

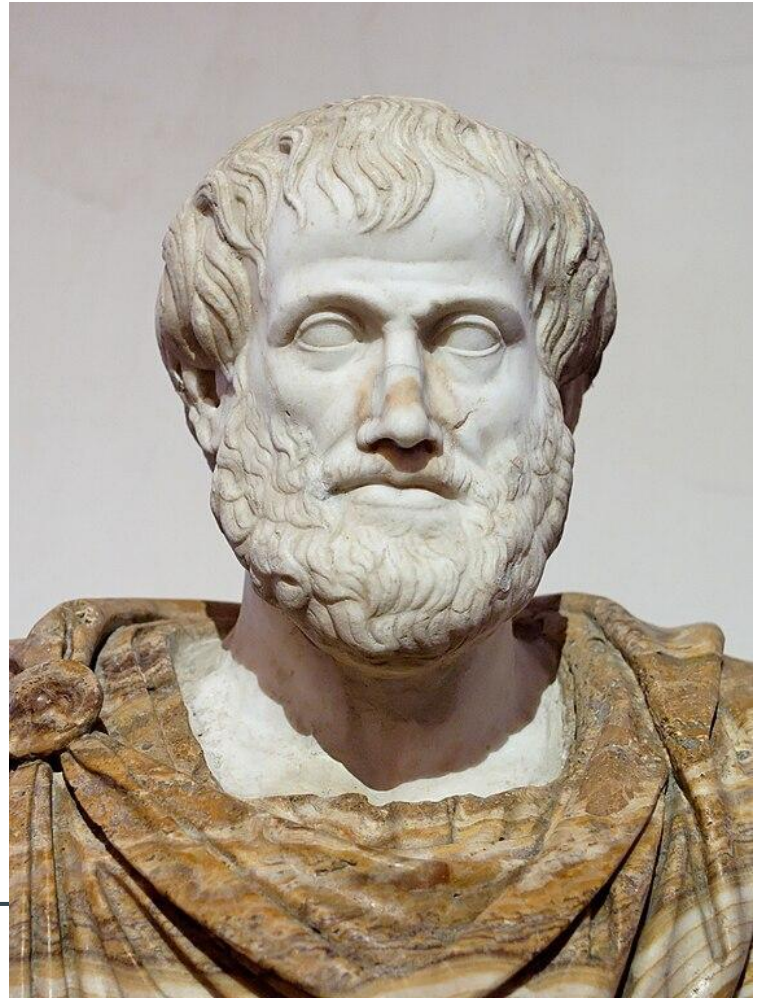
The Role of Truth in a Government and our Ethical Duties to Governments that Lie



By Luke Ostberg
Advisor: Dr. Mark Smillie
Philosophy

“But justice is the bond of men in states, for the administration of justice, which is the determination of what is just, is the principle of order in political society.”

- Aristotle in the *Politics* (I:2:1253a:31)



Truth and the State: Three Relations to Consider

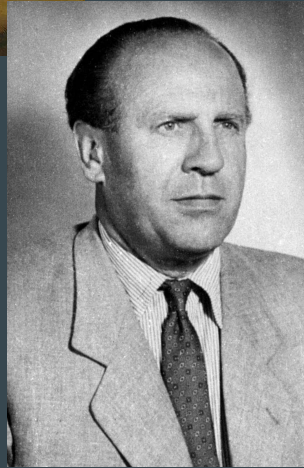
1. Totalitarianism
2. Agnosticism Towards the Truth
3. A Balanced Relation Between Freedom and Moral Truth



“The first conclusion to be drawn, then, is that the original and most important sphere of activity, one that predetermines all the others, is simply an attempt to create and support the independent life of society as an articulated expression of living within the truth.”

- Václav Havel: *The Power of the Powerless*

Possible Responses to Governments that Lie



“I am therefore suggesting a strategy that should gradually lead us out of the blind alley we are in today. This strategy can be summarized in two phrases: what unifies and drives us must continue to be a sense of *moral commitment and mission*; and this drive should be given a place and a perspective in the creation of a *parallel polis*.”

- Václav Benda: “The Parallel Polis”

Conclusion and Present Significance



Bibliography

- Adler, Mortimer J. *A Vision of the Future: Twelve Ideas for A Better Life and a Better Society*. Macmillan Publishing Company, 1984.
- . *Aristotle for Everybody: Difficult Thought Made Easy*. Simon and Schuster, Inc., 1978.
- Arendt, Hannah. "Totalitarianism." In *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, 303–479. Harcourt Brace and Company, 1979.
- Aristotle. *The Politics of Aristotle*. Translated by Benjamin Jowett. The Modern Library. Random House, Inc., 1943.
- Bartrop, Paul R. "Schindler, Oskar." In *Resisting the Holocaust: Upstanders, Partisans, and Survivors*, 240–43. Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2016.
<https://research.ebsco.com/linkprocessor/plink?id=8bd66de8-eb26-3a3f-b90a-7eb3c9438b21>.
- Bassham, Gregory. "Environmental Disobedience." In *Environmental Ethics: The Central Issues*, 207–15. Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 2020.
- Benda, Václav. "The Parallel Polis." In *The Long Night of the Watchman - Essays by Václav Benda, 1977-1989*, edited by F. Flagg Taylor IV, translated by Barbara Day, 49–56. St. Augustine's Press, 2017. <https://paralelnipolis.cz/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/pp.pdf>.
- Benda, Václav, Milan Šimečka, Ivan M. Jirous, Jiří Dienstbier, Václav Havel, Ladislav Hejdránek, Jan Šimsa, and Paul Wilson. "Parallel Polis, or An Independent Society in Central and Eastern Europe: An Inquiry." *Social Research* 55, no. 1/2 (1988): 211–46.
- Dabrowski, Patrice M. "People's Poland: From Stalinism to Solidarity." In *Poland: The First Thousand Years*. Ithaca, UNITED STATES: Cornell University Press, 2014.
<http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/carroll/detail.action?docID=3382606>.
- Dreher, Rod. *Live Not by Lives*. Penguin Random House, 2020.
- Eskew, Douglas Stephens. "Values Education in American Public Schools: An Overview with Implications for the Future," n.d. https://getd.libs.uga.edu/pdfs/eskew_douglas_s_200408_edd.pdf.
- Geusau, Leo Altling von. "International Reaction to the Encyclical Humanae Vitae." *Studies in Family Planning* 1, no. 50 (1970): 8–12. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1964800>.
- Goldstone, Jack A. *Revolutions: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford University Press, 2023.
- Havel, Vaclav, and John Keane. "The Power of the Powerless." In *The Power of the Powerless: Citizens Against the State in Central Eastern Europe*. Oxford, UNITED KINGDOM: Taylor & Francis Group, 1985. <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/carroll/detail.action?docID=4692143>.
- Hoeres, Peter, and Hubertus Knabe. *After Dictatorship: Instruments of Transitional Justice in Post-Authoritarian Systems*. Basel/Berlin/Boston, GERMANY: Walter de Gruyter GmbH, 2023.
<http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/carroll/detail.action?docID=30591568>.
- Solzhenitsyn, Aleksandr. "Solzhenitsyn Live Not by Lies." Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn Center, February 17, 2022. <https://www.solzhenitsyncenter.org/live-not-by-lies>.
- Stokes, Gale. "The Glorious Revolutions of 1989." In *Walls Came Tumbling Down: The Collapse of Communism in Eastern Europe*. Cary, UNITED KINGDOM: Oxford University Press, Incorporated, 1993. <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/carroll/detail.action?docID=728742>.
- Zuziak, Władysław. "The Rise of Philosophy of Solidarity in Poland." Text.Chapter. Uniwersytet Papieski Jana Pawła II w Krakowie Wydawnictwo Naukowe. Accessed April 8, 2025.
<https://doi.org/10.15633/9788383700274.04>.

*Images from stock Google Images

Thank you!