

ARENDRT'S NOTION OF TOTALITARIANISM AND ITS POLITICAL IMPACT

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Nowhere in Hannah Arendt's *The Origins of Totalitarianism* and in her other political discourses does she provide a ready-made, cut-and-dry definition of totalitarianism. The reason being that her theory is by no means drawn from a purely abstract formulation; it is developed from her in-depth evaluation of the political movements which took place in modern day Europe, particularly in the Communist Russia under Joseph Stalin from 1929-1953, and the Nazi Germany of Adolf Hitler from 1933-1945. This shows that Arendt's concept of totalitarianism is clearly presented through a descriptive narrative on some concrete phenomena which presumably comprise the nature of all (not just one or two) actual or potential totalitarian regimes.

Totalitarianism is a difficult concept to define since it is often confused with other oppressive forms of government like authoritarianism, dictatorship, tyranny, and others, which are closely associated with persecution of individuals or class within a social system. In her *Hannah Arendt: A Reinterpretation of her Political Thought*, Margaret Canovan, one of the leading Arendtian critics, explicates five elements that constitute the essential attributes of totalitarianism. She contends that antisemitism, alliance between capital and mob, racism, decay of the national state, and expansion for expansion's sake are immanent elements, which in more ways than one, prepared the conditions that predisposed Russia and Germany to metamorphose into a full blown totalitarian States.

Arendt, however, in her "On the Nature of Totalitarianism" stresses that to understand totalitarianism one has to go down to the very root of the matter—to its nature. According to her, totalitarianism involves two key concepts: ideology and terror. These

twin features are inseparable—one cannot be made fully operational without the effective collaboration of the other. They are even rendered as the “two sides of the same coin” (Arendt, 1973: 341).

Ideology and Terror

Ideology, in general, is a belief system which serves as the “guiding” principle of a government for the “organization, maintenance and transformation of power in society” (Thompson, 1986: 66). In the words of Arendt, ideology is the motor that sets terror “in its proper motion, that determines its action” (Arendt, 1923-1975: 49). It might be true that non-totalitarian governments have their respective ideologies to put their political machinery in motion, but totalitarian regimes have their specific and distinct ideological orientation and practices. What makes the ideology exclusively totalitarian is the vicious claim to totality grounded on the firm belief that ideology is absolutely the only “key to history as the solution of the riddles of the universe” (Ibid., 1973: 457). Ideology is the panacea for all social, economic, and political ills—an utterly defective claim because the world in its entirety is extremely complex and no single ideological model could capture with finality the richness of its meaning. There is always, as Paul Ricoeur would love to say, a surplus of meaning.

This totalitarian ideological approach was very evident in the Communist Russia when Stalin envisioned a perfect socialist society wherein the ownership of capital and the means of production were under the control of the government and not by private individuals. When this paradigm has firmly settled in his mind, Stalin has deemed the bourgeoisie as the “historical enemy who alone stands in the way of the victory of the proletariat and thereby the erection of a classless society” (Ibid., 1923-1975: 49). As a consequence, Russia suffered a series of massive purges from 1932-1938 that claimed millions of Soviet citizens.

In that stage, Russia has plunged into a full-scale totalitarian rule. Arendt further elaborates that

the means by which Stalin changed the Russian one-party into a totalitarian regime and the revolutionary Communist parties all over world into

totalitarian movements was the liquidation of factions, the abolition of inner-party democracy and the transformation of National Communist parties into Moscow directed branches of the Comintern. (Ibid., 1973: 379).

For its part the Nazi Germany, with Hitler at the helm, was extraordinarily preoccupied with the so-called "Jewish question" and held it "absolutely central to his view of the world" (Landau, 1992: 115). Aided by this blinding and bizarre fundamentalist mentality, Hitler shamelessly prescribed the Jews as the "natural enemies of mankind, as the counter-race, which prevents the establishment of an Aryan race-society" (Arendt, 1923-1975: 49). When Hitler rose to power in 1933, he immediately "launched a genocidal policy against the Jews aimed at their total annihilation" (Landau, 115-116). The report of Ronnie Landau claimed that the Nazi Holocaust brought the no less than 6 million European Jews to their horrible deaths. According to Arendt,

what distinguished these new totalitarian ideologists from their predecessors was that it was no longer primarily the 'idea' of ideology—the struggle of classes and the exploitation of the workers or the struggle of races and the care for Germanic peoples—which appealed to them, but the logical process which could be developed from it (1973: 472).

At the heart of both the Stalinist and Hitlerian totalitarian ideologies, the principle of logical consistency has become an all-embracing criterion of reality. One significant implication of this is that totalitarian ideology is no longer based on the standard of truth and falsehood. All forms of reality in the outside world are subsumed into a body of pure logical coherence. This means that the only knowable and acceptable reality in the world is the reality of ideology. In the event that this same world does not fit into the logic of ideology, it has to be forcibly altered for the sake of consistency. The Nazis, for example, "did not merely repeat the familiar anti-Semitic myth of Jewish world-conspiracy" (Canovan, 1992: 55). What they did was "they modeled themselves on the fiction of a conspiratorial

master-race, and recruited a master-race of their own by demanding proof of non-Jewish descent from their members" (Ibid.). On the other hand, Russia, with its desire to achieve similar result, has "changed the Marxist doctrine of the inevitable final victory of the proletariat by organizing its members as 'born proletarians' and making other class origins shameful and scandalous" (Arendt, 1973: 356).

Terror stands side by side with ideology as a method of control by force, usually with accompanying torture and execution. Terror is essential for a totalitarian regime because it makes the world consistent, a decisive step leading to the eventual domination of human beings (Ibid., 1923-1975: 52). Generally, terror in totalitarianism subdues the entire population wholly different from the terror employed in a despotic, tyrannical, or dictatorial government. Two reasons. First, in totalitarian rule, terror includes, among others, punishing innocent individuals primarily because they are conceived as natural or historical enemies of mankind. In Russia and Germany, the bourgeois and the Jews were tortured and executed not on the basis of their opinions, actions, and behavior but on account of their membership in a class or a race. Most despotic, tyrannical, or dictatorial governments terrorize their victims only after a positive identification that they truly pose a serious threat to the survival of the regime. The totalitarian rulers' use of terror is always carried out in consonance with the logic of ideology. Second, the rulers in totalitarian states deny freedom and responsibility when they begin to effect their respective ideologies. The overriding sentiment is that each of these rulers (i.e., Stalin and Hitler) together with his die-hard collaborators who made the horrible "crime of the century" possible, did not consider himself "to be a free agent who has the power to execute his arbitrary will and whim, but to be the executor of certain laws which are higher than he himself" (Ibid., 50). As Rabindranath Tagore would put it, these rulers take pride in claiming "freedom to kill freedom." The totalitarian rulers' denial of freedom and responsibility hinges on the view that those who are judged unfit to live are sentenced according to the dictates of the law and that the rulers themselves are only acting as the executors. In other words, it is not the rulers' exercise of freedom but the supremacy of the law

that led to the odious class or racial cleansing. This was how the Nazi officers, after Germany lost the war, defended themselves for their unconscientious participation in the Holocaust. They contended that they were only following orders—all in the name of national ideology; and through this line of argument, they confidently declared themselves unfree and wholly innocent in what they did.

Ideology and terror, which comprise the principle and essence of totalitarianism, would not succeed without the popular support of the masses. The "masses" are the people of the state who "have ceased to experience life as members of any class at all" (Canovan, 53). They are no less than an aggregate of people who are politically apathetic, isolated individuals who bear no known common interests to bind them together—the hopeless throng of humanity who upon the collapse of their expectations and aspirations in life have become expendable and are predisposed to throw their unquestionable loyalty to those who could provide them a sense of belongingness (Ibid.). As a result, these "isolated and atomized mass men" have become gullible which in effect made them an easy recruit to rally behind the totalitarian rulers' evil design. Hitler was, in a way, successful in advancing his ideological contrivance when Germany was struck with economic debacle following their humiliating defeat in World War I in 1929. A great depression all over Germany then caused the influx of the obviously uncontrollable massive unemployment, which initially started from 2 millions in 1929, increased to 3 millions or so in 1930, and somersaulted to 5.6 millions in 1931. Thus, from 1929-1933 the German government failed miserably to solve the grave economic-related problems such as mass unemployment, inflation rate and industrial slump. These and some other factors left an indelible imprint in the consciousness of the citizens and eventually conditioned them into taking Hitler's program of government as a desperate attempt to save themselves from their difficult situation. In Russia, the atomization of the masses took a slightly different turn. Stalin resorted to a "bloody extermination of the peasants, the uprooting of the workers, the repeated purges of the administrative machinery and the party bureaucracy" (Arendt, 1923-1975: 57). Logicality "appeals to these isolated human beings, for man in complete solitude, without any

contact with his fellow men and therefore without any true possibility of experience, has nothing else he can fall back upon but the most abstract rules of reasoning" (Ibid., 58). The mass support to totalitarianism springs from their existential rootlessness and homelessness, from loneliness and superfluity.

Political Impacts of Totalitarianism

There are five political impacts which can readily be drawn from the Russian and the German totalitarian regimes. The first lies in the crass dissolution of the positive laws crudely turning the state into complete lawlessness. Arendt aptly calls this, "the killing of the juridical person in man" (Ibid., 1973: 451). Properly understood, lawlessness is within the context of wanton disregard for certain laws which protect and preserve the rights, freedom, and dignity of every citizen. Positive laws, believed to owe their origin from Natural law and Historical law, are designed to establish social order, which in turn approximates the security of lives and property of the populace. Ideally, positive laws provide the living space for freedom of each individual human being. However, at the birth of totalitarian rule these laws are instantly phased out by defying them in broad daylight. The defiance begins by "putting certain categories of people outside the protection of the law" (Ibid. 447). Mass terror takes over social order exposing the people to abuses and impending violence. Indiscriminate arrest, torture, and execution in the camps are a common sight hence placing everyone's life virtually at the mercy of the ruler and his allies. If a state is truly based on law, the destructive acts of cruelty and sadism could not have happened. Indeed, it is only in an unjust government that these tragic events could ever take place. Only the lawless bullies and murderers would be able to advance in this system, not the decent citizens. Amidst the rampant abuses, the police and the courts of law are all silent about them, a case which clearly signals the irreversible downfall of the political, social, and legal institutions.

The second impact is the introduction of distorted notion of lawfulness. Following the dissolution of positive laws, a new version of law emerges. However, this notion is valid only from the perspectives of the ruler himself and his followers rather than from

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the perspective of a democratic and God-fearing system of government. What happens is that the "term law has changed its meaning from expressing the framework of stability within which human actions and motions were supposed and permitted to take place, it has become the very expression of these motions themselves" (Ibid., 1923-1975: 35). Arendt would like to underscore that the law is supposed to permit and even promote human actions and motion; totalitarianism changes this essential function of the law as it has now become the very tool which forbids human actions and motion. This is less surprising since the overriding law of totalitarianism is nothing else but the logic of ideology itself. Lawfulness, therefore, means conformity of the world to the logic of ideology—going against is unlawful and deserves severe punishment. This brings us to an understanding that totalitarianism's concept of law is a law eliminates individuals for the sake of the triumphant process and progress of the regime's ideology.

In this regard, Natural law and Historical law have also taken a new meaning. If Natural law is traditionally attributed to God and his grand design of the entire universe, it is now attributed to Darwin's Natural law theory. Charles Darwin (1809-1882), a British Naturalist, has revolutionized the science of biology in his demonstration of evolution by natural selection. He theorized that "all living beings, including man, are similar and had not been individually created but had evolved from more primitive species" (Beer, 1988: 508). Darwin's project has replaced God's creation with automatic natural mechanism of evolution. From this Darwinian speculative understanding of Natural law, Hitler aligned his race laws with "Darwin's idea of man as a more or less accidental product of a natural development which does not necessarily stop with a species of human beings" (Arendt, 1923-1975: 34). If Historical law, as mentioned by Arendt, can be equated with the "everlasting customs and traditions of history," or as historically revealed "Commands of God" now it is modified with Marx's own version of History (Ibid. 35). Stalin, who has found Marx's Historical law beneficial to his totalitarian ideology, patterned after his class laws to "Marx's notion of men as the product of a gigantic historical movement which races to the end of times, that is, tends to abolish itself" (Ibid., 34-35).

Here, "totalitarian lawfulness, executing the laws of Nature or the laws of History, does not bother to translate them into standards of right and wrong for individual human beings but applies them directly to the species, that is to mankind" (Ibid., 33). The full force of the "law" is implemented in a sweeping motion denying the individuality of every human person in the process. Totalitarian laws of Nature and History freeze man into inaction. And so, "Nature and History are no longer the stabilizing sources of authority for the actions of mortal men, but are in themselves movement and their laws" (Ibid., 34).

The third impact is the radical curtailment of human freedom. Freedom is one of the essential components of man's nature (Arendt speaks of human condition instead of human nature). The exercise of one's freedom (whether it be in thoughts, words, and deeds) makes man worthy of being called a human person. To a certain extent, freedom can be understood as the capacity to do mature and responsible decisions in life. Without freedom, no meaningful and creative human experience is possible.

In the social and political spheres, freedom is concretely manifested in the various activities taking place in the body politic. Some of them are seen through the people's willful participation in the government, inspired by the constitutionally mandated civil and political liberties such as the freedom of assembly, freedom of speech, freedom of expression, among others. These political liberties are preserved and hedged by the laws to help secure equality for all. In any free country freedom is the foundation of the body politic where plurality is respected and valued.

Under the totalitarian regime human freedom is abolished. This is inevitable because totalitarianism and human freedom are diametrically opposed; the existence of one cancels the other out. There is no way in which they can co-exist in the same state at the same. The ultimate goal of a totalitarian rule is total domination of mankind leaving no space for freedom to operate. As a system of total domination, it forthrightly "subverts the ground of freedom by attempting to kill the capacity for action and its source" (Tlaba, 1987: 104). Total domination may mean subjecting all the people in one and the same fold—in homogeneity rather than plurality. In order to

guarantee the success of this grand project to dominate, terror becomes a necessity.

Terror replaces rationality in the "free exchange of opinions through persuasion and debate" (Ibid., 96). Russia's totalizing mechanism for domination is grounded on its desire to establish a classless society. Germany's impulse for domination is conditioned by its most cherished idealism which is to set forth a master race in the entire world. To make each of these to come into reality torture and execution have to be enforced. Terror has become the key to sow fear and to "intimidate anyone who tries to speak the truth in public" (Ibid., 98). Out of fear, the people would passively adopt a "see-no-evil" and "hear-no-evil" attitude rather than risk their lives. They elect to set aside the realities around and bury them into oblivion, pretending that everything is normal. Silence becomes the norm as a result of the failure to communicate the truth. Consequently, the people are "reduced to a simple, unthinking mass of individuals who just conform to anything that happens" (Ibid., 104). When men are unable to communicate they become isolated from one another and, following their isolation, the public realm and political freedom where plurality inheres are virtually demolished (Ibid., 99).

The fourth impact has something to do with the deliberate, well-calculated method of depersonalization of the human being. The labor camps in Russia and concentration camps in Germany were the most telling techniques in stripping man of his human qualities by treating him as no better than a mere brute. The camps were meant to induce an animal-like behavior; they were designed to obliterate everything human. "Being human means being one of a plurality of individuals, each of them different, each of them capable of starting something new" (Canovan, 25). The experience in the camps was so horrible that no normal mortal could imagine how the victims were treated. Canovan commented "totalitarian regimes are absolutely evil because they do their best to establish a form of domination so intense that all that is most characteristic of human beings has to be destroyed" (Ibid.). In a democracy, the preservation and promotion of humanity stands supreme; in totalitarian rule humanity is degraded

to its lowest form. Thus far, what the victims have suffered in the camps are beyond compare.

In Arendt's observation, the ultimate form of dehumanization was the cunning act of stripping away from the human person the qualities which make him uniquely different from animals. These qualities are none other than man's individuality and his capacity to initiate action and thought—spontaneity and creativity that sustain and renew the human world. All the different activities in the camps like stripping the inmates naked, forcing them to live in their filth, subjecting them to starvation, among others were all geared toward inducing and instilling into the victim's consciousness that there is nothing that he can do. The point was to destroy man's psychological condition which forms part of his intellectual faculty. When his psychological condition would break down everything in him would fall including his creativity and the will to do something for the better.

Man's point of initiation to action is his will. The will inspires him to action. If this human will is destroyed, then man is nothing more than just a vegetable stored in the camps, or he is no better than the brutes enclosed in the pen. Inside the camps, man's spirit and will were being crippled by the daily routines of beating, kicking, spying one another, and doing arbitrary execution through lethal injection.

Some commentaries have admitted or confirmed that in a number of cases, the camps were successful on account that "most of the victims had so far lost the possibility of action that very few of them even made any attempt to resist death" (Tlaba, 106). This means that the prisoners gave up hope and lost all the desire to anticipate something positive in the future. The brutal dehumanizing mechanisms were, at some points, successful in transforming the inmates to passive individuals, reducing them into complete inaction. The foundation of human condition is the plurality of human beings; to destroy this foundation is to reduce humanity to a homogeneous block. "The destruction in the camps was so successful that people began to view themselves as objects, not persons" (Ibid.). This had been made possible only after the destruction of the individual's juridical, moral, and physical being. Below is the testimony of one of

the victims of the cruelties in the camps as conscripted by Inga Cledinnen

We were running under the threat of the clubs of the SS men who supervised us. We lost ourselves to such a degree that none of us knew what he was doing, and how, and whatever was happening to him. Driven on we ran like automatons, not knowing whither we were running, what for and what we were doing. I know that not one of us was fully conscious, did not think, did not reflect. They reduced us to such a state that we become like [illegible] when we come to our senses somewhat [we saw] who was being dragged to be burnt and what was going on around us (1999: 67).

The fifth impact is the extermination of man's capacity for moral judgment. Moral judgment is inherent in man which allows him to rationally determine certain actions as right or wrong, good or evil. When he finds the act as good and promotes humanity, he is obliged to pursue it; when it is evil and destroys humanity, he has to avoid it. Regardless of the norm of one's moral belief (e.g., conscience, natural law, utilitarian principle, human nature, etc.), every moral individual seems to agree to such a moral command that something must be done as ought in view of a desired end. Such terms as compassion, care, love, solidarity, sympathy, happiness, justice, and the like are closely tied with morality. In the camps when the inmates were subjected to a battery of inhuman experimentation, their sense of right and wrong, good and evil were all blurred and obscured. They were forced usually to commit criminal acts or be indifferent to fellow inmates (or even family members) in order to live. Under extreme conditions, the only thing that preoccupied them was to survive in whatever way. Some of them would even be willing to collaborate if by doing so gave them new lease on life. There was no crime they would not commit in order to save themselves—the drive to live weakened their moral resolve. When the survival instinct totally dominated moral life, the feeling of compassion for the suffering of others is lost and help is no longer extended.

Tzvetan Todorov narrates:

Even the closest family ties were vulnerable in this fight for survival. Borowski, for example, tells how a mother, to save her own life, pretends not to know her child. And Elie Wiesel, another Auschwitz survivor, describes in *Night* how a son snatches a piece of bread from the hands of his father, and he speaks of the relief he felt when his own father died, because it increased his own chances for survival (1996: 33).

The keepers of the camps were so ingenious in creating an atmosphere of "guilt by association" where family members, close friends, or associates were made to appear as accomplices against each other. A Greek mother, in Arendt's account, was made to choose one among her four children to be executed first by the SS men.

To summarize, Arendt's concept of totalitarianism involves ideology and terror. Ideology represents the guiding principle which direct the affairs of the state. Since ideology (in a totalitarian rule) has become the panacea of all social, economic, and political ills, it has transformed itself into a supra-human law, which seeks to bring all the people into a homogeneous block. Ideology alone cannot work effectively since resistance to totality is sure to arise. Because opposition is inevitable, terror is necessary not so much to frighten people but chiefly to materialize the ideological doctrine. The use of force is a means to an end. Resistance is an expression of man's freedom, creativity, and spontaneity whose primordial source is the human psyche. To destroy the human psyche is to destroy everything which inspires man into creative action. The most effective way (as Stalin and Hitler perceived it) to destroy the human psyche is to subject the individual into painful, horrible, and miserable experiences which no one could ever imagine. By means of these, slowly and surely man will begin to feel a sense of hopelessness and meaninglessness of his own existence. All sorts of moral and physical evil, when repeatedly induced, will one day render man into total inaction. The daily routines of torture, execution, guilt association, beating, conspiracy, betrayal, isolationism, hunger, filth, and more never failed (probably with a number of exceptions) to destroy man's

humanity. Viewing totalitarianism from this standpoint, is there a way to fight against it? For Arendt, there is a way to fight against it.

A careful reading of Arendt's works leads one to understand that the general phenomena serve a fertile ground for the totalitarian regime. One of these phenomena is the decay of class society. Indeed, it is in the "breakdown of class society [that] the psychology of the European mass man developed" (Arendt, 1973: 315). From this scenario, "totalitarian rule has [found an] easier way to come in when society is already in a state of atomized and structureless mass" (Ibid. 319).

In Germany, before Hitler rose to power, the country was already badly beaten with severe financial and industrial slump which resulted to massive unemployment problem following their humiliating defeat in World War I. In Russia, although nothing of this sort has occurred to bring about an individualized and atomized society, Stalin fabricated it by resorting to a bloody extermination of the peasants and the violent uprooting of the workers. Through the repetitive purges millions of slave laborers realized that their lives and their families' depended not upon their fellow-citizens but solely on the whims of the government to which they belonged. When the masses in Russia and Germany were already ripe for the totalitarian domination, both Stalin and Hitler immediately launched their respective national ideology coupled with terror. From there, everything is history.

To fight against totalitarianism, we have to "appeal to Freedom and Justice and to mobilize people" (Ibid., 1923-1975: 5). We need to stand together in our promoting freedom and justice and participate freely, enthusiastically and courageously in the public affairs. For, a government based on law and justice does not happen automatically; it does not materialize overnight most especially when citizens are politically apathetic and when they advance their own personal interests. Everybody must share the burden of responsibility; each must be prepared to make sacrifices.

Furthermore, a continuous and vigilant control of the mechanism must help shape the vital political opinion in associations, parties, and other organizations—the breeding ground of propaganda as reflected in the past regimes. Equally necessary is a strong and

respected political opposition in light of the noble idea of political responsibility. Also, the concept of law must be radically changed—a law based on justice since an unjust law is not law at all. The famous *dura lex sed lex* dictum is not enough. There is always a temptation that the law will be circumvented to cover up criminal activities. To promote humanity, we have to take to the heart the Kantian categorical imperative: never use man as means to an end. Stalin and Hitler considered force as the one and only means of political maneuver. In reality, it was the worst, as violence brought destruction and suffering. To renounce it, we must instead place our trust and confidence in a peaceful and gradual progress; we must strive for a peaceful solution of conflicts; we must establish a relationship based on trust; and we must be firm in our professed commitment to freedom and humanity. Lest, these would wither away during the trying times of our political life.

A number of commentaries have agreeably held that Arendt made an explicit pronouncement saying that modern day politics, following the totalitarian regimes of Russia and Germany, is “either actually or potentially totalitarian.” If this is true, then the Martial Law years of the Marcos administration, the series of coup attempts in the late 80s under the presidency of Corazon C. Aquino, the Oakwood takeover in Makati on July 27, 2003 by some 300 junior officers of the AFP, the seemingly never ending rumors of a possible military junta brought about by the congressional attempt to impeach Chief Justice Hilario Davide, Jr., and the declaration of the State of National Emergency by President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo on February 25, 2006—all these can be glaring manifestations of such a tendency toward a militaristic and eventually totalitarian rule. But since the numerous coup attempts failed due probably to the absence or the lack of popular support, what the Filipinos have experienced which comes closer to the frontiers of totalitarianism, was Pres. Marcos’ dictatorial rule which lasted for almost fourteen years (from 1972-1986).

Hypothetically speaking, Marcos could have transformed himself into a full-fledged totalitarian ruler had he not suffered a variety of serious illnesses which weakened him considerably; or, had it not probably due to our traditional Christian belief which made us

Filipinos (in general) "God-fearing." To shed light on this matter, let us briefly examine two essential aspects in the Marcos regime: ideology and terror. Before the 1972 declaration of martial law, Marcos was already toying with the idea of advancing his new program of government which was popularly known as the "New Society." Under this ideological framework, Marcos wanted to eliminate the dizzying gap between the rich and the poor. He theorized that poverty in the country had gone worse simply because of the "unlimited democracy" and the "free enterprise" economy" (Rosenberg, 1979: 34). He thought that the best solution to the problem was a radical change of the system. He further claimed that from our populist, personalist, and individualist mentality, a genuine change of attitude and values is necessary to prosper as a nation. With this, Marcos proposed the idea of discipline (*disiplina*) as the way to completely eradicate our bad habits. Hence, there was a time that the slogan: *Sa ikauunlad ng bayan disiplina ang kailangan* became very popular. To make Marcos' call for discipline realizable under the New Society, he embodies it in all his

presidential decrees, proclamations, general orders and instructions, new rules and regulations, old laws and codes, the flag, the national anthem, indoctrination, New Society song, slogans, maxims, proverbs, citizen campaigns, presidential awards, commemorative ceremonies, varied applications of force and coercive sanctions customary in democracies, and calculated violations of human rights characteristic of authoritarian system (Ibid., 35).

But facing with the mounting opposition from his political rivals and those who were discontented of his governance, Marcos declared martial law on September 21, 1972 under Proclamation 1081. The declaration was still part of his New Society ideology, which was to restructure power and wealth. One of its "avowed goal[s] was 'to institute reforms' in a political, economic, and social system marked by an increasing concentration of power, wealth, and opportunities for advancement caused by and resulting in the rule of oligarchy" (Ibid., 32). What followed was a blatant abusive exercise of

power and sent the entire country into a state of terror. David Rosenberg narrated that

on the night of September 22, 1972, under presidential orders, the army closed down all radio and television stations, and newspaper offices and arrested prominent publishers, journalists, and commentators critical of the president, including a few who were allegedly involved in a conspiracy against him and the government; several opposition senators, a number of opposition delegates to the Constitutional Convention, a governor, and a congressman known to be close to the president but suspected of arm smuggling; labor leaders; and thousands of activists and protesters (Ibid., 35-36).

The use of terror was primarily meant to silence critics of his administration. The military and the police resorted to all imaginable forms of terror such as warrantless arrest or abduction, physical and mental torture, imprisonment without trial, and execution or "salvaging" in order to decisively prevent further dissent and subversion. In fact,

the Task Force on Detainees of the AMRSP [Association of Major Religious Superiors of the Philippines] reported an average of more than thirty disappearances each year between 1976 and 1978 and a yearly average nearly fifty 'salvages'... (Wurfel, 1988: 126).

Alongside the AMRSP report was the account of Filemon V. Tutay which provided a rough estimate of the number of victims during the roughly 14 years of Marcos dictatorship. He said that the number of victims ranges from "300 to 3,000 and from 500 to 5,000" annually (1986: 10). The most familiar types of physical tortures inflicted on the hapless victims consisted of "punching the stomach or the region around the floating ribs, twisting the arms 'until it hurts,' the familiar water cure with the water invariably coming from the gutter or the toilet bowl which had not been flushed and electric shocks to the genitalia" (Ibid.).

But after all the terror and gross violation of human rights, the dictatorial rule of Marcos ended by way of People Power in February 1986. At that time, democracy was gloriously restored. Although since then, the country has never experienced any major improvement in the social, economic, and political life of the people. But hope lingers. Perhaps, in a not-so-distant future, we will pull it through. Successfully.

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