rare Film Footage Of Graham Greene In The Belgian Congo, March 1959

Graham Greene in the Belgian Congo

My purpose in this contribution is to present and contextualize the only film footage ever recorded of the novelist Graham Greene (1904-1991) in the Belgian Congo in 1959. The footage was filmed with an 8mm camera, which did not record sound. It belongs to Mrs. Édith Lechat (*née* Dasnoy;1932-) and her husband, the leprosy specialist Doctor (later Professor) Michel Lechat (1927-2014).

From 1953 through 1960, Dr. Lechat was head of the leper hospital and colony of Iyonda, a village and mission station some 15 kms south of the city of Coquilhatville (now, Mbandaka) in central-western Congo. Greene stayed a number of weeks in Iyonda and other mission stations in the region in search of inspiration, a setting, and material for a new novel. The novel, *A Burnt-Out Case*, appeared in 1960, and was dedicated to Dr. Lechat. Greene occupied a room in the house of the missionary fathers in Iyonda, but spent long parts of his days with the doctor and his family. The film reached me through the hands of Édith Lechat, who had it transposed to a DVD-playable format, and via my friend

Hendrik (a.k.a., "Henri" or "Rik") Vanderslaghmolen (1921-), who was a missionary in the region at the time. As he was one of the only Belgian missionaries there with some knowledge of English, he often accompanied Graham Greene during his trips from one mission station to another. Rik Vanderslaghmolen and the Lechats are still close friends today.

Much of the information I offer below stems from conversations I had with both Rik Vanderslaghmolen and Édith Lechat in July and August 2013. Regrettably, Dr. Michel Lechat's poor health condition did not allow me to probe his memory, but an interview he gave for the Brussels-based weekly *The Bulletin* on the occasion of Greene's death in 1991 is available (Lechat 1991), as well as a closely similar talk he gave at the 2006 Graham Greene Festival in Berkhamsted, published in the *London Review of Books* in August 2007 (Lechat 2007). Édith Lechat has given me the kind permission to share the film with the readership of *Rozenberg Quarterly* and to add the necessary contextual information on both the historical situation and the contents of the film.

Graham Greene (right, 54 years old) with Dr Michel Lechat (31 years old) and Lechat's two first-born children, Marie and Laurent. Car park in front of the airfield of Coquilhatville, the Belgian Congo, 5 March 1959. Photo reproduced with permission from Edith Lechat.

Snippets of the film were used in a documentary the BBC produced on Graham Greene in 1993 (*The Graham Greene Trilogy*, by Donald Sturrock). Yet, the order

in which the documentary presented the snippets did not respect the original course of the film and they were, in any case, fragmentary. Also, neither the film bits nor the voice-overs in the documentary provided much information on Greene's stay in the Congo and his relation with the Belgian missionaries, but rather served to portray Greene's personality, i.e. to illustrate what some interviewees described as his tendency to falsely pretend happiness and gaiety while in reality being a sombre and depressed man, especially in those years. My contribution here is thus an opportunity to present, for the first time, the film in its full and unedited length, and to zoom in on the Congolese and missionary circumstances under which it was made.

Graham Greene's journey to the Belgian Congo took place in the beginning of 1959; to be precise, he arrived by plane in Leopoldville (now, Kinshasa) on 31 January and left that city again for Brazzaville on 7 March 1959. He was in Iyonda from 2 to 11 February and again from 26 February to 5 March, visiting other mission stations in between these two periods. The reason why some 35 years later Greene wrote that "In 1959 I spent about three months in and around the leper colony of Iyonda in the then Belgian Congo" (Greene in Hogarth 1986: 108) and why in the same way he mentioned "months" in an interview heard in part 2 of the BBC documentary, remains unclear. His stay in the Congo must have appeared much longer to him with hindsight than it had been in reality. Either way, in 1958 he had a rough idea for a book in mind, namely a stranger arriving in a leper colony run by a missionary order. When Greene was searching for a suitable leper colony in a remote place of the globe which he could visit to substantiate his technical knowledge of leprosy and where he could spend time with missionaries, a mutual Belgian friend told him about Michel Lechat and his work in the Congo (Lechat 1991, 2007). He wrote three letters to the doctor, who in turn discussed it with the missionary fathers of Iyonda and Coquilhatville, and his stay was arranged.

The missionary congregation in charge of Iyonda, Coquilhatville, and the other mission stations Greene visited during his Congo journey was the Belgian branch of the Catholic Missionaries of the Sacred Heart (*Missionnaires du Sacré-Coeur de Jésus*, MSC), which included among its members the famed specialists and guardians of the Mongo people, Edmond Boelaert (1899-1966) and Gustaaf Hulstaert (1900-1990), and which produced the proto-scholarly and socially committed journal *Æquatoria* (1937-1962), later succeeded by *Annales Æquatoria*

(1980-2009) (see Vinck 1987, 2012 and www.aequatoria.be for more details). The MSC missionaries and their bishop Mgr Hilaire Vermeiren (1889-1967) were particularly proud to receive the famous author, who had not only converted to Catholicism in his early twenties but some of whose books, such as *Brighton Rock*, *The Lawless Roads*, *The Power and the Glory*, *The Heart of the Matter*, and *The End of the Affair*, also developed profoundly Catholic themes.

Entrance to the Iyonda leprosery, with the missionary fathers' house on the left, where Greene was accommodated. The first part of the 8mm film was recorded on the loggia of this house. Photo reproduced with permission from R. Vanderslaghmolen.

During his stay in the Congo, Greene kept a diary in which he noted down daily observations, thoughts and conversations, and in which he tried out some characterizations and pieces of story for the novel: "I took advantage of the opportunity to talk aloud to myself, to record scraps of imaginary dialogue and incidents, some of which found their way into my novel, some of which were discarded" (Greene 1968 [1961]: 7). Afterwards, the diary was thoroughly proofread by Dr. Lechat, who did not only correct technical errors related to leprosy and leprosy treatment but also cleaned out quite some painful descriptions of real people and situations, before it was published, in 1961, under the title *In Search Of A Character: Congo Journal*. It contains the dates and locations of Greene's whereabouts, and mentions the various missionaries, colonials and other people he met on his way. In an article posthumously

published in *Annales Æquatoria*, Gustaaf Hulstaert identified each MSC missionary mentioned in the diary and also attempted to find clues in *A Burnt-Out Case* (Hulstaert 1994). Hulstaert ends his article with a defence of his fellow missionaries, most of whom Greene had depicted in not so favourable terms in the diary and, less explicitly identified, in the novel as well. Greene had found many of them, although kind and hospitable (see also his words in Hogarth 1986: 108), not widely educated, rather naive and infantile, easily amused by college types of humour and immature games, some of them cruel with animals, others lazy, and all of them occupied with all sorts of logistics, such as constructing buildings, running schools, laying in provisions, but not with the spiritual fundaments and higher goals of motivated Christianity.

One of the exceptions was the bishop, Mgr Vermeiren. Greene and Vermeiren seem to have shared the same perception of the priests; testament to this is what Vermeiren wrote to the MSC provincial superior in Belgium in 1957: "It is my impression that quite a number of our priests are not mature. For people holding university degrees, they sometimes behave so childishly" (letter to Jozef Van kerckhoven, 26 April 1957, MSC Archives). In his diary, Greene appreciates Vermeiren for being "a wonderfully handsome old man with an eighteenth-century manner – or perhaps the manner of an Edwardian boulevardier" (Greene 1968 [1961]: 26), and lauds his cultivation as well as his bravery and tenacity in the difficult years of decolonization (1968 [1961]: 40; see also Hulstaert 1989). In the many years of professional and friendship contacts I have had with members of the MSC, I have learned that priests and friars who worked under Vermeiren are in general less eulogistic about him, remembering him especially for his aloofness and sense for pomp and rank – a characterization which also surfaces in biographical sketches such as Van Hoorick (2004: 26). This discrepancy is indicative of Greene's general preference for patrician class and high-cultured milieus, and in any case suggests that his interpretive grid was considerably remote from the fathers', leading more than once to a misunderstanding or at least to a lack of connection. This want of mutual understanding and connection is also mentioned by Hulstaert (1994: 501-502) and was similarly reported to me by Rik Vanderslaghmolen and Édith Lechat.

One of the MSC missionaries working in the Congo was Martin (Adolf) Bormann Jr. (1930-2013), first-born son of Adolf Hitler's private secretary Martin Bormann, and Hitler's godson. Converted to Catholicism at the age of 17, he studied

theology and was ordained priest in 1958, in the Austrian-German branch of the MSC (MSC 1963: 255). He went to the Congo for the first time in May 1961, where he was assigned to the mission station of Mondombe, in the easternmost diocese of the MSC mission region, some 800 kms east of Iyonda and Coquilhatville. In 1964, fleeing the advancing Simba rebels, he lived for some days hidden in cassava fields, but was nonetheless caught (Bormann 1965, 1996). In November 1964, he was freed by Belgian paratroopers and repatriated to Europe. He went back to the Congo for a second term of one year in March 1966 and left priesthood in 1971. On 12 February 1959, the day when Greene arrives in the mission station of Bokuma, located some 70 kms northeast of Iyonda but still some 700 kms away from Mondombe, he writes "Incidentally Martin Bormann's son is somewhere here in the bush" (1968 [1961]: 44-45). However, in 1959 Bormann had not yet arrived in the Congo. An explanation for this confusing anachronism in Greene's diary is to be found in the fact that, as Édith Lechat and Rik Vanderslaghmolen reported to me, Martin Bormann's entrance in the congregation of the MSC and his being assigned to the missions in the Belgian Congo raised some dust among missionaries and colonials in the vicariate of Coquilhatville. In 1959, Bormann's anticipated arrival was, in fact, the talk of the town in Coquilhatville and depending mission stations. Greene must have picked up the news and misinterpreted it, believing Bormann had already arrived.

A Burnt-Out Case is set in a leprosery in the Belgian Congo and has as one of its protagonists a Belgian doctor (Dr. Colin), head of the leprosery, who, moreover, works in close collaboration with a group of missionaries, whose personalities and characters conjure up the MSC missionaries Greene met during his journey. In his dedication of the novel to Dr. Lechat (Greene 1977 [1960]: 5), Greene insists that the leprosery in the novel is not literally the one in Iyonda, even if he may have copied "superficial characteristics" from it. He also avers that Dr. Colin is not Dr. Lechat: apart from the fact that he has the same experience of leprosy, the character is in "nothing else" based on him. As far as the missionaries are concerned, Greene admits that he gave the Superior of the mission station to which the leprosery is attached in the novel, the same habit of smoking one cheroot after the other and of spilling ashes on everything and everyone in his vicinity as he had seen the Superior in Iyonda, Pierre Wynants (1914-1978), do. Also, Greene says the river boat on which the main character Querry, and later Parkinson, travel to and from the leprosery is inspired by the steamer which Mgr Vermeiren had put at his disposal in 1959 and on which he was often

accompanied by Rik Vanderslaghmolen. But apart from that, Greene insists, none of the central characters is based on any particular person he had met in the Congo, and the novel "is not a *roman à clef*, but an attempt to give dramatic expression to various types of belief, half-belief, and non-belief, in the kind of setting, removed from world-politics and household-preoccupation, where such differences are felt acutely and find expression" (Greene 1977 [1960]: 5). Yet, however much I agree that reading *A Burnt-Out Case* as a *roman à clef* would severely miss the author's point and defeat the purpose of the artistic experience, there do seem to be closer resemblances than Greene admits.

The river steamer Theresita, property of the MSC missionaries in the Congo and used by Graham Greene in 1959 to move from one mission station to another. Photo reproduced with permission from R. Vanderslaghmolen.

First of all, much like Greene, Querry, too, defends himself against allegations, from Marie, that the story he is telling her would be an allegory of his past and that he would be the boy appearing in it. Querry retorts to her: "They always say a novelist chooses from his general experience of life, not from special facts" (Greene 1977 [1960]: 152). Greene could have spoken exactly the same words in defence of *A Burnt-Out Case*. Secondly, Querry displays the same lack of impatience with what he feels to be the priests' mediocrity as Greene shows in his

diary, and both Greene and Querry are sickened by the fondness for gratuitous game hunting of one particular missionary, who, moreover, is both in the novel and in real life the captain of the river steamer (real person: Georges Léonet, 1922-1974). Thirdly, the bishop in the novel is depicted as an aristocratic and highly refined gentleman. He is described as "an old-fashioned cavalier of the boulevards" (Greene 1977 [1960]: 64), which is no less than an immediate echo of the words "Edwardian boulevardier" Greene used in his diary to describe Mgr Vermeiren. What is more, the bishop in the novel is a fond player of bridge (1977 [1960]: 64). The diary does not make mention of Vermeiren's avid passion for this card game, but this passion is still legendary among MSC members today – not in the least Rik Vanderslaghmolen, who was often summoned to drive Mgr Vermeiren to outlying bridge venues. Fourth, in the same way as Greene is on record for having been a womanizer, drawing much of his success with the other sex from his fame (i.a., Shelden 1994), Querry, too, looks back on a life in which his status and celebrity as an artist-architect earned him considerable attention from women. Fifth, Greene was already world-famous before his departure to the Congo, and as the anticipation of too much attention annoyed him greatly, he travelled in the Congo under the pseudonym "Mr. Graham" (Lechat 1991, 2007). In the diary, Greene more than once noted down his irritation with admirers, mostly Belgian colonials, who in spite of his attempted anonymity managed to approach him to discuss literary matters or submit creative writings of their own to his appreciation and advice. Michel Lechat recounts the funny anecdote of how Greene, upon spotting from far an admirer driving in the direction of the leprosery, would run into the Lechats' house, jump out of the rear window of their bedroom, and run away into the forest (Lechat 1991, 2007). Querry, too, is an internationally renowned artist, whose success and praises have worn him out. In fact, the very reason for his leaving Europe and hiding away in the Congo is his self-unmasking as a second-rate artist and his related desire to vanish from sight. The nail in Querry's coffin is Mr. Rycker, Marie's husband and a Belgian colonial entrepreneur relentlessly exasperating Querry with tributes and references to his grand artistic achievements. Again, the resemblance between Querry and Greene is too striking to be left unnoticed. Lechat in fact also remembers a number of other anecdotes and actual situations that befell Greene in the Congo and that are almost literally lived by Querry in the novel (Lechat 1991, 2007). Decidedly, as the biographer Norman Sherry put it, "in describing [...] Querry, Greene is describing himself" (Sherry 2004: 194), and much more so than the novelist was prepared to recognize.

A Britain-based author of many novels set in tropical places, who goes to the Congo in order to find inspiration for a new book, travels the Congo river or its tributaries on a steamer, keeps a Congo diary in preparation of the book, and, in his literary creation, connects outer-world removal from all things familiar with inner-world self-confrontation, despair, and madness – one cannot help being reminded of Joseph Conrad and his *Heart of Darkness* and *An Outpost of Progress* (for Conrad's Congo diary see Najder 1978 and also Stengers 1992).

Evidently, in terms of writing style, no two authors could be more unlike than Greene and Conrad. Although both privilege themes of gloom, failure, and disillusion and even though they both gauge the characters' psychological and emotional states and changes (see also Stape 2007, among others, on Conrad's heritage in Greene' s work), Greene's style is much less oriented towards sensuality and sensation, is story-practical, and is above all narrative- and action-driven whereas Conrad's is description-based. Of more importance is the fact that, and the ways in which, Greene invokes Conrad on more than one occasion in his Congo diary. The diary entries reveal how heavily Conrad's shadow had been hanging over Greene since his first days as a novelist.

First of all, we find several appropriate but terse and spontaneous citations from *Heart of Darkness* in the diary*.* When contemplating Leopoldville, Greene briefly cites, without any identification of the self-evident source: ""And this also", said Marlow suddenly, "has been one of the dark places of the earth"" (Greene 1968 [1961]: 15). And when admiring the Congo river at Iyonda, he writes down "This has not changed since Conrad's day. 'An empty stream, a great silence, an impenetrable forest.'" (1968 [1961]: 18). We later on learn that Greene has found his Congo journey to be a perfect occasion to reread *Heart of Darkness.* In itself, this is not particularly noteworthy, as many a European has done the same when travelling to the Congo for the first time. What is of interest is that, on the day of 12 February 1959, Greene confesses that in 1932, i.e. at the age of 28 already, he had abandoned reading Conrad altogether, because it filled him with a strong sense of inferiority as a writer: "Reading Conrad – the volume called *Youth* for the sake of *The Heart of Darkness* – the first time since I abandoned him about 1932 because his influence on me was too great and too disastrous. The heavy hypnotic style falls around me again, and I am aware of the poverty of my own" (1968 [1961]: 42).

At that young age, Greene thus stopped reading Conrad – "that blasted Pole [who]

makes me green with envy", as he once referred to him (Keulks 2006: 466) – in order to avoid the risk of being too much influenced by him. Could this be where we have to find the origins of Greene's strongly opposite writing style, a style he developed in reaction to Conrad's, which he held in great awe and at the same time considered unattainable? Édith Lechat recalls how she and her husband once mentioned their great keenness for Conrad in a conversation with Greene, and how his reaction was unusually evasive and crabby. So crabby that the three never raised the subject Conrad again. Fascinatingly, a bit later, when he has progressed further in the book, Greene makes a new assessment of the novel as compared to his reading of it in his twenties: "Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* still a fine story, but its faults show now. The language too inflated for the situation. Kurtz never comes really alive. [...] And how often he compares something concrete to something abstract. Is this a trick that I have caught?" (Greene 1968 [1961]: 44). Whether one agrees with Greene's appreciation or not (at least as far as Kurtz is concerned, I do), what we seem to be witnessing here is a moment later in Greene's life at which he overcomes his self-degrading veneration of Conrad. The 54-year old, mature Greene, now rereading *Heart of Darkness* "as a sort of exorcism" (Lechat 1991: 16), has found faults in Conrad's characterizations and has discovered a stylistic trick he believes he was overusing. These demystifying discoveries seem to enable Greene for the first time in his life to step out of Conrad's overpowering shadow, to free himself from the burden of his inescapable ubiquity, now undone.

http://rozenbergquarterly.com/wp-content/uploads/201 3/09/GG_titles_08092013_25MB.mp4
8mm film of Graham Greene in Iyonda, the Belgian Congo, 5 March, 1959. Reproduced with permission from Edith Lechat and Rik Vanderslaghmolen.
Click video to play. Click lower right corner of video to enter full screen. Press "escape" to exit full screen. Note: We are aware of an issue with this video in some internet browsers and are working on a solution.

The camera for this 8mm film was held by Father Paul Van Molle (1911-1969), the later superior of the Iyonda mission and leper colony. Greene mentions Father Paul only once, and briefly, in his diary, namely on 10 February, when receiving a haircut from him (1968 [1961]: 38). Greene himself does not mention or allude to the filming in his diary in any way. On the basis of a series of clues, Édith Lechat has been able to reconstruct that the filming took place in the morning and at

lunch time of Greene's last day at Iyonda, namely Thursday 5 March 1959. Later in the afternoon, the Lechat family would drive Graham Greene to the airfield of Coquilhatville, where he was to board a plane to Leopoldville. With Greene's departure imminent, Father Paul realized the fathers and the Lechat family had not yet captured his presence among them on film, and therefore hastened to do so.

The film as shown here was not edited: all 'cuts' are moments at which Paul Van Molle switched the camera off and on again. The film, 4 minutes and 40 seconds in length, can be said to consist of two main parts, each filmed at a different time of the day and at a different location in Iyonda. The first part, running until 2'19", is shot in the morning time on the loggia, named *barza* in Belgian colonial parlance, of the fathers' house, where Greene was accommodated (see also photo of Iyonda above). The second part, running from 2'23" until the end, is an hour or two later, i.e. at lunch time, in the Lechat house, which was a few hundred meters away from the fathers' house. On 27 February, Greene writes that "I no longer bother to go to the Congo [river] to read" (1968 [1961]: 66), a habit he used to entertain during his first stay in Iyonda from 2 to 11 February. The first twelve seconds of the film show Greene stretched out in a deck chair on the fathers' *barza* reading a book, which according to the diary must be Belloc's Catholic testimony *The Path to Rome* (1968 [1961]: 76). The fact that he is doing his daily reading there, and not on the banks of the Congo river, confirms that the film was recorded during Greene's second stay in Iyonda.

The other details of the first part of the film are as follows. After 0'12", we see that Greene has put the book aside and is engaged in a conversation with whom we discover a bit later to be Édith Lechat, then 27 years old, standing on the edge of the *barza*. Shortly after that, Father Rik Vanderslaghmolen, aged 38, joins in from behind Greene. As I mentioned above, Rik was one of Greene's main escorts during his Congo journey, and in that capacity his name reappears quite frequently in the diary. At the time of Greene's visit, Vanderslaghmolen was on leave in Iyonda to recover from illness (see also Hulstaert 1994: 498). Both the film and the diary show a Vanderslaghmolen as his family, confreres, and friends, including myself, know him best, namely as a frolicsome practical joker, an impish leg-puller, an ever good-humoured, jesting entertainer. As the three are having an amicable, relaxed conversation, Greene remaining seated, the zoom is close enough for an experienced lip reader to decipher what Greene is saying, probably

in (broken) French, the language in which he habitually conversed with Édith Lechat (whereas he mostly used English with her husband). From 0'32" through 0'39", Greene is entertained by the Lechat children, Marie (4.5 years old) and, on his little tricycle, Laurent (2.5). Then, from 0'39" to 0'45", Greene is filmed holding a camera to photograph the cameraman, Rik stepping in and whimsically hindering Greene from looking into the camera viewer. After that (0'46" – 0'58"), Greene and Rik are larking about, Rik blocking the door of the house to prevent Greene, clutching his inseparable whisky flask, from coming in. In the following bit, until 1'13", we first see Greene with Édith Lechat, lighting a cigarette, and her two children, immediately followed by Rik and Greene sillily engaged in a mock waltz, a stunt clearly triggered by the filming occasion. Next (1'13" – 1'20"), Rik amuses his company by trying to squeeze his lofty body into little Laurent's tricycle. After Greene picks up his book and glasses and regains his deck chair, and Édith Lechat, following her daughter, leans through a window of the fathers' house to have a conversation with someone inside, Dr. Lechat has joined the company and a chat ensues between the three (until 2'19"), Greene still seated, Michel and Édith Lechat standing. Michel Lechat's and Greene's gazes (1'56" – 1'59") reveal a light, good-hearted annoyance with the camera's intrusion.

The second part of the footage is shot in the house of the Lechats, showing Greene with the Lechat family at lunch, assisted by their Congolese servant Mongu Henri (year of birth unknown). This takes place only a few hours after the morning scene at the fathers' house. It can be noticed, however, that Greene has changed shirts, possibly in anticipation of his flight to Leopoldville (notice that it is the same shirt as in the photo above, taken in the car park at the Coquilhatville airfield). Gazes into the lens and nervous laughter make it clear that the company, although trying to behave naturally, remain acutely aware of the camera's presence during the entirety of the meal. My poor lip reading skills aside, I venture to say that at 3'36" – 3'38", Mrs. Lechat, slightly embarrassed, addresses the cameraman with the words*"Père Paul, arrête! Arrête de filmer, s'il te plaît!"* ("Father Paul, stop! Stop filming, please!"). Between 3'16" and 3'20", we witness Dr. Lechat repairing his photo camera, the same camera with which, a few hours later, his wife would take the picture in the airfield car park.

The second half of the 1950s was one of the darkest periods in Greene's life, specifically after the break-up with his mistress Catherine Walston (i.a., Shelden 1994; Sherry 2004; R. Greene 2008). His manic depression reached the most

severe point he had experienced until then, he self-reported to feel chronically miserable, even to have turned into a misanthrope. In the BBC documentary, relations and friends of Graham Greene's narrate how he was an absolute master in masking away this gloominess and dejection, concealing it under the exact opposite – merriment, smiles, superficial gaiety. Appearing in off-screen voice, his wife Vivien Greene explains that: "I've discovered, and I'm sure I'm right, that people who are great on practical jokes are very unhappy. And I think it was when Graham was most unhappy that he started all these practical jokes. [...] It was I'm quite sure when he was most deeply unhappy that he had this spell of practical joking, which people think of as high spirits but I don't think it is." Her off-screen voice is heard over (very short) bits of images showing Graham Greene dancing around with Rik Vanderslaghmolen on the fathers' *barza* and looking happily entertained at lunch with the Lechat family. The message of the documentary makers is clear: Greene's gaiety and insouciance visible on the Congo footage are make-believe, a shallow pose that when scratched away reveals a deeper, lurking despondency. I do not wish entirely to refute this analysis, but at the same time would like to invoke the album, also mentioned above, that the graphic artist Paul Hogarth made on the locations appearing as settings in Greene's novels (Hogarth 1986).

In commentaries Greene added to Hogarth's paintings in this album, the novelist remembered his time in Iyonda as not particularly gloomy: "It was not a depressing experience. [...] Most of my memories of the *léproserie* are happy ones – the kindness of the fathers and friendship of Dr. Lechat to whom the book is dedicated" (Greene in Hogarth 1986: 108-112). Certainly, the late 1950s were dark, dismal years in Graham Greene's life, and to be sure the writing of *A Burnt-Out Case* constituted a terrible artistic ordeal for him – as he put it: "What was depressing was writing the novel and having to live for two years with a character like Querry. I thought it would be my last novel" (Greene in Hogarth 1986: 108). But perhaps the time he spent in the Congo with Dr. and Mrs. Lechat and with the fathers, among whom the comic and generous teaser Rik Vanderslaghmolen, who according to Édith Lechat was "the only person really capable of making Graham Greene laugh and have fun", triggered off tiny bouts of contentment in Greene's tormented soul. A contentment surely initiated from the outside, and maybe ephemeral and fleeting, but nonetheless momentarily highly efficacious.

Acknowledgments

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See also: http://grahamgreenebt.org/

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