

The Cognate Philosophies of Control: A Comparative Study of Authoritarian Ideologies, Policies, and Regimes

Tate Stanford
trfstanford@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

An authoritarian government is led by a dictator, often with a cult following, who has control over all aspects of the nation's institutions. The two major authoritarian ideologies, communism and fascism, are on opposite ends of the political spectrum. The goal of this paper is to compare and contrast these two ideologies through the analyses of 20th century regimes and their methods of social control, which will gauge the extent of their influence on authoritarian policies. The examination of these regimes and their methods, both communist and fascist, yielded no significant differences between them in terms of their ideologies. This conclusion supports the argument that authoritarianism itself is the true ideology, with its own platform and goals which surpass the left-right dichotomy.

INTRODUCTION

To “rule with an iron fist” is to rule without compassion or sincerity. A ruler with an iron fist is not a civil servant to the people, but one who makes the people civil slaves to themselves. This famous idiom was not, in fact, first used to describe a dictator in the same vein as Hitler or Stalin. It instead originates from early 19th century Napoleonic France, used by political pundits to describe the administration of Emperor Napoleon Bonaparte. The emperor famously utilized a unique style of governance prioritizing nationalism, brotherhood, and an “us vs. them” mentality to forge a vast empire (1). At that time, Europe was dominated by monarchies, whose rulers did not preoccupy themselves with their favorability among the people, as maintaining power and fortune was their only true goal. In contrast, Napoleon made tyranny marketable. He saw the importance of public opinion and sought to control it.

Soon, Napoleon's state rose among the established empires he sought to destroy. He had become the establishment; aristocratic and imperialistic. He was an authoritarian. Yet, through his flamboyant rhetoric, he managed to maintain his revolutionary facade. As a result, France became somewhat of a progressive, nationalist, republican monarchy.

Aug 2026
Vol 10. No 1.

The concept of an ideology has devolved from its original definition by an astonishing amount, that being the “science of ideas.” Ideologies were debated in Roman forums and Parisian salons, places of mutual respect and legitimate interest. The “isms” were less so political platforms that fed into moral dispositions and more subjective concepts meant to be studied and discussed (Arendt 315). Their purpose was to decipher society’s driving force. For socialism, that would be community. For capitalism, that would be wealth. This is what made Napoleon’s syncretic government possible. Nobody was “woke” or “MAGA” in the nineteenth century. Liberal, conservative, and socialist groups constantly clashed and intermingled due to the fluidity of the left and right. It wouldn’t be until the recent ascent of identity politics that ideologies and isms would shift from objective matters to subjective.

In retrospect, many parallels can be drawn between Napoleonic France and the infamous dictatorships of the 20th century. The country was one born from struggle, led by a charismatic dictator with a cult following, which used both fear and hope to hold a monopoly over its people’s lives. Originally meant to be a country that followed the will of the people, its need for absolute control spiraled into the creation of an authoritarian police state. The government’s original values began to decay once they met the harsh reality of maintaining a society. These characteristics can be applied to nearly any modern authoritarian government, whether that be Marxist Russia or Nazi Germany; Maoist China or Mussolini’s Italy. Stripped of their manifestos, the confines of the communist gulag and the fascist concentration camp seem to become functionally indistinguishable. Because of these glaring similarities, the question arises: *“To what extent do ideological differences between the authoritarian governments of the early 20th century affect the ways they effectively control their people?”*

The simple answer is no. This paper argues that ideological differences shaped rhetoric and justification, but the practical methods of authoritarian control often converged across varying regimes. An empirical observation reveals that any political differences are outweighed by deep rooted similarities. A specious perspective would argue that communist and fascist states seem to be going in completely different directions, be it left or right, but their paths will always converge through practical means of control. Any state with such a monolithic government will face the same issues; infighting, revolts, resources spread too thin. Similar problems require similar solutions. Authoritarianism does not change depending on politics. It evolves. The radical policies of Bonapartism met their spiritual successor in communism during the 1840s. Nearly a century later, Benito Mussolini, a former socialist, went on to father the fascist movement after breaking away from the Italian left. All dictatorships share a common ancestor, and it shows. Communist and fascist dictatorships differed in ideological language but often relied on comparable mechanisms of coercion and social manipulation. In other words, any authoritarian regime rules with the same iron fist.

Contemporary society continues to label the left and right as fundamentally separate entities, preserving a widely accepted dichotomy that continues to cultivate the political antagonism that fuels increasingly more radical movements across the globe. The concepts of authoritarianism and dictatorships have undergone a sort of semantic bleaching and now describe any form of government intervention that its user is uncomfortable with. Nevertheless, a left-winger’s advocacy for expanded social welfare is no

different from a right-winger's advocacy for more policing, and vice versa.

LITERATURE REVIEW

What follows is a literature review of the main sources used to fulfill this research paper's purpose. The paper in itself is a qualitative comparative study that analyzes the leaders, structures, and methods of control used by the USSR, China, Germany, and Italy during the early 20th century. To conduct such an expansive study, many sources have been referenced to compile background information and evidence used throughout its duration.

"The Leviathan" by Thomas Hobbes is undoubtedly among the most influential works of the Renaissance. Hobbes was a major proponent of the rather tyrannical English monarchy and jumped to its defense whenever its legitimacy was challenged. The Leviathan is a culmination of Thomas Hobbes' authoritarian activism. To begin, Hobbes proclaimed that humans are inherently evil creatures. According to him, life before the advent of society was "solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short" (Hobbes 77). To escape this misery, humans agreed to the social contract, in which they would give up some of their freedoms in exchange for order and safety from a strong central government; known as the Leviathan. The Leviathan must not be divided into branches or have any external influences from political groups or clergy, as these factors lead to conflicts of interest, civil war, and collapse. What Thomas Hobbes intended to communicate with the Leviathan is that authority is a necessary evil and is the only logical thing standing between peace and anarchy. The Leviathan supports the research paper's argument by arguing that humanity's need for order drives them towards authoritarianism, noting that a government's structure is more important than ideology to meet this goal. Hobbes' reasoning laid groundwork for future authoritarian logic, cementing its importance in modern politics.

"Ideology and Terror" by Hannah Arendt discusses how the authoritarian dictatorships of the 20th century have diverged from previous authoritarian states, mainly the monarchies and fiefdoms of pre-1900s Europe. She first describes terror as the most supreme method of control, being less of a defined concept and more of an essence that keeps society in a permanent state of flux. While previous tyrants had used irrational fear, dogmatism, and violence to quell opposition, dictators weaponized rationalist terror against their loyal masses to keep them paranoid and isolated. Terror exposes harsh realities and rests on "ice cold reasoning," which discourages the mere thought of rebellion. More importantly, terror isolates the populace. It destroys all individuality, culture, and emotion, draining society of all characteristics besides those of the state's overarching political movement. Arendt's arguments explore what differentiates modern dictatorships from classical tyranny. She states that the goal of an authoritarian state is not God, gold, or glory, but domination of the human spirit. Ideology and Terror disproves ideology *through* terror. Arendt's methods of control apply to all dictatorships, whether they be communist or fascist. Any noble, utilitarian state would inexorably resort to systematic terror if their power was jeopardized. The "how" dictates the direction of a state. Not the "what" or "why."

“The Phenomenon of the Personality Cult — A Historical Perspective” by Anita Pisch goes into depth on the ideas and methods of personality cults, with an emphasis on the Stalinist period of the Soviet Union. A personality cult is an extremely devoted group of individuals that worships their leader instead of a higher being or cause, typically a political one. Oftentimes, their leader is portrayed *as* the higher being or as an embodiment of the cause. Anything the leader says is truthful and sacred. Anyone who disagrees is viewed as a heretic, shunned, or subject to violence. Pisch describes the personality cult as not a byproduct of vanity, but a calculated tool for control. Personality cults emerge during times of materialistic crises and/or revolutionary fervor. During chaos, people will become desperate and can gravitate towards a charismatic personage that promises a brighter future. Authoritarian governments are able to abuse personality cults by luring a population into voluntary submission. They become state religions that dictate what is true and what is false. Adolf Hitler, Mao Zedong, Benito Mussolini, and Joseph Stalin were all dictators that were centers of cults in their respective countries. Personality cults are a constant among authoritarian states, a cure-all for dissent, despair, and doubt.

Other than these four main sources, the paper will be utilizing several references that go into detail on the four main dictatorships in particular. The Encyclopedia Britannica and various History websites have several articles on secret police forces and persecution. Though Hobbes, Arendt, and Pisch provide the philosophical data needed, these smaller sources will aid in exploring smaller facets of the four authoritarian states that will be covered.

METHODS

The conclusions drawn in the research paper’s case study section were reached through the philosophical and practical evaluations of several different methods used by the states of Germany, Italy, China, and the USSR. These four states were chosen due to their monumental roles in global history and the development of modern authoritarianism, warranting their place in this paper. The USSR and Italy were the first countries in their respective ideological categories, with China and Germany greatly expanding on their original agendas. All four utilized similar tactics of censorship, policing, and rhetoric. For example, Russia and Germany both had secret police forces in the form of the NKVD and the Gestapo, respectively. Italy and China each aimed to mold their subjects’ intuitions through government sponsored societal conventions. Along with these comparisons, many case-specific examples will also be explored in depth.

Overall, the sources used are observational, rather than opinionated, which is necessary for a multifaceted study such as this one. The three major sources were used to assess the key policies, indicators, and goals of authoritarianism as a general form of governance. Alongside these philosophical aspects, specific policies and their outcomes were assessed mainly through qualitative data provided by secondary sources like the many listed above. The goals of these policies were then compared using the previously mentioned interpretations of the authoritarian framework, which will determine the degree to which left

and right ideologies had significant influences on policy execution. Once this is done, the primary goal of this research paper will be met.

Every case study will be formatted like so. Historical context, an analysis of the dictator, and methods of control. The latter will be split into description paragraphs and elaboration paragraphs. Finally, each case will end with a brief conclusion.

CONTEXTUAL TABLE

Regime	Ideology	Dictator	Target Groups	Goals	Justifications
The Soviet Union	Communism Marxism-Leninism	Joseph Stalin	Urban Working Class Hardline Communists Intellectuals	Abolishing social classes and spreading the communist ideology.	Class conflict was responsible for society's problems.
Italy	Fascism	Benito Mussolini	Middle & Upper Class Militarists Youth World War I Veterans	Reinvigorating the Italian identity and restoring the Roman Empire.	Italy was cheated out of land; the Romans were the greatest civilization.
China	Communism Maoism	Mao Zedong	Rural Peasantry Youth	Removing the incompetent monarchy and abandoning old institutions.	The archaic government and its customs stunted progress.
Germany	Fascism Nazism	Adolf Hitler	Urban Working Class Agrarians Youth World War I Veterans	Conquering the world and eradicating it of all non-Aryan groups.	Germany was treated unfairly by the Allies; Aryans were biologically superior.

AN INTRODUCTION TO COMMUNISM

Communism is an authoritarian ideology that lies on the far left of the political spectrum. It was formulated by German philosophers Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, introduced to the world in 1847 as a part of their "Communist Manifesto." Marx and Engels argued that all of society's ills are driven by a constant class struggle between the slaving working class, the *proletariat*, and the wealthy, land-owning upper classes, the *bourgeoisie*. Therefore, the solution to this incessant class struggle is for the proletarian masses to overtake their aristocratic overlords. Marx and Engels created communism with a utopian vision in mind. The communist framework dreams of a truly equal society, one where socioeconomic classes and private property have been abolished, one in which everyone will always have what they

need. During this period of revolutionary transition, there would be a so-called “dictatorship of the proletariat” that would oversee and maintain its people. In practice, concentrating total economic and political power within a centralized state to dismantle capitalism has historically led to the rise of authoritarian regimes. Without democratic checks and balances, ruling communist parties routinely suppress political dissent, eliminate individual liberties, and create permanent totalitarian states rather than functioning as a temporary bridge to the promised stateless utopia.

CASE 1: THE SOVIET UNION

Dirt poor, uneducated, and restless for any change from the years of aristocratic regimes they had endured, Communism looked to be a way out for the struggling Russian peasantry. The man who desired to weaponize this was none other than Vladimir Lenin, a communist visionary and the father of the Soviet Union. Along with military commander Leon Trotsky, he quickly ousted the country’s existing provisional government. Lenin promised the Russian people a brighter future, one in which all of them would be protected and cared for; peace, land, and bread. He declared that all power would be bestowed upon the Soviets, the workers councils, undoubtedly guiding the nation towards a socialist utopia. Lenin died a savior in Russia’s eyes, succeeded by a young Joseph Stalin, who would take “all power to the Soviets” in a different direction.

THE DICTATOR: JOSEPH STALIN

“Joseph Stalin” is a fake name; a fabricated personality. Stalin translates to “steel man,” something more palatable to the Russian majority than the dictator’s original Kartvelian name, Iosep Jugashvili (B1). Steel is symbolic of authority and also communicated his industrial vision for the country, hence its importance. Stalin became the General Secretary of the Communist Party in 1922 and ascended the ranks after that, becoming the Soviet Union’s second leader after Lenin’s passing. The reason Stalin was picked was less because of his popularity or prowess, but because most of the other candidates had coincidentally died, went missing, or were arrested. Stalin took his *steel man* persona into the Kremlin, where he continued to acquiesce power for the Communist Party, erase political opponents, and hold an unceasing grip on the Soviet public with his authoritarian policies, which will soon be explored. Of the four countries being discussed, Russia was the first to gain its iron fists.

METHOD ONE: THE NKVD

The People’s Commissariat for Internal Affairs (NKVD) was the Soviet Union’s primary secret police force under the leadership of Joseph Stalin. It handled counterintelligence, foreign espionage, and mass surveillance (2). Above all, the main objective of the NKVD was ideological suppression. Any person or group within the Soviet Union that Stalin viewed as seditious would never be heard from again.

Capitalists, religious leaders, and Western sympathizers constituted a significant portion of those who were prosecuted. Most notably however, was the staggering list of government officials that were wiped out just the same. Once again, this was how Stalin became the USSR's leader in the first place. Leon Trotsky, Lenin's closest ally, was killed with an ice pick to the face at the hands of NKVD agent Ramon Mercader in Mexico. Of course, this was under the orders of Stalin, who saw Trotsky as his biggest political rival. Close allies of Stalin weren't safe either. Nikolai Yezhov (pictured), the NKVD's chairman and Stalin's supposed "right-hand," was executed and wiped from all Soviet records following accusations of homosexuality. The mere suspicion of anti-Stalinist thought without any evidence of subversive action became grounds for excessive torture, life in the gulag, and outright execution (Pisch 58). This culminated in the Great Purge, in which 1.5 million people were arrested and 700,000 were killed between 1937 and 1938.



Credit: Photographer N/A, article by Jesse Seeberg-Gordon

There are two main reasons why NKVD was an effective method of control under Stalin. The first is more obvious: fear. Anybody could be the secret police's next target, as even the slightest infraction, be it intentional or not, could mean certain death. An astray thought made the thinker public enemy number

one. Given the sophistication of both the police and their enemy forces, it appeared to the Soviet populace that nearly anyone could be a secret agent or a secret rebel, and that was intentional. It has already been established that fear, specifically paranoia, breeds loneliness and isolation. A paranoid individual trusts no one and becomes intellectually isolated. They may still be a part of society in terms of having a job and a family, but they have become incapable of any meaningful human connection (Arendt 322). Their wings clipped, their fire extinguished. When an entire society behaves like so, any assembly, and therefore rebellion, becomes impossible.

The NKVD and the KGB made the dictator the sole decider in who was an enemy of the public and who was an ally. Enemies were devices of fear used to keep citizens in line. Allies were devices of pride used to embolden the Soviet identity. Stalin became both the instigator of fear and the provider of solace. Such terrible power over people's lives gave Stalin god-like qualities. Fear easily became submission, and submission became trust. Personality cults have an inherently religious aspect because of this, even when put through the atheistic lens of authoritarianism (Pisch 57). This is why fear is such an instrumental part of personality cults. Under the authoritarian framework, a leader who operates solely off of love has no real power. Fear is the only acceptable way to preserve leadership by establishing a rock solid power dynamic. The only way it is broken is if imperfections are found, which is why a personality cult's leader is portrayed as flawless.

METHOD TWO: POPULATION TRANSFER

Contrary to the egalitarian ideals of communism, and Stalin's own non-Russian background, the Soviet Union held a rancorous disdain towards various minority groups. Covering such a large area meant the territory of the country's Russian majority was mottled with hundreds of non-Russian ethnicities. These groups included Turkic, Uralic, and Mongolic groups, as well as many diasporic communities such as the Volga Germans and Korean refugees. This diversity fostered cultural enrichment, but it also triggered the diffusion of new ideas and political movements, something absolutely unacceptable in the eyes of the Soviet government. In response, allegations of treason and foreign collusion were fabricated against entire people groups. Stalin used this as a justification for the mass deportations of roughly 3 million minority individuals between 1938 and 1952 (3). Families were often given only a few hours notice to pack before being ripped from their homes by NKVD officers. People were piled into hot and cramped cattle cars, where they would remain for weeks on end with little food, water, and medicine. Most groups were dumped in isolated "special settlements," gulags located in the arid plains of Kazakhstan and Siberia. Those who did not cooperate either fled or were executed. Harsh conditions both in transit and in the settlements resulted in the deaths of over a million people. Entire cultures were bleached over years of forced assimilation, effectively making the Soviet Union a *Russian* country.

A nation state is a sovereign political entity that aligns with a singular distinct culture or ethnic group. Authoritarian states infamously pursue nation states because of how they may aid in social control. A

society that is completely uniform is easier to manage than one with several groups with conflicting languages, customs, and beliefs that are constantly competing for dominance. By incorporating majoritarianism into political rhetoric, the majority is elevated whilst the minority is vilified. Evidently, this was the goal of the Soviet Union's intensive population transfer policies. Just a decade earlier, the Soviet Union promoted native cultures and attempted to integrate their customs and languages into local institutions, a policy known as *korenizatsiya*, or indigenization. Something changed. Stalin had decided that indigenization got in the way of the centralized modernization he had dreamed of. The Russian public also lacked a sufficient scapegoat at that time. Thus, Russification was created as a double fix. To a great extent, this policy was successful. Stalin silenced several cultures and kept it that way until his death. Many ethnicities returned with only a traumatized half of their population.

CONCLUSION

Needless to say, if Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels saw what was interpreted as communism in the 20th century, they would be appalled. Their dreams of equality had been twisted into nightmares of fear and violence due to a single man's lust for power. A nation founded to help the abused needy had come to repeatedly use terror and censorship to preserve the power of the highest class. The administration of Joseph Stalin had left deep scars in the Soviet Union's visage, undoubtedly contributing to the empire's collapse in 1991.

AN INTRODUCTION TO FASCISM

Contrary to communism, fascism lies on the far right of the political spectrum. However, it has a similar utopian undercurrent. Fascism envisions a world dominated by one master race that has overcome all lesser groups. Its proponents believe that undesirable demographics are the root of society's problems, and eradicating them is key to a perfect society. A strong central government, military, and cultural identity is necessary to a fascist. The ideology's founder and the dictator of Italy, Benito Mussolini, was originally a devout socialist and an editor for various left wing Italian newspapers. He was even inspired by the Communist Manifesto as well as other works of Marx. He was removed from the Italian Socialist Party (PSI) for having an interventionist stance on World War I, which clashed with the PSI's strictly pacifist outlook. Mussolini's nationalist flare combined with the policies of socialism led to the birth of the fascist movement. The name that Mussolini chose came from the Latin *fascis*, meaning bundles of wood. Historically, the Ancient Romans used the symbol of an axe tied to a bundle of wooden rods to represent strength through unity and authority. This symbol was subsequently used to symbolize the Italian Fascist Party and fascism in general. Such a collectivist mentality certainly echoes that of communism. How far those echoes reach is the crux of the matter.

CASE 2: ITALY

Despite being on the winning side of World War I, Italy was one of its biggest losers. The immense economic distress and political divisiveness the war had caused left Italy in shambles. The current liberal government did little to solve these problems, giving it a reputation of ineffectiveness. One of the most profound political issues that emerged from the war, however, was the outcome of the Treaty of Versailles. Italy had its sights set on acquiring new territories on the Adriatic Sea from Austria-Hungary. The proposal was rejected, leaving the country without much compensation and a resentment towards its former allies. The Italian people were dissatisfied, fearful, and impoverished. These conditions were ideal for the creation of many radical movements and organizations, one such movement being the *Fasci Italiani di Combattimento*, a group led by Benito Mussolini which was devoted to dismantling Italy's defective democracy.

THE DICTATOR: BENITO MUSSOLINI

Similar to Joseph Stalin, Benito Mussolini also had an alternative name. Il Duce, The Leader. Such a simple name was meant to communicate absolute power and establish a monolithic presence that resonated with the Italian public. Mussolini's own excessively bombastic persona gave him wide appeal, especially among the nationalistic youth. He transformed postbellum chaos into militaristic order through his fascist militia, known as the Blackshirts. Mussolini infamously took control of Italy through his March on Rome, an organized demonstration in which the Blackshirts besieged the government. The Prime Minister and Emperor were threatened with violent confrontation if the militia's demands were not met. Thus, Emperor Victor Emmanuel III forced the resignation of reluctant Prime Minister Luigi Facta and replaced him with Mussolini. From then on, Il Duce's fascist policies subverted the conventions of liberal democracy until an illiberal state was achieved. Victory, violence, and fascism became synonymous under the jurisdiction of the new Italy.

METHOD ONE: THE NEW ROME

Mussolini campaigned off of a paradise lost. As stated before, the ineffectiveness of the liberal government gave him leeway to attack the mainstream political system. First, he stated that liberalism had effectively outstayed its welcome, that its ideology had exhausted its historical function and was no longer important to societal progression. In his eyes, its goals and policies were too abstract to be realistically achieved. Second, he attacked the framework of liberalism. Mussolini chastised the ideology's emphasis on individual freedoms as overly decadent, promoting a solipsistic lifestyle. The essence of the individual was lost in the moral decay of liberal democracy, that "outside of [the State] no human or spiritual values can exist (Mussolini 2)." So, as an alternative, Mussolini proposed a new interpretation of liberty that was intertwined with the State. The State was able to revive the essence of the individual by abolishing the trifles of liberalism and establishing a government that was all-embracing. These attacks bear many similarities to those made by Thomas Hobbes, who argued that liberal

governments only lead to chaos through their permissiveness and fragmentation (Hobbes 144). Mussolini was most definitely influenced by the Leviathan.

To prove his point, he likened fascism to the era of the ancient Roman Empire, a beacon of ancient valor and refinement. Propaganda heavily relied on *romanità*, the idea of “Roman-ness” and the authoritative grandeur that came with it. Mussolini portrayed ancient Rome as the ideal society and vowed to restore it, as it was already regarded as one of the first world powers and a source of Italian pride. Il Duce was no longer just the leader, but the next Roman Emperor. The fascist movement characterized Mussolini as a modern Caesar, with propaganda often depicting him in poses similar to those in classical statues. Speeches were held in ancient ruins such as the Circus Maximus and Arch of Constantine. Mussolini’s speech proclaiming the creation of the Italian Empire in 1936 was spoken entirely in Latin. The return to historical stability as Italian fascism’s eternal goal, though perfectly replicating an extinct society is just as unattainable as the so-called abstract ideals of liberalism. The only thing that separated the two was Mussolini’s boisterous confidence, which fabricated a false sense of change and optimism among the public. So, even when liberalism could objectively hold both the moral and political high ground in a given situation, he could undermine it. Mussolini’s reign exposed the true arbiter of politics, that being presentation. Populist ideologies like fascism work because they get people’s attention. Populists are viewed as outsiders; mavericks. Statistics and credentials simply can’t make a compelling argument anymore. They have become symbolic of the establishment that voters have become increasingly disillusioned with. Thus, aggression has become a one-way street to credibility for people like Mussolini.

METHOD TWO: MASCULINITY

The Third Rome wasn’t the only thing Mussolini endlessly pursued. His propaganda also had a profound air of hypermasculinity. Il Duce framed himself as a superhuman archetype of athletic vigor and rigid virility. He often made public appearances whilst shirtless and/or performing laborious tasks (pictured). Essentially, fascism became the ideology of youthful vitality, which made opposing ideologies appear outdated and stale in respect. Rulebooks and powdered wigs were doused in gasoline and set alight. Mussolini very much broke the mold when it came to being a politician, portraying himself as rugged instead of refined. Be that good or bad, this was more to get him attention from both allies and opponents than anything, which aided in the spread of his doctrines. On top of his grandiose public image, Mussolini made it a point to sensationalize his austere personal routines. It was public knowledge that Mussolini’s favorite food was a salad of raw garlic soaked in olive oil and lemon juice, often consumed in the evening, which he touted as the ultimate health food that kept him strong, disciplined, and ruthless, all aspects of fascist machismo. He infamously banned pasta for the opposite reasons. The perceptions of masculinity that Mussolini had pushed were closely linked to *romanità* in the way it pertained to ancient Roman athleticism and militarism. By making masculinity synonymous with fascism, the government was able to effectively emasculate all political opposition whilst also enforcing its own doctrines. Being a predominantly Catholic and conservative nation, gender roles were something deeply entrenched in Italian society. Losing one’s manhood was something that could not be risked, which was impossible without partaking in the fascist cult.



Credit: Photographer N/A, article from Worldhistory.org

Both *romanità* and fascist masculinity pertained to the same method of societal control, which is why they were grouped together. The pursuit of the new Rome and the new man were unattainable goals that kept Italian society on a Sisyphean journey that the fascist government purported was only achievable under their violent jurisdiction. These fabricated doctrines pushed a new societal structure that justified the policies of Mussolini's administration. By keeping the country in a constant state of movement towards these goals, the populace was unable to stop and truly comprehend the humanitarian consequences of their government (Arendt 308). The Italian people became blinded by ambition, beguiled by visions of a utopia with Il Duce at its helm. The indignant new generation was indoctrinated to believe they were the fixers of what had been broken by the opulence of liberalism and the inequities of World War I. When all would be fixed, though, then what? Fascism would crumble, outstaying its welcome just as liberalism did. The fascist government couldn't allow that and would be forced to withhold its promises to stay in power. False hope is worse than no hope at all. Now, the people are aware that there is a goal, but are also aware it will never be met. Fascism must shatter all reasoning to mask this major flaw. The future had become the past and war had become peace.

CONCLUSION

Fascism was born out of Mussolini's indignation, not hope. Indignation for being exiled from a movement he loved dearly. If he wasn't excommunicated from the PSI, it's likely he would have remained a

staunchly socialist politician with nearly identical policies. Similar to the Soviet Union, the era of Il Duce was defined by a desire to leave behind the perceived weaknesses of liberalism and achieve a state of absolute singularity. Yet, this is not a goal of authoritarianism, but simply another nuanced method of mass manipulation. Mussolini's ambitions were far too great, which explains why his empire was so short lived and the first to surrender to the Allies in World War II. The destruction of his fantasies was poetically displayed when his corpse was hung upside down from an Esso petrol station in 1945.

CASE 3: CHINA

The country of China is different from the two previous cases in the way that it is located completely in Asia, thousands of miles away from the Kremlin and the Palazzo Venezia, but right next door in terms of its upbringing. The rise of China's communist regime was fueled by the same aristocratic European subjugation. The 19th century was one of abuse, one in which China slowly became a corrupt vassal of the European colonial powers through coerced trade, unfair treaties, and superimposed policies. The time period was known as the Century of Humiliation. Like Italy's emphasis on gender roles, Chinese society greatly valued honor and dignity, and sullyng them was a despicable offense. The Century of Humiliation left the monarchy disgraced, which ultimately led to its collapse and the creation of a republican government. Yet, what semblance of order it had provided was not enough to protect China and maintain internal unity. Such a vast country required unparalleled structure. The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) was a stark contrast from the inept status quo, disciplined and optimistic. The CCP vowed to protect the vast Chinese peasantry against the evils of nationalism and reform the government as such, which mobilized 500 million workers into fighting for a new cause. China marked the spread of communism outside of Europe and into the minds of roughly a quarter of the world's population.

THE DICTATOR: MAO ZEDONG

Mao Zedong was not just the leader of China, he *was* China. He was the embodiment of the CCP, the country, and its people. Mao was an intellectual and a poet, whose writings became symbolic of the Chinese people, their struggles, and their victories, able to both create and promote his own empire of propaganda. His philosophies became the basis of reasoning. People were legally required to memorize verses and arguments were settled by who could find a better quote. Mao's greatest power, however, was his capability of mass mobilization. The reason communism had not breached Asia was because the rhetoric of Marx and Engels was exceptionally urban, pandering to impoverished industrial workers living in large cities who felt neglected by their bourgeois overlords. China, however, was not an industrialized nation. 85% of its population was agrarian, with most cities being small ports or palaces, having just enough people to function. Mao was one of the first to put communism through a pastoral lens, which is why his rhetoric was so effective. His policies were directed at China's rural population, prioritizing their desires for land reform and communalism. Similar to a mutated virus, communism was something China was unprepared for, which allowed it to spread like wildfire. Something that is certainly the most

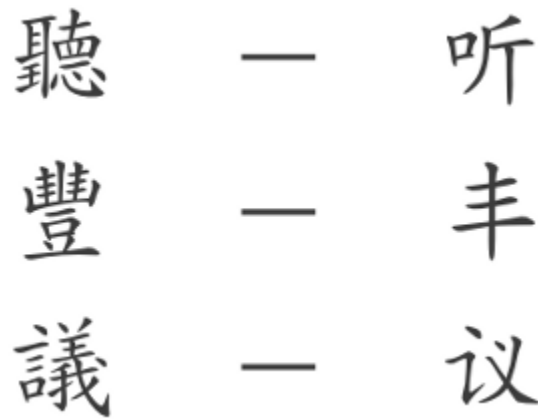
interesting about the administration of Mao Zedong is how he put himself at the center of a society supposed to embody the sheer concept of the people, which are essentially two opposites in definition. This concept is inherently anti-Marxist (Pisch 52). Yet, China is not a Marxist state. All previous conventions, including those of communism, had been abandoned and redefined to further glorify the CCP. Mao had shamelessly indulged in egocentrism, but he ingeniously disguised it as paternal love for his citizens. In China, everyone was a child of the chairman, the sunflowers to his sun.

WHAT IS ORWELLIANSIM?

The word “Orwellian” is often thrown around as an insult between political groups. It’s used to label their opponents as power-hungry and oppressive, similar to that of Oceania, the dictatorship that serves as the setting in George Orwell’s book 1984 (4). While yes, that is an aspect of the word, that isn’t the entire picture. To be Orwellian, something must have the capability of mass social control through the manipulation of language, a major topic in the book. Society has to become physically incapable of contradicting the truths of the state through devices such as Newspeak and Doublethink. Orwell’s fascination with language’s role in authoritarianism is seen throughout his many literary works. By this definition, a truly Orwellian state must have both the desire and the capacity to completely change the way its people communicate and interpret information. No other country embodies this better than Maoist China.

METHOD: LINGUISTIC DIALYSIS

Up to today, the official language of the PRC is Simplified Chinese (right), an abridged and more dynamic version of its parent language, Traditional Chinese (left). Though the widespread implementation of Simplified Chinese occurred primarily in the latter half of the 20th century, the scheme’s roots go far back. Simplified Chinese dates as early as proposals from 1909 and an actual list from 1935. Of course, relatively, this version of the language is extremely young. It did not evolve naturally, but was carefully curated by the CCP as one of their efforts to overhaul every aspect of Chinese society, known as the Cultural Revolution. Maoist propaganda greatly focused on destroying the *Four Olds*: Ideas, Culture, Customs, and Habits. Traditional Chinese and the works that used it fell under old culture. It was one of the feudal elements of China’s pre-communist era that threatened the party’s legitimacy and growth. To effectively “simplify” the Chinese language, several adjustments were made to the language’s ideographic writing system. The amount of strokes required for individual characters were reduced, with some characters being eradicated altogether and replaced with broader ones. Over a thousand characters were decommissioned and roughly 2,200 were noticeably changed. The language had been reduced to basic shapes and concepts, making it not only simplified but also easier to learn, which aided in its rapid dissemination. Thus, the language of dynasties was shunned, and Simplified Chinese adorned every sign and textbook by the late 20th century.



Source: hackingchinese.com

Of all things that an all-powerful authoritarian government could do, why choose a linguistic overhaul? Language is undoubtedly the principal method of human communication. It's how information may cross entire continents and last thousands of years. Controlling language means controlling how society obtains, interprets, and transfers every fragment of information that circulates through it. China's "Cultural Revolution" aimed to sever all ties between its past and present, erasing tradition and all value that comes with it (5). Tradition is what forms a culture's identity, and identity is the obdurate wall between authoritarianism and total supremacy. By forcing an entire population to become literate in a constructed language that has absolutely no historical roots, history becomes off-limits. Those who couldn't read Traditional Chinese could not read anything from the country's pre-communist era. A millennium's worth of historical records, books, and poetry became inaccessible to the Chinese public, leaving them no direction but forward.

Simplified Chinese had another function, though. It lies right in the name: simple; unadorned and elementary. This version of Chinese did not require the critical thinking needed to write out the complex brush strokes of its Traditional form, nor the intricate concepts that those strokes represented. By reducing the country's vocabulary, the government reduced the country's space for nuanced thinking and questioning (6). Here, history and philosophy was abandoned as part of a sanctimonious movement. Being the traditional bases of societal conventions, their absence permitted a cultural dialysis. A mandate of simplicity was issued, eradicating the threats that complex thought, artistic expression, and historical knowledge had posed to the CCP. That is truly Orwellian. \

CONCLUSION

Maoist China's anti-intellectual policies certainly clash with the nature of communism, seeming much more similar to fascism's emphasis on the harsh nature of reality. Fascism has a certain hatred for subjectivity and complexity that simply can't be replicated by other ideologies. The purpose of

communism is to encourage the working class to exercise their sacrosanct freedoms, which should include expression and participation in cultural tradition. Meanwhile, communist governments have intruded on this basic principle time and time again. Similar to previous cases, China was a manifestation of one man's ego that was glorified through ideological dogma. Ideally, a communist leader would be humble, completely devoted to the idea of the collective. Yet, Mao's face was reflected in every aspect of Chinese life. Over a billion people were taught to be dependent on him, which makes it a miracle that the government didn't collapse following his death. In essence, the ideological abstraction of communism was cemented in Mao Zedong's legacy.

CASE FOUR: GERMANY

Nazi Germany was founded off of hate. Hate towards the Allied powers, hate towards minorities, and hate towards those who didn't partake in hatred. The German Weimar Republic endured a perfect storm succeeding World War I. The Treaty of Versailles left the country completely humiliated, fragmented, and bankrupt. Germany had lost all of their colonial possessions as well as the Danzig corridor, leaving it split in two. More profoundly, the Treaty's War Guilt clause demanded that Germany take complete responsibility for the War and pay 150% of their GDP in reparations, which led to hyperinflation so extreme that a single egg cost 80 billion Marks (7). Like Italy, Germany's democratic government was obscenely ineffective at managing these conditions. In its opposition was the National Socialist (Nazi) Party, a fascist political party led by Adolf Hitler, which strategically exploited the government's faults through powerful rhetoric. The party promised food and work, but also a new goal: Lebensraum. Living space. In Hitler's fervent speeches, he proclaimed that the Aryan race, that being Germanic people with blonde hair, blue eyes, athletic bodies, and heterosexual orientations, were the ideal form of man. It was their duty to conquer the world and eliminate all non-Aryan peoples, the Untermenschen. The deep seated resentment the German public felt towards the establishment quickly gave the Nazi Party a supermajority in parliament, in which they became the only party going forward.

THE DICTATOR: ADOLF HITLER

Hitler was indeed a troubled man. His early life was plagued by dysfunction, violence, and rejection, feeding into his hateful personality. He blamed everything on everyone else, especially those who he saw as threats to German society. Unsurprisingly, Hitler was also an ultranationalist, fighting as a soldier on the side of Germany in World War I. He had a very strict and exclusionary interpretation of his country's culture, which is what largely developed his political views. Antisemitism and anti-Jewish policies were widespread during Hitler's upbringing, leading him to choose the Jewish population as his scapegoat for all of the world's problems. In 1919, he joined the Nazi Party and quickly became its leader, campaigning with violently nationalistic speeches that preached his fascist vision for Germany. For the emblem of his movement, Hitler chose the Swastika. The swastika is a Hindu symbol meaning prosperity. In the form used by the Nazis, it is tilted forward to communicate movement. The swastika, emblematic of peace and

good fortune, had been distorted to become an analogue of bigotry. Adolf Hitler taught German society that it was okay to be vicious and hateful, redefining German culture

METHOD ONE: THE HOLOCAUST

A tragedy that is practically obligatory to mention when discussing the history of Nazi Germany is the Holocaust, the systematic genocide of over 11 million civilians (8), over half of them being Jews. It must be made known that the Holocaust was not the original plan of the Nazi Government. After the fall of France, Nazi official Heinrich Himmler had proposed that Europe's Jewish population be deported to the island of Madagascar over the course of four years (9). The island itself would be a police state run by the Schutzstaffel (SS), the German secret police force. Himmler hoped that the brutal conditions of both the relocation process and actual life on the island would be enough to exterminate the Jews after a few years. This entire process sounds extremely similar to the population transfer initiatives brought on by the Soviet Union. The Soviets didn't intend to directly kill any minorities, instead isolating them and leaving their fates up to the harshness of the Steppe. This worked for them, but not for the Germans. The Madagascar Plan was quickly abandoned due to the amount of time and money the project would take, as well as the strong British naval presence in the area. The Nazis required something quicker, something more aggressive. The "Final Solution" was drafted soon after, which would become the single deadliest genocide in human history.

6 million Jews were systematically arrested and relocated to various concentration camps located all across Central Europe, where they would be forced to work until they wasted away. Considering Jewish people were the foremost enemy of the Nazi Party, it's no surprise they constituted over half of the Holocaust's victims. Hitler's lies played into the harmful stereotypes imposed upon Jews, being that they secretly controlled society through a vast network of political and economic ties. They were viewed as mistrustful, miserly, and practically inhuman. All Jews were marked with a large yellow Star of David on their clothes. The symbol of their religion had become an indicator of undesirability and an object of public ridicule. As a result, many went into hiding. Those who were unlucky enough to have no place to go or were eventually found by the SS were sent to their deaths in camps like Auschwitz and Dachau. These camps didn't just imprison Jews, however. Trade unionists, Roma peoples, and homosexuals were among the 5 million others to undergo the same despicable treatment. Any ounce of humanity these minorities had was siphoned away and given to the German Aryans, who had ascended to superhuman status. The Aryans were the gods of their own fascist religion. The untermenschen were born heretics, destined to be righteously slain. Hundreds of cultures swiftly disappeared from German society altogether in this racial iconoclasm.

Once again, society had witnessed the violent pursuit of a nation state. In many ways, Nazi Germany was far more effective at this goal than the Soviet Union. Unlike the Soviet NKVD, which was significantly divided due to internal mistrust and paranoia, the SS was tightly woven by Nazi indoctrination. The motivations here are clear: the use of ethnic homogeneity as an item of ideological conviction and a

shortcut to absolute social control, practically identical to the policies discussed beforehand. Though, a new element had been introduced. Morality. Nazism was grounded in a perceived “moral” obligation to cleanse the world of undesirables. Thus, anyone who refused its agenda also refused morality. If they weren’t with the government, they were against it (Pisch 55). This sort of binary logic transformed the Nazi cult into an exclusive group defined by extreme diligence and strict moral adherence, similar to that of an organized religion. This religion had one main doctrine. The platform of Nazism itself verily comes down to bigotry in any shape or form, so long as it encourages state sponsored malice. Hate was the primary object of control in this scenario. The propaganda spewed by the Nazis wasn’t just to scare people into submission, but also to galvanize their existing prejudices and motivate them to take action. Nazi sentiment gradually consumed German society, fed by fear and malevolence.



Credit: Photographer N/A, article from Encyclopedia Britannica

METHOD TWO: APATHY

Apathy is another method of control in itself. It’s an emotion defined as a lack of concern; futility in intellectual form. Those who partake in it offer nothing to society. They are driven by their own self preservation and strive to achieve their own goals through opportunism and complacency. Inaction directly upheld the Nazi regime. While there were many passionate disciples of Nazism among German society, there were arguably many more people who simply did not care. Many had the mentality that they lacked the capability of fighting a foe as formidable as the Nazi regime, which was used as a justification for their silence. As long as the Nazi party did not target them in particular, they did not bother. Of course, the tides rapidly changed if Hitler decided to make them a new state enemy; *then* the Nazis were suddenly a great evil that must be stopped. It may seem hard to avoid an apathetic mindset. The drive for

Aug 2026

Vol 10, No 1.

self-interest is something practically engrained in the human psyche from birth. German Lutheran pastor Martin Niemöller's poem "First They Came" communicates this idea in a thoughtful, resonating way (10). He was one of the apathetic millions that watched the Holocaust fester and proceeded to turn a blind eye, writing this poem as a confession of sorts. It's a work of art that everyone should read at least once. Nazi Germany was well aware of the experiences of pastor Niemöller and many others, as it was all planned. Hitler and his party were aware that they could not persuade everyone, so they used hate to control their disciples and apathy to control their opponents.

CONCLUSION

Hitler's empire did not last long, nor did Hitler himself. Nazi Germany quickly surrendered to the Allied Powers following his suicide in 1945, the last life he would take. Yet, for such a short lifespan, the damage caused by the Nazi regime will likely never be fully repaired. The country was a glass cannon, overly reliant on the direction and passions of an insane person. Ironically, Hitler did not fit any of his Aryan criteria. He was a stocky, dark haired Austrian with Kallmann Syndrome, a far cry from the Nazi "superhuman." His demagoguery and violent tendencies have cemented him as one of history's most infamous figures.

DISCUSSION

The final conclusions will be drawn in this section. To create a truly complete argument, though, opposing views must be considered.

There are several arguments against the concept of ideological convergence. One such criticism is that its propositions are an oversimplification of the political spectrum and the nuance of different ideologies, discounting fundamental differences between the left and right without providing any evidence besides philosophical merit. These arguments are somewhat justifiable. The goals of the left and right *do* seem diametrically opposed. Left leaning ideologies like communism are characterized by their pursuit of social justice and radical change, whereas right leaning ideologies like fascism are defined by tradition and rigid hierarchies. In short, the leftist framework in one word would be *people*. The rightist framework in one word would be *country*. In many modern governments, progressive and nationalist parties are often considered bitter rivals. If anything, it appears that ideologies converge at the center. There *have* been far more centrist coalition governments throughout history than between fringe groups. The few that have existed were volatile and dysfunctional, having an average life expectancy half that of centrist groups. It seems that there is no hope of long term compromise, but a compromise implies that there are differences to be set aside. That in itself holds the key to proving this paper's theory.

Communism and fascism are two extremes that had fundamentally rejected the same thing, liberal democracy. Liberal groups prioritize individuality and freedom over all else, proclaiming that every human being is born with unalienable rights they are entitled to under any circumstance. Politically, it is the only thing more powerful than power itself, making it every despot's Achilles' Heel. Observing the

political strategies and approaches of the four dictatorships being researched reveals their shared contempt towards this ideology, as undermining liberalism is key to their survival. All authoritarian states are collectivist, meaning their societies act as a singular entity and are treated as such. Having a private life is considered suspicious and solipsistic. This is the concept of the body politic, an organized group that functions as one. Individual dignity and desires are erased through an ego genocide. The gradual erosion of individuality under this mindset most definitely culminates in a nefarious end goal. That end goal is what this paper has explored extensively. The research question “*To what extent do ideological differences between the authoritarian governments of the early 20th century affect the ways they effectively control their people?*” quite literally holds the answer.

Whether it's the Stalinist gulag or the Nazi concentration camp, Italian historicism or Chinese vanguardism, any authoritarian policy can be reduced to the overarching objective of control, something that transcends the arbitrary boundaries of any political spectrum or ideological prerequisite. In a truly authoritarian society, virtue becomes moot, usurped by the desire for complete superiority. Political platforms are a formality. For example, the Soviet Union, which portrayed itself as the embodiment of social equity, the savior of neglected peoples, the affirmative action empire, was responsible for imprisoning, deporting, and starving millions of minority communities in its periphery. The idea of the nation state was (and still is) one of the most efficacious catalysts for control, which was enough to convince the government to abandon any previous conviction. Italy and Germany, though both irrefutably believed in social hierarchy, honed in on the struggles of the proletariat to achieve their goals. They ruthlessly attacked groups believed to harm the welfare of the working class or abuse the conventions of capitalism. Fascism became the ideology of the Axis' working class even though it blatantly went against the demographic's interests via its reactionary and exclusive nature. In World War II, the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact between Germany and the Soviet Union proved these ideological faults. Two major dictatorships, meant to be mirror opposites, forged an ultimatum for the sole intent of acquiring more land and power through the partition of Poland. If these two nations were completely dissimilar, the chance of even reluctant cooperation on such a large scale would be slim to none. In this way, authoritarianism is the true ideology at play. It has a clear platform, after all; a strong central government, militaristic surveillance, and strict monoculturalism. Communism and fascism are trivial factions that reside within this broader political movement, exposing a new cleavage of authority vs. freedom instead of left vs. right. The people who refuse these truths are effectively denying the adverse effects of authoritarian policies on both themselves and the people around them.

LIMITATIONS

Nothing is perfect, and this paper is no exception. Any form of research has its limitations. First is the sample size. The paper covers only four very specific cases within a fifty year time frame, giving it limited generalizability. The world has radically changed since the age of Nazi Germany and Stalinist Russia, and so have the methods of dictatorships. The former half of the 20th century is evidently not the only point in history in which authoritarianism had a massive role. Regimes like Iran and Syria as well as

most of the Cold War unfortunately had to be omitted. There are numerous modern dictatorships with their own unique policies, nuanced ideologies, and rich histories that may vastly change the context of this topic, but they have been excluded for the sake of specificity. To make a quality research paper, precision is a necessity.

The second limitation that may have an effect on this paper's legitimacy is its pre-existing biases, which culminates in a somewhat polemical tone. The paper's material, especially the elaboration present in the case studies, interprets authoritarianism as inherently "evil." Of course, determining the morality of authoritarianism and the dictators that practice it was not the original goal of this paper, which was to compare different methods. The subject matter of this paper cannot be considered good or bad without bias being present. However, the majority of contemporary society shares the view that authoritarian governments are harmful. Can a certain sentiment be considered biased if it is practically unanimous? Still, these limitations are worth being considered to have an informed point of view.

CONCLUSION

Agree to disagree, despots are essentially a force of nature. They have existed since the dawn of society and will continue to exist until its dusk. Control is something every person strives for, whether they would like to admit it or not, or even if they are aware of it at all. It's something that transcends politics, even humanity altogether. Animals fight for mates. Trees fight for sunlight. Genes fight for expression. Ideology is insignificant in this struggle, which is why it does not influence the governments that participate. Half a century of dictatorships had shown little evolution in their methodologies, exemplifying the invariable nature of dictatorial governance and mindsets. Other ideologies simply aim to achieve political goals pertaining to their frameworks, which fosters healthy competition and diversity. Authoritarianism does the opposite, intending to dismantle the delicate political ecosystem by snuffing out all other ideological groups. The perpetual battle for control is not innately noble or malicious, but an amoral force that must be diligently managed and balanced. Acknowledging its existence is key to stability, wellbeing, and the prevention of increasingly harmful dictators.

To combat the repeated failures of past empires, modern authoritarians have learned to outmaneuver society's safeguards. A new age of despotism has dawned on humanity, one where dictators do not find their victories on a battlefield, but in a conference room. The blatantly violent and oppressive tactics used by the authoritarian regimes of the 20th century massively contributed to their downfall by drawing the ire of the democratic world, so they have evolved to be more covert. The 21st century has proven to be the peak of illiberal democracy, which is a dictatorship that develops silently and uses soft power to carry out its agenda. Even after a dictatorship is achieved, illiberal democracies will continue to preserve their vestigial democratic institutions. Elections, legislative chambers, and independent media outlets all still exist, but they are heavily pressured to benefit the party in power. Still, their sheer existence often allows the regime to slip through the cracks. When these democracies are hollowed out, they shed their liberal aspect. Certain people may view this as beneficial, considering that the word "liberal" has essentially

become synonymous with weakness and insularity through semantic manipulation. Contemporary illiberal leaders like Vladimir Putin and Recep Tayyip Erdoğan have built vast connections with the global core and have become crucial to its survival. If the global outlook on authoritarian policies remains negative, then people's actions must reflect this. Left or right, a universal consensus must be met on what is right and what is wrong.

REFERENCES

Minor Sources (Placed in Order of Number)

- Safire, William. "Iron Fist." *Nytimes.com*, New York Times, 20 Aug. 2000, archive.nytimes.com/www.nytimes.com/library/magazine/home/20000820mag-onlanguage.html. Accessed 29 Apr. 2026.
- Dewdney, John C, et al. "Soviet Union | History, Leaders, Map, & Facts." *Encyclopædia Britannica*, Encyclopædia Britannica, 20 Dec. 2018, www.britannica.com/place/Soviet-Union. Accessed 29 Apr. 2026.
- "UNHCR Publication for CIS Conference (Displacement in the CIS) - Punished Peoples: The Mass Deportations of the 1940s | UNHCR." *UNHCR*, UNHCR, 1 May 1996, www.unhcr.org/publications/unhcr-publication-cis-conference-displacement-cis-punished-peoples-mass-deportations. Accessed 29 Apr. 2026.
- Mussolini, Benito. "The Doctrine of Fascism." [sjsu.edu](https://www.sjsu.edu), 1932.
- "Orwellian | Definition in the Cambridge English Dictionary." *Dictionary.cambridge.org*, Cambridge Dictionary, dictionary.cambridge.org/us/dictionary/english/orwellian. Accessed 29 Apr. 2026.
- Lieberthal, Kenneth G. "Cultural Revolution." *Encyclopedia Britannica*, Encyclopedia Britannica, 5 Apr. 2019, www.britannica.com/event/Cultural-Revolution. Accessed 29 Apr. 2026.
- Kurzynski, Maciej. "Cognitive Stylometry: A Computational Study of Defamiliarization in Modern Chinese." *Computational Humanities Research*, vol. 2, 5 Dec. 2025, www.cambridge.org/core/journals/computational-humanities-research/article/cognitive-stylometry-a-computational-study-of-defamiliarization-in-modern-chinese/806CD4721AEC85C07473396825C3D7DD, <https://doi.org/10.1017/chr.2025.10020>. Accessed 1 June 2026.
- Backhouse, Fid. "Hyperinflation in the Weimar Republic." *Www.britannica.com*, Britannica, 6 May 2022, www.britannica.com/event/hyperinflation-in-the-Weimar-Republic. Accessed 29 Apr. 2026.

Berenbaum, Michael. "Holocaust." *Encyclopedia Britannica*, Encyclopedia Britannica, 8 Oct. 2018, www.britannica.com/event/Holocaust. Accessed 29 Apr. 2026.

"Hitler Presents Mussolini with Madagascar Plan." *Zachor Foundation*, Zachor Foundation, 2025, www.zachorfoundation.org/timeline/hitler-presents-mussolini-with-madagascar-plan/. Accessed 29 Apr. 2026.

"Martin Niemöller: 'First They Came For...'" *Ushmm.org*, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, 1946, encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/martin-niemoeller-first-they-came-for-the-socialists. Accessed 29 Apr. 2026.

Major Sources

Hobbes, Thomas. "Leviathan." *Project Gutenberg*, Project Gutenberg, 1651, www.gutenberg.org/files/3207/3207-h/3207-h.htm. Accessed 29 Apr. 2026.

Arendt, Hannah. "Ideology and Terror: A Novel Form of Government." *The Review of Politics*, vol. 15, no. 3, 1953, pp. 303–327, www.jstor.org/stable/1405171. Accessed 29 Apr. 2026.

Pisch, Anita. "The Phenomenon of the Personality Cult — a Historical Perspective." *JSTOR*, ANU Press, 2016, www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt1q1crzp.7. Accessed 29 Apr. 2026.

Visual Sources

Seeborg-Gordon, Jesse . "Nikolai Yezhov: A Portrait of the 'Bloody Dwarf'. Part 2: Terror and Downfall." *Nikolai Yezhov: A Portrait of the 'Bloody Dwarf'. Part 2: Terror and Downfall | Communist Crimes*, Communist Crimes, 8 Oct. 2021, communisticrimes.org/en/nikolai-yezhev-portrait-bloody-dwarf-part-2-terror-and-downfall. Accessed 30 Apr. 2026.

Unknown Photographer. "Propaganda Picture of a Shirtless Mussolini." *World History Encyclopedia*, World History Encyclopedia, 19 Mar. 2025, www.worldhistory.org/image/20239/propaganda-picture-of-a-shirtless-mussolini/. Accessed 30 Apr. 2026.

Linge, Olle. "Learning Simplified and Traditional Chinese." *Hacking Chinese*, Hacking Chinese, 28 Jan. 2012, www.hackingchinese.com/simplified-and-traditional-chinese/. Accessed 30 Apr. 2026.

The Editors of Encyclopedia Britannica. "Anschluss | German History." *Encyclopedia Britannica*, Encyclopedia Britannica, 6 Mar. 2019, www.britannica.com/event/Anschluss. Accessed 30 Apr. 2026.