

Modern Political Dissent

Syllabus Fall 2010

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Tuesday and Thursday, 11.00, Professors' Room

Course description:

Both individual and collective identities underwent historically unprecedented shake-up in the twentieth century. Mass totalitarian ideologies used in Western political discourse at this time to explain major economic and social changes have altered forever the relationship between the state and its citizens. The aspiration of authoritarian regimes to acquire total control over even individual lives through the regime control of education, employment, health systems, media and, later also entertainment has succeeded beyond anything perceived possible until then in any political situation after European Enlightenment. First the Chauvinist reactions to industrial revolutions and then Nazism and Communism have mobilized irrationally motivated mass support. Misuse and manipulation of instruments of political democracy helped to their success, as well as mass propaganda using for the first time electronic media, and using fear as a primary instinctive argument to create a portrait of external and internal Enemy.

The major focus of the course will be oriented towards topics trying to explain the psychological reasons and models for mass support of even clearly totalitarian ideologies praising and requiring mass support for extermination of large collectives of humans. On the basis of an individual and collective psychology. We will examine psychological explanations of survivor syndrom, self-victimisation, acceptance of the roles of victim, perpetrator and by-stander, obedience mechanisms, majority society response to mass human rights abuses and the abusive past. Against this background the phenomenon of identity and the phenomenon of political and cultural dissent in the 20. and 21. century will be introduced and discussed using case studies examples from different time and place in the world. The defining role of electronic mass media as radio, film and television in the changes in political culture and workings of political democracy, the theory of post-modern dictatorships, terrorism and antiglobalisation tendencies are discussed as possible modern vehicles of totalitarian tendencies and reactions against them. The course will be a mixture of lecture, discussion and first hand experience as well as model crisis situation decision making exercises. Students will be expected to write two research papers and consult their readings.

Grading policy

Class participation/attendance:	20%
Paper or other assignment:	20%
Mid-term:	30%
Final:	30%

Schedule of classes

Week 1

7 September - Overview of course

Introduction into the life in extreme. Psychological reactions to extreme stress and fear for survival. Issue of individual responsibility. Formation of individual and group identity. Knot in history situations and modernity's love for short cuts...

9 September

Appeal of Totalitarian Ideologies. Search for new identity in critical historical moments. Are we different? Would we react different? Destabilisation brought by industrialisation.

Week 2

14 September

Communism, Communist Manifesto and where was Karl Marx wrong from the very beginning?

Communist Manifesto

16 September

Appeal of Fascism and National Socialism, Roles, Grey zone and Decent Nazis. Science and Experts in service to Evil. Leni Riefenstahl case.

Mein Kampf, film - Triumph of the Will

Week 3

21 September

Primo Levi – the psychology of survival, torture, guilt and suicide
Primo Levi – The Drowned and the Saved

23 September

Roles and Identitties – Victims, perpetrators and Bystanders

Week 4

28 September - State holiday, no classes

30 September

Robert Jay Lifton – Thought Reform, Brainwashing in Communist China
Reader text

Week 5

5 October

Stanley Milgrams obedience experiments, Philip Zimbardo, Stockholm syndrome
Reader text

7 October

Abu Ghraib experience. Are we different?
Film - Ghosts of Abu Ghraib

Weeks 6/7 –MIDTERM EXAMS - YOU SHOULD SCHEDULE YOUR MIDTERM EXAM OR PAPER FOR WEEK SIX OR SEVEN

Week 6

12 October

Karl Jaspers – The Question of Guilt

Reader text

14 October

What Jaspers could not envisage?

Week 7

19 October

Cult formation, Religious and other cults, televangelist movement, escaping the reality, Jones' tapes.

Robert Lifton - Cult Formation

21 October

Victim rehabilitation. Torture victim clinics, rehabilitation of child soldiers, Veteran care.

Reader text, internet sources

Week 8 – Fall Break – no classes

Week 9 -

2 November

Dissent as Art of Defeat – the need to communicate..

Reader text

4 November

David Thoreau, Suffragette movement – direct action and power of example

Reader text, internet

Week 10

9 November

Mahatma Gándhí – use of media

Reader text

11 November

Anticolonial movements and their failure as dissent. Cold War.

Internet sources. Case studies.

Week 11

16 November

Civil Rights Movement – use of television

18 November – National Holiday; No classes

Week 12

23 November

NGOs – Amnesty International, Greenpeace – human rights and environmental agenda, internationalisation

Internet sources

25 November

Zapatista movement – internet mobilisation on global scale, antiglobalisation tactics, roots of terrorism

Reader text

Week 13

30 November

Dissent under Communism. Two schools – Vaclav Havel vs Adam Michnik, postmodern dictatorships.

Vaclav Havel - The Power of the Powerless, Adam Michnik – Letters from Prison, Letters from Freedom

2 December

Ideological response to the fall of Communism, lessons of wars in Yugoslavia, Iraq and Afghanistan.

Film – Stake No.12

Week 14

7 December

Dissent tactics – how to fight totalitarian tendencies, lessons of dissent for democratic societies.

Adam Michnik - letters from Prison

9 December

Summary of the course

Week 15 --Exam week PLEASE SCHEDULE YOUR FINAL EXAM OR TELL YOUR STUDENTS THAT THEIR PAPERS ARE DUE THIS WEEK, EITHER December 14th OR 16th.

Selection of required and recommended readings:

1. Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels: Communist manifesto
2. Adolf Hitler: Mein Kampf
3. Giovanni Gentile: The Doctrine of Fascism
4. Primo Levi: The Drowned and the Saved
5. Alexandr Solzhenitzyn: Gulag Archipelago
6. Robert Jay Lifton, Eric Markusen: The Genocidal Mentality; Basic Books, NY 1990
7. Rober Jay Lifton: Thought Reform and the Psychology of Totalism
8. Karl Jaspers: The Question of German Guilt. Capricorn Books, New York 1961
9. Karl Jaspers: The Fight Against Totalitarianism, 1963
10. Hannah Arendt: Origins of Totalitarianism
11. Hannah Arendt: Eichmann in Jerusalem, Viking Press, 1963
12. C.J.Friedrich and Zbigniew Brzezinski, Totalitarian Dictatorship and Autocracy, 1967
13. Karl Popper: The Open Society and Its Enemies, Vol.1: The Spell of Plato, 1945
14. Stanley Milgrams: Obedience to Authority, An Experimental View, Harper Collins, NY 1974
15. Philip Zimbardo: The Pathology of Imprisonment, Society, 9,1972, 6, pp. 4-8
16. Jeri Laber: The courage of strangers, Public Affairs, New York, 2002
17. Juan J.Linz, A. Stepan: Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation, Hopkins Univ. press, 1996
18. Josef Korbel: The Communist Subversion of Czechoslovakia, Princeton University Press 1959
19. Hobsbawm Eric: Nations and Nationalism since 1870, Cambridge University Press, 1997
20. Gellner Ernst: Encounters with Nationalism, Blackwell Publishers, 1994
21. Ash Timothy Garton: The Uses of Adversity, 1989
22. Ash Timothy Garton: The Polish revolution, Solidarity, 1980-82 (1983)
23. John Kean: Vaclav Havel, Political Tragedy in six acts, Cambridge University Press 2000
24. Vaclav Havel: Power of the Powerless
25. Vaclav Havel: A Word About Words
26. Adam Michnik: Letters from Prison
27. Adam Michnik: Letters from Freedom
28. Barbara Falk: The Dilemmas of Dissidence in East-Central Europe, CEU Press, 2003
29. Yehuda Bauer: Rethinking the Holocaust, 2001, Yale University Press New Haven
30. Noam Chomsky: Media Control: The Spectacular Achievements of Propaganda, Seven Sturves Press 2002
31. Miles Hugh - Al-Jazeera: How Arab TV News Challenges America, Grove Press, 2005
32. Brackman Selma: The Child Soldier, War and peace: Convention on the Rights of the Child, May 2002 <http://www.warpeace.org/article.php?story=20040120131755153>
33. Rock the Vote: Political Power for Young People – www.rockthevote.com
34. Phillips, Melanie: The Ascent of Woman : a history of the suffragette movement and the ideas behind it; London, Abacus 2007
35. Goldsmith, Jack L.: The terror presidency : law and judgment inside the Bush administration; New York, W.W. Norton 2007
36. Zapatista!: Reinventing Revolution in Mexico / edited by John Holloway, Eloína Peláez; London, Pluto Press 1998
37. Lifton, Robert Jay, Superpower syndrome : America's apocalyptic confrontation with the world; New York, Thunder's Mouth Press 2003
38. Zimbardo, Philip G.: The Lucifer effect: understanding how good people turn evil; New York, Random House 2007
39. Kohák, Erazim V. Jan Patočka : philosophy and selected writings; Chicago, University of Chicago Press 1989
40. Esposito, John L. Who speaks for islam? : what a billion muslims really think; New York, Gallup Press 2008
41. Garton Ash, Timothy: We the people : the revolution of '89 witnessed in Warsaw, Budapest, Berlin & Prague; London, Penguin Books 1999
42. Husain, Ed: The Islamist : why I joined radical Islam in Britain, what I saw inside and why I left; London, Penguin 2007