French Intellectuals Against the Left

FRENCH INTELLECTUALS AGAINST THE LEFT

The Antitotalitarian Moment of the 1970s

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To My Parents

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ABBREVIATIONS

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APL	Agence de presse Libération
BRD	German Federal Republic
CAP	Comité d'action des prisonniers
CDU	German Christian Democratic Party
CERES	Centre d'études, de recherches et d'éducation socialiste
CFDT	Confédération française démocratique du travail
CGT	Confédération générale du travail
CIEL	Comité des intellectuels pour l'Europe des libertés
CNE	Comité national des écrivains
CVB	Comités Vietnam de base
EHESS	École des hautes études en sciences sociales
ENS	École normale supérieure
FLN	Front de libération nationale
GIP	Groupe d'information sur les prisons
GP	Gauche prolétarienne
IMEC	Institut mémoires de l'édition contemporaine
INA	Institut national de l'audiovisuel
JCR	Jeunesse communiste révolutionnaire
MFA	Portuguese Armed Forces Movement
NRP	Nouvelle résistance populaire
OAS	Organisation de l'armée secrète
OPS	Organisation partisane secrète
PCF	Parti communiste français
PCI	Italian Communist Party
PCMLF	Parti communiste marxiste-léniniste de France
PCP	Portuguese Communist Party

PS	Parti socialiste
PSI	Italian Socialist Party
PSP	Portuguese Socialist Party
PSU	Parti socialiste unifié
RDR	Rassemblement démocratique révolutionnaire
RPF	Rassemblement du peuple français
SFIO	Section française de l'Internationale ouvrière
SNESup	Syndicat national de l'enseignement supérieur
SPD	German Social Democratic Party
UEC	Union des étudiants communistes
UJCML	Union des jeunesses communistes marxistes-léninistes
UNEF	Union nationale des étudiants de France

INTRODUCTION

French Antitotalitarianism in Comparative Perspective

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In the latter half of the 1970s a critique of left-wing totalitarianism took French intellectual life by storm. In books and pamphlets, in the press and on television, antitotalitarian intellectuals loudly and dramatically denounced Marxist and revolutionary politics as fatally affiliated with totalitarianism. Originating within the intellectual Left and facing minimal opposition from it, antitotalitarianism rapidly marginalized Marxist thought and undermined the legitimacy of the French revolutionary tradition, paving the way for the postmodern, liberal, and moderate republican political alternatives of the 1980s and 1990s. Antitotalitarianism also radically altered the political judgments and *engagements* of intellectuals of the noncommunist Left, inaugurating a crusade against communism abroad and worsening the already difficult relations at home between them and the parties of the French Left. In the eyes of the British Marxist Perry Anderson, Paris, the capital of the European (and, in many regards, the world) Left after World War II, had become "the capital of European reaction."[1]

Antitotalitarian intellectuals have represented their own critique of totalitarianism as an abrupt rupture in French intellectual politics induced by revelations about the nature of communism. Intellectuals, the antitotalitarians argue, had moved uncritically from one revolutionary enthusiasm to another during the thirty years preceding the critique of totalitarianism. According to antitotalitarian historians such as François Furet, Pierre Rosanvallon, and Jacques Julliard, the remarkably long-lasting blindness of French intellectuals to the repressiveness of communist régimes and the shortcomings of revolutionary politics was due to the longstanding hegemony of the Jacobin revolutionary tradition within French political culture.[2] Intellectuals would only be awakened from the long slumber of their critical faculties by the publication of Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn's *Gulag Archipelago* in 1974. *The Gulag Archipelago*'s revelations regarding commu-

nism, combined with the failure of post-1968 revolutionary politics and the collapse of third-world revolutionary utopias, led French intellectuals to critique communism and revolutionary politics as totalitarian, according to this interpretation.

Rather than test this thesis and explore alternatives to it, historians and other commentators on French intellectual politics have generally accepted it at face value, using it to structure narratives of blindness and awakening that find expression in titles of French works on intellectual politics such as Pierre Rigoulot's *Les Paupières lourdes* (heavy eyelids) and Jeannine Verdès-Leroux's *Le Réveil des somnambules* (the awakening of the sleepwalkers).[3] Scholarly works on the critique of totalitarianism have done little more than recast into academic prose the consciousness of the antitotalitarian moment itself. In this regard they are hardly exceptional. Histories of French intellectual politics and culture since World War II have—no doubt due to the importance of French thought to contemporary historical consciousness in general—too often been constructed around an identification with a privileged intellectual or moment of consciousness that grounds the interpretation.[4] Problematic in the best of cases, this approach has been particularly damaging to historical understanding of the antitotalitarian moment. Because of the broad claims of the critique of totalitarianism, any uncritical identification with it cannot fail to have a significant and potentially distorting impact on the historiography. This is clearly demonstrated by the Anglo-American academic incarnations of this antitotalitarian recasting of French intellectual politics: Sunil Khilnani's *Arguing Revolution* and Tony Judt's *Past Imperfect*.

Sunil Khilnani's *Arguing Revolution* contends that intellectuals after the Liberation "adopted and persisted with the language of revolutionary politics" for reasons that "do not lie in the details of a particular social and economic conjecture."[5] Rather, Khilnani, drawing on Furet, argues that intellectuals used the language of the Jacobin revolutionary tradition because it was *the* tradition of the Left. Further, they were attracted to the French Communist Party (PCF) and the USSR because the former had appropriated this tradition for its political project.[6] For Khilnani, this Jacobin tradition was hegemonic in the French Left and possessed a number of "fundamental traits" that were "fully shared": a culture at the core of which is "the image of the revolution" and "a belief in centralized political power." This Left "focused on questions of political legitimacy rather than forms of rule" and made claims to legitimacy in such universal terms that at critical moments "any divergence or dissent consequently came to be described as betrayal or treason."[7] Because "French liberalism was disabled by the absence of a well-founded tradition of rights discourse and by a feeble conception of the relations between civil society and the modern state," "the arguments of the liberal and non-Communist Left lacked conviction" and French intellectuals, unable to conceive of an alternative, persisted in politics inspired by the Jacobin revolutionary tradition.[8] After the

challenge of 1968 to Jacobin statism threw this political culture into crisis, François Furet offered a way out of the impasse by critiquing the Jacobin tradition as protototalitarian and thereby clearing the path to liberal political thought and moderate, pluralist republicanism.

The interpretive thrust of Tony Judt's *Past Imperfect* is remarkably similar to that of Khilnani's work. Judt also argues against explanations of the postwar politics of French intellectuals by the immediate context.[9] Although he hardly ignores the heritage of the 1930s and the war years, Judt contends that the singularity of French intellectual discourse after the Liberation can ultimately be explained by an "empty space" at the heart of French political thought: the absence of a liberal political tradition.[10] Lacking a tradition that values "negative liberties," liberties of individuals affirmed against the collectivity, French intellectuals could not conceive of grounding their political judgment in Kantian ethics, which Judt holds to be the only viable protection against murderous historicism and nihilistic radicalism.[11] Judt doubts that much changed after 1956. To be sure, he admits that intellectuals abandoned communism after 1956, but for him this resulted in little more than a transfer of allegiances to third-world revolutionary movements. According to Judt, the move away from communism was not accompanied by any serious reflection on it or any distancing from Marxist or utopian perspectives.[12] Even the critique of totalitarianism of the 1970s brought about less change in intellectual politics than is commonly believed because it did not effect the triumph of liberalism in France. Moreover, "it is a rare French thinker who has faced and engaged the real problem with totalitarianism, which is that it is a logical and historical derivative of precisely that universalist vision of republican democracy that still bedazzles so many French thinkers."[13]

Interpretations like those of Judt and Khilnani have placed serious obstacles in the way of our understanding of the critique of totalitarianism. By privileging Furet's analysis as both the key to interpreting the broad sweep of French intellectual politics and the way out of totalitarian politics for the French Left, Judt and Khilnani have rewritten the history of postwar French intellectual politics in an antitotalitarian key and adopted an uncritical perspective on Furet's important role in that history. They have reduced the thirty years between the Liberation and the critique of totalitarianism to the history of an absence—that of liberalism—in French political culture. Unappreciative of political alternatives to liberalism, they have minimized the extra-liberal evolution of French intellectual politics after 1956. Thus, the antitotalitarian moment of the 1970s appears to them, as it does to most other commentators and the antitotalitarian intellectuals themselves, as a sharp—although in Judt's opinion insufficient—break from the essential sameness of more than a quarter century of radical intellectual politics informed by the Jacobin revolutionary tradition.

A critical history of postwar intellectual politics and of the critique of totalitarianism in particular needs to depart from the identificatory

approach, of which Judt and Khilnani offer only the most illustrative examples. It must denaturalize the history and at least temporarily suspend political judgment. It must also recognize that historical processes work in ways that are incoherent or at best ironic from the perspective of political philosophies and treat concepts like totalitarianism and liberalism as historically determined efforts to confront particular problems, not eternally valid concepts that offer ready-made solutions to the problem of historical understanding. Consequently, as a history of the French critique of totalitarianism of the 1970s, this book begins with a denaturalization of the concept of totalitarianism.

*   *   *

Coined by opponents of Italian fascism in 1923 to designate its authoritarianism, the term "totalitarian" (*totalitario*) was embraced by Mussolini and the Italian fascists themselves shortly thereafter to indicate the voluntarism of their movement. (Mussolini spoke in 1925 of the fascists' "fierce totalitarian will.")[14] As the fascist party declined in importance within the régime, the term increasingly referred in fascist usage to the fascist state's domination of society and the individual. Ironically, although the term "totalitarian" has generally been seen to be a more apt description of Nazi Germany than fascist Italy, the Nazis, after toying with the term "total state" advanced by the philosopher Carl Schmitt, rejected its application to their régime. The primacy that the Nazis gave to their movement and the German racial community made the emphasis on the state in the Italian usage of the term "totalitarian" and by the German advocates of the "total state" seem misplaced.[15]

Although the Nazis avoided the appellation "totalitarian" for their régime, its opponents did not; and in the wake of the Nazi seizure of power and the exile of anti-Nazi German intellectuals the term gained general currency throughout Western Europe and the United States. Yet, despite its increasing application to fascist Italy, Nazi Germany, and the Soviet Union beginning in the mid 1930s, the use of the term "totalitarian" was more tentative and suggestive than systematic and analytical before the Cold War.[16] In all its variants—Liberal, Marxist, and Christian—the concept of totalitarianism lacked theoretical elaboration. Further, those who used the concept of totalitarianism did not agree on key issues like the origins of totalitarianism and its fundamental characteristics. Some liberals like Friedrich Hayek believed that totalitarianism was a product of socialist economic planning; others like Hans Kohn viewed totalitarianism as an extreme form of nationalism. Whereas liberals generally saw totalitarianism as a negation of liberalism, some Marxists like Herbert Marcuse held that totalitarianism developed out of liberalism. Christian thinkers like Luigi Sturzo and Jacques Maritain generally interpreted totalitarianism as an anti-Christian "political religion." Finally, little agreement existed on whether or not the Soviet Union should be labeled totalitarian.

Hans Kohn hesitated to do so because he saw communism as rational, universalistic, and non-aggressive in its foreign relations—a development out of the Enlightenment liberal tradition. Communist dictatorship was, Kohn emphasized, transitory in theory. Similar reasoning led Raymond Aron to object to Élie Halévy's assimilation of the Soviet Union to fascism in 1936. On the other hand, anti-Stalinist Marxists such as Victor Serge and Leon Trotsky described the Soviet Union as totalitarian when discussing its authoritarian repression of internal dissent (Serge) or its failure to bring the proletariat to power (Trotsky).[17]

A variety of understandings and usages of the term "totalitarianism" survived into the Cold War. Marcuse's *One Dimensional Man* continued the Marxist tradition of applying the term to liberal capitalism; Waldemar Gurian and others continued to voice the interpretation of totalitarianism as a political religion; and some liberals maintained objections to the term's application to the Soviet Union for reasons similar to those advanced by Kohn as early as 1935. And, there was little agreement on the origins of totalitarianism. Yet, despite the survival of multiple usages and continued debate on important questions, the Cold War saw the distillation of a dominant definition of the concept generally shared by its advocates throughout Western Europe and the United States.[18]

The elaboration of the Cold War understanding of the concept of totalitarianism was largely the product of German speaking émigrés to the United States, whose formulations quickly conquered public and academic discourse in the United States, Great Britain, and the German Federal Republic. Divorced from the antifascist politics that had played a key role in the concept's initial elaboration in the 1920s and 1930s, they developed the concept largely within a liberal political framework. Unlike advocates of the concept in the 1930s who were divided over whether it applied to the Soviet Union, the Cold War theorists focused on communism. Although Nazi Germany remained important to discussions of totalitarianism, fascist Italy did not. Most of the scholarly and polemical literature either ignored it or denied that it was totalitarian. The emphasis on communism shifted the focus of the concept by asserting the central importance of ideology. This contributed to the instrumentalization of the concept in relation to the Cold War.

Two books were key to the making of the Cold War concept of totalitarianism: Hannah Arendt's *The Origins of Totalitarianism* and Carl Friedrich and Zbigniew Brzezinski's *Totalitarian Dictatorship and Autocracy*.[19] On the surface *The Origins of Totalitarianism* and *Totalitarian Dictatorship and Autocracy* offer very different approaches to the issue of totalitarianism. Arendt's analysis is a wide-ranging, philosophically informed search for the origins of totalitarianism, which comes up with an essentialist definition of totalitarianism. For Arendt, totalitarianism's essence is terror that seeks to destroy the autonomous individual in order to establish the reign of an ideology. Friedrich and Brzezinski's book, by contrast, is unconcerned

with totalitarianism's origins and offers a phenomenological definition of totalitarian dictatorships as régimes that share six traits: "an official [totalitarian] ideology," "a single mass party led typically by one man," "a system of terroristic police control," "a technologically conditioned near-complete monopoly of control" of mass communication, "a similarly technologically conditioned near-complete monopoly of control" of armed combat, and "central control and direction of the entire economy."[20] Perhaps most importantly, Arendt differs from Friedrich and Brzezinski in her understanding of power in totalitarian régimes. For Friedrich and Brzezinski totalitarian régimes are monolithic. Within them decisions are made at the top and blindly executed by those below the leader in the state and party. For Arendt, totalitarian régimes are essentially shapeless, with constantly shifting lines of authority and centers of power acting in service of totalitarian ideology.

Despite these differences, the two books' analyses of totalitarianism are significantly convergent, especially when compared to the diversity of pre-Cold War analyses. Both consider totalitarian régimes sui generis, focus on Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union under Stalin, and give little attention to fascist Italy. [21] Differences between the Nazi and Stalinist régimes are given short shrift in analyses that focus on their apparent similarities. Both give pride of place to ideology in interpretations that consider totalitarianism to be most fundamentally the result of an effort to make history conform to a utopian ideology. Remaking the world in the image of ideology requires massive, essentially arbitrary terror that does not solely strike real opponents of the régime and only increases over time. Rather than appeal to the interests of the people, totalitarian régimes rule through ubiquitous terror and propaganda, which destroy all opposition, atomize the population, make resistance and reform virtually impossible, and eventually forge mass support for their policies. Externally, totalitarian régimes are naturally expansionist; their ideology requires nothing less than world domination. The practical policy conclusions are sobering. Arendt, who compares the consequences for humanity of an eventual victory of totalitarian rule to those of the hydrogen bomb, calls war against totalitarianism "necessary war" and argues that "the politically most important yardstick for judging events in our time" is "whether they serve totalitarian domination or not." Friedrich and Brzezinski consider that "the possibility of peaceful coexistence of the nations peopling the world presupposes the disappearance of totalitarian dictatorships"; "those who reject the system have no alternative but to strive for its destruction."[22]

Ironically, precisely when these books brought the concept of totalitarianism into its Cold War heyday in the United States, West Germany, and Great Britain, conditions were emerging in the Soviet Union that would cast doubt on the concept's validity. The end of mass terror, the relative liberalization of Soviet cultural life under Khrushchev, the emergence of dissidence after his ouster in 1964, and then the transformation of Bolshevik

ideology into a justification of the staid power and privilege of the Nomen-klatura under Brezhnev all dramatically contradicted the Cold War concept of totalitarianism's understanding of terror, ideology, and the space available to dissent in the Soviet Union. At the same time, the emergence of détente in U.S.-Soviet relations belied predictions of the Soviet Union's expansionist drive. Criticisms of the moralizing tone of the totalitarianism literature in the early 1960s culminated in a forceful attack on the literature's justificatory function for U.S. foreign policy during the Vietnam War. All of these factors led scholars in those countries where the Cold War concept of totalitarianism had reigned supreme to question, modify, and in many cases repudiate the concept.[23]

Perhaps the most dramatic revisions were among the original formulators and advocates of the concept. In her introduction to the 1966 edition of *The Origins of Totalitarianism* Arendt, pointing to the important changes enumerated above, argued that Stalin's death had been "decisive" and that "the Soviet Union can no longer be called totalitarian in the strict sense of the term." Concerned about the Cold War misuse of the concept, she also argued against its application to all communist régimes.[24] While Arendt felt no need to revise her theory in light of recent events—despite her theory's absolute inability to account for the Soviet Union's post-Stalinist evolution—Friedrich and Brzezinski did rethink the concept. In the 1965 edition of *Totalitarian Dictatorship and Democracy*, revised by Friedrich alone, Friedrich significantly diluted their interpretation, writing notably that it is "not tenable" to argue "that totalitarian régimes will become more and more total." Friedrich de-emphasized secret police terror, added psychic and party-controlled terror to his definition of totalitarianism, and argued that the emergence of a substantial, coerced consensus behind the régime made overt terror less necessary. In a 1967 conference paper, Friedrich took this revision even further, substantially normalizing totalitarian régimes by arguing that they "will probably resemble other governments so far as their ends or objectives are concerned" and "that totalitarian dictatorship, like other political phenomena, is a relative rather than an absolute category."[25] As his nonparticipation in the revision of *Totalitarian Dictatorship and Autocracy* indicates, Brzezinski drifted away from using the concept to describe contemporary Soviet reality in the 1960s and 1970s, arguing that the syndrome of traits that he and Friedrich had enumerated in 1956 was insufficient to identify totalitarian régimes. "Institutionalized revolutionary zeal" aimed at transforming society was, he now argued, the "essence" of totalitarianism. Although Brzezinski continued to hold that the Soviet Union under Stalin had been totalitarian, he argued that totalitarianism had come to an end after Stalin's death when the party ceased efforts to revolutionize society, leaving the surviving totalitarian elements of the political system dysfunctional to the new Soviet system.[26]

Within American, West German, and British academia, Friedrich's efforts to modify the concept of totalitarianism so that it could still apply

to the contemporary Soviet Union were not successful. His successive revisions deprived the concept of coherency and raised the suspicion that Friedrich was motivated by a desire to be able, as Frederick Fleron wrote in 1967, to "continue to pin a 'boo' label on a 'boo' system of government."[27] Sovietologists moving away from the concept of totalitarianism embraced comparative political frameworks and increasingly analyzed the contemporary Soviet Union with the same concepts as they used with other régimes. Robert Tucker argued as early as 1960 for the comparison of the Soviet Union with other "revolutionary mass-movement régimes under single-party auspices," a challenge taken up by Richard Lowenthal, who analyzed the Soviet Union as a form of "dictatorship of development." H. Gordon Skilling studied contemporary Soviet politics in terms of the interaction of interest groups, an approach Jerry Hough developed further into what he called "institutional pluralism," which explicitly compared the Soviet and Western democratic political systems and minimized differences in political participation between the two.[28]

While most political scientists limited their revisionist interpretations to the post-Stalinist period, histories of Stalinism implicitly and explicitly challenged the applicability of the concept of totalitarianism to it by showing the complexities of relations between the party-state and society and the confused and improvised nature of party-state action. Moshe Lewin argued as early as 1965 that the collectivization of agriculture, which totalitarian theory considered to be dictated by ideology, was largely improvised. Later, in the 1980s, J. Arch Getty would similarly contend that the indecision and chaos of the Great Purge indicate that it was probably not the product of a master plan dictated by Stalin. In fact, Getty argued that it was a largely improvised affair in which party officials on different levels played an important role. Sheila Fitzpatrick's studies of social and cultural life made the case that Soviet society was not passive in Stalin's revolution from above. Because, for example, Stalin's policies offered real prospects of social mobility to workers, many could support them out of interest rather than propaganda or terror, Fitzpatrick argued.[29]

Although the concept of totalitarianism enjoyed a revival in the 1980s and after the collapse of communism, it remains a profoundly problematic and ultimately unhelpful concept for understanding the Nazi and Soviet dictatorships for two fundamental reasons. First, it misinterprets relations between the party-state and society in supposedly totalitarian régimes. Second, the concept of totalitarianism's explicit comparison between the Soviet and Nazi régimes insists on their essential sameness, when in fact the differences between the régimes outweigh their similarities.

Recent research on Nazi Germany has made a total hash of the totalitarianism theory's understanding of its internal dynamics. Nazi Terror has been shown to be neither total, nor ubiquitous, nor indiscriminate. Most ordinary Germans had little to fear from it. Terror targeted the political, racial, and social enemies of the régime and posed little threat to the pop-

ulation at large, even when their transgressions were brought to the attention of the authorities. Further, ordinary Germans generally supported terror because they saw it as in their interests. Indeed, terror against the régime's enemies relied on citizen denunciations to such an extent that some historians have argued that German society under the Nazis was largely self-policing and the Gestapo "reactive."[30] Similarly, the participation of police battalion members in the Holocaust has been shown to be uncoerced. Whether one accepts the explanation of this behavior by Goldhagen as a consequence of a tradition of German eliminationist anti-Semitism that predates the Nazis or by Browning as a result of a combination of conformity, deference to authority, and wartime brutalization, in neither case is "totalitarianism" a factor.[31] Many historians now believe that the Nazi régime enjoyed a substantial active consensus that was neither coerced by terror nor imposed by brainwashing propaganda. Propaganda worked to the extent that it matched "everyday German understandings." The régime won converts for its successes, notably increasing employment, reversing the Versailles settlement in the 1930s, and then conquering much of Europe between 1938 and 1941.[32] Indeed, it is hard not to conclude that many Germans supported the Nazi effort to build a racial empire precisely because they saw it as in their interests. The persecution and then genocide of the Jews gave Germans the opportunity to profit from "Aryanization"; war brought both plundered goods and plundered labor, which gave "even the most incompetent dullard" a chance to "lord … over Poles and Russians"; and racial policy gave welfare benefits to Germans deemed to be racially worthy.[33]

Although scholarship on the history of Stalinist Russia is not as advanced as that on Nazi Germany, the first works that have appeared after the archives began to open following the collapse of the Soviet Union tend—without supporting all of the earlier claims of the revisionists—to confirm criticisms of the concept of totalitarianism. Research has shown that there was no master plan for the terror that by fits and starts followed the assassination of Kirov in 1934 and that the terror was not aimed at atomizing the population or frightening it into passivity. Rather, the terror, far from being random, targeted specific sectors of the population perceived, by the régime and also by much of the population, to include real enemies of the régime. Although the amount of terror was greater in the Stalinist Soviet Union than Nazi Germany, it seems likely that most of the population did not feel threatened by it, if only because it largely focused on the Soviet elite and the everyday presence of the party-state on the ground was relatively weak. Further, the terror offered the population opportunities to criticize local conditions and leaders and obtain redress of grievances as long as criticism did not turn against the national leadership or the régime. Only during the Great Purges of 1937-38, when a hysterical proliferation of accusations, arrests, and executions resulted in a situation of complete chaos, does it appear likely that the ordinary Soviet citizen

feared arrest. Yet, when the Great Purges ended in the fall of 1938 the régime publicly criticized their excesses—something a régime bent on terrorizing the entire population would not have done. Studies of peasants and workers under Stalin reveal that neither was cowed by terror or brainwashed by propaganda. In the relatively fluid situation in the countryside during and after collectivization, peasants stubbornly fought for their interests and obtained concessions from the régime in some instances. Justifiably bitter over the violence of collectivization and their second-class status in its aftermath, peasants would only be reconciled with the régime after the reforms of the Khrushchev and Brezhnev eras substantially increased the collective farmers' standard of living. Workers, benefiting from the high demand for labor in the 1930s, foiled government efforts to control them through harsh legislation and were able to obtain improvements in living and working conditions by criticizing local officials. Although—unlike Nazi Germany—the Soviet Union did not have a popular consensus behind it in the 1930s, it clearly enjoyed support or at least acquiescence from significant sectors of the urban population in spite of (or perhaps even because they believed in the correctness of) the régime's coercion.[34]

Incapable of accounting for the internal dynamics of Nazi Germany and Stalinist Russia, the concept of totalitarianism is no less a failure as a basis for a comparison between these two régimes that asserts their essential similarity. Indeed, comparison has increasingly revealed fundamental differences between the two régimes. The Nazis came to power with the acquiescence of the existing elites in an advanced industrial country with a democratic political system. Once in power, they worked with old régime elites while attempting to construct a racial utopia, notably by systematically exterminating the Jewish people and waging a war of racial conquest. Justified by an exclusionary anti-Enlightenment biological and racial ideology and Hitler's charismatic authority, racial domination became the primary focus of the régime during World War II. The Bolsheviks, by contrast, came to power in a backward country through a coup d'état and civil war following the collapse of the autocratic old régime. Adhering to a universalistic and humanistic Enlightenment philosophy of emancipation, the Bolsheviks swept aside the old régime's elite and attempted to build socialism through a state-controlled modernization of the country. Although the carnage wrought by Stalinism was enormous, the Stalinist Soviet Union—unlike Nazi Germany—sought neither the extermination of entire biologically-defined categories of people ("the liquidation of the Kulaks as a class" being rather different from the genocide of the Jews) nor a war of conquest. Its goals were more limited and rational. Further, neither terror nor Stalin's charismatic rule were—again unlike terror and Hitler's charisma in Nazi Germany—immanent to the Soviet régime. Whereas terror directed against those deemed racially inferior was arguably intrinsic to the Nazi régime, terror largely came to an end in the Soviet Union following the death of Stalin. And, while Hitler embodied

Nazism, Stalin was more a product of the system and the Stalin cult unessential to it. The Soviet Union would, of course, survive Stalin. Its emancipatory, Enlightenment ideology would arguably contribute to the relative liberalization of the régime after Stalin's death and helps explain why the Soviet Union and Central European communist régimes came to a relatively peaceful end in contrast to the Nazi *Götterdämmerung*.[35]

Given that the concept of totalitarianism was at a low point in its Cold War homelands in the mid 1970s and that there were then and still remain important cognitive reasons to reject it, the French critique of totalitarianism of the 1970s is puzzling. Why would French intellectuals turn to the concept of totalitarianism to describe not only the Stalinist, but also the contemporary Soviet Union (as well as Marxist and revolutionary politics in general) when their homologues in other Western countries were abandoning it? A comparison of the Cold War uses of the concept of totalitarianism in Western Europe and the United States helps us begin to answer this question. As we shall see, throughout the Cold War the concept of totalitarianism was highly instrumentalized, and its instrumentalization varied considerably from country to country. Although developments within communist countries have impacted receptivity to the concept of totalitarianism, in no case has there been a one-to-one correspondence between the two. Everywhere, the international situation and the domestic political resonance of the concept have been important to determining its success.

In the United States the fortunes of the concept of totalitarianism have been very closely related to developments in the international situation. Usage of the term to describe both Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union, although increasingly common in the late 1930s, became the norm after the Nazi-Soviet Pact of August 1939. The invasion of the Soviet Union by the Nazis in June 1941 partially reversed this trend until the growth of tensions between the Soviet Union and the United States after the war renewed the attractiveness of the concept. President Truman adopted the term when he announced the Truman Doctrine in March 1947, making the fight against "totalitarianism" the focus of U.S. foreign policy. "Totalitarianism" would enter American law in 1950 with the McCarran Internal Security Act, which barred "totalitarians" from entering the country. Détente and then criticism of U.S. foreign policy in Vietnam—which was justified by the concept of totalitarianism—were at least as important as change within the Soviet Union to the move away from the concept in the 1960s and 1970s. Likewise, the renewal of Cold War tensions in the early 1980s contributed to a revival of the concept despite the fact that, by any objective measure, the communist world was becoming less totalitarian and not more so.[36]

The concept of totalitarianism was invaluable to American foreign policy after World War II. In the insightful analysis of Herbert Spiro and Benjamin Barber, "it explained and it rationalized American policy in terms

which both preserved America's pragmatic self-image *and* carried a moral conviction which pragmatism itself lacked." Crucial to legitimizing the United States's abandonment of isolationism, the theory of totalitarianism also helped America explain communist behavior and American difficulties in the developing world as well as justify the reversal of the wartime alliance, the use of force in foreign relations, and support for friendly non-communist dictators.[37] The close connection between the concept of totalitarianism and American foreign policy needs is reflected in the profile of Soviet Studies during the Cold War. The field was dominated by people who came to it out of an interest in national security and not "an intellectual passion for Russian-Soviet civilization." Indeed, according to Stephen Cohen, many hated their subject. Connections between Soviet Studies programs and the government were close. The federal government and private foundations heavily subsidized Soviet Studies, and many Soviet Studies graduates worked for the federal government. The loyalty-security crusade of the early Cold War kept the profession relatively free of, or intimidated those with, unorthodox views.[38]

Although the fortunes of the concept of totalitarianism rose and fell with the fever chart of the Cold War, this does not mean that it was unimportant in American domestic politics. Antitotalitarianism, which had become synonymous with anticommunism by the 1950s, was used to justify the marginalization and repression of dissident and progressive movements of all varieties, to promote religion and morality against godless, immoral communism, and—in its Hayekian version—to defeat social-democratic policy options. There can be no doubt that the retreat from the concept of totalitarianism in the 1960s and its revival in the early 1980s had domestic political causes as first the New Left fought against and then the neoconservatives fought for a concept that restricted political possibilities.[39]

Much more than any other postwar European state, the German Federal Republic (BRD) was a product of the Cold War and an anticommunism that blended into antitotalitarianism. The June 1948 currency reform and the May 1949 promulgation of the Basic Law that founded the BRD followed directly out of American Cold War decisions, and anticommunism played a central role in the 1949 *Bundestag* elections, in which socialist economic options were roundly defeated. Anticommunism also dominated the rearmament debate of the early 1950s, which resulted in the second founding of the BRD in 1955 when the Treaty of Paris granted it near-complete sovereignty in return for Cold War rearmament within the framework of NATO. Although the German Social Democratic Party (SPD) initially opposed rearmament and German integration into NATO and often suffered politically from the Right's assimilation of it to communism, it, like the ruling Christian Democratic Party (CDU), was anticommunist. Anticommunism was shared by all the major political forces in Germany. According to Andrei S. Markovits, until the late 1960s "virtually all public discourse in the Federal Republic was engulfed by an anticommunism

bordering on an article of faith if not outright hysteria."[40] The German Communist Party suffered the consequences; it was banned for twelve years beginning in 1956.

The theory of totalitarianism not only justified the anticommunist identity of the BRD, but it also worked on the Nazi past. The equivalency that the theory of totalitarianism established between Nazism and communism downplayed the significance of the former and served, like contemporaneous explanations of Nazism by Hitler's evil genius, to exculpate the West German elite and institutions by minimizing their role in and personal responsibility for the Nazi régime.[41] By giving priority to the mobilization of the BRD against the new totalitarian enemy to the East, the theory of totalitarianism helped halt denazification and shift the emphasis of reeducation from uprooting Nazism to combating communism. As in the United States, during the 1950s the theory of totalitarianism not only was hegemonic in scholarly circles, but also penetrated deeply into society, occupying a central place in the secondary school curricula, for example. Further, the concept of totalitarianism contributed to the formation of a postwar West German identity as a victim nation by making Germans the victims of the totalitarian designs of a handful of Nazis and by turning the suffering of German POWs and women in the hands of the Soviet Union into the equivalent of "the suffering of 'victims of the Germans'" during World War II. Consequently, in Germany, as in the United States, Cold War theorizing about totalitarianism helped marginalize the Holocaust in historical consciousness. [42]

Given its role in the very constitution of the BRD, the concept of totalitarianism would find itself severely challenged by the general crisis of the postwar order in the late 1960s. The New Left's questioning of postwar domestic and international political structures, of the dominant memory of World War II, and of the consumer culture that thrived during the great economic expansion of the 1950s and 1960s all undermined the legitimacy of the concept of totalitarianism, which some German scholars like Christian Ludz had begun to question as early as 1961. Anticommunism and the theory of totalitarianism seemed to the New Left to play a system-legitimizing and exculpatory role for both American foreign policy in Vietnam and the BRD's social and political order. Looking back on the Nazi past and seeing the older generation more as "perpetrators of fascism" than "survivors of totalitarianism,"[43] the New Left indignantly protested that the BRD was—as the presence of former Nazis in positions of power indicated—based on the abandonment of denazification and the cement of anticommunism. Even consumer society, the culture of the *Wirtschaftswunder*, was accused of serving to divert Germany from a reckoning with the Nazi period. For the writer Heinrich Böll the currency reform of June 1948 marked the end of hopes placed in *Stunde Null* and the beginning of German amnesia as it embraced prosperity.[44] In Reiner Werner Fassbinder's masterful and enormously popular 1978 film *The Marriage of Maria Braun*,

the revival of an unreformed Germany through the *Wirtschaftswunder* has consequences that are nothing short of apocalyptic.[45] Encouraged by a normalization of relations with Eastern Europe and a new acceptance of German responsibility for World War II brought about by Willy Brandt's *Ostpolitik*, anti-anticommunism and *Faschismustheorien*—which emphasized the responsibility of the German elite and the continuity between the Third Reich and the BRD—became *de rigueur* within the West German New Left.[46] Although the theory of totalitarianism and narratives of German victimhood were revived in the *Historikerstreit* of the mid 1980s, the West German intellectual Left remained steadfastly opposed to both right up to the collapse of communism in Eastern Europe.[47]

In Italy, like France, the fate of the concept of totalitarianism was determined much more by domestic politics, notably that surrounding the Italian Communist Party (PCI). Italy had a strong communist party after World War II, and although its Cold War political opponents attacked it as totalitarian, the concept of totalitarianism failed to gain wider legitimacy. Friedrich and Brzezinski's *Totalitarian Democracy and Autocracy* never appeared in Italian, and Arendt's *The Origins of Totalitarianism* was published in an Italian edition only in 1967. The historian of Italian fascism and critic of the PCI Renzo De Felice claimed in 1975 that no serious discussion of the concept of totalitarianism had occurred in Italy. The concept, he noted, "remained an analysis for a handful of specialists who for the most part rejected it." This failure of the concept of totalitarianism was largely attributable, De Felice argued, to the "cultural hegemony of the Communist party." [48]

If Italy, unlike France, did not experience a critique of totalitarianism in the 1970s, it can largely be explained by the PCI's moderation. After 1956 the PCI distinguished itself from the French Communist Party (PCF) by its greater independence from the Soviet Union, commitment to democratic politics, and respect for intellectuals. The PCI moved toward polycentrism in international communism after 1956 and developed "a strategy based on acceptance of the republican constitution and parliamentary democracy," leading it to sharply criticize the 1968 Soviet intervention in and subsequent normalization of Czechoslovakia, the 1979 invasion of Afghanistan, and the 1981 declaration of martial law in Poland. When student protest erupted in the late 1960s the PCI was relatively open to it, and in the 1970s it "opened up to the representatives of Marxist dissent" and abandoned "any attempt to dictate to intellectuals." Seeing in the PCI a means to increase their influence in society, many Italian intellectuals aligned themselves, if only superficially, with the party in the mid 1970s. The PCI's approach reflected a commitment since the end of World War II to a broad penetration of Italian national life, which received even greater emphasis with the party's "historic compromise" of 1973-79, an attempt—in accordance with the lessons that PCI leader Enrico Berlinguer drew from Italian politics after World War I, the contemporary extreme right's

strategy of tension, and the overthrow of the Allende government in Chile—to fend off the threat of fascism and establish the respectability of the PCI. The PCI's "historic compromise" led it to moderate its politics and support first tacitly and then actively the Christian Democratic led governments of the years 1976-79. Although the PCI enjoyed some initially spectacular electoral successes, the end result was a disaster for the party. Implicated in unpopular and repressive government policies and falling short of obtaining political power, the PCI quickly lost credibility and was increasingly criticized from the Left for taking a social-democratic turn.[49]

Because of the choices made by the PCI, when it came under attack in the late 1970s, 1980s, and beyond the emphasis was on antifascism and the party's role in the wartime Resistance—which had initially established its credibility as a mass, national, and democratic party and had been the foundation of much of the rhetoric of the historic compromise. The extreme Left attacked the PCI for having repeated its supposed 1940s betrayal of revolution in the 1970s. The Right, on the other hand, contested the PCI's attempt to claim legitimacy by appealing to Resistance antifascism. De Felice began the assault in late 1987 when he charged that antifascism blocked political reform and "was used by the communists to assume a patina of democracy." De Felice elaborated on these charge in his *Rosso e Nero* (1996), in which he contended that politically motivated communist violence during the Resistance and the hand of Moscow in PCI Resistance decisions undermined the PCI claim to be a national and democratic party. Although this reevaluation of the Resistance quickly led to the charge that the PCI was totalitarian, the focus was always on the history of Resistance and the foundation of the postwar Italian Republic, not totalitarianism.[50]

The relative failure of the concept of totalitarianism in Italy may also be a consequence of its limited utility for the Italian Right. Whereas in West Germany it served to exculpate the elite and—in the recent work of Ernst Nolte—even the Nazis to some extent, in Italy the comparative dimension of the concept of totalitarianism—like that of the concept of fascism—threatened to implicate Italian fascism and the Italian elite in the crimes of Nazism. Thus, Renzo De Felice was very careful in his revisionist interpretation of fascist Italy to highlight the differences between Italian fascism and German Nazism, holding notably that "Italian Fascism is sheltered from the accusation of genocide, and quite outside the shadow [of guilt] for the Holocaust."[51] Throughout his career he rejected the classic theory of totalitarianism because it "concludes by reducing fascism, Nazism, and communism … to a common denominator that I do not accept."[52] When De Felice finally described Italian fascism of the late 1930s as totalitarian in the fifth volume of his monumental biography of Mussolini published in 1981, he rejected all existing theories of totalitarianism because they gave insufficient attention to the differences between fascist Italy and Nazi Germany or the Stalinist Soviet Union. Mussolini's totalitarianism, he insisted in terms that made it seem almost benign, was

more "moral" than "repressive."[53] Perhaps because of the contortions required to separate fascist Italy from other régimes considered to be totalitarian, De Felice's "analysis of totalitarianism," his student Emilio Gentile would later say, "remained rudimentary and was not always clearly or coherently defined."[54]

France was similar to Italy in that domestic politics was the primary determinant of the concept of totalitarianism's reception. The Cold War—although important—was much less constitutive of the postwar domestic order in France than in West Germany or even Italy. And, unlike the United States, where the Cold War was a crusade at the center of foreign policy, the French "experienced the Cold War simultaneously as a necessity, a bother and an opportunity."[55] It was a necessity insofar as the French government saw no alternative to supporting the Western Alliance; it was a bother in that it complicated efforts to pursue national goals such as dealing with the German menace; and it was an opportunity because in instances like the French war in Indochina it occasionally allowed France to harness American power in support of French interests. In any case, French national leaders were generally not comfortable with the bipolar nature of the Cold War and often sought to escape its logic in order to find room to maneuver internationally. The theory of totalitarianism, which emphasized this bipolar logic, could not serve as a foundation for their foreign policy. Thus, not surprisingly, French studies of the Soviet Union after World War II did not emerge out of an interest in national security (as was the case in the United States); rather, communism as a model with possible political relevance for France was more often the stake of research. Many, if not most, French students of the Soviet Union had been either fellow travelers of communism or communist party members at one point or another.[56]

It was the possibility of communism at home, notably because of the strength of the French Communist Party (PCF), that gave the concept of totalitarianism some resonance in France. All major political parties accused the PCF of being totalitarian after it was excluded from the government in 1947, yet the concept failed to conquer the academy or wider intellectual circles and did not gain a central place in the secondary school curriculum. Raymond Aron, the primary French exponent of the concept, failed to convert other intellectuals to it. Friedrich and Brzezinski's *Totalitarian Dictatorship and Autocracy*, although introduced to a French audience by Aron's 1957-58 lectures at the Sorbonne, was never published in French.[57] Despite Arendt's efforts to find a French publisher, her *Origins of Totalitarianism* did not appear in a complete French translation until 1984.[58] If the concept of totalitarianism was far less successful in France than in West Germany or the United States in the early Cold War, this had much to do with the strength and legitimacy of the PCF as well as with the French intellectual Left's hopes for radical change. The PCF deployed its considerable postwar influence against the concept of totalitarianism; and

French intellectuals, who saw the PCF as a necessary partner in—if not always a preferred agent of—a revolutionary transition to socialism, could hardly countenance the ostracization of the PCF that accepting the concept of totalitarianism would entail.

The fate of the concept of totalitarianism in France turned largely on the relationship between left-wing intellectuals and the PCF. Unlike the PCI, the PCF failed to establish distance between itself and the Soviet Union or pursue a moderate politics that might have sheltered it from the charge of totalitarianism. And whereas in West Germany and the United States "New Left"[59] politics undermined the legitimacy of the concept of totalitarianism, in France it prepared the ground for antitotalitarianism by turning left-wing intellectuals against the PCF after 1956. The PCF did much to encourage the growth of intellectual hostility toward it. Its support of the repression of the Hungarian Revolution, its *ouvriérisme*—which gave intellectuals little power or independence—its failure to lead the opposition to the Algerian War, and its hostility to the student movement in 1968 all fed "New Left" critiques of communism. Furthermore, when received ideas about the French experience during World War II were questioned, the PCF was deemed guilty of manipulating antifascism to its benefit and cooperating with de Gaulle in the erection of a "resistancialist" myth that minimized the significance of Vichy in French history and exaggerated the importance of the Resistance.[60] Yet, unlike in West Germany, French debates about World War II were not central to those on the concept of totalitarianism. The concept was hardly used in the important discussion of Vichy in the 1970s and 1980s.[61] The French discussion of totalitarianism focused almost exclusively on communism and made little reference to the existing international scholarship on the topic. The narrow focus and provincial character of the French critique of totalitarianism can be explained by its emergence in the heated debate about contemporary French communism in those years. In the 1970s the PCF allied with the Socialist Party (PS) in a Union of the Left, which promised to institute socialism when it came to power. The electoral success of this coalition led French intellectuals of the Left to fear that the PCF, which in their mind had changed little since the Stalinist era, would impose a repressive form of socialism in France similar to that then existing in Eastern Europe. The critique of totalitarianism was developed to combat this perceived threat.

This comparison between developments in the United States, West Germany, Italy, and France has suggested that the concept of totalitarianism's implantation has a variable geography that is largely determined by the concept's instrumentalization. The concept's instrumentalization and consequent implantation varied in relation to the politics of the Cold War and domestic communism in each country. Especially given that the concept of totalitarianism seems to be more the product of local political agendas than cool reflection, its history is more political than intellectual history. Further, because the concept's history is inseparable from its instrumen-

talization, it cannot be written as an intellectual morality tale of objectively justified adhesions to and politically motivated deviations from an apparently evident truth about régimes deemed to be totalitarian.[62] Nor is it possible, following Judt and Khilnani, to write its history in terms of intellectuals' failure to embrace a particular political philosophy or culture. Rather than focus on absences (either of objectivity or of a favored political tradition), this book seeks to explain the history of French intellectuals' critique of totalitarianism of the 1970s by focusing on the concrete political problems faced by intellectuals and the resources that they used to confront them.

To fully situate the critique of totalitarianism, establish its significance, and rectify antitotalitarian misreadings of recent history, the story begins in chapter 1 with an examination of the evolution of French intellectuals' political projects, notably their initial attachment to and then evolution away from communism, between the Liberation and the mid 1970s. Left-wing intellectuals' support for the French Communist Party (PCF), the Soviet Union, and revolutionary violence was moderated by a serious commitment to the preservation of liberty within socialism and the revolutionary project that informed the evolution of intellectual politics during and after the first heady postwar decade. In the latter half of the 1950s events in communist Eastern Europe, the Algerian War, and the coming of the Fifth Republic had a profound impact on intellectual politics. Khrushchev's secret speech and the crushing of the Hungarian Revolution in 1956 decisively compromised the image of the Soviet Union, while the failure of the PCF to de-Stalinize and adequately resist either the Algerian War or the coming of the Fifth Republic distanced left-wing intellectuals from it. More profoundly, the PCF's failures were often understood to be those of the working class, which appeared increasingly less revolutionary; and the conduct of the Algerian War brought the entire political class and the state into question. In reaction to these events intellectuals gave the revolutionary project a direct-democratic orientation and recast the revolutionary subject so as to ensure that revolution secured and extended liberty and democracy. The direct-democratic alternative resonated with French political traditions going back to the French Revolution of 1789. Long attractive to French intellectuals who saw in it a means to restore, however briefly, both the autonomy of the individual and the collective will and thereby purify and regenerate politics,[63] direct democracy was additionally appealing in this period because it offered intellectuals a politics appropriate to their growing power in the mass media that allowed them to bypass the political elite and directly address the people.

The year 1968 renewed hopes for revolution and gave the intellectual Left's politics a profoundly anti-authoritarian, anti-institutional, and direct-democratic orientation that—although indebted to the efforts to rethink revolution after 1956—was substantially new in the depth of its democratic and libertarian exigencies. Given expression in redefinitions of the intel-

lectual by Jean-Marie Domenach, Michel Foucault, and Jean-Paul Sartre, as well as in projects such as the Groupe d'information sur les prisons and the newspaper *Libération*, these exigencies outlasted the revolutionary tide and ensured that the revolutionary movement would not be sustained once the élan of 1968 had dissipated. At the extreme, post-1968 intellectual politics developed into a late *gauchisme* marked by its refusal to countenance the exercise of political power. This new intellectual politics and the deepening of long-standing critiques of communism and revolution after 1968 put intellectuals on a collision course with the Socialist and Communist parties, which formed a Union of the Left in 1972 on the basis of a Common Program of Government advocating a state-centered socialism. The critique of totalitarianism reflected in both its radicalism and themes not an absolute reversal of intellectual politics attributable to the shock of Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn's *Gulag Archipelago* or the collapse of third-world revolutionary utopias but rather the profundity of the chasm separating intellectual politics marked by a diffuse post-1968 *gauchisme* in disarray from that of the parties of the Left rapidly advancing toward political power.

Indeed, the close look at the reception of Solzhenitsyn's *Gulag Archipelago* in chapter 2 reveals that it did not have a decisive impact on French intellectuals' evaluations of communism, if only because it was not received as a revelation. It was not *The Gulag Archipelago*'s content, but the PCF's attack on the book and its defenders and, more broadly, concern that the communists were trying to control the Union of the Left that worried French intellectuals and constituted the Solzhenitsyn affair of 1974. To the extent that intellectuals like Claude Lefort and André Glucksmann found inspiration in Solzhenitsyn's tomes, their reading of him was heavily filtered through their own late *gauchiste* politics. To be sure, references to Solzhenitsyn and the metaphor of the gulag were ubiquitous in the antitotalitarian politics of the late 1970s, but that reflected their usefulness in political battles within the Left, not *The Gulag Archipelago*'s revelatory impact.

Chapter 3 traces relations between intellectuals and the Union of the Left from 1972 to the emergence of the critique of totalitarianism in 1975. Incompatible with the direct-democratic tendencies of French intellectual politics, this alliance and its program were received coldly by noncommunist intellectuals from their inception. Intellectuals feared that the PCF's "Stalinist" politics made it a threat to democracy, and they rejected the Common Program's state-centered approach to building socialism. In 1975 these reservations led them to elaborate a critique of totalitarianism in reaction to two developments within the French Left: the PCF's ideological offensive against the PS beginning in October 1974 and the PCF's response to developments in the Portuguese Revolution in the summer of 1975. The PCF's actions and the PS's measured response to them led many French intellectuals to fear that the communists were, although losing the battle for electoral influence within the Left, becoming ideologically hegemonic within it. The communists would, they argued in an analysis that

rejected the Mitterrandist understanding of the dynamic within the Left in terms of power, call the shots in a future coalition government of the Left even if the socialists were the larger party. First emerging in the autumn of 1975 among the intellectuals associated with the journal *Esprit*, the critique of totalitarianism soon spread throughout the intellectual Left.

One of the ways in which intellectuals waged their antitotalitarian campaign against the PCF was, we see in chapter 4, by protesting against repression by Eastern European communist régimes. Protest against this repression was not entirely new. Beginning with the crushing of the Hungarian Revolution in 1956, left-wing intellectuals had raised their voices in order to highlight the difference between their vision of a socialism that respects liberty and the socialism practiced beyond the iron curtain and advocated by the PCF. Analyzing the campaigns against Czechoslovakian "normalization" and in favor of the release of the Soviet dissidents Leonid Plyushch and Vladimir Bukovski, this chapter shows that protest intensified in the 1970s because of intellectuals' fears that the Union of the Left threatened liberty in France and reached new heights in 1977, when it appeared likely that the Left would win the 1978 legislative elections. The confrontation with the Union of the Left also forced an evolution of the politics of protest as intellectuals sought more vigorously to ensure the future of liberty in France. In 1976 protest previously motivated by the ambition of reconciling socialism and liberty was replaced by protest divorced from the socialist project that turned increasingly in an anticommunist and antitotalitarian direction. In 1977 fear of the threat posed by the PCF to liberty and the new emphasis on Eastern European dissidence made possible the emergence of the French "dissident" intellectual who presented himself or herself as dissident vis-à-vis the possible future French government of the Left.

Chapter 5 examines the significance of 1977, the year of the new philosophers, dissidence, and the crisis of Marxism in French intellectual politics. Although new philosophers such as André Glucksmann and Bernard-Henri Lévy were skillful in their use of the mass media, they and their pessimistic political philosophies were able to occupy the center stage of French politics, intellectual or otherwise, in 1977-78 above all because they played on fears of a Left victory in the 1978 legislative elections and were either supported or at least tolerated by prominent figures on the French intellectual scene who shared their fears of the parties of the Left. This chapter's in-depth study of the debate about the new philosophers reveals that by 1977 a large number of intellectuals of the non-communist Left—such as Jean-Marie Domenach, Michel Foucault, and Philippe Sollers, for example—either embraced or tolerated the conclusion that communism, Marxism, and revolution were totalitarian. Further, those who rejected this conclusion—such as Claude Mauriac, Jean Elleinstein, and Nicos Poulantzas, for example—had lost all ability to define the agenda in intellectual politics. This chapter also shows the extent to which

the content of intellectuals' analyses of totalitarianism was derivative of the contemporary debate over the Union of the Left. Antitotalitarian intellectuals argued that totalitarianism was not the product of social or historical conditions, a thesis that minimized the danger posed by the Union of the Left. Rather, they found the origins of totalitarianism in revolution, revolutionary projects and ideology, and the oligarchic tendencies of political parties. Finally, they began to uncover its origins in French history, notably the French Revolution. These understandings of totalitarianism all served to highlight the danger of a totalitarian adventure in contemporary France. They also underscore the depth of the critique of totalitarianism in French intellectual life.

Given the domestic political origins and focus of the critique of totalitarianism, its most important intellectual product was appropriately François Furet's revisionist history of the French Revolution, studied in chapter 6. In his *Penser la Révolution française* of 1978 Furet, relying on a mode of argumentation that was perhaps more political than scholarly, applied to the French Revolution the contemporary understanding that revolutionary politics necessarily ends in totalitarianism as a result of its inevitably Manichean ideological dynamics. Furet's interpretation cast the French Revolution as the founding moment of a proto-totalitarian political culture, thereby justifying fears of totalitarianism in France that might otherwise seem inappropriate given the country's long democratic tradition. Furet's French Revolution became for both his contemporaries and later scholars the origin, foundation, and explanation of intellectuals' postwar political adventures with communism and revolutionary politics. For intellectuals like Furet who had been communists in their youth, this interpretation may have been attractive because it was comforting, but it, like the use of the concept of totalitarianism, arguably came at the cost of a serious distortion of the historical record.

The legacies of antitotalitarianism, considered in the epilogue, are considerable. Most obviously, it made intellectuals suspicious of—and at times overtly hostile toward—the socialist-led government of the early 1980s. Until the communists left the government in June 1984 intellectuals feared that France would take a totalitarian turn with the Left in power. At the same time, the collapse of the intellectual Left resulted in a reconfiguration of intellectual politics. The immediate beneficiaries were postmodernism and liberalism, both of which thrived on the loss of direction experienced by intellectuals in the early 1980s. Yet, as antitotalitarianism receded from the forefront of intellectual politics in the later 1980s and 1990s it was republicanism that came to dominate intellectual politics. French intellectuals found in republicanism both answers to the new political problems of the 1980s and 1990s, such as immigration and globalization, and a way to revive—on a more modest level—the universalism to which they remained attracted and which the antitotalitarian critique of the revolutionary project had brought into question.