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Introduction:

The term "totalitarian" comes from Latin - the word "totus" means "whole" or "complete". A totalitarian state means a political rule in which people are completely subjugated to the state system. It is a form of dictatorship, i.e. a dictatorship without democracy, in which the people have little freedom. The human rights are violated or severely limited and there is no freedom of expression, religion and press freedom. The media such as newspapers, books or television are controlled by the rulers and critical content falls victim to censorship, so they are not published. There is also no separation of powers; such is to ensure in democratic states that the state power is not too one-sided.

Totalitarianism: a dictatorial form of government

For the first time, the Italian politician and political critic Giovanni Amendola used the term "totalitarian" in a political context when he called fascism in Italy under Benito Mussolini in 1923 a “totalitarian system". He described the almost unrestricted and uncontrollable rule of the dictator Mussolini. The fascists finally used the term themselves and interpreted it positively in their favor. In a totalitarian state, a single tyrant does not necessarily have to be at the top, but total power can also come from a political group. Other political opinions or parties are not tolerated by the state power. A totalitarian government strives to control all areas of life affecting both professional activity and family life or leisure activities. Moreover, the peculiarity of totalitarian systems is that they are based on certain ideas and convictions, their worldview and the image of humanity that they set should be shared by all citizens be taken over and a critical and independent thinking is undesirable. A "new human being" is to be created that corresponds to a certain ideal image. A political, social and at the same time human enemy image is also common to these systems, through which the "we-feeling" is strengthened. It is not the individual, that is, the individual person that counts in this social form, but the community into which the individual must submit. On the other hand, the personal freedom of the human being is severely limited and a development according to one's own interests and preferences is difficult. Such was the slogan of the National Socialists: "You are nothing, your people is everything," and in the socialist GDR it was said: "From me to us."

Therefore, from childhood onwards, people should be educated to the most adapted citizens, who are completely convinced of the socially prescribed ideals and do not question the rules of the system, a constant " propaganda " is carried out in the interests of the rulers. In a totalitarian system, control of people goes so far that it not only plays a role in how they behave externally, but also their thinking and feeling should be as much as possible in accordance with the convictions of their state. The citizens in totalitarian systems are being monitored and spied on, and critics of the ruling policies must expect prosecution and punishment. Not infrequently, people who do not fit the government are imprisoned, tortured or even killed. The population is often arrested or even forced to observe and betray "conspicuous" people for the alleged welfare of the general public so that "enemies of the state" can be fought and eliminated. Thus, people are intimidated and there is a state of constant fear and oppression. In addition to Mussolini's fascist system in Italy and the Nazi dictatorship in Germany between 1933 and 1945 under Adolf Hitler, Josef Stalin's Communist rule in the Soviet Union between 1924 and 1953 is often cited as an example of a totalitarian system.

References

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