

NOTES FOR DISCUSSION - INTRODUCTION/CHAPTER 1

What event in the Spring of 2015 changed the author's mind that totalitarianism may not be dead after all?

What made this event so important?

Is she a valid witness? Why or why not?

What blinds modern American society from seeing what this older Czech woman and other survivors of Soviet hard totalitarianism as they do? B., xii

What changed in old-fashioned liberalism that has created a concern that totalitarianism of a newer variety is making its way into the public scene? G.,1

What has been the effect of this change? G., 1

What vision do the old, hard totalitarianism and the new, soft totalitarianism share? G., 2

What is the goal of soft totalitarianism? G., 3

What is one sure thing we must do in order to resist soft totalitarianism? B., xiv

What are two particular factors that define the rise of soft totalitarianism? B., xv

Assuming you have reviewed the person of Father Kolakovic, what was his adopted motto and what does it mean? G.,6

Do you think it is a good motto?

How would we apply it today?

How does Hannah Arendt describe a totalitarian society? G., 8

What does the author of the guide suggest is the major interest of modern man? G., 10

How does the soft totalitarian seek to fill this need? G., 10

Describe the therapeutic culture and how it has influenced the church.

What term does author Dreher use to label the modern church methodology? B.,12

Describe how this label is manifested in the modern church.

SUGGESTED QUESTIONS FOR TABLE DISCUSSIONS

What was your one great takeaway from your reading?

What stood out to you as something you did not know before but you can now see it as a possibility?

Did you have the thought, “This could never happen here”? If so, why did you think that? If not, what did you think when you encountered the statements or analysis of the author?

Is this material important? If so, why? If not, why not?

Did this material cause you concern? If so, why?

What is the difference between an authoritarian state and a totalitarian state?

What term was coined to describe the decadent form of Christianity today? What is its meaning?

What is “ketman” and the pill of “Murti-Bing”?

What does our author say must be done to resist totalitarianism?

SUMMARY OF THE IMPORTANT POINTS IN THE INTRODUCTION AND FIRST CHAPTER of LIVE NOT BY LIES, Rod Dreher

The prophetic, wise ministry of Father Kolkovic
Jesuit priest and anti-facist activist - Croatian
True name: Tomislav Poglajen
Resisted the Nazis in Czechoslovakia and learned methods of
resistance
Took on his mother's maiden name, Kolakovic
Wrote books and articles under the pseudonym of Father George
Studied Soviet history, culture and the ways of communism
He the threat of Soviet totalitarianism was as great as that of the
Nazis; he felt the defeat of the Nazis would only open the door
for Soviet totalitarianism
He recognized the church was not ready for the communists; the
structure of the church was not equipped for it and certainly the
laity was even remotely ready
He knew the communists would try to get to the clergy and control
them; the "laity", it was assumed, would simply fall in line.
He understood that ONLY a full and total life commitment to Christ
would enable them to withstand the coming trial
The commitment to Christ would have to be concrete and communal
IMPORTANT: He developed cells of faithful Catholics who came
together for prayer, study, and fellowship
He taught the fear of the LORD: every person must be accountable to
God for his actions; FREEDOM IS RESPONSIBILITY
FREEDOM means to live within the truth (Jesus called it "Abiding in
Him"; Paul called it "being filled with the Spirit" and "letting the
Word of Christ dwell in you abundantly")
He adopted the motto of the Jocsists: "See, Judge, Act"
SEE, JUDGE, ACT
To **SEE** meant to be awake to realities around you.
To **JUDGE** was a command to discern soberly the meaning of those
realities in light of what you know to be true, especially from the
teachings of the Christian faith.
To **ACT** meant to live according to that conclusion to resist evil
Stated another way, SEE, JUDGE, ACT means

Identify the challenge
Discern together its meaning
Act on your conclusions

He succeeded in creating a community of trust and mutual friendship
from a diverse grouping of people

Communism offers a system of thought that covers every aspect of life
Christianity had dried up to a matter of a few rituals without affecting
or effecting the rest of life

With Kolakovic, they were not only studying the Bible but philosophy,
sociology and intellectual topics; he was wising up the
congregations to a full biblical worldview

He trained his young followers in how to work secretly and withstand
the interrogation that he said would surely come

He began to build the underground church - which became the
principle means of anti-communist dissent for the next forty
years.

TOTALITARIANISM

Is a complete ideology that demands all those under it swallow the
whole ideology or be cancelled

It seeks to displace all prior traditions and institutions, with the goal
of bringing all aspects of society under control of that ideology

Is a state that aspires to nothing less than defining and controlling
reality; the leadership determines what is truth

Old totalitarianism demanded love for the party and enforced
compliance with the power of the state

New or soft totalitarianism demands allegiance to a set of progressive
beliefs, many of which are incompatible with logic and certainly
with Christianity; compliance is enforced by elites using public
opinion and private corporations controlling us through
sophisticated technology

Totalitarianism takes advantage of the internal desires of man for the
kingdom of God, the Garden of Eden, the Millennial kingdom
and his hunger for righteousness and justice to create a secular
utopian dream (think John Lennon's "Imagine")

Soft totalitarianism seeks to control by meeting the human desire for
safety, personal pleasure and comfort when enforcing what
would otherwise be repugnant to people

Christianity of today has bought into this scheme by changing from
the radical followers of Jesus in willingness to suffer for
righteousness to become a Moralistic Therapeutic Deism

MTD consists of the general belief that God exists and wants nothing more from us than to be nice and to be happy; the purpose of suffering is denied and suffering is to be avoided at all costs – that leads to the compromise with the soft culture that absorbs it into its orbit

Modern Christianity cannot resist this magnetic gravitational pull for it has no moral ground for which to do it; it has already accepted the premise that it is better to just get along, keeping a safe enough distance from the center of the storm of totalitarianism to catch nothing but the debris flying from it.

The church is sucked into the doublethink and doublespeak of the culture through the media, academia, so-called science, corporate America and other institutions practicing this Newspeak. We recognize it but continue to live in the hypocrisy of *ketman*.

The church, like the culture to which it has assimilated, feels powerless to do anything about it

PRINCIPLES OF OVERCOMING TOTALITARIANISM

Decentralize the power and leadership

Draw close to authentic spiritual leadership

Encourage total life commitment to Christ by all

Empower people to be the priests/leaders they were intended to be

Create communities of trust and mutual friendships around Bible study, prayer and the study of a biblical worldview; form small cells of fellow believers with whom one can pray, sing, study Scripture, and read other books important to their mission.

Know your enemy, his viewpoints and his ways

Know how to recognize evil, deceit and lies; know the truth above all else in order to recognize it immediately.