

## *Arendt Totalitarianism in Power*

### The Three Defining Features of the Modern Period

1. State sovereignty (1648, Treaty of Westphalia)
2. Democracy (1776 American Revolution, 1789 French Revolution)
3. Capitalism (17th century in England, 18th century in France and America, 19th century in Germany)

### Political Theory through comparative politics

- In Depth:
  - Democracy (Tocqueville, Locke)
  - Totalitarianism (Arendt)
- More passingly:
  - Aristocracy (Tocqueville)
  - Tyranny (Arendt)
  - Communism (Marx)

### Our three topics

1. State Sovereignty
  - Created by consent (Locke) and tied to territory (Arendt).
  - Threatened by totalitarianism (Arendt) and communism (Marx)
2. Democracy
  - Created by consent (Locke), primacy of the individual (Locke), equality of conditions (Tocqueville), and overcoming of aristocracy (Tocqueville).
  - Threatened by individualism, materialism, tyranny of the majority (Tocqueville), tribal nationalism (Arendt) and (politically) by communism (Marx).
3. Capitalism
  - As economic system (Marx) and as comprehensive way of life (Tocqueville).
  - Threatened by communism (Marx) and totalitarianism (Arendt).

### Totalitarianism as a total attack

- Attacks nation-state through tribal nationalism.
- Attacks (liberal) democracy through populism and the mass, and the conquest of the state by the nation.
- Attacks capitalism by repudiating materialism, moderation, and calculation as virtues and modes of life.

### Five Steps to totalitarianism

- Step 1: Atomization. Breeding ground for totalitarianism.
- Step 2: Race/nationality as new unit of solidarity (pan-movements);
- Step 3: Conflict with the nation-state;
- Step 4: Nation takes over the state;
- Step 5: de-nationalization of mass populations.

### Three targets of totalitarian violence Totalitarian ambition:

1. Destruction of the Judicial Person
  - Destroy the nation-state (Chapter 9: denationalization)
  - Destroy the state (Chapter 13: overcome law)
2. Destroy the Moral Person
  - Gain mass support (Chapter 10: atomization and the formation of the mass)
  - Disable conscience and common sense (Chapter 11: totalitarian organization)
3. Destroy Individuality
  - Create a uniform mankind (Chapter 12: concentration camp and total domination)
  - Sever the individual from others and reality (Chapter 13: terror and ideology)