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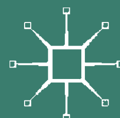
THE PALGRAVE HANDBOOK OF MASS DICTATORSHIP

Edited by Paul Corner and Jie-Hyun Lim



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Paul Corner • Jie-Hyun Lim
Editors

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To Alf Lüedtke

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Introduction

Paul Corner and Jie-Hyun Lim

Given the history of the last century, a handbook on dictatorship would seem to require little justification. Even from what is now some distance, the great dictators of the twentieth century still dominate much of historical attention and their fascination remains evident; it is enough to enter any bookshop and count the number of books with a swastika on the cover to appreciate this fascination. Dictatorship, with its utopian ambitions and its hallmark horrors, remains high on the list of public interest. But, if interest in dictatorship hardly needs to be justified, what does require some explanation is the approach adopted in this handbook, because the object of our attention is not simple dictatorship—it is mass dictatorship. The term might appear to be almost an oxymoron—the dictator is usually seen to stand alone—but its use is a deliberate attempt to extend the sphere of investigation from the leaders and the led—distinct categories, often studied apart—to that of the entire framework of dictatorship in the twentieth century which the dictator and the dominated constructed together in consent and in conflict.

Moving beyond the static picture of societies characterized by consensus and/or repression, the handbook attempts an examination of the complexities of dictatorial rule and of popular reaction to that rule, arguing, in its various essays, that twentieth century dictatorship is intimately linked to the emergence of mass society and has to be seen above all in that context. Although it may seem paradoxical, dictatorship is seen here as a collective enterprise, in which the relationship between dominator and the dominated is not simply one-directional—always from top downwards, with the oppressed having no capacity for anything but passive acceptance and resignation—but one in which the masses possess agency and have multiple methods of responding to domination and of expressing that agency, thus both reacting to dictatorship and also conditioning its behaviour. Such a symbiotic relationship makes it essential, therefore, to avoid in any analysis the separation between dictatorship and the masses. The term mass dictatorship attempts to express this understanding; it is intended to suggest that, unlike the more straightforward authoritarian dictatorships of earlier periods, the defining characteristic of the

twentieth century dictatorships is their necessary and unavoidable involvement with the masses.

In their various ways, the contributions to this handbook reflect this underlying conviction. They deal with the differing dictatorial projects of both left and right wing regimes, with the objectives that the dictatorships set for themselves, and with the methods regimes used to try to realize those objectives—methods which involved not only repression and the use of violence on a massive scale but also the more modern techniques of popular mobilization and mass persuasion. How people reacted to these methods of social control is also a central theme of certain essays; what determined popular collaboration with the regimes and what space was left for non-compliance, or even for resistance, are fundamental questions posed here. What all the contributions have attempted to do is to approach the subject as far as possible from a transnational, comparative, angle, looking more at the various aspects bound up with the concept of mass dictatorship than at isolated empirical examples; moreover a particular effort has been made to avoid the often prevalent Eurocentrism in the discussion of these questions. It is hoped that the very broad scope offered by our genuinely world-spanning team of contributors will have helped us to achieve this transnational outlook. As a brief glance at the list of contributors will make clear, this handbook aims at a global treatment of its subject, convinced that it is only through such an approach to the question of mass dictatorship that we can supersede many of the existing paradigms.

The term "mass dictatorship" requires some further explanation, particularly in respect of many of the current historical models used to analyse dictatorship. Much of what is written here reflects the newly emerging post-Cold War paradigm in the study of twentieth century dictatorship—a paradigm that places a question mark against the usefulness of both the totalitarian and Marxist models, heavily conditioned as they tend to be with the simplistic dualism imposed by Cold War competition, which aimed at putting a few perpetrators (a vicious "them") in the opposite political camp compared with many victims (an innocent "us") on our own side of the divide. In the radicalized, black and white, language of demonization characteristic of Cold War discourse and propaganda, at one extreme 'people's democracy' amounted to little more than the dictatorship of the Stalinist Gulag, while, at the other, liberal democracy was assimilated to the fascism of capitalist plutocracy. At times the terms "democracy" and "dictatorship" became so entwined in the political discourse that they seemed almost to define one and the same system. Such an amalgam of the terms of democracy and dictatorship may sound strange, but it has been discursively possible in the domain of the concepts used in relation to the history of this period. What has always been clear, however, is that—however the terms have been used—they have always been seen as opposites.

In reality a closer look at this conceptual history serves above all to shatter the antithesis between dictatorship and democracy—an idea rooted deeply in the political common sense of the twentieth century. As the German school of *Begriffsgeschichte* suggests very persuasively, dictatorship in its original usage in

the ancient Roman republic meant emergency powers provisionally invoked in a state of emergency. Its original meaning remained as such till the nineteenth century. The antonym of dictatorship was not democracy, therefore, but the normal state, and the antonym of democracy was not dictatorship, but monarchy or aristocracy. Thus, to have seen dictatorship as the antithesis of democracy—as we do now—would have seemed a strange association for the conceptual history of the nineteenth century. To nineteenth century readers, seeing the antithesis of democracy in dictatorship was no less alien than would have been the idea of connecting liberalism with democracy, given the lack of regard liberals had for democracy. A history of the concept of dictatorship raises doubts, therefore, about the Manichean dichotomy between dictatorship and democracy present in the Cold War paradigm; the antagonism between the two may be less than is generally assumed. Dictatorship, just like democracy, also requires its *demos*. Thus, while—as already suggested—the term "mass dictatorship" may seem to be something of an oxymoron, at the level of conceptual history, it is not really so difficult to couple the two words.

The concept is perhaps easier to understand if we abandon the Eurocentrism that has tended, for very obvious reasons, to dominate discussion of dictatorship and which has almost always concentrated on the nation-state. Now horizons are wider. The paradigm shift that followed the Fall of the Berlin Wall coincided with the spatial turn from the national to the transnational. The globalization of the human imagination facilitated this spatial turn, which influenced ways of perceiving the past and the present and thus the mode of experiencing the world. These developments produced striking results and suggested that previously-held distinctions might in fact be less valid. The Europe-dominated perspective, which saw in Nazism and Fascism an 'abnormal' path to modernity and, at the same time, erected the path of parliamentary democracy of the 'West' as the norm, implicitly—and sometimes very explicitly—relegated all other paths to a position of backwardness and relative underdevelopment. In this analytical framework 'West' was best; the 'Rest'—a kind of barbaric 'East'—did not make the grade. Now, through the adoption of a transnational perspective in relation to the history of mass dictatorship, two apparent opposites can be seen as part of a single whole. Thus the dictatorship of the 'East'—seen as backward, anti-modern, and reactionary—and the democracy of the 'West'—modern and progressive—can now stand together on the global horizon of modernity. It is necessary to recognise, therefore, that, in the trajectory of global modernity, democracy and dictatorship are not located in some predetermined spaces of the West and East that necessarily separate them from each other but are together in a kind of 'problem space' of constant evolution and becoming.

But neither East nor West is a geo-positivist concept. Neither is geographically fixed. The 'strategic location' of East and West in historical discourses is always in flux. What matters, however, is not any national peculiarity but the strategic position of each historical unit in our imaginary geography. A few examples serve to make this point better. In contrast to its self-portrayal as the

'East' vis-à-vis France, Germany posed its own national self as the 'West' in relation to its Slavic neighbors. Studia Zahodnie (Western Studies) in Poland has meant German Studies while Ostforschung (Eastern Studies) in Germany meant Polish studies. But the imagining of East/West in virtual reality does not stop at the German- Polish border. Posited as the 'East' by Germans, Poles regarded themselves as 'Europeans' against the 'Asiatic' Russians. In turn, Russians, despised as 'Tartars' in Europe, could represent themselves as civilized Europeans confronting barbaric Asian neighbours. Positions could be reversed, however; with its victories in the Sino-Japanese and Russo-Japanese Wars, Japan proved its equality with the West and Russia's affinity with the East. The global chain of East/West confrontations in a constant position change knows no end.

Many of the contributions to this volume reflect these new global perspectives, arguing that the discursive position of West and East in flux puts in question the dichotomy of a dictatorial East and a democratic West. Mass dictatorship in the global trajectory enables us to see twentieth-century dictatorship not as the end-point of a particular path of the pre-modern, but as one of the normal paths of the modern, and allows us, ultimately, to abandon 'East' and 'West' in our understanding of twentieth century dictatorship on a global scale. The global history of mass dictatorship indicates that mass dictatorship is itself a transnational formation of modernity that emerged in response to the global processes that swept through the twentieth century. The near ubiquitous presence of mass dictatorship on a global scale and in disparate historical circumstances suggests that mass dictatorship is one of many manifestations of global modernity that stem from competing desires to construct a modernist utopia by the 'follow and catch up' strategy. More specifically, the desire for colonizing power and the corresponding fear of being colonized were two locomotives that drove mass dictatorship regimes. A global history of mass dictatorship as a transnational formation of modernity puts the Holocaust, fascist atrocities, and postcolonial genocide together in a single stream of the modernist violence with the initial unleashing of colonial violence.

This reflection requires a reformulation of the question: what is the difference between mass dictatorship and mass democracy? The answer is not that simple because, at least in some respects, both seem to aim at the same goal. What if majoritarian democracy in the modern nation-state is based on the categorisation of minorities as 'others' in terms of nation, class, gender, race, ethnicity and so on? What if the majority tyrannises minorities? Is that democracy or is it dictatorship? Arguably, the cliché that dictatorship is imposed by a wilful minority upon a confused majority can explain only one dimension of dictatorship. And in the past there have been efforts to explicate dictatorship in terms that go beyond the one-dimensional explanation of heavy coercion and which are to some degree in line with the idea of mass dictatorship. The characterisation of American democracy as a 'tyranny through the masses' (Tocqueville) and the identification of 'totalitarian democracy' among French

Jacobins (Talmon) are suggestive of 'mass dictatorship' just as much as is Mao Zedong's declaration that 'dictatorship is dictatorship by the masses'.

Indeed, it is not difficult to find references to 'popular dictatorship' and even to 'people's dictatorship', not to mention 'people's democracy'. Carl Schmitt's apologetic justification of Nazism as 'an anti-liberal but not necessarily anti-democratic' regime can be put in the same context. In fascist Italy Giuseppe Bottai would argue that fascist dictatorship was more genuinely democratic than were the so-called western 'democracies' because all the people were included in the fascist scheme of things. And even today 'guided democracy' is a familiar (and rather sinister) term. But its Polish version of 'demokracja kierowana' could be found already in the Sanacja regime in the 1930s. More classically, in his address to the National Convention (1793), Barère tried to justify Jacobin dictatorship on the ground that the nation was exercising dictatorship over itself. Seen in this light, George Mosse's eccentric assumption that Robespierre would have felt at home in the Nazi's mass rallies is not so groundless after all. The Nazi Vo*lksgemeinschaft* was not a bizarre pre-modern political concept but a meta-modern political order in which the people regarded themselves as the real political sovereign. In Eugen Weber's expression, Nazism looked 'much like the Jacobinism of our time'. In this respect, it is intriguing that socialist regimes used the metaphor of 'people's democracy' as a variant of proletarian dictatorship in defining themselves. The reference to 'the people' is telling. It is in this sense that the term of 'mass dictatorship' ceases to be an oxymoron; rather it represents a focus shift from the classical idea of the coercive 'dictatorship from above' to that of 'dictatorship from below', in which one of the principal objectives of the regime is the self-mobilisation of the people themselves. It is only necessary to consider the role played by popular denunciation in many dictatorial regimes to appreciate the force of this self-mobilisation.

As a politico-societal project 'mass dictatorship' implies the attempted mobilisation of the masses for state projects which frequently secured voluntary mass participation and support. Once the masses had appeared on the historical scene, the voices of ordinary people could no longer be silenced or disregarded by any regime, whether democratic or dictatorial. Rather, the socio-political engineering of the modern state system demanded the recruitment and mobilisation of the masses for the nation-state project, and indeed required—if possible—their enthusiasm and voluntary participation. The efforts at popular conscription to the cause explain why some mass dictatorship regimes tried to arrive at what has been called a 'dictatorship of consent' through the rhetoric of decisionist democracy. The use of the term of 'consensus dictatorship' in describing the GDR, with its emphasis on consensus building, can be located within the same stream. It is because of this necessity for mobilisation of the masses that the study of mass dictatorship needs to be situated, not within the history of pre-modern barbarism, but within the broad transnational context of political modernity, understood in relation to modern statecraft, territoriality, sovereignty, population, egalitarian ideology and so on. It differs significantly from '*despotismo moderno*' which is created through an alliance of conservatives

and the military without mass involvement or the self-mobilization of the masses.

However, as a term, mass dictatorship seen as 'dictatorship from below' carries a slight difference in meaning from what we have described as the dictatorship of consent. One of the weaknesses of totalitarian theory has been its tendency to concentrate on the harsh characteristics of the political system of rule rather than enquire about the complex realities of social life. A frequent consequence has been the assumption of a complete polarisation of positions within the realm of domination. Yet, in the context of twentieth century dictatorships, coercion and consent, domination and hegemony, forced mobilization and self-mobilization cannot be seen as polar opposites to each other; rather they should be understood as integral parts of dictatorship in which one concept does not necessarily exclude the other. In fact, seen from the viewpoint of history from below, consent and coercion are not exclusive opposites; they can and do co-exist. Coercion itself is a multi-layered experience spanning many definitions—internalised coercion, forced consent, passive conformity, and silent resignation are just some of them. The realities of coercion and consent are subject to negotiations and interactions between individual historical actors and the mass dictatorship regime. As Konrad Jarausch has written of the GDR regime, 'its social reality involved surprisingly complex negotiations between rulers and ruled.' If we do not recognise the plurality and complexity of consent, 'dictatorship of consent' would appear to be nothing more than the successful realisation of the hegemonic political project of dictatorship from above—nothing more than action followed by reaction. Instead, the common thread running through many contributions presented here is the effort to go beyond a picture painted just in black and white—the attempt to reveal complex and multifaceted realities of twentieth century dictatorship by pluralizing and depolarizing the concepts of coercion and consent. Ultimately it is from the viewpoint of history from below that the concept of mass dictatorship can contribute to the shifting of dictatorship studies from 'dictatorship from above' to 'dictatorship from below'.

A few lines about the organization of the volume. As with any handbook, we—as general editors—do not expect that the reader will read this book from start to finish. The contributions are separate essays and should be approached as such. At the same time, while this is essentially a volume for consultation on specific issues, it is hoped that the transnational perspective adopted will allow the reader to better relate the specific to the general and to do this in ways not normally seen in the standard textbooks. The five parts into which the volume is divided represent what we consider to be the principal significant aspects of the overall problem of analysing twentieth-century mass dictatorships. Each part has a brief general introduction by a part editor which aims to assist the reader in identifying the central issues of that part. Given the limits of space, bibliography has been kept to a minimum, but it is hoped that what there is represents the essential minimum and can serve as a guide to further reading. The rationale behind the part divisions needs rather less explanation than does

the use of the concept of mass dictatorship. It may, nonetheless, be useful to the reader to have a brief overview of the key points of each of the parts.

Making sense of twentieth century dictatorship is a complex task and we have tried, through the process of division and sub-division of subjects, to tread a fairly logical path in the effort to unravel the complexities. Broadly speaking, we ask, 'What did the dictatorships hope to achieve?', 'How did they go about it and with what success?', 'Which proved to be more effective, coercion or persuasion, fear or joy, compulsion or voluntary participation?', 'How did various historical actors react to this divergence of domination?', 'How can one interpret the broad spectrum of people's reaction between enthusiastic support and drastic opposition?', and, finally and more briefly, 'What are the lessons and legacies of these dictatorships?' The transnational approach adopted in the volume means that often there are multiple answers to these questions, depending on region and on epoch, and these different answers are reflected in the individual contributions within each of the parts.

This is nowhere more evident than in the first part on 'Projects' where the initial impetus and the various originating aspirations of mass dictatorship are examined from widely differing points of view. Certain of the contributions concentrate on the ways in which regimes projected themselves very consciously towards the future, with their radical and sometimes utopian views of the evolution of history and of the capacities of the 'new man' to dominate and direct that evolution through the discoveries of science and the mechanisms of social engineering. In these initial projects are best seen what might be termed the hopes of mass dictatorship, always projected towards a radiant future; they remind us that—at least in the case of the European regimes—the traumatic experience of the First World War played a large part in determining apocalyptic visions of the new world in the making. Other contributions deal with the ways in which certain dictatorships saw their task principally as that of nation building—a task in which colonialism and the creation of empire often played a significant part. The case of Italian Fascism serves to illustrate this aspect very clearly, and both the Japanese and Korean examples are, in different ways, also very relevant, even if their historical trajectories are very different. In these contributions, as is inevitable when we are talking about projects, the role and specific characteristics of the ideologies of dictatorial regimes are discussed. In particular one chapter confronts the rather thorny question of the role of political religion in consolidating regimes and, although focused principally on North Korea, takes into account the varied experience of different regimes and the very different ways in which political religions were born and developed during the course of dictatorship.

The second part on 'Domination' moves on a less ideological level, examining the techniques and mechanisms of the ruling machine. Here the volume addresses the question of repression, possibly the aspect of dictatorship which we most associate with such regimes and with which we are most familiar. The Gestapo and the NKVD, the concentration camp and the Gulag, are never very far away from our thoughts when twentieth century dictatorship is discussed.

The meticulous organization of social control is, of course, a central feature of mass dictatorship and, even if the concept of mass dictatorship employed here rejects the idea of a total divorce between perpetrators and victims within dictatorship, there is no attempt to deny the fundamental conditioning role played by terror and by police repression in establishing that control. But, while accepting this premise and examining how such control is established, this part also looks at several of the less obvious methods of domination—the organization of the public sphere, such as it was, through the manipulation of information, the crucial part played by the state's control of material resources and of their subsequent allocation to the population, and—very important—the various ways in which dictatorial regimes used legislation to create a national community that learned to reason in terms of inclusion and exclusion, of 'us' against 'them'. Alongside the manipulation of information, control of resources and the bio-politics of population, the effort of labour coordination and memory management can be counted too as the soft aspects of hard domination.

The third part looks at the question of 'Mobilization'—the popular mobilization that was achieved not only by regimentation but also by a whole series of projects, programmes, and policies intended to stimulate popular involvement with the regime and generate a popular consensus. All the dictatorial regimes considered here pursued policies aimed at the self-mobilization of the population through popular participation; mass dictatorship could not function without such participation. If, to a great extent, the second part deals with the stick wielded by dictatorships, the third is more concerned with the carrot, for mass dictatorships not only controlled, they also offered. Indeed, access to what was on offer was one of the constitutive elements of control. Ralph Dahrendorf's accusation that East Germans had exchanged their freedom for fridges was perhaps unfairly caustic but not entirely misconceived; in some, but not all, of the regimes, consumption, or the prospect of consumption, was one of the key elements of mobilization. But it was by no means the only element. In respect of mobilization the transnational approach adopted in the contributions to this part is particularly valuable because it permits us to see the ways in which often very novel policies regarding, for example, welfare and leisure, gender, and cultural formation were used in the different regimes, often with widely differing results. And, as the concept of cultural formation will suggest, regimes stressed not only the activities of the organizations and associations that marked out the regimentation of society under dictatorship but also the attitudes and thought processes of their subjects. For this reason propaganda, with its often heavy emphasis on the cult of the leader, receives attention in this part, as does that new and powerful feature of the first decades of the last century—the film. In one way and another, popular mobilization was to be realized through the generation of the conviction that the regime had the 'correct' purpose and direction and that life had sense and either was, or would shortly be, getting better.

Part four deals with a further key aspect of all the regimes in question—the 'Militarization' of civil society, both in its organization and in its objectives. The mobilization of society to which we have referred above required its justification and war—the memory of war, war itself, or the prospect of war—provided just such a justification. In this, the experience of the First World War was central: mobilizing for what were now seen to be inevitably total wars required the kind of militarization of society, even in peacetime, that past experience of total war had determined. A characteristic of mass dictatorship in almost all its forms is the heavy emphasis laid on war and on the values and lessons of war for civil society. War was often seen as both necessary and welcome. Mussolini, for instance, saw war as the essential road to Italy's Darwinian destiny. As the contributions to this part make clear, the militarization of society permeated all aspects of normal life—education, organization, language -, putting the population in uniform and producing societies that appeared to be permanently on the brink of conflict. The value of this kind of military psychosis in creating a sense of common purpose among the population will be readily apparent. In the same way, the themes of the necessary sacrifice of one's life for the nation and the accompanying cult of death and the dead made war seem both logical and acceptable. Self-mobilization of the population might be achieved through these means—the necessity of war and the idea of the ever-present internal and external enemy being used to produce a permanent state of emergency.

Moving away from organization and mobilization, the fifth part shifts our attention to the questions of impact, reception, and response—in short, of 'Appropriation'. As explained earlier in this introduction, the concept of mass dictatorship looks at the phenomenon of twentieth century dictatorship both from above—from the point of view of the aspirations, objectives and methods of the dictators—and also from below—from the position of those subjected to domination. It posits a level of agency on the part of those subjected to dictatorship that invites careful scrutiny, suggesting that the relationship between the rulers and the ruled is usually much more complex than it might seem and frequently involves mechanisms of negotiation too often overlooked. The contributions in this part examine the whole gamut of popular reactions to dictatorship, ranging from the enthusiastic acceptance shown by the committed volunteer, through the complicity, conformity, compliance, and everyday coping of the vast majority of the population, to the uncertainties of that non-compliance often exhibited before the final stage of resistance. At every point in these analyses, the great difficulty of generalization is made clear. With the exception of the committed supporter of the regime, the words most appropriate to the mass of the population seem usually to be those of ambivalence and ambiguity in respect of the dictatorship, describing a population which was, in any case, very often attempting to live with the regime on the least unfavourable terms. The extent to which even this kind of survival strategy, typified by an astute navigation between obstacles, represented nonetheless a form of

complicity with the regime is one of the questions posed here. The complexity of the ordinary people's ever-changing attitudes under the mass dictatorship regime reflects 'practices of meandering'—Alf Lüedtke's term to describe individual trajectories in ambivalence and self-contradiction. Certainly, the simple division between victims and perpetrators to which we are accustomed begins to look uncomfortably unrealistic. The final essay in this part examines the question of victimhood, arguing strongly against the binary division adopted in traditional accounts of dictatorship and insisting on the much more complex relationship between dominators and those subjected to domination envisaged in the concept of mass dictatorship.

A Handbook like this is cannot be all-comprehensive—there are many gaps in our coverage—nor can it offer any once-and-for-all conclusions, but certain final, general considerations may nonetheless be in order, particularly in respect of the theme of lessons and legacies. Foremost among these considerations must be the importance of resisting the temptation to think that this entire story of mass dictatorship finished in 1945 with the end of the Second World War, in the 1960s and 1970s with the decline of the 'developmental dictatorships', and in 1989 with the so-called 'collapse' of communism. This is to be stressed not only in the banal sense of the continued existence of exceptions like the residual regime of Lukašenko's Bielorussia or, on a different wavelength, that of North Korea (to say nothing of the far from collapsed world of communist China), but also because it is essential that the reader should avoid the idea of total breach between the world of mass dictatorship—over and finished—and the contemporary world, seen only in terms of the 'onward march' of democratic politics. In other words, the study of mass dictatorships invites analysis not only of the past but also of certain continuities between past and present. As is evident, the problem of social control present in mass society—a problem that pushed some nations into mass dictatorships—persists, as does that of the often precarious relationship between coercion and consensus; uneven international development can also still produce the dictatorial 'catch-up' phenomenon outlined in some of the contributions here. And, as our daily newspapers remind us, 'national revolutions' that culminate in dictatorship are in no sense events of the past.

But continuities are also suggested because, in general terms, many contemporary societies, not only in the West, are experiencing what is often called a 'crisis' of democracy. The 'golden age' of economic expansion and the subsequent 'end of history' have given way to extreme political uncertainty. Lack of public participation in politics, generalized mistrust of public institutions, the lack of credibility of politicians—all are accompanied by the increasing drift towards presidential rule, often based on clear populist tendencies. That impression, so evident in mass dictatorships, of the leader and the willingly-led is once again a frequent impression. With the advent of neo-liberalism and its emphasis on the individual, the role of the state has apparently been reduced,

but, as the state has bowed out in respect of the organization of the economy and the provider of social welfare, it has re-emerged strongly as guarantor of individual security. The continual condition of emergency in which we now live, produced by terrorism and international instability, justifies and permits the concession to government of many non-democratic powers—Patriot Acts, legislation suspending habeus corpus, and the like. And, without being paranoid about the intrusive powers of information technology, it is never wise to forget that the modern state knows much, much more about any individual citizen than did the Gestapo or the NKVD. Only bankruptcy rescued Icelanders from the bio-totalitarian project of establishing a DNA bank of all citizens.

What is striking about these developments is the relative lack of popular reaction. The individualism of the contemporary world has undermined to a large degree any sense of collective interest. But that individualism, defined by the Frankfurt school in the period before the Second World War in terms of the 'isolation' and 'solitude' produced by modernity and seen as pushing people into a 'flight from freedom', no longer seeks its resolution in simple dictatorship. The axis of public interest has been partially shifted from politics (as evidenced by the aforementioned low levels of political participation in many countries) to a world modelled by consumption, by the media, and by individual celebrity. If this does not presage the introduction of dictatorship on the old model, it does nonetheless open the way for the extension of non-democratic powers, which pass unnoticed because of public distraction. Formally pluralistic but ever more dominated by relatively few interest groups, by what Michael Mann has called 'infrastructural powers', and by the capacity for manipulation of public opinion, the modern state would appear to be moving in an increasingly authoritarian direction. The population, in the main able to see world only through the filter of the media, have few defences against this tendency because it is not perceived (Peter Weir's film 'The Truman Show' is exemplary in this respect). The risk here is not so much that of a new Hitler or a resurrected Mussolini (although the public theatre of politics provided by the media has possibly increased rather than decreased the importance of personal charisma) but that of a more authoritarian state accepted in part through lack of concern for individual liberties and in part through what appears to be the necessity determined by never-ending state of emergency.

Seen in this light, the distance we generally assume to exist between mass dictatorship and modern democracy seems less than might appear at first sight. As suggested at the beginning of this Introduction, the antagonism between the two may be less than is generally thought. The fundamental problem of social control implicit in the 'democratic age' of mass society remains; the means of achieving that social control have been adapted with the times and with the changing nature of the public and have become much more sophisticated with