

Totalitarianism: Hitler and Stalin

Stalin's Soviet Union was totalitarian in that free speech and dissent was *controlled* and *punished*. Power was maintained *physically*. FEAR.

Hitler's Germany was totalitarian in that free speech and dissent was *precluded*. Power was maintained *psychologically*. LOVE.

Nazism *produced* a specific type of "individual" and *constructed* a specific type of identity.

In a totalitarian society, the individual possesses no natural rights that the state must respect.

Stalin will confiscate private property in order to redistribute it (communism), while Hitler will forbid contraception and abortion (fascism).

Weimar Germany

In the 1920s, Germany suffered from inflation and it failed to pay its war reparations required under the Treaty of Versailles.

In response, France occupied the Ruhr Valley (an industrial region) in order to force Germany to pay its war reparations.

Ultimately, the payment plan for the war reparations was allowed to fluctuate based on the health of the German economy due to the Dawes Plan.

The Weimar government remained divided between Social Democrats, Liberals, and Conservatives over how to rebuild the economy.

Extremist political parties such as the Nazis continued to grow due to the social and political anxieties produced by the poor economy, particularly after 1929.

Hitler's Rise to Power

The President of Germany, Paul von Hindenburg, was a Conservative. The traditional conservatives did not like the Nazis, but they wanted to cooperate with the Nazis in order to gain Nazi voters and avoid the spread of communism. Hindenburg, as President, was responsible for appointing the Chancellor (leader of the legislature). Hitler wanted to be appointed Chancellor in exchange for Nazi support, but Hindenburg initially refused. Ultimately, Hindenburg appointed Hitler Chancellor on January 30, 1933 in order to gain Nazi support and hopefully control the rising star.

Fictional Fascist United States

Pretend that it is 2016 and Jeb Bush is favored to win the presidential election, but he needs the support of the Tea Party so he nominates Ted Cruz as his Vice President (President of the Senate) with the intention of gaining Tea Party supporters and controlling a potential political rival (Cruz). Bush's advisers support such a move in order to avoid a scenario where the Tea Party actually replaces the Republicans as the main opposition party to the Democrats (those culturally deprived, un-American socialists!)

Once Hitler became Chancellor in 1933 he consolidated his power by removing rivals within the Nazi Party and placing Nazis in leadership positions within the police force. On February 27 a fire broke out in the Reichstag and Hitler blamed the event on communists. He used the “threat of communism” to suspend civil liberties and imprison people without trial. In March, the Reichstag passed the Enabling Act permitting Hitler to rule by decree (end to parliamentary democracy and constitutionalism).

It is now 2017, acts of domestic terrorism by violent environmentalists opposed to the Keystone XL result in Congress further suspending civil liberties in order to fight terrorism at home (renewed and expanded Patriot Act). Bush empowers the NSA to actively monitor all digital communication of persons suspected of sympathizing with radical environmental groups. A major financial crisis a few months later results in a stock market crash that wipes out savings and produces widespread unemployment, which leads to a rise in anti-immigrant violence. Cruz enthusiastically supports the growing Minutemen militias on the Texas and Arizona borders, while other right-wing Christian Nationalist militias continue to grow in the South and Mountain West.

In 1934, Hindenburg died and Hitler combined the offices of President and Chancellor. Hitler had the leadership of the Brownshirts (SA) murdered and replaced by loyal Nazis; and increased the power of the Protection Squads (SS). In effect, the SA and SS were the infrastructure of a new police state. Anti-Semitism, a major component of the Nazi political ideology, was quickly reflected in new legislation called the Nuremberg Laws of 1935, which excluded Jews from citizenship and civil liberties. In 1938, thousands of Jewish stores and synagogues were destroyed in the Night of Shattered Glass. During WWII, over 6 million Jews would die in concentration and death camps.

In June of 2018, Jeb Bush dies and Ted Cruz becomes President. ISIS successfully attacks Washington D.C. and Los Angeles. In response, Cruz combines the Minutemen and Christian Nationalist militias into a new domestic anti-terrorism defense force that is personally loyal to him and proceeds to promote a Christian Nationalist revival that will “restore” the United States to its founding values and contain the domestic threat of radical Islam. White Christians embrace his leadership and millions of gun-loving Christians enthusiastically enlist in the new defense force. The 2018 midterms result in Republican supermajorities in Congress. Cruz’s supporters believe that they are bringing about the “restoration” of America’s lost glory, united behind their belief in America’s unique destiny and their hatred of immigrants, Muslims, progressives, and homosexuals. Gays and lesbians are barred from teaching, adopting children, or voting. The EPA is abolished, labor unions are outlawed, contraception and abortion become illegal, and the federal income tax is reduced to 10% for all income levels. The border is militarized, immigration is permanently restricted, and Christianity is declared the official religion of the United States and prayer is restored to public schools.

Fictional Communist United States

In August of 2016, Barack Obama, through executive order, bans the sale or importation of assault weapons. Right-wing militias and many gun enthusiasts respond by stockpiling weapons and ultimately engage in armed standoffs with federal agents in dozens of states. President Obama then declares a national “state of emergency” and argues that the federal government must use force to suppress the “insurrection.” The National Guard is hesitant to use force against American citizens so the federal government uses drones to attack those who have organized to protect their rights. Elected officials and media personalities who openly support the “insurrectionists” are seen as “terrorist sympathizers” and are arbitrarily imprisoned under the PATRIOT Act (similar to treatment of Confederate sympathizers during Civil War).

Obama then creates a new Cyber-Security Bureau with the authority to monitor and censor the internet. Gradually, and without the people realizing it, alternative viewpoints are removed from the nation’s political discourse. Civil war breaks out between citizen militias and the federal government (similar to Paris Commune in 1871). Obama proposes that the 2016 election be cancelled in the name of national security and domestic order. The media, now censored, blames the civil unrest on extremists within the Republican Party, while the Democratic Party calls for new Congressional elections in 2017. The results are large majorities in each chamber for the Democrats. Their first act is to propose a constitutional amendment to overturn presidential term limits, which enables Obama to run for re-election. A special presidential election that year produces an overwhelming victory for Obama.

Fictional Communist United States

Congress then outlaws the Republican Party as an “insurrectionist” party that can no longer run candidates for office. With total one-party control, the Democrats pass comprehensive tax reform that raises top tax rates to 90% for income over \$100,000, confiscates all existing private wealth in excess of \$100,000, and turns all private corporations into worker-owned businesses. Healthcare is nationalized, private hospitals are owned by the state, and doctors become government employees. Climate change is used as justification for legislation that regulates the daily lives of citizens, from the amount of electricity that may be consumed to the number of miles that may be driven in automobiles. Obama declares another national “state of emergency” due to the threat of climate change and begins to rule by decree; he even stays in office beyond his third term. The fossil fuel industry is nationalized and slowly converted into a renewable energy industry, the profits funding universal Pre-K and higher education that perpetuates the government’s radical communist-environmental political ideology. Christian colleges and universities are taken over by the state and secularized. A new program of religious affirmative action is embraced, which requires the number of Christian churches to not exceed the number of synagogues, mosques, and other temples. All religious establishments become subject to state taxation and oversight. A new program aimed at population control mandates the use of contraception for all non-married women and makes abortion free.



Some political scientists have proposed that democracy can gradually change to an authoritarian if not totalitarian state. This can occur when the state and corporate decision makers have come to work together so closely that the interests of the two are almost indistinguishable. This can only happen if the population shows disinterest, is distracted from the changes, or is voluntarily obedient.

The concept of “inverted totalitarianism”

The corporate control of the democratic process and demobilization of the citizenry, also referred to as “managed democracy.” Inverted totalitarianism, unlike classical totalitarianism, does not revolve around a demagogue or charismatic leader. It finds expression in the anonymity of the Corporate State. Economics controls politics, rather than politics controlling economics. The citizenry is distracted by consumerism and sensationalized news, while the levers of power within government are controlled by private interests.

Sheldon Wolin, a political philosopher at Princeton, formulated the concept to describe what the U.S. government is devolving into and contrast it with classical totalitarian regimes like Nazi Germany and Stalinist Russia.

EARLY WARNING SIGNS OF FASCISM

**POWERFUL AND CONTINUING
NATIONALISM**

DISDAIN FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

**IDENTIFICATION OF ENEMIES
AS A UNIFYING CAUSE**

SUPREMACY OF THE MILITARY

RAMPANT SEXISM

CONTROLLED MASS MEDIA

OBSESSION WITH NATIONAL SECURITY

**RELIGION AND GOVERNMENT
INTERTWINED**

CORPORATE POWER PROTECTED

LABOR POWER SUPPRESSED

DISDAIN FOR INTELLECTUALS & THE ARTS

OBSESSION WITH CRIME & PUNISHMENT

RAMPANT CRONYISM & CORRUPTION

FRAUDULENT ELECTIONS

Lorraine W. Britz wrote about the common signs of fascism in April, 2003, after researching seven fascist regimes. These were Adolf Hitler's Nazi Germany, Benito Mussolini's Italy, Francisco Franco's Spain, Antonio de Oliveira Salazar's Portugal, George Papadimitriou's Greece, Augusto Pinochet's Chile, Muammar Gaddafi's Libya. These signs resonated with the political and economic direction of the United States under Bush-Cheney. Get involved in reversing the anti-democratic direction while you still can!



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COMMUNISM

“We can’t expect the American people to jump from Capitalism to Communism, but we can assist their elected leaders in giving them small doses of Socialism, until they wake up one day to find that they have Communism.”

-Nikita Krushchev

**Communism killed
100 million people and
all I got was this
lousy t-shirt.**



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