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For Volker

There must be a middle place between abstraction and childishness where one can talk seriously about serious things.

—Czesław Miłosz, *I Apologize*

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Introduction

Passion and Antipathy

> Search, then, the Ruling Passion: There, alone,
> The Wild are constant, and the Cunning known;
> The Fool consistent, and the False sincere;
> Priests, Princes, Women, no dissemblers here
>
> —Alexander Pope, *Moral Essays*, Epistle I

This book examines the nature of totalitarianism as interpreted by some of the finest minds of the twentieth century. Russian Bolshevism and German National Socialism, personified by Josef Stalin and Adolf Hitler, not only were responsible for the most devastating war in human history—excluding Chinese and Japanese casualties, it killed around 36 million soldiers and civilians. Bolshevik and Nazi aggression also produced camps and slave labor colonies that murdered millions more. Only a minority of those marked for extermination, exile, or forced labor were determined enemies of the regimes that slaughtered them. Given the opportunity, most would have kept their heads down, connived and colluded to be left alone. But totalitarian governments were the foe of tranquility. They unleashed wars, purges, and show trials. They demanded that completely innocent people admit to impossible crimes. They mobilized whole populations for conquest. They assigned death by category; it was not what you did that damned you, but what you were—a Jew, a Slav, an intellectual, a kulak, a "cosmopolitan." Animating this culture of death were rituals and ideologies that prophesied earthly redemption: a

world of brotherhood or of race purity. Onlookers were baffled. What had caused such convulsions? What did the atrocities they perpetrated imply about the elasticity of human nature and its potential for evil? Were the Bolshevik and National Socialist experiments totally new phenomena or exacerbations of earlier tyrannies? Once defeated, could similar governments rise once again?

No writer asked these questions more searchingly, or arrived at more arresting answers to them, than Hannah Arendt (1906–1975), a thinker of Jewish-German origin who, following Adolf Hitler's appointment as chancellor, and her own brief detention by the Gestapo, fled Berlin in 1933. Arendt's book *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (1951) is a classic—perhaps *the* classic—treatment of Bolshevism and Nazism. It was an improbable achievement. A student of Martin Heidegger and Karl Jaspers, the stars of German "existentialism," Arendt was in the 1920s a young woman of intelligence, sensitivity, and academic promise, but, judging by her doctoral thesis *Love and St. Augustine* (1929), by no means an exceptionally gifted thinker. If she possessed an identity, it was as a philosopher, continuing the tradition of German letters and cultivation. She had no firm plans for an academic career. Compelled to become a refugee, she watched, first from France, later from the United States, as the world was shaken by a force of unimaginable brutality that she, and others, called "totalitarianism." Henceforth, Arendt employed all her creative powers to articulate its conditions and implications, even when dilating on the most arcane subjects—the faculty of thinking, the concept of action, the meaning of authority. Investigating totalitarianism was her ruling passion.

She was not alone in her endeavor. Many writers in America and Europe struggled to comprehend the totalitarian enigma. Quite a few she knew personally. Some remained lifelong friends; others she fell out with. This book makes no attempt to chart the whole of Arendt's network. It is not a biography of Arendt, though it contains many details of her intellectual relationships. It attends only to a portion—albeit the most innovative portion—of her writings. Readers looking for an Arendt conspectus must search elsewhere. My topic is a group of Arendt's most acute social critics, men of the caliber of David Riesman, Raymond Aron, and Jules Monnerot. All, in their fashion, were impressed by Arendt's originality, by the boldness and paradoxical quality of her arguments. But all were skeptical of her theory of totalitarianism. In turn, Arendt had

strong disagreements with them on subjects that straddled politics, ethics, and the interpretation of history.

In great intellects, a ruling passion is often complemented by an abiding antipathy. Arendt loathed the social sciences in general and sociology in particular. Her second published article was a review of Karl Mannheim's *Ideology and Utopia* (1929), which she chastised for denying the autonomy of thought and for suggesting that philosophy's traditional focus on ontological questions was less illuminating than was understanding the shifting finitude of everyday life, the alleged source of the philosopher's categories.[1] Bearing the impress of her university education, Arendt wrote as a champion of *Existenz* philosophy, defending it against what she saw as sociology's reductionism and aspiration to replace it. The tone throughout her essay on Mannheim is restrained, the language turgid, the subject recondite. Dissent is tempered by a spirit of intellectual generosity. When Arendt confronted sociology again in the 1940s and 1950s under the wider rubric of "the social sciences," the landscape of her life and her conception of philosophy had been radically reshaped. Behind her lay the ruins of the Weimar Republic, the capitulation of her teacher, Martin Heidegger, to Nazism, the horrors of a genocidal war, and the painful experience of her own exile in France and, at least initially, in America. Her tone was now urgent, the language limpid, the subject of her reflections charged with immediate gravity. Once more, she attacked social science analysis, but this time it was the alleged failure of such approaches to explain *totalitarianism* that was her prime concern. The earlier spirit of engagement with sociology is replaced by tempestuous root-and-branch dismissal of it. It is this period of Arendt's life with which we are centrally concerned in this book.

Arendt was one of a group of Weimar intellectuals transplanted to American soil for whom the social sciences were deeply suspect, "an abominable discipline from every point of view, educating 'social engineers.'"[2] This group of thinkers included Leo Strauss, Eric Voegelin, and such prominent members of the Frankfurt School as Theodor Adorno, Max Horkheimer, and Herbert Marcuse.[3] Arendt's relations with Horkheimer and Adorno—those "bastards"—were strained by personal repugnance, sharply contrasting political attitudes, and major philosophical differences.[4] But she shared with them not only her Jewishness and the status of being a refugee, but also the key ordeal that brought Jewishness and immigration together: the experience of Nazism and the Shoah. It was

this experience above all that led her to view sociology with growing distrust and to see the social sciences more generally as deeply compromised by the mass societies they purported to explain.[5] Arendt insisted that sociology was parasitical on "the social," a modern sphere of life characterized by conformity rather than distinction. She inveighed against sociology's "repulsive vocabulary."[6] She argued that social scientific explanations couched in terms of structural theories of causality denied the existence of human freedom. Most of all, Arendt believed that the social sciences had chronically misconstrued the nature of Nazi and Bolshevik regimes. In her account, "totalitarianism" refers to a type of regime that, no longer satisfied with the limited aims of classical despotisms and dictatorships, demands continual mobilization of its subjects and never allows society to settle down into a durable, hierarchical order. In addition, totalitarian domination rules through total terror; pursues, by means of the secret police, "objective enemies" or "enemies of the people" who are typically not subjective opponents of, or genuine threats to, the regime; offers an all-encompassing ideological framework that abridges the complexity of life in a single, axiomatic, reality-resistant postulate that allows no cognitive dissonance; and is predicated on an experience of mass superfluity attendant on the growing mobility, insecurity, and "worldlessness" of modern human beings. Arendt considered totalitarianism to be modern and singular.[7] It was not a phenomenon that had early modern roots; nor was it the logical outgrowth of a peculiar national tradition or culture, even German culture,[8] or of the rise of secularism and godlessness. Totalitarianism was the result of an avalanche of catastrophes—World War I, the implosion of the Habsburg and Ottoman empires, and a global capitalist economic crisis—that brought the victory of a movement and the consolidation of a regime that was structurally different from classical dictatorship or tyrannies. In sum, Arendt argued that totalitarianism was a cosmos so alien that it had rendered obsolete our familiar repertoire of concepts and judgments. Social science attempts to capture its essence in stock analogies and "ideal types" failed miserably to grasp its uniqueness.

Most studies of Arendt are composed by philosophers and political theorists. By disciplinary formation, they tend to share her antagonism to the social sciences, and sociology in particular. My approach is different. A critical admirer of Arendt, trained in a tradition she distrusted, I look sympathetically (Chapter 1) at her objections to social science and show that her complaints were in many respects justified. Yet this book does

more. Avoiding broad-brush disciplinary endorsements or dismissals, it reconstructs the theoretical and political stakes of Arendt's encounters with, or rebuttals by, men like David Riesman, author of *The Lonely Crowd*, with whom Arendt corresponded in the 1940s about the limits of totalitarianism (Chapter 2); Raymond Aron, who argued that much of totalitarianism could be explained as an amplification of revolutionary ideology and violence (Chapter 3); and Jules Monnerot, with whom she sparred during the 1950s, in the pages of *Confluence*, a journal edited by Henry Kissinger, about the nature of "political religion" (Chapter 4). Along the way, we will greet other writers whom Arendt either reproached or failed to convince, including Theodore Abel, Hans Gerth, Alex Inkeles, Talcott Parsons, and Philip Rieff. It may appear odd to some readers that Daniel Bell plays only a cameo role in this book. To be sure, Bell was the foremost sociologist among her friends and a brilliant social thinker in his own right. But his critical engagement with her was meager.[9] He was unhappy about "mass society" theory and alluded to her in that connection. But Arendt appears in a list of five "varied uses" of mass society that, Bell cogently argues, fail to reflect the "complex, richly striated social relations of the real world."[10] A similar treatment graces his comments on totalitarianism in which, once more, Arendt's distinctive arguments are absorbed into a more general catalogue of criticism.[11] Bell's assessment of Arendt is hence muted and cursory. That cannot be said of Riesman, Aron, and Monnerot. There we see dissonance that is intensive and productive; we see great minds talking back to Arendt in a nuanced and elaborated form. Her critique is itself criticized; her refutations are contested, her alternatives disputed. Sociological explanation emerges as far more angular and robust than her categorical denunciations suggest.

If the first objective of this book is to retrieve debates that have been largely forgotten, the second objective is substantive: to distill from these disputes a series of issues that continue to tax the modern mind. Notably, to say that the social sciences were intrinsically unable to grasp unprecedented phenomena raises the question of what "unprecedented" actually means. How does one recognize things that are utterly strange? Arendt gives us little to go on, so we need to develop answers of our own. This book was written in the shadow of the West's struggle with radical Islamism. Giles Keppel, an informed and honest modern commentator on Islam, remarks that "naming the adversary [has] created the illusion of having identified it," short-circuiting "the search for operational concepts

that could assimilate a complex reality and, in the process, restructure existing cognitive categories."[12] What, then, is the alternative? How might we more adequately grasp this "complex reality"? That is a quintessentially Arendtian question, and I give my own response to it in the final chapter. Or take Arendt's blistering attack on the concept of "political" or "secular" religion: Arendt believed that describing National Socialism or Bolshevism as religions, secular or otherwise, was a travesty when it was not a heresy. Can we today—faced with new religious radicalism—extract from her indictment, and Monnerot's rejoinder, a less polarized perspective on the relationships between religion and totalitarian politics? I show that we can.

The Title of This Book, Its Scope, and Ways to Read It

Why does the title of this book refer to the social sciences and not simply to sociology? In the first place, Arendt typically invoked the latter when she sought more generally to excoriate the former. She saw sociology as the most egregious example of a modern intellectual trend that concatenated structural history, empiricist political science, and psychology. Writing before the ascendancy of rational choice theory, she believed economics to be a somewhat provincial discipline dealing with a very basic activity, the satisfaction of material needs. This "initial science" had been extended, or rather eclipsed, by "the all-comprehensive pretension of the social sciences which, as 'behavioral sciences,' aim to reduce man as a whole, in all his activity, to the level of a conditioned and behaving animal." She continued:

> If economics is the science of society in its early stages, when it could impose its rules of behavior only on sections of the population and on parts of their activities, the rise of the "behavioral sciences" indicates clearly the final stage of this development, when mass society has devoured all strata of the nation and "social behavior" has become the standard for all regions of life.[13]

Sociology, the putative science of the social founded by Marx more than Comte,[14] was symptomatic of this broader decadence, but it did not work alone. Positivist political science and, in particular, psychology were its dehumanizing allies and, in consequence, additional targets of her scorn.

A second reason why this book, notwithstanding its sociological bias, summons the social sciences more generally is that Arendt's interlocutors had complex intellectual identities. David Riesman was originally a student of law. He later wrote as a social commentator, or culture critic, rather than as a specialized sociologist. Raymond Aron was as much a political writer and a theorist of international relations as he was a sociologist. Jules Monnerot mixed sociology and psychology.

We should also appreciate that Arendt's assault on social science reasoning was part of a much larger appraisal of the Western intellectual tradition. Originally enamored of classical philosophy, Arendt was increasingly struck by its limitations. From Parmenides and Plato, through to Spinoza and Heidegger, she spied an entrenched prejudice against Man as a terrestrial and transitory being, and a denial of the dignity of human affairs. "The tradition," as she summarily called it, had repeatedly denigrated the realm of action while elevating the contemplative spirit. It craved peace and tranquility, distrusted the body and its passions, and oscillated between utopia and despair. Politics, from this standpoint, was secondary to the life of the mind, the *bios theōrētikos*; worse, the confounded noise of politics—its long, drawn-out, and inconclusive discussions; its haphazardness; its entrapment in sense perceptions; and hence its failure to conform rigorously to a template of the Good or the Rational—was essentially demeaning. More elevated was the soul, the quest for ultimate, disembodied Truth, and for refuge in heaven.[15]

Even those who later, like Karl Marx, believed that they had transcended philosophy were essentially intolerant of politics. Marx, after all, wished ardently for the dissolution of the state and identified politics with class domination. The Marxist notion that violence is the midwife of history justified the use of force to speed up the historical process, to aid in the "making" of history against defunct classes.[16] But, for Arendt, the idea that history can be "made" was chilling; it implied that human beings were disposable objects of nature, a brute mass to be designed and recreated by a master fabricator. It also suggested that the theorist, like the craftsman, knows the end of the process he is manufacturing. But, short of apocalypse, history has no end. We cannot foretell or control humanity's future any more that we can foretell or control our own. Marxism lent itself to the totalitarian project "because of its perversion, or misunderstanding of political action as the making of history."[17] A different kind of book from the one I have written might examine Arendt's evaluation of

Western thought as a whole. My purpose here is more limited: to examine her estimation of twentieth-century social science and her engagement with some of its most brilliant representatives.

It is essential, in a work of this sort, to listen to both sides of the arguments in which Arendt was engaged, to give a fair hearing to those with whom she disagreed. Accordingly, this book affords roughly as much space to Arendt's opponents as to Arendt herself. Indeed, I hope the book will be valuable to readers who, even if unsympathetic to Arendt, would like to know more about what Riesman, Aron, and Monnerot (and Abel and Parsons) said about totalitarianism. Readers should be forewarned, however, that each of the chapters assumes a somewhat different shape. Posterity records for all to see the dialogue between Arendt and Riesman, and between Arendt and Monnerot; the first took place largely in correspondence to which we now have access; the second was rehearsed in a magazine polemic. With Raymond Aron, however, the situation is quite different. He furnished various objections to her account of totalitarianism; she did not reply to them. In sum, we have heterogeneous and asymmetric encounters to consider, only some of which were conducted as real person-to-person conversations or exchanges.

I have avoided the temptation to update Arendt's analysis of National Socialism and Bolshevism by recourse to modern historical evidence *unless one of her interlocutors anticipated a relevant finding.* Facts are important; Arendt herself often said so.[18] But to simply "correct" Arendt's errors of fact would be patronizing, the author playing the role of schoolmaster instructing a less resourceful pupil. It would also be anachronistic, judging her statements by standards of evidence that may simply have been unavailable in the 1940s and 1950s. Far better to ask, what did Arendt's critics spot at the time, and point out to her, that later scholars have vindicated? In this way, we keep the analysis historical and eschew pedantry.

Perusing this book as a whole will give the reader a historical, many-sided sense of Arendt's depiction of totalitarianism, her attack on social science, and the rebuttals of her social science critics. But perhaps you don't want a comprehensive view. You are concerned only with a particular debate, say, between Arendt and Riesman, or you want to know the nature of Raymond Aron's intellectual qualms about Arendt. With that priority in mind, I have made the chapters relatively self-contained; they can be read individually. This has produced a little repetition of Arendt's chief claims; in compensation, each chapter deals with her evaluation of

the social sciences in a different way. Moreover, the present work is itself the first volume of a two-book project. Each book can be read separately or together. The successor volume takes us further back into Hannah Arendt's career by examining her critique of Karl Mannheim and Max Weber. The first she confronted directly; the second, a towering absence in the life of Arendt's mentor Karl Jaspers, she handled with greater circumspection. Neither influenced her thought in any positive way. But Arendt's rejection of both thinkers tells us a great deal about her own intellectual framework and the origins of her hostility to social science.

Hannah Arendt called totalitarianism the burden of our time. Is it still? The legacies of the Second World War, Stalinism, and the Cold War continue to shape us. But jihadist movements and states of terror raise different problems and, correspondingly, call for new, robust responses. Western publics—generally timid, convinced that enmity is at root a misunderstanding rather than a conscious decision—face a martial, courageous, and inventive foe. Arendt and her social science interlocutors urged us to think afresh. Worldly and astute, they struggled to grasp the unique dangers of their century. Their example encourages us to confront, with sobriety and realism, the perils of our own age.

Hong Kong, August 2009

§ 1 Hannah Arendt's Indictment of Social Science

This chapter sets the scene for Arendt's collision with David Riesman, Raymond Aron, and Jules Monnerot. It begins by offering a summary of Arendt's theory of totalitarianism, before delineating the most common general objections that she leveled at social scientists trying to understand totalitarian phenomena. While Chapters 2, 3, and 4 will offer a critical look at Arendt's assertions and arguments, here I present her case in its strongest, most cogent form.

Totalitarianism

Totalitarianism is a concept rooted in the horror of modern war, revolution, terror, genocide, and, since 1945, the threat of nuclear annihilation. It is also among the most versatile and contested terms in the political lexicon. At its simplest, the idea suggests that despite Fascist/Nazi "particularism" (the centrality of the nation or the master race) and Bolshevik "universalism" (the aspiration toward a classless, international brotherhood of man), both regimes were basically alike—which, as Carl Friedrich noted early on, is not to claim that they were wholly alike.[1] Extreme in its denial of liberty, totalitarianism conveys a regime type with truly diabolical ambitions. Its chief objectives are to rule unimpeded by legal restraint, civic pluralism and party competition, and to refashion human nature itself.

Coined in May 1923 by Giovanni Amendola, *totalitarianism* began life as a condemnation of Fascist ambitions to monopolize power and to transform Italian society through the creation of a new political religion.

The word then quickly mutated to encompass National Socialism, especially after the Nazi "seizure of power" in 1933. By the mid-1930s, invidious comparisons among the German, Italian, and Soviet systems as totalitarian were becoming common; they would increase considerably once the Nazi–Soviet pact was signed in 1939. Meanwhile, recipients of the totalitarian label took different views of it. Although in the mid-1920s Mussolini and his ideologues briefly embraced the expression as an apt characterization of their revolutionary élan, Nazi politicians and propagandists saw a disconcerting implication. Granted, Hitler and Goebbels, during the early 1930s, had a penchant for cognate expressions such as "total state"; so too did sympathetic writers such as Ernst Forsthoff and Carl Schmitt. At around the same time, Ernst Jünger was busy expounding his idea of "total mobilization." But "totalitarianism" was treated with greater circumspection. The *Volksgemeinschaft* (national community), Nazi spokesmen insisted, was unique: the vehicle of an inimitable German destiny based upon a racially based rebirth. "Totalitarianism" suggested that German aspirations were a mere variant on a theme; worse, a theme that current usage extrapolated to the Bolshevik foe.[2]

Hannah Arendt entertained no such reservations. Her theory of totalitarianism advanced three central claims—claims to which we will return repeatedly in this book. First, totalitarianism is radically new, an original development that attended Europe's economic, political, and moral ruination during and after the First World War, and which became manifest in National Socialism after 1938, and Bolshevism from 1930 to the late 1950s. From Arendt's perspective, attempts to locate a long-established lineage of totalitarianism are fundamentally mistaken. So too are analogies of totalitarianism with Caesarist, Bonapartist, and other dictatorial or tyrannical regimes. National Socialism and Bolshevism are a phenomenon sui generis, not an extreme version of something previously known. On those grounds Arendt opposed the view that totalitarianism was a perverted outgrowth of the Luther-sanctioned authoritarian state, or an exaggerated legacy of Tsarist intolerance. Similarly, she found risible arguments such as Franz Neumann's that "totalitarian dictatorship" was an ancient phenomenon, prefigured in the Spartan state or the Roman imperial regime of Diocletian; and his contention that National Socialism revived the "fascist dictatorship" methods of the fourteenth-century Roman demagogue Cola di Rienzo.[3] "The problem with totalitarian regimes," Arendt countered,

> is not that they play power politics in an especially ruthless way, but that behind their politics is hidden an entirely new and unprecedented concept of power, just as behind their *Realpolitik* lies an entirely new and unprecedented concept of reality. Supreme disregard for immediate consequences rather than ruthlessness; rootlessness and neglect of national interests rather than nationalism; contempt for utilitarian motives rather than unconsidered pursuit of self-interest; "idealism,"—i.e., their unwavering faith in an ideological fictitious world, rather than lust for power—these have all introduced into international politics a new and more disturbing factor than mere aggressiveness would have been able to do.[4]

A second defining feature of totalitarian formations is their conjoined shapelessness and radicalization. Totalitarian regimes, far from settling down once they attain full control of the state, are driven incessantly toward world domination. Their domestic populations are continually mobilized through war, campaigns, "struggles," or purges. Moreover, and notwithstanding ideological obeisance to ineluctable Laws of History and Race, totalitarian domination insists on febrile activity. The will of the leader and that of the people as a whole must constantly be exercised to produce the impossible, combat backsliding, and accelerate the direction of the world toward its cataclysmic, if never fulfilled, culmination. To that extent, Arendt's delineation was consistent with other classical academic accounts of totalitarianism that emphasized the centrality of flux and activism. Franz Neumann, in *Behemoth* (1944), called the Third Reich a "movement state." Ernst Fraenkel dubbed it *The Dual State* (1941), in which the normal functions of the legal and administrative apparatus were constantly undermined by party "prerogative"—Fraenkel's term for the maelstrom of feverish Nazi initiatives that unleashed bedlam without respite. Similarly, Sigmund Neumann entitled his comparative study of the Nazi, Fascist, and Bolshevist hurricanes, *Permanent Revolution: The Total State in a World at War* (1942).

Third, totalitarianism comprises a peculiar combination of terror and ideology. Totalitarianism's victims, once real opponents are liquidated, are principally social categories: "enemies of the people" or "objective enemies"—"dying classes" or "decadent races"—putatively fated by history or evolution to disappear. Terror is total to the extent that no one knows who will be the next victim, no matter how compliant they are. The point of terror is, among other things, to create a kind of being that accepts its own expendability. This New Man is trained to be superflu-

ous, bereft of most recognizable human qualities, especially reflection and spontaneity. The laboratory in which he is created is the concentration and death camp where, through terror, people can be reduced to a bundle of sensations and, once consumed, disappear without trace in a "hole of oblivion." As for ideology, Arendt defines it not by any specific content it might idiosyncratically possess, but by its formal properties. Ideology is a type of cognition that is reductive (based on one overriding postulate—class or race) and proceeds by deducing everything from that postulate. The person in the grip of an ideology thinks in terms of clichés and also in terms of logical consistency. Yet, rather than logic being an aid to rational argument, it is a replacement of it, since anything that appears to conflict with totalitarian logic is disregarded. The real world is a colorful, cacophonous place. Ideology is monochromic and tone-deaf.

It is worth distinguishing Arendt's approach to totalitarianism from two others saliently embraced by her contemporaries. The first sought to track down modern totalitarianism to ancient, medieval, or modern *ideas* that had ostensibly animated it. Karl Popper found proto-totalitarianism in Plato; Eric Voegelin glimpsed it in millenarian Gnostic heresies. Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno spied a totalitarian dialectic evolving out of an "Enlightenment" fixation on mathematical formalization, instrumental reason, and the love of the machine. J. L. Talmon discovered a creedal "totalitarian democracy" arising from one tendency among eighteenth-century *philosophes*. Enunciated by Rousseau, Morelly, and Mably; radicalized by the French Revolution, especially during its Jacobin phase; and reincarnated in the Babouvist conspiracy, "totalitiarian democracy" amounted to a leftist "political messianism" that preached the arrival of a new order: homogeneous and egalitarian, yet supervised by a virtuous revolutionary vanguard able to divine the general will. Arendt queried much of this intellectual detection. True, she did believe that Marxism contained various totalitarian elements. But she insisted that totalitarianism was so radical in its rupture with civilization that harvesting the past for totalitarian ideas was largely a fool's errand. Totalitarianism was above all a movement and a set of institutions, rather than a system of concepts.

Similarly, she evinced a marked hostility to the claim that Bolshevism and National Socialism were "political religions" (or "secular religions"). We will pursue her reasoning in Chapter 4. It suffices here to note, however, that most modern writers on totalitarianism have found its religious

strains too salient to ignore. Nazi ideology was replete with notions of national redemption, the spirit of a rejuvenated people, and even the divine mission of the SS.[5] The First World War, and the community of front-line soldiers (*Frontgemeinschaft*) or "trenchocracy" it witnessed, was typically identified as the crucible of this steely resurrection. Coup d'état strategizing, the battles to defeat the Whites during the Civil War, and the perennial trumpeting of the class struggle promoted a similar mentality among the Bolshevik leaders. Lenin, Stalin, and Mao notoriously gained the status of demigods.

Commentators who stress the mythological component of totalitarianism—writing of "ersatz religions," "political religions," the "myth of the state," the "sacralization of politics," and "palingenesis"—include Raymond Aron, Albert Camus, Ernst Cassirer, Norman Cohn, Waldemar Gurian, Jacob Talmon, and Eric Voegelin. Worthy successors are Michael Burleigh, Roger Griffin, and Emilio Gentile. Civic religions, such as those found in the United States and France, are different from political religions because they celebrate a republican concept of freedom and law. Church and state are separated, and each has its legitimate sphere of activity. In contrast, the sacralization of politics under totalitarian rule, together with its liturgies, festivals, and cults, was marked by the deification of the leader, idolatrous worship of the state that arrogates to itself the exclusive right to determine good and evil, orgiastic mass rallies, immortalization of the party fallen, the appeal to sacrifice, and the cult of death. Of this Arendt had little to say.

Social Science: The Failure of Theory and Method

In "Social Science Techniques and the Study of Concentration Camps," Arendt declared that "every science is necessarily based upon a few inarticulate, elementary, and axiomatic assumptions which are exposed and exploded only when confronted with altogether unexpected phenomena which can no longer be understood within the framework of its categories."[6] The concentration and extermination camps, she contended, were precisely the "unexpected phenomena" that had exploded the assumptions of social science.

The core assumption totalitarianism shattered was the idea that human conduct springs essentially from self-interested, instrumental, and utilitarian considerations. Yet not only were the concentration camps

"non-utilitarian"—she adduced the "senselessness of 'punishing' completely innocent people, the failure to keep them in a condition so that profitable work might be extorted from them, the superfluousness of frightening a completely subdued population,"[7] the camps were also *anti*-utilitarian, because the exterminatory program of the Nazi regime diverted valuable logistical and other resources from the war effort. "It was as though the Nazis were convinced that it was of greater importance to run extermination factories than to win the war."[8] Originally, the German camps, run by SA bullies and sadistic grudge-holders, had been built to imprison and intimidate the Nazis' foes. But once the Nazis' real enemies had been eliminated, the staff of the camps changed, as did their nature. SS guards were chosen on the basis of physical and "racial" criteria. They were, in most respects, "completely normal" and committed their crimes "for the sake of their ideology which they believed to be proved by science, experience, and the laws of life."[9] Their job was to ensure that the "fabrication of corpses" proceeded smoothly, ensuring "a regulated death rate and a strictly organized torture, calculated not so much to inflict death as to put the victim into a permanent status of dying."[10] "The concentration camps are the laboratories in the experiment of total domination," determined to show that human spontaneity is capable of being altogether extinguished. The geographical isolation of the camps and the deliberate stripping away of the juridical, moral, and individual personality of the victims were attempts to transform the unique human person "into a completely conditioned being whose reactions can be calculated even when he is led to certain death." Indeed, what confronts the outside observer is the "complete senselessness" of the *Lager*, "where punishment persecutes the innocent more than the criminal, where labor does not result and is not intended to result in products, where crimes do not benefit and are not even calculated to benefit their authors."[11] Being "normal men," accustomed to the precepts of Western civilization, social scientists are ill equipped to explain a hellish world where motives of utility and even of passion are characteristically absent. It follows that categories based upon these precepts and presuppositions will necessarily fail to grasp the "insane consistency" of the camps and the enormity of the deed committed in them—a crime beyond crime that "the Ten Commandments did not foresee," and for which the perpetrators showed so little remorse.[12]

At this point it is worth pausing to note a curiosity of Arendt's argument. Though she claims to be writing about "social science techniques,"

her actual discussion contains no mention of them. Indeed, behaviorist psychology appears to be Arendt's main target, and what she offers is a metacritique of it. Perhaps, with some inventiveness, it might be possible to reformulate her remarks to indict models of economic man or of rational choice. Even so, it is hard to see how criticisms of instrumentalism could sensibly be extrapolated to sociology—a discipline that for the most part has strenuously opposed "utilitarian" explanations: Durkheim, Weber, and Talcott Parsons all offered trenchant alternatives to them. Moreover, to the extent that the death camps were unprecedented—"the 'nightmare of reality' before which our intellectual weapons have failed so miserably"[13]—it follows that *every* mode of cognition, not simply that of social science, has been thrown into question. And this is exactly what Arendt does contend elsewhere,[14] and why she punctuates her analysis with formulations—"ideological nonsense," "a world of the dying in which nothing any longer made sense," "fabricated senselessness," "human-made hell," "atmosphere of unreality," "insane consistency"—that stress the horrendous absurdity of camp existence. So if the camps confound all conventional social, political, legal, and ethical notions, and not simply those articulated by the social sciences, we need to know more about the *specific* ways in which social science has failed.[15]

Arendt focused on three aspects of social scientific enquiry that she believed to be systematically obfuscating: the methodological principle of *sine ira et studio*;[16] the theoretical strategy of what she called "functionalism"; and the related issue of social science's tendency to become trapped in analogies and ideal types that impeded its ability to confront historical novelty.

SINE IRA ET STUDIO AND THE PROBLEM OF REPRESENTATION

Any author concerned to understand and explain the "Final Solution"—the Nazi attempt to exterminate European Jewry—is confronted with an immediate and disconcerting question: What is the best—most accurate, most appropriate, most authentic—register to depict the death camps, the core phenomenon that, as we saw above, had ostensibly exploded social science's presuppositions? Arendt's response to this question in *The Origins of Totalitarianism* entailed a conscious departure from "the tradition of *sine ira et studio* of whose greatness" she "was fully aware."[17] Arendt did not reject the attempt to be dispassionate and objective as such. She repudiated the supposed logical incongruity be-

tween objectivity and expressed indignation, and the related contention that impartiality is the only legitimate stance to assume in the analysis of any "human society." Her "particular subject matter"—notably, the Nazi death factories—did not lend itself to experimental detachment:

> To describe the concentration camps *sine ira et studio* is not to be "objective," but to condone them; and such condoning cannot be changed by condemnation which the author may feel duty bound to add but which remains unrelated to the description itself. When I used the image of hell, I did not mean this allegorically but literally. . . . In this sense I think that a description of the camps as Hell on earth is more "objective," that is, more adequate to their essence than statements of a purely sociological or psychological nature.[18]

One might reply that Arendt's image of Hell, evoked to do justice to the suffering and madness of the camps, carries its own characteristic distortion. Depending on one's theology, Hell is a place for those who never received God's grace or who viciously renounced God through sin, preferring the ways of the Devil to those of the Lord. And how can an image of Hell be "literal"?[19] Still, was Arendt exaggerating the tendency of sociologists, impelled by methodological principles, to describe the camps in an inappropriately clinical manner? In 1947, the *American Journal of Sociology* published an article by Herbert A. Bloch, who had witnessed German camp conditions shortly after liberation. The "horrible mass exploitation by the Third Reich of concentration camp inmates" and others, Bloch declared, afforded a "remarkable opportunity for the study of social patterning and personality under a distinctive set of controlled circumstances." Study of the camps enables sociologists to see "what happens when modern man becomes stripped of his culture and is reduced to an animal state very closely approaching 'raw' motivation."[20] He continued:

> Under such conditions the process of assortative and differential association provide[s] a deeply penetrating view into genotypical forms of gregarious and adaptive social selection. Moreno has been pointing to these forms for some time in his sociometric patterning. What happens to the untrammelled socius when the usual social framework is removed? . . . It transpired that what developed was a process of "desocialization," resulting in a primal state of human association. It is possible to conceive of this as a heuristic prototype for comparative study with institutionalized and more

> normal patterns of groupings, leadership, and hierarchical class structure. (p. 335)

The idea that camps such as Buchenwald give us access to "a primal state of human association" is, surely, bizarre in the extreme—unless one imagines there to be such a state in the first place and then concludes that such a state resembles a concentration camp. Similarly, "raw" motivation in a camp is unlikely to be similar to "raw" motivation elsewhere, unless one assumes that being beaten, starved, and terrorized reveals a primal human being, rather than one that has been beaten, starved, and terrorized. Bloch's description (p. 339) of the problems encountered in "reconditioning and retraining" Jewish child survivors of the camps and death marches—their case, he avers, is "analogous to the putative conditions involved in the retraining of classical feral children"—appears to ignore the signal difference between children abandoned at birth and those who have been forcibly removed from their parents and deliberately mistreated by people who wish to see them die.

My point is not that Bloch was inhumane or individually callous; probably the reverse is true.[21] Nor is it that he is a representative figure of American sociology, whatever this might mean in such a diverse discipline. Bloch *was*, however, one of the few sociologists at the time who studied the death camps. (Another account of them, by Theodore Abel, raises different problems, as we shall see.) Finally, I do not assert that sociology has no business seeking to learn from the camp catastrophe, a proposition that is self-evidently absurd.[22] Rather, the point is that in his attempt to recapitulate norms of scientific objectivity, Bloch fell prey to sociological occasionalism: the practice of using Nazism and the camps as an opportunity for grand theorizing *sine ira et studio*, devoid of the passion, sense of horror, and madness that Arendt believed must be conveyed if one is to be *true* to the phenomenon. Worse, in the attempt to offer a sociology that was rigorously detached, Bloch's "controlled circumstances" and "heuristic prototype" conjure up a sociological laboratory that disturbingly parallels the one the SS itself had established in the camps to conduct their own experiments. Reading Bloch, it is almost as if the SS had made a remarkable contribution to human knowledge, bequeathed a providential gift to science, by providing sociologists with new material for their theoretical casuistries.

"FUNCTIONALISM"

Equally problematic for Arendt was the category of "function," a category she traces not to Durkheim or Spencer, but to Marx.[23] Her chief complaint is that sociology obsessively seeks to turn a peculiar episode or phenomenon into something that it is not, denying its concrete, elemental reality and claiming that it is a symptom or token of a deeper substratum remote from the world of appearances. Correlatively, because any tangible thing is deemed a façade hiding something more real (developmental tendencies, historical forces), it is easy to identify one discrete phenomenon as being very much like any other, provided each of them can be shown to serve the same common underlying purpose. Hence, religion and communism can be considered "*functionally* equivalent," even though this requires that the social scientist never asks "what a religion actually is, and if it is anything at all when it is a religion without God."[24] This disciplinary habit means that what people actually say can conveniently be ignored, a reflex that Arendt found both condescending and dangerous, as it led to frequent miscalculations of what actors intended. Marx's notorious formulation that religion is really an opiate, when in fact it is often a source of action, suffering, and heroic endeavor, is predicated on the widely shared view among sociologists that the thoughts of a human being are "the ideological reflexes and echoes of his life process."[25]

The tendency to substitute and shuffle ideas, destroying the boundaries between them and their objects, was one she urged the historically attentive to resist. Unlike "sociologists who methodically [ignore] chronological order, location of facts, impact and uniqueness of events, substantial content of sources, and historical reality in general," historians should reclaim the art of making distinctions. They should insist that "these distinctions . . . follow the language we speak and the subject matter we deal with."[26] The invidious alternative was the Marxist "positive science of history" and the "underlying assumption" of the sociologists that "every matter has a function and its essence is the same as the functional role it happens to play."[27]Armed with such a method, it was no wonder that sociology had failed to understand the most momentous episode of the century: totalitarianism. Sociology simply assimilated it into its conventional suite of categories or deemed it "as some more radical form of something already well known."[28]

It is tempting to brush aside Arendt's complaints about sociology as a caricature of a discipline that, even in the 1940s and 1950s, was complex and heterogeneous. Her frequent identification of sociology with the "social sciences" *tout court*, a rhetorical strategy that conflates a variety of disciplinary object domains and perspectives, invites similar dismissal. Yet something of the force of Arendt's critique reasserts itself when we examine specific cases, particularly the use of generalization, analogy, and metaphor to occlude substantive differences among social phenomena or to establish spurious historical pedigrees.

Consider, for instance, the claim of H. G. Adler, a former inmate of Theresienstadt no less, that the sociology of "slavery" was probably the best framework within which to understand the Nazi camps. Adler argued that the existence of concentration camps necessitated "the construction of a sociology of 'the unfree' " that would include other "extreme forms of exclusion" such as the penitentiary. To complement a wide-ranging sociology of the unfree, Adler suggested a social-historical investigation that would "not only describe the history of the modern concentration camp but seek out the institutions of earlier times that are akin to it and that exhibit elements likely to exist whenever men are significantly or totally excluded from a relatively free community. An understanding of the concentration camp is impossible without insight into the nature of slavery; the concentration camp is part of the history of slavery."[29] Adler acknowledged that Nazi "crypto-slavery" appeared novel, but insisted that, on closer scrutiny, the characteristics of "older methods" could be readily identified. Arresting innocent relatives of those who opposed the regime was actually "a revival of the practice of taking hostages and of the ancient institution of kinship liability."[30] To be sure, the "SS concentration camp" could justifiably be considered "unique and incomparable," but only, he added incongruously, "within the general framework of slavery."[31]

But it was precisely such transhistorical sociological models that Arendt abhorred when applied to totalitarian regimes.[32] While acknowledging Nazi enslavement of occupied territories, Arendt maintained that Nazi concentration camps were unprecedented and had a fundamentally different purpose than conventional slavery:[33]

> Throughout history slavery has been an institution within a social order; slaves were not, like concentration-camp inmates, withdrawn from the sight

> and hence the protection of their fellow-men; as instruments of labor they had a definite price and as property a definite value. The concentration-camp inmate has no price, because he can always be replaced; nobody knows to whom he belongs, because he is never seen. From the point of view of normal society he is absolutely superfluous, although in times of acute labor shortage, as in Russia and Germany during the war, he is used for work.[34]

The salient point about the Nazi camps, Arendt argued, was that unlike slavery they had no obvious utilitarian value. The extermination of Jews and other "inferior races" in Birkenau (a section of Auschwitz), Belżec, Sobibór, Chełmno, and Treblinka proceeded apace at considerable cost to the German war effort, diverting logistical, manpower, and material resources that could have been employed to fight the Allies. Moreover, the Nazi camps were unlike previous concentration camps—they sought not just to contain an enemy or terrify potential civil opponents of the regime, but also, and *primarily*, to conduct an experiment on their hapless captives. Here, Arendt adapted the account of Bettelheim, an inmate of Dachau and Buchenwald between 1938 and 1939, who depicted the camps as "a laboratory for subjecting not only free men, but especially the most ardent foes of the Nazi system, to the process of disintegration from their position as autonomous individuals."[35] Or, as he put it later:

> [T]he camps were a training ground for the SS. There they were taught to free themselves of their prior, more humane emotions and attitudes, and learn the most effective ways of breaking resistance in a defenseless civilian population; the camps became an experimental laboratory in which to study the most effective means for doing that. They were also a testing ground for how to govern most "effectively"; . . . This use of the camps as experimental laboratories was later extended to include the so-called "medical" experiments, in which human beings were used in place of animals.[36]

Arendt held a similar view, arguing that the concentration camp was the "central institution of totalitarian organizational power,"[37] designed to calibrate the optimum means through which one could transform spontaneous and diverse human beings into an artificial, isolated, and interchangeable creature that was little more than a conditioned set of Pavlovian reflexes.[38] It transpires that the camps were anti-utilitarian only by normal standards of utility maximization. By Nazi standards, the camps' usefulness consisted in their capacity both to exterminate

"objective enemies" and to fabricate the "model citizen" of the totalitarian regime. Moreover,

> without the undefined fear [the camps] inspire and the very well-defined training they offer in totalitarian domination, which can nowhere else be fully tested with all of its most radical possibilities, a totalitarian state can neither inspire its nuclear troops with fanaticism nor maintain a whole people in complete apathy. The dominating and the dominated would only too quickly sink back into the "old bourgeois routine"; after early "excesses," they would succumb to everyday life with its human laws; in short, they would develop in the direction which all observers counseled by common sense were so prone to predict.[39]

As the "laboratories in which the fundamental belief of totalitarianism that everything is possible is being verified,"[40] and in which "the whole of life [is] thoroughly and systematically organized with a view to the greatest possible torment,"[41] the camps were the Nazi guarantee against social and political routinization.

That being the case, Arendt considered it theoretically misguided at best, morally obtuse at worst, to extrapolate the concept of totalitarianism, or its cognates, to institutions that were part of the history of conventional societies. Contrast, for instance, Arendt's notion of "totalitarianism" with Erving Goffman's sociological category of "total institutions."[42] Because Arendt's notion of totalitarianism referred to a unique, unparalleled, and radically evil phenomenon, it would never have occurred to her to extend the adjectival prefix "total" to conventional forms of society. But this is exactly what Goffman did with the concept of "total institutions." The result was an analysis, in *Asylums*, that treated the Nazi concentration camps on a par with institutions that were substantively unlike them;[43] in short, we have a clear example of the kind of "functionalist" shuffling of content and generalization that Arendt attacked. Goffman, we know, had priorities of his own: The notion of "total institution" was a rhetorical shock tactic, an act of iconoclastic normalization, aimed at challenging complacency by making respectable institutions appear in a disturbing new light. Nonetheless, to designate "jails, penitentiaries, P.O.W. camps, and concentration camps" under the same rubric, one must ignore salient facts about them that call into question their being classified together. POW camps are designated for people granted a legitimate status under the conventions of war; jail and penitentiaries are for those who

break the positive laws of a society. Conversely, communists, Jews, Jehovah's Witnesses, Poles, and others in the Nazi camps had no legitimate status among their captors and had broken no positive laws; rather, they had been put outside the law through a deliberate set of discriminatory policies and decrees. The location of prisoners in a modern nontotalitarian society is usually known by the prisoners' families. Their death is evidenced by a body and marked by a grave. By contrast, concentration camps sought to swallow people into "holes of oblivion" and eliminate all traces of their ever having existed.[44] Prisons are typically places of confinement, rather than of slave labor or extermination. Other differences are easily enumerated. To be sure, Goffman was aware that the attempt "to extract a general profile" from his "list of establishments" opened him to the charge that "none of the elements I will describe seem peculiar to total institutions, and none seems to be shared by every one of them."[45] But that caveat, once registered, has no demonstrable impact on the argument that follows. Instead, Goffman contents himself with a taxonomy that stresses "general characteristics" and family resemblances.[46] He concludes:

> Certainly the similarities obtrude so glaringly and persistently that we have a right to suspect that there are good functional reasons for these features being present and that it will be possible to fit these features together and grasp them by means of a functional explanation. When we have done this, I feel we will give less praise and blame to particular superintendents, commandants, wardens, and abbots, and tend more to understand the social problems and issues in total institutions by appealing to the underlying structural design common to them all.[47]

Yet Arendt and Goffman had more in common than my truncated comments suggest. Both writers stressed the primacy of "appearance" and denied what Alvin Gouldner called the "metaphysics of hierarchy": the notion that behind life's surface lies some generative causal structure that conjures it into existence.[48] Both Arendt and Goffman took an intense interest in public performance, employing dramaturgical metaphors to depict it. But whereas Arendt concentrated on the public realm as a space in which political actors could express their authenticity, lending significance and meaning to an otherwise transient, private existence, Goffman envisaged the social realm as a series of ritualized face-saving encounters. His portrayal of social actors as impression managers would

have confirmed Arendt's worst fears about the manipulative superficiality and conformity of modern "society."[49]

THE IDEAL TYPE

In *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, Arendt's relationship to sociological investigation is ambivalent. On the one hand, she draws appreciatively[50] on Georg Simmel's analysis of secret societies to show their affinity with totalitarian movements.[51] On the other hand, Arendt is extremely critical of attempts to employ Max Weber's ideal types of charisma and bureaucracy to totalitarian rule. Relying on these categories is a "serious error,"[52] a failing she attributes less to the deficiencies of Weber's original concepts than to their bowdlerized adaptation in the hands of Alfred von Martin, Arnold Koettgen,[53] and especially Hans Gerth, for whom Arendt shows a particular disdain.[54] Hans Gerth, a pupil of Karl Mannheim, was a former student friend of Arendt's first husband, Günther Stern (alias Günther Anders). A *former* friend because Stern later turned on Gerth, claiming him to be a Johnny-come-lately who had emigrated in 1938 only after attempts to ingratiate himself with the Nazi authorities, as a journalist for the *Berliner Tageblatt*, had failed. That assessment is almost certainly a travesty of Gerth's conduct, a matter I will not pursue here.[55] Hannah Arendt's analytical rejoinder to Gerth is that totalitarian regimes are the antitheses of bureaucracy, because they permit no room for positive law, stability, or predictability. Instead, such regimes unleash unceasing, turbulent movement. Equally anomalous is the tendency of commentators to exaggerate the charismatic "fascination" of leaders like Hitler and Stalin and to see that fascination as the key to their success over the movement as a whole. Against this, Arendt argued that the major contributions of Hitler's and Stalin's oratorical gifts were, first, to confuse the opposition, who misread such rhetoric as mere ranting demagogy; and, second, to help integrate plausible, propagandistic fictions—the Protocols of the Elders of Zion, the Trotskyite conspiracy—into an ideological "region" that allowed no inconsistency or test of experience. The "true goal of totalitarian propaganda is not persuasion but organization,"[56] organization in the sense of an ideology that, in the Nazi case, creates the *Volksgemeinschaft* here and now, and in the sense of social organizations—front organizations, paramilitary formations, secret societies—which, in various ways, shield the movement from having to confront the plurality and inconstancy of real experience. In *Mein Kampf*,

Hitler contrasted the "living organization" of the Nazi movement with the "dead mechanism" of a typical, bureaucratized party. Nazi propaganda sought to make this living organization a reality—and it succeeded, in part due to Hitler's "brilliant gifts as a mass orator."[57]

Arendt's portrayal of the leadership of totalitarian movements is complex and, though I will not pursue the issue here, somewhat inconsistent, in good measure because of her attempt to paint Stalin and Hitler in broadly similar colors. But her chief argument in relation to Hitler is that his much-vaunted gift of fascination[58] was a "social phenomenon" that had to be "understood in terms of the particular company he kept."[59] Hitler understood that modern bourgeois society wanted nothing more than to be freed of the "chaos of opinions" that any "social gathering" generates; that, under conditions of social atomization and the fragmentation of judgment, his own rigorous, ruthless and apodictic adherence to one postulate[60] was deeply attractive. Under such conditions, "extraordinary self-confidence and displays of self-confidence . . . inspire confidence in others; pretensions to genius waken the conviction in others that they are indeed dealing with a genius."[61] Defeat in war, economic crisis, and social fragmentation had transformed large sections of the German people into what Arendt called *masses*, a human detritus that had lost a "worldly" place, and with it a sense of security and reality. Bereft of a stable social structure, and feeling keenly its own expendability, this stratum latched onto Hitler's uncompromising views with a fanaticism ideally suited to the self-sacrifice demanded by the Nazi movement.

Further, the totalitarian leader does not command a hierarchy of which he is at the pinnacle. Rather, he is the personification of the movement itself, a living vortex assuming the movement's characteristics of turbulence, amorphousness, and radicalism. "In substance," Arendt argues, "the totalitarian leader is nothing more or less than the functionary of the masses he leads; he is not a power-hungry individual imposing a tyrannical and arbitrary will upon his subjects. Being a mere functionary, he can be replaced at any time, and he depends just as much on the 'will' of the masses he embodies as the masses depend on him."[62] If that quotation strains the reader's credulity, it has, nonetheless, some similarities with J. P. Stern's lapidary description of Hitler as "a center of Nothing"—the phrase is redolent of Conrad's portrait of Kurtz in *Heart of Darkness* as "hollow at the core"—and Robert Harris's assessment that "this inner

emptiness helped enable Hitler to use himself as a tool, changing his personality with shocking abruptness to suit the task at hand."[63]

In sum, ideal types such as "charisma" and "bureaucracy," however serviceable in other contexts, banalized the singularity of National Socialism.[64] As with "functionalism," she considered the ideal-type approach to be one more sociological device to normalize the phenomenon, to make of it an item or a case of something already known.[65] To the objection that Weber's express purpose in commending the ideal type was to help the investigator understand the individuality of historical configurations, to map their territorial *irregularity*, Arendt was silent, but for an understandable reason. Her opposition was directed not simply to particular ideal types, but to the neo-Kantian epistemology that underpinned them. While from a Weberian standpoint, *totalitarianism* is a model—a research instrument or heuristic—that enables the social scientist to delineate a unique historical conjuncture against an artificially constructed prototype, for Arendt *totalitarianism* is a term that abbreviates a real historical conjuncture, an elemental combination of terror and ideology that constitutes the frightful uniqueness of the totalitarian experiment.

How plausible was Arendt's claim that sociologists wedded to ideal types in general, and to Weber's ideal types in particular, misunderstood the Nazi movement? I now offer two examples that, in their different ways, lend some support to her allegation.

Theodore Abel's and Talcott Parsons's Studies of National Socialism

Undoubtedly the most remarkable empirical study of National Socialism produced by an American sociologist in the 1930s, and one with which Arendt was familiar, was Theodore Abel's *Why Hitler Came into Power* (1938).[66] Following a visit to Germany in the summer of 1933, Abel hit upon the ingenious idea of self-funding[67] a contest with 400 marks in prizes to find the "Best Personal Life History of an Adherent of the Nazi Movement." The contest was launched a year later, and its 683 manuscript submissions remain to this day among the most important autobiographical sources available for documenting the makeup and motivations of prewar Nazi militants. It is true that, both at the time and

subsequently, Abel's methodological protocols and techniques, or lack of them, drew pointed criticism, largely for their statistical or inferential limitations.[68] But the fact remains that a great deal of later research on Nazi Germany confirmed Abel's chief finding: namely, that National Socialism was a highly differentiated social movement by no means overwhelmingly lower-middle-class in composition.[69] By providing the reader of *Why Hitler Came into Power* with a selection of first-person life histories, or "biograms,"[70] that allowed his respondents to speak for themselves, Abel drove home the point of Nazism's social heterogeneity.

Moreover, after the war, Abel turned briefly to a study of concentration camps that was bold and original, arriving spontaneously at many of the same conclusions that Arendt reached in *The Origins of Totalitarianism*. Neither the camps, nor the policy that motivated them, could be attributed to some mainspring of German culture or, as he put it, "national character or specific historical conditions affecting Germany *only*."[71] In addition, there was no evidence whatsoever, Abel contended, that the SS perpetrators were generally psychopaths, or that their Jewish, Polish, and other victims were chosen principally because of "their *individual* antisocial activity." On the contrary, such people were targeted because they belonged to a "social category." Again like Arendt, Abel detected the distinguishing mark of the Nazi camp system not simply in "its systematic execution, the cold-bloodedness and rational organization of the procedure and the fact that several millions of people were involved in it," but also in the policy that animated it.[72] Similarly, he insisted that what was characteristic of the Nazi camps was "not slave labor, detention, privation, extermination (all those things have been done many times before in history) but the systematic effort to reduce human beings . . . to bundles of reflexes, to debase and degrade them absolutely."[73] And he also warned ominously that the Nazi camp system was not a freak incident, but "a pattern of social behavior that is apt to emerge under certain conditions, the recurrence of which can be envisioned."[74]

In other ways, Abel went even further than Arendt by coining new terms that he believed would do justice to Nazi barbarism (that word itself is, of course, antiquated). These included "social obliteration," a notion redolent of Patterson's analysis of "social death," and "democide," a label since augmented by R. J. Rummel, and which Abel took to mean the destruction of a people as a social category.[75]

> I propose to call this special feature of concentration camps *Democide*, of which genocide is a sub-form pertaining specifically to the extermination of ethnic or racial groups. The broader term *democide* pertains to extermination procedures against a population selected on the basis of *any* kind of social attribute, racial, religious, educational, political, cultural, and so forth, including even distinctions on the basis of age.[76]

The specific "motivation" for Nazi democide within the camps "arose from the combination of negative eugenics with power politics."[77] And such a policy, far from being incomprehensible, was fully explicable in sociological terms. One hypothesis suggested by the "basic findings of sociology" was that "the more narrowly the membership of the in-group is defined, the greater is the range of permissible licence of behaviour towards those who are excluded from it."[78] Taken to an extreme, insiders are apt to view members of the out-group as forming a different human species altogether, who can be treated with impunity and to whom conventional norms of restraint no longer apply. But how was one to depict, in a sufficiently realistic manner, the agents and the system of terror? What new terms would be suitable?[79] Abel's favored option regarding the agents of extermination—the SS, the SD, and the Gestapo—was "Myrmidons," the ferocious Phthian warriors of Greek mythology who, in the Trojan War, were led by Achilles. They are likened in the *Iliad* (XVI. 187–193) to famished wolves "that rend and bolt raw flesh, hearts filled with battle frenzy that never dies . . . belching bloody meat." As for the *system* of brutality, extermination, deportation, and enslavement as a whole, terms ending in "-cracy" were inadequate, Abel contended, because "the issue is not the number and kind of people who ruled but the way in which they ruled." That being so, Abel chose the word "*raptorial*, meaning preying upon others, robbing them of their life, property, freedom, using deprivation of values as a method of conduct."[80]

This summary is enough to show that, far from being a sociological simpleton, Abel was an astute and audacious student of Nazism, notwithstanding a problem that I now, in the spirit of Arendt, seek to highlight. To grasp this problem, we must revisit *Why Hitler Came into Power*.

When Abel turned from his documentary material to the task of making sense of it, he attributed the rise of the "Hitler movement" to four mutually reinforcing "general factors" or "causes":[81] discontent within German society on account of crises within the social order; the special

appeal of Nazi ideology and its program for social transformation; the distinctive organizational techniques used by the Nazi Party; and, finally, the presence of charismatic leadership.[82] For our purposes, the last factor is the most relevant, and Abel offered a number of perspectives on it. Drawing on his subjects' accounts, Abel discerned a twofold "function of charismatic leadership." On the one hand, Hitler "was the chief executive, the planner and organizer. On the other hand, he played the role of the prophet of the movement." Hitler's role as chief executive was conjoined to "an indomitable will" and unshakable self-confidence, similar to that of religious founders or imperial pioneers such as De Lesseps. "Like other leaders of the masses," Hitler combined authority over his colleagues with a sense of realism, qualities that amply equipped him to assume the role of "driving power" and "directing genius" of the movement.[83]

The "second function" that "Hitler fulfilled" is evident in the attitude of his followers toward him. To his supporters, Hitler was someone who possessed "superhuman power" and to whom the proper disposition was one of unquestioning obedience and submission. "To them he was a prophet whose pronouncements were taken as oracles." Abel quotes several reports among his respondents testifying to Hitler's "magnetic power" and "ability to cast a spell" and infers from these reports that we are dealing with "what Max Weber has called charismatic leadership."[84] We should recall that Abel was one of the pioneers in bringing Weber to the attention of an American audience, and that it was he, more than anyone, who was responsible for introducing the German term *Verstehen* into an English idiom.[85]

This view of Hitler's charisma, with its reference to previous examples of the phenomenon, may have prepared the reader for a notable feature of Abel's account: his conviction that "the forces that brought about" the Führer's social recognition are "the very ones operative throughout history in creating charismatic leaders."[86] The result is that both the Nazi movement, and Hitler in particular, are historically normalized as yet another case, perhaps somewhat extreme but no different in essentials, from a well-established lineage. More than that, we are encouraged subtly to expect a predictable charismatic trajectory. This is not because Abel specifically draws that conclusion, but because he does not confront it. Hence, in the absence of a discussion of Hitler's peculiarities, or of properties of the Nazi movement that would make it different from previous movements, the

clear implication is that Nazism is on the path to stabilization and routinization.[87] That Abel did entertain such a view is evident from an entry in his journal. On a visit to Berlin in June 1934, Abel was struck by the growing discrepancy between the zealotry of the National Socialist movement and the emphasis on mundane concerns that characterized the mass of "average" Germans, who were now convinced that the main crises (economic, social, and political) were over. Abel writes:

> We find in Germany today that activities common to the normal life of collectivities assert themselves. The individual is after his best interest: security and a rise of his standard of living. . . . The unity achieved in the hour of great emotional upheaval breaks up under the pursuit of individual tendencies and the sobering effect of realities. The problems of the revolutionaries become ordinary problems of management and life with all its complexities, contradictions, etc. reigns again. The holiday is over. Concrete deeds—promoting individual interests, become then, the issue, and not ideas and feelings. . . . The N.S. [*sic*] is fighting against the inevitable phenomena of ordinary life—impossibility of perpetual enthusiasm, selfishness, interest in the amenities of life which have no idealistic significance, domination by the circle of personal problems, neglect of community problems. The victory of every-day life is inevitable.[88]

Although aspects of this picture of quotidian existence in Germany during the 1930s ring true and are supported by the testimony of witnesses, Abel's mistake was to assume,[89] with Weber's ideal type of charisma in mind, that the reemergence of profane concerns was symptomatic of the movement's enervation. On the contrary, the Nazi movement, and the regime itself, remained highly radical and "idealistic" to the end, attributes that were unsparingly compatible with the cynical attempt of its members to profit financially from colonization, expropriation, and genocide. Modern historians of Nazism are in broad agreement that its signature characteristics were "continuous revolution,"[90] "cumulative radicalization,"[91] and systemic "governmental disorder,"[92] notions that endorse Arendt's argument about the primacy of motion, the chaotic nature of governance, and the absence of routinization. As we know, Arendt also believed that such characteristics revealed a regime type sui generis. In contrast, as late as 1945, Theodore Abel continued to portray the situation in Germany as essentially a repetition of causes and processes that were already well documented. In an article entitled "Is a Psychiatric Interpre-

tation of the German Enigma Necessary?"[93] Abel answered his question in the negative by invoking Durkheim's injunction to explain social facts in terms of other social facts. Nothing about recent events in modern Germany, Abel remarked, indicated a specifically German phenomenon. Jewish persecution, for instance, in thirteenth-century England, fifteenth-century Spain, and nineteenth-century Russia reminds us of deeds "as black as the German record of the twentieth." Equally, "the sadism of the concentration camps" finds its counterpart in many other acts of sadism and torture throughout the ages, the Spanish Inquisition being only the best known. Anyone even vaguely acquainted with history will surely not be surprised by recent German conduct, since behavior like it has been "repeated innumerable times."[94] So why, even so, do we remain puzzled by German conduct? The reason lies not in its existence, "but because it exists in the XXth century and is practiced by a nation which ranks exceedingly high in intellectual and cultural achievements. It is the anachronism that disturbs us," not the novelty.[95] To account for that anachronism, Abel offered a version of the German *Sonderweg*, claiming that it was Germany's backwardness that explained its current plight.[96] In Germany, unlike other Western nations, feudalism was never completely eradicated, the bourgeoisie failed to become the ruling class, representative government remained stymied by Junker domination, and the economic doctrine of the state was protectionist rather than laissez-faire. All these factors, combined with accustomed "allegiance to a dynast or 'Fuehrer' " and a virulent form of ethnocentrism, portended "a return to the primitive forms of tribalism," though Abel hastened to add that it is "feudalism" and "patrimonialism" that best characterize the German state. The rise of National Socialism is then simply a parasitic growth subsisting on something more ancient. Hitler succeeded in winning the admiration and plaudits of millions of Germans because "he appealed to deeply rooted sentiments and traditions." Similarly, the "old order—hierarchical, authoritarian, patrimonial—was re-established in full force."[97]

That interpretation of German history and Nazism jolts us back with a vengeance to Arendt's discomfiture with a sociology inured to looking backward, unable[98] or unwilling[99] to recognize the new, although we should note that historical misidentification of National Socialism was widespread across all disciplines and political sympathies during the 1930s and 1940s. Consider only the Left. While Russian, Italian, and

German Marxists of the stature of Trotsky, Gramsci, and Thalheimer frequently identified fascism or National Socialism with some modality of Caesarism or Bonapartism, the majority of their sympathizers in France, invoking the great parallel with the French Revolution, were inclined to construe Bolshevism as analogous to the Jacobin republic devoid of the Thermidorean "reaction."[100] Granted, Abel's analysis of the German "enigma" was composed before his concentration camp investigation sensitized him to novel features of Nazi rule, although even there it is significant that he chose to invoke concepts—Myrmidons,[101] raptorial—that reprised ancient and prehistoric periods of earthly existence. Abel claimed to be looking for "new insights, new approaches." But, as he put it when pondering in June 1964 whether he should resume his investigations into National Socialism, "a study of Nazism might illuminate a singular historical process, but I fail to see what can be derived from it of general import that has not been already discussed."[102]

I have focused on the work of Theodore Abel to show that normalization of a new phenomenon—the tendency to fall back on dubious historical and conceptual pedigrees—was the default position of a sophisticated sociological mind. Talcott Parsons, a principled and indefatigable opponent of American isolationism, was another of sociology's great figures who had a penchant for comparing Nazi Germany with previous epochs and for invoking Weberian ideal types. In addition, Parsons oscillated between warning of the new and terrible menace posed by National Socialism to liberal-humanist civilization and an analysis that emphasized the sclerotic, "traditional," and quasi-feudal qualities of the National Socialist movement.[103] Even more than Abel, Parsons employed Weber's sociology of rulership/domination (*Herrschaftssoziologie*) to depict Hitler as a classic example of the charismatic leader who imperiously demands of his followers that they recognize his destiny, legitimates decisions by plebiscite, and discards all rational-legal restrictions to the Führer's rule. Hitler's demagogic success owed itself to the exploitation of a deep and "unresolved tension" in German society.[104] Although the development of rational legal authority in the West had eroded many conventional loyalties based on religion, kin, locality, and social class, it had not destroyed entirely these ties and sentiments. Nor had rational-legal authority effectively replaced them with substitutes that could secure the emotional loyalty of many sectors of the populace. The result was a conflict, born of widespread insecurity on all sides, between those who fancied

themselves "emancipated," and for whom "debunking" tradition was tantamount to a professional sport, and others for whom such a stance was deeply insulting to, and threatening of, cherished sentiments and commitments. This second group was particularly vulnerable to demagogic appeals of the kind ventilated by National Socialism, a movement adept at mobilizing "fundamentalist" feelings. Capitalists, internationalists, emancipated Jews, political radicals—the groups National Socialism ritualistically demonized—become useful symbols of all that was wrong about the modern world, condensing a potent brew of subversion, atheism, immorality, deracination, and corruption.

Even so, Parsons did not believe that a revolutionary movement could become a status quo. Weberian categories rendered such a prospect impossible. Given Nazism's hostility to the rule of law, "there is a strong presumption that long-term predominance of National Socialism would strongly favor a traditionalistic rather than a rational-legal outcome of the process of routinization."[105] That of course presupposed the likelihood of what Weber had described as "routinization of the movement," a developmental process that Parsons believed bound to occur, in some form, if Nazism survived. But in what form? Currently, the party organization resembled a mixture of charismatic and bureaucratic modes, just as Hans Gerth had argued, with the "charismatic absolutism of the dictator" most prominently on display.[106] Loyalty rather than law was the key principle of solidarity, and that principle was likely to continue. Yet once Hitler died and the movement's basic dependence on him evaporated, a rather different configuration of forces was conceivable. Already there was evidence of organizational factionalism within the regime, accentuated by the success of the Nazi Party's security apparatus—notably the Gestapo and the SS—in appropriating state powers. Hence, "in the longer run the break-up of the hierarchy into a variety of different elements which jealously guard their own rights, territorially or functionally segregated from the whole, is probable. This might well lead to a situation akin to feudalism except that the relation to land would presumably be different."[107] In the longer term, the pattern of charismatic provision (gifts and booty) that characterized the revolutionary movement (e.g., "Aryanization" of Jewish business) would need to be put on a more stable basis, probably by a quasi-feudal arrangement of "benefices" owned by party functionaries. More generally, a metamorphosis toward feudalism would affect everything liberal humanists hold dear. "That the most

distinctive cultural features of our civilization could not long survive such a change, would scarcely seem to need to be pointed out."[108]

Conclusion

This chapter examined, in a sympathetic light, Arendt's critique of sociology. We witnessed her objections to value neutrality, to the functionalization of concepts, and to the ideal type. We saw, too, that Arendt's general depiction of sociology as methodologically hidebound in its portrait of totalitarianism was in many respects accurate. Yet to say that sociology had failed to grasp totalitarianism as an "unprecedented" episode raises questions about what *unprecedented* actually means, whether any event can actually *be* unprecedented and, if it can, whether totalitarianism was such a phenomenon. I return to these questions in the final chapter of this book. My intention now is to attend to specific debates in which Arendt's interlocutors launched their own critiques of her theory and method. I begin with David Riesman.

§ 2 "Totalitarianism" in the Dialogue of David Riesman and Hannah Arendt

Introduction

Aside from being classics in their fields, and bearing titles chosen by their publishers,[1] David Riesman's *The Lonely Crowd*[2] and Hannah Arendt's *The Origins of Totalitarianism* are works with little ostensibly in common. They examine different countries, focus on substantially different problems, and do so from radically different perspectives. Yet over an intense and remarkably creative four-year period that began in February 1947, Arendt and Riesman were engaged in a dialogue about themes that arose from their books (especially hers) that repays investigation for the light it sheds on the meaning, nature, and limitations of "totalitarian" regimes. Both believed that "totalitarianism" was an apposite designation of the Bolshevik and National Socialist regimes. They diverged on the discursive approaches that might most fruitfully be applied to understand the character and prospects of these formations. On one side of the debate was Arendt's sweeping claim, shared fully by her husband and sometime intellectual *éminence grise*, Heinrich Blücher, that social science in general, and sociology in particular, had failed miserably to explain the singular and unprecedented nature of totalitarian regimes. From that perspective, it was a short, if illogical, step to the extrapolation that social science concepts and assumptions were inherently incapable of grasping the trajectory, and of registering the depth, of the crisis that totalitarianism had visited on the twentieth century. On the other side was the contention of writers such as Riesman (and Raymond Aron) that Arendt's own account of totalitarianism was exaggerated; it failed to recognize the limitations of

totalitarian regimes on which social science perspectives could shed considerable light.

Below I retrieve the stakes of this dispute, highlighting, consecutively, Riesman's sociological concerns in *The Lonely Crowd*, and—in that context—the critical encounter that took place between him and Arendt on the subject of totalitarianism. Riesman's analysis of Arendt's theory of Nazi Germany and Soviet Bolshevism was especially effective intuiting—for there was at that time little hard evidence to go on—that it rested on a defective understanding of totalitarian society and of what it means, more generally, to be a social agent able to play roles, don masks, and take cover in the interstices of a brutal system. Historians of everyday life in Germany and the Soviet Union during their totalitarian phases have subsequently vindicated Riesman's hunches.

The Background to David Riesman's Engagement with Arendt

Their association began with an introductory letter from Riesman to Arendt on February 27, 1947,[3] commending her recent writings in *Partisan Review* on "nationalism, racialism, and power generally" and asking her opinion of Hobbes.[4] For the next five years, while both scholars consolidated their reputation as major public intellectuals, Riesman provided Arendt with encouragement and provocation.

Politics and sensibility furnished some common coordinates. Both were secularized Jews. Both opposed a unitary Israeli state. Both were ambivalent toward "the corrosive acids of aggressive secularism."[5] And both were students of totalitarianism. Yet, in other respects, they were strange intellectual bedfellows. Arendt, as we have seen, loathed social science; Riesman sought to develop and practice it intelligently. Arendt was above all a political writer, not an academic, for whom the university was a secondary and erratic site of convenience; Riesman, in contrast, spent most of his creative adult life at the universities of Chicago and Harvard combining free-spiritedness and eclectic interests with a strong commitment to the teaching of undergraduate students.[6] Arendt's major anxiety turned on the evisceration of the political realm and the continuing presence of totalitarian "elements" in society; Riesman worried more about the danger of a nuclear cataclysm.[7] Arendt distrusted all forms of psychological speculation; Riesman, an analysand and protégé of Erich

Fromm, believed that the insights of psychology were vital for understanding one's own place in the world and social character. Moreover, from the beginning, it is evident that the two writers' appreciation of their respective magnum opuses was asymmetrical: Riesman was always the more generous and assiduous discussant. As time passed, these and other differences became more evident, and the relationship cooled. But, during its peak, Riesman's engagement with Arendt's work was as lively as it was insightful.

What was the circuitous path that led Riesman to Arendt? Despite ecumenical interests that embraced politics and journalism, Riesman's graduate academic work was centered in law: a training at Harvard Law School (1935–1936) prefaced a year clerking for Louis D. Brandeis, who was at that time a justice of the U.S. Supreme Court.[8] Everything seemed to point to a legal career. Following his spell with Brandeis, Riesman briefly entered private legal practice in a small Boston law firm, before proceeding to teach law at the University of Buffalo (1937–1941) and then, at the outset of American's entry into the war, becoming for a few months a deputy assistant attorney of New York County. But law was not Riesman's passion. He yearned for colleagues with whom he could teach and from whom he could learn the craft of interdisciplinary social research.[9] Soon, thanks to the good offices of Edward Shils, he discovered both at the University of Chicago, where Riesman arrived to take up employment in January 1946. Colleagues at the College of the University of Chicago included, aside from Shils himself, Milton Singer, Daniel Bell, Gerhard Meyer, Frank Knight, Abram Harris, and Sylvia Thrupp, an academic grouping that ensured an omnivorous diet of philosophy, psychology, anthropology, economics, and sociology. Riesman also benefited in Chicago from the seminars of such innovators in community studies and field methods research as, respectively, Lloyd Warner and Everett C. Hughes; and from the presence of Clyde Hart, director of the National Opinion Research Center, who stimulated Riesman's growing interest in public opinion and survey research.

Soon an opportunity emerged to put these varied interdisciplinary research interests to work. With the encouragement of Harold D. Lasswell and Eugene V. Rostow, Riesman was invited by the Committee on National Policy at Yale to conduct research on any aspect of national policy he found pertinent, though one preferably in the field of public opinion and mass communications; a leave of absence from Chicago facilitated

the challenge.[10] In the fall of 1947 Riesman arrived at Yale, and in January 1948,[11] aided by Nathan Glazer,[12] began his investigation by poring over interviews collected by the eastern office of the National Opinion Research Center. His curiosity was first aroused by the observation that most American respondents wished to avoid at all costs the semblance of apathy.[13] The frank admission "don't know" on an interview questionnaire appeared to be an abhorrent or embarrassing alternative to stating an answer confidently—even when such a reply clearly exceeded the respondent's knowledge or experience. Holding an opinion was viewed as a kind of entitlement. Interviews collected for C. Wright Mills[14] were another useful resource for Riesman and Glazer, who initially coded them under a binary they first called "conscience directed" and "other directed."[15] Then, joined by Reuel Denney,[16] Riesman and his collaborators began to conduct interviews of their own,[17] teasing out of them a "gestalt" to illustrate "social character." As Riesman remarked in a ten-year retrospective essay on *The Lonely Crowd*, "our effort . . . was to deal with an historical problem that was broader than genitality, though narrower than fate."[18] Refracting his interviews of modern Americans through the neo-Freudian psychoanalytic theories of Erich Fromm and Erik H. Erikson, on the one hand, and the "culture and personality" perspective pioneered by anthropologists such as Margaret Mead, Ruth Benedict, Clyde Kluckhohn, and Henry Murray, on the other,[19] Riesman arrived at the distinction between "inner directed" and "other directed" social character types.

Social character, from this perspective, is not the same as personality, which refers to the "total self."[20] Nor is it to be equated with "national or modal character" that deals with aggregate statements about a group as a whole. Rather, social character concerns only "certain aspects of character" among "salient groups in contemporary society:"[21] the specific modes of conformity and creativity that arise among individuals in their experiential interaction with the social world. Riesman argued that changing demographic trends, particularly a decline in rates of fertility, and the growth of a service-based, consumer-oriented, bureaucratic society had witnessed the gradual dislocation of "inner-directed" persons and their replacement by an emergent "other-directed" social type.

Inner-directed people, on this account, were the social products of nineteenth-century American heroic capitalism. Raised in an era that emphasized utility, production, and extraction, and in which family

background and parenting induced strong principles and a sense of self-reliance, the inner-directed person marched through life guided by a sort of psychological "gyroscope." Such people tended to be conventional in their dress codes, home furnishings, and other externals, but they were driven by convictions that enabled them doggedly to pursue their objectives and, if need be, to go it alone. Guilt was the dominant emotion they experienced when they failed to live up to the dictates of God's law and parental expectations. In contrast, "other-directed" people—Americans of the mid-twentieth century whose work as educators, marketers, managers, advertisers, and therapists requires communicative, empathetic, and symbolic skills—are less afflicted by guilt and more troubled by the diffuse anxiety that arises from feeling out of step with conventional opinion, mores, and relationships. Other-directed people wish to be liked more than respected, to fit in more than to strike out on some idiosyncratic path. Employing a simile suggested to him by Karl Wittfogel, Riesman compared other-directed individuals' orientation to a radar that constantly monitors, and facilitates adjustment to, the prevailing cultural environment. A product of smaller families with more permissive parental upbringing and child care, connected to a wider sphere of significant others through the peer group, mass media, and other agencies, the other-directed character strives hard to remain popular, changing views and opinions to be "sensitive" to those around him or her, and seeking approval by avoiding offense and appearing affable.

In turn, both inner- and other-directed types are to be distinguished, Riesman continues, from the "tradition-directed" social character associated with pre-industrial and pre-capitalist modes of production. Denizens of caste or clan-based social arrangements, tradition-directed persons are inwardly shaped by a system of ritual and ascribed statuses whose main sanction is the elicitation of shame. It is not that individuals are undervalued in such a community or fail to find encouragement. On the contrary, they may be significantly more appreciated and experience a greater sense of belonging than those hapless members of the modern unemployed who feel keenly their status as expendable labor power. Still, the radius of innovation permitted to individuals in a traditional habitat is narrowly drawn, and the range of choice allowed to them tightly circumscribed.

The Lonely Crowd drew a set of parallel distinctions among political "styles." Tradition-directed and other-directed individuals are both largely

indifferent toward politics, but they are indifferent in divergent ways. Whereas tradition-directed groups with few immediate opportunities—for instance, immigrants and "rural Negroes"—believe political responsibility is best left to their superiors and to the grace of God, other-directed people, afforded a degree of literacy, organization, and understanding lacking in their tradition-directed counterparts, are impassive for other reasons. They, too, are loath to participate actively in politics, but theirs is the apathy "of people who know enough about politics to reject it, enough about political information to refuse it, enough about their political responsibilities as citizens to evade them."[22] Additionally, the other-directed political style is characterized by the prominence of what Riesman calls the "inside dopester" attitude: the mental set of people rooted in a world where consumption is king, and for whom being right on all issues is infinitely preferable to having strong ideological convictions that, by definition, are resistant to momentary fluctuations of public opinion. Toward politics, the other-directed inside dopester remains cosmopolitan, restrained, urbane, unperturbed, and, most of all, detached, a grandstander eager to solicit inside knowledge to demonstrate his perspicacity but determined "never to be taken in by any person, cause, or event."[23] The point is expertly to decipher the world, not change it, to resemble others, not agitate them. Yet there is a thin line between the playful indifference of the inside dopester and "new style" mass nonchalance per se: for where passion is consistently abjured or ridiculed, satiation may not be so far behind. The institution that helps stave off this entropic state is the mass media. Transmuting politics into one more object of cultural consumption, the mass media keeps at least a section of indifferents alert through hype, packaging, and manufactured charisma.[24]

By contrast, the inner-directed person is neither indifferent nor apathetic but is deeply *indignant* toward the evanescent superficiality he is compelled daily to confront. His element is the world of work and discipline, of which politics is considered an extension: just as the objects of fabrication can be steadily improved through the skill and energy of God's stewards, so too can human beings and their institutions. His political style is that of the "moralizer" who enjoins his contemporaries to embrace high ethical standards or, at the very least, to desist from sloth, debauchery—and socialism. Political activity, to the inner-directed person, is intimately bound up with the protection of interests, both material and ideal, that help secure what is best in the world. During its nineteenth-century heyday, the moralizing

style confidently harmonized with the great tasks of American reform and advancement; self-interest and ethical gravitas conveniently reinforced each other. But in its eclipse, the moralizing style turns bitter. For those middle-class or skilled manual workers, especially from the rural districts, who vestigially adhere to inner-directedness, the world is an increasingly confusing place. The mass media make it even more inhospitable by invading the family home with siren voices of popular culture and values of "tolerance" and "sincerity." As older working patterns become steadily superseded by the nostrums of modern sensitivity entrepreneurs, and as established competences become inadequate to the task of understanding, let alone running, a complex, globally shaped society, so the inner-directed character unravels. Internalized goals of self-sufficiency collide with the new feel-good, smart-aleck media culture. The baffling complexity of economic and political affairs is met by mounting dismay that transforms its recipients into a seething, stiff-necked parody of their more poised forebears. Modern politics becomes anathema, a sphere to be excoriated rather than engaged.

It may appear from the foregoing that *The Lonely Crowd* laments the fall of the robust inner-directed person and decries the banality of his other-directed successor, yet in a "caveat" that closes part I,[25] Riesman cautions against that elegiac interpretation. Inner- and other-directed types share one fundamental attribute: both are responding to the pull of internalized attitudes, except that in the case of the inner-directed, internalization takes place at an earlier stage in the life cycle. Moreover, it would be wrong, Riesman insists, to denigrate the greater concern for human relations vouchsafed by the other-directed person. "We must ask anyone who opposes the manipulation of men in modern industry whether he prefers to return to their brutalization, as in the early days of the industrial revolution. In my scheme of values, persuasion, even manipulative persuasion, is to be preferred to force."[26] The real moral alternative today, Riesman declares, is not a choice between inner- and other-direction, but between both of these and *autonomy*,[27] a concept that is, of course, always relative to the dominant form of conformity. Granted, inner-direction allowed an autonomous element too; it forged a kind of person who was less than fully "adjusted," and who was "capable of choosing his goals and modulating his pace" in a manner that was "rational, nonauthoritarian and noncompulsive."[28] Such autonomy was facilitated, though could also paradoxically be impeded, by a Protestant validation of conscience, a degree of privacy that allowed people,

within limits, to be themselves, a freedom of movement that existed before the introduction of passport controls, and an emphasis on work, stamina, and independence of mind. Other-directed people are also capable of autonomy,[29] evidenced in the growing self-awareness of those who wish to distentangle themselves from prevailing codes of behavior through bohemian, sexual, aesthetic, and other forms of experimentation. That such behavior often results in new patterns of glib, unprincipled conformity to supposedly heterodox values is proof that experimentation is no panacea. Yet Riesman's conclusion is ultimately optimistic. By even thinking about the kind of people we are today, we bring to self-consciousness the possibility that we could be different. New critical and creative standards are possible. Modern societies, for all their "mood engineering," provide a material abundance that provides the conditions to release "the enormous potentialities for diversity in man's bounty" and to offer a kind of differentiation that is both socially responsible and personally authentic.[30] Riesman appeals to his readers "to realize that each life is an emergency, which only happens once."[31]

The classification of tradition-, inner-, and other-directed characters,[32] Riesman notes, enables us to see the sequential victory and displacement of character types, while also allowing us to imagine them as analogous to "geological or archaeological strata," a cross section of which reveals "earlier [formations] changed through the pressure of being submerged by the later."[33] Their coexistence, and the multiple tensions and transitions to which they give rise, constitutes a site of social friction ("the characterological struggle") witnessed in domestic and international relations alike. Thus, there remain "millions of inner directed Americans" who, bitterly resentful of their decline, have become "caricatures of their characterological ancestors in the days of their dominance."[34] Similarly, nations at one stage of character formation feel threatened by those at other stages. Global suspicion and conflict are the inevitable result.[35]

The Dialogue

> "I feel you have accomplished a great work of the human spirit."
> —Riesman to Arendt, August 24, 1948.[36]

It was during the period that Riesman was working on *The Lonely Crowd* that he and Arendt began a serious correspondence. If the letters

digitized in the Hannah Arendt Papers represent a mostly complete record of their epistolary conversation, it appears that, initially, it was Riesman's work that was the focus of attention. Even here, however, there is an inkling of a disagreement about Soviet totalitarianism that became more pointed in subsequent correspondence. In a letter of May 21, 1948, Arendt responds to some "outlines" Riesman had sent her by commending his concept of the "autonomous" inner-directed type (which she prefers to "Max Weber's 'protestant' "),[37] offering some remarks on the distortions to which interviews are prone, and making two observations pertinent to totalitarianism. First, Arendt approves of the distinction in the draft of *The Lonely Crowd*[38] between "apathetic" (tradition and other-directed) and "indignant" (waning inner-directed) types and agrees, further, that indignation is essentially a non-political attitude. Worse, to the extent that indignant people reject the world and its limitations, they are attracted to the grandiose claims of totalitarian movements. "You remember, of course, that the rise of the fascist movements was not determined by adherents gained from other parties, but simply by the extent to which people who had never voted, could be mobilized. Your differentiation between indignation and apathy might make it possible to calculate the totalitarian potential in every country."[39]

Second, Arendt queries a formulation Riesman furnished in one of his outlines that depicted contemporary Russia as nurturing a "marketing type" highly sensitive to success and to the judgments of others. Such a designation, Arendt protests, minimizes the extent to which the modern Russian has adapted to totalitarian conditions.[40] A more apposite description, anticipated by Hobbes, for this "new type of man who wants only to fit," is a "functioning type" whose "only ideal of himself is to be well adjusted, to fit well, and whose only ideal of life is to go on functioning unto death, that is, for whom spontaneity no longer exists." This functioning type is not motivated by the prospect of success because, in Russia, "success has no longer anything whatsoever to do with what one does oneself, but is simply determined by good or ill luck."[41]

Ten months later, Arendt returned to the issue of apathy by distinguishing with greater precision two kinds of attitude it allows: that of the person who feels well integrated into, and sufficiently represented by, the political order, and "the resentful apathy of modern masses who feel that this whole game really does not concern them at all."[42] Moreover, it is a mistake to assume that those who abstain from voting, or who

vote irregularly, are disenchanted with the system per se. On the contrary, they may simply feel that political arrangements work well enough without them and that, by world standards, modern times for Americans are better than satisfactory. By the same token, it is an error, Arendt maintains, to assume that such individuals are not good citizens. "I know of people who never voted and still wrote outraged letters to Congressmen and even the President when American citizens of Japanese origins were interned."[43]

Another bone of contention for Arendt was the tendency of Riesman to emphasize the intimate liaison between politics and a healthy personality;[44] to suggest, in other words, that politics belongs "to those individual needs without which one is not a well-rounded personality or has not developed all of one's potentialities."[45] Arendt objects that even for an engaged individual like herself it is "good books, good music, and good friends" that meet her personal needs, not politics.[46] In the political arena, people meet as formally equal citizens who inhabit a world in common, despite, by the nature of things, diverging in countless other ways. Protection and concern for the well-being of this "world," rather than individual fulfillment or self-realization, is the presupposition of political life.[47] Personal satisfaction "in political activities is, it seems to me, the psychological prerequisite of the man who makes politics his career, the statesman, the politician, the diplomat etc., but not of citizens."[48]

Riesman responded to Arendt's comments by accepting some of her strictures on the limitations of the interview technique and by also agreeing that the "indignant person is ripe for totalitarian movements. Before I had your letter, I had just completed a case study of the sort just mentioned where this point is established concretely for a young Stalinist."[49] On Arendt's "functioning type," Riesman wishes to reflect more.[50] But his main concern in those early days was to recruit Arendt, a "historian,"[51] to survey comparatively the characterological terrain. In November 1948, Riesman attempted to procure a grant between $500 and $600 on Arendt's behalf that would permit her "to write an historical chapter, dealing with the problems of tracing changing character structure in the Western world." In such wise, the collaboration "might help to end the isolation between history and social psychology."[52]

Riesman could not have known that with each clarification of his project, and with each apparent inducement, Arendt must have been

further repulsed from collaboration. Arendt had as little time for social psychology, indeed for psychology *tout court*, as she did for the sociology of knowledge, another of Riesman's interests. Moreover, while Riesman was disarmingly frank that the interview component of *The Lonely Crowd* was subsidiary to the authors' own personal "experiences of living in America—the people we have met, the jobs we have held, the movies we have seen"[53]—this did not suggest a nonchalance toward rigorous methodology. Far from it, Riesman evinced a deep interest in methodological questions and kept abreast of the latest techniques in interviewing, survey, and market research.[54] Arendt, conversely, was deeply suspicious of these "behavioral sciences." In the "conceptual swamps" of the sociologists and psychologists, she complained to Karl Jaspers, "everything founders and sinks," and while those professional obfuscators "are only a symptom of the mass society . . . they play an independent role as well."[55]

But if formal collaboration was not to be, Riesman nonetheless took great pains to study Arendt's work closely and to convey his admiration for its remarkable qualities. On Arendt's analysis of imperialist "expansion," he declared himself to be "very much stimulated,"[56] a condition that was only heightened once he saw the draft manuscript of part 3 of *Origins*.[57] "I am simply overwhelmed by your vision," he enthused after reading Arendt's discussion of the relationship between "elite and mob."[58] Four months later, reflecting on the danger of mass superfluity, he confessed, "It's not your fault that your book made such an impression on me that I keep thinking about it and keep thinking of new problems to throw at you."[59] Yet as Riesman reflected on Arendt's key propositions in *Origins*, he became increasingly skeptical of their cogency.

His chief disagreement with her centered on the limits, fault lines, and dislocations of totalitarian power. That Hitler and Stalin were motivated by fanatical and evil objectives, Riesman was of no doubt. But he cautioned against a view that ascribed to them a degree of calculation, a "malign logic,"[60] that took little account of happenstance. "You assume . . . that the Nazis knew at the beginning what they wanted at the end," Riesman wrote to Arendt on June 8, 1949, but were they not like upwardly mobile youth who find themselves "surprised and unprepared by the rapidity" of their ascent and who are then compelled to improvise their next move?[61] Repeatedly, Riesman accused Arendt of treating "an accident as a rational calculation,[62] of analytically marginalizing the bureaucratic morass and conflicting interests in which every totalitarian

plan is entangled."[63] "The danger of assuming that what happened had to happen (which is different from assuming that one can explain it retrospectively) always confronts the historian who attempts to be more than a narrator of antiquities."[64] Riesman's charge was more damaging than it first appeared, for had not Arendt attacked social science precisely for its over-rationalized and deterministic view of human conduct? Now Riesman was accusing her of recapitulating the same mistakes of the tradition she assailed.[65]

Arendt also tended to view totalitarianism as omnipotent, a portrayal that Riesman believed to be both erroneous and dangerous. It is not only that the projects of a monomaniac or a clique are constrained by the environment in which they ricochet. Whatever the Politburo's ambitions and its demands for unconditional obedience, it cannot escape the limits—"jurisdictional dispute, personal caprice and connection, or luck"[66]—that constantly frustrate its objectives. It is also that a perception of total domination "greatly overestimate[s] the capacity of totalitarianism to restructure human personality."[67] The German character structure after the war did not appear to be appreciably different from that before it.[68] And even the terror in the Soviet Union had not been able to "destroy all bonds of organization among its victims."[69] To accept, or suggest, the possibility of omnipotence was to "subtly succumb to the appeal of an evil mystery; there is a long tradition of making Satan attractive in spite of ourselves."[70] The direct target of these comments is Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, a book that Riesman described as "sadistic" and "symptomatic," a "fantasy of omnipotent totalitarian impressiveness which I think may itself, among those who admire efficiency and have little faith in man, be an appeal of totalitarianism for those outside its present reach."[71] But it is likely that Arendt herself was implicated in Riesman's objections.

In *The Origins of Totalitarianism* and elsewhere,[72] Arendt portrays concentration camp inmates as utterly helpless and devoid of agency, save for their general human characteristics of spontaneity, plurality, and unreliability that the regime busily attempts to efface. The camps are institutions that not only "kill the juridical person in man,"[73] but also "murder . . . the moral person in man"[74] and destroy his "unique identity."[75] In fairness, Arendt states that total domination cannot change human nature but only destroy it.[76] Yet this qualification stands uneasily with other remarks of hers that suggest the Nazis did in fact succeed in metamorphosing their

captives. "Actually," Arendt observes, "the experience of the concentration camps does show that human beings can be transformed into specimens of the human animal,"[77] while elsewhere she describes the death factories as producing a "primal equality" in which humans become "like cattle, like matter, like things that had neither body nor soul; nor even a physiognomy upon which death could stamp its seal."[78] And regarding totalitarian societies at large—that is, social relations *beyond the camps*—Arendt emphasizes the role of an ideological "supersense" that annihilates "common sense," and imposes a logical consistency on experience that is thoroughly spurious.[79] Later, in one of her most celebrated essays, she elaborates on this argument by depicting totalitarian societies as dominated by ideology and "total terror."[80]

To be sure, Arendt never believed that totalitarianism would conquer the whole globe. By the time her correspondence with Riesman began, she had seen the obliteration of Nazi Germany and was under no illusion that Bolshevism could subjugate the world.[81] But within *already established* totalitarian societies, Arendt gives not a single example of individuals who, in some part, escaped its ambitions to dominate them utterly. Similarly, she offers no clue of the furtive stratagems by means of which individuals sought to retain their sanity or exercise their agency.[82] The result is a picture of human life that is "monolithic,"[83] relentlessly bleak, indeed lifeless, of a system that appears to operate under its own laws. Riesman's insight that "totalitarian control was an unreachable ideal," that there was a difference between "inefficient Stalinism and less efficient Nazism" opened him, he remarked in one retrospective essay, to "attacks then and thereafter from often newly zealous anticommunists." Nonetheless, he refused to believe that totalitarian systems "would forever remain unchangeable from inside."[84]

That insight stimulated Riesman's curiosity in the everyday ruses that actors employ to evade totalitarian ideology and brute terror. Arendt's abstract Augustinian idea of freedom as a "new beginning" was all well and good, but Riesman wished to show how a liberty of sorts was actually exercised in existing totalitarian societies, to demonstrate the "sheer unheroic cussed resistance to totalitarian efforts to make a new man."[85] And here his native discernment, combined with a recently acquired training in social science, gave him a perspective on totalitarian conditions that was far more politically astute than Arendt recognized. The University of Chicago, where Riesman came up to speed on social scientific methods,

was the heartland of American sociological ethnography. The interviews that formed the basis of *Faces in the Crowd* indicated the malleability of human beings, but also their ingenious responses to social pressures. All this suggested to Riesman, as he turned to consider totalitarian societies, that everyday, routine human pliability was a double-edged sword. On the one side, it facilitated the hubristic objectives of those who sought to refashion human beings for the totalitarian project. On the other side, it was this flexibility that enabled totalitarian subjects to survive within the fissures of the system: to cooperate without being cooperative, to obey devoid of enthusiasm, to perform like dutiful citizens while remaining inwardly skeptical. We often fail to appreciate, he remarked, that people's capacity "to fit, part time, into such a world is what saves them from having to fit into it as total personalities."[86] That extends to the "ability of human beings to dramatize, to play roles, to behave in ways that seem contradictory only if we do not appreciate the changes in scene and audience."[87]

Riesman knew what he was talking about: a visit to the Soviet Union in the summer of 1931[88] apprised him of the manner in which totalitarian subjects "develop ritualized ways of handling their political exhortations without inner conviction."[89] In two separate recollections of that trip, Riesman drew a social landscape first sketched in the exchanges with Arendt. On hard-sleeper train rides, in animated conversations with such luminaries as Karl Radek (later liquidated), and during a spell in hospital being treated for a knee injury, Riesman discovered a society that combined fear with stoicism, disorder, and rampant corruption, attributes that offered a precarious sanctuary from the terror and ideology that Arendt highlighted. The Soviet experience revealed "that in a large, incipiently industrial society no amount of terror could create complete internalized belief and that at the margin there could even be disobedience."[90] Extrapolating from that experience in a 1951 meeting of the American Committee for Cultural Freedom, at which Arendt, Bruno Bettelheim, and Nathan Leites were present, Riesman urged his colleagues to consider "some of the defenses people have against totalitarianism." Chief among them was neither republican pride nor virtue but the "apathy, corruption, free enterprise, crime" that was endemic to totalitarian societies. Such features did not challenge the totalitarian system, and may even have reinforced its workings by enabling people to compromise with "the system

as a whole."[91] But they did enable their subaltern agents, through a combination of ingenuity and withdrawal, to engage in what Riesman called "resistance quiescences": those "quieter modes of resistance" in which people bow their heads in mock mental obeisance but refuse "to internalize the system's ethical norms."[92] Riesman made a similar point in a review of Margaret Mead's *Soviet Attitudes Towards Authority*. After noting that the "human being in the USSR appears to fight back and to find in apathy and petty deception the sovereign remedies against the great deceptions and impressiveness of ideology,"[93] he invoked this instructive, though restrained, contrast:

> [I]n its style and its conclusions, [Mead's book] stands in a paradoxical relation to Hannah Arendt's *The Origins of Totalitarianism*. From the latter book, impassioned and lyrical, emerges a picture of nightmarish police efficiency, applied to utterly diabolic and wild ends; from the former, we get a picture of barely averted chaos, struggling with realistic ends such as production and rearmament. Dr. Mead's interdisciplinary analysis in terms of social structure and motivation may tend to over-interpret Soviet officialdom as, not "just like us," but as understandably different—too understandably; whereas Dr. Arendt's more mystical[94] insistence of the savagery of the society may slightly overestimate the power of men permanently to transform their victims into beasts: the relatively undestroyed humanity of major elements in the Soviet population is for me the most encouraging conclusion of the Mead book. Thus, in spite of mutual suspicion and ceaseless fear of betrayal precisely by those who are most close to one, friendship seems not wholly to have perished but even at times to appear as a defense against the terror.[95]

Riesman acknowledged that there was no way of knowing what proportion of people had managed to defend themselves, unobtrusively, against the totalitarian onslaught. But one possible index of a regime's inability to penetrate all sectors of society was the presence of corruption—that great "antidote to fanaticism"—and the apparent impossibility, despite numerous campaigns, to eliminate it.[96] "Monetary rewards have their own logic," especially under conditions of scarcity and a black market where managers are expected to meet quotas. The attitude of business-as-usual is "a wonderful 'charm' against ideologies," because it expresses the real exigencies of people's lives[97] and shows the lack of efficiency of

totalitarian domination.[98] In a letter to Arendt, Riesman further distinguished between types of corruption. He remarked:

> Corruption makes the Nazis less totalitarian since one can buy ancestry, a little freedom, exile, and gravy. Communist corruption is different. It is not personal and individual but rather the stealing of parts in factories, etc. Corruption, moreover, is a human vice as against the inhuman vices of totalitarianism. It prevents the regime from being totally impressive ideologically, since the swindle is evident.[99]

Arendt replied to a number of Riesman's criticisms both in their correspondence and during a meeting of the American Committee for Cultural Freedom in November 1951. She conceded that her portrayals of Hitler and Stalin might have exaggerated the extent of their calculation—"I am trying to tone these passages down," she wrote to Riesman in June 1949—and acknowledged the "stubbornness of reality which filters back into the totalitarian fiction." Nonetheless, she went on to say, in social constructionist vein, that reality itself requires safeguarding if it is not to be destroyed. This was an oblique reference to her contention that totalitarian regimes were actually in a position to fabricate reality to an unprecedented degree. Hence, the Nazis were able to prove that Jews were inhuman by creating the camps that produced their inhumanity. Similarly, Nazis "instituted chaos to show they were right when they said that Europe had only the alternative between Nazi rule and chaos."[100] As for corruption, Arendt agreed about its humanizing potential but believed its significance to be negligible both in Germany, where one was unable to buy ancestry, and in Russia, where the falsification of accounts by factory managers was "swindle" rather than "corruption"; that is, it took place as part of a carefully orchestrated fantasy that allowed the regime to liquidate managers at will. The only exception of any significance to this pattern was the concentration camp, where corruption played "an all-important role" as a means of demoralizing its inmate population.

Or, at least, this is what Arendt maintained in the letter from which I have been quoting.[101] Yet in the Cultural Freedom meeting she appears to have revised, or at least qualified, this argument. There, Riesman records her saying that the degree of prisoner rule and corruption that developed in the "camps described by [Eugen] Kogon and [David] Rousset were exceptions, and that in most [cases] no such prisoner ingenuities and defenses developed."[102] Riesman was skeptical. He was right to be

so. The German camps Arendt knew most about when she wrote *The Origins of Totalitarianism* were those of Dachau and Buchenwald, the institutions in which her chief sources—Kogon, Rousset, and Bettelheim—were incarcerated.[103] Of the "eastern" camps in Poland she had little information, and, unsurprisingly, she was not familiar with Primo Levi's *Survival in Auschwitz*, first published in a print run of 2,500 copies in 1947.[104] Yet corruption and *Kapo* rule were rampant in Auschwitz. Primo Levi says of the *Lager* that it was a place "wholly devoid of free will, as our every action is, in time and place, the only conceivable one."[105] To that extent, Arendt's analysis appears to be vindicated. Yet Levi also examines in detail the stratification order and the endemic venality of the camp together with the survival strategies of those who, for instance, traded their meager belongings on the "Exchange Market" furthest away from the Nazi huts, despite the "frequent swoops of Kapos or *Blockälteste*."[106]

Equally, Arendt's contention that human uniqueness was obliterated is contradicted by Tsvetan Todorov's analysis of survivor testimonies. This shows that, despite everything, a measure of ethical life survived in the camps: that alongside "vital values"—modes of individual survival—stood "moral values,"[107] a tenacious belief that "staying human is more important than staying alive." Accordingly, some camp inmates affirmed their dignity through the practice of "ordinary virtues" such as keeping clean, caring for others, and continuing to exercise the life of the mind.[108]

Arendt's depiction of the wider German society, infused by total terror, was also hyperbole—just as Riesman suspected and as subsequent research has confirmed. Naturally, those who opposed, or seemed to oppose, Nazi rule were violently hunted down and destroyed, but Arendt's concern in *Origins* was not with these islands of dissent. On her account, Germany became fully totalitarian only once open rebellion was eliminated. Yet if that is the case, most "ordinary" Germans did not know that they were living in a terrorized society. First, Germans who were neither clandestine communists, Jews, radical priests, Jehovah's Witnesses, nor Freemasons did not emerge as Nazi targets and, consequently, felt safe. Second, the majority of Germans supported the regime and voluntarily complied with edicts they deemed legitimate. Finally, complaints about, and frustration toward, the regime were routinely ignored by the Gestapo, whose lack of resources compelled them to discriminate between pesky grumblers and determined adversaries. The underfunded and undermanned secret police

were hardly "the super-efficient and super-competent" service Arendt perceived them to be.[109] Consider, for instance, Eric Johnson's meticulous study of the Krefeld, Bergheim, and Cologne Gestapo, in which the author observes that Nazi terror, far from being "blanket, indiscriminate," was above all selective, a fact that "helps to explain its success."

> Nazi Germany was . . . a police state, but one that allowed most of its citizens considerable room for their regular activities and for the venting of everyday frustrations. . . . [M]ost Germans may not even have realized until very late in the war, if ever, that they were living in a vile dictatorship. They knew there were victims . . . but they perceived most of [them] as criminals with whom they had little or nothing in common. By their own admission on our surveys and in our ordinary interviews, the great majority of ordinary Germans believed that they had little reason to fear the Gestapo or the concentration camps.[110]

My point is not that Arendt was completely unaware of this situation. It is that, unlike Riesman, she took little interest in it. As a result, the sociology of everyday life in totalitarian societies is never integrated into her *political* analysis; had it been, Arendt would have been compelled to qualify, and perhaps reconfigure, her theory. Worse, her understanding of quotidian existence was actually impeded by two concepts—mass atomization and classlessness—that rendered sociological analysis unnecessary. According to Arendt, "[t]otalitarian movements are mass organizations of atomized, isolated individuals," whose most conspicuous characteristic is their loyalty to the movement itself. In turn, such loyalty "can only be expected from the completely isolated human being who, without any other social ties to family, friends, comrades, or even mere acquaintances, derives his sense of having a place in the world only from his belonging to a movement, his membership in a party."[111] Arendt adduced no evidence for this human atomization, and again, modern scholarship finds little support for it. She was right to say that National Socialism (let us stick to the German case) could not be plausibly explained by reducing it to class. But rather than argue that Nazi totalitarianism was built upon the dissolution of classes, it would have been more accurate to say that support for National Socialism cut across class lines. To be sure, Arendt's position was different from that of Theodor Geiger, Sigmund Neumann, Harold Lasswell, Joachim Fest, and Karl Dietrich Bracher, who argued that "fascism" was overwhelmingly a petty bourgeois movement. Masses embrace more

than the petty bourgeoisie. Unfortunately, however, her mass reductionism is just as problematic as the class reductionism she rejected. Consider the following statement:

> For masses, in contrast to classes, want victory and success as such, in their most abstract form; they are not bound together by those special collective interests which they feel to be essential to their survival as a group and which they therefore may assert even in the face of overwhelming odds. More important to them than the cause that may be victorious, or the particular enterprise that may be a success, is the victory of no matter what cause, and success in no matter what enterprise.[112]

That portrait smacks of caricature, the triumph of a certain kind of philosophy over sociology. Riesman sensed that the reality was far more complex. Others have shown it to be so. Richard Hamilton reveals that NSDAP electoral support varied markedly by religious confession (for instance, in villages and small towns, Protestants were markedly attached to National Socialism, while Catholics were mostly averse to it). Equally, his research into voting records of fourteen of Germany's largest cities found that support for Hitler was strongly correlated with neighborhood prosperity:

> In Hamburg, for example, where the party gained one-third of the vote in [the Reichstag election of] July 1932, the strongest support came from the three best-off districts, the percentages ranging from 41 to 48. The metropolitan area's most affluent suburban community gave the National Socialists 54 percent. With corrections, adjusting for the presence of Jews, Catholics, and working class minorities, the levels for the remaining upper- and middle-class voters would run well above those figures.[113]

With a somewhat different emphasis, Michael Mann comes to broadly similar conclusions. "Fascism" certainly mobilized people from all classes. But not only were its militants a highly integrated group from backgrounds that were, in the main, anything but marginal, atomized, or dysfunctional, its supporters also evinced a distinctive economic sectoral bias. National Socialism disproportionately attracted public sector workers and professionals such as lawyers, teachers, civil servants, doctors, and the police—people, that is, occupationally remote from the heartland of class conflict in urban heavy industry or manufacture. Further, the perpetrators of ethnic cleansing were far from being the frightened jobholders of Arendt's

description. Collecting the biggest sample ever assembled of Nazi war criminals convicted of murderous cleansing—1,581 of them in all—Mann reveals that individuals from border regions or "lost territories" are significantly overrepresented: notably, Alsatian Germans and ethnic Germans from Poland and other eastern areas. Many had been homeless or ended up in refugee camps (a fact that is at least consistent with Arendt's argument about the masses). They were embittered and ideological. From this circumstance Mann infers that anti-Semitism was part of a broader ethnic imperial revisionism by people who considered themselves to be the real victims. And like Nazis in general, perpetrator biographies show a sectoral bias, concentrating in professional, public, state-funded occupations. Perpetrators typically had a Nazi career. They were not "ordinary men" or ordinary bourgeois jobholders, but people who since the First World War had taken an active part in street fighting, police duties, and Germany's own euthanasia program. Many were "old Nazis," having joined the party early. Before that, 30 percent had been members of the paramilitary *Freikorps*.[114]

I hear a sigh of irritation from the reader. Is it fair to hold Arendt up to modern historical scholarship, judging her by a standard that was impossible in her own day? Did I not say in the Introduction to this book that I would avoid playing the pedant's role? The problem with that complaint is that Arendt did, in fact, have a source at her disposal—cited in the bibliography of the first and third editions of *Origins*—which pointed her in a markedly different direction to the one she took on the "masses": Theodore Abel's *Why Hitler Came into Power* ([1938] 1986). As we saw in Chapter 1, Abel let NSDAP supporters speak for themselves. His six hundred Nazi life histories of workers, farmers, soldiers, youth, "anti-Semites," and others show a range of motives for supporting National Socialism that, in their very humanity, belie the notion of "the masses." The result is a social portrait in which confession, geography, and economic sector all have their place. Thomas Childers, himself a beneficiary of Abel's work, says of *Why Hitler Came into Power*, "I know no more powerful or revealing grassroots testimony in the vast literature on the NSDAP."[115] Arendt seems to have ignored it.

Moreover, by describing totalitarian societies as classless, Arendt was deflected from an examination of the strata that totalitarianism leaves intact and their variable proximity to terror and ideology. In the Soviet Union, for instance, intellectuals and party cadres were far more likely to

be exposed to arbitrary terror than were ordinary wage earners: in fact, the latter were hit harder by the draconian labor laws of 1938 and 1940 (which mandated strict penalties for absenteeism and lateness) than they were by the Great Purges, while for the peasantry the chief trauma was collectivization.[116] There was always a radius of terror in Stalin's Russia that the prefix "total" ignores. "To sit at the bottom" and avoid responsibility "was safer" than occupying a position closer to the pinnacle of power.[117] Nadezhda Mandelstam recalled that "people talked much more freely and openly in working-class homes than in intellectual ones in those savage times. After all the equivocations of Moscow and the frantic attempts to justify the terror, we were quite startled to hear the mercilessly outspoken way in which our hosts talked."[118] Sarah Davies' research on the Great Terror also shows that "official propaganda was not universally believed, that numerous unofficial interpretations of the events circulated at the grassroots, and that *some* people did strongly object to aspects of the terror."[119] True, in contrast to Nazi Germany, most Soviet citizens were fearful of the regime, knowing all too well the waves of terror it could unleash. But this coexisted less with ideological fervor or one-dimensional dogmatism than with resentment of party privilege, skepticism—"a refusal to take the regime's most serious pronouncements fully seriously was the norm"[120]—and the proverbial Russian fatalism: "This too will pass."

The regime, as we know, had its supporters among youth, officeholders, and party members. Yet, in considering "Homo Sovieticus" as a peculiar hybrid, Sheila Fitzpatrick is struck by a species characterized by "outward conformity" rather than motivated by ideology. She observes, "*Homo Sovieticus* was a string-puller, an operator, a time-server, a freeloader, a mouther of slogans. . . . But, above all, he was a survivor."[121] And survival was facilitated by the Russian facility for speculation and *blat* ("pull"), which Fitzpatrick defines as "a system of reciprocal relationships involving goods and favors that, in contrast to patronage relations, entail equals and are nonhierarchical," but which Petr Gattsuk, a citizen from Novgorod, characterized in 1940 as little more than "swindling, cheating, stealing, speculation, slipshod practices, and so on."[122] Boris Souvarine put it this way:

> If there still exists in the U.S.S.R. a more or less directed economy, it is only by the infringement of the plans, by violations and transgression which are

> called by the untranslatable slang name of *blatt*, which expresses the very antithesis of plan, personal combinations substituted for stable rules which make it possible to get around various obstacles. The *blatt* obviates by personal initiative the impossibilities conceived by the central authority, but it cannot solve, against the police State, all the problems.[123]

From the official Communist Party's point of view, this was corruption by another name, a social pestilence that subverted the official economic system by erecting alongside it a "second economy based on personal contacts and patronage." For other citizens, conversely, that parallel economy ameliorated the acute shortages of Soviet life and, Fitzpatrick maintains, "was probably more important in ordinary people's lives than the private sector had ever been during NEP."[124] A broadly comparable institution to *blat* in China is known as *guanxi wang*, an ancient practice of mutual aid, based on personal connections, that survived under Maoism, and through which the official ideology of equalitarianism or "redness" was regularly bypassed.[125] But even without *guanxi*, Mao's totalitarian determination to transform Chinese society and its people into a "virtuocracy" was self-defeating.[126] As Susan Shirk shows so well, the Maoist project to destroy self-interest, competitiveness, and family preference degenerated into a syndrome of opportunism, sycophancy, patronage, avoidance of activists, and privatization that conduced to weakening the very ideology that virtuocracy was supposed to implant.[127]

Conclusion

To say that Arendt was simply wrong about aspects of totalitarian rule or that she extrapolated beyond what the evidence allowed is only part of the story. She was also an acute observer; indeed, no one has written more perceptively about the permanent revolution that constituted totalitarian movements, or the surreal world they created. The larger problem with Arendt's analysis lies elsewhere: in her inattentiveness to social relationships and to the impact they had in mediating, refracting, and impeding the regime's goals. Social networks, in her account of totalitarianism, appear simply to absorb totalitarianism; they have no vibrancy of their own and rarely surface as objects of sustained investigation. It is the *regime's* institutions—the secret police, the party apparatus, the leaders—that command Arendt's attention. In contrast, later historians have pinpointed the "wide disparity between central pronouncements

and local outcomes, the relative autonomy of some social processes, and more ambiguous multi-causal origins of terror."[128] And this was precisely the terrain that Riesman, in those early years, sought to map out, as a corrective to the oppressive weight of Arendtian categories.[129]

In this effort, one might add, social science complemented Riesman's own experimental, pragmatic temperament. It was thus entirely characteristic that while his family suffered no hardship during the Great Depression, the young Riesman decided to learn more about its impact firsthand. Dismayed at the complacent attitudes of affluent friends and acquaintances who refused to believe there was a depression at all, who lambasted Franklin Roosevelt's call for a New Deal, and who insisted that there was work for those willing to find it, Riesman decided, in the summer of 1934, to test those opinions. Dressed in Levi's and carrying a poncho slung over his back, he sought a job in Detroit at the Ford Motor Company River Rouge plant; failed, after repeated attempts, to get one; became sick; and lived briefly in a federal transients' shelter. There he met craftsmen who had been unwillingly unemployed for three to four years. His conclusion arose neither from logical deduction nor from newspaper accounts, but from what he saw with his own eyes: "There was real unemployment," he recorded, "not malingering, by proud Americans who used the available improvised public services only as a last resort. These wandering men, who had left their families in search of work, were in no way revolutionary. They had retained their faith in America and were convinced that the Great Depression would pass, as other depressions had, and that they would find work again."[130]

Ironically, it was Riesman, the social scientist ostensibly tainted by pseudo-universalistic theory, who was especially sensitive to individual cases and to evidence; and Arendt, supposedly the practitioner of phronesis, who constantly advanced arguments that the material could not bear. Where Riesman discovered distortions or exaggerations within social science perspectives—determinist and procrustean attitudes that effaced the "multiplicity of roles" and "emotional responses" evident among human beings—he was ready trenchantly to criticize them.[131] But in another irony, and as we have seen, these are the self-same criticisms that Riesman makes of Arendt herself, who, by inference, commits the errors of her putative theoretical adversaries. Riesman challenged the view "that social science, in its effort to probe and understand our times, must necessarily miss the basic evils and the deep irrationalities of totalitarianism."[132] He

insisted tartly that "a refusal to use all available techniques for examination [of concentration and labor camps] can also appear as a noble disdain for evil."[133] Moreover, it was not just Arendt's tendency to rely on "shaky evidence," to skate "daringly over documentary lacunae," that disturbed him. It was her curious argument that "while thoroughly unutilitarian in pursuit of such older goals as wealth and power, [totalitarianism] is ferociously efficient in seeking total domination as such." Against such a view of "organizational genius" Riesman suspected the "flatfooted brutality and incompetence" of regimes that were never fully omnipotent.[134]

Coda: Czesław Miłosz and Totalitarian Dramaturgy

Neither Arendt nor Riesman had the opportunity to experience deep immersion within a totalitarian state.[135] The great Polish poet Czesław Miłosz did. *The Captive Mind*, written in Paris exile between 1951 and 1952, is his depiction of that experience. A scintillating account of everyday life under totalitarianism, it offers far more evidence for Riesman's image of adept role players than for Arendt's snapshot of ideologically impregnated subjects. Social actors filled with tension, conflicting emotions, and at the root of it all, the compressed energy derived from an almost unbearable situation—this is the affective landscape that Miłosz illuminates in an écorché that has never been equaled.

To understand the dynamics of inner life under communism, Miłosz invoked the Shiite stratagem of *Ketman* as described by Joseph Arthur Comte de Gobineau (who served as a French diplomat in Persia between 1858 and 1863). Ketman is the art of dissimulation, a tactic employed by Islamic dissidents to disguise their true feelings when faced by the powerful, be they the infidel or the Sunni mullah. By exercising the wiles of Ketman, the embattled agent manages to survive in a dangerous environment. His fervent devotion to official doctrine in the presence of others is a sham, but he takes pride in his own cunning. Fooling the oppressor offers a modicum of satisfaction, a sense of intellectual and moral superiority over those deceived. In *The Captive Mind*, Miłosz applies this "striking analogy," derived from "the Islamic civilization of the Middle East," to the ostensibly "new mores" of the People's Democracies.[136]

Ketman, I said, is characterized by duplicity. But duplicity is possible only for the person who is aware of the game that is being played and his or her role in it. Arendt's view of ideology—to be explored more fully in

the next chapter—was that it impeded or prohibited the thinking process. Miłosz agreed that fanaticism, the propagandist division of people into loyalists and renegades, institutionalized lying, strict censorship, the orchestration of public activities, were all salient features of Polish life under communism. But he also showed just how accomplished totalitarian subjects became in protecting small corners of their identities. It is the fine grain of everyday life that interests him, its pathos, compromises, and small victories. Ketman, he argues, is emphatically plural, rather than monolithic.[137] Duplicity takes many forms—national, aesthetic, revolutionary, professional, metaphysical, and ethical. In analyzing each of them, Miłosz pauses to say explicitly to whom they refer: workers, peasants, middle-class intellectuals, working-class intellectuals, youth, Soviet citizens, non-Soviet citizens, and so on. No homogeneous masses here. For instance, the species he calls National Ketman—whose signature combination is vocal praise for Russia's astounding accomplishments in every field of endeavor, with a secret "unbounded contempt for Russia as a barbaric country"—is rampant among workers and peasants of the new People's Democracies who experienced the behavior of the liberating Russian Army at first hand.[138] The Ketman of those who love their own country, but who are prohibited from celebrating spontaneously and sincerely its cultural uniqueness, is above all direct and emotional. Yet patriotic Ketman is also shared by the "the young intelligentsia of working class origin" whose basic opinion is "Socialism—yes, Russian—no."[139] Many different types of people appear in Miłosz's tableau: Alpha, the moralist; Beta, the disappointed lover; Gamma, the slave of history; Delta, the troubadour. All of them are tormented or ambivalent, a far cry from the merciless, deductive—and hence solely cognitive—frenzy evoked by Arendt, and which we will examine presently.[140]

In contrast, Miłosz homed in on the emotional energy, the passions, that Ketman as a "social institution," or an interaction ritual, generates.[141] Ketman is dramaturgy: a socially shaped mode of concealment that is vigorous and dynamic. Face-to-face encounters with those who threaten a person's existence ensure a pervasive theatricality in all public walks of life, including the office, factory, and meeting hall.

> Such acting is a highly developed craft that places a premium upon mental alertness. Before it leaves the lips, every word must be evaluated as to its

> consequences. A smile that appears at the wrong moment, a glance that is not all it should be can occasion dangerous suspicions and accusations. Even one's gesture, tone of voice, or preference for certain kinds of neckties are interpreted as signs of one's political tendencies.[142]

In a country dominated by the Russian Imperium and its agents, nothing in the front stage can be spontaneous or relaxed; all actions must be calculated to convince and deceive, both activities being interchangeable. Totalitarian subjects in the People's Democracies perform as members of a "mass play," rather than behaving like automata. They must tune themselves to the appropriate pitch, calibrate every visible movement, stay perpetually vigilant. All this requires skill, ingenuity, and attention. Ketman is thus a kind of self-masking that parallels the authorities' unrelenting search to unmask new enemies. It requires the dexterity and concentration worthy of an acrobat. Yet such theater becomes, after a time, deeply imprinted upon the mind and emotions. "After long acquaintance with his role, a man grows into it so closely that he can no longer differentiate his true self from the self he simulates, so that even the most intimate of individuals speak to each other in Party slogans."[143] Such embedded behavior has the paradoxical effect of enabling the actor to relax somewhat, because, as a kind of second nature, it releases him momentarily from the need for eternal vigilance.

What are the consequences of such a life for intellectuals? As with other people, the intellectual must be constantly on guard against indiscretion. Yet, to the degree that indoctrination penetrates society, Ketman also gains ground. Hungry for strangeness, idiosyncrasy, and the sights, sounds, and textures of beautiful things, totalitarian subjects seek escape from the uniform terminal drabness of the regime. Ketman also "sharpens the intellect."[144] The scientist who officially bows to the latest nonscientific edict is driven deeper into his subject and his laboratory, havens from a mad world. Scholars no longer able to discourse on modern noncommunist writers plunge into new activities: children's books, translations, reconstructions of the sixteenth century. Caught in the eddy of everyday life, intellectuals develop a keener eye for substance and permanence, sublimating their talents into any endeavor that feels authentic. Intellectuals in totalitarian countries cannot afford the ennui of their Western counterparts, for whom freedom has become a burden and where everything they "think and feel evaporates like steam in an open

expanse."[145] Uneasy with conclusions that are always tentative, they tend to crave the certainty that communism appears to offer. Intellectuals in Soviet-dominated countries, by contrast,

> live within a wall which they batter themselves against, but which provides them with a resistance that helps them define themselves. Steam that once evaporated into the air becomes a force under pressure. An even greater energy is generated in those who must hide their Communist convictions, that is, who must practice Ketman. . . . In short, Ketman means self-realization *against* something.[146]

The Captive Mind was published two years after *The Origins of Totalitarianism* appeared. It offers the best picture we have of those tactical, energetic modes of defiance that Riesman pressed Arendt to recognize.

§ 3 Ideology, Terror, and the "Mysterious Margin"

Raymond Aron versus Hannah Arendt

Of all the European sociologists who came to maturity in the 1930s, none was more creative or more versatile than Raymond Aron. Scholar and professional journalist, political advocate, and foil to statesmen in France, America, and Israel, Aron was a phenomenon in his own day. He is almost unimaginable in ours.

Aron read Hannah Arendt's early political work with a mostly careful and critical eye. He took the trouble both to comment on *The Origins of Totalitarianism* and to offer a contrasting perspective on Bolshevism. Aron believed that the principal axis of division between totalitarianism and constitutional pluralism lay in the role of the political party; Arendt, by contrast, had little to say about political parties, unless it was to contrast them invidiously with the spontaneous participation of revolutionary councils. Where Arendt saw unprecedented events, Aron stressed the dynamic between continuity and "mutation," social logic and chance, necessity and accident, process and drama.[1] To a great extent, he argued, totalitarianism was historically and sociologically intelligible. It could be understood in much the same way as revolutions in general. And from the standpoint of its protagonists, such horrors as Bolshevik collectivization made sense. We will return to these divergences. First, however, let us set the stage for them.

Discovering Germany and Max Weber

Aron first met Hannah Arendt in Paris soon after she arrived there in the fall of 1933. He was more familiar than most Frenchmen with the Ger-

man conditions she had just escaped. Between 1930 and 1933, Aron worked for eighteen months as a teaching assistant in French at the University of Cologne and then moved to Berlin where he was based at the Französisches Akadermikerhaus (also known as the Maison Française). The German sojourn changed his life fundamentally. Discovering the work of Husserl and Heidegger, and the German neo-Kantians, notably, Wilhelm Dilthey and Heinrich Rickert, Aron commenced his lifelong engagement with the philosophy of history. He encountered Karl Mannheim in Frankfurt, and for "six months, to a year," was "a Mannheimian," before publishing in 1935 a far more trenchant and far-reaching evaluation of the sociology of knowledge than Arendt herself ever attempted.[2] But the greatest influence on him was someone for whom Arendt had little enthusiasm: Max Weber, "the sociologist who was also a philosopher."[3]

Weber's sociology preserved philosophy, said Aron, because it dealt with basic questions of human meaning: the significance that men and women confer on their existence and the perverse consequences of their actions. But this was above all a worldly philosophy, a "philosophy of choice,"[4] concerned with social and political institutions, with ethical dilemmas, and with delineating the kind of knowledge that was specific to the human sciences. Weber embodied both scientific rigor and political commitment. Later, Aron's initial embrace of Weber would be tempered with many objections.[5] He would disagree with him on political questions and on epistemology. But, newly discovered, Weber was a watershed in Aron's intellectual and emotional trajectory. Without Weber, it is doubtful that he would have ever become a sociologist. Native French sociology—the Durkheim school—repelled him, and not only because of the master's "divinization of society."[6] The teaching of ethics from the standpoint of something called society struck Aron as naive. Society was not a single, coherent whole, but a reality that was intrinsically plural and conflictual.

It was not only the intellectual impact of Germany on Aron that was a decisive turning point in his life. German politics was also at the forefront of his curiosity and concern. Aron observed the ascent of National Socialist fervor with growing alarm. He heard the speeches of Hitler and Goebbels in Berlin; to judge from the clothing and faces of their audience, he recalled, the Nazi movement attracted people from all social classes. Blond-haired as a young man and blue-eyed, Aron experienced no anti-Semitism personally; he found his students and colleagues

friendly, even welcoming. But of Hitler's "diabolical nature" and of the drift toward war, he was in no doubt.[7] From January 1933, it was clear that Jews and oppositionists were now in mortal danger, that they "were no longer breathing the same air" that other Germans inhaled.[8] From his base at the Berlin Französisches Akademikerhaus, Aron played an active part in helping refugees bound for France. Hannah Arendt knew of that role and respected him for it.[9] And in Paris, courtesy of an introduction by Aron, she attended the Hegel seminars of Alexandre Kojéve at the Ecole des Hautes Etudes.[10] Aron alludes to these "modest services" for Arendt and other German Jews, adding that lack of money and lack of connections were obstacles to doing more.

Their relationship was asymmetrical in another way, too. Aron seems to have genuinely admired Hannah Arendt. At least she certainly thought so. On a visit to Paris in 1952, refugee days behind her, Arendt saw Raymond Aron once again. To her husband, Heinrich Blücher, she confided that Aron "welcomed me with such warmth and friendship that I don't want to say this out loud." The emotion was not reciprocated. Compared with Albert Camus, "the best man they have in France," Aron and the other intellectuals she met were "at most bearable."[11] Three years later she ran into him once more, this time in Milan at a conference organized by the anticommunist Congress for Cultural Freedom. The hedonistic indulgence of the participants was scandalous, she recorded, as they shopped and ate their way through the city. "Everyone is wallowing in unimaginable luxury," she typed from her own luxury hotel. "The Europeans are the worst riffraff the Lord created in His anger. Yesterday Manès Sperber and Raymond Aron and so on and so forth. All of them showing me the deepest respect and a bit of fear. I am overly nice to everyone, as I'm worried that my contempt is oozing out of every pore."[12] An essay of Aron's on industrial society and Western political dialogue, circulated in advance as a discussion paper for a conference in Basel on "tradition and evolution," she "couldn't make much of."[13] Nor could Karl Jaspers, who believed it would encourage waffle from the participants rather than probing discussion.[14] Aron might have been surprised at this hostility had he ever known of it. He seems to have thought that, at the very least, Arendt appreciated the analysis of totalitarianism he offered in *Les Guerres en chaîne*, a book published in the same year that Arendt's own masterwork appeared.[15] (The abbreviated English-language version of *Les Guerres en chaîne*—translated as *The*

Century of Total War [(1954) 1985]—inexplicably omits the chapter on totalitarianism.)

The personal lives of intellectuals are typically less elevated than the best of their work. From the outside, clashes of temperament or the unending search for approval look very much like the emotional froth of precarious egos. Novelists and psychiatrists can doubtless provide illumination; so, too, can conflict sociologists.[16] A different question concerns us here: What united and divided Arendt and Aron as thinkers? At the Ecole Normale Supérieure in the 1920s, Aron was a star student, just as he was an excellent amateur tennis player. Like Hannah Arendt, who after 1945 typically described her métier as "political theory," he had an uneasy relationship to philosophy. With fellow enthusiasts such as Jean-Paul Sartre and Paul Nizan, he plunged into metaphysics, submerging himself for a year in the work of Kant. He attended the Sorbonne lectures of the French neo-Kantian Léon Brunschvicg and of the Durkheimian Célestin Bouglé; his second, still untranslated, book was dedicated to them.[17] But while philosophy engaged his mind, he wanted "simultaneously to be [a] spectator of history in the making and an actor, through words written and spoken, in politics."[18] He sought a path that would satisfy a yearning to understand the world as it is, to know his time "as honestly as possible."[19] Understanding politics requires deep immersion in its problems and the dilemmas they pose for responsible political actors. That, in turn, demands a grasp of history, international relations, and economic policy.[20] Yet knowledge is only one part of understanding. Honesty is required too, for without the willingness to distinguish between the world as it is and as it could or should be, knowledge is sterile.[21] In pluralist societies, the greatest threat to honesty, Aron believed, lay not in the downright lie, but in ideological evasion, a misplaced sense of solidarity, and the unwillingness to express ambivalence. More than anything else, this was the basis of his later clash with French contemporaries such as Jean-Paul Sartre—"the dialectician of the monologue"[22]—Simone de Beauvoir, and, at least for a while, Maurice Merleau-Ponty. Founders of intellectual sects, sermonizers in the classroom, and professional cynics who saw nothing in society but the misuse of power appalled him, especially when they were condensed in the same person.[23] Aron himself did not look for disciples and certainly expected none. Students who attended his lectures remarked on a style—lucid, rigorous, passionately restrained—that left the doctrinaire listener "unarmed and naked on the edge of the abyss."[24]

Both Hannah Arendt and Aron were assimilated, agnostic Jews (so were Mannheim and Riesman), who became politically radicalized only with the rise of the Nazi movement; in his youth, Aron was a pacifist of socialist leaning. Both came to realize that being Jewish was a fate from which there was no escape and from which no escape should be sought. If attacked as a Jew, Hannah Arendt declared, it was incumbent to fight as one. Aron agreed. In 1933, faced by the growing menace of National Socialism, "I adopted once and for all the only attitude that seems to me appropriate: never to conceal my origins, without ostentation, without humility, without compensatory pride."[25] Like Arendt, the great critic of Jewish "exceptionalism," Aron expressed solidarity for Jews from whatever part of Europe they came. "The attempt by French Jews to separate their fate from that of the 'Polacks' disgusted me," Aron recorded.[26] And his remark that it "took war to teach men again that they are citizens before they are individuals" was a statement that Arendt herself could have written.[27]

Raymond Aron's Review of *The Origins of Totalitarianism*

Aron reviewed *The Origins of Totalitarianism* in 1954 for the journal *Critique*.[28] He recognized immediately the book's importance and its power to "bewitch" the reader "by the strength and subtlety of some of its analyses."[29] Nonetheless, his criticisms pull no punches. They begin with the book's "style." Through the pages of *Origins* stream people, nations, parties, and events that, rather like the children in Velásquez's paintings, are connected by family resemblance, yet within a bleak landscape that reminds Aron of George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. "The mediocrity or inhumanity of all those who play a role in the drama are such that, in the end, one sees the world as the totalitarians present it and one risks feeling mysteriously attracted by the horror or the absurdity that is described."[30] But it is not just Hannah Arendt's apparent fascination with the "monsters she takes from reality" that is disturbing to Aron; it is also a "logical imagination" that exaggerates their characteristics to the "point of perfection." Convinced as she was of the absurdity of totalitarianism, Arendt's statements are at times hasty, tendentious, and factually incorrect—as in her confused description of the Dreyfus case and its aftermath. Aron's appraisal is severe:

> Without even being aware of it, Mme Arendt affects a tone of haughty superiority regarding things and men.[31] She abuses the adjectives "grotesque" and "farcical." She seems to try hard not to see the dramas of conscience that tore men who were Dreyfusards out of concern for truth and conservatives or militarists out of conviction. As interpreted by Mme Arendt, the Dreyfus Affair leaves an equivocal impression on the French reader: an excess of rationalization on the one hand and of disdain for simple mortals on the other makes for the presentation of a grimacing humanity. . . . The mixture of German metaphysics, subtle sociology, and moral vituperations ends up exaggerating the qualities and the faults of men and of regimes (are all men truly unhappy in a totalitarian regime?), substituting for real history a history that is at every moment ironic or tragic.[32]

Nor is Aron convinced by Hannah Arendt's portrayal of anti-Semitism. He grants that her analysis is "rich in ideas and facts and filled with original perspectives." But, in particular, Aron finds her description of the anti-Semitic "mob" confusing. Is "mob" the name for individuals who exist outside or among the major social classes, an intermediate grouping that is a more or less a permanent fixture of industrial society? Or does "mob" refer principally to those who were *once* members of a class such as the bourgeoisie or proletariat, but who, for reasons of personal or social failure, no longer are? In the first case, "mob" denotes a structural, if ill-adjusted, element of modern capitalist societies; in the second, it evokes the debris of all classes, the product of catastrophes such as wars or economic crisis. Hannah Arendt's depiction oscillates, according to Aron, between these two interpretations.[33] As for Arendt's thesis about the basic cause of modern anti-Semitism, Aron finds it "overly subtle." A central idea of part I of *Origins of Totalitarianism* is that anti-Semitism reached a particular intensity in Europe once Jewish bankers and other notables were pushed aside by a more national financial bourgeoisie. Jews were then identified as parasites—a group without a function while retaining undeserved privileges. Aron prefers a more "banal" (as he puts it) explanation. Anti-Semitism grew fiercer as Jewish emancipation and formal assimilation increased, threatening previous status monopolies (e.g., among the French officer corps) or where a sudden influx of Jews from the East increased intraprofessional competition. In Austria, anti-Semitism was caught up in the structural problems of the Dual Monarchy, as rival proto-nations clashed with one another and found a common enemy in the Jews. More generally, Aron continues, the most radical

type of anti-Semitism was unleashed once nationalism was uncoupled from liberalism and once the nationalist idea itself changed from a "freely taken" decision to "a datum of nature." That transformation denied the earlier alignment of the "rights of man and the rights of nations to sovereign independence." Now each confronted the other. Among nationalists, the "unification" of their own national grouping became the major geopolitical priority. And even the earlier conception of the rights of man had a racist component, because of its reluctance to fully encompass non-Europeans.[34]

Aron suggests that parts I and II of *The Origins of Totalitarianism* are the work of "a historian and a sociologist" accounting for events in relation to particular circumstances or general developments. Part III, specifically on Nazi Germany and Stalinist Russia, changes gear; it is totalitarianism as "a regime, one unprecedented in history whose essence itself needs to be grasped."[35] Aron approves of Arendt's wish to avoid "shallow pragmatic interpretations" and grasp the root of the phenomenon. Still, he remains skeptical of her alternative approach. Because Arendt is convinced of the madness or absurdity of totalitarian domination, she is disinclined to attend to the "system of values or passions held by the actors."[36] And especially in regard to the Soviet examples she provides, this is a major limitation of her study. The collectivization of agriculture in the USSR may be deemed absurd in the light of its results: widespread destruction of crops and livestock. But collectivization, monstrous as it was, had "a rational motive: increased yields"—and, one might add, increased control of an intransigent peasantry. From the standpoint of Soviet planners and their overlords, collectivization was reasonable. Conversely, tempting the peasantry with higher prices would have increased their autonomy and fueled demand for consumer goods: something a planned economy is congenitally ill equipped to provide. Forced labor camps are also rational to those who believe that a person is of more use to the state alive than dead.

Regarding the Third Reich, Aron agrees that the Nazi regime was of a different stripe than fascist or military governments. The political systems of the Polish colonels, of Franco, or of Mussolini are recent but hardly original in historical terms. Their similarities to older modes of tyranny are legion. He reads Arendt as saying that totalitarianism was distinctive not so much in regard to the particular elements of which it

is combined but in respect of the combination itself. The *essence* of totalitarianism is permanent revolution and the terror that animates it. Under totalitarian regimes, ideological fervor does not abate with time, nor does terror decrease with the consolidation of the regime. The great purges of 1937–1938 occur when the real enemies of Stalin have already been routed. The Nazis send to the death camps individuals who are incapable of harming the regime. These camps are places in which the final "massification" occurs, with individuals stripped of their dignity and "fertile solitude," dying "without anyone sensing the event as human or meaningful."[37]

As for the Soviet case, Arendt argued that while Lenin established a one-party dictatorship, it was Stalin who transformed it into a totalitarian state. Fearful of the inchoate nature of Soviet society, Lenin sought to multiply interests and identities. Stratification based on independent [*sic*] trade unions, councils, and nationality was actively encouraged. Stalin reversed this process all the better to dominate society as a whole.[38] To "fabricate an atomized and structureless mass,"[39] he set about liquidating property owners, independent peasants, trade unions, and councils, and purging the military and bureaucracy, including factory managers and engineers. All "nonpolitical communal bonds" were severed by a reign of terror; widespread denunciation dissolved friendships and family ties.[40] In Germany, the Nazi movement capitalized on the existence of bitter and disenfranchised "masses"; stranded on the margins of political life, these people stood waiting to be organized. In Soviet Russia, largely bereft of a movement, the totalitarian state *created* these masses by pulverizing all autonomous associations.

Raymond Aron saw things differently. It was under Lenin's postrevolutionary leadership that rival parties and factions were prohibited and police surveillance increased.[41] It was Lenin and his closest comrades who identified the proletariat with the Bolshevik Party and the party with its central committee. It was Lenin who, partially under Trotsky's influence, sanctioned the notion that Russia could avoid a bourgeois or capitalist phase and leap straight into "socialist reconstruction."[42] "Stalinist totalitarianism" marks no rupture with the Bolshevik project; instead, it "exacerbates" the Leninist "substitution of ideology for reality." Totalitarianism flourished in Russia when the "gap between reality and ideology," a Leninist legacy, began to show itself ever more starkly.[43] Once

rapid industrialization under spectacularly unfavorable conditions became a dogma of the Bolshevik credo, to which Stalin was fully committed, it was hard to renounce it. Ideology took precedence over actual conditions so as to close the gap between them. The victims were "a recalcitrant people" thoroughly unprepared for the sacrifices they were asked to make for a cause that most found baffling and repellent. What capitalism had achieved in other societies, state-organized coercion would accomplish in the Soviet Union.

> The need to increase yields and the doctrinaire concern to destroy every class founded upon private ownership brought on the politics of collectivization. This led to the fierce repression of peasant resistance, the temporary ruin of agriculture, the slaughtering of livestock, and famine. The kind of civil war that came with the construction of factories and collective farms no doubt went on being serenely baptized as "socialist reconstruction." Inevitably, the logical and murderous folly that to Mme Arendt appears as the essence of totalitarianism kept on gaining ground. The party had to be transformed into an impeccably disciplined instrument made to believe, on orders from above, that it was daylight in the dead of night, and to recognize socialism in these tragic events of first-phase industrialization. One needed an absolute faith in the Party, in History, and in humanity's fulfillment in a classless society, in order to combine cynicism in one's actions with a kind of long-range idealism.[44]

Viewed through the prism of ideology, then, a new reality was created that required ever more violence to sustain it. "Terror is perhaps indispensable to avoid a bureaucratic petrification that would obstruct the achievement of the paradoxical task of developing means of production under state impetus."[45] The compression of ideology and reality thus led straight down the path of terror.

This account of Bolshevism's trajectory between 1930 and 1934 suggests an explicable series of events and of human responses to them. And even the great purges of 1936–1938 display a situational logic that is "partially intelligible," Aron averred, a point to which we will return. He concedes that all explanations of totalitarianism "leave us with a mysterious margin: the mass arrest of millions of people that crippled industries, the army, and the managerial elite was neither necessary nor reasonable."[46] Yet the absurdity of some aspects of totalitarianism by no means requires us concluding that that regime was and is inherently absurd.

Ideology and Terror—Arendt's Coda to *The Origins of Totalitarianism*

Just as Aron was writing the evaluation I sketched above, a Festschrift for Karl Jaspers appeared in which Hannah Arendt offered a major contribution called "Ideology and Terror: A Novel Form of Government." Originally a lecture delivered at the University of Notre Dame in November 1950, and also published in 1953 in the *Review of Politics* (whose editor, and Arendt's host at Notre Dame, was Waldemar Gurian), the essay became chapter 13 of the 1958 and subsequent editions of *The Origins of Totalitarianism*.[47] It is a strange work, at once a recapitulation of the larger book, a philosophical distillation of totalitarianism in its perfect form, and an extrapolation of its tendencies. Once more, Arendt notes the unprecedented character of totalitarianism. But in contrast to the rich, if idiosyncratic, historical texture of *Origins*, "Ideology and Terror" is abstract and conceptually top-heavy. Its tone and generality suggest that Arendt wished to contribute to political theory in the grand tradition.[48] We must pay close attention to this essay for two reasons. The first is that it is Arendt's major alternative to explanations of totalitarianism as a political religion. (I examine political religion theory in detail in the next chapter.) Second, "Ideology and Terror" was also the title Raymond Aron chose for an important chapter in his *Democracy and Totalitarianism* (1965). Its allusion to Hannah Arendt is obvious.[49] Presently, I will explore his contrastive view of ideology and terror. Now, however, let us look more closely at Hannah Arendt's analysis of these phenomena.

Totalitarianism, she reiterated, differs "essentially from [all] other forms of political oppression known to us such as despotism, tyranny and dictatorship."[50] Naturally, it assumed different national expressions in Germany and in Russia. But wherever it existed, totalitarianism created "entirely new political institutions . . . transformed classes into masses, supplanted the party system, not by one-party dictatorships, but by a mass movement, shifted the center of power from the army to the police, and established a foreign policy openly directed toward world domination." She continued:

> Present totalitarian governments have developed from one-party systems; whenever these became truly totalitarian they started to operate according to a system of values so radically different from all others, that none of our

> traditional legal, moral, or common sense utilitarian categories could any longer help us to come to terms with, or judge, or predict their course of action.[51]

This radical challenge to the understanding requires a commensurately radical response. In particular, Arendt declared, it requires asking whether totalitarian government "has its own essence" and, if it does, what unparalleled historical "experience"—pervasive and consequential—gave birth to it. The very question is intimidating. To answer it requires us to acknowledge that we live in an epoch for which the tradition of political theory has left us woefully unprepared. From Plato to Kant, students of politics have described a type of regime—tyranny—that is capricious, legally unrestricted, self-interested, and based ultimately on "fear as the principle of action, namely fear of the people by the ruler and fear of the ruler by the people."[52] Totalitarian regimes, superficial comparisons notwithstanding, are profoundly different.

Consider the common belief that totalitarianism is lawless and arbitrary. That impression is superficial. Granted, the Bolshevik and Nazi regimes were largely contemptuous of "positive" laws. We know, too, that the existence of the Weimar Constitution (which Hitler never repealed) or three consecutive Soviet constitutions never stopped totalitarian governments from ignoring them. But that is quite a different matter from assuming that these regimes saw them themselves as free actors. The opposite is true. Totalitarian governments claimed to "obey strictly and unequivocally" suprahuman forces: Laws of Nature or of History.[53] In fact the distaste for positive law hid an obsession to supplicate this deeper Law, a Law indifferent to the countless anomalies with which positive legal judgment, bending with circumstance but stabilizing the human flux, has daily to contend. The Laws of Nature (Race) or of History, in contrast, are merciless and inexorable. The job of totalitarian government is to accelerate them, transforming the human species into "an active unfailing carrier of a law to which human beings otherwise would only passively and reluctantly be subjected."[54]

Curiously, both Nazi *and* Bolshevik totalitarianism depict human beings as the vehicle of quintessentially natural forces; in the first case because it is race that decides between virile and parasitic peoples; in the second case because it is labor power, at root a biological force, whose

"metabolism with nature" pushes history forward toward the postcapitalist mode of production. Similarly, both the Nazi and Bolshevik governments refuse "to view or accept anything 'as it is' [but only as being] a state of some further development." It transpires the core meaning of *law* has changed from a term that expressed boundaries and restraint to one that expresses unstoppable transformation.[55]

If the Laws of Motion are those to which totalitarian rule prostrates itself, "terror" is the mechanism by means of which movement is realized.[56] Terror—or more specifically "total terror"—is the essence of totalitarian government.[57] Terror is different from the familiar fear on which despotisms and tyrannies thrive and that induces people to shut up, to know their place, to stop activity. Fear offers people guidelines for their behavior, a "practical usefulness";[58] it suggests what to do and what not to do to stay out of trouble. Terror operates on a different dimension entirely. It becomes paramount or "supreme" when the original phase of destroying the opposition has ceased, and when guilt or innocence no longer attaches to individual actions. Instead, culpability adheres to categories, rather than to persons: objective enemies such as "dying classes" or "inferior races" unfit for this world. Their death sentence is pronounced by the tribunals of Nature or History, whose proxy is the totalitarian regime. Once one objective enemy is consumed, another takes its place. No one knows who will be the next target for a purge or who the next enemy of the people or objective enemy will turn out to be. No one can be sure that orthodoxy today will not transmute into heresy tomorrow. This ever-present terror forges "a band of iron which holds [its charges] so tightly together that it is as though their plurality has disappeared into One man of gigantic dimensions."[59] Tyrannies of the past were never total; in their crevices a degree of initiative remained; so did the desire for freedom. Total terror, conversely, produces something deeply paradoxical. On the one hand, individual "movement"—deliberation, initiative, action—is stymied as people lose their spontaneity. On the other hand, the individual becomes a conduit through which the Laws of Motion course without impediment. It transpires that terror and movement are part of the same configuration; under totalitarianism "the essence of government itself has become motion."[60]

I have already mentioned Arendt's conviction that new times required new thinking. It is foolish, she said, to rely on the great tradition of

political theory to explain the unprecedented. Even so, Arendt found in Montesquieu's *The Spirit of the Laws* a fertile distinction—between the "nature" of a regime and its "principle"—that, duly adapted, could still be pressed into service by contemporary writers. The *nature* or essence of a regime, according to Montesquieu, refers to its basic institutions, particularly those that establish who is sovereign. The *principle* of a regime is what animates it, the guiding sentiment or ethos that survives so long as people actively uphold the conduct it requires. Hence, in a republic it is the people or a section of the people who are sovereign; its corresponding principle is political virtue: patriotic commitment to the common good and the welfare of the polity. In a monarchy, sovereignty resides in one person; honor—respect owed to rank and noblesse oblige—is its principle. Despotism, like monarchy, turns on a single person and his advisors. But whereas monarchy is moderate though inegalitarian, despotism is extreme and effaces differences through a generalized climate of fear and a pervasive sense of political impotence among its subjects.

Hannah Arendt—and Raymond Aron also, as we will see presently—found in this distinction a useful way of grasping a major peculiarity of totalitarian governments. Like republics, monarchies, and despotisms, totalitarian governments could be said to have a nature or essence: terror-motion. But unlike its ostensible predecessors, says Arendt, totalitarianism appears to have no corresponding "principle." What, then, provides mental coordinates, or at least a mode of orientation, for totalitarian subjects? What primes the "inhabitants of a totalitarian population" for their twin role of executioner and victim of the Law of Motion?[61] Terror is insufficient to determine human conduct in its entirety. Not everyone will fall equally within its orbit. Those who do may still require signposts to guide them in a world of randomly chosen victims and perennially changing pronouncements. The "entirely new principle" that totalitarianism introduces is less a principle of action than a substitute for it: "ideology."

Ideology, in Arendt's sense, is a manacle of the mind, an intellectual straitjacket that inhibits the natural thinking process. She describes it as "a kind of supersense," a "superstition" that claims to have solved "the riddles of the universe."[62] Thinking is a two-in-one inner dialogue, a duet between myself and others, real or imaginary. Ideologies are a one-note dirge. Uninterested in "the miracle of being"[63] or in unique experiences, ideologies subject events to an iron consistency that corresponds

with the iron band of total terror. To the ideologist, events are never as they appear but are always signs of something else, invariably malign. The ideologist is equipped with a code, denied to the uninitiate, which enables him to unmask traitors and probe to the roots of reality.[64] That code is predicated on a pseudoscientific explanation that reduces everything—"the secrets of the past, the intricacies of the present, the uncertainties of the future"—to one simple postulate.[65] In turn, the postulate takes on propulsive force by attaching to itself a logical mode of reasoning—or, if you prefer, antireasoning. Race ideology and class ideology begin with a premise from which all else can be seamlessly deduced. The premise, put into action, is self-fulfilling. Once the totalitarian movement comes to power, its ideology reshapes the world according to its own logic, thus vindicating the believer's creed.

Arendt's depiction of ideology might suggest that she is demeaning logical thought. Certainly, she never equated logic with truth (which in Arendt's Heideggerian formulation is a mode of revelation rather than an inference or a correspondence between concepts and facts). But, of course, she recognized that logical thinking is a salutary check on arbitrariness and, as such, fundamental to the reasoning process. If we state two propositions that contradict each other, we know we have got something wrong and need to think again. But ideologies—literally "the logic of an idea"—are designed to obliterate this kind of reasoned reflexivity.[66] Their function is to impede reflection rather than promote it, to blot out any fact, concept, or judgment in tension with the ideology itself. "The ideal subject of totalitarian rule is not the convinced Nazi or the convinced Communist, but people for whom the distinction between fact and fiction (i.e., the reality of experience) and the distinction between true and false (i.e., the standards of thought) no longer exist."[67] Terror, we saw, destroys freedom by razing the boundaries between people. Ideologies, the antithesis of "inner freedom," are coercive too.[68] When Hitler boasted of the Nazi gift for "ice-cold reasoning," and when Stalin celebrated the "mercilessness of the dialectic," they were displaying, and seeking to impose, a mode of logic that made experience redundant. Educational "indoctrination," conducted at the party schools of the Comintern or Cominform and their Nazi equivalents, produces people who compel themselves.[69] Indeed, one potent source of coercive logicality is the discomfiture we feel at contradicting ourselves, an anxiety exploited by the

authors of the Russian purges to gain confessions from the innocent. If the party is always right; if the party divines the Laws of History; if such Laws, as revealed by the party, indicate that crimes are to be committed, then the stipulated criminals must be punished. If the party calls you to be one of these criminals, it does so because you really are an enemy or because it is necessary for you to play that role. Refuse to play it, and, by your very opposition, you are an actual enemy of the party and your whole life as a communist militant is ultimately rendered meaningless. Confess to the crimes, and at least you die reconciled with your earlier commitments.

What kind of "basic experience" prepared the conditions of totalitarianism and pervaded its machinery? The vital experience that underpins tyranny—a pretotalitarian experience—and on which it thrives, is *political* isolation and impotence; humans are unable to act in common to influence the commonweal or to engage in political action at all. Even so, domestic and family life, the sphere of work, and the life of the mind remain largely intact, spaces of apolitical freedom that the tyrant leaves alone so long as his subjects remain quiescent. Isolation, moreover, is by no means always negative. Creative work depends on it, because it is only by being alone, free of unwanted hubbub, that we are able to concentrate as we write, design, paint, compose, sculpt, and otherwise produce complex material objects. That production connects us to the world of things, the human artifice, and reinforces our sense of human reality. Only where work is reduced to mechanical labor does isolation become unbearable. Totalitarianism is far more radical than tyranny, and the basic experience that underpins it is also different. Like tyranny, it destroys the public realm and in such wise isolates people politically. But it does far more.[70] Totalitarianism is a type of government based on "loneliness in the sphere of *social* intercourse,"[71] an "experience of not belonging to the world at all, which is among the most radical and desperate experiences of men." This loneliness, she continues,

> is closely connected with uprootedness and superfluousness which have been the curse of modern masses since the beginning of the industrial revolution and have become acute with the rise of imperialism at the end of the last century and the break-down of political institutions and social traditions in our time. To be uprooted means to have no place in the world, recognized and guaranteed by others; to be superfluous means not to belong to the world at all.[72]

Loneliness, in distinction to solitude, is a feeling of abandonment, of an absence of companionship, of being deserted by others even while in their presence. Logical reasoning, which "always arrives at the worst possible conclusions,"[73] is the complement to loneliness, because the lonely person, bereft of the reality that comes from human relationships, is able to fall back on the one thing that makes any sense: a deductive process that requires only a single mind to activate it. In a "world where nobody is reliable and nothing can be relied upon," "ice-cold reasoning and the 'mighty tentacle' of dialectics which 'seizes you as in a vise' appears like a last support."[74] Arendt acknowledged that totalitarianism portended its own ruination; societies are simply unable to endure a condition of indefinite atomization. Equally, Man, being a beginning, will at some point begin the end of totalitarian domination. Or at least, he will begin the end of one of its manifestations. For the protracted danger of "organized loneliness" remains and with it the combustible social fuel of totalitarian movements. Just as monarchies, republics, tyrannies, and despotisms, once established, were able to repeat themselves, so totalitarianism is now likely to stay with us for the foreseeable future as a potential regime type.

Raymond Aron's Appraisal and Alternative

"Ideology and Terror" is among Arendt's most-read works. It is also her most unsubstantiated. Bleached of factual evidence to support elephantine generalizations, it clearly grated on the empirically minded Aron. He was as skeptical of its argument as he was of the book that preceded it. Hannah Arendt's philosophical inclination to discern an "essence" in totalitarianism was legitimate, Aron acknowledged, so long as one "does not neglect complementary methods"—an allusion to political sociology.[75] But what if the philosophical argument was itself garbled?

Recall that Arendt framed her analysis of "Ideology and Terror" in terms of Montesquieu's distinction between the essence, or nature, of a regime—the signature institutions that define it—and its "principle" of action—the sentiments that give it dynamism. For Raymond Aron, the contention that totalitarianism is both a new regime type and a regime type without a "principle" of action is contradictory: a "regime without a principle is not a regime."[76] Furthermore, in her resolve to delineate an unprecedented mode of governance, Arendt is constantly in danger of

exaggerating. To be sure, totalitarianism is original in many respects. But Aron is inclined to endorse Crane Brinton's argument that "ideology and terror are the amplification of revolutionary phenomena," rather than original phenomena.[77] It is the revolutionary situation itself that demands unconditional devotion from party militants, so that quotidian ties with family and work are broken. Again, it is revolution that prompts individuals to look for collective salvation. To be sure, Bolshevism is an unusually "prolonged" revolution, with a remarkable capacity for renewal. Yet even Bolshevism is not immune to being overtaken by everyday exigencies and the perquisites that accompany them. The Communist Party "re-establishes a bureaucracy that is at once managerial and technical." Increasingly, it

> guarantees itself material advantages, prestige, external signs of hierarchy, and intimations of traditional bureaucracy. To the benefit of the party's secretary general, the secular religion of revolutionary ideology ends up playing the same role that orthodox religion did for the czars. Caesaro-papism is reborn and the interpreter of History becomes the pope-emperor.[78]

These signs of creeping routinization raise a fundamental question: How long will totalitarianism last? The year 1953 was both the publication date of Arendt's "Ideology and Terror" and the year of Stalin's death. Would Stalinist domination survive its archetype? We lack experience of a "totalitarian revolution's return to normal life," cautioned Aron.[79] His own best guess—delivered two years before Khrushchev's condemnation of Stalin at the Twentieth Party Congress—was positioned between two contrary ideas: first, an Orwellian despondency that envisioned totalitarianism to be perfectly consistent with, if not actively encouraged by, planning and industrialism; second, the more sanguine view of Isaac Deutscher that once Stalinism dispelled primitive Russian economic conditions, it would undermine its own historical foundations. A more plausible alternative, Aron averred, was that as the regime became "stabilized" and increasingly recruited its officials from a technical and managerial class, it would lose "the purity and fanaticism of a sect." He even claimed (a stretch) that this view was "implicit in Mme Arendt's book." While economic progress tends to attenuate "bureaucratic despotism," it is in no way incompatible with spasms of ideology and terror.[80] And while the Bolshevik impulse to confuse reality with a creed risked "reviving

revolutionary crises,"[81] catastrophe was not inevitable. "It would be wrong," Aron concluded, "to insist that human irrationality has won the day once and for all."[82]

Aron's review article of *The Origins of Totalitarianism* and "Ideology and Terror" offered only a glimpse of his estimation of Hannah Arendt's political theory. But a few years later, he returned with a far more elaborated answer to her arguments about totalitarianism, "the enemy I do not tire of pursuing."[83] It was published under the title *Democracy and Totalitarianism*. Originally a series of nineteen lectures delivered at the Sorbonne, during the academic year 1957–1958, it is an exemplar of empirically grounded political sociology. In turn, *Democracy and Totalitarianism* was but part of a much larger project that examined the nature of industrial society and the class struggles it produced. Exploring that broader project would take us too far from our main theme. I will concentrate on three aspects that are especially germane to contrasting Aron's approach with Arendt's: (a) his argument that the main axis of demarcation between democratic and totalitarian states revolves on the contrast between pluralist and monopolistic political parties; (b) his interpretation of totalitarian terror; and (c) his analysis of totalitarian ideology. A fourth area of divergence from Arendt, to be mentioned only in passing, is Aron's theory of totalitarianism as a secular or political religion. A more extensive investigation into secular/political religion theory is reserved for the next chapter because Arendt explicitly confronted that theory not principally with Raymond Aron in mind, but in the context of rebutting one of his sociological colleagues: Jules Monnerot.

POLITICAL PARTIES AND TOTALITARIANISM

The chief task of political sociology, Aron says, is to "*understand the internal logic of political institutions*. Political institutions are not an accidental juxtaposition of practices. Every political regime contains a minimum of unity and of meaning which the sociologist must uncover."[84] What, then, is the institution in modern times that principally enshrines the "logic" of political institutions? Or to put the matter more concretely, what is the fundamental difference between constitutional pluralist and totalitarian states?[85] Aron is in no doubt. Mimicking Arendt's own term in "Ideology and Terror," he asks his readers to

consider what is *essential* to modern politics. Hannah Arendt had concluded, reprising Montesquieu, that the essence of totalitarianism was terror and the unceasing turbulence it sets in motion. Aron moves one step back. It is the nature of the political party that is essential; understand it and you are able to explain the genesis of totalitarian terror. But to the use of this philosophical term (*essential*)[86] Aron adds a sociological gloss: totalitarian formations are to be distinguished from democratic (or, more accurately, "constitutional pluralist") ones on the basis of a chief or main variable (*variable principale*).[87] This variable—really, an axis of demarcation—turns on whether a regime is characterized by a single (monopolistic) party, proclaiming an exclusive right to rule, *or* by the existence of many parties that are able to compete peacefully for power.[88] And why is this main variable essential? Because it has structural consequences for the political system as a whole; all the most important features of the regime can be inferred from it. A regime in which alternative parties fight peacefully to exercise a share of power through fair elections is also a regime that allows for the legality of opposition. From the legality of opposition "one can deduce an even more general phenomenon, which is the moderate or legal form that the exercise of authority takes in such cases."[89] Conversely, it is part of the nature of regimes based upon a single party that elections, where they exist, are acclamatory; that opposition is prohibited; and that the abuse of power, latent in any regime, has a far greater chance of extremity than in constitutional pluralist systems. In the latter, a party that loses power on one occasion has the opportunity to win it on another; transitions between ruling parties take place according to rules that are known in advance. By contrast, a single party typically takes the state by force and, fearing its own removal and extirpation, rules with an iron fist.

To this logical justification for taking single or multiple party systems as essential, Aron adds a host of empirical reasons. Political parties are *today* the most significant, and usually indispensable, collective political actors. Especially in the age of National Socialism and Bolshevism, the chasm between parties that monopolize power and those that distribute it is evident and its consequences far-reaching. Since the French Revolution, all governments claim to rule in the people's name, to be their vehicle and distilled will. Implementation of this principle falls to parties—single or

plural. Another reason for choosing parties as the decisive political institution harks back to classical political philosophy in which the differentiation among regimes turns on the number of holders of sovereignty: one (monarchy, despotism), several (oligarchy), all (democracy). Agreed, a modern analysis of politics that followed strictly that classification would make little sense; the British system, for instance, enshrines all three principles. But we can argue, by invoking an "arithmetical fiction," that the antithesis between the one and the many is relevant if we apply it to parties. More than that, while parties are not typically mentioned in modern constitutions, they are the de facto "agents of political life; it is within the parties that the fight for the highest office takes place; it is through the parties that one arrives at power."[90] And while all regimes are oligarchic—some people, not all, have to take the decisions—the real issue is to discern how they "use their power, according to what rules do they govern, what are the advantages and disadvantages of this rule for the community"?[91]

A third rationale for Aron's party-centered focus derives from looking at how regimes such as the Soviet Union actually work. From the time of the 1917 Revolution, the Communist Party oscillated between the rule of a clique and that of a single man, between a single tyranny and a collective one. Yet the regime remained the same in all fundamentals. Now consider what would happen if one were to initiate a transition from a single- to a multiparty system; the change would have spectacular consequences. Finally, the very "game" of politics, and the rules by which it is played, is in our time essentially a party game wherever one is thinking about constitutional-pluralist systems.[92] He later observed:

> The game of men and parties represents, as it were, a constitutional expression of a potentially violent rivalry among candidates for power. I use the word "game" deliberately, for when this phenomenon has an *agonal* quality, it is characterized precisely by the imposition of strict rules and the maintenance of a spatial and temporal framework within which the actors must remain. The regular occurrence of elections symbolizes both the continuity of the game (victory is never definitively won) and the finiteness of the number of rounds. The opposition, beaten at the preceding round, must wait for the next round without preventing the majority and the government from performing their function in the interval. In other words, the institutions of liberal democracy, as they have finally become stabilized in North America

> or Western Europe, are defined less by the sovereignty of the people or by universal suffrage (almost all forms of government in our time hold elections and invoke the will of the people) than by the organization of a competition which is kept alive by passions that are ready to explode. There is a strong temptation for those who have the power not to expose themselves for risk of losing it and for those who are excluded from power to utilize illegal means of seizing it.[93]

TOTALITARIAN TERROR

Whereas Hannah Arendt judged Stalin's and Hitler's governments to be something qualitatively different from monopolistic party systems, Raymond Aron stressed their contiguousness. National Socialism and Bolshevism were extreme in their radicalism, he agreed. Both sought total mobilization. Both employed terror to transform the society they dominated. Yet it was the presence of a monopolistic party that allowed, encouraged, and underwrote such terror. This suggests, *contra* Arendt, that totalitarianism is best understood as a *mutation*[94] of the one-party system, as distinct from a *novum:* a complete rupture with all that had preceded it.[95] Look closely at the Soviet Union, Aron advised, and observe three ways that terror is officially articulated and justified.[96] To begin with, terror is "codified" in Soviet legal documents through provisions against counterrevolutionary action, conduct that is "a danger to society." These provisions give the regime wide legal scope to suppress those deemed a threat. Moreover, an action that is not expressly forbidden by law can be rendered illegal by analogy; the action can be condemned by showing it bears some resemblance to formally prohibited conduct. This power was evident from the beginning of the Bolshevik state but was enhanced by articles in the Soviet criminal code from 1934 onward that enabled the secret police, acting nominally through the Ministry of Interior, to dispatch putative miscreants to concentration camps. In effect, law succumbed to administrative tribunal, the second formal category of terror that Aron mentions. Victims fail to appear in court and are denied the right to appeal their sentence, but such impotence is the result of authoritative formulation (much like laws of preventive detention). The third category of legal terror—again, stipulated, rather than haphazard or ad hoc—revealed itself in the deportation of peoples en masse, such as the Chechens, from their homeland. A similar fate was planned for the Ukrainians, until it dawned on Stalin and his

confederates that finding a new place for 40 million people was, even for a totalitarian regime, impossible.

Superimposed on these three "formal categories" of terror, though not fully synchronized with them temporally, were what Aron called "three kinds" of terror. Here, Aron is less interested in the formal mechanisms of terror than in the groups to which it is applied. In the first case, terror is "used by a party or faction against parties or factions hostile to them."[97] This modality of terror is "normal" to revolutionary conjunctures; it recapitulates the experience of the French Revolution's treatment of its adversaries and the attempt to extirpate factions. It is a form of civil war. Such normal terror appeared in Russia between 1917 and 1921, when Socialist Revolutionaries, Mensheviks, and others were liquidated by the Bolsheviks. "Every great revolution undergoes this. The terror of Cromwell, Robespierre, Lenin; history repeats itself."[98] A second kind of terror became manifest in 1929–1930 with the drive toward collectivization. The Bolshevik Party now aimed to eliminate the kulaks and other "class enemies." Here, Aron reprised comments he had made in his review article on *The Origins of Totalitarianism*. Though horrific, this kind of terror admits of a "rational explanation" rooted in the basic clash of interests between the peasantry and the Bolsheviks. Once collectivization became the latter's objective, the kulaks turned decisively against the regime, destroying half their livestock before the state could get hold of it. Terror was the means for the state to prevail.

If the first kind of terror was aimed against rival parties, and the second against a class, the third kind of terror Aron mentions defies all sensible explanations; it is terror directed toward the Communist Party itself, employing all available means of cruelty, and inventing new ones to boot, that had been previously applied to its real or imagined competitors. Of those "elected" at the Seventeenth Party Congress (1934), 70 percent of the members of the Central Committee, and over half of the delegates of the congress, were subsequently liquidated. This was "the most astounding and, if I may say so, the most abnormal aspect of the terror." From "1917 [to] 1936, revolutionary terror, instead of gradually abating, redoubled in force in proportion to the stability of the regime."[99] It led to the concentration camps and the Moscow trials. The latter, Aron wrote "represent the culmination, the apex of ideological terror, which is one of the essential aspects of this extraordinary regime."[100] The confessions of innocent people mystified contemporary observers. Yet even here

Aron applies his slide rule, distinguishing among the "logic of the confessions," the "psychology of the accused," and the "function of the trials and purges in this kind of regime." The "logic of confessions" was straightforward once one understood the notion of an "objective enemy" or an "enemy of the people." For, according to that mind-set, guilt was a matter for the party to decide, or rather its Central Committee, on the basis of what it believed to undermine the proletariat. Subjective culpability was secondary, when it was not downright irrelevant. Invention of crimes was enough to make them real, because even if Zinoviev, Kamenev, Bukharin, or Trotsky were not actually agents of the Gestapo, they were symbols of conspiracy, which was much the same thing from a Bolshevik perspective. As for the psychology of the accused, again, there is no real mystery. Devotion to the party and the desire to find a final sacrificial purpose in life; the desperate attempt, by means of confession, to save self and family from execution; the brutal, sentient reality of torture—all these factors explain why innocent people admitted to crimes they had never committed or even thought of committing. And what was the purpose of the trials for the regime? Rather than answer the question, Aron restated the original puzzle:

> The terror which in a revolutionary period might have been expected, appeared some twenty years after the seizure of power; it struck not only at real or potential adversaries of the regime but those who were loyal to it. In fact, the terror wrapped itself up in ritual confessions which were in themselves extraordinary because they besmirched the regime. . . . It was a strange world which lent meaning to each event but the whole of which was absurd.[101]

TOTALITARIAN IDEOLOGY

Terror's totalitarian partner was ideology. Hannah Arendt had argued that totalitarianism found its "principle" of action, or rather its pseudo-principle, in ideology. Aron, in his 1954 review of *Origins* in the journal *Critique*, responded by saying that such an interpretation was incoherent; if a regime lacked a principle of action, in Montesquieu's sense, it made no sense to describe it as regime type. Now he pressed this criticism one stage further while at the same time quoting *The Spirit of the Laws* as a source of analytical inspiration. Multiple and monopolistic parties, Aron declared, enshrine two radically different principles. A pluralistic regime, considered

ideal-typically, combines respect for the law with a spirit of compromise. In contradistinction, a monopolistic regime generates faith and fear.[102] Aron's mention of fear is a throwback to Montesquieu's discussion of despotism. But "faith" is something new and connects up to what Aron has to say about totalitarianism as a "secular religion." Of course, the Bolsheviks were cynics. But the very fact that they, unlike National Socialists, professed fidelity to democratic principles even while suborning them is sociologically telling. "What do these constitutional fictions mean?" asked Aron. "Why elections of 99 . . . per cent? Why draw up in so much detail constitutions which do not correspond to the actual functioning power?"[103] Because the Bolshevik Party was ensnared in its own doctrine. Hannah Arendt took remarkably little interest in communist doctrine, because she believed, first, that it was widely disregarded by those who purported to embrace it; and, second, that the force of totalitarian ideology lay in its propulsive logical form, its deductive madness, rather than in its canonical dogmas. Ironically, this was exactly the sort of debunking for which Arendt routinely chastised the sociologists.

An outstanding feature of Aron's discussion of Bolshevism is his sensitivity to its blind spots—and that meant taking its content seriously (which Arendt typically did not). To explain the Soviet state satisfactorily, he said, requires that we understand how it imagines itself and others. The obsessive communist attack on monopoly capitalism, for instance, is by no means entirely contrived; that denunciation issues from the party's own oligarchic character. For those who have lived only under a Soviet-type regime, inured to its ways, it is almost impossible to believe that constitutional-pluralist governments could *in fact* operate differently—without "the omnipotence of the few."[104] At the same time, "the rivalry between the two kinds of regime is also a rivalry between two systems of institutional interpretation of the same ideological formula"—popular sovereignty. In constitutional-pluralist states the core symbol of popular sovereignty is the competitive election; in the Soviet case, it is uniformity of opinion. Popular sovereignty, according to Bolshevik thinking, is most pristine when opposition is absent, when elections are unanimous, and when people acclaim the results rather than acrimoniously dispute them. The Soviet election is thus a declaration of a "pact between the real or mystical will of the masses and that of those who govern."[105] Moreover, Bolshevik doctrine—the heart of its

ideology—manages to maintain a remarkably flexible attitude to the relationship between principle and practice. This suggests a different kind of dynamism from that which Hannah Arendt described. Raymond Aron is struck less by the delusional, logical relentlessness of Bolshevik ideology than by an opportunism framed by genuine conviction. The doctrine mandates determinism, inexorable processes, and a struggle between good and evil—much in the way that Hannah Arendt outlined. But this has not stopped the regime falling into the hands of a clique that pursues a mercurial and self-interested set of agendas. To that extent the leadership is not the collective vector of impersonal forces, but an active, discerning agent in its own right, making decisions on a motley group of issues—painting, music, the natural sciences, industrial production—that seem irrelevant or tangential to the Marxist faith it professes. And that, in turn, suggests that the ideology, far from being crustaceous, is itself open to transformation. Aron commented on this protean quality as follows:

> The general principles of the historical evolution from capitalism to socialism or the role of the party can be upheld while the significance of past events can be completely reinterpreted. But one of the consequences of the form taken by the doctrine is that, in place of determinism or objective forces, there creeps into the view of history the action of individuals. The sacrosanct history of Soviet doctrine is becoming less and less that of the development of the forces of production and more and more that of the history of the party itself. The sacrosanct history of events which led to the revolution is that of the Bolshevik party, of conflicts within the party, as well as that of the satellite parties.[106]

Bolshevik ideology can, of course, be viewed as a simple tool of government, an instrument to consolidate, as well as justify, the power of an oligarchy. But it is not merely that. Aron agrees with Hannah Arendt that ideology constrains the actors who claim to champion it. But his emphasis on doctrinal dynamism and agility—as opposed to the merciless grip of logic or dialectic—clearly differentiates his chapter on "Ideology and Terror" in *Democracy and Totalitarianism* from Hannah Arendt's coda to *Origins*. To the extent that Bolshevik doctrine was porous, admitting thought, calculation, and improvisation, ideological revisions were possible. In contrast, it is very hard to see how, in Arendt's charac-

terization of ideology, anyone could ever break out of its asphyxiating carapace.

Conclusions

It takes no prescience to anticipate one conclusion of this chapter: that Raymond Aron offers a subtle, sober, and logical account of totalitarianism in which the tools of political sociology are employed to impressive effect. Aron does not unmask; he does not deny the reality of the political. He does not, in other words, commit the cardinal sins of sociology that Arendt enumerates. Instead, he explains the multidimensional properties of totalitarianism—or at least the Bolshevik version of it. We see its political rationale, its basis in one-party rule, and its continuities with previous revolutions.

But now consider a dissonant conclusion: that Raymond Aron offers precisely the kind of analytical reassurance that Arendt warned against. Is not totalitarianism rather too familiar, too normal, in the hands of this master of sociological thought? Can the system that Aron unravels with such skill be the same one that produced the Gulag Archipelago and Auschwitz, or that Eugen Kogon and Jean Amery, and Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn endured? We understand political parties. We understand their division into monopolistic and pluralistic formations. And if totalitarianism really is a mutation of this system, it would seem to follow that we have understood that too.

Reason concurs; the imagination protests. Raymond Aron leaves us enlightened but dissatisfied, because his "chief variable"—the nature of the political party—falls short of explaining the grotesque texture of the totalitarian world. Of course, most of us have not experienced that world. But we have read the accounts of those who did; writers like Vasily Grossman, who described the communist purges and confessions as "chaotic, mad, absurd";[107] or Primo Levi, who called the creation of the special squads of death camp inmates "National Socialism's most demonic" crime: the "attempt to shift onto others—specifically, the victims—the burden of guilt, so that they were deprived of even the solace of innocence."[108] Or consider the words of one of totalitarianism's prime movers, Albert Speer, writing from his Spandau prison cell in December 1946:

> And then this beastly way of talking! How was it I never really felt revolted by it, never flared up when Hitler—as he did almost all the time in the last few years—spoke of "annihilation" or "extermination." Certainly those who would charge me with opportunism or cowardice are being too simplistic. The terrible thing, the thing that disturbs me much more, is that I did not really notice this vocabulary, that it never upset me. . . . At the time of August 1939, when Hitler had already decided to attack Poland, he stood on the terrace of his house at Obersalzberg and commented that this time Germany would have to plunge into the abyss with him if she did not win the war. This time a great deal of blood would be spilled, he added. How odd that none of us was shocked by this remark, that we felt ourselves somehow exalted by the fatefulness of such words as "war," "doom," "abyss." In any case, I distinctly recall that when Hitler made this remark I did not think of the endless misfortunes it meant, but of the grandeur of the historical hour.[109]

Chaotic, mad, absurd, demonic, beastly: this is the language of actors and witnesses. It conveys the dark side of the moon, a surreal, vertiginous landscape far removed from Aron's prosaic casuistry. No theorist has better captured that nightmare quality, or registered the extent of totalitarianism's rupture with quotidian standards of judgment and even quotidian crimes, than Hannah Arendt. Repeatedly, as we saw in Chapter 1 of this book, she called attention to the anti-utilitarian aspects of the totalitarian world: its disregard for limits; its incessant motion; its delusional belief that everything was possible and that anything was permissible; its distance from factual reality; its warped, paranoid drive for consistency. That description required the talents of an artist as much as a theorist, a painter as much as a draftsman.

My reticence about Raymond Aron's explanation of totalitarianism should not be mistaken for the calumny, often voiced by his detractors, that he was cold and unfeeling. Passion is everywhere in Aron's work. That it is a disciplined and honest passion, devoid of the histrionics that intellectuals routinely mistake for debate, only adds to its pathos. Nor was Aron insensible to the dark side of human nature. "We know that man is a reasonable being. But men?" he rhetorically enquired.[110] The problem is different; it concerns an approach that, chopping totalitarianism into its elements, seems curiously removed from what Aron himself called the "Hitlerian madness": the eruption into the world of a bizarre wickedness that combined the precision of industrial murder with radically unhinged ideas.[111]

Like Aron, Hannah Arendt was a strikingly detached writer, refusing to equate solidarity with pity, or to collapse the public into the private; for that attitude she was often called haughty. The very act of making distinctions was, for her, a kind of exercise to steel the mind against easy sentimentality or lazy conflation. Animating that attitude was the gift of "demoniac poetry" that enabled Arendt to create a genre, simultaneously illuminating and eerie, calm and haunting, that was hers alone. Arendt was even in some respects—*quelle horreur!*—the more original and ecumenical sociologist. Perhaps the richest part of *The Origins of Totalitarianism* is the extensive discussion it contains of the totalitarian "movement" and its onionlike structure: the front organizations, the duplicatory institutions of the apparatus, the secret police, all entrained in the voracious dynamic of permanent revolution. Raymond Aron says practically nothing about the totalitarian movement in those senses. Hannah Arendt assigns a major role to "the masses"—the supporters, recruits, and staff of the movement. Her analysis is unsubstantiated, tendentious, and, it turns out, largely wrong.[112] But she at least made a stab at reconstructing the totalitarian base and the motives of those who formed it. Raymond Aron, on the other hand, was overwhelmingly concerned with the role of party elites in establishing totalitarianism, and intellectuals in justifying it; Pareto and Machiavelli are early, and somewhat conventional, guides.[113] Hannah Arendt brooded all her life about the purpose and evolution of the death camps. Aron was mostly silent about them. And whereas she continually returned, even in the most abstruse philosophical topics, to the Nazi experience, he, after 1945, had little to say specifically about Nazi Germany. It was the Soviet Union that absorbed his attention. That is to be expected. Soviet Russia was the great survivor of his day, a hovering totalitarian presence until at least the mid-1950s and, in its Cold War metamorphosis, a superpower to challenge the United States. But it is also conceivable that Aron avoided the Nazi case because it fitted least comfortably with his sociology of the political party. He did pause to acknowledge the "mysterious margin" of totalitarianism: its creation and liquidation of objective enemies, its culture of death.[114] But having noted this puzzle, he quickly retreated from it.

Aron's method encouraged that withdrawal. A comparative sociology of markedly different human types enables us to marvel at the anthropological diversity of existence. But, he cautioned, the life of a modern Frenchman cannot be that of an ancient Roman. One can act only where

one is, and in one's time. Equally, to grasp the range of extant options open to human beings requires a sociology that compares "types of societies belonging to the same species." Tocqueville had noted that a democratic society allowed "many possible political regimes. Democratic societies may be liberal or despotic; democratic societies may and must assume different forms in the United States or in Europe, in Germany or in France."[115] Following Tocqueville, sociology "takes note" of the human manifold, but its prime interest lies in disclosing the "implicit logic" of diverse phenomena within a particular epoch, comparing like with like, eliciting themes in common.[116] Might that intraspecies perceptual bias have deflected Aron from seeing the full novelty of totalitarianism? Might it have encouraged him to focus on what was similar to totalitarian and one-party states; to interpret that similarity as essential; and hence to deem what lay outside it, however horrific and bewildering, as incidental?

Hannah Arendt's reflex was different. The mysterious traits of totalitarianism were no marginal phenomena; they were at the heart of what needed most to be explained. She reasoned that the modern period had witnessed two radically heterogeneous orders; call them different species or even different genera if you like, though that was not her vocabulary. Monopolistic party and plural party arrangements were, in many vital respects, dissimilar. But in the passivity they cultivated in their citizen subjects, and in the demagogic role they accorded leaders, they bore some family resemblance.[117] Totalitarianism was in all essentials unique. It demanded tumult, not order; mobility, not passivity; collective suicide, not pragmatic self-interest. To weigh this alien phenomenon on the same scale as party systems struck her as both categorically erroneous and politically dangerous. That emphasis is salutary even if it sometimes tempted Arendt to evoke disaster scenarios—consider once more the final pages of *The Human Condition*—to which Raymond Aron had the strongest aversion. "As for possible catastrophes," he drily observed, "why evoke them: each of us can imagine them without effort."[118]

Previous paragraphs make Aron sound pedestrian. I do not wish to end with that impression. We need his sociological acuity every bit as much as we need Arendt's demoniac poetry. Aron's accent on the agility of the totalitarian party system was borne out by the evolution of the Soviet Union. So was his skepticism about the extent of totalitarian control. His attention to communist electoral theater, the quest for democratic legitimacy in the very perpetration of a fraud, finds no counter-

part in the work of Arendt. And Aron was, in his own way, a brilliant painter of the paradoxical. Among his brushes was the telling oxymoron. The United States he called, without malice, the "imperial republic."[119] The credo of National Socialism and Bolshevism (especially the latter) he dubbed a "secular religion."

I have not, in this chapter, described Aron's secular religion theory, even though it offers another major contrast between his approach to totalitarianism and Hannah Arendt's. Unlike the topics of ideology and terror, however, it provoked no specific disagreement between them; Aron kept secular religion theory distant from his appraisal of Arendt. Here we can simply note his contention—at once analytical, normative, and polemical—that Marxism was a Christian chiliastic heresy, secularizing the battle between good and evil and the prospect of redemption. One of Marxism's bastard progeny was Russian communism, a movement with hubristic ambitions to fashion a new man. It spawned a leadership cult, and a worldwide faith. Yet that précis flattens a complex idea. Look more closely at Aron's secular religion theory, and one sees multiple propositions in play. On occasion, for instance, he appears to derive communism *genetically* from Judeo-Christianity; at other times, he stresses its *analogical correspondence* or *elective affinity* with Judeo-Christianity; at still other times he writes of secular religion as a substitute for, or a sublimation and caricature of, Judeo-Christianity, a pseudoreligion.[120] It is also evident that Aron grew discomfited with the very expression "secular religion." To bracket something as depraved as National Socialism or Bolshevism with majestic world religions stuck in his craw. This explains, I believe, the move to a different kind of terminology in his later work—communism as an ideocracy and as a vulgate. Granted, this was more a matter of emphasis than a complete break; *In Defense of Decadent Europe*, one of Aron's last books, spans the lexical gamut. Marxism as a state ideology is ideocratic, but it is parasitical on the "messianism" and "prophetism" of the founder. To complicate matters further, Aron came to the conclusion that modern Western civilization, more generally, nourished a myth that was as potent as it was dubious. In previous ages, no one dreamed that poverty and misery were eradicable. These maladies were part and parcel of the human condition. Today, fired up by the "Promethean ambition" we are convinced otherwise. So confident are we in the promise of technical mastery "that it is no longer permissible to regard any social condition as independent of the rational will of men."

This ambition is "almost pure Marx, but it expresses the common faith, or universal illusion, of modern societies."[121]

What was Hannah Arendt's attitude toward secular religion theory? And how did that attitude shape her encounter with sociology? I tackle these questions next.

§ 4 Totalitarianism as a "Secular Religion"

The Dispute Between Hannah Arendt and Jules Monnerot

Introduction

When totalitarian movements rose to power in Europe, the distinctiveness of their key institutions—the party cell, the paramilitary unit, and the "front" organization—was clear to most informed observers. But that was not all that critics noticed. Totalitarian formations were characterized by peculiar doctrines that appeared to transcend traditional power politics or familiar nationalist yearnings. Bolsheviks and National Socialists promised a radically transformed society. They pledged to rescue humanity from alien taint or class exploitation. They undertook to purge evil and injustice from the world and, by so doing, create a New Man worthy of a new era. Consecrating their projects with emotionally charged symbols, festivals, ceremonies, and rituals, leaders such as Stalin and Hitler projected themselves as invincible, wrapping their deeds in an aura of dogmatic omniscience. Their followers responded with fanatical devotion, justifying acts of predation by an appeal to the higher powers of Fate or History. How was this to be understood? One answer proved to be of lasting significance: totalitarian enthusiasm, rhetoric and symbolism amounted to a "political religion" or "secular religion," cognate expressions that circulated widely from the 1930s onward in the work of Raymond Aron, Eric Voegelin, Ernst Cassirer, Waldemar Gurian, Jacob Talmon, and Norman Cohn. As Gurian's work attests, however, the term always carried with it a certain degree of ambiguity. Was the Bolshevik creed, for instance, a real religion, a pseudoreligion, a substitute for religion, a church without a religion, or

a religion with a new church? A doctrine that entails the "self-deification of humanity" was a travesty of religion as it is usually understood. Yet the salvationist strain in Bolshevism bespoke a "living faith" redolent of religion.[1] In the Nazi and Soviet regimes:

> The leaders are deified; the public mass-meetings are regarded and celebrated as sacred actions; the history of the movement becomes a holy history of the advance of salvation, which the enemies and betrayers try to prevent in the same way as the devil tries to undermine and destroy the work of those who are in the service of the City of God. There are not only sacred formulas and rituals, there are also dogmatic beliefs, claims to absolute obedience and damnation of heretics in the name of absolute truth which is authoritatively determined by those leading the movement. . . . Of course, the totalitarian movements are *secularized* religions. They do not have beliefs in a transcendent reality beyond this world, beyond political power and social order. God is openly denied.[2]

From the late eighteenth century onward, Europeans had coined kindred expressions to describe, and usually to condemn, revolutionary fervor. I provide no general survey of those usages here, a task that has been ably expedited by others.[3] My aim is to explore Hannah Arendt's critique of "secular/political religion," her alternative to it, and some of the unresolved problems her critique raises. Of particular pertinence for this book is her dispute with the French writer Jules Monnerot, with whom she clashed in the pages of the journal *Confluence*, edited by the young Henry Kissinger. A member of the short-lived Collège de sociologie (1937–1939), Monnerot participated, with Georges Bataille, Roger Caillois, and Michel Leiris, among others, in a project to identify the "sacred" character of modern life. Monnerot was strongly wedded to secular religion theory as a means of highlighting a curious feature of totalitarian movements.[4] On the one hand, they were gripped by sectarian and apocalyptic fervor that, in a highly distorted fashion, was reminiscent of medieval millenarianism, the warrior culture of Islam, and the zeal of the Protestant Reformation. On the other hand, totalitarian movements aimed not at supernatural transcendence but at immanent redemption. Hannah Arendt recognized these properties. But she was highly averse to describing them in the language of religion or confusing so-called secular religion with ideology.[5]

Communism as "The Twentieth-Century Islam"

In the Anglophone world, Jules Monnerot is a largely obscure figure.[6] A founding member of the College of Sociology, it was Monnerot who gave the school its name, who introduced Roger Caillois to Bataille, and who, together with them, launched the project of "sacred sociology": the study "of all manifestations of social existence where the active presence of the sacred is clear."[7] Like his College compatriots, Monnerot was enthused by the scandalously bracing analysis of religion enunciated in Durkheim's *Elementary Forms of Religious Life* (1912). Like them, too, he was simultaneously repelled by the state of French sociology on the eve of the Second World War. He found it staid and irrelevant, caustically comparing the French sociological establishment with the "established" Church of England. Monnerot wanted "sacred sociology" to engage with the "burning issues" of the day, even if, as he remarked, it got burned itself. Yet the College was doomed from the beginning, and not only because of the war that would soon engulf it. Clashes of style, ego, and priority fractured the group almost as soon as it formed. Monnerot wished for a serious, politically engaged sociology.[8] But he also demanded that it remain scientific and not degenerate into literary impressionism, a charge he leveled at Bataille and Caillois. What, then, would a scientific work of sociology that was both politically engaged and concerned with the sacred nature of modernity look like? A belated answer to that question came in Monnerot's *Sociologie du communisme*. First published in 1949, it appeared in English translation in 1953 under the more accurate title *Sociology and Psychology of Communism*. Irving Kristol hailed it as "absolutely indispensable," and "the best single volume on Communist theory and practice that I know of."[9]

Totalitarian believers, Monnerot claimed, were "victims of collective passion . . . sustained by frequent communion, inflamed by periodic rites, such as meetings, processions, and demonstrations, and fed each morning by newspaper and radio."[10] The secular religion of communist ideology combines "science with morality, thus identifying itself with great idols as well as the great ideals."[11] Alas, such ideology is also a fundamental obstacle to logic and genuine fraternity, because the limited field within which it operates, an in-group of converts, obstructs the normal "desire for universal communicability."[12] Communism provides all answers the faithful require, suspending their critical faculty in some areas, intensifying it in

others. It is a kind of "compromise between the 'pleasure principle' and the 'reality principle.' "[13] Moreover, "exclusiveness and monomania are characteristic of the believer" to such a degree that, among intellectuals and workers alike, the secular religion of communism resembles a "delusionary" state of mind with which psychiatrists are familiar. "The socialization of obsessions and delusions effected by secular religions" is a remedy for individual isolation and social withdrawal, a mode of dispelling "neurosis" that leads the individual back to the world "of men and action and affairs."[14] Needless to say, this sort of psychological framework was anathema to Arendt; she also disagreed with Monnerot's contention that totalitarian ideology is impervious to logic. On the contrary, it was all too logical, as we saw in the previous chapter. Yet, for all the eclecticism of Monnerot's approach, it recognized something Arendt repeatedly underestimated: that, at some level, ideology (communist or otherwise) is powerful only to the extent that it mobilizes "affective energy" in highly localized forms of ritual encounters—party gatherings of the faithful, mass celebrations of fallen heroes, and the like.[15]

It is true, Monnerot says, that historians and sociologists are often at fault when they attach "familiar categories to the phenomenon of communism." But the real problem is not analogical thinking as such; it is the application of erroneous analogies.[16] Hence, the archetype of totalitarian secular religion is not Christianity, the religion that Arendt most emphatically sought to preserve from the embrace of newfangled functionalism. It is Islam.[17] As a *European* phenomenon, communism was certainly "unprecedented." But extend one's geographical and historical horizons, and the parallel is clear. In chapter 1, entitled "The Twentieth-Century 'Islam,' " Monnerot advances numerous comparisons between Soviet communism and the Egyptian Fatimids, the Persian Safavids, Shiites, and Sufis.

> Soviet Russia (to use the name it gives itself, although it is a mis-description of the regime) is not the first empire in which the temporal and public power goes hand in hand with a shadowy power which works outside the imperial frontiers to undermine the social structure of neighboring States. The Islamic East offers several examples of a like duality. . . . This merging of religion and politics was a major characteristic of the Islamic world in its victorious period. It allowed the head of a State to operate beyond his own frontiers in the capacity of *commander of the faithful* (Amir-al-muminin) and in this way a *Caliph* was able to count upon docile instruments, or captive souls,

> wherever there were men who recognized his authority. The territorial frontiers which seemed to remove some of his subjects from his jurisdiction were nothing more than material obstacles; armed force might compel him to feign respect for the frontier, but propaganda and subterranean warfare could continue no less actively beyond it.[18]

Monnerot acknowledged that his depiction of communism as a twentieth-century Islam was "only an analogy." Yet he insisted that it was a "necessary one" because the parallels were so evident. "Russia is to communism what the Abbasid empire was to Islam."[19] Christianity, at least in principle, recognizes the division between temporal and spiritual powers, between Caesar and God. Communism does not. Making no distinction between politics and faith, Soviet Russia is "Islam on the march"; its frontiers are "purely provisional and temporary." Communist universalism is also redolent of Islam, except that in communism's case the ambition is even greater: Islam has been largely content to hold sway within one civilization while coexisting with others. Communism, on the other hand, aims to bestride "the entire terrestrial globe"; hence, Stalin's remark to the Second Congress of Soviets, in January 1924, that "Lenin was the leader not only of the Russian proletariat and not only of the workers of Europe . . . but also of the whole working-class world."[20] Equally, the sectarian proselytizing and underground warfare of Communism was redolent of its Islamic forebears.[21] An implication of Monnerot's analysis is that totalitarianism is something less than authentically Western. By contrast, Arendt was adamant that totalitarianism—Bolshevik and National Socialist—was neither a foreign excrescence nor a phenomenon with deep roots in Western civilization. It was a product of recent Western history, a massive rupture with the "tradition."

Today, many writers seeking to understand modern radical Islamism reach for the concept of "totalitarianism" as their favored tool of comparison.[22] So it is intriguing to note that long before the "war on terror" began, the analogy was inverted: European thinkers sought to grasp *totalitarianism* by evoking Islam as their model. Monnerot was the most systematic of such authors. Marcel Mauss described the Soviet Union as a "new Mecca," ruled by a "sect" preaching a doctrine that was "religiously inspired."[23] Even those hostile to the Durkheim school, such as Raymond Aron, echoed a similar sentiment. Writing shortly after the publication of *Sociologie du communisme*, and perhaps alluding to it,

Aron observed that communism "is likened to a religion of salvation and compared with Islam, whose armies laid the infidel low and whose ideas conquered men's souls."[24] Of communist ideology, he later added that "since the spread of Islam there has probably never been such a rapid and impressive half-spiritual, half-political conquest."[25] And in his *Memoirs*, in a passage that brackets together the "devotees of Khomeini or Lenin," Aron remarked that "Iranian Shiites and Marxist-Leninists belong to the same family, since the Shiite clergy wants to rule over civil society as the Soviet Communist party does."[26]

Mauss, Monnerot, and Aron, for all their differences, were legatees of a French tradition in which revolutionary fervor was often likened to a religion; Tocqueville's scintillating discussion of this phenomenon in *L'Ancien régime et la Révolution* (1856) is the exemplary study. Tocqueville explicitly characterized the French Revolution as a "political religion,"[27] but he was equivocal about the accuracy of this term in the context he sought to employ it. The Revolution, he said, "acted like and began to look like a religious revolution"[28]—which is rather different from claiming that it actually was one. The religious revolution he had in mind, and which France of 1798 "resembled," was the European Reformation. In the main text to *L'Ancien régime*, but even more so in the manuscript notes never intended for publication, he invokes the following similarities. The Revolution in France formed a "body of doctrine" that was a "sort of political Gospel or Koran." It proselytized much in the same way that "Islam simultaneously had soldiers, apostles, and martyrs." Indifferent to borders or national distinctions, the French Revolution and the Reformation radiated across regions, separating or uniting people "despite differences of language, race, nationality."[29] Of special importance to Tocqueville were the abstract and "general" properties of religion that facilitate its diffusion. The Reformation dispute over the contrastive principles of justification by faith or by works addressed people not as subjects of a country but as members of a church or sect wherever they happened to live.[30]

These parallels are rich and suggestive. Yet at the same time as he adumbrated them, Tocqueville was obviously perplexed. First, he was unable to decide whether the French Revolution appeared to be a religion or actually became one; his emphasis falls on the former, but on occasion he drifts toward the latter proposition. Hence, he observes that in its striving to regenerate the human race as a whole—as distinct from re-

forming France as a particular nation—it "became a new kind of religion," though he immediately adds, "an incomplete religion, it is true, without God, without ritual, and without life after death."[31] A second source of consternation for Tocqueville lies in his own argument that the religion that most resembles the French Revolution is not Islam, which is in practice closely tied to particular locations, but Christianity. As he observed:

> Only the Christian religion has been completely faithful to what I call the philosophical method natural to religions. It has placed itself absolutely outside all particular institutions which exist among men, social or political, all legal conventions, in order to consider the human species as a single whole composed of similar individuals, all subject to the same moral law and called in the same way to the same fate.[32]

But if that were the case it would suggest that a sanguinary revolutionary doctrine that openly proclaimed its atheism shared fundamental properties with hallowed Christianity: an implication that would encourage "dangerous comparisons" and perhaps also be incoherent.[33]

Arendt's Rebuttal

Although *Sociologie du communisme* is an account of totalitarianism to rival in eclectic daring *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, we have no reason to believe that Arendt saw Monnerot as a heavyweight intellectual competitor.[34] Instead, he personified much that she detested about sociology in general and its approach to politics in particular. Here was an opportunity to settle accounts. Not only was Monnerot's interpretation of Bolshevik "absolutism" and "tyranny" anachronistic; from her standpoint, these were political categories that totalitarianism, as a new regime type, had emphatically superseded. Also noxious was Monnerot's proclivity to invoke two of her bêtes noires—Durkheim and, particularly, Freud—in his defense of the "secular religion" idea. Her quarrel with him occurred around the same time—the early 1950s—that she was also engaging with Waldemar Gurian, and with Eric Voegelin, who published his own book on *Die politischen Religionen,* in Vienna in April 1938, and who evaluated *The Origins of Totalitarianism* in the January 1953 issue of Gurian's *Review of Politics*.[35] The dispute with Monnerot was launched by Arendt's article "Religion and Politics." Published in *Confluence*, it had begun life as a

conference paper delivered at Harvard, addressing the question "Is the Struggle Between the Free World and Communism Basically Religious?" The article is Arendt's most extended and explicit critique of the "secular religion" idea. Simultaneously, it offered an alternative theory of the relationship between religion and politics that was later amplified in "What Is Authority?" (1959). In "Religion and Politics," Monnerot is named only twice. But he must have noticed not only the acerbic references to him, but also that the entire thrust of Arendt's arguments was hostile to his own. For that reason, he replied to Arendt's strictures on "secular religion," triggering Arendt's final riposte.

"One of the surprising by-products of the struggle between the free and the totalitarian world," Arendt began, "has been a strong tendency to interpret the conflict in religious terms." "Communism, we are told, is a new 'secular religion' against which the free world defends its own transcendent 'religious system.'"[36] How valid is this view? Arendt claimed that the first ism in the nineteenth century to be called a new religion was, paradoxically, atheism. Not atheism as a simpleminded rejection of the existence of God, but as a challenge to God, demonstrated in Nietzsche's apothegm, "*If* there were gods, how could I bear not to be one?" In turn, this challenge arose out of the climate of doubt and questioning that pervades modern life. Post-Cartesian thought is no longer animated by revelation or by wonder. Instead, it is highly interventionist in orientation. It is also suspicious of all that appears to the senses and reason as truth, a concept that it reinterprets as "a process of ever-changing patterns of working hypotheses."[37] Both aggressive secularism *and* modern religious sensibility are heirs to this view, sharing a common perception that the riddles of man and of nature are no longer capable of unambiguous answers.

As an ideology, Arendt continues, communism is neither atheism nor theology. The atheist must at least acknowledge God as a problem to be actively denied or transmuted. Theology assumes that man is "a reasonable being that asks questions and whose reason needs reconciliation even if he is expected to believe in that which is beyond reason."[38] An ideology—be it Bolshevism or National Socialism—is something else entirely. It is effective to the very degree that people stop raising questions; and people cannot doubt answers to questions they never ask. Rather than dealing with man as a skeptical, willing being, an ideology such as "Communism in its politically effective totalitarian form . . . treats man as though he were a falling stone, endowed with the gift of

consciousness and therefore capable of observing, while he is falling, Newton's law of gravitation."[39] Communism, unlike modern religion and modern science, is immune to metaphysical doubt (though not to cynicism). For that reason alone it is mistaken to see it as a religion.

Arendt's own characterization of totalitarian "ideology" was described at length in the previous chapter. We should note here her contention that Marx and Engels were more sophisticated—and skeptical—than those who purported to act in their name or follow their scientific example. The founders of Marxism were not, in her reading, *totalitarian* ideologists. Nor did it make any sense to call them "religious," because to do so brazenly ignored their openly declared secularism. Moreover, while Marx was a master of suspicion, and the "father" of social science methods, he still had a sense of substantive distinctions that the social sciences have subsequently lost. The "approach of the social sciences, the identification of ideology and religion as *functionally* equivalent . . . is based on the fundamental assumption," Arendt declared, "that they do not have to concern themselves with the *substance* of a historical and political phenomenon, such as religion, or ideology, or freedom, or totalitarianism, but only with the function it plays in society."[40] In contrast, neither Marx nor Engels were ever so crass as to consider ideology and religion as basically identical. Granted, they portrayed religion as an ideology and included it in the "superstructure" of a mode of production. But when Marx said that "religion is the opiate of the people" he was not, Arendt argues, describing the source or nature of religion, but rather its use. Equally, Engels decried the tendency (polemically fashionable in his day) to equate atheism with religion, with the lampoon that "this makes about as much sense as calling chemistry an alchemy without the philosopher's stone."[41] Such remarks demonstrate that that the founders of Marxism retained "a degree of awareness for differences of substance" that their ideological epigones and methodological imitators had lost. "It is only in our time that one can afford to call Communism a religion without ever reflecting on its historical background and without ever asking what a religion actually is, and if it is anything at all when it is a religion without God."[42] The failure to grasp the content of a phenomenon, to accept its otherness, was, for Arendt, the fatal flaw of the social science mentality, which had also seeped into historical and political studies.[43]

What, then, were the substantive differences between totalitarian ideology and religion to which Arendt alluded? She only hints at them in

her dispute with Monnerot. Sparring gently with Eric Voegelin in the pages of the *Review of Politics*, however, she is clearer. Again, she states that her "chief quarrel" with the "historical and political sciences" is their penchant to conflate what should be carefully separated, so that "nationalism" is invoked in polities devoid of the nation-state, "imperialism" appears indiscriminately to apply to Assyrian and Bolshevik history, and "totalitarianism" is discovered wherever there is severe collective oppression. "The result is a generalization in which the words lose all meaning," a kind of "confusion where everything distinct disappears and everything that is new and shocking is (not explained but) explained away either through drawing some analogies or reducing it to a previously known chain of causes and influences."[44] For Arendt, the concept of secular religion is inappropriate because no substitute for God exists in totalitarian ideologies—"Hitler's use of the 'Almighty' was a concession to what he himself believed to be a superstition"[45]—while "the metaphysical place for God has remained empty."[46] And in *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, taking the Abrahamic tradition as paradigmatic, her delineations are crystal clear. Religion instructs people to care for others or, at the very least, to refrain from harm. Totalitarianism is evil and predatory, inverting everything sacred in the Western tradition. "For just as Hitler's 'Final Solution' actually meant to make the command 'Thou shalt kill' binding for the elite of the Nazi party," so Stalin "prescribed: 'Thou shalt bear false testimony,' as a guiding rule for the conduct of all members of the Bolshevik party."[47] Religion recognizes a world of limits, as evidenced in the Psalmist's praise: "Know ye that the Lord he is God: it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture" (Psalm 100:3).[48] Totalitarian ideology asserts that everything is possible and permitted. It entails the hubristic desire to transform human nature itself—the camp system is its laboratory—and fabricate the New Man. Religion gives people palpable standards by which to comprehend right and wrong. Totalitarianism creates a nightmarish world in which all standards are dissolved by crimes whose enormity is beyond our capacity to adequately punish or forgive.[49] Religion recognizes the uniqueness and sacredness of human life. Totalitarian regimes view humans as superfluous and dispensable.

These fundamental contrasts make a mockery of all attempts to equate religion and totalitarian ideology. Had they lived in our era, Marx and

Engels would have castigated that elision, or so Arendt believed. The most problematic legacies of Marx and Engels lay elsewhere. Their impatient substitution of politics with violence—a mode of behavior that is essentially mute and antipolitical—proved to be contagious. Their penchant for metaphors of fabrication—the idea of "making history"—ominously likened human beings to the pliable material that a craftsman uses to create an object.[50] Moreover, by describing religion as an emotional reflex of the life process, Marx suggested that nonscientific statements of human beings were inherently unreliable and untruthful. People were simply unaware of the real forces that determined their thoughts. Accordingly, Marx, together with Nietzsche (and Freud), helped to disseminate a mood of suspicion that pervades the human sciences and requires them to proceed by unmasking. Modern sociology, under the influence of Karl Mannheim, has aggravated this tendency by declaring that Marxism, too, is an ideology like any other.[51] Arendt found this sleight of hand demeaning and, in its intellectual perversity, repugnant. To assume that when a person says he believes in God he is really saying something quite different is to reduce speech to the idiocy or insincerity of war propaganda. Similarly, to assert that when communists deny the existence of God and condemn the institution of religion they are really practicing a covert "secular religion" is again to ignore the reality of speech.[52] The fact that some kinds of discourse hide ulterior motives does not mean that ulterior motives—or unconscious ones—are the norm. Speech also has a "truth-revealing" quality, and the principal challenge of rhetorical and textual analysis is to differentiate between statements that conceal reality and those that manifest it. Social science, alas, is abysmally incapable of rising to this challenge. On the contrary, its bowdlerized use of ideal-type analysis has taken the debunking orientation to absurd lengths by arranging discrete historical actors and episodes under completely arbitrary and transhistorical categories. A "good example of this thoroughly confusing method" is "Jules Monnerot, *Sociology and Psychology of Communism*."[53] Warming to her theme, Arendt directs her cannonade at both Monnerot and another familiar target—Karl Mannheim.

> To take a convenient example, Max Weber coined his ideal type of the "charismatic leader" after the model of Jesus of Nazareth; pupils of Karl

> Mannheim found no difficulty in applying the same category to Hitler.[54] From the viewpoint of the social scientist, Hitler and Jesus were identical because they fulfilled the same function. It is obvious that such a conclusion is possible only for people who refuse to listen to what either Jesus or Hitler said. Something very similar seems now to happen to the term "religion." It is no accident, but the very essence of the trend which sees religions everywhere, that one of its prominent adherents [Jules Monnerot][55] quotes in a footnote, with approval, the astonishing discovery of one of his colleagues "that God is not only a late arrival in religion; it is not indispensable that he should come." Here the danger of blasphemy, always inherent in the term "secular religion," shows itself freely. If secular religions are possible in the sense that Communism is a "religion without God," then we no longer live merely in a secular world which has banished religion from its public affairs, but in a world which has even eliminated God from religion—something which Marx and Engels still believed to be impossible.[56]

Monnerot Versus Arendt: Reply and Riposte

If Arendt had not invoked Jules Monnerot by name, if she had not peremptorily dismissed him, and if she had not done so in the pages of *Confluence*, he might have simply ignored her attack on secular religion theory. What doubtless made her remarks especially wounding was that they came from someone on the same political "side." Monnerot, after all, was a principled opponent of Stalinism at a time when its apologists were flourishing in France.[57] He was accustomed to being attacked in his native land. That he should be trashed in America—the heartland of opposition to Bolshevism, and by the premier theorist of totalitarianism, to boot—was far more disquieting. He must also have asked himself why she had aimed her remarks so pointedly at him, while Raymond Aron, a contributor to *Confluence*, a fellow member of the Congress for Cultural Freedom, and a major theorist of "secular religion" in his own right, had escaped her reproach.[58] Henry Kissinger later recalled that *Confluence*, "a journal of limited circulation," which he edited as a Harvard graduate student, "was to be a medium through which European and American intellectuals could debate a series of issues of mutual interest."[59] And debate they did.

Monnerot's rejoinder began by noting that while Arendt condemned the "confusion" of ideology and religion, she failed to define either concept. Worse,

> the two concepts being undefined, nothing prevents her from subtracting from religion or adding to ideology whatever she chooses. This haphazard procedure is characteristic of the essay as a literary genre where ideas become like a currency with no fixed rate: anyone can give it whatever value, or successive values, he wishes. This currency is, of course, inconvertible, as objects and facts are not expressed by such fluctuating values.[60]

Monnerot asserted that it was his critic who was guilty of sloppy conceptualization, not sociologists like himself. Further, Arendt's attempt to show that Marx retained a substantive distinction between religion and ideology was bogus. Marx, in fact, operated with a variety of definitions of them according to the target of his polemic. But the burden of his analysis was to show that there was no "contradiction" between religion and ideology, and that, as part of the "superstructure," they possessed a similar form.[61] Monnerot also taxed Arendt's use of language. To say that the notion of a religion without God is a "blasphemy" makes sense only from the standpoint of the believer; it "is only in regard to a sacred name, to a Revelation, to a Church and all that remains within that invisible and sacred enclosure that a proposition can be considered blasphemous."[62] Monnerot remarked that he knew all too well the sacred grounds on which his book on communism had been decreed heretical by the Communist Party and its fellow-travelers. He was mystified, however, about Arendt's own sacred beliefs in whose name she "thunders retribution."[63]

Behind Arendt's scourge of "secular religion" theory, Monnerot identified a more general repugnance to sociology as such. He defended sociology on two grounds. By sociologically "profaning" a sect or a movement such as communism, by eliciting thereby anger and repugnance, one demonstrated the religious charge it contained and its points of vulnerability. One also found a way of combating it that was well-nigh useless once the doctrine was deeply entrenched and encrusted by tradition. Monnerot thus insisted that his *Sociology and Psychology of Communism* was a political intervention as well as a scientific work. And while comparative sociology was by its very nature a scandal, did that mean one should desist from it? It was an outrage only to monotheistic true believers who, equipped with the revelation of scripture, failed to see that the worship of Baal and the worship of the One God were fundamentally

similar religious activities. To deny the relevance of morphological analysis was tantamount to rejecting wholesale "the religious sociology of primitive peoples." Yet the founders of sociology "have observed among primitive peoples more or less coherent groups of symbols and practices which, as far as one knows, fulfill the same functions within the society they help to characterize, as the religious systems within historical societies. It is well known that not all of these societies permit a rational deity."[64] Was Arendt really suggesting that such symbols and practices, and the people who embraced them, were bereft of religious significance? Is Buddhism of the Small Vehicle, or the Brahmanism of the Upanishad, where there is no monotheistic God, but where "thought becomes an active agent, knowledge transforms the knower and there is the march towards the 'living deliverance'" to be jettisoned from the sphere of religion proper? If that is the implication of Arendt's objection to sociological analysis, it both impugned non-Western and more rudimentary traditions, while flying in the face of a century of historical scholarship. As for psychology, it enabled people to see that while religious life grew more complex and differentiated as it evolved, sharp reversals were also possible. That was one way of explaining communism and National Socialism. An "aggressive return of inferior forms," their secularism was "theologically but not sociologically" or psychologically "absurd."[65]

Beyond that, the antinomian reflexes of the typical militant communist are just too palpable to ignore. His activity is directed toward "a collective and irrational center of attraction. He steals energy from his social milieu, distorts it, and uses it against this milieu." He is impervious to argument, inverts the wicked for the good, and attributes to the Human Species and the Ruse of Reason "a functional role" that suggests a "sort of divinity." History will redeem him not as an individual but as a member of a collectivity, the Species itself. Myth, orthodoxy, transfiguration, the capacity of conversion, all trussed up in a pseudoscientific doctrine: how else is this to be described if not as a quasi religion? "Ideology" grasps part of communism, but it is insufficient to define its essential reality. It is the religious texture, however perverted, of communism that renders it so dangerous. If all it possessed were ideology, it "could count on no allies in other countries except those" it has bought "for cash."[66]

Monnerot's rejoinder was hard-hitting. But did it hit the mark? Its target certainly didn't think so. Arendt's (1954) riposte[67] recapitulated her basic assertion: regardless of Marx's conceptual versatility, he never believed that

ideologies were religions. Just because religion functioned as an ideology, and occupied the same superstructural space as ideology, it did not follow that each element in that space was the same, any more than ideology and politics are the same, or ideology and science. Monnerot's respect for science, and desire to save it from the totalitarian enemy, enabled him to differentiate it from ideology. But the logic of the functionalist argument he makes could just as well "identify the communist ideology with science rather than with religion." Though, ultimately, this would be as bizarre as Monnerot's other claims, it is actually closer to the truth of the matter, because Marxists specifically speak in the name of science, whereas they uncompromisingly damn religion.

As for the requirement to define ideology and religion, Arendt saw no sensible reason to do either. People can define something any way they like; that does not make the definition any less arbitrary. Instead of defining things, Arendt prefers to delineate them, respecting the "vaguely felt distinctiveness which is inherent in everyday language and which scientific inquiries are supposed to sharpen and enlighten."[68] Blurring the boundaries between the concepts of religion and ideology is nothing less than obfuscating. Besides, totalitarian ideology requires a historical specification rather than a definition, because the meaning of ideology has changed since its nineteenth-century inception.[69] Arendt told Monnerot she had already discussed "ideology" in an article published in the July 1953 issue of the *Review of Politics*. Defining religion was even more fatuous and not simply because so many have already attempted it. One would be bound to omit some crucial factor or nuance.[70] Instead, it was sufficient to make distinctions that "follow the language we speak and the subject matter we deal with." Otherwise, we will find ourselves in a situation where discourse becomes steadily compartmentalized, each person talking a language that befits his fancy. The key problem, for Arendt, is that sociologists have taken to extremes the functionalist procedure that Marx introduced. Sociologists today assume that "[e]very matter has a function and its essence is the same as the functional role it happens to play." The result is flagrant violation of historical chronology, the "location of facts, impact and uniqueness of events, [and] substantial content of sources." Arendt countered:

> I, of course, do not think that every matter has a function, nor that function and essence are the same, nor that two altogether different things—as for

> instance the belief in a Law of History and the belief in God—fulfill the same function. And even if under queer circumstances, it should occur that two different things play the same "functional role," I would no more think them identical than I would think the heel of my shoe is a hammer when I use it to drive a nail into the wall.[71]

Hell: The Political Genealogy of a Religious Concept

Arendt believed that "ideology" was a far better concept than secular or political religion with which to understand the totalitarian mind-set. But that a relationship existed between political thinking and religion she never denied. On the contrary, she affirmed it. She asked:

> Which was the religious element in the past so politically relevant that its loss had an immediate impact on our political life? Or, to put the same question in another way, Which was the specifically political element in traditional religion? The justification of this question lies in the fact that the separation of the public and religious spheres of life that we call secularism did not simply sever politics from religion in general but very specifically from the Christian creed. And if one of the chief causes of the perplexities of our present public life is its very secularity, then the Christian religion must have contained a powerful political element whose loss has changed the very character of our public existence.[72]

Arendt's answer was that the loss of belief in a transworldly hereafter, and particularly the loss of the fear of Hell, was the chief political factor that distinguished the modern secular age from those that had preceded it.[73] The notion that Hell—particularly its medieval representation of perpetual torment as the price of sin—has political derivations is bound to strike many people as odd. Hell as an otherworldy punishment is surely religious to the core. Arendt disagreed. The medieval doctrine of Hell that we find most graphically represented in Dante's *Inferno* owed very little to the preaching of Jesus or to the Hebraic tradition. Its real source, Arendt argues, was both a political transformation and a philosophical appropriation. As long as Christianity remained a faith of relatively few believers, scattered and without a firm institutional base, it retained a doctrinal fluidity that befitted its lack of secular responsibility. But once the Roman Empire, in the fourth century AD, adopted Christianity as its official doctrine, and, even more so, once the church, in the early Middle Ages,

consolidated its own institutions, Christianity became a worldly power faced with new responsibilities and problems. One of these problems was how to buttress its own secular authority against secular competitors—the Prince—and instill in its charges the order necessary for stable governance. The quandary was nothing new. It had also taxed Plato, who, believing that the hoi polloi would never find truth and virtue on their own, hit upon another solution: a myth of the hereafter that both appeared true and was politically effective. Hence, the Er story in Book 10 of *The Republic*, which describes in some detail a journey beneath the earth of a hero from Pamphylia who rose from the dead. Er recounts a sphere of rewards and punishments, of joy and despair. As Socrates recounts the story to Glaucon, for whatever wrongs people had committed in their lives "they had to pay a penalty—ten times over for each offence." And penalties were especially severe for "impiety towards gods and parents, and for murder" (*The Republic* 10: 615b/c). The teachings of Jesus of Nazareth, infused by moral pacifism and the joy of good tidings, are strangers to a vision of calibrated horror. Death was something to be welcomed, so that everlasting life with God could be embraced. Plato's myth and its imitators were much darker. The dread of eternal suffering after death was, however, a salutary reinforcement for the secular legitimacy of the Roman church.[74]

Arendt's claim, then, is that the Christian notion of Hell in its familiar form was, some precedents notwithstanding, an adapted import of ancient Greek philosophy, a "political device,"[75] that helped to undergird the church's worldly authority, an adoption of major importance to the Western tradition. By insisting that a sphere of eternal agony lay beyond the grave, the doctrine of Hell gave force to the idea that something exists worse than death itself, a condition that is, after all, inevitable. And in that vision of horror and its associated hold on the human conscience lay the seeds of a deterrent that for most people no longer exists. Indeed, the erosion to the point of nullity of Hell as a possible human destination was, for Arendt, a key index of the loss of authority in modern times. The prospect of Hell affirmed standards that were beyond question or negotiation. Authority relies on a similar basic dispensation if it is to be treated with reverence. To be sure, the Nazis created a hell of their own in the concentration camps, though with the difference that suffering, protracted as it often was, would eventually cease for the tormented victim. But totalitarian hell was accompanied by utter indifference to its theological

precursor. Unshackled from religious fear, totalitarianism had shown the human conscience to be an alarmingly weak vessel.[76]

The Nature of Religion and the Totalitarian "Style"

Suppose we agree with Arendt that the many parallels between totalitarianism and religion are substantively bogus. And suppose, accordingly, we refuse to see religious significance in such things as the Bolshevik and Nazi parades and festivals, the rituals marking fallen comrades—the *Blutzeugen* (martyrs, blood witnesses)—and the leadership "cults." This refusal will require us to contradict the impression of many contemporary witnesses. Boris Souvarine, fulminating against the prostration that Stalin inspired, caustically remarked: "Lenin was sanctified after his death," while Stalin was "deified while still living." Relics of the Great Leader occasioned awe; cities and mountains bore his name; poets praised the "mighty one, chief of the peoples, Who callest man to life, Who awakest the earth to fruitfulness, Who summonest the centuries to youth."[77] Sycophancy shaded into adoration. Milovan Djilas, who visited the Lenin mausoleum in early 1948, recalled seeing "simple women in shawls . . . crossing themselves as though approaching the reliquary of a saint. I, too, was overcome by a feeling of mysticism, something forgotten from a distant youth."[78] Russian historians, such as Roy Medvedev, have echoed a similar refrain, writing that under Stalin the "social consciousness of the people took on elements of religious psychology" and that this "religious outlook crippled the will even of those people who had stopped believing in Stalin."[79] It is, of course, possible to claim that these interpretations are, in their religious evocation, misleading or wrong. One might then redescribe them in a nonreligious language, a task that is actually harder than it first appears. But we are still left with two problems. First, if we follow Arendt's thought-trains we must define religion in such a way that it is separable from the feelings agents themselves consider religious; we must, in other words, stick to a delineation of religion that is indifferent to its phenomenological—experiential—manifestations. That smacks of undue rigidity. The second problem is one that is internal to Arendt's own argument. It concerns the difficulty of squaring her insistence that we take seriously the "style" of totalitarian utterances with the fact that many of these utterances employed a religious language. Let us consider these two difficulties in turn.

UNDERSTANDING "RELIGION"

By the time Arendt collided with Monnerot in the early 1950s, the concept of "religion" was already in a state of severe agitation. At least four modes of understanding it were vying for recognition.[80] The first was monotheistic, identifying Abrahamic religions (Judaism, Christianity, Islam) as exemplars of religion as such, and considering the sacred to be that revealed by a transcendental God through the medium of scripture. This was broadly the "substantive" position to which Arendt subscribed.[81] It accords with a long-established, Occidental idea of the object of religious piety. A second perspective prevalent in Arendt's day was broadly phenomenological, anthropological, and comparative. Religion, on this account, denoted a modality of experience, feeling, state of mind, or cluster of symbols. Concepts such as "hierophany,"[82] the "numinous,"[83] the *realissimum*,[84] and "collective effervescence"[85] speak to this view of the religious mode of life. A third stance was "functional" and was evident in all those writers—Raymond Aron foremost among them—who saw "secular religion" as a substitute for a spiritual God. The final approach to religion was historico-isomorphic, exemplified in the argument of Carl Schmitt that

> [a]ll significant concepts of the modern theory of the state are secularized theological concepts not only because of their historical development—in which they were transferred from theology to the theory of the state, whereby, for example, the omnipotent God became the omnipotent lawgiver—but also because of their systematic structure, the recognition of which is necessary for a sociological consideration of these concepts. The exception in jurisprudence is analogous to the miracle in theology. Only by being aware of this analogy can we appreciate the manner in which the philosophical ideas of the state developed in the last centuries.[86]

This fourfold categorization is obviously porous and internally complex.[87] For instance, phenomenological conceptions of religion, as much as traditional ones, are in their own way "substantive"—if the opposite of substantive is heuristic. Hence, the *experience* of the holy described by Otto *presupposes the existence* of the holy and its radical otherness. The modalities of religious experience are so many ways in which a religious reality shows itself to human beings, so many channels through which humans reach communion with the sacred. "Feeling" is what we are affected by.

Durkheim's view was of course different, because he located the source of religion in social relations—collective effervescence—and sought its elementary forms in the ritual conduct of Australian aborigines.[88] But this does not make religion any less substantive or radically other. The distinction between things that are sacred and things that are profane is neither an ideal type, nor an arbitrary imposition, nor a working hypothesis of the sociologist. It is human beings themselves, in social relationships, who designate objects as powerful, prohibited, dangerous, and who generate the radical "heterogeneity" (Durkheim) between such objects and those that may be approached with impunity.[89] Alterity is itself a consequence of the human group—assembled rather than dispersed, excited rather than tranquil, focused rather than distracted—that through collective sentiment generates its hallowed symbols: totems, national flags and anthems, emblems of sacrifice, heroism and death. The sociologist's categorical distinction between sacred and profane records, rather than constructs, this fact.

These remarks suggest that Arendt's peremptory dismissal of Monnerot's sociological understanding of religion was rather too convenient. "Religion" and the "religious" were heavily contested terms in her day. It is by no means obvious which was—and is—the more cogent.

THE TOTALITARIAN "STYLE"

Hannah Arendt often decried social science for its refusal to take seriously the speech acts of totalitarian leaders and movements, reducing them instead to some cause or mechanism of which the actors were supposedly innocent.[90] That strategy was part of the sociological mistrust of the mind, which assumed that to debunk an event or action was tantamount to explaining it. If people had taken *Mein Kampf* with the deadly seriousness of its author, they might have been quicker to see the danger Hitler posed to civilization. Arendt's criticism is forceful and raises uncomfortable questions about certain kinds of sociological procedure. It also has consequences, however, that are abrasive for other aspects of her argument. To begin with, it is indubitable that religious forms and expressions did in fact permeate totalitarian discourse—namely, the discourse of the leaders and movements; this is something that Arendt largely (but, as we will see, not completely) avoids discussing. Stalin's liturgical manner is well known; he may have picked it up during his student days in the Tiflis Theological Seminary. His notorious funeral oration to Lenin is almost a parody of the Christian catechism. "Com-

rade Lenin enjoined us to keep and strengthen with all our might the union of workers and peasants. We vow to thee, Comrade Lenin, that we will with honor fulfill this, thy commandment."[91]

The Polish Roman Catholic poet Czesław Miłosz had few qualms in likening Bolshevism to a perverted religion. He called communist doctrine, in its Soviet form, the "New Faith,"[92] a creation of Russian intellectuals whose connection with Marx "is rather superficial."[93] Its proponents are mostly ascetics; the "general ethical ideal of the New Faith is puritanical." The objective of the New Faith is the regeneration of humanity, redeemed from its baser nature. The person imbued with the spirit of revolutionary purity is devoted to the "sacred fire of the revolutionary epoch of Lenin."[94] He or she may deplore many of Stalin's actions. Yet even that kind of doubt is unstable, because, the reasoning goes, Stalin may be the vehicle of a higher purpose.[95] The Communist Party in Poland recognized a truth, Miłosz wrote, of which the Roman Catholic Church has long been familiar: that faith is planted in the individual not principally as an act of personal conviction but as a "collective suggestion" reinforced by social rituals imprinted on the body.[96] Faith is a "psycho-physical" phenomenon; belief is preceded by, and realized in, such somatic behaviors as kneeling, singing hymns, performing the sign of the cross, genuflecting, and folding one's hands in prayer. Party clubs organize themselves along similar lines, disseminating their iconography to schools, factories, and offices and arranging meetings "that are as potent as religious rites." It is by participating in a "collective rhythm" that people are able to, momentarily, suspend the doubts that they feel as individuals; pronouncing "ritual phrases and singing the ritual songs, they create a collective aura to which they in turn surrender."[97] Emile Durkheim could not have put it better.

Miłosz did not describe communist doctrine *as* a religion, but as similar to one in some respects. No moral relativist, he averred that Christianity and "Stalinist philosophy" were irreconcilable, notwithstanding the fact that many people appeared to worship both. Individuals who claim to be Christians but who believe that Stalin fulfills a Law of History that is also the will of God are simply deluded. "They renounce their faith but are ashamed to admit it. The contradiction between Christianity and Stalinist philosophy cannot be overcome. Christianity is based on a concept of *individual* merit and guilt; the New Faith, on *historical* merit and guilt. The Christian who rejects individual merit and guilt

denies the work of Jesus, and the God he calls upon slowly transforms himself into History."[98] Milovan Djilas—an ex-Partisan leader, comrade of Marshal Tito, and Vice President of Yugoslavia before he was expelled from the Community Party in January 1954 on account of his call for democratization—corroborated Miłosz's observations. Djilas noted that modern communism was "reminiscent of the exclusiveness of religious sects" during the Reformation. Elements of Puritanism and Jacobinism took shelter in communist doctrine and practice. Yet he insisted that the "essence" of the party and of the medieval church were profoundly different. The church, even at the height of its secular ambitions, had circumscribed goals, whereas the party's were limitless.[99]

Djilas, who met Stalin three times, was also struck by an oratorical style that resembled "an unblended jumble of vulgar journalism and the Bible."[100] And elsewhere he suggested that logical dogmatism was entirely compatible with, and part of the same discursive package as, religious language, even if the person who uttered it was not religious himself. Stalin, in contrast to the "flamboyant, incisive, and logical" manner of Lenin,

> believed his thinking to be the supreme expression of human thought. His style was colorless and monotonous, but its oversimplified logic and dogmatism were convincing to the conformists and to common people. It contained simplicities from the writings of the Church fathers, not so much the result of his religious youth as the result of the fact that his was the way of expression under primitive conditions, and of dogmatized Communists.[101]

Many other observers confirmed the "crude internal cohesiveness" of Stalin's statements.[102] The German journalist Emil Ludwig, who interviewed Stalin in December 1931, was one such witness. "Stalin lets syllables fall like heavy hammer blows," Ludwig recollected. "His answers are short and clear, not those of a man who oversimplifies things before a public audience, but those of a logical thinker whose mind works slowly and without the least emotion." The Old Bolshevik Fedor Raskolnikov painted a similar portrait, casting Stalin as a "schematist" who "knows the laws of formal logic, and his conclusions logically follow from his premises."[103] These and other comments validate Arendt's identification, discussed in Chapter 3, of perverted logicality as a signature feature of totalitarian thought and utterance. They do not, however, require us to conclude that religious discourse was thereby secondary or irrelevant or

to deny the partial congruence between that discourse, particularly in its catechismic form, and the process-logic that Arendt bemoaned.[104] One can delineate the singularity of both ideology and religion while acknowledging that, under certain conditions, they may be hybridized. Significantly, Arendt seems to have recognized this point without, however, theoretically clarifying it or developing its implications.

The Origins of Totalitarianism, in contrast to the "Ideology and Terror" essay that was later appended to it, is shot through with religious language. This is especially evident where Arendt is describing what she calls the totalitarian "style" of propaganda, namely, the penchant of mass leaders to calculate the future in terms of centuries and millennia. Totalitarian propaganda announces "political intentions in the form of prophecy"[105]—as evidenced, for instance, in Stalin's 1930 forecast to the Central Committee of the Communist Party that those impeding the regime were representatives of "dying classes." That description was simultaneously a death sentence; once carried out, it vindicated the oracle that foretold it.[106] Prophetic confidence, Arendt asserts, is profoundly attractive to all those in "society" who either think in a similar way or who find such dogmatism a welcome alternative to the normal "chaos of opinions."[107] Similarly, the language of "prophetic scientificality corresponded to the needs of the masses who had lost their home in the world and now were prepared to be reintegrated into eternal, all-dominating forces which by themselves would bear man, the swimmer on the waves of adversity, to the shores of safety."[108] So impressed was her contemporary, the culture critic Philip Rieff, with what he considered to be the religious impulse of *The Origins of Totalitarianism*—in its first edition, the book ends with a quote from Acts of the Apostles[109]—that he entitled his review of it "The Theology of Politics." Rieff's contention that Arendt considered totalitarianism to be "the Burden (punishment) of our time, visited inevitably upon Western man for hubris," is implausible.[110] But he was right to flag Arendt's pervasive employment of religious imagery.

Arendt could have used the term *prediction* rather than *prophecy* had she wished only to emphasize the scientific side of propaganda. (She does use the term *prediction* as well.) *Prophecy*, in contrast, has an unmistakable religious timbre. And the oxymoron *scientific prophecy*[111] is redolent of *secular religion*. Nor is this kind of phraseology isolated. Elsewhere in *Origins*, Arendt writes of the "idolatry" of Nazi and Bolshevik rituals;[112] of Stalin's initiation of the 1936 Soviet Constitution as "the sacred halo of

written law";[113] of the correspondence of the three different types of concentration camp to ancient and medieval notions of Hades, Purgatory, and Hell;[114] of the appearance in the camps of "radical evil";[115] and of "solidarity in human sinfulness."[116] Often these expressions are figures of speech. At other times, however, Arendt is recording the perceptions of totalitarian actors. She acknowledged that "the Nazi leadership actually believed in, and did not merely use as propaganda, such doctrines as the following: 'The more accurately we recognize and observe the laws of nature and life . . . so much the more do we conform to the will of the Almighty. The more insight we have into the will of the Almighty, the greater will be our success."[117] Yet if that is correct, should we not take *these* actors and *these* words as seriously as we do expressions of logical consistency or Hitler's blood-curdling threats in *Mein Kampf* (a book that also contains many "religious" statements)? Arendt evaded the question.

Consider the following extract from a speech, delivered in September 1935, by Hanns Johst, a high-ranking member of the SS and president of the Reich Chamber of Writers. The extract is quoted by Uriel Tal, who interpolates into it biblical allusions that Johst himself took for granted.

> The Reich our life (instead of "Christ our life"—Col. 3:4) and our blood and soil (instead of "creation itself") will be delivered from bondage of corruption, that is, from its impurity, its Jewishness, into the glorious liberty of the children of our Führer (instead of the "children of God" as Rom. 8:12). We are the redemption of the world, sent forth into the world as the light of the world and the salt of the earth (Mt. 5:13–16). The uniqueness of the Aryan race is a manifestation of the Volk-spirit. Since this spirit is from and for the Volk by virtue of its elitist essence, "it cannot be given to every man to profit" [1 Cor. 12:7].[118]

It is easy to dismiss this as so much eclectic nonsense. But Uriel Tal argues that it represented more than that: a "reversal of meanings" integral to Nazi discourse. Functionalization of concepts was not a fiction imposed by sociologists, but a device of National Socialism itself when it created a "substitute religion" rather than a secular one.[119] This substitute religion operated through a structural transformation in which "theological concepts of God and man were now used as anthropological and political concepts." God becomes man in the shape of the Führer, communication with him becomes communion, "the Pauline conception of

'putting on' the new man that is about to rise (Eph. 4:24; Col. 3:10) [is transferred] from the level of metaphysics and eschatology to that of nationality and statehood."[120] Alongside this transference of theological notions to the "secular, political plane," and the catechismic repetition of Christian motifs, Tal notes the reshaping of language that took place during the Nazi period. Theological terms such as *faith*, *mission*, *resurrection*, *eternity*, and, of course, *salvation* (*Heil*) are invested with political meaning, a tendency also brilliantly recorded by the Reich's most assiduous linguistic student, Victor Klemperer. He writes: "Nazism was accepted by millions as gospel because it appropriated the language of the gospel." Those who died at the Feldherrnhalle for the Nazi cause in 1923 at the time of the failed putsch were, Hitler preached in November 1935, "My Apostles." And in his funeral oration to them, the Führer consoled the nation with the thought that these fallen had "risen again in the Third Reich."[121]

We saw that while Arendt in *Origins* employs religious imagery, she was much keener to emphasize the warped, inexorable "logic" of totalitarian cognition. But why did she select logic and consistency as a more significant aspect of the totalitarian mind-set than any other? Three reasons may be conjectured. The first is that the relentless process dynamic of totalitarian "logic" meshed well with her central claim that totalitarianism was, above all, a regime of *movement*. Repeatedly, she states that totalitarian regimes are driven by a "perpetual-motion mania." They can "remain in power only so long as they keep moving and set everything around them in motion."[122] That momentum translates into the purges, wars, deportations, and identification of ever new objective enemies for extermination that mark totalitarianism's trajectory. Permanent revolution and endless deduction are two sides of the same coin. Arendt claims, in addition, that the demand for consistency enshrined in logical processes (irrespective of the absurdity of their grounding postulates) is something highly attractive to the atomized, nihilistic "masses," who find in it something firm to hold on to. Consistency rather than revelation is their emotional anchor.[123]

The second reason why Arendt was probably attracted to the notion of "logic" was that its very abstraction and detachment from anything solid enabled her to find a coherence for one branch of totalitarianism—National Socialism—without rooting it in any historical current of the Western heritage. As we saw previously, Arendt insisted that totalitarianism

represented a caesura with past regimes. "Nazism owes nothing to any part of the Western tradition," she maintained, "be it German or not, Catholic or Protestant, Christian, Greek, or Roman."[124] If she had admitted religion as a relevant factor in totalitarianism's rise or consolidation, that would have suggested a continuity with the past that she was loath to allow. As for Bolshevism, Arendt took seriously its declared antipathy to religion in all its forms.

Third, Arendt was drawn to logical consistency as the defining feature of the totalitarian mind-set, I surmise, because it provided a defensible alternative to the secular religion idea; defensible because it could account for totalitarianism's unusual appeal. At the same time, she could regard remorseless logicality as the antithesis of all things sacred. Granted, she was aware that people like Martin Bormann employed a shamanistic language, which probably expressed their true feelings. But she was certain that insofar as Nazi leaders embraced *Christianity*, they did so largely as a cynical ruse to get the support of a Christian nation, and that the "positive Christianity" enshrined in Point 24 of the NSDAP Party Program (1920), was a mask behind which lay the authentic pagan face of Nazism (a view that reprises the debunking attitude that Arendt normally flays). That interpretation is obviously appealing to anti-Nazi Christians. Citing the spirit as well as the letter of Christian scripture, they will have no difficulty in showing that the teachings' emphasis on human equality in the eyes of God is the antipode of National Socialist racism, and that a doctrine that subtracts the Old Testament from the New is hardly Christian in any recognizable sense. Anti-Nazi Christians can add that those who invoked the scriptures in Hitler's cause cannibalized for instrumental purposes an essentially humane and otherworldly creed; that Nazis who professed Christianity had misunderstood scripture, were blinded by their time, and had succumbed to a demonic distortion of the Word. What anti-Nazi Christians cannot assume is that self-professed Christians who embraced Hitler were lying. Victor Klemperer, who lived through the whole period, certainly did not think so.[125]

Doubtless, many Nazi activists did cynically trade on Christianity as a currency of manipulation. The movement was keen to straddle, even if it could not reconcile, the confessional divide in German-speaking lands between Protestants and Catholics. But as Richard Steigmann-Gall shows,[126] many leading Nazi activists—men like Joseph Goebbels, Dietrich Klagges, Walter Buch, Erich Koch, Hans Schemm—were avowedly

Christian in persuasion, both in public and in private, and comported themselves as Christian Nazis.[127] That is to say, prominent Nazis *saw themselves* as Christians, were committed to Christianity *as they understood it, believed that they* were acting within a Christian framework, and argued that National Socialism was *consistent* with Christian precepts. If their self-professed Christianity is bizarre to us who are Christians, it is because we fail to recognize that National Socialism was a syncretic doctrine that borrowed from a number of sources, including nationalism, confessional Lutheranism, and liberal, *völkisch* forms of Protestantism. Conversely, the anti-Christian, neo-pagan doctrine associated with Alfred Rosenberg, and adopted by Heinrich Himmler and others, was always a minority tendency in the Nazi movement. Far from being hegemonic, it was the object of open ridicule and derision, not least by Hitler himself, who opposed root and branch any attempt to transform National Socialism into a *new* political religion.[128]

Conclusion: Beyond Secular Religion Theory

Do the previous two subsections entirely negate Arendt's objections to secular religion theory? They do not. Her concern to avoid conflating things best kept apart remains cogent. And, sociologically, clear distinctions can be drawn between identities that attach to transcendental or divine religions and those that cleave to totalitarian ideologies; the former are far more durable than the latter. The zeal of Nazi ideology was quickly shed; Bolshevism took a little longer to dissipate. Both proved to be historically evanescent. In contrast, Abrahamic religions are the great survivors, capable of renewal over centuries. What explains that difference? The key to it, surely, is that ideologies like National Socialism and communism proved culturally shallow. It is easy to imagine a world without them. It is much harder to conceive of a world without Islam. A related point is that while military and political defeats appear to kill totalitarian ideologies, they are not terminal for world philosophies or divine religions. Confucianism survived the assault on it by Mao's regime, while Maoism itself is, today, increasingly deemed a relic by the Chinese people. Judaism has endured catastrophe for millennia. Indeed, disaster is commonly understood by Judaism to be a providential vindication. "Despite the frequency with which Jews were attacked or expelled," observes Ruth Wisse, they "interpreted their survival as proof of their

invincibility. Successive national disasters were absorbed into the day of mourning for the First and Second Temples."[129] Bolshevism and National Socialism, by contrast, were short and bloody episodes whose eclipse occasions little nostalgia, and whose history as mass movements appears to be over.

Enough of this oscillation between Arendt and Monnerot. A more productive question is this: In the light of their dispute, might we be able to forge some distinctions that retain a sense of the religious or quasi-religious aspects of totalitarianism without necessarily adopting the term "secular religion" to describe those aspects? I suggest that instead of invoking "secular religion," in the context of twentieth-century totalitarian movements, we seek to distinguish among Marxist faith, religious politics, imitation or ersatz religion, parallel religion, ritualized politics, religious legacy, and militant religion. These terms do not establish their own credibility; we may legitimately dispute or qualify what they purport to describe. But, as distinctions, they do at least signal rather different things and do so in a way that avoids the potential ambiguity and redundancy of "secular religion."

Marxist faith is preferable to "secular religion" because Bolshevik ideology was explicitly atheist and because faith is a more latitudinous concept than religion. The fact that religion, in the divine sense of the word, entails both a faith in God's existence and a community of believers to which one is socially bound does not mean that one cannot have faith and communal obligation without a belief in God. We can have faith in a friend, in a doctor, or in a soccer team without attributing religious properties to any of them. Similarly, we can have faith in a conviction, such as pacifism or liberalism; or, more precisely, conviction is a kind of faith. Bolshevism was a faith, taken to fanatical extremes, in something other than God: Marxist ideology.[130] This distinguishes it decisively from the philosophy of the Enlightenment, where worldly affirmation, active questing, a rejection of original sin, and a commitment to "natural" as distinct from revealed religion amounted to what Cassirer aptly called a "struggle for the expansion of the concept of God."[131] "Faith" has the added advantage that it reflects contemporaneous discussion about communism; Halévy referred to communism as a "common faith;"[132] Miłosz, again summoning popular usage, called it the New Faith,[133] while Lowenthal, charting its decay, wrote of the "disintegration of a secular faith."[134] And communism as a faith, distinct from a religion, was

what Djilas had in mind when he observed that communism "is neither a religion nor a church, in spite of the fact that it contains elements of both."[135] A cat is not a dog just because, like a canine, it has four legs, nor is a street fight a war just because people are hurt in both. Similarly, the fact that Marxist faith resembled at times a religious dogma does not make it one. That was Hannah Arendt's basic insight. I endorse it.

Religious politics is the expression Steigmann-Gall employs in his description of National Socialism.[136] He uses it to argue that Nazism contained a religious dimension that was highly appealing to a largely Protestant base. It was first and foremost the message of National Socialism—mixing Christianity and nationalism—as distinct from its ritual, that was capable of mobilizing a variety of constituencies, cutting across social classes. National Socialism tailored Christianity to its own purpose. Far from wishing to replace Christianity by creating a new religion, mainstream National Socialists saw their ideology as a manifestation of the word of God.

If religious politics suggests a movement in which secular activity is imbued with explicit transcendental sentiment, *imitation religion* directs us to an artificial reconfiguration of this principle. Here, the secular realm is itself understood as the seat of ultimate political authority, but nonetheless in need of doctrines modeled on some aspects of religious experience. The salient case is Rousseau's idea of "civil religion," which he described as a "civil profession of faith of which the Sovereign should fix the articles, not exactly as religious dogmas, but as social sentiments without which a man cannot be a good or a faithful subject." Infraction of these articles, and insult to the social sentiments that sustain them, would eventuate not in the accusation of impiety, but in the charge of acting in a way that offended social justice and social duty. The dogmas of this civil religion, Rousseau continued, should be "few, simple, and exactly worded, without explanation or commentary. The existence of a mighty, intelligent, and beneficent Divinity, possessed of foresight and providence, the life to come, the happiness of the just, the punishment of the wicked, the sanctity of the social contract and the laws: these are its positive dogmas."[137]

Rousseau's doctrine of civil religion owed a great deal to his background assumption that "a Christian republic" was a *contradictio in adjecto*, because the true Christian—pacific, otherworldly, unpolitical—"preaches only servitude and dependence." This assertion distinguishes

Rousseau's creation from what we might call *parallel religions*, such as the "civil religion" that Robert Bellah ascribes to the founders and revolutionaries of the American republic. To be sure, American civil religion, like its Rousseauian counterpart, refers to a sense of national reverence. Yet it is also grounded in an individual and collective sense of God's dispensation, an idea foreign to Rousseau. In its American articulation, civil religion is neither a proxy for Christianity nor a substitute for church religion; it is an additional dimension of social life based on the certainty that God chose the American nation as a vehicle of providence. More Hebraic than Christian, civil religion celebrates a real, transcendental deity that is no political contrivance.[138] If its symbolism, prophets, and rituals recapitulate biblical archetypes, this is because they form part of the same spiritual essence. The nation, far from being glorified in its own right, is hallowed to the degree that it embodies "ethical principles that transcend it and in terms of which it should be judged."[139]

One attraction of "secular religion" as an oxymoron is that it alerts us to the hybrid character of its subject matter: beliefs, symbols, rituals, and organizations that, in the kind of deference they demand, remind us of sacred things. "Secular religion" theory captures the sense of obligation and commitment that is typical of transcendental religions, while pointing out that such obligation and commitment is deemed to reside within the world itself, not outside or beyond it. It provides us with something that is largely absent from Hannah Arendt's logic-centered, formalistic account of ideology: an insight into the interdictions, foci of attention, modes of interaction, and emotional energy that inspire the faithful. From a sociological standpoint, it seems hardly credible to think that the disembodied imperative of logical deduction could enthuse a mass constituency or provide the long-term momentum for totalitarian leaders. At the same time, is not secular religion theory in danger of muddle and redundancy, as Arendt claimed? Why, we might ask, apply the term *sacred* to worldly entities if, instead of that term, and its divine associations, words like *solidarity*, *ritual mobilization*, or *general effervescence* would do just as well?[140] All politics is ritualized in various ways, though it is not clear to me what purpose is served by identifying ritual interaction, the delineation of insiders and outsiders, and feelings of respect and repugnance as thereby "religious."

Ritualized politics, as I have just suggested, is a ubiquitous feature of political life, as it is of life in general. Equally pervasive is the *religious legacy*

from which each civilization draws. Given that Western civilization has been fundamentally shaped by the Hebraic-Christian tradition, and many of its subtraditions, it would be utterly astonishing if Western social and political movements were utterly devoid of Hebraic-Christian influence. Even those intellectuals that denounce this legacy are, in their very blasphemies, marked by it—as Karl Löwith once remarked of Proudhon, and as many have observed of Marx.[141] Another demonstration of the fecundity of religious motifs is advanced by Judith Adler in her study of the refracted contribution of early Christian asceticism to modern environmentalism. Not content to establish broad parallels between religion and environmentalism, Adler offers an archaeology of the "religious vocabularies and narrative tropes" that provide "thematic continuities" connecting modern ideas of wilderness to their largely forgotten templates in late antiquity.[142]

The previous distinctions offer a rough classification of some relations among politics and religion. They make no claim to be exhaustive.[143] Other vocabularies might be used in their place: for instance, we might prefer to speak of "substitute religions" instead of "imitation" ones, religious "templates" instead of religious "legacies." No matter. To the extent that our discussion clarifies phenomena that are often elided, it fulfills its limited purpose.

§ 5 Concluding Reflections

A New Constellation of Terror

Hannah Arendt's grasp of social science was patchy. She knew little about it beyond the dispute in Germany during the 1920s and early 1930s over the sociology of knowledge. Perhaps she did not want to know. Perhaps dislike trumped curiosity, a common human failing. She certainly took no interest in American sociological schools of thought or the debates they generated. It is true that articles by Arendt and Talcott Parsons appeared together in the April 1942 issue of the *Review of Politics*,[1] and that the authors had common interlocutors in Eric Voegelin and Waldemar Gurian. It is also true that Arendt visited Harvard a number of times during Parsons's tenure there and, in the fall of 1953, delivered a university lecture that she later mocked as a "real disaster. The sociologists, whom I've been irritating for years, finally went into a rage and let me have it. It was a lot of fun. I take pleasure in a good fight."[2] Taking pleasure or not, Arendt failed to see that her appraisal of ideal types—examined in Chapter 1—degenerates into a cartoon when she fails to distinguish between one key logical purpose of such instruments (to establish historical uniqueness) and the empirically dubious or hackneyed use of them by the epigones. Moreover, the relationship between the employment of ideal types and clinical moral withdrawal is contingent but not necessary, a matter that Arendt fails to clarify. Who would maintain that there was anything ethically anemic about Weber's ideal type of the Puritan or H. G. Adler's ideal type of Nazi "administration"? Everett C. Hughes, in his reflections on the Final Solution, may have employed a highly conventional distinction between in-groups and out-groups. But this did not stop him evoking "cruelty and murder," as well as "ferocious,

obscene and perverse action."[3] Guided by a map whose configuration omitted great swaths of sociological territory, Arendt failed to see the extent to which sociology's practitioners have, from the beginning, labored to differentiate radically new terrain from orthodox landmarks. Obvious examples include Comte's theory of the emergence of the positive sciences, Weber's insistence on the specificity of modern rational bourgeois capitalism, and Durkheim's examination of the consequences of the cult of the individual. *Contract*, *secular*, *utility*, and *disenchantment* are all terms that the classical sociologists adapted to denote a new social order. Today, their legacy is flourishing in sociological discussions of *postindustrial society*, *computerized society*, *risk society*, *late modernity*, *postmodernity*, *information age*, and *globality*, to name only the most obvious of contemporary neologisms. Whatever one thinks about the adequacy of these concepts, it is impossible to deny that they denote an acute awareness that modern society is perpetually in a state of redefinition.

Arguably, however, such a response misses the point Arendt wished to impress on her readers. She was concerned with regime types rather than with societies, considered that it was far more difficult to recognize new political (or antipolitical) formations than social ones, and believed that sociology's hold on political realities was tenuous at best. Besides, it is one thing for sociologists to vouchsafe a general concern with the new, quite another to redeem that concern during any particular conjuncture, especially if there are other disciplinary proclivities that work to obscure the times we live in or the practices we encounter. Here we might summon Robert K. Merton's celebrated analysis of the inclination among historians of sociology to discount or minimize scientific discoveries by claiming them to be little more than fraudulent "adumbrations" of a more "congenial ancestor." Summarizing that predilection, Merton described the adumbrationist's credo in the following way: "The discovery is not true; If true, it is not new; If both true and new, it is not significant."[4] Yet, ironically, the opposite danger—exaggerating the plenitude of novel ideas, events, breaks, and ruptures—can be just as sociologically distorting. For to the degree that everything is vaunted as epochal, sociology loses its prudential capacity to discriminate between sensational claims and empirically serious ones.

I hope to have shown in this book that *despite* Arendt's limited familiarity with sociology, she did raise some astute objections to aspects of its treatment of National Socialism. Her unstinting attack on casual analogies

and spurious parallels and her insistent demand that we try to view our own time afresh, are of continuing, indeed pressing, relevance. Twenty-first-century citizens live in a post-9/11 world, painfully aware of a host of dangers to political pluralism, of which violent jihadism is currently among the greatest. This is one of the burdens of our time. How is it to be understood? Naturally, radical Islamism is by no means the only terror threat we face today. The most lethal attacks on human societies are still likely to come from interstate wars rather than from coercive non-state actors. In addition, many of the latter have nothing to do with Islam. Ethno-nationalist terror organizations remain a potent force in many parts of the globe. Religious cults, animal rights, and antiglobalization movements are all capable of employing terror, including weapons of mass destruction. And, as I write, one can be sure that other terror groups, at this juncture still unknown, are in the process of gestation. That is important to recognize because overemphasis on jihadism can easily distract us from seeing other enemies. And even in relation to Islam itself, a preoccupation with terror is misleading. A more amorphous fear is growing in Europe that falls short of terror. It concerns the results of emigration from Muslim countries over the past five decades, in particular the ambition of militant minorities of second- and third-generation Muslims to replace European native customs with the certainties and rigidities of sharia (Islamic law). Falling fertility among non-Muslim populations that are already old (a quarter of Europeans are over sixty); far higher birthrates among Muslims, later joined through marriage abroad by plentiful foreign dependents; the unthinking application by political elites of "diversity" and "tolerance" to groups that respect such norms only when applied to themselves; and the attenuation of Christian religious commitments—all of these tendencies offer a fertile field for colonization by a more confident, more courageous, and more belligerent culture.[5] My focus in what follows, however, is mostly limited to violent jihadism because of its ample record of aggression and intimidation, its martyrdom justification for mass murder, and its transterritorial aspiration to establish a caliphate in all Muslim lands (and to impose sharia, by force if need be, in whatever district, country, or region in which Muslims have a demographic presence). This is a phenomenon that I think would have interested Arendt, who assiduously sought to chart the terror of her time. It would also have interested her critic Jules Monnerot, who stressed the parallels between communism and Islam. My two key questions are these: To what extent is radical Islamism similar to, and

different from, "totalitarianism"? Is it an unprecedented phenomenon and danger, as some earlier observers claimed totalitarianism to be? These questions are Arendtian in spirit, because they reflect her conviction that political writers have obligations to understand the singularity of their epoch, to defend plurality, and to protect the human "world," without which politics is impossible.

Islamist political currents are heterogeneous, so it is best to make some initial discriminations. We can distinguish among:

(a) moderate, anti-Islamist, and often pro-Western Muslims;

(b) violent Islamist groups, some now defunct or reconfigured, such as Egyptian Islamic Jihad, the Salafiya Jihadiya Group [Morocco], the Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat [Algeria], Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb, the Islamic Group [Egypt], the Libyan Islamic Fighting Group, Hamas, Hezbollah, the Moro Islamic Liberation Front [Philippines], the Taliban, Jemaah Islamiah [Indonesia], Lashkar-e-Taiba [Pakistan], and the Al Qaeda franchise to which a number of these organizations are connected.

(c) nonviolent Islamists, such as the contemporary Muslim Brotherhood and its international front organizations that "represent the murky in-between" of (a) and (b).[6]

Naturally, the groups mentioned in (b) are diverse. Some, like Hamas, claim to pursue a local or regional agenda. Others, like Al Qaeda, have explicitly global aspirations. Still others, like the Taliban, see themselves as the local arm of a global jihad. Militant Islamist organizations are also frequently daggers-drawn; Salafists treat Shiites as scum; Hezbollah is wary of the Al Qaeda presence in the Palestinian camps of Lebanon; Iranian mullahs are, when conditions are propitious, arch-enemies of the Taliban. Another source of rivalry within the violent Islamist movement concerns strategic priorities. Should jihad be waged principally against the "near enemy" (local apostate rulers) or the crusader "far enemy?"[7] Nonetheless, many of these groups are capable of jihadist collaboration across sectarian divisions when it suits their purposes: a prominent example today is the Hamas (Sunni), Hezbollah (Shiite), and Iranian (Shiite) nexus. The Muslim Brotherhood, too, often provides succor, propaganda, and funds for violent Islamist groups, providing a membrane of respectability through which radicals can pass and feel part of the normal world.

Totalitarianism and Radical Islamism

In the conclusion to the previous chapter, I sought to circumvent the term *secular religion* by distinguishing among Marxist faith, religious politics, imitation or ersatz religion, parallel religion, ritualized politics, and religious legacy. How should we understand modern radical Islamism? *Secular religion* is obviously inaccurate. What, then, about *political religion?* In much of the Western tradition, the very existence of politics typically supposes a jurisdiction of human-made laws, separate from religion. It supposes, in other words, a distinction between God and Caesar, piety and justice, *sacerdotium* and *regnum*, church and state, soul and city, revelation and reason, sin and crime.[8] The fact that, in Western practice, religion and politics have competed with each other and sometimes dominated each other (consider caesaro-papism and extreme laicism) does not negate the distinction just made; it simply shows how difficult it has been historically to sustain.[9] In contrast, Islam has never legitimized politics as a separate sphere from religion. The mosque, unlike the church, is not a legal person. The state has no independent authority. The *suras* ("chapters") of the Koran make no categorical or principled distinction between public and private spheres: every duty emanates from God alone, because God's sovereignty cannot be divided; as Sayyid Qutb stressed, the one God has no associates.[10] Among radical Islamists, the substitute for political institutions is, above all, the fellow-feeling and camaraderie bestowed by membership of a secret society and the existential tests that confront the believer. This means that radical Islamism is parasitic on religion (drawing on a "religious legacy," in my previous formulation) without being political in, at least, the Western institutional sense. Accordingly, it is more apt to describe radical Islamism as a movement that appropriates and amplifies a *militant religion*—Islam—as distinct from being a political one. To the degree that political objectives exist at all (the establishment of a global caliphate), they are subordinate to, or enveloped in, religious imperatives and a chiliastic ideology.[11]

The comments in the previous paragraph have anchored politics in a conceptual and institutional distinction between God and Caesar. By that measure, I have argued, radical Islamism is not political in a Western sense. That judgment broadly accords with Hannah Arendt's spatial delineation of politics based on a separation of public and domestic

spheres, her contention that politics is above all about action under conditions of plurality, and her view that violence—mute, direct—is the polar opposite of politics. Yet say that we talk about politics differently. Say, notably, that we adopt Carl Schmitt's definition of the political as enshrining a concrete, existential mode of enmity toward, in this instance, *kafir* and apostates on the one hand, and a mode of friendship toward like-minded jihadist groups on the other. From that perspective, radical Islamism is quite evidently political; in some respects it recapitulates the earlier conflict, specifically mentioned by Schmitt, between the German kaiser (and king of Hungary) and the Turkish sultan. Let us listen to the antagonists: as of this writing, we are engaged in a conflict, as distinct from a policing action, against jihadists who repeatedly insist that war is what they are fighting. And war, for Schmitt, is "the most extreme consequence of enmity. It does not have to be common, normal, something ideal or desirable. But [war] must nevertheless remain a real possibility for as long as the concept of the enemy remains valid."[12]

Even if we accept Schmitt's depiction of the political, this still does not mean that radical Islamism is a political religion. The most one can say is that it is a movement that draws inspiration and consolation from the religious principles of Islam, and that a "religious community which wages wars against members of other religious communities or engages in other wars is already more than a religious community: it is a political entity."[13] Or, in the formulation I offered in the conclusion to the previous chapter, Islam, just like Christianity, is capable of functioning as a religious politics—a politics that derives from its religious convictions. One is bound to add that Islam's martial qualities *as a religion* are hard to deny.[14] Unlike Christianity, its founder was a warrior. Unlike Judaism, which has focused its territorial claims on Palestine, Islam is missionizing and imperial, enjoying a wide expansive reach;[15] the world currently houses 13 [*sic*] million Jews, many secular, as contrasted to 1.4 billion Muslims, the vast majority of whom are believers. Moreover, Islam possesses something that Christianity or religiously tinged philosophies such as Confucianism, Daoism, and Shinto lack: a divinely ordained, immutable, and finely calibrated law—sharia—that supposedly encompasses all human action and which, precisely because it is divine, applies to everyone. Sharia trumps human-made law, whether common law or law expressly created by parliaments. By contrast, the Ten Commandments are mostly general in nature, and publics

in Western democracies are free to devise laws (regarding abortion, euthanasia, homosexuality, same-sex marriage, stem cell research, etc.) that are post-Christian in orientation and vehemently opposed by many Christian churches. Another salient difference is that Christianity is above all a religion of orthodoxy (right belief) rather than orthopraxy—the prescription and enforcement of proper conduct. Islamic orthopraxy shows itself in numerous ways: from the prohibition against Muslims converting to another religion, to the *dhimmi* (ritually humiliated) status imposed on infidels in most Muslim societies, to the barring of non-Muslims from certain places—notably, the holy cities of Mecca and Medina—to the punishments meted out (for instance, in Pakistan) to anyone, irrespective of religion, for smoking or eating during Ramadan in a public space, to the persecution, imprisonment, and killing of religious minorities (such as the Baha'is in Iran).[16]

A degree of religious coercion is thus palpable wherever Muslims control territory and impose sharia, a situation aggravated by the application of a medieval religious mind-set to the modern world. But this is only one theme in a far more complex story. Not all Muslims in Muslim societies support religiously mandated coercion; some stoutly oppose it, seeking to combine their faith with modern notions of freedom, pluralism, and tolerance.[17] Furthermore, Islam, like all religions, is much more than a creed; it is a series of practices shaped by peculiar social conditions and mediated by distinctive social institutions, many of which are pragmatic and worldly. Largely forgotten is the fact that between 1917 and 1948, a number of Arabs, prominent and lowly alike, sided with the Zionists to help them in matters political, economic, and military.[18] Malaysia, where I spent my childhood, has recently allowed a Muslim to convert to Christianity, something that is still impossible in Afghanistan, where, in 2005, a man was subjected to a capital trial for apostasy. (He escaped execution thanks to an international uproar and by being allowed to flee to Italy.) The so-called Hadith Project operative in Turkey (a secular state currently under an Islamist-oriented government) looks very much like an attempt to reform the most egregiously inhumane aspects of Islam, though, significantly, this is officially denied. Muslim pragmatism, opposed to the fanaticism that I will presently describe, is also conspicuously evident in contemporary war zones such as the Iraq provinces of Anbar and Diyala, where tribal Sunni leaders turned on Al Qaeda co-religionists.

One reason for that was the sheer brutality of Al Qaeda; another was its affront to "affiliation solidarity": by killing and intimidating local tribesmen, Al Qaeda unleashed, to its cost, the tribal principle that obliges those closer in genealogy to resist those who are more distant.[19] Still another reason for Al Qaeda's failure was that its very presence was bad for business, a fact that David Riesman would have appreciated.[20] Nor should we assume that those who fight under the banner of Islam are fighting for primarily religious reasons or reasons that are irreconcilable with Western secular interests. Muslims pursue personal or tribal power, wealth, and security much as any other group might. Striking deals to expedite material interests is, again, a pronounced characteristic of the war in Iraq.[21] It is this fissiparousness and pragmatism among Muslims that so infuriated Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, the Jordanian psychopathic leader of Al Qaeda in Iraq. Objects of his castigation included Kurds, "heretics" (mainly Shiites), and, among the Sunnis, "the people" (passive, indolent), the religious scholars or *ulema* ("most of them are errant mystics"), and the Iraqi branch of the Muslim Brotherhood ("their religion changes mercurially. . . . God preserve us from them").[22] Finally, one should recognize that in many instances it is extremely difficult to separate out distinctly religious motivations from traditional and ethnic ones. Afghanistan, an Islamic Republic that juxtaposes Pashtuns, Tajiks, Hazaras, and Uzbeks, is only the most obvious case of such complexity, as any visitor will attest.

Islam, hence, incorporates various expressions and permutations. It becomes radical Islamism—a modern metamorphosis of Islam as a militant religion—when, and to the degree that, it uses violence or the threat of violence to pursue its goals; when, and to the degree that, it impedes individuals from following a law they would otherwise follow; and when, and to the degree that, such violence is inspired, justified, and ritually nourished by Muslim precepts derived from the Koran, the hadith (reports testifying to the Prophet Muhammad's deeds and sayings), and Islamic jurisprudence.[23] The most obvious aspect of radical Islamism as a militant religious mutant is the emphasis it accords to aggressive jihad, a commitment deeply rooted in the Muslim tradition itself.[24] One face of this, today, is putatively defensive: a battle against Western and other powers (notably Russia) that despoil Islam through military means and undermine it through the United Nations, multinational corporations,

international news media, relief agencies, and NGOs.[25] Islamic jihad is thus conceived, by its protagonists, as a reflex of Western and, particularly, American hegemony, a view given an authoritative imprimatur by Ruhollah Khomeini at the dawn of the modern Islamist age.[26] For radical Islamists, however, jihad is by no means restricted to obvious military defense against an invader or apostate ruler,[27] or to the inner taming of animal appetites, the so-called greater jihad. "Offensive jihad is an established and basic tenet of the religion," affirms Osama bin Laden. "It is a religious duty rejected only by the most deluded."[28] The Egyptian Sayyid Qutb, a gifted thinker, stated the matter with greater subtlety. Jihad is the obligation to fight against a world pervaded by *Jahiliyyah*, so as to remove the obstacles to true human freedom.[29] Qutb insisted that this has nothing to do with imposing Islam on unbelievers. On the contrary, it is about allowing everyone the liberty to "choose whatever beliefs they want."[30] Still, it is perfectly evident from what else he says that a false choice—a choice against Islam—would be proof that the believer still labored under the illusion of *Jahiliyyah*.[31]

Nor should we be complacent when we hear of doctrinal splits within the jihadist movement such as that articulated by Sayyid Imam al-Sharif (more usually known as Dr. Fadl) in his polemic against Al Qaeda's Ayman al-Zawahiri. Dr. Fadl, an intellectual who led the radical Islamist terror group Al Jihad, renounced from his prison cell in Egypt the violent tactics of Al Qaeda. So, too, if he is speaking the truth, have hundreds of former Egyptian jihadists. That is welcome news. But note the implication. Al Jihad's change of heart followed its violent suppression, incarceration, isolation, and abject defeat, suggesting that "political solutions" often require firm security and military action to make them workable. Dr. Fadl's renunciation of jihadist violence is also selective. "Jihad in Afghanistan will lead to the creation of an Islamic state with the triumph of the Taliban, God willing," he asserts. And while he criticizes the tactics of Al Qaeda in Iraq, he has declared that without jihad, "America would have moved into Syria."[32]

Presently, I shall describe other aspects of radical Islamism's militant religiosity, but first we must clarify an important analytical issue that Hannah Arendt addressed. This will enable us to assess the extent to which radical Islamism is a radically new challenge to the modern world and how dangerous it is.

Excursus: Identifying the Unprecedented

Arendt's concern about the singular character of Bolshevik and National Socialist totalitarianism raises two urgent questions for us to consider: (1) are there such things as unprecedented events/institutions (e.g., the Nazi concentration camps) or regimes (the Third Reich) at all, and, if there are (2) how are we able to identify them? Let me sketch one possible answer that goes beyond, while building on, Arendt's own intuitions. I present it in the spirit of inquiry and will rehearse, by and by, some possible objections to the argument I advance.

If we translate Arendt's own formulations into a more precise idiom, we might say that an event is precedented if it is possible to identify another event that has taken place at an earlier time that is *sufficiently* similar to the later event in *relevant* respects. The point about invoking a preceding event is that it is better understood than the more recent event that has attracted our attention. An event is "unprecedented" if it is impossible to identify an earlier event that is *sufficiently* comparable to the more recent event in *relevant* respects. Highlighting the term *sufficiently* indicates that there will always be a judgment involved; highlighting the term *relevant* indicates that that judgment itself is inevitably affected by our theoretical purpose. For all their cogency, Arendt's arguments against "functionalism" and sociological analogies come perilously close to the dogma that there is only one correct judgment and one credible theoretical purpose: her own.

But the necessity for judgment and theoretical orientation is not a mandate for the kind of interpretive nihilism that asserts that anything at all (the Nazi camps, or September 11) can be seen as "new" or "old" depending on one's vantage point. Although that assertion cannot, in principle, be flatly gainsaid, it is sociologically unenlightening, because it appears to deny a fundamental condition of any argument: the presupposition that some interpretations are more plausible, illuminating, and precise than others. That presupposition applies to all sociological research that advances an argument; hence, also to that species of sociological research that advances an argument about novelty—which is where we began. To insist otherwise is obviously self-defeating, because the person articulating the contrary position must assume what he or she claims to refute: a view that is more credible than the alternative. Besides, once we descend from the stratosphere of general theorizing and return

to historical instances and sociological cases, it takes no great perspicacity to identify, nonarbitrarily, some things that are demonstrably and importantly new and others that are already well established. To say that there is nothing "new" in a terrorist attack, even the attack on the World Trade Center on September 11, 2001, is obviously correct. But to declare that September 11 was "like Pearl Harbor," a Pacific military base, thousands of kilometers from the mainland, whose destruction led to the internment of 120,000 Japanese Americans, is not simply a viewpoint as valid as any other. On the contrary, the analogy is a clear obfuscation, because (1) unlike Japan, Al Qaeda is not a nation-state; (2) the organization originally denied responsibility for its action; (3) the purpose of the attack was and remains somewhat ill defined; (4) U.S. retaliation required the destruction of a government in Afghanistan that harbored the organization, but which had not directly perpetrated the outrage; (5) the U.S. authorities made great efforts to avoid discriminatory actions that would inflame popular prejudice against Muslim residents and citizens.[33] In short, and as unpalatable as this is for a certain kind of postmodernist sensibility, some interpretations are simply better—more complete, more revealing—than others. To demonstrate that fact requires no mysterious gift of insight; it entails, among other things, the prosaic, but effective, art of the comparative method for which ideal types, *pace* Arendt, are indispensable tools.

The key difficulty in suggesting that an action, event, or institution is unprecedented—in juridical terms, that there is no previous instance of it—is the requirement to show its utter dissimilarity with anything that has come before. Presumably, we would need to start by distinguishing an unprecedented event from one that is "merely" new or unique. Strictly speaking, all actions and events are new, because nothing can be a perfect repetition of something else. Nevertheless, the majority of actions and events in the world are simultaneously new *and* habitual (breakfast each morning), new *and* institutionalized (periodic general elections), and new *and* expected (frost in winter), affording the calculability without which human lives would be chaotic.[34] Similarly, every child is unique, but children themselves are not unprecedented. If the term *unprecedented* is to have any purchase at all, then it must refer to something sharply unlike anything previously new and previously known, devoid of an institutional series or lineage, and governed by no previous convention or custom. Minimally, this means that unprecedented events are different from

those phenomena with which we are already familiar and which have become, manifestly or latently, parts of the social and political order. These events and tendencies help shape their unprecedented counterparts; the latter, like everything else that is social or political, are historically conditioned. But unprecedented events or episodes, let us say, instantiate a caesura that not simply recombines but, more important, metamorphoses or transmogrifies previous modes of organization in unexpected and unanticipated ways. The outcome is something not simply new but sui generis and *original.*

Now to the degree that something is original, it could not have been predicted, although this does not mean that everything that is unpredictable is original. The result of a football match between two equally talented teams may be unpredictable, but the victory of a football team is not an original phenomenon. Still, sociological predict*ors* (e.g., relationships among family origins, educational attainments, and labor market outcomes) and historical-sociological predict*ions* depend on the identification of tendencies that are themselves well established. An example here will help. In 1980, the sociologist Randall Collins offered a geopolitical theory that predicted the demise and break-up of the Soviet Union within thirty to fifty years.[35] A valid prediction, he noted, requires both a theory and empirical information; lacking a theory, a prediction is no more than an empirical generalization. A predictive theory offers more than extrapolation. Conjoined with empirical data, it sets out principles that are inferential in character, specifying a chain of events[36] on an if–then basis.[37] I will not enter here the debate about whether prediction is a proper object of sociological inquiry, an issue that is contentious even among naturalistic philosophers of the social sciences. We know that there can be nonpredictive explanations, nonexplanatory predictions, and that the presence of "open systems" poses special difficulties for social sciences that are lacking in physics and astronomy.[38] Be that as it may, the validation of Collins's geopolitical prediction of the collapse of the "Russian Empire" presupposed the identification of tendencies—size and resource advantage, geopositional (i.e., "marchland") capacity, fragmentation of interior states, periodic long-term simplification of states, overextension—that, in various combinations, provided the mechanisms for state breakdown. This in turn presupposed unstable stability: state changes that were nonetheless circumscribed and directed by the processual mechanisms that Collins identified. Significantly, too, his theory

predicted an ending, not a beginning in the sense of an order that was fundamentally different from anything previously recorded.[39]

My point is that there were no comparable tendencies that could have led one to predict, say, at the turn of the twentieth century, the emergence and character of the Nazi state, a fact that I take to be negative evidence of its originality.[40] Nor was there empirical information. Suppose someone says that tendencies—bureaucracy, technology, racism—eventuating in National Socialism could in fact have been identified by an observer in 1914. That assertion is necessarily compromised by the fact that one now knows of the existence of Nazism. Suppose, further, our imaginary interlocutor says that Nazism was not unprecedented and is able empirically to substantiate that assertion. The demolition of Nazism's status as an unprecedented event would still leave other putative examples intact (the Reformation, the American Revolution), unless one was able to show that the very *idea* of something's being unprecedented was incoherent, a logical problem rather than an empirical one. That might be attempted by arguing that what are called unprecedented phenomena are really transformations of extant ones. Thus, nothing is really unprecedented. But that is trivially true insofar as nothing exists de novo. An event's originality derives, one might reply, not from the particular materials of which it is formed, but from the irregular realization of those materials into the event itself.[41] We are left with the prima facie consideration that there appear to be phenomena that are utterly strange and have no evident affinity with things previously known and established.

An unprecedented event, then, would appear to be a configuration that confounds all expectations based on familiar practices. Once established, it becomes ontic—absorbed into the world—and repercussive. Unprecedented events, like all others, can be local and containable, or they can be epochal and osmotic, continuing to reverberate throughout the social universe long after the occasions that produced them have passed. Traces of Nazism persist today, not merely among fringe groups in Germany who nostalgically crave its resurrection, but in the conflict between Palestinians and Israelis: without the Shoah, the Balfour Declaration notwithstanding, there would probably be no Israeli state. Unhinged from its own social structures and shattered by military defeat, Nazism has endured to become the debris, irritant and occasion for a thousand actions that we can see, and thousands more that we cannot.

Unprecedented events, if there are such things, clearly pose major obstacles to the faculty of understanding. This is not simply because their identification supposes extensive historical knowledge. For instance, the last two decades, and particularly the Kosovo Wars (1998–1999), saw a dramatic erosion of a fundamental ground rule of the international system that sharply distinguished between "internal" and "international" conflicts and, in so doing, made an equally sharp distinction between a condition of war (officially declared) and of peace. When Eric Hobsbawm called the destruction of that "golden rule . . . a completely new phenomenon,"[42] he actually meant that it is a throwback to the time before the Westphalian system was established in 1648 following the Thirty Years' War. Another difficulty is that what we call unprecedented is often a process, with no clear time limits, rather than a clearly demarcated act or episode. Accordingly, it is difficult to recognize where it begins and where it ends. A good example can be found in the long-range processes that we call technological or scientific "revolutions." Moreover, as Marx declared in the opening paragraphs of *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, the originality of events is generally obscured by the tendency of actors and interpreters to appeal to previous historical models, to envisage them as repetitions or adaptations of the past. And indeed, once they happen, unprecedented events gradually become part of the ontic world, their tendencies and elements now available as topics of knowledge and as resources for emulation.

How do we know that we have confronted an unprecedented event? We are most unlikely to know until we are well into it, because, by definition, originality means that we are on terra incognita. Still, one possible index of our being in the presence of the unprecedented is that extrapolations, predictions, and analogies break down. Neologisms proliferate.[43] As in Kuhn's description of a scientific revolution, the event taxes our categories to the maximum, creates distortions in our language, and leaves us in a state of perplexity.[44] The difference between an unprecedented episode and a scientific revolution, however, is that a scientific revolution registers an epistemic innovation—new ways of seeing, new explanations—of an intransitive event or structure, while the unprecedented episode indexes a breach in intransitivity itself. Scientific revolutions, even in the conventionalist language in which Kuhn clothes them, are tantamount to genuine scientific discoveries of an enduring universe. Unprecedented events, conversely, signal a realignment of the social and political order. They

create new modes of normality and familiarity, including the familiarity of horror.

This is only a sketch of what *unprecedented* might mean; it is not an argument for concluding definitively that unprecedented things exist. One obvious objection to the concept is the difficulty of drawing around phenomena clear temporal and spatial boundaries of sufficient precision as to identify them as unprecedented. Hence, the Nazi camps were horrifically distinctive, but policies of genocidal extermination were not, as the historical record shows all too dismally in the genocidal campaigns against aboriginal peoples, among aboriginal peoples, and against "nations." In the twentieth century, the best-known pre-Nazi instance is the Young Turk movement's assault, culminating in 1915, against the Armenian population in Turkish Armenia and Asia Minor. Another problem is the difficulty of determining how much of a break with the past is required of an event to call it unprecedented. Raising this question, Michael Marrus qualified it by remarking that since all events have antecedents, "we are speaking in relative terms."[45] But if this is the case, we end up with an oxymoron—the "relatively unprecedented"—that looks dangerously close to a contradiction.

A perplexity of a different kind arises when we think about the relationship between imagination and reality. Many occurrences that ordinary language describes as unprecedented have been previously anticipated, and sometimes quite specifically. Aldous Huxley's depiction in *Brave New World* of "soma," the drug that produces immediate elation, uncannily resembles Prozac. Indeed, as Francis Fukuyama points out, the whole book prefigures one strand of the biotechnology revolution, namely, neuropharmacology.[46] Fantasies, or warnings, of extirpation are also part of modern literature.[47] Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* recounts the Houyhnhnms' regular debate on whether "the Yahoos should be exterminated from the Face of the Earth"; Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* contains Kurtz's injunction, "Exterminate all the brutes." And of course both of these examples have precedents in the merciless insouciance with which the heroes of the *Iliad* slay and enslave the inhabitants of a conquered *polis*,[48] and with which Yahweh liquidates his enemies (Deut. 20:16–17; Josh. 6–7). Joshua's destruction of the Amorite cities was so complete that "he left nothing remaining, but utterly destroyed all that breathed, as the Lord God of Israel commanded" (Josh. 10:40).[49]

For all these reasons, we may be persuaded to develop an argument about social and political change that stresses continuity, not rupture, or that, admitting rupture, sees it as an anomaly that will be corrected by history's course. But the danger of continuity types of argument is that they bring us back to where theoretically we started: normalizing a phenomenon *in advance of rethinking it*. Long stretches of time are subsumed under simplistic portmanteau labels such as the "civilizing process," "millenarianism," or "rationalization." Al Qaeda becomes an example of the clash of civilizations, a fundamentalist movement, or a threat as grave as Nazism itself. Arendt warned against such presumption. Her challenge to received categories and intellectual reflexes is sobering and, in a dangerous world, necessary if we are to recognize what we might to our cost ignore.

The Novelty of Modern Islamist Terror

So how should we, then, characterize radical—that is, jihadist—Islamism?[50] How original is it? And how dangerous? The structural affinities of radical Islamism with twentieth century totalitarianism are obvious but ultimately misleading.[51] Like totalitarianism, radical Islamism is a movement in which pluralism is anathema, and in which party politics is derided as a sphere of venality. Modern jihadists also reconfigure the capillary, de-centralized mode of organization pioneered by the early anarchists and Bolsheviks.[52] Islamist militants combine the conspiratorial anti-Semitism of the Nazis (for whom they entertain a nostalgic admiration)[53] with the panterritorial ambitions of the Third International.[54] And Islamist language is replete with millenarian images of struggle, merciless destruction, and "sacred terror."[55] Bent on purifying the world of Zionism, liberalism, feminism and crusader (U.S.) hegemony, Islamist ideology articulates a mausoleum culture of submission, nihilism, suicidal martyrdom for the cause,[56] and mythological appeal to a world about to reborn. That archaic demands for the reestablishment of the hallowed caliphate are pursued with all the means modern technology affords is consistent with the "reactionary modernism" of earlier totalitarian movements.[57]

Such is the family resemblance of radical Islamism and twentieth-century totalitarianism. But if we foreground such affinities, we are likely to miss what is most novel about the modern jihadist constellation. And

that is what Hannah Arendt would urge us to see. Bolshevism and National Socialism began life as political movements. They did their greatest harm, however, after they captured the Russian and German states in 1917 and 1933 respectively. Once a domestic graveyard peace was established, totalitarian governments created empires through interstate wars. When those empires were destroyed or imploded, their totalitarian project was over. (In China, it died with Mao.) In contrast, it is often said that radical Islamism is a deterritorialized phenomenon. That statement is only partly true. Granted, with the exception of Afghanistan under the Taliban and the theocrats in Iran, jihadists have so far failed to capture a modern state. Nonetheless, non-state jihadists have found significant support from Iran (which it provides through its Qods Force and Ramazan Corps, furnishing training, weapons, and operatives to Iraqi Shiite factions),[58] from Syria and Iran (which bolster Hezbollah), and, by default or deliberation, from Pakistan. Jihadists also colonize areas within under-regulated or broken nations and states. Al Qaeda and the Taliban take refuge in the Federal Administered Tribal Areas in northwestern Pakistan. Hamas, as of this writing, is in control of the Gaza Strip, and a number of groups, such as Islamic Jihad and the Al Qaeda affiliate Fatah al-Islam, operate within its orbit. South Beirut and southern and eastern Lebanon are effectively under the domination of Hezbollah, with Amal now playing second fiddle. Parts of Africa, Indonesia, and Thailand also provide sites of jihad. A geographical base is hence a major platform from which radical Islamists pursue their jihad. That is why governments fight hard, and often successfully, to shut down their spaces.[59]

We should not, then, underestimate the territorial dimension of the new terror. But neither should we exaggerate it. Radical Islamism, in any of its particular manifestations, is typically hierarchical and regimented. Leaderless it is not.[60] But as a movement, it is a cellular, hydra-headed antagonist fueled by a culture of martyrdom. Non-state actors have done, so far, its cruelest work. Information technologies, especially the World Wide Web and the Internet, have given it a cyber-presence, and virtual tools of education, propaganda, conversion, and recruitment that twentieth-century totalitarianism could not even dream of. These instruments are effective precisely to the extent that they are free of state control.[61]

If *quasi territoriality* rather than deterritorialization, and the corresponding primacy of non-state actors, is the first significant way that radical Islamism differs from classical totalitarianism, the second is its loca-

tion in what Samuel Huntington calls a *uni-multipolar world*: a world in which the United States possesses indisputable military and economic superiority.[62] Below it, as secondary powers, are, to name the most important, Russia, China, India, Iran, and the France–Germany nexus; and below them, in a third tier, are states that include Japan, Great Britain, Ukraine, and Pakistan. Let us not quibble over how precisely to allocate states to the second or third tier. Most pertinent is the fact that one power, the United States, is qualitatively more influential, and more globalized, than any of the others. That the United States is hegemonic in the global system is obvious, not least of all to terrorists. Its influence reaches—via multinational corporations, diplomacy, the military, and NGOs—throughout the world, making it highly visible and a lightning rod for fanatics of all kinds.[63] By contrast, totalitarian states arose within a period marked by European multipolarity. No single state was preeminent in the interwar years (1919–1938); and when Germany emerged as a European hegemon in 1939, it met the combined balancing force of the Soviet Union, Great Britain, and the United States.[64] During the Cold War, and until 1990, multipolarity succumbed to a bipolar system of alliances superintended by the Soviet Union and the United States. Our post-1990 situation is highly unusual; the very supremacy of the United States makes it especially vulnerable to orchestrated assault. Anti-Americanism—natives abroad are among the worst offenders—is undoubtedly puerile (because its broad-brush condemnation leaves no room for basic, let alone subtle, distinctions). It is certainly irresponsible (because it lends legitimacy to terror). But it is also inevitable so long as the United States remains the premier power, a magnet for every group with a grievance and for every person who nurses a resentment against the world as it is. Animosity toward America is thus a structural property of a globalized system in which one nation has pride of place. As other powers, notably China, extend the radius of their global influence, they too will attract the hatred of the injured and aggrieved.

Quasi-territorialized jihadism in the context of a uni-multipolar geopolitical order are two characteristics, then, that distinguish our contemporary situation from that of classical totalitarianism, all other similarities notwithstanding. A third, and for my purposes final, element is the peculiar danger posed by the commodification of weapons of mass destruction[65] (WMD): the emergence of a clandestine market of biological, chemical, and nuclear weapons for sale to groups and states that lack the

current capacity to produce them. WMD, of course, are nothing new. Huge stockpiles of such weapons were integral to the Cold War deterrence doctrine of mutually assured destruction. WMD arsenals were jealously guarded by the states that manufactured and housed them. Today, however, a growing inventory of WMD is available to state and non-state actors for a price, and the price is getting cheaper. With good reason, many fear that jihadists and other terrorists will procure these weapons, an apprehension aggravated by the A. Q. Khan scandal that broke in the late 1990s. Khan remains, in his homeland, the lionized father of the Pakistan bomb. He was also, over two decades, a nuclear entrepreneur selling centrifuge enrichment technology, materiel (probably uranium hexafluoride), and nuclear weapons designs to clients that included Libya, Iran, and North Korea. To make matters worse, WMD know-how is today readily available, thanks to modern media technology. The gene sequencing of viruses such as polio, smallpox, and Ebola is no longer a secret; such information is, or has recently been, available on the Web to anyone choosing to study it, including terror organizations salivating over the prospect of mass casualties.

The implications of WMD in the hands of non-state actors in particular (who have no return address and who, thus, are immune to conventional modes of deterrence) are important to grasp. Britons knew who was bombing them in the Blitz. Americans knew who attacked them in Pearl Harbor or in the Korean Peninsula. Russians knew who assaulted them at Stalingrad. The Cold War pitted against each other, the Sino-Soviet schism notwithstanding, a recognizably stable group of clients. At the time of the Cuban Missile Crisis, the world understood that if Armageddon arrived, it would not have been initiated by non-state actors in Papua New Guinea. The possession of WMD in the hands of terrorist organizations creates a markedly different threat environment and political atmosphere. A polio, smallpox, SARS, or avian flu outbreak, deliberately instigated, might be hard to trace to any known assailant; it took seven years to discover the source of the U.S. anthrax attack in 2001 that killed five people, injured seventeen others, caused widespread disruption, and is estimated by the FBI to have cost the American taxpayer a billion dollars. And that was small beer. In turn, this opacity can quickly degrade from within a nation's ability to cope, as people demand security at any price, and as governments are only too ready to oblige.[66] Interstate wars of the totalitarian period generated their own kind of patriotic solidarity. WMD

strikes within a state, prosecuted by shadowy forces, are likely to sow panic, dissolve social relations, and create the very coercion that terrorists wish most to provoke.

Quasi territoriality, uni-multi polarity, and the commodification of WMD—all are post-totalitarian factors that concern modern terror in general. Potentially, many groups may become perverse beneficiaries of this new constellation. I have focused on violent jihadists because they pose, as we approach the second decade of the twenty-first century, the most evident menace to modern civilization. But, to return specifically to Arendt, is the peril we face today "unprecedented"? That is the question she would be asking herself and the one she would be expecting me to answer. Each of the factors I mentioned, including the notion of jihad and martyrdom, are mutations of previous realities.[67] Hence, the commodification of WMD supposes WMD to begin with, quasi territoriality is parasitic on extant territories, and a uni-multi polar world arose out of the collapse of a bipolar one. If, however, we focus on the constellation itself—what Hannah Arendt called "the event,"[68] but which we can describe as the combination of mutations described above—we are assuredly confronted by something radically new.[69] This finding required no philosophical wizardry. It was gleaned by emphasizing the distinctive over the commonplace, a procedure that is the bread and butter of every working social scientist and historian.

Modern jihadism has largely failed in its attempt to overturn governments and win power from the "near enemy," its own apostate regimes.[70] Nor can it achieve its ultimate objective, the global caliphate, though demographic movements in Europe are likely to increase the areas under sharia and provoke a nativist response.[71] It is certainly conceivable that Hezbollah will lose some traction if Israel and Syria cut a deal on the Golan Heights; that Iraq will see greater stabilization; that Al Qaeda will increasingly lose support among its Sunni constituency; that the Iranian theocracy will be replaced by a more pragmatic Muslim administration (in that event the region will still be endangered, because Iran is a power with hegemonic, and not simply Islamic, ambitions). But even if these events do come to pass, they are most unlikely to bring a wider Middle Eastern peace. As Martin Kramer points out, a common fallacy of our time is the belief that conflicts in the Middle East have a heart, a root cause, whether it be radical Islamism or the Israeli-Palestinian problem,

and hence a single basic solution. This fallacy is based on a mistake that Arendt repeatedly warned against—a misplaced parallel.[72] In this case, it amounts to a faulty analogy of the Middle East with Europe in which a "core problem" actually did exist: the conflict between France and Germany, the solution to which was pivotal to a broader European peace. In contrast, the Middle East is plagued by a number of self-sustaining conflicts of which Israeli-Palestinian discord and jihadism are by no means the most tenacious. Just as serious, and even more durable, are Arab-Persian competition, Sunni and Shia rivalry, the Kurdish "awakening" that frays at the borders of Turkey, Iran, and Syria, and inter-Arab disputes (e.g. attempted annexations of Kuwait, Yemen, and Lebanon by, respectively, Iraq, Egypt, and Syria).[73] These and other examples suggest plural, entrenched collisions rather than an interlocking master system.

Social science has a poor predictive record, though academics and pundits alike have produced a well-stocked dispensary of excuses to deny that fact.[74] We are more likely to understand our world if we remain angular, skeptical, and eclectic thinkers, foxes rather than hedgehogs. The greatest fox in social science was Raymond Aron. What, from his Montparnasse resting place, is he saying? "Maintain a sense of perspective. The destruction of our world is possible but improbable. Most terrorism is a resounding failure if success is measured by the terrorists' ability to achieve their policy objectives—to the extent that they have clear objectives.[75] The capacity of human beings for renewal, for surprise, for unexpected dialogue should never be underestimated. Islam is not monolithic and most Muslims want to raise families in peace and prosperity. Still, a clear-eyed appraisal of those who would gladly destroy the pluralist legacy is the sine qua non of any realistic policy today. For the point is not whether jihadists will succeed in their fantastical projects. It is what harm they will do to civilized life on their way to failure. Habitual condemnation of Western leaders by intellectuals is intellectually dishonest. Tell us what you would do—practically do—in their place and faced with their and our dilemmas. The predictions of doomsayers are usually wrong. Let us try, through our vigilance, to prove them so."

Reference Matter

Notes

Introduction

1. Hannah Arendt, "Philosophy and Sociology" ([1930] 1994).

2. Arendt, *Between Friends* (1995), p. 235; letter of Arendt to Mary McCarthy, December 21, 1968.

3. A more generous approach to sociology was taken by another exile, Franz Neumann. Although in *Behemoth* ([1944] 1966) he acknowledged "the inadequacy of sociological categories" (p. 366) to grasp the class structure of the Third Reich, Neumann insisted that a sociology of knowledge was essential to decipher the meaning of National Socialist ideology (p. 37). He also praised "Max Weber, whose name is known and honored wherever social and political science is taught." Neumann, "The Social Sciences" (1953), p. 21. In contrast, Arendt was adamantly anti-Weberian, on which see Peter Baehr, "Grammar of Prudence" (2001).

4. Arendt, *Within Four Walls* (2000), p. 72, letter of Arendt to Heinrich Blücher, August 2, 1941.

5. See Steven Aschheim, "Against Social Science" (2001); Lewis Coser, *Refugee Scholars in America* (1984); and Hannah Pitkin, *Attack of the Blob* (1998).

6. Arendt, "The Concept of History: Ancient and Modern" ([1958] 1993a), p. 59.

7. Contrast with Barrington Moore Jr., "Totalitarian Elements in Pre-Industrial Societies" ([1958] 1962), and John Stanley, "Is Totalitarianism a New Phenomenon?" ([1987] 1994).

8. Also Randall Collins, who remarks that, until World War I, the extent and violence of German anti-Semitism "was derivative and secondary" when contrasted to its counterparts in tsarist Russia, Poland, and Hungary. Collins, "German-Bashing and the Theory of Democratic Modernization" (1999b), p. 174.

9. He took her side during the Eichmann controversy. See Bell, "The Alphabet of Justice: Reflections on 'Eichmann in Jerusalem,'" (1963).

10. Bell, "America as a Mass Society: A Critique" ([1956] 1962), p. 25. His summary of Arendt's theory of mass society receives all of eight lines of text.

11. Bell, "Ten Theories in Search of Reality: The Prediction of Social Behaviour" ([1957] 1962), pp. 324–325. Querying the proposition that totalitarianism utterly atomizes society and produces a perpetual state of turbulence, Bell asks: "[Can] a society live in permanent crisis? Can it hold such a rigid posture without either exploding into war or relaxing? The basis of all social life requires not only a minimum of personal security but the reasonable expectation by parents that their children will be educated, develop careers, and so forth. To that extent, a tendency toward 'normalization' is at work in any crisis state." That observation is acute, but it was Raymond Aron, not Bell, who developed its implications with Hannah Arendt as his target.

12. Gilles Kepel, *The War for Muslim Minds* (2002), p. 112.

13. Arendt, *The Human Condition* (1958a), p. 45.

14. Arendt, *Denktagebuch* (2002), vol. 1, p. 356 [entry of May 1953].

15. For a convenient précis of this *déformation professionnelle*, see Arendt, *Lectures on Kant's Philosophy* (1982), pp. 20–27.

16. Hannah Arendt, "Karl Marx and the Tradition of Western Political Thought" (1953), in The Hannah Arendt Papers at the Library of Congress, Speeches and Writings File, 1923–1975, image 1. I am drawing on the preface to these lectures, delivered as the Christian Gauss Seminar in Criticism, at Princeton University in 1953. Here, as in a number of other places, Arendt calls Marx "an economist, a historian and, perhaps, the father of the social sciences rather than Comte." The cautionary "perhaps" disappears when, in the same year, Arendt described Marx emphatically as the "father of the social science methods" that seek to expose the "facades behind which the true historical forces conceal themselves." Arendt, "Religion and Politics" ([1953–1954] 1994), p. 374. Arendt viewed sociology, especially the sociology of knowledge, as the chief social scientific legatee of Marx's debunking attitude, a mentality that had, however, pervaded modern thought as a whole.

17. Arendt, "The Ex-Communists" ([1953] 1994a), p. 396.

18. "When the facts come home to roost," she once remarked, "let us try at least to make them welcome." Arendt, *Home to Roost* ([1975] 2003), p. 275.

Chapter One

1. Carl Friedrich, *Totalitarianism* ([1954] 1964), p. 50. Arendt concurred. The kind of rampant drunkenness and incompetence that was such a feature of

Russia in the 1930s had, in its chaotic excess, no parallel in Nazi Germany; conversely, the cruel methods of extermination perfected by the Third Reich in Poland were attenuated in the Russian Gulag. One should no more expect uniformity of totalitarian conditions than one should expect identical modes of absolute monarchy in Spain, France, and Prussia. She also noted that the party purge syndrome in the Soviet Union had no strict Nazi analogue. (The destruction of the Röhm clique in 1934 was sui generis.) See Arendt's contribution to Carl J. Friedrich, *Totalitarianism*, pp. 337–338.

2. Abbott Gleason, *Totalitarianism: The Inner History of the Cold War* (1995), pp. 13–50.

3. Franz Neumann, *Behemoth* (1944), p. 465.

4. Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* ([1951] 1973), p. 418.

5. Hitler's *Mein Kampf* ([1925–1926] 2001), pp. 305, 328, 336, 343–346, 348–349, 413, 416, brims with eschatological language of the "coming resurrection."

6. Arendt, "Social Science Techniques and the Study of Concentration Camps" ([1950] 1994), p. 232.

7. Ibid., p. 233.

8. Ibid.

9. Ibid., pp. 239, 242.

10. Ibid., p. 238.

11. Ibid., pp. 240–241.

12. Ibid., pp. 241–242. Questioning Karl Jaspers's characterization of Nazi policy as "criminal guilt," Arendt wrote: "The Nazi crimes, it seems to me, explode the limits of the law; and that is precisely what constitutes their monstrousness. For these crimes, no punishment is severe enough. . . . That is, this guilt, in contrast to criminal guilt, oversteps and shatters any and all legal systems. That is the reason why the Nazis in Nuremberg are so smug. They know that, of course. And just as inhuman as their guilt is the innocence of the victims. Human beings simply can't be as innocent as they all were in the face of the gas chambers (the most repulsive usurer was as innocent as the newborn child because no crime deserves such a punishment). We are simply not equipped to deal, on a human, political level, with a guilt that is beyond crime and an innocence that is beyond goodness or virtue." Arendt to Karl Jaspers, in Arendt, *Hannah Arendt and Karl Jaspers Correspondence* ([1985] 1992), p. 54, letter of August 17, 1946.

13. Arendt, "Nightmare and Flight" ([1945] 1994b), p. 133.

14. Arendt, *Origins of Totalitarianism*, p. 443 (on "the appearance of some radical evil, previously unknown to us"), and "Understanding and Politics" ([1954] 1994b), p. 318 (on how totalitarianism has "brought to light the ruin of our categories of thought and standards of judgment").

15. Barbed comments about sociology, sociologists, social science methods, behavioral science, psychoanalysis, and psychology pervade the Arendt-Blücher

correspondence. See Arendt, *Within Four Walls* (2000), pp. 62–63, 64, 69, 71, 75, 139, 231, 234, 250, 262–263, and (from Blücher's Common Course at Bard College), 394. For other criticisms of social science and psychology, see Arendt, *The Human Condition* (1958a]), pp. 43, 45, 323, and *On Revolution* ([1963] 1990), pp. 11, 19, 25, 62, 73 , 96, 99, 100, 174, 220, 290. I return to a number of these sources in context below.

16. The phrase "without indignation and partisanship" was coined by Tacitus (*Annals* I:I) in his very indignant and partisan history of the Augustan Principate.

17. Arendt, "A Reply to Eric Voegelin" ([1953] 2000), p. 159, responding to Eric Voegelin, "The Origins of Totalitarianism" (1953).

18. Ibid., p. 159; cf. Arendt, "The Image of Hell" ([1946] 1994b), and *Origins of Totalitarianism*, p. 445.

19. The representation of camp existence eludes the best attempts to make sense of it. Bruno Bettelheim struggled with this problem the moment he sat down to write his landmark article "Individual and Mass Behavior in Extreme Situations" ([1943] 1980). On the paper's "forced objectivity of diction," see Bettelheim's "Concentration Camps" ([1947] 1980a), p. 42, and compare with his remarks in "The Holocaust—One Generation Later" (1980b]. Equally, Primo Levi ([1986] 1989), wishing to avoid a simplistic view of camp life in Auschwitz as a Manichean battleground between the utterly innocent and the utterly evil, coined the term "Grey Zone" to depict the collusion of the victims in the destruction of their fellows, and the compromises that, to varying degrees, were forced upon all who survived. The idea of the "Grey Zone" contrasts markedly with the "in-group/out-group" dichotomy that was evident in early sociological writing about the *Lager* (for instance in Herbert Bloch, "The Personality of Inmates" [1947], p. 336, and Clifford Kirkpatrick's [1946] review of T. Abel's *Why Hitler Came into Power*, pp. 68, 70).

20. Herbert A. Bloch, "The Personality of Inmates in Concentration Camps" (1947), p. 335.

21. An editor's footnote to Bloch's article describes the author as "an executive officer and later head of the G-5 section of one of our leading combat divisions during the war," and "one of the first American officers and very likely the first professional American sociologist to enter the notorious German concentration camps, Buchenwald included, as well as numerous smaller foreign workers' encampments and barracks in Germany. He assisted in the organization of almost a hundred centers and communities for the liberated inmates and foreign workers and handled 500,000 [*sic*] of such individuals" (p. 335).

22. See the germane comments of Jeremy Adler, "Good Against Evil?" (2000), p. 97; Zygmunt Bauman, *Modernity and the Holocaust* (1989), p. xiii; and, for a defense of social science methods in this context, see Raul Hilberg,

The Politics of Memory (1996), pp. 87–88 (which also contains a bitter assessment of Arendt's work and personality).

23. Arendt, "Religion and Politics ([1953–1954] 1994), p. 374.

24. Ibid., p. 375. Chapter 4 examines in detail her argument against the idea of "political religion."

25. Ibid.

26. Ibid., p. 385.

27. Ibid.

28. Arendt in Friedrich, *Totalitarianism*, p. 76.

29. Adler, "Ideas Toward a Sociology of the Concentration Camp" (1958), p. 514.

30. Ibid., p. 517.

31. Ibid., p. 520. He goes on to say that "the totalitarian secret police became the greatest slave-keeper of all times" (p. 520), on which see also Albert Speer, *The Slave State* (1981). A concise conspectus of Adler's neglected work appears in Jeremy Adler, "Good Against Evil?" And for two appreciative sociological reviews, see Theodore Abel, review of H. G. Adler, *Theresienstadt, 1941–1945* (1957), and Everett Hughes, review of H. G. Adler, *Die verheimlichte Wahrheit: Theresiendstädter Dokumente* (1961). Arendt drew on Adler's writings about Theresienstadt in *Eichmann in Jerusalem* ([1963] 1994), pp. 119–120, 134.

32. So, too, at other moments, did Adler himself, who later argued that the Weberian ideal type of bureaucracy was inapplicable to the Nazi "administration." Adler, *Der verwaltete Mensch: Studien zur Deportation der Juden aus Deutschland* (1974) pp. 872–874, 915–917.

33. "Of the three types of camps [concentration, death, and slave camps], the slave labor camps—terrible as they were—present the least interesting problems. They were not all that different from the worst of other slave labor situations known throughout history." Bruno Bettelheim, "German Concentration Camps," p. 39. An influential account of the comparable psychological impacts of slavery and concentration camp experiences on their victims is Stanley Elkins's *Slavery* (1959), pp. 81–139; it draws extensively on Bettelheim's work.

34. Arendt, *Origins of Totalitarianism*, p. 444. Orlando Patterson's *Slavery and Social Death* (1982) also avoided the parallel between slavery and concentration camps. Even so, his concept of "social death" was adapted by Daniel Goldhagen in his discussion of the Jewish experience under Nazi domination: "violently dominated, natally alienated, and deemed incapable of bearing honor." *Hitler's Willing Executioners* (1996), p. 169. Goldhagen remarks further that matters were no different for the hundreds of thousands of Slavs that Nazis enslaved to serve the "labor-starved war economy" (p. 174).

35. Bettelheim, "Individual and Mass Behavior in Extreme Situations," p. 83.

36. Bettelheim, *Informed Heart* (1960), pp. 110–111; cf. Konnilyn Feig, *Hitler's Death Camps* (1979), pp. 37–39, on "thanatology and experimentation."

37. Arendt, *Origins of Totalitarianism*, p. 438.

38. "The camps are meant not only to exterminate and degrade human beings, but also serve the ghastly experiment of eliminating, under scientifically controlled conditions, spontaneity itself" (ibid.); cf. Arendt, "Mankind and Terror" ([1953] 1994b), p. 304. She also remarked: "The concentration camps are the laboratories in the experiment of total domination, for human nature being what it is, this goal can be achieved only under the extreme circumstances of a human-made hell. Total domination is achieved when the human person . . . has been transformed into a completely conditioned being whose reactions can be calculated even when he is led to certain death." Arendt, "Social Science Techniques and the Study of Concentration Camps," p. 240.

39. Arendt, *Origins of Totalitarianism*, p. 456.

40. Ibid., p. 437.

41. Ibid., p. 445. And for an early formulation, see Arendt, "Memo: Concentration Camps" (19460, image 29, where she remarks: "Concentration and extermination camps are unique in history in the following respects: As instruments of totalitarian rule; as forms of the most extreme deprivation of human rights; as societies of the 'living dead'; as field [*sic*] of psychological experiments which have revealed to us unexpected and unsuspected patterns of human behavior in persecutor and victim alike."

42. Though Goffman's *Asylums* was first published in 1961, its lead paper, "On the Characteristics of Total Institutions" (pp. 43–84), was a revision of an article that first appeared in 1957. Moreover, his "intellectual formation took place in the 1940s and 1950s." Charles Lemert, "Goffman" (1997), pp. xxiii–xxiv.

43. That such camps are the ones organized by the Nazis becomes clear from Goffman's chief source on this institution: Eugen Kogon's *The Theory and Practice of Hell* ([1946, 1950] 1980), also one of Arendt's key sources under its original German title of *Der SS-Staat*, an insider's account of Buchenwald.

44. Arendt, *Origins of Totalitarianism*, p. 434.

45. Goffman, "On the Characteristics of Total Institutions," p. 5.

46. Jails, penitentiaries, POW camps, and concentration camps—institutions "organized to protect the community against what are felt to be intentional dangers to it" (pp. 4–5)—are themselves only *one* of five groupings that appear under the rubric of "total institutions." Goffman's analysis is supposed to apply to all five. He says that he is "using the method of ideal types, establishing common features with the hope of highlighting significant differences later." But these "differences" are clearly peripheral to the argument as a whole (ibid., p. 5).

47. Ibid., p. 124.

48. Alvin Gouldner, *Coming Crisis of Western Sociology* (1970), p. 379.

49. Arendt, *Human Condition*, pp. 22–73; and Arendt, "Reflections on Little Rock" ([1959] 2000), pp. 231–246.

50. Arendt's philosophical mentor, Heidegger, also thought highly of Simmel. See Donald Levine, "Simmel Reappraised" (1997), pp. 184–185.

51. George Simmel, "Secret Society" ([1908] 1950).

52. Arendt, *Origins of Totalitarianism*, pp. 361–362, n. 57.

53. A decade before *The Origins of Totalitarianism* was published, Ernst Fraenkel (*The Dual State* [1941], p. 206) cites these authors (and articles) as confirmation of his view that Hitler's Reich integrates "rational and irrational activities." He quotes Koettgen as follows: "It is precisely the Leader-state which cannot dispense with charismatic forms of leadership, but at the same time the rulers of the modern state, in order to satisfy the diverse, numerous demands of the population, are inevitably forced to depend upon highly rationalized and bureaucratized forms of organization." In turn, this quotes derives from a chapter (3) devoted to "the sociology of the dual state" (188–208).

54. Arendt, *Origins of Totalitarianism*, p. 362, n. 57, and "Religion and Politics," pp. 378, 388, n. 24; Hans Gerth, "The Nazi Party: Its Leadership and Composition" (1940).

55. The taint of being "the Aryan latecomer," in Gerth's bitter phrase, meant that a position in the New School for Social Research was ruled out: see Guy Oakes and Arthur J. Vidich, *Collaboration, Reputation, and Ethics in American Academic Life* (1999), pp. 3–5. Arendt appears to have shared Stern's hostility to Gerth. Yet, in a letter to Gerth in April 1945, C. Wright Mills cites Arendt's support for Gerth's going to Germany, on State Department business, to trace postwar Nazi communication networks. C. Wright Mills, *Letters and Autobiographical Writings* (2000), p. 94.

56. Arendt, *Origins of Totalitarianism*, p. 361.

57. Ibid., pp. 361–362.

58. Arendt, "At Table with Hitler" ([1951–1952] 1994). She is alluding to Gerhard Ritter's introduction to *Hitler's Table Talk* (but see also Abel, *Why Hitler Came into Power* [(1938) 1986]), p. 182).

59. A broadly similar position was taken by Eric Voegelin (*Hitler and the Germans* [(1964) 1999], pp. 114–121). Voegelin concluded that only those who were already spiritually compromised, and who, because of that debility, were allowed into the Hitler circle, were swept away by the Führer's "aura." Voegelin's and Arendt's diagnosis of the vacuity of Hitler's "fascination" finds some posterior support in the farce of the forged Hitler Diaries. As Robert Harris (*Selling Hitler* [1986], pp. 138, 198, 207, 328, 342–343, 351) shows, the management of *Stern* magazine *wanted* to believe in the diaries' authenticity, and was "fascinated" by them notwithstanding the utter banality of their content.

60. Hitler's unapologetic emphasis on "fanaticism," "intolerance," and lack of compromise is a leitmotif of *Mein Kampf*, pp. 306, 318, 323–325, 388, 412, 485.

61. Arendt, "At Table with Hitler," p. 291, and *Origins of Totalitarianism*, p. 305.

62. *Origins of Totalitarianism*, p. 325. Arendt (pp. 325, 387) equivocated on this point. See also the shrewd observations in Stanley, "Is Totalitarianism a New Phenomenon?" ([1987] 1994), p. 13.

63. J. P. Stern, *Hitler* (1975), p. 13; Robert Harris, *Selling Hitler*, pp. 19–20.

64. Gerth ("'As in the Book of Fairy Tales,'" pp. 34–35) eventually responded to Arendt's strictures in an interview with Mathias Greffrath in 1977. He restated his opinion that National Socialism had "a split personality"—pervasively bureaucratic, yet also infused with charismatic energy "accelerating the journey towards death" that stretched from Hitler down to thousands of other little Führers. Far from capitulating to sociologically banal concepts, Gerth saw himself as daringly seeking to show that Nazism evinced a symbiosis of charisma and bureaucracy that, he claimed, "was prohibited in Weber's analysis." Neumann (*Behemoth*, p. 81) specifically endorsed Gerth's formula and devoted an entire chapter of his masterwork to a discussion of "the charismatic leader in the leadership state."

65. That the ideal-type method was execrable in principle for both Arendt and her husband, Heinrich Blücher, is plain from their correspondence. So it is that Albert Salomon, a fellow exile teaching at the New School, is the occasion for some stinging dismissals from Blücher (with which Arendt expressly concurs) of "sociological typology-experiments" that are "more of a new ritual that failed priests are trying to introduce than an advancement of reason." Arendt, *Within Four Walls*, Blücher to Arendt, pp. 61–62, letter of July 23, 1941; also pp. 64, 69, 71–73.

66. In this section I draw on Abel's *Journal of Thoughts and Events* (1930–1984), which is located in the Rare Book and Manuscript Library of Butler Library, Columbia University. Part of this twenty-three-volume, typewritten journal has been edited by Elżbieta Hałas as *The Columbia Circle of Scholars* (Abel, 2002). Wherever possible, I quote directly from this version. Where I cite entries that are not included in Hałas, these appear as "Abel" followed by the volume number in bold letters and the page number: e.g., Abel **II**: 142. Abel (1896–1988) was a Pole who immigrated to the United States in 1923 and who taught first at Columbia University, then at Hunter College.

67. He was unable to procure funds from Columbia!

68. See the early evaluations of Clifford Kirkpatrick (1939) and Harold Lasswell (1939), written for the *American Sociological Review* and the *American Journal of Sociology*, respectively.

69. Thomas Childers, *The Nazi Voter* (1983); Richard F. Hamilton, *Who Voted for Hitler?* (1982); Michael H. Kater, *The Nazi Party* (1983); Peter Merkl,

Political Violence Under the Swastika (1975); and, most recently, Michael Mann, *Fascists* (2004).

70. Abel, "Nature and Use of Biograms" (1947), p. 114.

71. Abel, "Sociology of Concentration Camps" (1951b), p. 152.

72. I have quoted from ibid., pp. 150–151.

73. Abel, *Journal of Thoughts and Events*, **12**:138, October 19, 1952.

74. For a similar view, see Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem*, pp. 273–274.

The only criticism of Arendt by Abel that I have been able to find occurs in *Journal of Thoughts and Events*, **12**:138, October 18, 1952, where he accuses her of "the fallacy of assuming a sinister, masterful infallible and absolutely consistent scheme in the Nazi party. As a counterpart, I read Goebbels' diaries which clearly show the absence of consistency, the fallible human element, the contradictions and inadequacies of the usurpers. Hannah deals with an ideal type [!] to which Himmler aspired, but she assumes that it was actually being realized." As we will see in the next chapter, a very similar objection was advanced by David Riesman.

75. Orlando Patterson, *Slavery and Social Death*; R. J. Rummell, *Democide: Nazi Genocide and Mass Murder* (1992), *Death by Government* (1994a), and "Democide in Totalitarian States" (1994b).

76. Abel, "Sociology of Concentration Camps," p. 151. On democide in a nuclear age, see Abel, *Journal of Thoughts and Events* **16:**7–10, August 3, 1960; cf. Jonathan Schell, "The Unfinished Twentieth Century" (2000), p. 51.

77. Abel, "Sociology of Concentration Camps," p. 151.

78. Ibid., p. 152.

79. "What I need is to find a new name for the total enterprises of which the Concentration Camps is only the most tangible manifestation. Also find a name for the group combining S.S., S.D., and Gestapo, the 'henchmen of the regime,' the 'janissaries,' the 'executioners.' " Abel as quoted in Hałas, *Columbia Circle of Scholars*, February 17, 1950.

80. Abel as quoted in Hałas, *Columbia Circle of Scholars*, p. 319, February 17, 1950.

81. To avoid the charge of reification, Abel was careful to say that the causes invoked "are not in themselves agents, but are general terms which give us the clues to the forces that made and sustained the movement. These forces are the specific motives, the concrete actions, and the personal experiences and decisions of individuals." Abel, *Why Hitler Came into Power*, pp. 184–185.

82. An earlier account of the relationship between ideology and charismatic leadership under National Socialism appears in Abel, "The Pattern of a Successful Political Movement" (1937), pp. 350, 352.

83. Abel, *Why Hitler Came into Power*, pp. 80–81.

84. Ibid., pp. 153–154, 181.

85. Abel, "Systematic Sociology in Germany" (1929), pp. 116–156, "The Operation Called Verstehen" (1948), and "Verstehen I and Verstehen II" (1975).

86. Abel, *Why Hitler Came into Power*, p. 154.

87. Ibid., p. 183.

88. Abel as quoted in Hałas, *Columbia Circle of Scholars*, pp. 181–182, June 26, 1934.

89. He later corrected his error: "I realize the importance of the original study I made. It was a contribution to the understanding of social movements. What happens since 1933 is that . . . [c]ompromise, balance of power, justice, tact, perspicacity, moral standards were brushed aside and resulted in radicalization of every aspect of social life." Abel as quoted in Hałas, *Columbia Circle of Scholars*, p. 318, February 17, 1950; also Hałas, "Ethical Dilemmas of 'Verstehen' in Sociology" (2001), pp. 12–13.

90. Michael Mann, "The Contradictions of Continuous Revolution" (1997).

91. Hans Mommsen, "Cumulative Radicalization and Progressive Self-Destruction" (1997).

92. Ian Kershaw, " 'Working Towards the Führer' " (1997). Though note that Kershaw himself (pp. 98–106, and *Hitler*, *1889–1936*, pp. xix–xxx) extensively employs the concept of charisma, while modifying it in a way that is quite different from Abel's usage.

93. Abel's article reprised and augmented an earlier critique of psychological and psychoanalytical explanations of National Socialism in *Why Hitler Came into Power*, p. 6: cf. Abel, review of G. M. Gilbert's *The Psychology of Dictatorship* (1951).

94. Arendt believed that "sadism" was a simplistic description of typical SS behavior because the SS were recruited precisely to be unfeeling, calculating and "dutiful." Their institutionalized, methodical, and experimental cruelty was "absolutely cold" and systematic, "calculated to destroy human dignity" (Arendt, *Origins of Totalitarianism*, p. 454). In agreement are Bettelheim (*Informed Heart*, pp. 108, 110, 119–120, 124–127) and Todorov (*Facing the Extreme* [(1991)] 1996], p. 122). On sadism within Buchenwald—the testimonies of prisoners provide ample descriptions of it—see the accounts collected in David A. Hackett, *The Buchenwald Report* (1995), pp. 35–36, 152, 154–155, and passim.

95. Abel, "Is a Psychiatric Interpretation of the German Enigma Necessary?" (1945), p. 460.

96. For a concise but effective demolition of the notion of German backwardness, see Randall Collins, "German-Bashing and the Theory of Democratic Modernization" (1999b). Geoff Eley ("The British Model and the German Road" [(1980) 1984] makes the point that the typical sociological interpretation of Germany, after the war and up to the mid-1960s, proceeded on the confident assumption of the "solidity and permanence" of scientific generalization. "There

was little sense of the continuously regenerative potential of historical research—that it might subvert as well as confirm existing theoretical wisdom" (pp. 65–66). Such research has seriously undermined much of the German *Sonderweg* (special path) thesis.

97. "Is a Psychiatric Interpretation of the German Enigma Necessary?" pp. 461–463.

98. Stephen P. Turner, "Sociology and Fascism in the Interwar Period" (1992), pp. 10–12.

99. Robert C. Bannister, "Principle, Politics, Profession" (1992).

100. Peter Baehr, *Caesar and the Fading of the Roman World* (1998), pp. 255–286; François Furet, *The Passing of an Illusion* ([1995] 1999), pp. 89–90, 267–268, 419–420.

101. The term is resurrected ("Myrmidons' Strife") by J. P. Stern in *Hitler*, pp. 154–166, to describe the so-called Röhm purge: the massacre of Nazi storm trooper leaders and others by the SS between June 30 and July 2, 1934.

102. Abel, *Journal of Thoughts and Events*, **16**:51, June 22, 1964). He added: "When I wrote 'Why Hitler Came into Power' I had two motives: to understand what happened from the point of view of the participants, and secondly, to generalize from the case to the basic conditions for a successful movement." The latter "motive" implies that all movements are essentially the same.

103. Talcott Parsons, "New Dark Ages Seen If Nazis Should Win" ([1940] 1993), pp. 153, 156, and "Some Sociological Aspects of the Fascist Movements" ([1942] 1993c), p. 219.

104. Parsons, "Max Weber and the Contemporary Political Crisis" ([1942] 1993a), pp. 174–175; cf. Parsons, "Democracy and Social Structure in Pre-Nazi Germany" ([1942] 1993b), p. 237, and "Some Sociological Aspects of Fascist Movements," pp. 211–215.

105. Parsons, "Max Weber and the Contemporary Political Crisis," p. 176.

106. Ibid., pp. 177, 186, n. 23.

107. Ibid., pp. 178–179

108. Ibid., p. 179. In *The Social System* (1951), pp. 520–535, Parsons broadened his analysis to encompass the "charismatic revolutionary movements" of both National Socialism and Bolshevism. Acknowledging that his theory of routinization had no time to work itself out in Germany, he turned to the Soviet Union as the paradigmatic case of what he now called "adaptive transformation." The analysis was in many respects prescient.

Chapter Two

1. Wilfred M. McClay, "Fifty Years of *The Lonely Crow*d" (1998), p. 34; Elisabeth Young-Bruehl, *Hannah Arendt: For Love of the World* (1982), p. 200.

2. David Riesman (with Nathan Glazer and Reuel Denney), *The Lonely Crowd: A Study of the Changing American Character* (1950).

3. Hannah Arendt [1947–49], digitized Hannah Arendt Papers at the Library of Congress, Correspondence File, 1938–1976, n.d., Riesman, David, 1947–1956, http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/arendthtml/mharendtFolderP02.html, images 1–63, at image 1. Hereafter, this source will be cited as Riesman-Arendt Correspondence, followed by the pertinent digitized image number.

4. Daniel Bell, a colleague at the University of Chicago, prompted Riesman's letter by passing on to him some of Arendt's writings from *Partisan Review*.

5. Riesman, "Some Personal Thoughts on the Academic Ethic" (1983), p. 283.

6. Ibid.

7. Over a seven-year period, as a boy, Riesman attended the Wednesday Quaker Friends Meeting sessions at the William Penn Charter School in Philadelphia. See Riesman, "Becoming an Academic Man" (1990), p. 26. As an undergraduate at Harvard College, where he majored in biochemical sciences, Riesman was a pacifist but, during the thirties, came to favor American intervention. The destruction of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945 was a watershed in his political views: from then onward, "the theme that unifies my political attitudes has remained that of the danger of nuclear war and the destruction of entire populations, perhaps of half the planet." Yet there was to be no return to pacifism. During the Cold War, Riesman supported "the strategy of a minimum deterrent" as a basic insurance policy against a Soviet first strike. He observed that "the danger of nuclear weapons is the principal danger facing the planet, and that all other hazards, whether the greenhouse effect, or desertification, or world hunger, are, in comparison, manageable by human intelligence and ingenuity." Riesman, "A Personal Memoir: My Political Journey" (1984), pp. 339, 344, 348. See also Riesman, "Becoming an Academic Man," p. 68, n. 18.

8. On this experience, see Riesman, "Becoming an Academic Man," pp. 38–40. "The very first case I worked on dispelled any illusion that Brandeis himself would be influenced by empirical data when in pursuit of the larger goals of creating precedents for federal judicial restraint" (p. 39).

9. Ibid., p. 54.

10. Ibid., p. 58.

11. Riesman, "Preface to the Fourth Printing" (1965) of *Faces in the Crowd*, p. v.

12. Glazer knew Hannah Arendt independently of David Riesman. He met her when she first came to the United States and while she worked as an editor

of Schocken Books, as well as during the time she was writing for *Commentary*, on which Glazer was an editor, and for other Jewish publications such as *Menorah Journal* and *Jewish Frontier* (personal communication with Professor Glazer).

13. The original 1950 edition of *The Lonely Crowd* opens with the illustration of "political apathy." The abridged paperback Doubleday 1953 edition omits this and other examples but offers many clarifications of method and substance. It shows the underestimated influence of Nathan Glazer and also some subtle updating by Riesman. As Riesman remarked, the 1953 Doubleday edition was "not only an abridgement" (approximately four-fifths as long as the edition of 1950), but "to some extent a new edition, for many passages have been rewritten and others rearranged." Doubleday ed., p. 6. Parenthetically, while the listing of authors in the first edition of *The Lonely Crowd* is Riesman, Denney, Glazer, in the Doubleday paperback and all subsequent paperback editions of the book, it is Riesman, Glazer, Denney. Glazer's important role in abbreviating and rewriting the original text probably explains this switch in authorial sequence.

14. The data were incorporated into C. Wright Mills's *White Collar* (1951). On the contrast between Riesman's concept of "veto groups" and Mills's notion of a "power elite," see Riesman, "Foreword: Ten Years Later" (1960), p. xxxiff, and also *The Lonely Crowd*, chapter 11.

15. Riesman also drew on work from Erich Fromm, Ernest Schachtel, and others on the political views of German workers. On this study, see Fromm, *Escape from Freedom* ([1941] 1965), p. 237. On the concept of "social character," see Fromm, *Escape from Freedom*, pp. 304–327.

16. Denney's specialty was popular culture. The division of labor among Riesman, Glazer, and Denny is clarified in Riesman, "Foreword: Ten Years Later," pp. xlvii–xlviii.

17. Some of this material constituted the twenty-one portraits, composed of 180 interviews, delineated in *Faces in the Crowd* (1952b).

18. Riesman, "Foreword: Ten Years Later," p. xiii.

19. Shortly before Riesman left Chicago to begin his research at Yale, he was busy working up a course on "Culture and Personality." See Riesman, "Becoming an Academic Man," p. 57.

20. Riesman, *The Lonely Crowd* (Doubleday ed.), p. 18.

21. Riesman, "Foreword: Ten Years Later," p. xxi.

22. Riesman, *Lonely Crowd*, p. 187. Strictly speaking, this description applies to people who, for reasons of generational and social mobility, are transitional and hybrid characters. Nonetheless, the depiction is broadly consistent with what Riesman says subsequently about the other-directed.

23. Ibid., p. 200. A discussion on the rise of insider-dopesterism in radical politics follows (it is abridged in the Doubleday edition), the burden of which is

to show that "the young Stalinist of today may know how to get his candidate in a union local elected or how to corral fellow travelers for a front organization, but he lacks the kind of enthusiasm or indignation, fanatical though this frequently was, that sustained the earlier Bolsheviks," p. 200. Riesman goes on to say, however, that some young Stalinists, as a result of other-directed group conformity, can become highly indignant and politically active.

24. *"[W]herever we see glamour in the object of attention, we must suspect a basic apathy in the spectator."* Riesman, *Lonely Crowd*, p. 214 (emphasis in the original).

25. The Doubleday edition (pp. 186–188) includes some new clarifications.

26. Riesman, *Lonely Crowd*, p. 173. The Doubleday edition (p. 188) adds the following: "The context out of which I have written, is . . . an effort to develop a view of society which accepts rather than rejects new potentialities for leisure, human sympathy, and abundance."

27. Added to the Doubleday edition, p. 188.

28. Riesman, *Lonely Crowd*, p. 295.

29. Another deviation from "adjustment" (the fit between cultural norms and individual experience) is anomie, a variation that at one level indicates a "failure" to fit in but at another may suggest a neurotically charged predisposition to break with established inhibitions. Riesman, *Lonely Crowd*, pp. 287–291.

30. Ibid., p. 373.

31. Added to the Doubleday edition, p. 338.

32. Riesman, *Lonely Crowd*, p. 178, emphasizes that "real people are blends, more complicated and various—things of shreds and patches—than any scheme can encompass. They may, for example, be on the whole other-directed, but politics may be a sphere in which they are more inner-directed." Similarly, in the Doubleday edition (p. 48), the authors emphasize the heuristic nature of their discussion, saying that "the types of character and society dealt with in this book are *types*: they do not exist in reality, but are a construction, based on a selection of certain historical problems for investigation" (italics in original).

33. Riesman, *Lonely Crowd*, p. 31.

34. Doubleday edition, p. 51 (which makes more grammatical the equivalent passage in the original edition, p. 33).

35. Riesman, *Lonely Crowd*, p. 35. I should add that Riesman had far more sympathy for the other-directed character, and for popular culture, than these truncated remarks may suggest.

36. Riesman-Arendt Correspondence, image 27.

37. "[B]ecause this type . . . is to be found today in such Catholic countries as France, Italy and possibly those in Latin America, a much greater extent than in Protestant countries." Ibid., image 5.

38. Riesman, *Lonely Crowd*, pp. 184–209.

39. Riesman-Arendt Correspondence, images 4 and 5, letter of May 21, 1948.

40. Ibid. This letter also includes the observation that "modern philosophy has long had a tendency to destroy every idea of man as an autonomous being: You are what life makes of you; you are your destiny; etc.," image 5.

41. Ibid.

42. *Masses* in Arendt's lexicon, is equivalent neither to economic classes nor to mobs, but instead refers to people of all classes who have been uprooted by war, revolution, and unemployment from a stable world, and whose atomization corrodes a sense of reality. These people, made superfluous through social dislocation, are, Arendt argues, the prime candidates of totalitarian movements. See Arendt, *Origins of Totalitarianism* ([1951] 1973), pp. 351–352; and Peter Baehr, "The 'Masses' in Hannah Arendt's Theory of Totalitarianism" (2007).

43. Riesman-Arendt Correspondence, image 9, letter of March 9, 1949. Arendt would not have known that Riesman himself was active in the defense of Japanese Americans immediately after the bombing of Pearl Harbor. He described this involvement as "my first directly political action." Riesman, "A Personal Memoir," p. 337. On Riesman's campaigning in Washington against the deportation of West Coast Japanese Americans, see "Becoming an Academic Man," p. 66, n. 6.

44. The connection is a leitmotif of *The Lonely Crowd* but is especially emphasized in the subsection "The Adjusted, The Anomic, The Autonomous," pp. 287–291. Arendt must also have found the psychoanalytic language ("superego controls," "clinical symptom") and metaphors that pervade *The Lonely Crowd* particularly grating. Following a quotation on the emotional condition of soldiers hospitalized for apathy, Riesman remarks (*Lonely Crowd*, p. 290), "My own belief is that the ambulatory patients in the ward of modern culture show many analogous symptoms of too much compliance and too little insight, though of course their symptoms are not as sudden and severe. Their lack of emotion and emptiness of expression are as characteristic of many contemporary anomics as hysteria or outlawry was characteristic of the societies depending on earlier forms of direction."

45. Riesman-Arendt Correspondence, image 9, letter of March 9, 1949.

46. Ibid.

47. Later, in *The Human Condition* (1958a) and elsewhere, Arendt spelled out the concept of "world" that is implicit in this letter to Riesman. While "the earth" designates the terrestrial sphere of physical and organic life, "the world" refers to the cultural, technological, and political artifice that lends human existence a modicum of stability. People relate to this world analogously to how they sit around a table: the world is common but we see it from different vantage

points; the world both brings us together and separates us; this separation is a condition of human freedom and diversity. "Worldlessness" is that condition in which people lose the sense of a common world; they become cynical, lose their grasp of reality, mistake the world as it is for their own feelings about it. In short, worldlessness is a condition of unreality, acutely felt by modern "masses" and generally produced by social meltdown (the status of the refugee or the superfluous person) attendant on massive disruption (e.g., the breakdown of the Habsburg and Ottoman empires after World War I).

48. Riesman-Arendt Correspondence, image 10, letter of March 9, 1949. In a later comment on the "other-directed type," Arendt speculated on people who live under the misapprehension that normalcy "is something in the flesh" (as distinct from a medium of measurement) and who are not satisfied with the respect of their community but want "the impossible [namely] the active approval, amounting to friendship, of exactly everybody"—a craving that paradoxically makes friendship impossible too. Arendt to Riesman, June 13, 1949, image 21.

49. Perhaps a reference to Henry Friend, whose portrait appears in *Faces in the Crowd*, pp. 441–484.

50. Riesman-Arendt Correspondence, image 6, letter of May 25, 1948.

51. Riesman's assumption that Arendt was a historian, rather than a political theorist or philosopher, is a common refrain of the early letters.

52. Riesman-Arendt Correspondence, image 3, letter of November 11, 1948. (The image, in the digitized archive, is out of chronological sequence.) See also images 6 and 7, letter of May 25, 1948.

53. Doubleday edition, p. 5. See also Riesman, "Preface to the Fourth Printing," p. v: "In fact, the concepts of social character set forth in *The Lonely Crowd* were developed almost accidentally in working with the vignettes of a few individuals."

54. Riesman, "Foreword: Ten Years Later," p. xvii, "Becoming an Academic Man," p. 61.

55. Arendt, *Hannah Arendt, Karl Jaspers: Correspondence* ([1985] 1992), p. 236, letter of December 21, 1953.

56. Riesman-Arendt Correspondence, image 8, letter of February 28, 1949.

57. Part 3 of the version that Riesman read encompassed the chapters "The Classless Society" (Arendt's distinction among classes, masses, and mob), "The Totalitarian Movement'" (on totalitarian propaganda and organization), and "Totalitarianism in Power" (the nature of governance, the secret police, and total domination). In the second enlarged edition of 1958 and in the third edition of 1966, Arendt added a new chapter, "Ideology and Terror" (based on "Ideology and Terror: A Novel Form of Government" [1953], *Review of Politics*

15 [3]: 303–327). The 1958 version of *Origins* also contained a chapter on the Hungarian insurrection (based on "Totalitarian Imperialism: Reflections on the Hungarian Revolution" [1958] *Review of Politics* 20 [4]: 570–590); it was excised from the 1966 edition. The two English-language editions that followed *Origins'* 1951 publication witnessed a number of interpolations into the main text and included additional prefaces. We lack a full concordance, but for some helpful preliminary observations, see Roy Tsao, "The Three Phases of Arendt's Theory of Totalitarianism" (2002).

58. Riesman-Arendt Correspondence, image 17, June 13, 1949.

59. Riesman-Arendt Correspondence, image 47, October 6, 1949.

60. Riesman, "Totalitarianism" [1954], p. 410.

61. Riesman-Arendt Correspondence, image 15.

62. Ibid.

63. Riesman-Arendt Correspondence, image 12, letter of June 7, 1949; image 26, letter of June 27, 1949; image 35, letter of August 26, 1949.

64. Image 54. Images 51–62 comprise Riesman's typewritten review of *The Origins of Totalitarianism* for *Commentary*. See Riesman, "The Path to Total Terror" (1951).

65. The remonstration runs deeper because one of Riesman's criticisms of social science—that it "tended to imagine social systems as monolithic"—is also one of his criticisms of Arendt: see image 15, letter of June 8, 1949, and Riesman, "Some Observations on the Limits of Totalitarian Power" (1954b), p. 422; cf. p. 422, n. 6 for a comment on Arendt.

66. Riesman, "Totalitarianism" (1954a), p. 410. "In general . . . she tends to make totalitarianism appear as consistently fanatical; she therefore interprets specific actions in terms of long-range goals, and does not allow for any more or less accidental concatenations of bureaucratic forces, slip-ups, careerisms, as explanatory factors." *Commentary* review, image 61.

67. Riesman, "Limits of Totalitarian Power," p. 415.

68. Cf. Riesman-Arendt Correspondence, image 46, September 22, 1949.

69. Riesman, "Limits of Totalitarian Power," p. 415.

70. Ibid.

71. Riesman's animus against *Nineteen Eight-Four* looks jarring until one considers the kind of interpretation the book allows. So, for Richard Rorty, *Nineteen Eighty-Four* lends credence to the claim "that there is no such thing as *inner* freedom" and that there "is nothing to people except what has been socialized into them." Rorty, *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity* (1989), p. 177.

72. See Arendt, "Social Science Techniques and the Study of Concentration Camps" ([1950] 1994), p. 240, on the "disintegration of the personality."

73. Arendt, *Origins of Totalitarianism*, p. 447.

74. Ibid., p. 451. Also, p. 459: "Human nature is at stake."

75. Ibid., pp. 453, 455. For a contrary view, see Tsvetan Todorov, *Facing the Extreme: Moral Life in the Concentration Camps* ([1991] 1996), pp. 31–118.

76. Arendt, *Origins of Totalitarianism*, p. 459.

77. Ibid., p. 455.

78. Arendt, "The Image of Hell" ([1946] 1994b), p. 198. On the Nazi "experiment" of eliminating spontaneity, see Arendt, *Origins of Totalitarianism*, p. 438.

79. Arendt, *Origins of Totalitarianism*, p. 457.

80. Arendt, "Ideology and Terror" (1953). The essay's main line of argument is discernible in the drafts of *The Origins of Totalitarianism* that Riesman consulted. Note, however, that "Ideology and Terror" refers *principally* to the "inhabitants of a totalitarian country" (Arendt, *Origins of Totalitarianism*, p. 468); it deals with concentration and death camps only by allusion.

81. Arendt, *The Burden of Our Time* (1951), p. 429. She remarked that "the chances are that total domination of man will never come about, for it presupposes the existence of *one* authority, *one* way of life, *one* ideology in all countries and among all peoples in the world. Only when no competitor, no country of physical refuge, and no human being whose understanding may offer a spiritual refuge, are left can the process of total domination and the change of the nature of man begin in earnest" (italics in original). The remarks were expunged from later editions.

82. Recall that I am talking about *The Origins of Totalitarianism*. In *Eichmann in Jerusalem* ([1963] 1994), Arendt does give examples of resistance, though these overwhelmingly take place outside of Germany itself. It is notable that Arendt's philosophical masterwork, *The Human Condition* (pp. 320–322), ends on a similar note of almost unreserved gloom: the "victory of the *animal laborans*." She remarks, "even now, laboring is too lofty, too ambitious a word for what we are doing, or think we are doing, in the world we have come to live in. The last stage of the laboring society, the society of jobholders, demands of its members a sheer automatic functioning. . . . It is quite conceivable that the modern age—which began with such an unprecedented and promising outburst of human activity—may end in the deadliest, most sterile passivity history has ever known." This maudlin peroration uncannily resembles the conclusion to Weber's *The Protestant Ethic and the "Spirit" of Capitalism* ([1905] 2002).

83. As Riesman observed about her view of totalitarianism as a whole: image 15, letter of June 8, 1949.

84. Riesman, "Becoming an Academic Man," p. 67, n. 10.

85. Riesman, "Limits of Totalitarian Power," p. 425.

86. Ibid., p. 423.

87. Ibid., p. 420.

88. On Arendt's reckoning, while Nazi Germany entered its totalitarian phase after 1938 (and thus six years after her own flight), the Soviet Union was totalitarian "after 1930": see Arendt, "Mankind and Terror" ([1953] 1994b), p. 297. In other words, Riesman, unlike Arendt, had actually witnessed in person a totalitarian society.

89. Riesman, "Limits of Totalitarian Power," p. 421.

90. Riesman, "Becoming an Academic Man," p. 67, n. 10.

91. Riesman, "Limits of Totalitarian Power," p. 416.

92. Ibid., p. 419.

93. Riesman, "Grammar of Soviet Motives" (1952a), p. 246.

94. Heinrich Blücher, misquoting Riesman, contemptuously dismissed the charge. "The book [*Origins*] will outlast the troublemakers, and you can set your mind at rest. Mr. Riesman revenged himself with a swipe at you in a review of one of Margaret Mead's scribblings, where he felt that her work was so much more substantial than the 'mystical insights of Hannah Arendt.' " Blücher to Arendt, May 23, 1952, in Arendt, *Within Four Walls* (2000), p. 177.

Riesman's *Commentary* review described Arendt as "less mystical" and more attentive to historical data than Simone Weil, but this still suggests that Arendt was mystical to some degree. The review prompted a disparaging reaction from Mary McCarthy, who considered its "strictures and pious exceptions terribly stupid; it seemed to me that he understood the book and the marvel of its construction very little." Letter to Arendt, April 26, 1951, in Arendt, *Between Friends* (1995), p. 2. McCarthy appears to have taken an especially strong dislike to Riesman, calling his work "drivel" (letter to Arendt, January 20, 1955, p. 32). She also commended an article by Elizabeth Hardwick, a close friend, that McCarthy deemed "utterly ruinous to a man like that—a total loss of face. I think this is a good thing.' " Letter to Arendt, September 16, 1954, p. 38. See Hardwick's sardonic "Riesman Considered" (1954).

95. Riesman, "Grammar of Soviet Motives," p. 246.

96. Note that while the original edition of *The Lonely Crowd* (p. 296) states that "modern totalitarianism . . . wages open and effective war on autonomy," the 1953 Doubleday edition (p. 288) omits the word *effective*, adds the rider that "[m]odern totalitarianism is also more inefficient and corrupt than it is often given credit for," and observes that while the aims of totalitarianism are unlimited, its "effectiveness" is still unknown. The amendment likely reflected Riesman's criticisms of Arendt.

97. Riesman, "Limits of Totalitarian Power," p. 421.

98. This was a criticism of Arendt that emerged in the *Commentary* review, image 61.

99. Riesman-Arendt Correspondence, image 16, letter of June 8, 1949.

100. Arendt, "The Seeds of a Fascist International" ([1945] 1994c), p. 147. On "factuality as fabricated," see Arendt, "On the Nature of Totalitarianism: An Essay in Understanding" ([c. 1952–1953] 1994), p. 350.

101. Riesman-Arendt Correspondence, image 23, letter of June 13, 1949.

102. Riesman, "Limits of Totalitarian Power," pp. 419–420, n. 4. The statement I have quoted is not verbatim Arendt, but Riesman's abbreviated recollection. For a description of the "underground struggle" in Buchenwald, see Eugen Kogon, *The Theory and Practice of Hell* ([1946/1950] 1980), pp. 255–273. In the 1966 preface to part 3 of *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (p. xxvii), Arendt stated, "Corruption, the curse of the Russian administration from the beginning, was also present during the last years of the Nazi regime."

103. Arendt, *Origins of Totalitarianism*, p. 439, n. 126. Cf. Roy Tsao, "The Three Phases of Arendt's Theory of Totalitarianism," pp. 601, 616, n. 28. Kogon, in *The Theory and Practice of Hell*, does, however, describe gassings in the "eastern camps," pp. 239–241.

104. Primo Levi, *Survival in Auschwitz* ([1947] 1986). This is a translation of *Se questo è un uomo* [If this is a man]. The first printing sold only 1,900 copies. The book was reprinted in 1957. For details, see Primo Levi, *The Drowned and the Saved* (19860), p. 167.

105. Levi, *Survival in Auschwitz*, p. 98.

106. Ibid., p. 78. See also pp. 87–100.

107. Todorov, *Facing the Extreme*, p. 40.

108. Ibid., pp. 59–118.

109. Arendt, *Origins of Totalitarianism*, p. 420. Nor was the regime as a whole able to drill its ideology (e.g., of anti-Semitism) into the entire population. For testimony, see Victor Klemperer, *I Will Bear Witness: A Diary of the Nazi Years, 1933–1941* ([1995] 1999), pp. 438, 442; yet see 441.

110. Eric A. Johnson, *Nazi Terror: The Gestapo, Jews, and Ordinary Germans* (2000), p. 485; also pp. 20–21, 353–375, 485. In a similar vein, see Robert Gellately, *Backing Hitler: Consent and Coercion in Nazi Germany* (2001), p. 257 and passim.

111. Arendt, *Origins of Totalitarianism*, pp. 323–324. On p. 338, Arendt qualifies this picture by writing of the masses as "good family men" who sacrificed "belief, honor, dignity" for security.

112. Ibid., p. 351.

113. Richard Hamilton, *Who Voted for Hitler?* (1982), p. 113. However, this same election shows that by this time the NSDAP was winning around 40 percent of its votes from workers, 30 percent of all votes cast. (In 1932 about half of German workers were voting communist or for the SDP.) See Michael Mann, *Fascists* (2004), p. 190.

114. Mann, *Fascists*, pp. 139–206, and *The Dark Side of Democracy* (2005), pp. 212–239.

115. Childers in Abel, *Why Hitler Came into Power*, p. xix.

116. Sheila Fitzpatrick, *Everyday Stalinism* (1999), pp. 9, 192.

117. Ibid., p. 220. Also Nadezhda Mandelstam, *Hope Against Hope* ([1970] 1999), p. 340.

118. Mandelstam, *Hope Against Hope*, p. 339.

119. Sarah Davies, *Popular Opinion in Stalin's Russia* (1997), p. 123; italics in original.

120. Fitzpatrick, *Everyday Stalinism*, p. 222.

121. Ibid., p. 227.

122. Ibid., pp. 62–63.

123. Boris Souvarine, *Stalinism* (1939), p. 665.

124. Fitzpatrick, *Everyday Stalinism*, pp. 65–66.

125. It is the persistence of this venerable institution, largely family-based but also involving reciprocal obligations to those of a similar (school, town, military) background, that partially explains how Chinese enterprise was able to grow so quickly once Deng Xiaoping's Open Door reforms began in the late 1970s. Exiles from Hong Kong, Taiwan, Singapore, and elsewhere returned to their home communities, where, welcomed enthusiastically, they were able to invest and strike highly personalized deals with local leaders. See Lucian W. Pye, "'Asian Values': from Dynamos to Dominoes?" (2000). And on *guanxi* during the Cultural Revolution, see Ruth Cherrington, *Deng's Generation* (1997), pp. 94–95.

126. The self-destructive consequences of a reign of virtue for protagonists and victims alike—indeed the protagonists become victims of their own rhetoric—are subtly delineated in Arendt's analysis of Jacbonism: see Arendt, *On Revolution* ([1963] 1990), pp. 66–114.

127. Susan L. Shirk, "The Decline of Virtuocracy in China" (1984).

128. J. Arch Getty and Roberta Manning, "Introduction" to *Stalinist Terror: New Perspectives* (1993), p. 5. On the same page, the authors describe the recent "inclusion of society into the Stalinist equation" as "revisionist" though in fact it marks a return to many of the issues identified in Alex Inkeles and Raymond A. Bauer's *The Soviet Citizen: Daily Life in a Totalitarian Society* (1959). The book employed the resources of Harvard's Emigré Interview Project (1951–1953), the data of which consisted of just over 1,000 in-depth interviews of Soviet emigrants resident in Germany and the United States. For details, see pp. 4–40; and http://daviscenter.fas.harvard.edu/research_portal.

129. The state may have sought to "swallow" society, but "it was unable to realize the vision presented by totalitarian theory of [a] complete atomized society. The limits of state power were met when people refused to work efficiently, migrated from place to place by the millions, or informally worked out ways to

resist pressure from above." Ronald Grigor Suny, "Stalin and His Stalinism: Power and Authority in the Soviet Union, 1930–1935" (1997), p. 36.

130. Riesman, "Personal Memoir," p. 335.

131. Riesman, "Limits of Totalitarian Power," pp. 422–423.

132. Riesman, "Totalitarianism" (1954a), pp. 410–411.

133. Ibid., p. 411. In 1954, Riesman and Arendt joined other participants in a conference on totalitarianism organized by Carl J. Friedrich, but Riesman's contributions add nothing of substance to what he had already argued. See Friedrich (ed.), *Totalitarianism* ([1954] 1964). For Riesman's contributions (the book has no index), see pp. 132–33, 227–228, 377–378. For Arendt's, see pp. 75–79, 133–134, 228–229, 336–338. Friedrich was Riesman's mentor on political matters. On their relationship, see Riesman, "Becoming an Academic Man," pp. 30–31, 37–38, 42, 50.

134. *Commentary* review, image 62.

135. Recall that Arendt fled Germany in 1933. By her own reckoning, Germany became totalitarian only during the war.

136. *The Captive Mind* ([1953] 2001), p. 57.

137. Ketman, Miłosz added, is probably more pronounced in the People's Democracies than in "the Imperium," and for a simple reason: in countries such as Hungary and Poland, Ketman is more recent, and the New Faith coincides with vestiges of older ethics, including those influenced by Christianity. Ibid., pp. 77–78.

138. Ibid., p. 61.

139. Ibid., p. 62.

140. To anticipate: it is not the content of ideology that interests Arendt, but its formulaic properties. The zeal ideology inspires resembles nothing more closely than the fanaticism of a deranged logician. Years later she would refine that intellectualist emphasis in her portrait of the career conformist Adolf Eichmann. Characteristically, she insisted that it was Eichmann's inability to think from the standpoint of anyone else, his refuge in officialese, clichés, and "empty talk," that enabled him to play the part of a Nazi desk murderer. See also Arendt, *Life of the Mind* (1978), pp. 3–7.

141. Czesław Miłosz, *The Captive Mind*, p. 79.

142. Ibid., p. 54.

143. Ibid.

144. Ibid., p. 78.

145. Ibid., p. 79.

146. Ibid., pp. 79–80. And p. 71: "Surely man has never before been subjected to such pressure, never has he had to writhe and wriggle so as to adapt himself to forms constructed according to the books but obviously not to his size. All his intellectual and emotional capacities are put to the test."

Chapter Three

1. Raymond Aron, "The Dawn of Universal History" ([1961] 2002), pp. 465, 467, 469, 471.

2. Aron, *The Committed Observer* ([1981] 1983), p. 3. For the critique of the sociology of knowledge, see Aron, *German Sociology* ([1936] 1964), pp. 51–65. The affable Mannheim took it all in good grace. Meeting Aron in Paris in 1935, he remarked with a smile on how much he had "appreciated" the book, "except for the chapter that concerns me directly." Aron, *Memoirs* ([1983] 1990), p. 78. Presumably, Aron sent Mannheim an advance copy of the manuscript. Alternatively, the meeting must have taken place in 1936 or later.

3. Aron, *Memoirs*, p. 45.

4. Aron, *La Philosophie critique de l'histoire: Essai sur une théorie Allemande de l'histoire* ([1938] 1950; originally titled *Essai sur une théorie de l'histoire dans l'Allemagne contemporaine*), pp. 238–249.

5. Almost half of Aron's first book, translated as *German Sociology*, is devoted to a discussion of Weber. Containing not one word of approbation, it is the work of an intellectually stunned man. Contrast this with the more nuanced and critical "Max Weber and Modern Social Science" ([1959] 1985) and "Science and Consciousness of Society" ([1960] 1985). In particular, Aron came to reject the Weberian notion that ideal-types are purely heuristic impositions on reality. See Aron, *Democracy and Totalitarianism* ([1965] 1969), pp. 40, 50, 57, 59, 220–223.

6. Aron, *Memoirs*, p. 45.

7. Aron, *Committed Observer*, p. 28,

8. Aron, *Memoirs*, p. 49.

9. Elizabeth Young-Bruehl, *Hannah Arendt: For Love of the World* (1982), p. 104.

10. Ibid., p. 116.

11. Hannah Arendt, *Within Four Walls* (2000), p. 164, letter of May 1, 1952.

12. Ibid., p. 269, letter of September 13, 1955.

13. Arendt, *Hannah Arendt, Karl Jaspers* ([1985] 1992), p. 365, letter of March 31, 1959.

14. Ibid., p. 366, letter of April 6, 1958. Weighed down by more important commitments, Jaspers declined an invitation to participate in the conference. He was also offended by a breach of etiquette: a letter to Aron was answered by his secretary. Hannah Arendt found that "quite outrageous." Ibid., p. 368, letter of April 27, 1959.

15. "Finally, I added a few chapters at the end of the book, one of which ("Totalitarianism") was appreciated by Hannah Arendt and perhaps [was] inspired by her." Aron, *Memoirs*, p. 202.

16. See Randall Collins on the Camus-Sartre confrontation, *The Sociology of Philosophies: A Global Theory of Intellectual Change* (1999), pp. 774–782.

17. Aron, *Philosophie critique de l'histoire*. Again, Weber looms large in the analysis; see pp. 218–273.

18. Aron, "Introduction" (1978a) to *Politics and History*, p. xx.

19. Aron, *Memoirs*, p. 39.

20. Aron, unlike Hannah Arendt, took a major interest in economic questions. An autodidact, he co-taught a course, in 1936 or 1937, on political economy at the Ecole Normale Supérieure, introducing students to such concepts as "international liquidities, floating capital, [and] world prices." Aron, *Committed Observer*, p. 44. Aron simply did not believe it creditable for a modern intellectual, discoursing on world history, to be unfamiliar with economic realities and economic theory. This, itself, was part of his worldliness.

21. Aron, *Memoirs*, p. 15. Aron's willingness to undergo psychoanalysis was, he remarked, "an interrogation, an evaluation of the self, a necessary examination of the conscience." Aron, *Committed Observer*, p. 36. Hannah Arendt, in contrast, believed psychoanalysis and psychology in general to be thoroughly fraudulent—both as modes of introspection and of interpretation. In her preface to *Rahel Varnhagen* ([1958] 1997, p. 83), Arendt deplored the modern tendency to "penetrate [*durchschauen*]" a "subject's tricks," aspiring "to know more than the subject knew about himself or was willing to reveal." The "pseudoscientific apparatuses of depth-psychology, psychoanalysis, graphology, etc., fall into this category of curiosity-seeking." Psychology was also antipolitical, habituating people to the worst aspects of modern life. See her scathing comments in *The Promise of Politics* (2005), pp. 105–107, 201–202.

22. Aron, *Memoirs*, p. 330.

23. For a devastating judgment on Pierre Bourdieu, an Aron protégé, see Aron, *Memoirs*, p. 238.

24. In the words of a former student, quoted in Aron, *Memoirs*, p. 478.

25. Aron, *Memoirs*, p. 57; cf. Aron, *Committed Observer*, p. 37

26. Aron, *Memoirs*, p. 123.

27. Aron, *Memoirs*, p. 87; compare Arendt's "The Decline of the Nation State and the End of the Rights of Man," in *The Origins of Totalitarianism* ([1951] 1973), pp. 267–302.

28. The essay was republished in *Commentaire* in 1985. I use the translation by Marc LePain and Daniel Mahoney, "The Essence of Totalitarianism According to Hannah Arendt" (Aron [1954] 1994). This was not, however, Aron's first comment on *The Origins of Totalitarianism*. A year earlier, in the German edition of *La Sociologie allemande contemporaine* (orig. 1935), he described it as "an important contribution to the sociology of totalitarianism." Despite its title, however, "the book throws more light on the nature than the origins of totalitarianism;

and in particular, the chapters concerned with propaganda, the police, and terror, seem to touch [on] the most important features of the phenomenon." "The Problems and Methods of Contemporary Sociology" ([1953] 1964), p. 132.

29. Aron, "Essence of Totalitarianism According to Hannah Arendt," p. 97.

30. Ibid., p. 97.

31. Critics of Arendt's *Eichmann in Jerusalem* ([1963] 1994) voiced a similar objection.

32. Ibid., p. 98. He continues: "The Jews are persecuted at the very moment they have lost all real influence; South Africa is conquered at the very moment it no longer holds any strategic worth; superfluous individuals and superfluous capitals go off in quest of that most superfluous of goods, gold. . . . Each of these theses probably contains an element of truth. But they could be expressed in a way that would remove from each one . . . a part of the disproportionate credence that Mme Arendt seems ready to give them," p. 98.

33. Aron seems to confuse Arendt's distinction between the mob and the masses. *Classes* are interest-bound formations, determined by their place in the productive process. The riffraff of bohemians, crackpots, gangsters, and conspirators is what Arendt dubs *the mob*. *Masses* come in two complementary forms. First, they comprise individuals who live on the periphery of all social and political involvements. These people exist within the interstices of class society and party politics. Bereft of organizational affiliation, inexperienced in conventional politics, and lacking conviction, masses call down a plague on all houses. Having never been previously organized by the party system, or ever convinced by its rhetoric, they offer virgin territory for the totalitarian movements to plow. Masses in this first sense are testimony to the fact that modern government functions amid a population that tolerates it without enthusiasm. Their typical quiescence and apathy is by no means the same as consent. When totalitarian movements colonize parliament and begin to destroy it, the masses show no regret; to them, parliament was a fraud to begin with.

Alongside this first meaning of "masses"—a permanent fixture of modern societies, witness to the inability of class formations to incorporate many segments of the populace—Arendt introduces another. On this reckoning, masses are the product of a specific conjuncture. They constitute the detritus of all social strata that have lost their former social identity and emotional bearings as a result of abrupt domestic, geopolitical, and economic dislocation—the same conditions that Emile Durkheim and Talcott Parsons said produced anomie (a term Arendt assiduously avoids).

34. Aron, "Essence of Totalitarianism According to Hannah Arendt," pp. 101–102.

35. Ibid., p. 102.

36. Ibid., p. 103.

37. Ibid., pp. 104–105. It is not always easy to distinguish, in this review article, between Aron's summary of Hannah Arendt's portrait of National Socialism and his own view of it. Moreover, Aron says comparatively little about Nazism here, and even less in the chapter in *Les Guerres en chaîne* (1951) devoted to "Totalitarianism," pp. 466–485. It is Bolshevism that engrosses him. I return to this point below. Note, however, that the original French version of Aron's review ([1954] 1993) contains a subsection—omitted from the translation I am using—on Léon Poliakov's *Bréviare de la haine* (1951). Aron cites it to buttress his view of the explicable, if depraved, motives—plunder, extortion—of many of those who engaged in the mass killing of Jews. Poliakov's book was first published in English in 1954 as *Harvest of Hate: The Nazi Program for the Destruction of the Jews of Europe*.

38. Arendt, *Origins of Totalitarianism*, p. 319. Raymond Aron gets this exactly backward, claiming that, according to Arendt, Lenin "would have attempted to give the masses an undifferentiated structure." "Essence of Totalitarianism According to Hannah Arendt," p. 105.

39. Arendt, *Origins of Totalitarianism*, p. 319.

40. Ibid., p. 322.

41. Later he would add: "The reign of terror and the concentration camp were born in the days of Lenin's rise to power. The verbal violence with which the militant Lenin, head of the Bolshevik faction, accused of treason those comrades who did not agree with his interpretation of an article of dogma was transmuted into actual violence. The Bolshevik faction . . . never left off excluding traitors and hounding enemies. While he played the role of Zurich-based interpreter of historical truth, Lenin used irony; when he acted as bearer of both the sword of might and the scales of justice, he inspired terror." Foreword to Alain Besançon, *The Soviet Syndrome* ([1976] 1978), pp. xv–xvi.

42. Aron, "Essence of Totalitarianism According to Hannah Arendt," p. 106.

43. Ibid.

44. Ibid.

45. Ibid., p. 108.

46. Ibid.

47. For the context of this essay in Arendt's study of the "totalitarian elements of Marxism," see chapter 3 of Margaret Canovan's *Hannah Arendt: A Reinterpretation of Her Political Thought* (1992).

48. In her preface to the second enlarged edition of *Origins of Totalitarianism* (1958, p. xi), Arendt remarked: "As sometimes happens in such matters, there were certain insights of a more general and theoretical nature which now appear to me to grow directly out of the analysis of the elements of total domination in

the third part of the book, but which I did not possess when I finished the original manuscript in 1949. These are now incorporated in Chapter XIII, 'Ideology and Terror,' of the present edition."

49. Arendt is mentioned by name in the chapter "On Totalitarianism": Aron, *Democracy and Totalitarianism*, p. 198.

50. Arendt, "Ideology and Terror" [1953], p. 460.

51. Ibid.

52. Ibid., p. 461.

53. Ibid., pp. 464, 466.

54. Ibid., p. 462.

55. Ibid., p. 464.

56. In *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, p. 344, Arendt had anticipated this judgment when she remarked that terror is "the very essence of its government." Yet while *Origins* devotes a section to totalitarian propaganda, it says much less specifically about ideology (to which no section is devoted). Propaganda, she says, is directed toward the nontotalitarian world and, domestically, represents an incomplete coordination. Ideology is for the initiated. Terror reaches its climax and "perfection" after domestic opposition has been liquidated. Because Arendt in "Ideology and Terror" was writing about totalitarian government, assuming total subordination, she was not especially concerned about propaganda. Other differences between *Origins* and its coda are also discernible, though it must be stressed that these are differences in emphasis only. In *Origins*, the target of Arendt's discussion of both propaganda and ideology is the lie, the fiction of the movement. In "Ideology and Terror," her focus is on the perverted logic of ideology. What bridges both conceptions is the idea of "consistency" (*Origins*, pp. 343 and 353). The point remains that her discussion of ideology in "Ideology and Terror" encapsulates many notions—a pseudoscientific orientation, consistency—which *Origins* assigned to propaganda (for instance, pp. 352–353). She also occasionally elides "totalitarian propaganda" and "totalitarian ideology", as on p. 346. This asymmetry supports the conjecture that Arendt significantly rethought the concept of ideology after *Origins* was completed, giving it a new salience in her later work.

57. Ibid.

58. Ibid., p. 467.

59. Ibid., p. 466.

60. Ibid.

61. Ibid., p. 468.

62. Arendt, *Origins of Totalitarianism*, pp. 457–458. The term *supersense*, a kind of sense that "gives the contempt for reality its cogency, logicality, and consistency," appears five times on two pages of the 1958 and subsequent editions of *Origins* (457–458). It is absent in "Ideology and Terror."

A rather similar formulation is provided by Raymond Aron when he writes of the Marxist-Leninist ideology as a "super-reality." See *In Defense of Decadent Europe* ([1977] 1979), pp. 36–40.

63. Arendt, "Ideology and Terror," p. 469.

64. Ibid., pp. 470–471.

65. Ibid. Arendt claims that while all ideologies contain totalitarian "elements," they become fully totalitarian only when embraced by totalitarian movements. The totalitarian "elements" she mentions are the claim to total explanation, the "capacity of ideological thinking to become independent of experience," and a logical ordering of facts that aims at iron consistency. She adds: "What distinguished these new totalitarian ideologists from their predecessors was that it was no longer primarily the 'idea' [i.e., the content] of the ideology—the struggle of classes and the exploitation of the workers or the struggle of races and the care of the Germanic peoples—which appealed to them, but the logical process which could be developed from it. According to Stalin, neither the idea nor the oratory but 'the irresistible force of logic thoroughly overpowered [Lenin's] audience.' The power, which Marx thought was born when the idea seized the masses, was discovered to reside, not in the idea itself, but in its logical process which 'like a mighty tentacle seized you on all sides as in a vise and from whose grip you are powerless to tear yourself away; you must either surrender or make up your mind to utter defeat' " (p. 472). Arendt is quoting from a speech by Stalin delivered in January 1924.

66. Ibid., p. 473.

67. Ibid., pp. 473–474.

68. "We know that the iron band of total terror leaves no space for such private life and that the self-coercion of totalitarian logic destroys men's capacity for experience and thought just as certainly as his capacity for action." Ibid., p. 474.

69. Ibid., p. 471.

70. Ibid., p. 474.

71. Ibid., my emphasis.

72. Ibid., p. 475.

73. Ibid., p. 477.

74. Ibid., p. 478.

75. Aron, "Essence of Totalitarianism According to Hannah Arendt," p. 110.

76. Ibid., p. 109.

77. Ibid.

78. Ibid., p. 110.

79. Ibid., p. 112.

80. Ibid., p. 111.

81. Ibid.

82. Ibid., p. 112.

83. Aron, "On the Historical Condition of the Sociologist" ([1970] 1978), p. 65.

84. Aron, *Democracy and Totalitarianism* ([1965] 1969), p. 27; italics in original. On the "internal logic" of regimes, see also pp. 39, 40, 50, 52, 57. Compare *Democracy and Totalitarianism*, p. 30, with Aron, *Main Currents in Sociological Thought II* ([1967] 1970), p. 290.

85. Aron says that totalitarian formations exist to varying degrees (*Democracy and Totalitarianism*, p. 55), a move toward the relativization of the concept that Hannah Arendt generally resisted; something was totalitarian (a movement, a regime) or it was not. Even so, she did write of totalitarian "elements," and occasionally alluded to "semitotalitarian" movements or totalitarian "tendencies" that may go unrealized; she believed that she had spotted one such tendency in McCarthyism. See Arendt, *Origins of Totalitarianism*, pp. 308, 356.

86. Aron, *Democracy and Totalitarianism*, pp. 30, 33, 50, 57, 59, 81; yet see the qualifications on pp. 62 and 64.

87. *Démocratie et totalitarisme* (1965), pp. 90–106 = *Democracy and Totalitarianism*, pp. 52–64. Aron's additional statement that he is formulating "ideal types" is bound to strike readers conversant with Max Weber as incongruous. Weber would have been happy enough for Aron to say that this or that institution was ideal-typically essential *from his perspective* or *from the standpoint of his problematic*. But that one could detect the essence of a regime is something Weber's nominalism prohibited. Aron was perfectly aware of this objection. But as a creative thinker he felt able to invest the ideal type with Aronian "realism." His conceptual transformation of the ideal type is rarely noted, even when Weber's method is the topic of discussion: see Trine M. Kjeldahl, "Defense of a Concept: Raymond Aron and Totalitarianism," p. 126; and Luc Ferry, "Stalinisme et historicisme: La critique du totalitarianisme stalinien chez Hanna [*sic*] Arendt et Raymond Aron," esp. pp. 246–249.

88. Aron does mention a third possibility: a modern regime without a party. This is largely a hypothetical alternative, but he sees some basis for it in regimes that suffer extreme "depoliticization." An example is Vichy in its first phase "which could not be defined either by a single party (there was none) or by multiple parties, which had almost completely disappeared." Another approximation was the Salazar regime in Portugal, which held elections occasionally but did not rely on a party for political orchestration. *Democracy and Totalitarianism*, p. 56.

89. Ibid., p. 40. Aron acknowledges that "legal" and "moderate" are not the same: illegal governments can act moderately; legal ones can be vicious.

90. Ibid., p. 58.

91. Ibid., p. 84.

92. Ibid., p. 59. While Aron offers four explicit reasons to defend his choice of party's being fundamental to the analysis of modern politics, *Democracy and Totalitarianism* offers many more justifications; indeed, the whole book is a demonstration of this thesis. See, for instance, pp. 81–83, 97–98, 109–110, 138–39, 154ff, 193–204, 220–229

93. Aron, *An Essay on Freedom* (1970), p. 57. Party politics as a "game" is a recurrent theme of this essay, for instance, pp. 57, 63, 66, 67, 102, 110, 121, 127, 158. War also may approximate a game, on which see Aron, "Three Forms of Historical Intelligibility" ([1972] 1978), p. 50. Hannah Arendt largely avoided the "rules of the game" metaphor. She was far more attracted to the idea of politics as theater, something Raymond Aron also evoked in his argument that human history witnesses a tension between "drama" and "process."

94. A favorite term in Aron's discussion of "The Dawn of Universal History" ([1961] 2002), pp. 465, 467, 469. See also Mahoney, *The Liberal Political Science of Raymond Aron* (1992), pp. 25–27.

95. See Brigitte Gess, "The Conceptions of Totalitarianism of Raymond Aron and Hannah Arendt" ([2000] 2004), p. 231.

96. Aron, unlike Hannah Arendt, made no serious attempt to distinguish fear from terror. See note 102 below.

97. *Democracy and Totalitarianism*, p. 187.

98. Ibid.

99. Ibid., p. 188.

100. Ibid.

101. Ibid., pp. 192–193.

102. Recall that Hannah Arendt had distinguished between "fear" (found in tyrannies and despotisms) and "terror" (found in totalitarian regimes). Fear allows some space for harm avoidance; obey the despot, stay out of politics, and he is likely to leave you alone. "Terror" is total and unpredictable. Aron tended to elide that distinction. His phrasing also sometimes implies that he is adapting Montesquieu's approach without being "entirely convinced" of it: *Democracy and Totalitarianism*, p. 49. One interpretation of that skepticism is that Aron chose to invoke Montesquieu only because Hannah Arendt, at that time the premier theorist of totalitarianism, had done so. Employing Montesquieu's dyad of essence (or nature) and principle allowed Aron a handy analytical foil to show that Hannah Arendt's view of totalitarianism was contestable even within the theoretical tradition she had chosen to articulate it. The political sociologist, Aron mischievously intimated, was the better philosopher.

103. Aron, *Democracy and Totalitarianism*, p. 166.

104. Ibid., p. 178.

105. Ibid., p. 179.

106. Ibid., p. 183.

107. Vasily Grossman, *Forever Flowing* ([1970] 1997), p. 183.

108. Primo Levi, "The Gray Zone" ([1986] 1989), p. 53.

109. Albert Speer, *Spandau: The Secret Diaries* ([1975] 1976), pp. 28–30.

110. Aron, "Dawn of Universal History," p. 486.

111. He realized the problem when he observed, "I have no wish to cast doubt, personally, on the validity of formal conceptualization, with its suprahistorical tendencies so long as . . . [this] does not lead to a disregard for the specificity of historical or social problems or situations." Aron, "Macht, Power, Puissance: Democratic Prose or Demoniac Poetry" ([1964] 1978), p. 104.

112. Peter Baehr, "The 'Masses' in Hannah Arendt's Theory of Totalitarianism" (2007).

113. For representative examples, see Aron, "Democratic and Totalitarian States" ([1939] 2002), "Le machiavélisme, doctrine des tyrannies modernes" ([1940] 1990), and *The Opium of the Intellectuals* ([1955] 1985) Aron's ubiquitous habit of describing totalitarian regimes as "tyrannies" or "despotisms" would have struck Hannah Arendt as anachronistic (though this did not stop her from referring to totalitarianism as a "dictatorship").

114. Aron, *Democracy and Totalitarianism*, p. 108.

115. Aron, *Main Currents in Sociological Thought I* ([1965] 1970), p. 238. He added: "I personally consider the essential task of sociology to be precisely this comparison of types within the same species."

116. Aron, *18 Lectures on Industrial Society* ([1961] 1967), p. 26. Similarly, the sociologist wishes "to be able to discover common characteristics in all the economic systems of our time, and to understand the two types of economy [market, command] as two variations on the same theme, or as two species of the same genus."

117. I am stating Arendt's view, not my own.

118. "On the Historical Condition of the Sociologist," p. 81.

119. Aron, *The Imperial Republic: The United States and the World, 1945–1973* ([1973] 1974).

120. Representative texts are "Une révolution anti-prolétarienne" ([1936] 1993), based on a lecture delivered in 1935; the expression used on pp. 297–298 is "temporal religion"; "The Future of Secular Religions" ([1944] 2002); "History and Politics" ([1949] 1978); "From Marxism to Stalinism" ([1951] 2002b); "The Expansion of Stalinism" ([1951] 2002a); *The Opium of the Intellectuals* ([1955] 1985), esp. chapters 2, 3, and 9; *Progress and Disillusion: The Dialectics of Modern Society* ([1968] 1969), pp. 242–250.

121. Aron, *An Essay on Freedom*, pp. 44–45, italics omitted; also 50, 83, 98, 100, 153-60. Cf. *Progress and Disillusion*, pp. 259–275; and "On the Historical Condition of the Sociologist," pp. 80–82; "Sociology and the Philosophy of Human Rights" ([1969] 1978), pp. 122, 130–138. The Promethean ambition has

a strong resemblance to Hannah Arendt's view of "fabrication" as a dominant image of modern life. See Arendt, *The Human Condition* (1958), pp. 136–174, and, for a convenient summary of her argument, the lecture "Labor, Work, Action" ([1964] 2000).

Chapter Four

1. Waldemar Gurian, *Bolshevism: Theory and Practice* ([1931] 1932), pp. 228, 231; italics in original.

2. Gurian, "Totalitarianism as a Political Religion" ([1954] 1964), p. 123. A Roman Catholic Russian exile, Gurian was founder of the *Review of Politics*, a journal for which Arendt wrote a number of articles, including an affectionate obituary of him (Arendt [1955] 1968) that was later reprinted in *Men in Dark Times*. Gurian was more than a friend and fellow exile, however. He was an ally, together with Eric Voegelin, in the battle against social science. This explains why Arendt treated Gurian's version of secular religion theory with an affectionate restraint that is conspicuously absent in her communication with Monnerot. See Arendt, "Understanding Communism" ([1953] 1994c), a review of Gurian's *Bolshevism: An Introduction to Soviet Communism* (1952). On the trajectory of Gurian's thought, see Heinz Hürten, "Waldemar Gurian and the Development of the Concept of Totalitarianism ([2000] 2004)."

3. Notably, by Philippe Burrin, "Political Religion: The Relevance of a Concept" (2000), Hans Maier, *Totalitarianism and Political Religions* (2004); Michael Burleigh, *Earthly Powers* (2005); and Emilio Gentile, *Politics as a Religion* (2006).

4. See Peter Baehr, "Totalitarianism" (2005).

5. In the same year that Arendt completed *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (1951), the comparison of Bolshevism with "the God that failed" was already something of a topos. See Richard Crossman's ([1949] 1963) book of that title charting the spiritual journeys of Arthur Koestler, Richard Wright, and others to and from Bolshevism. In his introduction, Crossman remarked, "The Communist novice, subjecting his soul to the canon law of the Kremlin, felt something of the release which Catholicism also brings to the intellectual, wearied and worried by the privilege of freedom." *The God That Failed*, p. 7.

6. For a rare appreciation, see Michael Richardson, "Sociology on a Razor's Edge" (1992).

7. To quote from the group's "Note on the Foundation of a College of Sociology" (1937), reprinted in Denis Hollier, *The College of Sociology (1937–39)* (1988), pp. 3–5.

8. As he recalled in "Le Collège de sociologie ou le problème interrompu" (1979), pp. 389–391.

9. The endorsement appears on the front cover of the book's paperback version.

10. Jules Monnerot, *Sociology and Psychology of Communism* ([1949] 1960), p. 135.

11. Ibid., p. 136.

12. Ibid., p. 137.

13. Ibid., p. 140.

14. Ibid., p. 142.

15. Ibid., p. 141.

16. Ibid., p. 22.

17. Monnerot mentions Christianity too, but in a secondary way. He remarks: "Communism takes the field both as a *secular religion* and as [an aspirant] *universal state*; it is therefore more comparable to Islam than to the Universal Religion which began by opposing the universal State in the Hellenistic and Roman worlds, and which can be said to have drawn men's hearts away from the State to itself," p. 18, italics original. Monnerot is also struck by the fact that while Christianity is inclusive, welcoming into the fold people of all classes and statuses, communism is forever promulgating lists of "persons and social categories condemned to perdition," p. 156. Marxism's universalism is phony. The "deification of man" is also utterly alien to religious traditions. What Marxism retains from Christianity is a doctrine of salvation (to be found, however, on this earth) and of predestination, in which the proletariat takes the part of God's elect.

18. Ibid., p. 19.

19. Ibid., p. 20.

20. Ibid., p. 19.

21. On the Islam-communist parallel, see also, pp. 111, 185, 219.

22. See, inter alia, Paul Berman, *Terror and Liberalism* (2003), p. 181; Norman Podhoretz, *World War IV* (2007), p. 13; Daniel Goldhagen, "The New Threat" (2006).

23. Marcel Mauss, "A Sociological Assessment of Bolshevism" ([1924-1925] 1992), p. 166.

24. Aron, "The Expansion of Stalinism" ([1951] 2002a), p. 225. Another example is Miłosz's ([1953] 2001) depiction, summarized in Chapter 2, of communist culture as *Ketman*, a mode of dissimulation practiced by embattled Muslims. The elective affinity between Soviet culture and Islam was also noted by Nadezhda Mandelstam in her poignant memoir of her husband, the Russian poet Osip Mandelstam. "Most of the Soviet writers [in the Stalin period] who traveled to the borderlands—something that was very popular—chose the Muslim areas. M. thought this preference for the Muslim world was not accidental—the people of our times were less suited to Christianity with its

doctrine of free will and the inherent value of the person than by Islam with its determinism, the submerging of the individual in the army of the faithful, and the formalized design of an architecture which made man feel insignificant." *Hope Against Hope* ([1970] 1999), p. 252.

25. Aron, *Democracy and Totalitarianism* ([1965] 1969), p. 207.

26. Aron, *Memoirs* ([1983] 1990), p. 472.

27. Alexis de Tocqueville, *The Old Regime and the Revolution* ([1856] 1998), p. 328.

28. Ibid., p. 99.

29. Ibid., p. 325.

30. Ibid., p. 328.

31. Ibid., p. 101.

32. Ibid., p. 326.

33. Ibid., p. 329.

34. Monnerot dealt with only half of the totalitarian equation, saying next to nothing about National Socialism.

35. I have already hinted at why Arendt avoided a public refutation of Voegelin's political religion theory. He was a convinced critic of the social sciences. Gurian was a friend, so that ruled him out. And Aron was immune because of the help he had given Arendt during her refugee years in Paris. Arendt never publicly confronted people to whom she felt indebted. Loyalty was one of her most important values. Monnerot, a sociologist in whom she had nothing personally invested, was a perfect foil for her attack on secular/political religion theory. On Arendt's loyalty, see Baehr, "The Grammar of Prudence" (2001).

36. Arendt, "Religion and Politics" ([1953-54] 1994), p. 368.

37. Ibid., p. 370.

38. Ibid., p. 371.

39. Ibid.

40. Ibid., p. 374.

41. Ibid., p. 375.

42. Ibid.

43. In "What Is Authority?" ([1959] 1993), Arendt states her commitment to a traditional ontology in which things possess "distinctness" or "otherness" (*alteritas*), a commitment that "the social, political, and historical sciences" routinely deny. She mentions two forms of this rejection: first, overlooking the differences among tyrannies, authoritarian regimes, and totalitarian formations; second, the "functionalization" of concepts in the social sciences (she uses the secular religion motif as her chief example). See pp. 96–104.

44. Arendt, "A Reply to Eric Voegelin" ([1953] 2000), pp. 162–163.

45. The "positive Christianity" of the Nazis, Hitler included, is not so easily dismissed. I shall return to Arendt's contentious judgment. Like many others,

she seems to have assumed that paganism was the fundamental attitude of the Nazi movement. In fact, it was only one stream of it and by no means the most influential.

46. Arendt, "Reply to Eric Voegelin," p. 162.

47. Arendt, "Preface to Part III: Totalitarianism" ([1966] 1973), p. xxxiii.

48. See Roger Scruton's meditation on the psalm's enduring vitality in *Gentle Regrets* (2005), pp. 233–240.

49. Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* ([1951] 1973), p. 459.

50. Arendt, "Religion and Politics," p. 376.

51. Ibid., p. 375.

52. Ibid., p. 377. No one could accuse Arendt of ignoring the role of fiction, lying, and image making in modern politics. Her analysis of them is central to part III of *Origins* and also, inter alia, to Arendt, "Truth and Politics" ([1967] 1993), "Lying in Politics" ([1971] 1973), and "Home to Roost" ([1975] 2003).

53. Arendt, "Religion and Politics," p. 388, n. 22.

54. A footnote takes us to Hans Gerth. Arendt's exculpation of Max Weber is clearly mistaken, as anyone who has read the relevant sections in *Economy and Society* will know. Charismatic domination was explicitly honed to be a comparative, evaluation-free concept.

55. A footnote ("Religion and Politics," p. 388, n. 25) takes us to p. 124 of Monnerot's *Sociology and Psychology of Communism* and his indebtedness to Van der Leeuw and Durkheim. See, in contrast, the respect Arendt accords (p. 387, nn. 10 and 11) Eric Voegelin's views of religion, political and otherwise.

56. "Religion and Politics," p. 379. "Marx and Engels believed that religions are ideologies, they did not think that ideologies could simply become religions. According to Engels, 'it never occurred to [the bourgeoisie] to put a new religion [sc., its own new ideology] in place of the old. Everyone knows how Robespierre failed in his attempt" (Arendt is quoting from *Feuerbach and the End of Classical German Philosophy*), p. 388–389, n. 26.

57. Tony Judt, *Past Imperfect: French Intellectuals, 1944–1956* (1992), p. 118 and passim.

58. Cf. Giles Scott-Smith, "The Congress for Cultural Freedom" (2002).

59. Henry Kissinger, "Foreword" to Raymond Aron, *Memoirs*, pp. ix–x.

60. Jules Monnerot, "Letter to the Editor" (1953), p. 131.

61. Monnerot's argument does not actually get to the heart of Arendt's objection. She acknowledged that Marx saw religion as an ideology inasmuch as it played a superstructural legitimating function. Her key point was that Marx never maintained that ideology was a religion; neither the concepts nor the phenomena were interchangeable. See note 56 above.

62. Monnerot, "Letter to the Editor," p. 131.

63. Ibid.

64. Ibid., p. 132.

65. Ibid., p. 133.

66. Ibid., p. 134.

67. I am quoting from the original *Confluence* article. It is also included (absent Monnerot's defense) in Arendt, "Religion and Politics."

68. Arendt, "Letter to the Editor" (1954), p. 119.

69. One could say the same about the meaning of religion, but Arendt conveniently sidesteps that conclusion.

70. With a dig at Durkheim, Arendt wrote: "Suppose I defined religion and some great religious thinker—not of course the worshipper of the kangaroo, whom I could easily take into account—had escaped my notice!" "Letter to the Editor," p. 119.

71. Ibid., p. 120.

72. Arendt, "Religion and Politics," p. 379.

73. This précis draws both on "Religion and Politics" and Arendt's elaboration of her argument in "What Is Authority?" esp. pp. 128–135. Both examine the transformation of the early Christian *faith*, based on the example of Jesus of Nazareth, into a Pauline-based *religion* and, later, the Roman *church*. But whereas the essay "Religion and Politics" is mostly concerned with the Roman church's adoption of elements of Greek philosophy, "What Is Authority?" combines this with an account of how later Christianity was grafted upon the Roman political tradition rooted in the authority of founding figures and actions.

74. Arendt's genealogy of the concept of Hell is obviously simplified, yet it possesses historical substance. The English term *Hell* is a translation of the Greek word *Hades*, which appears ten times in the New Testament and twenty-six times in the Apocrypha. Its Hebrew counterpart is the word *Sheol*, which assumes various meanings. Some are neutral (as in Gen. 37:35); others are more punitive (as in 1 Enoch 27:1–4). And the notion of the risen Christ, in the New Testament, is (at least in Acts 2:24) a victory over death in all its forms. For a more extensive reconstruction, from which I have benefited, see Bo Reicke, "Hell" (1993).

75. Arendt, "What Is Authority?" pp. 131, 134.

76. Arendt, "Religion and Politics," p. 383, "What Is Authority?" p. 133.

77. Boris Souvarine, *Stalin* (1939), p. 661.

78. Milovan Djilas, *Conversations with Stalin* (1962), p. 166.

79. Roy Medvedev, *Let History Judge* (1971), p. 363.

80. I am adapting Burrin, "Political Religion" (1997), pp. 325–356; and Maier (2000), "Concepts for the Comparison of Dictatorships," p. 205.

81. "[T]here is no religion without God. And this is a whole dimension of human life which is not political. It is neither private nor public. It is really beyond." Arendt, "Remarks to the American Society of Christian Ethics" (1973),

image 16. Denying revelation does not constitute a total abandonment of "faith," Arendt conceded ("Lecture on Religion and Politics" [1966], image 2), but it does jettison "the very foundation on which a religious institution can be founded." Cf. Luc Ferry, "Stalinisme et historicisme" (1983), pp. 231, 246, 248.

82. Mircea Eliade, *Patterns in Comparative Religion* ([1949] 1958).

83. Rudolf Otto, *The Idea of the Holy* ([1917] 1959).

84. Eric Voegelin, *The Political Religions* ([1938] 2000).

85. Emile Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life* ([1912] 1995); Roger Caillois, *Man and the Sacred* ([1939] 2001).

86. Carl Schmitt, *Political Theology* ([1922] 1988), p. 36. Schmitt's reference to a "sociological consideration" was no throw-away phrase. He described his project in *Political Theology* as a "sociology of concepts" (pp. 45–46). Karl Löwith—no Schmittian—was another writer interested in the secularization of religious concepts. On the theological presuppositions of the philosophy of history, see Löwith's *Meaning in History* (1949). The debate that book generated—particularly the critique by Hans Blumenberg—is well described in Milan Babík, "Nazism as a Secular Religion" (2006), esp. pp. 385–394.

87. A particularly intricate position was advanced by Eric Voegelin in *The Political Religions*, a text Arendt knew well. Religion, he wrote, was part of human nature; it could be repressed, diverted, or ignored, but it could never be finally abolished. "When God is invisible behind the world" as a result of aggressive secularism, "the contents of the world will become new gods; when the symbols of transcendent religiosity are banned, new symbols develop from the inner-worldly language of science to take their place," p. 60. Religion is a structure of symbols—such as hierarchy, ecclesia, and revelation—that links humans to a larger order of reality and through which the divine becomes palpable. It can be good or evil, "world transcendent," or "world immanent," the latter being a perversion of the former. Satan was a fallen angel of God, and thus part of God's creation, which "contains evil"; the "splendor of Being is clouded by human misery, the order of the community is built upon hate and blood, with misery and the apostasy of God," p. 71. National Socialism was a demonic "world immanent" political religion, being anti-Christian and anti-God. Its putative scientific credentials rested on symbols—the *Volksgemeinschaft*, the *Führer*—that prohibited rational discussion (pp. 60–62).

88. Of "political religion" Arendt ("Religion and Politics," p. 387, n. 10) remarked that "the term originally derived from anthropological studies and not from an interpretation of Western tradition *per se.* Anthropological and tribal psychological implications of the term are still quite manifest in its use by the social sciences." That is true and, *pace* Arendt, is a potential bonus of the concept. As Bellah rightly points out, western notions of religion tend to denote "a single type of collectivity of which an individual can be a member of one and

only one at a time. The Durkheimian notion that every group has a religious dimension, which would be seen as obvious in southern or eastern Asia, is foreign to us. This obscures the recognition of such dimensions in our society." Robert Bellah, "Civil Religion in America" ([1967] 1991), p. 187.

89. Durkheim, *Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, pp. 35–39. On Durkheim's view of alterity, see the apposite comments of Michèle Richmann, "The Sacred Group" (1995), pp. 65–67, and, more generally, Richmann, *Sacred Revolutions: Durkheim and the Collège de Sociologie* (2002).

90. On the importance of listening to the "emphatic assertions by totalitarian rulers," see, for instance, Arendt, *Origins of Totalitarianism*, pp. 411, 414.

91. More extracts are quoted in Robert Conquest, *Stalin: Breaker of Nations* (1991), pp. 109–110.

92. Czesław Miłosz, *The Captive Mind* ([1953] 2001), pp. 6, 57, 67, 78.

93. Ibid., p. 74.

94. Ibid., p. 63.

95. Ibid., p. 64. Miłosz typically capitalizes the pronouns that refer to Stalin so as to reflect the latter's godlike omnipotence within the Soviet Union and its client states.

96. "In its own fashion, the Party too is a church. Its dictatorship over the earth and its transformation of the human species depend on the success with which it can channel irrational human drives and use them to its own ends. No, logical arguments are not enough." Ibid., p. 207.

97. Ibid., pp. 197–198.

98. Ibid., p. 208.

99. Djilas, *The New Class* (1957), p. 150.

100. Djilas, *Conversations with Stalin*, p. 12.

101. Djilas, *New Class*, p. 129.

102. Ibid.

103. For both quotations, see Conquest, *Stalin*, pp. 183, 192–193.

104. Conquest (ibid., p. 320) makes a broadly similar point, while adding that Stalin's logic was not very logical.

105. Arendt, *Origins of Totalitarianism*, p. 349; also pp. 345–346.

106. Ibid., pp. 349–50. "[T]he method of infallible prediction, more than any other totalitarian propaganda device, betrays its ultimate goal of world conquest, since only in a world completely under his control could the totalitarian ruler possibly realize all his lies and make true all his prophecies," p. 350.

107. Ibid., p. 305.

108. Ibid., p. 351.

109. "Do thyself no harm; for we are all here" (Acts 16:28). This citation (Arendt, *The Burden of Our Time* [1951], p. 439), together with a few preceding pages of context, was expunged from later editions of *Origins*.

110. Philip Rieff, "The Theology of Politics" (1952), p. 119. Rieff's idiosyncratic review is in other ways acute. Against Arendt's view of the amorphous "masses," Rieff considered them to be "highly stratified." He also believed that her account of Jewish assimilation could benefit from an "occupational sociology of despised peoples" (p. 124).

111. Arendt, *Origins of Totalitarianism*, p. 345.

112. Ibid., p. 377. She is quick to add, however, that the "idolatry" that is introduced into totalitarian ceremonies is hardly "proof—as is sometimes asserted—of pseudoreligious or heretical tendencies. The 'idols' are mere organizational devices, familiar from the ritual of secret societies, which are also used to frighten their members into secretiveness by means of frightful, awe-inspiring symbols. It is obvious that people are more securely held together through the common experience of a secret ritual than by the common sharing of the secret itself." Ibid., pp. 377–378.

113. Ibid., p. 398.

114. Ibid., pp. 445–447.

115. Ibid., pp. 443–459.

116. Ibid., p. 459.

117. Ibid., p. 346. Arendt is quoting Martin Bormann.

118. Uriel Tal, "Aspects of Consecration of Politics in the Nazi Era" (1982), pp. 59–60.

119. Tal appears to assume that this substitute religion was essentially pagan. That may be so, but it did not exhaust Nazi religiosity. See below.

120. Tal, "Aspects of Consecration of Politics in the Nazi Era," pp. 60–61.

121. Victor Klemperer, *The Language of the Third Reich* ([1975] 2000), pp. 111, 117.

122. Arendt, *Origins of Totalitarianism*, p. 306.

123. The voluntarism of totalitarian rhetoric, something Arendt writes about in *Origins*, would also help to explain permanent revolution, but Arendt underplays this feature in "Ideology and Terror." Eric Voegelin (*The Political Religions*, pp. 66–69), by contrast, saw the will for action as pivotal to the Nazi political religion. He cites Gerhard Schumann's "Lieder vom Reich" as "one of the strongest expressions of political-religious agitation" resolutely opposed to the "daily routine of battle-relieved business and commercial activities." Voegelin quotes from the poem "Die Tat" as follows:

> Do not permit me to settle down
> Do not permit me to have my fill and to call for peace
> Thrust me into every despair and restlessness of the heart.

124. Arendt, "Approaches to the 'German Problem'" ([1945] 1994a), p. 108. Arendt had more difficulty making this claim for Bolshevism, with its expressed

debts to Marx and its admiration for the Jacobin current of the French Revolution. For a subtle discussion of how she handled this problem, see Margaret Canovan, *Hannah Arendt: A Reinterpretation of Her Political Thought* (1992), pp. 63–98.

125. Chapter 18 of Klemperer's *The Language of the Third Reich* is entitled "I Believe in Him" and offers a few vignettes of ordinary, non–Nazi Party Germans who saw Hitler as an infallible, chosen savior.

126. Richard Steigmann-Gall, *The Holy Reich: Nazi Conceptions of Christianity, 1919–1945* (2003), pp. 13–50.

127. So, on many occasions, did Hitler.

128. Steigmann-Gall, *Holy Reich*, p. 111; Steigmann-Gall, "Nazism and the Revival of Political Religion Theory" (2004), pp. 377, 393. Gall believes that it makes more sense to understand National Socialism as a "religious politics" rather than as a "political religion."

129. Ruth R. Wisse, *Jews and Power* (2007), p. 75. Wisse adds that "pride in sheer survival demonstrates how the toleration of political weakness could cross the moral line into *veneration* of political weakness. Jews who endured exile as a temporary measure were in danger of mistaking it for a requirement of Jewish life or, worse, for a Jewish ideal," p. 76.

130. In debate with Arendt and Waldemar Gurian, Alex Inkeles ("The Totalitarian Mystique: Some Impressions of the Dynamics of Totalitarian Society" [1954], pp. 91–92) argued that totalitarian commitment amounted to a "mystique," a "compulsion to make man and social development conform to the dictates of [a] higher law"—the Laws of History of Race. Inkeles' subtle intervention was notable for its recognition that one can find other terms aside from *religion* to express totalitarian ideology.

131. Ernst Cassirer, *The Philosophy of the Enlightenment* ([1932] 1951), p. 166.

132. Elie Halévy, *The Era of Tyrannies* ([1938] 1965), p. 267.

133. Czesław Miłosz, *The Captive Mind* [1953], p. 66.

134. Richard Lowenthal, *World Communism: The Disintegration of a Secular Faith* (1964).

135. Milovan Djilas, *The New Class*, p. 165.

136. Steigmann-Gall, "Nazism and the Revival of Political Religion Theory."

137. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, "The Social Contract or Principles of Political Right" ([1762] 1973), pp. 307–308. On Robespierre's interpretation of this notion, see Arendt, *On Revolution* ([1963] 1990), pp. 183–184.

138. This did not stop Bellah's being accused of idolatry by his critics. See Robert Bellah, "Civil Religion in America," p. 168.

139. Ibid., p. 169. For a very different view, see Arendt, *On Revolution* [1963], pp. 191–198.

140. As they plainly do for Randall Collins in *Interaction Ritual Chains* (2004).

141. Karl Löwith, *Meaning in History*, p. 65. On Marx, see Gareth Stedman Jones's introduction to Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *The Communist Manifesto* ([1848] 2002), esp. p. 136.

142. Judith Adler, "Cultivating Wilderness: Environmentalism and Legacies of Early Christian Asceticism" (2006).

143. For a rather different casuistry, see Juan Linz, "The Religious Use of Politics and/or the Political Use of Religion" (2000).

Chapter Five

1. Hannah Arendt, "A Believer in European Unity" (1942); Talcott Parsons, "Max Weber and the Contemporary Political Crisis" ([1942] 1993a).

2. Arendt, *Hannah Arendt, Karl Jaspers: Correspondence 1926–1969* ([1985] 1992), p. 235, letter of December 21, 1953.

3. Everett C. Hughes, "Good People and Dirty Work" ([1948] 1971); see also Hughes's "The *Gleichschaltung* of the German Statistical Yearbook" ([1955] 1971).

4. Robert K. Merton, "On the History and Systematics of Sociological Theory" ([1949] 1968), p. 22.

5. For the European data, and a scintillating analysis of it, see Christopher Caldwell, *Reflections on the Revolution in Europe* (2009).

6. I have adapted the tripartite classification in Daniel Pipes, "Letter to the Editor" (2008), p. 12. For a different classification, see Tamara Cofman Wittes, "Three Kinds of Movements" (2008).

7. On the latter debate, see Fawaz A. Gerges, *The Far Enemy* (2005). The author's view that the Muslim Brotherhood now "emphatically embrace[s] democratic principles" (p. 2) is optimistic in the extreme. The key point, in any case, is whether the Muslim Brotherhood is committed to *pluralism as a value*. Hamas's rule in Gaza is an example of a democratic tyranny.

8. See Roger Scruton, *The West and the Rest* (2003), pp. 1–6, 23, 134–139.

9. "It is argued that Christianity has always accepted a secular space ("Render unto Caesar . . ."), while forgetting that the churches (from Gregory the Great to Calvin) claimed the right to define and control that space." Olivier Roy, *Secularism Confronts Islam* (2007), p. 15. That statement is correct. It omits to add, however, that this "right" was episodically contested by worldly powers so that, today, the church has conceded the formal separation of religion and politics. In its battle with political secularism, the church lost.

10. Sayyid Qutb, *Milestones* (1964), p. 59; cf. 79, 90. (He is presumably alluding to the Koran 25:1–2.) The Trinity, and the derivative idea of Jesus as the Son

of God, are proof positive for Qutb that Christianity has a spurious view of monotheism.

11. For this and other reasons, Lee Harris (*Civilization and Its Enemies* [2004]) characterizes radical Islamism as a "fantasy ideology" rather than as a political movement.

12. Carl Schmitt, *The Concept of the Political* ([1927] 1976), pp. 31, n. 12, and p. 33.

13. Ibid., p. 37.

14. On which see Ibn Khaldûn, *The Muqaddimah* (1967), pp. 171, 183, 188–189, 256–257; and Max Weber, *Economy and Society* ([1922] 1978), p. 512.

15. Efraim Karsh, *Islamic Imperialism* (2007).

16. See Steve Bruce, *Politics and Religion* (2003), pp. 233–240.

17. See Joshua Muravchik, *The Next Founders* (2009), and Asef Bayat, *Making Islam Democratic* (2007). Note, however, that these so-called post-Islamists are compelled to struggle for modern freedoms precisely because their current society or state (and often both) are hostile to them.

18. The story is recounted by Hillel Cohen in *Army of Shadows* (2008).

19. Cf. Philip Carl Salzman, *Culture and Conflict in the Middle East* (2007), pp. 49–100; Charles Lindholm, *The Islamic Middle East* (2002), pp. 49–62.

20. Michael Yon, *Moment of Truth in Iraq* (2008), p. 93.

21. Ibid., pp. 222–223.

22. Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, "Letter to bin Laden and Zawahiri" (2008), pp. 252–260. Zarqawi was killed by Coalition forces in 2006.

23. This is obviously a simplification. What I am calling radical Islamism or jihadism (I use the terms as synonyms) need not be violent; they may proceed through stealth, hollowing out institutions rather than seeking to overthrow them by force (for many examples, see Spencer 2008). Still, my focus here is on the violent variety.

24. Ably documented by David Cook in *Understanding Jihad* (2005). Cook shows persuasively that the notion of the "greater jihad"—the personal confrontation with desire—is secondary to its martial connotation.

25. For a longer list, on which I have drawn, see Ayman al-Zawahiri, "Knights Under the Prophet's Banner" (2008), p. 193.

26. He wrote that the present struggle was between "the entire world of disbelief and the world of Islam." Cited in Yaroslav Trofimov, *The Siege of Mecca* (2007), p. 140.

27. Abu Mus'ab al-Suri, "The Military Theory of the Global Islamic Resistance Call" (2008), p. 402; cf. pp. 388, 413.

28. See Osama bin Laden, "Moderate Islam Is a Prostration to the West" (2007), p. 32.

29. Literally, *jahiliyyah* refers to the condition of pre-Islamic barbarism. In contemporary jihadist parlance, it refers to the affront by modern apostates, polytheists, crusaders, and Jews, to God's divine purpose, which, on earth, is the establishment of a transnational *ummah* (community) recognizing that there is no deity except God and that Muhammad is his prophet.

30. Qutb, *Milestones*, p. 57.

31. Ibid., pp. 60–61, 63, 82. See also his remark (on p. 62) that "[i]f we insist on calling Islamic jihad a defensive movement then we must change the meaning of the word 'defense' and mean by it 'the defense of man' against all those elements which limit his freedom. These elements take the form of beliefs and concepts, as well as of political systems, based on economic, racial or class distinctions."

32. The quotes and information draw on Lawrence Wright, "The Rebellion Within" (2008).

33. For disparate arguments that stress the "unprecedented," yet syncretic and hybrid character of Al Qaeda, see Peter Bergen, *Holy War, Inc*. (2002), p. 41; Navid Kermani, "A Dynamite of the Spirit" (2002); p. 15; Edward Luttwak, "We Deceive Ourselves" (2002), p. 13; Donald Rumsfeld, "From Terror Came Courage and Conviction" (2002); Elisabeth Young-Bruehl, "On the Origins of a New Totalitarianism" (2002), p. 573. On the ostensible novelty of the George W. Bush administration's doctrine of "preemptive self-defense," see Harold Hongku Koh, "The Law Under Stress After September 11" (2002), p. 15. For a contrasting view, see John Lewis Gaddis's *Surprise, Security, and the American Experience* (2004), which argues that preemption and unilateralism were first devised by John Quincy Adams.

34. Max Weber, *Roscher and Knies: The Logical Problems of Historical Economics* ([1903/1905–1906] 1975), p. 125.

35. This theory was incorporated into Collins's "The Future Decline of the Russian Empire" (1986).

36. Or moves in a game played by various "stakeholders," as in the application of the expected utility model to post-1997 Hong Kong. See Bruce Bueno de Mesquita et al., *Red Flag over Hong Kong* (1996) pp. 165–186. The model presumes rational action and the possibility of estimating the relationships among preferred outcomes, capabilities, and "salience."

37. Randall Collins, "The Geopolitical Basis of Revolution: The Prediction of the Soviet Collapse" (1999a), pp. 56–69.

38. Roy Bhaskar, *The Possibility of Naturalism* (1979); Andrew Sayer, *Method in Social Science* (1984).

39. Karl Popper (*Conjectures and Refutations* [1963], p. 117) once distinguished between two kinds of scientific prediction: the prediction of "*events of*

a kind which is known, such as eclipses or thunderstorms," and the prediction of "*new kinds of events* (which the physicist calls 'new effects') [italics original]." In sociology, we can predict only what we already, in some sense, know: a preestablished series of mechanisms. Totalitarianism, Arendt suggested, was outside the range of our previous experience, norms, judgments—and science.

40. A 1911 prediction, by a speaker in the Russian Duma, of the Jews' annihilation is noted by Norman Cohn in *Warrant for Genocide* ([1967] 1996), p. 122. And in December 1938, Leon Trotsky said: "It is possible to imagine without difficulty what awaits the Jews at the mere outbreak of the future world war. But even without war the next development of world reaction signifies with certainty the physical extermination of the Jews." Cited by Norman Geras, *The Contract of Mutual Indifference* (1998), p. 139. Would the Jews really have been murdered en masse without the war? I doubt it. Nonetheless, once hatred of Jews as a religious and social entity morphed into a hatred of them as a subhuman race—a transformation that occurred as early as the 1870s—their mass murder was henceforth a latent prospect, on which, again, see Cohn, pp. 187–212.

41. Arendt put it rather more cryptically:

> The elements of totalitarianism comprise its origins, if by origins we do not understand "causes." Elements by themselves never cause anything. They become origins of events if and when they suddenly crystallize into fixed and definite forms. It is the light of the event itself which permits us to distinguish its own concrete elements from an infinite number of abstract possibilities, and it is still this same light that must guide us backward into the always dim and equivocal past of these elements themselves. In this sense, it is legitimate to talk of the origins of totalitarianism, or of any other event in history."

Arendt, "Understanding and Politics (The Difficulties of Understanding)" ([1954] 1994b), p. 325, n. 12.

42. Eric Hobsbawm, *The New Century* (2000), p. 10.

43. As an example of such neologism, see the depiction (in the next section) of the new constellation of terror as a combination of "quasi territoriality," a "uni-polar" geopolitical system, and the "commodification of weapons of mass destruction."

44. Thomas Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* ([1962] 1970), pp. 111–135.

45. Michael Marrus, *The Holocaust in History* ([1987] 1989), p. 20.

46. Francis Fukuyama, *Our Posthuman Future* (2002), p. 4.

47. Claude Rawson, *God, Gulliver, and Genocide* (2001), chapter 4.

48. For extirpations that are historically documented, see, for instance, Thucydides' (*Peloponnesian War* V) remarks on the aftermath of the Athenian siege of Melos, in 415 BCE (the men are slaughtered; the women and children,

enslaved) and Polybius' description (*Histories* X) of Scipio Africanus' duly executed order to his troops, on the capture of New Carthage in 209 BCE, to "exterminate every form of life they encountered, sparing none" (even the dogs were dismembered).

49. "But thou shalt utterly destroy them; namely, the Hittites, and the Amorites, the Canaanites, and the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites; as the Lord thy God hath commanded thee." Deuteronomy 20:17. Because the archaeological evidence for the destruction of these peoples is inconclusive, I present Yahweh's command as fictive. Cf. G.E.M. de Ste Croix, *The Class Struggle in the Ancient Greek World* (1981), pp. 331–332.

50. See note 23 above.

51. Historical continuities are also evident. Many Arab states and movements were sympathetic to the Nazis before and during the Second World War, while during the Cold War the pre-Islamist or proto-Islamist current (e.g., Ali Shariati and his followers in Iran before the 1979 Revolution) was heavily influenced by Marxism. See Gilles Kepel, *The War for Muslim Minds* (2004), pp. 201, 226–230, 264–270, 285–286; Augustus Richard Norton, *Hezbollah* (2007), p. 15; and Matthias Küntzel, *Jihad and Jew Hatred* ([2002] 2007), chapter 1.

52. On the "school of individual jihad and small cells," see Abu Mus'ab al-Suri, "The Military Theory of the Global Islamic Resistance Call," pp. 363ff.

53. *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* is routinely treated as a factual document in Muslim countries and has an enduring fascination. In 2002, for instance, it appeared in Egypt as a forty-one-part television series: see Küntzel, *Jihad and Jew Hatred*, p. 151. The larger and far more disturbing truth is that anti-Semitism long preceded the formation of the state of Israel. It has been a salient feature of Islam since the days of Muhammad. For extensive details, oscillating between the tedious and the bloodcurdling, see Andrew Bostom's compilation *The Legacy of Islamic Antisemitism* (2008).

54. Arendt was adamant that both Bolshevism and Nazism were universal movements aimed at global domination; the nation was secondary. Radical Islamists ubiquitously make the same point: the goal is not the nation, but the "Islamic Nation," that is, the transnational community of Muslims (*ummah*). Typical is a statement of Abu Abdelrahman al-Ghazzawi (of Fatah al-Islam, based in the Gaza Strip) "Know this, our friends: We are a Divine movement, not Eastern, not Western. . . . No border or language shall separate us—we share the same Lord, the same religion, the same enemy." http://www.nefafoundation.org/miscellaneous/FeaturedDocs/nefafatahpalestine0208.pdf

55. The language of radical Islamism is especially reminiscent of Bolshevism: al-Zarqawi ("Letter to bin Laden and Zawahiri") described the rituals of Iraqi sheikhs and *ulema* as "the real opium of the people." Before him, Qutb declared that he wrote *Milestones* for the "vanguard" of Islam, pp. 12, 80.

56. See, out of a voluminous literature, al-Zawahiri, "Jihad, Martyrdom, and the Killing of Innocents" (2007). On the complicated tradition of Islamic martyrdom, see David Cook, *Martyrdom in Islam* (2007).

57. Jeffrey Herf, *Reactionary Modernism: Technology, Culture, and Politics in Weimar and the Third Reich* (1984).

58. See Bill Roggio's reports for *The Long War Journal*, http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2007/12/irans_ramazan_corps.php (December 5, 2007) and http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2008/06/iraqi_army_interdict.php (June 1, 2008).

59. Realistically appraised by the talented Al Qaeda strategist (currently in detention) Abu Mus'ab al-Suri, in "The Military Theory of the Global Islamic Resistance Call."

60. Marc Sageman, *Leaderless Jihad: Terror Networks in the Twenty-first Century* (2008). For a rebuttal, see Bruce Hoffman, "The Myth of Grass-Roots Terrorism" (2008).

61. See Bruce Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism* (2006), chapter 7. Also, Kepel, *War for Muslim Minds*, p. 290: "The ulema have lost control over the declaration of jihad and no longer have a means of warning believers against fitna [war in the heart of Islam, disintegration, sedition]. Militant activists have overridden them, laughing at their circumspection and turning their backs on the rich histories of Muslim cultures. These masters of postmodern technologies surf the Web and pilot airplanes, while nurturing a totally closed, salafist vision of the world. To resolve the tension underlying this disassociation of consciousness, they embark on a quest for martyrdom."

62. Samuel Huntington, "The Lonely Superpower" (1999).

63. My account, here and below, draws on Brynjar Lia, *Globalization and the Future of Terrorism* (2005), and Philip Bobbitt, *Terror and Consent* (2008).

64. See John J. Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* (2001), pp. 355ff. Mearsheimer distinguishes between balanced multipolarity (1792–1793, 1815–1902, 1919–1938) and unbalanced multipolarity (1793–1815, 1903–1918,1939–1945), but, for reasons of convenience, I have conflated them. Still, one should note his argument that unbalanced multipolarity produced the most lethal wars and the greatest casualties (since the last decade of the eighteenth century, 27 million military deaths as contrasted with 10,000 in a bipolar system, and 1.2 million in a balanced multipolar one).

65. I take the phrase from Bobbitt, *Terror and Consent*, pp. 9, 59, 98, 471.

66. Ibid., p. 404.

67. "Mutation" was the term preferred by Raymond Aron, and to which I alluded in Chapter 3. See also Raymond Aron, "The Dawn of Universal History" ([1961] 2002), pp. 467–469.

68. Arendt, "A Reply to Eric Voegelin" ([1955] 2000), p. 160.

69. That novelty is registered by the peculiar, and somewhat strangulated, terms I have employed to describe the new terror constellation.

70. Kepel, *Jihad: The Trail of Political Islam* (2002); David Cook, *Understanding Jihad*, pp. 163ff.

71. On the European jihad and the legacy of the Bosnian war, see Evan Kohlmann, *Al-Qaida's Jihad in Europe: The Afghan Bosnian Network* (2004).

72. Another common parallel today is to believe that the peace process in Northern Ireland offers an exemplary model for an Israeli peace with Hamas and Hezbollah. For a trenchant critique of this analogy by a key participant, see David Trimble, *Misunderstanding Ulster* (2008); and for a complementary view, see Michael Young, "The Islamists are True Believers," *Daily Star* (Beirut), March 27, 2008, p. 9.

73. Martin Kramer, "The Myth of Linkage" (2008).

74. They are deftly cataloged by Philip Tetlock in *Expert Political Judgment* (2005), pp. 129–136.

75. Of the forty-two policy objectives of the twenty-eight groups designated as foreign terrorist organizations by the U.S. Department of State, only 7 percent (of such objectives) have been realized. Particularly when terror organizations aim principally at civilian rather than military targets, their success record is abysmal. A key reason for this is that civilian deaths are invariably seen by that country's public as an existential attack on the country itself, even if the terrorists specifically state otherwise. Accordingly, embattled governments are resolute against making concessions to the belligerents. For the argument and the data, see Max Abrahms (2006), "Why Terrorism Does Not Work," a critique of the views of Robert Pape, Alan Dershowitz, and many others.

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