of German social democratic forces taking issue with Lenin's bolshevist kind of dictatorship. From the mid-1930s onwards, the term came to be used in comparative analyses of fascism, national socialism, and communism. The classical definition of the concept of totalitarianism was then proposed by Carl J. Friedrich, who devised a paradigmatic list of criteria in 1953, whereas Hannah Arendt offered a rather historical-philosophical approach. Both explanations have in common that they assess mass terror as a central factor, which means that, strictly speaking, developments in the Soviet Union after Stalin's death are not covered. More recent definitions emphasize, however, the absolute preeminence of politics and total control as principal features of totalitarian rule. This makes it possible to distinguish between modern dictatorships based on ideology and authoritarian dictatorships.

1969-1989: DO WE LACK A CONCEPT, OR RATHER THE WILL TO UNDERSTAND?

Petr Pithart

The author is convinced that neither the term "totalitarian" nor the adjective "authoritarian" sufficiently describe Czechoslovakia after 1969. That Czech society did not know for certain how to classify the regime of "normalization" is interpreted not only as constituting a problem for the culture of recollection, but also as the cause for many wrong decisions having been made concerning the future orientation of the transformation policy in the 1990s, with exponents of the thesis of a totalitarian regime supposing that the socialist state had been excessively strong, and demanding that the scope of governmental action be considerably restricted, and with representatives of the concept that following the "Prague Spring" there had been a rather authoritarian regime in Czechoslovakia underestimating, on the other hand, the degree to which societal structures had been destroyed. Both sides advocated economic transformation to be carried out as quickly as possible, with considerations of properly establishing the rule of law being neglected. That the rule of law was not put into practice made it possible for actors of the "gray" and black markets to maintain control of their capital into the post-turnover time. They were even able to juridically safeguard their money, often even to augment it, which resulted in the trust of society in the new democracy being considerably damaged.

STATE SOCIALISM WAS MORE THAN A POLITICAL RELATIONSHIP OF RULERS AND SUBJECTS

Some remarks on a theoretical deficiency of the concept of totalitarianism

Dieter Segert

The author advocates that social and political history join forces in attempting to undertake research into state socialist systems. His central point is that focusing solely on the relationship between rulers and subjects, as has been typical for the
classical concept of totalitarianism, hides reasons for both stability and change in state socialist systems. In order to understand these phenomena, one has to comprehend which societal groups viewed their interests as protected by the socialist order. The fact that socialist systems could not exist without being considered legitimate by relevant parts of society is proven, among other things, by attempts at reform that were inspired both “from above” and by parts of the critical, but loyal intelligentsia. Last but not least, the continuity of elites after 1989 demonstrates the importance of taking into account a societal reality which might very well deviate from the relationships of power being proclaimed: In the late period of state socialism, informal relationships of power and property had long since been established, which could easily be transposed into the period following the turnover.

**TOTALITARIANISM AS THEORY AND AS CZECH “TOTÁČ”**

*Jan Pauer*

Miloš Havelka’s attempt at characterizing the years 1939 to 1956 as a “totalitarian period” in Czech history raises a number of questions. Both the varying approaches at conceptualizing totalitarianism and the large number of historical phenomena make it doubtful that it is justified to claim an “internal commonality” for the period under scrutiny. Rather than in the definition of historical periods, theories of totalitarianism have their application for comparisons of dictatorial regimes. In the context of the Czech discourse about totalitarianism, which largely restrains itself to the communist kind of dictatorship, Havelka delivers, by taking into account national socialist rule as well, an important impulse which might result in some light being shed on the connections between both dictatorships. Petr Pithart’s claim about the consequences for the transformation after 1989 of a misinterpretation of totalitarian dictatorship is relevant not so much for the economic transformation, but rather for widespread societal pathologies which were a central pillar of dictatorial rule.

**ADVANTAGES AND LIMITS OF A PARADIGM: THE THEORY OF TOTALITARIANISM APPLIED TO EAST CENTRAL EUROPEAN STATE SOCIALISM**

*Bianca Hoenig*

The theory of totalitarianism experienced a kind of boom after the collapse of the “Iron Curtain,” predominantly in the nations belonging to the former Eastern bloc and in connection with attempts in these nations at coming to terms with their socialist past. Whereas particularly in the West this concept is frequently criticized, throughout Eastern Europe it has met with broad acceptance to this very day. Examining research efforts devoted to Poland, Czechoslovakia, and the GDR, the