
Totalitarianism as a “political chameleon” in a time of transition – The analysis of Sigmund Neumann (1904–1962)

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Abstract

Der aus Leipzig stammende Historiker und Politikwissenschaftler Sigmund Neumann musste 1933 wegen seiner jüdischen Herkunft in die USA emigrieren. 1942 veröffentlichte er dort sein Bahn brechendes Werk „Permanent Revolution“. 20 Jahre später wollte er – bereits schwer krank – für die Neuauflage eine Einleitung und drei ergänzende Kapitel schreiben. Nach Neumanns Tod am 22. Oktober 1962 schrieb Hans Kohn für die 2. Auflage von „Permanent Revolution“ eine eigene Einleitung. In dem hier veröffentlichten Beitrag werden Neumanns Ergänzungen, soweit er sie noch abschließen konnte, vorgestellt. In seinen Texten warnt Neumann vor raschen Generalisierungen als Grundlage für eine Totalitarismustheorie mit umfassendem Erklärungsanspruch. Vielmehr plädiert er für ein hohes Maß an Differenzierung sowohl der totalitären wie der autoritären Diktaturen. Dies gelte sowohl für den Vergleich zwischen verschiedenen Diktaturen als auch für die Transformationen innerhalb einer Diktatur über die Zeit hinweg.

Sigmund Neumann’s concept of totalitarianism* has witnessed changes over 20 years, namely from 1942 to 1962, and it is only known of to a limited extent. The historian and social scientist Sigmund Neumann,¹ an immigrant originally from Leipzig, worked at the Wesleyan University in Middletown, Connecticut, from

* Paper delivered at the Jagiellonian University in Kraków during the Conference “The Sources of Twentieth-Century Totalitarianism”, 6.–8. November, 2007.

1 See Peter Lösche, Sigmund Neumann. In: Deutsche Historiker, Göttingen 1989, p. 82–100; Karl Dietrich Bracher, preface to: Sigmund Neumann, Die Parteien der Weimarer Republik (1932), 2nd edition Stuttgart 1970, p. 7–12; Alfons Söllner,

1934 onwards. The application of comparative social science is a method of central significance to Neumann's analyses – a procedure which is more interested in the genesis of a phenomenon than its actual form, and one which also brings out the differences between the various dictatorships of the 20th century.

In his ground-breaking volume entitled *Permanent Revolution*.² *The Total State in a World at War*, which was published in 1942, Sigmund Neumann went in the face of the prevailing consensus of the anti-Hitler coalition, in that he fully integrated the USSR – an ally of the USA in the ongoing war – into his dictatorship comparison. A posthumous second edition of *Permanent Revolution* was published twenty-three years later. Up until his death Neumann had been working on a preface (of which there were two versions) and three new chapters; he was only able to complete the first – a 44-page introductory essay entitled *Toward a Theory of Totalitarianism*.³ Hans Kohn,⁴ who released the posthumous 2nd edition, did not include Neumann's new sections, and was instead content to use a short biographical foreword. He did, nonetheless, change the subtitle of the work according to Neumann's suggestion, which therefore saw it become *Totalitarianism in the Age of International Civil War*.⁵

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- Sigmund Neumanns "Permanent Revolution". Ein vergessener Klassiker der vergleichenden Diktaturforschung. In: Idem/Ralf Walkenhaus/Karin Wieland (ed.), *Totalitarismus. Eine Ideengeschichte des 20. Jahrhunderts*, Berlin 1997, p. 53-73.
- 2 1942/43 saw the publication of a large number of approving, sometimes euphoric reviews in the most important academic volumes. Cf. Hans Cohn. In: *American Historical Review*, 48 (1943), p. 534 f.; Ernst Kris. In: *American Journal of Sociology*, 49 (1943), p. 86; Hugh McDowall Clokie. In: *American Political Science Review*, 37 (1943), p. 350 f.; Herman Hausheer. In: *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 226 (1943), p. 167 f.; Robert Gale Woolbert. In: *Foreign Affairs*, 21 (1942), p. 276-289; Louis Leo Snyder. In: *Political Science Quarterly*, 58 (1943), p. 144 f.; Phillips Bradley. In: *Survey Graphic*, 32 (1943), p. 107 f.; C. H. Driver. In: *Yale Review*, 32 (1943), p. 197-200, 592, 594. The author is going to translate and edit Neumann's "Permanent Revolution".
 - 3 See Sigmund Neumann to Jonathan Harris dated the 17.9.1962. In: Sigmund Neumann Papers, File Permanent Revolution, Deutsches Exilarchiv 1933-1945, Frankfurt a. M.
 - 4 Cf. Hans Kohn, *Revolutions and Dictatorships. Essays in Contemporary History*, Cambridge (Mass.) 1939.
 - 5 In Preface (II) Neumann remarks on this matter: "The change of the subtitle from 'the total state in a world at war' to 'totalitarianism in the age of International Civil War' is indicative of the shifting climate in which the new publication appears. Written originally under the impact of National-Socialism's arrogant challenge in its open warfare against the world, this study must now apply to a much more subtle and interwoven pattern of global interaction. The blurred frontiers of International Civil War manifest that today totalitarianism has penetrated deeply into the tissues of our society on all levels – international, national, and personal." (Preface II, Sigmund Neumann Papers, File Permanent Revolution, *ibid*). In the case of the 2nd edition, Sophia Sluzan arranged for an additional bibliography (organized according to chapter) of the titles released between 1942 and 1964. Sigmund Neumann, *Permanent Revolution. Totalitarianism in the Age of International Civil War. Second Edition*, with a new Preface by Hans Kohn, London/Dunmow 1965, p. 376-389.

Where content is concerned, Cohn only made the following comments in his introduction: “Stalinism has been replaced by a ‘milder’ dictatorship of Khrushchev and his successors; the apparently monolithic and highly centralized structure of the Communist world movement has given way to a pluralistic polycentrism [...]”⁶ He also quotes Neumann’s warning that one should be careful in one’s differentiation between the various autocracies: “Even the modern autocracies [...] are worlds apart from one another [...] But in actual fact, significant and numerous as their structural similarities and common human traits are, the dynamic movements of our day – the awakening nationalism of the Near East, Latin-American one-man rule, Far Eastern neo-feudalism [...], Russia’s Bolshevism, even German National Socialism and Italian Fascism – must be differentiated in time and space. They have their distinct national climate. They arrive from a specific historical background. [...] Hence a full definition of modern dictatorship must include this diversity with all its shades and conflicting aims. Any sweeping formula should therefore be regarded with suspicion.”⁷

In his own, unpublished preface written in 1962, Neumann is more careful yet more detailed than Cohn in his comments on totalitarianism and its Soviet variety:

“There may well be manifestations of totalitarianism in our midst. Even if of transitory nature, these phenomena demand our close scrutiny. [...] There is first of all the U.S.S.R. which gained the position of one of the two super-powers and in fact is challenging in ever accelerating and ambitious ardour the U.S.A. [...] What is the true nature of the new Red Empire? Has the Soviet Union undergone a radical transformation in its third generation of citizens, neither creators nor conscientious fighters but matter of fact children of a permanent revolution that has become institutionalized and normalized? Or is the new policy of the thaw merely a technical move and clever camouflage of a persistent drive of a planned grand strategy for eventual world conquest? [...] Is it of its essence that it must go on conquering until it possesses the world? If that should be the case, then any attempt at co-existence and pacification would be hopeless appeasement and mere postponement of an inevitable and ever-widening conflict. Or are there signs of an inner transformation of its aggressive aspirations into a cooling off towards a constructive conservation of a stabilized world power?”⁸

Neumann is convinced that the modern dictatorships “have changed radically since their inception.”⁹ In his view this necessitates the study of the transformation of dictatorships and the comparison of the various stages of totalitarian development – both within a dictatorship and between various dictatorships.

6 Quote according to Neumann, *Permanent Revolution*, Second Edition, p. viii.

7 *Ibid.*, p. ix.

8 Preface (I) by Sigmund Neumann (1962), *Sigmund Neumann Papers*, File *Permanent Revolution*, *ibid.* The last sentence is almost identical to a corresponding sentence in Preface II, *ibid.*

9 Neumann, Preface I, *ibid.*

This call for a detailed analysis of specific changes was not only referring to dictatorships in Germany, Italy and the Soviet Union, but also to regimes in countries such as Yugoslavia, Poland and China. Neumann comes to the conclusion: “This very fact may call for greater hesitancy in making quick generalizations towards an all-inclusive theory of totalitarianism.”¹⁰ Referring to the situation in the Soviet Union in 1962, Neumann states:

“The Bolsheviks’ declared fight for the world conquest [...] no longer exhausts itself in or concentrates on militant aggression, not even in its proven indirect and refined Faith Column strategy. The emphasis has shifted to the more promising and rewarding economic front. Indeed, in view of the lethal military techniques of this atomic age, Khrushchev could go so far in his propagandizing slogan of ‘peaceful co-existence’ as to renounce Lenin’s dictum about the inevitability of war between the Capitalist and Socialist world. Yet such ‘peaceful co-existence’ means to the Soviet Union’s unchallenged blueprinter definitely not the end of a divided world, but only a transfer of the life-and-death-struggle to an equally ruthless economic and ideological competition in which he expects Communism to triumph. In this sense, while not changing the direction of its final route the system may well have learned to exploit many new avenues of attack.”¹¹

In his unpublished essay *Toward a Theory of Totalitarianism* (1962), Sigmund Neumann describes the fundamental sequences of totalitarianism interpretation. Bolshevism was initially understood by the Western world as a singular, abnormal phenomenon “resultant of strange historical circumstances of national traditions and misfortunes of defeat”,¹² a temporary episode not worthy of any in-depth analysis. It was only the rise of the Central European dictatorships which, “partly in response to the Soviet challenge”,¹³ made the “Soviet matter” interesting to “civilized society”. The various interpretations of this historic phenomenon which followed over a period of decades “were more a mirror of the changing times than of the nature of the matter in dispute.”¹⁴

The first explanation offered by Neumann for the rise of dictatorships is the psychoanalytical paradigm, which is to falsify it straight away. The neuroses of the leading protagonists did not account for these “one man rules” to a sufficient extent. The next, historic attempt at an explanation took the characteristic mass basis of the movements as its starting point, and saw the developing dictatorships as the natural response of a proud nation which had lost the war and been humiliated by its victors. Yet this explanation is not accurate, at least not in the case of the USSR, though one could perhaps say that Lenin used Russia’s defeat in the imperialist war as the ideal basis for a radical coup.

10 Ibid. The last sentence is almost identical to a corresponding sentence in Preface II, *ibid.*

11 Neumann, Preface I, *ibid.*

12 Sigmund Neumann, *Toward a Theory of Totalitarianism*, p. 9, Sigmund Neumann Papers, File Permanent Revolution, *ibid.*

13 *Ibid.*

14 *Ibid.*, p. 10.

This hypothesis also created the connection between war and revolution. Although Neumann found this humiliation theory unconvincing, it had brought about a predominant mood of appeasement amongst the victorious Anglo-American countries during the 1930s. People felt guilty, and tended towards concessions – particularly as the National Self-determination slogan came from the ideological repertoire of the Western democratic countries. The toleration of annexations carried out by the USSR – for instance in the Baltic – were seen by the Western powers as an opportunity to appease and neutralize the potential revolutionary threat posed by both the USSR and the fascist regimes by making territorial concessions.

It was only by the end of the 1930s, by which time the dictatorships had consolidated and set about spreading themselves across the continent, that the Western powers began to deliberate upon the issue of which of the dictatorships was the lesser evil. Left-wing intellectuals had labelled fascism the “last stage of capitalism”. Fascism and National Socialism turned this slogan into a positivism, referring to themselves as “bulwarks against the Red Peril”. As the USSR regarded the fascist dictatorships as the last stage of capitalism even before the dawn of the socialist revolution, and the Western conservatives tolerated these dictatorships as a bulwark against communism, both National Socialism and fascism were able to spread further in the shadow of these images.

The military successes of these dictatorships – initially gained by the National Socialists, then by the Soviet Union – led to the extremely flattering wording of totalitarianism as an efficiency [sic!] state of master organizers and propagandists.”¹⁵ According to Neumann, even serious students of behavioural sciences in the United States were impressed by the powerful protagonists’ ability to mobilize mass support even in the occupied states.

In Neumann’s view, once the Third Reich had collapsed the Western victorious powers took to interpreting the totalitarian German state as a mysterious quirk of the German national character. The Germans were labelled abnormal, and attempts were made to ban them from the international scene or to place them in quarantine under a military leadership. Essentially one wanted to strike up again from the point where the dictatorship had interrupted “normal” proceedings. The triumphal impression that such a development would never be able to happen on their soil took root amongst the victorious Anglo-Americans. A far-sighted line from Neumann comments on this stage of dictatorship analysis: “Serious students, however, from the outset realized that totalitarianism was not and could not be defeated on the battlefield.”¹⁶ He continues: “In fact its power seemed to be reinforced in the post-war era by a formidable triple threat: The legacy of dictatorship among the defeated nations, its catchy germ affecting

¹⁵ Ibid, p. 14.

¹⁶ Ibid, p. 16.

the counter-attacking democracies, and the reassertion and rise of even more powerful totalitarian regimes.”¹⁷

Neumann delineates three post-War approaches to totalitarianism according to their methodology: “An existentialist theory, very much in tune with a prevailing mood of the aftermath, was probing more deeply into human condition which had brought about the origins of totalitarianism and revealed many insights into modern man’s predicament.”¹⁸ He names Hannah Arendt as an excellent example of this paradigm, suggesting that her originally British title *The burden of our time*¹⁹ is a good introduction to this type of interpretation. Nevertheless, he rejects this concept as unconvincing: “Vis-a-vis such radical destruction of the world around us, it seems indeed understandable to retreat to the inner core of individual conscience as the last defence and only redeeming force of naked existence. Yet such an interpretation, while quite persuasive and potent on a personal plane, does not comprehend the historical complexity and the social reality of the phenomenon itself. Above all, it hardly applies to the most critical antagonist of our time, the USSR, nor does it grasp the revolutionary dynamics of evolving Red China and the still groping forces of newly developing nations.”²⁰

Neumann does not see it as a coincidence that during the post-War period – for him “a lull period for imaginative thinking and theoretical insights”²¹ – totalitarianism could only be portrayed as a syndrome of interrelated characteristics. He names the work of Carl Joachim Friedrich and Zbigniew Brzezinski as an example of such a concept.²² “Friedrich-Brzezinski’s cluster analysis rightly reflects and records the substantive progress of differentiated research in the field, yet such a careful catalogue obviously cannot answer the quest for a full comprehension of the phenomenon’s intrinsic nature.”²³

The concept of modernization as the key to the explanation of totalitarianism moves the most recent advancements of the mature Soviet model into focus and explains its attractiveness to developing countries. Centrally-planned socio-economic transformations of this pace and radical nature can be enticing when compared with the slow, strenuous change processes witnessed in democratic states. “The dictator’s directed efforts can surely lead to short-cut solutions which in their immediate and impressive achievements let their followers forget the price to be paid and leave their opponents crippled in their self-confidence to remain

17 Ibid.

18 Ibid.

19 Hannah Arendt originally intended to name her book not *The Origins of Totalitarianism* but *The burden of our time*.

20 Neumann, *Toward a Theory of Totalitarianism*, p. 17.

21 Ibid, 18.

22 Cf. Carl Joachim Friedrich/Zbigniew Brzezinski, *Totalitarian Dictatorship and Autocracy*, Cambridge/Mass. 1956.

23 Neumann, *Toward a Theory of Totalitarianism*, p. 18.

masters in this age of the spectacular Sputnik.”²⁴ In Neumann’s view it is nonetheless naïve to believe in an automatic transfer ranging from ecumenical development to a political modernity featuring public participation and civil responsibility. “Neither does the search for modernity lead the royal road to guaranteed democracy nor is this speed-updrive for economic development the one and only expression of modern totalitarianism.”²⁵ Neumann postulates that the Khrushchev era – with its radical renunciation of Stalinism and concept of a worldwide “managerial revolution” with differing regional developments, ideologies and long-term goals but similar structures and short-term goals – obscured the previously clear perception of totalitarianism. According to him, the wish to explain this many-faceted image with the “modernization” formula could not be the final word on the matter.

Nonetheless, Neumann states that all of the theorems mentioned – for a particular phase in the development of totalitarianism – included an element of truth. Yet he also notes that all blinkered explanations are dangerous and lead to confusion if they are taken as the whole truth.

Neumann sees the “totalitarianism” theorem as a “political chameleon”²⁶ which, in his view, is best labelled as “permanent revolution”. In 1962 Neumann spoke of the modern dictatorships as “total, demagogic, institutionalized and driven to unlimited expansion.”²⁷ According to him, the limitlessness of modern dictatorships in terms of time and space differentiates them from the classical Roman dictatorships through to the dictatorships of the 18th and 19th centuries. The cold calculation of Lenin’s decision to risk a revolution if “the objective sociological conditions for a radical change are on hand, separated him from the enthusiastic yet fatal plotters of a century’s standing from the Dekabristi to the Narodniki and Nihilists.”²⁸ Neumann writes that, in contrast with earlier revolts, Lenin linked the romantic idea of a revolution with an academic concept, thereby turning revolution into a rational matter and raising it to a new level. Prerequisites for modern revolutions include the existence of wide social classes which are not integrated into the existing society and therefore constitute the raw material for a movement “promising them a new haven of communal existence.”²⁹ The demi-god’s appeal to these classes makes him into their spokesperson and charismatic leader. According to Neumann, the successful implantation of a dictatorial system requires the execution of further transformation processes after the seizure of power. He describes the first step as the targeted destruction of pluralist society, which is then to be replaced by a “new order” which brings “conformity on all levels of social existence (Gleichschaltung).”³⁰

24 Ibid, p. 19.

25 Ibid, p. 19 f.

26 Ibid, p. 21.

27 Ibid, p. 22.

28 Ibid.

29 Ibid, p. 24.

30 Ibid, p. 25.

The mobilization of the masses is indispensable to this new order; the masses are to receive the impression that they are participating in the political system “in some ways in an even more active manner than democratic systems which rely on the free interplay of competing social forces.”³¹ The survival of modern dictatorships is linked to a further highly-significant factor: “Modern dictatorships, autocratic as they may be, have to fulfil the social needs of security, material welfare and spiritual belonging for their mass following if they expect any degree of permanence.”³² We have learned from analyses of the collapse of the Eastern Bloc that these dictatorships were not in a position to satisfy the material and spiritual needs of their followers on a sustained basis. In describing modern dictatorships as “post-democratic” Neumann brings both systems close together: “[...] one ought to recognize that both rival systems belong to the same historical era.”³³ This means that both systems must provide answers to problems and questions common to them. In Neumann’s view, both democracies and dictatorships feature leaders and followers. Yet the difference lies in the specific selection, character and functions of the competing institutions. The decisive difference is that a dictatorship institutionalizes revolution. This makes it total: it seeks to pervade every fibre of society. The body with the most important role if this total pervasion of society is to be achieved is the party machine: “Such centralized manipulation through institution, propaganda and last not least terror down to the lowest level of society guarantees not only the proverbial enforcement of conformity, but also prepares modern dictatorships for their fourth task: the march on the world.”³⁴ In 1962 Neumann was completely under the influence of the success of Khrushchev – not least because of the first successful manned space flight, achieved in 1961. He was not able to include Khrushchev’s errors and downfall in his 1962 analysis.³⁵ Against the backdrop of Khrushchev’s rule, the possibility of a “peaceful coexistence” appears totally unrealistic to Neumann. He also sees conflict between the two systems as inevitable. In the case of the USSR he identifies further variables outside of the many-faceted factors within the “red empire”: The concentric circles around its centre in the form of the Soviet satellite states represented an additional area of influence. The antagonistic world powers also exerted their influence on the politics of the “Revolutionary Fatherland”: “In each of these spheres the image and strategy of Bolshevism takes on a different pattern, and yet they are all part and parcel of its full definition. [...] In fact, much of the current controversy on the true nature of USSR might be resolved if one conceives of the Soviet system as part of the present whirlpool of world-wide upheavals. By itself Russia might have reached a point of saturation and stabilization by now. However, being fed by the fire of

31 Ibid, p. 25 f.

32 Ibid, p. 26.

33 Ibid.

34 Ibid, p. 28.

35 See Gerhard Besier/Katarzyna Stokłosa, *Das Europa der Diktaturen. Eine neue Geschichte des 20. Jahrhunderts*, München 2006, p. 413 ff.

these coinciding revolutions, the master manipulators of the Kremlin could well direct these divergent forces into their stream and thus reinforce Permanent Revolution, until it encompasses and devours the whole world.”³⁶ Neumann also writes that Sino-Russian tensions, strains and stresses within the USSR, external perceptions held by the USSR’s antagonists and the Soviet response to these perceptions were having an effect on the transformations within the USSR.

It is this multifactorial and multi-dynamic point which differentiates Neumann from other totalitarianism theorists. It is this concept which enables him to also include theorems from other thinkers as validating elements in his much more complex concept. This explains his distinctly, constructive, discursive style when compared with his peers. On the 30th of November 1949 Sigmund Neumann wrote to Carl Joachim Friedrich: “I hope that our discussion was useful for you and your group. It was most assuring to find that in spite of our all too infrequent get-togethers we seem to agree on the fundamentals.”³⁷ “Fundamentals” here is presumably less about methodical and methodological processes regarding the research subject than the common platform both took as their base: the conviction that free democracy is the form of political order which is to be defended and secured.

In order to stress this point of view, Neumann favours “definition by contrast” in the form of comparative analysis of “constitutional democracy” and “totalitarianism”. He states that the modern ideological war between systems sees the opponents appropriating each other’s ideas and concepts; these are then ideologically bent, as the example of the people’s democracies had already shown. “A comparative confrontation alone can articulate their true character and clash in our time. [...] It defines the opposing camps in a threefold approach: political, sociological and ideological, by addressing itself to the crucial questions of their source and scope of power, their divergent interrelations of leaders and followers, and their contrasting concepts of man in this triple involvement on the international, national and personal plane.”³⁸ Neumann suggests a bipolar model similar to the most recent models, with extreme democracy on the one hand and totalitarianism on the other.³⁹ (Table 1)

He names a third category in the form of “authoritarianism” as a historically-dominant political system in developing countries. In his view, authoritarian states do not formulate missionary goals and also lack an ideological basis – if one disregards a vague conservative creed. In contrast with totalitarian regimes they do not seek to mobilize people, but to privatize them and keep them outside of centres of political power. He writes that authoritarian rule “does not even possess a mechanism to control corruption which may in fact often be the basis

36 Neumann, *Toward a Theory of Totalitarianism*, p. 30.

37 Sigmund Neumann Papers, File Sigmund Neumann’s Letters 1949–1961.

38 Neumann, *Toward a Theory of Totalitarianism*, p. 34.

39 See Wolfgang Merkel, *Systemtransformation. Eine Einführung in die Theorie und Empirie der Transformationsforschung*, Opladen 1999, p. 55.

Table 1: The Demoratic Decalogue.⁴⁰ Definition by Contrast

	Constitutional Democracy	Totalitarianism
A	Source and Scope of Power	Political Approach
1.	Responsible Government	Totalitarianism in time and space
2.	Freedom of Choice of Alternatives	Enforcement of conformity to the one-party state (<i>Gleichschaltung</i>)
	party government majority rule and minority rights “Her Majesty’s Opposition” the meaning of compromise	
B	Leaders and Followers	Sociological Approach
3.	Institutional Leadership	Personal Leadership
	Leadership in the democratic Mass Society	Rule of the Demagogue The Lieutenants: competing pyramids underneath the monolith
4.	Constitutionalism: Rule of Law	Rule by Degree
5.	The political party: democratic representation and integration	Centralized authoritarianism
6.	Pluralism of democratic daily life through competitive informal groups, interest organizations, civic societies.	Control of the masses through institutions, propaganda and fear as a political weapon
7.	Social Cohesion	Pulverised Society The rise of the Crises Strata Artificial Coordination of the Garrison State
C	Man and Society	Ideological Approach
8.	International Order	Unlimited Expansion
9.	The Ideological Climate: Rational Society and Free Interplay of Free Agencies	The Irrational Counter-Revolution Emotional Government and the control of the amorphous masses
10.	The Concept of Man Inalienable rights of the responsible individual	“Escape from Freedom” “Security through miracle, mystery and authority” (The Grandinquisitor)

40 Neumann, Toward a Theory of Totalitarianism, p. 35. Cf. Idem, Der demokratische Dekalog: Staatsgestaltung im Gesellschaftswandel. In: Richard Löwenthal (ed.), Die Demokratie im Wandel der Gesellschaft, Berlin 1963, p. 11–28.

of its stability.”⁴¹ Where the authoritarian dictatorships in Portugal and Spain were concerned, Neumann’s 1962 work saw him doubt their longevity and postulate that they were set to undergo transformation processes into democracies or totalitarian societies: “Whether it then reverts to democratic or to totalitarian patterns will depend on many factors which touch the core of our concern.”⁴² If Neumann had lived longer he would have witnessed the irreversible transformation of the Soviet system into an authoritarian, inflexible system founded on withering ideology. The Eastern Bloc having collapsed, Putin has made timid attempts at democratization but now returned to authoritarian models which exhibit all the characteristics of uni-ideological authoritarianism. As such, and in contrast with what Neumann expected in 1962, the authoritarian dictatorship has proven itself to be remarkably tough.

41 Neumann, *Toward a Theory of Totalitarianism*, p. 42.

42 *Ibid*, p. 44.