

ABOUT ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF THE
CONCEPT OF TOTALITARIANISM, WITH EARLIER
APPROACHES TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT

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This study assesses Miloš Havelka's hypothesis of a totalitarian epoch in Czech history from four different points of view. First to be examined is the usage of the term "totalitarianism" in postwar Czech political discourse. Among other things, the author draws attention to the fact that this term was used only for rhetorical, polemical applications of a short-term nature, particularly when somebody or something was termed "fascist." The second point concerns the contemporary conviction of a totalitarian continuity in Czech society after "Munich." In this context, the author points out that émigré literature, when emotional strength is complemented by a degree of self-criticism, offers some insights worth considering. Part three examines to what degree the concept of totalitarianism which came to be accepted from the 1950s onwards is applicable to Czech society. As far as the 1950s are concerned,

and with the concept of a “political religion” taken into account, the answer is “yes.” The fourth and final part takes a critical look at the attempts at de-totalizing (de-Stalinizing) society in the 1960s. In a digression, the efforts at research into fascism of the period examined are interpreted as a proof of an irrational animosity against civilisation common to both totalitarian systems.