

TOTALITARIANISM AS THEORY AND AS CZECH "TOTÁČ"

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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.