

# Totalitarianism and Political Religions, Volume III

Concepts for the comparison of  
dictatorships: theory and history of  
interpretation

*Edited by*  
**Hans Maier**

*Translated by*  
**Jodi Bruhn**

Totalitarian Movements and Political Religions

# Totalitarianism and Political Religions, Volume III

Available for the first time in English language translation, the third volume of *Totalitarianism and Political Religions* completes the set. It provides a comprehensive overview of key theories and theorists of totalitarianism and of political religions, from Hannah Arendt and Raymond Aron to Leo Strauss and Simone Weill. Edited by the eminent Professor Hans Maier, this represents a major study, examining how new models for understanding political history arose from the experience of modern despotic regimes.

Where volumes I and II were concerned with questioning the common elements between twentieth-century despotic regimes – communism, fascism, National Socialism, Maoism – this volume draws a general balance. It brings together the findings of research undertaken during the decade 1992–2002 with the cooperation of leading philosophers, historians and social scientists for the Institute of Philosophy at the University of Munich.

Following the demise of Italian fascism (1943–45), German National Socialism (1945) and Soviet communism (1989–91), a comparative approach to the three regimes is possible. A broad field of interpretation of the entire phenomenon of totalitarian and political religions opens up. This comprehensive study examines a vast topic which affects the political and historical landscape of the whole of the last century. Moreover, dictatorships and their motivations are still present in current affairs, today in the twenty-first century. The three volumes of *Totalitarianism and Political Religions* are a vital resource for scholars of fascism, Nazism, communism, totalitarianism, comparative politics and political theory.

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# **Totalitarianism and Political Religions, Volume III**

Concepts for the comparison of dictatorships:  
theory and history of interpretation

**Edited by Hans Maier**

**Translated by Jodi Bruhn**

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# Foreword

This volume sums up research on the topic, ‘Totalitarianism and Political Religions’ that was undertaken from 1992 to 2002 with the cooperation of philosophers, historians and social scientists at the Institute for Philosophy at the University of Munich. This research was accompanied and supported by Paul Mikat (Düsseldorf), Philippe Burrin (Geneva), Juan Linz (Yale) and correspondents in several countries. The circle surrounding the journal newly founded in 2000, *Totalitarian Movements and Political Religions* (Ilford, Essex), should also be mentioned. Financially, the Alfried Krupp von Bohlen and Halbach Foundation, and the Volkswagen Foundation supported the project. The Görres Society took the essays up into their own publications. Michael Schäfer and Johannes Seidel prepared the manuscripts; project and conference administration lay in the tried and tested hands of Angelika Mooser-Sainer. All these individuals, as well as the Ferdinand Schöningh publishing house, must be warmly thanked for their patience, zeal and talent for improvising in critical situations.

Whereas the volumes that have appeared to this point – volumes I (1994) and II (1996) – record first results, the concluding volume III (2003) attempts to draw a general balance. For this reason, the presentation sometimes approaches the character of a handbook. This corresponds to the progress of the research itself, where the question as to the commonality of modern despotic regimes emerged increasingly into the foreground. Following the demise of Italian fascism (1943–45), German National Socialism (1945) and Soviet communism (1989–91), a comparative approach to the three has become possible. A broad field of interpretation of the entire phenomenon has opened up. The present volume attempts to do justice to this state of affairs.

Hans Maier  
Munich  
2003



# **Part I**

# **Introduction**



# 1 On the interpretation of totalitarian rule 1919–89

*Hans Maier*

From the beginning, the emergence of the totalitarian regimes of the twentieth century has left behind a broad trail of interpretations and analyses by contemporaries of those regimes. This begins with the perception of Communism, Fascism and National Socialism recorded in reports of travellers, journalists, writers and politicians following 1917, 1922 and 1933. It continues in the efforts to discover appropriate descriptions for the new phenomena. And it leads, finally, to larger interpretive patterns. Of these, the concepts of totalitarianism and political religions have become the best known ones.<sup>1</sup>

At present, there is no consensus in the research concerning these interpretive patterns. Much is still disputed and the discussion is still in progress.<sup>2</sup> Contemporary investigations of the despotisms of the twentieth century, however, bear features that differ markedly from the investigations that occurred at the beginning. Fascist Italy, in the meantime, has probably departed from the focus of totalitarianism research definitively. Today, the research concentrates increasingly – indeed, almost exclusively – on the Soviet Union and National Socialist Germany. With regard to Germany and Russia, research on the Holocaust and the Gulag has trained our gaze on the phenomenon of mass destruction: on processes, therefore, that (not coincidentally) mark the extreme culmination of totalitarian politics. Such processes can hardly be adequately explained in terms of the course of pragmatic events! For its part, the search for motives for the crimes of the Holocaust and Gulag has revived questions as to the ideological impetuses, the historical-philosophical justifications, the pseudo-religious legitimation and absolution of those who committed the deeds. In sum: following a period of intensive (and meritorious!) reconstruction of the facts accompanied by a palpable restraint concerning comprehensive interpretations, a conspicuous interest in gaining an encompassing view stirs again today. We seek to *comprehend* something we have long since known – something that threatens to remain incomprehensible, even unbelievable, without interpretive help. This renewed interest provides new opportunities for the old interpretive models. It is no coincidence that, after 1989/90, both the theory of totalitarianism and the idea of ‘political religions’ have returned to the arena.



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The following reflections on the interpretive history of the totalitarian regimes arise from three international symposia on this topic that were held in the years 1994, 1996 and 1999.<sup>3</sup> The focus is on three questions. First: what new thing attracted the attention of observers during the beginnings of Communism, Fascism and National Socialism (first section)? Second: how did the corresponding perceptions and terminologies develop (second section)? And third: what has been the yield of the concepts of totalitarianism and political religions in particular (third section)?

### **Communism, Fascism, National Socialism: the new element**

Communism and Fascism were children of war. They developed in a political scene that was dominated by war, civil war, constant battles and paramilitary actions. The context is the most tangible with Russian Communism, which would hardly be conceivable without the military collapse in the West, the conclusion of the peace, the gathering of a 'Red Army' and the victory in the civil war.<sup>4</sup> Mussolini's seizure of power also occurred in an atmosphere charged with a civil-war like situation, however, and was consciously stylised as a 'March on Rome' in the military sense. Nor did Hitler, appearing a little later, lack his *squadri*<sup>5</sup> – the 'brown battalions' whose terrorist energies unfurled in the streets and squares.<sup>6</sup>

The power that World War I<sup>7</sup> unleashed gained a prolonged, dark permanence with the modern despotic regimes. These often seemed to be demonstrations of a continually expanding 'total mobilisation'.<sup>8</sup> The military infiltrated the civil structures and transformed them. A militaristic friend-enemy mentality now presided in the state interior too. With every conflict driven to the point of an existential 'either-or', power no longer rested on the foundation of law, but on the end of the bayonet. And because all things involving war entail a hint of the arbitrary, an element of the toss of the dice comes into politics: everything might be won or lost with a coup; one might fall into oblivion or be carried up to the heights of power and greatness. The magnification, intensification and vitalisation of political power distinguish the modern despotisms from the nineteenth-century constitutional state, with its distribution of powers. To an equal extent, the uniformed dictator and his military retinue are distinct from the civil statesman and civil service of a democracy. The warlike all-or-nothing transports politics from an activity of advising, consideration and decision into one of war – victory and defeat are involved. In the extreme case, there are only the dead and the survivors in the end.

The exaltation of politics, its elevation above the state of normality, becomes clear in the statements of contemporaries of this phenomenon. For Nikolai Nikolayevitch Suchanov, for example, the Petersburg Soviet is 'like the Roman senate, which the ancient Carthagians once held to be a council of the gods. Such a mass . . . could in fact tempt one to attempt to illuminate old Europe with the light of the Socialist Revolution'.<sup>9</sup> Although Fedor

Stepun had portrayed the ‘insane-like’ quality of the Russian situation like hardly any other, he still calls the October Revolution an ‘exceedingly significant Russian topic’, estimating that ‘some primordial, typical hour begins to strike for Russia, so that perhaps it steps into the meaning of its madness’.<sup>10</sup> The popular poet, Demyan Bedny, sees the Soviet person looming up in the streets of the large city like a giant Leviathan composed of many individuals:

Feet of millions: one body. The plaster cracks.  
Masses of millions: one heart, one will, one step!  
In time, in time!  
They are marching forward. They are marching forward.  
March march ...<sup>11</sup>

Little wonder that the Bolsheviks were regarded beyond the Russian borders – and above all, in Germany – as ascetic soldiers of the Revolution, Dostoyevskian heroes, ‘pointers of new paths’, ‘reformers of universal humanity’. In his diary, Harry Graf Kessler reports of a visit to Walter Rathenau in February of 1919:

for Bolshevism, he let a strong affection shine through. It is a magnificent system, he says, and one to which the future will likely belong. In one hundred years, the world will be Bolshevistic. Contemporary Bolshevism resembles a wonderful play at the theatre ... By night he is a Bolshevik, he says; but by day, when he sees our workers and administrators, he is not – or not yet (he repeated the ‘not yet’ several times).<sup>12</sup>

Similar statements can be found in the work of Thomas and Heinrich Mann, of Käthe Kollwitz and Alfred Kerr. This is to say nothing of such emphatic ‘fellow travellers’ as Herbert G. Wells, George Bernard Shaw, Lion Feuchtwanger, André Gide and others, whose long procession towards Moscow had already set itself in motion in 1920, in the midst of the civil war.<sup>13</sup>

The receptions of Mussolini’s ‘March on Rome’ and Hitler’s ‘seizure of power’ are more sober. Although messianic undertones are entirely present in both Italy and Germany, they are lacking among foreign observers. Nevertheless: the features of ‘mobilisation’, of the marching and parading force that has broken loose from its administrative and parliamentary enclosures, were clearly perceived. Predominantly Anglo-Saxon observers noted the emergence of a naked power that is no longer domesticated by a constitutional and party state. Because it is omnipresent, flooding everything with images, symbols, banners, speeches and fanfares, it is a power that can no longer be evaded. On 6 January 1932 in Rome, Harold Nicolson entered the following into his diary:

## 6 Introduction

spent the day for the most part reading Fascist pamphlets. They have, in any case, transformed the entire country into an army. One is pressed into the Fascist mould from the cradle to the grave; no one can escape it. On paper, this all seems very virtuous and impressive. But I ask myself how the life of the individual looks. This I will not be able to say before I have lived in Italy for a certain period of time. To the extent that it destroys individuality, in any case, a socialist experiment is involved. It also destroys freedom. If someone first prescribes for you how you should think, then he immediately also prescribes how you should conduct yourself. With such a system, I confess, a measure of energy and effectiveness can be attained such as we, on our island, do not attain. And yet, and yet . . . The whole thing is a pyramid set on its head.<sup>14</sup>

The second testimony arises from William L. Shirer's *Nightmare Years 1930–1940* and describes the Nuremberg Party Convention of September 1934.

[F]ifty thousand young men in dark green uniforms, the first rows with naked torsos, stood before their *Führer* with flashing spades that mirrored the morning sun. Standing at attention on the *Zeppelinwiese*, they listened as he praised their service to the Fatherland. When they then began to march forward – in a perfect goose step; presumably, even the old Prussian field sergeants could not have done it better – the huge multitude went wild with enthusiasm. I found the goose step laughable, but it appeared to please the spectators so much that they sprang up spontaneously and cheered. In marching past, the young men paid homage to their *Führer* in a powerfully reverberating speaking chorus, one that concluded with another thundering ‘Heil Hitler!’ I soon learned that Hitler – besides the Work Service – had built up an even more comprehensive youth organisation, the Hitler Youth. Here, children were to be sworn to the *Führer* beginning in the seventh year of life.<sup>15</sup>

The new movements sought to form the entire human life. This was to influence the conduct of each individual. Not that such reactions were new: ‘vulgar obedience toward those who have somehow come into power soon occurs’, as Jacob Burckhardt says.<sup>16</sup> Here, though, obedience is born not only from habit or a need for peace. Nor is it born solely of fear: whoever marches with the rest has the liberating feeling of standing in harmony with the era and realising a historical new beginning. Thus does mobilisation of the masses arise in response to the commanding presence of the leadership: the will to political power is transposed upon the many. These, in turn, march ‘with the new era’.<sup>17</sup>

## Levels of understanding

The political personnel in the countries that had been gripped by revolution seemed at first like a troupe of lost fighters. Many actions appeared to have been improvised actions of war, a state of emergency directed inwards rather than against external enemies. Even if this was true, the new regimes – in Russia, as in Italy and Germany – nonetheless proved themselves to be unexpectedly lasting ones. One had to *label* them, then. The struggle to find appropriate labels accompanied the history of Russian Communism, Italian Fascism and German National Socialism from the beginning.

The attempt to conceptualise the Bolshevik rule in Russia first triggered a dispute among European socialists. The concept of the ‘dictatorship of the proletariat’ – one going back to Marx and Engels<sup>18</sup> and taken up again by Lenin<sup>19</sup> – divided them into two camps. In 1918, Karl Kautsky already entered the battlefield by speaking out against Lenin’s dictatorship.<sup>20</sup> Characterising it as ‘Asian’ or ‘Tartaric’ in 1920, he applied the epithet that Marx and Engels had coined to describe the tsarist empire.<sup>21</sup> The critique of a socialist dictatorship found a broad sympathy among European revisionists and social democrats. At the conference of the Second International held in February 1919 in Bern, this critique did not win out, however; although the German, Scandinavian and Belgian social democrats supported it, they lost to a majority composed of French, Austrian and Dutch delegates.<sup>22</sup> In the period that followed, the differing perceptions and evaluations of dictatorship – a concept that Lenin understood as a total freedom from legal restraints<sup>23</sup> – would mark a clear divide between Communists and democratic socialists. Not coincidentally, analysis of the dictatorship aspect of Communism becomes a central topic for all those who turn from the doctrine – and this from the 1930s to the 1980s, from Ignazio Silone<sup>24</sup> to Margarete Buber-Neumann, Ernst Fischer, Alfred Kantorowicz, Arthur Koestler, Gustav Regler, Manès Sperber and many others.<sup>25</sup>

In terms of world history, Italian Fascism threw a shorter shadow than that of Russian Communism. Yet it, too, was surrounded by a net of pro and contra from the beginning, by disputes as to its correct nomenclature and classification. As is well known, *fascismo* makes an historical allusion to the *fascēs* (bundle of sticks) – the official symbol of the magistrate in the Roman republic. In the Italy of the late nineteenth century, *Fasci* alliances already existed. These alliances were of various kinds, spanning from the Christian *fasci democratici cristiani* that followed the 1891 encyclical *Rerum novarum* of Leo XIII<sup>26</sup> to the social-revolutionary *fasci dei lavoratori* of the same period in Sicily.<sup>27</sup> The name, therefore, lay ready at hand. Mussolini kept to this well travelled path when he founded the *Fasci d’azione rivoluzionaria* in 1915, when Italy was torn by agitation for entry into the war. A hint of ancient Rome resonates in this designation. Indeed, it might be said of Italian Fascism – justified in the same terms Karl Marx used for the French Revolution – that it stepped onto the stage of history in Roman

costume.<sup>28</sup> By contrast to Bolshevism, the Italian revolution boasted points of reference that were clearly historical. Whereas the former sought a ‘new era’ that had had no precursor and a ‘new human being’ that had never before existed, Italian Fascism sought a revolutionary renewal of the state on the ancient model. Here lies a degree of limitation, however: insofar as the bundle of sticks was a *state* symbol, a remnant of statehood typified Italian Fascism when compared to its more radical brother, National Socialism. With the exception of the final phases of the ‘*Repubblica Sociale Italiana*’ (1943–45), Mussolini’s Fascist movement respected and tolerated a state structure for two decades. This state structure, moreover, came complete with a monarchy and its institutions as well as with a limited (but nonetheless tangible) autonomy provided for Church, economy and culture. As further evidence of the restricted nature of the Fascist revolution, open offers of alliance were made to the old elites.

Paradoxically, though, it was the Italian example that sparked an international discussion about unlimited political power, about a state that is no longer subject to the law. In the 1920s, opponents of the Italian regime characterised Fascism as *sistema totalitario* and *totalitarismo*. A concept that gained international currency was born. Soon applied to Russian Communism, it was later applied to National Socialism.<sup>29</sup> Religious interpretations later arose as well. In the late 1930s, these led to the coining of a concept of ‘political’ or ‘secular’ religions. These linguistic descriptions also caught on internationally.<sup>30</sup> Opposite the self-descriptions of the new revolutionary regimes of Communism, Fascism, National Socialism, then, critical perceptions of these regimes from the outside were now strengthened. The new linguistic formations pointed out commonalities, arranged the individual phenomena of the various countries into ‘types’ and ‘patterns’. Both the phenomena and the interpretation of them became the object of international discussion in political philosophy. Having left the realm of regional political studies – whether Russian, Italian or German – the phenomena were also increasingly examined for their secular dimension.

Tellingly, even a stormy and violent movement like National Socialism no longer succeeded in definitively establishing its own self-description (national socialism) on the international scene. At first, German National Socialism was perceived throughout the world as a continuation of Italian Fascism; for many, the brownshirts were nothing more than a variation of the blackshirts. The attribute ‘Fascist’ was applied to National Socialism entirely as a matter of course. Various different factors came into play here. One was the underdeveloped intellectual capacity of the National Socialists, who could never have absorbed the zeal for formulation evinced by Mussolini and his *Dottrina del fascismo*.<sup>31</sup> Another decisive factor was the profound reluctance of the Communists to speak of the socialism that was emerging as its competition.<sup>32</sup> Finally, there was the previously mentioned formation and reinforcement of an international theoretical framework. Relativising

the individual phenomena, this framework preferred to emphasise the universally shared elements at the expense of the particular ones.

Certainly, Fascism and National Socialism possessed many commonalities. Yet they also differed on many points. Anti-Semitism, for example, was almost entirely absent in the political household of the Italian Fascists until 1938. The understanding of state was also different. In Italy, the National Socialists' basic principle holding that 'the party commands the state' never gained absolute validity. We cannot wonder at this, insofar as the regime had not entirely burned its bridges with the past. Conversely: as even Carl Schmitt was forced to learn, National Socialism never allowed itself to be restricted to the status of a 'total state'. When in doubt, 'the movement' always trumped state and law as the decisive factor. The differences extend right up to the symbolic and emblematic aspects of the two movements: to the substantial differences between the brown, earthy colours of the National Socialist movement and the stylised 'stately' black of the Fascists, between the German flags fluttering in the wind and the rigid Fascist standards, between the symbol of the bundle of sticks and the sign of salvation of the swastika.<sup>33</sup> The pathos of the 'Fascistic oath', swearing in of the 'Third Rome' and of an *Africa Orientale Italiana* may appear excessive and laughable in hindsight. Compared to the blood-and-soil mysticism and the dully mute fanaticism of SA and SS, though, its tinge of the theatrical and rhetorical suggests a different – indeed, a hardly comparable – character.

It also cannot be forgotten that, alongside the neologisms of totalitarianism and political religions, the classical political vocabulary has also continued to play a substantial role in the perception of the new regimes.<sup>34</sup> The Aristotelian theory, for example: with its catalogue of good and corrupted forms of government and its nuanced analyses of tyranny and despotism,<sup>35</sup> its influence has extended far into the modern period – even into the twentieth century. Despite its marginalisation by political theory (particularly by continental European political theory)<sup>36</sup> as a result of positivism and relativism, the Aristotelian terminology was present in the initial reactions to the newly established Communist, Fascist and National Socialist regimes. Provisionally, at least, it facilitated a comprehension of them. In 1918, for example, Eduard Bernstein provided a shorthand characterisation of the freshly established Soviet Republic as a 'tyranny'.<sup>37</sup> This assessment was followed by Bertrand Russell, among others.<sup>38</sup> In 1936, Elie Halévy speaks of a European 'ère des tyrannies', and his essay provides the occasion for Raymond Aron to reflect three years later on the 'origin of the Russian, Italian and German tyrannies'. The result was the formulation that the epoch of modern tyrannies (Aron also calls them 'totalitarian regimes') is at once an epoch of 'political religions'.<sup>39</sup>

It cannot be said, therefore, that the concepts of tyranny and despotism were merely antiquarian ones in the Europe of the twentieth century. In Great Britain and the United States, above all, the resistance provided by the classical vocabulary has been impressively strong. Scholars like Leo

Strauss and Eric Voegelin have always perceived this clear – by no means value-free – terminology to provide a sure support in the struggle against the seductive power of modern historicism and relativism.<sup>40</sup> Conversely, even such critics of the classical and natural law tradition as Hans Kelsen were compelled to formulate their legal-philosophical doubts more moderately when they were in the United States, or even to maintain silence about them entirely. Thus could Leo Strauss have directed at Kelsen the apparently innocent question as to why he would have omitted, in the English translation of his *Allgemeinen Staatslehre*, the sentences in which he had claimed that even a despotism possesses a legal order and had accused critics of this opinion of a ‘natural-legal naïveté or conceit’.<sup>41</sup> Strauss knew the answer, of course. In the Anglo-American context, namely, one ‘cannot speak and write so lightly of “natural-legal naïveté or exaggeration” as in the German linguistic sphere’.<sup>42</sup>

It would hardly be oversimplifying things to distinguish three geographical zones in the labelling of totalitarian regimes after 1919. First, there was the Anglo-Saxon sphere, where the classical vocabulary was the most strongly in evidence (and was also systematically renewed).<sup>43</sup> Second, there were Italy and Germany, where this vocabulary appears to have been marginalised the most. Here, beginning in the 1920s, the concept of dictatorship is reactivated in its place.<sup>44</sup> Third, there was the rest of Europe: after 1923 and 1938, the new concepts of totalitarianism and political religions became widespread. Such Eastern European mediators as Waldemar Gurian (and later Zbigniew K. Brzezinski) gained decisive influence here. During the 1930s and 1940s, the totalitarianism thesis also conquered the Anglo-Saxon sphere,<sup>45</sup> although it never reigned there without competition. George Orwell, for example: with gaze trained primarily on the events occurring in Germany and Russia, ‘German Nazis and Russian Communists’ became his standard formula for the totalitarian personnel. Even such an important representative of the concept of totalitarianism as Orwell, however, used the adjective ‘totalitarian’ synonymously with ‘tyrannical’ and ‘despotic’.<sup>46</sup>

## **Models of interpretation**

### *1*

Inquiring as to the products of what now has been almost 80 years of reflection and research on totalitarianism,<sup>47</sup> we are most struck by the wealth of empirical observations that the ‘era of violence’ left behind as remembrance and warning to later observers. Contrary to the impression of a methodology content with hasty generalisations and deductions, totalitarianism research has brought forth an almost indigestible number of individual political analyses; moreover, it has done so through a close cooperation of historical, philosophical, political and juridical disciplines. A foundational theme of

the twentieth century gains expression here, and one that remains important for future generations: the unleashing of political power, its liberation from legal and moral norms, its perversion into ‘sheer’ tyrannical power.

As Amendola’s early juxtaposition of the *sistema maggioritario*, *minoritario* and *totalitario* indicates,<sup>48</sup> this process begins with the renunciation of the majority principle, the parliamentary system, and the regularities of the constitutional state.<sup>49</sup> It continues with the concentration on one ‘leader’, a leader who seizes all power in order gradually to become the sole ruler both by abolishing power-sharing and pluralistic restrictions and by destroying all opponents.<sup>50</sup> Thence follows the monopolisation of power with the help of a single mass party (the only one still admitted), of a terrorist secret police and a propaganda that steers and regulates ideas, opinions, news, research and arts. Finally, terror – understood as ‘regular arbitrariness’ – serves to secure the functioning of a society that has been reduced to reflexes of command and obedience. The dissolution of legally ordered rule reaches its peak with the destruction of universally binding law: if human beings are placed outside the legal community from the beginning (due to their membership in a particular race or class), if they are no longer prosecuted for that what they do, but for what they are, then a ‘point of no return’ has been reached. There can be no return here to ordered relations. Quite correctly, therefore, the figure of the ‘objective enemy’ has been regarded as a criterion of totalitarian rule as such.<sup>51</sup>

Thus does the totalitarianism research tell, in a new way, the old history of a ‘diverging’ (*parekbasis*) of political forms into their opposite, of a transformation of a good form of government into a bad one. In doing so, it evinces an unsought reverence for the classical theoretical model. As in the ancient city-state, so in the twentieth century: the dangers appear to lie in the beginnings. The first steps from the path occur half unconsciously and are hardly noticed; when the corruption occurs, it is accompanied by cheering from the majority. In the general euphoria, the ‘bright and cheerful tyranny’ begins to take its course. What then follows occurs almost necessarily: the worsening of a bad situation can scarcely be reversed any more.

It would be false to believe that political power was attained in the totalitarian systems solely through threat and terror, or that such systems solely spread fear and trembling and compelled blind obedience. Both totalitarian power and its centre of power, the party, live not merely according to their power to translate its goals into fact, according to the right of the stronger. They live just as much – if not even more – from their claim to know the right, the true. The party is consecrated with knowledge of the purposes of history; it knows where the course of history will lead. Whoever links his fate to its fate is with the victors; the others, condemned to defeat, will land in the notorious ‘dustbin of history’. ‘The Party, the Party is always right.’<sup>52</sup> It is this fortification with an infallible ideology – or at least one that seems infallible – that grants totalitarian movements their power to establish themselves. Not only hands and feet are taken prisoner, but thought is as



well. Party and ideology are mutually reinforcing. From the insight into the (apparently) necessary, there grows an intellectual certainty, a revolutionary passion, and a preparedness to do everything and anything – even the most horrible deed – in the service of the ‘new era’. Tricked out with an appearance of scientific validity, the totalitarian movements’ coherent explanation of the world is what provides them with their frighteningly clear conscience.

The power that was unleashed by the modern totalitarianisms has been a frightening spectacle. Much of it almost springs the bounds of human imagination. If research conducted on the crimes of the actors is supplemented by the testimony of the victims,<sup>53</sup> then one is faced with a pandemonium of terror – here, the technical manual of terror, there, the screams of tortured and destroyed human beings. The reality not only surpasses that which we know of the horrors of ancient tyranny, it goes beyond even the dark utopias of modern literature – from Kafka’s *Strafkolonie* (1919) to the novels of Huxley or Orwell.

More frightening even than the total unleashing of power, however, is its justification by disburdening philosophies and ideologies – a justification that is equally total. We touch here upon a further characteristic that is specific to twentieth-century totalitarian rule and is without a comparable historical counterpart. With penetrating insight, Albert Camus has characterised the difference in *L’homme révolté*: with respect to the crimes of past tyrannies, the ‘conscience could be clean and the judgement clear’. In the age of the perfect crime, by contrast, the *libido dominandi* has ‘an irrefutable alibi, namely, philosophy’. Philosophy could be enlisted for anything, Camus states, even for the transformation of murderers into judges.<sup>54</sup>

Potencies and resources that had been prepared in the nineteenth century nourished the justificatory ideologies that accompanied the totalisation of political power. Indeed, the ideologies are in part even older. François Furet,<sup>55</sup> Hermann Lübbe<sup>56</sup> and Daniel Suter<sup>57</sup> have indicated the connection between purification and terror, revolutionary ‘incorruptibility’ and the unchaining of power that was already present in the French Revolution. Using the model of the ‘French, German and Russian cycles’, Marie-Joseph Le Guillou has identified certain similarities that were already present in the prehistories of both the modern ideologies and the organisations that underpinned totalitarian power.<sup>58</sup> What emerged as periodically recurring phenomena were: (1) the liberation of the theory of a new ‘intelligentsia’ from the controls of schools, universities and academies; (2) the emergence of a class of activists that approaches the task of transforming the society with the help of a particular explanation of world and history; (3) the rise of militant parties seeking not pluralistic competition, but solely rule; these parties at once present themselves as the guardians of a pure doctrine. And finally, one finds here (4) a use of language for the purpose not of communication, but of dominance. This necessarily leads to a flattening of the language and speech presented in ready-made phrases; its end phase is a loss of reality and nonsensical ideas.<sup>59</sup>

Of this colourful and confused mesh of ideology, two strands that became particularly virulent in the twentieth century can be isolated: ideologies with the central concepts of 'class' and 'race'. Whereas the first might still be granted both a connection to a structure of philosophical doctrine and a certain dogmatic insularity, nationalist and racist theory can be justified only pseudo-scientifically through a very crude naturalism and vulgarised social Darwinism. Its crude ideological foundations did not prevent it from gaining influence in crisis periods, however: whatever National Socialism may have lacked in a faith dogma, it compensated with its diffuse yet strongly emotional religiosity.

## 2

The terms 'totalitarian' and 'totalitarianism' are very specific designations for the unleashing of political power in the twentieth century. Then, as now, these formulae are indispensable in analysing how the modern despotisms emancipated themselves from the law of a constitutional state – that self-magnification, anarchic liberation and totalisation of the political that occurred between 1917 and 1989. All this, of course, stands in sharp contrast to the efforts to gain constitutional and democratic controls on power in the periods that both preceded and followed them. Does a careful definition of the hallmarks and attributes of the totalitarian already suffice to denote the historically new element, however?<sup>60</sup> Does the concept of ideology itself not already take us far beyond the limits of a phenomenological approach? What leads totalitarian systems not only to claim unrestricted freedom of action for themselves, but to take the logic of their own justification to the heights of the absurd?<sup>61</sup>

Religious-like energies lie in the modern totalitarianisms to the extent that some of their features can be explained only in religious terms. This has been claimed repeatedly – and not only by the 'classical theorists' of political religion, Eric Voegelin and Raymond Aron.<sup>62</sup> In retrospect, it is striking to observe how much the Russian revolution was already regarded by its contemporaries to have been an apocalyptic event.<sup>63</sup> But the Italian Fascists also rushed to see an entirely new era begin with the 'March on Rome', just as the French revolutionaries had done before them in 1792.<sup>64</sup> With the millenarian 'Third Reich', moreover, adherents and opponents competed for religious interpretations. There was 'Heil' instead of 'Hallelujah' on the one side, complete with Nazi reinterpretations of liturgies and attempts to transform the Christian celebrations into a National Socialist 'festival year'. And on the other side,<sup>65</sup> there was the unmasking of the Third Reich as a 'kingdom of the lower demons' and the Nazis as 'Anabaptists'.<sup>66</sup>

The First World War had thrown European liberal culture into the abyss. In both the chaos of war and the post-war era, many people became susceptible to new doctrines that promised salvation. The spring of the saviours was a universal European phenomenon – following 1918, and

especially following 1933. Hitler, with his bold and brusque stage appearances, by no means stood alone in these years. Dictators ruled in large parts of the continent, especially in the south and east. That Hitler could establish himself at the pinnacle of this movement for a prolonged period was due to his ability to hold the media's attention and his magical, saviour-like air. Hitler was part of the spirit of the times. Before a great public, this otherwise inconspicuous man with a 'doughy face' and 'brown shoe-button eyes' suddenly transformed himself into a 'force, by turns imploringly pleading, melancholy or raging, set loose on an audience that no longer knew in the end whether it was the driving force or had been driven against its own will'.<sup>67</sup>

Returning to the work of Konrad Heiden and Eric Voegelin, Michael Burleigh has recently portrayed National Socialism as having offered a 'great promise', an appeal to the future; it was to mark the dawning of a 'new era' and a 'new human being'.<sup>68</sup> Light is also shed here upon the shamefully rapid surrender of the constitutional state in 1933 and 1934. Burleigh's thesis: mistaking politics for a matter of faith, the German people threw itself into the arms of a 'charismatic *Führer*'. Only such a people can surrender its freedom 'in obedience to necessity'. In the dizziness of success, it ultimately loses sight of the difference between good and evil. Burleigh reassesses the 'Weltanschauung' of National Socialism, stating that its influence has often been underestimated. 'It was a re-mystification of natural science and nature itself, with the result that clarity was unified with the unfathomable, religion with natural science, pubescent morbidity with vitalism'. Thus did

the recourse to the language of parasitology develop its own uncompromising logic and radicality. With its zeal for hygiene, it strengthened those who took it upon themselves to take the 'iron broom' in hand during those 'iron times' and thereby to liberate the world from infectious racial mistaken developments. This was politics interpreted as biological destiny, but poured into religious moulds.<sup>69</sup>

In fact, the historian studying modern totalitarianism slips into religious phenomena at every turn. Involving festivals and celebrations, the omnipresent cult of personality (and cult of the dead), the mystique of the 'great plan', the religious-like signs, symbols and emblems,<sup>70</sup> such phenomena also surrounded daily life: in a clear departure from the Christian traditions, ordinary life was reshaped and enlisted as well.<sup>71</sup> The totalitarian regimes strove for an almost ancient proximity of the cultic to the political; they continually sought to reverse the Christian dualities of individual and public life, of society and state. Yet they also work in Christian elements – partly with the intent to usurp them.<sup>72</sup> A claim to possess religious truth thereby returns into politics with Communism.<sup>73</sup> Communism developed a faith history complete with sacrosanct texts, inspired interpreters, and a concern

for the purity of the faith that was reinforced by punishment. Heretics, dissidents, apostates and renegades<sup>74</sup> were persecuted and – if necessary – destroyed. With the more diffuse *Weltanschauungen* of Fascism and National Socialism, we find only the beginnings of the kind of catechistic statements of the faith that characterise religions of the book. What prevails here is an emotionally based religiosity that is even more intense. Corresponding to this difference, the systems of justification are also distinct in terms of their *Weltanschauungen*: on the one hand, there is Marxism-Leninism understood as a comprehensive, quasi-philosophical doctrine explaining history and the world. On the other, there are Hitler's concept of 'providence' and Mussolini's faith in destiny. (Whereas the former is a strange mixture of natural law and the Christian sense of having been elected, the latter is partly ancient and partly mediated by Nietzsche and Sorel.)<sup>75</sup>

Two objections are usually raised against the application of religious categories to the interpretation of totalitarian systems. First: Lenin, Stalin, Mussolini and Hitler are said to have been anything but religious human beings (to say nothing of religious founders!). On the contrary, with the exception of Mussolini, they persecuted the churches. Second: such a venerable concept as that of religion is said to be hardly suited to serving as an interpretive category for the sphere of totalitarianism. If the justificatory systems of totalitarian regimes were even placed in the proximity of 'religion', terrible confusion would arise. Where, in that case, would the distinction between religion and crime ultimately lie?

It is correct that Lenin, Mussolini and Hitler were not religious founders. Their relationships to religion were variously distant, hostile or cool. For his part, Lenin regarded any religious idea, 'any idea of a God' as an 'unspeakable revulsion' (letter to Maxim Gorki of 14 September 1913). Throughout his life, Mussolini remained a pragmatist and positivist where religion was concerned. Although he regarded the Church as an organisation and public power, he by no means saw it as an institution of faith and the faithful. Things probably stood in a similar way with Hitler. Respect for the institution of the Church, its organisational coherence, its formative, educative power and its 'power over the souls' was joined for him with an intense rejection of the 'clerics' and an image of history that regards the Judaic and Christian traditions almost as a dynamite. Christianity is seen as a ferment of dissolution, a precursor of Bolshevism!<sup>76</sup> For all the fervour to found a religion of a Rosenberg, or the ritualism of a Himmler, for all those in the Party who sought to articulate the National Socialist *Weltanschauung* as a religious cult, he reserved only scorn and derision.

This does not prevent us from ascertaining that people of genuine subjective religiosity undoubtedly existed among the followers of Lenin, Mussolini, and Hitler. Whether they regarded these dictators as religious figures to be honoured, venerated or even worshipped (many have testified this) or whether they interpreted the doctrines that issued from these new power centres, the

parties and movements, as religious messages, many of the activists, helpers and fellow travellers of the totalitarian parties undoubtedly understood their services not as anti-religious, but as entirely religious ones. They felt themselves to be neophytes of a new church, adepts of a new, true faith. Without reference to the religious – or, in any case, religious-like – zeal of the modern despotisms, much of what has given the history of the modern despotisms its peculiar character cannot be explained. The high degree of loyalty and readiness for sacrifice of many adherents cannot be explained in terms of terror and fear alone, nor can their imperviousness to criticism and doubt, their feeling of fulfilling a mission.<sup>77</sup>

The second objection should be taken more seriously. We are of course reluctant to connect the fateful resolution of the actors, their imperviousness to humanitarian impulses, their dismally resolute ‘it must be!’ to religion. We would be inclined more to believe that the key to totalitarian fanaticism lies in a secular ‘belief in history’ (Karl Popper) or in a scientific insanity of omnipotence that seeks to make reality obey one’s own wishes (Le Guillou). At best – according to a widespread opinion – the term, ‘religious ersatz’ (or ‘ersatz religion’) would be best suited to describing such tendencies. And in fact, contemporary observers had already applied those terms to Communism and National Socialism early on.<sup>78</sup>

Yet what is it that is being ‘replaced’ here? At the turn of the last century, the phenomenology of religion had already rediscovered certain archaic features on the face of the religious. Terror and salvation, unconditional submission and unswerving discipleship, the *tremendum et fascinatum* of religion, its *credo quia absurdum*, and its *sacrificium intellectus*: such features are either overlooked or blended away in a study of religion ‘within the limits of pure reason’. When Eric Voegelin describes race and class as the intramundane supreme values (*realissimum*) of the political religions,<sup>79</sup> when Hannah Arendt places the ‘iron band of terror’<sup>80</sup> at the centre of her analysis of totalitarianism, both use this concept of religion – one whose former dimensions have been expanded. The same can be said of Romano Guardini, with his *Heilbringer* book. All these authors describe modern totalitarianism as a voluntary-involuntary reincarnation of archaic religiosity.

Religion is not harmless. It has both winning and terrible features, attractive and repulsive sides.<sup>81</sup> Long before 11 September 2001, this was clear to the engaged observer. In my opinion, it is crucial that contemporary analysts neglect none of these features, that they use the entire array of instruments and methods of the history of religions and religious psychology. Otherwise, it is too easy to be barred both from access to the consciousness of the actors<sup>82</sup> – a consciousness that has ‘gotten mired in the repulsive’ – and from the absurd logic of their justifications, that ‘masquerade of evil’ that Dietrich Bonhoeffer said had ‘whirled our ethical concepts into a mess’.<sup>83</sup> Which concepts? Our concepts of law, politics and – *nota bene* – religion!<sup>84</sup>

Notes

- 1 An overview of the international research on totalitarianism is provided in Eckhard Jesse, ed., *Totalitarismus im 20. Jahrhundert* (Bonn 1996); compare also Detlev Schmittchen-Ackermann, *Diktaturen im Vergleich* (Darmstadt, 2002). On the research on the theme of political religions, the journal *Totalitarian Movements and Political Religions* edited by Michael Burleigh and Robert Mallet (Ilford, UK, 2000ff.) is informative.
- 2 To this extent, the theoretical foundations of the ‘anti-totalitarian consensus’ that was proclaimed in 1989/90 – a consensus that is in itself worth welcoming – still hang in the air.
- 3 They occurred in Munich, Tutzing and Geneva and are documented in Hans Maier, ed., *Totalitarismus und Politische Religionen*, vol. I (Paderborn, 1996); the same and Michael Schäfer, eds, *Totalitarismus und Politische Religionen*, vol. II (Paderborn, 1997); Hans Maier, ed., *Wege in die Gewalt. Die modernen politischen Religionen* (Frankfurt, 2000, 2nd edn 2002).
- 4 On the civil war and the beginnings of the Red Army, compare Peter Scheibert, *Lenin an der Macht. Das russische Volk in der Revolution 1918–1922* (Weinheim, 1984), 54–69; Richard Pipes, *Die Russische Revolution*, vol. 3 (Berlin, 1993), 12–232 and Manfred Hildermeier, *Geschichte der Sowjetunion 1917–1991* (Munich, 1998), 105–56.
- 5 Renzo De Felice sketches a clear and comprehensive picture in his Mussolini biography. Relevant here is the first volume of *Il fascista: La conquista del potere 1921–1925*, which appeared in Turin in 1966.
- 6 What role uniforms, flags, standards, orders, medallions and insignia played in the development of the National Socialist movement is made clear by the volume edited by the Münchner Stadtmuseum, *München, ‘Hauptstadt der Bewegung’* (Munich, 1993). With its wealth of photos, the book might serve as a model for many others. The uniforms of Party, SA, SS, youth organisations, etc. may have not only blurred for many contemporaries the difference between regular forces of order and Party militias, but have also prepared the ‘power seizure’ in a symbolic-image sense because political power was identical to military power for many people.
- 7 Robert Wohl, *The Generation of 1914* (Cambridge MA, 1979); Martin van Creveld, *Technology and War* (New York, 1989). See further literature in the latter.
- 8 In literary terms, this concept is connected today above all with Ernst Jünger’s essay of 1930: ‘Die totale Mobilmachung’, *Sämtliche Werke* vol. 7 (part 2, essays I) (Stuttgart, 1980), 119–42. We might not forget, however, the long prehistory extending from Clausewitz’s ‘absolute war’ to the war theories of Erich Ludendorff in the wake of World War I.
- 9 Nikolai Nikolayevitch Suchanov, 1917. *Tagebuch der Russischen Revolution*, selected, transliterated and edited by Nikolaus Ehlert (Munich, 1967), 666.
- 10 Fedor Stepun, ‘Das bolschewistische Russland. Gedanken und Bilder’, *Hochland* 21 (1924), 243–52; 522–38 (the citation is from 247).
- 11 Citation in René Fülöp-Miller, *Geist und Gesicht des Bolschewismus* (Zurich, 1926), 6ff. Translation by Johannes R. Becher.
- 12 Harry Graf Kessler, *Tagebücher 1918–1937*, Wolfgang Pfeifer-Belli, ed. (Frankfurt, 1982), 132ff. I have Hella Mandt to thank for pointing out this passage.
- 13 An array of assessments of the Soviet Union can be found in Gerd Koenen, *Die großen Gesänge* (Frankfurt, 1987), 26ff. This compendium does not cast a praiseworthy light on the Western intelligentsia of the 1920s and 1930s. Nonetheless, André Gide later attained a more critical attitude (*Retour de l’URSS 1936, Retouches à mon Retour de l’URSS 1937*).

## 18 Introduction

- 14 Harold Nicolson, *Tagebücher und Briefe 1930–1941* (Frankfurt, 1969), 101.
- 15 William L. Shirer, *Das Jahrzehnt des Unheils*, new edition (Munich, 1989), 75.
- 16 Jacob Burckhardt, *Weltgeschichtliche Betrachtungen*, Kröner edition, (Stuttgart, 1969), 234.
- 17 The preparedness for conformity, the joy in being part of things and the fear of isolating oneself enter into a symbiosis that is difficult to dissolve. For the Soviet Union is referred summarily to the witnesses of Alexandr Solzhenitsyn, Andrei Sakharov and Efim Etkind. Illuminating for Nazi Germany: Theodor Haecker, *Tag- und Nachtbücher 1939–1945*, Heinrich Siefken, ed. (Innsbruck, 1989) and Wanda von Baeyer-Katte, *Das Zerstörende in der Politik. Eine Psychologie der politischen Grundeinstellung* (Heidelberg, 1958).
- 18 *MEW* 28 (1963), 503; *MEW* 22 (1963), 199; on this, Ernst Nolte, 'Diktatur', Otto Brunner, Werner Conze and Reinhart Koselleck, eds, *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe*, vol. 1 (Stuttgart, 1972), 900–24 (916–19).
- 19 Vladimir Ilich Lenin, *Staat und Revolution* (1917).
- 20 Karl Kautsky, *Terrorismus und Kommunismus* (1919), reprinted in H. Kremendahl and Theodor Meyer, eds, *Sozialismus und Staat*, vol. 1 (Kronberg, 1974).
- 21 Kautsky (see note 20) decides for 'tartaric', 'for Asia has given birth to its Confucius and a Buddha' (232).
- 22 On this see Hella Mandt, 'The Classical Understanding: Tyranny and Despotism' in this volume, Chapter 2, pp. 000–000. Mandt notes that the Bolshevik power-takeover was not yet perceived as a revolution of a new type and a secular caesura. That this was the case becomes evident in the fact that the

leading representatives of French socialism saw the developments in Russia to correspond to the history of the French Revolution of 1789. Although 1793 was also an episode in this history, it did not, for the most part, have the lasting effect of a political trauma.

- 23 Lenin, *Staat und Revolution* (see note 19), 424; see the same, *Die proletarische Revolution und der Renegat Kautsky* (1919). In the latter, see the definition of the dictatorship of the proletariat as a 'power that is supported directly upon power, that is bound by laws of no kind' (new printing Moscow, 1940, 115).
- 24 Ignazio Silone, *Die Schule der Diktatoren* (Zurich, 1938).
- 25 The first comprehensive portrayal is in Michael Rohrwasser, *Der Stalinismus und die Renegaten. Die Literatur der Exkommunisten* (Stuttgart, 1991).
- 26 Hans Maier, *Revolution und Kirche*, 5th edn (Freiburg, 1988), 46, note 62.
- 27 Rudolf Lill, *Geschichte Italiens in der Neuzeit*, 3rd edn (Darmstadt, 1986), 301, note 1.
- 28 Cited in Hannah Arendt, *Über die Revolution* (Munich, 1963), 62.
- 29 Hans Maier, "'Totalitarismus" und "Politische Religionen"', *VfZ* 3 (1995), 387–405.
- 30 Erich (later Eric) Voegelin, *Die politischen Religionen* (Vienna, 1938), newly edited by Peter J. Opitz (Munich, 1993); Raymond Aron, 'L'ère des Tyrannies d'Elie Halévy', *Revue de Métaphysique et de Morale* (May 1939).
- 31 1932 (together with Giovanni Gentile).
- 32 That National Socialism was also socialism remained a challenge to the Left of all shades, as indisputable as the evidence was. The veiling (and trivialising) talk of 'German Fascism' provided a welcome linguistic diversion here.
- 33 See here my discussion in Peter Blickle, André Holenstein, Heinrich Richard Schmidt and Franz-Josef Sladeczek, eds, *Macht und Ohnmacht der Bilder* (Munich, 2002), 485–507.
- 34 Individual evidence in Hella Mandt, 'The Classical Understanding', 31ff.
- 35 Aristotle, *Politics* I–III. On this, see Hellmut Flashar, *Aristoteles' Überweg: Antike* 3 (Basel, 1983), 175–457 (in particular 242–52, 336–58).

- 36 Hella Mandt, *Tyrannislehre und Widerstandsrecht* (Darmstadt, 1974); Mandt, 'The Classical Understanding', 49ff.
- 37 Eduard Bernstein, *Betrachtung über das Wesen der Sowjetrepublik*, 19 September 1918. Cited in Mandt, 'The Classical Understanding', 90.
- 38 Mandt, 'The Classical Understanding', 96ff.
- 39 See note 30. On Aron, compare David Bosshart, *Politische Intellektualität und totalitäre Erfahrung. Hauptströmungen der französischen Totalitarismuskritik* (Berlin, 1992), 103ff., 117ff.
- 40 Compare Eric Voegelin, 'Die deutsche Universität und die Ordnung der deutschen Gesellschaft', *Die deutsche Universität im Dritten Reich. Eine Vortragsreihe der Universität München* (Munich, 1966), 241–82.
- 41 Leo Strauss, *Naturrecht und Geschichte* (Stuttgart, 1956). See note 2 of the 'Introduction'.
- 42 Mandt, 'The Classical Understanding', note 115.
- 43 One need think only of Leo Strauss' *On Tyranny* (1948) or on the matter-of-course way in which British historians (Alan Bullock, for example) use the concepts of tyrant and tyranny to this day.
- 44 Maier, "'Totalitarismus'" und "'Politische Religionen'", 389ff.
- 45 Maier, 395ff.
- 46 Mandt, 'The Classical Understanding', 128–29.
- 47 Compare the contributions by Karl Dietrich Bracher, Klaus Hildebrand, Ian Kershaw and others in Eckhard Jesse, ed., *Totalitarismus* (see note 1).
- 48 Giovanni Amendola on 12 May 1928 in the newspaper *Il Mondo*; on this see Manfred Funke, 'Braune und rote Diktaturen. Zwei Seiten einer Medaille?' in Jesse, *Totalitarismus im 20. Jahrhundert*, 152–59; Jens Petersen, 'Die Entstehung des Totalitarismusbegriffs in Italien', *ibid.*, 95–117.
- 49 To this belongs the literature thematising the 'dissolution' of existing legal and constitutional systems. As a beginning, one should consult Karl Dietrich Bracher's classical work, *Die Auflösung der Weimarer Republik* (Villingen, 1955). As an end-point, see Daniel Suter's penetrating study, *Rechtsauflösung durch Angst und Schrecken. Zur Dynamik des Terrors im totalitären System* (Berlin, 1983).
- 50 This leader emerges in the Soviet, Fascist and National Socialist systems, with all the accompanying phenomena of the personality cult, the exemption from criticism and the divinisation during the leader's lifetime. For such a leader, the classic title of the tyrant is entirely appropriate – what other title could better characterise him?
- 51 Thus, above all, according to the methods of Hannah Arendt and Daniel Suter, *Rechtsauflösung durch Angst und Schrecken*, 91–98. Logically, this way of thinking leads not only to the destruction of the shared nature as citizens, it also extinguishes the subject. The 'objective enemy' is no longer a guilty person, but a pest that is to be 'eliminated' like an insect in acts of purgation and annihilation. The decree 'On the Red Terror' of 5 September 1918 proclaimed merciless retribution for the class enemy and all white-guardist subversive activities. From now on, the individual case would no longer be of interest, political murder would be generalised. Everything speaks for the reality having matched the brutality of the notorious formulation of the high-ranking Chekist, Lacin: his organisation conducts 'no war against individuals', it extinguishes the 'bourgeoisie as a class' (Hildermeier, *Geschichte der Sowjetunion 1917–1991*, 150ff. A similar way of thinking can be found in Heinrich Himmler's notorious Posener Speech of 4 October 1943 (*Der Prozess gegen die Hauptkriegsverbrecher vor dem Internationalen Militärgerichtshof, Nuremberg, 1948*, vol. XXIX, 1919 PS, 145).
- 52 From a later marching song of the Free German Youth in the DDR.
- 53 Summarily, we recall such authors as Jean Améry, Viktor Frankl, Primo Levi, Jorge Semprum and Tzvetan Todorov.



## 20 Introduction

- 54 Albert Camus, *Der Mensch in der Revolte* (Reinbek, 1977), 1ff.
- 55 François Furet, *Le passé d'une illusion* (Paris, 1995).
- 56 Hermann Lübbecke, 'Totalitäre Rechtgläubigkeit. Das Heil und der Terror', Hermann Lübbecke, ed., *Heilserwartung und Terror. Politische Religionen des 20. Jahrhunderts* (Düsseldorf, 1995), 15–34.
- 57 Suter, *Rechtsauflösung durch Angst und Schrecken*.
- 58 Marie-Joseph Le Guillou, *Le mystère du Père. Foi des apôtres. Gnozes actuelles* (Paris, 1973); in German under the title *Das Mysterium des Vaters* (Einsiedeln, 1974), 161ff.
- 59 Le Guillou already demonstrates these features using the example of the jargon of the Jacobins (162), but above all of that of Leninism and National Socialism. 'Language ceases ... to inform about reality in order to spread a coercive net over it instead' (173). Hugo Steger sketches the 'German cycle' in Helmut Kreuzer and Dieter Zerlin, eds, *Verfolgung und Widerstand. Acta Ising* (Munich, 1988), 81ff.
- 60 For all the unquestionable merits of Friedrich and Brzezinski's classic work, *Totalitarian Dictatorship and Autocracy* (Cambridge, 1956), this question must be asked of it as well.
- 61 Neither Lenin and Stalin nor Mussolini and Hitler saw their work to have been justified simply by its success. Supported by their *Weltanschauungen*, both took substantial pains to justify themselves. This fact becomes all the more astonishing insofar as no one was in a position to force them to justify themselves.
- 62 See note 30.
- 63 The literature is legion, extending from philosophical and theological works (Berdyaev, Florenski, Merezkovsky, Stepun) to widespread descriptions of everyday life (Alya Rachmanova). Even Alexandr Solzhenitsyn's giant work on the October Revolution is narrated from such a perspective!
- 64 Hans Maier, *Die christliche Zeitrechnung*, 5th edn (Freiburg, 2000), 55.
- 65 Werner Freitag, ed., *Das Dritte Reich im Fest. Führermythos, Feierlaune und Verweigerungen in Westfalen 1933–1945* (Bielefeld, 1997); Wolfgang Kratzer, 'Feiern und Feste der Nationalsozialisten. Aneignung und Umgestaltung christlicher Kalender, Riten und Symbole', doctoral dissertation (Munich, 1998); Horst Möller, Volker Dahm and Hartmut Mehringer, eds, *Die tödliche Utopie. Bilder, Texte, Dokumente, Daten zum Dritten Reich*, 4th edn (Munich, 2002).
- 66 Friedrich P. Reck-Malleczewen, *Bockelson. Geschichte eines Massenwahns*, 3rd edn (Stuttgart, 1968). The author paid for this book during the Third Reich with his life!
- 67 Michael Burleigh, *Die Zeit des Nationalsozialismus. Eine Gesamtdarstellung* (Frankfurt, 2000), 106ff.
- 68 See note 67.
- 69 Burleigh, 28ff.
- 70 On this, see Hans Maier (see note 33).
- 71 In the Soviet Union, through the abolition of Saturday and Sunday and the introduction of a five-day week. This led *de facto* to a substantial extension of the work period, to the detriment of free time.
- 72 Le Guillou, in *Le mystère du Père*, formulates it pointedly:

what is imitated is often the sins of Christianity ... The ideological power first imitates is precisely what it accuses Christianity of having done. What should not be done is what legitimates it: the burning of heretics and witches, the surveillance of the conscience.

(Op. cit., 180ff.)

- 73 One need think only of Lenin's oft-cited words stating that Communism is strong because it is true, or of 'The Truth' as the common name of Communist press organs (*Pravda*, *Rude Pravo*, etc.).
- 74 Rohrwasser, *Der Stalinismus und die Renegaten*, assembles on 31 pages (26–57) a 'Dictionary of Damnation', which impressively demonstrates the presence of concepts of Church history (renegades, converted, heretics, etc.) in Communism. No less than the Communist actors, those who later 'converted' from Communism also used the same religious concepts:

The communist movement is assessed in the renegade texts less as a political movement than as a faith one. What is criticized is the development of a dogmatic church that betrays the faith. With that, such comparisons as that of the 'purgations' with the Inquisition and such judgements as that of the Hitler-Stalin Pact as a 'fall into sin' or Stalinism as 'original sin' become manifest.

(Op. cit., 56ff.)

- 75 The most recent portrayal of the religiosity of Hitler can be found in Michael Rissman, *Hitlers Gott* (Zurich/Munich, 2001).
- 76 The clearest portrayal of these connections can be found in Ernst Nolte, *Der Faschismus in seiner Epoche* (Munich, 1963), 398–409.
- 77 Compare now: Wolfgang Dierker, *Himmler's Glaubenskrieger. Der Sicherheitsdienst des SS und seine Religionspolitik 1933–1941* (Paderborn, 2001).
- 78 The earliest was Franz Werfel, in several speeches at the beginning of the 1930s, reprinted in *Zwischen Oben und Unten* (Stockholm, 1946), 19–148.
- 79 Voegelin, *Die politischen Religionen*.
- 80 Hannah Arendt, *Elemente und Ursprünge totaler Herrschaft*, 2nd edn (Frankfurt, 1962).
- 81 Bernhard Welte, *Vom Wesen und Unwesen der Religion* (Frankfurt, 1952). On the history of the concept: Ernst Feil, *Religio*, vol. I (Göttingen, 1986), vol. II (1997), vol. III (2001).
- 82 Dolf Sternberger, *Drei Wurzeln der Politik (Schriften II, 1, 2)* (Frankfurt, 1978), 438. 'In attempting to know these phenomena, we must not shrink from the effort to penetrate the chambers of such a consciousness, one that has become mired in the repulsive' (Himmler's Posener speech is referred to here).
- 83 Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Widerstand und Ergebung*, new edn (Munich, 1970), 12.
- 84 The fact that the totalitarian regimes had hostile intentions with regard to the Christian churches provides no conclusive argument against their description as (political) religions. Whole worlds lie between the 'church-type religion' of Christianity, against which both Communism and National Socialism – each in its own way – declared war and the political or secular religion that manifests itself in the 'holy books' of Communism and in the faith of Mussolini in destiny and Hitler in 'providence'.



## **Part II**

# **The classical understanding**



## 2 The classical understanding

### Tyranny and despotism

*Hella Mandt*

Leaving aside the diversity of cultural traditions in Europe, the classical vocabulary provided a first linguistic means by which to understand the new forms of illegitimate rule that arose in the twentieth century. Further still: it entailed a power to mobilise that enabled – at least potentially – a degree of distance and immunity with regard to the modern despotisms. Here, modern divergences from the ancient concepts must be considered, as must the varying degrees of presence and validity that the concepts enjoyed within the individual European countries. Whereas a relative continuity between classical and modern conceptual forms has predominated in Great Britain and the Anglo-Saxon world, continental Europe has been divided. Here, elements of the tradition on the one hand and deconstructive tendencies that have levelled the traditional vocabulary on the other have held the scales in balance.

#### Elements of the tradition

##### *The Aristotelian theory of tyranny*

The tyranny arises within the context of the theory of the constitutions and the transition of constitutions. At the base of this theory, in turn, lies an understanding of the constitution as the way of life (*bios*) of the citizens (in other words, of the entire state of the citizen community). This way of life encompasses both custom and law. Among the Greeks, tyranny is defined as one basic non-legitimate form of public rule. ‘Despotic rule’, by contrast, is regarded primarily as a matter pertaining to management of the household (*oikonomia*). Only occasionally, therefore, do we encounter the substantive ‘despotism’ (*despoteia*).<sup>1</sup> With the exception of ‘oriental despotism’, the concept describes, not a constitutional form, but a private kind of rule – one referring to the pre-political realm of the ‘house’. Thus is *despoteia* opposed to *politeia*, which is the genus for all forms of public rule. ‘Rule over slaves’ (*despotike arche*) is the counter-concept of ‘rule over the free’ (*politike arche*).<sup>2</sup> In the Aristotelian *Politics*, this contrasting of two ways of ruling systematically precedes the typology of the constitutions.<sup>3</sup>

Beyond the household level, despotic types of rule can at best gain legitimacy among un-free peoples (barbarians). By contrast to the Hellenes, these lack the consciousness of freedom and equality.

They [the kingships of some barbarian peoples] have, namely, a power that approaches tyrannical rule, yet are still based on law and inheritance. Here, the barbarians are of a more slavish character than the Greeks and the Asians more than the Europeans; this is why they tolerate a despotic rule without rebelling against it.<sup>4</sup>

The despotic form of government is legitimate by nature within the context of the 'house'. According to the theory of constitutions and of constitutional change, however, it is a characteristic shared by all degenerate forms of public rule – whether of the one or of the many.<sup>5</sup> The worst constitutional form is the tyranny.<sup>6</sup> Here, the tyrant reigns not with, but against – or without – the existing laws and against – or without – the consent of the citizens:

tyranny, therefore, must be that kind of monarchy that reigns without responsibility (*anypeutynos*) over all of like and better birth, to its own benefit and not to the benefit of the ruled. This is why it is involuntary (*akousios*), because no one of free birth will freely accept such a rule.<sup>7</sup>

Because those subject to tyrannical rule lose their qualities as citizens, they are described – with terminological consistency – as either 'natives' or 'subjects'.<sup>8</sup> Characterising the concept of tyranny according to its purpose and its mode of exercise of rule, Aristotle mentions a third fundamental dimension as well. Concerning the relations among the citizens both as citizens and as human beings, Aristotle notes the impossibility of their living together in friendship and trust and their being exposed to the planned destruction of these qualities.<sup>9</sup> Not only a political deprivation is entailed by this prevention of friendship and trust, however. Going far beyond this, the influence of tyrannical rule penetrates into the pre-political sphere of interhuman relationships. This occurs through its prohibition of 'celebratory gatherings of all kinds' (*syssitien, hetairien*), its establishment of the greatest possible publicity, its control of subjects' thoughts and activities, its prohibition of education. As a final impingement, a tyranny prevents the enjoyment of leisure, permanently drawing subjects both into huge building projects and into wars. This is how people become alien to one another; they are robbed in decisive dimensions, not only of their life as citizens, but also of elements of their very human being (*philia, homonoia, pistis*). To the extent that neither ancient nor more recent Greek tyrannies practised cultural and psychic deprivation, Aristotle's discussion of such deprivation should be understood as part of his attempt to measure the consequences of tyranny for the ways of life of the ruled. Taken together with its intent to

rob freedom and its transposition of practices of despotic rule into the public sphere, the tyranny is opposed to the constitutional conditions that would promote the 'good life'. In absence of philosophical considerations concerning the 'good life' as part of a theory of illegal rule, however, cultural and psychic atrophy cannot be regarded as possible consequences of a thoroughgoing tyrannical rule.<sup>10</sup>

In the three dimensions described here, tyranny marks the quintessence of the corruption of public rule for Aristotle. Extreme oligarchy and democracy – in the sense of an unrestricted rule of the majority – are classified as 'merely tyrannical rule with many parts'.<sup>11</sup> With both, rule is no longer exercised to the benefit of all citizens but solely in the interests of a class. With oligarchy, it is exercised to the advantage of a minority of the rich, whereas in a democracy, it is practised to the benefit of the poor – who are usually in the majority. In the case for which wealth on the one hand and poverty on the other are driven to the extreme, it is foreseeable that 'a state of masters (*despotes*) and slaves (*doulos*) exists, but not of free men: the one side envies and the other feels contempt, and both work against freedom and political community to the greatest degree.<sup>12</sup> This social constellation is the most certain breeding ground for the rise of pure tyranny. In the same measure that wealth increases on the one hand and poverty on the other, the danger that an individual will exploit the situation for himself also grows. Such an individual will establish a tyranny for which his rule is based on one of the two classes – both of which strive to gain power.<sup>13</sup>

Aristotle places particular emphasis on the identical nature of pure tyranny and unrestricted democracy. Wherever the will of the ruler – whether of an individual or of the people as a whole ('the multitude is the master, not as each individual, but as a totality')<sup>14</sup> – is the sole instance authorised to make generally binding decisions, responsible rule is no longer possible. Responsible rule is practised in offices for which authority and responsibility are firmly established. Under the rule of the will (whether of the people or of a monarch), by contrast, 'all offices are dissolved'.<sup>15</sup> The constitution is dissolved along with them. For this reason, according to Aristotle, neither tyranny nor unrestricted democracy could be described as constitutions.<sup>16</sup>

The identity of tyranny with pure democracy extends far beyond the erosion of political responsibility through dissolution of the order of constitutional offices, however. The supposed rule of the people is in reality the rule of an individual: the people's leader or 'demagogue'. And although the people believes itself to be the master of everything, the demagogue is the master of the opinion of the people. He converts the consensus, which is based upon reasonable advice, into an acclamation based upon a 'call to the people'. '[F]or thus do they [the demagogues] themselves become great: when the people is master of everything and they are masters of the opinion of the people; for the people obeys them'.<sup>17</sup>



[T]hus, then, does this kind of democracy fall under the rulership of the tyrant alone. The character is also the same: both rule despotically over those who are more virtuous and the flatterers and leaders of the people correspond precisely to one another. And in each case, both have the greatest power: the flatterers over the tyrants and the leaders of the people over such a people.<sup>18</sup>

This detailed diagnosis seeks to understand the multi-layered complexity of tyrannical rule: its origination, forms of appearance and practical implications. Although no correspondingly detailed therapy for a tyranny is offered, we are not justified in assuming that Aristotle attributed less significance to this aspect of his theory of tyranny than he did to the previous part. Nor are we justified in assuming that his reserve in this passage was intended to express scepticism – whether of the justification or of the possibilities and chances of success of attempts to eliminate a tyranny. In the *Politics*, for example, Aristotle himself favourably reports on the Greek practice of bestowing high honours on one who commits tyrannicide.<sup>19</sup> In *The Athenian Constitution*, Aristotle describes the older (pre-Peisisistrate) Athenian law against tyranny as having been mild: it punished those who strove to establish a tyranny or who supported another in the attempt, solely by withdrawing the active and passive rights of citizenship. The law that came into force after the expulsion of Peisisistratus, by contrast, prescribed a punishment of death for the same crime.<sup>20</sup> It should be assumed that Aristotle's extensive restraint on the question had been imposed by the circumstances under which he taught and wrote. His status as a foreigner and a Macedonian subject in Athens had brought upon him the suspicion, on the part of the followers of Demosthenes, that he was the head of a 'Macedonian spy ring'.<sup>21</sup>

It may have been for this reason that Aristotle restricted himself to cloaking his therapy in a report as to what actions commonly destroy a tyranny and what actions commonly maintain one. Excepting the influences of foreign states, a tyranny is said to go under 'by itself' if the groups or citizens that support it become disunited among themselves<sup>22</sup> or if citizens threaten either the life or the rule of the ruler – whether 'due to insult, out of fear or out of contempt'<sup>23</sup> or through ambition<sup>24</sup> to gain the fame that should be expected.<sup>25</sup> Aristotle mentions 'ambition' last in his list of the motives for tyrannicide or the overthrow of a tyranny. He emphasises that only a few have acted for this reason. Last but not least, he mentions Plato's friend and pupil, Dion, as a role model in this context. (In 357 BCE, Dion had liberated Syracuse from a tyrannical rule that had lasted 50 years.) Taken together, all these factors permit the suspicion that Aristotle regarded ambition as the most honourable motive for the elimination of the tyrants:

But whoever undertakes an attack out of ambition has reasons other than the ones that have been named to this point. . . . Others do it for

other reasons, but these attack the one ruler as though this were one of the outstanding deeds through which one becomes famous and respected by the people; they do not want to gain rule for themselves, but fame. Admittedly, only very few act for this reason . . . As their role model, they must take the resolve of Dion. Striking Dionysus with very few means, he said that however the thing turned out, it would suffice for him to succeed to the point that, even if he were to die with his first small step into the country, it would be a beautiful death for him.<sup>26</sup>

The description of the motives that have generally led to the overthrow of a tyranny is followed by a description of the means by which tyrannical rule is commonly maintained. Aristotle compares the most extremely opposed means to this end: maintenance of a tyranny through exhaustion of all possibilities on the one hand and through its transformation into a monarchy on the other.

Description of the first possibility adds a catalogue of relevant techniques of tyrannical rule to the basic characteristics of a tyranny that were ascertained in the diagnosis. Taken together, these are said to seek the destruction of the personal, citizenly and political freedoms of the citizens. The description of tyrannical politics in these passages has become famous in the Western tradition of political thought.<sup>27</sup> The theorists and practitioners of European and American revolutions were well aware of it, and even used it as part of their arsenal of arguments proving the justice of the thing for which they fought:

This is the way in which most tyrants maintain their rule: . . . eliminate the outstanding, get rid of the proud and permit no clubs, no education or anything of the like, but prohibit all things from which pride and mutual trust could arise. Likewise, they permit neither leisure nor celebratory gatherings, but do everything to keep the citizens mutually estranged as far as possible. (For, if people know each other, they more easily begin to trust one another.) Aside from this, the local citizens should always be controllable and should always stay away from the house; for thus can they least undertake something secretly and thus will they accustom themselves to a humble cast of mind, for they are always held in servitude. Thus does the tyrant always attempt to know what the subjects say or do. He has spies, for then the people will talk less openly in fear of these eavesdroppers. And if they do speak openly, then it is more easily known. Besides this, the tyrant will incite the people against one another, friends among themselves and the people against the respected and wealthy. He will also make the subjects poor: in order both to pay his own guards and to ensure that they will continually pursue their subsistence and have no time for conspiring. The Egyptian pyramids and the construction of the Olympion by the Peisistradians provide examples of this practice. All these pursue the same

goals – occupation and impoverishment of the subjects. The tyrant is also war-like, so that the people are continually occupied and always dependent upon a leader. The kingship is maintained through friends. The tyranny, by contrast, [is maintained] by the mistrust of enemies. Such things, therefore, comprise the tyranny and maintain it, and no misdeed is lacking here. They can be collected into three groups. All of the tyrant's measures can be derived from one: that they mistrust one another, that they are powerless and that they are servile.<sup>28</sup>

### *The concept of the tyrant in European linguistic usage*

Up to the nineteenth century, both the Aristotelian definition and its constitutive distinction between political and despotic rule predominated in what came to be a common, European concept of tyranny. To be sure, that concept was reinterpreted, tabooed and rejected even in pre-revolutionary Europe. Not only the assertion of individual reinterpretations or taboos, but the bias against negative constitutional concepts in epochs of political change served to limit any binding establishment by a 'classical' theory.

During the crisis of the republic of Florence, Machiavelli retained both the traditional constitutional typology and the theory of the cycle of constitutions. For him, tyranny remained the perfect example of unjust rule, the opposite of the political or civil way of life (*vivere politico, vivere civile*).<sup>29</sup> The latter is said to be characterised by the rule of laws that serve the common good, that are supported by good habits and morals, but especially by institutional precautions. Resembling 'dykes and dams', such precautions are suited to steering both party struggles and historical change onto tracks that are politically productive.<sup>30</sup> At the same time, however, Machiavelli rejects the traditional constitutional typology by setting another counter to the model of the *vivere politico* alongside the tyranny: the *principe nuovo*. The task of this new prince is to overcome a crisis situation in which conflicting parties are incapable of re-establishing a constitutional (republican) order by using their own resources. To this end, the new prince – who is neither a legitimate republican ruler nor a tyrant, but a third kind of ruler – is permitted 'to resort to extraordinary means, that is, to 'force and weapons' (*Discorsi* I. 18). Only a successful foundation or reestablishment of a republic can justify the use of such means, whereby the 'prudente ordinatore d'una repubblica' is to follow an economy of cruelty.

One can call cruel means good – if it is even permitted to call something bad, good – if one uses them all at once . . . but then does not continue with them. . . . Cruel measures are poorly used if they increase rather than cease with time, even if they are used in small amounts at the beginning.<sup>31</sup>

Machiavelli never characterises the rule of the *principe nuovo* as ‘politico’ or ‘civile’. Such rule is said to be politically productive only if the new prince is

so clever and has such strength of character that he does not pass down the unrestricted power he has seized for himself to another. Because human beings tend more towards evil than good, his successor could abuse the power that he has used to the good of [achieving] ambitious goals.<sup>32</sup>

After the crisis has been overcome and the republican order has been successfully re-established, the *principe nuovo* must give the community back to the citizens and distribute power among the social forces in a prudent way.

Thus does Machiavelli relativise the uncompromising opposition of kingship and tyranny – one that excludes a tertium – that had been passed down by the tradition. Such relativisation should not be confused with an abolition of the opposition and a complete break with the tradition, however.<sup>33</sup>

Once the sovereign state that emerged from the religious civil wars was established on the European continent, the concept of the tyrant was extensively reduced to its ethical-political content. Where the fundamental experience of the civil war was a threatening brush with anarchy, this experience led to a revision and partial de-politicisation of ‘tyranny’. Even if a usurper were to reign as a tyrant, the tyranny still appeared as an acceptable alternative to the *bellum omnium contra omnes*: ‘La tyrannie d’un prince est pernicieuse, de plusieurs encore pire . . . Toutefois elle n’est point encore si mauvaise que d’Anarchie, où il n’y a forme de République, n’y personne qui commande, ou qui obeisse.’<sup>34</sup>

Et ne faut pas appeler tyrannie les meurtres, banissements, saisies, & autres executions, ou exploits d’armes qui se font au changement des Républiques ou retablisement d’icelles: Car il ne se fit jamais & ne peut se faire autrement quand le changement est violent, comme on a veu au triumvirat, & souuent aux elections de plusieurs Empereurs . . . car il estoit necessaire d’avoir un tel medecin à une Republique ulcerée de tant de seditions & rebellions, & envers un peuple effrené & débordé en toute licence.<sup>35</sup>

The challenge of the epoch provided the occasion for Bodin too to relativise the traditional opposition of king and tyrant even as he maintained it. He relativised it by splitting the regime into *état* and *gouvernement*, state form and governing form, and by conceiving the sovereignty of the prince as *maiestas summa in cives ac subditos legibusque soluta potestas*. Bodin excuses the monarch – who, as the sovereign (IV, 7), is set above the fighting parties as a judge – from the consensus of the citizens and the ties to the traditional and legislated right. Obliging the monarch to the *ius divinum et naturale* alone, Bodin relocates the distinction that had previously existed concerning the mode of the exercise of rule exclusively into the realm of the moral:

or la plus noble difference du Roy & du Tyran es, que le Roy se conforme aux loix de nature: & le tyran les foule aux pieds; l'un entretient la pieté, la iustice, & le foy: l'autre n'a ni Dieu, ni foy, ni loi; l'un fait tout ce qu'il pense servir au bien public, & tuition des subjects: l'autre ne fait rien que pour son profit particulier, vengeance, ou plaisir.<sup>36</sup>

The idea of the sovereignty of the ruler overcame the medieval dualism between 'country' and 'rule' that had previously existed on the Western European continent. What was established in its place was a sovereign invested with the monopoly of power in order to establish law on the one hand and an association of subjects that had been robbed of all political authority on the other. As a result of this development, the concept of tyranny was stripped of its (constitutional) political content. This situation obtained no matter how emphatically its moral substance was maintained in the period that followed (especially in Germany).

How, under these circumstances, was political rule to be distinguished from despotic rule? Did Bodin's monarchy *legibus et consensus populi soluta* not correspond to the form of government that had been defined, since Aristotle, as despotic and had been regarded as slavish and barbarian? Did the levelling of the difference between despotic and political rule – and, to the extent that it was levelled, an unexpressed positive revaluation of despotic government – not follow as the necessary consequence of the theory of sovereignty? As Voltaire later formulated it, was the future dividing line not between 'le pouvoir monarchique et le despotisme ... si fine que bien des yeux ne l'apercevront pas'?<sup>37</sup>

Bodin could avoid an unwanted identification of political rule and despotic rule by avoiding the adjective *despotique* – even though, in terms of content, he picks up on the older theory of the *principatus despoticus* in the *Six Livres de la Republique*. Opposing the 'Monarchie Seigneuriale' to the 'Monarchie Royale ou legitime' and the 'Monarchie Tyrannique', he was able to save the sovereign 'Monarchie Royale' from the suspicion that he would be despotic and un-free.

At the root of Bodin's avoidance of the adjective *despotique* in favour of *seigneuriale* lay a positive political revaluation of the despotic type of government. The 'Monarchie Seigneuriale' that was soon called 'absolute monarchy' was no longer something against nature – 'aucunement contre la loy de nature'. At the same time, this kind of monarchy was liberated from the odium of being considered slavish or barbaric. Indeed, it was the original form of government of all peoples, not only the 'barbarians', but the Greeks, 'qui escriuent à tout propos que les Grecs, estoient libres, & les Barbares esclaves' (II, 2, p. 273). In terms of their origins, all states (*republicques*) are said to be based upon force and suppression, 'se trouvent plains d'esclaves'. The Western states are no exceptions:

Demosthene, Aristote & Ciceron se sont mespris, suyuant l'erreur d'Herodote, qui dit que les premiers Rois ont été choisis pour leur iustice & vertu, au tempts qu'ils ont figure heroique . . . La raison & la lumiere naturelle nous conduit à cela de croire que la force & violence a donné source & origine aux Republiques.<sup>38</sup>

The de-politicisation of the traditional theory of tyranny did not establish itself in Germany without resistance. This resistance found its most concise expression in the *Politica*, by Johannes Althusius, which was directed against Bodin's theory of sovereignty. Regarded from the standpoint of the old right, Bodin's absolute monarchy was still a tyranny: 'Absoluta potestate uti, est tyrannis. Tyrannis est . . . quando summus magistratus absolutâ potestate seu plenitudo potestatis, in administratione sua utitur, & repagula atque vincula, quibus humana societas est obserrata, revellit & perfringit'.<sup>39</sup>

The protest formulated on the grounds of the old, feudal constitutional structure remained without lasting resonance on the European plane, however. The path of political prudence appeared to lie with Bodin's solution rather than with that of Althusius and his followers. In the confusion of the English Civil War, Thomas Hobbes went far beyond Bodin's relativisation of the opposition between king and tyrant in his positive revaluation of despotic rule. Hobbes let 'de-ethicisation' – a total abolition of the distinction between king and tyrant, in other words – follow the 'de-politicisation' of the theory of tyranny. Nor did his de-ethicisation arise solely from the necessity of the times. On the contrary, it also issued from his attempt to establish foundations for politics as an exact science.

From the perspective of Hobbes' new political science, a 'tyrant' was now merely a designation for an unpopular ruler. The tyrannophobia of the Greek and Roman classics of political thought could be reduced to a 'fear of being strongly governed'.

Hobbes' abolition of the distinction of kingship and tyranny was accompanied by a levelling of the opposition between political and despotic rule. By contrast to the Aristotelian tradition, he referred neither to a particular geographical area (the Orient) nor to the mode of the exercise of rule. The distinction was maintained solely in order to describe different bases from which states originated:

political commonwealth or commonwealth by institution and commonwealth by acquisition, . . . where the sovereign power is acquired by force . . . which some writers call despotic, from despotes which signifieth a lord, or master; and is the dominium of the master over his servant.

In the first case, the ruled place themselves under a sovereign out of fear of one another; in the latter, they subject themselves to a conqueror they fear.<sup>40</sup> Thus did the negative connotation of 'despotism' fall away. Hobbes

expressly reevaluated the concept into a positive one and described despotism as ‘naturale’.<sup>41</sup> Because the goal of rule is no longer to make the good life possible, but simply to ensure survival, a tyrant can accomplish this task as successfully as any other kind of ruler can.

In England, certainly, this new valuation of tyranny and despotism remained without resonance. Following the failure of absolutist efforts during the Glorious Revolution, political thought remained bound to the classical vocabulary here. As a result, English linguistic usage – including that of North America – continued to uphold both the traditional concept of tyranny and the traditional evaluation of despotic rule to a greater extent than the continental usage did. A positive reevaluation of despotism in light of the idea of an enlightened or well intentioned despotism met with no success. The failure of this idea, one that was widespread in continental thought, extended from 1688 up to Carlyle’s *On Heroes*, written in the middle of the nineteenth century. In England, absolute monarchy always seemed closer to tyranny than to monarchy. Locke saw the difference between king and tyrant to lie with the fact ‘that one makes the laws the bounds of his power and the good of the public the end of his government; the other makes all give way to his own will and appetite’. In this context, ‘law’ was said to be, above all, ‘the forms and the rules of the government; the form of government agreed upon’. Law was the ‘powers’ to which the king is entitled in the context of the constitutional order: whoever steps beyond these powers injures the ‘trust’ signified by the power of office and political rule. The prince ‘[who] acts contrary to, or beyond that trust’ becomes a tyrant.<sup>42</sup> Against a king or government that injures the constitutional order (or trust), there is not merely a *right* of resistance – of which Locke clearly approves – but even an obligation not to let matters take their course. Once a political development has been introduced, it could prove difficult to reverse:

if a long train of abuses, prevarications and artifices, all tending the same way, make the design visible to the people, and they cannot but feel what they lie under, and see wither they are going, it is not to be wondered that they should then rouse themselves, and endeavour to put the rule into such hands which may secure to them the ends for which government was first erected, and without which, they are much worse than the state of Nature or pure anarchy; the inconveniences being all as great and as near, but the remedy farther off and more difficult.<sup>43</sup>

The right does not exist solely where an individual’s moral interior (Kant) and faith are in danger of being suppressed; it already exists wherever the external order of the civil society, the attested rights of the citizens and the institutional structures of political responsibility have been threatened. Beyond this, Locke does not see the right of resistance to exist only after a tyrannical regime has been established; it is present as soon as the attempt to attain such a regime becomes clearly recognisable. Locke emphasises that

the right of resistance is 'not only a right to get out of [a tyranny] but to prevent it'. A people cannot stand by and watch as the legislative power is excluded from political life by 'oppression and artifice' and plot about counter-measures only afterwards. To recommend such a manner of proceeding would signify nothing other than 'to bid them first be slaves and then to take care of their liberty, and when their chains are on, tell them they may act like free men'.<sup>44</sup>

The decisive rejection of an absolute monarchy was not simply a question of political world-view in England. In his *Political Essays* (1742), David Hume calls absolute monarchy the quickest death of the British constitution: 'If any single person acquire power enough to take our constitution to pieces and put it up a new, he is really an absolute monarch . . . Absolute monarchy, therefore, is the easiest death, the true *Euthanasia* of the British constitution'.<sup>45</sup> In his *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (1790), Burke expressly invokes 'the ancients' when he excludes absolute monarchy as thoroughly as he does absolute democracy from the just constitutions:

Not being unread in the authors [i.e. the ancients] . . . I cannot but help concurring with their opinion, that an absolute democracy, no more than absolute monarchy, is to be reckoned among the legitimate forms of government. They think it rather the corruption and degeneracy, than the sound constitution of a republic.<sup>46</sup>

At the outset of the second half of the nineteenth century, John Stuart Mill strengthened the consensus with his assessment of absolute monarchy and a 'good despotism'. These are said to be

a radical and most pernicious misconception of what good government is; a good despotism is an altogether false ideal, which practically (except as a means to some temporary purpose) becomes the most senseless and dangerous of chimeras. Evil for evil, a good despotism, in a country at all advanced in civilisation, is more noxious than a bad one; for it is far more relaxing and enervating to the thoughts, feelings, and energies of the people. The despotism of Augustus prepared the Romans for Tiberius.<sup>47</sup>

The category of despotism remains clearly bound to the goal of legitimate political rule in the Aristotelian tradition: 'bringing into sufficient exercise the individual faculties, moral, intellectual, and active, of the people'. In the English linguistic sphere, we can speak neither of a thinning out of the classical vocabulary nor of its historicisation or marginalisation.

### *Transformations of the concept of despotism*

A decisive transformation must be registered for France and in Germany. In France, certainly, and through Montesquieu in particular, despotism



becomes in a decisive conceptual weapon of the political opposition against the absolute monarchy. At the same time, though, Rousseau undermined Montesquieu and European liberalism by taking the character of the negative constitutional concepts from the classical vocabulary. This occurred through his proclamation of the sovereignty of the *volonté générale*. Prior to the French Revolution, Rousseau legitimated a new type of the rule of humans over humans in the name of the *volonté générale*. This type of rule crystallised during the Revolution into the concept of a *despotisme de la liberté*. A positive revaluation of despotic rule into *despotisme légal* by the physiocrats preceded this positivisation of despotism. In the first decade of the nineteenth century, Hegel's positive revaluation of 'tyranny' followed – as a challenge to the hopeless theorising of the political scientists.

In Montesquieu's work, despotism became the new quintessence of illegitimate rule: 'un crime contre le genre humain'.<sup>48</sup> In decisive points, Montesquieu followed Aristotle's understanding of despotic rule as impassably divided from political rule. If one first assumes the general classification into monarchy, aristocracy and democracy in accordance with the number of rulers, despotic rule is the degenerate form, not merely of a single state form, but of all just, moderate state forms: 'La monarchie dégénère ordinairement dans le despotisme d'un seul; l'aristocratie, dans le despotisme de plusieurs; la démoncratie dans le despotisme du Peuple'. Characteristic of despotism is the lack of *pouvoirs intermédiaires* and a *séparation des pouvoirs* into legislation, executive power and judiciary. For this reason, fear of unpredictable arbitrary acts committed by the power-holders dominates the citizens' daily life. Whether the despotism of an individual or of a multitude of rulers, the citizens' freedom is constantly threatened:

Comme les démocraties se perdent lorsque le peuple dépouille le sénat, les magistrats et les juges de leur fonction, les monarchies se corrompent lorsque'on ôte peu à peu les prerogatives des corps où privileges des villes. Dans le premier cas, on va au despotisme de tous; dans l'autre, au despotisme d'un seul.<sup>49</sup>

Montesquieu insists that his distinction between legitimate and illegitimate political orders is determined, not 'par des choses d'accident, comme les vertus ou les vices du prince', but 'par la forme de la constitution, la distribution des trois pouvoirs'.<sup>50</sup> Despotism, therefore, is *sensu strictu* a constitutional concept. The decisive goal according to which despotism is regarded as the new prime example of illegitimate rule is that of attaining political freedom through a moderation of power. Even if ruling virtues are neglected as 'choses d'accident' in contradiction to the Aristotelian tradition, the modern industrial state is nonetheless obliged to relieve the situation of the poor. This obligation is justified in terms of its manner of functioning:

Les richesses d'un État supposent beaucoup d'industrie. Il n'est pas possible que dans un si grand nombre de branches de commerce, il n'y en ait toujours quelqu'une qui souffre, et dont par conséquent les ouvriers ne soient dans une nécessité momentanée. C'est pour lors que l'état a besoin d'apporter un prompt secours, soit pour empêcher le peuple de souffrir, soit pour éviter qu'il ne se révolte.<sup>51</sup>

In Rousseau's political thought, the declaration of the sovereignty of the *volonté générale* robs constitutional questions of their relevance. Now it is solely forms of government that are of significance. These, to be sure, are of secondary significance insofar as the government is merely an agent or minister of the sovereign: 'Ce n'est absolument qu'une commission, un emploi, dans lequel, simples officiers du souverain, ils exercent en son nom le pouvoir dont il les a faits dépositaires, et qu'il peut limiter, modifier et reprendre quand il lui plaît' (*Du contrat social*, 3.1). The number of the members of the government must be conversely proportional to the size of the population so as to ensure efficiency in the execution of the will of the sovereign. In addition to this formula, the following obtains: 'il n'y a pas une constitution de gouvernement unique et absolue, mais qu'il peut y avoir autant de gouvernements différents en nature que d'états différents en grandeur' (*Du contrat social*, 3.1).<sup>52</sup> Negative constitutional concepts are foreign to Rousseau's political thought. Neither 'tyranny' in the Aristotelian tradition nor 'despotism' in the sense of Montesquieu is a key category in his work. At most, such categories appear as historical reminiscences:

Dans le sens vulgaire un Tyran est un Roi qui gouverne avec violence et sans égard à la justice et aux lois. Dans le sens précis un Tyran est un particulier qui s'arrogé l'autorité royale sans y avoir droit ... Pour donner différents noms à différentes choses, j'appelle Tyran l'usurpateur de l'autorité royale, et Despote l'usurpateur du pouvoir Souverain. Le Tyran est celui qui s'ingère contre les lois à gouverner selon les lois; le Despote est celui qui se met au-dessus des lois mêmes. Ainsi le Tyran peut n'être pas Despote, mais le Despote est toujours Tyran.<sup>53</sup>

In the collectivity's authority to force recalcitrant individuals to subordination to the *volonté générale* (*Du contrat social*, 1.7) lies a justification for another, qualitatively new form of public rule. Only in the course of the revolution was this form conceptualised as 'despotisme de la liberté'.

Preceding this, there was the positive revaluation of despotic rule into the 'despotisme légal' of the physiocrats. There are no fundamental objections to regarding a government equipped with absolute power as the 'soul' of the state. By contrast to the old 'despotisme arbitraire', a new, reform-oriented 'despotisme légal' of the reasonable world-order – a world-order that is supposed to be self-evident in its reasonableness – aids in achieving the breakthrough. Now, the new despotism has the assumption of political

legitimacy on its side. ‘Dans le despotisme légal l’évidence ... commande avant que le Souverain ordonne’.<sup>54</sup> Labelling the notion of physiocracy a *despotisme légal* of the *partie honteuse*, Turgot distances himself from this positive revaluation of the despotism concept. He ascribes to it a ‘tic sur l’autorité tutélaire’, one that dishonours the economic doctrine of the ‘MM les Economistes’ and will prove to retard its distribution – above all, in England.<sup>55</sup>

The positive revaluation of ‘despotism’ in physiocratic thought lacked any kind of anti-monarchical tendency. In another case of positive revaluation, by contrast, anti-monarchism was of prime importance. Members of the revolutionary Comité du Salut Public – Robespierre in particular – denied any kind of legitimacy to the monarchy. Thus did monarchy and tyranny become one. ‘Tyranny’ became an political fighting slogan as opposed to the category of ‘despotism’, which had originally been negative, but was now offensively revaluated with an apologetic intent: ‘domptez par la terreur les ennemis de la liberté; et vous avez raison, comme fondateurs de la République. Le gouvernement de la révolution est le despotisme de la liberté contre la tyrannie.’<sup>56</sup>

In Germany at that time, a corresponding positive revaluation is also in evidence. Friedrich Schlegel approved of transitional dictatorship as a temporally limited transitional sovereignty by which to shorten the transition from an old despotism to the new republican order. Certainly, any invocation of ‘ancient history’ in this context blurred the difference from the classical models that legitimated a temporary unrestricted rule.<sup>57</sup> Fichte’s plea for a *Zwingherr* by which to ‘Germanify’ the nation after the collapse of Prussia also wished to be understood as a form of transitional, future-oriented rule. Goal-setting, temporal limitation and accountability was to elevate it from the unjust regimes of the past, to distinguish it from ‘tyranny’. This distinction, however, possessed more theoretical significance than it did practical, political significance insofar as both the accountability and the temporal time limit were postponed to an uncertain future date. The forced education of the people of the nation is predicted not yet to have concluded by the beginning of the twenty-second century.<sup>58</sup>

The young Hegel draws a more radical conclusion from the experience ‘that Germany ... is no longer a state’. Referring to Machiavelli, he justifies tyranny as necessary and just:

thus are all states created, through the noble power of great human beings ... This power is not despotism, but tyranny – pure horrible rule. It is necessary and just, however, to the extent that it constitutes and maintains the state as this genuine individual.<sup>59</sup>

The public opinion of his time diverged from Hegel’s own estimation and regarded ‘tyranny’ as a morally and politically negative category. Although Hegel’s own use of the term paid no heed to this divergence, it was clearly expressed in the *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Geschichte*:

tyranny is held to be something that is not right and that meets with disapproval in religion and the moral consciousness of individuals; tyranny offends individuals, they shrink back from it and experience it as oppression; it is for this reason arbitrary and not proper; it should not be.<sup>60</sup>

Parallel to his positive revaluation of 'tyranny', Hegel projects certain basic elements of the ancient and modern typology of constitutions onto a scheme of the course of world history:

world history is the disciplining of the unbridled natural will to general and subjective freedom. The Orient knew and knows only that *one* is free, the Greek and Roman worlds know that *some* are free, and the Germanic world that *all* are free. This is why the first form we see in world history is despotism, the second is democracy and aristocracy and the third is monarchy.<sup>61</sup>

By incorporating despotism into the course of world history and enlisting the term to characterise regions outside Europe as well, Hegel neutralises despotism as a negative constitutional concept in the sense of Montesquieu and Kant. Although Hegel takes up the right of resistance in his *Ästhetik*, he evaluates it as politically counter-productive or inopportune. To be sure, Hegel acknowledges an 'absolute justification' to fight against a situation that has become 'established injustice' – one of social and political privileges grounded solely in the fact of one's birth. However justified, though, the claim to a right of resistance can only bring about 'a situation of unhappiness and what, in itself, is false' in the case that injustice, 'through the force of prevailing conditions', has hardened into an insurmountable necessity. Hegel's advises that one

peacefully let the unavoidable roll over one's back; for the reasonable human being . . . must subordinate himself to necessity, that means, he must not react against it . . . he must relinquish the interests and needs that are submerged [by such injustice] and therefore bear that which cannot be overcome with the still courage of passivity and toleration. In cases where a struggle is futile, the reasonable course is to get out of the fray in order to withdraw, at least, into the *formal* independence of subjective freedom. Then, the power of the unjust no longer has power over him, whereas he immediately experiences his whole dependence if he opposes it.<sup>62</sup>

In the first half of the nineteenth century, the concept of despotism remains clearly pejorative in France and Germany – and this in both scientific and general linguistic usage. This should be attributed primarily to the influence of Montesquieu, Benjamin Constant, Tocqueville and Kant.

Kant rejects the interpretation holding the political ruler to be the father of the land – an interpretation that was widespread in Lutheran Protestantism.

[A] government that were to be erected on the principle of good will towards the people as of a father towards his children, ... is the greatest conceivable despotism [constitution that abolishes all freedom of the subjects, which then have no rights at all]. Not a paternal but a patriotic government (*imperium non paternale, sed patrioticum*) is the only conceivable one for human beings that are capable of rights, as regards the good intention of the ruler as well.

Opposing the despotic and republican modes of government as the *forma regiminis*, Kant connects these with the various forms of rule (*forma imperii*) in a way analogous to that in which Aristotle classified the despotic mode of government under the corrupt forms of rule. In this sense, Kant maintained continuity with the tradition. At the same time, however, he broke this continuity in a dual sense: through his rejection of the category of happiness as the goal of the state on the one hand and his classification of both ‘despotism’ and its counter-concept of ‘republicanism’ under the heading of ‘progress’ on the other. Kant assumed the perfectibility of human life as a hypothetical principle of all history. ‘Despotism’ hereby becomes a concept of the past, one heading towards ‘republicanism’ as a concept of the future.<sup>63</sup> Even if republicanism is ‘the only constitution that is perfectly suited to the law of the human being’, even if its realisation is the goal of world history, Kant nonetheless seals off the path of political change through active resistance by the people – a path that such Western countries as ‘Switzerland, the United Netherlands ... Great Britain’ had taken. For him, the command to ‘obey the authority that exercises power over you’ is a categorical imperative – that is, it is a practical rule that obtains unconditionally, no matter whether the authority rules justly or despotically. Like the Lutheran political theory of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, Kant restricts the validity of this imperative solely to the condition that the commands of the regime ‘do not contravene the internal moral one’. If the state were to abolish the freedom of belief or of science, for example, if it were to attempt to practise a ‘compulsion to unnatural sins, [for example to] treacherous murder’, then one would be permitted to ‘refuse to obey and let everything pass over him’.<sup>64</sup>

Various reasons were decisive for Kant’s rejection of a right of resistance. Of particular weight among them was his intention to provide an answer, through an ‘experiment of pure reason’, to a question ‘that many find difficult to answer’. Resistance is not admissible ‘because it would occur in accordance with a maxim which, if universalised, would destroy all liberal constitutions and would eradicate the sole state in which people could possess rights at all’.<sup>65</sup>

In the first half of the nineteenth century, Tocqueville was the main continental European thinker who reckoned, not with the foreseeable end of political tyranny and despotism, but with its return. His concerns applied even more to the signals of new kinds of perils for the democratic constitutional state – perils that had no historical precedents.

Whether separately or together, both a ‘matérialisme honnête’ and an ‘esprit particulier de l’armée’ would favour the rise of tyranny and despotism in democratic constitutional states. Through the neglect of citizenly obligations and rise of a marked preference for peace and order, a nation may already have internally cleared the path for those prepared to exploit ‘un passage très périlleux dans la vie des peuples démocratiques’.<sup>66</sup> Alternatively, a ‘tyrannie militaire’ might arise: conditioned by war, at first, such a tyranny would be promoted by a centralisation of steering authorities in the hands of the civil government as well as by ‘l’amour excessif de tous les citoyens pour la tranquillité’.<sup>67</sup>

For the United States, at least, Tocqueville foresaw little possibility of a return to political tyranny or despotism. The highly developed ‘esprit d’association’ vouchsafes the founding and maintenance of political associations, which serve as ‘grandes écoles gratuites’ of the perception of political duties and formation of political qualities. At the same time, religion in the United States is said to arouse a sense of the ‘jouissances immatérielles’ and the ‘perfectionnement de l’âme’.<sup>68</sup> The ‘esprit général de la nation’, then, is capable of moderating the corporate spirit of the army through an ‘omnipotence of public opinion’.<sup>69</sup>

As for the dangers to which democratically ruled peoples are exposed, Tocqueville saw signs of new kind of danger that had no historical comparison. Casting about for suitable words to describe his ideas (*idées*), Tocqueville used the traditional, negative constitutional concepts with an awareness of their inadequacy:

je cherche en vain moi-même une expression qui reproduise exactement l’idée que je m’en forme et la renferme; les anciens mots de despotisme et de tyrannie ne conviennent point. La chose est nouvelle, il faut donc tâcher de la définir, puisque je ne peux la nommer.<sup>70</sup>

Despite his reservations, Tocqueville still defined the new types of oppression occurring in the context of a democratic constitution with the help of the ancient words. These are applied synonymously and are not distinguished from one another. Regarding the establishment of democracy as unstoppable, Tocqueville would wish to steer this development onto the tracks of freedom and thereby to render the ‘grande révolution démocratique’<sup>71</sup> politically fruitful. He sees three possible sources of danger to a modern democracy: (1) that of an omnipotent administrative centralism formed through dissolution of corporate ties and independent local powers without replacement of them; (2) that of a pressure towards social conformity

of the majority over minorities; and (3) that of a combination of administrative despotism and the sovereignty of the people to form a system of guardianship with comprehensive planning authority at its disposal. This system would seek to establish an ‘égalité des conditions’.

In the United States, federal order and communal self-administrative rights serve as counterbalances capable of successfully holding the *despotisme administratif* within bounds. The social ‘tyranny of the majority’, by contrast, is said to be more unbearable than the political despotism of an individual in Europa ever was:

Les princes avaient pour ainsi dire matérialisé la violence; les républiques démocratiques de nos jours l’ont rendue tout aussi intellectuelle que la volonté humaine qu’elle veut contraindre. Sous le gouvernement absolu d’un seul, le despotisme, pour arriver à l’âme, frappait grossièrement le corps; et l’âme, échappant à ses coups, s’élevait glorieuse au-dessus de lui; mais dans les républiques démocratiques, ce n’est point ainsi que procède la tyrannie; elle laisse le corps et va droit à l’âme. Le maître n’y dit plus: Vous penserez comme moi, ou vous mourrez; il dit: Vous êtes libres de ne point penser ainsi que moi: votre vie, vos biens, tout vous reste; mais de ce jour vous êtes un étranger parmi nous. Vous garderez vos privilèges à la cité, mais ils vous deviendront inutiles: car si vous briguez le choix de vos concitoyens, ils ne vous l’accorderont point, et si vous ne demandez que leur estime, ils feindront encore de vous la refuser.

As for a guardianship system promoting the ‘égalité des conditions’ in the context of a democratic constitutional order, Tocqueville characterises it as a new kind of despotism in the sense of a negative utopia.

Je veux imaginer sous quels traits nouveaux le despotisme pourrait se produire dans le monde: je vois une foule innombrable d’hommes semblables et égaux ... Au-dessus de ceux-la s’élève un pouvoir immense et tutélaire, qui se charge seul d’assurer leur jouissance et de veiller sur leur sort. Il est absolu, détaillé, régulier, prévoyant et doux. Il ressemblerait à la puissance paternelle si, comme elle, il avait pour objet de préparer les hommes à l’âge viril; mais il ne cherche, au contraire, qu’à les fixer irrévocablement dans l’enfance.<sup>72</sup>

### ***Revaluation and loss of meaning of the theories of tyranny and despotism***

During the second half of the nineteenth century, the concepts of tyranny and despotism largely lost their negative character in Western Europe. Other terms – ‘absolutism’, ‘Bonapartism’, ‘Caesarism’ and ‘dictatorship’<sup>73</sup> – came to replace the older ones. One reference was retained, however: the

description of a transitional rule as a quick and efficient solution to national or social problems. Following the foundation of the Reich in Germany, the positivism that would soon dominate the legal and social sciences was just establishing itself. This positivism sanctioned the loss of meaning of tyranny and despotism. Tyranny, for example, became a purely historical description; it was now predominantly applied as a descriptive category restricted to the Graeco-Roman period.

The meaning of the terms was further drained by Marx and Engels, who used them as catch-all words. The young Marx, for example, used 'despotism' and 'tyranny' as synonyms for 'monarchy'.

The sole idea of despotism is contempt for the human being, the dehumanised human being . . . The despot always sees human beings in a devalued sense. For him, they drown before his eyes in the muck of the communal life from which they, like the frogs, repeatedly issue . . . The monarchic principle in general is that of reviled, contemptible, dehumanised human being; and Montesquieu was very much in error to have bestowed it with honours. He props himself on the distinction of monarchy, despotism and tyranny. But these are only the names of a single concept, at most, a difference in customs with regard to the same principle. Wherever the monarchical principle is in the majority, human beings are in the minority; wherever it is not doubted, there are no human beings.<sup>74</sup>

In systematic and historical terms, the Marxian understanding of history regards political despotism as a question of the past and the present, but not of the foreseeable future. If 'the history of all past societies . . . is the history of class struggles',<sup>75</sup> then there must be both a definitive beginning and a definitive end to political despotism. For Marx, this view is not restricted solely to European politics. To the extent that he regards Europe as a geographical centre of the progress of humanity, he – like other publicists of the second half of the century – grants a right to rule of 'European despotism' compared to the stagnating 'Oriental despotism' of the 'barbarian nations'. This rule was to aim to modernise both the mode of production and the predominantly 'passive' 'way of life' that characterised the Orient; in this way, humanity would be brought 'closer to its destiny'.<sup>76</sup> Marx did not ignore the peculiar danger of the European 'esprit de conquête' of which Benjamin Constant had warned – that of sacrificing 'les êtres réels' to an 'être abstrait'. In his view, however, the supreme goal of the progress of humanity demanded sacrifices of this kind.<sup>77</sup>

Once political despotism has ended and the mode of production been modernised, certainly, despotism is still predicted to prevail economically in both Europe and Asia. Marx and Engels do not expect despotism to end in the foreseeable future. In the *Kommunistischen Manifest*, 'despotism' undergoes a re-economisation that is maintained in their later writings:



Modern industry has transformed the small workshop of the patriarchal master into the great factory of the industrial capitalists. Masses of workers ... are organised in a soldier-like fashion ... They are not only serfs of the bourgeois classes, of the bourgeois state, they are oppressed by the day and hour by the machine, the supervisor and, above all, by the individual manufacturing bourgeois himself. This despotism is all the more petty, spiteful and embittered the more openly it proclaims acquisition as its ultimate goal.<sup>78</sup>

In *Das Kapital* (1867), the ‘unconditional authority of the capitalist over those human beings that constitute mere parts of a total mechanism that belongs to him’, is described as ‘despotic in terms of form’.<sup>79</sup> The specifically normative dimension of ‘despotism’ as a negative constitutional concept retreats completely here in favour of an emphasis upon the functional imperative of every kind of labour-distributing production: ‘With the development of cooperation on a larger scale, this despotism develops its characteristic forms ... Like a military army, a mass of workers needs industrial higher officers ... and lower officers working together at the command of the same capital’.<sup>80</sup> A few years later, Engels both paraphrases and intensifies this argumentation with his thesis of the practical constraints of industrial society. Quite independently of the development of legal possession of the means of production, such practical constraints lead to despotism:

The mechanical automation of a large factory is many times more tyrannical than the small capitalists who employed workers ever were ... When the human being, aided by science and the genius of invention, has subdued the forces of nature to himself, these take their revenge on him by subjecting him, in the same measure that he has enlisted them, to a true despotism independent of all social organisation.<sup>81</sup>

If Marx and Engels follow the old ‘household’ (economic) concept of despotism here, then Marx’s formula of the ‘dictatorship of the proletariat’ also recurs to an ancient Roman political concept<sup>82</sup> that had gained new meaning after 1848. Rousseau had already recently introduced the word ‘dictatorship’ into the political theoretical debate.<sup>83</sup> During the French Revolution, a ‘plebiscitary dictatorship’ had been demanded by Marat and others<sup>84</sup> (Robespierre and, later, Napoleon I avoided the concept because it was too easily associated with tyranny!). In a letter of 5 March 1852 to Joseph Weydemeyer, editor of the New York monthly journal, *The Revolution*, Marx speaks for the first time of a ‘dictatorship of the proletariat’ to which the class struggle will necessarily lead. This dictatorship is nothing other than a transition to the abolition of all classes and a classless society.<sup>85</sup> In Marx’s use of it, the concept of ‘dictatorship’ not only lost its ancient Roman legal restrictions; it also now referred to a collectivity rather than an

individual. These differences marked a substantial expansion and redefinition of the concept. Marx's concept was even more problematic in practical terms: entailing a rejection – one Marx never revoked – of the declarations of human rights of the American and French revolutions, it simultaneously rejected the principle of the separation of powers as the product of bourgeois ideology.<sup>86</sup>

German national liberalism only reinforced the marginalisation of despotism and tyranny as negative constitutional concepts by Marxian thought. Here, the question of national unification was set above all other internal political problems. Characteristic for this position is the following statement made by David Friedrich Strauss in 1852: 'compared to this question of unity, I regard varying degrees of despotism and constitutionalism, junkerdom or democracy within the individual German provinces to be very indifferent matters'.<sup>87</sup> Strauss' clearly recognisable resignation concerning the constitutional question was mirrored by an extensive rejection of 'despotism' and 'tyranny' in the analysis of internal politics. These terms were now used only as descriptive categories for past or extra-European political systems. In the lexicons, a tendency to replace the concept of 'despotism' with that of 'absolutism' emerged. Implying a positive political reevaluation of unrestricted monarchy, the substitution at very least distinguished the 'monarchic principle' from the traditional Western concept of despotism.<sup>88</sup>

It was Heinrich von Treitschke who dissolved the link connecting ideas of national unity to those of liberal-democratic freedom – a Western liberal connection that was still understood as essential during the period that preceded the German revolution of 1848. Elevating the national state itself to the rank of a moral idea, he regarded all means that appeared suited to accelerating the attainment of this goal as just: 'The path that leads the most quickly to this national unification is my favourite one, even if it were despotism.'<sup>89</sup> Soon after, Treitschke not only strengthened his plea but expressed his admiration for the practical statesman, Machiavelli:

he sacrifices justice and virtue to a great idea, the power and unity of his people ... this basic idea ... that even the most oppressive despotism must be welcome if it preserves the power and unity of the Fatherland ... is what has reconciled me to the many reprehensible and offensive opinions of the great Florentine.<sup>90</sup>

A few years later, Treitschke confesses that the political unity of Germany might demand some victims. '[A] few hundred thousand lives' would offset it, though; compared to the goal of such unity, he regarded his own life as 'not worth a penny'.<sup>91</sup> In his Berlin Lectures on 'Politics' that began after 1871, Treitschke intensified his approval of despotism and tyranny into an amoral aestheticisation of power. This allowed him to admire in tyrants – in

‘democratic tyrants’ on the model of Napoleon I and III especially – the ‘sovereign personality, a feeling of power that sets limits for itself alone’.

It is so instructive to reflect upon this state form [i.e. tyranny] because the power of the personality emerges most decisively here. Such a ruler has risen up solely through his genius and his good sword, through luck and money, and is entirely self-sufficient. In him becomes manifest a sense of affinity with the great artist, who is equally a sovereign.<sup>92</sup>

Tyrannical rule represents a ‘transition, a necessary stage of historical development’.<sup>93</sup> Contra Hegel, Treitschke maintained that some severely unjust acts cannot be harmonised with a postulated reason of world history and be proclaimed as historical necessity according to a dialectical perspective.<sup>94</sup> All the same, he was incapable of withdrawing himself from the influence of Hegel’s conceptual and theoretical world, one that absorbed political ethics (or the classical and modern rights of nature) into the categories of necessity, development and the dialectic process.<sup>95</sup>

As he emphasised at the beginning of his lectures, Treitschke intended the lectures as a continuation of the old European tradition of political science in the Aristotelian school.<sup>96</sup> Such continuation existed solely in the form of an acknowledgement, however. The *Politik* lectures demonstrate this clearly. The chapter on tyranny, for example, states that the concept of the tyrant ‘gradually attained its contemporary [negative] sense’ only after Machiavelli’s era. The negative gloss arose from the civil-war like conditions that prevailed in the Italian city-states of the fifteenth century. What could indicate more clearly the marginalisation of the classical vocabulary that had occurred during the second half of the nineteenth century and had already progressed far in German political thought? Certainly, there was no lack of resistance to this process of marginalisation, particularly to the positive revaluation in terms of real politik:

it [despotism] can be necessary and useful, but only under the assumption of an ingrained, passive and unfree people. Yet it can also mark the mere denaturing of the monarchy into an arbitrary rule. The Asian and African despotisms are often constitutions of the first type, the European always of the latter . . . . It is therefore quite rightly hated by the civilised peoples . . . . It would be more bearable if it were to have the prospect of serving the education of the peoples and to lead to a higher level of development. But this hope contradicts the basic character of despotism. Nor can it be supported by historical experiences.<sup>97</sup>

The protest against the positivisation of despotism and tyranny in terms of realpolitik remained unsuccessful. In addition, it was expressly restricted to the European peoples. To their members was conceded the right to a ‘certain measure of despotism’ exercised upon the ‘people of lower races’.<sup>98</sup>

By the end of the nineteenth century, the marginalisation of the classical vocabulary had progressed far – in the German linguistic sphere, in any case. The causes for this were heterogeneous. So much is certain, at least: where the value-relativist political theory and social science of the new twentieth century did not introduce this state of affairs, they merely sanctioned it theoretically.

## Constancy and marginalisation of the classical vocabulary

### *Political theory at the beginning of the twentieth century*

We begin with England. *Law of the Constitution* and *Report on Indian and Constitutional Reforms*, two works by Albert Venn Dicey (1835–1922), were part of the canon of political philosophy for the Oxford course of study entitled ‘Philosophy, Politics, Economics’.<sup>99</sup> Having first appeared in 1885, Dicey’s *Introduction to the Study of the Law of the Constitution* has since attained numerous editions (8th edn 1913; reprint 1926; latest printing 1996). The predominant negative constitutional concept here is despotism, which is characterised by ‘an absence of arbitrary power on the part of the Crown, the executive, and every other authority in England’. In the constitution of a representative democracy, the ‘rule of law’ – ‘which appears to be an essential characteristic of a civilised and progressive state’ – is the political opposite of ‘despotism’.<sup>100</sup> The decisive goal is freedom in the sense of both ‘negative’ and ‘positive’ freedom (right to personal freedom; right to freedom of discussion and right to public meeting). In a structural respect, parliamentary sovereignty is emphasised in conjunction with ministerial responsibility.

Referring to the Europe of the twentieth century, Dicey affirms: ‘in the most European countries, the rule of law is now nearly as well established as in England’. Compared with the eighteenth century, this signifies progress in European constitutional development. In the past, not all ‘civilised societies’ were identical with the ‘rule of law’, as is assumed in England. The French *ancien régime* is generally held to be the typical ‘representative of despotism’, even though ‘all the evils of despotism’ existed in much stronger measure in Spain, in the Italian city-states and the German princedoms without having roused the attention of the European public realm. This realm is said to have overlooked the ‘lawlessness of petty tyrants’. References to classics of political thought are numerous (Hume, Adam Smith, Burke, Bentham, Voltaire, De Lome, Tocqueville, J. S. Mill, Bagehot, Gneist), as are the references to representatives of contemporary political thought (among them J. Bryce, L. Duguit and M. Hauriou). Certainly, Dicey’s reflections on the rule of law and despotism blended away those developments within nineteenth-century political thought that had anti-liberal and totalitarian implications.

The classical vocabulary also predominates in the work of the influential and internationally recognised French professor of political theory, León

Duguit (1859–1929). This observation obtains for his first work, *L'état, le droit objectif et la loi positive* (1900), as well as for the *Traité de droit constitutionnel* – a work that was printed in several editions and was newly revised or supplemented.<sup>101</sup>

‘L'État est le produit historique d'une différenciation sociale entre les forts et les faibles dans une société donnée’. The goal of the state is to promulgate the law, not – as is often claimed – to assert the *volonté générale*, for which the governing organs are to be impersonal, dispassionate. This notion is said to be a useful fiction through which the will that ‘in truth [issues] from individuals with political power’ is endured as ‘power or tyranny’.<sup>102</sup>

In his *Traité*, Duguit invokes Aristotle in order to distinguish illegitimate from legitimate rule.

Il suffit de citer la Politique d'Aristote . . . , que les écrivains modernes n'ont pas dépassés. C'est la mission de l'art politique . . . d'adapter les formes et les procédés du gouvernement aux croyances religieuses et morales, aux besoins économiques du pays et de faire en sorte que les sujets soient profondément convaincus que les gouvernants gouvernent dans l'intérêt de tous et non pas dans leur intérêt personnel.

A tyrant is the type of ruler that governs in his own interest: ‘la définition est toujours vraie’.<sup>103</sup>

Duguit analyses the right of resistance in detail. Referring to Thomas Aquinas, John of Salisbury and the Spanish natural law theorist, Gerson, to John Locke and Benjamin Constant, he throws up the question: ‘Comment la question se pose-t-elle aujourd'hui?’ He rejects tyrannicide. Nonetheless, resistance is legitimate: ‘la résistance passive, la résistance défensive et la résistance agressive’.<sup>104</sup> The category of despotism is not lacking in Duguit's work. It becomes thematic in §47, where he considers monarchical governments. Here, Montesquieu is accepted as the authoritative classic Duguit introduces in order to describe commonalities and differences between ‘monarchie despotique, absolue ou limitée’. ‘Dans la despotie, le chef commande sans être lié par aucune règle générale’. Here too, it is emphasised, every government can be despotic – ‘un gouvernement républicain comme un gouvernement monarchique’. In the third edition of the book, this passage was updated and supplemented as follows: ‘Le gouvernement soviétique nous offre exemple parfait de république despotique’.

Duguit's underestimation of the Soviet system does not arise from limits inherent to the classical vocabulary. Rather, the author is no longer familiar with the multi-layered character of Montesquieu's concept of despotism. He abbreviates that concept to mean a rule without law and in accordance with one's own will and caprice. Nothing is mentioned about fear as the guiding principle of despotism. The character of despotic regimes that contravene the European traditions and are geographically located in the large Asian empires also goes unmentioned.<sup>105</sup>

In *Principes de droit publique* (1910), Duguit's personal friend and scholarly opponent,<sup>106</sup> Maurice Hauriou, systematically investigates 'la pathologie de l'État'. As a justification, Hauriou submits that it is unrealistic to analyse the state 'uniquement dans son état de santé et dans son développement normal'. A 'régime constitutionnel' seeks to realise the freedom of citizens by protecting their political freedom: 'son idéal propre est la liberté'. Pathological developments are called forth in part by an 'esprit révolutionnaire' and in part by its opposite, by an 'esprit réactionnaire'. In the first case, passion for equality is the cause: '[elle] prend pour objectif principal les réformes égalitaires continuelles'. The 'esprit réactionnaire' militates against this: 'À droite et prend pour objectif principal l'autorité, la puissance organisatrice, la stabilité.'<sup>107</sup> The remedy (*remède profond*) is the education to freedom: 'il faut systématiquement enseigner la liberté ... Ce remède est, d'ailleurs, souverainement efficace'. To be sure, such a therapy is effective only at the first signs of the onset of pathological developments. In accordance with its nature, the remedy fails in cases of the outbreak of revolutions or coups as well as in situations of civil war. A dictatorship is required in order to put a stop to these. It is necessary, whether in the Roman sense of the 'dictature limitée prévue d'avance par la constitution', or a 'dictature de fait, sou la pression de la nécessité ... qui n'était point prévue par la constitution et qui n'est point non plus autorisée, sur le moment même, par l'ensemble des pouvoirs constitués'. As an historical example of this kind of dictatorship, Hauriou offers the English Long Parliament. For France he offers the Convent Hall rule that reigned with the help of terror. Hauriou makes no reference to the term with which the members of the convent themselves justified their regime, as a 'despotisme de la liberté contre les tyrans'. He criticises the 'dictature de fait' as 'inconstitutionnelle'.

By contrast to Duguit, Hauriou dispenses with the classical vocabulary. 'Tyranny' is historicised and applied only twice with regard to the Greek city-states.<sup>108</sup>

Whereas the most respected representatives of English and French political theory hand down the classical vocabulary, even if no longer in its original dimensions, the contemporary and scientific relevance of this vocabulary is called into question in German political theory. In Georg Jellinek's representative work, *Allgemeinen Staatslehre* (1900), tyranny and despotism are categories of marginal significance. Despotism is mentioned only in passing, as a

sub-type of monarchy that signifies either a disapproval of the ruler by the subjects (tyranny), or, if it corresponds to the conviction of the people as a normal form of government, a judgement according to the standard of the exercise of a different type of rule.

Seen in scientific terms, despotism is said to be a purely scholarly definition, one that corresponds perfectly to no actual state in the long term.<sup>109</sup>

Comparable to the ‘non-political Jellinek’,<sup>110</sup> Richard Schmidt – who was later co-founder of the *Zeitschrift für Politik* – analyses the typologies of the constitutional forms in his *Allgemeinen Staatslehre* (1901). The very title of the chapter called ‘The So-called State Forms’, renders the author’s own view clearly recognisable. Holding the attempt to develop a typology that extends back to Aristotle to be mistaken, Schmidt argues: ‘the continuation of the distinctions [becomes irrelevant] with the knowledge that there are no *normal forms* of types of government against which the denaturing of the latter could be measured’.<sup>111</sup> This claim is based upon a refusal to raise the question inquiring as to the goals or meaning of the state. According to this understanding, political theory is permitted to ask this question just as little ‘as natural science [can ask] as to a purpose of mountains, sea, plants and animals’. The state is ‘a life-community that grows together over the individual with natural necessity’. The historical development of states can be written as a history of constitutions that is entirely capable of being scientific. As opposed to this and in keeping with what was said previously,

the question asking which state form exists in a state, asking who the bearer of the supreme power – whether simple or composite – is, has been incorrectly posed. The principled question surrounding the problem of the state form is a different one: it asks, namely, whether an absolute or a constitutionally restricted regime exists.

Compared to this primary question, the one inquiring as to the form of a regime is said to be secondary. At the same time, the latter has been ‘far less intrusive for the entire developmental path of state life’ than one that distinguishes between the absolute and the constitutional states.

Even before the turn of the nineteenth century, one Italian thinker rejected the Aristotelian constitutional typology – its universal acceptance (‘oggi ancora universalmente accettata’) notwithstanding. Gaetano Mosca, who taught constitutional law and the history of political ideas at the Bocconi University in Milan beginning in 1902, criticised Aristotle’s ‘classificazione dei governi’ in the first section of *Teorica dei governi e governo parlamentare* (1884). Here, Mosca argued that Aristotle’s classification is unsuited to describing political systems: ‘ispirata assolutamente a criteri superficiali’. That all state forms are based upon the rule of one political class is said to be the decisive thing.<sup>112</sup> Following Aristotle, the ancient city-states might be described as a mixed constitution: ‘Questa forma di governo, seguendo la classificazione aristotelica potrebbe passare per una forma mista di monarchia, aristocrazia e democrazia . . . Eppure, studiando un po’ da vicino la città antica, si vedrà come questa apparenza sia quasi del tutto falsa’. Here, as in other ancient (or modern) states, a realistic analysis that refrains from making normative valuations reveals that ‘l’organizzazione politica dello Stato antico aveva per carattere principalissimo, e quasi esclusivo, la padronanza assoluta della classe politica sulle altre classe sociali, e la più

perfetta, netta ed assoluta, che difficilmente si riscontra l'uguale presso altri populi di diversa civiltà'.<sup>113</sup>

Despite his earlier rejection of Aristotle's categories, the negative constitutional concept of tyranny is by no means completely foreign to Mosca. Twenty years before Lenin's seizure of power, he asks whether

with the realisation of the communist . . . system, justice, truth, love and reciprocal toleration among men will occupy a greater place in the world than they now occupy? Will the weak, who will always be at the bottom, be less burdened? We now answer this question emphatically with the word, 'no'.

Without attempting to defend the moral advantages of capitalism compared to those of state socialism as forecast by Marx, Mosca expects of the realisation of state socialism '[o]ne single crushing, all-embracing tyranny [which] will weigh upon all'.<sup>114</sup>

### *Developments after 1917*

For numerous representatives of positivist political theory, the political developments in Russia and Italy provided no reason to reassess the methodological commitments that had been made in different times. In *Hauptprobleme der Staatsrechtslehre* (1911), the head of the Vienna school, Hans Kelsen, had already committed himself to a systematic distinction between facts and values, is and ought, and to a refusal to incorporate natural law arguments and postulates as the *conditio sine qua non* of a scientific political theory. In his *Allgemeine Staatslehre* (1925), Kelsen held firmly to the position he had assumed. This led directly to criticism of the category of despotism. Denying any difference between 'absolute and unrestricted monarchy' and 'despotism' in their quality as 'constitutional states', Kelsen rejected as completely meaningless the claim that despotism is governed by the whim of a despot rather than a legal order.

The despotically governed state, after all, also represents some kind of order of human conduct . . . . And precisely this order is the legal order. To deny it the character of law is only naiveté or arrogance based on natural law . . . . What is interpreted as arbitrariness is merely the legal possibility of the autocrat to seize every decision for himself, to determine the activity of subordinate organs unrestrictedly and at any time . . . , to abolish or alter norms that were once legislated . . . . Such a state is a legal state, even if it is perceived as disadvantageous.<sup>115</sup>

With this statement, Kelsen did not intend to issue a general attestation to the practitioners of modern despotisms that opposition or resistance would be unjustified. Past constitutional debates had never involved declaring a



particular order of human conduct as good either. The social democrat, Kelsen, had by no means done this either. In 1923, even before the appearance of his *Allgemeine Staatslehre*, he criticised the rise of an arbitrary dictatorial rule in Soviet Russia by invoking Karl Kautsky. He agreed with the objective judgement of Kautsky, '[who is] not an opponent of socialism, but of one of its greatest leaders'.<sup>116</sup>

In the tradition of Kautsky's social democratic anti-Bolshevism and in face of the calls for a dictatorship that were multiplying from the right, Kelsen pleaded resolutely for a defence of democracy. (Although he did not return to Kautsky's call to defend democracy 'with tooth and nail'.)

[T]he ideal of democracy fades and a new star rises on the dark horizon of our times. It is one to which the hope of the masses turns all the more faithfully the bloodier its brilliance shines above them: dictatorship . . . In the circles of political theory and sociology, it is now almost considered a truism to speak of democracy using only contemptuous words. It is regarded as modern to welcome dictatorship – whether directly or indirectly – as the dawning of a new era.

By contrast with Kautsky's resolve to defend democracy actively, Kelsen proved to be an inadequate – and also, ultimately, an apolitical – opponent of the dictatorships he had already long rejected. Democracy is said to be

the one state form that defends itself against its opponents the least . . . If it remains true to itself, then it must also tolerate a movement that seeks the destruction of democracy. Should a democracy defend itself even against a people that no longer wants it . . .? To pose this question is already to answer it in the negative.

What remained for Kelsen was an attitude of political forbearance and a call not to flinch in loyalty to democracy:

there is also loyalty to the idea, which is independent of the chance of realising this idea. One must . . . remain true to it, even if the ship is sinking; and [one] can only bring along into the deep the hope that the ideal of freedom is indestructible and that, the deeper it has sunk, the more passionately will it return to life.<sup>117</sup>

In his major work, *Verfassung und Verfassungsrecht* (1928), Rudolf Smend takes aim at the non-political Kelsen.<sup>118</sup> The methodological precept Kelsen champions – one that pays no heed to politics, ethics or history in the construction of a political theory – is said to have led him to a 'dead end, without goal and purpose'. In 1923, Smend had already demanded that political theory must have 'the essential phenomenal forms of modern political life as its object'. He regarded the development of a contemporary

'comparative theory of state forms' to be the *conditio sine qua non* of an escape from the 'dead end' of legal positivism. 'The problem of the state form is not merely the most difficult, but also the crowning and final question of political theory – of constitutional theory in particular'.<sup>119</sup>

In 'the contemporary world', 'the traditional classification of state forms, especially the ancient classification and its successor' cannot be applied. Smend justifies this position by pointing out the static 'value-content of the ancient state, which perceived itself as a-historical'. This is why the form of the ancient state, 'did not [have] continually to reintegrate the community that was bound by this content, but had merely to represent this content'. A 'classification [of a state] into the constitutional types' that would begin to do justice to the contemporary world would depend upon the peculiar character of the factors of integration. These are seen to 'deliver the true foundation for the classification of the state forms'.<sup>120</sup>

Smend distinguishes integration via a personality (through a legitimate monarch or charismatic 'leader', for example) from integration via a function (procedure or election) or the state symbolism of founding myths.

Smend does not replace the general historicisation of the classical vocabulary with a new typology that conceptualises modern despotic regimes precisely. The latter are never mentioned. He leaves the question as to whether and what has occurred in the contemporary world entirely open. As a result, the classical vocabulary is once again marginalised. The poles of 'static and dynamic dialectic' do not admit a justified distinction of negative and positive constitutional concepts on their own terms. Or, they do not admit such distinction, at least, as long as a dynamic dialectic describes that '[integration] process of the confrontation of oppositions' in which the 'factual result of the general direction and essential type of the state [is] attained ever anew via the struggles of public opinion and elections, via parliamentary deliberation and votes'. This same dynamic process is what comprises the peculiarity and 'decided contrast' of the parliamentary mode of governing

from all other state forms: to this extent, parliamentarianism is a state form in and of itself. All remaining state forms are distinct from parliamentarianism by virtue of the fact that, in them, the decisive factor of integration is of an essentially static nature.

A state form that was still valued in 1923 is written off in political terms in 1928: 'liberal political theory is not a political theory because it moves on ethicising, technicising and other wayward paths. The liberal state form – parliamentarianism, that is – is not a state form because no state can be founded upon functional integration alone'.<sup>121</sup> Without any doubt, Smend did not succeed in attaining a position alternative to that of the 'non-political Kelsen', one that was adequate to addressing the pressing political problems of the time. The fact that he saw it to be necessary to clarify, in an article

entitled 'Integration', that his political theory presented a 'strictly democratic theory' makes it clear that he felt himself to have been misunderstood by such contemporaries as Gustav Radbruch.<sup>122</sup>

Carl Schmitt's *Verfassungslehre* appeared in 1928. Adherence to the constitutional typology of Aristotle or Montesquieu – to say nothing of the entire tradition that followed them – was not to be expected from the beginning. In a 1921 study entitled 'Die Dictator', Schmitt had already attempted to provide a theoretical justification for a type of dictatorship that ran counter to the Roman understanding of this category. This new type – 'the sovereign dictatorship' – corresponded best to Lenin's theory and practice. It applied not to the maintenance of the republic, but to the creation of a new political order. Understanding his 'sovereign dictatorship' as an analogue to the 'commissariat dictatorship', Schmitt argues that the 'commissariat dictator is the unrestricted action-commissar of a *pouvoir constitué*; the sovereign dictatorship is the unrestricted action-commission of a *pouvoir constituant*'.<sup>123</sup>

Schmitt's attempt to regard the sovereign dictatorship as an institution analogous to dictatorship in the Roman sense is questionable. His justification of the sovereign dictatorship is based on the premise that all law emanates from the will of the people or the nation:

the people, the nation, the primordial power of all states, constitute organs ever anew. From the infinite, incomprehensible abyss of its power, ever-new forms arise, forms that can break through this power at any time and in which its power is never definitively delimited. It can will whatever it likes; the content of its willing always has the same legal value as the content of a constitutional definition. This is why it can interfere however it likes using the means of legislation, of the administration of justice or merely actual acts.

The justifiability of a dictatorship in the Roman sense during a national crisis has always seemed plausible to even the most resolute defender of the ideal of the constitutional state. The supposedly analogous institution of the sovereign dictatorship, by contrast, subsumes to the category of right something that lies, according to its nature, outside and beyond it. As is entirely obvious, the argumentation is not free of an – intended? – obscurity concerning the concept of law (*Recht*), which can signify both right and law.<sup>124</sup>

Schmitt's conception of the sovereign dictatorship indirectly suspends the negative constitutional concept. This it does without providing clearly recognisable political options at first. Its foundations are Schmitt's decisive aversions both to liberalism and to its younger 'brother', which Schmitt believes to be able to recognise in Bolshevism. Both are considered to embody modern rationalism and materialism.<sup>125</sup>

Just as dictatorship is not a *negative* constitutional concept in Carl Schmitt's political thought, it is not the decided opposite of democracy

either. Presupposing both an identity and authoritativeness of the will of the people, a sovereign dictatorship does 'not theoretically annul the suspension of democracy in the name of the true democracy, the one that has yet to be created'.<sup>126</sup>

Without taking account of the developments in Italy, the Soviet Union and other Western democracies and having no clear goal for the foreseeable future, the soft are placed in favour of dictatorship to the extent that this type offers a political option that can be enlisted 'in the name of true ... democracy', should the situation arise.

In the *Verfassungslehre*, the theory of the state forms is restricted to the unavoidable: democracy, monarchy and aristocratic elements in modern constitutional democracies that are characterised by the rule of law are treated in the third section of the work. All discussion of illegitimate rule and its phenomenal forms is omitted. This is logically consistent to the extent that Schmitt expressly argues that there is no difference between the 'government of an ordered community' and the 'power of a pirate; [they are] not to be captured with ideas of justice, social utility and other norms, because all such norms can also hold for the pirates'. The indisputable difference is said to lie with the fact that 'each genuine regime represents the political unity of a people – not the people in its natural state'.<sup>127</sup>

In his treatment of legality and legitimacy concluded in July 1932, what had long been established is now clearly stated:

the traditional tripartite division of monarchy, aristocracy and democracy with its modifications shall not be applied here. This is not because the Aristotelian theory is held to be non-modern or antiquated. The same would hold for other distinctions that have arisen in past situations, for example ... rule of law and dictatorship, etc. They are not very productive for our knowledge of the contemporary state.

On the contrary, such distinctions are better suited to obscuring and confusing such knowledge. The present situation would be better understood in terms of the conceptual pair of legitimacy and legality. Schmitt stresses the legitimacy of a homogeneous order of a plebiscitary-democratic type in an abrupt contrast to the legality he attributes to the parliament. His intention is thereby to replace the traditional central concepts of political justice and injustice.

Hierarchisation of the 'pair of conceptual opposites' was perfectly suited to perform 'useful services to those who came later, [to act] as a battering ram against Western democracy in general and the Weimar system in particular'.<sup>128</sup> This function could also be performed because Schmitt's idea of legitimacy was formal and empty of content; it marked the expression of German nihilism and of a merely formal legality that is supposedly indifferent to 'value and truth'. Contrary to Schmitt's claim, however, the conceptual pair of legitimacy and legality cannot supplant the opposition of the

rule of law and dictatorship. Nor can it supplant as other ‘distinctions that arose in past situations’.<sup>129</sup>

Before Alfred Cobban did so, a German, Hermann Heller, countered Carl Schmitt’s rejection of the ‘complex of normative demands for a legitimate political order’ that is based in Western political culture and should be ‘recognised as a critical reference’.<sup>130</sup> Regardless of his critique of natural right theory, this normative sphere of reference remained binding for Heller. In his posthumously published *Staatslehre*, Heller paraphrases Augustine: ‘without ascertaining the purposive function of a specific state power, this power cannot be distinguished from a band of robbers, or a coal cartel, or a bowling club’. As descriptive concepts for political systems, the state governed by the rule of law and the dictatorship as its opposite are fundamentally relevant at present. In a chapter entitled ‘Die Staatsformen’ – foreseen as part of part III, ‘Wesen und Aufbau des Staates’ – Heller was no longer able systematically to develop the reflections on this topic that had been published in other writings. It should be assumed, however, that the Aristotelian constitutional typology would have been considered here. This can be proved through his frequent recourse to the work and methods of Aristotle as the founder of ‘politicology’.<sup>131</sup>

Heller first distinguished totalitarianism from authoritarian dictatorship: a differentiation that the constitutional changes that had occurred in Russia and Italy demanded. Whereas the former case involved a ‘state that envelops each movement of life’, the latter entailed a state that acknowledged the political and legal limits of its activities. The Italian case was one for which the maxim, ‘nothing outside the state, nothing against the state, everything for the state’, did not obtain. Although he still regarded ‘totalitarian’ as a self-description of the Fascists, Heller already indirectly expanded the concept of totalitarian dictatorship in 1929. Describing it as a concept for a new epoch, he argues: ‘disregarding some national and social differences, Fascism and Bolshevism are twin brothers of the same political spirit’.<sup>132</sup>

Although Heller approved of the ‘authoritarian state’ for ‘both socialist reasons and reasons of national politics’, this should not be confused with a necrology of parliamentarism or misinterpreted as an anti-parliamentary option. Heller took care to choose his words with thorough deliberation.<sup>133</sup> In his view, it was necessary to strengthen the government power in the context of the parliamentary system – just as it was necessary in the view of Friedrich Meinecke, who spoke out on behalf of a ‘trust dictatorship’ in the same year. In both cases, the plea for a strong democratic regime was bound up with an unambiguous rejection of such ‘illusory images’ of dictatorship for which the ‘firm foundation of law and the firm barriers of law’ were lacking.

A comparable debate over state forms did not occur in England, and this for illuminating reasons. James Bryce was ‘almost a household name’ in the Anglophone sphere. In 1921, he declared that the ‘old question as to the best possible state form has almost come out of practice’. Democracy is ‘the

only just kind of regime'.<sup>134</sup> Thus does one seldom find detailed discussions on the 'forms of the state', not least because Dicey's *Introduction to the Study of the Law of the Constitution* enjoyed canonical validity for almost a century.<sup>135</sup>

Wherever separate sections on the question of the state forms can be found, as with R. M. MacIver's *The Modern State* (1926), a complex typology is eschewed:

our object in this chapter is to classify and to characterise the various forms of state. We can ... distinguish two main types of state as follows: (a) dynastic states, i.e. states in which there is no general will co-extensive with the community embraced within the state, or in which the general will is merely acquiescent or subservient; (b) democratic states, in which the general will is inclusive of the community as a whole or of at least the greater portion of the community, and is the conscious, direct, and active support of the form of government.

Dynastic states are the negative pole in this dual typology. Greek 'commonwealths' are likewise subsumed to it, as are democracies in which a privileged class (ruling caste) rules over the totality: 'It is founded on force and its policies are inevitably exploitative'. Of the classical vocabulary, the terms 'oligarchy' and 'oligarchic' are used, but no other categories are applied. 'All dynasties are oligarchies'. European states of the very recent past – the German empire, Austria – are used as case examples of dynastic states just as much as the ancient Egyptian and Chinese dynasties (Ts'in, Han, Ming, Manchu) are. Oligarchies can assume the form of dictatorship. Here, the contemporary reference is established:

We should characterise the Soviet government of Russia as one of the type just mentioned. Nominally it is a 'dictatorship of the proletariat', which means in effect the dictatorship of a small group based on proletarian support. It is a unique form, being a class-limited oligarchy which ... limits citizenship not from above, in the socio-economic sense, but from below.<sup>136</sup>

### ***Reactions to Bolshevism and Fascism***

Scarcely no other event of the twentieth century presented such a lasting challenge to intellectual, political and economic elites as the power seizure of the Bolsheviks in October 1917. That this challenge polarised the European left at first is not surprising. This held above all for the German social democrats, who were divided at that time into the Majority Social Democratic Party, Minority Social Democratic Party. The politically strongest socialist party in Europe had supported the Russian Bolsheviks in manifold

ways from the beginning. This, certainly, did not occur without critique: following the division into Bolsheviks and Mensheviks that Lenin had forced in 1903, there remained reservations about it and corresponding efforts to undo it.

Concerning the future development of German internal politics, Karl Kautsky reacted against Lenin's dictatorship in several essays written from 1918 on. Kautsky's 'almost natural-rightist attitude towards democracy' and general elections (P. Lösche) originated no less than a quarter century before the October Revolution. Beginning with *Parlamentarismus und Demokratie* (1893), dictatorship is a clearly negative term for Kautsky. This attitude did not change after 1917. 'The Lenin dictatorship leads only to that kind of socialism that has been called Asiatic. Unjustly, for Asia has given rise to Confucius and a Buddha. One would do better to call it Tatarist socialism'.<sup>137</sup>

The adjective 'Tatarist' is intended to describe a specific modus operandi: namely, the complete (total) subjugation and unregulated violence that qualitatively goes beyond pre-Tatarist or non-Tatarist forms of dictatorship as a 'regime form tantamount to the deprivation of the rights of the opposition'. Comparison to the 'Jesuit state of Paraguay' helps to clarify its nature:

there, the Jesuits were a superior class; using dictatorial power, they organised the work of the Indian aboriginal population in a way that was in fact worthy of admiration – without applying [physical] force, they even gained the devotion of their subjects.

Kautsky supplements his discussion by referring to Lenin's 'messianic consciousness', a consciousness that is identical to the claim of the infallibility of his own will. Under the precondition of a complete deprivation of the rights of the opposition, this is said to require 'dictatorial habits'. Kautsky uses the traditional concept of despotism to describe the tsarist kingdom. It is fundamentally distinct from the dictatorship, which is understood as a temporary emergency measure, through its character as a class-based state institution.<sup>138</sup> For his part, Lenin rejects this distinction as 'manifestly false' without allowing himself to get mired in providing a justification. Evading such justification, he comments only that Kautsky's claim '[has] nothing at all to do with the question that interests us here'.<sup>139</sup>

For Kautsky, the quintessence of legitimate political rule is a democracy that protects both basic rights and party competition. He saw it to be necessary to defend it 'with tooth and nail' and to the utmost degree.<sup>140</sup>

Kautsky's critique of Lenin gained broad support, and this not solely within the ranks of the European social democrats but in a public that extended beyond these as well. Ernst Bloch was one of Kautsky's readers. After becoming a co-worker on a Bern emigration paper (*Die Freie Zeitung*) in the spring of 1918, he began to be interested in Russia. As a socialist, he declared himself repulsed by the total, 'Bolshevist social dictatorship' and

the 'new Genghis Khan [tricked out] with gestures of the people's liberator'. Four years later, however, Bloch's expectations had changed. With the help of a right to resort to violence of the good based on the 'spirit of utopia', 'empty Western human beings' were to be transported to a more profound level. Although a confession of faith in Bolshevism was not yet at hand here, an essential precondition for it was. With the victory of National Socialism, this confession of faith occurred. Just as his friend George Lukács had done before him, Bloch willingly succumbed to the political 'fallacy' (Bertrand Russell) and 'evil sophism' (F. Turati) that one must choose between Communism and Fascism.<sup>141</sup>

Following the dissolution of the *Konstituante* on 19 January 1918, the Second International met for the first time after the war in Bern in February 1919. Supported by the German, Scandinavian and Belgian social democrats, the British Labour Party and the exiled Russian socialists, a resolution that sought to condemn the methods of the Bolsheviks was introduced. The passage of this resolution was prevented by a majority of French delegates in alliance with the Austrian and Dutch socialists, however. Among other reasons, the thwarting of the resolution was also linked to the fact that the Bolsheviks' assumption of power had not yet been perceived as a revolution of a new type. At first, it was not even perceived as the secular caesura it appeared to be a decade later. In terms of the conceptualisation of Lenin's despotic rule, this delay was indicated by the continued use of the old negative constitutional concepts.<sup>142</sup> As an additional motive, the leading representatives of French socialism saw the developments in Russia to correspond to the history of the French Revolution of 1789. Although 1793 was also an episode in this history, it did not, for the most part, have the lasting effect of a political trauma.<sup>143</sup>

Although they had at one time been Lenin's loyal disciples, the Kronstädt sailors accused in him 1921 of a 'tyranny and suppression' that had lasted three years, 'surpassing, by far, the three-hundred year long despotism of tsarism'.<sup>144</sup>

One further factor affected the relative constancy of the classical vocabulary following Lenin's acquisition of power. Although tyrannophilia (D. Pikes) had not yet set in, the traditional tyrannophobia (Thomas Hobbes) had been partially set out of joint. This partial recession of tyrannophobia was based on the conviction that Marxian humanism was now being realised by the 'good Lenin' (H. Carrère d'Encausse). Later perversions were ascribed to Stalin. Boris Souvarine, co-founder of the French Communist Party and a protégé of Lenin during his youth, thought this way, as did Ignazio Silone. Silone, like Antonio Gramsci, had been one of the co-founders of the Italian Communist Party. Gramsci had first been a member of the Italian Socialist Party after 1913. Just as the outbreak of the Russian Revolution in February 1917 had shaped his political thought, so did Lenin's later acquisition of power arouse extraordinarily high expectations in him.



Gramsci's analysis of Fascism was at first heavily influenced by the category of tyranny. In keeping with the Marxist-Leninist theory of Fascism, it argued that a that phase of 'tirannia non meno liberticida di un fascismo di stato' would precede the 'fascismo mussolinaiano'. Later, Gramsci developed a distinction between the 'progressive' and 'objectively regressive' phases of totalitarian politics: 'Le dittature contemporanee aboliscono legalmente anche queste nuove forme di autonomia si sforzano di incorporare nell'attività statale: l'accentramento legale di tutta la vita nazionale nelle mani del grupo dominante diventa, "totalitario"'.<sup>145</sup>

Gramsci, who was heavily involved in the Bolshevisation of the PCI,<sup>146</sup> sacrificed his earlier ideals to engagement within the Party. This explains why the concept of a monolithic, single-party rule replaced his earlier goal of a workers' democracy in his *Prison Notebooks*. It also explains why the central idea of a 'proletarian enlightenment' that would prepare a democratic revolution from below would have to give way to the sketch of an 'explicitly "totalitarian" culture organised from above' (Theodore R. Bates).<sup>147</sup>

If it remained indisputable for Gramsci that the Soviet Union is a totalitarian system,<sup>148</sup> things looked entirely different to the English Fabian socialists, Sidney and Beatrice Webb. Initially, they had been firmly anti-Marxist: followers of 'industrial democracy' and the 'inevitability of gradualness'. The emergence of Fascist movements in Italy and Germany raised doubts about gradualism in the arch-reformist, Beatrice Webb, however. Having originally damned the Russian experiment as a monstrous product of anarchy, she later warmed to it during the desperate times of the Great Depression. Webb was converted by a trip to the Soviet Union in 1932. In full knowledge of the purges and persecution that were occurring, she declared these to be the birth pangs of a 'new civilisation' and disputed the claim that the Soviet system was a dictatorship.

In the case of Beatrice Webb, political opportunism can be excluded. Her 'voluntary blindness' was induced by a search – as she herself emphasised – for an ersatz religion and new secular certainties. As she understood it, the Soviet constitution possessed what was lacking in the Constitution for a Socialist Commonwealth that the Webbs had drafted in 1920: 'a soul which our paper constitution lacked . . . It is the invention of a religious order as a defining feature of a great nation – this is the magnet that attracts me to Russia'.<sup>149</sup> Harold Laski was also fascinated by the Soviet experiment, calling it 'the greatest event in history since the Reformation'. This member and éminence grise of the Labour Party's executive committee, who had also been a professor of political science at the London School of Economics since 1920, did not deny that the methods of the revolutionaries were 'tyrannical' and that a 'dictatorship' ruled in Moscow. 'No doubt its government was, in a rigorous sense, a dictatorship . . . No doubt again, its subjects paid a heavy price for the ultimate achievement to which they looked forward'. All the same, he maintained even in his late writings that

‘one [commits an] injustice ... if one calls into question the sincerity or idealism [of the revolutionaries]’. Communism was no less than a new religion. Laski compared the Bolsheviks both to the Jesuits and to the early Christians. Although fascination and scepticism remained in balance over several years, he too assumed the assessment of the Webbs after the end of the war: ‘the Soviet Union is the pioneer of a new civilisation’.<sup>150</sup>

Although Max Weber had an educated knowledge of the classical vocabulary, he mentioned it strictly in the context of the ‘ancient and medieval cities’ (and here, ‘essentially ... restricted to Italy’).<sup>151</sup> In his study, ‘Die drei reinen Typen legitimer Herrschaft’ (1920), ‘despotism’ is used only in quotation marks – a practice that only underscores the thorough historicisation of the classical vocabulary. This vocabulary cannot be integrated into Weber’s typology on its own premises: not only does Weber’s ‘radical value agnosticism’<sup>152</sup> leave no space for constitutional concepts, his ‘command model of rule’ (N. Luhmann) does not capture the form of political rule specifically.

Weber comes closer to the new phenomenon as a sociologist of religion than he does as a representative of contemporary political theory. He sees in the Bolsheviks a sect rooted in the Russian soil – one whose members have strong energies of faith and deed at their disposal. Career politicians who are not inspired by ersatz religion suffer from an infirmity of the will that manifests itself in a constant preference for the present over the future. By contrast to these, ‘sect members’ have the future in view and are resolved to do anything at any price.

Weber’s fascination with sect members predated Lenin’s seizure of power.<sup>153</sup> Its sudden waning in 1917 makes it clear that this fascination was at base no more than the flipside of his contempt for the leading politicians of German parties – of the social democrats in particular, to whom Weber had accredited a lack of will to gain and remain in power.

On the whole, it could hardly be said that Weber had more foresight than his contemporaries. This becomes particularly evident in his comparison of the Bolsheviks to the *parte Guelfa* of the thirteenth century: if one considers

the confiscation of the goods of the nobility ..., their exclusion from offices and the right to vote, the inter-local party committee, the strictly militaristic organisations and the bonuses given to informants, one is reminded of Bolshevism: its Soviets, its strictly selected military and ... spy organisations, its disarmament and deprivation of the political rights of the citizens (that is, of businessmen, merchants, senior citizens, clergy members, dynastic descendents, police agents) and its confiscations.<sup>154</sup>

The comparison trivialises the specifically Bolshevik difference from tsarist terror. We could hardly speak, therefore, of the ‘striking analogy’ that Weber claims.

Even if the ‘happy expression’ (K. Stählin) of a ‘military dictatorship for the corporals’ is incapable of capturing the reality of the Soviet regime, it must be stressed that Max Weber remained both unerring in his assessment and bound to the tradition of political liberalism to the extent that he did not transpose his original fascination with Russian revolutionaries onto Bolshevism. Instead, he criticised them by applying a manifestly negative – if not a more carefully defined – constitutional concept.

This was by no means a matter of course in Germany and other countries of Western Europe at this time. Not merely ambivalent attitudes, but an outright fascination with Bolshevism and an avoidance of the constitutional concept are frequent. This obtained not only for such political authors as Thomas Mann, but also such representatives of the economic elite as Walter Rathenau, for example. Following a visit to the Palais Rathenau in Berlin, Harry Graf Kessler notes in his diary in February 1919:

for Bolshevism, he let a strong affection shine through. It is a magnificent system, he says, and one to which the future will likely belong. In one hundred years, the world will be Bolshevistic. Contemporary Bolshevism resembles a wonderful play at the theatre ... By night he is a Bolshevik, he says; but by day, when he sees our workers and administrators, he is not – or not yet. (He repeated the ‘not yet’ several times).<sup>155</sup>

Among the critics of the first hour numbered the English mathematician and philosopher Bertrand Russell. He was well equipped to perform this role in many ways: by his background as a member of one of England’s great Whig families (which had generated two prime ministers and two foreign secretaries), by his godfather, John Stuart Mill, and by his personal knowledge of Bolshevik Russia. From 11 May to 6 June 1920, Russell participated in a visit to Russia by a delegation of the parliamentary Labour Party (although he was not a Member of Parliament). Firmly resolved to form an independent judgement, he removed himself from the group and the official companions that had been allocated to it.

In characterising the Bolshevik regime, Russell applied the classical vocabulary sparsely, although he did use the terms despotism, tyranny, and (with a negative connotation) dictatorship. He made no express reference to the classics of political thought. In connection with a ‘thick description’ (C. Geertz) that went beyond a positive or negative mystification, the traditional negative constitutional concepts did not act as a fetter on the perception of ‘Soviet Russia without camouflage’.<sup>156</sup>

At a time when ‘an atmosphere of cowardice’ reigned throughout Europe, a ‘new religion’ was required as the ‘solely possible power capable of restoring the human being with its vitality’. Insofar as Bolshevism ‘delivered a new religion’ that promised ‘glorious things’, it could ‘not be understood as an ordinary political movement’.<sup>157</sup> By contrast to the widely practised

custom of Western countries to excuse the 'hardness' by reference to the immediate consequences of the war, the 'struggle against the entente and the nations that were its slaves', the 'despotism that characterises the Bolsheviks ... is a firmly established component of their social philosophy; it would have to repeat itself, even if only in moderated form, wherever this philosophy gains influence'.<sup>158</sup> 'General hostility' is guaranteed by the doctrine of the class struggle. Embittered opposition to the entente, therefore, was not to be understood solely in terms of realpolitik: as a 'possibility', at least, it had always been part of the 'Bolshevist theory'.

By contrast to Weber, Russell foresaw a consolidation of the Bolshevik regime, which would 'survive the crisis through which it was generated' through an 'excess of despotism'. Following Marx's thesis that the main spring of human action is the '*libido habendi*', the Bolsheviks had neglected the hunger for power, which is said to be 'an equally strong motive and an equally large source of injustice ... as greed for money'. The 'excesses of despotism' follow from a concentration of political and economic power in the hands of an oligarchy.

[I]f I were forced to choose one as the greatest political evil, I would decide for the unequal distribution of power. And I would dispute that the class struggle and dictatorship of the Communist Party are the suitable means by which to dispense with this evil.

(*Politische Schriften I*, 148)

Russell talked of a visit that became a 'constantly growing nightmare':

I have not expressed the feeling of most extreme revulsion that overcame me when I was there. Cruelty, poverty, suspicion, persecution were the air that we breathed. Our conversations were constantly supervised. In the middle of the night, one heard shots and knew that idealists were being killed in the prison.<sup>159</sup>

Russell himself was reluctant to publish this essay, insofar as it was clear to him that he would not be able to count on applause and agreement. More than the critique of the English left, he feared applause coming 'from the wrong side'. His declared goal was to break through the 'conspiracy of silence'. One did socialism a poor service by failing to state openly the conditions in the Soviet Union and the fundamental problems with the Bolshevik experiment.

In this respect, Russell did not let himself be led astray when Italian Fascism and National Socialism arose as further types of twentieth-century despotic regime. Almost half a century later, he could protest all the more credibly against a view that was hardening into a commonly held fallacy: the view that it was necessary to choose between Communism and Fascism because these were in fact the only alternatives. As counter-examples, Russell

pointed out the United States, England and France – although Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, New Zealand and Australia remained unmentioned. Compared to James Bryce, Russell's highly respected compatriot who had characterised the Communist state as paternalistic, Russell's view was the more accurate.

Moving to Benedetto Croce's extensive oeuvre, we find the classical vocabulary is no longer present. This obtains both for his 'Answer to the "Manifesto of the Fascist Intellectuals"'<sup>160</sup> written in 1925 and his *History of Europe in the Nineteenth Century*. The latter appeared for the first time in 1932 as a 'warning cry against the approaching barbarism'. Here, Stalinist Russia is described as an 'autocracy that has robbed the Russian people of even that hint of spirit and freedom that it had still possessed under the previous tsarist autocracy'.<sup>161</sup>

German Catholicism remained very familiar with the classical vocabulary through the widely distributed political lexicon of the Görres Society. Familiarity was maintained in an article entitled 'Despotie', written by G. von Hertling, the founder of the Görres Society himself.<sup>162</sup> Here, the centrist politician and philosopher indicated the various dimensions of this negative constitutional concept, one he placed in the context of an intellectual history extending from Aristotle through Machiavelli and Montesquieu. Despotism is defined here as arbitrary rule that takes no consideration of 'customs and background'. 'Nothing is mentioned of the purpose of the state as the order of human community life'. The self-interest of the state leader dominates. The subjects, for their part, have the status of a 'herd possessing no rights or will – one that exists solely in order to provide the despot with his foundations of greatness and means of enjoyment'. The principle of this kind of rule is said to be fear.

In terms of the 'asymmetry of leniency' (F. Mount) that later set in with regard to various forms of illegitimate rule, it should be noted that the author expressly emphasised 'that despotism, in this sense, [is] not a state form that can be justified by a theory'. It should be discussed in a political theory only to the extent that it 'presents the most frightful denaturing of state life'. Montesquieu is said to have lacked 'a firm moral measure – for he does not, like Aristotle, politically condemn despotism as the worst of all [state forms, which] ... is neither natural nor suited to any people or country'.

To this corresponds his rejection of both the justification and the practice of 'enlightened despotism'. Enlightenment is said to mean 'of course, a direct overcoming of despotism'. Without discussing the claim of Western European states to be 'enlightened despotisms', the author refers to Peter the Great of Russia. In other passages, he refers to the Reign of Terror in France, which is said to have strengthened 'the words of Montesquieu', according to whom fear is the main principle of despotism.<sup>163</sup>

In Hertling's study, *Naturrecht und Socialpolitik*, by the way, we also find – in the context of an analysis of the 'future socialist state' – the prognosis

that its establishment in practice would mean no less than that ‘the struggle of humanity against despotism ... that has been fought for millennia [will have been] fought for nothing’.<sup>164</sup>

### **New concepts: totalitarianism, political religions**

Adolf Hitler’s seizure of power in 1933 set off an intensification of the debate as to the particularity of the new despotic regimes. This debate received additional impulses from disillusioned ex-Communists – from Boris Souvarine, for example, who had gained first-hand experience from his collaboration with Lenin in Moscow, or Franz Borkenau, who had worked for the Comintern. Such authors enjoyed immensely good pre-conditions for working out comparative diagnoses and prognoses. The same held in part for ex-fascists (H. Rauschnig). Important preconditions for the rise of a theory of totalitarianism had now been supplied. The classical vocabulary was by no means done away with entirely, however. It too is still mentioned, often with an adjective that makes it more precise.

#### *Souvarine*

Boris Souvarine, ‘le premier désenchanté’, characterises the Soviet regime as a ‘dictatorial power without equal in the world and without a precedent in history’. Lenin was its ‘actual creator’, just as he was the ‘true initiator of Bolshevism, ... genuine founder of the Communist Party [and] ... true victor of the October Revolution’.<sup>165</sup> The classical vocabulary served here predominantly to describe the Russian *ancien régime*: ‘despotism of the tsars’,<sup>166</sup> ‘power of the tyranny’.<sup>167</sup> By contrast to other ex-Communists, Souvarine locates the origins of Soviet totalitarianism with Lenin. He does not interpret it as a Stalinist deformation.<sup>168</sup>

The co-founder of the French Communist Party was exceedingly well acquainted with Lenin, with both the writings and the person. Although he was a convinced Marxist, he had let Lenin know – at 23 years of age – what many believed at that time: that a socialist revolution in Russia would be dangerous and utopian. Although Souvarine welcomed the Revolution in 1917, he did not do so unreservedly. In the spring of 1921, Souvarine visited the country where he had been born in 1897, the son of a goldsmith of Jewish heritage. In Moscow, he became the political protégé of Lenin, who nominated him to serve as secretary to the executive of the Third International. Souvarine used the occasion to gain an idea of the new Russia. Both his position and his knowledge of languages opened many doors for him – including those of the Moscow prisons, which were filled with anarchists, Mensheviks and tsarists.

He speaks with workers about their situation. He makes trips in the region of Kiev, where his family has its roots, and is forced to realise

that people are reticent because he arrives in official carriages. Much troubles him, but he remains loyal.<sup>169</sup>

Souvarine began to suspect that grave, irreversible mistakes were occurring. Even before Lenin's death in 1924, he gradually gains the impression – from the suppression of citizens' freedoms, the elimination of the workers' councils, the terror and the negation of individual and moral values that accompanied it – that a regime with no parallel in history was establishing itself.

Through a denunciation, Souvarine was threatened with deportation. In 1925 he returned to France, where he set himself the task of meticulously analysing and comparing the developments in the Soviet Union to Fascism and National Socialism, and above all of warning against the totalitarian regimes. He underscored the 'identité frappante de méthodes entre le fascisme et bolchévisme' and denied that Italian Fascism was in any way original: 'une doctrine que son unique théoricien n' a pas fini d'élaborer ou plutôt de composer de pièces et de morceaux disparates emprunté à des idéologies incompatibles'.<sup>170</sup>

Terror and value nihilism are said to characterise the new despotic regimes. Ideologies, by contrast, are attributed a purely instrumental function. This holds in particular for Stalin. Hitler, too, is described as not having championed a coherent political ideology, although, by contrast to Stalin, he is said to be filled with a 'romantisme pathologique, des préjugés historico-missionnaires, des griseries vertigineuses'.

### ***Tillich***

The publication of Souvarine's study of Stalin was accompanied by multiple difficulties. Before the work even appeared, Paul Tillich – the Protestant theologian and philosopher of religion who enjoyed great international respect – had published an investigation of the totalitarian state.<sup>171</sup> Following a visit to Italy, Hermann Heller had expanded the expression 'totalitarian dictatorship' into a new concept with which to describe the epoch. As Heller had done before him, Tillich dispensed with the classical vocabulary in his discussions both of the Soviet regime and of National Socialism. He depicted them as systems that can be compared in terms of ruling structures, *modi operandi* and goals. As for the latter, although they indeed diverge in terms of content, they are said to converge in terms of their religious character. These goals, or *Weltanschauungen* that provide the foundations of totalitarian states, are expressed in myths of nation or tradition, race, realm of freedom or class. They are the conditional forces that bring an unconditional surrender to charismatic leaders, whose all-encompassing rule is as non-institutional as it is politically irresponsible (responsible to no one). Standing above the law, this kind of rule rejects constitutional correctives.

In Tillich's view, totalitarian states are not the products of historical necessity or the internal logic of late capitalism. ('In every historical event there are structural forces ... [but it] also involves accidents, natural occurrences, the activities of particular individuals and the influence of external historical events'.)<sup>172</sup>

Certainly, the consequences of the economic development in those countries that were involved in the First World War were among the factors that triggered the rise of totalitarian states. The general uncertainty of proletarian existence was intensified by long periods of unemployment: 'And a new group emerges in which the negative effects of the proletarian fate become multiplied. The exclusion from employment removes the last vestige of the meaning which work, even in the service of profit, can give'. An even greater danger was said to be posed by the proletarianisation and loss of reputation of the commercial middle class, petty civil servants, employees and farmers. Even the ruling group is not excepted from perceptions of insecurity. In this situation, a spiritual and psychic disintegration of the masses such as can be only rarely observed in history is said to occur, a disintegration that makes reintegration the primary task of the epoch.

The various totalitarian regimes have reacted to this situation in different ways. Only Germany was totalitarian in both theory and practice.<sup>173</sup> Neither Austria nor Italy, by contrast, was ever totalitarian. As for Tillich's false claim concerning Italy, this can be explained at best by Tillich's oft-described isolation from the politics of his day; assumedly, this also explains his firm conviction that 'such ideas and such people' as Hitler would never have had a chance. In Russia, the totalitarian state is said to have been incomparably more efficiently realised than in Germany – albeit in absence of a theory. This is due to the special situation in Russia: 'the motivating force is not the state but the individual ... Russia has set for herself the task of assimilating the rational technological culture of the past centuries of European civilisation ... without accepting Western capitalism'. Of myth as the *sine qua non* of unconditional surrender in a totalitarian state is spoken just as little as of charismatic leaders who demand and violently coerce unconditional submission.

As with Tillich's mistaken estimation of National Socialism,<sup>174</sup> the Soviet Union also became the object of a blatant misperception:

The totalitarian character of the Soviet state ... should be understood as a bulwark against the penetration of bourgeois-capitalistic elements on the one hand and the education of an entire continent in communistic enlightenment on the other. Every step forward in this educational process means essentially a strengthening of the critical, anti-authoritarian and anti-totalitarian forces among the people. Thus, the more successful it is in the realisation of its goal, the closer does the totalitarian state come to digging its own grave. This corresponds precisely to the theories of Marx and Lenin on the state.<sup>175</sup>



To date, Tillich's contribution to the theory of totalitarianism has hardly been acknowledged in the literature. Nonetheless, that contribution merits mention on various grounds: (1) The text testifies to the absence of a scientifically based theory of totalitarian rule at this time; (2) It indicates that a mere application of the language of the 'totalitarian state' and avoidance of the classical vocabulary ensures neither a deeper understanding of the new regimes nor an accurate or adequate guide to practical conduct. From this can be derived (3) the hypothesis that Tillich's close connection to the founding fathers of the 'Frankfurt School' could not become a productive challenge to the Western German left – although this might be said of both Souvarine and Frank Borkenau.

### *Horkheimer and Marcuse*

In his youth, Max Horkheimer had committed himself – together with his friend, Friedrich Pollock – to 'creating a solidarity of all human beings'. Horkheimer's view was removed from those both of his friend, Tillich, who believed that the goal of the classless society is false, and Pollock, whose pessimism first set in during a stay in Moscow in 1929. Max Horkheimer never let himself be swayed in his optimism that a 'humanistic socialism'<sup>176</sup> might be established in the Soviet Union after all.<sup>177</sup> Speaking of the Soviet Union in 1934, he mentions the possibility and desirability of an 'enlightened, indeed, revolutionary despotism'. As one who knew his Kant, Horkheimer chose the classical constitutional concept in a way that attempted to suggest continuity. He thereby evaded the question as to the *novum* and *proprium* of the twentieth-century despotic regime for the sake of his own political hopes.<sup>178</sup> Certainly, his claim of the continuity of the Soviet dictatorship with classical dictatorship was equally as false as his concurrent claim that Fascism was the necessary consequence of capitalism.<sup>179</sup> All the same, though, both theses became formative for the European Marxist left as a broader group.<sup>180</sup> The theses were shared by other members of the Frankfurt School. Herbert Marcuse, for example:

the transition of the liberal state to a totalist authoritarian state occurs on the basis of the same social order. Concerning this identical economic base, we could say that liberalism creates the totalist authoritarian state as its fulfilment on a more advanced level of development.<sup>181</sup>

In 1939, Horkheimer adopts the adjective 'totalitarian' without reflecting on his contemporaries' attempts to conceptualise the term. In addition, the designation, 'totalitarian order', is restricted to Fascism as the 'truth of the modern society'. The totalitarian order is said to be

no different from its predecessor, a predecessor that has only lost its inhibitions. Just as old people become evil from time to time, as evil as

they always were at base, class rule takes the form of a national community at the end of its epoch.<sup>182</sup>

The designation ‘totalitarian order’ is indeterminate in terms of content. Horkheimer reserves it strictly for Fascism, only to drop it three years later in favour of the category of the ‘authoritarian state’. This category, in turn, is related to ‘reformism, Bolshevism or fascism’ generally. Of the forms the authoritarian state might take, the ‘most logically consistent type’ is ‘integral etatism or state socialism, because it has liberated itself from any kind of dependence upon private capital . . . . The fascist countries represent a mixed form.’ Finally, he states of ‘pre-fascist statesmen’ that with respect to integral statism, they – by contrast, to Bolshevism especially – ‘cannot surrender the idea of a utopist or humanitarian version of the authoritarian state’. The leaders of the most rigorous kind of authoritarian state, by contrast, strive for a people’s community of an authoritarian kind.<sup>183</sup> Nor does the desire for a ‘classless state’ give way in this case to the ‘believing realism’ of a Paul Tillich here. Thus is the hope for a ‘classless democracy’ given new expression. And ‘it is precisely integral etatism that still offers hope [to the masses], because it stands on the border of the better option’. Constitutions, which were formerly instruments of rule – as Horkheimer expressly emphasises in continuity with the devaluation of political institutions by the left – can ‘claim no more authority in the new society . . . than timetables and traffic rules [can claim] in the existing one’.<sup>184</sup> Following the end of the war and the founding of the BRD, his findings are as follows: ‘The basic features of the majority of dictatorships were already present in the second half of the fourth century before Christ’. Citing directly from the tyranny chapter of Aristotle’s *Politics* for three quarters of a page, he adds as a commentary only that it is possible ‘to capture the totalitarian political measures of the various political shadings using the same formula’.<sup>185</sup>

### **Borkenau**

The neo-Marxist claim of continuity – based upon political wishful thinking or ‘consciously nourished illusions’,<sup>186</sup> even on a *sacrificium intellectus* – denies the radical caesura that characterises both the historical development and the political thought of Europe. Within the Western left itself, this claim was distinctly contradicted by Franz Borkenau, who was an earlier recipient of a stipend from the Institute for Social Research.<sup>187</sup> In the modern despotic regimes – whose expansionist drive he emphasised, yet still regarded as subsidiary (with respect to Nazi Germany, in any case) – he saw primarily a break with civilisation:

Nazism and Communist Russia confront Western civilization not primarily as a conquering empire, but as a force of world revolution. This

world revolution threatens all the values that have been passed down from Athens and Jerusalem, through the Rome of the emperors and the popes, through to the Reformation, the Age of Enlightenment, and the present age.<sup>188</sup>

These revolutions have both their roots and ‘a measure of justification’ in the evils of those societies against which they are directed.

Borkenau is one of the few analysts of modern despotic regimes that – on the bases of education, personal predispositions and motivations, and life history – have attempted to describe succinctly both the affinities and the specific differences between ancient and modern types of despotic regime.

The new kinds of tyranny are linked both to the tyrannies of past centuries and to the reflection on them in political theory by the support of the social underclass: ‘The Nazi regime is undoubtedly a tyrannical autocracy. But at the same time it is undoubtedly mob rule’. As unbelievable as this might have seemed a few years before, it was said to hold few novel elements: ‘Both ancient Greeks and ancient Romans knew very well that democracy, if taken to an extreme, was apt to degenerate into mob rule; and they knew very well that mob rule had only one end-point: a tyrannical autocracy’. To this extent, the Aristotelian theory of tyranny was still relevant; it would require only minor modifications in this respect before it could be applied to our modern world.<sup>189</sup>

Nonetheless, drastic differences are still said to exist. Whereas the ancient paternalistic autocracies attempted to exclude those subject to rule from interference in politics, modern totalitarian dictatorships – National Socialist and Communist ones specifically – arose through revolutionary mass movements that helped them gain power; and they remained dependent upon this same mass movement for support.<sup>190</sup>

On the level of aims, messianic claims are a *novum* and *proprium* of the totalitarian regimes. As for their means, they are terror and blood purges. Invoking H. Rauschning’s *Revolution des Nihilismus* in his foreword, Borkenau attributes the resonance of messianic promises among the masses to the spiritual collapse that is said to have occurred both during and after the First World War – in Germany in particular. In this respect, Italy is declared to be an exception; it is said not to have experienced a collapse comparable to that of Germany. With its differing social structure, Italy is said to have needed a messiah less acutely.<sup>191</sup> Russia, by contrast, is identified as a ‘wholesale, wicked, sadistic, horrible tyranny’, of the same calibre as Germany.<sup>192</sup> Borkenau was prompted to identify the two by the Stalinist terror against the political allies of the Communists behind the Republican Front during the Spanish Civil War; he, like so many others, had witnessed an exportation to Spain of the blood purges that had occurred in his homeland. The fate suffered by European volunteers during the Spanish Civil War only deepened his break with Marxist socialism and gave rise to his ‘fundamental critique of the utopian elements of Marxism’.<sup>193</sup> First

formulating his critique in an essay on the myth of the Paris Commune,<sup>194</sup> Borkenau offered it in temporal proximity both to Paul Tillich and to Ignazio Silone, co-founder of the Italian Communist Party. These likewise incorporated Karl Marx into the history of the origin of totalitarian regimes.<sup>195</sup>

### **Silone**

Silone's work has been accessible to researchers in the form of a critical edition only since 1998. That work supports the thesis represented here, which affirms a relative constancy of the classical vocabulary accompanied by a simultaneous establishment of the neologism (in adjectival form) 'totalitarian'. With Silone too, this neologism remains connected to the terms 'dictatorship' or 'regime' (to the extent that negative constitutional concepts are involved). Silone has not yet formed the 'ism' that would be capable of transforming a leading concept of political criticism into a *cri de guerre* of an ever-intensifying epochal confrontation.<sup>196</sup>

In words resembling those of Souvarine – to whom he refers in both *Scuola dei dittatori* and *Uscita di sicurezza* – Silone speaks of the uniqueness of modern despotic regimes. He finds their prime cause in modern mass civilisation ('l'odierna civiltà di massa'), one in which the masses need the *ducismo* and integration by ideologies ('pantautologia') – whether by those of red Fascism or its brown counterpart within the 'millennio totalitario'. Insofar as the 'ism' formation has not yet occurred, the older vocabulary can retain both its descriptive and its critical potential.

### **Cobban**

During the final months before the outbreak of World War II, the English political scientist Alfred Cobban explains why he chose the category of dictatorship for *Dictatorship: Its History and Theory*, a work he concluded in January 1939: '[F]or practical reasons, I have preferred the term dictatorship, which is now generally used, rather than the strictly more correct tyranny.' Selecting the Aristotelian constitutional typology as the starting point of his introductory reflections, he criticises this typology because 'Aristotle is taking us into the realm of moral philosophy'. The goal of the political scientist should be 'to keep clear of morals as long as possible'. It is necessary to optimise the descriptive capacity. Only then will it be possible 'to produce a classification of governments based on objective and not on ethical tests'.<sup>197</sup>

In describing the new despotic regimes, 'totalitarian' is usually connected with 'dictatorship' in the text. Occasionally, it is connected with the word 'state'.<sup>198</sup> The index provides a clear picture: whereas 35 lines of a study spanning just over 350 pages are required for references to dictatorship, only two lines are reserved for despotism and seven for tyranny. Likewise,

seven lines are required for text passages in which the neologism ‘totalitarianism’ is applied. No justification is offered for the choice of this new formation, though. For this reason, no content-based clarification can be found for this choice of terms. Such clarification, after all, would require a systematic interpretation in terms of conceptual history.

### *Halévy*

In November 1936, the French historian Elie Halévy presented his theses for discussion to the *Société Française de Philosophie*. Halévy entitled the text, ‘L’ère des tyrannies’. His choices of both title and concept by which to characterise an entire epoch were well considered. In looking back on the First World War, which he understood as the destruction of the liberal civilisation of Europe by its own children,<sup>199</sup> Halévy spoke of an era which, ‘like every great French liberal, has acquired the virtue of active pessimism’.<sup>200</sup> Through centralisation of all decision-making authorities, the war-conducting nations had been led to an *étatisme*<sup>201</sup> that included the control of thought in both negative (censorship) and positive forms. In Russia, a group of armed men driven by a common faith had declared themselves to be the state; in doing so, they could draw upon this prior centralisation. And in Europe, the seizures of power by both Fascism and National Socialism occurred through a direct imitation of Russian methods.

With reference to the Roman understanding of dictatorship, Halévy justified his refusal to speak of an ‘era of dictatorships’. Marcel Mauss emphatically supported Halévy’s argumentation:

I am in entire agreement with you on every point of your communications . . . . Your deduction of the two Italian and German tyrannies from Bolshevism is quite correct . . . . Fundamental to the deduction of all this is the idea of ‘active minorities’ . . . . These events seem to me to be very like events that often took place in Greece, which Aristotle can still be cited on the way in which tyranny is linked to war and to democracy itself . . . . So things begin all over again, and the course of events is the same.<sup>202</sup>

### *Aron*

In a review essay published in May 1939, Raymond Aron follows Halévy’s choice of the tyranny concept without adopting (as Mauss did) the reasons for the rise of the ‘Russian, Italian and German tyrannies’ that Halévy had offered. Not the war, but its consequences is said to have caused their rise: ‘the defeat of Russia and, in the cases of Germany and Italy, the psychological and material affects’ favoured the genesis of ‘reactionary tyrannies’. ‘In other words, the tyrannies issued from the war only to the extent that

this was the cause of the social and economic crises.’ On the other hand, it would remain to be asked whether ‘the intellectual tyranny of the single doctrine and single party’ is a historical coincidence of short duration or ‘a necessary phenomenon of the new era instead’. The era of tyranny – according to Aron, who went beyond Halévy here – is an ‘era of political religions’. Not coincidentally, Aron uses the newly formed concept of ‘totalitarian regime’. He thereby diverges from the use of tyranny, which had to this point been a general term.<sup>203</sup> In the years that follow, he retains this formulation. If the new concept remains predominant, however, it must still be recalled that Aron was never a particularly enthusiastic proponent of the ‘totalitarian’ as a general category that would be suited to capturing ‘the various modern threats to the open society’.<sup>204</sup>

### ***England***

Towards the end of the 1930s, the concept of totalitarianism entered into English conservative thought. In an essay by T. S. Eliot entitled *The Idea of a Christian Society* (a work that attained many editions in a short period of time),<sup>205</sup> totalitarianism emerged in competition with tyranny – albeit without replacing the traditional concept. Here, the origins of totalitarianism were said to lie in the success of the Industrial Revolution. The further this revolution progressed, the more it unleashed and favoured a materialistic philosophy that was to prove deadly:

The tendency of unlimited industrialism is to create bodies of men and women of all classes, detached from tradition, alienated from religion, and susceptible to mass suggestion: in other words, a mob. And a mob will be no less a mob because it is well fed, well clothed, well housed and well disciplined.

Eliot stresses that his essay should not be understood as an ‘anti-Fascist or anti-Communist manifesto’. Indeed, the success of totalitarian states should be ascribed to a failure of Christian societies and the churches. ‘To speak of ourselves as a Christian society, in contrast to that of Germany and Russia, is an abuse of terms’. One of the causes of the origin of totalitarian states is the attempt to perceive a function that the churches of non-totalitarian states have neglected: that of providing a moral foundation to the national community.<sup>206</sup> In the summer of 1933, at Oxford, Eliot had presented the following warning: ‘the Catholic should have high ideals – or better, I should say, absolute ideals – and moderate expectations: the heretic, whether he calls himself Fascist or Communist, democrat or rationalist, always has low ideals and great expectations’.<sup>207</sup>

In 1943, ‘totalitarianism’ becomes the victor within the Anglophone realm – even if tyranny and despotism are also retained and used in part synonymously with the new conceptual form.<sup>208</sup> In referring to Franz Borkenau’s

‘totalitarian enemy’, Christopher Dawson distinguishes between the ‘new tyranny’ and the ‘tyrants of the past’. The specific feature of the ‘despotic mass-order of the totalitarian states’ is said to lie with the claim to rule both the intellect and the body of a person. Modern means of ‘mass suggestion’ and ‘propaganda’ serve this purpose, as do the means of mass terror, secret police and one-party rule. Characterising the ‘new direction of totalitarian party dictatorships’ as ‘a modernised form of old traditional, absolute rulerships’, Dawson attributes to Borkenau a continuity that contradicts his own perception; the latter, we will recall, emphasises the civilisational breach that was the precondition of the singularity and incomparability of totalitarian regimes.<sup>209</sup> Certainly, Dawson underscores the significance of the dissolution of Christianity as a precondition for the rise of the new despotic regimes. ‘Europe [is] essentially a society of Christian peoples and nations . . ., who derive their unity, not from race or economic interest, but from the spiritual community’. This is why the struggle against totalitarianisms of both right and left can only be successfully conducted through the ‘renewal of this spiritual substratum’.<sup>210</sup> The types of Western constitutional state or pluralistic democracy, by contrast – even if one does not count them among the heresies, as Eliot does – are not ‘firm points of orientation’.<sup>211</sup> All the same, democracy is regarded as a positive constitutional concept and source of political opposition to totalitarianism and new tyrannies. Yet it is certainly exposed to the dangers that Tocqueville is said already to have foreseen in the nineteenth century. It can easily ‘serve as instrument of mass despotism’ – even as one that ‘[in many respects paves] the way to a new . . . political form of totalitarian state’.<sup>212</sup>

### *France*

Moving on to France, the view is basically the same. Here too, the classical vocabulary is retained alongside the linguistic combinations of totalitarian system, regime, state and totalitarianism. Here too, both traditional concepts and new formations are often used synonymously, in absence of systematic reflection as to the suitability or limits of the concepts that are applied.

Bertrand de Jouvenel wrote his essay *Du pouvoir, Histoire naturelle de sa croissance*,<sup>213</sup> in Swiss exile in 1943. In chapter 14, entitled ‘Totalitarian Democracy’,<sup>214</sup> de Jouvenel explains his intention in the very first paragraph: ‘we now seek to observe the era of the *tyrannis* more precisely; to analyse the cause of the modern despotism’. Modern despotism is characterised as the logical consequence of party rule wherever it does not – as in England – encounter a ‘retarding resistance’ that is conditioned by a long process of growing accustomed to a democracy of party competition.

If one of the parties brings more system into its organisation, more technology into its propaganda, reduces its doctrine to even simpler

concepts, if it surpasses its opponents in propaganda, in incitement and in brutality, if it grasps for the desired prey and does not set it loose again, we have totalitarianism.<sup>215</sup>

Whereas the real historical developments in individual countries are neglected, the conservative critique of liberalism and democracy becomes central. Its central topoi come to explain the origins of the ‘unholy tyranny’, a tyranny ‘the citizens accept and hate [only] when it is too late’. ‘Rulelessness of egoistic interests call forth social incoherence’, which can now be overcome solely through state repression, because ‘spontaneous conformity’ through ‘inner rules, habits and morals’ no longer occurs. In their place, the vulgar methods of collective suggestion and propaganda emerge to supplement physical coercion. This ‘totalitarian solution [is] an evil called forth by the individualistic evil’.<sup>216</sup> As the *prima causa* of modern despotic regime, De Jouvenel assumes an internal logic of development of modernity. This development is said to be irreversible to the extent that individualistic rationalism is not criticised: ‘Whatever one might think of individualistic ideas, one thing is certain: the totalitarian regimes cannot be assessed without simultaneously assessing the destructive metaphysics that have made their unavoidable appearance possible’.<sup>217</sup> De Jouvenel’s analysis marks a fall below the scientific level that had already been attained in illuminating the complex causal connections by prior analyses of modern despotic regimes. It is an intellectual-historical deduction nourished by a ‘considerable nostalgia for pre-democratic societies’.<sup>218</sup> At the same time, the choice of concepts does not in itself hinder an adequate understanding of modern despotic regimes – particularly if the content of the concepts is not reflected upon. Conversely, the new negative constitutional concept does not get one any further if the perspective is established a priori – whether that perspective works in terms of intellectual history or in those of economic history.

### *Germany*

The only option left to anyone who attempted to resist the ‘fascist temptation’ and to advertise for an ‘anti-fascist decision’ in Germany – as Walter Dirks did in a lecture to students and Catholic youth groups prior to the last Reichstag elections in 1933 – is now that of inner emigration and activity far removed from politics. By contrast to the standpoints of resistance or exile, this stance no longer admits the use of negative constitutional concepts.<sup>219</sup> It was a ‘temptation’ Arnold Gehlen was not capable of resisting. After 1933, Gehlen occupied the Frankfurt chair that had previously been held by Paul Tillich (who had been dismissed and forced into exile). He was later an assistant of Hans Freyer at the Leipzig Institute of Political Science. In the atomised industrial society, Gehlen states, there is no communality of vital values. Rejecting Marxism, pacifism and liberalism alike because these are said to have corrupted the German people, Gehlen derives the necessity



of a dictatorship from Fichte's 'Zwingherr'.<sup>220</sup> In 1940 and 1941, the National Socialist regime signifies to Gehlen an 'institutional structure that is appropriate for its time'.<sup>221</sup> When the foundations for the support of this dictatorship fell away in 1945, Gehlen recommended the Soviet system as a last ordering power. Noting the tendency of the national democracies to erode,<sup>222</sup> Gehlen remained the only European intellectual of the twentieth century who approved of both Communist and National Socialist despotic regimes (albeit at different times).

## Developments after 1945

### *Political theory*

The demise of both the National Socialist regime and Italian Fascism would have marked an appropriate time to end the 'asymmetry of forbearance' (F. Mount) with regard to the totalitarian despotic reigns of the twentieth century and to address the problems of legitimating the Soviet dictatorship. This proved difficult in view of the strength of Communist parties and trade unions in the individual Western European countries – in France and Italy in particular. In France, for example, Sartre declared Marxism to be the 'unsurpassable horizon' of political thought.

Maurice Merleau-Ponty, who worked with Sartre for a time, maintained this 'asymmetry of forbearance' shortly after the end of the war in an essay entitled 'Humanism and Terror'. Without intending to offer an apology for Stalinism, he thematised the justifiability of Communist terror. Force is said to be the starting point shared by all regimes. Communism did not invent it, but found it already at hand – whether in 'despotism, for which the absolute subjectivity of an individual makes all others into objects' or whether in the 'liberal state, in the form of colonisation, unemployment and wage labour'. The decisive question, therefore, is not that force is exercised, but to what purpose. To the extent that they are directed towards a future state in which 'human being [is] the highest being for the human being', 'the humanistic intentions of communism ... cannot be disputed'. These intentions alone are said to justify the use of force, especially if such force seeks to transcend itself. 'In formal terms, Marxist politics are dictatorial and totalitarian. Yet this dictatorship is the dictatorship of human beings who are human at its purest.'<sup>223</sup> On the basis of a simple reference to Marx's meta-political promise of salvation in the *Kritik der Heglschen Rechtsphilosophie* and without considering the critique of human rights in the essay, 'Zur Judenfrage', Merleau-Ponty assumes humanism to be a given. Thus he asks: 'Is communism up to its humanistic intentions?' Doubts are raised and are clearly stated. The directional change of the critique of Sartre's 'ultra-Bolshevism' that later followed had already been prefigured here. In 1950 he already declares: 'Ce que nous disons, c'est qu'il n'y a pas de socialisme quand un citoyen sur vingt est au camp'.<sup>224</sup>

In 1946, Albert Camus wrote an essay for *Combat* (of which he was editor-in-chief) entitled 'Ni Victimes Ni Bourreaux'. After this essay, Camus' perception of modern despotic regimes is pervaded by a different intellectual ethos. (The essay was published in German for the first time in 1984.) Camus summarises this ethos into four duties for intellectuals: '1. Reconnaître le totalitarisme et le dénoncer. 2. Ne pas mentir et savoir avouer ce qu'on ignore. 3. Refuser de dominer. 4. Refuser en toutes occasions et quel soit le prétexte toute despotisme même provisoire'.<sup>225</sup>

Like Hannah Arendt, Camus attempted to capture the specific character of modern forms of despotic rule. *L'homme revolté* appeared in the same year in which Hannah Arendt's study, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* also appeared. Here, Camus writes that tyranny belongs to a past era for which the 'enemy was thrown to the lions before the assembled people'. In face of such crimes, the 'conscience could be clean and the judgement clear'. In the 'age of the perfect crime', by contrast, the 'libido dominandi' has gained an irrefutable alibi – namely, philosophy. This could be used to do anything, even to transform the murderers into judges.<sup>226</sup>

The classical vocabulary is not marginalised in France after 1945. Important evidence of this is provided by a study by Jules Monnerot entitled *Sociology of Communism*. (Having first appeared in the French language in 1949, the study received much attention in its time.)<sup>227</sup> The title of the third part, 'The Secular Religions and the Imperium Mundi', makes it clear that the author uses the classical vocabulary synonymously with despotism, absolutism and totalitarianism – albeit by emphasising the *differentia specifica*.<sup>228</sup> Referring to 'the humanist tradition', the author expressly justifies his retention of the concept of tyranny.

Matters take a completely different course in West Germany. Franz Neumann's study of the structure and practice of National Socialism published in 1942<sup>229</sup> served to reinforced the marginalisation: the concepts of tyranny and despotism were said to have no precise meaning. Both words are emotionally charged, expressing a greater or lesser degree of passionate rejection, a greater or lesser strength of resentment against these systems.

At the same time, Neumann laments the lack of a systematic theory of dictatorship. Neumann himself was not able to revise his text for publication due to his surprising accidental death in 1956. It is also worth noting that the more recent works that had appeared to that point had neither been introduced into the footnotes nor considered in the text itself. As a 'most significant exception', Neumann mentions Carl Schmitt's treatment, *Die Diktatur*,<sup>230</sup> estimating its worth as 'indisputable'. Neither A. Cobban's *Dictatorship: Its History and Theory* – a work Maurice Duverger ranked as a 'major work' for a general theory of dictatorship – nor G. W. F. Hallgarten's *Why Dictators? The Causes and Forms of Tyrannical Rule from 600 BC* gain attention. The studies of Hannah Arendt and C. J. Friedrich are not considered either.<sup>231</sup> In both throwing the classical vocabulary overboard and paying no attention to the relevant literature, Neumann lets himself be led – without

justification – by the premise that moral judgements about political systems make it more difficult to understand their functions.

How much can we understand if we do not inquire as to the political goals and structures, the mode of implementation and motives of ruling elites? This question will be left open. With its value-free standpoint, Neumann's typology of dictatorships distinguishes the following: (1) dictatorship as a means to maintain democracy (2) educational dictatorship, which *could* prepare for democracy (3) dictatorships as the complete negation of democracy and thereby as totally repressive systems.<sup>232</sup>

The Marxist-Leninist conception of a dictatorship of the proletariat is characterised as a 'preparatory dictatorship'. Here, Neumann passes over in silence both Marx's idea of dictatorship and its thorough modification by Lenin – a modification having political implications that had been expressly formulated by the social-democratic and liberal critique of the Bolshevik seizure of power since Kautsky and Max Weber. Neumann merely repeats the legends of the 'good Lenin' that had been refuted by Souvarine, Aron and others here, distinguishing between the 'National Socialist-fascist Party [as of a totalitarian movement] and Lenin's party before 1917'. He does not hold the Bolshevik Party of this time to have been a totalitarian movement, nor does he regard Lenin [by contrast to Stalin after 1928] as having been a totalitarian leader.

In connection with the unjustified refusal to make 'moral judgements about political systems', Neumann's expulsion of the classical vocabulary as imprecise, 'filled with emotion' and laden with resentment serves a clearly recognisable function. As in the case of Hannah Arendt, who lets the Soviet totalitarian dictatorship begin and end with Stalin, the abiding desire for an original innocence of the left is not to be relinquished.

Since the founders of critical theory abstained from explaining modern despotic regimes in terms of the internal logic of capitalism, they placed their bets on the internal logic of the Enlightenment. As a consequence, the concept of totalitarianism lost its character as a political constitutional concept and became a diffuse, negatively loaded concept of leftist cultural criticism.<sup>233</sup> Theodor W. Adorno later drew a different, more radical conclusion. At the meeting of the Frankfurt Sociologists in 1968, he suggested,

not to use the concept of rule so squeamishly. Rule has always possessed an element of fertility ... Rule [incubates] within itself the tendency to totality now ... in order to maintain itself as rule. As for what totalitarian rule means, this we already know. This is why we should not use the concept of rule so squeamishly, why we also should not think of the good sides that it undoubtedly has had at times. Compared to the potential of absolute terror, these sides cannot seriously fall into the equation.<sup>234</sup>

Adorno's recommendation remained just as significant an episode as Neumann's rejection of the old concepts did. In the Western Europe of the

post-war period, the classical vocabulary was retained beyond the bounds of democratic parties; perhaps it was also favoured by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of the General Assembly of the United Nations on 10 December 1948. In the preamble is stated: 'it is essential, if man is not to be compelled to have recourse, as a last resort, against tyranny and oppression, that human rights should be protected by the rule of law'.<sup>235</sup> The debate about the historically unprecedented character of modern despotic regimes was furthered after the appearance of Hannah Arendt's study, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* and the spring conference of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences.<sup>236</sup> Yet it was carried out without discussion of the specificity of total rule, and resulted in an exclusion of tyranny and despotism from the household of political concepts. Richard Löwenthal, for example, emphasised the limits of the tyranny concept without dispensing with it altogether: modern dictatorships are 'variants of an old, well-known type' of illegitimate rule. Yet they are

like the ancient Greek tyrannies and usurpers of the Renaissance only in the limited sense that they attain power through a collapse of the previous regime, and that, in the beginning, they must undertake a series of measures of redistributing social layers in order to reward their followers at the cost of their opponents.

To this extent, modern despotic regimes have 'predecessors among the tyrants of the ancient Greek city-states, the rulers of the Italian Renaissance'. Following the phase of the power-seizure and the execution of the initial 'immediate program', the demagogic tyrannies of past eras have typically attempted to consolidate their power; they thereby became 'conservative ... , whether toward the inside or toward the outside'. Beyond this, the older concepts help '[only] to blur the specific and peculiar character of modern totalitarianism'.<sup>237</sup> This is fundamentally true. Nevertheless, it must still be maintained that perceptive analysts of modern despotic regimes – among them George Orwell, 'the supreme describer of totalitarianism in general'<sup>238</sup> – used the old vocabulary in conjunction with the new one and by no means wished to blur the differences with this conjunction. Orwell confessed that he was 'filled with absolute revulsion for a dictatorship of theorists like in Russia and Germany', because the 'modern intelligentsia' is incapable of seeing that, 'whatever the political and economic forms may be', human society must be founded upon 'common decency'. Although such decency is lacking completely in the totalitarian regimes, it is not lacking in Europe in general. Orwell's special hope was reserved for England, where 'the common people' are said never to have become detached from their moral code. As a result, they find it difficult to imagine what a despotic regime looks like. They can swallow totalitarianism *because* they have no experience with anything besides liberalism. With all its injustices,

England is still the country of *habeas corpus*, and the overwhelming majority of the English people are said to have no experience of coercion or lawlessness.<sup>239</sup>

### ***Taking stock***

During the ‘concept war’ (J. Kocka) surrounding the concept of ‘totalitarian rule’ that was fought in the 1960s and 1970s, the negative constitutional concepts of tyranny and despotism were classified as antiquarian in both Germany and Italy.<sup>240</sup> For the foreseeable future, the concept of totalitarian rule was to be replaced by the category of dictatorship. For its part, this estimation was more assumed as self-evident than it was supported by a detailed evaluation of the relevant sources. A ‘counter attempt’ was not made (and the question of possible peculiar developments was not raised). Nor was the claim examined in terms of a comparative sample among countries, one asking whether and to what extent historicisation or marginalisation can be observed.

As a comparative analysis extending to the present day reveals, the thesis of antiquated status cannot be maintained of the classical vocabulary. Certainly, historicisations, relativisations, reinterpretations and positive reevaluations must already be registered in the individual countries of Europe in the nineteenth century. All these resulted from the opposing interests of negative constitutional concepts during periods of political change. All the same, a considerable measure of (relative) constancy and vitality of the classical vocabulary should be ascertained. This vocabulary served as a component of a common politico-moral language of the European family of nations.<sup>241</sup>

Even if the horrible originality of totalitarian rule cannot be adequately understood in terms of the classical vocabulary,<sup>242</sup> we might still gain with its help a provisional understanding through ‘tacit knowledge’ (K. Polanyi),

however rudimentary . . . this ultimately may prove to be. Without any question, its presence is preferable to the lack of this kind of provisional understanding – it is true. Whoever cannot be mobilised to join the struggle against the modern despotic regimes on this basis will probably not be mobilised at all . . . [It] will certainly be more effective in preventing the people from attaching themselves to a totalitarian movement.<sup>243</sup>

In historiography and the work of scholarly publicists, the classical vocabulary has been thoroughly capable of maintaining its validity compared to ‘dictatorship’. It is not used solely for looking back upon the twentieth century, however,<sup>244</sup> but is also applied in the analysis and critique of contemporary regimes.<sup>245</sup>

To date, a notable example remains Michael Walzer's study, *Spheres of Justice*, which first appeared in 1983. Here, Walzer attempts theoretically to anticipate the possible mistaken developments of modern societies with the aid of the category of tyranny.<sup>246</sup> With the classical vocabulary, central categories of political analysis and critique are retained for science and common sense. These categories cannot be dispensed with for the foreseeable future.

## Notes

- 1 Compare Aristotle, *Politics* 1253b18; 1255b16; 1278b19, 32, 37; 1325a28; on this H. Flashar, ed., *Ältere Akademie Aristoteles Peripatos* (Basel/Stuttgart, 1983), 175–457, especially 248ff., 336ff.
- 2 *Ibid.*, 1255b, 16–23.
- 3 Depending on the legal status and kind of activity, Aristotle distinguishes three kinds of relationships between lords and members of a household: (1) that of the husband to his wife (*gamiké*); (2) that of the father to his children (*patriké*); (3) that of the master to his slaves (*despotiké*). *Politics* 1253b4–11; 1259a37–39. The latter is restricted to the caring for the necessities (*anankeia*) of daily life and the preservation of 'mere life' (*zen*), 1252b29ff. Within the house, too, the despotic form of rule is 'from nature'. To this extent, it is legitimate solely for slaves and not, by contrast, for women and children. See 1259b1.
- 4 *Politics* 1285a18–23; compare *ibid.* 1279a21. In earlier times, according to Aristotle, the Greeks had also accepted a despotic regime, but this was solely in the form of a temporally limited rule. The emphasis on it having occurred in former times is decisive here. Compare *ibid.*, 1295a11–14; 1285a30–b4.
- 5 *Ibid.*, 1292a.
- 6 *Ibid.*, 1289a39ff.
- 7 1295a19–23.
- 8 1313b6 and 1313b12.
- 9 *Nicomachean Ethics* 116a10.30–23.
- 10 A. Kamp, 'Die aristotelische Theorie der Tyrannis', *Philos. Jb.* 92 (1985), 21ff. See page 26.
- 11 312b34ff.
- 12 1295b21ff.
- 13 1318b18; 1308b21; 1305a15.
- 14 1292a13.
- 15 1292a30.
- 16 1292a31.
- 17 1292a25.
- 18 1292a18–22.
- 19 1267a13–16.
- 20 *Staat der Athener*, 16. Compare H. Friedel, *Der Tyrannenmord in Gesetzgebung und Volksmeinung der Griechen. Würzburger Studien zur Altertumswissenschaft* (11) (Stuttgart, 1937), 20ff., 39ff. Here too, see page 41 of the text of the newer law against the tyranny to which Aristotle refers in *Staat der Athener*, 22:

if one topples democracy in Athens or occupies an office while the democracy is toppled, then he shall be an enemy of the Athenians and be killed without punishment and his possessions shall fall to the polis and the tenth portion to the goddess. But he who has killed such a one who has practised it, and he who has aided in it with advice, shall be guiltless and pure. But all

Athenians, simultaneously carrying out the law according sacrifice to Phylon and Demen, shall take an oath to kill the one who has practised such a thing. But the oath formula should be the following:

I wish, through word and deed and voting stone and with my own hand, if I am capable of it, to grant death to one who topples the democracy in Athens and one, further, who continues to hold an office as the democracy is toppled, and one who brings oneself to become a tyrant or helps the tyrant to power. And if another carries out the killing, I will regard him before gods and demons as justified, as one who has killed the state enemy of the Athenians. And I want to sell all the possessions of the one killed and to pay half the proceeds to the one who has killed him and to withhold nothing from him. But if, by killing one of the named or by an attack on him, one dies himself, I want to reward him and his children like Harmodios and Aristogeiton and their descendents.

The same text can be found in F. Bauer, ed., *Widerstand gegen die Staatsgewalt. Dokumente der Jahrtausende* (Frankfurt, 1965), 26ff. On Aristotle's position on tyrannicide, compare the comments of H.-G. Schmidt-Lilienberg, *Die Lehre vom Tyrannenmord. Ein Kapitel aus der Rechtsphilosophie. ND der Ausgabe Tübingen 1901* (Aalen, 1964), 11ff. On Aristotle's position on the right of resistance, compare J.A. Stütter, 'Das Widerstandsrecht und seine Rechtfertigungsversuche im Altertum und im frühen Christentum', *ARSP* 51 (1965), 495–538. Also in A. Kaufmann and L. E. Backmann, eds, *Widerstandsrecht. Wege der Forschung*, vol. CLXXIII (Darmstadt, 1972).

- 21 This view is represented in W. Jaeger, *Aristoteles. Grundlegung einer Geschichte seiner Entwicklung* (Berlin, 1923), 335. See Also U. v. Wilamowitz-Moellendorf, *Aristoteles und Athen* (Berlin, 1893), 339 and 351. Compare the comment of L. Strauss in *Persecution and the Art of Writing* (Glencoe IL, 1952), 33.
- 22 *Politics* 1312b10ff.
- 23 1311a6f.
- 24 1312a24.
- 25 In this context, ambition is intended positively, not pejoratively, as is fame.
- 26 1312a24–40.
- 27 Compare O. Jászi and J. D. Lewis, *Against the Tyrant: The Tradition and Theory of Tyrannicide* (Glencoe IL, 1957), 6, 22 and 260, footnote 22. Also A. Schäffle, *Bau und Leben des sozialen Körpers*, 2 vols. *Spezielle Soziologie* (Tübingen, 1896), invokes the 'splendid characteristic of Aristotle against [*sic!*] tyranny', which 'in an insurpassable way [...describes] the basic features of the kind of politics through which alone tyranny can be maintained'.
- 28 1313a40–1313b32, 1314a13; 1314a2.
- 29 Compare W. Kersting, *N. Machiavelli* (Munich, 1988), 125ff. I. Berlin, 'Die Originalität Machiavellis', *Wider das Geläufige. Aufsätze zur Ideengeschichte. I. A* (Frankfurt, 1988), 93–157.
- 30 *Principe* XXV.
- 31 *Principe* VIII.
- 32 *Discorsi* I.
- 33 The programme of the extra-constitutional 'principe nuovo' is equally far removed from an utopian and fatalistic opting-out of history. By contrast to the task of the likewise extra-constitutional 'législateur' in the totalitarian utopia of Rousseau, it is not a question of overcoming the nature of the human being by 'denaturing' it or of transforming the 'société civile' into an 'association' that is free of opposition and rule. The goal of the 'principe nuovo' is a political one: it is necessary to wring from human nature the capacity to form a republic.

- 34 J. Bodin, *Six Livres de la République* (Paris, 1583). VI, 4. Compare the preface s.p.  
 35 Ibid., II, 4.  
 36 Ibid., IV, 7; II, 4.  
 37 Compare R. Dérathé, 'Les philosophes et le despotisme', *Utopie et Institutions au XVIIIe Siècle. Le Pragmatisme des Lumières. Congrès et Colloques IV* (Paris, 1963), 61.  
 38 I, 6, 69. Compare II, 2, 273:

Quant à la Monarchie Segneuriale, Il est besoin de la traiter la première, comme celle qui a été la première entre les hommes. Car ceux les abusent, lesquels, suivant l'opinion d'Aristote, pensent que les premiers Monarques aux temps héroïques fussent élus des peuples.

- 39 J. Althusius, *Politica methodice digesta atque exemplis sacris et profanes illustrata*. Facsimilie copy of the 3.A. Herborn 1614 (Aalen, 1961), chapter 18, 69.  
 40 Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan: or, the Matter, Form, and Power of a Commonwealth, Ecclesiastical and Civil* 4 (1651), *EW* vol. 3 (1839; reprint 1962), 2, 19 (171); 2, 29 (316); 2, 17 (159); 2, 20 (185; 188ff.)  
 41 Hobbes, *De Cive* 5, 12 (1642/46), *Opera Part II* (1839; reprint 1962), 216.  
 42 *Second Treatise on Government*, chapters XVIII; XVII; XIX.  
 43 Ibid.  
 44 XIX. Compare O. Jászi and J.D. Lewis, *Against the Tyrant: The Tradition and Theory of Tyrannicide* (Glencoe IL, 1957), 103.  
 45 Ch. W. Hendel, ed., *David Hume's Political Essays* (New York, 1953) ('Whether the British Government inclines more to absolute monarchy or to a republic'), 76.  
 46 *Reflections*, Everyman edition (London, 1960), 121.  
 47 *Considerations on Representative Government* (1861) (London, 1960), 202ff.  
 48 Montesquieu, *De l'esprit des lois* 3.10; 2, 1 (1748), *Oeuvres complètes*, Part A (1951; 1976), VIII, 6.  
 49 Montesquieu, *De l'esprit des lois* 3.10; 2, 1 (1748), *Oeuvres complètes*, Part A (1951; 1976), VIII, 6.  
 50 XI, 9.  
 51 XXIX.  
 52 J. J. Rousseau, *Du contrat social* (1762). Compare *ibid.*, 9.1:

Quand donc on demande absolument quel est le meilleur gouvernement, on fait une question insoluble comme indéterminée; ou, si l'on veut, elle a autant des bonnes solutions qu'il y a de combinaisons possibles dans les positions absolues et relatives des peuples.

On this, B. de Jouvenal, 'Rousseau's Theory of the Forms of Government', M. Cranston and R. S. Peters, eds, *Hobbes and Rousseau* (New York, 1972), 485–97.

- 53 In *Discours sur l'origine et les fondemens de l'inégalité parmi les hommes* (1754), despotism appears as the 'dernier terme de l'inégalité'. See *ibid.*, 191. Compare *Du contrat social* 2, 11, footnote:

Voulez-vous donc donner à l'État de la consistance? ... ne souffrez ni des gens opulens ni des gueux. Ces deux états, naturellement inseparables, sont également funeste au bien commun; de l'un sortent les fauteurs de la tyrannie et de l'autre les tyrans; c'est toujours entre eux que se fait le trafic de la liberté publique; l'un l'achette et l'autre la vend.

- 54 P. F. Le Mercier de la Rivière, *L'ordre naturel et essentiel des sociétés politiques* (1767), E. Depitre, ed. (Paris, 1910), 138ff., 140ff.



- 55 Cited according to G. J. Cavanaugh, 'Turgot: The Rejection of Enlightened Despotism', *French Historical Studies* 6 (1969), 31–58; here page 43.
- 56 M. Robespierre, 'Speech of 2 February 1794', M. Bouloiseau and A. Soboul, eds, *Oeuvres*, part 10 (Paris, 1967), 357. Compare J. P. Marat, speech of 4 April 1793: 'Le despotisme de la liberté', P. J. B. Buchez and P. C. Roux, *Histoire de la Révolution Française*, part 25 (Paris, 1836), 300.
- 57 Friedrich Schlegel, 'Versuch über den Begriff des Republikanismus (1796)', *SW* vol. 7 (1966), 14.
- 58 J. G. Fichte, 'Aus dem Entwurfe zu einer politischen Schrift im Frühling (1813)', *SW* vol. 7 (1846, reprint 1965), 565. See also Fichte, 'Die Republik der Deutschen, zu Anfang des zwei und zwanzigsten Jahrhunderts, unter ihrem fünften Reichsvogte' (1807/13), *ibid.*, 532.
- 59 G. W. F. Hegel, 'Kritik der Verfassung Deutschlands', G. Lasson, ed., *Schriften zur Politik und Rechtsphilosophie*, vol. 2A (Leipzig, 1923), 3. See also Hegel, 'Jenaer Systementwürfe III. Vorlesungsmanuskript zur Realphilosophie (1805/06)', *Gesammelte Werke* vol. 8 (1976), 258. Here, it should be considered that Hegel – in a clear departure from the tradition – had already pressed the question as to the form of constitution 'into the sphere of the accidental' in the essay on the constitution of the Reich that remained unpublished in his lifetime. (Having begun in Frankfurt in 1798–99, he finished it only later in Jena). Compare H. Maier, 'Hegels Schrift über die Reichsverfassung', *Politische Wissenschaft in Deutschland. Aufsätze zur Lehrtradition und Bildungspraxis* (Munich, 1969), 52–69; here, 63.
- 60 Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Geschichte*, *SW* vol. II, 219.
- 61 *Ibid.*, 150.
- 62 G. W. F. Hegel, *Ästhetik* (Berlin, 1955), 230. Compare H. Mandt, *Tyrannislehre und Widerstandsrecht* (Darmstadt, 1974), 175.
- 63 'Über den Gemeinspruch: Das mag in der Theorie richtig sein, taugt aber nicht für die Praxis II 1 (1973)', *AA* vol. 8 (1912); reprint 1968, 290ff.; 302. See also 'Zum ewigen Frieden (1795)', *AA* vol. 8, 350ff.
- 64 *Kleine Schriften*, 99. See also *Streit der Fakultäten*, 159 A. Also *Rechtslehre*, 142–206. *Reflexionen* no. 8051; 7975.
- 65 *Kleine Schriften*, 164, 97.
- 66 A. de Tocqueville, *De la démocratie en Amérique*, F. Furet, ed. (Paris, 1981), vol. II, chs XI; XIV.

c'est à travers le bon ordre que tous les peuples sont arrivés à la tyrannie . . . Une nation qui ne demande à son gouvernement que le maintien de l'ordre est déjà esclave au fond du coeur; elle est esclave de son bien-être, et l'homme qui doit l'enchaîner peut paraître.

- 67 Op. cit., XXII:

La guerre ne livre pas toujours les peuples démocratiques au gouvernement militaire; mais elle ne peut manquer d'accroître immensément... les attributions du gouvernement civil; elle centralise presque forcément dans les mains de celui-ci la direction de tous les hommes et l'usage de toutes les choses. Si elle ne conduit pas tout à coup au despotisme par la violence, elle y amène doucement par les habitudes.

- 68 Op. cit., VII; XV, XVI.  
 69 Op. cit., XII.  
 70 Op. cit., vol. 2, part 4, ch. VI.  
 71 Op. cit., vol. 1, introduction.

- 72 Op. cit., vol. 2, part 4, ch. VI.
- 73 Compare the following articles: Dieter Groh, 'Caesarism', and Ernst Nolte, 'Dictatorship', O. Brunner, W. Conze and R. Koselleck, *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe*, vol. 1 (Stuttgart, 1972), 727–71; 900–24.
- 74 K. Marx to A. Ruge, May 1843. *MEW* 1 (1956), 340.
- 75 K. Marx and F. Engels, *Manifest der Kommunistischen Partei* (1848), *MEW*, Vol. 4 (1959), 462.
- 76 K. Marx, 'Die britische Herrschaft in Indien (1853)', *MEW* 9 (1960), 128–32.
- 77 B. Constant, 'De l'esprit de conquête et de l'usurpation dans leurs rapports avec la civilisation européenne (1814)', A. Roulin, ed., *Oeuvres* (Paris, 1957), 1.13, 1019.
- 78 Op. cit., 469.
- 79 *Das Kapital*, vol. I, *MEW* 23 (1962), 377; 351.
- 80 *Ibid.*, 351.
- 81 F. Engels, *Von der Autorität* (1872/73), *MEW* 18 (1962), 306.
- 82 It was at the same time a legal concept: in Roman civil law, dictatorship was both temporally and legally limited – a regime reserved for the state of emergency.
- 83 J. J. Rousseau, *Du contrat social* (1762), 1. IV, chapter 6.
- 84 Nolte, 'Dictatorship', 908.
- 85 *MEW* 28 (1963), 508.
- 86 'None of the so-called human rights goes ... beyond the egoistic human being'. 'Zur Judenfrage (1843)', S. Landshut, ed., *Frühschriften* (Stuttgart, 1953), 194. See also 'Deutsche Ideologie (1845/46)', *Frühschriften* op. cit., 374:

At a time and in a country where kingly power, aristocracy and bourgeoisie argue about rule, where, therefore, the rule is distributed, the doctrine of the distribution of powers shows itself to govern the ideas, as a doctrine that is now expressed as an 'eternal' law, and specifically, by 'the active, conceptive ideologies' of the ruling class.

M. A. Bakunin had initially been a close friend of Marx before the two became irreconcilable opponents during the Third International. In a 1870 Geneva essay entitled *La Science et la tâche révolutionnaire urgente*, Bakunin criticised Marx's notion of the 'dictatorship of the proletariat', stating it to be 'such a heresy against common sense and historical experience that one asks oneself with astonishment how a person as intelligent as Mr Marx could have thought it up'. Bakunin saw the 'doctrinarian' socialists to be on the best path 'to take the people in hand'. They 'profess that solely a dictatorship – one of themselves, of course – is capable of attaining the freedom of the people. To this we answer that no dictatorship can have any goal besides that of enduring as long as possible'. Cited from D. Guérin, *Anarchismus. Begriff und Praxis* (Frankfurt, 1967), 24ff.

- 87 D. F. Strauss to F. Theodor Vischer, 1 August 1852, E. Zeller, ed., *Ausgewählte Briefe* (Bonn, 1895), 307.
- 88 *Ibid.*, 351.
- 89 H. von Treitschke to H. Bachmann, 19 November 1854, M. Cornicelius, ed., *Briefe*, 2.A., vol. 1 (Leipzig, 1914), 260.
- 90 The same, to his father, 4 March 1856, *ibid.*, 352.
- 91 *Briefe*, vol. 2, 75 (letter of 3 February 1860 to W. Nokk).
- 92 *Politik*, vol. 2, 190; 193 (chapter entitled 'Über Tyrannis und Cäsarismus').
- 93 *Ibid.*, 189, 192, 199, 210.
- 94 *Ibid.*, 21. Compare also *Aufsätze*, vol. 4, 790.
- 95 Compare H. Mandt, *Tyrannislehre*, 215ff.

- 96 *Politik*, vol. 1, 'Introduction', 2: 'Whoever truly wishes to acquire political sense should harden himself in the steel bath of classical antiquity, which has brought forth the greatest masterpiece of political theory, the *Politics* of Aristotle, before which we all still stand as amateurs'. Compare *Briefe*, vol. III, 39ff.
- 97 J. C. Bluntschli, 'Despotism', Johan Caspar Bluntschli and Karl Ludwig Theodor Brater, *Deutsches Staatswörterbuch*, 11 vols (Stuttgart, Leipzig, 1857–70), vol. 2 (1857), 718, 720.
- 98 J. C. Bluntschli, *Lehre vom modernen Staat, Teil 3: Politik als Wissenschaft* (Stuttgart 1876, Aalen, 1965), 415.
- 99 Compare Steven Collini, *Public Intellectuals: Political Thought and Intellectual Life in Britain 1850–1930* (Oxford, 1991), 287–301. See also R. A. Cosgrove, *Albert Venn Dicey, Victorian Jurist* (London, 1981). Dicey was part of the canon not solely for his introduction to constitutional law, but also for his quality as 'one of the greatest liberal theorists' in the tradition of J. S. Mill and A. de Tocqueville. Compare here M. Qvortrup, 'A. V. Dicey: The Referendum as the People's Veto', *History of Political Thought* XX, no. 3 (1999), 531–45; here 531 and 537ff.
- 100 Compare A. V. Dicey, *Introduction to the Study of the Law of the Constitution*. (1.A. 1885). Cited here: 8.A. 1913. Part II, *The Rule of Law*, chapter 4: 'The Rule of Law: Its Nature and General Applications', 185. 'Civilised and progressive state', A. V. Dicey, 'Will the Form of Parliamentary Democracy be Permanent?' *Harvard Law Review* XII (1899/1900), 71. Cited from M. Qvortrup, op. cit., 533. Within representative democracy, Dicey feared the tyranny of one party, insofar as constitutional changes could be made by a democratically elected parliamentary majority: '[they] ought not be made by a body of men who do not clearly represent the final will of the nation'. The referendum was supposed in this case to function as 'the people's veto'.
- 101 *L'État* (Paris, 1900); *Traité de Droit Constitutionnel* 1.A. 1911; 2.A. 1921; 3.A. 1927.
- 102 L. Duguit, *L'État, le droit objectif et la loi positive*, vol. I (Paris, 1900), 320. Cited according to B. de Jouvenel, *Über die Staatsgewalt. Die Naturgeschichte ihres Wachstums* (Frieburg, 1972), 22.
- 103 *Traité* II, chapter 1 *Les Éléments de l'État*, §6 'La force matérielle des gouvernants', 48. As a supplementation, Duguit adds:

Qu'on n'oublie pas que la tyrannie n'est pas incompatible avec la démocratie, que les élus du peuple sont aussi tyrans s'ils gouvernent dans leur intérêt et dans celui de leurs électeurs, non dans l'intérêt de tous. Qu'on n'oublie pas que le gouvernement tyrannique, quelle que soit sa forme, ne possède point la force morale sans laquelle la force matérielle ne peut être que précaire.

(Op. cit., 48)

- 104 Emphases in original, *Traité*, III, chapter VI, §101, 801.
- 105 *Traité*, III, chapter III: 'Les organes de l'état', §47. *Les gouvernements monarchiques*, op. cit., 772ff. Duguit refers for further information to three publications: 'La délegation des députés communistes anglais en Russie', *Revue politique et parlementaire* (10 July 1926), 31. Douillet, *Moscou sans voiles* (1928), 'et surtout, Mirkine-Guetzevitch, *La théorie générale de l'État soviétique*, avec préface de Jéze, 1928'. Following these entries are three further ones concerning the character of inherited monarchy in France and the basic laws of the monarchy.
- 106 Compare R. Schnur, 'Einleitung zu M. Hauriou', *Die Theorie der Institution und zwei andere Aufsätze. Schriften zur Rechtslehre*, no. 5 (Berlin, 1965), 11.

- 107 Compare M. Hauriou, *Principes de Droit Public à l'usage des étudiants en licence et en Doctorat es Sciences Politiques*, 2.A. (Paris, 1916), 773–75.
- 108 M. Hauriou, op. cit., 76ff. It bears further scrutiny as to whether this finding also applies to later publications following Lenin's coming to power and the political consolidation of Fascism in Italy.
- 109 G. Jellinek, *Allgemeine Staatslehre* 3.A. (1900), W. Jellinek, ed. (Berlin, 1914), 666ff.
- 110 H. Heller, *Staatslehre* (1934), 3rd edn (Leiden, 1963), 27.
- 111 R. Schmidt, *Allgemeine Staatslehre* (Leipzig, 1901 reprint Aalen, 1969). Vol. I, first part: 'Die Gemeinsame Grundlagen des politischen Lebens', 268.

Accordingly, it would seem to be a mistake to dissociate, from the three main forms of the theory of regimes, an equal number of adjacent forms – to oppose tyranny or despotism to monarchy, for example, or oligarchy to aristocracy or ochlocracy or mob rule to democracy as 'deviations'.

- 112 'Teorica dei governi e governo parlamentare', *Scritti politici di Gaetano Mosca. A cura di Giorgio Sola*, vol. I (2nd edn 1924) (Turin, 1982), 187–538, 202ff.
- 113 'Teorica', op. cit., 249, 250. Richard Bellamy emphasises that it was not 'crude empiricism' that determined Mosca's plea for a 'ruling class' in the sense of a 'meritocracy'. '[T]he original impetus behind the entire project' was an attempt to find a peaceful solution to the social question in Italy. The unexpressed prescriptive premise of his conception of the ruling class as a 'rule by a disinterested educated elite serving the common good', was mistrust of the rule of propertied elites, '[who], to better the condition of the poor, will never injure their own interests'. Bellamy, 'G. Mosca', Bellamy, ed., *Modern Italian Social Theory, Ideology and Politics from Pareto to the Present* (Cambridge MA, 1987), 37; 42ff.)

This original impetus has remained unconsidered by N. Bobbio, *Saggi sulla Scienza Politica in Italia* (Laterza, 1969). That Bobbio was no friend of Mosca's politics is emphasised by J. Femia, 'Mosca revisited', *European Journal of Political Research* 23 (1993), 145–61. See here 147. On page 145: 'social critics could learn much from Mosca, in spite of his conservative leanings'.

- 114 Cited according to J. Femia, op. cit., 157: 'Under collectivism, everyone will have to kowtow to the men of government. They alone can dispense favour, bread, the joy or sorrow of life'. No more talk of 'i cosidetti tiranni' of the Greek cities. Compare 'Teorica', op. cit., 254. There, the Jacobin rule is characterised as 'sanguinaria tirannide' (346). Despotism in the context of representative democracy: *Elementi* I, 689–91, cited in Bellamy, op. cit., 47. Dictatorship (invoking Guicciardini) is rejected as a 'disease'. Political freedom (likewise invoking Guicciardini) is defined as the 'superiority of the laws and ordinances above all private desires'.
- 115 H. Kelsen, *Allgemeine Staatslehre* (1925), 2nd edn (Bad Homburg, Berlin, Zurich, 1966), 335. In the English edition, which appeared in 1949 (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press), this passage is omitted. Certainly, this would not have occurred without the consent of the author; yet it was never justified, either. Compare *General Theory of Law and State*, 300. In the second German edition, which appeared in 1966, the wording of 1.A. was retained with only marginal modification:

completely meaningless is the claim that there is no legal order in the despotism, where the arbitrariness of the despot is said to rule. Completely

disregarding the fact that historical fact proves the opposite, that all known despotisms, especially the ancient oriental despotisms, manifest a very differentiated legal order, ... the despotically governed state also still represents some kind of ordering of human conduct. Indeed, without such an order, a state – not even a community – would not be possible at all. Precisely this order is the legal order. To deny it the character of law is merely a natural-right naivety or arrogance. Particularly when it is justified solely by the claim that subjects of a despotism are without rights ... and all are slaves ... [T]he despotism [must] be valid as a legal order. The identification of a certain technique of law with law in itself is a fully and completely unpositivistic way of thinking.

(§46, 'Die Monarch', op. cit., 335)

Whether Kelsen knew of Leo Strauss's 1953 book, *Natural Right and History* (Chicago, 1956), cannot be ascertained to date. In the introduction (footnote 2), Strauss draws attention to the fact that the above-mentioned passage has been omitted from the English translation: 'Where Kelsen has not changed his attitude opposite natural right, I cannot imagine why he would have omitted this instructive passage'. Presumably, Strauss could very well have imagined the reason. In the Anglo-American context, one cannot speak and write about 'natural-law naivety or arrogance' as easily as one can in the German linguistic sphere!

- 116 Compare H. Kelsen, *Sozialismus und Staat*, 2nd edn (Leipzig, 1923), 111.
- 117 H. Kelsen, 'Verteidigung der Demokratie', *Blätter der Staatspartei* 2 (1932), 90–98. Reprinted in H. Kelsen, *Demokratie und Sozialismus. Ausgewählte Aufsätze*, edited and with an introduction by Norbert Leser (Vienna, 1967), 60, 62, 68. See also M. Stolleis, *Geschichte des öffentlichen Rechts in Deutschland*, vol. 3, *Staats- und Verwaltungsrechtswissenschaft in Republik und Diktatur 1924–1945* (Munich, 1999). Stolleis underscores Kelsen's 'exceedingly clear words of 1932', which he cites extensively. The weight of these words, however, and the problem they express remain unconsidered. Thus is Kelsen honoured as a critic of dictatorship in absence of a description of the aprioris of his value-relativistic doctrine and its significance for practical politics in the Weimar Republic.
- 118 H. Heller, *Staatslehre*, op. cit., 26.
- 119 R. Smend, 'Verfassung und Verfassungsrecht' (1928), *Staatsrechtliche Abhandlungen*, 2nd edn (Berlin, 1968), 124. See also Smend, 'Die politische Gewalt im Verfassungsstaat und das Problem der Staatsform' (1923), *Staatsrechtliche Abhandlungen*, op. cit., 88. 'Verfassung', op. cit., 218.
- 120 'Die politische Gewalt', op. cit., 83.
- 121 R. Smend, 'Die politische Gewalt', op. cit., 86; 'Der Verfassung', op. cit., 219.
- 122 R. Smend, 'Integration', *Evangelisches Staatslexikon*, 3rd revised edn in two volumes (Stuttgart, 1987), vol. I., 1354–58. See here 1358. Compare on Smend, M. Stolleis, *Geschichte des öffentlichen Rechts in Deutschland*, op. cit., 174 in connection with the critique of Hermann Heller, *Staatslehre*, op. cit., 49. Compare also G. Radbruch, *Rechtsphilosophie*, 3rd edn, 1932:

But the political function of the integration theory ... is its ability to base non-democratic constitutional forms on the will of the people as well; not on the will of the majority of the people, certainly, but on the integrative will of an indeterminate and untestable – and, therefore, to a large extent arbitrary – people's community.

See page 165, footnote 1 (§8, 'Rechtsphilosophische Parteienlehre').

- 123 Compare E. Nolte, 'Diktatur', *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe*, vol. I, op. cit.

One would hardly go wrong to construe the political core of the book in relation to the 'dictatorship of the proletariat' – which is more touched upon in select passages than interpreted. The implicit result might be formulated as follows: the liberal state, which is endangered to the utmost by the emergence of a party that is fundamentally hostile to the state . . ., can no longer be content with the commissaristic dictatorship prescribed in Article 48 of the constitution of the Weimar Republic. It must be transformed instead into the sovereign dictatorship, which is uniquely positioned to be able to eliminate the challenge at the root.

(921)

- 124 C. Schmitt, 'Diktatur', 142. Compare Alfred Cobban, *Dictatorship: Its History and Theory* (New York, 1939), II Appendix: The theory of dictatorship of Carl Schmitt, 335–44. Here, see 340–41.

Behind these arguments, we must insist, lies the fundamental presupposition that all political right is an emanation of the will of the people, or the nation . . . Now this principle, while generally accepted by German thinkers, runs counter to the secular trend of Western thought.

(341)

- 125 The great entrepreneur has no ideal other than that of Lenin – namely, an 'electrified earth'. American finance people and Russian Bolsheviks find themselves united in the struggle for economic thought . . .; the functionality of economically thinking capitalists [is here] very close to the conviction of radical communism. (Carl Schmitt, *Römischer Katholizismus und politische Form* (1923), 2nd ed. (Munich, 1925), 19, 49)
- 126 Carl Schmitt, *Die geistgeschichtliche Lage des heutigen Parlamentarismus* (1923), 5th edn (Berlin, 1979), 37.
- 127 C. Schmitt, *Verfassungslehre* (1928), 3rd unrevised edn (Berlin, 1957), xii, 212.
- 128 Compare K. Löwenstein, 'Max Weber als "Ahnherr" des plebiszitären Führerstaats', *KzfSS* 13 (1961), 281.
- 129 Compare O. Kirchheimer, 'Bemerkungen zu Carl Schmitts *Legalität und Legitimität* (1932)', Kirchheimer, *Von der Weimarer Republik zum Faschismus. Die Auflösung der demokratischen Rechtsordnung* (Frankfurt, 1976), 113–51; cited here, 150. On Schmitt's rejection of the paradigms of the legitimacy of the Western tradition, with the consequence of a 'Ramboisation of politics' (F. Cardini), see H. Mandt, 'Legitimität', D. Nohlen, ed., *Lexicon der Politik*, vol. I: *Politische Theorien* (Munich, 1995), 284–98; here, 292ff. On German nihilism, compare Leo Strauss, 'German Nihilism' (1941), *Interpretation* 26, no. 3 (1999), 353–75.
- 130 F. Scharpf, *Demokratietheorie zwischen Utopie und Anpassung* (Konstanz, 1970), 19.
- 131 H. Heller, *Staatslehre* (1934), G. Niemeyer, ed., in M. Drath, O. Stammer, G. Niemeyer and F. Borinski, eds, *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 3 (Leiden, 1971), 310. Heller, 'Rechtsstaat oder Diktatur?' (1929), *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 2 (Leiden, 1971); Heller, *Staatslehre*, op. cit., 315, 360ff. The structure of the third part of the *Staatslehre* is printed as an appendix to the *Staatslehre*. On the reference to Aristotle, compare Heller, part I, 2: 'Entwicklung und Gegenstand der politischen Wissenschaften', 13:

In Greece, the type of politicology that is the most related to contemporary science was created by Aristotle. It was he who took the fundamental step from speculation to the empirical material. Not that he relinquished knowledge

of the best state as the ultimate goal of science. But he wants to attain this goal in such a way that he ... first collects a comprehensive array of factual material to the end of knowing the empirical reality and only then erects the final value-goal in reflecting on this being.

- 132 H. Heller, 'Europa und der Fascismus' (1929), *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 2, 515; Heller, 'Was bringt uns eine Diktatur?' (1929), *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 2, 437.
- 133 G. Niemeyer expressly emphasises this in his introduction to the *Staatslehre*, which he edited: 'often, he spent an entire day of concentrated work on the formulation of a single sentence. Hermann Heller's awareness of his responsibility for his statements to both readers and listeners knew no limits of self-criticism or effort'. His intellectual honesty is said to have been corrupted neither through an addiction to originality nor through resentment, nor through an aesthetic of a system (op. cit., viii).
- 134 J. Bryce, *Modern Democracies*, 2 vols (London/New York, 1921). In the Anglo-American sphere, among others in the United States, Canada and Australia, 'the words, "democracy" and "democratic" have assumed ... associatively a social and in fact almost ethical character'. Op. cit., 23.
- 135 Compare D. C. M. Yardley, *Introduction to the British Constitution*, 6th edn (London, 1984), 70.
- 136 R. M. MacIver, *The Modern State* (Oxford, 1926), ch. XI, 'The Forms of the State', 338; here see 342, 345, 348. In other passages, 'the fascist government of Italy' is counted alongside Soviet Russia as one of the dictatorships that issued from the war. Compare ch. III, 'Authority and Revolution', 215. The premise lying at base of MacIver's argument states: 'the study of the historical process' confirms 'that, in spite of reversion, the main trend of the state, *after it has finally emerged as a state*, is toward democracy'. Op. cit., 340 (emphasis in the original).
- 137 K. Kautsky, 'Terrorismus und Kommunismus (1920)', H. Kremendahl, Theodor Meyer, eds, *Sozialismus und Staat*, vol. I (Kronberg, 1974), 232. The recurrent characterisation of the Soviet dictatorship as one of an 'Asiatic' or 'Tatarist' character goes back to Marx's and Engel's 'anti-Russian complex' (D. Geyer). For them, the tsarist kingdom was of prime importance only as the supreme reactionary power of Europe. Compare here J. Zarusky, *Die deutschen Sozialdemokraten und das sowjetische Modell. Ideologische Auseinandersetzung und außenpolitische Konzeptionen 1917-1933* (Munich, 1992), 19ff. and 50ff.
- 138 K. Kautsky, 'Die Diktatur des Proletariats' (1918), H. Kremendahl, Theodor Meyer, op. cit., 195, 205.
- 139 The question at stake in this context concerns the opposing of democracy to dictatorship. Lenin connects his evasion of a justification with the following comment:

Kautsky's tendency to turn from the twentieth century to the eighteenth century and from the eighteenth century to antiquity is well known, and we hope that the German proletariat, having attained the dictatorship, will bear this tendency of Kautsky in mind and will employ him ... as a *Gymnasium* professor of the history of antiquity.

Lenin further accuses Kautsky of seeking to evade 'defining the dictatorship of the proletariat', by 'philosophising about despotism'. This is said to be 'either a capital stupidity or a downright imprudent swindle'. Op. cit., 213-14.

- 140 'Die Diktatur des Proletariats', op. cit., 213.

- 141 Compare K. Sauerland, 'Von Dostoevsky zu Lenin. Georg Lukács' und Ernst Blochs frühe Auseinandersetzungen mit dem revolutionären Rußland', G. Koenen and L. Kopelev, eds, *West-östliche Spiegelungen. Deutschland und die russische Revolution* (Munich, 1998), 482–502; here 496ff.; Eva Karádi, 'Ernst Bloch und Georg Lukács im Max Weber-Kreis', W. Mommsen and W. Schwentker, eds, *Max Weber und seine Zeitgenossen* (Göttingen, 1988), 682–702; F. Turati, 'Faschismus, Sozialismus und Demokratie' (1928), E. Nolte, ed., *Theorien über den Faschismus* (Cologne, Berlin, 1967), 143–55, here 153. Turati, the founder of the PSI, uses *despotism*, *despotic*, *dictatorial* synonymously, referring to Bolshevism and Fascism: *totalitarian* with gaze directed at Italian Fascism: 146ff. and 150. In *Das Prinzip Hoffnung*, Bloch's major work begun in the United States in 1938, the classic vocabulary dominates (*tyranny*, 577, 615ff., 673, 722, 1136, 1152 and 1315. *Despotism*: 1146, 1403, 1423, 1438, 1525 as well as *despoticism*: 450, 628, 688, 1136, 1405 in connection with *despotic* (seven times) in comparison to *tyrannical* (once); *totalitarian regime*).
- 142 For example, E. Bernstein, 'Tyrannei', *Betrachtung über das Wesen der Sowjetrepublik 19.9.1918*. Cited, with many further pieces of evidence, from U. Schöler, 'Despotischer Sozialismus' oder 'Staatsklaverei', vol. 1, 316.
- 143 F. Furet, *Das Ende der Illusion. Der Kommunismus im 20. Jahrhundert* (Munich, 1995), 87ff.
- 144 Cited from Christian Türcke, 'Wie der Imperialismus verschwand. Über W. I. Lenin und seine Kapitalismuskritik', U. Greiner, ed., *Revision. Denker des 20. Jahrhunderts auf dem Prüfstand* (Hildesheim, 1993), 137.
- 145 A. Gramsci, *Quaderni del carcere*, Edizione critica dell'Istituto Gramsci. Vol. 1, 4 (Turin, 1975), 2287. This version was revised by Gramsci himself after his release from prison. It contains not merely a stylistic revision, but an adjustment of content in two respects: instead of referring to the 'classe dominante', he now writes of a 'grupo dominante'. Beyond this, the legality aspect is emphasised much more than it was in the original version. The first version states: 'La dittatura moderna abolisce anche queste forme di autonomia di 1
- 146 Theodore R. Bates, 'A. Gramsci and the Bolshevization of the PCI', *Journal of Contemporary History* 11 (1976), 115–31.
- 147 If Gramsci had not been imprisoned before it could happen, Bates holds a party annexation to have been possible on the basis of Gramsci's reservations surrounding the tactical line of the Sixth World Congress (which made a renewed declaration of war on the social democratic parties of Europe). Op. cit., 131.
- 148 In his 'Note sul Machiavelli', he uses the expression 'totalitario' for the first time ('Note sul Machiavelli sulla politica e sullo Stato moderno', *Opere di Antonio Gramsci*, vol. 5 (Turin, 1949)).
- 149 B. Webb, *My Apprenticeship: January 1932* (London, 1936), 332–33; cited according to G. Himmelfarb, 'The Intellectual in Politics: The Case of the Webbs', *Journal of Contemporary History* 6, no. 3 (1971), 3–11; here pages 10–11. Compare also F. Weckerlein, 'Die Webbs. Intellektuelle zwischen Westminster und Rotem Platz'. Introduction to B. Webb, *Pilgerfahrt nach Moskau* (Passau, 1998), 11–42.
- 150 H. Laski, *Communism* (1927), 7th edn (London, 1968), 45. On dictatorship see *Foreign Affairs* (October 1932). Cited according to D. O'Sullivan, *Furcht und Faszination. Deutsche und britische Rußlandbilder 1921–1933* (Bonn, 1996), 208–9; Religion: *Communism* 52, 51–53. New civilization: *Liberty in the Modern State* (1948), 3rd edn (London, 1949). Cited in M. Hennigsen, 'H. J. Laski und George Orwell', M. Weber, ed., *Der gebändigte Kapitalismus. Sozialisten und Konservativen im Wohlfahrtsstaat. Englisches politisches Denken im 20. Jahrhundert* (Munich, 1974), 122. Inspired by Sidney and Beatrice Webb, with



whom Laski had been acquainted for many years, he published *Faith, Reason and Civilization* (London, 1944). Here, Laski's eighth chapter entitled 'The Soviet Idea and its Future', states his conviction: by

all who are still capable of learning ... [is] in fact admitted that Western European and American civilisation must somehow fit the basic doctrines of Lenin's analyses of our epoch into its plan. Although they might admit it in an irritated or reluctant way, the important thing is that they are driven to admit it in a way like the Roman citizen of the Constantian era was forced to absorb the foundations of Christianity into his horizon of ideas.

(Page 72 of the German edition: *Religion, Vernunft und neuer Glaube* (Berlin, 1949))

- 151 M. Weber, *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft*, vol. 2 (Tübingen, 1972), 784ff.  
 152 W. Mommsen, *Max Weber und die deutsche Politik 1890–1920* (Tübingen, 1959), 69–76.  
 153 M. Weber, *Politik als Beruf* (1919), *Gesamtausgabe* vol. 17 (1992), 113–252.  
 154 *Ibid.*, 197ff.  
 155 Harry Graf Kessler, *Tagebücher 1918–1937*, Wolfgang Pfeifer-Belli, ed. (Frankfurt, 1982), 132ff. Compare also D. O'Sullivan, *Furcht und Faszination. Deutsche und britische Rußlandbilder 1921–1923* (Cologne, Weimar, Berlin, 1996), 233.  
 156 B. Russell, *Politische Schriften I*, A.v. Borries, ed., (Munich, 1972), 22.  
 157 B. Russell, 'Theorie und Praxis des Bolschewismus (1920)', Russell, *Politische Schriften I*, op. cit., 139.  
 158 *Ibid.*, 121.  
 159 B. Russell, *Autobiographie*, vol. II (Frankfurt, 1970), 137.  
 160 B. Croce 'Antwort auf das 'Manifest der faschistischen Intellektuellen', E. Nolte, ed., *Theorien über den Faschismus*, 5th edn (Cologne, Berlin, 1979), 138–40. In Nolte's volume, see also G. Gentile, 'Manifest der faschistischen Intellektuellen an die Intellektuellen aller Nationen, 21 April 1925' (112–17).  
 161 Croce, *Geschichte Europas im 19. Jahrhundert* (Frankfurt, 1968), 318.  
 162 G. v. Hertling, 'Despotie', *Staatslexicon*, edited by the commission of the Görres Society for the Cultivation of Science in Catholic Germany, 2 vols. (Freiburg, 1892), 128–31.  
 163 Op. cit., 129ff.  
 164 G. von Hertling, *Naturrecht und Socialpolitik* (Cologne, 1893), 25.  
 165 B. Souvarine, *Staline. Aperçu historique du bolchévisme* (Paris, 1935), 25.  
 166 *Ibid.*, 37.  
 167 *Ibid.*, 48.  
 168 Hannah Arendt, who had thoroughly studied Souvarine's book, did not follow his estimation of Lenin. Compare here Tony Judt, 'At Home in this Century', *New York Review of Books*, 6 April 1995, 9:

Her debt to Boris Souvarine[']s ... brilliant and prescient study of Stalin is ... openly and generally recognized, though her enduring nostalgia for a certain lost innocence of the left prevented her from endorsing Souvarine's root-and-branch inclusion of Lenin in his condemnation of the Soviet enterprise.

- 169 D. Bosshart, *Politische Intellektualität und totalitäre Erfahrung. Hauptströmungen der französischen Totalitarismuskritik* (Berlin, 1992), 83–103 (also on the following); the citation is from 87.  
 170 Cited in Bosshart, op. cit., 97.

- 171 This programmatic writing, *Die sozialistische Entscheidung*, was printed in 1932 in Potsdam and prohibited and publicly burned in Frankfurt in 1933. In this essay, Tillich had still criticised Bolshevism and National Socialism with the help of the category of *dictatorship* or the slogan of *barbarism*. Going beyond Souvarine and anticipating Borkenau, he also incorporated Karl Marx as a religious socialist and his 'utopia' of the classless society into the genealogy of the Soviet regime. This utopia is said to fail to recognise that the fulfilment of human meaning is not possible within the human sphere. From the perspective of religious socialism, the Marxian vision of the *realm of freedom* and the classless society is 'false' on the level of its goal.
- 172 'The Totalitarian State and the Claims of the Church', Paul Tillich, *Main Works, Vol. 3. Writings in Social Philosophy and Ethics* (Berlin et al., 1998), 423–42, here 423.
- 173 Op. cit., 427.
- 174 Tillich later called the Hitler regime a tyranny: 'When we emigrated, we were shaken not so much by its tyranny and brutality as by the unimaginably low level of its intellectual culture'. Cited according to W. and M. Pauck, *P. Tillich*, vol. I (Stuttgart, Frankfurt, 1978), 135.
- 175 Tillich, op. cit., 428.
- 176 Written agreement between Horkheimer and Pollock cited from H. Gunnior and R. Ringguth, *Max Horkheimer in Selbstzeugnissen und Bilddokumenten*, 2nd edn (Reinbek bei Hamburg, 1983), 16. The authors speak of Horkheimer's life-long 'desire for a world without problems and cares'. Horkheimer himself noted in his diary on 9 July 1915: 'I cannot master my desire and I want to let myself be led by it my whole life, wherever the wild trip may lead'. Gunnior and Ringguth, op. cit., 17.
- 177 F. Pollock, 'Die planwirtschaftlichen Versuche in der Sowjetunion', *Archiv für die Geschichte des Sozialismus und der Arbeiterbewegung*, vol. 2 (Leipzig, 1929). In 1930, Horkheimer notes:

Whoever feels nothing from the scholars of the hint of strain there [in Russia] and carelessly raises himself [above it], is a miserable comrade whose society brings no profit. Whoever has eyes for the senseless ... injustice of the imperialistic world ... will at least ask with a thumping heart whether this attempt [to overcome it] will last.

See here *Dämmerung* (Zurich, 1934), 152. Cited according to Gunnior and Ringguth, op. cit., 33.

- 178 M. Horkheimer, 'Zum Realismusstreit in der gegenwärtigen Philosophie', Alfred Schmidt and Gunzelin Schmid Noerr, eds, *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 3 of 19 vols. (Frankfurt, 1985–96), 203. It should be noted that Horkheimer does not mention Kant's categorical rejection of the repetition of a rule of terror 'due to its high price'.
- 179 Compare M. Horkheimer, 'Die Juden und Europa', H. Dubiel and A. Söllner, eds, *Wirtschaft, Recht und Staat im Nationalsozialismus. Analysen des Instituts für Sozialforschung 1939–1942* (Frankfurt, 1984), 33:
- 180 See F. Furet, *Das Ende einer Illusion. Der Kommunismus im 20. Jahrhundert* (Munich, 1996), 466. See also Gunnior-Ringguth, op. cit., 31.
- 181 Compare H. Marcuse, 'Der Kampf gegen den Liberalismus in der totalitären Staatsauffassung (1934)', *Kultur und Gesellschaft*, vol. I, 8th edn (Frankfurt, 1968), 32.
- 182 Horkheimer, 'Die Juden und Europa', op. cit., 34. The text gets by with few footnotes. Of twelve references in total, eight are reserved for Mandeville, De Sade, de Bonald, Kant, Hobbes and Adam Smith. The remaining four refer to

the daily papers, in particular to the *Frankfurter Zeitung* as well as to Whaley-Eaton, Foreign Service Letter 1046, 2 May 1939 and *Revue d'économie politique* (September/October 1933). The only monograph mentioned was published in 1912 (D. Mornet, *Les origines intellectuelles de la Révolution Française*) and is invoked in order to prove the existence of similarities between the dictatorship of Robespierre and Saint Just and twentieth-century fascism.

The order that began as progressive in 1789 carried the tendency to National Socialism within from the beginning. Despite all basic differences ... from the leaders of the Third Reich (for which astonishing parallels can be found), the praxis arises from the same political necessity.

(Op. cit., 47)

- 183 M. Horkheimer, 'Der autoritäre Staat', W. Brede, ed., *Gesellschaft im Übergang. Aufsätze, Reden und Vorträge 1942–1970* (Frankfurt, 1972), 19, 16. 'In all its variants, the authoritarian state is repressive'. All the same: 'for individuals, the shape it ultimately assumes is decisive. The unemployed, retirees, business people, intellectuals can expect life or death depending upon whether reformism, Bolshevism or fascism is the victor' (20, 19).
- 184 Op. cit., 21, 22. This essay too is said to demonstrate that '[c]ritical theory is of another type. Rejecting the knowledge upon which can be insisted [traditional theory], it confronts history with the possibility that always becomes concretely visible in it'. Op. cit., 29. This essay also gets by with few notes: of ten footnotes in total, three refer to works of Friedrich Engels, two to August Bebel, one to Dante's *Divine Comedy*, another, finally, to August Comte. Further footnotes are reserved for: B. J. B. Buches and P. C. Roux, *Histoire Parlementaire de la Révolution Française*, vol. 10 (1834); two works by A. Mathiez (*La Réaction Thermidorienne* (Paris, 1929)) and *Contributions à l'histoire religieuse de la Révolution Française* (1907)) as well as a single contemporary monograph: Gaétan Pieou, *Neo-Liberalism, Neo-Corporations, Neo-Socialism* (Paris, 1939).
- 185 M. Horkheimer, 'Lehren aus dem Faschismus' (1950), *Gesellschaft im Übergang*, op. cit., 47.
- 186 Compare Gumnior, Ringguth, op. cit., 71. Recently also F. Pellicani, 'Modernity and Totalitarianism', *Telos* (1988), 3–22, here 5ff.
- 187 On the person, see R. Löwenthal, 'Einführung des Herausgebers', Franz Borkenau, *Ende und Anfang* (Stuttgart, 1984), 13ff. Also W. Jones, 'The Path from Weimar Communism to the Cold War: Franz Borkenau and the "Totalitarian Enemy"', A. Söllner, R. Walkenhaus and K. Wieland, eds, *Totalitarismus. Eine Ideengeschichte des 20. Jahrhunderts* (Berlin, 1997), 35–52. J. P. Arnason, 'Totalitarismus und Moderne. Franz Borkenaus Totalitarismustheorie als Ausgangspunkt für soziologische Analysen', A. Siegel, ed., *Totalitarismustheorien nach dem Ende des Kommunismus* (Cologne, Weimar, 1998), 169–200.
- 188 Franz Borkenau, *The Totalitarian Enemy* (1940), reprint (London, 1982), 17.
- 189 Franz Borkenau, op. cit., chapter VI, *The New Tyranny*, 151ff.
- 190 Complete exclusion could be attained solely through deficient media of mass communication, whether print or electronic media, which are used to mobilise the masses in the twentieth century. *Ibid.*, 157.
- 191 Italian Fascism has never had to deal with a big urban proletariat in giant factories, nor with a middle class completely ruined by inflation. Nor has Italy ever lived through a spiritual collapse of the type Germany experienced during and after the Great War. Italy was much less in need of a Messiah. (Borkenau, op. cit., 41)
- 192 Op. cit., 105.

- 193 Compare here R. Löwenthal, who had known Borkenau since their student days, when he was the *Reichsleiter* of the Communist students of Germany, a group to which Löwenthal also belonged. Editor's introduction (see footnote 96), 16ff.
- 194 Franz Borkenau, 'State and Revolution in the Paris Commune, The Russian Revolution and the Spanish Civil War', *Sociological Review* 29, no. 41 (1937), 41–75. On Borkenau's critique of Marx's 'total and totalitarian utopia', a utopia Lenin took with bitter seriousness, see also the introduction to the selection of Marxian writings edited by him (Frankfurt, 1956), 28ff., 37.
- 195 For example, in 'Prospettiva attuale de Socialismo Europeo', *Avanti*, 29 and 30 October and 5 November, 1944. Reprinted in I. Silone, *Scritti politici e morali. Romanzi e Saggi* (Milan, 1998). B. Falcetto, introduction, 1333. In 'La scuola dei dittatori' written a half-decade before in 1939, Silone still counted Marx among the founders of political science, together with Machiavelli, Bodin, Montesquieu, Mazzini, Masaryk and Lenin as well as Trotsky.

malgradi i suoi indegni epigoni, Marx ha, nella nostra epoca, con altri mezzi e alter intenzioni adempiuto alia stessa funzione di Machiavelli nel 1500, in quanto ha cercato di mettere in chiaro il funzionamento reale della società capitalistica della sua epoca, liberandolo dai veli della filosofia idealista tedesca e dell'umanitarismo francese. Per cui, non a torto, egli è stato definito il Machiavelli del proletariato.

(Op. cit., 1029)

- 196 On the meaning of 'ism' formation in the history of concepts in general, see R. Koselleck, 'Einleitung', O. Brunner, W. Conze and R. Koselleck, eds, *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe*, vol. I (Stuttgart, 1972), especially part 2, 'Begriffsgeschichtlicher Überblick dieser Studie (am Beispiel von despotisch, Despotie und Despotismus)'; also Koselleck, 'Tyranis, Despotie', *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe*, vol. 6 (Stuttgart, 1990), 651–706.
- 197 London, 1st edn 1939, 2nd edn 1943. The 'ethical test' lies not with the common good, but with following the modern paradigm of interests, the 'interests of the community as a whole'. See here foreword, 9. See also chapter I, 23ff. Delimiting it from the Roman concept of dictatorship on the one hand and that of Carl Schmitt on the other, Cobban defines dictatorship as

the government of one man who has attained his position, not by inheritance, but primarily by either force or consent and normally a combination of both . . . all political power must ultimately emanate from his will, and it must be unlimited in scope. It must be exercised . . . in an arbitrary manner, by decree rather than by law. And, finally, it must not be limited in duration to any given term of office; nor must the dictator be responsible to any authority.

(Op. cit., 26)

- 198 Cobban sees the peculiarity of modern totalitarian dictatorships to lie in their being based upon a particular intellectual justification:

whereas dictatorship in the past has been a practical expedient, lacking any attempt at theoretical justification, behind the machinery of party bureaucracy and secret police, political armies and terrorism, there is a real spiritual principle in modern dictatorship, which makes it something more than a mere technique of government. The new totalitarian dictatorship is powerful

not because it rules men's bodies, but because it controls their minds. Its essential aim is, in fact, ... the identification of Church and State.

(Op. cit., 283–84)

- 199 'I return repeatedly to my thesis. On the day Jaurès was murdered and the firestorm broke out in Europe, a new epoch of world history began. It is stupid to claim that the fire could be extinguished in six months'. Letter to Xavier Léon, 24 March 1916. Unpublished, cited according to Furet, op. cit., 631, footnote 22.
- 200 Compare F. Furet, *Das Ende einer Illusion*, op. cit., 72.
- 201 Emphasis in the original.
- 202 E. Halévy, 'The Era of Tyrannies'. First printed in the *Bulletin de la Société Française de Philosophie* (1936), 183–253. English translation in *Economica* VIII, 77–93 (February 1941). French edition: *L'ère des Tyrannies. Études sur le socialisme et la guerre* (Paris, 1938), 266ff. M. Mauss, Appendix II, 291ff.
- 203 R. Aron, 'Das Zeitalter der Tyrannen', *Über Deutschland und den Nationalsozialismus. Frühe politische Schriften 1930–1939*. Edited by J. Stark (Opladen, 1993), 186–208; here 190, 195, 197, 206ff. 'Totalitarian countries', 200. In understanding Aron's review essay, it should be added that the review appeared after Halévy's death. From this results possibly both the length of the review of Halévy's 'sketch' and the expressly declared intention 'less [to refute] these theses on the following pages than [to analyse] them ... They shall be confirmed and rectified through investigation of the facts, both the certain results and the dubious results shall be underscored'. Op. cit., 187.
- 204 Compare T. Judt, 'The Peripheral Insider: Raymond Aron and the Wages of Reason', T. Judt, *The Burden of Responsibility: Blum, Camus, Aron and the French Twentieth Century* (Chicago and London, 1998), 152. See here also Aron's essay, *Opium für Intellektuelle oder Die Sucht nach Weltanschauung* (Cologne, Berlin, 1957). Here is stated: 'For those who wish to "save the concepts", there remains a difference between a philosophy whose logic is monstrous and one that lends itself to a monstrous interpretation' (55). See also *Clausewitz*, vol. 2, 218. Judt emphasises in this context Aron's distaste for 'great theories':

His distaste for grand theory extended to anti-Communist rhetoric as well, and his thoughts on totalitarianism were derived in the first instance from his concern for its opposite – the partial, always imperfect reality of liberty, constrained and threatened by necessity and history.

(Op. cit., 152)

As a supplement, the author might have referred to the facts that Aron also brought out a volume of collected essays entitled *L'homme contre les tyrans* (Paris, 1945), as well as the posthumously published collection of essays, *Machiavelli et les tyrannies modernes* (Editions de Fallois, Paris, 1993).

- 205 First edition London 1938. 2nd edn November 1939; 3rd December 1939; 4th February 1942; in total, 10 editions in as many years.
- 206 Op. cit., 44, 48, 50ff., 66, 71, 78. 'Totalitarian worldliness', (52), a materialistic orientation towards the this-worldly, has resulted in the consequence that

a good deal of attention of totalitarian states has been devoted, with a steadiness of purpose not always found in democracies, to providing their national life with a foundation of morality – the wrong kind, perhaps, but a

good deal more of it. It is not enthusiasm, but dogma, that differentiates a Christian from a pagan society.

(79).

- 207 T. S. Eliot, 'Catholicism and International Order (1936), *Essays Ancient and Modern* (London: Faber and Faber, 1936). German edition in *T. S. Eliot, Essays I* (Frankfurt, 1988), 156, 162ff.
- 208 Christopher Dawson, *Judgement on the Nations* (London, 1943). German edition, *Gericht über die Völker* (Zurich, Einsiedeln, 1945).
- 209 Op. cit., 33, 134, 160, 22, 66.
- 210 Op. cit., 122.
- 211 Compare E. Nolte, *Geschichtsdenken im 20. Jahrhundert. Von M. Weber zu H. Jonas* (Frankfurt, 1991), 457.

Thus does Dawson stand close to the theory of totalitarianism, certainly, but the 'western constitutional state' or pluralistic democracy are not equally firm orientation points for him. This is because he sees an irreligious culture to be likewise a phenomenal form of disaster.

(457)

- 212 Op. cit., 59, 159. Dawson obviously reads something into Tocqueville's prognoses that would have been entirely unimaginable for the author of *Democracy in America*. The 'tyranny of the majority', or the 'kind of despotism the democratic nations must fear', is neither a political form *sensu strictu* nor a totalitarian one. Compare A. de Tocqueville, *Über die Demokratie in Amerika* (Munich, 1976), second part, IV, ch. 6.
- 213 German edition, *Über die Staatsgewalt. Die Naturgeschichte ihres Wachstums* (Freiburg, 1972). Translated and provided with an afterword by H. R. Ganslandt. In the translator's estimation, this study brought Jouvenel international renown (452).
- 214 The French edition, which first appeared in Paris in 1945, is also entitled 'La Démocratie totalitaire' (ch. XIX, 379–418).
- 215 Op. cit., 308, 309, 332.
- 216 Op. cit., 446f. 319, 333.
- 217 Op. cit., 446ff.
- 218 Compare C. Slevin, 'Social Change and Human Values: A Study of the Political Thought of B. de Jouvenel', *Political Studies* XIX (March 1971), 49–62; cited here, 52, footnote 1.
- 219 W. Dirks, 'Faschistische Lockung und antifaschistische Entscheidung', *Gegen die faschistische Koalition. Politische Publizistik 1930–1933*. F. Boll, U. Bröckling and K. Prümm, eds, *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 2 (Zurich, 1990), 356–86. Compare H.-O. Kleinmann, 'W. Dirks (1901–1991)', J. Aretz and R. Morsey, eds, *Zeitgeschichte in Lebensbildern*, vol. 8 (Mainz, 1997), 265–81; cited here, 274–75:

In his editorial work of these years can be found only a few passages that might be read as coded messages or camouflaged resistance to the regime. They cannot be compared to the camouflaged resistance politics of a Rudolf Pechel . . . . The existential form of the Dirksian protest was much more private socialization.

In 1934 and 1935, he built a house into which his mother also moved. Following the outbreak of the war in 1939, he bought himself a clavichord: 'almost a symbolic act . . . , with the useful benefit that one is freed from the tyranny of

- the ubiquitous modern piano'. In 1941, Dirks married: 'I would not exist if this marriage had not been given to us as a gift and succeeded' (op. cit., 279).
- 220 A. Gehlen, *Deutschum und Christentum bei Fichte* (Leipzig, 1935), cited according to W. Rügemer, 'Vom bürgerlichen Krisenbewusstsein zur nationalsozialistischen Arbeiterpartei. Die politische Entwicklung A. Gehlens', *Merkur* 1 (1995), 83.
- 221 Compare E. Nolte, *Geschichtsdenken*, op. cit., 467.
- 222 A. Gehlen, *Moral und Hypermoral. Eine pluralistische Ethik* (Frankfurt, 1969), 139.
- 223 M. Merleau-Ponty, *Humanismus und Terror* (1st edn Paris, 1947), 2 vols. (Frankfurt, 1966), vol. 2, 8ff., vol. 1, 12.
- 224 *Ibid.*, vol. 1, 12 with the addition: 'That is the real question'. Regarded in hindsight, Arendt was correct in her 1954 estimation of Merleau-Ponty, when she attributed to him 'put-on Marxism'. This citation can be found in 'Concern with Politics in Recent European Thought', unpublished manuscript, Arendt Papers, Library of Congress, Washington DC. Cited from E. Young-Bruel, *H. Arendt. Leben und Werk* (Frankfurt, 1986), 391.
- 225 'Ni Victimes Ni Bourreaux', A. Camus, *Actuelles Chroniques 1944-48*, 2nd edn (Paris, 1977). 'Vier Pflichten für Intellektuelle' cited from J. Daniel, *Le Nouvel Observateur*, 27 November 1978, 86.
- 226 A. Camus, *Der Mensch in der Revolte. Essays* (Reinbek bei Hamburg, 1977), 1ff. T. Judt, 'The Reluctant Moralists: Albert Camus and the Discomforts of Ambivalence', *The Burden of Responsibility: Blum, Camus, Aron and the French Twentieth Century* (Chicago and London, 1998), 87-136.
- 227 J. Monnerot, *Sociologie du communisme, Echec d'une tentative religieuse au Xxe siècle* (Paris, 1949). A German version appeared in 1952 in Cologne. An English edition followed in 1953 in London. On Monnerot, who was educated in the school of Marcel Mauss, compare R. Desjardins, *The Soviet Union through French Eyes, 1945-85* (New York, 1988), 67ff. See also D. Bosshart, op. cit., 137, 141, 143 and 246-48.
- 228 III: 'The Phenomenon of Tyranny', 289ff.; IV: 'The Absolutism of the Twentieth Century', 301ff.; VI: 'The Totalitarian Dynamism', 380ff.
- 229 Franz Neumann, *Behemoth. The Structure and Practice of Work* (London, 1944), German edition Frankfurt, 1963. Compare here finally J. P. Arnason, 'Totalitarismus und Moderne. Franz Borkenau's Totalitarismustheorie als Ausgangspunkt für soziologische Analysen', A. Siegel, ed., *Totalitarismustheorien nach dem Ende des Kommunismus*. Vol. 7 of K.-D. Henke and C. Vollnhals, *Schriften des Hannah-Arendt-Instituts für Totalitarismusforschung* (Cologne, Weimar, 1998), 172, footnote 4. Neumann's analysis followed the approach of the Frankfurt School, one 'of reducing the dynamic of [totalitarian rule] to the logic of capitalistic development'. Thus R. Wiggershaus on Neumann's dissertation, *The Governance of the Rule of Law* (1936). See *Die Frankfurter Schule. Geschichte, Theoretische Entwicklung, Politische Bedeutung*, 2nd edn (Munich, 1987), 253ff.
- 230 F. Neumann, 'Notizen zur Theorie der Diktatur', Neumann, *Demokratischer und autoritärer Staat. Beiträge zur Soziologie der Politik* (Frankfurt, 1967), 147-70. See here 149, 147, 167.
- 231 M. Duverger, *Über die Diktatur* (Vienna, 1961), 157. A. Cobban, *Dictatorship*, 2nd edn (London, 1943). G. W. F. Hallgarten, *Why Dictators?* (New York, 1954). The collection of essays edited by Guy Stanton in 1935, *Dictatorship in the Modern World* (Minneapolis), finally, remains unconsidered. With contributions by M. Lerner, 'The Pattern of Dictatorship', op. cit., 3-25 as well as H. Kohn, 'Communist and Fascist Dictatorship', op. cit., 141-60. Both essays were taken up into the collection edited by B. Seidel and S. Jenkner, *Wege der*

*Totalitarismus-Forschung* (Darmstadt, 1968). H. Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (New York, 1951). C. J. Friedrich, ed., *Totalitarianism: Proceedings of a Conference held at the American Academy of Arts and Science, March 1953* (Cambridge MA, 1954). Whether Neumann could still have known of C. J. Friedrich and Z. Brzezinski, *Totalitarian Dictatorship and Autocracy* (Cambridge MA, 1956) requires further investigation.

232 Neumann, op. cit., 161ff. Italics are mine.

233 M. Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno, *Dialektik der Aufklärung* (Amsterdam, 1947). Against the thesis of the intrinsically totalitarian character of modernity, which Zygmunt Bauman has taken up following Horkheimer/Adorno – among others – in *Modernity and the Holocaust* (Cambridge, 1989), L. Pellicani rightly argues:

modernity has been and continues to be the *only* civilization based on rights and freedoms. This is the source of misunderstanding of the historical-cultural significance of the National Socialist revolution, which was fundamentally a revolt against modernity as a culture of rights and freedoms.

The thesis of Horkheimer and Adorno that the Enlightenment is potentially totalitarian gave rise to his classification of the *Dialectic of the Enlightenment* as a ‘sociological pseudo-classic’. Compare L. Pellicani, ‘Modernity and Totalitarianism’, *Telos* (1998), 3–22; here page 5ff.

234 Theodor W. Adorno, ‘Diskussionsbeitrag. Verhandlungen des 16. Deutschen Soziologentages’, Theodor W. Adorno, ed., *Spätkapitalismus oder Industriegesellschaft?* (Stuttgart, 1969), 105.

235 Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Adopted and proclaimed by General Assembly Resolution 217 A (III) of 10 December 1948.

236 Carl J. Friedrich, ed., *Totalitarianism: Proceedings of a Conference held at the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, March 1953* (Cambridge MA, 1954).

237 R. Löwenthal, ‘Totalitäre und demokratische Revolution’, *Der Monat* 13, 100/61, no. 146, 29–40. Reprinted in B. Seidel and S. Jenker, eds, *Wege der Totalitarismusforschung*, op. cit., 359–81. Cited here: 362, 363.

238 Compare Timothy Garton Ash, ‘Orwell in 1998’, *New York Review of Books*, 22 October 1998, 11. Garton Ash, himself a ‘passionate Orwellian’ (op. cit., 10), sees Orwell to have been ‘the most influential political writer of the twentieth century’. Between 1945 and 1990, Orwell was read in the West as the ‘supreme describer of totalitarianism in general and Soviet totalitarianism in particular’. On the other side of the Iron Curtain, *Animal Farm* and *1984* was a standard component of required samizdat reading.

239 G. Orwell, *Collected Essays*, vol. 1 (New York, 1968), 531ff. Ibid., 515ff. As the ‘most extremely original quality’ of the English, Orwell treasures their ‘habit of not killing each other ... The English are probably more capable than other peoples of attaining revolutionary change without spilling blood’. *Essays*, vol. IV, 372ff.

240 Ernst Nolte, ‘Diktatur’, O. Brunner, W. Conze and R. Koselleck, eds, *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe*, vol. 1 (Stuttgart, 1972), 900–24, here 900. Compare Giovanni Sartori, ‘Appunti per una teoria generale della dittatura’, K. von Beyme, ed., *Theorie und Politik. Festschrift zum 70. Geburtstag für C. J. Friedrich* (The Hague, 1971), 456–85. Reprinted in G. Sartori, *Elementi di teoria politica*, 3rd edn (1995), ch. 3, ‘Dittatura’, 57–93. Here 66: ‘tirannide ha un sapore antiquato, laddove dittatura è il termine moderno’. The recommendation is made in ignorance of the original conceptual content of tyranny and despotism. With R. Aron, the *suspected* inadequacy of the classical vocabulary becomes the ostensible occasion for its rejection – a rejection with an underlying ground of varying assessments of the Hitler regime and the Soviet system.



- 241 John Stuart Mill, *Utilitarianism, Liberty, Representative Government*. Introduction by A. D. Lindsay (London and New York, 1960), 129.
- 242 Hannah Arendt, 'Verstehen und Politik (1953)', U. Ludz, ed., *Zwischen Vergangenheit und Zukunft. Übungen im politischen Denken I* (Munich, 1994), 112.
- 243 Ibid., 113.
- 244 Compare R. Dahrendorf, 'Bilanz und Hoffnung. Ein Zeitalter geht zu Ende. Was bleibt?', Spiegel series: *Das 20. Jahrhundert*, no. 45 (2 November 1998), 76, 78 ('Stalins und Maos mörderische Tyrannen'). See also Ian Buruma, 'Divine Killer', book review of P. Short, *Mao: A Life...* and J. Spence, 'Mao Zedong', *New York Review of Books* (20 February 2000), 20–25, here 25. 'Qu'elles complicités avec quelles tyrannies?' With contributions by G. Gorodetsky, J. Goytisoló, E. M. Bokolo, F.-M. Verschave, T. D. Allman and N. Chomsky, *Le Monde diplomatique* (July-August 1998), 'Les combats de l'histoire', 40–56.
- 245 T. Garton Ash, 'Beauty and the Beast in Burma', *New York Review of Books*. 48 (25 May 2000), 21–25. Here 21. Gerd Behrens, 'Südafrika: Tyrannie der Mehrheit?' *Blätter für deutsche und internationale Politik* (July 1999), 791–94, here 791:

After 342 years of white hegemony and 46 years of apartheid, the tyranny of the minority found an end in South Africa, as ... in 1994 the first free elections were held. After the second free elections in June, does the tyranny of the majority now threaten?

- 246 M. Walzer, *Spheres of Justice* (New York, 1983). Ch. 13: 'Tyrannies and Just Societies'.

## **Part III**

# **The new approaches**



### 3 Early uses of the concept ‘political religion’

Campanella, Clasen and Wieland

*Hans Otto Seitschek*

#### Tommaso Campanella

Giovanni Domenico – later Tommaso – Campanella (1568–1639) entered the Dominican order in 1583 and devoted himself to theological studies. Imprisoned for heresy in 1591, he repeatedly landed in jail after that date. He spent the last years of his life in Paris, in the cloister of Saint-Jacques under the protection of Cardinal Richelieu. Although Campanella repeatedly suffered persecution, he still found occasion to write down his ideas. As George Thomson had done before him in 1606,<sup>1</sup> Campanella attributed great significance to the relationship of politics and religion. To the extent that both Campanella and Thomson speak of *religio politica*, these thinkers mark the beginning of the formation of the concept of ‘political religion’. In his study of Campanella’s work, John M. Headley determines<sup>2</sup> that Campanella had arrived at the view that religion is exploited for political ends: ‘Drawing closer to the political events of his own day, Campanella observes that religion, which should direct men to God, is abused for purposes of ruling and that princes change religion in accordance with the greater political utility’.<sup>3</sup>

Further, Campanella – thus Headley – is of the view that a community can under no circumstances dispense with religion entirely: insofar as it is the core of the political, religion unites the people of a community.<sup>4</sup>

Campanella’s comprehensive *Metaphysics* is structured in three parts. It treats religion at the beginning of the sixteenth book. Concerning the relationship of religion to politics, Campanella describes public ceremonies in particular. Regarding ablutions, for example:

Beyond a sacrifice, the political religion also requires pleasant-sounding speech, but more still, a speech that addresses the mind: for the people are occupied with bodily [fleshly] things and know neither how to philosophise appropriately about God nor how to demand or give thanks, as it [the political religion] teaches it; it must announce priests and hear prayers and learn to pray from them: this is also useful to the priests in stimulating the spirits both of others and of themselves: for otherwise, a

pleasant-sounding speech is worth nothing if it does not also address the mind.<sup>5</sup>

For the first mystery, which is shared by all nations, as St Thomas [Aquinas] establishes, also consists in faith and in the question as to why all who believe in God entrust their sons and property to God for this reason: as a result of this, a public portrayal of religion in the form of various ceremonies, ablutions, circumcision, etc., became evident in politics. And thus are they cleansed of original and present sins.<sup>6</sup>

Campanella stresses the need that the people be publicly educated in religious matters by a priest. The citizens must be 'officially' introduced into religious thinking and speaking. Hereby is expressed (not uncritically) the occasionally propagandistic character of public religious speech, for Campanella speaks of a 'stimulation of the mind'. Beyond this, he presents public religious ceremonies – confession and expiation in particular, and perhaps also initiation. The personal confession of faith is also clarified.

Although Campanella expressly mentions the concept 'political religion' in his *Metaphysics* of 1638, he had previously describes a state system founded on a political religion already in 1623. This occurred in his utopian essay, *Civitas Solis*,<sup>7</sup> a work that recalls Plato's great dialogue of political philosophy, *Politeia*, but does not use the concept 'political religion' literally in this context. The supreme ruler of this utopian state is a priest: he is a 'metaphysicus' and is called 'HOH'<sup>8</sup> by the members of the Sun State. Further, he is 'the head of everyone in worldly and spiritual things, and all businesses and disputes are ultimately decided by his judgement'.<sup>9</sup> At his side stand three dignitaries called 'Power, Wisdom and Love'.<sup>10</sup> These are likewise priests. In addition to these, there is yet another supreme civil administrator, the 'Sol'. He is a kind of 'supreme teacher' about morals, customs and artisanship and is at the same time the supreme priest. Campanella ultimately does not distinguish between 'HOH' and 'Sol'. Described as the highest dignitaries of the Sun State, the two are probably identical. Only one who knows the religions, morals, customs and artisanship of all peoples – thus, one who truly knows and can do everything – attains the dignity of the 'Sol'.<sup>11</sup> The supreme administrators choose the civil servants of all further offices. These regulate and influence all areas of daily life: education, division of labour, meals, reproduction, the raising of children and conduct of war, to list only the most important areas. Campanella describes precisely the 'religion of the members of the Sun State'.<sup>12</sup> As the supreme priest, the 'Sol' is responsible for the state cult:

But then he [the Sol] sacrifices to God and prays. Previously, however, he publicly confesses to God the sins of the entire people on the altar of the temple. . . ., yet without calling any one sinner by name. After that, he absolves the people.<sup>13</sup>

This portrayal of the public cult, closely related to the passage from the *Metaphysics* that was cited earlier, already shows the collectivistic character of this religion. On the basis of the identity of the highest administrator with the highest priest, the religion can truly be described as a political religion, similar to the state religion of ancient Egypt. In this state cult, even human sacrifices are foreseen – albeit voluntary ones.<sup>14</sup> This also points toward a coercive feature of Campanella's utopian state, which has almost a totalitarian character. Similar to the political religions of antiquity, the priests are a sole mediating 'bond between God and the human being'.<sup>15</sup> The fate of the citizens of the 'Sun State' depends upon them alone. Hereby, the priests – under the instruction of the 'Sol' – also claim to be authorised to advise about things 'that they have recently discovered for the well-being of the state and [beyond that] to all peoples of the world'.<sup>16</sup> Thus is also implicit, even if only *in nuce*, an additional imperialistic claim in the self-understanding of the priesthood of the political religion of the 'Sun State'. Indeed, the claim might even admit a connection to the nineteenth- and early twentieth-century imperialism that historically preceded the totalitarianism of the twentieth century. The staging of the Sun State religion also recalls the pompous march-pasts that typify totalitarian systems. Likewise, the holidays without genuinely religious backgrounds as well as the celebration and memorial days of the state recall festivals in totalitarian systems. One is inescapably reminded of Fascist or National Socialist parades and festivals in the following:<sup>17</sup>

New moon and full moon are also holidays, as is the day of founding of the state, certain memorial days of victories, etc. Then music and singing rings out from women; then one hears drums, trumpets and cannons. The poets sing the praises of the great field marshals and their victories.<sup>18</sup>

Veneration of the sun – how could it be otherwise with the religion of the 'Sun State?' – receives a place entirely of its own. By contrast to the ancient sun cults, though – the Egyptian sun cult, for example – the sun is not worshipped as a god, but is merely honoured.<sup>19</sup> Only a transcendent God is worshipped. The cosmology of the Sun-Stations assumes the sun to be the 'Father' and the Earth to be the 'Mother'. The elements of fire, water and air are seen to have descended from both. The metaphysical system lets physical events occur between being – God himself – and nothingness, the lack of being.<sup>20</sup> Knowing no revelation, the religion of the Sun-Stations is derived from natural law. Despite this point of connection with the Christian religion, it seems strange that Campanella lets one of the two partners in the dialogue observe the following of the religion of the Sun-Stations, which bears the features of a political religion:

Truly! That they, who know only the natural law, come so close to Christianity, which expands the natural laws solely through the sacraments

... I take from this circumstance a strong ground of proof that the Christian religion is the most true of all, and the certainty that it, free of all abuses, will become the mistress of the entire orb, just as the great theologians teach and hope.<sup>21</sup>

Does Campanella's thoroughgoing critique of Christianity – one packaged in clever words, as is well known of utopian writings – resonate here? Or does it represent merely a praise of the theologian introduced by Campanella for his own confession of faith? In light of Campanella's biography, one would almost tend to assume that the Dominican presents a critique of the Christian religion here. Although this question must be left standing, it should still be stressed that, no matter what its intention, Campanella's portrayal of the religion of the Sun-Statians marks (together with others) the beginning of the conceptual history of modern political religions.

An interpretation of the future concludes Campanella's early seventeenth-century dialogue. In equal parts apocalyptic and clairvoyant, this interpretation might offer a further indication of his critique of his era and its religion:

[There] will occur a reformation and renewal of the laws, of the arts and of the sciences. And they [the Sun-Statians] say that from now on, Christianity is facing a great upheaval; first, there will be annihilation and eradication, but after that, there will be building and planting, etc.<sup>22</sup>

Campanella's dialogue, *Sun State*, points far ahead in its description of the future as well: its description of progress, but also of violent upheavals, accurately describes the historical reality both of the violent revolutions of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and of the period of the imperialism that ends with the twentieth-century era of totalitarian violence.

Campanella's insights, therefore, represent an important step in the conceptual history of the political religion: whereas he literally mentions the concept of 'political religion' in his *Metaphysics*, he also describes a religion that evinces clearly recognisable features of the twentieth-century political religions – their controlling, all-encompassing character, for example – in his *Sun State*.

## Daniel Clasen

Some time after Campanella, Daniel Clasen (1622–78) presented a critical analysis of German politics and religion.<sup>23</sup> In the same period, Dietrich Reinkingk also concluded 'that the earthly jurisdiction should be attributed right and authority in religious matters' in a work entitled *Biblische Policey* (1653).<sup>24</sup> And in *Teutscher Fürsten-Stat* (1656), Veit Ludwig von Sekken-dorff argued for granting 'the prince of the land' the power to 'give laws

and ordinances in religious matters'.<sup>25</sup> Along with Clasen, these thinkers provided examples of the extension of state power into the sphere of religion during the seventeenth century. As a general hallmark of this period, there emerges 'a "politicisation" of research in philology, theology, and history' in Germany.<sup>26</sup> Hermann Conring, Clasen's teacher of political science, had especially influenced his understanding of politics. As a scholar who was also a legal theoretician and philologist, Clasen was also decidedly influenced by his philology teacher, Christoph Schrader, who had brought a liberal spirit back to Helmstedt from his period of study spent in Holland. The way in which Clasen framed his political questions issued from his background in philology and political theory; the question concerning political religion also issued from it. First published in 1655, Clasen's essay entitled *De religione politica*<sup>27</sup> brought him both renown and a subsequent position as a professor at Helmstedt in 1661. In *On Political Religion*, Clasen presents 'the political dimension and function of religion'.<sup>28</sup> His orientation here is more practical than theoretical. Far from seeking the ideal-typical relationship of politics and religion, Clasen focuses on the ruling practice of the reigning political estate of his time. He still found it necessary frequently to clarify the nature of the state's ruling claim over religion and Church. (In Germany especially, it was always necessary to deliver a balanced judgement as to the relationship of Christianity and *raison d'état* at this time.) In this, Clasen – like Campanella before him – treats the abuse of religion as an instrument by which to legitimate rule in special detail. By contrast to Campanella, though, he first reviews and systematises the various politico-religious themes and sources of his time.<sup>29</sup> Clasen was regarded as a proponent of political religion on this basis. Because he chose the theses of political religion as his chapter titles and criticised them only in the discussion, he came under a strong suspicion of atheism within the theological circles of the time.

From the outset, the theses present religion as the 'work of human beings'. For its quality of keeping the citizens 'pawns',<sup>30</sup> religion is to be exploited entirely to the personal advantage of the ruler and the politically opportune. Tradition, loyalty to one's confession, uprightness and steadfastness are to be disregarded. Religion must use and adapt to the *raison d'état*. If it does not fulfil these tasks, the ruler must either prohibit it or find a new, more fitting religion that is compulsory for all subjects. What is important here is less the particular confession than the practicability of the religion with respect to the political situation:

The supreme ruler should uphold the religion that supports the reason of state, and he should move his subjects to it by force – if he is not capable of doing so by a gentler path.<sup>31</sup>

If it would help his state, the supreme ruler can even sanction the Islamic, Jewish or pagan religion.<sup>32</sup>



At that time, freedom of religion and faith was a human right that was still largely unknown. In this interpretation, however, the religions and their communities were to enjoy no rights of any kind and were to be completely subordinated to the state. The instrumentalisation of religion is unmistakable here; Clasen speaks of 'religion standing at disposal for use'.<sup>33</sup>

According to Mulsow, however, it would be 'mistaken indeed to suspect a radical in Clasen'.<sup>34</sup> His was a liberal mind concerned in a provocative yet critical way with a topic that was pressing his time. Conversely, Clasen also sought to evoke critical judgement in his readers.<sup>35</sup> This is why he often abstained – especially in his later, more provocative writings<sup>36</sup> – from decisively criticising any of the positions he presented. Clasen's portrayal of political religions, too, therefore, can be set within the conceptual history of the twentieth-century political religions. By the seventeenth century, however, there was one significant difference even from Campanella's time: now, no longer traditional religion, but one's own ideology furnished the content of the political religion.

### **Christoph Martin Wieland**

Great significance has been attributed to Christoph Martin Wieland (1733–1813), the writer and Enlightenment thinker. Yet Wieland was also a perceptive observer of the political events of his time. Coming from a patrician family in Upper Swabia, Wieland enjoyed a solid schooling and university education: first in Magdeburg and Erfurt, among other places, then as a student of legal sciences in Tübingen.<sup>37</sup> Between 1760 and 1769, Wieland served as a town clerk and legal administrator in the imperial city of Biberach, where he had spent his childhood and youth. This was the period that his literary work first bloomed. The *Bildungsroman*, *Musarion oder die Philosophie der Grazien* (1764), for example, arose from this period.<sup>38</sup> In 1769, Wieland was called to Erfurt to serve as a professor of philosophy. Having already made a name for himself as a liberal and Enlightenment thinker during the Biberach period, Wieland was highly prized at Erfurt, a university that attempted to provide a counter-weight to the conservative, Jesuit-led University of Mainz. Yet he soon cultivated relationships in nearby Weimar, where he could exchange ideas with greats of classic German literature. Thus did Wieland accept a 1772 call to serve as an tutor to the princes in Weimar. Issued by the Duchess Anna Amalia, this call meant that he could not occupy the position he had sought as professor in Vienna. Already before the planned end of his activity as tutor to the princes, however, Wieland was removed from his office in 1775 – the year of the arrival of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe in Weimar – and made a state pensioner. From 1773 to 1810 he edited *Der Teutsche Merkur*, a cultural journal that followed French and English models. A central topic at the time was the French Revolution, which was treated in numerous articles in this journal.<sup>39</sup> Wieland enjoyed good, mutually respectful relations with

Goethe and other intellectual greats in Weimar at that time. From 1797 to 1803, Wieland retreated to a knight's property in Ossmannstedt.

One of his chief works, the novel *Die Abderiten*, appeared in 1781. During this same period, Wieland also became well known as a scholar of antiquity and a translator of classical texts – the most influential was his translation of the works of Lucian into German.<sup>40</sup> The first phases of classicism matched his own style more than the *Sturm und Drang* at the end, when Wieland underwent a crisis of his literary activity in light of the early creative power of a Goethe. At his death in 1813, Goethe himself praised Wieland's outstanding literary style.

Besides his influence as poet and man of letters, Wieland was also a political writer and a critical analyst of his time. He experienced Germany as a disparate structure divided into many units; although the imperial constitution might be able to guarantee these units freedom, nothing united them. In his view, solely the feeling of belonging to the same nation – and not merely to the same culture – was capable of forming a community.

The French Revolution had made a particularly strong impression on Wieland. He observed the events in France from 1789 to 1794 very closely and reported on them in the *Teutschen Merkur*. Like many of his contemporaries, he first hailed the revolution of the French citizenry as a translation of Enlightenment premises – premises that granted unrestricted pre-eminence to the independent use of reason – into practice. His initial euphoria was soon transformed into its opposite, however.<sup>41</sup> Not terror, but a seriously intended freedom can be the sole foundation of a stable society and free state. Wieland sees the cycle of constitutions only confirmed by the French Revolution: from the untrammelled sovereignty of the people, a tyranny ultimately arises. This is why he rejects delegation of supreme power to the people:

By the freedom to which all human beings have a just claim, I do not understand a constitution that gives the supreme state power to the people ... Rather, I understand by it liberation from arbitrary power and suppression, equal obligation of all members of the state to obey the laws of reason and justice; ... freedom of conscience in all that affects faith in the supreme being and in the veneration of the same; in brief, [I understand] a freedom without which the human being, as a reasonable being, cannot fulfil the purpose of his existence.<sup>42</sup>

With that, Wieland positions himself against the traditional convention of transferring all personal rights to a sovereign. Instead he bets on the freedom of an enlightened individual in an enlightened system. Because it has too many classes, this system should not be a monarchy. For Wieland, the people is the 'million-headed animal'<sup>43</sup> that inclines now to the one side and now to the other but does not act reasonably. Wieland probably thinks more along the lines of an enlightened aristocracy or monarchy that is steered best by a sovereign who is circumspect because he is enlightened:

But even the most mad-headed despot . . . has lucid moments in which he clearly realises that, in order to enjoy his omnipotence long and securely, he must rule according to laws, that is, must subject his will to reason.<sup>44</sup>

In this passage, Wieland expresses what is probably the basic principle of an enlightened monarchy: rule under the primacy of reason and the laws. Nonetheless, in the tradition of the cycle of constitutions, Wieland harbours a certain amount of scepticism towards all forms of government because they decay and can lead to a revolution.

Wieland also foresees the freedom of religion in his political theory. He does not speak of the religious legitimation and foundation of the state constitution or of a coupling of politics and religion, as with Hobbes. Nor does he speak of the principle of civil religion, as with Rousseau. Does he see religion to have been liberated once and for all from the clutches of politics? Or does Wieland's constitutional theory also contain the basic principles of a civil religion? Both, apparently: formed by the Enlightenment critique of religion, Wieland hardly requires the religious underpinning of a state constitution; religion is a purely personal matter that rests with the freedom of the individual. Freedom from suppression and the equality of right are the highest freedoms of all. Having experienced the advantages of religious parity during his time as a legal civil servant in Biberach (where all offices were filled in a way that sought confessional parity and both confessions used the church space), Wieland by no means wished to connect politics and religion. He saw the burgeoning intolerance of the French Revolution to be turned directly against the Enlightenment tradition. As Wieland anticipated in 1798, this form of rule based in a political religion led to Napoleon's despotic rule in Europe.<sup>45</sup> The gods of this religion, as Wieland had already ascertained in 1793, were freedom and equality, the basic elements of the people's sovereignty. The religion persecutes anyone who does not acknowledge the gods of the revolution as the sole true gods. This person is declared either a despot or a slave:<sup>46</sup>

It seems to me that nothing could be more obvious than that it is a kind of new political religion, what is preached to us by the [French generals] . . . at the head of their armies. The founders and champions of this new religion recognise no divinities besides freedom and equality; . . . they share with Mohammed and the Theodosians the great maxim to tolerate no other faith alongside itself. Whoever is not with them is against them. Whoever does not recognise their concept of freedom and equality as the sole truth is either an enemy of the human species or a contemptible slave . . . . These new republicans declare war on all kings and princes of the earth in offering peace and fraternity to all peoples at the same time . . . . Beyond the new French democracy, there is, in their way of imagining it, nothing besides tyrants and slaves.<sup>47</sup>

This commentary of Wieland describes precisely the repercussions of the newly formed religion of the French Revolution, one in which features of the political religions of the twentieth century can be recognised unmistakably. Presenting those who do not accept it as enemies of the truth, this kind of political religion seeks to compel everyone to affirm its doctrine. This same construction of the other – of the enemy who becomes it whether hostile or not – recalls strongly the attitude of the twentieth-century political religions. Wieland describes the secular religion of the revolution as a political religion that divinises the foundations of the state, entirely in the tradition of Rousseau. To this must be objected, however, that Rousseau's thought was severely distorted by the revolutionary appropriation of it, because Rousseau was vehemently opposed to ideological intolerance.

### Notes

- 1 G. Thomson, *Vindex vertatis adversus Iustum Lipsium libri duo. Prior insanam eius religionem politicam, fatuam nefariamque de Fato, sceleratissimam de fraude doctrinam refellit* (London, 1606). In his work, Thomson reproaches, among other things, the frequent conversions of Lipsius (according to M. Mulsow, *Moderne aus dem Untergrund* (Hamburg, 2002), 163.
- 2 J. M. Headley, *Tommaso Campanella and the Transformation of the World* (Princeton, 1997), particularly 180–196; see here also G. Bock, *Thomas Campanella. Politisches Interesse und philosophische Spekulation* (Tübingen, 1974), especially 182ff.
- 3 J. M. Headley, *Tommaso Campanella and the Transformation of the World* (Princeton, 1997), 184.
- 4 *Ibid.*, 187.
- 5 Praeter sacrificum indiget religio politica, etiam oratione vocali, nedum mentali: quoniam Populus corporeis occupatus nesciens Philosophari rite de Deo, neque petere gratias, neque agree, ut docet, indiget audire sacerdotes praedicantes & orantes, & ab eis discere orare: & hoc etiam prodest sacerdotibus ad excitandam aliorum & propriam mentem: alioquin oratio vocalis valet nihil, nisi adsit & mentalis.  
(From T. Campanella, *Universalis Philosophae seu Metaphysicarum Rerum, iuxta Propria Dogmata* (Paris, 1638), part III, book XVI, ch. V, art. 1, 307.  
The translation from Latin into German is the author's own.)
- 6 Nam & primum mysterium omnibus nationib. Commune, ut notat S. Thom. Est fidei quo quisquis credit in Deum, & per hoc comendat se & filios & sua Deo: ex quo eluxit in Politica Religionis protestatio sub diversis ceremoniis, lavacris, circumcissione, & c. & sic ab originali, & actuali culpa mundantur.  
(*Ibid.*, ch. VII, art. III, 214; author's own translation of the citation.)  
  
A further reference to religious ceremonies in the political sphere can be found in *ibid.*, ch. VII, art. IV, 215: 'ceremonialia politicè'.
- 7 T. Campanella, 'Sonnenstaat', K. J. Heinisch, ed., *Der utopische Staat* (Reinbek bei Hamburg, 1987), 111–69. Original text: T. Campanella, 'Civitas solis', *Realis Philosophiae epilogisticae partes IV* (Frankfurt, 1623). (Citations from Campanella's *Sun State* are, in this contribution, according to Heinisch.)
- 8 T. Campanella, 'Sonnenstaat', K.J. Heinisch, ed., *Der utopische Staat* (Reinbeck b. Hamburg, 1987), 119.

- 9 Ibid., 119ff.
- 10 Ibid., 120.
- 11 Ibid., 126. The name 'Sol', refers to two things in the author's view: first, he is the one – in Latin, *solus* – who has at his disposal such a treasure of knowledge that he does justice to the position of the 'Sol'. Further, he shines with his knowledge loftily over all like the sun – in Latin, *sol*. Eric Voegelin also discusses the sun metaphor in the sphere of state power. See here E. Voegelin, *Die politischen Religionen*, 2nd edn (Munich, 1996), 29ff.
- 12 T. Campanella, 'Sonnenstaat', op. cit., 153–62. Thomas More describes a similar conception of religion in his *Utopia*: Thomas More, *Utopia*, K. J. Heinisch, ed., *Der utopische Staat* (Reinbek bei Hamburg, 1987), 96–106. Francis Bacon, by contrast, prefers Christianity as the religion in his utopian *New Atlantis*: F. Bacon, 'Neu-Atlantis', K. J. Heinisch, ed., *Der utopische Staat* (Reinbek bei Hamburg, 1987), 184–86.
- 13 T. Campanella, 'Sonnenstaat', op. cit., 153.
- 14 See *ibid.*
- 15 Ibid., 154.
- 16 Ibid.
- 17 On the topic of 'festivals and celebrations in National Socialism', see W. Kratzer, 'Feiern und Feste der Nationalsozialisten. Aneignung und Umgestaltung christlicher Kalender, Riten und Symbole'. Ph.D. dissertation (Munich, 1998). Also Y. Karow, *Deutsches Opfer. Kultische Selbstausslösung auf den Reichsparteitagen der NSDAP* (Berlin, 1997).
- 18 T. Campanella, 'Sonnenstaat', op. cit., 155.
- 19 Ibid., 157.
- 20 Ibid., 158ff.
- 21 Ibid., 162.
- 22 Ibid.
- 23 On 'politics' and 'religion' in seventeenth-century Germany see also the chapter entitled 'Polizeibegriff in den älteren Regimentstraktaten und in der christlichen Staatslehre des 17. Jahrhunderts', H. Maier, *Die ältere deutsche Staats- und Verwaltungslehre* (Munich, 1986), 105–50.
- 24 Ibid., 137, from D. Reinkingk, *Biblische Policey*, 5th edn (Frankfurt, 1701), first book, axiom VI.
- 25 H. Maier, *Die ältere deutsche Staats- und Verwaltungslehre* (Munich, 1986), 141. Cited from V. L. von Seckendorff, *Teutscher Fürsten-Stat*, edited by A. Simson von Biechling (Frankfurt, 1737), part II, ch. I, §§7/8, 38ff.
- 26 M. Mulsow, *Moderne aus dem Untergrund* (Hamburg, 2002), 223.
- 27 D. Clasen, *De religione politica* (Magdeburg, 1655), according to M. Mulsow, *Moderne aus dem Untergrund* (Hamburg, 2002), 223.
- 28 M. Mulsow, *Moderne aus dem Untergrund*, 216.
- 29 Ibid., 216 and 221ff.
- 30 'Religio est hominum opus, quo subditi in officio contineri possunt.' (D. Clasen, *De religione politica*, op. cit., ch. V, 65). The complete chapter titles of this work by Clasen can be found, with translations, in Mulsow, op. cit., 218ff.
- 31 'Princeps eam Religionem amplectatur, quae faciat ad Status Rationem, et ad eam subditos commonveat vi, si leniore via non possit.' (D. Clasen, *De religione politica*, op. cit., ch. X, 222).
- 32 'Potest etiam Princeps, si hac ratione suo statui consulere possit, religionem Turcicam, judaicam, vel paganam quoque probare' (*ibid.*, ch. XII, 283).
- 33 'Princeps nihil gratius facere potest populo, quam si religionem usitatam, modo etiam statui faveat, strenue defendat' (*ibid.*, ch. XV, 389).
- 34 M. Mulsow, op. cit., 220.
- 35 Ibid., 222.

- 36 D. Clasen, *De oraculis gentilium* ... (Helmstedt, 1673) and Clasen, *Theologia gentilis* (Leipzig, 1684).
- 37 On Wieland's years in Tübingen, see F. Sengle, *Wieland* (Stuttgart, 1949), 30–46.
- 38 Friedrich Sengle also takes up Wieland's 'Graziendichtung', *ibid.*, 203–9.
- 39 See *ibid.*, 407–22, especially 410–12.
- 40 See *ibid.*, 397–99.
- 41 On Wieland's assessment of the French Revolution, see *ibid.*, 440–53, especially 444–46.
- 42 Christoph M. Wieland, 'Sendschreiben des Herausgebers des T[eutschen] M[erker]s an Herrn P. \*\* zu \*\*\* (January, 1792)', *Meine Antworten. Aufsätze über die Französische Revolution 1789–1793*, edited by F. Martini (Marbach, 1983), 65.
- 43 *Ibid.*, 59.
- 44 *Ibid.*
- 45 Christoph M. Wieland, 'Gespräche unter vier Augen. Zweites Gespräch über den neufränkischen Staatseid "Haß dem Königtum!"' F. Martini and H. W. Seiffert, eds, *Werke*, vol. 3 (Munich, 1973), 768–86, especially 785.
- 46 Friedrich Sengle comments that Wieland, 'knows very well the "new political religion" that hides behind the sovereignty of the people. Wieland's critique seeks that, not the people, but ultimately "only reason or the law in accordance with reason" be called sovereign'. (Wieland, cited by F. Sengle, *op. cit.*, 446ff.).
- 47 Christopher M. Wieland, 'Betrachtungen über die Gegewärtige Lage des Vaterlandes', *Meine Antworten*, *op. cit.*, 113.

## 4 The thinkers of the total

Ernst Jünger, Carl Schmitt and Erich Ludendorff

*Michael Schäfer*

From 1930 to 1935, three German authors apply the concept of the ‘total’ to the sphere of the political in some way. Ernst Jünger speaks of a ‘total mobilisation’, Carl Schmitt of a ‘total state’ and Erich Ludendorff of ‘total war’. Although application of the concept of totality might be understood as merely a station on the path to the totalitarian, such characterisation would scarcely do justice to the authors and their work.

Each in their own way (even if not independently from one another), Jünger, Schmitt and Ludendorff describe certain phenomena, processes and potentials of the political landscape that began to emerge after the epochal transition of 1914. The authors share the conviction that these phenomena drive towards a radical change. For our purposes, the fact that each thinker<sup>1</sup> places the phenomenon of totality in relation to religion already justifies our treating their contribution to twentieth-century conceptual history at some length. More important, though: ultimately, the ‘thinkers of the total’ mirror with this category the period spanning from 1914 to 1918/19, the end of the long nineteenth century and the beginning of the short twentieth one – and thereby a fundamental precondition of totalitarianism. The emphases vary here: whereas Erich Ludendorff stresses war, Ernst Jünger stresses the economisation of all spheres of life that must accompany war. For his part, Carl Schmitt emphasises the disintegration of the political unit. Re-establishment and fortification of this unit mark both starting and vanishing points of his theoretical and practical engagement with the years spanning from 1919 to 1933.

### **Ernst Jünger**

Like so many writings of Ernst Jünger, the *Totale Mobilmachung*<sup>2</sup> concerns the drastic experience of the First World War. The very first section of the essay already states: ‘we will attempt . . . to collect some data that distinguish the last war, our war, the greatest and most influential event of this time, from other wars whose history has been handed down to us’.<sup>3</sup> But what, then, is the *Totale Mobilmachung*? In the war context, it is the recruiting of all potential energies of a people for a war:

in order to develop energies of this extent, it no longer suffices to arm the sword-arm – it is armament up into the innermost marrow, to the finest life-nerve. To realise this is the task of the total mobilisation, an act through which the power-supply system of modern life, one that is extensively branched and many-times veined, is delivered by a single grasp to the switchboard to the great stream of warring energy.<sup>4</sup>

The phenomenon of a penetration of all spheres of life is by no means restricted to the warring period here. In some countries, the ‘order of the peaceful state’ of the post-war period is already marked by such mobilisation: ‘we have encountered this attack, one seeking to ensure that nothing that cannot be conceived as a function of the state exists, in Russia and Italy first, but later with us as well.’<sup>5</sup>

Tellingly, there is no sign that Jünger seeks to distance himself from the development he describes. Although this might be interpreted as the neutral position of an analytical observer, certain things would suggest<sup>6</sup> that Ernst Nolte is correct in determining that Jünger describes, ‘what liberal theory damns as “totalitarianism” as being positive, inescapable and full of future’.<sup>7</sup> It should not be neglected that Jünger uses his category of ‘total mobilisation’ with an entirely comparative intention:

socialism and nationalism especially are the two great millstones between which progress crushes the remains of the old world and, ultimately, itself . . . . The fact of their identity now unveils itself ever more clearly in all countries such that even the dream of freedom dwindles away as under the iron grip of a vice.<sup>8</sup>

Progress, the enigmatic essence and merciless-fascinating *movens* of ‘total mobilisation’ becomes here a power ‘of a cultic kind . . . . Who, then, would doubt that progress is the great people’s church of the nineteenth century – the only one that enjoys genuine authority and faith without criticism?’<sup>9</sup>

## Carl Schmitt

Consciously following<sup>10</sup> the concept of ‘total mobilisation’ that was coined by his life-long conversation partner, Ernst Jünger,<sup>11</sup> Carl Schmitt introduces the concept of the ‘total state’ in 1933.<sup>12</sup> His thesis states that the nineteenth-century liberal non-interventionist state – one that was neutral on questions of society and economy – is currently undergoing a process of transition towards the total state. At first, this thesis can be understood analytically, not normatively. That said, such analysis must be founded on certain of Schmitt’s basic assumptions: on his critique of pluralism, his distinction between democracy and parliamentarianism<sup>13</sup> and a valuation of political parties that is at least ambivalent.



Schmitt devotes two works to describing the total state. First appearing in 1931, *Die Wendung zum totalen Staat* analyses the historical development of the various state forms. Schmitt recapitulates this development in the following way:

the powerful change can be construed as part of a dialectic development that occurs in three stages: from the absolute state of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, through the neutral state of the liberal nineteenth century, to the total state of the identity of state and society.<sup>14</sup>

The last stage of identity results from an understanding of the state as the 'self-organisation of the society'.<sup>15</sup> This holds above all for the economic area: 'in every modern state, the relationship of the state to the economy forms the actual object of the immediately relevant question of internal politics'.<sup>16</sup> And 'the most conspicuous change compared to the nineteenth-century idea of the state lies with the transition to the economic state'.<sup>17</sup>

The economy's increased significance in the life of the state – or, for example, in the intervention and strong action by the state in economic processes<sup>18</sup> – is only one element of Schmitt's analysis, however. The second, the transformation of the parliament, is more genuine insofar as it is a political criterion of the total state: 'at the same moment its victory seemed complete, the parliament, the legislative body, the bearer and centre of the legislative state, became a self-contradictory structure, one that disowned its own assumptions and the assumptions of its victory'.<sup>19</sup> The reason for this corruption of the parliament is said to have been the detachment from its natural antipodes, the monarchical military and administrative state: 'as this fell away, the parliament collapsed, so to speak, upon itself'.<sup>20</sup> In the transition from the parliamentary party state, with its loosely organised free parties, to the pluralistic party state with its firmly organised parties, the parliament loses what Schmitt holds to be its state-bearing function of representing the unity of the people:

the firm social connections that are now the bearers of the pluralistic state render the parliament, its exponents appearing in the form of fractions, a mere image of the pluralistic division of the state itself . . . . Thus is the parliament transformed from the showplace of a unifying, free negotiation of free people's representatives, from the transformer of partisan interests in a supra-partisan will, into a showplace for the pluralistic division of the organised social powers.<sup>21</sup>

By the time Schmitt resumes the topic of the total state in 1933,<sup>22</sup> his term has become common property. At this point, he makes a distinction between the total state out of strength and the total state out of weakness. The most conspicuous beginning of the totality of the state is its growing stock of ruling instruments, which have accrued to it through technical

development. If the state appropriates these instruments in an uncompromising way, then it is total out of strength – in the sense of Italian Fascism, which describes itself as ‘*stato totalitario*’:

such a state allows no forces that would destroy, limit or divide it to arise in its internal structure. It does not consider delivering the new instruments of power to its enemies and destroyers or allowing its power to be undermined under such slogans as liberalism, the rule of law, or whatever else it might be called. Such a state can distinguish friend from enemy. In this sense, as has been stated, every authentic state is a total state; as a *societas perfecta* of the mundane world, it has been this at all times.<sup>23</sup>

It is difficult not to find a vote for the totalitarian in Schmitt’s contrast of the total state out of strength, as exemplified by Italian Fascism, with the total state out of weakness as represented by the political situation in Germany. Nonetheless, such an interpretation exposes one to the danger of failing to do justice to Schmitt’s intention. His critique is directed not against the institution of parliamentary democracy as such, but against the deficient integrative powers of the Weimar Reichstag and the other Weimar political institutions. The critique transfers the friend/enemy scheme to parliament – that is, to the co-existence of divided parties through abysses of *Weltanschauungen*, a situation for which each party is total within itself.

This ‘benevolent’ interpretation of the 1933 essay is supported by the closing paragraph:

Such a parliament, with its negativity that is both incompetent and destructive of power, weighs on the democratic system of the Weimar constitution, on its institutions and resources, like a monarch who is physically and spiritually sick . . . These constitutional provisions have all become frail and denatured completely, all legal authorities, even all interpretations and arguments, are instrumentalised to become tactical media in the fight of each party against the others and of all parties against the state and government.<sup>24</sup>

On the basis of the benevolent exegesis, Schmitt’s term of the ‘total state’ can be interpreted as simply describing the state of the political landscape in pre-Nazi Germany. The approaching totalitarian National Socialist state is thus interpreted as a quasi-logical further development and ‘fulfilment’ of the Weimar parliamentarianism that has fallen into a crisis. The National Socialist state is the result of two factors: an increase in the ‘totality potential’ of the state through technical development on the one hand and a radicalisation of the *Weltanschauungen* of political parties on the other.

Carl Schmitt was too much a Catholic to have invested his ‘total state’ with religious significance directly. *Ex negativo*, a connection – precise

knowledge of which is obscured by Schmitt's own fluctuating attitude on the matter – can nonetheless be derived from Schmitt's work.

### **Erich Ludendorff**

Analogous to Jünger and Schmitt, Erich Ludendorff's *Totalen Krieg* of 1935<sup>25</sup> states that the innovation that first entered into the conduct of war with the First World War was the inclusion of the entire people: 'the world saw the war of the nations in the literal sense of the word'.<sup>26</sup> Ludendorff sees the essence of the 'total war' to lie in this transformation of the conduct of war. The war of the present – and, most certainly, the war of the future<sup>27</sup> – is a war that requires and demands all the powers of the people. The absolute precondition for total war is the 'psychic insularity of the people', a term that appears throughout the entire treatment.<sup>28</sup>

In a certain sense, Ludendorff's reflections are anti-Clausewitzian, and there are some indications that the general always wants to be understood as such. Although he refers extensively to his predecessor's work (already a classic), his reservations very quickly predominate.<sup>29</sup> Ultimately, one can only reject the Clausewitzian pre-eminence of politics entirely:

the nature of war has changed, the nature of politics has changed. So must the relationship of politics to the conduct of war change. All of Clausewitz's theories should be dumped. War and politics serve the preservation of the life of the people, but war is the supreme statement of the people's will to live. This is why politics must serve the conduct of war.<sup>30</sup>

The understanding of politics that is characteristic of modern totalitarian regimes has clearly been adopted here. What remains is 'total politics' – no less than the subordination of politics to ideology. In the words, once again, of the general: 'Because war is the supreme striving of a people for its self-preservation, total politics must aim to prepare this life-struggle of a people in war even in times of peace.'<sup>31</sup> War is no longer the continuation of politics by other means; politics, rather, is the means by which to prepare for war.

Ludendorff's essay is informative from a further standpoint as well. As we have already seen, he regards 'the psychic insularity of the people' to be the basis of total war. Interestingly, he can conceive of such 'psychic insularity' solely on the basis of a common religion that is suited to the people:

the psychic insularity of a people . . . can be achieved solely on the path of the unity of racial genotype and faith . . . . Only where the racial genotype's drive to move from its premonition of God to its knowledge of God is accommodated can the impeccable insularity of the peoples that have been to this point Christian and Nordic be attained.<sup>32</sup>

At this point, one can (and should) set aside the confused and convoluted trains of thought of the Ludendorffs, husband and wife, on the conspiracy of Roman Catholic Church, world Judaism and Freemasonry directed against Germanic Germany. What should be retained, however, is the connection between the total enlistment of the people to ideological purposes on the one hand and the necessity of a religious foundation for this totalitarian wish on the other.

Characteristically, Ludendorff's sketch of a society that is both organised according to the situation of 'total war' and aimed at that situation, stands on the frontier dividing a military dictatorship from the totalitarian *Führer* state. With its title, 'Der Feldherr', the concluding chapter sketches a *Führer* figure<sup>33</sup> who reigns untrammelled over all areas of life.<sup>34</sup> The state and society over which the field marshal-leader presides remain conspicuously one-dimensional, however. With its complete disinterest in the genuinely political and its narrowing of the total state to the figure of the 'total field marshal', Ludendorff's analytical capacities reveal their limits. Although Ludendorff can theorise the total *Führer* in a state of total war, the characteristics that a totalitarian regime must necessarily possess remain veiled to him – and this although he already lives and writes under one.

## Notes

- 1 Application of the term 'thinker' to Erich Ludendorff might be surprising at this point. One can hardly refuse conceding a certain respect to Ludendorff's prescient description of the internal and external structure of a future war, however. That this respect cannot extend to the muddled constructs of his nationalist *Weltanschauung* goes without saying.
- 2 Ernst Jünger, 'Die Totale Mobilmachung', Jünger, *Sämtliche Werke*, 2nd section, Essays, vol. 7, *Essays I: Betrachtungen zur Zeit* (Stuttgart, 1980), 119–42.
- 3 *Ibid.*, 121.
- 4 *Ibid.*, 126.
- 5 *Ibid.*, 127.
- 6 'We are, however, far removed from wishing to lament the unavoidable.' *Ibid.*, 134.
- 7 Ernst Nolte, *Geschichtsdenken im 20. Jahrhundert*, 2nd edn (Berlin, Frankfurt, 1992), 268.
- 8 Ernst Jünger, *Totale Mobilmachung*, 141.
- 9 *Ibid.*, 123.
- 10 Carl Schmitt, *Die Wendung zum totalen Staat*, 3rd edn (1994), 173.
- 11 Compare the correspondence that has recently been edited by Helmuth Kiesel.
- 12 Carl Schmitt, *Die Wendung zum totalen Staat*. First appeared in the *European Review* (December 1931). Now in Carl Schmitt, *Positionen und Begriffe im Kampf Weimar – Genf – Versailles 1923–1939*, 3rd edn (Berlin, 1994), 166–78.
- 13 Compare here Carl Schmitt, *Die geistesgeschichtliche Lage des heutigen Parlamentarismus* (1923), 7th edn (Berlin, 1991).
- 14 Carl Schmitt, *Die Wendung zum totalen Staat*, 173.
- 15 *Ibid.*, 172.
- 16 *Ibid.*
- 17 *Ibid.*, 173.

- 18 According to Schmitt, this can be recognised in the constant increase of the state quota. Compare *ibid.*, 173ff.
- 19 *Ibid.*, 176.
- 20 *Ibid.*
- 21 *Ibid.*, 177.
- 22 C. Schmitt, 'Weiterentwicklung des totalen Staats in Deutschland', first appeared in *Europäische Revue* (February 1933). Now in C. Schmitt, *Positionen und Begriffe im Kampf Weimar – Genf – Versailles 1923–1939*, 3rd edn (Berlin, 1994), 211–16.
- 23 *Ibid.*, 213.
- 24 *Ibid.*, 213.
- 25 Erich Ludendorff, *Der totale Krieg* (Munich, 1935).
- 26 *Ibid.*, 5.
- 27 For Ludendorff, it is apparently an event that is to be expected. Indeed, it is almost a necessity – in this, he correctly assesses the political situation and internal principle of development of National Socialist Germany.
- 28 The central chapter of the book is entitled (in translation) 'Psychic Insularity of the People: The Foundation of the Total War'.
- 29 *Ibid.*, 3. 'The work, by the way, belongs to a past stage of world history and has now been largely superseded. Indeed, his study might even seem confusing.'
- 30 *Ibid.*, 10.
- 31 *Ibid.*
- 32 *Ibid.*, 20ff.
- 33 'The man who is field marshal has to stand in the first position . . . From this position alone can he endow his influence with the unity and vigour that is destined to wrest down the enemy and preserve the people.' Page 107.
- 34 *Ibid.*: 'This influence is all-encompassing, just as total war encompasses one's entire life. In all areas of life, the field marshal must be the deciding instance and his will must be authoritative.'

# 5 The interpretation of totalitarianism as religion

*Hans Otto Seitschek*

## Eric Voegelin

In 1938, the Viennese political scientist and philosopher Eric<sup>1</sup> Voegelin (1901–85) wrote *Die politischen Religionen*.<sup>2</sup> This work was formative for the concept of political religions. The period of his life when he wrote this essay was filled with tension; the terror of the National Socialists forced him to emigrate to the United States a short time later. Although Voegelin himself did not regard *Die politischen Religionen* as central to his later work,<sup>3</sup> the text nonetheless offers a first, direct glimpse into Voegelin's perspective on the twentieth-century totalitarian regimes.

The intersecting topics of Voegelin's study provide not only a religio-historical interpretation of the development of totalitarian regimes, but a philosophical analysis of the relationship between religion, politics and the state. Psychological assessments of the development of the mass regime also play a role here. In strokes that are occasionally very broad, Voegelin sketches a universal history of the political religions. Beginning with Egyptian antiquity, he traces it through many epochs and thinkers of Western European intellectual history up to Voegelin's own era: to 1938 and the era of the totalitarian despotic regime – specifically, to that of National Socialism. Voegelin had already analysed the concepts of 'total' and 'authoritarian' two years earlier in *Der autoritäre Staat*, a work that focused on the 'problem of the Austrian state'.<sup>4</sup>

The 'foreword' to *Die politischen Religionen* makes Voegelin's intention clear. Writing in Cambridge, MA, at Christmas 1938, Voegelin writes of the 'radical' struggle against National Socialism. He means 'radical' in a very literal sense here:

I do not wish to say ... that the struggle against National Socialism should not also be an ethical struggle. It is simply not carried out radically in my opinion; and it is not carried out radically because it lacks its *radix*, its roots in religiosity.<sup>5</sup>

What is important for Voegelin in this context is progressive secularisation: 'the secularisation of life that is borne in the idea of humanity [is] the very

same ground ... upon which anti-Christian religious movements like National Socialism could flourish in the first place'.<sup>6</sup> As Voegelin's later work also indicates, he regards secularisation to be a factor far more important than the 'relapse into barbarism' that was often lamented in connection with totalitarian regimes. In presenting the 'problem', Voegelin's very first sentence strikes at the heart of his seminal interpretation of the political movements of his era:

To speak of political religions and to understand the movements of our time not only as political ones, but above all as religious ones is not yet a matter of course at the present time, even though the facts compel the attentive observer to speak this way.<sup>7</sup>

Voegelin holds the conceptual distinction between the spheres of politics and religion to be responsible for the current failure to recognise that politics and religion share their roots in the essence of the human being, in its creatureliness. When we speak of religion, we intuitively think above all of the Church; when we speak of politics, we first associate it with the state and its institutions. Seeking to draw these divorced spheres closer together, Voegelin broadens the concept of religion to include not only the soteriological religions, but all religious phenomena. On the other side, he extends the concept of the state beyond the purely mundane sphere of the organisation of communal being out to the sphere of the religious.<sup>8</sup> Thus is the political 'resacralised', with antiquity providing the model.<sup>9</sup>

Voegelin first defines the 'state' in 'school terms' as 'human beings in association, settled on one territory'.<sup>10</sup> What then becomes problematic is the concept of power. A genuine power stands above all other things; it is a power of powers that has no power above it and 'powers below it only through its toleration'.<sup>11</sup> This is what Voegelin understands by 'original power'.<sup>12</sup> It should not be overlooked that the religious sphere enters into the definition of the state via the concept of power. To the extent that the power that was present from the beginning has been decapitated and a secular head set upon it, that power becomes mundane, pertaining to the state. That which is in fact transcendent now becomes mundane. Thus does the state originate from its own self. A natural hierarchy of powers derived from the original divine power has been lost. Voegelin mentions Hegel in this context. With the state existing in and for itself, according to Voegelin, Hegel intended the nation to become the spirit of its own immediate reality and thereby the absolute power on earth.<sup>13</sup> Voegelin sees a grave danger in the Hegelian 'spiritualisation' of the nation as the state: the translation of the earthly power of human beings into a purely spiritual power ultimately renders it a *realissimum* of the sort that the world-transcendent God originally had been. Yet this *realissimum* of the Hegelian spirit is already 'in-human' for Voegelin.<sup>14</sup> Thus does mundane political power become 'the core of religious experience', a 'mystical process'.<sup>15</sup>

As for 'religion', Voegelin remarks that human beings experience their existence as creaturely and therefore as questionable. Thus does Voegelin incorporate human existential experiences into his reflections. The religious experience tugs at the navel of the soul, at the nexus connecting the human being to the cosmos. In offering his anthropological definition of religion, Voegelin refers to Max Scheler's *Die Stellung des Menschen im Kosmos*.<sup>16</sup> Besides Scheler,<sup>17</sup> Voegelin cites Erich Przywara SJ,<sup>18</sup> Alois Dempf<sup>19</sup> and others as his sources. He also speaks in this context of an '*intentio*', a 'tension towards God',<sup>20</sup> in which one should locate one's own human existence and through which one discovers the supreme existence, God: 'Whenever a real thing can be recognised as a sacred thing in the religious experience, it becomes the most real thing of all, the *realissimum*.'<sup>21</sup>

One such *realissimum* has been located in the Hegelian concept of the state: when the nation has become spirit, it becomes a *realissimum* in becoming spirit as state. Voegelin makes a distinction between different kinds of religions on this basis: the 'spiritual religions' locating the *realissimum* in the divine ground of the world are to be called 'supra-worldly religions', whereas all other religions 'shall be called inner-worldly religions'. The political religions should be numbered among the latter, because these 'discover the divine in partial contents of the world'.<sup>22</sup> Thus does Voegelin describe the field of tension that spans religion, politics and state, the supra-worldly and world-immanent spheres. The religious human being lives in this tension between world-immanence and world-transcendence. Indeed, it is through this tension that he recognises the creatureliness of his own person.

These conceptual definitions set the parameters for Voegelin's intellectual history of the development of political religions. Such religions were not secular at first,<sup>23</sup> but gradually assumed a secular character that culminated in the totalitarian movements of the twentieth century. Following James H. Breasted,<sup>24</sup> Voegelin states that the first 'political religion' of a 'civilised people' was the 'sun faith of the Egyptians'.<sup>25</sup> The most highly developed form of the sun cult is said to go back to 'Akhenaton'. Yet even the first kings of Egypt understood themselves as successors of the sun god, Horus, who governed the country in its mythic beginnings.<sup>26</sup> Similar to the Roman emperors (especially after the reign of Caligula in the first century AD), the Egyptian pharaohs were worshipped as gods after their death.

The Egyptian kings served as mediators between human beings and gods; they alone had the right to worship the gods. This right they transferred to the priests, who exercised it in a representative way.<sup>27</sup> Using the various local divinities as their bases, human rivalries now surrounded the gods' spheres of power and influence. The priesthoods now representatively fought out the gods' battles in order to increase respect for the respective religion. In this fight, the sun god of Heliopolis, the Rê, ended up the victor. Horus of Edfu was suppressed, and beginning at the end of the fifth dynasty, the kings bore the name 'son of Rê' alongside the Horus title.<sup>28</sup>



Closely following the political development, the cult of Rê became the state cult. The mythology of the gods also underwent a revision and the power centre was displaced from Memphis in the north to Thebes in the south. In connection with Rê, the Theban local divinity, Amon, became Amon-Rê; from now on, this was the highest divinity. This unification of the local divinities within the one sun god marked a further step towards the foundation of a monotheistic myth formation.<sup>29</sup> The priestly orders were also placed under one supreme order: the divinely legitimised hierarchisation.<sup>30</sup> From here, the divine rule would flow into the earthly one, issuing from the delegation of the god's power to the king and the king's to the priests.<sup>31</sup> The period of Egyptian world domination began at the same time.

In a further development, Aton, an old description of the sun, replaced the names of the unified Rê divinities. Pharaoh Amenhotep IV completed this development by making Aton the highest divinity – albeit one identical to Rê. Yet Aton was to be understood more abstractly than Rê had been: Aton was the sun's glow, the life-spending power standing behind the orb of the sun. All the old divinities, both their names and their priesthoods were 'eradicated'.<sup>32</sup> The new religious – hence, political – order was completed by the name change of the ruler: Amenhotep IV (which is still suggestive of 'Amon') now became Akhenaton ('it is pleasing to Aton'). As a crowning touch, three new capital cities were created in place of Thebes: Achet-Aton became the new residence of the king. The Egyptian earthly kingdom had reached its climax. Recapitulating, Voegelin observes:

Because the king is himself God, the divine and the human spheres spill into one another. The kingdom conquered by human beings and the divinely created world, human and divine creation, cannot be precisely distinguished. From these pre-formed attempts, Akhenaton developed the idea of God that we know from his Aton hymns.<sup>33</sup>

Voegelin criticises Akhenaton's manner of proceeding: having 'expropriated'<sup>34</sup> – thus Voegelin literally – the old gods and their priesthoods, Akhenaton replaced them with the Aton cult and Aton priests. Social life, which had been balanced under polytheism, was harshly disrupted by this action. The Aton cult destroyed the people's religion, particularly the Osiris cult, without providing a substitute for it.<sup>35</sup> The struggles for leadership had only substituted one political religion for another; the rule-legitimising function remained the same. A representation of the cosmic order was manifest in this political religion as well: with its representation of transcendence, a society that had become historically existent through its descriptive and existential representation laid claim to the cosmic truth of society.<sup>36</sup> Elements that had been useful to the development of personal religiosity, elements that had still been present in the polytheistic system, were lacking in this purely political state religion. Personal elements were lost in favour of collectivist ones.

As has been mentioned already, the 'hierarchy' is one of the most essential elements or 'symbols' – as Voegelin calls them – of the link between human and divine spheres: 'A basic form of the legitimation of the rule of some human beings over others occurs in the symbol of emanation, which flows from the divine pinnacle through the hierarchy of rulers and officers down to the lowest obedient subject'.<sup>37</sup>

Voegelin mentions several points of development of the symbol of hierarchy in history. It begins, as has just been described, with the sun myth of Akhenaton in which the sun is worshipped as the entity from which all existence flows. Sun images of course later play a large role in the Neo-Platonic theory of emanations of Plotinus, who came from Egypt. According to this theory, everything flows from the One, Highest, into deeper levels of spiritual and physical hypostases. According to the ancients, however, light is a fine-flowing substance that flows from the one sun in streams and thereby makes life possible. A further abstraction of divine rule occurs with Philo's view of the monarchy, according to which the sun and moon are not divinities. Now, the divine is the intellectual logos that legitimates one to exercise an office. The symbolism of the emanation of light power can later be found with Maimonides and Dante, according to whom the individual's authority has its source in the authority of the whole. The authority of the emperor, which radiates over his entire kingdom, is only a pale reflection of this whole authority. A further example of the sun metaphor in the sphere of political rule is provided by the title of Tommaso Campanella's utopian sixteenth-century sketch: *Sun State*.<sup>38</sup> Later, the description of Louis XIV as the 'Sun King' also draws upon the symbolic power of the sun.

A rationalisation of the hierarchy symbol occurred in the work of the political theorist Jean Bodin. Bodin sees the hierarchy to be ordered on a pyramid, at the pinnacle of which is God. Those standing lower are subordinate to those standing higher. According to this model of rule, God is the only one to whom everyone is subordinate. Here, those standing higher communicate power to lower members; the exception is the supreme earthly ruler, who receives his power directly from God. This marks an essential adjustment to the formula of Egyptian antiquity: at that time, the king alone mediated between human beings and God. With Christianity, by contrast, all human beings relate directly to God. The individual's direct relation to God, together with the division between mundane political and religious spheres, is one of the revolutionary innovations of Christianity compared to pagan antiquity. The hierarchical ordering has been retained to this day in the theory of legal levels. Both divine and secular ruling structures of rule are possible with this symbol, depending upon which legitimating instance occupies the pinnacle – a theistic or an atheistic one.

The *ekklesia* is a hierarchical principal all its own. The concept of *ekklesia* was developed from the Pauline letters – in particular, from the letter to the Hebrews.<sup>39</sup> Understanding the Church as the mystical body of Christ, it symbolises all people who are disciples of Jesus Christ and orient their lives

on his.<sup>40</sup> The *ekklesia* is a divinely legitimated hierarchy all of its own; it has its own substance, one in which the symbolism of the community plays an essential role. Although the *ekklesia* exists alongside the worldly hierarchy, it encompasses both earthly and divine kingdoms. ‘Modern inner-worldly political units’, of which the totalitarian mass movements of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries are also examples, are ‘formed by reinterpretations of the substance of the *ekklesia*’<sup>41</sup> – thus Voegelin.

As the *ekklesia* symbol begins to develop, it gradually replaces the tribal-state community symbolism of antiquity during the early Christian period as a new community-forming and community-founding symbolism. Voegelin mentions the death of Socrates as an example of the earlier connection of the individual fate with that of his polis or homeland – a connection that was weakened by early Christianity. The members of the *ekklesia* relate to one another like the limbs of a body. Christ is the *pneuma* that presides over both this body and its head.<sup>42</sup> He is regarded as the second ancestral father of the human being, a second Adam. Together with the Eucharist of the early Christian communities – which has close ties to the mystery-cults, these symbols support the statement of the *pneuma* that has influence in the body of the *ekklesia*, a *pneuma* that pours into the members of the *ekklesia* and constantly brings forth new charismata. Hereby, the original communities can be supplemented by the political, ruling function and a connection between divine power and earthly rule can be established – as in the political religions of antiquity. The ruling function can then no longer be distinguished from the function of priest and teacher.<sup>43</sup> The border between political and religious is thereby gradually blurred.

With the filling of Christian communities with natural content – in other words, with the view that the ‘*populus Christianus* [was a] nation among the nations’<sup>44</sup> – the spiritually constituted communities were reorganised and institutionalised as inner-worldly bodies. The development of purely political communities, of states, began. This is why elements of the *ekklesia* have manifested themselves in the Christian churches in part, but also in the state, up to the present day. This holds even if the state is decidedly opposed to the church, but nonetheless demands freedom, equality and fraternity for its citizens – as with the period of the French Revolution. Here, Jacobinism became a kind of ‘civil religion’, which – under the influence of the Rousseauan tradition – was more a political religion than it was a Christian one. Some elements of the Rousseauan civil religion have also asserted themselves in the state and social community of the United States, and this to such an extent that individual members of the United States are seen to be bound together by ‘like-mindedness’.<sup>45</sup> Indeed, the United States is an example of the establishment of a civil religion via the legitimation of the ruling order, as Robert N. Bellah has demonstrated in recent years.<sup>46</sup>

Voegelin now shows that, although National Socialism strongly distances itself from the Christian church, its basic form is still that of the mystical body bound into a unit by the *pneuma*. Here, an analogue to the *ekklesia*

lives on in the requirement for 'spiritual conformity'.<sup>47</sup> In condensed form, this same statement demonstrates Voegelin's basic thesis, which is by no means uncontentious: the thesis of an inner-worldly community that allows the mystical pneuma of the *ekklesia* to live on through the sense of the predestined character of its movement. This occurs although, or even *because* the movement rejects the Christian church and religion; no totalitarian regime regarded itself as a religion! The spiritual regions of the individual human being that had previously been occupied by religion are now occupied by inner-worldly ideologies that virtually make the inhuman demands of their regimes a 'sacral duty'.<sup>48</sup>

A further symbol of the distinction between worldly and divine spheres lies in the designations 'spiritual and temporal'. Taken together, the concepts indicate a side of existence that is spirituo-religious on the one hand and another side that is distinct, but not separate, from the former: a temporal-worldly side. This distinction recalls Mircea Eliade's portrayal of the sacred and the profane<sup>49</sup> – a portrayal that retains its significance in a secular horizon of meaning. Here, Voegelin introduces Augustine as an example from intellectual history: in *De Civitate Dei*, Augustine distinguishes a *civitas Dei* and *civitas terrena*, whereby both *civitates*, citizenships, are intermingled on the journey within this world.<sup>50</sup> The *civitas Dei*, which began as a state of angels, is directed towards an eschatological fulfilment of history at the end of the ages.<sup>51</sup> The pure equation of the *civitas Dei* with the Church and the *civitas terrena* is too simplistic an interpretation, however, even though such tendencies arise in Augustine's own presentation. Both *civitates* are to be understood in terms of internal disposition rather than in institutional terms: if the citizens of the *civitas Dei* live in accordance with God, then the citizens of the *civitas terrena* are those who are hostile to God and Christ.<sup>52</sup> Thus does Augustine's concept of the *civitas Dei* also include those pre-Church and pre-Christian peoples that are *bonae voluntatis*. The historical background of Augustine's concept of the two *civitates* was the Visigoths' invasion of Rome in the year 410: Augustine defended Christianity, which had yet to establish itself as the state religion, against the accusation that it had not been capable of preventing the misfortune of the invasion. What counts is solely the steadfast internal attitude of the Christian, which is formed by the discipleship of Christ, no matter how hostile the environment in which the believing Christian resides. The concept of the two *civitates* is not entirely clear, however. This because a clear, institutional distinction between state and church was lacking even in Augustine's era. During the early fifth century, it will be recalled, Christianity was still on the path to becoming a state-bearing religion.

In the scholastic political theory of Thomas Aquinas, a distinction between 'temporal and spiritual' is unmistakably asserted. Aquinas requires the prince to exercise his rule in the earthly realm in such a way that subjects can strive for the salvation of their souls. The Church, for its part, is to care for the spiritual realm. 'In accordance with the superiority of the

spiritual end compared to the temporal one, the princely function is subordinate to the ecclesiastical function' – thus Voegelin.<sup>53</sup> The earthly ruler must therefore bow to the divine power and his rule must be directed by the divine will: the 'political-temporal sphere' is 'superseded by the spiritual one'.<sup>54</sup> This arrangement prompts an opposition of spiritual and temporal spheres as the state increasingly dissociates itself from the *ekklesia* and absorbs sacral contents for itself during the period that follows. Ultimately, this leads to the rise of an 'inner-worldly political religion on the basis of the Christian *ekklesia*'.<sup>55</sup> This was the case with Frederick II. Regarding himself as the 'Messiah king', he was the first to create an inner-worldly political religion within the *ekklesia*.

The result was the compilation of a 'world of politico-religious images' that 'can still be recognised as the basic structure of European developments up to the present'.<sup>56</sup> The symbolism of the 'apocalypse' and the 'sacred number' – the number three representing the Trinity – also became decisive here. Paul spoke of the Christian kingdom as the third kingdom that would follow the periods of the *lex naturalis* and *lex Mosaica* of the Old Testament. Similarly, the thought of German Symbolism speaks of the dawning of a 'Third Kingdom' in the period spanning from Joachim of Fiore to Dante.<sup>57</sup> Joachim of Fiore, for example: as the Third Kingdom following the kingdoms of the Old Testament and Christ, he foresees the kingdom of the Holy Spirit – a kingdom that remains to be fully realised. Each of the kingdoms has its own leaders and internal structure: coming after the precursors of Zachariah and John in the First Kingdom was Christ, who concluded a new covenant to inaugurate the Second Kingdom. At the beginning of the Third Kingdom stands a *Dux*,<sup>58</sup> a leader that is only vaguely characterised. This kingdom is set to begin for the year 1200 (or 1260). The apocalyptic Revelations of John speak of an *evangelium aeternum*.<sup>59</sup> The work of Joachim was later held to be this eternal gospel; as for his Third Kingdom, it was to be no mere institutional replacement of the Church but a spiritualisation of the *ekklesia*. Many orders that were founded, particularly the Franciscan order, suggested such a development. Unlike Paul, Joachim offers no structure of social order for this new, spiritualised *ekklesia*. According to Voegelin, the 'Christian apocalypse of the Kingdom and symbolism of the late Middle Ages' are 'the deep, historical substratum of the apocalyptic dynamic that characterises the modern political religions'.<sup>60</sup> The leader figures and myths of National Socialism in particular evince a level of spiritualisation that persists within the various orders of the movement. In addition, the political religions also assign the apocalypse the function of achieving a total revolution – the precondition for the completely new ordering of reality that is to follow. The nomenclature of 'Third Reich' is associated primarily with Germany from 1933 to 1945. Yet Marx and Engels also speak of a philosophy of history structured into 'three kingdoms' – one moving from primordial society, through society based on classes, to the classless society. For its part, the Italian

Fascist movement speaks of a 'Fascist Third Rome following the ancient and Christian Romes'.<sup>61</sup>

Preceding the age of absolutism, the *ekklesia* of the Christian West visibly disintegrates and increasingly divides up into partial state communities. The sovereign states arise in various stages of development. The state gradually assumes the place of the *ekklesia*, whereby an identity of political and religious institutions is practised in some states. The theory justifying this process is worked out by Hobbes, whom Voegelin characterises as 'the great theologian of the particularist *ekklesia* directly under God' – by this, he means the Hobbesian state.<sup>62</sup> The symbol of this identity of state and ecclesiastical power is the Leviathan,<sup>63</sup> the 'mortal God',<sup>64</sup> as Hobbes calls it. As the sovereign legitimated by the contract and the 'omnipotent state',<sup>65</sup> the Leviathan encompasses both divine and worldly power. The contract suspends the human state of nature, which is characterised as *bellum omnium contra omnes*. The many human beings unite to form one single person, the Leviathan, the state-body. The community thereby becomes a collective person.<sup>66</sup> The Church is also absorbed into this collective person. Any distinction between 'spiritual and temporal' thereby becomes superfluous. Hobbes abolishes the distinction because the state, as the sovereign, includes both spheres. By contrast to this, the *ekklesia* distinguishes spiritual and temporal sides of the hierarchy: pope and emperor, king and clergy and laity. Hobbes criticises the Catholic Church especially in this context: its claims both of the representation of God in a single person and of the direct relationship of the individual to God render it incapable of being absorbed into the state-body. As the exact opposite of the Leviathan, the Catholic Church is a realm of darkness and Satan according to Hobbes' theory.<sup>67</sup> The sovereign is to preserve the unity of the body of the people – of the commonwealth. In doing so, it is also permitted to use censorship. Perhaps with the National Socialist regime in mind here, Voegelin cynically notes the following:

[Hobbes'] justification [of censorship] could have been written by a modern propaganda minister: human actions are determined by their opinions and whoever correctly steers the opinions steers the actions towards peace and harmony. Certainly, the teachings must be true, but a conflict cannot arise insofar as teachings that disturb the peace of the community are not true.<sup>68</sup>

The subject must obey the sovereign alone, whatever form it might take. Above the sovereign stands God as the original power. In structural terms, the model of Jewish theocracy flows into the Hobbesian conception at this point. Abraham is named as an example: as the sole person that related to God directly, he interpreted God's will for himself and his family. Thus understood, the concept of the Leviathan resembled the political religion of antiquity: only the sovereign ruler mediates between God and human beings. Jesus Christ is a renewer of the covenant in this context and not an

earthly ruler because his rule comes only after the resurrection. Nonetheless, Christ has ecclesiastical power; apostolic succession ensured that this power was transferred to the apostles and their successors until Christian rulers subjugated themselves directly to God and thereby re-established the rule of God in themselves in a transferred sense. The Leviathan is now the new *ekklesia* that has been established on the ruins of the old *ekklesia*. Everything that opposes it is evil, Satan.

The 'new *ekklesiae* [*sic!*]<sup>69</sup> known as the national states developed in various ways throughout Europe. They arose in a process for which parts of the old *ekklesia* gradually detached themselves from the universal kingdom with its pinnacle in God, and sealed themselves off within the immanent world. In the process, they became fonts of the sacral in their relations with one other. According to Voegelin, the development of the twentieth-century political religions is already anticipated at this stage. As his assessment of Frederick II demonstrates, he sees the political religions to issue from a melding of spiritual and temporal spheres on the temporal side of earthly rule and power. Hereby, the political religions span a spectrum from the 'kingdom of evil' that was initially understood to be the opposite of the liberal state up to the totalitarian systems. Ultimately, the political religions posit whole new counter-kingdoms; such kingdoms must necessarily be destroyed if the purpose of the reigning political religion – which leads the world to what it sees to be good – it is to be attained. In the case of National Socialism, the counter-kingdom is world Jewry. The 'politico-religious symbolism'<sup>70</sup> remains the same as that of the *ekklesia*, but its content has radically changed to become secular and non-transcendent. 'Religiosity' becomes 'political', the 'mission of God' becomes the 'mission of history'.<sup>71</sup> The divine order is suppressed; Schelling's basic question asking why there is something and not nothing slips into oblivion, despite its resumption by Heidegger. The faith in science gains ground. The dominant image of the world becomes increasingly atheistic in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries: one need think here only of Auguste Comte's law of stages<sup>72</sup> leading from a theological-fictive stage through a metaphysical-abstract stage to a positive-scientific one, and of the almost total devaluation of religion by Karl Marx<sup>73</sup> and Sigmund Freud.<sup>74</sup> The question of human existence is the only question left open to the human being; beyond this, the worldly content obscures all divine content. What is more, the elevation of partial world-content to an absolute restricts the value of the human being as a person. Although reference to transcendence is integral to the essence of the human being in Voegelin's view, such reference is made impossible by the absolutisation of contents of the immanent world.<sup>75</sup> New apocalyptic visions emerge. These see not a *spiritualisation*, but a *scientification* of the world to be imminent:

The final kingdom is no longer a supernatural community of the spirit, but an earthly condition of perfected humanity. Kant's understanding

of history according to the intention of the world-citizen presents an idea of history in which the rational human person, as a world-immanent one, ascends to ever-higher levels of perfection. The ultimate goal is to stride forward – led by the appropriate spiritual leaders – to the community of world-citizens that is free of coercion.<sup>76</sup>

As this statement clearly shows, Voegelin finds a rationality that relates solely to the immanent world at work in the political religions. The purpose of this rationality is the ‘perfection of reason’, leading to a ‘coercion-free state’ under the ‘appropriate leaders’. Inner-worldly goals are established as the absolutes through which salvation becomes one in this world, and the original transcendent goal becomes immanent: ‘a perfect humanity’ in the immanent world.

‘Race theory’ is said to be an important component of the political religions. In 1933, Voegelin’s *Rasse und Staat* already presented important reflections on this theory.<sup>77</sup> Human corporeality is used as a basis upon which to present ideas of the body that are crucial to forming the body of the state.<sup>78</sup> One such idea concerning the body is the race idea. Whereas biologicistic foundations underpin race theories, the race ideal is based upon spiritual, mythical constructs that constitute a *corpus mysticum*.<sup>79</sup> The ideology of National Socialism contains both components – both mystical and biological ones. In *Die politischen Religionen*, Voegelin demonstrates that the race theory exploits transcendent contents for worldly purposes: he names Johann Gottlieb Fichte, who describes a ‘revelation’ in which he envisages the kingdom of God realised already in this world.<sup>80</sup> Only the ‘original people’ (*Urvolk*) of the Germans can lead humanity to the immanent final kingdom.<sup>81</sup> In the struggle of the races, Gobineau regards the Nordic-German race as ascendant.<sup>82</sup> As the religious-transcendent community had possessed previously, each earthly community now also has its counter-community: the positivist community has the metaphysical-religious one as its opposite, whereas the superior race has the inferior race. The construction and counter-construction of kingdom and counter-kingdom is always equipped with a sheen of scientific respectability. Yet how can this ‘pseudo-scientific respectability’ – we need think here only of race theory in the Third Reich – exist in the first place? To this end, the concept of truth is transformed into an ‘organic truth-concept’, as with Alfred Rosenberg.<sup>83</sup> As with Hobbes, the truth is understood here as ‘whatever promotes the existence of the organically sealed, immanentist national community’.<sup>84</sup> In the context once again of the inhumane race theory, new myths<sup>85</sup> of a superior immanentist community also arise, moulding a *corpus mysticum* of their own. Although transcendent in terms of their character, such myths are not transcendent in terms of their content. In realising the goals of an immanentist community, the people within such a community allow themselves be exploited as means and instruments. They thereby lose their personalities – the actual core of their existence. Voegelin summarises this



phenomenon as follows: ‘once the immanentist collective existence takes the place of God, the person becomes a member serving the sacral world-immanent content; it becomes an instrument’.<sup>86</sup>

The *ekklesia* symbolism of the immanentist community is like that of the Hobbesian Leviathan, except that in the former, God has been removed from the peak of the hierarchy entirely. This phenomena leads to the formation of ‘radically immanentist *ekklesiae* [*sic!*]’. The two ‘radically immanent *ekklesiae* [*sic*], the Fascist-Italian and the National Socialist German ones’, are sealed off to the utmost degree due to the divinisation of the nation and race, of the shared blood within the communities. The diction of both is nourished ‘by the shared vocabulary of German Romanticism’.<sup>87</sup> In place of the transcendent God, ‘the spirit of the people or the objective spirit’<sup>88</sup> – an unmistakable reference to Hegel – becomes a *realissimum* in history. The binding of the members of the nation through this spirit is almost a ‘religious idea’, its regime is a ‘religious politics’. In an almost mystical way, the nation becomes one with the Führer,<sup>89</sup> it ‘professes its faith’ in him: ‘The generation of the myth and its propaganda in newspaper and radio, in the speeches and community festivals, the assemblies and march-pasts, the planning and dying in the struggle are the immanentist forms of the *unio mystica*.’<sup>90</sup>

The individual’s confession to the collective articulates itself according to Voegelin in a ‘faith’ of its own. It is a faith for which the *realissimum* is not in God, as with supra-worldly religions, but in itself, in the predestined national community.<sup>91</sup> ‘Ecstasies’ of this kind of ‘faith’ are not spiritual, but instinctual and end in ‘the murderous frenzy of the deed’.<sup>92</sup> Characteristic of these secular faiths are the poems of the *Lieder vom Reich* by Gerhard Schumann:

The millions bowed themselves before him in silence.  
 Saved. The sky flamed in the morning’s pallor.  
 The sun rose. And with it rose the Reich.<sup>93</sup>

Voegelin’s reflections pertain only to Fascism and National Socialism directly. Although Voegelin certainly includes Communism as one of the political religions,<sup>94</sup> his reflections are less applicable to Communism insofar as the Communist faith is characterised by a strongly theoreticised ideology. In the ‘Epilogue’ to *Die politischen Religionen*, Voegelin attains a result that can be summarised in four points. First, the political community has roots that are clearly religious. The political sphere, therefore, is not a strictly profane sphere. Second, the political and legal order is always modelled on the Christian order and its *ekklesia*. Third, a religious dynamic and symbolism characterise every political community, even if these often are not recognised by a-religious interpretations. Fourth, the human is essentially religious and spiritual. As such, every human community – even and especially the political community – must seek to consider and protect these qualities.<sup>95</sup> Further: the human being is not permitted to find the transcendental

source of good within himself in Voegelin's view. The attempt marks a lapse from God, insofar as immanent realities (the human being, collectivity or state) might never become the *realissimum*; indeed, it *cannot* become it, due to its immanent character. Rather than effectively stemming the totalitarian mass movements, a modern, secular enlightened humanism covertly plays into their hands. Here, Voegelin's thought approaches the *renouveau catholique* – especially Jacques Maritain's neo-Thomism. Like Voegelin, Maritain criticises modern positivist thought and politics for their contribution to the general distancing of the person from Christianity and God.<sup>96</sup> The disintegration of rationality into a pure scientism in modernity leads to new kinds of gnostic movements – these later become one of the main topics of Voegelin's book, *The New Science of Politics*.<sup>97</sup> And as he already makes clear in the foreword to *Die politischen Religionen*, the only way to destroy the foundations of the political mass movements would be a genuine 'religious renewal' of the human being.<sup>98</sup>

To sum up: the political religions begin with the indistinct boundary between politics and religion in antiquity. Here, the supreme ruler alone is the divine mediator between human being and God. In the *ekklesia*, each individual Christian relates directly to God. The hierarchy that flows from God has a spiritual and a temporal side. In the model of the *Leviathan*, the state itself becomes the *ekklesia*. A division between temporal and spiritual orders becomes superfluous. In the period that follows (one for which state and Church are distinguished) the *ekklesia* gradually detaches itself from the universal kingdom with its pinnacle in God. In a process that unfolds in various stages, the national states come to replace the *ekklesia* as immanent communities that become sources of the sacred in their own right. In a further, more radical step, this development leads to the formation of political religions. These religions gain expression in the twentieth-century totalitarian mass movements.

According to Voegelin, the totalitarian regime manifests the severe spiritual crisis of European culture directly after the First World War. Voegelin's interpretation expands the concept of religion beyond the traditional boundaries of that concept – one that comprehends and characterises primarily the high religions. For him, the concept extends into the political sphere. He thereby lays bare the religious roots of the political movements: politics and religion have common roots in the depth of the human being, in its creatureliness and its psyche. Voegelin's work, *Die politischen Religionen*, heads towards the comprehensive conception of human and political order that he later presented in his major work, *Order and History*.<sup>99</sup> If – like Heinrich Meier<sup>100</sup> – one understands political theology as a political theory for which the highest authority and ultimate foundation is divine revelation, then Voegelin's concept of the political religions could also be understood as a political theology.<sup>101</sup> Both Michael Henkel and Jan Assmann<sup>102</sup> discern a clear relationship of Voegelin's position to Carl Schmitt's political theology.<sup>103</sup> Schmitt also sees concepts of political theory

to have developed as a secularisation of theological concepts. For Hans-Christof Kraus as well, Voegelin's approach has the character of a political theology that ultimately does not achieve its goal.<sup>104</sup> The chief reasons he provides are, first, that Voegelin's approach connects various concepts of intellectual history in a new, strange way that is problematic from the perspective of historical criticism. Drawing together the spheres of theology and political philosophy (spheres that are distinct in a secular epoch), Voegelin seeks a new perspective in political science. Further, Voegelin's direct references to reality seem problematic in the context of a universal history; ultimately, Voegelin's approach is clearly based upon his own internal experiences.<sup>105</sup> On these grounds, Kraus holds Voegelin's politico-theological analyses of basic experiences of transcendence to be too speculative to be able to taken seriously as a theory of the structure of reality.<sup>106</sup> His investigations of the link between politics and religion, on the other hand, are of more interest because these indicate the 'political significance of religious emotions'.<sup>107</sup> Due to its strongly theological character, therefore, Voegelin's philosophy of politics and history proves to be problematic. Further, to the extent that its general concept is guided by that of classical Christian philosophy, it too is at the mercy of 'anti-metaphysical and anti-Christian criticism'.<sup>108</sup> Ultimately, it is difficult for a human being who has no experiences of transcendence to understand what Voegelin means by 'transcendent and immanentist', 'spiritual and temporal', and their identification by the inner-worldly political religion. Although such objections are partly justified, it should be countered that Voegelin regarded himself as an empiricist who had great respect for the factual. Precisely because Voegelin incorporated human value-attitudes and experiences of reality into his concept of reality, '[he] regarded his theory', according to Peter J. Opitz, 'as [being] even more saturated with reality'.<sup>109</sup> What remains problematic about Voegelin's theory is his reference to existential experiences. Insofar as such experiences are always subject to interpretation, it is almost impossible to verify not only their correctness, but their reality and rationality. One can only empathise with or understand such experiences.<sup>110</sup>

Voegelin's concept of religion is so expansive that a religion can still be a religion even if it makes no reference to transcendence. A problem lurks within this concept, however.<sup>111</sup> Although the political religions indeed make reference to such world-immanent goals as 'perfected humanity' or one's own race (although, therefore, they manifest an inner-worldly eschatology), the transcendent character of this reference is retained: ultimately, such goals can be attained only at the end of a long historical development. Only thus can Voegelin maintain the description 'political religions'. Yet, in his later work, Voegelin distances himself from the concept of the political religion altogether.<sup>112</sup> He now speaks only of 'gnosis', 'gnostic mass movements' and even of 'ersatz religions'.<sup>113</sup>

One further critical remark would apply primarily to the effectiveness of Voegelin's concept of political religions. Insofar as the concept is based in

his methodology, it can indicate the origins of many totalitarian phenomena, but cannot explain the development of totalitarianism entirely. Totalitarian regimes, therefore, cannot be exhaustively explained in terms of political religions.<sup>114</sup>

Voegelin's *Die politischen Religionen* is important for showing that – despite all secularisation – religiosity is an important aspect of modern political systems, especially in modern nation-states. His philosophic-historical depiction also clarifies the origins of the religious elements. Like the historian Jacob Talmon,<sup>115</sup> Voegelin sees the roots of modern totalitarianism to lie in the close association of politics and religion before the Enlightenment.<sup>116</sup> Worth emphasising, finally, is Voegelin's contribution to overcoming the modern crisis of meaning, as well as his contribution to heightening our critical perception of ideologies and our understanding of the structures of totalitarian regimes. Thus Opitz:

According to Voegelin's thesis, crucial needs of large sections of the population were very essentially *religious*. The thesis that these needs – needs that were satisfied by the ideologies – lay at base of the rise of the ideological mass movements, remains valid today.<sup>117</sup>

## Raymond Aron

The French philosopher and sociologist Raymond Aron (1905–83) takes a very different path from Eric Voegelin in developing his concept of political religions. He speaks of 'political religions' in interpreting political mass movements only initially; later, he speaks primarily of 'secular religions'. In essays both on Germany and on politics in general, Aron presents a detailed religious characterisation of the totalitarian regimes of his day. His essays on Germany draw from his experiences when he lived there from 1930 to 1933. (Aron's parental home was one of assimilated Jews.)

As just noted, Aron seldom uses the concept 'political religions'. The term first appears in a 1939 review of *L'ère des tyrannies*,<sup>118</sup> a work by Elie Halévy, a French theorist of totalitarianism, of 1938. The concept occurs a second time in 1941, in an article entitled 'Bureaucratie et fanatisme'.<sup>119</sup>

In the 1939 review of *L'ère des tyrannies*,<sup>120</sup> Aron challenges Halévy's thesis holding that Fascism and Communism have common origins. Expressing well justified doubts about Halévy's arguments, Aron wishes to see them 'less refuted than analysed'.<sup>121</sup> The analysis to follow offers numerous religious characterisations of totalitarian regimes: thus does Aron speak of the 'religious fervour of nationalism'<sup>122</sup> in Germany, which is said to be stronger there than in other European nations. This brief entry by Aron already demonstrates a central element of his concept of political religions: its interpretation of the individual phenomena of totalitarian despotic regimes (in this case, the intensive national enthusiasm of the

Germans in the 1930s) as religious phenomena. In the same context, Aron states that Fascism might be effective in coping with the crisis of capitalism – indeed, that it might even offer ‘a solution’ to this crisis ‘because it represents power and because it creates hope’.<sup>123</sup> This characterisation too, especially the expression, ‘hope’, might refer to a religious horizon of ideas.

As Harald Seubert ascertains,<sup>124</sup> Aron’s religious portrayal of certain elements of totalitarianism is consistent with Aron’s understanding of ideology. Ideology is said to signify a philosophy that claims to be politics.<sup>125</sup> Thus Aron:

Yet by this we understand one of the conditions that have been necessary for the success of the tyrannies to this day: the fragility of the democratic powers, the seductive power of nationalist ideologies by contrast to the international humanitarianism of the old theories on the left.<sup>126</sup>

Such an ideology, which conveys ‘omnipotence’ on the person of the tyrant, ‘is dogmatically taught as official truth’.<sup>127</sup> Although Aron does not speak of ‘religion’ or the ‘religious’ in this context, the proximity to the religious in Aron’s diction is clearly recognisable: contents of the ideologies become ‘dogmas’, political leaders become ‘omnipotent’. In addition, fascist tyrannies ‘deify’ such world-immanent quantities as ‘the nation or the race’,<sup>128</sup> such that these world-immanent quantities can replace the transcendental ideas of God offered by traditional religions. Despite the proximity of the concepts of ideology and religion, Aron still distinguishes the ideological sphere from the religious one: ‘Even the ideology of unity does not have the same meaning: communism is the transference or caricature of a soteriological religion. Yet the fascisms no longer know anything of humanity [*humanité*]’.<sup>129</sup>

For Aron, therefore, totalitarian regimes – Fascism and Communism, in this context – are of a religious character because they intensify the political sphere to the point where it merges with the religious one. As imitators of traditional religion, they thereby become secular or political religions. With reference to Germany in particular, but accompanied by a critical remark on France, Aron sees more than mere enthusiasm steered along organised tracks in the political religions; one need think only of the National Socialist mass rallies at the Nuremberg party conventions or in the Berlin *Sportspalast*. He sees in the political religions a peculiar ‘violence of the struggle of the party’ that has a depth all its own; politics assumes a religious dimension here precisely in its promise to create a new human being and new community. For Aron, the effects of political religions surpass that of mere ideologies. The political religions possess a explosive spiritual power all their own, one that enlists and intensifies the dynamics of traditional religions even further. Ultimately, however, the political religions are to be contrasted to traditional religions because they lack their more comprehensive spiritual content. One need think here only of the sphere of art:

Let us recall the Weimar Republic during its final years (and to a certain extent, our own country in the present day). Let us observe the violence of the struggle among the parties. The conflicts of this epoch of political religions are not caused merely by self-interest and the striving for advantage; they issue from strivings that are contradictory in their depths: they are nourished by metaphysics or, better still, by rivalling dogmas.

Nevertheless: 'Neither Marxism nor racism represent an equivalent to Catholicism in the medieval society: too many individuals and too many spiritual riches escape them.'<sup>130</sup>

On the one hand, Aron indicates the depth dimension of the ideologies here. Of a quality similar to that of religion, the depth dimension of ideology ultimately contradicts the former because it is nourished by an opposing basic principle. On the other hand, Aron's critical, almost negatively loaded concept of religion is also manifest here: the references in this context to 'self-interest and striving for advantage' and to 'Catholicism in the medieval society', for example. On the one hand, Aron makes a clear distinction between the traditional religions, in the shelter of which flourishing cultures could and did develop, and the political religions with their artificially created cultures. On the other hand, however, Aron holds religion to be a kind of 'undigested remnant' of the Enlightenment age in various respects. Because it conceals uncertainties and dangers, it is in need of reappraisal.<sup>131</sup> Aron sees political religion to represent a further aggravation and intensification of ideology, a new dimension of added explosive power.

Aron uses the concept of 'political religions' in 'Bureaucratie et fanatisme' (1941), the article that was previously mentioned. Here, he speaks of the construction of an enemy, of evil incarnate; to combat this evil, there emerges a prophetic saviour, the hope of the masses. 'Thus does a political religion arise.'<sup>132</sup> In this article, Aron also characterises the central attributes of 'political religions'.

The political religions, with their holy book, with their devil and their saints, their interpretations of history and their prophecies, only appear to contradict each other: they express the revolt against a destiny that one does not understand, they absorb various kinds of fervour having no object.<sup>133</sup>

Even before the two articles that have just been introduced were published, Aron made first attempts to offer a religious interpretation of the totalitarian despotic regimes of his time in *La crise sociale et les idéologies nationales* (1936).<sup>134</sup> In 1932, he already writes that 'the masses [were] thrown into a turmoil by a collective faith of a religious nature'.<sup>135</sup> The 'prophet', Hitler, proclaimed Germany's 'chiliastic' future, one that would not bring material riches, but would very well bring purity, strength and security. Hitler himself

pointed out the path to this future. In 'Bureaucratie et fanatisme', the 'prophetic' element in particular re-emerges, just as religious interpretations of political mass movements appear repeatedly throughout Aron's oeuvre. With excellent foresight, he notes in 1936 – at the end of his contribution to *La crise sociale et les idéologies nationales* – that National Socialism 'rekindles an almost religious enmity between the nations'.<sup>136</sup> It does this because Germany attributes itself a mythic uniqueness, one that is to confront the mythic hostility of the other nations. This statement clearly indicates Aron's religious interpretation of the National Socialist regime of terror.

In 'L'avenir des religions séculières' (1944)<sup>137</sup> a two-part essay appearing in *La France Libre*, Aron reflects on the religious dimension of Marxism and National Socialism in particular.<sup>138</sup> In doing so, however, he continues along the interpretative direction he had begun with the concept of 'political religions':

I suggest calling 'secular religions' those doctrines which occupy the place of the disappeared faith in the hearts of our contemporaries and which cast the salvation of humanity in the form of a social order that is to be recreated in the distant future of this world.<sup>139</sup>

Aron sees the disintegration of traditional religious faith to be one cause of the rise of secular religions. This disintegration is said to have provided the occasion for the religious potencies that had been set free to be occupied with worldly contents. Regarding Marxism, Aron determines that it is distinguished by its strongly rationalist orientation. To a certain extent, it is a *fides quaerens intellectum*.<sup>140</sup> It even constructs – thus Aron verbatim – a 'socialist eschatology'.<sup>141</sup> National Socialism, by contrast, is characterised by irrationality.<sup>142</sup> Both enjoy great influence in their different ways. One reason for the success of the secular religions according to Aron is the shattered spiritual unity of Europe in the wake of a Christianity that has become increasingly weak. In this disorientation, the secular religions are said to provide a substitute for the community that has been lost:

But, now, there are also individual persons numbering in the millions – persons who are the prisoners of a monotonous occupation, who are lost in the crowds of the cities, and who participate in no other spiritual community than the one the secular religions have offered them. The masses of people who enthusiastically cheer on the false prophets betray the strength of the desires that rise up to an empty heaven.<sup>143</sup>

The power to form communities is said to be an important distinguishing feature of the secular religions. The new religions also exploit the uneasiness that predominates in the face both of growing technological progress and of the mutual alienation of people from one another. Further, the secular religions hold up an image of the enemy that presents everything that does

not belong to one's own community as the incarnation of evil. This is why Aron calls the secular religions, especially National Socialism, 'Manichaeism'.<sup>144</sup> He does so with absolute correctness, insofar as National Socialism postulates a clear dualism of the principles of good and of evil. Yet Aron still maintains that the secular religions have no lasting future; contenting themselves with perfection in this world, they will always ultimately remain deficient.<sup>145</sup> That said, Aron does not see the danger issuing from the secular religions to have been stemmed merely by this prediction.<sup>146</sup>

In *L'opium des intellectuels* (1955), the concept of the 'religion of intellectuals'<sup>147</sup> emerges alongside 'secular religion'<sup>148</sup> with respect to Marxism – which Aron treats in detail in this investigation. The title, *L'opium des intellectuels*, provides a polemical reminder that religion is the 'opium of the people'.<sup>149</sup> Concerning intellectuals, Aron finds a parallel to religion in Marxism. Conditioned by the 'philosophy of immanence',<sup>150</sup> Marxism supplies human dispositions that would otherwise be formed in the religious sphere with political goals. Marxism in particular exploits this process in order to lend its ideology a particularly effective power. An era of salvation is prophesied here – in this case, the era of the classless society – and a select group can attain it in advance. The party thereby plays the role of a 'church', including the elect and pitting them against the non-elect, the opponents that must be fought with violence. The party, as a church, also establishes dogmas and truths of its own.<sup>151</sup> The course of empirical and intellectual history is interpreted such that one refers to one's own ideology alone. Aron summarises this development in the following way:

This is the psychology more of a sect than of a world-church. Its disciples are convinced that they belong to the small number of elect upon whose shoulders the salvation of everyone rests. The faithful likewise become 'new human beings'. As quick studies, they are accustomed to following the zigzag of the line and to repeating the clarifications that replace and contradict each other (like the clarification of the German-Russian pact, for example, or of the conspiracy of the murderers in white lab-coats).<sup>152</sup>

Aron makes it clear that Marxism involves more a sect than a church; its structures only remotely resemble those of an ecclesiastical type. Certainly, the unconditional obedience displayed towards a doctrine that transforms the disciples into new human beings is characteristic of the concept of secular religion, as is the belief in one's own election. Thus is Marxism, too, the 'religion of intellectuals', a secular religion.

After the Second World War, religious characterisations of totalitarian regimes can be found in many other of Aron's essays. In his 1951 foreword to André Thérive's *Essai sur les trahisons*,<sup>153</sup> Aron asks: 'does the religious or ideological tie outrank the national tie?'.<sup>154</sup> As is always the case with Aron, the proximity of the religious to the ideological sphere is revealed



here, despite all distinctions made between the two. Yet his subsequent placement of the religious or ideological tie above the national tie means that he sees the latter to be overarched by religion to a certain extent. The political, national plane is fitted out with a religious character. According to Aron, further, the twentieth-century despotic regimes are not typically modern. Their intention is not a modern, but a religious one, insofar as it seeks to 'create a new human being' 'who is supposed to worship his masters and regard the edicts of the state power as dogmas'.<sup>155</sup> This aspect of the twentieth-century ideological mass movements is almost Promethean already. According to Aron, though, the Promethean element is supplemented by a further nuance that approaches a Nietzschean transvaluation of all values: 'In such a world, the values are reversed into their opposite. Treason is no longer the one thing that is most justly condemned in the world. Entirely to the contrary: rare and noble, it becomes the final refuge of freedom.'<sup>156</sup>

Clothed in ironic words, Aron's appeal to shake off the yoke of the twentieth-century totalitarian despotic regime is sounded here: democratic freedom is to be regained through treason, which becomes increasingly rare in these times.

In a later essay written in 1954,<sup>157</sup> Aron discusses various approaches within the theory of totalitarianism. Here, he considers those of Hannah Arendt, Léon Poliakov and Crane Brinton, among others.<sup>158</sup> Following Arendt, Aron characterises totalitarianism as arising from an unchecked increase of bureaucracy that results in a conflict of jurisdictions. The next step is the monopolisation of power by a single party. This party possesses both an internal aspect intended for a small circle of people and an outer one seeking a stronger mass effect for the broader population. Ultimately, the power of the party culminates in one leader. A secret police becomes the supreme power in the state. This police regime is introduced together with obsessive, ideological mass propaganda and the development of an 'esoteric theory' intended for a small circle of people.<sup>159</sup> The latter, for its part, involves not merely the development of a simple theory, but a 'demand for ideological orthodoxy'.<sup>160</sup> Such orthodoxy is required by totalitarian regimes at the climax of their revolutionary phases. The terror element of the totalitarian regime is only increased as a result. This same depiction of totalitarianism shows how closely the concepts 'totalitarianism', 'ideology', and 'religious sphere' – the latter of which is usually not addressed directly – are connected for Aron. One gains the impression that Aron's reflections on the twentieth-century despotic regime proceed in the manner of a 'hermeneutic circle', circling the phenomenon from all sides, but not characterising it in a strictly systematic way.

Revolutionary societies uproot the human being from such habitual ties as family or occupation. All that counts now is faith in the doctrine of the totalitarian regime, one that promises salvation to both individual and community (sealed together by destiny) at the end of an historical process.

This process – thus Aron, following Arendt – occurs necessarily and according to its own internal laws rather than arising from the arbitrary whim of an individual human being.<sup>161</sup>

In comparing Communist rule to the tsarism that preceded it, Aron attributes to the revolutionary ideology, as a secular religion, the same role he attributes to the Russian Orthodox religion during tsarism. Although his juxtaposition of secular religion and orthodox religion is not unproblematic in historical terms, it shows that Aron sees religious doctrines as supporting political structures and even bringing them to full effectiveness.<sup>162</sup> Aron holds that the sacralisation<sup>163</sup> of power serves the establishment of a system of rule:

The revolutionary ideology – the secular religion – begins to perform the same role to the advantage of the General Secretary of the Party that the orthodox religion played to the advantage of the tsars. Caesaropapism arises anew, just as the interpreter of history becomes the Emperor-Pope.<sup>164</sup>

As Aron's reflections indicate here, his interpretation of the essence of totalitarianism is conducted on many levels; his sources and assumptions are similarly multi-layered. This is why no method used for the interpretation of totalitarianism is excluded from the beginning.

In a 1979 article,<sup>165</sup> Aron writes that Hitler believed he would build up an empire of the Aryan race through the purification of the German race. This empire was to reign first over Europe, and ultimately over the entire world. Every culture, history and religion (Christianity in particular) was to disappear. In general, Aron sees the 'secular religions' of Marxism and National Socialism to be caught up in a struggle: whereas the first 'is supra-rationalistic', the second is 'fundamentally irrational' and 'an answer to the first'.<sup>166</sup>

Returning to 'L'avenir des religions séculières',<sup>167</sup> his two-part essay that appeared in *La France Libre* in 1944, Aron resumes his characterisation of the distinguishing features of 'secular religions'. Such religions, first, replace faith within the individual human being. Second, they see the salvation of humanity as occurring in this world in the distant future and as taking the form of a social transformation and new social order. As soteriological religions, the secular religions manifest supreme values 'embodied by a missionary party'. Within the parties, 'unrestrained Machiavellianism' reigns: whatever the leaders of the party find useful is also good. Secular religions interpret the entire course of history as aimed towards their own ends. Truths are proclaimed and proved 'by the deed'. Aron has National Socialism and Marxism especially in mind here.<sup>168</sup>

A meeting of the Société Française de Philosophie was held in 1939. Aron closes a discussion in which Jacques Maritain and others also participated<sup>169</sup> with the following words:

The crisis appears to me to be infinitely deeper; ... I wanted to show that it is too simple to invoke immortal principles against the totalitarian regimes. Principles, if they are not animated by life and faith, make no difference. It is necessary to reanimate them.<sup>170</sup>

Aron's statement might be interpreted as meaning that the totalitarian regimes mirror 'immortal principles' in a living and credible way. Genuinely 'immortal principles' like those of Christianity, therefore, must first be revitalised in order to be able to combat totalitarianism. This statement ultimately makes it clear just how strongly Aron estimates the religious influence of the totalitarian regimes.

By way of summary, the stages of development of Aron's concept of political or secular religions can be recapitulated as follows: in the case of German National Socialism, Aron already recognises the presence of religious features in totalitarian regimes as early as 1936. Three years later, in 1939, he speaks explicitly of 'political religions' in his review of Halévy's *L'ère des tyrannies*. In 1941, he mentions the concept of 'political religions' – again in characterising the phenomena of totalitarian mass movements. And although he begins to speak of 'secular religions' in 1944, he retains and uses this concept in various essays long after the Second World War – in 1979, for example.

For Raymond Aron, a political or secular religion is characterised by the following elements: first, by its doctrine. The content of the respective system or ideology is dogmatised and formulated into fixed principles of faith that claim to present the truth. Political or secular religions erect their own scale of values, one attempting to justify certain political actions and often tending to absolutise world-immanent entities. Hereby, the rule of a single party has its pinnacle in an 'omnipotent' prophetic leader who embodies these values – values that usually approve of everything that is useful to the party and the leader. As a second element of a political or secular religion, its system constructs an enemy that embodies everything opposed to its own good doctrine. This enemy must be annihilated in order to attain the salvation the party has prophesied. Political or secular religions imitate soteriological religion. They suffuse the political sphere with a religious character by replacing the personal religious faith of the individual and prophesying a state of salvation that is to follow an apocalypse at the end of our present times. This state of salvation, however, can be attained only through a radical re-ordering. Such reordering must occur through a strict adherence to the programme set forth by the doctrines of the political or secular religion. The ties generated by these religions go well beyond ideological ones. Creating a dimension of depth that is even greater than that generated by ideologies, these ties underpin the ruling totalitarian system. The political or secular religions also appeal to the human psyche, exploiting religious forces that are no longer captured by the dissolving traditional religions. A further characteristic of political or secular religions

is that they uproot people from such traditional communities as the family and bind them into new communities. Hereby, political or secular religions make use of a mass propaganda that they themselves have developed and that has its counterpart in an esoteric teaching for a small circle of people. Such teachings bind the groups for which they are intended in each case with a force that is almost spiritual. Finally, political or secular religions interpret the entire course of history – that which was, is and is to come – to their own benefit. Only the revitalisation of traditional religious values and views can expose the fleeting character of the values of the political or secular religions.<sup>171</sup>

Aron's concept tends to be problematic to the extent that he never precisely explains how, in terms of the history of religion, the political or secular religions are typical of the European nations. To the extent that these nations have undergone a break of the public culture from Christianity, the political religions (as Voegelin correctly ascertains) can claim to fill a 'value-vacuum' that has arisen in Europe. Aron does not go far enough in terms of the philosophy or phenomenology of religion either. According to Harald Seubert, he possessed no precise concepts of religion, faith or Church. As such, his religious interpretation of the totalitarian despotic regimes is based upon a concept of religion that is intuitive and relatively undifferentiated.<sup>172</sup>

The analysis of ideologies offered by Marie-Joseph Le Guillou agrees with Aron to the extent that Le Guillou also considers ideologies to manifest certain cultic forms and also discovers Church-like structures in Marxism-Leninism specifically. By contrast to Aron, however, Le Guillou ultimately rejects the concept of 'secular religion', because the disciples of an ideology themselves do not regard their doctrine as a religion.<sup>173</sup>

Despite this criticism – one that is not entirely unjustified – the descriptive and analytical importance of Aron's concept of political or secular religions should not be underestimated. In the period of 1930 to 1940, after all, there was an urgent necessity to expose the phenomena and symptoms of despotic totalitarian regimes – even though this effort remained ultimately unsuccessful and was unable to open the eyes of a broad stratum of the population.

## **Lucia Varga**

The genesis of the concept of political religion is connected primarily with the name of Eric Voegelin. A first edition of Voegelin's 1938 treatise is to be found in the library – preserved by chance<sup>174</sup> – of an historian who has remained largely unknown to this day. Herself a student of Marc Bloch, Lucia Varga would have found her own research supported by Voegelin's work. Indeed, she herself had already characterised National Socialism as just such a political religion in 1937, in certain essays in the *Annales d'histoire économique et sociale* edited by Marc Bloch and Lucien Febvre.<sup>175</sup>

‘Not far from us at all, a world has come to an end. A new world with contours as yet unknown arises’.<sup>176</sup> Thus begins Varga’s 1937 essay on the rise of National Socialism, one appearing in the autumn edition of the *Annales*. Here, she examines the ‘old’ familiar interpretive schemas before concluding that these, ultimately, cannot explain the fascinating power of National Socialism: ‘the old keys do not fit the new locks’.<sup>177</sup> On the basis of a sociological analysis of Nazi adherents in Germany, she reaches the conclusion that neither social misery nor a class-consciousness of any type is their central motivation. On the contrary, she sees the disciples of Nazism to be attempting to defend and re-establish ‘social honour’.<sup>178</sup> The concept of ‘social honour’ represents the mobilising power of the Hitler movement, one that does not recruit through a programme, a bundle of ideas, but represents instead an *Erlebnisgruppe* – Varga explicitly uses this German concept in her French text.

The common experience<sup>179</sup> of sacrifice for the group endows the lives of its individual members with new meaning and the movement as a whole with its revolutionary dynamic. ‘[R]evolution, this means to simplify everything and assert dualisms everywhere: friend or enemy, comrade or opponent in the struggle . . . . Around this arises a blind, fanatic belief in the leader and the doctrine, a total self-sacrifice’.<sup>180</sup>

Varga tests the phenomenon of resistance to National Socialism in her thesis. First naming members of the two great Christian confessions, she analyses the contrast between German Christians and the confessing Church. In conclusion, she determines that ‘both of these, as well as the members of numerous sects throughout Germany, face the same problem: that of opposing the totalitarian political religion of National Socialism with a divine totalitarian religion’.<sup>181</sup>

One is reminded in a remarkable way of Voegelin’s opposition of world-immanent to supra-worldly religion. Nevertheless: Varga’s concepts are distinct from Voegelin’s by their remaining consciously bound to anthropological and social facts rather than seeking to provide a theory of universal history.<sup>182</sup>

In a review of the same year, she again tests her precise knowledge of the religio-sociological circumstances in National Socialist Germany:

It must be seen, certainly, that the opponent of Catholicism and Protestantism in present-day Germany is not so much ‘neo-paganism’ and the religious dilettantism associated with it – a phenomenon that means nothing whatever outside a few semi-intellectual circles. The opponent is rather National Socialism itself, a political religion that replaces the divine with its *gospel of violence*.

In terms of its significance – especially measured by its impact upon the literature – Lucia Varga’s characterisation of National Socialism as a political religion cannot be compared to that of Voegelin’s work of 1938. Nevertheless,

it can justly claim to have introduced a term that has proved to be a critical element of any comprehensive interpretation of the phenomenon. The strength of Varga's approach is that it does not begin with the history of ideas, but places great value on the databases and methodology of the history of religion, anthropology, and sociology instead. In this sense, the approach might be regarded as a valid guide even today.

### **Literary interpretations: Franz Werfel and Hermann Broch**

Franz Werfel analyses religion and the character of his times in his literary work. Largely following his own intuition, he ultimately finds himself 'between the fronts'<sup>183</sup> and is therefore an eloquent witness of the intellectual aporia of the 1930s and 1940s. The title of a 1944 book indicates that what was involved was not a decision 'between right and left, but between above and below'.<sup>184</sup> The decisive question, that is, does not involve socialism or nationalism, but faith in God or nihilism. Further: in the 1930s, the idea that socialism and nationalism are 'political ersatz religions' – an interpretation that was at that time nowhere near as hackneyed as it is today<sup>185</sup> was rejected. (From 1945 to the present, however, the thought that socialism and nationalism, the driving forces of the totalitarian regimes of the twentieth century, emerged as 'political ersatz religions' has not been shared by many.) Werfel also calls nationalism and socialism the 'great modern heresies'. Together with anti-Semitism, they mark 'a form of resistance against Christ'.<sup>186</sup> Further: for all their hostilities, the 'political ideologies' are 'identical in their anti-metaphysical leanings'.<sup>187</sup>

On 5 March 1932, Werfel gave a lecture entitled 'Können wir ohne Gottesglauben leben?' in Vienna. Having broken with the Jewish community (albeit without converting) at the insistence of his later wife, Alma Mahler-Gropius, in 1929, Werfel now speaks about the difficult situation of religion in his time. Referring less to a particular confession or the Church than to religion in general, he states: 'I [will] not speak of organised religion . . . , not of positive churches and confessions, but of the unchecked stream of metaphysics that suffuses the human soul as much now as it ever did'.<sup>188</sup> In this lecture, Werfel first sketches the picture of an average human being living in a large city; he has an occupation of middling significance and is of middle age. Except for the contact he once had with the Church during childhood and youth, he has no special relation to religion or the transcendent. His search for meaning and for God ended early, aided by the cold and sober scraps of knowledge that were provided by the advancing sciences. Aside from his cares and worries, the only thing now left to our average human being is his ego. Yet the ego too is exposed to a great danger: to nothingness. This danger is mirrored in the average person's thoughts: 'First I was nothing, then I became a pleasure-needing and pain-perceiving something, except that this would be taken from me. And in the end, I will be not only nothing again, but an intensified nothing – a nothing minus my ego'.<sup>189</sup>

Formed by the terrible experience of the First World War, this person is tormented by a deep fear of death, the fear of being swallowed by absolute nothingness. This person serves for Werfel 'as the symbol, incarnate in a human being, by which to represent that all-penetrating modern state of consciousness I [Werfel] wish to call *naturalistic nihilism*'.<sup>190</sup> In a 1930 lecture entitled 'Realismus und Innerlichkeit',<sup>191</sup> Werfel had already depicted the historical, economic and psychological origins of naturalistic nihilism: it is the alienation of the person from his being, which is rooted in transcendence.<sup>192</sup> In *Theologumena* (1942–44)<sup>193</sup> too, thoughts on naturalistic nihilism can be found predominantly in the section, 'Eine Engelsbrücke für Agnostiker'.<sup>194</sup> Due to this nihilistic alienation from God, the human being has no further possibility 'of attaining a higher world-meaning through knowledge or perception'.<sup>195</sup> The disenchantment of the world by natural science in particular has made an essential additional contribution: 'the human spirit, dazzled by telescope and microscope, was blind for some time to God'.<sup>196</sup> In 1937, Werfel casts the zeitgeist in a critical light in the lecture, 'Von der reinsten Glückseligkeit des Menschen'.<sup>197</sup> '[I]f ever a time has earned the epithet of the "Promethean", it is ours'.<sup>198</sup>

Werfel's average human being has two sons, who by no means wish to remain content with an ego threatened with nothingness and emptiness. They strive for 'attachment to a higher order, to a super-order, to an authority to which they can passionately submit themselves, for which they under certain circumstances would sacrifice their lives'.<sup>199</sup> By these orders he means the political mass movements of National Socialism and Communism. For Werfel, both are 'radical kinds of faith' that draw the people – in particular the youth – under their spell. The empty ego is to be filled with these new 'kinds of faith'. It gains a new meaning thereby – albeit a dubious one, one for which it is even worth dying. 'But each', thus Werfel in another passage in 1944, 'requires the tie back, the *re-ligio*, to a large whole. Most accept the ersatz religions offered by the nihilistic spirit of the time just as thoughtlessly as they had earlier accepted the authentic religion'.<sup>200</sup> In 'Können wir ohne Gottesglauben leben?' (1932) Werfel had already called the nihilistic-naturalistic forms of faith 'ersatz religions' or 'religion ersatz', because they occupy the place of the traditional religions:

Our era offers the young people two radical types of faith. You have guessed that the one son of our man on the street is a Communist and the other is a National Socialist. Naturalistic nihilism likewise can be divided into two branches. The youth makes the step away from the helpless ego. Communism and National Socialism are primitive means by which to transcend the ego. They are ersatz religions or, if you like, an ersatz for religion.<sup>201</sup>

Werfel sees Communism and nationalism – with the latter being one of the decisive driving impulses of National Socialism – to be the most important

ersatz religions. Parallels to Raymond Aron's later concept of political or secular religion are marked here: for example, in Werfel's discernment of a dogmatisation of Communist doctrine or of the quasi-eschatological idea of a classless society to which the soteriological theory of Communism will lead.<sup>202</sup> Unlike Aron, Werfel regards socialism of a Communist stamp, not as a *fides quaearens intellectum*, but as a faith that demands the *credo quia absurdum* from its adherents and bears features of a doctrine of salvation:

However large the portion of the *credo quia absurdum* that is expected of the faithful here may be, it cannot be denied that something strange and captivating issues from this doctrine. Age-old resonances, a messianic, apostolic certainty that the kingdom of God is near, reverberate from the depths of history: the idea of paradise regained, where lion and lamb graze beside one another in tranquility.<sup>203</sup>

Here, Werfel summarises the religious character he sees Communism to bear with absolute clarity. The biblical metaphor of the 'lion and lamb' clearly demonstrates the messianic, utopian character of the classless society that is taught by Communism. Werfel also notes a religious quality in the collectivisation of property with Communism: Communism originates not only in the envy of the groups and masses that feel themselves deceived in their claim to life. It is also rooted in a religious reaction of the guilty conscience to which Jesus Christ once addressed the words: 'give all your goods to the poor and follow me'.<sup>204</sup> Further:

'renounce your property, even your ego' – this is the holy, paradoxical demand of the religion that seeks to lead the people from the illusory personality of the metaphorical world to the genuine reality of God. Renounce the personality, Communism exhorts, and direct your capital to an impersonal power, to the society.<sup>205</sup>

Things are different with National Socialism: its core builds, not on a doctrine nourished by scientific principles, but on nationalism as its driving force. It avoids argumentation, preferring to deliver its messages in oracular form.<sup>206</sup> Depending upon which nation one belongs to, every person can, in principle, be drawn by the simple emotions that nationalism addresses. In this aspect, nationalism is also strongly divisive because it excludes everyone who does not bear one's own respective nationality:

Nationalism has it very easy in serving as an ersatz for religion. It is a somewhat cheap effect, because the merit of belonging to a nation depends solely upon the achievement of being born. Even if one is nothing at all, he at least belongs somewhere. Nationalism turns biological jurisdiction into a moral value. It grants the individual, tax-free, the medal of bravery for all the historical victories and great deeds of



his people. Further, it allows the young person to become part of the ecstatic experience of faithfully incorporating his ego into a higher being, into a nobler higher order.<sup>207</sup>

For both 'religion-surrogate types of faith',<sup>208</sup> Communism and National Socialism, one thing remains the same through all their differences concerning the character of faith or religiosity: their common origins in nihilism, which devalues the ego by exposing it to the nothingness by which it will ultimately be swallowed.<sup>209</sup> This complex of topics is taken up by twentieth-century existentialist philosophy in particular. New doctrines of salvation – specifically, Communism and the National Socialism that is nourished by nationalism – now attempt to fill the emptiness that arises through the absolute nothingness and absence of values. These doctrines function as an ersatz religion that replaces the actual investment of meaning by the traditional religion, which for its part was carried off by nihilism. Communism and nationalism, therefore, are surrogates of religion and do not represent genuine religions.<sup>210</sup> In view of the nothingness that surrounds existence, they can demand an unconditional preparedness for sacrifice from their adherents. In this, too, however, they go well beyond their political character:

We have therefore demonstrated that Communism and nationalism, the two largest movements of the present day, are anti-religious, yet religious-surrogate types of faith and by no means only political ideas. As genuine children of the nihilistic epoch, they have not fallen far from the tree. Like their father, they possess no ties to transcendence; like him, they hang in the void. Yet they are no longer content with this emptiness, but commit excesses in it in order to overcome it.<sup>211</sup>

Franz Werfel precisely describes here the core of the religious character of the political mass movements of his time – a core that is characterised by nihilism. He describes the political mass movements as, among other things, 'political ersatz religions' that mark the end-point of a relapse into paganism.<sup>212</sup> Voegelin's 1938 universal-historical interpretation of the movements as political religions opposes Werfel on this point. For Voegelin, the political religions are not a relapse, but more of a linear development. Yet Werfel and Voegelin agree with respect to the means to overcome ideologies, which is said to be possible only in a recollection of the transcendent power of religion and faith in God. Aron also comes to this conclusion in 1939.<sup>213</sup> To his lecture's opening question asking whether we can live without faith in God, Werfel answers with an emphatic 'no'. As the *Theologumena* also demonstrates, though, Werfel does not try to offer a systematic concept for the religious dimension of totalitarian mass movements; he seeks instead to drape his analysis of reality in a literary form and in aphorism, to stir up the people and expound to them in drastic terms the symptoms of a time

that is formed by nihilism and that has lost its connection to the transcendent entirely. In the *Theologumena*, Werfel speaks of the

formula of the vicious circle: loss of God, this means loss of the ego, this means loss of property, this means capitalism, this means mass wares, this means quick destructibility, this means trash, this means failing satisfaction of needs, this means the tragic unrest of the soul of humanity, this means the either-or between anarchist or totalitarian life-form, this means perpetual war.<sup>214</sup>

In his political writings, Hermann Broch also reflects on the relationship between religion and politics. Here he considers, in various contributions, the period from the end of the World War I to the end of World War II. He also takes up the religious element within the political sphere in doing so. A sceptical distance from religion – from Christianity in particular, always marks his reflections.

In 1918, Broch already draws a critical parallel between a political mass experience and Christianity in a letter to Franz Blei. Both politics and Christianity, he suggests, involve the ‘cheap ecstasy of the shared rhythm’.<sup>215</sup> Whereas the shared rhythm is created by the stock of national songs on the part of the political masses, it is created on the part of Christianity by common prayer. Further, Broch refers to the immediacy with which a ‘pure politics’ turns to the masses. This immediacy is stronger still with ‘theological politics’, the mixture of politics and cult such as was present in antiquity, for example. The realisation of a ‘dogmatisation’ of politics as the result of this mixture can later be found again in Raymond Aron’s conception of political or secular religion. Broch’s way of seeing ‘pure politics’ as a ‘pure, moral demand’ recalls the Hegelian interpretation of the state as the idea of the people that has become spirit:

Pure politics is the pure moral demand that has become the formal image. Such form giving is possible only in the world of the bodily and therefore requires dogmatisation – a more direct and exclusive one than is demanded by any goal-oriented politics. This is because it turns essentially to the people directly and with the kind of immediacy that an early teleological and theological politics, which involved pre-existent givens, did not at all know.<sup>216</sup>

With respect to socialist politics, Broch writes in 1940 that its ‘proletarian realpolitik’ is borne by ‘loyalty to dogmas’ and ‘prophetic security’.<sup>217</sup> Both the ‘dogmatisation’ and the prophetic character of politics are elements that clearly evince Broch’s religious interpretation of politics.

With reference once again to the masses, Broch discerns in both 1939 and 1941 a ‘repaganisation’ of the people that has been invoked by a dimming of rationality. What is involved for Broch is not so much a social rejection

of Christianity or return to the Germanic religion, but a reflexive return 'to the human's pre-sphere of magic', which Broch calls 'primitive', 'devilish' and even 'cannibalistic'.<sup>218</sup> The metaphorical emergence of the 'mad, apocalyptic creature that has existed from the primordial beginning and remained the demonic bearer of all desire for war, the terrible bearer of all intoxication with victory to the present day'<sup>219</sup> – this, according to Broch, is one result of 'repanisisation'. The view that totalitarianism involves 'repanisisation' was not undisputed during the 1930s and 1940s: Eric Voegelin, for example, regards the development of totalitarianism as a political religion to have occurred more as a linear progression of the secularisation of spirit than a 'relapse into barbarism'.<sup>220</sup> Yet Broch too finds the secularisation of thought to be a further important reason for the failure of the fight against mass insanity – a task that had earlier been taken on by the Church as part of its conversion of the pagans. If, earlier, reason had been 'mindful of its divine origin, subordinate to faith', now, the claim to absoluteness had been 'transferred from the sphere of religion, with its static content, into the functional-formal sphere of a scientificity that has become mathematical'.<sup>221</sup> This transformation of the claim to absoluteness later becomes one of the central assumptions of modernity for Eric Voegelin as well.<sup>222</sup> According to Broch, an 'exorcism' is required at this point of cultural history; this exorcism will take the form of a conversion of the people, who have gone astray in their secular rationality and adhere to a mass insanity. To the extent that this movement is 'purely worldly', however, certain difficulties emerge. Both 'early modern' elements of 'deepest irrationality as well as late modern ones of supreme rationality'<sup>223</sup> – both of which lead to inhumanity – are implicated here. The unravelling of these elements is a difficult task, one to be attained by fighting the repaganisation and hence the mass insanity. For Broch, however, it is a purely secular task that can be achieved solely through a higher level of rationality. This is why Broch does not involve religion in the solving of it, but politics instead; too weak on its own terms, politics is to collaborate with science. According to Broch, this conjoining of forces can best occur within a democracy.<sup>224</sup> Democracy is to cure the mass insanity – 'politics in transformation; the will to heal is at once the will to self-healing, is the will to the new formation of the democratic conviction from which alone the new conversion can issue'.<sup>225</sup> Although Broch's idea of 'exorcism' runs parallel to Eric Voegelin's critical attitude towards the positivist rationality of modernity, his prescriptive solution – one that builds upon a higher-level rationality that is at once a 'will to self-healing' – evinces clear features of gnosis, the intellectual stream of modernity that is the most powerful according to Voegelin. Beyond this, Broch's thought evinces elements that are clearly Hegelian, as the idea of a higher-level rationality demonstrates.

After 1941, Broch addresses religion only on the margins of his political writings. His 'Theorie der Politik' (1949) marks his most detailed treatment of the religious in politics. Here, he reflects on the 'earthly absolute' in particular.

Because he sees the starting point of politics to rest 'with the human being', Broch begins with an anthropological observation:<sup>226</sup> even if the human being denies the existence of God, he still cannot deny his likeness to the highest being, for the human being is continually aware that he is influenced by something absolute. Yet his awareness of likeness and the 'duty to freedom'<sup>227</sup> that is bound up with it overtax him. These lead him, according to Broch, to perform a Promethean divinisation of his own creative power. This act, in turn, is supposed to lead him to freedom: 'for, in his awareness of being a likeness, the human being seeks to be the earthly God'.<sup>228</sup> According to Broch, two poles – those of 'likeness and anarchy' – are inherent in the creative act.<sup>229</sup> If the 'positive pole' of likeness leads to a good and just ordering of being, then the 'negative pole' leads to an anarchic chaos.<sup>230</sup> The negative pole leads to the awareness that one is the earthly God oneself and drives the human being to assert absolute freedom. This ultimately leads to the enslavement of one human by another by use of political means; such enslavement culminates in a 'full enslavement', as Broch ascertains regarding the concentration camps.<sup>231</sup>

The human being searches for the absolute – whose bearer is ultimately the human being himself in Broch's view – in the earthly sphere. Added to this, empirical and precise science, which is continually developing, delivers a constant stream of knowledge as to how to construct the 'earthly absolute'. The human being finds the absolute in the sphere of law as well – specifically, in the Logos and what previously had been divine law, transformed through 'natural law' into a secular 'law of reason'.<sup>232</sup> The task of the human being has not yet been fulfilled, however. On the contrary, he is 'referred back to the earth; further still . . . : he [has] been referred back to himself, perhaps even in order to save the earth'.<sup>233</sup> The human being must therefore translate the natural law or law of reason into an earthly legal order – that of human rights – in order both to do justice to his mission as the being that is like a god and to intensify that likeness by degrees.

Although Broch recognises the corrupting chaos of godless anarchy and the necessity to derive earthly law from a transcendent legal order (whether a divine natural law or merely the law of reason), he still leaves salvation to the 'earthly absolute' manifest in the conclusions of empirical science and human law. Broch does not dare to make the further step of assuring a salvation through the transcendent God alone, but remains too bound here to a religious-critical rationality. Thus do Broch's ideas of the human's likeness to God – even though they evince an insight into transcendence – ultimately approach those of modern gnosis in Eric Voegelin's sense.

In *Die Verzauberung*,<sup>234</sup> a novel that also bears the titles of *Der Bergroman* or *Versucher*, Broch provides a literary analysis of the topic of 'politics and religion' from 1931 up to his death in 1951. Bearing both messianic and dictatorial features, a saviour by the name of Marius Ratti comes to a mountain village and seduces the residents into returning to a pre-modern, archaic way of life that is shaped by mythic rituals. Ratti's seduction succeeds.

One factor that contributes to it is the spiritual insecurity of the inhabitants, who can no longer find the meaning of their lives in traditional religion and the Church and therefore seek new sources of meaning. The mythical raptures come to a terrible conclusion, however: at a festival celebrating the consecration of the church, a young woman is sacrificed to Mother Earth. The sacrificial executioner, the village butcher, must flee, whereas Ratti becomes a city councillor. Broch describes in his novel, therefore, the seduction of human beings by a politically religious leader – a Hitler and saviour in one person. This seduction finds its apocalyptic end in an ecstatic, religiously motivated sacrificial murder. Only a renewed religion, one that has liberated itself from the ossified structures of a tradition that has become weak and that is based on a changed attitude to nature can prevent such a seduction in the future. Here too, Broch's critical attitude towards traditional religion and the Church becomes clear. Romano Guardini, for example, also dealt with the figure of the saviour in politics in the 1930s: according to him, the saviour mediates the salvation that emerges in the existence-interpreting myth that brings good to human beings. In this context, Guardini is critical of Adolf Hitler, the 'saviour of twelve years', the 'messenger of God'. As a saviour who appeared on earth long after Jesus Christ, Hitler must necessarily prefigure the Antichrist insofar as he seeks to reverse the salvation operative in and through Jesus Christ in order to emerge as a new, anti-Christian saviour. This can be only non-salvation, anti-salvation. In this context, the greeting of 'Heil Hitler' signifies that one wishes Hitler *Heil* on the one hand and that Hitler's *Heil* should embrace the one being greeted on the other.<sup>235</sup> The mythological elevation of the political saviour connects the analyses of totalitarianism of Guardini and Broch – analyses that are markedly different in other respects.

Despite his insights surrounding the topic of 'politics and religion', Broch develops no concept or theory by which to interpret the religious sphere of politics. We could speak more accurately of a sensitive literary 'assessment' of this topic in the circumstances that prevailed at the time.

## **Paul Tillich**

In 1962, the Protestant theologian Paul Tillich introduced a concept that he himself had coined in interpreting secular movements that evince a religious dimension – as is the case with totalitarian mass movements. Writing of 'quasi-religions',<sup>236</sup> he thereby expanded the sphere of religion to the point that it now also included secular movements. Corresponding with actual religions<sup>237</sup> only in certain aspects, quasi-religions elevate secular things to the level of ultimate ones and divinise them. To be counted among such religions are 'the nation, science, a particular form or particular stage of society'.<sup>238</sup> Whereas the hopes of genuine religions are directed towards the transcendent, the hopes of quasi-religions are directed at immanent

things.<sup>239</sup> Pseudo-religions are to be distinguished clearly from quasi-religions. Tillich states the difference as follows:

Occasionally, that which I call 'quasi-religion' is described as 'pseudo-religion'. But that is imprecise and inaccurate. 'Pseudo' relates to an intentional, feigned similarity, 'quasi' by contrast to an unintended similarity that is in fact present on the basis of certain common features. Such a similarity to religion obviously exists with Fascism and Communism, the most extreme representatives of the quasi-religions in our time.<sup>240</sup>

The reason why Fascism, Communism and Nazism should be numbered among the quasi-religions lies with their radicalisation of movements that have a potentially religious character – specifically, nationalism and socialism – and attribute an ultimate validity to their contents. In themselves, nationalism and socialism are not quasi-religions and include elements that are unquestionably positive; Fascism transforms nationalism, however, and Communism transforms socialism in such a way that their religious potencies unfurl and their positive elements assume a radical character.<sup>241</sup> Fascist ideology radically elevates the quasi-religious elements of nationalism – one's own group, the people or the nation and their self-assertion – to an absolute. Communism, by contrast, elevates the new order of things, the quasi-religious element of socialism, to an absolute and radicalises it. Both the new absolutes themselves and their realisation are expressed through a combination of Christian and secular symbols. With Communism, for example, the absolute new order of things is clarified both by the Christian symbol of the 'end of history' and by the secular utopian symbol of the 'classless society'.<sup>242</sup>

Besides Fascism, Nazism and Communism, Tillich also includes 'liberal humanism' among the quasi-religions. Although liberal humanism is based upon such basic demands of traditional religion as freedom, justice and true humanity, it appears in secular clothing. Liberal humanism has a quasi-religious and a purely secular side. Its quasi-religious side comes to the foreground whenever liberal humanism is challenged by the restriction and threatening of human freedom, as occurs repeatedly in the struggle for the freedom of science or for basic human rights.<sup>243</sup> Through a progressing influence of secularism, however, the liberal-humanistic quasi-religion can also take on a radical character.<sup>244</sup> In this context, it becomes clear that Tillich extends the concept of 'quasi-religion' beyond political borders. Ultimately, the 'quasi-religions' include all secular movements that unconsciously evince religious features. Hereby, Tillich does not attribute the same danger to liberal-humanist quasi-religions as he does to the radical quasi-religions. In his view, however, the great danger is posed by the possibility that religions and liberal-humanistic quasi-religions – neither of which are radical at first – could adapt their nature in their resistance to their radical

opponents and thereby assume an ideological character themselves. Through such radicalisation, it is above all the quasi-religions that become a danger for actual religions:

The danger is not that the spiritual religion and the humanistic quasi-religion are suppressed by the less labile religions or quasi-religions, but that self-defence forces them to do violence to their own being and to adapt to the nature of their opponents. We live with this danger today.<sup>245</sup>

Thus does Tillich see a danger in the radical transformation of liberal quasi-religions into quasi-religious ideologies. Here, the quasi-religion of secularism and the politically ideological quasi-religions of Fascism, National Socialism and Communism endanger the genuine religions.

The more important reason for the rise of political quasi-religions, according to Tillich, is the penetration of National Socialism and socialism<sup>246</sup> into the religious order. In the course of the history of religion, secular and religious symbols have been joined to form quasi-religious symbols; these symbols, in turn, emerge repeatedly in the political mass movements of the twentieth century.

## Notes

- 1 Voegelin's first names are Erich Hermann Wilhelm. Voegelin used the Anglicised form of his first name after his emigration to America.
- 2 Eric Voegelin, *Die politischen Religionen* (Vienna, 1938). A second edition appeared in Stockholm/Berlin in 1939 and there is a new edition edited by P. J. Opitz (Munich, 1993). On the latter, see the extensive review by Ernst Nolte, 'Von Echnaton zu Hitler', *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 7 December 1993.
- 3 See Eric Voegelin, *Autobiographische Reflexionen* (Munich, 1994), 69ff.
- 4 Eric Voegelin, *Der autoritäre Staat. Ein Versuch über das österreichische Staatsproblem* (Vienna and New York, 1997), 1st edn Vienna, 1936. See especially the first section on the meaning of 'total' and 'authoritarian', 9–55.
- 5 Eric Voegelin, *Die politischen Religionen*, 2nd edn (Munich, 1996), 6.
- 6 *Ibid.*, 7.
- 7 *Ibid.*, 11.
- 8 See *ibid.*, 15ff. and 12f.
- 9 See P. Berghoff, 'Säkularisierung und Resakralisierung politischer Kollektivität', M. Hildebrandt, M. Brocker and H. Behr (eds), *Säkularisierung und Resakralisierung in weltlichen Gesellschaft* (Wiesbaden, 2001), 57–70.
- 10 E. Voegelin, *Die politischen Religionen*, 12.
- 11 *Ibid.*
- 12 *Ibid.*
- 13 Cited from *ibid.* See here G. W. F. Hegel, *Grundlinien der Philosophie des Rechts*, E. Moldenhauer and K. M. Michel (eds), *Werke in 20. Bänden, Theorie-Werkausgabe*, vol. 7. (Frankfurt, 1970) §270, 415–31.
- 14 E. Voegelin, *Die politischen Religionen*, 14.
- 15 *Ibid.*
- 16 M. Scheler, *Die Stellung des Menschen im Kosmos*, 14th edn (Bonn, 1998).
- 17 Eric Voegelin, *Die politischen Religionen*, 67.

- 18 E. Przywara, 'Religionsphilosophie Katholischer Religion', *Handbuch der Philosophie*, section II (Munich and Berlin, 1927).
- 19 A. Dempf, *Sacrum Imperium. Geschichts-und Staatsphilosophie im Mittelalter und der Renaissance* (Munich and Berlin, 1929).
- 20 Eric Voegelin, *Die politischen Religionen*, 16. The use of the substantive, 'tension towards' in the context of 'religion' is etymologically problematic: *religio* is derived more from *re-legere*, 'to do (something) carefully' than from *religare*, 'to bind back'. See here E. Feil, *Religio*, vol. I (Göttingen, 1986), 39–49.
- 21 E. Voegelin, *Die politischen Religionen*, 17.
- 22 Ibid.
- 23 In his introductory study, M. Henkel refers in particular to the non-secular original character of political religion. See M. Henkel, *Eric Voegelin* (Hamburg, 1998), 76.
- 24 J. H. Breasted, *Geschichte Ägyptens* (Stuttgart, no year).
- 25 Eric Voegelin, *Die politischen Religionen*, 19.
- 26 See J. H. Breasted, *Geschichte Ägyptens* (Stuttgart, no year), 43 and 47–52.
- 27 Ibid., 53.
- 28 Eric Voegelin, *Die politische Religionen*, 20.
- 29 Cited from *ibid.*, 21.
- 30 Greek *he hierarchía* (*hierè arché*), 'the office of the last' in Dionysius Areopagita (see W. Pape, *Griechisch-deutsches Handwörterbuch*, vol. I, A–K (Graz, 1954), 1240).
- 31 See J. H. Breasted, *Geschichte Ägyptens* (Stuttgart, no year), 88–90 and 119ff.
- 32 Eric Voegelin, *Die politischen Religionen*, 22. This word, 'eradicated', recalls the diction that was used in the Nazi regime. On the distortion of language by ideologies, see also J. Pieper, 'Mißbrauch der Sprache – Mißbrauch der Macht', *Werke in acht Bänden*, vol. 6: *Kulturphilosophische Schriften* (Hamburg, 1999), 132–51. Also M.-J. Le Guillou, *Das Mysterium des Vaters* (Einsiedeln, 1974), 173.
- 33 E. Voegelin, *Die politischen Religionen*, 23.
- 34 Ibid., 26.
- 35 See J. H. Breasted, *Geschichte Ägyptens*, 213–25.
- 36 See also Eric Voegelin, *Die Neue Wissenschaft der Politik* (Munich, 1959), chs I and II, especially 110ff.
- 37 E. Voegelin, *Die politischen Religionen*, 29.
- 38 See T. Campanella, 'Sonnenstaat', K. J. Heinisch (ed.), *Der utopische Staat* (Reinbek bei Hamburg, 1987), 111–69.
- 39 See Hebrews 5: 5–10; 9, 11–24 and 10, 1–25.
- 40 See Corinthians 1: 12, 27.
- 41 E. Voegelin, *Die politischen Religionen*, 32. More precise observations on the development of the world-immanent communities and mass movements can be found in Voegelin's essay, *The People of God*. Beginning in about 1300, the Christian Church could no longer integrate eschatological and gnostic splinter groups, an activity that was important to the preservation of its authority. A revolutionary movement then developed; via the Protestant Reformation, it led to further divisions. Ultimately, this process manifesting a 'secularised, anti-Christian character' climaxed with the twentieth-century political mass movements. (See E. Voegelin, *Das Volk Gottes* (Munich, 1994), 25ff.).
- 42 Ephesians 4: 15ff.
- 43 According to E. Voegelin, *Die politischen Religionen*, 33.
- 44 Ibid., 34.
- 45 Ibid.
- 46 According to R. N. Bellah, 'Civil Religion in America', *Daedalus* 96 (1967), 7ff. In characterising the American civil religion, Bellah refers especially to the



inaugural addresses of various American presidents. Here 'God' is often spoken of without any reference to individual religions. Bellah distinguishes his specifically American conception of the civil religion from the Rousseauian concept (see *ibid.*, 5–9).

47 *Ibid.*, 35.

48 On the creation of a 'new human being' with totalitarianism, see also B. Zehnpenning, 'Der neue Mensch', M. Hildebrandt, M. Brocker and H. Behr (eds), *Säkularisierung und Resakralisierung in Weltlichen Gesellschaften* (Wiesbaden, 2001), 81–95.

49 M. Eliade, *Das Heilige und das Profane* (Frankfurt, 1990).

50 See Augustine, *De Civitate Dei* (Migne Patrologia Latina, vol. 41), among others book I, preface, columns 13ff.

51 See *ibid.*, books XI, XII and XXII, 315–76 and 751–804.

52 See, among others, *ibid.*, book XIV, 28, 436.

53 E. Voegelin, *Die politischen Religionen*, 37.

54 *Ibid.*, 38.

55 *Ibid.*

56 *Ibid.*

57 On the 'Third Kingdom' and on Joachim of Fiore in particular, see B. Brentjes, *Der Mythos vom Dritten Reich. Drei Jahrtausende Sehnsucht nach der Erlösung* (Hanover, 1997), 27–65.

58 Voegelin calls to mind in this context the magic numeric sequence of 500, 5 and 10 (in Latin DVX) in the work of Dante. See *ibid.*, 41.

59 Revelations 14: 6.

60 E. Voegelin, *Die politischen Religionen*, 40. On the 'apocalyptic dynamic' of National Socialism, see especially K. Vondung, *Die Apokalypse in Deutschland* (Munich, 1988), 207–25; and Vondung, 'Die Apokalypse des Nationalsozialismus', M. Ley and H. Schoeps (eds), *Die politische Religion des Nationalsozialismus* (Bodenheim, 1997), 33–52.

61 E. Voegelin, *Die politischen Religionen*, 41. In 1932, Anton Koch also analyses this 'Third Rome' in a contribution to *Stimmen der Zeit*. See A. Koch, 'Das Dritte Rom', *Stimmen der Zeit* 62, no. 10 (1932), 233–38.

62 E. Voegelin, *Die politischen Religionen*, 43.

63 According to the Old Testament description, the Leviathan is a large, scaly monster that has no equal on the earth. (Job 40: 25–32, particularly 26).

64 See Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan* (Frankfurt, 1984), part II, ch. 17, 134. The English original: Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan* (London, 1988), part II, ch. XVII, 227: 'that *Mortall God*, to which wee owe under the *Immortall God*, our peace and defence'.

65 E. Voegelin, *Die politischen Religionen*, 43.

66 See here the famous illustration of the Hobbesian Leviathan. With breastplate composed of the many bodies of its subjects, it carries the sword as a sign of state power in its right hand and the shepherd's staff as the sign of ecclesiastical power in its left. (See, for example, the title page of Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan* (London: Penguin, 1988)).

67 This sharp critique of Hobbes has long resonated in Great Britain. It was Cardinal Newman who first assumed a mediating role between the Anglican and Catholic churches in the middle of the nineteenth century.

68 E. Voegelin, *Die politischen Religionen*, 45.

69 Not an admissible plural, even if it reads this way in Voegelin's text. It would have to be read either as the Greek *ekklesiai*, or the Latin *ecclesiae*.

70 E. Voegelin, *Die politischen Religionen*, 49.

71 *Ibid.*

72 See A. Comte, *Rede über den Geist des Positivismus (1844)*, 2nd edn (Hamburg, 1966), 4–41.

- 73 See K. Marx, *Zur Kritik der Hegelschen Rechtsphilosophie* (1844), Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Werke*, vol. I (East Berlin, 1958), 278–91, especially 378.
- 74 See S. Freud, 'Die Zukunft einer Illusion (1927)', *Studienausgabe*, vol. IX (Frankfurt, 1974), 135–89, especially 164–89.
- 75 Michael Henkel also makes this clear: 'for the person, the reference to transcendence [is] constitutive'. See M. Henkel, *Eric Voegelin*, op. cit., 85.
- 76 E. Voegelin, *Die politischen Religionen*, 51.
- 77 E. Voegelin, *Rasse und Staat* (Tübingen, 1933). See also Voegelin, *Die Rassenidee in der Geistesgeschichte von Ray bis Carus* (Berlin, 1933). Here can be found Voegelin's study of the conceptual history of the idea of race and race theory.
- 78 According to E. Voegelin, *Rasse und Staat*, 5.
- 79 Cited from *ibid.*, 14.
- 80 See J. G. Fichte, 'Versuch einer Kritik aller Offenbarung', Fichte, *Ausgewählte Werke in sechs Bänden*, vol. I (Darmstadt, 1962), 1–128.
- 81 See J. G. Fichte, 'Reden an die deutsche Nation', Fichte, *Ausgewählte Werke in sechs Bänden*, vol. 5 (Darmstadt, 1962), 365–610 (in particular, the 'Siebente Rede. Noch tiefere Erfassung der Ursprünglichkeit und Deutschheit eines Volkes', 470–88.).
- 82 See A. von Gobineau, *Essai sur l'inégalité des races humaines* (Paris, 1853).
- 83 See A. Rosenberg, *Mythus des 20. Jahrhunderts*, 3rd edn (Munich, 1943).
- 84 E. Voegelin, *Die politischen Religionen*, 53.
- 85 See A. Rosenberg, *Mythus des 20. Jahrhunderts*.
- 86 E. Voegelin, *Die politischen Religionen*, 54.
- 87 *Ibid.*, 56.
- 88 *Ibid.*
- 89 See here E. Cancik, "'Wir sind jetzt eins". Rhetorik und Mystik in einer Rede Hitlers (Nuremberg, 11 October 1936)', G. Kehrler (ed.), *Zur Religionsgeschichte der Bundesrepublik Deutschland* (Munich, 1980), 13–48.
- 90 E. Voegelin, *Die politischen Religionen*, 55.
- 91 On the element of faith in National Socialism, see K. Vondung, "'Gläubigkeit" im Nationalsozialismus', H. Maier and M. Schäfer (eds), *Totalitarianism und Politische Religionen*, vol. II (Paderborn, 1997), 15–28, especially 16ff.
- 92 E. Voegelin, *Die politischen Religionen*, 58.
- 93 *Ibid.*, 59.
- 94 See *ibid.*, 41.
- 95 Cited from *ibid.*, 63. The connection between the political and the religious is also central to Voegelin's approach to political science in later works. See, for example, E. Voegelin, *Die Neue Wissenschaft der Politik* (Munich, 1959).
- 96 See J. Maritain, *Christlicher Humanismus* (Heidelberg, 1950), 86–91 and 176–80.
- 97 See E. Voegelin, *Die Neue Wissenschaft der Politik*, op. cit., chs IV–VI, especially 257–59. On Voegelin's criticism of modern humanism, see also D. Herz, 'Der Begriff der "politischen religionen" im Denken Eric Voegelins', H. Maier (ed.), *Totalitarismus und Politische Religionen*, vol. I (Paderborn, 1996), 196–200.
- 98 E. Voegelin, *Die politischen Religionen*, 6.
- 99 E. Voegelin, *Order and History*, vols 1–4 (Baton Rouge, 1956–87).
- 100 Cited from Heinrich Meier's introductory essay, 'Was ist politische Theologie', J. Assmann, *Politische Theologie zwischen Ägypten und Israel* (Munich, 1992), 16ff.
- 101 Michael Henkel does this, for example. See M. Henkel, *Eric Voegelin*, op. cit., 91, 127–29, 178.
- 102 See J. Assmann, *Politische Theologie zwischen Ägypten und Israel*, op. cit., 30 and M. Henkel, *Eric Voegelin*, op. cit., 128.
- 103 See C. Schmitt, *Politische Theologie. Vier Kapitel zur Lehre von der Souveränität*, 6th edn (Berlin, 1993), ch. III, 'Politische Theologie', 41–55, especially 43.

- 104 See H. Christof Kraus, 'Eric Voegelin redivivus? Politische Wissenschaft als Politische Theologie', M. Ley and J. H. Schoeps (eds), *Der Nationalsozialismus als politische Religion* (Bodenheim, 1997), 74–88.
- 105 Cited from *ibid.*, 74ff.
- 106 Cited from *ibid.*, 87.
- 107 *Ibid.*, 88. See also 78–81.
- 108 Afterword by P. J. Opitz to E. Voegelin, *Die politischen Religionen*, 81.
- 109 *Ibid.*, 79.
- 110 According to *ibid.*, 79ff.
- 111 See here M. Behrens, "'Politische Religion" – eine Religion?', H. Maier and M. Schäfer (eds), *Totalitarismus und Politische Religionen*, vol. II (Paderborn, 1997), 249–69.
- 112 The interpretation is not completely false, but I would no longer use the concept of religions, because it is too imprecise and already corrupts the actual problem of experiences from the beginning in that it mixes them with other problems of dogmatic and doctrine.  
(E. Voegelin, *Autobiographische Reflexionen* (Munich, 1994), 70.)
- 113 According to M. Henkel, *Eric Voegelin*, *op. cit.*, 88. On Voegelin's concept of 'gnosis' and 'gnostic mass movements', see E. Voegelin, 'Wissenschaft, Politik und Gnosis', Voegelin, *Der Gottesmord. Zur Genese und Gestalt der modernen politischen Gnosis*, ed. P. J. Opitz (Munich, 1999), especially 57–63, 83–90 and 91–93; also E. Voegelin, 'Religionsersatz. Die gnostischen Massenbewegungen unserer Zeit', *ibid.*, 107–10.
- 114 Cited from D. Herz, 'Der Begriff der "politischen Religionen" im Denken Eric Voegelins', H. Maier, *Totalitarismus und Politische Religionen*, *op. cit.*, 209.
- 115 See J. L. Talmon's *History of Totalitarian Democracy*, which is presented as a trilogy: *The Origins of Totalitarian Democracy* (London, 1952), *Political Messianism. The Romantic Phase* (London, 1960), and *The Myth of the Nation and the Vision of Revolution* (London, 1980).
- 116 See the contribution by R. Chr. Van Ooyen, 'Totalitarismustheorie gegen Kelsen und Schmitt: Eric Voegelins "politische Religionen" als Kritik an Rechtspositivismus und politischer Theologie', *ZfP* 49, no. 1 (2002), 56–82, here 58ff.
- 117 Afterword by P. J. Opitz in E. Voegelin, *Die politischen Religionen*, 71.
- 118 E. Halévy, *L'ère des tyrannies* (Paris, 1990).
- 119 R. Aron, 'Bureaucratie et fanatisme', *La France Libre* III, no. 13 (1941), 49–59, later also in R. Aron, *L'homme contre les tyrans* (Paris, 1945), 51–66.
- 120 Aron's review of Halévy's study first appeared in May of 1939 in the *Revue de métaphysique et de morale*. A revised version can be found in *Commentaire* 28/29 (1985), 329–40. Aron's review is also included as an afterword in the new edition of Halévy's *L'ère des tyrannies* (251–70). A German translation of this essay can be found under the title 'Das Zeitalter der Tyrannen', J. Stark (ed.), *Raymond Aron: Über Deutschland und den Nationalsozialismus* (Opladen, 1993), 186–208.
- 121 *Ibid.*, 187. Original in 'Elie Halévy et L'ère des tyrannies', E. Halévy, *L'ère des tyrannies* (Paris, 1990), 253. Aron ultimately concludes that the fascisms are 'essentially [distinct] from Communism' through the 'imperialistic function'. Both, however, are 'equally an answer to the problem of the disintegration of the democratic state and the demand for an authoritarian state with a competent administration' (*ibid.*, 204, original: *ibid.*, 268).
- 122 *Ibid.*, 196. Original, *ibid.*, 261. In the German translation, a footnote refers to a contribution made by Edmond Vermeil: E. Vermeil, 'Pourquoi une religion nationale en Allemagne?', *Revue de métaphysique et de morale* 46, no. 1 (1930). This reference is missing in the French original!

- 123 R. Aron, 'Das Zeitalter der Tyrannen', op. cit., 197.
- 124 See H. Seubert, 'Erinnerungen an den "Engagierten Beobachter" in veränderter Zeit', H. Maier and M. Schäfer (eds), *Totalitarismus und Politische Religionen*, vol. II (Paderborn, 1997), 325.
- 125 According to J. Stark, *Das unvollendete Abenteuer* (Würzburg, 1986), 153.
- 126 R. Aron, 'Das Zeitalter der Tyrannen', op. cit., 200. Original: R. Aron, 'Elie Halévy et L'ère des tyrannies', op. cit., 264: 'A contrario, nous dégageons une des conditions qui semblent nécessaires au succès des tyrannies: la fragilité des pouvoirs démocratiques, la seduction des ideologies nationalistes par contraste avec l'humanitarisme international des vieilles doctrines de gauche.'
- 127 Ibid.
- 128 Ibid., 201.
- 129 Ibid., 205ff.
- 130 Ibid., 207. Original, 207:
- Rappelons-nous la République de Weimar au cours de ses dernières années (et dans une certaine mesure notre pays aujourd'hui): observons la violence des querelles partisans. Ces divisions, à notre époque des religions politiques, ne concernent pas seulement l'opportunité out l'intérêt, elles découlent de volontés, en leur profondeur, contradictoires, animées par des métaphysiques, ou mieux des dogmes rivaux. . . . Ni le marxisme, ni le racisme n'offre l'équivalent du catholicisme dans la société médiévale: trop de personnes, trop de richesses spirituelles leur échappent.
- 131 On Aron's scepticism concerning religion, see H. Maier and Michael Schäfer (eds), *Totalitarismus und Politische Religionen*, vol. II, op. cit., 14, 187 and 324.
- 132 'Ainsi naît une religion politique'. See R. Aron, 'Bureaucratie et fanatisme', op. cit., 59.
- 133 les religions politiques avec leur libre sacré, avec leur diable et leurs saints, leurs interpretations historiques et leurs prophéties, ne sont paradoxales qu'en apparence: elles expriment la révolte contre un destin que l'on ne comprend pas, elles recueillent les ferveurs sans objet.
- (Ibid., 59ff.)
- 134 E. Halévy, R. Aron *et al.*, *La crise sociale et les ideologies nationaux (Inventaires I)* (Paris, 1936). German translation entitled 'Eine anti-proletarische Revolution. Ideologie und Wirklichkeit des Nationalsozialismus', J. Stark (ed.), *Raymond Aron: Über Deutschland und den Nationalsozialismus* (Opladen, 1993), 167–85.
- 135 Ibid., 175.
- 136 Ibid., 185.
- 137 R. Aron, 'L'avenir des religions séculières', *La France Libre* XIII, no. 45 (1944), 210–17 (part 1) and in *La France Libre* XIII, no. 46 (1944), 269–77 (part 2). A new edition can be found in R. Aron, *Chroniques de guerre* (Paris, 1990), 925–48. On Aron's concept of 'secular religion', see D. Bosshart, *Politische Intellektualität und totalitäre Erfahrung* (Berlin, 1992), 118–26; F. Bédarida, 'Nationalsozialistische Verkündigung und säkulare Religion', M. Ley and J. H. Schoeps (eds), *Der Nationalsozialismus als politische Religion* (Bodenheim, 1997), 153–67, especially 154; also B. Gess, 'Die Totalitarismuskonzeption von Raymond Aron und Hannah Arendt', H. Maier (ed.), *Totalitarismus und Politische Religionen*, op. cit., 264–74, especially 264–67. Brigitte Gess, by contrast to Bosshart, suggests a clear 'reliance [of Aron] on the . . . definition of Eric Voegelin' (ibid., 265, fn 4).
- 138 A detailed and up-to-date investigation entitled 'National sozialismus und Stalinismusls historische Ausprägung' can be found in E. Jesse (ed.), *Totalitarismus im 20. Jahrhundert* (Bonn, 1996), 135–222.

- 139 'Je propose d'appeler "religions séculières" les doctrines qui prennent dans les âmes de nos contemporains la place de la foi évanouie et situent ice-bas, dans le lointain de l'avenir, sous la forme d'un ordre social à créer, le salut de l'humanité'. R. Aron, *Chroniques de guerre* (Paris, 1990), 926.
- 140 See *ibid.*, 928.
- 141 'Eschatology socialiste', *ibid.*, 927.
- 142 Cited from *ibid.*, 930–35, especially 931–33.
- 143 Or, il est des individus, par millions, prisonniers d'un métier monotone, perdus dans la multitude des villes, qui n'ont d'autre participation à une communauté spirituelle que celle que leur offrent les religions séculières. Les foules qui acclament furieusement les faux prophètes trahissent l'intensité des aspirations qui montent vers un ciel vide.  
(*Ibid.*, 937)
- 144 'Et comme toutes les religions séculières, il [le nazisme] est manichéen' (*ibid.*, 932).
- 145 *Ibid.*, 947.
- 146 According to *ibid.*, 946.
- 147 R. Aron, *Opium für Intellektuelle* (Cologne, 1957), 334; original: *L'opium des intellectuals* (Paris, 1955), 287: 'Le communisme est la première religion d'intellectuels qui ait réussi'.
- 148 *Ibid.*, 319.
- 149 K. Marx, *Zur Kritik der Hegelschen Rechtsphilosophie* (1844), Marx and F. Engels, *Werke*, vol. I (East Berlin, 1958), 378.
- 150 R. Aron, *Opium für Intellektuelle*, *op. cit.*, 330.
- 151 *Ibid.*, 322.
- 152 *Ibid.*, 324. Original: *L'opium des intellectuals*, 278:  
Psychologie de secte plutôt que d'Église universelle. Le militant est convaincu d'appartenir au petit nombre des élus chargés du salut commun. Les fidèles, accoutumés à suivre les tournants de la ligne, à répéter docilement les interprétations, successives et contradictoires, du pacte germano-soviétique ou du complot des assassins en blouses blanches, deviennent d'une certaine façon, des 'hommes nouveau'.
- 153 A. Thérive, *Essai sur les trahisons* (Paris, 1951). In the German translation, Aron's foreword is entitled, 'On Treason'. It can be found in J. Stark (ed.), *Raymond Aron: Über Deutschland und den Nationalsozialismus*, *op. cit.*, 252–74.
- 154 *Ibid.*, 266.
- 155 *Ibid.*, 274.
- 156 *Ibid.*
- 157 Excerpts in *Commentaire* 28/29 (1985). A German translation of this essay can be found under the title 'Das Wesen des Totalitarismus', J. Stark (ed.), *Raymond Aron: Über Deutschland und den Nationalsozialismus* (Opladen, 1993), 275–93.
- 158 H. Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (New York, 1951); Arendt, 'Ideologie und Terror', K. Piper (ed.), *Offener Horizont. Festschrift für Karl Jaspers* (Munich, 1953); L. Poliakov, *Bréviare de la Haine. Le III Reich et les Juifs* (Paris, 1951); C. Brinton, *The Anatomy of Revolution* (New York, 1952).
- 159 Cited from R. Aron, 'Das Wesen des Totalitarismus', *op. cit.*, 284. On the commonalities and differences between the theories of Raymond Aron and Hannah Arendt, see B. Gess, 'Die totalitarismuskonzeption von Raymond Aron und Hannah Arendt', *op. cit.*, 271ff.
- 160 R. Aron, 'Das Wesen des Totalitarismus', *op. cit.*, 284.

- 161 Ibid., 290ff.
- 162 Ibid., 291.
- 163 On the sacralisation of politics, see E. Gentile, *Il culto del littorio, La sacralizzazione della politica nell'Italia fascista* (Biblioteca Universale Laterza, 406), 6th edn (Rome/Bari, 1998). Gentile's study represents the development of Italian Fascism as a political religion. For Gentile, Fascism is the first modern political movement that presents itself as a religion. See here also E. Gentile, 'Die Sakralisierung der Politik', H. Maier (ed.), *Wege in die Gewalt. Die modernen politischen Religionen* (Frankfurt, 2000), 166–82.
- 164 R. Aron, 'Das Wesen des Totalitarismus', op. cit., 291.
- 165 R. Aron, 'Gibt es ein Nazi-Rätsel?', J. Stark (ed.), *Raymond Aron: Über Deutschland und den Nationalsozialismus* (Opladen, 1993), 294–320. French original in *Commentaire* 7 (1979).
- 166 According to R. Aron, 'Gibt es ein Nazi-Rätsel?', op. cit., 300.
- 167 New printing in R. Aron, *Chroniques de guerre* (Paris, 1990), 925–48.
- 168 According to R. Aron, 'Gibt es ein Nazi-Rätsel?', op. cit., 300–1.
- 169 Protocols of the meeting of 17 June 1939 in *Bulletin de la Société française de philosophie* (April–May 1946). A German version appears under the title, 'Demokratische Staaten und totalitäre Staaten', J. Stark (ed.), *Raymond Aron: Über Deutschland und den Nationalsozialismus*, op. cit., 209–41.
- 170 Ibid., 241.
- 171 On Aron's 'secular religions', see also D. Bosshart, *Politische Intellektualität und totalitäre Erfahrung* (Berlin, 1992), especially 118–23 and 126.
- 172 On the critique of Aron's concept of the political/secular religions from the standpoint of the history, phenomenology and philosophy of religion, see H. Seubert, 'Erinnerungen an den "Engagierten Beobachter" in veränderter Zeit', op. cit., 332–34.
- 173 See Marie-Joseph Guillou, *Das Mysterium des Vaters* (Einsiedeln, 1974), 178 and 180ff.
- 174 P. Schöttler, 'Das Konzept der Politischen Religionen bei Lucie Varga und Franz Borkenau', M. Ley and J. H. Schoeps (eds), *Der Nationalsozialismus als Politische Religion* (Bodenheim, 1997), 186–205.
- 175 The corresponding contributions of the annals can now be found in Lucie Varga, *Zeitenwende. Mentalitätshistorische Studien 1934–1939*, translated and edited by P. Schöttler (Frankfurt, 1991).
- 176 L. Varga, *Zeitenwende*, 115.
- 177 Ibid.
- 178 The concept had just played a role in the context of the 'Party Convention of Honour' in Nuremberg. A little later, a book penned by Robert Ley entitled *Durchbruch zur sozialen Ehre* (Breakthrough to Social Honour) appeared. Compare here P. Schöttler, *Konzept*, 190.
- 179 Compare L. Varga, *Zeitenwende*, 123: 'One sacrifices oneself and dedicates oneself to the new doctrine, which convinces those who have already been initiated to such an overwhelming extent that it cannot be explained through logic, symbols, myths or holy books'.
- 180 Ibid., 121.
- 181 Ibid., 133.
- 182 On the methodology of Lucie Varga, compare P. Schöttler, *Konzept*, 192.
- 183 See the chapter, 'Werfel und die Religion' in the catalogue to the exhibition, 'Franz Werfel zwischen Prag und Wien', Adalbert Stifter Verein (ed.), *Franz Werfel zwischen Prag und Wien* (Benediktbeuren, 1990), 59–64 (citation from 59). See also the biographies, P. St Jungk, *Franz Werfel. Eine Lebensgeschichte* (Frankfurt, 1987); L. B. Foltin, *Franz Werfel* (Stuttgart, 1972); and N. Abels, *Franz Werfel* (Reinbek, 1990).

- 184 Foreword of Franz Werfel to *Zwischen oben und unten* (Stockholm, 1946), 13. The book had already appeared in the United States in 1944 under the title *Between Heaven and Earth*.
- 185 *Ibid.* In his speech, 'Von der reinsten Glückseligkeit des Menschen', Werfel speaks of 'political ersatz religions' as well. See Franz Werfel, 'Von der reinsten Glückseligkeit des Menschens', *Zwischen oben und unten* (Stockholm, 1946), 163.
- 186 Franz Werfel, 'Theologumena', *Zwischen oben und unten*, op. cit., 285. See also *ibid.*, 349ff. and 369.
- 187 Franz Werfel, 'Von der reinsten Glückseligkeit des Menschen', op. cit., 182.
- 188 Franz Werfel, 'Können wir ohne Gottesglauben leben?', *Zwischen oben und unten*, op. cit., 69.
- 189 Franz Werfel, 'Können wir ohne Gottesglauben leben?', op. cit., 79.
- 190 *Ibid.*, 80.
- 191 Franz Werfel, 'Realismus und Innerlichkeit', *Zwischen oben und Unten*, op. cit., 44–49.
- 192 Also characteristic of the nihilism of the 1920s and 1930s was the power struggle between the various directions of atheistic freethinking movements throughout Europe and the world. See here three essays by Anton Koch in *Stimmen der Zeit* (1932): 'Bund der kämpfenden Gottlosen', *Stimmen der Zeit* 62, no. 4 (1932), 217–33; 'Weltkampfbünde gegen Gott und Kirche', *Stimmen der Zeit* 62, no. 5 (1932), 289–95; 'Die Gottlosenpropaganda in Deutschland', *Stimmen der Zeit* 62, no. 6 (1932), 378–88.
- 193 Franz Werfel, 'Theologumena', *Zwischen oben und unten*, op. cit., 200–369.
- 194 *Ibid.*, 225–28, 330 and 357ff.
- 195 Franz Werfel, 'Können wir ohne Gottesglauben leben?', op. cit., 81.
- 196 *Ibid.*, 83.
- 197 Franz Werfel, 'Von der reinsten Glückseligkeit des Menschen', op. cit., 151–95.
- 198 *Ibid.*, 185.
- 199 Franz Werfel, 'Können wir ohne Gottesglauben leben?', op. cit., 84.
- 200 Werfel's prologue to *Zwischen oben und unten*, 14.
- 201 Franz Werfel, 'Können wir ohne Gottesglauben leben?', op. cit., 85.
- 202 According to *ibid.*, 85–88. Parallel to this is R. Aron, 'L'avenir des religions séculières', *Chroniques de guerre* (Paris, 1990), 927–29.
- 203 Franz Werfel, 'Können wir ohne Gottesglauben leben?', op. cit., 88ff.
- 204 Franz Werfel, 'Theologumena', 235ff.
- 205 According to Franz Werfel, 'Können wir ohne Gottesglauben leben?', op. cit., 97.
- 206 According to Franz Werfel, 'Können wir ohne Gottesglauben leben?', op. cit., 97.
- 207 *Ibid.*, 94ff.
- 208 *Ibid.*, 98.
- 209 See also Franz Werfel, 'Theologumena', op. cit., 357ff.: 'No one can deny that both Fascism and Bolshevism are two consequences – different in form, but similar in nature – of naturalistic nihilism, that is, of the modern spirit'.
- 210 For a differentiated consideration of 'ersatz religion' and 'religion ersatz' see H. Buchheim, 'Despotie, Ersatzreligion, Religionsersatz', H. Maier (ed.), *Totalitarismus und Politische Religionen*, vol. I, op. cit., 262. Here, Buchheim prefers the concept of 'religion ersatz' to 'ersatz religion' and the Voegelinian 'political religion' because 'religion ersatz' is said to be no religion, but merely a surrogate through which 'religious energies [are] mobilised to political ends'. Hermann Lübke characterises the religious features of totalitarianism as 'anti-religion' (see H. Lübke, 'Totalitarismus, Politische Religion, Anti-Religion', H. Lübke, *Heilserwartung und Terror* (Düsseldorf, 1995), 11–13).
- 211 Franz Werfel, 'Können wir ohne Gottesglauben leben?', op. cit., 98.
- 212 Werfel's prelude to *Zwischen oben und unten*, op. cit., 13.

- 213 See Franz Werfel, 'Können wir ohne Gottesglauben leben?', op. cit., 117ff. See also Eric Voegelin, *Die politischen Religionen*, op. cit., 6, and Aron's statement on the recent animation of religious faith principles in the protocol of the meeting of the Société française de philosophie (April–May, 1946).
- 214 Franz Werfel, 'Theologumena', op. cit., 248.
- 215 Hermann Broch, 'Die Straße', Hermann Broch, *Gedanken zur Politik* (Frankfurt, 1970), 8.
- 216 Ibid., 9.
- 217 Hermann Broch, 'Kapitalismus und Sozialismus', *Gedanken zur Politik*, op. cit., 44.
- 218 Hermann Broch, 'Toleranz und Massenwahn', *Gedanken zur Politik*, op. cit., 62.
- 219 Ibid. On the 'made apocalyptic creature' see Revelations 12: 18–13, 18 ('the two beasts').
- 220 Eric Voegelin, *Die politischen Religionen*, op. cit., 7.
- 221 H. Broch, 'Toleranz und Massenwahn', op. cit., 65.
- 222 See in particular Eric Voegelin, *Die Neue Wissenschaft der Politik* (Munich, 1959), chs IV–VI, 153–259.
- 223 Hermann Broch, 'Toleranz und Massenwahn', op. cit., 66ff.
- 224 According to *ibid.*
- 225 Ibid., 68.
- 226 Hermann Broch, 'Eine Theorie der Politik', Hermann Broch, *Gedanken zur Politik* (Frankfurt, 1970), 171.
- 227 Ibid., 173.
- 228 Ibid., 174.
- 229 Ibid., 176.
- 230 Cited from *ibid.*
- 231 According to *ibid.*, 180ff.
- 232 According to *ibid.*, 184.
- 233 Ibid.
- 234 Hermann Broch, *Der Bergroman. Drei Originalfassungen* (Frankfurt, 1969). See also H. Kiesel and J. P. Grevel, 'Die modernen Gewaltregime und die Literatur', H. Maier (ed.), *Totalitarismus und Politische Religionen*, vol. I, op. cit., 220–22; also H. Kiesel, 'Politische Religionen in der deutschsprachigen Literatur des 20. Jahrhunderts', H. Lübke (ed.), *Heilserwartung und Terror* (Düsseldorf, 1995), 63–67.
- 235 R. Guardini, *Der Heilbringer* (Mainz, 1979), especially 60–74. An interpretation of Guardini's *Der Heilbringer* can be found in W. Hover, 'Schrecken und Heil. Aspekte politischer Zeiterfahrung bei Romano Guardini', H. Maier (ed.), *Totalitarismus und Politische Religionen*, vol. I, op. cit., 175–79.
- 236 P. Tillich, 'Das Christentum und die Begegnung der Weltreligionen', Tillich, *Gesammelte Werke*, R. Albrecht (ed.), Vol. 5: *Die Frage nach dem Unbedingten* (Stuttgart, 1964), 51–98. The first English edition of this contribution appeared in New York in 1962.
- 237 According to *ibid.*, 52.
- 238 Ibid., 53.
- 239 According to *ibid.*, 60.
- 240 Ibid.
- 241 According to *ibid.*
- 242 According to *ibid.*
- 243 According to *ibid.*, 55f.
- 244 According to *ibid.*, 57.
- 245 Ibid., 56.
- 246 See *ibid.*, 53ff., 58–63.



## 6 Eschatological interpretations

Vondung, Talmon

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### **Apocalypse and cult (Klaus Vondung)**

In the early 1970s, Klaus Vondung presented his analysis of the types of celebrations and the quasi-liturgical forms of National Socialism.<sup>1</sup> These were said to evince a clearly apocalyptic character. According to Vondung, the religious character of these rites also warrants our speaking of a political religion in the case of National Socialism. Both an ordering and a manipulation of the human being are said to be achieved through the magical influence of the celebrations and rites.<sup>2</sup> The political religious cult rises to become the 'socially dominant figure' and gains 'the possibility . . . of exercising power'.<sup>3</sup> This power serves to maintain the existing ruling system – in this case, National Socialism. Vondung sees the National Socialist cult to bear an original similarity to the rites of the French Revolution, which created a religious form of its own with Jacobinism; seeking to justify revolutionary rule, Jacobinism may well have anticipated the twentieth-century political religions already. A line of connection to Talmon's treatment of political Messianism can be found here; Talmon too sees the salvation-promising character of political systems already present in the French Revolution and its 'ideology'. Although the revolutionaries acted on the basis of Rousseauan political theory, they failed to recognise the danger of slipping into intolerance:

Robespierre was an enemy of the Catholic Church, yet he did not regard himself as an atheist. The programme of his 'citizens' religion' arose from Rousseau and Mably and corresponded to the conviction that the people cannot live from reason alone, but need a faith. A religion that does not contradict reason and the natural order is the foundation of morality and, to that extent, guarantees the just and harmonious order of the society. No state could exist without religion, which must articulate itself in external forms, institutions and festal rituals. This concept provided the most succinct formulation of a political religion.<sup>4</sup>

The cult also assumes a legitimating role in National Socialism. In light of the anti-religious, atheistic tenets of National Socialism, the proximity to

the Christian religion that emerges is certainly surprising. According to Vondung, however, the reason for this proximity was probably that National Socialism sought to suppress Christianity and set its own cult in its place.<sup>5</sup> The National Socialist cult took a variety of forms and included all sectors of the population – especially the youth.<sup>6</sup> Both eschatological-chilastic and messianic elements come clearly to light here. A specifically National Socialist ‘style of celebrating’ was manifest: ‘the specifically National Socialistic style of festival style was formed in a different place; its roots lie in its form of self-depiction, the political mass assemblies and demonstrations of the party during the “period of struggle”’.<sup>7</sup>

The mass assemblies in particular strongly influenced the individual, especially in the psychic sphere. To the same extent the individual could be absorbed into the mass, he could be controlled. The choreography of the mass events was precisely regulated. One is thoroughly justified in speaking of the celebrations’ ‘liturgical form’<sup>8</sup> shaped by ‘liturgical texts’.<sup>9</sup>

Myth also played a large role in this context. The Nazi myth elevated its own race, to the extent that it was ‘pure’, to the supreme reality. The myth was communicated by the cult. This ‘political religion’ in Voegelin’s sense presents itself ‘just as a supra-worldly one does, with the claims to interpret the whole of reality and to save the human being’.<sup>10</sup>

In his portrayal of the cultic forms of National Socialism, Vondung resumes Voegelin’s conception of political religion, which speaks clearly of the political religions’ Christian religious symbolism. In particular, Vondung connects his analysis of the cultic forms of National Socialism to both the psychological components of Voegelin’s historical-philosophical concept and the elevation of the racially pure blood to the new realissimum, as is supported by the myth.

### **Political messianism (Jacob L. Talmon)**

‘Messianism’ or ‘messianic movements’ emerge predominantly within the Abrahamic religions. As such, they are generally stamped by ‘the emergence of personalities’ that, ‘on the basis of their salvation-historical consciousness of mission, exercise a magnetic attraction upon growing hordes of adherents’.<sup>11</sup> The expectation of an apocalyptic coming of a messiah prompts the rise of mass movements that are marked by intoxicated enthusiasm at times. Often, the charismatic leader of the messianic movement is himself identified as the Messiah and honoured in a cult that surrounds his person; this phenomenon can assume the features of an apotheosis. The order that religious messianism *pretends* to support is a firmly established order with its reference point in the messianic arrival of God. Political messianism is different: ‘the point of reference of modern messianism is reason and the human will. Its goal, happiness on earth, is to be attained through social transformation. Although the reference point is worldly, the demands are absolute’.<sup>12</sup> Political, worldly messianism develops an almost

Schopenhauerian unrestricted will to transform its own doctrines into reality and thereby to transform the world. If the idea of the perfection of human life in the beyond still predominates with religious messianism, so does 'worldly messianic monism'<sup>13</sup> seek the fulfilment of all plans and projects already in this world. Analogous to religious messianism, these two kinds of messianism also issue from some kind of 'leader' who points the way to the goal – whether it lie in this world or in the next one.

In this context, Jacob Leib Talmon (1916–80), one of the most important theorists of 'political messianism', mentions English Puritanism at the time of the 'Glorious Revolution'. At its beginning, at least, Puritanism connected religious eschatology to individualism and social radicalism; this connection resulted in a totalitarian culmination. With respect to political messianism, Talmon's concept of religion is that of a functionalist 'ersatz religion' in which no reference to transcendence can be recognised.<sup>14</sup> Much stronger features of totalitarian democracy emerge during the period of the French Revolution. A strong orientation towards the political form of the ancient polis occurs here; this form, in turn, is established as a mythical 'image of freedom and virtue' that is parallel to modern democracy.

The first volume of the trilogy, *A History of Totalitarian Democracy*,<sup>15</sup> is entitled *The Origins of Totalitarian Democracy*. At the beginning of this book, Talmon already clearly states that his investigation of totalitarianism moves within the history of ideas. He sees the roots of the political situation of the mid-twentieth century to extend back into an intellectual prehistory that is 150 years old. In this prehistory, messianic (hence religious) elements play a central role on the totalitarian side of the development of democracy (which is to be strictly distinguished from the liberal side).<sup>16</sup> Talmon describes the resulting situation as the contemporary world crisis:

Seen from our standpoint – from a vantage point in the middle of this twentieth century – the history of the last hundred and fifty years appears in fact to be a systematic preparation for the abrupt clash between empirical and liberal democracy on the one hand and totalitarian messianic democracy on the other – and that is the world crisis of today.<sup>17</sup>

Totalitarian democracy issues from a single political truth and a fixed world-order that compels the people to obey in order to attain it. These, according to Talmon, are the two central assumptions of totalitarian democracy. Together, they encompass all of human existence – the psychological, sociological and historical spheres.<sup>18</sup> Talmon describes the political ideas and theoretical framework of totalitarian democracy as a 'philosophy'. Political action is the 'art' of the application of this philosophy in practice – almost in the sense of the Aristotelian *politikè téchne*.<sup>19</sup>

A more important impulse behind this development was the waning influence, due to secularisation, of religion and the Church on both the

individual human being and society with the onset of modernity. Gradually, the state assumes the position of being the decisive moral authority. The citizens equate the freedom gained thereby with virtue and reason – this view is also expressed in the Rousseauian concept of the civil religion.<sup>20</sup> As a further step, the social and economic organisation of society moves into the foreground alongside the ethical problem. The orientation of political messianism thereby gains the character of a ‘social salvation’ of socially weak or oppressed groups.<sup>21</sup> In the development of social ideas preceding totalitarian democracy, Talmon distinguishes three stages: ‘the postulate of the eighteenth century, the Jacobin improvisation and the crystallisation of the Babeuf movement’.<sup>22</sup>

In a style similar to that of Eric Voegelin,<sup>23</sup> Talmon arranges his investigations as a universal history of ideas: unlike Voegelin, however, he does not begin with antiquity, but with the eighteenth century with Morelly and Mably as well as Rousseau and other thinkers of that epoch. If democratic elements can still be found in left-wing totalitarianism, dictatorial elements predominate in right-wing totalitarianism.<sup>24</sup> As is expressed in the arrangement, ‘Morelly, Mably, Rousseau’, Talmon sees the social element to be an important impulse for the ‘this-worldly religion of totalitarian democracy’.<sup>25</sup> Socialist ideas play a similar role in Paul Tillich’s concept of the ‘quasi-religions’.<sup>26</sup> It is the social impulses that distinguish modern political messianism from other religious-chiliastic movements; having the character more of sects than of political movements, the latter have religious rather than secular roots. To a certain extent, political messianism arises ‘as a postulate of social and economic idea-structures’.<sup>27</sup> It has a leading, transitional character. The intellectual state that corresponds to the human perception of political messianism is a disposition, a ‘complex of spiritual, emotional and conduct-based elements that, taken together, can best be compared to a general human attitude that is evoked by a religion’.<sup>28</sup> More specifically, the religion in this case is a *secular* religion. The ‘eschatological postulates’ of political messianism incorporates the people’s faith, which forms them and is difficult to penetrate with rational arguments. According to Talmon, the ‘secular religion’ described here as arising in the second half of the eighteenth century has, since its emergence, always been forced to struggle with the ‘antinomism between freedom and the exclusivity of a messianic order’.<sup>29</sup> Talmon would like to investigate the phenomenon of secular religion as a phenomenon that is created by human beings, yet as one through which conditions for human co-existence are created in turn. The mutual relations between the secular religion and human beings or the situations in which they find themselves are considered here.

Talmon sees the philosophy of the eighteenth century – especially in French philosophy – to mark the starting point of a development whose twentieth-century outgrowths are the totalitarian dictatorships of Russia and Germany, Italy and Spain.<sup>30</sup>

He begins his investigations with Morelly.<sup>31</sup> In a work entitled *Code de la Nature*, Morelly assumes an objective order of things; this order includes a social mechanism through which humanity can attain the ‘natural order’ (*ordre naturel*). At base of this ‘natural order’ lies a concept of nature that is clearly materialistic-mechanistic. From this – according to Talmon – issues ‘fully developed Communism as a practical programme as the order of the day’. This programme later became significant for Babeuf, who assumed that it came from the Encyclopaedist, Diderot. This socialistic-communistic line can also be found with Mably. Besides this, a utilitarian trend also gains in significance – as it does with Helvetius in *De L’Esprit*.<sup>32</sup> Later, a materialistic determinism as expressed in Holbach’s *Système de la Nature*<sup>33</sup> becomes important.

Theoretically, all human beings are granted insight into the objective natural order on the basis of their capacity to attain knowledge. At the same time, such insight is necessary so that nobody can rebel against the natural order without doing something harmful and disadvantageous both to himself and to the society. Thus, only the presumptuous rebel against this objective, natural order – those who seek and do only evil to the community and themselves. In order to attain deeper insight into this natural order, the philosophy of the seventeenth and eighteenth century also applies the methods of natural science to the spheres of ethics and politics, with the goal of attaining results in these spheres that can be measured almost with the precision of natural science. As examples should be mentioned Spinoza’s *Ethics* (1677) as a seventeenth-century precursor, and Condorcet’s works in political philosophy. The theories of both proceed according to a *more geometrico*. Later, Talmon explains that the central question of eighteenth-century philosophy – which was highly eclectic – was the paradox between the natural order and human freedom.<sup>34</sup> Perfect insight into the nature of the human being would endanger freedom by being determinative. In this context, several thinkers of the eighteenth century pointed to the human capacity for education: perfect insight into human nature is made more difficult by the fact that the soul of the human being, as a ‘developing being’, is formed only during the course of his lifetime. That makes it a complicated matter to discover principled definitions of the essence of the human being. The human is ultimately neither good nor bad, although it tends more to the good and can be influenced in its deeds by the laws:

in a society that has dispensed with the Church and that knows social utility as the only standard, education – just as much as everything else – would necessarily have to have its focal point in the governing system. Education is a matter for the government.<sup>35</sup>

Talmon sees the proximity of eighteenth-century philosophy to totalitarian formations in the twentieth century expressed in this idea too.

In this context, Jean-Jacques Rousseau assumes a special position for Talmon. He investigates the nature of things, the socio-cultural framework that forms the human being to his disadvantage. Reason, justice, principles of legality and rule are the foci of Rousseau's reflections on political theory in the *Contrat social* (1762); this work, in turn, should be seen in conjunction with *Emile*, which also appeared in 1762, Rousseau's pedagogy of the formation of the individual as a functioning communal being. The universal principle, the *volonté générale*, manifests itself in state rule. By contrast to Hobbes' prescription in the *Leviathan* (1651), the legislator must also follow the *volonté générale*. Through the *volonté générale*, the people obliges itself to itself; for the *volonté générale* is to be followed and obeyed unconditionally. The totalitarian potential inherent in this principle was unleashed during the later course of the French Revolution by the intervention of Robespierre. This development signalled, according to Talmon, a strong, ideological-totalitarian hardening on the basis of Rousseau's philosophy.

Alfred Cobban<sup>36</sup> and John W. Chapman<sup>37</sup> represent an opposing interpretation of Rousseau's philosophy, which they believe is situated more within the liberal tradition. In my opinion, [the latter offer] a more accurate interpretation of Rousseau, who rejected political-social intolerance in his 'First Version of the Social Contract' of 1760: 'Il faut penser comme moi pour être sauvé. Voilà le dogme affreux qui désole la terre'.<sup>38</sup>

Nonetheless, it must remain on record that Rousseau's concept of political theory can attain totalitarian intensity through the universalism of the *volonté générale* and the obligation of the citizens that is required by the civil religion. According to Chapman, Talmon distinguishes three planes upon which to consider the basic theoretical lines that were decisive for the circumstances of the French Revolution:

[F]irst, critique of the ancien régime, of its abuses and absurdities; second, positive ideas about a more rational and free system of administration, as for example ideas about the division of powers, the place of the administration of justice and a healthy taxation system; and, as the final thing, unclear messianic expectations connected to the idea of the natural order.<sup>39</sup>

From this certainty concerning the natural order results both the beginnings of a scientific socialism and an integral revolution. The Girondists, who (by contrast to Robespierre) were of more of a liberal stamp, had nonetheless already registered doubts in 1792–93 concerning the principle of a closed natural order in which the human being can live; the human, after all, is himself imperfect and anything but a 'closed system'. They saw the danger that the claim of a perfect, total order would thrust too much on the human, that it would rob him of his humanity and make him a beast.

To Talmon, the philosophers of the eighteenth century were certain that they proclaimed a new religion. This religion was a secular one, just as the Church had accused. The new 'secular religion' – thus the Church stated – undermined the two decisive conditions that made both private and public morality possible: the existence of God and the transcendent sanction. The Church saw the foundations of ethics and society to have been attacked by the withdrawal of all foundations of virtuous action.

The philosophy of the eighteenth century sought to teach a non-religious ethic. Holbach was the first to set his hopes upon materialism as a foundational principle. Basic social structures were redefined in a 'revolutionary' way, whereby the Church was accused of failure in the social sphere and the historical truth of revealed religion was attacked. According to the view of this anti-clerical and, at times, atheistic philosophy, the dualism of Church and world was so great that the teaching of religion became an evil. In different ways, this critique is expressed in the views of Rousseau, Morelly, Helvetius, Holbach, Diderot, Condorcet and Voltaire; all believed they were creating a religion of a new kind in their critical analyses of the supernaturalist ecclesiastical theology.<sup>40</sup> The greatest influence of Voltaire, for example, was his attack of the effect of the religious ethic upon the social order. In the *Social Contract*, Rousseau provides a detailed treatment of the loyalty problem of Christians – specifically of the Catholics, who must obey both a worldly and an ecclesiastical sovereign. Rousseau comes very close to the ancient idea of a unity of politics and religion here, precisely when he speaks of the 'unification of both heads of the eagle'<sup>41</sup> – of the worldly and the ecclesiastical powers. Although Rousseau himself sees such unification to have been anticipated in the political theory of Thomas Hobbes already, Talmon does not address Hobbes' work explicitly.

Atheistic materialists like Helvetius and Holbach taught an agreement of religion and politics on the basis of legal regulations and restrictions on the extent and practice of religion. Although Rousseau and Mably distanced themselves from this trend, their reflections came closer, as Talmon emphasises, 'to the Hebraic-biblical and classical-pagan understanding than to Christian ideas'.<sup>42</sup> This was because they emphasised the guarantee of the social ethic and thought less of the existence of a divine being.<sup>43</sup> In this context, Talmon probably slightly underestimates the role of the divine being for Rousseau; to a certain extent, this being is the basic assumption of a concept of a civil religion that is capable of supporting the state and laws, for the law alone does not suffice to guarantee moral action. For Rousseau and Mably, the social order is based upon the principle of the general will; Helvetius, Holbach and Morelly, by contrast, see the social order to rest more on the foundation of knowledge: as a result, knowledge is to be translated into action.<sup>44</sup> For Mably and above all for Rousseau, the civil religion becomes a social necessity because it supports the order or the society. Fear of God and the civil religion are to be guaranteed by the threat of the death penalty. Hereby, the civil religion must take care not to run into

contradictions by claiming any personal relationship of the individual to God; instead, state and society must be seen as standing collectively under the will of God, like the people of Israel in the Old Testament. Talmon even reaches the conclusion that the religion would 'melt into a kind of Robespierrian mysticism'. 'There would be no other priests than the magistrates; religious and patriotic ceremonies would be one and the same, and service of one's country would mean service of God'.<sup>45</sup> On this basis of this assumption, the funnelling together of politics and religion that arises with twentieth-century totalitarianism is already anticipated in the revolutionary world-view of the eighteenth century.

On the opposite side of the principle of the natural order stands Montesquieu. Before the thinkers named above, Montesquieu was interested in the real-life unfolding of social structures and functions. The art of action rather than mere knowledge was still the focus of social and political thought. Rationalism, by contrast, trained the eye upon the essence and the psyche of the human being; to the extent that the human conducts itself identically in its basic elements, knowledge of these provides a good access to politics. Condorcet likewise posits a human immutability from which the human rights themselves can be derived as a universal principle. Yet these rights are often neglected by revolutions:

The French Revolution, compared to the American one, is an event that occurs on an entirely different plane. It is a total revolution in the sense that it leaves no sphere or aspect of the human being untouched, whereas the American revolution represented a purely political change.<sup>46</sup>

Thus does the French Revolution bear, for Talmon, features that appear to be clearly totalitarian. (This is a position that Bronislaw Backzo does not share in his essay, 'Hat die Französische Revolution den Totalitarismus hervorgebracht?')<sup>47</sup> Talmon refers further to Joseph de Maistre,<sup>48</sup> whose followers propagated a 'theocratic absolutism'.<sup>49</sup>

A further central tenet of eighteenth-century philosophy – particularly with Rousseau – is self-love. Contrary to what might be assumed, love of self does not prevent a harmonious social order; with its striving for happiness and joy, it provides an impetus to human social coexistence. As Talmon makes clear, self-love is also supposed to preserve morality within the society. The reason for this is that no one can attain his own happiness if he completely neglects the happiness and well-being of others. Only in the context of society can people be happy and develop their being. This recalls the basic features of Aristotelian politics and ethics insofar as friendship and the communal co-existence of the people as *zôa politiká* are considered important foundations.<sup>50</sup> By contrast to Aristotle, however – for whom true friendship in absence of dependence plays the central role – eighteenth-century philosophy is centred upon the calculation: without the happiness



of the other, I cannot be completely content myself. From this follows that, in order to be able to be content myself, I must seek the well-being of others as well.<sup>51</sup> Thus does self-love play a central role in eighteenth-century theory. In this context, Talmon points out that Holbach calls ‘the vice-laden human being a poor calculator’.<sup>52</sup> The soul must be in harmony with itself and the human being must live in harmony with his environment in order that he can follow the Natural Order. Unhappiness would signify resistance against the Natural Order. For Rousseau, this means to place *amour-propre*, self-interest, above *amour de soi*, self-love. The coordination of self-interest and the interest of the society is the task of the legislator, who is also the ‘supreme educator’ of the people. Just and good laws, therefore, are the preconditions for creating virtuous people in the community.<sup>53</sup> Yet the new formation or steering of the people by the state through laws and censorship is also an element of totalitarian rule. In essence, therefore, morality is directed by a utilitarian component: by the interest of the greater number, into which the interest of the individual must fit. On this utilitarian aspect, Talmon states the following:

The totalitarian possibilities of this philosophy are not entirely clear at first glance. But they are nonetheless weighty. The very idea of a self-enclosed system from which all evil and unhappiness is exterminated is totalitarian. The assumption that such an order of things is possible and even inexorable is to proclaim the demand that a ruling system embody this perfection in order to force acknowledgement and subordination from its citizens and brand opposition as vice or corruption.

The greatest danger of this system lies in the fact that, not only does it not deny the human being his freedom and rights and demand no sacrifice and subordination from him; it solemnly promises him freedom and rights as well as human self-interest. It claims to have no other goals than the realisation of these. Such a system has every prospect of becoming all the more totalitarian precisely because it guarantees everything in advance and accepts all liberal premises a priori.<sup>54</sup>

According to Talmon, the first test of this kind of system can be found with the Jacobin regime. Although Rousseau, Helvetius and Holbach foresee neither violence nor coercion and continue to propagate freedom, this path still leads to totalitarianism precisely through the messianic belief in a total, all-determining order. Thus does Mercier de la Rivière speak of the ‘despotism of evidence’, because an absolute insight into the order of nature is possible.<sup>55</sup> A higher degree of insight into the existing system is tantamount to greater individual freedom – thus states the mistaken conclusion of those who propagate the influence of the Natural Order.<sup>56</sup> The people are not permitted to live in their own way according to their own ideas, but must be transformed qua law in such a way that they are incorporated into the Natural Order of the virtuous society – one that is virtuous due to the laws alone.

This form of state order is different from an absolutist divine right of kings and tyranny in the classical sense insofar as it represents a ‘synthesis of the sovereignty of the people and one-party dictatorship’. In addition, according to Talmon, it is a ‘dictatorship based upon ideology and mass enthusiasm’.<sup>57</sup>

Political messianism intends to establish a political programme by placing in view a utopian goal that includes the realisation of a state of salvation in the immanent world. A *single* leader leads on to this goal, *one* leader that realises his ideas and images through *one* party and that is venerated in a cult of personality to the point of apotheosis.

Only a select few attain this salvation-promising goal, however: those who have attained insight into the system of order that is implicitly expressed in the programme of the single party. The ‘others’, who are either incapable of attaining this insight or are not allowed to attain it, are condemned to ruin as ‘enemies’ who damage their own people and the nation.<sup>58</sup> They only get in the way of the apocalyptic realisation of the goal of salvation and must be destroyed in order to implement the desired goal. If necessary, the people must be forced to attain their happiness, a happiness the totalitarian regimes believe themselves to be included in. What helps here at the beginning is a small group of enthusiasts for whom the idea of the salvation-bringing goal is so strong that they would ‘walk over corpses’ to realise it – in the most literal sense of the phrase. Thus can a relatively small group that implements the party’s totalitarian doctrine set off a mass movement. This doctrine, it will be recalled, comprehends all areas of life in a *total* way – similar to Carl Schmitt’s conception of the ‘total state’. Thus is the totalitarian potential for violence unleashed to its utmost, inhuman limit in wars and mass destruction; these, in turn, are understood as apocalyptic outbreaks in the transitional phase that precedes the state of salvation and paves the path of its arrival.

## Notes

1 K. Vondung, *Magie und Manipulation. Ideologischer Kult und politische Religion des Nationalsozialismus* (Göttingen, 1971). See also Vondung, “‘Gläubigkeit’ in Nationalsozialismus”, H. Maier and M. Schäfer (eds), *Totalitarismus und politische Religionen*, vol. II (Paderborn, 1997), 15–28. On the religious dimension of ‘political rituals’ in the twentieth century up to the ‘tame repetition of the *Jugendweihe* in the German Democratic Republic’ see also the newspaper article by Milos Vec, ‘Die Ausbeutung des Sakralen’, *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* (19 July 1999).

2 According to K. Vondung, *Magie und Manipulation*, op. cit., 7.

3 *Ibid.*

4 *Ibid.*, 10.

5 According to *ibid.*, 13.

6 See *ibid.*, 16–24, especially 16ff.

7 *Ibid.*, 33.

8 See *ibid.*, 113–21, especially 113–18.

9 See *ibid.*, 122–39, especially 133: ‘Das große Gelöbnis’ by Herybert Menzel.

- 10 According to *ibid.*, 183.
- 11 P. Beyerhaus, 'Messianische Bewegungen', Walter Kasper, Konrad Baumgartner, Horst Bürkle, Klaus Ganzer, Karl Kertelge, Wilhelm Korff and Peter Walter (eds), *Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche*, vol. 7, 3rd edn (Freiburg, 1998), 164–66, 164 (citation).
- 12 J. L. Talmon, *Die Ursprünge der totalitären Demokratie* (Cologne/Opladen, 1961), 9. See here also Talmon, *Politischer Messianismus* (Cologne/Opladen, 1963), 1–17, especially 1–5.
- 13 J. L. Talmon, *Die Ursprünge der totalitären Demokratie*, op. cit., 10.
- 14 See K. Hornung, 'Politischer Messianismus: Jacob Talmon und die Genesis der totalitären Diktaturen', *Zeitschrift für Politik* 47, no. 2 (2000), 148.
- 15 J. L. Talmon, *The Origins of Totalitarian Democracy* (London, 1952); Talmon, *Political Messianism. The Romantic Phase* (London, 1960); Talmon, *The Myth of the Nation and the Vision of Revolution* (London, 1980).
- 16 On this distinction, see K. Hornung, 'Politischer Messianismus: Jacob Talmon und die Genesis der totalitären Diktaturen', op. cit., 134.
- 17 J. L. Talmon, *Die Ursprünge der totalitären Demokratie*, op. cit., 1.
- 18 K. Hornung, 'Politischer Messianismus: Jacob Talmon und die Genesis der totalitären Diktaturen', op. cit., 136ff.
- 19 See J. L. Talmon, *Die Ursprünge der totalitären Demokratie*, op. cit., 2.
- 20 J.-J. Rousseau, *Du contract social*, B. Gagnebin and M. Raymond (eds), *Oeuvres complètes*, part III (Pléiade) (Paris, 1964), book IV, ch. VIII.
- 21 See J. L. Talmon, *Die Ursprünge der totalitären Demokratie* (Cologne, Opladen, 1961), 5.
- 22 *Ibid.*, 6.
- 23 In particular, Eric Voegelin, *Die politischen Religionen* (Vienna, 1938); and Voegelin, *Order and History*, 5 vols (Baton Rouge LA, 1956–87).
- 24 In *Totalitarismustheorien*, Wolfgang Wippermann reproaches Talmon for neglecting the sources of 'right totalitarianism' and the ideologies of racism and anti-Semitism: W. Wippermann, *Totalitarismustheorien. Die Entwicklungen der Diskussion von den Anfängen bis heute* (Darmstadt, 1997), 25ff. Klaus Hornung represents the opposite view in 'Politischer Messianismus: Jacob Talmon und die Genesis der totalitären Diktaturen', op. cit., 155.
- 25 J. L. Talmon, *Die Ursprünge der totalitären Demokratie*, op. cit., 8. See also Talmon, *Politischer Messianismus*, op. cit., 21–198.
- 26 P. Tillich, 'Das Christentum und die Begegnung der Weltreligionen', *Gesammelte Werke*, ed. R. Albrecht, Vol. V: *Die Frage nach dem Unbedingten* (Stuttgart, 1964), 51–98 (first English edition of this contribution, New York, 1962).
- 27 J. L. Talmon, *Die Ursprünge der totalitären Demokratie*, op. cit., 11.
- 28 *Ibid.*
- 29 *Ibid.*, 12.
- 30 See K. Hornung, 'Politischer Messianismus: Jacob Talmon und die Genesis der totalitären Diktaturen', op. cit., 138–42.
- 31 Talmon cites from Morelly, *Code de la Nature* (Paris, 1910).
- 32 Talmon treats C. A. Helvetius, *De L'Esprit* (Paris, 1795) in special detail.
- 33 P. H. Holbach, *Système de la Nature* (Paris, 1821).
- 34 J. L. Talmon, *Die Ursprünge der totalitären Demokratie*, op. cit., 25–28.
- 35 *Ibid.*, 28.
- 36 A. Cobban, *Rousseau and the Modern State* (London, 1934), 29–31.
- 37 J. W. Chapman, *Rousseau – Totalitarian or Liberal?* (New York, 1956), 74, 78, 80.
- 38 According to I. Fetscher, *Rousseaus Politische Philosophie* (Neuwied a. Rhein and Berlin, 1968), 192. Original J.-J. Rousseau, *Du contrat social* (first version), B. Gagnebin and M. Raymond (eds), *Oeuvres complètes*, op. cit., 341:

Il faut penser comme moi pour être sauvé. Voila le dogme affreux qui désole la terre. Vous n'autrez jamais rien fait pour la paix publique si vous n'ôtés de la cité ce dogme infernal. Quiconque ne le trouve pas exécration ne peut être ni chrétien ni citoyen ni homme, c'est un monstre qu'il faut immoler au repos du genre humain.

One must think as I do in order to be saved: that is the horrible dogma that has laid waste to the earth. You have done nothing for the public peace if you do not turn this hellish dogma out of the republic. Whoever does not find it abominable can be neither a Christian nor a state citizen, nor a human being; he is a monster that must be offered as a sacrifice to the peace of humankind.

- 39 J. W. Chapman, *Rousseau – Totalitarian or Liberal?*, op. cit., 17.
- 40 See K. Hornung, 'Politischer Messianismus: Jacob Talmon und die Genesis der totalitären Diktaturen', op. cit., 146.
- 41 Original J.-J. Rousseau, *Du contrat social*, op. cit., book IV, ch. VIII, 463: '... réunir les deux têtes de l'aigle. ...'
- 42 J. L. Talmon, *Die Ursprünge der totalitären Demokratie*, op. cit., 20.
- 43 See *ibid.*
- 44 See *ibid.*, 21.
- 45 *Ibid.*, 22.
- 46 *Ibid.*, 25.
- 47 B. Baczkó, 'Hat die Französische Revolution den Totalitarismus hervorgebracht?', H. Maier (ed.), *Wege in die Gewalt. Die modernen politischen Religionen*, 2nd edn (Frankfurt, 2002), 11–36.
- 48 See J. de Maistre, *Abendstunden in St. Petersburg oder Gespräche über das Walten der göttlichen Vorsicht in zeitlichen Dingen* (Frankfurt, 1824) or the same, *Vom Papste* (Munich, 1923).
- 49 See J. L. Talmon, *Die Ursprünge der totalitären Demokratie*, op. cit., 25.
- 50 Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, book 8, 1155a1–1163b32.
- 51 See J. L. Talmon, *Die Ursprünge der totalitären Demokratie*, op. cit., 29.
- 52 *Ibid.*
- 53 See *ibid.*, 30ff.
- 54 *Ibid.*, 32.
- 55 According to *ibid.*, 33.
- 56 See *ibid.*
- 57 *Ibid.*, 6.
- 58 See here J. L. Talmon, *Politischer Messianismus*, op. cit., 201–60 ('Messianischer Nationalismus'), especially 226–47 ('Das Volk als Messias (Mazzini, Mickiewicz)').

## 7 Supplementary approaches

Leo Strauss and Hannah Arendt

*Katrin Mey*

### Leo Strauss' revival of the classical theory of tyranny

In the range of interpretations of totalitarian phenomena, such classical concepts as despotism, dictatorship or tyranny are scarcely used any longer. New 'theories' have been developed in order to understand the phenomenon instead.<sup>1</sup> One thinker who has analysed the classical concept of tyranny and made it fruitful for understanding and interpreting totalitarian phenomena in certain respects has been Leo Strauss.<sup>2</sup>

His concept of tyranny bears fruit in the following ways: first, in diagnosing the tyrannical regime; second, in offering both practical and theoretical means of dealing with it; and third, in providing a deeper understanding of political orders in general. Leo Strauss resumes not only the classical heuristic concept of tyranny (as he finds it primarily with Plato, Aristotle and Xenophon), but also the intention of these classical philosophers,<sup>3</sup> thinkers for whom the concept of tyranny was always embedded in a general theory of tyranny. By contrast to modern theories oriented strictly on the phenomena, the theory of tyranny includes the human being as a second focal point of the ellipse in its reflections on the phenomenon. In this case, the philosophical intention is thought to justify connection of the question of tyranny to the question of the truth of being – one that has been omitted by modern political science as a value judgement. Thus Strauss:

Our political science is fairly obsessed with the idea that scientific rigour excludes value judgements. To describe a regime as tyrannical, however, means: to make a value judgement. The political scientist who has prescribed for himself a freedom from values will speak of mass state, dictatorship, totalitarianism, authoritarian state, et cetera. As a citizen, he might reject a tyrannical regime with all his heart. As political scientist, however, he must dismiss the concept of tyranny as a 'myth'.<sup>4</sup>

From Strauss' concept of tyranny, therefore, we should not expect a catalogue of characteristics that has been obtained and developed empirically, but an analysis of the basic structure of a political process that spans

between thought and order: the basic structure of human existence. Hereby, according to Strauss, the classical theory of tyranny not only generates insight into the origins and function of tyranny, it is also a prophylactic measure against this kind of order – which is seen to be inadequate for the human being. It is commendable, therefore, to pose the question surrounding tyranny not only in the face of totalitarian phenomena, but at all times. To cease to pose it and to dismiss it as a traditional description of the phenomenon makes us blind – and thereby susceptible – to the onset of a tyranny.

Hella Mandt has pointed out the blindness surrounding the concept of tyranny that predominated at the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth.<sup>5</sup> It was Leo Strauss who returned the concept in order to capture the twentieth-century totalitarian regime.<sup>6</sup> His reconstruction of the concept allowed him to set classical political philosophy in a diagnostic and therapeutic relation to totalitarianism as a cluster of historical phenomena. Although his procedure is not the only possible method of submitting these phenomena to insightful interpretation, it offers the possibility of pointing beyond them both descriptively and constructively.<sup>7</sup>

As a first step, Strauss outlines the ways in which classical and modern tyrannies are distinct in his essay on tyranny: ‘by contrast to the classical tyranny, the tyranny of our time has both technology and “ideology” at its disposal’.<sup>8</sup>

The tyranny of the twentieth century assumes the existence of the natural sciences – or, in particular, that of a particular kind of natural science. Conversely, the classical tyranny, by contrast to the modern one, involves a natural science whose goals did not consist, either in fact or potentially, in the governing of nature or the distribution and popularisation of its scientific findings.<sup>9</sup>

The decisive difference between the classical and modern tyrannies, therefore, is technology.<sup>10</sup> Technology presents the tyranny with the possibility of becoming ‘permanent and all-encompassing’.<sup>11</sup>

We face today a tyranny that brings with it, on the basis of the ‘conquest of nature’ and, particularly, of human nature, a danger that has been present in no prior tyranny: namely, the danger of becoming permanent and all encompassing. The terrible alternative that the human being or human thought will be collectivised, either suddenly and mercilessly, or gradually and using gentle means, compels us to give some thought to how we can escape this dilemma. We want, therefore, to consider once again the elementary and inconspicuous conditions of human freedom.

Hand-in-hand with the technical possibilities that stand at the disposal of the modern tyranny is the source of its claim to omnipotence in governing

human nature: in other words, its ideology. But the fundamental differences with regard to the ancient and classical tyrannies, those of technology and ideology, might place thought concerning the conditions of human freedom in a new starting situation: it might be that the classical theory of tyranny, in the view of modern tyranny, has nothing more to communicate because it was faced with different, less encompassing and permanent tyrannies. The fundamental difference between ancient and modern tyranny, however, is said to be not a difference in essence, but only a difference of degree.

According to Strauss, the question as to how all-encompassing and permanent a tyranny in fact is – in other words, to what extent a tyranny has been realised – is not the basic question of the classical theory of tyranny. Its theoretical starting-points, rather, are the questions concerning the conditions of human freedom and the relationship of happiness to political order.<sup>12</sup> The more comprehensively and permanently a tyranny been established, certainly, the more urgently these questions are posed and the better the questions posed can attain an answer. In other words: it has never been more urgent or necessary to resume the classical efforts of thought concerning tyranny than it is now, in view of the totalitarian threats to human freedom in the twentieth century.

The fact that a fundamental difference between the classical tyranny and the tyranny of our day exists, or that the classics were not capable, even in their wildest dreams, of imagining the contemporary form of tyranny is neither a good nor a sufficient reason to give up the classical system of reference. For this fact should be harmonised completely with the possibility that the contemporary tyranny can still be incorporated into the classical system of reference, even that it cannot at all be accurately understood outside this system of reference.<sup>13</sup>

For the classics, the single important question of the theory of tyranny was the question concerning the best political order. According to Leo Strauss, it was entirely clear to these thinkers that the perfect political order would have to correspond to the nature of the human being, to the achievement of one's genuine goal: that of attaining and preserving happiness. Yet it was equally evident to the classical theorists that the *vanitas* of human nature<sup>14</sup> would have to be reckoned with here, that happiness is a concept that is too much an individualising concept in its realisation, because it is a moral one. The political order, therefore, can only ever create the conditions for the possibility of attaining happiness.

For the ancients, happiness arises from an acknowledgement of individual virtue by the other – that is, of the actualisation of virtue under the conditions of the possibility of freedom. Such actualisation has two preconditions: not only must I be virtuous in order to attain acknowledgement, but there must also be other virtuous subjects who could provide me with the acknowledgement I need in order to be happy. In destroying this other virtuous

subject, I simultaneously destroy both the measure and the possibility of my own happiness – the possibility of attaining virtue is the condition of the possibility of gaining acknowledgement.

Simonides demonstrates nothing other than this to Hieron when he exposes his efforts to gain love and recognition, as a tyrant in a tyranny, as a contradiction in itself. With his claim to wield absolute power over all his subjects, to govern over them as well as over things, he destroys freedom understood as the condition of the possibility to gain recognition and love of the other. He destroys the possibility of virtue and thereby the possibility of realising his demand. The tyrant conducts himself like someone who demands a compliment or a gift: he strides down a path, in any case, that cannot lead to his goal. Having arrived at this point, Simonides generates in Hieron the insight that life under these conditions is not even worth living for a tyrant. The tyrant, therefore, would actually have to commit suicide.

Leo Strauss presents the point of Xenophon's dialogue: the tyrant's solution consists precisely in not conducting himself like a tyrant, but in clearing the path to his own happiness instead. This path seeks the moral and individual recognition by the other through friendships, renunciation of arbitrariness and binding himself to the laws, through generosity and the preservation of freedom. In this kind of tyranny, the tyrannical element shifts from the actualisation to the potency, to the mere possibility of a power that is never actualised. This good tyranny is structured like every other good order. Specifically, it is bipolar: power respective to truth on the one hand and respective to law on the other. The question concerning truth, therefore, or the relationship of philosophy to law in the society, is the second important question of the classical theory of tyranny.

The law is the mediating instance between the philosopher's striving for truth, continual questioning, breaking-through of human contingency on the one hand and the necessity to organise the coexistence of the non-philosophers on the other. Laws are codified insights, which – because they are human – must repeatedly succumb to falsification.<sup>15</sup> Because they must remain legitimate, however, their fallibility cannot be advertised. To do justice through a questioning searching, therefore, is the task not of the laws, but of the philosopher. Leo Strauss characterises the relationship of politics, which enacts laws, to the philosopher as follows:

Because the philosopher is a human being whose whole life is devoted to the search for wisdom, no time for political activity of some kind remains to him. The philosopher can never wish to rule. The only demand he makes of the politicians is that they leave him in peace. He justifies his demand in that he honestly assures them that his undertakings are of a purely theoretical nature and could by no means disturb the circles of the politicians in any way . . . The philosopher cannot live in complete isolation, for legitimate 'subjective certainty' and the 'subjective certainty' of the crazy person are difficult to distinguish.



Genuine certainty is ‘intersubjective’. . . . The philosopher must leave the closed and enchanted circle of the ‘initiated’ if he wishes to remain a philosopher. He must make his way to the market place. The conflict with the politicians, therefore, cannot help but materialise. And this conflict itself – refraining from mentioning its causes and effects entirely – is already political action.<sup>16</sup>

The philosopher, therefore, is by no means apolitical; yet, just as the politician does not restrict to the philosopher the possibility to think in the good political order, so does the Socratic philosopher perceive his task as being socially responsible:

Socratic rhetoric is intended as an indispensable instrument of philosophy. Its goal is to lead potential philosophers to philosophy – and this through its mere practice on the one hand and through liberation from those magic tricks that stand in the way of philosophical effort on the other. But Socratic rhetoric should also block the path to philosophy to those who are not suited to philosophising. Socratic rhetoric is unconditionally just. Its motive is social responsibility. It is based in the assumption that there is a disparity between the uncompromising search for truth and the requirements of the society. Or, stated differently, all truths are not undangerous at all times.<sup>17</sup>

In order to be able to maintain this optimal ‘conflict situation’, political rule requires the ‘gentlemen’, the noble men: these renounce the politically tyrannical claim to rule because they are in the position to concede that they, as politicians, cannot be privy to the truth: they leave over the business of the search for wisdom to the philosophers and set the unwise under the law: ‘It is indeed certain that the absolute rule of those who are not wise is less desirable than a limited rule by them: the unwise should stand under the law’.<sup>18</sup>

These nobles are also in the position of living happily under a tyranny in that they succeed in blending out the claim to absolute rule here, too – if, in any case, the tyranny corresponds to the ideal tyranny of Simonides.<sup>19</sup>

Only in an order that holds firm to these two poles, however – to the truth and to the law – can the ‘gentleman’ call himself happy. Virtue can no longer exist in a system that does away with one of these poles. Philosophy in the classical sense does not raise the claim to rule, but expressly rejects the ruling crown and sceptre. For:

Philosophy as such is none other than genuine knowledge of the fundamental problems in their entirety. It is not possible to reflect on these problems without approaching one of the less thinkable solutions. So long, however, as there is not wisdom, but only the search for wisdom, the power of conviction of all thinkable solutions is – unavoidably –

lesser than the evidence of the problems. For this reason, the philosopher ceases to be a philosopher at that moment in which the 'subjective certainty' of a solution suppresses his knowledge of the problematic character of this solution. At this moment, a sectarian is born.<sup>20</sup>

For the mass party is nothing other than a sect with an uncommonly large following.<sup>21</sup>

Philosophy remains itself only if it does not rule, but is part of a good, stable order that guarantees its activity. It must protest expressly against its enlistment for political activity in the sense of ruling; its political activity, then, is to preserve itself as seeking a standard for a political order. And this is why Strauss registers an objection with Alexandre Kojève, with whom he had an intensive confrontation on the question of tyranny. Believing to recognise the failure of all philosophy to this point Kojève is said to have assumed 'the political action of philosophy on behalf of philosophy was a ringing success'.<sup>22</sup> For Kojève, the political action of philosophy consists in the striving for political rule on the part of the philosophers, the greatest experts on questions of the best political order. At this point, Strauss' critique of Kojève, the leftist Hegelian, begins:

Hegel's theory is far more demanding than that of Hobbes, but it is, exactly like that of Hobbes, a construction. Both theories construct the human society in that they begin from the false assumption that the human being as such can be understood as a being for which consciousness lacks hallowed limits – as a being, therefore, that is driven solely by the desire for recognition.<sup>23</sup>

Hegel continued a modern tradition and radicalised it in a certain sense – the modern tradition that released the passions and, with them, 'competition'. This tradition began with Machiavelli and was completed by men like Hobbes and Adam Smith. It arose through a consciously enacted breach with the strict moral demands that had been posed by both the Bible and the classical tradition.<sup>24</sup>

Kojève's philosophy of history ignores the anthropological fact of contingency in that it does not, like classical philosophy, incorporate the impossibility of the realisation of the happiness of all human beings into the question of the best political order. It bets on the realisation of lesser goals instead:

From this followed the replacement of moral virtue with universal recognition, or the replacement of happiness with the satisfaction that arises from universal recognition. The classical solution is utopian in the sense that its realisation is improbable. The modern solution is utopian in the sense that its realisation is impossible. The classical solution leads to a fixed value-standard upon which each actual solution

can be measured. The modern solution destroys in the end even the idea of a value-standard that would be independent from the given.<sup>25</sup>

The correspondence in terms of political form of this realisation of minimised happiness – satisfaction through general recognition – is the universal unitary state. Such a state, therefore, is also said to be the goal of the historical process.

If the universal unitary state is the goal of history, then history is absolutely 'tragic'. Its attainment will reveal that the problem of the human being and, in particular, the problem of the relationship between philosophy and politics is insoluble. For centuries, human beings have unconsciously done nothing more than to clear its path through endless efforts, struggles and suffering, continually hoping for the universal and unitary state; yet once they have attained the goal of their journey, they will be forced to concede that they have destroyed their humanity by arriving at the goal of their humanity, and thus will have returned in the cycle to the pre-human beginnings of history.<sup>26</sup>

In the collapse of philosophy into politics, the specifically human is surrendered: freedom in contingency. The breaking-through of human limits presumes the acknowledgement of those limits; such a break-through, however, is aborted by the restriction to the animalic that is suggested by the concept of limitlessness. In such an order, philosophy can reconstitute itself only in the Nietzschean sense, as nihilism, and this by rejecting this illusory minimalist solution.<sup>27</sup>

Leo Strauss exposes the structural identity between 'left' and 'right' tyranny here. In both, attempts to overcome human contingency bring humanity itself – human nature – to an end rather than contingency. A tyranny that becomes universal and permanent means the end of philosophy. This is because it makes the claim of philosophy without accepting the condition of the possibility of philosophy in the first place: the recognition of human historicity, of human contingency, and thus of the freedom to attempt continually to break through it. Both right and left tyrannies emerge with the claim to overcome history: the leftist Hegelians (as represented by the person of Kojève) bring history to an end by guiding it to its fulfilment in the philosophy of history.<sup>28</sup> The rightists (as represented in the form of National Socialists) create for themselves a unique historical position by declaring their historical situation to be incomparably absolute. They thereby rob the human being not only of his historicity but of his common nature with that portion of humanity that appeared in prior epochs.<sup>29</sup>

In both cases, the possibilities of technology are enlisted to transcend precisely this contingent nature of the human being. The 'tragic' element lies in the reality that these limits are not truly overcome. In merely destroying those phenomena that demonstrate limits (other classes, other races), technology erects only the illusion of having transcended contingency.

In classical philosophy, the possibility of the existence of the other is manifest in the good political order, as is the possibility of improving one's own order through the reforms – not revolutions! – introduced by the esoteric teaching of the philosophers.<sup>30</sup> As Kojève depicts it, the violent revolution that will occur at the beginning of the universal and permanent philosopher-state is directed against the original political order to such a great extent that it seeks to destroy it, the 'other' of the new political order.<sup>31</sup>

Everything looks like the repetition of the age-old drama. Only this time, the matter of philosophy is lost from the beginning. For the last tyrant presents himself as a philosopher, as the supreme philosophical authority, as the supreme exegete of the only true philosophy, as the executor and hangman, who derives his authority from the only true philosophy. Thus does he claim that he does not persecute philosophy, but only false philosophy. This experience is not entirely new to the philosopher. . . . And because there was no universal state, the philosopher was able flee to other countries when life under the tyrant became unbearable. Yet there is no flight from the universal tyrant. Due to the conquest of nature and the total, unhindered replacement of law with superstition and terror, the universal tyrant has at his disposal almost unlimited means to track down and destroy even the most modest beginnings of independent thought. Kojève seems to be correct, even if for the wrong reason: the dawning of the universal and unitary state signals the end of philosophy on earth.<sup>32</sup>

Strauss accuses Kojève of assuming the dependence of truth upon human historicity. To this extent, being, true being, must always be measured on the concrete historical situation; it is absorbed in that situation completely. 'Social change or fate affects being, if it is not identical with Being, and hence affects truth.'<sup>33</sup> This is why Kojève's philosophy must be oriented on the human being in his concrete situation in order to find the truth: the human being must be entirely at home upon the earth.<sup>34</sup>

The classical philosophers, by contrast, are oriented towards an independent, eternal order that must be sought repeatedly in history and for which it is necessary to establish values that approximate it as precisely as possible. Historical processes, therefore, are free processes occurring against the backdrop of a necessary, eternal order.

A being that is assumed to create itself during the course of history, by contrast, knows no correction on the template of an eternal being. A tyranny must always make such a being the fundamental, theoretical assumption of its existence. According to the classical assumption, it would run into a contradiction with itself because it would have to establish and recognise an independent measure of itself: a tyranny that submits itself to a standard does not rule over this standard, but only this kind of tyranny can be a good one. The Xenophonic dialogue between Simonides and Hieron

proves that the good tyranny is a utopia. Occasioned by the question concerning tyranny, this same proof also raises questions of being, human nature and the good political order. Merely in doing this, however, it makes it clear that these three components cannot be identical.<sup>35</sup>

With the classical theory of tyranny and its assumptions, these three components are held as three balls in the air. And the air, for its part, is the tension spanning between philosophers and the political order or society. If this dialectic between philosopher and society is eliminated in favour of a dialectic of historical process (or an abolition of historicity in general), then humanity collapses – together with the truth and the good political order – into a morass of an all-destructive course of history.<sup>36</sup>

To this extent, Strauss' precise recapitulation of the classical theory of tyranny illuminates the possibility of understanding modern tyrannies in terms of their rejection of humanity as well. At the same time, the questions that are pressing for the classical theory of tyranny – questions concerning human nature, true being and the good political order – also present a heuristic structure. This structure enables us in turn both to identify and justifiably to condemn all forms of modern tyranny or totalitarian phenomenon; and we can do so in a way that is independent of both the concrete contingency of historical appearance and any catalogue of defining characteristics – whether this be conclusive or open.

### **The nature of the human being and totalitarianism – Hannah Arendt**

Hannah Arendt's evaluation of the phenomenon of totalitarianism later leads to her general theory of the political and bears certain affinities with the concept of Leo Strauss. Preceding this, however, is the historic-functional description and conceptual analysis of the phenomenon that is undertaken in *The Origins of Totalitarianism*. The German version of the title, *Elemente und Ursprünge totaler Herrschaft*, already indicates that Arendt does not claim to deliver a comprehensive theory of the phenomenon. Restricting herself solely to those facets that she finds to be the most important and essential, she seeks to understand the essence of the phenomenon. Of particular interest to us here is how she locates the human being within the sphere of the political and understands his destiny within a totalitarian system.<sup>37</sup>

The first two parts of her tripartite essay proceed in a historico-chronological way. Claiming to describe a trend, these sections describe phenomena that are not merely related in nature to the elements of totalitarianism, but even lead to and find their structural realisation in them. Arendt describes intellectual structures and points out historical analogies. Without claiming a strict historical causality between the origins and elements of the phenomenon,<sup>38</sup> she proceeds to her conceptual analysis by construing the connection as a 'crystallisation'.<sup>39</sup> Thus does her methodology lie as a mediate path between philosophy and historical and political science – one aspect of her work that explains its controversial reception in the literature.

Arendt's understanding of prudential judgement<sup>40</sup> is the epistemological prerequisite for her political philosophy. For its part, this political philosophy is already political in that its precondition has been experience of the phenomenon of totalitarianism.<sup>41</sup> The dialectical tension that arises for a theory whose justification and formulation already fulfils its requirements<sup>42</sup> must be explained before proceeding to a summary of Arendt's theory of totalitarianism. What must be delivered first, therefore, is a description of the theory of totalitarianism as it is outlined in *The Origins of Totalitarianism*. Following that, the theory will be placed within the context of the Arendtian approach to political science and political knowledge in general. This exercise will render Arendt's conception comparable to that of Leo Strauss and allow the two thinkers' concepts to be developed for an integrative theory of totalitarianism that takes political religions into account as well.

In *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, Hannah Arendt investigates the movement from the nation-state through the imperial state to the total state as that of a disintegration of heterogeneous societies.<sup>43</sup>

With the rise of the nation-state, attempts to render the various heterogeneous groups of one ruled territory more homogeneous are already made. They are to be centralised under the banners of the 'nation', of language, of membership in national groups or of culture in the broadest sense. In a structural sense, minorities are no longer regarded as inevitably occurring, but encounter increasing pressure to assimilate. With that, nationalism degenerates into the attempt to homogenise a people.<sup>44</sup>

Imperialism emerges at a later historical date – Arendt places it in the second half of the nineteenth century. This phenomenon also alters how the nation is regarded. The needs of the economy dictate expansion and the winning of new colonies. Within the sphere of the colonies themselves, homogeneity is no longer striven for in the political realm; instead, the residents are considered only an administrative mass and not the subjects of government from the beginning.<sup>45</sup> The division of territory, nation and state – the unity and homogeneity of which was still the declared goal of nationalism – leads to consideration as to how the rule of one people over another can be legitimated. The defining of the nation as a race lays the foundations for political racism.<sup>46</sup>

Thus do nationalism and imperialism change the understanding of human nature. Whereas the contingent nature of a human being who is in need of redemption and finds himself in continual conflict with others recedes from view, the attempt to strip him of borders and limits in order to transform him, together with his fellow people, into a homogeneous mass, moves into the foreground.<sup>47</sup> For Arendt, this attempt has succeeded – at least partially – in the totalitarian regimes:

The totalitarian attempt at global conquest and total rule is the destructive way out of all dead ends. The victory of totalitarianism will

possibly coincide with the destruction of humanity; for wherever it has ruled, it has begun to destroy the essence of the human being.<sup>48</sup>

Totalitarianism is merely the project of ‘testing out the project of rendering human beings superfluous’.<sup>49</sup> Hannah Arendt subsumes both Stalinism and National Socialism to this project, although she distinguishes hereby between the anthropological preconditions and the structural elements of total rule.

The structural elements of total rule are the leader, the party, the elites and the onion structure of the organisation – that is, the intransparency and multiplicity of institutions and instances that prevent any kind of transparency capable of guaranteeing rights. Totalitarian institutions govern, not as a political government, but as a non-political movement.<sup>50</sup> The instrument of the movement is propaganda; its essence is terror:

Propaganda is in fact an indispensable component part of the ‘psychological conduct of war’. But terror is more; terror remains the basic form of rule of the totalitarian form of government; the real horror sets in only after its psychological goals have been long since attained, after terror rules a population that is completely subdued. Wherever terror has attained its perfection, as it did in the concentration camps, propaganda disappears entirely; it was even expressly forbidden in the concentration camps. In other words, propaganda is only an instrument, even if perhaps the most important one, in dealing with the world outside; terror, by contrast, is the true essence of totalitarian rule.<sup>51</sup>

Regarded anthropologically, the human being has dissolved into a politically disinterested mass whose corresponding form of rule is totalitarianism. Without wishing to engage itself intellectually, this mass passively submits itself to the promise of salvation in order to become free from human contingency in insane ideologies of racism and expansion. ‘Totalitarian movements are mass movements, and they are to this day the only organisational form that the modern masses have found and that appears to be suited to them’.<sup>52</sup>

Having arrived at the historical derivation of ‘modern society’ and the mob that issues from it, Arendt moves from the description of historical developments to an interpretation of the conceptual tensions that are inherent in them.<sup>53</sup> These tensions then serve as the foundation of her theory of totalitarianism and concept of the political.<sup>54</sup> In the beginning, society and nation-state were still opposed in their respective developments: the nation-state had still served as a guarantee to the heterogeneous, plural possibilities within the society; its simultaneously limiting and stabilising combination of the two political principles of sovereignty of the people and human rights still made this possible. Although this was the case, however, society – according to Arendt – tended towards homogenisation. And

because the nation-state in the Jacobean sense was itself a product of modern, bourgeois society, it too succumbed to this tendency. It eroded the rational principle of human rights with the voluntaristic principle of the people's sovereignty – one for which the 'people' became the defining quantity of the group that would bear the human rights.<sup>55</sup> In modern societies, depoliticisation of the political sphere is ensured in advance, merely through the circumstance that such societies give birth to themselves through a non-political impetus. This is why Hannah Arendt regards herself as justified, in conceptual terms, to take a second interpretative step of replacing the society with the nation and opposing it to the state as the relevant political quantity.<sup>56</sup> Thus does the dialectic between rationality and voluntarism<sup>57</sup> that is constituted by the modern society lead, in its failure, to a mutual elimination of limits.<sup>58</sup> This self-destructive tendency to radicalisation and loss of limit<sup>59</sup> becomes the moving principle of totalitarianism. The rationality principle becomes a strictly non-political ruling logic and is subordinated to a voluntaristic principle that knows no more rational responsibilities. The limits of the individual opposite other individuals, of one state opposite other states – the limits, in other words, constituting the sphere of the political in the first place – are blurred. These limits are socially integrated through homogenisation. Now, there are no longer individuals who might form interest groups (parties),<sup>60</sup> but only two possibilities: that of absorbing both the individual and the other into the mass or that of destroying. Concerning the latter option, establishing who or what can be homogenised and who or what will resist absorption into the mass in the long term is a purely arbitrary exercise. What is clear according to the logic of homogenisation is solely that the latter group must be destroyed.<sup>61</sup>

Arendt expresses these phenomena of the destruction of limits and formation of masses using the metaphor of the desert as a symbol of evil: the bridges of forgiveness and promise are destroyed as constituents of the political<sup>62</sup> and the human being is annihilated in the desert of loss of the world.<sup>63</sup> Evil is so banal not because it is a radical antipode of the good, but because it simply abolishes the difference between good and evil, guilt and innocence, culprit and victim.

In the first edition of *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, Arendt had restricted her analysis mainly to the phenomenon of National Socialism. By the appearance of the second edition in 1959, she had worked in an analysis of Stalinism as well.<sup>64</sup> Whereas National Socialism signified a breach with the history of Western rationality,<sup>65</sup> she claimed to recognise a 'dark continuity' in Stalinism. This continuity had already been present in the Platonic turning-away from the world, had then been carried through to the Christian negation of the world to emerge once again in the privatisation and atomisation of the modern, enlightened human being. In the terms of philosophical anthropology, the tensions that appeared in Arendt's concepts of freedom and politics also appear in her interpretation of National Socialism and Stalinism. By turning progressively to those concepts<sup>66</sup> and distancing herself



from the historical-functionalistic interpretations of the first chapters, her theory becomes capable of incorporating Stalinism as well.

But how does Hannah Arendt understand the modern human being?<sup>67</sup> She sees the modern human to be located between the concepts of freedom and politics.<sup>68</sup> The freedom concept, influenced by her early analysis of Augustine and derived from Augustine ever afresh, is based upon the fact of 'natality'. With the birth every human being, a new beginning occurs within the world.<sup>69</sup> Because this new beginning simultaneously marks a rejection of what already exists, it entails the possibility of a certain loss of the world; a conceiving of the world in its political dimension afresh via the bridges of forgiveness and promising is nonetheless also possible.<sup>70</sup> The Christian possibility of withdrawal from the world thereby entails both the possibility for the freedom of acting in the world and the possibility of a total withdrawal into the private sphere – a withdrawal that Hannah Arendt describes as 'loss of the world'.<sup>71</sup>

The fact of 'natality' – because it is not a mere 'abstraction'<sup>72</sup> and thus a medium of loss of the world – provides the foundation for the only human right to which Hannah Arendt wishes to grant validity: the right to have rights.<sup>73</sup> It could be objected that this right, in terms of content, is essentially far more abstract than all codified rights to freedom and equality, which could be considered to have left the sphere of 'virtual' abstraction entirely and become for a large part positive rights. Yet, with her 'right to bear rights', Hannah Arendt has presented the *conditio sine qua non* of the political.<sup>74</sup> Both the necessity of this right and the uselessness of traditional human rights – which she proves with the example of stateless refugees during and after the Second World War<sup>75</sup> – permit her to set her concept of freedom into an inviolable relationship with the political.<sup>76</sup> According to this constellation, the human being is not merely free but even human only to the extent that he relates to others and communicates with them. Thus, only the political human being is human. Communication assumes many – and many different, heterogeneous – participants in conversation. In coming to understand the world together, they prevent the loss of both their world and themselves.<sup>77</sup> Accordingly, Arendt sees the most astounding perversion of Marxism to lie in the socialist attempt to abolish the human's alienation from himself and his work. This attempt is thought to mark a complete loss of the world.<sup>78</sup> Loss of the world always signifies an abolition of alienation through the annihilation of the human being who alienates himself – it is the 'becoming superfluous of the human being'.<sup>79</sup>

Thus does Arendt's demanding concept of the 'political essence' of the human being locate the freedom concept largely within the political freedoms of action and communication.<sup>80</sup> On the one hand, Arendt ties her concept of the human being (and hence, of the right-bearing capacity) to the capacity of political acting and communicating. And on the other, with its complete withdrawal of rationality and natural causality ('unpredictability of human action'<sup>81</sup>), her concept of political acting in freedom makes

political action indifferent as regards the distinction between good and evil – to the extent, that is, that free political action is not restricted by the communicative capacities of promising and forgiveness.<sup>82</sup>

Undoubtedly, then, Arendt's concept of freedom<sup>83</sup> is taken one-sidedly from the perspective of the constitution of the political. The tendency to a totalitarian removal of limits and the resulting loss of the world that might result, however, is always restricted to the spiritual limit imposed by the fact of human natality. As the *conditio humana*, this natality – and not the restrictive present ability to communicate – is the prerequisite of one's bearing the 'right to have rights'.<sup>84</sup> With the new beginning of each life, moreover, the communicative bridges into the political – forgiveness as action with regard to the past and promising as acting with regard to the future of the world – are also born. Arendt's anthropological conception of the political is completed solely with this decisive event of emerging into the world, an event that constitutes the political sphere by erecting both the spaces and the bridges between individual and other in the first place.<sup>85</sup>

This conception also reflects Arendt's results concerning the modern human being. As the metaphor of the 'desert' that annihilates the human being expresses, the possibility of an elimination of spaces – hence, the possibility of the totalitarian – remains one of the structural possibilities available to modern societies.<sup>86</sup> In her attempt to counter the escalation of privatisation brought on by totalitarianism (a phenomenon for which she rejects the classical concepts of 'tyranny' and 'despotism' as political concepts that are unsuitable for explaining total depoliticisation<sup>87</sup>), Hannah Arendt seeks to reconnect the Enlightenment tradition to Aristotelian and Roman political philosophy. The norm setting inherent limitations upon the political as she conceives it is strictly the mutual binding of the freedom gained through natality and the freedom of the political.<sup>88</sup>

Like Leo Strauss, Arendt also regards classical philosophy as an aid to understanding totalitarian phenomena on the one hand and as a resource by which to conceive the political anew on the other after the catastrophe of totalitarianism.<sup>89</sup> Both thinkers maintain that a philosophical knowledge of the essence of the totalitarian phenomenon is both its active remedy and its antidote.<sup>90</sup> Both, further, have a very elitist understanding<sup>91</sup> of the bearers and communicators of this knowledge. Arendt conceives only those who communicate insights in a politically active way – those, in other words, who inspire the many to encircle the truth as the precondition to constituting the political – to be genuinely of age politically. For her, the philosopher is always a direct political actor.<sup>92</sup> For his part, Leo Strauss also attributes the philosopher with political significance – but this is precisely because, by retreating into thought, he always places a question mark on the dogmatically laden political sphere. For Leo Strauss, the philosopher is never a ruler or political actor, but always only one point in the tension between the necessity to positivise truth on the one hand, and to formulate the question concerning truth ever afresh. With Arendt, the

political human being must be able to do both. With Strauss, there is a division of labour.

Another point of contact is their shared view that the Jewish people is a paradigm of the Other.<sup>93</sup> The possibility of that people's existence marks the sign of a successful political order – an order that corresponds to the *conditio humana* both of one among equals and of strangers among strangers. In the negation of the possibility of the existence of the Jewish people, both Strauss and Arendt see the negation of human nature itself. What is irreconcilable in their approaches is the logical conclusion each draws for political philosophy: drawing upon Plato, Strauss seeks to regain the place of pure thought through the capacity of esoteric teaching (at least in dark times). He thereby excludes the ignorant from his philosophy from the beginning. Arendt, by contrast, requires the political commitment of thinking human beings, an unrestrained public communication of truth as the sole weapon against the withdrawal into the private – a withdrawal she consistently stigmatises as the sabotage of democracy.

Political religions play no role in the interpretation of totalitarian phenomenon for either Hannah Arendt or Leo Strauss. Strauss, certainly, concedes that '*Quid sit deus?*' has always been one of the guiding questions of his philosophizing. It is the holding open of this question, however, that he regards as the basic anthropological situation of the human being and thereby the basic assumption of a successful political life. In this sense, then, the two are similar: neither Arendt's concept of the political and theory of totalitarianism nor Strauss' reconstruction of the classical concept of tyranny can be expressly linked to a heuristic approach that regards religion as a structural characteristic of totalitarian rule.<sup>94</sup> That said, we must stress that their philosophical anthropologies and interpretations of totalitarian phenomena indeed offer a possibility of rooting the category of religion in human intellectual history.<sup>95</sup> Their approaches, specifically, illuminate that site in the human being – specifically, the status of the human being in his *conditio humana* – where the element of political religion might enter in.<sup>96</sup>

## Notes

- 1 Hella Mandt works out the difference among political scientists in their attitude to the phenomenon as they have developed theories and doctrines. See Hella Mandt [Mandt], *Tyrannislehre und Widerstandsrecht. Studien zur deutschen politischen Theorie des 19. Jahrhunderts* (Darmstadt/Neuwied, 1974), 5f., 8–11.
- 2 Leo Strauss [*Hieron*], *Über Tyrannis. Eine Interpretation von Xenophons 'Hieron' mit einem Essay über Tyrannis und Weisheit von Alexandre Kojève* (Darmstadt/Neuwied, 1963). Leo Strauss [*On Tyranny*], *On Tyranny. Including the Strauss-Kojève Correspondence*, Victor Gourevitch and Michael S. Roth (eds), 3rd edn (Chicago/London: University of Chicago Press, 2000). On the relationship of philosophy, philosopher and society, see especially Leo Strauss, *Persecution and the Art of Writing* (Chicago/London: University of Chicago Press, 1988), 22–37.
- 3 Reconstructed in minute detail in Heinrich Meier [*Die Denkbewegung von Leo Strauss*], *Die Denkbewegung von Leo Strauss. Die Geschichte der Philosophie und die Intention des Philosophen* (Stuttgart/Weimar, 1996), particularly 29–31.

- 4 *Hieron*, 34.
- 5 Mandt, 301ff.
- 6 Another view: Strauss' application of the classics is said to be far removed from the desiderata of contemporary analysis. See, for example, Alfons Söllner [Söllner], 'Leo Strauss', Karl Graf Ballestrem and Henning Ottmann (eds), *Politische Philosophie des 20. Jahrhunderts* (Munich, 1990), 105–21. See here 110.
- 7 'Introduction'. *On Tyranny*, xxii.
- 8 *Hieron*, 33.
- 9 *Hieron*, 33.
- 10 'Introduction', *On Tyranny*, xxi.
- 11 *Hieron*, 39.
- 12 Catherine H. Zuckert [Zuckert], *Postmodern Platos: Nietzsche, Heidegger, Gadamer, Strauss, Derrida* (Chicago/London: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 132.
- 13 *Hieron*, 98.
- 14 A new way of dealing with the contingency of human nature led to a change of function of political philosophy in modernity. Whereas earlier, it had been oriented towards the past, it is now oriented towards the formation of the future. See here Söllner, 111, and Leo Strauss, *Hobbes' politische Wissenschaft* (Neuwied/Berlin, 1965), 16ff., 106–8.
- 15 Thomas L. Pangle, 'On the Epistolary Dialogue Between Leo Strauss and Eric Voegelin', Kenneth L. Deutsch and Walter Nicgorski (eds), *Leo Strauss: Political Philosopher and Jewish Thinker* (London/Lanham MD: Rowman & Littlefield 1994), 231–56, 248.
- 16 *Hieron*, 216.
- 17 *Hieron*, 38.
- 18 *Hieron*, 215.
- 19 *Hieron*, 98.
- 20 *Hieron*, 219.
- 21 *Hieron*, 218.
- 22 *Hieron*, 230.
- 23 *Hieron*, 214.
- 24 *Hieron*, 214.
- 25 *Hieron*, 233.
- 26 *Hieron*, 233.
- 27 *Hieron*, 233. 'Depoliticisation' as a tendency of modernity, which denies the fundamental character of the political, offers a point of contact with Hannah Arendt's political philosophy. On Leo Strauss, see Clemens Kaufmann [Kaufmann], *Leo Strauss zur Einführung* (Hamburg, 1997), 87–89. See also Heinrich Meier [Meier], *Carl Schmitt, Leo Strauss und 'Der Begriff des Politischen'. Zu einem Dialog unter Abwesenden* (Stuttgart, 1998), 29ff.
- 28 *Hieron*, 236.
- 29 See Leo Strauss, *Naturrecht und Geschichte* (Stuttgart, 1953), 12–15. His analysis of Heidegger can be traced in Zuckert, 130–32 and Kaufmann, 64–73.
- 30 *Hieron*, 236.
- 31 Here Strauss proves himself to be a decided adherent of Kant.
- 32 *Hieron*, 236.
- 33 *On Tyranny*, 212.
- 34 *On Tyranny*, 212.
- 35 Meier, 95ff.
- 36 *On Tyranny*, 212.
- 37 In this entirely general sense, anthropology is understood here as any human speech. That Hannah Arendt can have no theory of an unchangeable nature of

the human being was established through her dispute with Eric Voegelin on the subject.

- 38 On the failure of the classical concepts of tyranny, dictatorship and despotism to understand the new phenomenon, see Hannah Arendt [EU], *Elemente und Ursprünge totaler Herrschaft*, 7th edn (Munich, 2000), 944–79.
- 39 Construing the connections as ‘crystallisation points’ demonstrates both the disparity and the connection of the elements and origins of the phenomenon of totalitarianism. At the same time, however, it prohibits a fatal causality. Compare here Arendt, ‘Eine Antwort’, Hannah Arendt [*Über Totalitarismus* (1988)], *Über den Totalitarismus. Texte Hannah Arendts aus den Jahren 1951 und 1953*, translated from the English by Ursula Ludz (Dresden, 1998). The controversy with Eric Voegelin on the mutability of human nature can be found here as well (43–44). This question is worked out further in Ingeborg Nordmann’s commentary [Nordmann (1998)], ‘How to Write about Totalitarianism?’, in Hannah Arendt, *Über den Totalitarismus. Texte Hannah Arendts aus den Jahren 1951 und 1953*, translated from the English by Ursula Ludz (Dresden, 1998), 53–68, 59. See here also Ingeborg Nordmann [Nordmann (1994)], *Hannah Arendt* (Frankfurt/New York, 52).
- 40 Hannah Arendt, *Das Urteilen. Texte zu Kants politischer Philosophie* (Munich, 1985).
- 41 Nordmann (1994), 59–60. Also Ronald Beiner [Beiner (1982)], Hannah Arendt über das Urteilen’, Hannah Arendt, *Das Urteilen. Texte zu Kants Politischer Philosophie* (Munich, 1985), 115–98, 125.
- 42 Compare Ernst Vollrath [Vollrath (1990)], ‘Hannah Arendt’, Karl Graf Balles-trem and Henning Ottman (eds), *Politische Philosophie des 20. Jahrhunderts* (Munich/Vienna, 1990), 21ff.
- 43 For a brief, almost abbreviated account of the individual steps taken, see Achim Wagenknecht [Wagenknecht (1995)], *Einführung in die politische Philosophie Hannah Arendts* (Marburg, 1995), 15ff.
- 44 EU, 20ff. On anti-semitism as a phenomenon of decadence in the transition of the nation-state to imperialism, see EU, 43.
- 45 EU, 405ff., on this see also Siegbert Wolf [Wolf (1991)], *Hannah Arendt. Einführungen in ihr Werk* (Frankfurt, 1991), 47.
- 46 EU, 483; Wolf (1991), 47.
- 47 First, this means the human being as administrative mass. See EU, 405, 515.
- 48 Hannah Arendt, ‘Die menschliche Natur steht auf dem Spiel’, from the ‘Foreword’ and ‘Concluding Remarks’ of the first edition of *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (1951), in *Über Totalitarismus* (1998), 13.
- 49 EU, 699; Arendt, ‘Die menschliche Natur steht auf dem Spiel’, op. cit., 17; Nordmann (1994), 60.
- 50 On Arendt’s distinction of rule and political action, see the explanation of Hauke Brunkhorst [Brunkhorst (1999)], *Hannah Arendt* (Munich, 1999), 107ff.
- 51 EU, 731.
- 52 EU, 663.
- 53 As has already been noted, construing the connections as ‘crystallisation points’ enables Arendt to make the transition to a conceptual analysis. See here Arendt in her answer to Eric Voegelin, who does not see the nature of the human being to have been abolished, but develops a causal connection between the loss of transcendence and totalitarianism with his concept of gnosis. See here the confrontation between Arendt and Voegelin concerning human nature that was occasioned by *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (*Über Totalitarismus* (1998), 33–52).
- 54 This switch in the manner of proceeding – from indicating historical indices to an analysis and outline of political concepts – is located in chapter 9 (EU, 559ff.) of *Elemente und Ursprünge*. Compare Brunkhorst (1999), 90.

- 55 Nordmann provides a detailed investigation of Arendt's dismissive attitude concerning human rights. See here Nordmann (1994), 63ff.
- 56 The distinction of state as political sphere and nation(ality) as social sphere can also be found in a letter to Karl Jaspers of 3 June 1947. Letter 59 in Hannah Arendt [Briefwechsel], *Hannah Arendt/Karl Jaspers – Briefwechsel 1926–1969* (Munich, 1985), 127–28.
- 57 See here Breier (1992), 129.
- 58 Arendt's proximity to the Frankfurt School and familiarity with the *Dialektik der Aufklärung* has been treated in detail by Seyla Benhabib, *The Reluctant Modernism of Hannah Arendt* (Thousand Oaks CA, 1996).
- 59 Brunkhorst (1999), 56.
- 60 EU, 529ff., 540ff., 676.
- 61 Arendt, 'Die Natur des Menschen steht auf dem Spiel', *Über Totalitarismus* (1998), 21–23.
- 62 Hannah Arendt, *Vita Activa oder Vom tätigen Leben*, 2nd edn (Munich, 1981).
- 63 Hannah Arendt, [EiJ], *Eichmann in Jerusalem. Ein Bericht von der Banalität des Bösen* (Hamburg, 1964), 84. *Denktagebuch* VIII, Library of Congress, Washington DC – cited in Nordmann (1994), 88. On the destructive metaphor, compare Nordmann's explications in Nordmann (1994), 84. The *Denktagebücher* edited by U. Ludz and I. Nordmann first appeared in the autumn of 2002 and were not yet present in printed form as this article was being written.
- 64 Brunkhorst (1999), 109.
- 65 S. Nordmann (1998), 55, states that she is unable to find Arendt's continuity hypothesis on Stalinism in Arendt's work.
- 66 Society, nation, state. See EU, 559ff.
- 67 Hannah Arendt, 'Die Krise in der Erziehung', *Der Monat* 11, no. 124 (1958/59), 48ff. Religion and nature – the standards by which to define the nature of the human being – have lost their authority. EU, 660.
- 68 This can also be construed as a connection between individual and plurality. Nordmann's portrayal is illuminating here (1998), 63.
- 69 EU, 979.
- 70 Kurt Sontheimer [Sontheimer (1993)], foreword to Hannah Arendt, *Was ist Politik?* Ursula Ludz (ed.) (Munich, 1993), iii.
- 71 On the discovery of the forgotten political sphere, see Nordmann (1994), 94ff. See also Nordmann (1998), 56. The aim is to bring the experiences of classical political philosophy back into conversation with the experiences of the modern.
- 72 She shares this is opinion with Edmund Burke; EU, 607. See also Brunkhorst (1999), 93ff.
- 73 Arendt, 'Die Natur des Menschen steht auf dem Spiel', *Über Totalitarismus* (1998), 27–28.
- 74 Breier (1992), 109ff.
- 75 EU, 606.
- 76 Hannah Arendt [Arendt, *Was ist Politik?* (1993)] in Ursula Ludz (ed.), *Was ist Politik?* (Munich, 1993), 36.
- 77 This necessarily develops a normative dimension; EU, 608: the human being is not *permitted* to be excluded from the sphere of the political, the realm of communication.
- 78 EU, 699.
- 79 EU, 612, 809–13, 819, 749ff.
- 80 *Vita activa*, 166. See also Brunkhorst (1999), 119.
- 81 Hannah Arendt, *Von der Menschlichkeit in finsternen Zeiten. Rede über Lessing* (Munich, 1960), 74.
- 82 *Vita activa*, 231, 240. Compare Breier (1992), 102, 134.
- 83 Sontheimer (1993), ii.

- 84 Nordmann (1994), 49.
- 85 The political is located, not within the human being – here Arendt is distinct from Aristotle – but between human beings. As a between, it is the *conditio sine qua non* of individual human being in the world. See Arendt, *Was ist Politik?* (1993), 11.
- 86 Thus also Sontheimer (1993), iv, and Brunkhorst (1999), 83.
- 87 Arendt, *Was ist Politik?* (1993), 15, EU, 944ff.
- 88 See Arendt, *Was ist Politik?* (1993), 50–51. Nordmann (1998) also regards this as an inherent limitation, 64.
- 89 On Arendt's positive references to Plato and Aristotle in the *Denktagebüchern*, see Nordmann (1994), 123. Compare *Denktagebuch*, DT XVIII 21, cited in *ibid.*
- 90 Arendt, *Was ist Politik?* (1993), 52.
- 91 With reference to Arendt, see Nordmann (1994), 76.
- 92 Arendt, *Was ist Politik?* (1993), 9.
- 93 This is by no means to be understood as a Zionistic position. Both Strauss and Arendt were (increasingly) critical of Zionism. What is entailed here is existing as a Jew within a state and its society. Compare here Iris Pilling [Pilling (1936)], *Denken und Handeln als Jüdin. Hannah Arendts politische Theorie vor 1950* (Frankfurt, 1996), 53ff. Also Alte Synagoge (ed.), *Hannah Arendt: 'Lebensgeschichte einer deutschen Jüdin ...'* (Essen, 1995); Edna Brocke, "'Treue als Zeichen der Wahrheit', – Hannah Arendts Weg als Jüdin gezeichnet nach Selbstzeugnissen", 43–66. See also Hannah Arendt, *Rahel Varnhagen. Lebensgeschichte einer deutschen Jüdin aus der Romantik* (Munich, 1975). See also Arendt's letters to Karl Jaspers: letter 61 of 4 September 1947 [Briefwechsel], 134; letter 160 of 6 October 1954 [Briefwechsel], 284–85. Leo Strauss, 'Why Do We Remain Jews?', *Jewish Philosophy and the Crisis of Modernity* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1997), 311–58.
- 94 See here again the discussion of Arendt and Voegelin on human nature: whereas Arendt concedes that totalitarianism can indeed be understood as a destruction of the transcendent (as summarised in his gnosis concept), human nature is destroyed through the realisation that one has been rendered superfluous, through one's total loss of the world. Voegelin, by contrast, insists upon the constancy of human nature and sees the decisive factor to have been the progressive destruction of transcendence. See *Über Totalitarismus* (1998), 33–52. Also Nordmann (1994), 66–67.
- 95 The retreat from the political human being to the atomised human being (from the people to the person) then becomes the prerequisite for the abolition of the human being. Similarly, the theologico-philosophical nature of the human being is the prerequisite for the political. At the same time, however, it is always the structural prerequisite of a possible abolition of the political and thus of the human being. See Arendt, *Was ist Politik?* (1993), 11; Gess, Brigitte, 'Die Totalitarismuskonzeption von Raymond Aron und Hannah Arendt', Hans Maier (ed.), *Totalitarismus und Politische Religionen. Konzepte des Diktaturvergleichs* (Paderborn, 1996), 264–74, 269.
- 96 If it is sketched – as with Arendt (Gess (1996)) – as an attempt to develop an integrative theory of totalitarianism.

## **Part IV**

# **On the concept and theory of political religions**





## 8 Political religion – state religion – civil religion – political theology

### Distinguishing four key terms

*Hans Maier*

In the contemporary debate surrounding religion and the public sphere, the concepts of political religion, state religion and civil religion are often confused. So that their origins and historical background might be clearly distinguished, the qualities and differences among these terms will briefly be sketched in the following.

A. By political religion, we mean a kind of religion that is rooted in a political community – to the extent that it could not exist without this political foundation. The best known model is the city and state cult as it developed in the Greek polis and republican and imperial Rome. All examples taken from the ancient world and the elementary forms of religious life as practised in simple societies are characterised by a greater or lesser proximity to political structures. Under such circumstances, religion is an abbreviation of the society – the ‘concentrated expression of the entire collective life’ (Emile Durkheim).<sup>1</sup>

According to ancient thought, the cult of the gods is linked to the flourishing of the political community to the utmost degree. State and religion are thought to exist in an elementary symbiosis. This naive unity of cult and politics first becomes problematic in light of the philosophical question concerning religion. No longer contenting itself with the mere presence of the gods in the public cult, the philosophical question is aimed at the essence of the gods, their nature. Whereas the Platonic critique of the Homeric tales of the gods already anticipates the Greek ‘Enlightenment’, the tension only intensifies in the Christian era: the god beyond the world resists integration into the cult of the political community. From this point on, the city (state) is no longer simply the ‘church of its religion’.<sup>2</sup>

In the outsider’s perception of it by philosophy and theology, the ancient cultic-collective identity already becomes a ‘political religion’. Varro already distinguishes political (civil) from mythical and physical theology; for him, the former mediates between the religion of the people and the purified (‘atheistic’) religion of the philosophers.<sup>3</sup> Augustine recasts the ancient dilemma by placing himself on the side of the physical (philosophical) teaching about God, but melding it with elements of historically revealed faith. His argument: Christianity can conjoin what antiquity was incapable

of conjoining; in other words, it can answer the question as to the 'true religion' and provide a worship of God in the context of the community at the same time. Certainly, God is of a majesty that is beyond this world. Through the incarnation, however, his Son has entered into the cooperative of human flesh and 'founded a city'.<sup>4</sup> Admittedly, this community of humans who follow him transcends those of the peoples and nations. From the limited religion of the polis, therefore, there arises the universalism of a 'vera religio' that extends its reach into the whole world.

B. The privileging of Christianity by Constantine and Theodosius gives rise to the second type to be considered here: the state religion. This religion is characterised by the fundamental independence, even the supremacy of religion over the state. As the '*advocatus ecclesiae*', the 'prosecutor and worldly arm of the Church', the state now moves into a subservient role. The independence and supremacy of the Church develops over a long period of time; its historical stations are the Investiture Controversy, the increasing significance to Christianity of the office of the pope and of the general councils. A final station is the forming of the peoples and states by the Christian theory that binds them, its commandments and legal norms, the thinking and feeling that issues from them. Decisive is the acknowledgement of the Christian Church as a *societas perfecta* that stands equal to all states!<sup>5</sup> Fundamentally, the age of the Christian state religion lasts well into modernity. With the splintering of the faith, however, it slips into a crisis of identity: what is the future 'true religion?' The state religion, which had been the expression of a *christianitas* that transcends the nations, is particularised into national forms in the centuries that follow. The supremacy of the Church over the state weakens to the point where the system ultimately reverts into the opposite form: the superiority of the state over the Church.

C. The concept of civil religion is a modern product. It is no coincidence that the name refers to antiquity – to the unity of religion and politics that was lost as a result of the Christian revolution. This unity is now to be renewed through a '*minima religiosa*' (Eberhard Jüngel) that is prescribed as binding by the state. The civil religion is presented in the form of a confession that is to be made by all citizens. Rousseau, the earliest theoretician of civil religion, mentions two precursors in his sketch: in the religious sphere, Mohammed and the Islamic tradition, which knows nothing of the Christian differentiation of God and Caesar.<sup>6</sup> And in the earthly sphere, he mentions Thomas Hobbes, whom he credits as having been the first Christian author to have dared 'to reunify the two heads of the eagle' – to re-establish, in other words, the ancient political unity without which neither state nor religion can flourish in Rousseau's view.<sup>7</sup>

Rousseau's concept has been taken up again in the twentieth century, above all in the United States. Robert N. Bellah, for example, has referred to the religious dimension in the American political culture and bestowed on it the name, 'civil religion'.<sup>8</sup> Niklas Luhmann and Hermann Lübbe have developed similar concepts in Germany.<sup>9</sup>

As for the sphere of countries under the influence of Orthodox Christianity, one finds related approaches here too.<sup>10</sup> On the whole, the concept of civil religion is part of the history of the modern nation-state having a religious basis. It shifts between an ancient ‘political religion’ complete with cultic elements and universal bindingness (as Rousseau still had in mind as a model) and the idea of a symbolic sphere of ‘horizons of meaning’ and ‘ultimate justifications’ in which the action of democratic societies is said to occur. The relationship to Christianity in the ecclesiastical sense remains open. As ersatz religion, civil religion might replace Christian content, but it might equally content itself with borrowing its legitimacy from the Christian tradition and emerge without a cult or a duty to make any confession of faith. In each case, the Church – as the champion of the Gospel against the ambivalent phenomenon of the civil religion, is charged with the task of making the relevant distinctions.<sup>11</sup>

D. The concept of political theology (*theologia civilis*) arises from Graeco-Roman antiquity.<sup>12</sup> Understood in a Christian sense, it means the illicit ‘theologisation’ of existing forms of state and society, the religious transfiguration (or, as the Patristics would say, the idolisation) of these entities in the sense of an intermingling of the earthly and the divine, of the cult and politics. For the ancient human being, such intermingling seems entirely natural as a pattern of thought and perception. The ancient lives, after all, in a world for which state and gods belong together in a constitutive sense, one for which there neither is nor can be a godless state or stateless divinity. In the ancient conception, *polis* and *civitas* are religious concepts. Both have divine qualities. It is Christianity, with its world-transcendent concept of God, which first breaks through the connection of an immanence that is both theological and political. Accordingly, a critique of political theology first emerges during the Christian period.

Alongside the *civitas* to which even the Church itself belongs,<sup>13</sup> the Christian community now emerges as the saved People of God, the community that refuses to grant Caesar the cult of the gods and thereby provokes the crisis of ancient ‘theopolitical’ religiosity. In his *De Civitate Dei*, Augustine explained the psychological basic process of the immanentisation (of the divine) on the example of Varro’s *theologia civilis*.<sup>14</sup> According to him, this configuration of thought was inescapable for ancient religiosity, for which the gods were merely enlarged images of human beings; they enjoyed a world-immanent, not a transcendent being. At the same time, Augustine formulated the abiding reservation of the Christian concerning the theologisation of political institutions – concerning even the theologisation of the world in general. He asks his reader:

why do they [the pagans] want the earth to be a goddess? Because it is fruitful perhaps? But why then are human beings gods not instead, those who make the earth even more fruitful through agriculture – albeit by tending rather than worshipping it?<sup>15</sup>

This is why the history of political theology in the Christian era is at once at the history of its progressive destruction. The doctrine of divine kingship gave way to the dogma of the Trinity. Christian eschatology restricted any interpretation of the *pax Augustana* as an eternal peace.<sup>16</sup> The medieval Christian emperor lost his numinous quality during the Investiture Controversy. In modernity, the monarchic theology of history of Bossuet and its counterpart, the theological democratic theory of the constitutionalists during the French Revolution, were successively disenchanting.<sup>17</sup> Yet, here it becomes clear that the political possessed no theological rank during the Christian era, that it could not define and govern the meaning of human existence as it did in antiquity. The political, rather, was a part of the general secularisation of the world; as the non-absolute, next-to-ultimate, it gained the character of being a servant and instrument of the Christian. In this sense, John Locke was a good Christian when he defended the civil government against the traditional theocratic doctrine.<sup>18</sup> In this sense, a political theology *post Christum natum* is a problematic venture insofar as it runs the danger of reviving certain ancient positions that the Christian faith had dissolved. Taken at its word, political theology would lead to the enthronement of politics as the pre-eminent instance that defines the meaning of the human being. According to Augustine, however, the Christian should not 'worship' this world – not politically either – but should 'tend' it. In other words, he should know it and constructively develop it further.

## Notes

- 1 Emile Durkheim, *Les formes elementaires de la vie religieuse* (Paris, 1912); German edition, *Die elementaren Formen des religiösen Lebens* (Frankfurt, 1994), 561, 594ff.
- 2 'The ancient civitas is the church of their religion.' Joseph Ratzinger, *Volk und Haus Gottes in Augustins Lehre von der Kirche* (Munich, 1954), 273.
- 3 The Varronic theologies are preserved in Augustine, *De Civitate Dei*, VI, 5–12.
- 4 Ratzinger, *Volk und Haus Gottes*, op. cit., 275 with footnote 31.
- 5 Thus Alexander Hollerbach, 'Staatskirchen und Staatsreligionen', *Staatslexikon*, edited by the Görres-Gesellschaft, 7th edn, vol. 5, 182–86. Here, a distinction is rightly made between state religion and state Church.
- 6 The biblical injunction to give unto God what is God's and unto Caesar what is Caesar's!
- 7 Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Du contrat social, Oeuvres complètes*, part III (Pléiade) (Paris, 1964), ch. VIII, 460–69 (462ff.).
- 8 Robert N. Bellah, 'Civil Religion in America', *Daedalus* 96 (1997), 1ff.; see also Bellah, *The Broken Covenant: American Civil Religion in Time of Trial* (New York, 1975). See Wolfhart Pannenberg, 'Reich Gottes in Amerika', *Evangelische Kommentare* 10 (1997), 333ff.
- 9 Niklas Luhmann, 'Grundrechte als Zivilreligion. Zur wissenschaftlichen Karriere eines Themas', *Archivio di Filosofia*, no. 2/3 (1978), 51ff.; Hermann Lübbe, 'Staat und Zivilreligion. Ein Aspekt politische Legitimität', *Archiv für Rechts- und Sozialphilosophie*, special issue (1981), 15ff.
- 10 The concept of the 'civil society' that is often recommended to the Eastern states by the West has unmistakable civil religious implications.

- 11 Thus also Eberhard Jüngel in a lecture, 'Untergang oder Renaissance der Religion? Überlegung zu einer schiefen Alternative', at a congress entitled 'Was hält die moderne Gesellschaft zusammen?' held on 6–7 April 1995 in Karlsruhe.
- 12 Compare K. L. Schmidt, *Die Polis in Kirche und Welt* (Basel, 1939), 98ff. J. Ratzinger, *Volk und Haus Gottes in Augustins Lehre von der Kirche*, op. cit., 265ff. See also A. Ehrhardt, *Politische Metaphysik von Solon bis Augustin*, vol. I (Tübingen, 1959), 55ff.
- 13 Thus Ratzinger, op. cit., 273.
- 14 *De Civitate Dei*, VI, 2–7.
- 15 *De Civitate Dei*, VII, 23.
- 16 On this, see E. Peterson, *Theologische Traktate* (Munich, 1950), 104. Compare also Ehrhardt, op. cit., vol. II (Tübingen, 1959), 27.
- 17 H. Maier, *Revolution und Kirche*, 5th edn (Freiburg, 1988), with footnote 16, 120ff.
- 18 John Locke, *Two Treatises on Government*, 1690.

# 9 On the instrumentalisation of religion in modern systems of rule

*Karl-Josef Schipperges*

Modern society is secularised society. It is a society for which the entire atmosphere is formed steadily less by the sacred and steadily more by the profane. The disenchantment of the world as diagnosed by Max Weber extensively defines a society that is governed by Enlightenment and rationalism. The question of technical feasibility suppresses the metaphysical question of origin and meaning. Unavoidably, religion comes to collide with the demands and results of science. It moves into the margins of interest and loses its cultural plausibility.<sup>1</sup>

## **The religious legitimation of political rule**

Ever since the sovereignty of the ruler by God's grace was replaced by the sovereignty of the people, modernity has slipped into a crisis of legitimacy. The new political order that arose from the American and French revolutions has eliminated the old order legitimated by religion. This former order now must face the problem that it can raise no absolute claim to rule itself without falling back upon religious remnants. The new political rule must also be 'sanctioned by religion'.<sup>2</sup> The invocation of the will of the people is not a sufficient legitimation. The majority has nothing to say about the truth and legitimacy of the claim.

With that, religion retains a political dimension even in the secularised world, just as politics possesses a religious dimension. Religious elements serve to justify and sacralise the new revolutionary order. Religion is not simply repressed, but is partially supplanted by the secular powers of nation, state, class and race.

In the United States, national unity is mustered by invoking the religious roots of the country. In the great respect that is paid to the founders of that democracy, there emerges a citizens' ritual that takes on the features of a religion. The founding fathers are honoured in the cult of saints and heroes. They are venerated as the elect that were led by God from the slave house of Egypt, through the Red Sea and the desert, into the Promised Land. The Puritans, who called themselves Pilgrims, were convinced that they played an extraordinary role in God's plan.

In France, the first anniversary of the storming of the Bastille was celebrated on 14 July 1790 – the great federal festival celebrating fraternity and harmony that evinced all manifestations of the ‘new revolutionary religion’. An ‘Altar of the Fatherland’ was erected and the holy oath was delivered on it. Here, Tallyrand celebrated a ‘ceremony taken from the mass and benediction, one for which it was necessary to bind piety and patriotism in order to bind the faithful to the revolution’. In times of crisis, the necessity to continue the Revolution and fidelity to the ideal of the laicist republic was regularly sworn. The principles of equality and fraternity created a solidarity that was interpreted within the new, immanent *ecclesia* as a secularised Christian *caritas*. In 1989, the 200th anniversary of the Revolution was celebrated in the style of a religious ritual.

What arises here is a ‘citizens’ religion’, a *religion civique*, which should be carefully distinguished from the ‘civil religion’ as has been described by the likes of Robert Bellah. What is involved here is less the integration of religious elements into the lives of the citizens – by the detour of a moral code, for example – than an elevation of the life of the political citizen into the religious sphere and an endowment of that life with the dignity of the sacred. This distinction is already revealed in the choice of vocabulary. The citizen dedicates his life to the nation; he sacrifices it on the altar of the fatherland. After a great victory, the resurrection and rebirth of the nation is celebrated. In the United States – but elsewhere too – the state institutions, especially the constitution, are holy. Here, the various articles of the constitution are compared with the Mosaic Ten Commandments.<sup>3</sup>

### The anti-modernity of the ideologies

The ideologies of the twentieth century emerged with incomparably more self-confidence, which came complete with the soteriological claim to create a new order and interpret the world anew. Yet these, too, cannot dispense with quasi-religious legitimation and the instrumentalisation of religion for the sake of political goals. Here, too, religion emerges – despite all atheistic claims – in a secularised and perverted form.

The irrational also regains significance in the twentieth-century ideologies. Where clear logic fails, fanaticism becomes a possible alternative. Where truth is no longer seen to be communicated in rational discussion, the ideologies offer absolute certainty – for ideological truth knows no plurality of truths. In the search for certainty and protection, Communism and National Socialism stand at the ready and offer answers to the ‘nostalgia for a blessed world of order, meaning and solidarity’.<sup>4</sup> Secularisation, relativism and pluralism are modern creations. The ideologies of the twentieth century, by contrast, are anti-modern at base.

This anti-modernity first reveals itself in the reunification of religion and politics. The unity of religion and politics, a matter of course in antiquity, was already loosened through Christianity in that the Church, as the *societas*



*perfecta*, established itself as an independent institution alongside the state. Yet the distinction of Church and state was not yet a separation of Church and state. It was certainly not a separation of religion and politics. First taken by Machiavelli, this step of separation has shaped the history of European modernity ever since. Yet, in the twentieth century, religion – which had steadily lost influence during the course of secularisation – reappears as a political factor. In political theory, for example, it reappears in the form of the political theology of Carl Schmitt. In practice, it appears in the ideologies – creeds for which Eric Voegelin and Raymond Aron had already coined the concept of political religions in the 1930s.<sup>5</sup> Religion, once an *instrumentum regni*, has again become an *instrumentum politicum*.

The anti-modernity of the modern ideologies reveals itself, therefore, in their opposition to the Enlightenment and rationalism and their seeking to create a new, irrational order. Interested neither in reality nor in truth, nor in the neutrality of science, they involve a dogmatism and fundamentalism that proclaims a new orthodoxy. If the rational critique of the Enlightenment had shaken firm convictions based in faith, the modern ideologies have yielded ‘new ideological dependencies’ and thereby represent ‘counter-Enlightenment’.<sup>6</sup> Enlightenment, after all, means to nourish oneself on the truth through rational discussion and argumentation and therefore to shake untenable, overly perfect images of the world and dogmatic truths.

The twentieth-century ideologies are anti-modern, finally, insofar as their critique of civilisation generates an ennui concerning civilisation and an uneasiness concerning modernity. The difference is merely that National Socialism finds sense and security in the past in its search for the perfect world, whereas Communism projects its perfected world ‘into the future’.<sup>7</sup>

National Socialism fights liberalism, socialism, democracy and the French Revolution. It thereby rejects the specific developments of modernity *in toto*. Its nationalism harkens back to the time that preceded the Enlightenment, to the era of ‘patriarchic-authoritarian’ society. In reaching back to the past of a golden age, National Socialism revives old Germanic legends and myths.<sup>8</sup>

Whereas National Socialism reverts to the past in order to overcome an evil present, Communism seeks salvation in the future, when the earthly paradise will arise with the creation of the new *homo sovieticus*. To Raymond Aron, Communism is ‘opium for intellectuals’, a ‘chimera’ and ‘romantic illusion’.<sup>9</sup> Reality is governed here by the imaginary. Politics is no longer the art of the possible, but a ‘grasping for the impossible’.<sup>10</sup>

Eric Voegelin has pointed out that modern ideologies are ‘related, in terms of their structure, to the gnosis of antiquity’. The earthly paradise forecasted by them appears as an ‘immanentisation of the Christian eschaton’. ‘In gnosticism, the non-recognition of reality is a matter of principle’. The real world is replaced by a ‘transfigured dream world’.<sup>11</sup>

The success of the modern ideologies in their struggle against the Enlightenment and rationalism proves that modernism and progress have

been exhausted.<sup>12</sup> Since the Romantic period, a 're-enchantment of the world' has arisen to combat a secularism and disenchantment to which the modern ideologies also succumb. The modern ideologies attempt to 'immunise themselves against the doubt of modern unbelief', against the 'bacillus of relativism', and 'to legitimate the new faith-certainties ... also scientifically'.<sup>13</sup>

### **The new dogmatism**

In doing so, however, the modern ideologies slip into the realm of the sacred and assume pseudo-religious characteristics. Nation, race and class are elevated to the rank of 'intermediate transcendences'.<sup>14</sup> National Socialism and Communism absorb 'religious feelings, patterns of thinking and organisational forms' and thereby also assume 'the task of the ultimate justification'.<sup>15</sup> This is why we would also be justified in speaking of a 'dogmatic ideology' and 'period of ideological dogmatomachy'.<sup>16</sup> The image of the world a given ideology presents is the solely valid one. It offers firm knowledge that rises above all doubts. It possesses both the truth and the path that leads to the truth. Freedom of discussion is inadmissible, of course, as are hypotheses that might lead to other insights.

This dogmatic certainty also pertains to the course of history. History is claimed to proceed according to laws that are susceptible to scientific proof – all this under the influence of Hegel. The idea of the class struggle is 'difficult to dispute' hereby, even if it must also be emphasised that the class struggle has not determined the path of history exclusively. The idea of race, by contrast, remains 'without clarificatory validity'<sup>17</sup> and can be supported by no historical evidence. For both ideologies, however, the dogmatic claim to know the course of history and the path to the future remains.

The ideologies' dogmatic certainty and their firm orientation create the right to enlist the entire human being to their goals and purposes – a right that means, in turn, that the distinction of private and public is abolished. The entire human being, all his thoughts and deeds, are enlisted and controlled by the ideology. Wherever 'eternal truths' are proclaimed, there can be neither discussion nor compromise, but solely the right 'to suppress every other opinion'.<sup>18</sup>

The result is a cultural uniformity guaranteed by dogmas. Individualism and pluralism, relativism and rationalism are said to lead to the fissured world of social coldness and doubt. With their dogmatically secure order and firm orientation, by contrast, the ideologies of twentieth-century humans offer what they are lacking so much at the end of the Enlightenment and the belief in progress. The new orthodoxies provide protection and security, claiming to deliver 'what religion formerly delivered'. They are capable of 'creating meaning and thus of stabilising the existences of groups and individuals'.<sup>19</sup> In their elevation of nation, race and class to the rank of the sacral, modern ideologies create an 'inner-worldly religiosity'<sup>20</sup> – even if

the idea of the thousand-year kingdom and the earthly paradise represents a 'perverted form of the Biblical motif' and a 'diabolical attempt to transform the idea of the kingdom of God into politics'.<sup>21</sup>

### **Race theory and anti-Semitism**

With its 'divinisation of the master race' and its claim 'to replace Israel as the true people of the God of history', National Socialist race theory absorbs elements that are manifestly pseudo-religious.<sup>22</sup> Members of the Aryan race are the true people of God and because two elected peoples cannot exist alongside one another; Judaism must be annihilated. The Jew is a being that is foreign to the natural order. The Aryan is as far removed from the Jew as the human being is removed from the animal. The German race has been elected in order to purify the German earth, just as Israel once took possession of the land of Canaan in order to liberate it from foreign gods.<sup>23</sup>

With that, salvation history is written anew. Jewish messianism is now 'directly taken over by a different people and turned against the Jews'. This is 'National Socialist messianism'. Just as Biblical messianism expects the kingly figure that will bring perpetual peace with a new covenant, Hitler sees himself as an 'instrument of God's providence',<sup>24</sup> one that brings ultimate salvation by violently drawing the Kingdom of God to earth. The 'Führer' is the new 'messianic emperor', the '*Augustus redivivus*'<sup>25</sup> enjoying a status that is quasi-divine.

### **The Germanic race**

These ideas are embedded in and underpinned by a new, pagan-national religion that picks up on certain Scandinavian traditions, although its roots lie in Romanticism.

In the years around 1900, old Germanic myths and heroic sagas are rediscovered. The *Edda* is touted as the 'religious book of the Germans' and a 'foundational holy writ'. The conservative revolutionary, Paul de Lagarde, points in the same direction with his *Deutschen Schriften* (), which demand a new national religion of Germanic provenance. By the end of the century, this same demand gives rise to an 'explosive cocktail composed of nationalism, populist ideology, racism, anti-Semitism, hostility towards Christianity and a critique of civilisation'. Wagner's Siegfried becomes a 'saviour' and 'shining figure' descended from the gods and is already likened to the 'German' or 'Aryan' Christ that defines 'national-religious thought'. Houston Stewart Chamberlain, whose *Grundlagen des 19. Jahrhunderts* of 1899 links 'Germanomania to race ideology', is lastingly influenced by this.<sup>26</sup>

From the Old Germanic tradition, therefore, a neo-pagan national religion is constructed. The hope for the foundation of an elected people is connected with the idea of 'rebirth'. Social Darwinists contribute to these

the hopes for a 'regeneration of the body of the people, which has been weakened in modernity'. 'The citizens of the coming "new" or even "Third" Reich should have only one confession: the "confession of their own kind" or even the faith in the race.' Although it is true that Joachim of Fiore spoke of a Third Reich of the Holy Spirit, what is sought here is an act of 'self-salvation'. Christ is now no longer the Son of God, but becomes an 'Aryan light figure' that is 'interchangeable with Baldur or Siegfried, Arminius or Wittekind'. The result is then a religion of 'self-divinisation through self-salvation'. In the end, the light-bringer and saviour of the German people is no longer called Baldur or Siegfried, but Hitler.<sup>27</sup> The Führer is not only the representative of the people, but also the incarnation of the national spirit. Führer and people are 'bound together in the sacral substance' of the people's community, the new *ecclesia*, the 'corpus mysticum'. The absorption of the individual into the community becomes a 'religious experience'.<sup>28</sup> In the SS, the *Ahnenerbe* and the work of Alfred Rosenberg, these ideas live on.

### The new festal calendar

It was also Rosenberg who strove for the 'establishment of an anti-Church calendar of holidays and festivals'.<sup>29</sup> He brought elements that were expressly religious into play. Such attempts were present from the beginning: the 9th of November 1923 had become a National Socialist 'Good Friday of the movement' through which the 'Easter light of the coming resurrection' already shimmered. This 9th of November was celebrated every year as a National Socialist 'All Saints and All Souls Day'. Alongside the 9th of November, the 1st of May became the 'National Socialist Easter Festival' that was supposed to recall the 'resurrection of the German people from its inner foment and fragmentation'.

The most important occasion for religious-like celebrations was the Reich Party Convention in Nuremberg, which became a 'liturgical festival' characterised by a ritual that was manifestly religious. Here, a 'faithful people' assembled for a 'service of worship in the dome of the German landscape'. Hitler spoke to his party as a priest speaks to his mother, the Church. Hans Frank called this day 'his [Hitler's] wedding day with the German people'. On this day, Hitler consecrated the new flags of the SA and the SS by touching them with the 'Blood Flag' that had been saturated with the blood of the 'martyrs' of 9 November 1923.<sup>30</sup>

The annual Reich Party Convention in Nuremberg was touted as the 'pilgrimage of the nation'. Accordingly, the convention grounds became the 'place of pilgrimage and temple-city of the movement', the 'holy place of the nation'. The architecture acquired a religious-like character as well. The *Luitpoldhain*, for example, is an arena that recalls 'an apsis', of the 'choir of a Christian Church'. The later *Zeppelinfeld*, by contrast, moves clearly away from Christian models and is modelled on ancient temple

architecture. 'The main part of the tribune building draws on the conception of the Greek temple in Didyma in Asia Minor'. The door in the temple's centre is the 'apparition door', the 'site of the epiphany of the god or proclamation of the oracle by the priests/prophets'. Hitler's 'orator pulpit' is located 'directly in the axis' of the 'apparition door'. Hitler speaks as a priest of the god here, the interpreter of oracles and proclaimer of the truth.<sup>31</sup>

Last but not least, there were many more sacral acts still that served to separate the regime from ordinary life and lend it dignity and lustre. As is known, Himmler organised his SS according to the model of the Jesuit order. Political engagement assumed the religious forms of cultivation, obedience, devotion and asceticism. The *Winterhilfswerk* was conceived as a new version of *caritas*. The awarding of orders and badges of honour, the ceremonial flag-raising, flag-consecrations and similar rituals were executed as liturgical acts.<sup>32</sup>

From the distant vantage point of today, we are of course tempted to dismiss these pseudo-religious rituals as boundless exaggerations and intolerable blasphemy. Yet the question remains: why did those in power place such a high value on these symbols and actions at the time? Apparently, sacrality should not be separated from rule in the secularised world either. An anti-Christian political system cannot exist without pseudo-religious supports and ties any more than a Christian one can.

### **The new Messiah and the new *ecclesia***

For National Socialism, the German nation is the elect. For Communism, the international proletariat is the new Israel, the messianic class, the mediator and saviour of humanity. Because the proletariat stands outside the society, it bears the essential prerequisite for the creation of a classless society. The exploited and dispossessed are not burdened with the original sin of exploitation; hence, only they can save humanity. The proletariat will bring about a new Reich and a messianic period of peace and justice in which the wolf lies beside the lamb. The suffering servant of Isaiah, the saviour of the world, must be crucified in order to save the world.<sup>33</sup>

This is Pelagianism and gnosis at once. The human being is regarded as self-sufficient and capable of saving himself. The Christian belief that Christ returns to create a new heaven and a new earth at the end of time is already transformed into a secular end-time in the Enlightenment. In the place of a transcendent expectation of salvation moves the immanent certainty of the fulfilment of world history. The modern belief in progress is a secularised Christian faith. 'Christian in terms of origins', it is 'anti-Christian in terms of orientation'.<sup>34</sup> Salvation does not come from above and in a distant future, but is generated by the human being in the here and now. Rationalism and Enlightenment, science and technology create a new self-consciousness, transform the human being into a demiurge who can form the world

according to his will. Ultimately, Communism will create the new human being, the *homo sovieticus* that will realise the Biblical prophecy. It is he who will bring the Good News to the poor. As with Christianity, the message of Communism is a universal message directed at Jews and Greeks, freemen and slaves. National boundaries fall. The new messianic kingdom destroys egoism and brings peace and justice for everyone. In the earthly paradise, the commandment of brotherly love is realised once and for all because everyone is equal and there will be neither envy nor a thirst for power. This is a great temptation for Christians too. Historically, Christians have felt themselves drawn by Communist ideas because they sensed an inner affinity with them.<sup>35</sup>

The actual saviour, however, is not the proletariat, but the party, the avant-garde of the proletariat, the true *ecclesia* and community of the faithful. It is the party that gives ultimate answers and offers its adherents a spiritual orientation. Official party opinion is regarded as truth itself. A lapse from the community of the faithful – and hence, from the truth – signifies treason.<sup>36</sup>

This self-certainty is deeply anchored in the Russian revolutionary tradition. In 1871, Nechaev had already published his *Revolutionary Catechism*, which demanded the total reorientation, the ‘metanoia’ of the revolutionary. Like a member of a Christian order, the revolutionary was to leave their father and mother and was to break radically with a world that is evil to its core. That the revolutionary leaders possess the absolute truth is guaranteed by scientific research. Whoever does not acknowledge this truth is said to be either stupid or evil – at very least, he is a pest and must be eliminated for this reason.<sup>37</sup> In possession of the absolute truth, the party becomes a ‘metaphysical quantity’, the ‘bearer of the charisma’.<sup>38</sup>

The leader of the party – above all, Stalin – is the embodiment of this charisma. Because he is a ‘supernatural being’, ‘elected to the fulfilment of a special historical mission’, he possesses a ‘supernatural power’. This ‘Elected One’ is the ‘source of both truth and right’. ‘Love and veneration’ are to be accorded to his authority. Yet the leader also demands subjection and ‘self-abandonment’. Contradiction of him is blasphemy.<sup>39</sup>

The community of the faith has been equipped with an apostolic succession of the charismatic leaders: Marx, Lenin and Stalin. It possesses the sacred texts that these inspired prophets have left behind. The scientist who studies these texts is not a neutral researcher who reads them critically and without prejudice, inquiring as to their truth. He is, rather, the commentator on a text that is indisputably true; he relates to the writings of Marxism in the same way that the Christian theologian relates to the Bible. As with the Word of God in the Bible, the text contains an indisputable truth that requires exegesis. To make a critique means to prove an author’s fidelity or infidelity to the Marxist classics. A citation of Lenin bears ‘the function of religious revelation’. Lenin’s writings undergo a ‘canonisation’ and his person a ‘sacralisation’.<sup>40</sup> The ability to see the world with Marxist eyes signifies that one is in possession of grace.

If there are holy texts that proclaim the pure doctrine, then there are also heresies (Tito), heretics (Trotsky), inquisitions, renegades, apostates, and dissidents, just as there are apostles, church fathers and proselytes.<sup>41</sup>

The logical consequence of this kind of thinking is the embalming of Lenin and the relic cult bound up with it. Lenin is praised as the 'saint, apostle and prophet of world Communism'. 'Parallels with Christ' also turn up. Lenin is venerated as the 'immortal leader' and the 'incarnation of the revolution'.<sup>42</sup>

The clear application of religious vocabulary is of course no coincidence. Corresponding to the central elements of church life, Marxism establishes similar central elements of Communist society. All essential dogmas are transferred from transcendence into the immanence of atheistic humanism. What is involved here is said to be Christian truths gone mad, 'vérités chrétiennes devenues folles'.<sup>43</sup>

## **Political religion**

Both National Socialist and Communist ideologies are characterised by a Manichean faith-attitude. The struggle of Communism against capitalism is cast as a radically irreconcilable struggle between good and evil, between light and darkness. All compromise, any kind of mixture, is evil. Here, a 'right-believing power' fights the 'impure power' of property, the principle of evil. The Cold War creates a 'strict division between good and evil'.<sup>44</sup> From this results a self-evident truth claim that is not open for discussion. A Manichean scheme of thought also governs National Socialism. Hitler demonstrates a 'preference for black and white figures, for struggles between light heroes and dark devils'. For him, history becomes salvation history, the 'struggle of belief against unbelief'. 'Destruction' and 'extermination' of the non-Aryan is an act of faith to which the Aryan is bound by duty. Racial disgrace is the 'original sin of humanity'. To gather all powers against Judaism, the 'evil enemy of humanity', is a 'holy duty'. 'To conduct German foreign affairs means to gain fellow-fighters against the devil, the Jew, and the sins of the disgrace of the blood'.<sup>45</sup>

Another thing the two ideologies have in common, therefore, is their philanthropic intention. Both seek to educate humanity and to create a new human being. Both strive for a radical transformation of the immanent world. Like Biblical messianism, their messianism promises a new covenant of peace and the final salvation of humanity. By contrast to Biblical messianism, however, the kingdom of God is brought down to earth through violence. The *regnum hominis* must be established here and now.<sup>46</sup> For Communist ideology, this kingdom is the earthly paradise; for National Socialism, it is a secularised form of the thousand-year 'Third Reich' of Joachim of Fiore.

This is why the modern ideologies are justly called political religions. Not to be overlooked are the political rituals and symbols modelled on religion.

Political engagement takes on religions forms. This is revealed in the various kinds of self-surrender, the asceticism and self-sacrifice of the fanatical adherents who are prepared to die for their convictions. With their totalitarian claim, the ideologies essentially fulfil a 'function of compensation for the loss of meaning' in modern society – a society that is incapable of 'enduring a profane world for an extended period'. They are successful because they satisfy 'a need for integration'. They elevate the world 'to the rank of the absolute' in order to 'resacralise' it.<sup>47</sup> Centuries of secularisation have not succeeded in extinguishing the political dimension of religion. This dimension lives on even in the perverse contortion of the modern ideologies, which – whether consciously or unconsciously – have exploited the religious relics that live on in the secularised society in order to stabilise their claims to rule. This also then means that the modern ideologies are not capable of realising a radically atheistic society.

Modern ideologies are secularised forms of religion. They are 'ersatz religions', or better still, 'an ersatz for religion'<sup>48</sup> that promises security and orientation. Of course, their functioning as a religion is purely illusory. With their rituals and symbols, however, modern ideologies can nonetheless generate a religion-like fascination that verges on the *fascinosum* and *numinosum* of religion without possessing it entirely. Because the numinous, the ground of being that lies behind the visible world, is essentially part of the world of religion, no political ideology can enlist it fully. Political ideologies are not merely a religious ersatz or pseudo-religions, therefore, but 'anti-religions' in the strict sense.<sup>49</sup>

Ideology and religion do not merely mutually exclude one another, therefore. Faith is even decidedly 'resistant'<sup>50</sup> to the ideologies, which offer quick, simple and ultimate answers to the weak and disoriented human being of modern mass society. Religion, by contrast, helps us to grasp reality better; it provides security in difficult situations. The human being who has religious ties is realistic to the extent that he sees reality more clearly and does not let himself be deceived by ready-made *Weltanschauungen*. If ideology is opposed to Enlightenment because it rejects critical questions and admits neither hypotheses nor discussions, then religion is an aid in gaining genuine enlightenment. This is because it does not bar the way to the concrete, scientific search for truth.

## Notes

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- 2 Hannah Arendt, *Über die Revolution* (Munich, 1963), 46.
- 3 Else Marienstrass, 'Nation et religion aux Etats-Unis', Michel, op. cit., 280 and 286. Also Simon Schama, *Der zaudernde Citoyen. Rückschritt und Fortschritt in der Französische Revolution* (Stuttgart, 1989), 504–7 and 511. Eric Voegelin, *Die politischen Religionen*, 2nd edn (Munich, 1996), 34.
- 4 Peter L. Berger, *Der Zwang zur Häresie. Religion in der pluralistischen Gesellschaft* (Freiburg, 1992), 37.



- 5 Hans Maier, *Politische Religionen. Die totalitären Regime und das Christentum* (Freiburg, 1995), 7 and 29ff.
- 6 Hermann Lübbe, *Religion nach der Aufklärung* (Graz, 1989), 62 and 65.
- 7 Berger, *Häresie*, op. cit., 38.
- 8 Friedrich Heer, *Der Glaube des Adolf Hitler. Anatomie einer politischen Religiosität*, 2nd edn (Munich, 1998), 260 and 263.
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- 10 Eugen Biser, *Der Mensch – das uneingelöste Versprechen* (Düsseldorf, 1995), 86.
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- 13 Justus H. Ulbricht, “‘Veni creator spiritus’, oder ‘Wann kehrt Baldur heim?’ Deutsche Wiedergeburt als politisch-religiöses Projekt”, Richard Faber (ed.), *Politische-Religion – religiöse Politik* (Wurzburg, 1997), 167 and 169ff.
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- 16 Eric Voegelin, *Anamnesis. Zur Theorie der Geschichte und Politik* (Munich, 1966), 327ff. and 354.
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- 19 Lübbe, op. cit., 56 and 59.
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- 21 Biser, op. cit., 236ff.
- 22 Dietrich Braun, “‘Gott mit uns’, Zur Frage der Nation als Thema gegewärtiger theologischer Ethik”, Faber, op. cit., 261.
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- 28 Voegelin, *Die politischen Religionen*, op. cit., 57, 45 and 14.
- 29 Ulbricht, op. cit., 172. Compare Lübbe, op. cit., 238.
- 30 Heer, op. cit., 219, 317 and 246ff. Also Ernst Nolte, *Der Faschismus in seiner Epoche* (Munich, 1963), 465 and 467.
- 31 Yasmin Doosry, ‘Die sakrale Dimension des Reichsparteitagsgeländes in Nürnberg’, Faber, op. cit., 206, 209, 212ff.
- 32 Heer, op. cit., 500, 265 and 423.
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- 37 Alain Besançon, *Les origens intellectuelles du léninisme* (Paris, 1977), 131–40.

- 38 Erhard Stölting, 'Charismatische Aspekte des politischen Führerkults. Das Beispiel Stalin', Faber, op. cit., 56. See also 47 and 49.
- 39 Ibid., 46ff.
- 40 Ibid., 54.
- 41 Maier, op. cit., 34.
- 42 Stölting, op. cit., 52ff.
- 43 Calvez, op. cit., 594.
- 44 Stölting, op. cit., 67 and 72.
- 45 Heer, op. cit., 26, 28, 33, 237 and 236.
- 46 Besançon, *Malheur*, op. cit., 100, 116, 155.
- 47 Giacomo Marramao, *Die Säkularisierung der westlichen Welt* (Frankfurt, 1996), 116ff.
- 48 Lübke, op. cit., 57.
- 49 Ibid., 56 and 239.
- 50 Ibid., 63.

## 10 Excursis

### Eric Voegelin's concept of 'gnosis'

*Hans Otto Seitschek*

After 1939, Eric Voegelin moved beyond the sphere of the political religions to offer a new concept by which to interpret modernity: the concept of 'gnosis'.<sup>1</sup> Although Voegelin continues here with the ideas of *Die politischen Religionen* – above all, with the notion that the modern spirit has become detached from its religious roots – he erects a different conceptual structure. The grounds for the change are presented in a study entitled *The People of God*, which he drafted soon after emigrating to the United States in 1938. Voegelin's approach to modern gnosis might be said to consist in three steps, then: from *Die politischen Religionen* through *The People of God* to *The New Science of Politics*.

Before discussing it, however, we turn to the original meaning of gnosis. gnosis was first understood to mean 'knowledge' – a pure translation of the Greek *gnōsis*. In late antiquity, however, this knowledge gained a saving function as arcane knowledge. Gnosis thereby became a religious movement:

By gnosis in the narrower sense, or gnosticism, is understood a syncretistic religious movement that was distributed particularly in the Eastern Mediterranean sphere (Asia) of late antiquity (it flourished in the second and third centuries AD). This movement made the elitarian 'knowledge of divine secrets' the centre of its theory and regarded the spiritual core of the human being (*pneûma*) as partaking in the divine substance. After having fallen into a fateful entanglement with matter, this spiritual core can gain salvation solely through the recognition of its true, transmundane nature.<sup>2</sup>

Gnosis also teaches a strict dualism between the immanent, evil world of darkness and a good world of light in the beyond. As *salvator salvandus* (the saviour to be saved), the saving knowledge also has a dynamic of its own: leading its immanent part to knowledge and salvation, it becomes a *salvator salvatus* (saved saviour). Thus, the saving knowledge has a liberating, healing effect.<sup>3</sup> Gnosticism represented a serious competitor to early Christianity, which was first consolidated by the establishment of its tenets of faith at the early Christian councils – at those in Nicea in 325 and Constantinople in 381 in particular. The gnostic understanding of history is linear. History has a definite beginning and end in the gnostic view. Where the end is an

established goal that is realised according to a certain process, gnostic doctrine is of an eschatological character.

Various sectarian movements of the early Middle Ages also manifested gnostic traits – as their strict dualism positing a kingdom of good opposed to a kingdom of evil shows. To be mentioned above all here is Manichaeism. In this context, it is interesting that Raymond Aron's portrayal of political or secular religions makes special mention of their Manichaean, strictly dualistic character.<sup>4</sup> The political religions are said to see good embodied in their own teaching and evil in everything that does not correspond to it. In his portrayal of National Socialism as gnosis, Harald Strohm also points out the Manichaean features of National Socialism.<sup>5</sup> Strohm enters further into the 'gnostic mythology' of National Socialism<sup>6</sup> and even analyses Hitler's psyche.<sup>7</sup> The latter, in his view, matches that of a gnostic sectarian leader such as Mani.

Voegelin does not use the concept of 'gnosis' according to its classical meaning, but as part of his critical interpretation of modernity instead. For Voegelin, modernity is a gnostic movement.<sup>8</sup> Like the gnostics of late antiquity, moderns seek to attain salvation in this world through their knowledge of a desacralised, secular spirit. In doing so, they dispense with the saving power of such religions as Christianity. As a result, both modern science and non-religious doctrines – particularly those occurring in the political sphere – assume a soteriological, hence gnostic, character from the knowledge they communicate. A 'religious faith' in modern science and inner-worldly doctrines arises; with their mythical ideologies, these promise salvation on earth – a salvation that usually occurs following an apocalyptic upheaval.

Franz Werfel had already pointed out the gnostic character of the natural sciences in 1932. At this point, he ascertained that the non-mathematic spirit believed itself to have been 'set back into the centuries of the gnostic' in light of the knowledge that had been attained by the natural sciences.<sup>9</sup> Some forty years later, Marie-Joseph Le Guillou discerned that the 'faith' of the gnostic is 'in formal terms, a human conviction' like a 'value judgement, an aesthetic, philosophical, ethical or political decision, [or] the choice of an ideology'.<sup>10</sup> This new gnostic 'religious faith' does not arise as religious faith does, however: through the discovery of divine revelation by attention to the Word of God.

Eric Voegelin includes 'movements of the type of progressivism, Marxism, psychoanalysis, Communism, Fascism and National Socialism' among modern gnostic movements.<sup>11</sup> Thus, he includes both intellectual movements and mass movements within the gnosis of modernity. Comtian positivism, a movement that was supposed to encompass the entire world, was both intellectual and political according to Voegelin. One of the last remnants of the positivist concept can be found in the insignia of the Republic of Brazil; its motto remains to this day 'Order and Progress'.<sup>12</sup>

The modern gnostic movements manifest certain characteristic features. All of them begin with a fundamental dissatisfaction with the current

situation. The cause for their dissatisfaction is the evil situation of the world and its order, not the inadequacy of human beings themselves. In the modern gnostic's view, salvation from this condition is possible and it is to be brought about as a transformation of the order of being in the course of mundane history. Salvation does not occur at the end of time and beyond the earthly realm, as with the Christian tradition. Modern gnosis teaches that the radical transformation of the order of being can be attained through human action itself. It therefore becomes necessary for the modern gnostic to investigate the possibilities for a change of the order of being, to work out methods by which both to realise it and to proclaim it to humanity in a prophetic-scientific way.<sup>13</sup>

Both the path and the goal of the perfection of being are immanentised, therefore. They are also proclaimed to be attainable for the human being by his own power.<sup>14</sup> This is the clearest line of division separating the gnostic movements of modernity from Christianity. Among the modern gnostic movements themselves: various teleological or axiological directions can be distinguished depending on whether the path that leads to the goal, the goal itself, or both, is the focus of a particular theory.<sup>15</sup>

In Voegelin's view, the origins of modern gnosis lie with the medieval gnostic movements, which took on a revolutionary quality as a result of their rejection by the Church.<sup>16</sup> One reason for the rise of gnostic communities was the postponement of the *paraousia* that occurred in late antiquity: whereas early Christianity had counted on an imminent return of Christ, the theory and faith of the Church changed when that return failed to occur. Influenced predominantly by Augustine's work, *De Civitate Dei*, the Church now maintained that the spirit of Christ lives on in the Church and that he will come again only at the end of time.<sup>17</sup> Yet this teaching is countered, according to Voegelin, by the Revelation of John, which envisages the kingdom of God as irrupting into the world through an historical apocalypse. From the Church's later interpretation, in any case, there arose an institutional division into the Church and the worldly kingdom, accompanied by the rise of certain sects that rejected the institutionalisation of the doctrine of Christ's salvation and sought to bring on Christ's kingdom by initiating an immanent apocalypse.<sup>18</sup> The attempt to break 'the factor of uncertainty in favour of clarity on ultimate questions appears, however, to be a general human problem'.<sup>19</sup> This is why Voegelin sees parallels to the medieval gnostic sects in modern political movements; like the medieval sects, these too have human carriers – yet the essence of the human being has remained the same throughout history.<sup>20</sup> Thus, due to the similarity of basic human experiences, does a constant stock of symbolism emerge in the organisation of communities.<sup>21</sup> As an example of such parallels, both *Die politischen Religionen* and the *New Science of Politics* cite the interpretation of history that structures it into three kingdoms that first emerged with Joachim Fiore. In 1260, Joachim foresaw the coming of the Third Kingdom, an event that would mark the perfection of being as a spiritualisation of

humanity and the transformation of creation under the leadership of a *dux e Babylone* (whose nature is not defined more closely).<sup>22</sup> To this day, the Joachitic symbolism is said to shape the symbolism of political communities: the theory of the three kingdoms, the leader, the prophet and the brotherhood of autonomous persons.<sup>23</sup> This symbolism characterises modern gnosis as well, especially such totalitarian mass movements as National Socialism and Communism. As a final example of continuity, the dualism that had already characterised ancient gnosis returns in both medieval gnostic sects and modern political movements: the present order of being is to be rejected as evil and to give way to a new good order, a new world: 'what is involved', according to Voegelin, 'is the annihilation of the old world and a transition into the new one'.<sup>24</sup> Further, the coming of the new world is presaged by an apocalypse that turns all existing orders upside down.<sup>25</sup>

Voegelin discovers the gnostic character of modernity throughout the entire history of modernity – paradigmatically with Thomas More, Thomas Hobbes, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, Auguste Comte, Karl Marx, Friedrich Nietzsche and Martin Heidegger.<sup>26</sup> Thus does Voegelin find not merely 'gnostic thought *in* modernity', but rather the 'gnostic character *of* modernity'.<sup>27</sup> In his view, Max Weber gains a key position in this context: he stands between the end of the positivist phase and the beginning of the new political science – of the science of order, as Voegelin understands it. Assuming a non-transcendent interpretation of human nature and reality, Weber reaches that point of the positivistic science of society and history at which the treasure of historical knowledge is so great that a system that meaningfully orders the wealth of details becomes necessary. This system is delivered by political philosophy in the full sense of Plato and Aristotle, by the *epistème politiké* that might, to a certain extent, take the place of positivism. Yet Weber does not himself make the step to political philosophy of a Platonic-Aristotelian character.<sup>28</sup> On Weber, Voegelin states: 'although he knew what he longed for, he could not reach it; although he saw the Promised Land, he was not permitted to enter it'.<sup>29</sup> Weber's thought assumes a special place in Voegelin's view.<sup>30</sup> Nonetheless, gnosticism still predominates in modernity.

Two points are decisive components of modern gnosis: first, the self-salvation of the human being and, second, the re-divinisation of the society. With self-salvation, the human being seeks to overcome the uncertainty that traditional soteriological religions have placed on the path to salvation through new myths:

The gnostic speculation overcame the uncertainty of faith by rejecting transcendence and equipping the mundane sphere of human action with the significance of an eschatological fulfilment. To the same extent to which this immanentisation progressed experientially, civilisational activity became a mystical work of self-salvation.<sup>31</sup>

The re-divinisation of the society, the second essential characteristic of modern gnosis, takes its starting point from an immanentisation of the meaning of existence; through this, a self-divinisation of the human being occurs. With modern gnosis, the divine is drawn into human nature in a way that is similar to the anthropology of ancient gnosis, which discovered a part of the divine, the *pneûma*, in the human being. The process of de-divinisation – which let God be experienced as the transcendent God of the Judaeo-Christian tradition – is therefore reversed by the re-divinisation of the human being and, hence, also of society.<sup>32</sup> The result is a reinterpretation of the division of the world into spiritual and temporal realms. This reinterpretation transforms faith into certain knowledge of the spiritual realm and sets the human being himself up as ‘saving God’ – for it is the human being that makes such knowledge possible. This Promethean self-divinisation of the human being brings with it, ‘necessarily, according to its nature’, the murder of the transcendent God.<sup>33</sup> The manifestly nihilistic element of modern gnostic movements is expressed here. According to Voegelin, a clear correspondence to twentieth-century existentialist philosophy can also be detected here. Salvation, both of the human essence and of the world itself, is ultimately always left to the human being – even though the human being cannot measure up to the task.

According to Voegelin, modern gnosticism will never attain its goals for the simple reason that the essence of both the human being and the order of being remain unchanged. Both have been fixed by God and cannot be changed by the human being – not after re-divinisation either. The essence of the human being remains open to transcendence. Conscious non-recognition or negation of the transcendent character of human being is one of Voegelin’s main objections to modern gnosis and its positivistic anthropology. For Voegelin, the insights of classical philosophy – of ancient Greek philosophy and Christian revelation in particular – are insights into the nature of the human being that cannot be transcended, even where modern positivism and scientism would deny it. Due to the anthropological deficiencies of the modern gnostic doctrine, therefore, the efforts of the modern gnostic ultimately produce no result besides a confusion of the orders of reality:

The death of the spirit is the price of progress. Nietzsche revealed this mysterium of the Western apocalypse when he proclaimed that God is dead and that he was murdered. Those human beings who offer God as a sacrifice to civilisation constantly commit this gnostic murder. The more intensively all human energies are thrown into the great enterprise of the salvation through world-immanent action, the more do those who help in this enterprise distance themselves from the life of the spirit. And because the life of the spirit is the source of order in both the human being and the society, the cause of the decay of a gnostic civilisation lies precisely with its success.<sup>34</sup>

Voegelin's critique of modern gnosis does not call for the restitution of ecclesiastical hegemony over the sphere of the state government: state and Church, politics and religion, should always be distinguished. Indeed, precisely this distinction is of paramount importance for Voegelin: the state should not become an institution that promises salvation, because this is how the political sphere incorporates the religious one to the extent that it ultimately consumes it. As the development of the twentieth-century political religions indicates, this is how a dangerous unification of the political and the religious comes about.

With the concept of gnosis, Voegelin resumes the basic principle of his approach in *Die politischen Religionen* (one he later describes as an 'embarrassing solution').<sup>35</sup> That principle states that the spirit originates in religion. Although a secularised spirit might be able to recast its religious element, it can never dispense with it entirely. Such recasting only alienates the nature of the human being, however. In the final analysis, it leads to a totalitarian ideology and the destruction of humanity, as the twentieth-century political mass movements have shown. Voegelin's concept of gnosis resumes the main tenets of his concept of political religions. In addition, however, Voegelin presents – as has been shown – a basic concept that absorbs many aspects of the general critique of the modern spirit without remaining restricted to the political sphere.

## Notes

- 1 On Voegelin's concept of Gnosis in modernity, see especially the following: E. Voegelin, *Die Neue Wissenschaft der Politik* (Munich, 1959), chs IV–VI, 153–259 (1st edn: Chicago, 1952); Voegelin, *Der Gottesmord. Zur Genese und Gestalt der modernen politischen Gnosis*, Peter Opitz (ed.) (Munich, 1999). Here, above all: 'Wissenschaft, Politik und Gnosis', 57–90, 'Der Gottesmord', 91–104 and 'Religionsersatz. Die gnostischen Massenbewegungen unserer Zeit', 105–28.
- 2 M. S. Torini, 'Gnosis, Gnostizismus', Walter Kasper, Konrad Baumgartner, Horst Bürkle, Klaus Ganzer, Karl Kertelge, Wilhelm Korff and Peter Walter (eds), *Lexicon für Theologie und Kirche*, vol. 4 (Freiburg, 1995), 802.
- 3 According to *ibid.*, 802ff.
- 4 See R. Aron, 'L'avenir des religions séculières', *Chroniques de guerre* (Paris, 1990), 932.
- 5 See H. Stroh, *Die Gnosis und der Nationalsozialismus* (Frankfurt, 1997), 30, 87–113.
- 6 See *ibid.*, 35–77.
- 7 See *ibid.*, 114–254, especially 114–16.
- 8 See P. J. Opitz, 'Die Gnosis-These – Anmerkungen zu Eric Voegelins Interpretation der westlichen Moderne', E. Voegelin, *Der Gottesmord. Zur Genese und Gestalt der modernen politischen Gnosis* (Munich, 1999), 7–35.
- 9 F. Werfel, 'Können wir ohn Gottesglaube leben?', *Zwischen oben und unten* (Stockholm, 1946), 110.
- 10 M.-J. Le Guillou, *Das Mysterium des Vaters* (Einsiedeln, 1974), 19. Le Guillou's characterisation of ideology refers clearly to its Gnostic character.
- 11 E. Voegelin, 'Religionsersatz. Die gnostischen Massenbewegungen unserer Zeit', *Der Gottesmord*, *op. cit.*, 105. Although Voegelin speaks of an ersatz for religion



in the title of his essay, he does not return to it in what follows. To him, the decisive concept for the interpretation of modernity is gnosis.

- 12 According to E. Voegelin, 'Religionsersatz. Die gnostischen Massenbewegungen unserer Zeit', op. cit., 106.
- 13 Cited from *ibid.*, 107–9.
- 14 See among others, E. Voegelin, 'Wissenschaft, Politik und Gnosis', *Der Gottesmord*, op. cit., 62ff.
- 15 According to E. Voegelin, 'Religionsersatz. Die gnostischen Massenbewegungen unserer Zeit', *Der Gottesmord*, op. cit., 109–11.
- 16 E. Voegelin, *Das Volk Gottes* (Munich, 1994), 53–77.
- 17 In the letter to the Hebrews, the Christian faith is characterised as 'the substance of things hoped for and faith in things unseen' (Hebrews 11: 1).
- 18 According to E. Voegelin, *Die Neue Wissenschaft der Politik*, op. cit., 155f. and the same, *Das Volk Gottes*, op. cit., 30–34.
- 19 E. Voegelin, 'Religionsersatz. Die gnostischen Massenbewegungen unserer Zeit', *Der Gottesmord*, op. cit., 128.
- 20 According to M. Henkel, *Eric Voegelin* (Hamburg, 1998), 99.
- 21 According to Eric Voegelin, *Die Neue Wissenschaft der Politik*, op. cit., 17.
- 22 See E. Voegelin, *Die politischen Religionen*, op. cit., 39–41, Voegelin, *Die Neue Wissenschaft der Politik*, op. cit., 158–60 and the same, 'Religionsersatz. Die gnostischen Massenbewegungen unserer Zeit', *Der Gottesmord*, op. cit., 112–16.
- 23 Voegelin, *Die Neue Wissenschaft der Politik*, op. cit., 159ff. and the same, 'Religionsersatz. Die gnostischen Massenbewegungen unserer Zeit', *Der Gottesmord*, op. cit., 113–16.
- 24 Eric Voegelin, 'Wissenschaft, Politik und Gnosis', *Der Gottesmord*, op. cit., 62.
- 25 On the significance of the apocalypse to political mass movements, see Klaus Vondung, *Die Apokalypse in Deutschland* (Munich, 1988), especially 207–25; also Vondung, 'Die Apokalypse des Nationalsozialismus', M. Ley and J. H. Schoeps (eds), *Die politische Religion de Nationalsozialismus* (Bodenheim, 1997), 33–52.
- 26 On Hobbes, Hegel, Comte and Marx, see E. Voegelin, *Die politischen Religionen*, op. cit., 43–46, 13, 55, 51, 52. On all the thinkers named above (save Heidegger) see Voegelin, *Die Neue Wissenschaft der Politik*, op. cit., 171, 211–24, 175, 24–26, 46ff., 182–85. On Heidegger in particular, see Voegelin, 'Wissenschaft, Politik und Gnosis', *Der Gottesmord*, 62ff., 87–90. Again, on More, Hobbes, Hegel and Comte see Voegelin, 'Religionsersatz. Die gnostischen Massenbewegung unserer Zeit', *Der Gottesmord*, op. cit., 106ff., 118–23. Also E. Voegelin, 'Nietzsche and Pascal', E. Behler, E. Heftrich and W. Müller-Lauter (eds), *Nietzsche-Studien*, vol. 25 (Berlin/New York, 1996), 128–71. Finally, see the following contributions: Peter J. Opitz, 'Eric Voegelins Nietzsche – Eine Forschungsnotiz', *ibid.*, 170–90; and H. Ottmann, 'Das Spiel der Masken. Nietzsche im Werk Eric Voegelins', *ibid.*, 191–99. On Voegelin's interpretation of Hegel, see E. Voegelin, 'Hegel – Eine Studie über Zauberei', *Occasional Papers XI* (Munich, 1999).
- 27 M. Henkel, *Eric Voegelin*, op. cit., 115. See here especially E. Voegelin, *Die Neue Wissenschaft der Politik*, op. cit., 176–80.
- 28 According to *ibid.*, 33–44. See here M. Henkel, *Eric Voegelin*, op. cit., 129–34.
- 29 E. Voegelin, *Die Neue Wissenschaft der Politik*, op. cit., 44.
- 30 On Voegelin's interpretation of Max Weber's thought, see especially E. Voegelin, *Die Größe Max Webers* (Munich, 1995), 9–28, 29–47. Also Peter J. Opitz, 'Max Weber und Eric Voegelin', Volker Gerhardt, Henning Ottmann and Martyn P. Thompson (eds), *Politisches Denken*, 1992 Yearbook (Stuttgart and Weimar, 1993), 29–52.

- 31 E. Voegelin, *Die Neue Wissenschaft der Politik*, op. cit., 181ff.
- 32 Cited from *ibid.*, 153ff.
- 33 E. Voegelin, 'Wissenschaft, Politik und Gnosis', *Der Gottesmord*, op. cit., 92ff.  
On the 'murder of God' see *ibid.*, 91–104.
- 34 E. Voegelin, *Die Neue Wissenschaft der Politik* (Munich, 1959), 184ff.
- 35 E. Voegelin, 'Wissenschaft, Politik und Gnosis', *Der Gottesmord*, op. cit., 58ff.



**Part V**

**Fascism and non-democratic  
regimes**



# 11 Fascism and non-democratic regimes

*Juan J. Linz*

## Introduction

I might start with the paradox that, having written extensively on non-democratic regimes, fascism, and breakdown of democracies, I have not yet systematically linked these three areas of interest and research.<sup>1</sup> The reasons for this are many. Some of them were accidental, such as the fact that the writings appeared in the context of work that focused on each problem area separately. Yet there is also an intellectual one, one that I shall try to develop here: although the three themes are undoubtedly interconnected in many cases, they are quite distinct in many other cases. Totalitarian and authoritarian regimes have existed and will continue to exist without fascism playing a role in their development – unless, of course, we stretch the concept of fascism to the point where it becomes unrecognizable and useless. What is more, there both have been and will continue to be breakdowns of political democracy in the absence of fascist movements, and these will lead to regimes that cannot be characterized as fascist. These are the fundamental reasons why I have discussed these three great problems of twentieth-century politics without linking them systematically. Nevertheless: between the two world wars, one finds sufficient cases for which the three were connected in one way or another to warrant an attempt at a more systematic analysis of the relationship between them.

Let me make a few brief statements on this. Even after the first World War, there were failures and crises of democratic regimes in Europe and elsewhere for which fascist movements played no role or only a minor one; such crises led to the establishment of non-democratic regimes in which fascists played no part – and indeed, ones that even suppressed fascist movements in several cases. The communist parties that arose from the splitting of the socialist movement due to opposition to the war following the Zimmerwald Conference and the October Revolution not only threatened particular democracies, but contributed to the general crisis of democracy in the 1920s and 1930s. The communists attained power only temporarily in Hungary (from October 1918 to August 1919) and permanently in Russia. Even there, though, the continuing independence and

resistance of Finland, Poland and the Baltic republics limited the success of the Bolsheviks and the Red Army.

Contrary to images of a Europe that was engulfed by fascism and of democracies that were overwhelmed by antidemocratic forces, then, it must be emphasized that a large number of democracies survived, at least until some were occupied by Germany.<sup>2</sup> (See Tables 11.1 and 11.2.) The list includes the following nations: the United Kingdom, France (despite serious threats), Switzerland, Belgium, the Netherlands, Ireland, Denmark, Sweden, Norway and Finland (despite a dangerous crisis). This is a total of ten countries. The number of democracies – not simply liberal constitutional states or democracies that were developing, emerging or merely possible – is much smaller: Italy, Germany, Austria and Spain in 1936. That is four countries. The other cases of breakdown – Russia, Turkey, Poland, Hungary, Spain 1923, Portugal 1917 and 1925, Romania, Bulgaria and Greece – would perhaps better be defined as breakdowns of liberal constitutional regimes, of countries that were in the process of democratizing or as aborted

*Table 11.1* European states, World War I and democracy

	<i>States before World War I</i>	<i>States which attained independence after World War I</i>	<i>Collapsed empires and successor states</i>	<i>Sum</i>
Stable democracies	Denmark (N) Luxemburg (N) Holland (N) Norway (N) Sweden (N) Switzerland (N) Belgium (V) France (V) Great Britain (V)	Finland Czechoslovakia (V) Ireland		12
Sum	9	3		
Democracies in crisis or with a democratizing process that failed	Spain 1923, 1936 (N) Italy (V) Romania (V) Greece (V, D) Bulgaria (D) Portugal (V)	Poland (V) Yugoslavia (V) Latvia Lithuania Estonia	Russia/USSR (D) Turkey (D) Hungary (D) Austria (D) Germany(D)	16
Sum	6	5	5	16
Total	15	8	5	28

*Note:* N = Neutral; V = Victor; D = Defeated.

processes of democratic consolidation rather than as fully democratic regimes. That is nine countries; added to the first four and to the three Baltic republics that yields a total of sixteen countries. We do not count Albania, because it was a pre-modern society and state in the making. Of the states that existed before World War I, nine were stable democracies in the inter-war years, whereas democratization was frustrated or democracy broke down in six cases. The successor states of the Russian empire, the Ottoman empire, Austria-Hungary and the German empire all experienced breakdown. Of the eight new states that were born during the aftermath of the War, democracy survived only in three: Finland, Czechoslovakia (until its disintegration under German pressure) and Ireland. Five others experienced authoritarian breakdowns: Poland, Yugoslavia, Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia. Both established statehood and the status of having been neutral among the victors was favourable to democracy. Beyond this, democratic stability appears to have been favoured by constitutional monarchies. Although the fascist movements were generally unsuccessful in destroying

*Table 11.2* Monarchies and republics in the inter-war years and democratic stability

	<i>Monarchies</i>	<i>Republics</i>	<i>Sum</i>
Stable democracies	Great Britain	Switzerland	
	Denmark	France	
	Norway	Finland	
	Sweden, the	Czechoslovakia	
	Netherlands		
	Belgium Luxemburg		
Sum	7	5	12
Democracies in crisis or with a failed democratic process	Spain (1936)	USSR	
	Italy	Turkey	
	Yugoslavia	Poland	
	Romania	Hungary	
	Bulgaria	Portugal	
	Greece	Germany	
		Austria	
		Lithuania	
		Latvia	
		Estonia	
	Spain (1939)		
Sum	6	11	17*
Total	13	16	29

Note: \* Spain is counted twice.



European democracies, they contributed to their crises and a few either gained power or gained a share in power. Although the existence of both the Italian fascist regime and, after 1933, the Nazi system exerted an influence on the form that authoritarian regimes took in that period, it would be difficult to say this would have sufficed for us to be able to characterize those regimes as fascist. It does make it difficult to distinguish fascist, semi-fascist, and non-fascist authoritarian regimes, however, particularly because there is no consensus as to what the Italian fascist regime actually was like. It is easier to distinguish the authoritarian regimes from Nazi totalitarianism once it had fully consolidated its power. The success and appeal of fascist movements influenced other anti-democratic parties and movements, thereby making clear distinctions difficult.

It is wrong to regard the period after 1918 as one of a 'civil war' between fascism and communism, as Nolte does. The fight was fought between the two great anti-democratic movements on the one hand, and by both against liberal or social-democratic liberal democracies on the other. Unfortunately, some democrats (if they were inclined to the left) felt that the communists were the lesser threat in some countries – generally not their own. For their part, many conservatives (who were not always fully content with democracy) felt that fascism was the best protection against the communist threat. As Furet has shown, one of the tragedies of history was that anti-communism was often equated with fascism and anti-fascism with sympathy for the Soviet Union.

A minority of left fascists even felt an affinity with the Soviet revolution – as an alternative to a national revolution – and emphasized the common hostility to the victorious 'plutocratic' democracies of the West.<sup>3</sup> For short periods, this led to a cooperation of fascist regimes with the Soviets, one that that culminated in the Hitler-Stalin pact. The Finnish winter war marked an odd moment in which the Western democrats could oppose both the Soviet Union and Hitler at the same time.

With their putschist activities, the communists helped to destabilize democracy in Germany and Estonia. Elsewhere, they contributed to the fractionalization of the labour movement (particularly in Italy) and to the split between the SPD and the USPD in Germany. In countries such as Spain, communism contributed to the radicalization, the 'bolshevization' of the socialist party in 1934 and particularly in 1936. Similarly, pre-emptive competition with the fascists led to a 'fascistization' of one conservative Christian party, the CEDA. It is absurd to write about the demise of the Weimar republic and the incapacity of the Reichstag to support democratic governments without mentioning the negative majority that was formed by the added votes of the NSDAP and the KPD, or the confrontation of the democratic government of Prussia with the communist violence.

Fascism did not defeat communism, but in some cases democracies were weakened by the hostility of communists. The two antidemocratic movements that fought each other in the streets but celebrated a common hostility

toward 'bourgeois' democracy (including social democrats, who had been labelled 'social fascists' by the communists) complemented each other in the crisis of democracy.

In the inter-war crisis, one factor that cannot be neglected is the international relations between countries and parties. In the case of the communist movement, the directives from Moscow and interventions of the Comintern leadership in the factional fights within the parties made them less responsive to the national political contexts and often contributed to suicidal policies in confronting the fascist threat – most particularly in Germany. In the case of the weaker fascist parties, the existence of the Italian PNF and German NSDAP – two poles of attraction, both ideologically and in terms of contacts – contributed indirectly to the fractionalization of the movement. Even if some parties received subsidies and other forms of support, this had little influence on their success or failure, although it occasionally contributed to their delegitimization. More important was the attraction of the successes of the Mussolini regime – in the conversion of Mosley into a fascist leader, for example – and the German 'national rebirth'. The feeling of national unity, of mass support engineered by the regime, and enthusiasm impressed foreign visitors – not only fascists, but conservative leaders as well. The image of Italy and later, of Germany, made fascism attractive. Another indirect factor was the desire for peace that led nationalist leaders to favour appeasement and the search for an understanding with Germany; this in turn led to a breach with parties that advocated a harder line and rearmament.

Obviously, we cannot ignore how the interests of the major powers – fascist Italy and later, Nazi Germany among them – contributed to the support of authoritarian tendencies and authoritarian regimes (although not necessarily the fascist parties) in the context of post-Versailles politics. For example: before Dollfuss' assassination, his policies were influenced both by Mussolini and by the chancellor's own interest in facing the Nazi threat and the *Anschluss*. The complex interaction between foreign policy alignments, ideological or cultural-religious affinities and even personal sympathies among rulers was important for the creation, the stability and the internal politics of authoritarian rule. Until the war, such processes were generally not the result of direct intervention, but of the 'rule of anticipated reactions'.

If we were to agree on some basic characterization of fascism as a political movement that existed in the Europe of the interwar years but no longer existed after World War II,<sup>4</sup> some questions might be asked. Specifically, what difference did the presence of fascist movements and successful fascist regimes make for authoritarian regimes before and after 1945? This is a difficult question in that both fascists and anti-fascists had an interest in blurring the distinctions that we have attempted to make. The fascists did this in order to legitimate their claim to represent the way of the future, to be the expression of the needs that were felt in the most diverse societies

and to further an alliance of the most diverse regimes against Western democracies and the Soviet Union. Despite this, the fascist leaders and intellectuals were keenly aware of the differences between their movements and regimes and others, including those that imitated them. For their part, democrats, socialists and communists – all of them victims of anti-democratic and authoritarian movements and regimes – were interested in identifying them with fascist Italy and particularly with Nazism later on because those regimes were capable of mobilizing widespread rejection, especially after World War II. The hegemony of the Axis powers in Europe or parts of Europe led anti-democratic movements and authoritarian regimes not to underscore their own differences with fascism until the prospect of the victory of those powers had already become dim.

### **Fascism and the breakdown of democracy**

Even though fascism played a major role in the crisis of democratic regimes, the failure of the consolidation of democracy in a number of countries cannot be linked to the presence, strengths or ambitions of fascist movements. A number of democracies that had been established before and immediately after World War I underwent serious crises in the consolidation process even before fascism became an attractive alternative to democracy for significant sectors of the population and elites. Even after fascism gained power in Italy, no significant fascist movements emerged in a number of countries where democratic regimes experienced a breakdown. The elites that established authoritarian regimes were not unaware of the fascist experience, and in some cases they explored the possibility of incorporating elements of that experience into their regimes. However, their understanding of what fascism entailed was limited, and their regimes reflected both this lack of understanding and the independent development of their forms of authoritarian rule.<sup>5</sup> The fact that some of those regimes – particularly Hungary – held on to semi- or pseudo-democratic institutions and did not reject the liberal heritage outright proves the non-fascist character of authoritarian rule.<sup>6</sup> Another indication is that the fascist movements emerged in a number of cases as opponents of authoritarian regimes (particularly in Romania, Hungary and Lithuania) and sometimes experienced discrimination and even persecution (like the murder of Codreanu by the dictatorship of King Carol in 1938).<sup>7</sup>

With those identifying with a Marxist – particularly a vulgar-Marxist – interpretation of fascism as an instrument used to suppress the emerging working class and to defend capitalism, there is a tendency to forget that the authoritarian solutions appeared in response to other social and political problems: the building of a state in the case of Turkey, the bitter nationality conflicts in some Eastern European countries, the rural/urban conflict in Bulgaria, and, paradoxically, the response to a perceived fascist threat in Estonia and Latvia in the 1930s.<sup>8</sup> The failure of the consolidation

of democracy in the years after 1918 cannot always be attributed to the presence of fascist or fascisticized movements; nor – if we were to accept the Marxist interpretation – can it be attributed to the solution of the type of problems to which presumably fascism responded.

In Spain (1923), Portugal, Poland and the Baltic republics, the crisis of parliamentarianism was probably more important than social conflicts and even the economic crisis after 1929. Anti-parliamentarianism, hostility to parties and politicians, exaltation of society – of professionals, workers, entrepreneurs, youth, as a new elite opposed to the politicians – in the first decades of the century were widespread sentiments shared by intellectuals and large sectors in many societies. They were articulated by those favouring authoritarian solutions and by no one better than the fascists in Italy and later other fascist movements. Non-fascist authoritarian solutions and the new movement were born in the same climate of opinion, although fascism was the much more complex phenomenon! Corporatism was one widely shared alternative, as was a diffuse populism. Both will be found in many authoritarian responses to the crises of the 1920s and 1930s. The party fractionalization that resulted from proportional representation, the presence of multiple ethnic parties (in Latvia and Estonia) and the representation of interest groups led to high levels of governmental instability and a demand for a stronger executive and a presidential system.

Thus, it is imperative to maintain the separation between questions concerning consolidation and crisis of democratic regimes and the rise of authoritarian rule on the one hand and those asking, ‘why fascism?’ and ‘why did the fascists succeed in the overthrow of democratic regimes?’ on the other.

We can distinguish at least five kinds of situations in the Europe of the interwar years:

- 1 Authoritarian regimes that emerged in the absence of fascist movements and experienced no or limited influence in their policies and particularly in their institutionalization of fascist regimes. (Turkey would be a good example here.)
- 2 Authoritarian regimes that appear in societies where fascist movements have emerged and where the fascists support the process of destruction of democracy and enter into the anti-democratic coalition that establishes the authoritarian regime. The outcome of that participation varies from those cases in which the fascists gain a significant share in power and those in which they are pushed aside and even eliminated as a politically relevant factor. Although they are unable to gain a hegemonic or even important position, the authoritarian regimes that are established in the presence of fascist movements and with their participation will look somewhat different and evince a number of features that would allow us to characterize some of them loosely as fascist regimes. Nonetheless, the persisting differences between such regimes and truly

fascist regimes like the Italian one provide sufficient grounds to question such a characterization.

- 3 Only in Italy and Germany did the fascist parties play the decisive role in the final destruction of democracy; only here did they assume power, did their leaders become the head of government and did they establish regimes in which the fascist movement played a hegemonic role in the consolidation of the regime – after a certain point, at least. In the process of gaining power, these parties made certain alliances. In the case of Italy, such alliances might have become more permanent and limited the hegemony of the party; in that of Germany, however, they soon gave way to a more or less hegemonic position of the Nazis. Only in Romania do we find another case of control of the government by a fascist party; the diarchy led by General Antonescu from 15 September 1940 to 23 January 1941 was short-lived, however, and was overthrown by a military authoritarian regime.
- 4 The German-Italian domination of Europe did not bring fascist movements to power in all the countries they controlled. Although they played an important role as collaborators, they assumed power only in Norway with Quisling and in Croatia, if we consider Ustacha a fascist party. To this we might add the more dubious case of the fascistized Slovakian nationalist movement. Let us not forget that the Nazis granted Hungarian fascists power only for a very short time, or that the French fascists had to compete for power with the *Etat Français* of Pétain. Further, countries like Belgium and the Netherlands remained under German military occupation; and a further such country, Denmark, remained a democracy with a free election that was held under the occupation in 1943 (an election in which the DNSAP gained 2.15 per cent of the vote). Finland too, which was a *de facto* ally in the war against the USSR, was a democracy.<sup>9</sup>
- 5 A fifth situation was that of the stable democracy. In some stable democracies, the fascist movements or parties represented a more or less serious threat: in Finland, Belgium and France before World War II. In others, cases like the UK, Ireland Denmark, Sweden and Switzerland, they did not become a danger to stability. Czechoslovakia was a special case because the threat did not come from native fascists, but from a Nazified Sudeten German minority and the fascistized Catholic Slovak nationalist movement.
- 6 There was only one country in which the communists ended the hope for democracy: the USSR, with the October Revolution and the disbanding of the Constituent Assembly.

In this essay, I focus on the role of fascism and radical nationalism in the breakdown of democracy. It would require another essay to present the hostility to liberal democracy of communist, Soviet council movement, of the syndicalist and anarchist worker movements, of maximalist socialism,

even of Austro-Marxism – all of these ideologies and movements that shaped the era of ideologies. Although they did not achieve power, they generated fear and hatred among their opponents and disturbed public order in a way that challenged democratic governments and presumably showed their weakness (even in cases where they defeated or controlled them).

Our enumeration should make it clear that fascist movements and fascist ideas – as presented by the examples of Italy and, later, of Germany – did not play a decisive role in the breakdown of many democracies and that the breakdown of democratic regimes did not always lead to a participation of fascists in power. Nor should we forget that a number of authoritarian regimes, as in Portugal, not only did not co-opt the fascists but even excluded them from power.<sup>10</sup> In a few cases – Romania, Brazil, Japan, the Baltic countries and, in a certain period, Hungary – these regimes even persecuted fascists. Concerning these last cases, it could be argued that the fascists were conceived as competitors for power, but that there was no fundamental difference or conflict with the goals of their successful authoritarian opponents. Against this, I would argue that basic conflicts between the political objectives of the fascists and those of the authoritarian rulers existed in all cases; indeed, these situations allow us to understand better some of the differences between anti-democratic authoritarian conceptions and the fascist movements.

The cases in which fascists play the role of a partner, sometimes a minor partner, in the coalition that brings an authoritarian regime into power, raise the interesting question as to why they were not allowed to play a more important role. Why, even in a Europe that was dominated by fascist powers, did they fail to assume a more hegemonic role? To some extent, such an analysis would help answer the question of why Papen's dream of enlisting Hitler failed while others successfully used the fascists for their own goals – or, at the most, they merely gave a share of power to them. In the context of this essay, it is difficult to tell what difference it would have made that fascists did not play a greater role in those authoritarian regimes; the difficulty arises particularly in analyzing the social, economic, educational and cultural policies of those regimes and their subsequent development. The comparison of regimes in which fascists played some role to those in which their movements and leaders did not, and especially to those in which they were displaced from any participation in power, might tell us something about the distinctive contribution of fascism to authoritarian regimes. A comparison of those authoritarian regimes that were established before the rise of fascism and were only superficially and indirectly influenced by fascism (like the dictatorship of Primo de Rivera in Spain, 1923–30)<sup>11</sup> to those that came to power at the height of fascist success and with fascist support and participation (like the Franco regime) would help us better to understand the sheer variety of non-democratic politics and the fascist phenomenon.<sup>12</sup>

All these questions justify a separate treatment of two distinct issues. The one is the issue as to why fascist parties or movements appeared in some societies and not in others and why they were more or less successful in attracting a following and particularly mass support; the other concerns the problem of the crisis of democracy and the establishment of authoritarian regimes.<sup>13</sup> Having dealt with the first issue in one of my essays, I treat the second in a book – albeit one that does not deal systematically with the type of regimes that emerged after the breakdown of democracy – and enquire as to the extent to which they can be considered fascist regimes.<sup>14</sup>

Moreover, there is the theme of the relationship between the more or less totalitarian character of a non-democratic regime and the role of fascism as a movement and an ideology – the emergence of totalitarianism, that is, as a form distinct from the other non-democratic regimes that I have described as authoritarian.<sup>15</sup> The question might be raised as to whether a non-democratic regime that is also non-communist can become fully totalitarian without the presence of a fascist movement. The answer depends very much on the definitions of both fascism and totalitarianism one adopts; and since those two concepts mean very different things to different people, it would vary accordingly. Using a restrictive definition of both fascism and totalitarianism, I would argue that a non-democratic regime could not become a fully totalitarian political system in the absence of either a fascist or a communist party. On the other hand, I would argue that the presence of a fascist movement in power, just as the presence of a communist party, does not always ensure the successful transformation of the regime into a totalitarian political system.<sup>16</sup> Indeed, scholars disagree as to the place of fascist Italy in relation to the totalitarian-authoritarian distinction. Even ignoring that problem, it would seem that, in absence of a fascist movement (or a Leninist party), an anti-democratic regime would be unable to develop many of the characteristics we associate with totalitarianism. I do not mean massive repression and terror, since these have been more characteristic of a number of authoritarian regimes than of fascist Italy. In my view, therefore, they constitute a separate dimension in the analysis of political systems.<sup>17</sup>

### **Fascism, totalitarianism and authoritarianism**

In a number of publications, I have developed a distinction between totalitarian systems and authoritarian regimes within the general category of non-democratic political systems. As I have emphasized, this is not only a matter of degree of certain variables, but a distinction representing fundamental alternative conceptions of politics. When applied to reality, however, the ideal types present some mixture of elements and too many ambiguities (in part due to imperfect descriptions of that social and political reality) for any effort to classify specific, concrete political systems at any time and place in the world. Only the relative predominance with which some

elements enter into the typology rather than others can allow us to speak of systems as being closer to either the totalitarian or the authoritarian type.

As any reader on the subject will realize, the totalitarian type appears infrequently and under quite exceptional circumstances; it is not the natural outcome of an evolutionary process.<sup>18</sup> Totalitarianism, perhaps, cannot be sustained for any great length of time; this would account for its transformation into post-totalitarian regimes, which have many of the characteristics associated with authoritarian regimes.<sup>19</sup> Because the lives of Italian fascism and Nazism were cut short by defeat, we cannot study a possible post-Mussolini or post-Hitler evolution of those regimes. That said, even an approximation to the ideal type of totalitarianism was not achieved easily. This is why I have suggested the idea of proto-totalitarian or arrested totalitarianism to describe those situations in which the intent has been present, but the ideal type not been fully achieved.<sup>20</sup>

I would like to make it clear that the distinction between totalitarian and authoritarian regimes does not imply that the latter were not terribly repressive, that they were not responsible for human rights violations, anti-Semitic policies and even spontaneous collaboration with the genocidal policies of the Nazis in many countries. On the contrary: if we consider the Italian fascist regime to have been close to the totalitarian model, then some regimes that clearly fit into the authoritarian type were undoubtedly more repressive (as, for example, Franco's Spain for many years).

The relationship between fascism as a movement and ideology and totalitarianism is theoretically complex – even more so empirically. We will only outline some of the questions for research and state briefly some of the possible answers that would deserve thorough theoretical discussion and confrontation with the empirical materials.

The ideology, the state of mind, the style of politics, the conception of man and society that fascist movements represent entail an implicit totalitarian ambition. If the movements were to be successful, this ambition would produce regimes approaching the totalitarian ideal type.

The reverse, however, is not true: the absence of a fascist movement does not necessarily mean that a political system and a society would not evince characteristics of totalitarianism. As the concept was developed in the 1930s and particularly in the classic works on totalitarianism, it is clear that a number of political systems that were not fascist, but communist, Soviet, Leninist, Stalinist and Maoist, have been and can be interpreted as having pursued the totalitarian ideal and approximated at one time or another the structures that we identify with totalitarianism.<sup>21</sup> The question, therefore, is whether non-fascist and non-communist regimes, as conceived by their founders and particularly in their realization, approximate the ideal type description of a totalitarian system. Answers to this question vary greatly, depending on the way different scholars use the term totalitarian and the dimensions they consider to define a totalitarian system. The answers can differ greatly even if we leave aside the identification of totalitarianism with



widespread and irrational repression (which I do not consider to be an essential characteristic, although it is a frequent and logical consequence of a totalitarian system). Using, as I tend to do, a very restrictive and relatively narrow definition of totalitarianism – one that could, as a consequence, be realized or approximated only in very few cases – I am inclined to think that the non-democratic systems having no hegemonic fascist or communist component are unlikely to fit the characteristics we associate with totalitarianism. These would instead be closer to the model of authoritarian regimes.<sup>22</sup> In principle, this does not exclude the possibility that future regimes based on a movement, an ideology, or a conception of man and society that cannot be described as either fascist or communist might lead to totalitarian systems. In this sense, then, the death of the fascist movement, of the peculiar historical constellation of factors that we describe as fascism, in no way ensures that the totalitarian temptation will also have disappeared. We know too little about the development of Iran after the fundamentalist Islamic revolution to say whether it approached the totalitarian model or not, although some argue that it did.<sup>23</sup>

Limiting ourselves to the era of fascism, we might analyze the totalitarian potential of different anti-democratic movements, parties and ideologies and ask ourselves if those we characterize as fascist differed in this respect. Should we agree with those who consider National Socialism to have been distinct from fascism? We could debate whether the Nazi regime was totalitarian because of that distinctiveness. On this basis, we could then question the totalitarian intent of fascist movements in a more narrowly defined sense, one perhaps limited to the Italian case and those influenced by it. For whatever reasons, there can be no doubt that National Socialism led to the development of one of the most totalitarian political systems. Yet we would argue that fascism, as a movement, presented the basis for the development of a totalitarian regime; not only its conception of society, of the relation of the individual to the nation and the state, but the full realization of that conception would have led to totalitarian regimes in countries other than Germany.

In political reality, however, fascism outside of Italy (again leaving aside Germany and National Socialism) did not achieve hegemonic power for a length of time that would have been sufficient to develop its totalitarian potential. The fact that the fascist movements were elements of varying importance in the anti-democratic coalitions that were often led by leaders and forces that did not identify with the fascist ideals, prevented the fascists from realizing their totalitarian ambition. Even in the case of Italy, the debate as to the degree to which the regime was totalitarian and the periods in which it would have been totalitarian remains open. The high degree to which we could debate the extent of the coalition compromises in the process of taking power, the resilience of the pre-fascist structures of Italian society, and a number of other factors, point to what I have called ‘arrested totalitarianism’. Yet this is a situation that shares some characteristics with regimes that fit the ideal type of an authoritarian regime.<sup>24</sup>

I remain ambivalent about characterizing the Italian regime as totalitarian, although I have in my work noted its character as 'arrested totalitarianism'. I am far from alone in this estimation: in the course of his lifelong work, the great scholar, De Felice, continually hesitated and evolved – as Emilio Gentile has shown, quoting the relevant texts.<sup>25</sup> Gentile has persuaded me of his view that fascism not only had a totalitarian potential, but was also moving towards a totalitarian regime – particularly in the 1930s. As I will note later, this thesis becomes questionable in light of the regime's performance during the war and the events of 1943. This would lead me to argue for a 'failed' rather than an 'arrested' totalitarianism and therefore to ask the question: why did Italian totalitarianism fail where Nazism succeeded, and this almost up to Hitler's suicide in the Berlin bunker? Was it that it remained a hostage of the compromises it had made in the process of coming to power? Or was it the latent heterogeneity of the PNF, the important role of elites from other groups like ANI, or the personality of the Duce? Was it Italian society and the Italians that were not the 'material' for the project? Mussolini sometimes hinted at that explanation.<sup>26</sup> What element of Italian society would have arrested the realization of a totalitarian blueprint, whereas other elements in Germany made it possible? As a social scientist rather than an historian, I am somewhat uneasy about the 'escapism' of the last explanation. But who, after all, would disagree with the statement that Italians are not Germans?

The absence of large-scale state terror in fascist Italy right up to the Republic of Salò poses an interesting question. If terror is considered to be one of the defining characteristics of totalitarianism, then I – like Hannah Arendt – would be obliged to consider the regime non-totalitarian. If we were to insist upon its totalitarian character, then we would have to conclude that terror is not one of the defining characteristics of totalitarianism (or perhaps that it would have had to come later).

The disagreement between scholars depends in part on the greater emphasis on the ideological formulations and monism the legal system created on the one hand, or on the actual practice of government and the social reality under fascism on the other. The more weight we give to the former, the more likely we are to consider the Italian regime totalitarian. The more we cede to the latter, the more likely we are to question the regime's totalitarian character.

Any analysis of fascism's failure to have transformed politics and society in the totalitarian direction in other countries must be linked to our previous discussion of the limited success of fascist movements in gaining hegemonic power. Similarly, their role as coalition partners and subordinated elements, even as neutralized or defeated elements in authoritarian regimes, must also be considered. These phenomena alone would make it difficult to conceive those regimes as totalitarian. The variety of political actors, their different ambitions and their appropriation of parcels of power introduce an ambiguity surrounding the movement's supposed monopolistic

assumption of power. A similar ambiguity surrounds the different factions that arose as a result of the co-existence of the organizations that were created and inspired both by the movement and by others that were also influential in the system, but nonetheless not under its control. This alone would bring such regimes closer to the model of limited pluralism (or limited monism) that I have used to characterize authoritarian regimes.

The co-existence of different political tendencies that do not lie within the fascist movement, but pre-exist it and are antagonistic to its hegemony creates the conditions for various pre-existing social groups, institutions, interests, and individuals in the society to link up with these political actors and create an authoritarian regime. By this means, a degree of social pluralism – and, with it, the possibilities of independent development under a regime composed of these forces – can be maintained. This is why an evolution towards an authoritarian regime was inherently there from the beginning, despite the initial totalitarian ambition of the fascist movement, its relative success in imposing its hegemony and the assimilation of the language, style, and ideology of totalitarianism by other political forces. This is why the Franco regime, despite the strongly totalitarian tendencies of some of its early phases, evolved into what I have described for the 1960s as an authoritarian regime. In the case of a victory of the Axis powers, the evolution might have moved in a different direction; yet this would probably have required a change not only in the regime, but of the regime – including, perhaps, the displacement of Franco.<sup>27</sup>

In order to generate a movement and leadership that are committed to totalitarianism, something more than nationalism and the defence of a status quo is required.

It cannot be emphasized enough: the genesis of a regime during the process of breakdown of democracy (or a democratization process) shapes its future development. Without subscribing to an intentionalist conception assuming that the political actors involved have clear and prior ideas of the type of regime they will found, it is also true that the future development of a regime is conditioned by their initial ideas. The same is true for the initial constellation of political forces and resources. When travelling to Rome in 1922 to become prime minister, Mussolini probably did not have in mind the regime he would shape later as the Duce. If a variety of circumstances – the aftermath of the Matteoti murder, to mention only one – had not intervened, then the fascist regime with its totalitarian dimension might not have come into being. Nonetheless: the ideological baggage of Mussolini and the fascist movement in the early 1920s made those later developments possible, even likely. Turning to the ideas and actions of Franco in the crucial years of the Spanish Civil War and the building and consolidation of his power (as described by Javier Tusell), the creation of a totalitarian regime under his leadership seems unlikely – albeit possible, under some circumstances.

I would advance the hypothesis that it is difficult to imagine a transition to totalitarianism in the absence of a fascist movement that has enjoyed considerable success in mobilizing support prior to the power take-over and that has assumed a hegemonic position from the very beginning. Beyond Weimar Germany and the earlier Italy of Giolotti, I would say that only Romania had a chance of making such a development in inter-war Europe. As I have argued previously: 'Paradoxically, genuine fascist mass movements could only grow in the context of a liberal, democratic society committed to and recognizing the right to proselytize, regimes which until the middle 1930s found it difficult to restrict the fascists' activities' (by contrast to a number of authoritarian regimes).<sup>28</sup>

If we were to accept the idea that anti-democratic politics could lead to totalitarianism only on the basis of fascist ideology (leaving communism aside), we would have to look for the distinctive sources of fascist ideology and movements. Since Italian fascism was the first one and the inspiration for other fascisms, we cannot avoid asking: do factors that were unique to Italy account for the birth of *fascismo*? Although this is not the place to answer this question, I find sufficient evidence in the works on the intellectual-ideological climate and the mobilization that resulted from the nationalist interventionism and the nationalist war in order to answer in the affirmative.<sup>29</sup>

### **Was there a totalitarian potential in other anti-democratic ideologies and parties?**

Our argument would require proof that other anti-democratic ideologies,<sup>30</sup> parties, organizations, and leaders did not conceive a totalitarian system to be their goal and that the fascistization of those parties, leaders, etc., was not sufficient to create a totalitarian system. To prove this would require a case-by-case analysis, but I might refer briefly to some of fascism's most important anti-democratic competitors.

From its origins in the nineteenth century, political Catholicism evinced an ambivalent attitude to democracy – particularly to liberalism. This attitude prevailed even though what would later be known as Christian democracy was prepared to play a constructive role in democratic, pluralistic regimes in many countries (we have only to think of Belgium, Holland, Luxemburg and the Weimar Republic). Yet there were also Christian parties that emphasized such ideological traditions as the ideas of the corporate state and organic v. inorganic democracy; the hostility of such parties to liberalism and socialism, particularly Marxism, was not only intense but incompatible with a multi-party democracy in which those forces might become governing ones or in which stable government would require the formation of coalitions with a clerical party. A number of complex circumstances reinforced the anti-liberal, anti-socialist and consequently anti-democratic elements within those parties such that the idea of an

authoritarian solution to the crisis of the 1920s and 1930s became a real possibility that was advocated by some of their leaders.

Confronted with a deep economic and social crisis, with an ideological socialist party that had created a subculture that was antagonistic to traditional Catholicism, with a rising National Socialist movement, many followers of the Austrian Christian Social Party supported a conservative paramilitary organization influenced by Italian fascism. In the 1930s, that party saw itself required to establish an authoritarian corporatist state – one that incorporated the Austro-fascist, albeit anti-Nazi *Heimwehr*.<sup>31</sup> Established after a brief civil war in 1934, the Dollfuss-Schussnigg regime provided an alternative to the anti-clerical republic for the Spanish clerical party, the CEDA. This party's youth organization, the JAP, clearly advocated a regime like the Austrian one.<sup>32</sup> In Spain, opponents to clericalism, particularly the socialists, perceived this trend as the real threat to them and to democracy rather than the small fascist party of the Falange; as a result, they quickly identified the CEDA as Spanish fascism. Similar tendencies were not absent in the political Catholicism of other countries. Yet only in Portugal, Lithuania and in Slovakia (after the achievement of independence) was Catholic-inspired authoritarianism established.

The discussion of what has been called *nacional-catolicismo* to describe the Franco regime and the importance of Catholic conservative corporatist ideology in the *Estado Novo* in Portugal raises the question as to whether Catholic lay movements, with their integralist ideological conceptions and their organizational penetration of the society could not serve as the basis for a type of totalitarianism besides the fascist one. Because the regimes established in countries like Austria, Spain, and to some extent, Portugal, were close to the fascist powers and often competed with the fascist movements for the support of the same social bases, there was considerable mimicry, to the point that many observers spoke of a clerical fascism.

There is no doubt that the integralist conception of a harmonious, religious, corporatively organized society that excludes liberalism and socialism and controls the state possesses a considerable potential for another type of totalitarianism. Yet we would argue that there were inherent limits to such a tendency – limits derived from the fundamental characteristics of the Catholic Church as an institution. The universal Church was never able to identify fully and exclusively with the integralist model of a Catholic society; it had to leave room for alternative political philosophies and patterns of action that would also have been orthodox Catholic alternatives. This fact alone was a seed for the later crisis of authoritarian regimes in Spain, for example, where the Church played a major role. Ultimately, it is an inherent weakness of the development of any totalitarian dynamic if the legitimacy of a regime is built upon an ideology whose formulation and legitimacy is derived from sources beyond the control of the rulers – or, to use Weber's term, from 'heteronomous' sources.<sup>33</sup> The possibility that the universal Church, the Vatican and the pope might also support alternative

political formulations remained a constant obstacle. Besides this, whatever identification the Catholic political leadership and laymen possessing social and political power might have with such a regime, the Church as an institution has always tended to maintain some distance and independence; certainly, it has always demanded a degree of autonomy and respect for its representatives that is not always compatible with the interests of the political leadership. In the case of Spain, although national Catholicism became hegemonic in many respects, it was only one component of the coalition that created and supported the Franco regime. Others, including the fascist Falange, introduced an element of pluralism that protected some sectors of Spanish life from a total hegemony of national Catholicism. In a sense, the co-existence of the totalitarian ambitions of fascism with the totalitarian potential of national Catholicism became a factor in the regime's development towards authoritarianism rather than totalitarianism from a very early time-point.

Action Française was probably the most influential and largest movement of the radical right.<sup>34</sup> Its ideology found a resonance among the Portuguese Integralistas, the followers of Calvo Sotelo of *Renovación Española*, and in Latin America. Action Française has been considered a fascist or, at best, a proto-fascist movement. These movements remained elitist, generally unable to organize mass support and gain power. Although *Renovación Española* enjoyed great influence during the Franco regime and the Integralistas also did under the Salazar regime, neither articulated a totalitarian conception of politics and society.<sup>35</sup> Allied with the military and bureaucracy and supported by powerful economic interests, the non-democratic regimes established by such forces still could not develop into totalitarian systems. In some cases (as in Hungary), the radical right was even content with establishing pseudo-democratic regimes in which elements of the liberal tradition survived. The political leaders from the democratic period were simply incorporated or co-opted, and they did not allow a new political class enjoying popular support to emerge. They were too elitist to even attempt popular mass mobilization. In fact, they were fearful of this, which could be seen whenever their fascist allies attempted to incorporate the masses, the working class, into the regime.

There is, however, one anti-democratic, authoritarian and reactionary movement that possessed not only a popular and mobilized mass base, but links to the clergy and an integralist conception of society: the Spanish Carlists.<sup>36</sup> These distrusted the fascists as having been too secular; they distrusted even the conservative Christian democrats for their willingness to make compromises with non-religious parties in a democracy. As some have said about them, they were 'more papist than the pope'. The *Comunión Tradicionalista* and their militia, the *Requeté*, were the legacy of a counter-revolutionary, anti-liberal populist resistance during the civil wars of the nineteenth century. They aimed at the restoration of a pre-modern monarchy and a state based on traditional territorial units and laws. Had their support

not been fundamentally limited to Navarre and the Basque country, they would have established a polity that was socially and culturally stronger. With their enthusiasm and their local strength, they too were co-opted to form a subordinate element of the Franco coalition. To sum up, we might submit that, if few fascist movements were able to realize their totalitarian potential in establishing regimes that could be described as totalitarian, there was even less opportunity to establish totalitarian systems for other anti-democratic movements and groups in the context of the 1920s and 1930s in Europe. This should account for the phenomenon that these anti-democratic regimes, except for brief interludes, evolved in an authoritarian rather than a totalitarian direction.

Whereas authoritarian regimes were ultimately based on interests, fascism and totalitarianism were built on passion. The first reflected factions within the society, the latter a search for community; the first was 'cold', the latter was 'hot'.<sup>37</sup> Authoritarian regimes attracted the attention of a few scholars, mainly of law professors and economists, whereas the totalitarian regimes attracted that of intellectuals, writers and artists, aesthetes and moviegoers, students and the young. The fascination extends even to the students of the period, those who loathed totalitarianism for its horrors but struggled to understand it whereas they neglected authoritarian regimes, with their limited and largely passive support. Authoritarian regimes are interpreted as the product of particular societies, of their idiosyncrasies and historical legacies; they are described as 'ordinary dictatorships' rather than as part of the European crisis of the inter-war period. One could go even further: they were a response, one poorly articulated in intellectual terms, to the weaknesses and failures of democracy and capitalism and were presented as an alternative to the totalitarian passion. Going out on a limb, one could state that the conflict in the 'short' twentieth century was played out between four political alternatives: democracy, totalitarian fascism, totalitarian communism and authoritarian rule. Fascism and communism occupied centre stage, whereas democracy was relegated to the Atlantic periphery for a short time and authoritarianism to the less significant southern and eastern states. The democrats were against the authoritarian leaders for their disregard of freedom and human rights; the totalitarians scorned them for their lack of revolutionary mystique and defence of the existing social and economic order. Authoritarian rulers and their supporters, in turn, rejected fascism because they sensed its revolutionary ambitions and potential. As a result, they set to 'domesticating' it and sometimes repressed the fascist movements.

### **Anti-democratic politics in the inter-war years**

The 1920s witnessed the crisis of democracy and the rise of a number of dictatorships that had no relation to the genesis of fascist movements, the March on Rome, or the Italian fascist regime. This does not mean that,

once this regime was established, some of the politicians or the intellectuals connected with them would not have been interested in the Italian experience or have imported some ideas and institutions from Italy. This was true for such regimes created before Mussolini's rise to power as the Turkish Republic shaped by Atatürk and the Hungarian regime that was established after Bela Kun's Soviet republic was defeated. It is also true for the Primo de Rivera Coup of 1923, although some fascist influences became manifest at a later date, when a feeble attempt to institutionalize a 'civilian' dictatorship was made.

These regimes marked responses to crises that were quite varied: to a communist revolutionary dictatorship in the case of Hungary, to the hegemonic rule of a populist agrarian leader in that of Bulgaria. In Spain, the response of 1923 was to a mixture of crises: to defeat in a colonial war, social revolutionary unrest in Catalonia under anarcho-syndicalist leadership, and an unstable parliamentary regime. In these three cases, emphasis can be put on the social economic conflicts, so that a Marxist type of interpretation has some validity, even though nationalism also contributed to the crises in Bulgaria, Macedonia and Catalonia. Paradoxically, however, the counter-revolutionary regime in Hungary was a semi-democratic one up to and including the 1930s; it would therefore retain more traditional liberal values, institutions and practices than most authoritarian regimes. Writing of the regime under the extreme right = wing prime minister, Gyula Gombos, István Deák very nicely captures the politico-social pluralism of Horthy's Hungary in 1932:

A pattern was actually set at that time wherein Hungary was governed by people who publicly claimed to represent one and the same right-wing ideology, but who in reality were divided into two distinct camps: one radical and fascistic, which we might call the New Right, and the other conservative with liberal inclinations, which we might call the Old Right. The division ran right through the Government Party, with the right-wing element in this right-wing party secretly collaborating with the openly fascist parties. On the other hand, the liberal and left wing parties, which were diminishing in size with every election, had no choice but to support the moderates in the Government Party. Thus, in the crazy quilt of Hungarian Politics, we find in one camp Social Democrats, peasant politicians, archconservative royalists, rich Jewish liberals, mildly anti-Semitic counterrevolutionary politicians, and such Hungarian racists for whom the German minority in Hungary and Nazi imperialism represented more of a threat than the Jews. In the other camp were pro-German counterrevolutionary politicians, most of the army officers, fascist ideologues, rabid anti-Semites, much of the non-Jewish middle class and petite bourgeoisie, and masses of poor people for whom National Socialism promised salvation from oppression by Jewish capitalists and aristocratic landowners.<sup>38</sup>



It would be difficult to account in Marxist terms for Pilsudski's 'military demonstration', which toppled a centre-right government in part through support of the trade unions, even though the semi-dictatorship would subsequently turn out to be conservative.

Even though there are some similarities between the crisis of democracy or democratization in Eastern Europe and the Balkans and Southern Europe there are significant differences. Moving from the nineteenth century through World War I and the inter-war years that produced the authoritarian threats and regimes, Edward Malefakis<sup>39</sup> has shown both the similarities and the differences among the four Southern European states; he has also shown the unique appeal of anti-democratic nationalism and the rise of fascism in Italy. Again, the impact of World War I and its aftermath is central, particularly in Greece, as is the greater mobilization and assertiveness of the left and the working class in Italy and Spain.

In nations that had been recently defeated and in countries that were struggling for their independence and were often composed of various different political cultures and traditional elites, as in the case of Poland, the crises cannot be understood simply in terms of social economic conflicts or economic underdevelopment. Those factors contribute to an account explaining the turn to authoritarian regimes; but they also help explain the rise of fascist movements, which were sometimes opposed to the authoritarian regimes.

### **Statehood, national identity and the crisis of democracy**

Any analysis of the breakdown or crisis of democracy in the interwar years must consider: (1) the powerful emotions and interests linked to the definition of the nation; (2) the ambiguities of the national identity of citizens in the presence of ethnic and linguistic minorities; (3) the massive displacement of populations (for example, in Greece and Rumania) after the war; (4) the instability of the borders of the state as a result of international power relations; and (5) the resulting saliency of irredentism.

The problems of the new states have been formulated well by Furet:

The people who negotiated that treaty [of Versailles] (and the series of treaties related to it) were the virtual trustees of promises born of the war. Constricted by the quarrels of 'nationalities' and the memories of 1848, which revived half-forgotten passions, they multiplied Slavic states on the ruins of vanquished Germanism, creating everywhere – from Warsaw to Prague, from Bucharest and Belgrade – unlikely parliamentary republics in which the French bourgeois radicals believed themselves to be replanting their traditions though they were merely exporting their form of government. More than a European peace, the treaties of 1919–20 constituted a European revolution. They erased the history of the second half of the nineteenth century to the benefit of a

new, abstract division of Europe into small, multi-ethnic states that merely reproduced the shortcomings of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Those little states were as divided within their new frontiers as they had been within the old, and were separated from one another by even greater hostility than they had experienced under German or Hungarian domination. The allies had miniaturized national hatred in the name of the principle of nationhood.

What the Allies had tried [to] do with these improvised, poor, and divided states, most of which contained sizable German populations, was to make them the eastern belt of Anglo-French preponderance in Europe. The October Revolution had liquidated Russia's traditional role as an element of European equilibrium, so that Soviet Russia, far from playing – with Britain's blessing – fraternal policeman to the Slavic nations and the great power to the east, had become the pole of the Communist revolution. The new, composite countries carved out of Central and Eastern Europe immediately had to assume a twofold historical function that was too heavy for them: to stand guard both to the east, against Soviet messianic, and to the west, against Germany – a Germany defeated, disarmed, and broken but still to be feared, and occupying a place more central than ever in the politics of Europe.<sup>40</sup>

In practically all the new states, the dominant nationality conceived the state as a nation-state. Yet 'nation-building' policies alienated the national minorities. The difficulty of consolidating democracy was closely related to those facts. In my work on the breakdown of democracies that was focused on Western Europe, I did emphasize this dimension, one that is central to the volume of essays edited by Erwin Oberländer: *Autoritäre Regime in Ostmittel-und Südosteuropa 1919–1949*.<sup>41</sup>

Almost all countries experienced changes in their borders, ones that left behind irredenta, minorities, and refugees whose heightened sense of national identity would cause them to question the international order that had been created by the victors or by powerful arbiters in state-nationality conflicts. It did not help much that victorious Western democracies and rich countries had imposed their order and attempted to guarantee it through the League of Nations; for this only invited demagogic appeals against plutocratic democracies and the governments that were willing to cooperate with them.

To the extent that the 'stateness' issue and the definition of the national identity remained unresolved, the governments – whether elected or not – could have been accused of having betraying the state or national interest.

The authoritarian regimes in Eastern Europe, even if they were illiberal and repressive, are not viewed even today as having been as illegitimate as those in Western Europe. Pilsudski, Ulmanis, Pats, Horthy, even Antonescu and Tisso are chapters of the national history that are not always seen negatively. Their role in the struggle for national independence and the fact they were victims of external enemies contributes to this.

**'Ordinary' dictatorships or authoritarian regimes**

Some non-democratic governments of the inter-war years conceived themselves as dictatorships in the traditional – we might say Roman – conception of an interim government that suspends a constitution and civil liberties presumably in order to restore them in a near future. The proclamation of General Primo de Rivera in Spain in 1923 fitted this conception – at least initially. It was a dictatorship that did not intend to create a regime. The same can be said for Estonia and Latvia. However, most dictatorships moved towards establishing their own distinct institutions, tending to abolish rather than merely suspend the constitution and to create a new regime. In the late 1920s, particularly in the 1930s, those 'régimes d'exception' that would have become ordinary dictatorships in another context often became authoritarian regimes.<sup>42</sup> The presence of fascism and in some cases of a fascist component made them different.

In a number of authoritarian regimes, the military and royal dictatorships in particular, but also the few in which a civilian politician of the democratic period assumes dictatorial powers, one finds an allergy to parties. Initially, there is sometimes a suspension or outlawing of all parties including (paradoxically) even those that support the dictatorship. Occasionally, a no-party regime with a more corporative system of representation is the choice. Yet there are pressures to have a single party, one that is sometimes created from above as a civic movement and to invite those who support the regime to join it (office-holders and civil servants are likely to join).<sup>43</sup>

Otto Bauer, a leading Austro-Marxist in 1936, describes such a party, the Vaterländische Front of the Austrian authoritarian regime:

The Vaterländische Front did not, therefore ... issue from a popular mass movement like the Fascist Party of Italy and the National Socialist Party of Germany, but was instead invented and founded by the government and forced upon the masses of the people through use of the means of power of the state. In reality, Fascism is not the natural product of elementary mass movements and the class struggle here, but rather an artefact that the legal state power has placed upon the people.

The head of the ministry, Heft, by the way, the same that had so decisively cooperated in the pseudo-legal establishment of the dictatorial regime, judged similarly about the Vaterländische Front:

It will, in terms of its entire development and composition, never lose its character as an Austrian club with its specific Viennese coffee-house character. It is impossible that the Christian Social Party, the *Heimwehr*, the individual parts of the nationalist front will truly be absorbed by it, that from it will form a single, unified Austrian powerful people's movement. Despite the existence of the Vaterländische Front, the

authority of the regime is based, not on a mass mandate to lead, but on the will of the government to use the measure of power that it possesses to the limit of the possible.<sup>44</sup>

In the presence of parties that identify with the authoritarian alternative, there will be an effort to incorporate them, and in some cases the creation of a unified party rather than an appeal to only one of them (which would create a dependence on one). Authoritarian rulers are, therefore, not very likely to grant a fascist party the status of a single party, but will instead absorb it into a new, more heterogeneous organization.

The particular authoritarian regimes were typically divided on the question as to whether the institutions inherited<sup>45</sup> from the liberal-democrat constitutional past should be retained or corporatist chambers introducing 'organic democracy' and a single party with its own chamber should be introduced instead. In some instances, they combined those different elements in an unsteady arrangement; indeed, this is one of the elements of limited pluralism. Hungary retained the facade of a limited democracy; Portugal added the corporative chamber to some of the institutions it had inherited from the past – the *Asamblea Nacional*, for example; yet nobody represented the single party that dominated the national assembly. Franco's Spain started with only a *Consejo Nacional* in which the appointed representatives of the parties fused within the one party and some members of the military sat; the Cortes were added to in 1942, as a partly corporative chamber. Nevertheless, in spite of the rejection of the idea of parties, none of the authoritarian regimes of the inter-war years in Europe was organized as a party organization that sometimes called itself a 'movement' (Bulgaria after 1934 was the exception). The closer a regime approached the fascist model, the greater was the role it assigned to the party and its ancillary organizations.

Almost all the authoritarian regimes considered and introduced some corporatist institutions, even though their development was often delayed and their political significance limited. To them, corporatism was one of the attractions of Italian fascism,<sup>46</sup> whereas they had greater doubts about the role of a single disciplined ideological party. They invoked the idea of an 'organic democracy' as an alternative to 'inorganic' party democracy. Obviously, none of the governments were required to enjoy the confidence of those corporative chambers, which were indirectly elected and de facto largely appointed by the government. As an added attraction of corporatism, liberal democrats, social democrats, Christian democrats and 'pluralist' intellectuals had advocated corporatist institutions to complement parliamentary democracy. This ideological *Ideenkreis* was tangential to fascism, authoritarianism and democracy. For many authoritarians, corporatism was the main attraction of fascism. (A parallel here would have been the attraction exerted by Yugoslav self-management to many who were far from sympathetic to communist rule.)

### **Crisis and breakdown of democracy**

In my 1976 work on the breakdown of democracy, I emphasized the strong element of contingency using the dictum of Friedrich Meinecke: 'Dies war nicht notwendig'. Since that time, important works by Rueschemeyer, Huber Stephens and, more recently, a collection of case studies having a common framework and directed by Berg-Schlosser have appeared.<sup>47</sup> Both have a more sociological and, therefore, a more structural perspective that leaves less room for contingency. Both focus on the breakdown, somewhat less on fascism, and even less on the type of regime that was installed after the breakdown. The latter two problems are just as, if not more, subject to contingency. The brilliant *histoire evidentielle* by Henry Turner<sup>48</sup> – whose focus on the small group of men that brought Hitler to the chancellorship in January of 1933 coincides with my own analysis of the small groups, my 'small c's', in the final stages of a breakdown – highlights the importance of contingency and individual actors rather than of structural macro-social factors.

In my book, I have noted that it was often not the strength of the anti-democratic parties, but the failure of the democratic leadership to prevent a loss of power that created a power vacuum that preceded the transfer of power, which in turn led to the breakdown. In the case of the breakdowns that occurred before the 1930s and even later in the Balkans and Eastern Europe, the same holds even truer. Failure of the liberal-democratic political class and governmental instability or inefficacy were even more important; these allowed small groups of conspirators to end democracy or democratization with the passive acquiescence of kings, non-conspiratorial militaries and populations that were unwilling to support the regime and even welcomed the dictatorships with a sense of relief and even hope. The high level of political mobilization and polarization in Italy and, later, in Germany, Austria and Spain (1936) should not be generalized to the Spain of 1923 or to Poland, Portugal or the Baltics in the 1920s. In those cases, the crisis was as much, or more, political than it was social or economic; politicians even often created it.

Looking back on my 1978 work on breakdown, on the cases of re-equilibration in crises and on the survival of democracy, as well as on the important scholarly contributions that have been made since then, I would hold to my multi-causal and dynamic approach.<sup>49</sup> If I were forced to privilege certain factors, however, then I would still emphasize the problems of the legitimacy of the democratic institutions and the state as well as the role of political actors. The extent to which people believed that democracy offers a better way in which to organize political life and legitimate those governing than any other alternative does was crucial. The willingness or capacity of those who were not committed to an anti-democratic ideological alternative to postpone their legitimate conflicts in order to assure governability was also very important. Even more important was the presence of semi-loyal

political actors who were strategically situated and prepared to collaborate with or justify anti-democratic movements and actors.

The authoritarian regimes in the 1920s and even some in the 1930s were established by a coup d'état that was either initiated or accepted by those in power, and this generally with the support or acquiescence of the military. In the 1920s, only the Hungarian Horthy-Bethlen regime was born during a civil war (with foreign support) against the communists. Later, in the 1930s, the authoritarian turn of the Austrian government encountered a popular resistance that was articulated by the social democratic party and led to a brief civil war and a Nazi putsch that was defeated.

Only in Spain was the establishment of authoritarian rule the result of a long and bloody civil war. This is not the place to analyze the reasons for this unique development, except to call attention to a few decisive differences. The coup was not initiated by a government, but by a military uprising against a left-bourgeois minority government. It took place in a relatively industrialized Western society that possessed well organized working-class movements that shared, in part, a revolutionary ideology; in the cities and on the countryside, there was a class-conscious conservative middle class that felt threatened. By 1936, the European experience of fascism, of dictatorship and of the defeat of the working class generated a high level of polarization and readiness to fight. The military revolts did not succeed in gaining power; the government was either supported or left unhindered by critical sectors of the armed forces and the police, as well as by rapid mobilization of anarchist, socialist and communist militias. The failure of the putsch immediately led to the mobilization of civilian volunteers, particularly of Carlists and Falangists. The social revolution that had been unleashed on the republican side, combined with the counter-revolution, with all its violence, that had been unleashed on the side of the rebels, would turn what might have been a successful coup d'état into a civil war that had no parallel in other countries between 1918 and 1939. The victorious Franco would also establish an authoritarian rule that was more exclusionary and repressive than those of Hungary, Poland, Portugal, Bulgaria, the Baltic states or even Austria (1934–38). Contrary to a 'functionalist' understanding of totalitarianism, one interpreting it as the response to the mobilization and resistance of the working class and democrats, this was not the case here.

Greece is a thorn in my side, because, according to my scheme that attempts to account for the rise of fascism, it should have had a significant fascist movement but did not. If we consider many sociological and economic explanations for the breakdown of democracy, it is not fully clear that this should have happened unless we consider the political factors: the legitimacy of the regime, the conflict between the monarchy and the republic, the disunity of the political leadership, and the role of the army as the result of the prolonged state-building during several wars.

In some authoritarian regimes of the inter-war years, we find many traces of ideologies that struggled more or less effectively for hegemony and could have led to a totalitarian outcome. Totalitarianism was prevented by certain key factors: the fact that no one ideology was granted full control by rulers who possessed no charismatic appeal to an organized following and who were interested in personal power, protecting different interests and playing them against each other. Added to this were such complex social-structural characteristics as the relative autonomy of the Church and the military. Let it be noted that this relative autonomy prevented neither repression nor the exclusion from public discourse of many values and ideas. This did not require the hegemony of one dominant and relatively integrated and single set of ideas; and it certainly did not require mobilization and participation.

### **Royal dictatorships**

One particular feature of authoritarian regimes in the Balkans was that, in Romania, Bulgaria, Yugoslavia and Greece, a king was the head of state and assumed a role in governing that was more or less direct.<sup>50</sup> Previously, these kings had ruled as constitutional parliamentary monarchs that supported oligarchic parties and politicians. It is important to remember that they did not displace working parliamentary liberal-democratic regimes in that monarchs already played a decisive role, whether constitutionally or in practice. They contributed to the making and unmaking of cabinets; they granted power to prime ministers and parties and called elections that were largely manipulated. The assumption of fuller powers by the kings and/or by the politicians that enjoyed their support did not represent a dramatic discontinuity – even though such actors suspended constitutions and civil liberties, closed parliament, and outlawed some parties. In some cases, they went further and enacted authoritarian constitutions, created corporative systems and formally established single-parties; in doing so, they relied on a complex social pluralism, the co-opting of politicians of the old parties and efforts to negotiate with and subordinate a radical right fascist movement. When the latter effort failed, they could turn to brutal repression, as in Romania, which in turn unleashed the same terrorist violence that later delegitimated the regime. Sometimes, they were forced to turn their power over to anti-democratic military leaders and, in a few cases, to allow fascist movements to participate in power. The personality and power of the kings contributed to the shaping of these regimes and their policies, as well as their international sympathies. Without question, not only their presence but also the complex ‘court’ politics limited the potential for totalitarianism. ‘Royal dictatorships’ have an inherent stability; the king is ultimately suspicious of the dictator’s accumulation of independent power. The dictator, for his part, is suspicious of the king and those who may influence him, that they might question or threaten his position.

Due to the traditional link between the 'commander in chief' and the armed forces, the anti-democratic option generally involves the military in a monarchy. A military dictatorship or a civilian authoritarian regime that is backed by the king is likely to preserve a considerable pluralism rather than seek social and ideological hegemony.

Only in Italy and Romania did the kings face strong fascist movements. In Italy, fascism had initially been republican, but Mussolini was ready to compromise with the monarchy. In a crucial moment, Vittorio Emanuele was ready to appoint him prime minister; this initiated the many years of collaboration that would end with the dismissal of the Duce in 1943 and his arrest at the gate of Villa Savoia. The degree to which the monarchy limited the fascist totalitarianism is a complex issue. In Romania, King Carol established his own authoritarian rule rather than calling the Iron Guard into power; he further allowed the brutal repression of the movement.

Are monarchs different as dictators or supporters of dictatorial regimes? We might advance the hypothesis that kings are more likely to act opportunistically, since they might well believe that their residual legitimacy would allow them to change course and dismiss their authoritarian collaborators, shifting the blame on them. Although they would not always succeed in doing so, they could 'dismount the tiger' more easily than other dictators could. Nevertheless, they (like Alfonso XIII in Spain) had to abdicate in the process after a short interregnum. And (with Umberto unable to assure the continuity of the Savoy dynasty or King Constantine that of the monarchy in Greece) the institution was delegitimated in the end. In some way, these kings were in the same position as the armed forces that were able to distinguish themselves as an institution from the military as an instrument of government by returning to the barracks (as in Greece and Latin American dictatorships in recent years); this occurred, however, at the cost of their legitimacy.

### **Why authoritarian rather than totalitarian regimes?**

Why were so many regimes authoritarian rather than totalitarian? The simplest answer would be that, when the crisis of democracy or of constitutional liberal regimes in transition to democracy became acute, there was no significant fascist party to take power or to be co-opted. Yet that would only return us to the question of why fascist parties would have been either successful or unsuccessful before the crisis. I have tried to answer this question elsewhere.<sup>51</sup>

A very different approach, one more congruent with structuralist (and Marxist) interpretations, would state that there was little or no need for the penetration of the society by a single party and its organizations in order to ensure control; the police and the army sufficed. This explanation would measure the relative weakness or strength of the labour movement and/or of the civil society's commitment to democracy.



Another approach would be offered by a cultural interpretation: the nationalist consensus against ethnic minorities and/or a potential foreign threat would be regarded as sufficient to assure a passive consensus. Such would be the case with Poland in the 1920s and the Baltic republics in the 1930s.

An authoritarian alternative to democracy – or an oligarchic liberal regime – can succeed only with the support or acquiescence of the armed forces. Division of armed forces between those that are loyal to the democratic regime and those that are ‘putschists’, as well as divisions based on ideological sympathies are likely to result in civil war. When opposition to an authoritarian alternative has been strong, the army has almost inevitably had to intervene directly and has likely assumed power.

The limited pluralism that was tolerated by authoritarian regimes of Eastern European states was not limited to overt or covert heterogeneous alliances made within the ruling group, the official party; for long periods, it even allowed the existence of some opposition parties. These could participate in elections, but were not supposed to win. Only the communists were outlawed everywhere. These opposition parties demanded a return to parliamentary rule and fairer competition – which shows that, at some point, the regimes were more exclusive than inclusive. The transitions to more authoritarian rule were more gradual, and there is often no precise date that symbolizes the break between a liberal, pseudo-democratic rule that is more or less constitutional and the creation of a fully authoritarian regime.

In our analysis, we should note how the surviving traditional conservative liberal ruling class (or group and personalities), although it prevented the transition to democracy, also opposed modern authoritarianism. The case of Hungary is paradigmatic: many conditions for the rule of fascism were present. As electoral data show, moreover, the fascist parties gained inordinate strength. Yet unity and a capacity for elite settlements prevented their assumption of power. Only the war, the defeat, and the German presence allowed them to gain power for a short time – with terrible consequences. A symbol of the conflict between the moderate conservative elite, one that was more or less liberal, and the new forces was the demise of Regent Admiral Horthy in a Nazi concentration camp.

Authoritarian regimes were counter-revolutionary, or at least conservative. Men who had been formed in the nineteenth century generally led them. (Pilsudski was born 1867, Horthy in 1868, Pats, Ulmanis and Smetona in 1874, Miguel Primo de Rivera and Pétain in 1870.) Fascism, by contrast, was revolutionary and deeply hostile to the values of that century. It was anti-bourgeois, populist rather than aristocratic and led by a new, younger generation of leaders. (Mussolini was born in 1883, Hitler in 1889, Codreanu in 1900, Rolao Preto in 1896 and Jose Antonio Primo de Rivera in 1903). The heads and promoters of authoritarian regimes – the Balkan kings, Admiral Horthy, old-time politicians like Count Bethelen, military leaders like Pilsudski, Pétain, and Franco – had their own power bases.

Their institutional position, their prestige among the elites and their own peers, were sufficient to consolidate their power. As for their active opponents – specifically, the organized working class – repression was generally sufficient. On the other hand, civilian leaders that did not come from the establishment could only gain power and consolidate it by creating a mass movement, a party, its militias and ancillary organizations. This fact also provided those leaders and their followers with the possibility and incentive to penetrate and mobilize civil society, a process that opened the door, in turn, to totalitarian ambitions and conceptions of society.

Authoritarian rulers had generally been educated and trained in traditional institutions: in military academies and universities. Their life before coming to power had been in their professions, which in some cases involved a full-time activity that probably left little time for political activism.

The founders of many fascist parties did not have much, if any, formal education before or after World War I. They were autodidacts: Mussolini through his involvement in the socialist party, his activity as a journalist and his own intellectual ambitions to be a writer had a somewhat broader horizon. Hitler's range was much narrower. Only some of the later fascist leaders in France and Spain – leaders that were actually unsuccessful – had a broader and more respectable intellectual background.

While strongly inclined to give proper weight to agency, leadership, personality and conjuncture – even to historical accident – with regard to the uncertain situations that surrounded the breakdown of democracy, I would be the last to ignore structural factors. The question is, though: what kind of structural factors? I would tend to prioritize the political structural factors. For example, I would question the possibility that a non-democratic leader and his immediate followers could assume power and succeed in establishing a totalitarian regime without first having a party that possessed some roots and a significant degree of support – except in cases for which all other groups and institutions are in crisis or delegitimated. Although fascist leaders might have been able to gain power and to destroy and repress their opponents with German support, they were not able to achieve the totalitarian control and mobilization of the society.

The authoritarian regimes of many European countries during the inter-war years can be explained largely in terms of specific national crises and circumstances. Class conflicts, ethnic strife and political schisms – like the one between the monarchy and the republic in Greece – secularism and clericalism, are more or less central and sufficient explanations. The coming to power of communism and Lenin in Russia, of fascism and Mussolini in Italy and Nazism and Hitler in Germany cannot be fully understood in the absence of a much more complex analysis. The great achievement of the distinguished historian of the French Revolution, François Furet, was to draw out to the historical parallels that existed between these two antagonistic movements that were born of the crisis of World War I and to emphasize both their common hatred of the values of the liberal bourgeois

nineteenth century and their Machiavellian mobilization of the masses. This is why Furet also works with the category of totalitarianism. It is also the reason why an exclusive projection of the category of a struggle between fascism and communism onto conflicts in such countries as Spain leads to a false understanding of this conflict.<sup>52</sup>

With good reason, the breakdown of democracy in Germany and the coming to power of Hitler and the NSDAP has gained the most attention of all the cases. It might be argued that, had German democracy survived the crisis of the 1930s, authoritarian regimes would have existed throughout Eastern Europe, in the Balkans, in Portugal and perhaps even in Spain; besides these, of course, there was the Soviet Union and fascist Italy. One might even go so far as to argue that, without World War II, authoritarian regimes that possessed a fascist streak, veneer or component would have survived in much of Europe for a long time. Paradoxically, therefore, not all of Europe would have become democratic. A German republic – perhaps after an authoritarian interlude – might have been less committed to democracy than the Bonn (and now, the Berlin) republic was.

### **Why totalitarianism?**

It is not difficult to explain why the crisis and breakdown of democracy or liberal constitutional parliamentarianism would have led to one authoritarian regime or another. It is much more difficult to account for the rise of successful mass fascist movements and the impulse towards totalitarianism. Since this is not the place to review the rich literature on totalitarian movements and totalitarianism, we will only highlight a few themes.

One argument that is central to this essay is that totalitarianism would not have developed in absence of a fascist movement west of the Soviet border. Explanations for the rise and success of fascist movements in the strict sense are, therefore, a first step. The second step would be to explain the incapacity of the democratic parties and leaders to defend the democratic institutions and prevent the breakdown. In light of the resistance of authoritarian regimes to fascist movements, of the repression of such movements in a number of countries and their cooptation and ‘domestication’ in others, an explanation of the absence or failure of the authoritarian regimes becomes a third step. Yet these three perspectives still leave open the question as to why the totalitarian alternative would have been so appealing and successful.

Those scholars who have studied the German catastrophe have treated the third point. These ask why the presidential governments of 1931–33 – governments that already marked a break with Weimar democracy – did not lead to a military-bureaucratic-conservative authoritarian regime rather than to Hitler’s chancellorship on 30 January 1933. Was it solely the massive support, the organizational strength, the appeal of the *Bewegung*, the charismatic appeal and political skills of Hitler that made such an

alternative impossible? Or was it, rather, the misperception of Nazism by its contemporaries? Although it was possible to misunderstand the significance of Mussolini's attainment of power, this would have been more difficult in the case of Hitler. Rereading the history of the period prior to the point when Hitler was sworn in as chancellor on 30 January 1933, the following question comes to mind: why did democratic politicians, union leaders and conservatives not learn from the Italian experience more than a decade earlier? Whereas it is understandable that Italian opinion considered the first Mussolini cabinet to have been merely one more exemplar in the unstable politics of the period, it is less understandable that Hitler's appointment would have been received with similar self-deception and passivity. Perhaps the rule of Mussolini had not revealed yet the novelty of totalitarianism and was still regarded as one of the authoritarian takeovers of the 1920s. Alternatively, distinctive elements of the German situation may have precluded the establishment of an authoritarian regime by which to counter Hitler. Hindenburg was not the man to make that decision; nor was the German military either motivated or capable of having supported such an option in that it was not particularly congruent with their traditions and their view of their mission.

We should also not forget that, in Italy, the crisis of parliamentary democracy led to Mussolini's cabinet. Although this certainly resulted from the threat of fascist violence, many perceived it as one further provisional solution. Only slowly did it result in the elimination of all parties, in the hegemony of the fascists and the unfolding of the totalitarian potential.

The case of Germany is different, in that the crisis of the parliamentary republic resulted in the ambiguous rule of the presidential cabinet – an authoritarian situation, not a regime. This, however, did not lead to an authoritarian conservative regime, but to the appointment of Hitler, who rapidly moved it in the totalitarian direction. The next question is the following: why did the crisis of democracy not lead to an authoritarian regime? As Henry Turner writes:

It was Germany's misfortune that at the moment when military rule offered the best available alternative to Hitler's acquisition of power the general who stood at the head of the government lacked both the ability and the will to grasp the opportunity.

No overt coup d'état of the kind likely to galvanize popular resistance would have been necessary to circumvent the constitution and establish military rule in early 1933. Government by presidential emergency decree during the previous three years provided an ideal political device for gradual transition to an out-and-out authoritarian regime.<sup>53</sup>

The same counterfactual question might be asked as to what would have happened if the King had granted *Facta* the emergency powers necessary to stop the March on Rome. Although this might not even have led to an

authoritarian solution, it certainly would have broken the spell of Mussolini's drive to power. It is conceivable that a government with a parliamentary base and emergency powers would not have resulted in an authoritarian regime. To repress the fascist squadrist domination of part of the country might have been bloody, perhaps even bloodier than a rule legitimated by the president that would have attempted to hold the SA back from rebellion.

Turner speculates that, if Hitler had failed, it might have provoked a crisis in the NSDAP and Hitler may have committed suicide more than a decade earlier. In an equally speculative vein, one might wonder whether or not Mussolini, after some time, may not have ended up merely as one further politician in the system.

Once a series of factors that could have prevented a totalitarian movement and its leader from coming to power have been eliminated, we might turn to the question as to why a totalitarian alternative would have emerged and become successful. Here, the unique characteristics of a genuinely fascist party become central: the appeal of the leader in particular (which we shall discuss later), as well as the unique characteristics of Italian and especially German society. Assuming that the essential element of totalitarianism is ideology, the cultural matrix in which the ideology – a bastardized cultural product – could have emerged was significant in both countries.

A complex factor is represented by the intellectual crisis that is associated with modernity and the *fin de siècle* and that expresses itself in the efforts of the intellectual elite to explain and counter the frustration of backwardness and/or decadence. The ideas developed thereby led to a rejection of the Western democratic liberal path and the search for a genuine national revolution. The 'palingenesis theory' of fascism, one holding it to be a theory of rebirth, would fit here.<sup>54</sup>

The richness of intellectual life became significant. This does not mean that the intellectuals would have played a leading role in the implementation of a totalitarian utopia, that their ideas would have guided policy, but that their ideas as they had been incorporated, manipulated, distorted or bastardized by activists became important. In a sense, the German *Sonderweg*, the rich but confused culture of the German middle class, made ideological politics – even 'political religions' – seem both possible and perhaps even necessary as a means by which to legitimize non-democratic and illiberal rule. The paradox whereby a society that was so rich in cultural terms succumbed to totalitarianism would thereby become less paradoxical. Many Germans were ready to identify – to what extent and for how long is another question – with the Nazi syncretism of part of their cultural heritage, with the rhetoric and the aesthetics of the movement. In this context, the secularization of the society comes into play. For it is this that creates a space for ideology, even for a 'political religion'.

It is important to emphasize that, in both the German cultural tradition and the 'los von Weimar' milieu, many strands of thinking – besides the diffuse anti-Semitism – were incorporated into the Nazi appeal in order to

make the totalitarian utopia possible. One such strand was the yearning for *Gemeinschaft*, for community; whereby this desire was linked with an idealization of 'conflictless' pre-industrial peasant and small-town society. These ideas were all hostile to a complex, modern liberal-democratic view of society in which there was not only class conflict, but an urban-metropolitan culture.<sup>55</sup>

Central to the fascist drive for power was a new type of party, one that combined the organization for participation in elections (in democratic or quasi-democratic regimes) with violent militia organizations: the Squadrismo, the SA and SS, etc. Due to their experience in war and after the war, former soldiers on the front, the Arditi, the Freikorps, the White Guards in the lands bordering on the USSR and the unemployed youth provided the cadres and activists for the violence. Intellectual currents exalting activism, heroism, enthusiasm and irrationalism against the traditional bourgeois values and way of life – as, for example, were articulated in Sorel's *Reflections on Violence* and his theory of myth – combined with the idea of an avant-garde legitimated this new style of politics. This new style served not only to defeat and disorganize its opponents, but also to intimidate the establishment and the authorities into hoping that it could co-opt or domesticate the new force rather than have to resist it using the resources of the state.

A specifically Italian political style arose after the struggles for unification: the myths of Garibaldi, the syndicalist tradition, the incredible mobilization of the heterogeneous coalition of interventionists and its presence on the piazza, the rhetoric of futurism and D'Annunzio, later of Mussolini and fascism (but also of maximalist socialism), the radical nationalism and the imperialist dreams. Taken together, these all produced the climate in which fascism could appear as a new kind of politics. Any attempt to understand *fascismo* and Mussolini must focus on the intellectual development of radical nationalism, the forces that converged in interventionism (forces that are nicely summarized by Griffin), the beginnings of a revolution with the *maggio radioso* of 1915 and the hostility to the politicians who opposed the war – particularly to Giolitti.

It is emblematic that, in January 1915, the Spanish philosopher Ortega y Gasset could write about the symbolism surrounding the raising of Garibaldi's red shirt in a Roman piazza as follows: 'Blessed the Italians, for whose eyes a raised red shirt or vest proclaims an unlimited hope that opens up!'<sup>56</sup> This hope would provide the basis for a nationalism of war that would shape the Italians; it would be the seed from which a new style of politics would grow, a style the institutions and the political class in parliament could neither channel nor resist. It was a unique political revolution.

Those who were committed to the totalitarian project came to power using violence. Equally or even more important, however, was the enthusiasm of cadres and followers, the rewards provided for their loyalty, as well as the successes in internal policy and, initially, in foreign policy. The full

development of the coercive character of the regime, the fear that prevented resistance and the determination to crush any resistance, was the result of the total control that was achieved. It was a consequence of totalitarianism. The stability of authoritarian regimes, which operated using less repression, suggests that the surplus of wanton, inhuman terror against a largely acquiescent population was unnecessary, except to destroy the autonomy of individuals and society. Such terror ultimately became an end in itself, even though its roots lay in the ideological utopia.

The temporary success of totalitarian regimes was based on a combination of: (1) the faith and commitment of those who had brought them into power, (2) their real or apparent achievements, compared to the governments that preceded them, both internally and internationally, (3) the opportunism and passive support of a large part of the population, and (4) the fear that was associated with the state's unlimited capacity for terror, a terror implemented not only by the state, but by the party and the ordinary citizens that cooperated with them. The weight of each of those factors varied from country to country, very much over time. It would, therefore, be wrong to characterize the regimes by emphasizing only one of them.

### **The role of intellectuals and ideas**

Few of the significant thinkers and intellectuals of the period were directly responsible for the breakdown either of the liberal democracies or of the authoritarian and totalitarian regimes. There is no doubt, however, that they were indirectly responsible by their contribution to the debunking of political democracy, liberalism, parliamentarianism, and their vague but appealing utopian alternatives, by their support at one point or another (sometimes with mental reservations) for the anti-democratic regimes and even more for the totalitarian mass movements of the right and the left. A few, like Gaetano Mosca in a famous speech, even said so when they saw what was coming.<sup>57</sup>

What is more striking and has been revealed by many scholars studying the period is the very small number of people that articulated a clear and committed defence of liberal democracy from 1918 (even from the turn of the century) to the 1940s. My work has not focused on the contribution of anti-democratic ideas to the disasters of this period (it has only touched upon it); this provides an additional reason to ask the reader to turn to Bracher, Gentile, Sontheimer, Sternhell, Furet<sup>58</sup> and Raymond Aron and Hannah Arendt before them. All these have contributed to our understanding of the intellectual climate in which the politico-social processes (the focus of this investigation) occurred. Ideas – some of them even valuable – did not cause the disaster. That said, their ambiguity, their negation of the values of civilized liberal politics and of genuine political democracy, together with a formulation of them that was irresponsible in

part: taken together, these allowed the great *simplificateurs* to manipulate the masses and legitimize the regimes under discussion here.

The role played by the intellectuals has been described very well by Edgar Jung, one of those intellectuals who soon became disenchanted with and critical of the Nazis, and who was murdered on the Night of the Long Knives in 1934:

The intellectual preconditions for the German revolution were created outside of National Socialism. National Socialism has, to a certain extent, taken on the 'people's movement on paper' in this community of great works (that is, the revolutionary powers, the constitution). It has built it up in a grandiose way and has become a proud power. We are not only pleased about this, but we have ourselves contributed our part to this growth. In unspeakably detailed work, particularly within the educated estates, we have created the preconditions for that day on which the German people gave its voice to the National Socialist candidates. This work was heroic because it abstained from claiming the success, the external resonance.

I respect the primitive nature of a people's movement, the fighting power of victorious *Gauleiter* and *Sturmführer*. But their having arrived at the goal does not give them the right to see themselves as the salt of the earth and to regard their intellectual predecessors in the struggle with disdain.<sup>59</sup>

If we emphasize the Italian and German cultural climates of anti-liberal, antidemocratic thought in which fascism could resonate, this does not mean that we should ignore the rich body of similar thinking in France. (The difference with France, probably, is that democratic thought was also rich there and was shared by a larger segment of the educated middle classes. In addition to this, other 'fascisto-genetic' factors were absent or weaker there.) In Spain, a body of thought that was ambivalent about liberal democracy and about parliamentarianism in particular arose in response to the crises of 1898 and the early twentieth century. The 1923 coup benefited from it. The fall of Primo de Rivera and of the monarchy generated a renewed hope in a democratic republic, though; whereas this left little room for fascism, it strengthened Catholic-conservative responses to its policies and failures.

The inter-war period represents a paradoxical combination of a belief in *politique d'abord* on the one hand, and a belief in the possibility of solving all social problems by entrusting power to a single strong leader and/or choosing the right ideology on the other. The utopias envisaged misunderstood the importance of the rule of law, of freedom, constitutions and free elections, of individual rights rather than fusion into a national community. The search for community meant the dismissal of the inevitable heterogeneity of society, of the distinctive values and rights of such institutions as religion and the churches, as entrepreneurs and the market, as professional



ethics and the university, as class conflict, interest groups, and trade unions. What was rejected was a society that expressed itself through multiple political channels and that does not allow itself to be determined politically in its search for politico-cultural homogeneity.

Even though we never will know the extent to which an ideology and its translation into slogans and the constant propaganda was in fact internalized by the masses, we cannot ignore its impact on a broad stratum of educated (or half-educated) people. Consequently, it is not sufficient to understand the difference between totalitarian regimes and most authoritarian regimes by focusing solely on institutional and organizational structures. I have tried to clarify the difference between the two kinds of regime by using a distinction between ideology and mentality that has been derived from Theodor Geiger.<sup>60</sup> Like all typological concepts, the boundaries between the two evince a degree of fuzziness; yet I would still insist on the centrality of this distinction. The trouble is that the operationalization of those concepts is extremely difficult and the search for empirical (to say nothing of quantifiable) indicators is frustrating, especially many years later. This is reason why many who make a distinction between types of regime have neglected this dimension.

I myself have not worked enough on the description and analysis of mentalities. Fortunately, however, the work of many distinguished scholars has provided us with considerable understanding of totalitarian ideologies, of their intellectual roots, their simplification, use, manipulation, and appeal. This appeal extended to minds, artists and writers that were otherwise distinguished. It is almost impossible to determine how much their support (a support that was sometimes short-lived, it is true) contributed to the success of totalitarianism. In light of such works as those of Aron, Bracher, Furet and Gentile and of the research on political religions inspired by Eric Voegelin (among others) and now conducted by Hans Maier, it should be clear that totalitarianism cannot be understood in absence of a study of ideologies.<sup>61</sup> On the other hand, the non-Marxist work on fascism has led to an acceptance that fascism, in its various formulations, possessed a powerfully complex and richly ideological basis and pedigree, as did the tragic simplifications of Nazi and Hitler's racism. The weaker articulation of liberal-democratic thought in the *Zeitalter der Ideologien* contributed to the breakdown of democracies, to the half-hearted loyalty of democrats towards the regimes they could and should have defended and to the appeal of totalitarian strains to those who were not really committed to creating a totalitarian regime and who were basically – fortunately – not very interested or passionate about totalitarian ideas.

## **Legacies of World War I**

In accounting for the rise of fascism in its multiple dimensions, World War I was crucial. We have tended, perhaps, to underestimate its significance as a factor independent of the fascist one during the breakdown of democracy in

the 1920s and 1930s. Both the war and the peace that followed it divided the European states into losers and victors. In the defeated states, the legitimacy of the new democratic regimes had been weakened by the circumstances of their birth, by their acquiescence to the dictates of the winners. Ripe for legends of 'stabs in the back', these states were burdened with the economic consequences of the war (including the reparations in the case of Germany) and a widespread commitment to revisionism and irredentism.

All those factors affected the Weimar Republic, the new, small and unloved Austrian Republic, Hungary and Bulgaria. The new states – Poland, the Baltic Republics and Yugoslavia – faced the problems of nation building with populations that possessed large ethnic and linguistic minorities. Those that were part of the cordon sanitaire with the Soviet Union bore the legacy of a war with the communists that had, to some extent, been a civil war. The conflict between Poland and Lithuania contributed much to the crises in the latter country. The invasion of Hungary by the Czechs and Romanians and the war between Greece and Turkey had the same impact in the two defeated states. States whose legitimacy was doubted by many of their citizens could not generate the legitimacy that was required for the functioning of their democratic institutions. Even among the victors, the hopes that had been generated by the war, the lost or betrayed victory and the costs of that victory had generated deep divisions – in Italy, but also in Greece, where the flight of Greeks from Turkey led to discontent. In other cases, victory was accompanied by the incorporation of minorities whose loyalty would be questionable or uncertain, as in the greater Romania, in the Czech lands with the Sudeten Germans, or in the new unitary Kingdom of the Southern Slavs, with its dubious incorporation of the Croats. As far away even as Portugal, the number of human lives that had been lost due to participation in the war contributed to the crisis of the republic. The new forms of political violence of the Freikorps, the White Guards and the Squadristo were born of the war and post-war experience, as was the romanticization of war and violence. These forms of violence were an essential part of fascist – and even some anti-fascist – party organizations. Their confrontations and the terror they caused would undermine the legitimacy of democratic governments, would blackmail leaders into making the kind of compromises and domestication schemes that would open the door to totalitarian – or at best, to authoritarian – regimes.

The war did not only generate a disposition towards violence on the side of the right however, of the patriotic bourgeois ex-soldiers, but produced a violent revolutionary activism in the working class as well. Otto Bauer, the Austrian social democratic leader, theorist and historian, described the impact of the war in the following terms:

The war had fundamentally changed the structure and mental dispositions of the proletariat. It had taken the workers out of the factory and workplace. In the trenches, they filled their souls with hatred against

those who avoided service and war profiteers ... against generals and officers, who dined in abundance as they starved. ... The years in the trenches had led them to lose the habit of work, accustomed them to violent requisitions, looting and stealing.<sup>62</sup>

### **Religion, fascism, authoritarian and totalitarian regimes**

Conflicts between the Church and the state are not characteristic of a particular type of regime, but are constant through history, reaching highly varying degrees of intensity in different societies and political systems.<sup>63</sup> Due to its militant commitment to atheism, the Russian Revolution generated a real fear in the churches. Marxism and its manifestations in the sub-communities that were generated by some socialist movements, the anti-clerical and anti-religious chiasm of anarchism and the militant, freemasonry-influenced laicism of bourgeois democratic parties in Western and Southern Europe – all were regarded as a threat by churches whose hierarchy did not always believe that a Christian democratic alternative would be capable of warding off those dangers by mobilizing the electorate for the Church. Leaving the theologically based suspicions of liberalism, radical democracy, socialism and capitalism aside, then, it is no accident that important sectors of the Church would look with favour (or at least without disfavour) upon authoritarian responses to the moral and cultural crises of society in the first half of the century.

There were, however, very great differences between their attitude to fascism of all varieties and their attitude to right-wing authoritarianism. We need not refer solely here to the explicit opposition to Nazism before the National Socialists attained power, or to the struggle between Church and state under the German totalitarian system, however; we could find examples in other countries. Not only did fascists and Christian democratic parties compete for the same electorate, not only did the Italian fascists attempt to limit the growing Catholic Action movement to a restricted sphere of influence. Other inherent sources of tension were their concept of an integrated national community including both believers and non-believers, their claim of a total authority for the state (which sometimes included a separation of Church and state in their programmes), a brand of nationalism that led them to question any Vatican interference in the nation's internal politics, and their aim to monopolize the socialization of youth. This was particularly true when the fascists were confronted with the claims – sometimes equally totalitarian! – of the integralists in the Church, the defenders of a traditional conception of the role of the Church.

Not infrequently, fascist leaders arose from the left, with its traditional anti-clericalism, from the secularized middle classes or from intellectuals who were generally anti-clerical. For complex reasons, a few of them turned to pre-Christian mythic national origins – or, like Charles Maurras, to a

positivist interpretation of Christianity as a social and historical foundation of national identity as distinct from the universal Church and religious belief. Far from reassuring the Church, such tendencies were more or less explicitly attacked and, in a few cases, condemned. The conciliation with the Italian state and the Lateran treaties generated a positive response, but was soon dispelled by some of the policies and statements of Mussolini. In the later 1930s, the hegemony of National Socialists within the fascist camp led to a more critical and – in the case of the Belgian bishops in relation to the Rexists – hostile response. The presence of fascist clerics who were not condemned by the hierarchy does not alter this fact, just as the presence of communist clerics who were tolerated after 1945 does not alter the anti-communism of the institutional Church. In authoritarian regimes, the fascist component was forced to moderate its anti-clericalism; in some cases, it was even forced to incorporate a religious dimension, even though the ‘movement in the regime’ would latently persist in its hostility to clerical hegemony. The anti-liberal, anti-democratic Catholic ideological tradition and clerical influence became a barrier to fascist totalitarian ambitions, thereby contributing to the limited pluralism. For its part, fascism became a channel for the limited defence of laicist culture against the hegemonic ambitions of Catholic integralist culture.

With the exception of Ataturk’s secularizing dictatorship, authoritarian regimes dealt respectfully with the churches even as they were committed to a certain degree of statism; and the churches, for their part, were generally accommodating. Indeed, because these regimes had proclaimed their antipathy to communism, not only the churches but many of the lay leaders were in favour of those regimes combating godless communism; a few even sympathized with the local fascists on that account. A diffuse anti-Semitism reinforced these tendencies in Eastern Europe. In the case of the Orthodox churches, the traditional caesaropapism contributed to this pattern of cooperation.

It is necessary to distinguish Austria, Portugal and Spain – particularly after 1945 – from this pattern. In these cases, the regimes incorporated elements of corporatist, authoritarian Catholic thought and used religion politically; on the other side, some of the clerical elements conceived this as an opportunity for a ‘religious use of politics’. They felt that the state could serve to re-Christianize society and that this would grant the Church a privileged position in public life, education and cultural censorship.

In Catholic countries, conservative, authoritarian nationalism could make political use of religion and religious institutions in order to legitimize its rule; it could not, however, develop a political religion. Only on the radical right fringe did fascist groups break with the universal Church by going so far as to define the conversion to Christianity as oppression of an *Urvolk* that had possessed a tribal identity and its own gods. Manipulation of the religious tradition and its symbols was more likely in countries where the national identity was linked to a religious identity, to a legacy of crusading

against Islam, of wars of religion and missionary expansion. This was the case in Spain.<sup>64</sup> The new nationalisms based upon a sense of religious distinctiveness – such as those of Slovakia and Croatia – led to a brand of politics that blurred the borderline between the political use of religion and a transformation of both politics and religion into a political religion.

In the unique situation of the creation of a Croat state under the aegis of the Axis occupation, the Ustasha were able to establish a regime of terror against both the Serbian Orthodox minority and the Jews on the basis of a religious-nationalist ideology. In this, they enjoyed the cooperation of some segments of the clergy. Due to the wartime circumstances under which it was established, the regime of the Poglavnik was closer to the totalitarian model than to the authoritarian one.

The political use of religion and/or the religious use of nationalism, particularly by the lower clergy and the members of some religious orders – the Basque, Flemish and Slovak nationalists – are well known phenomena. This use of religion in non-democratic contexts should not be surprising. That said, there has been no systematic, comparative, empirical and sociological study of the fusion of minority nationalism with religion and the support of such a fusion by some segments of the clergy – often at the opposition of the ecclesiastical hierarchy itself.

In Slovakia, a nationalist party motivated by a conservative Catholic ideology came to power under the leadership of Monsignor Tiso after Czechoslovakia disintegrated through a decree of Hitler. It ruled the country as a fascistized regime, from March 1939 to 1945.<sup>65</sup> Possessing a mass membership, rooted in a society that was largely rural, and supported, finally, by many clergymen in a context where portions of the elite were either Protestant or alien to the nationalist movement, pluralism was largely limited to the more fascist sectors of the hegemonic ruling party.

Non-fascist authoritarian regimes very often established a positive relationship with the churches. This was particularly true for some countries that had Greek Orthodox state churches. They often supported the Church as one more component of the traditional social order and even favoured its presence in the educational and cultural sphere. In these cases, conflicts arose only when the clergy identified with the nationalism of a minority.

A totalitarian state and society that is ultimately based on religion would be possible only as a theocracy – that is, as rule by the clergy in both religious and political (state) realms. Such a rule would probably be impossible without a hierarchical church (its absence in Iran, for example, has prevented the full and stable development of a theocracy). Less likely and less stable still would be a caesaropapist totalitarianism in which the ruler – *basileus* – would also be a consecrated authority of the Church.

Religion has always been a brake on absolute power. In the absence of a trans-national centre that can authoritatively define sacred texts, however, it can serve to legitimize a power and society whose principles make them fully intolerant with regard to any kind of diversity. Such a society might

represent a new type of theocratic totalitarianism, one that is based on the political use of religion or the religious use of politics. In the case of Islam, the absence of such an ultimate centre that defines orthodoxy and heterodoxy leaves it to the various religious leaders to do so for their followers.

With the Second Vatican Council, a greater pluralism arose within the Church. The clergy gained a certain degree of autonomy from the hierarchy and new, radical theological currents took hold; the Church became more committed to human rights. Finally, the more active participation of the laity – independently of control and sponsorship by the hierarchy – ensured that the relationships between authoritarian regimes and the Church would become even more conflictual. These reasons, however, are very different from the ones that led to the conflicts between fascists and the Church in the 1920s and 1930s.

### **From ideology to political religion**

To the extent that we regard totalitarianism as the product of a unique commitment to ideology, as a political faith or world-view, we must ask ourselves how this was possible. Significantly: as I write this essay in English, I realize how different the words *politischer Glauben* and *Weltanschauung* sound in German. It would be tempting to analyze the secularization of the various societies and the way in which religious legacies were secularized as the keys to the totalitarian potential. My guess is that there were differences between the Western European and Southern-Latin European traditions of anti-clericalism and laicism, such that a conservative clerical reaction was produced for the former and a national-Catholic one arose with the latter. Anti-clerical, even anti-religious ideas, moreover, were largely (although not exclusively) associated with the left – with socialists or anarchists.

The secularization of the intelligentsia, of the educated, of the bourgeoisie, created a vacuum that would be filled, in societies that venerated culture and aesthetic emotions, by a commitment to ideology. Thus, both the ideas and the emotions that were linked to them were broad and diffuse. Once these ideas had been simplified and sloganized by a political movement, they could become a powerful basis for the kind of pseudo-religious, political commitment that could both justify totalitarianism and make it possible. The paradox that it was precisely German society, with its high cultural level, that fell for the confused populist, conservative revolution and racist thought is far from paradoxical from this perspective. The dense, heavy and heady collocation of thought and symbolism that the Nazis simplified, then re-elaborated, simply did not exist in other societies.

We have no systematic data on the religious beliefs, attitudes or practices of the different rulers. Concerning such fascist leaders as Mussolini, Hitler, and his closest collaborators, we know about their lacking ties with the churches, their atheism or deism, about their strange religious syncretism

that included pagan elements. We also know, however, of the more orthodox Catholicism of other fascist leaders. Although we do not know much about the religion of a number of authoritarian rulers, it was closer to orthodoxy in the cases of Salazar, Dollfuss, Schuschnigg, Franco and Pétain; Pilsudski, surprisingly, was a Protestant and Horthy and Bethelen were Calvinists.

### **Anti-semitism and racism: a further dimension**

Anti-Semitic attitudes, prejudices and discriminatory policies – even anti-Semitic violence – were not the exclusive characteristic of any particular type of regime in Europe, particularly in Eastern Europe. Initially, Italian fascism was not anti-Semitic and Jews were among its founders and militants.<sup>66</sup> Later movements incorporated anti-Semitism, though, just as the fascists of the Iron Guard, the Ustacha and the Arrow Cross participated in the genocide of Jews. Conservative French politicians and civil servants also did their share. The National Socialist Holocaust has become central to our understanding of totalitarianism. The question might therefore be asked: would it have been possible if this regime had not been totalitarian? Probably not.

That said, neither the breakdown of democracy nor the rise of fascism are directly linked to anti-Semitism. Certainly, the hostility to Marxist socialism was reinforced by invocations of Marx's Judaism and the presence of Jews among its leaders in some countries. Anti-Semitism served to reinforce the class hatred that contributed to the breakdown. In many countries, the anti-Semites had channels outside of fascism, but the more radical expression, the fascist violence, made it attractive to radical anti-Semites in many countries. The anti-fascist response of world Judaism to Nazism, in turn, strengthened the anti-Semitism not only of National Socialists, but also, to some extent, the anti-Semitism of fascists who were not originally anti-Semitic.

Not only anti-Semitism and populist racism contributed to Nazi totalitarianism, however; the biological pseudo-scientific conception of man and society underlying the eugenics movement did as well. As a science, eugenics was based on an understanding of the laws of human heredity that was supposedly new. As a social movement, it involved proposals that a society ought to ensure the constant improvement of its hereditary composition by encouraging 'fit' individuals and groups to reproduce, and (perhaps more important) by discouraging or preventing the 'unfit' from conveying their unfitness to future generations.<sup>67</sup> The notion of 'life not worthy of living' that served as the basis for forced sterilization and euthanasia policies had its roots in that body of thought. Although this intellectual current did not find much resonance in Catholic societies, it was accepted in progressive sectors of democratic societies. Nazi racism,<sup>68</sup> therefore, was more than anti-Semitism, the hatred of Gypsies and of such ethnic categories as the Slavs. Because it implied a radical intrusion into the private sphere and a

break with basic religious values, biological racism could only be implemented in a totalitarian system.

Where Nazi racism far beyond nationalist ethnocentrism, the question might be raised as to whether it went beyond the extreme nationalism of fascism. I have not asked whether Nazism was part of fascism, but I would argue that it was a branch of the fascist tree onto which other elements were grafted; this branch then grew so strong and heavy that it ultimately uprooted the tree.

### **Imperialist nationalism**

The totalitarian regimes of inter-war Europe were major powers that pursued, in terms of foreign policy, territorial expansion (by war or the threat of war, if necessary) and interference in other countries. The authoritarian regimes ruled in countries that were less significant. Although their nationalism also favoured international ambitions, the realization of those ambitions was not in their hands and in fact made them dependent upon the Axis powers.

Incited by the leadership of the Falange, the students and youth of Spain could be mobilized to shout 'Gibraltar español!' and to dream of African colonial expansion at the cost of France. Without the support of the Axis powers, however, such claims were bound to be unsuccessful. Because Italy and Germany (for their own, differing reasons) were not ready to support them, such claims led nowhere. The sole initiators of the wars were the two great powers; relying in part on the mobilization potential of totalitarianism, they were also driven to realize that potential by the war. Fascism reinforced the nationalist, irredentist, aggressive, tendencies in many countries, although the authoritarian regimes in Poland, Hungary, Bulgaria, Turkey, Greece, and Spain could not implement those tendencies – and this even if some, like Hungary, benefited from the Axis, whereas others were pawns or victims of the decisions of the totalitarian great powers.

The relation of totalitarianism and expansionism and international aggression is complex: was totalitarianism the source or the result of those policies? Certainly, the goals of international policy – the colonial expansion of Italy, for example – pre-existed the regime; yet these goals appeared to be more readily attainable through the consolidation of a totalitarian regime. One could argue that imperialism – the German push towards the East, for example – contributed to the appeal and development of totalitarianism, and also that the totalitarian mobilization of society was in part a result of foreign policy ambitions – in the case of Italy, at least.

### **The military and authoritarian versus the totalitarian alternative**

The armed forces, or important sectors within them, have played a major role in the establishment of non-democratic regimes. Various tactics include the withdrawal of support from the democratic regimes, the maintenance of a



neutral position in the confrontation between democracy and its enemies, the entry into an agreement with rising fascism and fascist regimes, or the assumption of power themselves, through the overthrow of democratic systems.<sup>69</sup>

Military leaders want to stand above factions; they are therefore unlikely to be committed to a complex ideology, and possess a limited capacity to mobilize the population. While rejecting the political and social pluralism of a liberal-democratic society, they are not ready to substitute elements of a plural society in a hegemonic way. Military thinking reflects a mentality that results from their training. For officers, a well ordered society does not require a mobilized society. Officers are satisfied with the achievement of passive obedience, neither needing nor even wanting to convince people. Although they typically reject the interference of the churches in politics, they are likely to tolerate the autonomy of the churches within their own sphere. For these reasons, a military regime or a regime in which the military exercises a veto power is likely to be authoritarian rather than totalitarian.

A purely military-based authoritarian regime is possible if the armed forces have the monopoly of armed violence, if they are not divided on ideological issues and if there is a low level of political mobilization in the society. In absence of these conditions, the military is likely to form coalitions with anti-democratic political groups, particularly if these are able to mobilize armed militias. This was clearly the case in Spain in 1936, when the putschist military was immediately forced to turn to the traditionalist Requeté militia and volunteers of the Falange. The same phenomenon appeared when the lawful government and the forces loyal to it were forced to turn to the proletarian militias of anarcho-syndicalists, socialists and communists – a move that unleashed a revolutionary process. On Franco's side, the outcome proved to be an authoritarian regime with an incipient political pluralism rather than a military dictatorship like that of Primo de Rivera in 1923.<sup>70</sup>

Authoritarian regimes have evinced a strong tendency to retain the monopoly of armed force for the regular police and the military and to place party militias under military control. The armed forces were particularly concerned to establish and retain that monopoly. By contrast to this tendency, totalitarianism attempts not only to politicize the army, but to establish its own control through political commissars and party militias that become ideological party armies. Indeed, one of the distinguishing characteristics of fascism was the organization of party militias before the take-over of power – the Squadristo and SA and imitations of these elsewhere. Because the civil guards in Finland and the Baltic countries originated during the wars of independence and subsequent civil wars (although they were still subordinate to the state in Finland), these cases were different. In the Soviet Union, the NKVD troops constituted a similar praetorian guard. Symbolically, the Reichskanzlei was guarded by the SS. In 1934, four different party militias with four distinctive uniforms guarded the

Franco headquarters. Soon, however, the party militia disappeared and its weapons were not operational even at the party headquarters during the 1940s.

An affinity existed between fascist movements and the military. This affinity arose from the fact that some of the most enthusiastic supporters, even the founders of fascist movements were those who had become reserve officers and were ex-combatants of the First World War.<sup>71</sup> They were all those who had rejected the ruling elites of their countries and the conditions under which peace was made; they were the war profiteers and the popular movements that used the crisis that followed the war and the defeat to attempt a revolutionary change. It is no accident, therefore, that many young officers would have been attracted to fascism and that some of their seniors would look upon the movement with favour.

From the very beginning, however, there were also inherent tensions between fascism and the military. Some fascists conceived of the nation as one under arms. They envisioned a militia-based army, sometimes organized around the cadres of the paramilitary organizations of the party, as a future military organization that would break with the class-based, bureaucratized professional army of the past that they saw to explain, to some extent, the anti-militarism of the popular strata. The professionals perceived those elements who advocated such a militia army as competitors and a threat to be neutralized or destroyed. Besides this, the party militias of many fascist movements were based on principles that were uncongenial to the officer corps. A *condottieri* type of leadership, an egalitarianism that did not respect the traditional hierarchical structures of society or even of the officer corps, an emphasis on youth rather than seniority, a hierarchy based on political commitment rather than on professional competence: all these ideas were alien to the officer corps. Beyond this, there were the tensions that arose from the traditional relationship between the armed forces and the state, at least until the takeover of power by the fascists, whatever misgivings the officers may have had about the liberal-democratic state. Not only were officers still attached to the authority of the monarch in the monarchical countries, but many believed in the principle of legal authority. Legality, as opposed to the substantive legitimacy of rule, led many officers to support the republican government during the Spanish Civil War despite their disagreements with the policies of the Popular Front and their dislike of uncontrolled anarchic violence. On the Franco side, many officers were suspicious of the fascist ideology and rhetoric. Quite a few regarded the infiltration of the fascists into the officer corps as a threat to institutional political homogeneity and a source of divisiveness, just as they regarded the infiltration of democratic or progressive tendencies as a threat to unity.

As a result of this ambivalence in the relationship between the military and fascism, members of the military attempted in some cases to maintain their autonomy, their apoliticism, even after the fascists had taken power and excluded soldiers and officers from party membership. In other cases,

efforts were made to subordinate the party militias to military officers and to control and limit the aspirations of populist fascism to mobilize the masses. In sum: the military sought to control or neutralize the hegemony to which fascists aspired. The automatic, formal membership of all officers in the FET y de las Jons provides a good example of such an effort.

Despite the elective affinities between fascism and the military, then, there were inherent tensions between the new political authoritarian rulers and military mentality and institutional interests. These tensions meant that, in a number of countries, the military became an obstacle to the hegemonic ambitions of fascist movements, a supporter of alternative authoritarian forces and, in a few cases, an instrument for the displacement, even the repression, of these movements. Some weak fascist movements were to be sorely disappointed in their hope that they might use the military to overthrow a democratic regime and then be called to assume power later, when the military retreated to barracks.<sup>72</sup> This does not mean that military-dominated regimes would not turn to men with a fascist background and ideology to help them establish authoritarian regimes, particularly when the military needed to mobilize a broad segment of the population in order to win a civil war, as in the case of Spain after the initial failure of the purely military *pronunciamento*. In Spain, it was probably the failure of the military to assume power a few days after the uprising that made the fascists so important; at the same time, the initial weakness of the fascist movement rendered the military critical to an anti-democratic, anti-socialist, anti-revolutionary alternative from the very beginning.

When the military assumes leadership of the overthrow of democracy, the new regime is almost always born under its hegemony, and activists of the fascist movement are not likely to play a central role. Although younger officers might have sympathies with such a movement, their seniors in command – who assume power in a more or less institutionalized coup – are more likely to have links with the establishment of the society. In choosing their civilian collaborators, cabinet members and heads of planning organizations, therefore, they tend to turn to the politicians of conservative parties, to high-placed civil-servants and such technocratic elites as directors of the central bank, conservative professors, bankers and businessmen. Only for such functions as propaganda, control of the mass media, censorship and, occasionally, the creation of functional alternatives to trade unions, do they turn to fascists or fascistized elites – if, that is, no Catholic integralists or conservative elites are available to play those roles. In that case, we are likely to have a takeover of power that represents a conservative counter-revolution rather than a political revolution associated with the rise of a new political elite that has previously enjoyed little status – whether ascribed or achieved – in the pre-coup society.

A military-led authoritarian regime is much less likely than a fascist regime to pursue an inclusionary strategy. There will be no mass membership party with activities between elections, no youth and women's organization,

no mass sponsored organizations for workers comparable to the German Arbeitsfront or to the official trade unions in the other fascist countries; there will be no equivalent to the Doppolavoro, no youth organizations to serve as a recruiting ground for future elites. There is little place for an intelligentsia in such regimes, although there will be a co-opting of academics and liberal professionals who have little capacity to manipulate ideology and symbols. Intellectuals and artists who are identified with the opponents of the regime and whose styles may not suit the taste of the new rulers are likely to suffer persecution or discrimination; by contrast to the fascist regimes, however, one finds only a limited effort to create a new culture, style of art, architecture that expresses the values of the regime.

This absence of anything new, the use of timeworn rhetoric, of patriotism and order and a purely negative response to new ideas limits the capacity of such regimes to attract youth, students and intellectuals. The contrast with fascism in Italy and even with Nazism could not be greater in this sense. It would be impossible to write a book on authoritarian regimes in the Europe of in the inter-war years, especially on authoritarian regimes of military origin after 1945, like the one Alistair Hamilton has written on respectable<sup>73</sup> intellectuals and artists who identified with fascism at some point or another – with varying degrees of mental reservations, loyalty and disappointment and with greater or lesser independence or servility. Even with the case of Spain under Franco, we find that quite a few intellectuals who were highly respected both before the civil war and after 1975 were linked at one point or another with the regime. This was due to the initiative of some of the Falangist leaders and via institutions of fascist origin, rather than through those who were identified more directly with national Catholicism.

In a number of cases, military, bureaucratic and technocratic authoritarian regimes arose in response to the same crisis of Western societies that led to the rise of fascism, fascist regimes and regimes with a fascist component. The absence of any intellectual appeal, however, has been at once been the weakness of these regimes and has hindered them from gaining any kind of international legitimation.

Some of the factors we have just mentioned have also been responsible for the lack of a genuinely totalitarian project and the incapacity for penetrating and homogenizing society rather than repressing and atomizing it. That said, the justification and methods of repression might be totalitarian.<sup>74</sup> These factors would also explain the growing autonomy of the civil society after such regimes have been in power for some time and their exclusionary objectives have been achieved. By this point, these regimes' limited capacity to solve problems of social integration have been revealed, as has their incapacity to solve many basic structural problems. This is the situation that prevails in the contemporary bureaucratic, authoritarian regimes of Latin America. It is no accident that civil society has gained new strength and autonomy in cases like Brazil – as Alfred Stepan has noted.

The absence of any fascist component (defined as we have defined it) has made those regimes quite different in terms of their political and, above all, their social development. This difference should not be ignored by those who would stress some of the common elements in their functional analyses of anti-democratic, anti-progressive, anti-socialist, anti-popular authoritarian regimes. To use the language of functional analysis: they are functional alternatives, but not functional equivalents.

### **Civil society and the rise of totalitarianism**

In view of the fashionable idea of civil society as a source of democratic values, we might ask ourselves the following: what was the role of civil society in the inter-war disaster? Certainly, civil society was weak in Eastern Europe, the Balkans, much of Portugal and Southern Italy. In the case of Spain, we would have to take into account regional differences and argue about the inclusion of politicized trade union movements and Catholic lay organizations into civil society. Although democracy broke down in many of those countries, the resulting regimes were authoritarian.

Obviously, the proponents of the thesis holding that civil society supports democracy can showcase the stability of democracy in the United Kingdom, Switzerland, the Scandinavian countries and Belgium, Holland and Luxembourg. Yet it would be difficult to argue that civil society – myriad voluntary associations serving a wide range of interests – was weak in Germany, Austria and, relatively speaking, in northern and central Italy. Considerable evidence suggests that in Germany – in provincial Protestant Germany, at least – civil society organizations were often taken over by the Nazis during the early 1930s.<sup>75</sup> In fact, these probably contributed to the assurance of Nazi hegemony in many communities and, ultimately, to the totalitarian control of society. It might be going too far to argue that a rich network of civil society made totalitarianism possible in some countries. After the take-over of power, though, many apolitical associations and institutions accommodated to the new regime and elected officers who were identified with it or acceptable to it. These then became channels for the regime's propaganda. Some resisted the *Gleichschaltung* of course, by dissolving or ceasing some of their activities rather than cooperating. If they had not already existed, however, then they would not have been available to the new rulers.

Neither can we ignore the many voluntary associations of veterans, farmers, cooperatives and liberal professionals in Italy during that period. Some of them had large memberships. Some were authentic social movements outside the party system and hostile to the traditional political class. Others were connected with political parties and represented a new wave of social participation and mobilization. Yet were these too not part of 'civil society?' They contributed, in any case, to the social-political climate in which fascism could emerge and thrive. Not a few of their members would even join the fascist movement.

In order to achieve political mobilization, totalitarian movements and regimes generated a large number of 'voluntary' associations that were similar, in formal terms, to those of civil society in liberal democracies, even though they were actually controlled and coerced. There were groups for youth, women, students, leisure, sports, culture, folk dancing and ecology.

Paradoxically many democratic parties gave up the sponsoring of such activities with re-democratization. Further, there is evidence that Eastern European people had tired of totalitarian 'regimented voluntarism' and were reluctant to participate in free and voluntary associations.<sup>76</sup> The differing patterns of membership in voluntary associations of post-totalitarian and post-authoritarian democracies provide a striking confirmation of the difference between the two types of regimes.

The efforts of most authoritarian regimes were directed at destroying the membership organizations of their opponents, at outlawing the many voluntary groups they distrusted and at limiting and controlling associational life. Associations had to be registered and approved and limits were placed on their efforts to federate or gain international links. The attempt was sometimes futile, especially when economic and cultural development had rendered more people ready to associate. In other countries, the organizations of civil society could survive (albeit, perhaps, taking a low profile) because they were less visible and important, protected by one political tendency or another in the regime – by the Church or a government bureaucracy, as I discovered in my research on Spain. By contrast even to totalitarian regimes most official associations or party structures did not claim an absolute monopoly. Membership remained basically voluntary, and was neither sizeable nor active. Many of the more independent organizations were not politicized. If they were politicized, in fact, it was by the opposition to the regime after it relaxed its controls.

### **Charismatic leadership and totalitarianism**

Charisma is a much-abused term.<sup>77</sup> By definition, it is exceptional. It should not surprise us, therefore, that most leaders of non-democratic regimes were not charismatic. The relevant questions ask whether only totalitarian leaders were charismatic, whether any of the authoritarian leaders were truly charismatic.

We know that some democratic leaders (Churchill) enjoyed a charismatic appeal, even regarded themselves as having had a charismatic calling (De Gaulle). Authoritarian leaders sometimes assumed charismatic poses in their rhetoric and self-presentation, or were presented as such by some of their followers and sycophantic scribes (probably Franco). Nevertheless, the convergence of a claim to have had a unique calling and an acceptance of that claim by large masses can rarely be found. There is no doubt as to the 'charismatic authority' of Hitler, Lenin and probably Mussolini in the Weberian sense. Almost none of the many authoritarian rulers could be

considered charismatic, though – perhaps with the exceptions of Marshall Pétain shortly after the French defeat and Marshall Pilsudski early on, even though he did not seek to rule directly. The gestures of King Carol and the public presence of the Regent Admiral Horthy, with their attempts to connect up with tradition, are not charismatic. Perhaps the rulers of authoritarian regimes outside of Europe – Peron, Vargas, Nasser and Sukarno – would be better candidates for having been ‘charismatic’ at some point. Stalin is a complicated case: although he probably did not enjoy charismatic appeal during his ascent to power or even at the height of his repressive rule, he perhaps gained some as the leader in the Patriotic War and, strangely enough, for communists outside the USSR.

### **Personal rule: another dimension?**

A great question that must be left open is how and why both totalitarian and authoritarian regimes, both fascist and non-fascist regimes, turned increasingly into personalized rule, thereby debilitating the single party, the armed forces, and other institutions controlled by the establishment. How was it that individuals that had not always enjoyed the respect and esteem even of those close to them, of those who presumably had still strong power bases and had not lost their capacity for critical judgement – how was it that they could not be challenged once they assumed positions of legally unbound power? Without institutionalized, legally established, or ‘constitutionalized’ restraints on power, such persons could always substitute any critics – even loyal ones – by more subservient personalities. In the case of the limited pluralism of authoritarian regimes, they could do so by means of cautious, Machiavellian coalition politics, or of an adroit manipulation of the rivalries of factional sub-leaders.

Acquired under a variety of circumstances, power having ill defined limits tends to perpetuate itself in the absence of the institutional controls of a liberal constitutional democracy. It does quite without ideological or popular legitimation. Once in power, leaders who initially had no political project and perhaps even no ambition to gain power are not inclined to give it up. We are reminded here of Lord Acton’s dictum of the corrupting impact of power. Pats, probably, would provide a good example: this leader of an agrarian party and politician in a democracy became president due to a constitutional reform that was proposed by the Veterans movement. After undertaking a pre-emptive (probably unnecessary) coup d’état with the support of almost all parties, this group established an authoritarian regime. Franco, who had been placed in power by his peers and by the circumstances, provides an even more striking example. Victorious in the Spanish Civil War, Franco would feel entitled to rule for over 35 years.

The development of our thinking about non-democratic politics in a way that seeks to make distinctions according to differences from the ideal type of democratic political processes, has inevitably led us to neglect the

dimension of 'court politics' of totalitarian and authoritarian regimes. (This dimension, incidentally, is far from absent in democracies as well.) Another aspect that deserves more attention is the room for personal arbitrary power, even in those cases that diverge further from the model of personal ruler or the extremes of the regimes I have described as sultanistic. It is no accident that both the common man and we ourselves label such regimes according to the name of their leaders in some cases, whereas we use a more collective name in others: 'the colonels' regime' or 'the Junta'. Discounting the self-serving aspect involved in the blaming of an individual by those who served him, the revelations about Franco's rule show the dangers of any analysis of Spanish totalitarianism or authoritarianism that seeks to proceed 'without Franco'. My own writings are guilty of this crime: to emphasize it would have made it more difficult to conceptualize the regime as a whole, in terms both of its origin and its development and its differences from the totalitarian systems. In addition, it was difficult to learn much about the relation of Franco to those that surrounded him in his exercise of power.

In his critique of Victor Hugo's analysis of Napoleon and his magnification of the role of *le petit*, Marx had already warned against the danger of overrating individual personalities.<sup>78</sup> Without falling into that danger ourselves, we still cannot get around the problem of personal power. In so doing, we should be careful to avoid misusing the term 'charisma' and turn to less lofty bases of power instead: subservience, flattery, selfishness, corruption, fear, petty rivalries and, above all, ambition. Mostly petty, rulers know well how to exploit and manipulate it, although it also allows subordinates to manipulate rulers.<sup>79</sup> Our theoretical constructs should not prevent us from being more sensitive to those aspects of politics that appear to be the only ones that journalistic accounts and many memoirs capture after the ruler's fall; for a more systematic study of these, however, we have neither concepts, methods nor data. Perhaps the tools of network analysis would help us better study this kind of politics, which is apparently less structured. It is a kind of politics for which the autonomy and representativeness of constituencies and social forces (even the military and business) are limited. Historians and the students of politics writing before the rise of sociological thinking and modern political science<sup>80</sup> were perhaps better equipped to describe and understand those aspects of the power of many regimes. We might profit from a reading of them. In any case: in establishing an authoritarian regime, some officers attempted to bind the leaders they selected to the internal procedural rules of the armed forces. Such efforts reflect their awareness of the risks associated with electing a *comandante en jefe* having unlimited powers.

Although a fascist party grants the personal ruler – the Duce or Führer – a degree of penetration into the society that can reach totalitarian proportions, it allows such a regime to appear to be the expression of the arbitrary whim of the ruler (although it normally is) less than the regimes without



parties do. In the latter type of regime, the ruler's 'transmission belt' to the society conveys the 'men of his making', those who serve a man rather than subjectively believing to serve a movement or an ideology. Yet this ultimately affects the legitimacy of the regime among its own supporters or beneficiaries. Having no party or only a weak one, authoritarian regimes can obtain a degree of legitimacy only if they can define themselves on the basis of traditional – or, in more modernized societies, 'legal' – formal legitimacy. This means that they must define themselves on principles of bureaucracy and, to some extent, of the rule of law. Yet these principles ultimately limit personal arbitrary power and facilitate a transition to liberal democracy after the demise of the ruler. The different patterns of transition from authoritarianism to democracy, especially the viability of the (Spanish-type) pattern, the *reforma pactada* – *ruptura pactada*, and the developments following the return to democracy there, may be related to those differences.

### **Stability of regimes**

We are not in a position to answer the question as to the stability or instability of non-democratic regimes – especially the degree to which the totalitarian project to transform society might even result in a greater continuity than the less intrusive authoritarian regimes. War and defeat by the Allies answered the question without allowing endogenous factors to play themselves out. Only the Soviet Union could be considered a test case, since the regime lasted decades and there can be no question as to its radical transformation of the society. The regime ultimately developed into a post-totalitarian one, then disintegrated and collapsed to leave a dismal legacy for the building of democracy. With the exception of Greece, the authoritarian regimes in Eastern Europe and the Balkans succumbed to invasion and satellization by the Soviets; in the case of Yugoslavia and Albania, they succumbed to communist revolutionary regimes. Only two rightist authoritarian regimes, Portugal and Spain, did not participate in the war – and they survived into the 1970s. Would the same have been the case for Hungary, Poland, Bulgaria, and the Baltics without the war? Or even Italy: should Mussolini have taken Franco's stance in World War II? This counterfactual is too dubious to merit an analysis. We cannot even generalize about the legacy of totalitarianism, since a comparison of Soviet and Nazi totalitarianism would involve factors besides that of regime type; and Hitler's rule, fortunately, lasted only from 1933 to 1945 compared to almost 70 years of Soviet rule.

One test of the degree of commitment to the different regimes might be the response to imminent defeat in World War II. There is no question that the Italian elites, including 19 of the 26 voters in the Gran Consiglio of the Party on 24 July, 1943, were not prepared to support Mussolini to the bitter end, whereas the Saló republic was still able to rally some support. The contrast to Hitler's Germany could not be greater: the 1944 conspiracy

neither did nor could rally any support, nor were there mutinies or mass desertions even at the end. Was this due to identification with the regime and patriotism, or just to discipline and fear? Or was it, rather, due to the implications of a Soviet invasion? In this case, we would still have to ask why the resistance on the Western front did not crumble faster. In the other countries of the alliance, authoritarian leaders began to seek peace and surrender even where forces that were more or less numerous fought to the end. How many were motivated by the ideological commitment? Or was it fear of retribution for their deeds? All of these questions deserve a systematic, comparative analysis.

A limited pluralism, an absence of an elaborate and binding ideology as well as a more limited involvement of the party in private organizations, provided a much greater space for partial oppositions, semi-opposition and even, in some cases, a-legal (but not 'legal') opposition.<sup>81</sup> These forms of opposition are not possible in a truly totalitarian regime. The degree of internal intellectual-ideological debate that was tolerated for considerable time in fascist Italy (sometimes under the 'umbrella' of Party leaders or organizations), combined with the extent to which intellectual life was not politicized, give us cause to question the fully totalitarian character of the regime.

### **Fascism and post-1945 authoritarian regimes**

The relationship between authoritarian regimes after 1945 and fascism has been the object of considerable polemical debate. If fascism were defined as any anti-democratic, non-communist political system, the answer would be simple. If fascism is not a distinctive political movement having unique characteristics that differentiate it from the pre-fascist, conservative and authoritarian politics that emerged in Europe in the inter-war years, then there is no reason to ask the question. Because we have assumed that both fascist movements and fascist regimes have provided a specific historical phenomenon that we can call fascism, however, the question remains relevant.

A number of neo-fascist parties have arisen, a few gaining some votes, as well as a number of neo-fascist organizations, some of them engaging in terrorism. Although they may have contributed to the crises of democratic regimes, however, they have not played major roles in those crises; nor have they led to a takeover of power. Only if we were to consider some organizations on the extreme right in Argentina and perhaps *Patria y Libertad* in Chile to have been fascist organizations could we say that fascism is still relevant to understanding the breakdown of democracy and the rise of authoritarian regimes.<sup>82</sup>

In no country since 1945 has there been a fascist mass movement remotely comparable to the NSDAP or even to the Italian fascists before 1922 and the Iron Guard of the 1930s. The debacle of the war and the horror of Nazism have made any appeals made by a party identifying itself as a neo-

fascist or even resembling the fascist movement in its style and ideology unattractive to the masses.<sup>83</sup> Neo-fascism is a remainder. The groups identifying with the symbols of the past are more ridiculous than tragic. This does not mean that certain elements of the fascist heritage will not reappear sometimes in the strangest of places. An uncanny similarity cannot bring us to interpret those movements as fascist, however – as it is sometimes done with the student radicalism of the 1960s, with the various terrorist groups of the left and the ETA in the Basque country. Just as the Roman empire left columns to be picked up by Christians to build Romanesque churches and by Moslems to build mosques, the fascist heritage has left behind scattered pieces that are used today because they are found either useful or attractive. Just as we would not call the edifices incorporating Roman stones Roman, however, we should not call such political phenomena fascist either.

It could be argued that, even if no significant fascist movements remain, certain regimes deserve to be called fascist.<sup>84</sup> This depends on how we define the fascist regime. Using certain definitions, obviously, it is possible to characterize many regimes as fascist. If we consider such elements as the presence of a bureaucratic, mobilizable mass party with affiliated organizations penetrating the society to be distinctive of a fascist regime, however, then that identification becomes questionable. Indeed, contemporary authoritarian regimes make a deliberate effort not to include elements that might easily be identified as fascist in their ideology, style, rhetoric and organization. With more or less sincerity – generally less – they claim to be temporary responses to the crisis of a society; they are the *regimes d'exception* that will make the return to democracy, a renewed democracy, possible. Regardless of its sincerity, this commitment implies a fundamental weakness in their legitimacy – even for their own supporters. It has also been an important factor in the instability of such regimes and the processes of re-democratization that took place in South America. By contrast to the authentic fascist regimes, they do not claim to be the wave of the future, to represent an historical breakthrough, an alternative to democracy and communism whose example will be followed everywhere. Their claim is to be the solution for their particular society at a particular moment. Whereas, in the 1930s, even the non-fascist authoritarian regimes made an effort to appear to be fascist and were characterized by their mimicry of purely fascist regimes, contemporary authoritarian regimes adopt pseudo-democratic or semi-democratic forms.

In terms of power, economic success, cultural creativity and military strength, no leading nation has chosen the authoritarian path and can be taken as a model. This fact creates for the authoritarian regimes (with the exception, perhaps, of Iran) a totally different situation than the one that prevailed in the 1920s and 1930s, when two countries as great as Italy and, later, Germany were the models.

None of the contemporary authoritarian regimes has developed an ideology or institutional organizational forms that would serve as a func-

tional equivalent to those provided by fascism in 1920s and 1930s. The death of fascism, therefore, is an important factor in the weakness, ambiguity and constant contradictions that are to be found in the non-communist, authoritarian regimes. It is no accident that none of these regimes has attracted enthusiastic supporters among youth, students and distinguished intellectuals beyond its borders – as fascist regimes did in the past. In a negative sense, then, fascism is relevant to our understanding of these regimes.

There are, however, good reasons why their opponents tend to regard and interpret them as fascist, even though they very often use such expressions as dependent fascism, neo-fascism, military fascism, etc. I suspect that those designations – like those of organic, tutelary, basic and popular democracy – serve only to hide the fact that they are not the same thing, even if one would like to think they are, for political or intellectual reasons. Interpreting these regimes as fascist makes it easier to delegitimize them and to mobilize the opposition of those who know little about them. Yet there are also serious disadvantages to doing so, in intellectual and even political terms. Such a conceptualization contributes to a deficiency of our understanding of the nature of those regimes, of their sources of weakness, their internal dynamics, the opportunities for political action of the opposition. Indeed, it often leads to perplexity when faced with their evolution. Without ignoring the similarities of these regimes to fascist ones in some respects, then (and I do not mean only their repressive character), I still believe that application of the analysis of fascist regimes to contemporary authoritarian regimes can be intellectually and even politically misleading.

We should not be guided by the emphasis on repression and terror, since these are phenomena that we find in many non-democratic regimes. The intensity and forms of terror, moreover, do not seem to be systematically related to the more or less fascist, even the more or less totalitarian character of the regimes. There can be little doubt that Mussolini's Italy was closer to the ideal model of fascism and totalitarianism than Franco's Spain was, but also that repression was more brutal in Spain. To question the usefulness of the fascist conceptualization of authoritarian regimes today, therefore, is in no way tantamount to questioning their repressive character and the moral indignation that character deserves.

## **Conclusion**

Our effort to link some of the most complex issues in the study of politics (outside of stable democracies) should perform several functions: (1) emphasize the need for more careful description, better data and more precise conceptualization; (2) call attention to the weaknesses of interpretations based on a 'functionalist' approach, which centres on the crisis that leads to the establishment of non-democratic regimes, on the assumed motives of the social actors and on the presumed needs of the 'system' in explaining

the differences between authoritarian regimes and the role of fascist movements and ideological elements; and (3) note the relevance of those elements to the problems of consolidation, legitimation, crisis, breakdown and the transition to democracy.

Even though we have not entered into the problem of the appeal of fascism, we should not forget the mobilization of idealism that fascism achieved in the inter-war years among the young, among students, and even among intellectuals of standing. Fortunately, contemporary authoritarian opponents of democracy on the right and authoritarian regimes have not attained this kind of mobilization.

Too many problems in the study of non-democratic politics remain unexplored. Foremost on the agenda here is the explanation of the extent and patterns of violence and repression and the inhuman forms it has taken. In my view, the distinction made between totalitarian systems and authoritarian regimes does not provide us with a full answer; nor do we have an explanation as to why even autocratic and non-democratic regimes of the nineteenth century showed a respect for political opponents that was lost in the twentieth century. Why, moreover, do some regimes content themselves with using coercion rationally and others condone unnecessary vengeance and brutality against fellow humans? There is need for a much more systematic comparative analysis of the variety of forms and intensity of state repression and terrorism, brutality and horror, one that might reveal factors that are not directly related to a typology of regimes or ideologies.

Study of the short twentieth century, of fascism and communism, of the breakdown of democracy, of totalitarian and authoritarian regimes, can and should contribute to the following ends: to a positive commitment to democracy and the rule of law, freedom and liberal values, to competitive party politics reflecting a plurality of interests and values, to respect for the proper place of religion and the churches, the role of the market, entrepreneurs, trade unions and interest groups. In sum: such a study should lead us to uphold the complexity of society, a complexity that totalitarians sought to destroy and authoritarians to limit. It should lead to the defence of a society in which, to use a phrase of a Catalan and Spanish politician-intellectual (in his critique of the nationalisms born of the disintegration of the Austro-Hungarian Empire) 'nobody was happy, but nobody was in despair either'.<sup>85</sup>

## Notes

*Translator's note:* several changes to this original English text by Juan J. Linz were approved by the author and published in the translation of Katrin Mey that appeared in the original German volume. These changes have been incorporated into this version of the English text.

- 1 This essay should be read in conjunction with my earlier writings, where I have defined, discussed and documented my use of such terms as authoritarian

regime, totalitarianism and fascism at length. Given the length of this essay, I shall not repeat myself here – although this might have been helpful for the reader. A selection of my works can be found at the end of this contribution.

- 2 J. Linz, 'La Crisis de las democracias', Mercedes Cabrera, Juliá Santos and Pablo Martín Aceña, eds, *Europa en crisis 1919–1939* (Madrid: Pablo Iglesias, 1991), 231–80.
- 3 The image among fascist leaders and intellectuals of the Soviet Union and even of Stalin (as distinct from world communism) merits further study and would reveal a sense of 'affinity' with the first and the rejection of the second. It is interesting that Ramiro Ledesma Ramos should write that the 'single school would be possible only in a totalitarian state, whether it be fascist or Bolshevik' (*Fascismo en Espana? Esplugues de Llobregat*, Barcelona: Ariel, 1968), 59. Note the use of the term 'totalitarian state' applied in 1935 by a fascist! Elsewhere, he writes: 'In our epoch, in our own days, the national revolutions develop with incredible success. See the names that represent them: Mussolini, Kemal, Hitler and – why not? – Stalin' (ibid., 62). In 1941 Leon Degrelle formulated it thus to his audience in German-occupied Paris:

It is not to save capitalism that we fight in Russia. . . . It is for a revolution of our own. . . . If Europe were to become once more the Europe of bankers, of fat corrupt bourgeoisies, slack, sloppy, and accommodating . . . we should prefer communism to win and destroy everything. We would rather have it all blow up than see this rottenness resplendent.

(Quoted in Eugene Weber, *Varieties of Fascism* (Princeton NJ: D. Van Nostrand, 1964), 47)

The French fascist Robert Bardeche expressed it more positively when he wrote in 1937:

Fascism, we have thought for a long time, is poetry, the poetry of the twentieth century itself (without doubt together with communism). The little children will learn with amazement the existence of that exultation of millions of people, the youth camps, the glories of the past, the parades, the cathedrals of light. . . . And I know well that communism, which also has its greatness, is similarly exultant.

(Quoted by J. Plumyène and R. Lasierra, *Les Fascismes Français 1923–1963* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1963), 103)

- 4 Stanley G. Payne, *A History of Fascism 1914–1945* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1995) provides a monumental, well documented and insightful work with exhaustive bibliographic references. See also Walter Laqueur, ed., *Fascism: A Reader's Guide* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978); Roger Griffin, *The Nature of Fascism* (New York: Routledge, 1991); Ugelvik Larsen, Bernt Hagtvet and Jan Petter Myklebust, eds, *Who were the Fascists. Social Roots of European Fascism* (Bergen: Universitetsforlaget, 1980); Ugelvik Larsen with the assistance of Bernt Hagtvet, ed., *Modern Europe After Fascism* (Boulder CO: Social Science Monographs, 1998). With its 63 chapters, this last work by Larsen covers a large number of countries and themes, focusing on the legacy of fascism in different regimes, on the discontinuities and continuities and how they dealt with the past. The chapters dealing with the fascists and radical right in each of these works excuse me from making more detailed analyses and bibliographic references of my own.
- 5 See John F. Coverdale, *Italian Intervention in the Spanish Civil War* (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 1975), 35–37 on Italian fascist perceptions of the Primo de Rivera dictatorship, on the absence of a 'myth', on the patriotic

party seen as 'completely devoid of soul and vitality', and 'the "condottiero" little more than an intelligent and energetic gentleman'.

- 6 Andrew C. Janos, *The Politics of Backwardness in Hungary 1825–1945* (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 1982), chs V and VI, 201–312. See page 229 for a chart of the parliamentary parties and factions from 1939 to 1944 and for the 'political pluralism' in the regime, and pages 278–85 for the social background of elites of government machine and parliament in the Liberal-Conservative period (1921–32) and the National Radical period (1932–44) and the National Socialist leadership. See here also Andrew C. Janos, 'The One-Party State and Social Mobilization: East Europe Between the Wars', S. P. Huntington and C. H. Moore, eds, *Authoritarian Politics in Modern Society*, (New York and London: Basic Books, 1970), 204–36; Istaván Deák, 'Hungary' in Hans Rogger and Eugene Weber, eds, *The European Right* (Berkeley CA: University of California, 1966), 364–407; Jerry Kochanowski, 'Horthy und Pilsudski. Vergleich der Autoritären Regime in Ungarn und Polen', Erwin Oberländer, ed., *Autoritäre Regime in Ostmittele- und Südosteuropa. 1919–1944* (Paderborn: Schöningh Verlag, 2001), 19–94; Joseph Rothschild, *Pilsudski's Coup D'Etat* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1966) and S. Andreski, 'Poland', S. J. Woolf, ed., *European Fascism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1969), 167–83. On the government parties, first the non-party bloc of collaboration with the government and then the Camp of National Unity 'and the struggle for power between the pseudo-fascist militarized bureaucracy and a semi-fascist party of anti-Semitic and ultramontane chauvinists', Edward D. Wynot Jr, *Polish Politics in Transition: The Camp of National Unity and the Struggle for Power, 1935–1939* (Athens GA: University of Georgia Press, 1974).
- 7 Henry L. Roberts, *Rumania: Political Problems of an Agrarian State* (New Haven CT: Yale University Press, 1951). The fundamental difference in worldview of the royal National Rebirth Front and the Legion of the Archangel has been well captured by Andres C. Janos, 'Modernization and Decay in Historical Perspective: The Case of Romania', Kenneth Jowitt, ed., *Social Change in Romania 1860–1940: A Debate on Development in a European Nation* (Berkeley CA: Institute of International Studies, University of California, 1978), 72–116. See in this context pages 109–12. Also Eugene Weber, 'Romania', H. Rogger and E. Weber, eds, *The European Right*, op. cit., 501–74. For a stimulating excursus comparing politics and society in Romania and Portugal, see Philippe C. Schmitter, 'Manoilescu and Delayed Dependent Development', K. Jowitt, ed., *Social Change in Romania 1860–1940*, op. cit., 117–39. See here 134–39. Also Hans-Christian Maier, 'Voraussetzungen der Autoritären Monarchie in Rumänien', and Florin Müller, 'Autoritäre Regime in Rumänien 1938–44', both in Erwin Oberländer, op. cit., 431–70 and 471–99 respectively; Mattei Dogan, 'Romania, 1919–38', Myron Weiner and Ergun Dzubudun, eds, *Competitive Elections and Development Studies* (Durham NC: Duke University Press, 1987), 369–89.
- 8 On Estonia, see Andres Kasekamp, *The Radical Right in Interwar Estonia* (New York: St Martin's Press, 2000). This work includes comparisons with other Baltic republics and a paired comparison between the Estonian breakdown and authoritarian regime and the re-equilibration of democracy in Finland. See also Ago Pajür, 'Die Legitimierung der Diktatur des Präsidenten Päts und die öffentliche Meinung in Estland', Oberländer, op. cit., 163–214. See also Anatol Lieven, *The Baltic Revolution: Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and the Path to Independence* (New Haven CT: Yale University Press, 1994) ch. 3.
- 9 Risto Alapuro and Erik Allardt, 'The Lapua Movement: The Threat of Rightist Takeover in Finland, 1930–32', Juan J. Linz and A. Stepan, eds, *The Breakdown of Democratic Regimes: Europe* (Baltimore MD: Johns Hopkins University

Press, 1978); also Henning Poulsen and Malene Djursaa, 'Social Basis of Nazism in Denmark: The DNSAP', Stein Ugelvik Larsen *et al.*, *Who were the Fascists?*, op. cit., 702–14.

- 10 The Portuguese Republic was characterized by extreme instability: 9 presidents, 44 governments, 25 uprisings, 3 counter-revolutionary dictatorships, and an average duration of governments of 117 days in 16 years. It would be misleading to attribute all this instability to social-economic conflicts, particularly considering the low level of industrialization and the presence north of the Tejo of a large small-landowning peasantry. The conflicts within the elite, the role of the armed forces and small but highly active revolutionary minorities, particularly in Lisbon, provide a better explanation than structural conflicts. Certainly, the small fascist party founded in 1953 had nothing to do with the breakdown of this unstable democracy. See here Douglas L. Wheeler, *Republican Portugal. A Political History, 1910–1926* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1978); Jesus Pabon, *La revolución portuguesa (De don Carlos a Sidonio Paes)* (Madrid: Espasa Calpe, 1941); Thomas C. Bruneau, *Politics and Nationhood: Post-Revolutionary Portugal* (New York: Praeger, 1984), ch. 1; Lawrence S. Graham and Harry M. Makler, eds, *Contemporary Portugal. The Revolution and its Antecedents* (Austin: University of Texas 1979). In the last work, see the chapters by Philippe Schmitter, Manuel de Lucena, Howard J. Wiarda, Harry M. Makler, Joyce F. Riegelhaupt and Douglas L. Wheeler.

Stanley G. Payne argues against the usefulness of characterizing the regime as fascist in 'Salazarism: "Fascism" or "Bureaucratic Authoritarianism?"', *Estudos de Historia de Portugal*, vol. II, sections XVI–XX: *Homenagem a A. H. Oliveira Marques* (Lisbon: Estampa, 1983), 525–31. See here also João Medina, *Salazar e os fascistas, Salazarismo e Nacional-Sindicalismo. A historia dum conflicto 1932–1935* (Lisbon: Bertrand, 1978); Antonio Costa Pinto, *The Salazar 'New State' and European Fascism – Problems and Perspective of Interpretation* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995); Antonio Costa Pinto, *The Blue Shirts. Portuguese Fascists and the New State* (Boulder CO: Social Science Monographs, 2000).

- 11 Shlomo Ben-Ami, *Fascism from above: The Dictatorship of Primo de Rivera in Spain, 1923–30* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983); Javier Tusell, *Radiografía de un Golpe de Estado, El Ascenso al poder del General Primo de Rivera* (Madrid: Alianza Editorial, 1987).
- 12 Stanley G. Payne, *Spain's First Democracy: The Second Republic 1931–1936* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1993); Stanley G. Payne, *Fascism in Spain 1923–1977* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1999); Stanley G. Payne, *The Franco Regime, 1936–1975* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1987). Thanks to the monumental efforts of Stanley Payne, Spain is the best-studied case of the crisis and breakdown of a democracy and of the relatively insignificant fascist movement that was incorporated in the Franco regime. Nothing can substitute the reading of his three monumental books. In addition, see Javier Tusell, *Franco en le guerra civil. Una biografía político* (Barcelona: Tusquets, 1992); also Juan J. Linz, 'From Falange to Movimiento Organización: The Spanish Single Party and the Franco Regime, 1936–68', Samuel P. Huntington and C. H. Moore, eds, *Authoritarian Politics in Modern Societies. The Dynamics of Established One Party Systems* (New York: Basic Books, 1970), 128–303; Javier Tusell, *La dictadura de Franco* (Madrid: Alianza, 1988); also Ucelay da Cal, 'Problemas en la comparación de las dictaduras española e italiana en los años treinta y cuarenta', E. D'Auric and J. Casassas, eds, *El Estado Moderno en Italia v España* (Barcelona: University of Barcelona, 1993), 155–74. On the limited pluralism of the Franco elite, see: Amando de Miguel, *Sociología del Franquismo, Analisis ideológico de los ministros del Regimen*



- (Barcelona: Euros, 1975); C. Viver Pi-Sunyer, *El personal politico de Franco (1936–1945)* (Barcelona: Vicens Vives, 1978); Miguel Jerez, *Elites politicas y centros de extraccion social en Espana 1938–1957* (Madrid: Centro de Investigaciones Sociologicas, 1982).
- 13 Juan J. Linz, 'Some Notes toward a Comparative Study of Fascism in Sociological Historical Perspective', Juan J. Linz, *The Breakdown of Democratic Regimes: Crisis, Breakdown, and Reequilibration* (Baltimore MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978), op. cit., 3–121; Juan J. Linz, 'Political Space and Fascism as a Late-Comer', op. cit., 153–89; Juan J. Linz, 'The Breakdown of Democratic Regimes', op. cit.; Juan J. Linz, 'From Great Hopes to Civil War', op. cit., 142–215; Juan J. Linz, 'Totalitarian and Authoritarian Regimes', op. cit., 175–411.
  - 14 Juan J. Linz, *The Breakdown of Democratic Regimes: Crisis, Breakdown, and Reequilibration* (Baltimore MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978); Juan J. Linz, 'From Great Hopes to Civil War. The Breakdown of Democracy in Spain', Juan J. Linz and A. Stepan, eds, *The Breakdown of Democratic Regimes: Europe* (Baltimore MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978), 142–215.
  - 15 Juan J. Linz, 'An Authoritarian Regime. The Case of Spain', E. Allardt and Y. Littunen, eds, *Cleavages, Ideologies and Party Systems* (Helsinki: Transactions of the Westermarck Society, 1964) vol. X, 291–341; Juan J. Linz, 'Totalitarianism and Authoritarianism: My Recollections on the Development of Comparative Politics', Alfons Söllner, Ralf Walkenhaus and Karin Wieland, eds, *Totalitarismus. Eine Ideengeschichte des 20. Jahrhunderts* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1997), 141–57. Francesc Cambó, *Meditacions. Dietari (1936–1940)* (Barcelona: Alpha, 1982). On the distinction between the totalitarian and the authoritarian states, see pages 714–15. I have quoted this text from 'Totalitarianism and Authoritarianism', Alfons Söllner, op. cit., 148. The essay by Enric Ucelay Da Cal (op. cit.) comparing fascist Italy and Francoist Spain makes the same point as Cambó's comparison of the same. There can be little doubt that the civil war divided Spanish society, created greater discontinuity in the bureaucracy, the judiciary, the officer corps and in intellectual and cultural life, that it generated more repression and fear than Italian fascism in the early years than did the *anni del consensu*. This, however, should not obscure the different conception and dynamics of both regimes. See here Guy Hermet, 'L'Autoritarisme', Madeleine Grawitz and Jean Leca, eds, *Traite de Science Politique* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1985), vol. 2, pp. 269–312. See also K. D. Bracher, 'Die Autoritäre Form und die Diktatur: von der ersten zur zweiten Nach-Kriegszeit', op. cit., 253–67; Guy Hermet, 'Dictature bourgeoise et modernisation conservatrice. Problemes methodologiques de l'analyse des situations autoritaires', *Revue Française de Science Politique* V, no. 1, 1975.
  - 16 On the characterization of communist Poland as an authoritarian regime, see Jacques Ruponik, 'Le Totalitarisme vu de l'Est', Guy Hermet, ed., *Totalitarismes* (Paris: Economica, 1984), 60–62. Here, he discusses the writings of Jerzy Wiatr, as well as Jadwiga Staniszkis, *Poland's Self-Limiting Revolution* (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984). See mainly pages 19–34, 150–88 on the evolution of the Polish regime between the poles of totalitarianism and authoritarianism and what she calls 'lame pluralism'.
  - 17 Juan J. Linz, 'Types of Political Regimes and Respect for Human Rights. Historical Cross-National Perspectives', A. Eide and B. Hagtvat, eds, *Human Rights in Perspective: A Global Assessment* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991), 177–222.
  - 18 Michael Walzer, 'On Failed Totalitarianism', Irving Howe, ed., *1984 Revisited: Totalitarianism in our Century* (New York: Harper and Row, 1983), 103–221. Here, Walzer notes:

But the regime has a short life, and we won't succeed in understanding it if we assign it a permanent place in the typology of political science. That would be like sneaking the apocalypse into a standard chronology. The end of days is not a date and totalitarianism is not a regime.

(Ibid., 119)

- 19 Juan J. Linz and A. Stepan, *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation. Southern Europe, South America and Post-Communist Europe* (Baltimore MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996); also Mark R. Thompson, 'Weder totalitär noch autoritär. Post-Totalitarismus in Osteuropa', Achim Siegel, ed., *Totalitarismustheorien nach dem Ende des Kommunismus* (Cologne: Böhlau Verlag, 1998), 309–39.
- 20 Juan J. Linz, *Totalitarian and Authoritarian Regimes*, op. cit., 240–45.
- 21 On the different totalitarianisms and the similarities and differences among them, see 'Totalitarian and Authoritarian Regimes', op. cit., and the literature cited there. Also Guy Hermet, ed., *Totalitarismes* (Paris: Economica, 1984); Domenico Fisichella, *Analisi del totalitarismo* (Messina: G. D'Anna, 1976); Guy Hermet, *Aux frontières de la démocratie* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1983). In addition to the extensive literature referred to in those publications, we would like to mention Marco Tarchi, *Partito unico e dinamica Autoritaria* (Naples: Akropolis, 1981).
- 22 Erwin Oberländer, ed., *Autoritäre Regime in Ostmittele- und Südosteuropa. 1919–1944* (Paderborn: Schöningh Verlag, 2001) provides an excellent collection of essays by specialists on different countries and a number of comparative chapters. I am grateful to Professor Hans Maier for having made this work available to me as I was finishing this essay. I wish I could have referred to it more often. The extensive bibliographic references are particularly useful. See also Erwin Oberländer, H. Lemberg and H. Sundhausen, eds, with the collaboration of D. Balke, *Autoritäre Regime in Ostmitteleuropa* (Mainz: Institut für Osteuropäische Geschichte, 1995).
- 23 Said A. Arjomand, *The Iranian Revolution in Comparative Perspective*, Working Papers, Department of Sociology, State University of New York at Stony Brook, 1983. The author discusses some of the similarities and differences between the Iranian revolution and the rise of fascism. See also Jean Leca, 'L'hypothèse totalitaire dans le Tiers monde; les pays araboislamiques', Guy Hermet, ed., *Totalitarismes* (Paris: Economica, 1984), 215–37; Houchang E. Chehabi, 'Das politische System der Islamischen Republik Iran', Renate Schmidt, ed., *Naher Osten Politik und Gesellschaft* (Berlin: PTB 3), 180–99.
- 24 The Spanish Fascist Ramiro Ledesma Ramos, *Fascismo en España? Discurso a las juventudes de España* (Esplugues de Llobregat: Ariel, 1968) frequently refers to both the need for and the costs of making alliances that faced the fascists in Italy and Germany in the process of gaining power.
- 25 The hesitation in defining Italian fascism as totalitarian and the shifts in interpreting the regime made by the great historian, Renzo De Felice, has been carefully documented and analysed by Emilio Gentile in 'Path to an Interpretation: Renzo De Felice and the Definition of Fascism', *Italian Quarterly* (summer-fall 1999). See also Emilio Gentile, *Le Oriani dell'ideologia fascista (1918–1925)* (Bari: Laterza, 1975); Emilio Gentile, *The Sacralization of Politics in Fascist Italy* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1996).
- 26 See the interesting analysis by Alberto Aquarone, *L'Organizzazione dello stato totalitario* (Turin: Einaudi, 1965). In chapter 5, 'Stato-totalitario e dittatura personale', he quotes Mussolini on the 'diarchia' with the king, the relations with the Church, and his own confession of the pluralism that limited his power (290–311).

- 27 Stanley Payne, *Fascism in Spain*, op. cit., 374, quotes Hitler in an after-dinner conversation of 7 July: 'One must take care not to place the regime of Franco on a level with National Socialism or fascism.' He continues to talk formally about the Spanish workers as 'so-called "Reds"' and about keeping them 'as a reserve in case of the outbreak of a second civil war. Together with the survivors of the old Falange, they would be the force at our disposal most worthy of confidence.' Continuing later, he states: 'the Blue Division, at the right time, could play a decisive role when the time comes to overthrow this regime controlled by priests'.
- 28 Juan J. Linz, 'Some Notes toward a Comparative Study of Fascism in Sociological Historical Perspective', W. Laqueur, *Fascism: A Reader's Guide* (Berkeley CA: University of California Press, 1976), 3–121.
- 29 Roger Griffin, 'Italian Fascism', *The Nature of Fascism* (London: Routledge, 1993), 56–84; Emilio Gentile, *Le Origini dell'Ideologia in Fascista, (1918–25)* (Rome: Laterza, 1975); Emilio Gentile, *Il Mito dello Stato Nuovo dell'Antigiulittismo al Fascismo* (Rome: Laterza, 1982); James Gregor, *The Young Mussolini and the Intellectual Origins of Fascism* (Berkeley CA: University of California Press, 1979); George L. Mosse, 'The Poet and Exercise of Political Power: Gabriele D'Annunzio', G. L. Mosse, ed., *Masses and Man* (New York: Howard Fertig, 1980), also 'The Political Culture of Italian Futurism: A General Perspective', *Journal of Contemporary History* 25, no. 2–3 (1990); Paolo Farneti, 'Social Conflict, Parliamentary Fragmentation, Institutional Shift, and the Rise of Fascism: Italy', Juan J. Linz and A. Stepan, eds, *The Breakdown of Democratic Regimes. Europe*, 3–33; Adrian Lytelton, *The Seizure of Power: Fascism in Italy. 1919–1929* (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 1987).
- 30 For a chart listing the parties or movements in different countries that represents the 'three faces of authoritarian nationalism' – fascists, radical right and conservative right – see Stanley G. Payne, *Fascism, Comparison and Definition* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1980), 14–21. For a Nazi account of kindred movements, see Werner Haas, *Europa will Leben. Die nationalen Erneuerungsbewegungen in Wort und Bild* (Berlin: Batschari, 1936). The reasons for the adoption or imitation of fascism in the inter-war years in different countries are in many respects similar to those that have been noted for the self-designation of a number of African regimes as 'scientific socialist' or 'Marxist-Leninist'. See here Kenneth Jowitt, 'Scientific Socialist Regimes in Africa: Political Differentiation, Avoidance and Unawareness', Carl G. Rosberg and Thomas M. Callaghy, eds, *Socialism in Sub-Saharan Africa: A New Assessment* (Berkeley CA: Institute of International Studies, 1979), 133–73, 391–96.
- 31 Austria would provide an interesting opportunity to compare the impact of an authoritarian regime (1933–38) and a totalitarian system (1938 to the start of World War II) on a society in different spheres of life at the community level. See Emmerich Tälös, 'Zum Herrschaftssystem des Austrofaschismus: Österreich 1934–38', Oberländer, op. cit., 143–62; V. Kluge, *Der österreichische Ständestaat 1934–1938* (Vienna: Verlag für Geschichte und Politik, 1984); Emmerich Tälös and W. Neugebauer, eds, *Austrofaschismus. Beiträge über Politik, Ökonomie und Kultur* (Vienna: Verlag für Gesellschaftskritik, 1984); Gerhard Botz, *Gewalt in der Politik. Attentate, Zusunnenstöße, Putschversuche, Unruhen in Österreich 1918–1938* (Munich: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 1983).
- 32 On the CEDA, see Ramon Montero, *La CEDA*, 2 vols (Madrid, 1977); R.A.H. Robinson, *The Origins of Franco's Spain* (Newton Abbott: David & Charles, 1970); Javier Tusell Gomez, *Historia de la democracia cristiana en España* (Madrid: Edicusa, 1974) and the speeches and memoirs of the party's leader, Jose Maria Gil Robles. The 'fascistic' tendencies in the CEDA and especially the JAP are discussed in Ricardo Chueca and Jose Ramon Montero, 'El fascismo

en España: elementos para una interpretación', *Historia Contemporánea* 8, (1992), 215–48.

- 33 Max Weber, *Economy and Society*, vol. 1, Guenther Roth and Claus Wittich, eds (New York: Bedminster Press, 1968), 49–50.
- 34 Eugene Weber, *Action Française: Royalism and Reaction in Twentieth Century France* (Stanford CA: Stanford University Press, 1962).
- 35 J. Gil Pecharrómán, *Conservadores subversivos: La derecha autoritaria alfonsina. (1913–1936)* (Madrid: Eudema, 1994).
- 36 Martin Blinkhorn, *Carlism and the Crisis in Spain, 1931–1939* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976).
- 37 Such fascists as Jose Antonio Primo de Rivera, Ledesma Ramos and Rolao Preto, felt a particular antipathy to the conservative, authoritarian, corporatist Catholic leaders, and wrote perceptive characterizations of them. Rolao Preto, for example, detested De Valera, Dollfuss, Schussnigg, Gil Robles and Salazar for their style, 'common sense', lack of revolutionary spirit, eclecticism and calculating attitudes. He describes them as 'tiranos frios', as the 'cold' dictators. See here João Medina, *Salazar e los Fascistas*, op. cit., *passim*. This hostility, by the way, was reciprocated on the part of the conservative leaders.
- 38 István Déak, 'A Fatal Compromise? The Debate over Collaboration and Resistance in Hungary', István Déak, Jan T. Gross and Tony Judt, eds, *The Politics of Retribution in Europe. World War I and its Aftermath* (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000), 39–73.
- 39 Edward Malefakis, *Southern Europe in the 19th and 20th Centuries: An Historical Overview*, Working Paper 1992/35. Madrid: Instituto Juan March de Estudios e Investigaciones, 1992. See also, Stanley G. Payne, 'Authoritarianism in the Smaller States of Southern Europe', H. E. Chehabi and Alfred Stepan, eds, *Politics, Society and Democracy: Comparative Studies (essays in honor of Juan J. Linz)* (Boulder CO, 1995), 183–96.
- 40 François Furet, *The Passing of an Illusion* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995).
- 41 Erwin Oberländer, ed., *Autoritäre Regime*, op. cit.
- 42 Juan J. Linz, 'The Future of an Authoritarian Situation', op. cit., pp. 233–54.
- 43 Shlomo Ben-Ami, *Fascism from Above: the Dictatorship of Primo de Rivera in Spain, 1923–1930* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983).
- 44 Otto Bauer, *Zwischen Zwei Weltkriegen?* (Bratislava, 1936), O. Bauer, *Werksgabe* vol. 4 (Vienna: Europaverlag, 1976), 37. Quoted from G. Botz, *Gewalt in der Politik*, op. cit., 242.
- 45 'Legislatures in Organic Statist-Authoritarian Regimes: The Case of Spain', Joel Smith and Lloyd D. Musolf, eds, *Legislatures in Development: Dynamics of Change in New and Old States* (Durham NC: Duke University Press, 1979), 88–125.
- 46 Philippe C. Schmitter, 'Still the Century of Corporatism', in E. B. Pike and T. Stritch, eds, *The New Corporatism: Social-Political Structures in the Iberian World* (Notre Dame IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1974), 85–131. Another *Ideenkreis* that crosses even the democratic/non-democratic divide, that overlaps with some fascisms and some, but not all, authoritarianisms, is populism. We are not going to explore it, but recommend that the reader turn to the recent work of Guy Hermet, *Les populismes dans le monde. Une histoire sociologique XIX–XX siècle* (Paris: Fayard, 2001).
- 47 Dirk Berg-Schlosser, 'Bedingungen von Demokratie in Europa in der Zwischenkriegszeit', Dirk Berg-Schlosser, *Empirische Demokratieforschung. Exemplarische Analysen* (Frankfurt: Campus, 1999), 141–274.
- 48 Henry Ashby Turner Jr, *Hitler's Thirty Days to Power. January 1933* (Reading MA: Addison-Wesley, 1996).

- 49 Juan J. Linz, *The Breakdown of Democratic Regimes*, op. cit. The essay by Dirk Berg-Schlosser and Gisele De Meur entitled 'Conditions of Democracy in Inter-War Europe: A Boolean Test of Major Hypotheses', *Comparative Politics* 26, no. 3, 253–79, compares my work systematically with that of other scholars. See also Leonardo Morlino, *Come cambiano i regimi politici: Strumenti di analisi* (Milan: Franco Angeli, 1980).
- 50 Holm Sundhussen, 'Die Königsdiktaturen in Südosteuropa: Umriss einer Synthese', *Oberländer*, op. cit., 337–48. This essay is followed by a number of essays on Albania, Bulgaria, Greece, Rumania and Yugoslavia.
- 51 Juan J. Linz, 'Political Space and Fascism as a Late-Comer', Larsen *et al.*, op. cit.; also, Juan J. Linz, 'Some Notes Toward a Comparative Study of Fascism in Sociological Historical Perspective', W. Laqueur, ed., *Fascism: A Readers Guide*, op. cit., 5–121. The latter essay provides biographical data on the fascist leadership in comparison with the leaders of other parties. There is no comparable analysis of the lives of authoritarian regime leaders.
- 52 Eric Hobsbawm, *The Age of Extremes. A History of the World, 1914–1991* (New York: Vintage Books, 1996). In fact, and contrary to the beliefs of this author's generation, the Spanish Civil War was not the first phase of the Second World War and the victory of General Franco (who, as we have seen, cannot be even described as a fascist) had no global consequences. 'neither the parties of Muscovite communism nor those inspired by fascism were of serious significance there before the Civil War, for Spain went its own eccentric way both on the anarchist ultra-Left and in the Carlist ultra-Right' (156–57), see also 157–61. On the crisis of Spanish democracy, see Enric Ucelay-Da Cal, 'Busando el levantamiento plebiscitario; insuprecionalismo y elecciones', *Ayer* 20 (1995), 49–80.
- 53 Henry Turner, op. cit., 171–72 and ch. 7, 163–83.
- 54 Roger Griffin, *The Nature of Fascism* (London: Pinter, 1991). Griffin defines palingenetic as 'expressing the myth of rebirth, regeneration in a political context, embodying the aspiration to create a new order following a period of perceived decline or decadence' (32–36, 240).
- 55 The 'longing for community' in the fascist movements has been well analysed by George L. Mosse, 'Nationalism, Racism and the Radical Right', in Eugene Kamenka, ed., *Community as a Social Ideal* (London: Edward Arnold, 1982), 27–42. It became particularly strong in the Romanian Legion and its militant organization, the Iron Guard.
- 56 Jose Ortega y Gasset, *Obras Completas, Tomo X. Escritos Politicos I (1908–1921)* (Madrid: Revista de Occidente, 1969).
- 57 For the quotation of Mosca, see the introductory essay by Gaetano Salvemini to A. William Salomone, *Italian Democracy in the Making* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1945), xv–xvi.
- 58 I have already referred to their contributions in the course of this essay. I would particularly note my indebtedness to Karl Dietrich Bracher, *Zeit der Ideologien. Eine Geschichte des politischen Denkens im 20. Jahrhundert* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlagsanstalt, 1982), and to Emilio Gentile, *Le Oriaini dell'ideologia fascista (1918–1925)* (Bari: Laterza, 1975). I would also call attention to the excellent essays appearing in the volumes edited by Alfons Söllner *et al.* (*Totalitarismus. Eine Ideengeschichte des 20. Jahrhunderts*, op. cit.) and by Hans Maier (*Totalitarismus und Politische Religionen. Konzepte des Diktaturvergleiches*, vols I and II (Paderborn: Schöningh, 1996 and 1997). Some of the writings of E. Nolte also deserve mention, although I disagree strongly with some of his theses. For Italy, I have already mentioned the work of Emilio Gentile, and for Germany, in addition to that of George Mosse, I would mention Kurt Sontheimer, *Anti-demokratisches Denken in der Weimarer Republik* (Munich: Nymphenburger Verlagshandlung, 1962), 283, 1968.

- 59 Edgar Jung, 'Neubelebung von Weimar', *Deutsche Rundschau* (June 1932), 153; quoted in Kurt Sontheimer, op. cit., 283.
- 60 Theodor Geiger, *Die soziale Schichtung des deutschen Volkes* (Stuttgart: Ferdinand Enke, 1932); Theodor Geiger, *Saggi sulla società industriale. Introduzione di Paolo Farneti* (Turin: Unione Tipografica (UTET), 1970), 23–28.
- 61 Hans Maier, ed., *Totalitarismus und Politische Religionen. Konzepte des Diktaturvergleiches*, vol. I (Paderborn: Schöningh, 1996); Hans Maier and Michael Schäfer, eds, *Totalitarismus und Politische Religionen. Konzepte des Diktaturvergleiches*, vol. II (Paderborn: Schöningh, 1997).
- 62 Otto Bauer, *Die österreichische Revolution* (Vienna, 1923); quoted in G. Botz, *Gewalt in der Politik*, op. cit., 23–24.
- 63 Juan J. Linz, 'Der religiöse Gebrauch der Politik und/oder der Politische Gebrauch der Religion, Ersatz-Ideologie gegen Ersatz-Religion', Hans Maier, ed., *Totalitarismus und Politische Religionen. Konzepte des Diktaturvergleiches* (Paderborn: Schöningh, 1996), 129–54. This article explores the whole range, from 'theocracy' on one end to 'political religion' on the other.
- 64 Juan J. Linz, 'Religion y politica en España', R. Diaz Salazar and S. Giner, eds, *Religion y sociedad en Espana* (Madrid: Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas, 1993), 1–50. On the Church and the Franco regime, there is a great deal of literature. See, for example, the monograph by Guy Hermet, *Les Catholiques dans l'Espagne Franquiste*, 2 vols (Paris: Foundation Nationale de Sciences Politiques, 1980). For a recent work in English, see Stanley G. Payne, *Spanish Catholicism: A Historical Overview* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1984), chs 6ff. and following. Elena de la Souchere, 'Un Catholicisme totalitaire', *Les Temps Modernes* (May 1974). On Portugal, see Manuel Braga da Cruz, *Estado Novo e Igreja Católica* (Lisbon: Bizâncio, 1998).
- 65 Jelinek Yeshayahu, 'Clergy and Fascism: The Hlinka Party in Slovakia and the Croatian Ustasha Movement', Larsen *et al.*, *Who were the Fascists?*, op. cit., 367–78. See also Yeshayahu Jelinek, *The Parish Republic: Hlinka's Slovak People's Party, 1939–1945* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1976). There is a mingling here of extreme nationalism, clerical-religious identities and fascist influences, particularly among the 'intellectuals' of the party and the functioning of a client state that was under its control.
- 66 The relationship between Mussolini and fascism on the one hand and Jews on the other is complex, ranging from the initial participation of Jews in founding the party to the 1938 Manifesto of Italian Racism and the race legislation. See Stanley G. Payne (*A History of Fascism*, op. cit., 239–42) for the scholarly references, as well as the work of R. De Felice, *Storia degli ebrei italiani sotto il fascismo* (Turin: Einaudi, 1988).
- 67 Charles B. Davenport, *Heredity in Relation to Eugenics* (New York: Henry Holt, 1911), 1. Quoted by Nancy Leys Stepan, 'The Hour of Eugenics', *Race, Gender and Nation in Latin America* (Ithaca NY: Cornell University Press, 1991).
- 68 George Mosse, *Toward the Final Solution* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1983). There are different shades and emphases in Frank-Lothar Kroll, *Utopie als Ideologie. Geschichtdenken und politisches Handeln im Dritten Reich* (Paderborn: Schöningh, 1999).
- 69 It is impossible to refer here to the extensive literature on the military in politics, on the conditions that lead to military coups d'état, on military regimes, on the relations between armed forces and fascists in the crisis of democracy and the power takeovers in Italy and especially in Germany. The reader will find references to the relevant literature in my 'Totalitarian and Authoritarian Regimes', op. cit., and in Juan J. Linz and A. Stepan, *The Breakdown of Democratic Regimes*, op. cit.

- 70 Edward Malefakis, 'Aspectos Historicos y teóricos de la Guerra', E. Malefakis, ed., *La guerra de España (1936–1939)* (Madrid: Taurus, 1986), 11–49, see 25.
- 71 Juan J. Linz, 'Some Notes ...', op. cit., 36–40, 53–55.
- 72 Jose Antonio Primo de Rivera, *Obras Completas* (Madrid: Vicesecretaria de Educacion Popular de FET y de los JONS, 1945); see 'Carta al General Franco', 623–26 and 'Carta a un Militar Español', 645–54.
- 73 Alastair Hamilton, *The Appeal of Fascism. A Study of Intellectuals and Fascism 1919–1945* (New York: Avon, 1971).
- 74 See Alexandra Barahona de Brito, *Human Rights and Democratization in Latin America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997) as quoted in Juan J. Linz, 'Further Reflections on Totalitarian and Authoritarian Regimes', *Totalitarian and Authoritarian Regimes*, op. cit., 25–26.
- 75 William Sheridan Allen, *The Nazi Seizure of Power: The Experience of a Single German Town 1922–1945* (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1965). Bernt Hagtvet, 'The Theory of Mass Society and the Collapse of the Weimar Republic: A Re-Examination', S. U. Larsen et al., *Who were the Fascists?* op. cit., 66–117.
- 76 Marc Howard, 'Demobilized Societies: Understanding the Weakness of Civil Societies in Postcommunist Europe', Ph.D. in Political Science, University of California, Berkeley, 1999.
- 77 Ann Ruth Willner, *The Spellbinders: Charismatic Political Leadership* (New Haven CT: Yale University Press, 1984); Luciano Cavalli, *Il capo carismatico* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1981) and *Carisma e tirannide nel secolo XX. Il caso Hitler* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1982).
- 78 In his preface to *The Eighteenth Brumaire*, Karl Marx wrote of Victor Hugo's *Napoleon le Petit*:

He sees in it only the violent act of a single individual. He does not notice that he makes this individual great instead of little by ascribing to him a personal power of initiative such as would be without parallel in world history.

(Quoted in John B. Halsted, ed., *December 2, 1851: Contemporary Writings on the Coup d'Etat of Louis Napoleon* (Garden City NY: Doubleday, 1972), 407)

- 79 Rainer Lepsius, 'Das Modell der charismatischen Herrschaft und seine Anwendbarkeit auf den "Führerstaat" Adolf Hitlers', M. Rainer Lepsius, *Demokratie in Deutschland* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1998), 95–118. Joseph Nyomarkay, *Charisma and Factionalism in the Nazi Party* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1967); Alessandro Campi, *Mussolini* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2001). Although it is not a scholarly book, the volume edited by Jose Maria Gironella and Rafael Borrás Betriu, *100 españoles y Franco* (Barcelona: Planeta, 1979) provides the responses of 100 Spaniards of different positions and background to questions on Franco. Among those with a favourable response, one only infrequently finds any reference to 'charisma'. See also Amando de Miguel, *Franco. Franco, Franco* (Madrid: Ediciones 99, 1976).
- 80 Juan J. Linz and A. Stepan, *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation*, op. cit. See especially chapter 4, 55–65. Also Mark R. Thompson, 'Weder totalitär noch autoritär ...', op. cit., 309–39.
- 81 Juan J. Linz, 'Opposition in and under an Authoritarian Regime: The Case of Spain', Robert A. Dahl, *Regimes and Oppositions* (New Haven CT: Yale University Press, 1973), 171–259, 197–99. Juan J. Linz, 'L'opposizione in un regime autoritario: il caso della Spagna', *Storia contemporanea* 1, no. 1 (1970), 63–102.
- 82 Carlos Huneeus, *El régimen de Pinochet* (Santiago de Chile: Editorial Sudamericana Chilena, 2000). See chapter VII, 'La elite civil. El "gremialismo" y el

papel de Jaime Guzman', 327–88. Here is provided one of the few intellectual elaborations of authoritarianism in Latin America in recent decades; it was not institutionalized, however.

- 83 Juan J. Linz, 'Fascism is Dead. What Legacy Did It Leave? Thoughts and Questions on a Problematic Period of European History', Stein Ugelvik Larsen with the assistance of Bernt Hagtvet, op. cit., 19–54.
- 84 On the use of the fascist label for contemporary authoritarian regimes, see the excellent discussion by Helgio Trinidad in 'La question due fascisme en Amerique Latine', *Revue française de Science Politique*, 33, no. 2, (1983), 281–312; also Emilio Garcia Mendez, 'La Teoria del Estado en America Latina: modelo para armar', *Sistema* 60–61 (June 1983), 21–36, particularly 24–29.
- 85 Francesc Cambó, *Meditacions. Dietari (1936–1940)* (Barcelona: Alpha, 1982), 574–75.

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- 'The Future of an Authoritarian Situation or the Institutionalization of an Authoritarian Regime: The Case of Brazil', A. Stepan, ed., *Authoritarian Brazil: Origins, Policies and Future* (New Haven CT: Yale University Press, 1973), 233–54.
- 'Opposition to and under an Authoritarian Regime: the Case of Spain', Robert A. Dahl, ed., *Regimes and Oppositions* (New Haven CT: Yale University Press, 1973), 171–259.
- 'Political Space and Fascism as a Late-comer', Ugelvik Larsen, Bernt Hagtvet and Jan Peter Myklebust, eds, *Who were the Fascists? Social Roots of European Fascism* (Bergen: Universetetsforlaget, 1980), 153–91.
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- 'The Breakdown of Democratic Regimes: Crisis, Breakdown and Reequilibration', Juan J. Linz and Alfred Stepan, eds, *The Breakdown of Democratic Regimes*. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978), 3–130.
- 'From Great Hopes to Civil War: The Breakdown of Democracy in Spain', Juan J. Linz and Alfred Stepan, eds, *The Breakdown of Democratic Regimes* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978), 142–219.
- 'Some Notes Toward a Comparative Study of Fascism', Walter Laquer, ed., *Fascism: A Reader's Guide* (Berkeley CA: University of California Press, 1976), 8–121.
- 'Totalitarianism and Authoritarianism: My Recollections on the Development of Comparative Politics', Alfons Söllner, Ralf Walkenhaus and Karin Wieland, eds, *Totalitarismus. Eine Ideengeschichte des 20. Jahrhunderts* (Berlin, 1997), 141–57.
- 'Typen politischer Regime und die Achtung der Menschenrechte. Historische und länderübergreifende Perspektiven', Eckart Jesse, ed., *Totalitarismus im 20. Jahrhundert, Eine Bilanz der internationalen Forschung* (Bonn: Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung, 1999), 519–71.





**Part VI**

**Interpreters of totalitarianism**



# 12 Interpreters of totalitarianism

## A lexicographical survey

The following survey includes persons who have made independent contributions to the theory of totalitarianism, the concept of political religions, or both. As a by-product of the systematic portion of this volume, it should be understood as a supplement to it – one that provides a comprehensive overview of those impulses in the literature (including that of Eastern Europe!) that either confirm, modify, supplement or criticize our approach. In keeping with this survey's character as a general overview, it will not discuss these works in extensive detail. The redaction lay in the hands of Katrin Mey, who was aided by the cooperation of Iñes de Andrade, Felix Dirsch, Karl-Friedrich Herb, Jiri Holub, Winfried Hover, Nino Nodia, Ludwig Remmler, Michael Schäfer, Hans Otto Seitschek, Harald Seubert, Thomas Stark and Hans Maier.

### **Adler, Hans Günther**

German historian and theologian of Jewish origins, born in 1910 in Prague; died 21 August 1988 in London; studied at the German University in Prague; doctoral dissertation on Klopstock and music; deported to Theresianstadt in 1942; following the liberation, he worked at first as a teacher in Prague; he was distinguished with numerous international prizes for his wide-ranging scientific and literary work.

### *Work*

In his monumental, three-part study, *Der verwaltete Mensch. Studien zur Deportation der Juden aus Deutschland* (Tübingen, 1974), Adler presented a theory of the relationship between administration and government. The foundation of his theory is a systematic historical portrayal of the deportations that incorporates individual fates from the files. For a binding, sovereign act having the character of a command to come into being, the person must always stand opposite the executive power and never the administration, which acts strictly objectively and is therefore never permitted to oblige the human being and handle him arbitrarily. On the example of the police in

the National Socialist system, Adler establishes that a relinquishment of this division of powers necessarily leads to totalitarian systems and slavery to the state. The human being is degraded here to a mere thing, to an object of the administration and no longer encounters a responsible authority. Adler's estimation resembles that of Hannah Arendt, who likewise sees a 'loss of individuality', a dissolution of the distinction between victim and culprit into an inhuman technicism, to be a decisive characteristic of totalitarianism.

### **Adorno, Theodor W.**

German philosopher, musicologist and social scientist. Born 11 December 1903, in Frankfurt; died 6 September 1969 in Brig, Switzerland; studied philosophy, psychology, musicology and sociology; doctoral dissertation in 1924 on the antinomies in Husserl's phenomenology; beginning of his friendships with Max Horkheimer and Alban Berg; in 1930/31, he wrote his habilitation piece on Kierkegaard; beginning in 1931, he acted as leader of the Institute for Social Research (in Frankfurt, then Geneva, later New York; after 1950, in Frankfurt again). In 1933, withdrawal of the *venia legendi* and emigration to Oxford; emigration to New York in 1938; there, reformulation of critical theory with Max Horkheimer; from 1942 to 1944, work with Max Horkheimer on the *Dialektik der Aufklärung* in Los Angeles; 1944–49, director of the Research Project on Social Discrimination, which investigates the structure of the authoritarian personality; from 1950, assistant professor of philosophy and sociology in Frankfurt, full professor from 1956; 1952–53, scientific director of the Hacker Foundation in California; in 1966, appearance of the *Negativen Dialektik*; lecture tours both inside and outside Germany; after increasing criticism of the Frankfurt School, resigned withdrawal.

### **Work**

Together with Horkheimer, Adorno takes a psychological-anthropological approach to the phenomenon of totalitarianism in *Dialektik der Aufklärung* (Frankfurt, 1947). In terms of individual psychology, the human being undertakes a 'pathic projection' in the experience of his most extreme powerlessness; that is, for those things that he cannot do and does not tolerate and everything that is forbidden, he seeks an object – mostly weaker – upon which he projects all his suffering and weakness in order then to liberate himself from them through acts of force. Because what is involved here a process founded in the individual human being, the object of 'pathic projection' is random; it must only be conspicuous and have no protection: Jews, vagabonds, Protestants, Catholics, etc. These, for their part, would undertake just such a projection themselves in the corresponding position of power.

In *Vorurteil und Charakter*, Horkheimer and Adorno draw this general psychological finding into their investigation of a specifically 'totalitarian

character', in order to explain the transition from the individual psychology to collective action. An essential feature of the 'totalitarian character' – and one that corresponds to Hannah Arendt's 'mass human being' – is its slavishness to authority and its desire, born of weakness, to lose itself in a great whole. The 'pathic projection' is then directed against everything that might disturb this dissolving integration process. The person again projects the destruction of itself, which is supposed to occur through its dissolution into the collectivity, upon the other. The will to destruction now perceived in the other justifies the destruction of the other; thus, for the 'totalitarian character', is its victim always the destructive enemy. '[T]he "decadence" of the victim is a slogan of the totalitarian hangman of all stripes' (368ff.).

Although the analyses of Horkheimer and Adorno make no specific contributions to a conception of the 'political religions', they present a nuanced anthropological and sociological finding that renders the location of the category of political religion more accessible for the interpretation of totalitarian regimes.

### **Aron, Raymond**

French sociologist and journalist, born 14 March 1905 in Paris; died 17 October 1983 in Paris; studied philosophy, then became a reader at the universities of Cologne and Berlin. Wrote his habilitation piece in 1939; from 1940 to 1944, participated in the resistance movement of 'Free France' in London; editor-in-chief of *La France Libre*. From 1945 to 1946, cabinet head of the information minister, André Malraux; from 1947 leader writer for *Figaro*; in 1955 professor of Sociology at the Sorbonne; 1970 professor of the Sociology of Modern Civilisation at the Collège de France. In 1976, president of the *Académie des Sciences Morales et Politiques*; political director of *Figaro*. Left *Figaro* in 1977; worked with *L'Express*. In 1979 received the Goethe Prize of the city of Frankfurt.

### **Work**

As a theoretician of totalitarianism and of the international politics of neo-Marxism, Aron coined the concept of 'religion séculière' as a means to distance himself from the concept of 'political religions' that had oriented him initially. This makes the decision as to whether Marxism involves a religion (its eschatology speaks for this category) or an anti-religion (its rejection of religious alienation speaks for this one) superfluous; one way or the other, doctrines are involved that

assume, in the souls of its contemporaries, the place of the disappeared faith; [these doctrines] situate the salvation of humanity here on earth, in the distance of the future and taking the form of a social order that is to be created.

National Socialism, like Marxism, erects an interpretation of the past, present and future whose truth it seeks to prove through its own deeds. Thus do two essential features distinguish totalitarian movements: by their Manichean character on the one hand and their promise of salvation on the other. Alongside the Manichean ideology as a constructed scenario of a catastrophe of good and evil (leader and foreign peoples), there is a promise of salvation that absorbs the human being's religious hopes for a saved world of peace and order in the National Socialist concept of the 'thousand year Reich'.

In 'L'essence du totalitarisme' (*Critique*, January 1954, 51–70), Aron finds in totalitarianism an attempt to exercise a 'total – internal and external – rule, one that robs [people] of their quality as human beings'. In this interpretation, he finds himself in agreement with Hannah Arendt, who likewise sees terror to be an essential characteristic of totalitarianism. The melting down of differences of any kind by means of ideology and terror eliminates the human being as the recipient of an action.

### **Arendt, Hannah**

German-Jewish philosopher. Born in Hanover in 1906, grew up in Königsberg; died 4 December 1975 in New York City; 1924, external *Abitur*; up to 1928, studied philosophy, theology and classical philosophy in Marburg and Freiburg with Heidegger, then in Heidelberg with Jaspers; she wrote her doctoral dissertation under the latter, a work entitled, *Der Liebesbegriff bei Augustin*. Married Günther Stern in 1929; began working in the following year on *Rahel Varnhagen*, which was finished in 1938. In 1933, brief internment in Berlin and flight to Paris thereafter; from 1933, activity for the *Jugend-Alijah*; divorce from Stern in 1937; friendship with Walter Benjamin, among others, who entrusts her and Heinrich Blücher with his *Geschichtsphilosophischen Thesen*, which she takes to New York and hands over to Adorno; marriage to Heinrich Blücher in 1940. After a temporary internment in the concentration camp at Gurs (southern France), flight with her husband to Spain and Portugal. Emigration to the United States in 1941. From 1941 to 1944 she cooperated on the German-Jewish weekly newspaper, *Der Aufbau*. In 1944, her essay entitled 'The Jew as Pariah: A Hidden Tradition', appeared in *Jewish Social Studies*. From 1944 to 1948, research director at the Conference on Jewish Relations and the Commission on European Jewish Cultural Reconstruction; 1946–48, chief reader at the Schocken publishing house; 1949–52, executive director of Schocken; *The Origins of Totalitarianism* appears in 1951; she assumes American citizenship in the same year. In 1959, receives the Lessing Prize of the City of Hamburg; in 1961, participation as a 'reporter' for the *New Yorker* at the Eichmann trial in Jerusalem. *Between Past and Future: Six Exercises in Political Thought* appears; in 1963, publication of *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil* as well as *On Revolution*. From 1963 to 1967,

professor at the University of Chicago. In 1967, her article 'Truth and Politics' appeared in the *New Yorker* and she received the Sigmund Freud Prize of the German Academy for Language and Poetry. From 1967 to her death, professor at the New School for Social Research in New York; in 1969, death of Karl Jaspers; death of her husband, Heinrich Blücher in the following year; in 1970 *On Violence, Civil Disobedience* (in the *New Yorker*) and her lecture on Kant's political philosophy appeared; in 1973, she gave the Gifford Lectures in Aberdeen, Scotland on *Thinking*. In 1974, lectures entitled *Willing* were broken off due to a heart attack. In 1975, Sonning Prize for contributions to European culture.

### **Work**

In *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (New York, 1951), *The Human Condition* (Chicago, 1958) and *Eichmann in Jerusalem* (New York, 1963), in particular, Hannah Arendt analyses the anthropological-political preconditions of National Socialism and Stalinism. She observes a break with both the Enlightenment and the political tradition of philosophy in totalitarian phenomena. The cause of this break is said to be a de-politicisation of thought: neither the Other nor otherness are taken into consideration any more, only the One is. This progresses up to the person's loss of individuality and the end of thought as such. The dialogue disappears along with its prerequisites of both an opposition between two people and the spaces between them. Thus does Arendt reach the conclusion that totalitarianism changes the nature of the human being. Only a recollection and preservation of ancient political philosophy and the Enlightenment tradition can regain the specifically human mode of being.

### **Assmann, Jan**

German Egyptologist. Born 7 July 1938 in Langelsheim. Studies of ancient Egypt, classical archaeology and ancient Greece in Heidelberg, Munich, Göttingen and Paris; completed his doctorate in Heidelberg in 1965; in 1971, habilitation in Heidelberg; from 1976, full professor of Egyptology at Heidelberg. Member of the Heidelberg Academy of Sciences; guest professor at Yale, Paris and Jerusalem from 1988 to 1990. Research and publication emphases are on the history of religion and literature in ancient Egypt, archaeological-epigraphical evaluation of imperilled gravesites, mainly of the fourteenth and thirteenth centuries BC in Thebes (Upper Egypt).

### **Work**

In his essay, 'Politische Theologie zwischen Ägypten und Israel' (*Themen. Eine Privatdruckreihe der Carl Friedrich von Siemens-Stiftung*, edited by



H. Meier, no. 52, Munich, 1992), Assmann reverses the thesis of Carl Schmitt. Whereas Schmitt's thesis states that all concepts of modern political theory are secularised theological concepts, several central concepts of theology prove to be theologised political concepts. Assmann proves this for ancient Egypt on the concepts of 'wrath' and 'love'. First coined in the political sphere, these concepts were transposed to the theological sphere only at a later time. This transposition, admittedly, occurred in the cultural milieu of a 'primary religion' that was connected with the basic experiences of being. For Israel too, though: Assmann proves on the concept of 'wrath' that a theologically loaded concept that was originally political was involved with this further-developed religious form too. With regard to the 'political religions' of totalitarian systems, Assmann also argues for a 'religious dimension' of the political, one distinguished by pure immanence. The process of a theologisation of political processes that Assmann describes works with a concept of religion that is linked to those of Scholz, Guardini, Otto and Van der Leeuw.

### ***Bärsch, Claus-Ekkehard***

Political scientist, born 3 October 1939 in Weimar; *Abitur* in 1957 in Leipzig; studied law in Munich from 1958 to 1968; in 1972, completed his doctoral dissertation under Eric Voegelin to become a Ph.D. at the Ludwig Maximilian University in Munich; completed his habilitation in 1977, with *venia legendi* for political science and social philosophy. Since 1981, has been professor of political science at the Gerhard Mercator University of Duisburg; taught at the Humboldt University of Berlin in 1990 and 1991; taught from 1991 to 1993 at the University of Potsdam. From 1993 to 1996, director of the Salomon Ludwig Steinheim Institute for German-Jewish history; founder of the Institute for the Politology of Religion in Duisburg in 1996.

### ***Work***

In his study, *Die politische Religion des Nationalsozialismus* (2nd edn Munich/Paderborn, 2002), Bärsch investigates the religious dimension of National Socialism, mainly on the basis of an exegesis of Hitler's *Mein Kampf* and Rosenberg's *Mythus des 20. Jahrhunderts*. Occupying the foreground, in his view, is not so much the investigation of religion, but the human being acting in 'society and history' (11). Following a *Weltanschauung*, human beings let themselves be led by the contents of a totalitarian ideology just as thoroughly as by religious contents. National Socialism exploits the power of religion in its ideology. Such concepts as *Volk*, *Nation*, *Race*, *Third Reich*, *Führer*, and *anti-Semitism* have religious implications based in the postulate of being 'elected' in distinction to the non-elect, who automatically become opponents to be destroyed. Herein lies the religious specificum of National Socialism.

If, in the qualification of one's own collectivity, in the establishment of an identity in difference to other peoples, a relation to God that is extraordinary and that pertains only to one's own collectivity is assumed, then the National Socialist ideology has the content of a political religion.

(42)

Bärsch has developed his 'politology of religion' for a systematic investigation (39) working with four levels of categories: first, the category of existence, second, the category of knowledge, third (following Eric Voegelin), the categories of politics as the order of the human being, of society and of history. Fourth, finally, are the categories of meaning and existence, which leave room for questions surrounding religion and religious implications. With the help of these levels of category, Bärsch investigates the writings of Dietrich Eckart, Joseph Goebbels, Alfred Rosenberg and Adolf Hitler in terms of the religious implications, primarily of the concepts that were just mentioned.

### **Bakunin, Michail Alexandrovic**

Russian revolutionary and anarchist. Born 30 May 1814 in Prjamuchino, Russia, died 1 July 1876 in Bern. In 1844, met Proudhon and Karl Marx in Paris. In May 1849, he was involved in the insurrection in Dresden and was subsequently imprisoned; extradited to Russia in 1851; sent to Siberia in 1957. In 1861 he fled to London, where he took part at the First International – from which he was later banned in 1872.

#### ***Work***

In Bakunin's work (*Gott und Staat*, 1871, and *Staatlichkeit und Anarchie*, 1873, among other essays), the individualistic anarchism of a Proudhon – which demands unlimited freedom for the individual and freedom of assembly – is transformed into a collectivist, revolutionary anarchism aiming at a stateless and classless collective order. In distinction to Kropotkin, though, Bakunin demands collective possession only of the goods of production, not of consumption goods as well. By contrast to anarchism, which was non-violent at first, Bakunin defends individual and collective terror as instruments by which to establish the new order. He also realises such terror in numerous acts of assassination and sabotage.

### **Barth, Karl**

Swiss reformist theologian. Born 10 May 1886 in Basel, died there on 10 December 1968. From 1904 to 1908, study in Bern, Tübingen and Marburg; activity as a preacher in Geneva and Safenwil (Aargau); after 1921, professor at Göttingen, Münster and Bonn after 1930; dismissed from Bonn

university in 1935 due to his refusal to take an oath of loyalty to Hitler. From 1935 to 1962, professor at Basel.

### **Work**

Having first been a devotee of liberal theology, Barth turned during the First World War to a theology of the kingdom of God based on the bible (*Römerbrief*, Bern 1919). Politically, he was close to the religious socialists and, later, to the Social Democratic Party. His unfinished, many-volume work, *Kirchliche Dogmatik* (Zurich, 1932ff.) is the most significant Protestant systematic work to have appeared after Schleiermacher's *Glaubenslehre*. The work had a great influence on Catholic theology (Söhngen, Balthasar, Küng) as well. Such programmatic writings as *Rechtfertigung und Recht* (Zurich, 1938), *Christengemeinde und Bürgergemeinde* (Zurich, 1946) and *Politische Entscheidung in der Einheit des Glaubens* (Munich, 1952) seek an ethic of the political arising from the revelation of Christ. Barth's services to the confessing Church and his formulation of the decisive positions of the Church struggle are undisputed. His critique of the West and of the rearmament of Germany, by contrast, as well as his encouragement of ecclesiastical engagement even under the conditions of communism in the post-war period, often encountered criticism and resistance.

In a collection of essays entitled *Der Götze wackelt? Zeitkritische Aufsätze, Reden und Briefe von 1930–1960* (edited by Karl Kupisch, 2nd edn, Berlin, 1964), Barth criticises the comparison of communism to National Socialism because it is said to negate the fundamental economic differences between the two systems. Further, Barth emphasises the idealistic nature of the central features of communism as compared to National Socialism; the very foundations of the two, which differ in terms of intellectual history, are said to render a comparison illegitimate. He regards the theory of totalitarianism that enables such a comparison as a kind of veiling tactic of conservative or liberal powers that do not want to concede their failures in the struggle against National Socialism. By contrast to these, thus Barth, the communist movements and parties had fought 'Hitler fascism' from the beginning and mourned significant numbers of victims themselves. The crimes of the different systems are likewise said to demand different qualification: the opponents of National Socialism were murdered in a systematic, factory-like way in accordance with to the latest state of technology, whereas Stalinism involved solely the outgrowths of a 'despotism'.

### **Bataille, Georges**

French philosopher and writer. Born in 1897 in Billom (Puy-de-Dôme), died in 1962 in Paris. Activity as a librarian from 1922 to 1942; starting in 1931, worked on the newspaper *La Critique sociale*, in which Bataille published several essays on the critique of totalitarianism. Member of the *Cercle*

*communiste démocratique*, founded by Souvarine until 1934; in 1935, founded (together with surrealists such as André Breton) *Contre-Attaque*, a 'union of struggle of revolutionary intellectuals'. In 1937, Bataille founded with Monnerot and Caillois the *Collège de Sociologie*, the main themes of which were the sacred, power, myths and the aesthetic. In 1941, alongside works on Nietzsche and Hegel, *Madame Edwarda* (Paris, 1941) appears; in 1943, both *Le Mort* and *L'Expérience intérieure* (Paris, 1943); in the following years, Bataille publishes studies on Baudelaire, Sade, Proust, Kafka and Genet and the works, *L'Erotisme* and *La Littérature et le mal* (Paris, 1957).

### **Work**

In Bataille's view, communism and fascism are bound to the religious. A 'sacred' of a new kind functions as 'lien social' in them. Contrary to the expectations of Marxism, Stalin, Italian fascism and German National Socialism mark not a 'withering away of the state', but its becoming omnipotent in an 'état totalitaire' for which the consciousness of time changes and the future becomes uncertain because death threatens daily. 'Military' and 'religion' are connected in a 'total concentration'. Social authority is to be gained only through the tie to the religious values of the leader. Incarnated in the person of the leader, the Fatherland plays – according to Bataille – the same role as Allah plays in Islam; here, Allah is incarnated in the person of Mohammed or the Caliph. Thus can future politics no longer be based upon a Hegelian or Marxist historical optimism: because pessimism alone is capable of developing subversive power any more, the future of freedom belongs to 'liberating fear' instead.

### **Benes, Edvard**

Czech sociologist and politician; born 29 May 1884 in Kozlany near Plzeň; died September 1948 in Sezimovo Ústí; studied philosophy and sociology in Prague, in France and England in 1906 and in Berlin in 1907; in 1912 Benes becomes a lecturer in sociology at the Charles University in Prague. From 1915 to 1918, politician in exile. Co-founder of the Czechoslovakian Republic, Czechoslovakian minister of foreign affairs 1918–35; Czechoslovakian president from 1935 to 1938. In 1939, professor of sociology in Chicago; from March 15, 1939, leader of the Czechoslovakian foreign resistance out of London; return to Prague as state president in 1945. In June 1948, resignation following the communist take-over of power.

### **Work**

In his work, *Democracy Today and Tomorrow* (1942), Benes stresses that communism shares several common features not only with fascism and National Socialism, but also with democracy. It thereby becomes a

phenomenon that is not typically totalitarian phenomenon. The fundamental philosophical distinction between democracy and the totalitarian regimes is said to consist in their differing prerequisites for the formation of society: if, for democracy, that prerequisite is the mediation of individual interests, it is the fight of the collectivity against the forces that destroy it in the totalitarian regimes. As doctrines, fascism and National Socialism are morally relativistic and distinguished by a biological dynamism taking the form of a metaphysical materialism. Politically, the refusal to hold themselves to constant principles leads to a permanent utilitarianism and opportunism. Fascism – thus Benes – is also anti-socialistic and anti-communistic because it rejects all things international, universalistic, and humanistic as well as all things egalitarian and pacifistic.

According to Benes, the central problem for fascism is the legitimation of its authority. Both National Socialism and Italian fascism make efforts to create a new authority, one that is no longer derived from God's grace, but from the concept of a national collectivity instead. They thereby make party, nation and state their gods. Whereas Italian fascism started only from a few theses in sociology and in the history of philosophy, National Socialism manifests an attempt to establish a new philosophy of history and *Weltanschauung* from the beginning. In this context, Benes calls National Socialism a 'certain kind of political religion'. The myth of the people is said to serve the legitimation of two political goals for National Socialism: both the intellectual and the factual amalgamation of all members of the German blood and the goal of territorial expansion.

### **Bentin, Lutz-Arwed**

German economist and diplomat. Born 26 April 1941 in Bad Freienwalde/Kreis Brandenburg, died 29 October 1986; studied economic theory and political science in Munich. In the foreign service from 1973.

#### **Work**

In his study, *Johannes Popitz und Carl Schmitt. Zur wirtschaftlichen Theorie des totalen Staates in Deutschland (Münchner Studien zur Politik 19, 1972)*, Bentin illuminates the foundations of the political theory of Carl Schmitt in economic theory. According to him, the Schmittian idea of the 'total state', as it was developed following Johannes Popitz, was a form with which to cope with the new economically interventionist state. The excursive of the 'total state against totalitarian rule' distinguishes the formula of the total state from the actual political reality of both National Socialism and totalitarianism in general. In terms of intellectual history, the idea of the total state as Bentin formulates it is one of the conservative-revolutionary theories of the 1920s and early 1930s; it does not, however, correspond to a totalitarian dictatorship of the National Socialist or Soviet socialist type.

## **Berdyaev, Nikolai Aleksandrovic**

Russian philosopher; born 1874 in Kiev; died 1948 at Clamart, near Paris; studied natural and legal sciences at the University of Kiev; Marxist activities beginning in 1898. Member of the 'Alliance for the Liberation of the Working Class', simultaneously published philosophical works in Marxist journals; was banned due to social-democratic activities from 1900 to 1903, first to northern Russia, then to the Ukraine. In 1903, the life-long friendship with Leo Sestov began; co-editor of the journal *Novyj Put* from 1904 to 1908; close contacts to the Russian symbolists; discussion with Mereschkovsky about the new religious consciousness. In Moscow from 1908 to 1922; professor at the University of Moscow in 1920. From 1910, Berdyaev was one of the first to represent an ecumenical position in religious discussions; deprivation of citizenship in 1922; involvement from 1922 to 1924 in the intellectual life of the Russian community in Munich; editor of the journal *Sofia*; from 1924 to 1948, worked with the journal *Put* in Paris; after 1944, worked with the journal *Russkij Patriot*.

### **Work**

In his essay, '*Novoe christianstvo: D. Mereschkovsky*' ('New Christianity', *Russkaja mysl*, 1916), Berdyaev refutes Mereschkovsky's conceptions of the new religious consciousness and of a reconstruction of the social structure on religious foundations. In opposition to historical Christianity, Mereschkovsky links the 'new' Christianity to the idea of the 'sacral body' – of the community that bears God within. Berdyaev, by contrast, begins with the individual personality and regards the new Christianity predominantly as a religious anthropology. For Berdyaev, revelation means human revelation – that is, the creative power of the human being. His conception includes an unlimited freedom for the religious person, who must rely exclusively upon himself and should expect support neither from above nor from without. He makes this anthropology of freedom more precise in his work, *The Philosophy of the Free Spirit: Problems of and Apology for Christianity (Filosofia svobodnogo ducha: Problematika i apologija christianstva* (Paris, 1928)). The freedom of the religious human being is based upon a mystical understanding of the world. This is what distinguishes it from the magical understanding of freedom, which anchors the human being firmly within the sphere of necessity. To this distinction corresponds the distinction between Christianity and the theory of progress. Whereas Christianity triumphs on the mystical plane with a victory over the origins of evil, the theory of progress tries its hand at fighting the consequences of evil. Whereas, for Christianity, history is oriented upon a Jesus Christ who transcends history, for the theory of progress, a divinised human being attempts to cope with history within the sphere of necessity. In structural terms, therefore, progressivism is parallel to Christianity.

Berdyaev had already investigated this relationship of Christianity and the political theory of progress in the work, *Philosophy of Inequality* (*Filosofia neravenstva. Pisma k nedrugam po socialnoj Filosofii* (Berlin, 1923)) and later in *Meaning and Destiny of Russian Communism: A Contribution to the Psychology and Sociology of Russian Communism* (*Istoki i smysl russkogo kommunizma*, Paris, 1955). In the first work, he exposes the revolution as a totalitarian phenomenon; the communist 'individuality principle' is displaced by collectivistic homogeneity, and the individual is confronted by a divinised nation. Democracy as the omnipotence of the people seems anarchistic on the one hand; on the other hand, however, it suppresses intellectual potential. As a prerequisite for political unity, equality is said to be based in God, not in the people. Only an aristocratically structured society provides room for the development of individual potential. Berdyaev assumes that unity in God can be substituted by unity in a nation; revolutionary theory, however, invokes a common people's will rather than the community structure of the nation and it thereby subverts the sovereignty of the nation. In his study of the meaning and destiny of Russian communism, Berdyaev investigates the tradition of the Russian state, which is bound up with the Russian Orthodox Church. He parallels the structure of the orthodoxy with Russian communism. Russian history evinces a development that is internally contradictory, one based in the meeting of Orient and Occident in Russia. Originally, the culture of the Muscovite kingdom represented an orientally Christianised Tartar culture. The Russian mentality was formed and religiously stamped by the Orthodox Church. As a result, the reception of such European intellectual movements as the ideas of the French Enlightenment, German idealism and Marxist theory as these are represented in nihilism, anarchism by the Narodniki, and in Russian communism, evince an orthodox character. The author recognises dogmatism and asceticism in the preparedness for sacrifice for the faith, for example, or in the yearning for transcendence. The religious energy of the 'Russian soul' is said to express itself in both religious and in social spheres. Berdyaev locates the missionary tendency of Russian communism in the historical understanding of Moscow that has held sway since the fall of Byzantium: the idea that Moscow is the 'Third Rome'.

Berdyaev's analysis of Russian communism and his critique of the revolution influenced religious interpretations of communism (Stepun, Solzhenitsyn).

### **Bloch, Ernst**

German-Jewish philosopher. Born 8 July 1895 in Ludwigshafen, died 4 August 1977 in Tübingen. Beginning in 1905, studied philosophy, physics, German literature and music in Munich and Würzburg; in 1908, dissertation entitled 'Kritische Erörterungen über [Heinrich] Rickert und das Problem der modernen Erkenntnistheorie'. Directly thereafter in Berlin, where he participated in the private colloquium of Georg Simmel, and Heidelberg.

Contact with Max Weber. Towards the end of the First World War, Bloch immigrated to Switzerland and accepted a research job lasting until 1919 at the Archive of Social Sciences in Berlin. In 1918, his work, *Geist und Utopie*, appeared; this work digests impressions of the October Revolution, among other things. Following Hitler's power take-over, Bloch – who had returned to Germany after the First World War – immigrated again to Zurich, then to Vienna in 1934, Paris in 1935 and Prague from 1936 to 1938. At discussions concerning a future, anti-fascist people's front, he became engaged in a passionate debate with his friend George Lukács about the ideological intentions of humanistic Marxism. He defended it, just as he defended the 'Stalinistic purges' and especially the 'Moscow show trials'. This position led to a dispute with Adorno, as well as with the Institute for Social Research led by Horkheimer. Bloch revised his standpoint only after 1956 (20th Convention of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union). In 1938 he emigrated to the United States (bases: 1940 New York, 1940/41 Marlborough NJ, 1942 to 1949 Cambridge, Massachusetts). He worked on several projects during this period, but predominantly on his three-volume *Das Prinzip Hoffnung* (Berlin, 1954). In 1949, Bloch accepted a chair of philosophy in Leipzig. He was called to be a full member of the Academy of Sciences. Although he received the National Prize of the German Democratic Republic and the Fatherland Order of Merit on his seventieth birthday, he was still forced to retire in 1957 due to his open criticism of the regime and the Soviet Union after the Hungarian Uprising. Surprised by the building of the Berlin Wall during a visit to the West in 1961, he never returned to the GDR, but accepted a guest professorship at the University of Tübingen instead. In 1964 he received the First Culture Prize of the Alliance of German Unions and in 1967 the Peace Prize of the German Book Trade.

### **Work**

In *Geist der Utopie* (Berlin, 1923), Bloch – driven by a 'feeling of deficiency' – already sketches images of an eschatological future. In *Prinzip Hoffnung* (Berlin, 1954), he develops his 'philosophy of hope', systematically drawing upon Aristotle, Ibn Sina, Ibn Rush, Hegel and Marx in creating an ontology of the 'not yet'. What lies at base here is a concept of the material that understands it as real possibility, open for the new. Due to its developmental potential, society can therefore be shaped into a 'kingdom of freedom'. In this context, Bloch demands a radical anthropologisation of religion (*Atheismus im Christentum*, Frankfurt, 1968).

### **Bosshart, David**

Swiss philosopher and political scientist, born 24 March 1959 in Münchwilen. Following an education in commerce and his study of philosophy, sociology



and psychology, became scientific researcher (under Hermann Lübke) at the Philosophical Seminar at the University of Zurich from 1986 to 1991. In 1990, promotion to Ph.D. with a study of the main currents of the French critique of totalitarianism. Since 1991 he has been department head at the Gottlieb Duttweiler Institute for Economic and Social Studies in Rüslikon, near Zurich.

### **Work**

In his doctoral dissertation, *Politische Intellektualität und totalitäre Erfahrung. Hauptströmungen der französischen Totalitarismuskritik* (Berlin, 1992), Bosshart distinguishes the foundational streams of the French critique of totalitarianism – a topic that had hardly been treated before. Besides left anti-totalitarianism (B. Souvarine), there was the liberal critique of totalitarianism (R. Aron), the literary-philosophical analysis of totalitarianism (G. Bataille) and the social-Catholic critique of totalitarianism (E. Mounier). Linked by a common scepticism towards the modern state, all four currents speak of an 'état totalitaire' in the 1930s already. Although fascism and Bolshevism are said to differ as to their origins and respective opponents, both are said to possess a religious dimension. Bosshart attempts to explain the differences between the various streams of evaluation in terms of the political culture in France. His investigation not only provides an insight into the French totalitarianism debate of the 1930s, but also contains extensive references concerning the religious dimension of totalitarianism in this debate.

### **Bracher, Karl Dietrich**

German historian and political scientist; born in Stuttgart on 13 March 1922, he attended the *Eberhard-Ludwig-Gymnasium* in Stuttgart. Service in the war in 1940; held prisoner of war by the Americans in 1943; after the war, studied history, philosophy, philology and literature in Tübingen. Received his Ph.D. in 1949 with the work *Verfall und Fortschritt im Denken der frühen römischen Kaiserzeit*. From 1949 to 1950, historical and sociological studies at Harvard University; habilitation at the Institute for Political Science in Berlin in 1955; further teaching jobs from 1954 to 1958 at the German *Hochschule für Politik*. Following his habilitation, Bracher taught political science, contemporary history and the history of political ideas as a private lecturer and assistant professor at the Free University of Berlin. From 1959, professor of political science and contemporary history at the University of Bonn. Professor emeritus since 1987.

### **Work**

In his work, *Zeit der Ideologien. Eine Geschichte des politischen Denkens im 20. Jahrhundert* (Stuttgart, 1984), Bracher characterises the history of the

twentieth century as a 'battle of ideas and ideologies'. This battle resulted, among other things, from the modern critique of culture and the climaxing of the crisis of progress into an 'either-or' dichotomy of 'progress or decline'. Already proclaimed in the critique of liberalism and democracy of the turn of the century, in the sociology and political science at the beginning of the century (M. Weber), in the theories of alienation and elites (Georges Sorel, Vilfredo Pareto, Charles Maurras, Maurice Barrès) and in the transformations of liberalism and social democracy, the totalitarian 'idea syndrome' provided the ground upon which communism, fascism and National Socialism would later flourish. The inner structure of totalitarian thought, therefore, is also influenced by the ambivalence of two developments: those of progressivism and traditionalism, of modernity and irrationalism. In *Die totalitäre Erfahrung* (Munich, 1987) and particularly in the chapter, 'Die Ausbreitung des Totalitarismus', Bracher investigates the modern human being detached from all ties. This human being is said to be the prerequisite for the origin and spread of totalitarianism. The individual who suffers under the above-mentioned tensions and his own loss of ties succumbs to totalitarianism in three steps. First, he adapts himself to the thought-structure that has just been sketched in the 'Entfaltung totalitärer Ideologien'. It then comes to a 'rise of totalitarian movements', which ultimately articulate themselves in the 'construction of totalitarian systems of rule'. As long as these three steps can build up upon one another causally, as preconditions, then totalitarianism remains possible. In *Wendezeiten der Geschichte* (Stuttgart, 1992), Bracher develops this finding more precisely on the basis of an investigation of the Baltic states, as well as Poland, Hungary, Spain, Portugal and Austria before 1938 in the Europe of the 1920s and 1930s. In his opinion, both totalitarianism and its analysis was nourished by the 'formation of liberal ideas of both right and left as a political religion at the turn of the century'. As a concept of historico-political description, totalitarianism is said to describe a 'characteristic tendency' shared by all totalitarian systems. Components of this tendency are the 'total governing authority of a single party', a 'militant ideology' that functions as ersatz religion and serves to abolish all personal rights and freedoms that precede the state, and third, 'the myth of the greater effectiveness of such a total commando state compared to the complicated constitutional democracy, which is limited by multiple checks and balances'.

### **Broch, Hermann**

Austrian writer: born 1 November 1886 in Vienna; died 30 May 1951 in New Haven CT. From 1913, publications in the journal edited by Ludwig Ficker, *Der Brenner*. Broch also maintained contact at this time with Alfred Polgar, Robert Musil and Egon Schiele, primarily in the Viennese intellectual cafés. He published several contributions, of a non-political nature at first, in Franz Blei's journal, *Summa*. In 1917, however, he opposed the dictatorial

council system in the journal, *Der Friede*. In 1925, studied philosophy, mathematics, physics at the University of Vienna. In this context, confrontations with the neo-positivism of Carnap and Schlick. These confrontations prompted Broch to regard philosophy as being no longer responsible for metaphysical questions, and he now turned to literature. In 1927, Broch sold the textile factory that he had inherited from his father and devoted himself to his *Schlafwandler* trilogy. After writing some comedies, he began work on *Die Verzauberung* (also called *Der Versucher* or *Der Bergroman*) in 1934. In 1937, Broch wrote the first version of his Vergil book (*Die Heimkehr des Vergil*). Besides this, he also wrote an anti-fascist resolution for the League of Nations in which he demanded both a new declaration of human rights and the strengthening of the League of Nations as guarantors of peace. From the annexation of Austria on 13 March 1938, to 31 March 1938, Broch was in National Socialist custody. In July of the same year, he fled with the help of James Joyce to England, and then emigrated to the United States with the support of Thomas Mann and Albert Einstein. In 1940, Broch helped develop the idea of a 'dictatorship of humanity' through his work on the project led by Giuseppe A. Borgeese, *The City of Man: A Declaration of World Democracy*; this dictatorship was supposed to protect democracy from its totalitarian enemies. In 1945, his main work, *Der Tod des Vergils*, appeared in New York. In 1950, he was named a university lecturer at Yale. In the same year, the Austrian PEN Club nominated him for the Nobel Prize. On 30 May 1951, Broch died of a heart attack.

### **Work**

In his work, Hermann Broch treated the dissolution of the bourgeois world (in his *Schlafwandler* trilogy) on the one hand and the role of the poet in this dissolving world on the other. Broch addresses the role of the poet primarily in his Vergil books. Here, he charges literature with the function of making the world transparent for the ethical and the religious.

In his *Bergroman*, the themes of dissolution and reinterpretation melt together. The wandering preacher, Marius Ratti, sets off a pseudo-religious, fanatical mass movement among the inhabitants of his village; this movement demands the sacrifice of a virgin; the work becomes a parable of National Socialism. Broch does not pit pure rationalism against this madness, however, but the wisdom of the healer, Mother Gisson, instead. The results of the studies he had been conducting in mass psychology since 1939 flowed into his later reworking of the text. These studies recognise the cause of political mass insanity in the loss of a religious centre.

### **Bry, Carl Christian**

German journalist and writer; born 1893 in Stralsund; died 9 February 1926 in Davos, Switzerland; studied history, national economy and philosophy;

relocated to Munich in 1919, where he worked as a freelance journalist for the *Argentinische Tagblatt*.

### **Work**

In his essayistic work, *Die verkappten Religionen. Kritik des kollektiven Wahnsinns* (Gotha, 1924), Bry marks out his field of investigation generously: 'it extends from abstinence to numerology, but also extends from astrology to Zionism or from the "anti" alliances (with anti-Semitism at the pinnacle) to yoga, from *amor fati* to divining rod or from Atlantis to vegetarianism' (28). According to Bry, all disguised religions share the conviction that a new reality might be discovered behind the visible world, a reality of whose victory the followers of the disguised religions are convinced. In Bry's view, the disguised religions arise from a chiliastic stock of ideas in that the basic goal of all disguised religions is a 'happy and sinless world' (240).

### **Burrin, Philippe**

Swiss political scientist. Born 1952 in Valais, Switzerland; studied political science in Geneva; since 1988 he has taught the history of international relations at the *Institut Universitaire des Hautes Études Internationales*; in 1994 and 1995, fellow at the Center for European Studies in Harvard; in 2000 and 2001, fellow at the Scientific College at Berlin; in 1997, Max Planck Research Prize; in 2001–2, guest professorship in Frankfurt.

### **Work**

According to Burrin, the concept of 'political religion' falls primarily within the sphere of the mythological, symbolic and ritual. (See 'Die politischen Religionen: Das Mythologisch-Symbolisch in einer säkularisierten Welt', M. Ley and J. H. Schoeps, eds, *Der Nationalsozialismus als politischen Religion* (Bodenheim bei Mainz, 1997), 168–85). His work draws predominantly from Eric Voegelin and Jean-Pierre Sironneau. Whereas the former is said to have observed the genesis of political religions, the latter investigated such typical phenomenal forms as mythologisation, rituals and community experiences, and particularly initiation rites. Both thinkers saw secularisation to be a precondition for the development of political religions. As the chief merit of the concept of political religions, Burrin emphasises that it takes the imaginary world of the human being seriously and analyses politics, not only in the sphere of the materially real, but on the level of symbolisation as well. Despite this, Burrin holds the analytical value of the concept to be questionable with regard to a precise determination of a political religion's deficient reference to transcendence and a differentiated perception of political phenomena. 'Political religions', after all,

can be found not only in totalitarian systems, but in the entire field of modern politics. This is why he holds the concept of 'totalitarianism' to achieve more in this respect.

### **Callois, Roger**

French philosopher and writer. Born 3 March 1913 in Reims, died 21 December 1978 in Paris. Following his schooling in Reims, university study at the *École Pratique des Hautes Études*; here, he heard the lectures of George Dumézil and Marcel Mauss. Diploma in religious studies in 1936; from 1938 to 1939, teacher at a school in Beauvais; founding of the *Collège de Sociologie* (together with Georges Bataille, Jules Monnerot and Michel Leiris) in 1938; works on themes like the sacred, the cultic festival, power and the myths. Founder of the Institut Français in Buenos Aires; activity for UNESCO as one of four members of the 'Bureau for Ideas' in 1947. Publications on questions of political science and sociology, also on the topic of poetics; in 1968, 'visiting writer' at the University of Texas in Austin; in 1972, membership of the Académie Française; in 1978, received the *Grand Prix National des Lettres*.

### **Work**

With his study in the sociology of religion, *L'homme et le sacré* (Paris, 1939), Callois represents the link between *Das Heilige*, by Rudolf Otto, and Mircea Eliade's *The Sacred and the Profane*. In the tradition of the science of comparative religion, Callois attempts to capture the logic of the 'sacred', which opposes the 'profane' in its anthropological and sociological dimensions. Based on the investigations of his teachers, the sociologist Marcel Mauss and the myth researcher Georges Dumézil, the study works to a large extent with the contemporary ethnological literature. For Callois, the sacred is a synonym for a social force that issues from a central authority in order to elevate and organise social life. Such archaic societies as the Chinese are marked by an openness to the power of the sacred, a force that guarantees not only stability and order, but its own space with archaic festivals, ritual settings and collective ecstasies. The modern equivalent of these festivals is war. Like the festivals, war also leads to socialisation, to a collocation of forces and aids; it therefore ends the period of atomisation, in which each human being pursues a different occupation and different goals. According to Callois, then, war and cultic festivals equally mark periods of 'collective arousal'.

### **Cassirer, Ernst**

German philosopher, born 28 June 1874 as the son of a Jewish family in Breslau; died 13 April 1945 in New York City; studied philosophy, first in

Berlin, Leipzig and Heidelberg, after 1886 in Marburg (with Hermann Cohen). In 1898 he gained his doctorate with a dissertation entitled 'Descartes' Kritik der mathematischen und naturwissenschaftlichen Erkenntnis'; in 1906, habilitation at the Humboldt University in Berlin; activity as a private lecturer in Berlin directly thereafter. Civilian military service during the First World War; in 1919, full professor of philosophy at the University of Hamburg, where he became rector in 1929; 1933–35, professor at Oxford; from 1935 to 1941, professor at the University of Göteborg. After 1941, Cassirer taught in the United States (at Yale, then from 1944, at Columbia University in New York).

### **Work**

Cassirer's experience with National Socialism gave rise to the work, *The Myth of the State* (New Haven CT, 1946). Cassirer does not restrict himself to an analysis of the phenomenal form of political totalitarianism here, but devotes himself to a search for the causes and principles that lie at base of the origination of all modern totalitarian systems. Cassirer's political theory is based on the results of his philosophy of culture as he worked it out primarily in his three-volume work, *Philosophie der symbolischen Formen* (Darmstadt, 1964). There, Cassirer indicates that the way in which the developed consciousness and the form of its cultural organisation correspond to the magic-mythical consciousness and its corresponding form of cultural organisation. Cassirer describes modern totalitarianism as the partial restoration of a cultural organisational form that is governed by the power of myth. As the intellectual heralds of totalitarianism, he identifies Carlyle, Gobineau and Hegel. Carlyle's theory of the veneration of heroes can be drawn into the legitimation of the Führer principle in the totalitarian state (volume II, 'Wesen und Wirkung des Symbolbegriffs', 246–89). For his part, Gobineau is said to deliver the theoretical foundations of racism (289–321). Hegel's political theory, finally, is said to underpin the establishment of the state as an absolute using the means of philosophical idealism (322–60). The intellectual roots of the totalitarian political myth extend far back to the beginning of modern history, however. To be named here, according to Cassirer, is primarily Machiavelli, who should be regarded as an intellectual originator of totalitarianism and whose thought provided a new entrance to mythical elements that were thought to have been already overcome (153–213).

Besides its roots in intellectual history, however, the re-mythicisation of culture also requires concrete historical causes. These consist in economic and military crises and conflicts, as well as a general loss of orientation in terms of *Weltanschauung*. The structural parallels between the totalitarian systems that were erected upon the political myths of the twentieth century and the primitive cultural forms based upon archaic myth can be found in the functions of the leader, of language and of ritual. In both cases, collective wishes are both projected onto and personified by the priestly, prophetic

Führer, who functions as a *homo divinus*. The logical and semantic function of language is overlaid or replaced by a magical charging of it. Ultimately, this process culminates in a comprehensive ritualisation of all spheres of life, a ritualisation that includes all age groups and social levels, that transfers individual freedom and responsibility to the collectivity and binds the collectivity indivisibly to the leader.

By contrast to the primitive myth, the political myths of the twentieth century involve means that were consciously established for engagement in the political struggle. The effectiveness of such means is ensured by the manipulative power of modern means of mass communication. Cassirer speaks, therefore, of a 'technology of modern political myths' (360–88). As the experience of recent history suggests, rational argumentation apparently proves itself useless in countering the revival of the magical-mythic consciousness. 'It goes beyond the power of philosophy', thus Cassirer, 'to destroy the political myths. A myth is in a certain sense invincible. It is impenetrable to rational arguments; it cannot be refuted with syllogisms' (388). This insight need not necessarily have fatalism as a consequence. The original overcoming of myth by the post-mythic culture occurred as sublimation of a myth that remains present – albeit sublimated – in the developed culture as well (389ff. of *Philosophy der symbolischen Formen*, vol. II, 281–311). Accordingly, the danger of re-mythicisation is stemmed in the same measure that the standards of a developed, post-mythic culture are maintained in the individual partial segments of the culture – that is, in such various symbolic forms as religion, science, art, law, etc. In the same measure that the efforts to maintain these standards fall away, of course, the myth comes back with a vengeance. Philosophy also acquires an important task with respect to the defence against the myth. 'It can allow us to understand the opponent. In order to fight against an enemy, one must know him. That is one of the first principles of a healthy strategy' (388).

## **Cohn, Norman**

English cultural historian; born in 1915 in London, he taught at various universities in England, Ireland and Scotland. His last post was professor at the University of Sussex. He was the director of a research project on the prerequisites for persecutions and genocide.

### **Work**

In his work, *The Pursuit of the Millennium* (London, 1957; German edition: *Das Ringen um das Tausendjährige Reich. Revolutionärer Messianismus im Mittelalter und sein Fortleben in den modernen totalitären Bewegungen* (Bern/Munich, 1961)), Cohn investigates the messianic movements of the Middle Ages, beginning with Jewish and early Christian apocalypticism. From the influence of Tanchelm in Antwerp to the rule of the Täufer in Münster,

Cohn traces the spiritual currents that are grounded in a revolutionary chiliastic world-view. The connection of a situation of social and spiritual deficiency with eschatological traditions (regardless of their origins) to form a 'closed social myth' does not apply solely to the Middle Ages and early modernity, however; it also applies to the ideologies of the twentieth century. In light of these commonalities, according to Cohn, the distinction between 'atavistic National Socialism' and 'rational Communism' also becomes obsolete:

just as the 'Aryan race' has to purify the earth through the annihilation of the 'Jewish race in the Nazi apocalypse, so does the 'proletariat' have to bring about the demise of the 'bourgeoisie' in the communist apocalypse. But here, too, we are dealing with the secularised version of a fantasy that is many centuries old.

(272 ff.)

Cohn modifies his juxtaposition of communism and National Socialism in the final revised edition in favour of a generalisation that affirms a connection between intellectual pseudo-prophets and socially disadvantaged masses in fantasies that involve both the struggle against a great opponent and the creation of a perfect world.

### **Eagleton, Terence Francis**

Professor of English literature. Born 22 February 1943 in Salford. Study from 1964 to 1969 at Trinity College, Cambridge; fellow in English of Jesus College, Cambridge; from 1969 to 1989, tutorial fellow at Wadham College, Oxford; lecturer and fellow at Linacre College, Oxford from 1989 to 1992; from October 1992, Thomas Warton Professor of English Literature and fellow of St Catherine's College, Oxford.

#### ***Work***

In his work, *Ideology: An Introduction* (Oxford, 1991; German edition: *Ideologie. Eine Einführung* (Stuttgart/Weimar, 1993)), Eagleton presents a conceptual history of the word 'ideology' and attempts to dispel the confusion surrounding the concept by developing his own conception of 'ideology'. Rejecting the rationalistic understanding of ideologies as 'conscious, well formulated systems of conviction' (253), he accuses it of failing to consider the 'affective, unconscious, mythical and symbolical dimensions of ideology, the ways and means in which ideology constitutes the lived and apparently spontaneous relations of the subject in a power structure and thereby composes the invisible foundation of daily life' (253). According to Eagleton, unchangeable features cannot be ascribed to ideology; much more does a "family resemblance" between various styles of meaning' exist in the various



ideologies (254). This is why Eagleton rejects an essentialist conception of ideology just as much as he rejects a historicist one that understands ideology as the *Weltanschauung* of a collectivity.

Ideology is not the foundational principle of social insularity, as historicist Marxists would like to suggest to us; rather, it aims to re-establish this insularity against all political resistance on an imaginary level .... It must ... take effect as a structuring social power that actively creates subjects at the roots of their lived experiences and attempts to equip them with values and convictions that are relevant for their particular social tasks and the general reproduction of the social order.

(254)

### **Eliade, Mircea**

Romanian author and scholar of comparative religions; born 9 March 1907 in Bucharest; died 22 April 1986 in Chicago. Studied philosophy at the University of Bucharest; received his doctorate in 1928; from 1928 to 1932, studied Indian philosophy and Sanskrit in Calcutta; from 1933 to 1940, professor of the history of Indian philosophy and the history of religions in Bucharest. In 1940, cultural attaché of the Romanian legation in London; in 1941, legation advisor for culture in Lisbon. From 1945 to 1956, studied history of religions in Paris; following the end of the war, guest lectureships at various European universities; from 1957 on, professor of the history of religions in Chicago. Numerous publications on the themes of yoga, myth (*The Myth of the Eternal Return*), shamanism, mysteries and rebirth. Beginning in 1960, editor of *The History of Religions* published in Chicago.

### **Work**

Mircea Eliade founded a phenomenology of comparative religions, a research path that has exerted great influence on contemporary theological and philosophical thought. His work, *Das Heilige und das Profane. Vom Wesen des Religiösen* (Reinbek bei Hamburg, 1957), first appeared in German; here, the specific categories of archaic religious existence and traditional types are worked out. His particular interest here is in the pre-Christian religious existence, which is still permeated with occultism and magical images. Through discovering the internal logic of their conduct, their symbols and their religious stems, Eliade seeks to lay bare – in the opposition of the ‘sacred’ to the ‘profane’ – the impoverishment of religious life in the modern secularised period. By contrast to Otto, who investigates the irrational as an essential feature of the religious in *Das Heilige*, Eliade investigates the sacred as a phenomenon in its totality, whereby he pays

particular attention to the rationality of translating religious experience into established rituals. Rational religious experience is also seen to shape our dealings with technology and nature, to govern our daily life and the course of time.

Eliade demonstrates religious modes of conduct in modern, apparently irreligious human beings as well. To this end, he indicates the mythological structure of communism, a phenomenon for which the eschatological myths of the Asian and Mediterranean spheres are said to have been resumed and supplemented by the soteriological role assigned to the proletariat. The prophetic-soteriological role of the proletariat and the final struggle between good and evil is said to infuse the archaic myth with Judaeo-Christian contents.

### **Fraenkel, Ernst**

German lawyer and political scientist of Jewish origins; born 26 December 1898 in Cologne; died 28 March 1975 in Berlin; studied law in Frankfurt; joined the Social Democratic Party in 1921. In 1923 he completed his doctoral studies with the work *Der nichtige Arbeitsvertrag*; directly thereafter, private lecturer at the official school of the Metal Workers' Union in Bad Dürrenberg. From 1927, lawyer in Berlin and legal advisor – together with Franz Neumann – of the Metal Workers' Union. Due to the so-called 'front soldier rule', Fraenkel was permitted to pursue his occupation as an attorney until 1938; at the same time, he worked in the resistance and made some of the first attempts to theorise the nature of the National Socialist state (*Das Dritte Reich als Doppelstaat*, published in 1937 under a pseudonym). He emigrated to the United States in 1938. In 1941, publication of *The Dual State: A Contribution to the Theory of Dictatorship*; second study of law from 1939 to 1942, concluding with doctoral degree. In 1945, work in Korea and for the Marshall Plan commission; in 1951, lecturer at the *German Hochschule für Politik* in Berlin. In 1953, full professor of the comparative theory of systems of rule at the Free University in Berlin; founder and first director of the John F. Kennedy Institute for America Studies; retired in 1967; received honorary professorships at Salzburg and Freiburg.

### **Work**

Fraenkel's main work, *The Dual State* (New York, 1941; German edition: *Der Doppelstaat* (Frankfurt/Cologne, 1974)) arose from his experience with the judiciary in the Third Reich. According to Fraenkel, the National Socialist system of rule is based upon the co-existence of a 'norm state' – which usually respects its own laws – and the 'extreme measures state' – which disrespects the same laws.

Of primary relevance to the topic of political religions is the second part of the work on the political theory of the dual state, which analyses the

National Socialist criticism of natural law. Here, National Socialism is said to reject the idea of universal justice and to replace values based on natural law with a restricted consideration of national purpose. Mindful of the close connection between Christianity and natural law, the conclusion that the Third Reich moves on a path retreating from the universal to the local god, from monotheism to xenotheism, appears to be justified.

### **Friedrich, Carl Joachim**

German-American political scientist. Born 5 June 1901 in Leipzig, died 19 September 1984 in Lexington, Massachusetts. Studied in Marburg, Frankfurt, Vienna and Heidelberg; relocated to the United States in 1922; doctoral degree in 1925; in 1927, professor at Harvard University; from 1956 to 1966 professor at Heidelberg.

#### ***Work***

In their study, *Totalitarian Dictatorship and Autocracy* (Cambridge, 1956), Friedrich and Brzezinski attempt to answer the question as to the essence of totalitarianism. Describing it as a corrupted form of democracy, they establish five defining characteristics: ideology, party, propaganda, terror, as well as a planned and controlled economy. Besides providing a systematic analysis of totalitarian systems, the authors also discuss various forms of resistance to totalitarian monopolisation (family, Church, science, military, etc.).

### **Gerlich, Fritz**

German scientist and journalist; born 15 February 1883, in Stettin; died 30 June 1934 in Dachau. Attended the *Mariienstift* in Stettin; beginning in 1901, studied natural sciences and history in Munich and Leipzig; in 1907, attained his Ph.D. with a work on Henry VI. In the same year, entered into the Bavarian Archival Service; in 1919, Gerlich presented one of the earliest analyses of communism as a 'chilastic religion'. From 1920 to 1928, he was the editor-in-chief of the *Münchener Neusten Nachrichten*; from 1930 to 1933, editor of the Catholic weekly newspaper, *Illustrierter Sonntag* (in 1932 renamed *Der gerade Weg*). Gerlich was probably the most resolute publishing opponent to the National Socialists in Munich. Taken into custody immediately after the National Socialists' take-over of power in Munich, Fritz Gerlich was murdered during the so-called Röhm Putsch in Dachau in 1934.

#### ***Work***

Gerlich's study, *Der Kommunismus als Lehre vom Tausendjährigen Reich* (Munich, 1922) issued from his propagandistic activity in wrestling with the

Munich soviet republic. It sets communism within the tradition of religious and philosophical chiliasm. Passing over early Christian and medieval millenarianism, Gerlich's description of the relations in the Soviet Union follows a portrayal of the history of philosophical chiliasm in Germany. Beginning with Lessing's theory of development, he attempts to trace the chiliastic thread through the philosophies of history of German idealism (Kant, Fichte, Hegel) up to Marx and Engels. Gerlich's work is the first scientific analysis of the pseudo-religious elements of the communist doctrine to have appeared in Germany

### **Guardini, Romano**

German philosopher, theologian and pedagogue, born 17 February 1885 in Verona; died 1 October 1968 in Munich; studied chemistry, national economy and theology in Munich, Freiburg and Tübingen; attained his doctorate in 1915 and habilitated in 1922, both with works written on Bonaventura. In 1923, Guardini was called to occupy the newly established chair for the philosophy of religion and Catholic *Weltanschauung* at the University of Berlin. Co-editor of the journal *Die Schildgenossen* beginning in 1924. From 1937, national leader of the Catholic alliance, Quickborn. His chair was abolished in 1939 and he was forced to retire; banned from speaking in 1941. From 1943 to 1945 stayed with his friend, the Catholic priest Josef Weiger in Mooshausen (Allgäu). In 1945 he assumed a chair in Tübingen. In 1948 he became professor of the philosophy of religion and Christian *Weltanschauung* in Munich. In 1952, he was named the papal House Prelate.

Guardini's work is devoted to the interpretation of Christian existence in the twentieth century. He became well known through *Vom Geist der Liturgie*, a work that appeared in 1918. The *Briefe vom Comer See*, which appeared in 1927, provided the foundation of his later critique of modern culture in *Das Ende der Neuzeit*, 1950. Guardini interpreted National Socialism as the end stage of the 'free floating' of religious ideas, as a 'new connection of religious and political-cultural energy' (*Die religiöse Offenheit der Gegenwart* 1933/34, unpublished). Religion, said to be more alive now than ever, is placed in the service of total power, total organisation. Hitler is taken seriously by Guardini; he is a quasi-religious figure, a 'saviour'. Guardini describes him as a mythic usurper who profits from the general vacuum of meaning that has accompanied the fading of Christian traditions. Hitler is said to have drawn the masses to himself in a crisis period.

### **Work**

Guardini's heuristic approach to the phenomenon of totalitarianism is nourished by his distinction between faith and religious experience ('Religiöse Erfahrung und Glaube', *Die Schildgenossen* 13 (1934), 238–306). According to this distinction, religious experience should always be assigned to the

world, as part of immanent being, whereas faith issues from a personal power beyond the world. Thus does faith also become, in Guardini's view, an answer to the call of God; it is not a deeply moving experience of reality, as religious experience is.

Guardini develops the distinction between faith and religious experience further in his work, *Der Heilbringer in Mythos, Offenbarung und Politik. Eine theologisch-politische Besinnung* (Stuttgart, 1946). Under the aspect of personalism, the differing structure of faith and religious experience as its counterpart, as part of the reality of the world, continues with his reference to the individual human being. If faith communicates an event of personal salvation, then religious experience communicates only intramundane, non-personal experiences and magical hopes. Guardini investigates this with the example of Hitler: salvation is said to occur with his figure through an earthly saviour, along a non-personal path, and with a Promethean overestimation of himself.

The surrender of personality in purely intramundane religious experience remains at the centre of Guardini's lectures on ethics (*Ethik. Vorlesungen an der Universität München 1950–1962* (Mainz-Paderborn, 1993)). Only through such surrender is it possible to establish a totalitarian state, with its claim to power that is not relativised by the individual person, but is created for its own sake, for the salvation of itself. As such, the totalitarian state is the equivalent of the modern Promethean human being, who likewise lifts himself up to self-salvation and no longer possesses ties with personal Other. The circle closes with Guardini's work, *Die religiöse Offenheit der Gegenwart*, one that discusses the elimination of faith through absorption into intramundane religious experience that is the precondition of totalitarianism.

## **Gurian, Waldemar**

Russian-German-American journalist and political scientist. Born 13 February 1902 in St Petersburg; died 26 May 1954 in South Haven, USA. In 1911, relocation to Berlin; study in Cologne, Breslau, Munich and Berlin; doctoral dissertation under Max Scheler; worked as a freelance directly thereafter. In 1934, emigration to Switzerland, there edited the *Deutschen Briefe* (together with Otto Knab). In 1937, accepted a call to come to the University of Notre Dame in Indiana and relocated to the United States.

### **Work**

Gurian is one of the path-breakers of the totalitarianism theory – as a journalist in Europe and as a political scientist and scientific organiser in the United States. In the context of his political theory, the 'political religions' also play an important role: they are a common characteristic that connects Bolshevism and National Socialism.

Motivated both by Carl Schmitt's *Die geistesgeschichtliche Lage des heutigen Parlamentarismus* and by Luigi Sturzo's *Italien und der Faschismus*, Guardini

sees fascism and Bolshevism as the 'two activist ideologies' in his early writing, 'Faschismus und Bolschewismus' (*Heiliges Feuer* 15 (1927/28), 197–203)). Both are said to be characterised by an elite ruling technique that presupposes a coincidence of the wills of the masses and of the leader (or party). Both, finally, are two 'variants of reaction against the modern emptying of the world from the setting of purposes'. Gurian continues this idea in *Bolschewismus als Weltgefahr* (Lucerne, 1935), in that he – taking leave of his concept of Caeserism – conceives of Bolshevism as a pure ruling technique for all forms of anti-parliamentarianism. Because National Socialism is said to have no real ideology and to restrict itself to the development and concentration of political power, it is the 'ideal type of Bolshevistic *Weltanschauung*' (68). Gurian touches upon the religious dimension of the totalitarian phenomenon, above all, of Marxism, when he writes:

the Marxist doctrine, it can be argued in an illuminating way, is a 'pseudo-religion'. As a string of authors has shown, Berdyaev above all and particularly impressively in recent times, it sets a certain social condition in the place of the heavenly paradise as the goal of humanity. (38)

In *Der Kampf um die Kirche im Dritten Reich* (Lucerne, 1936), Gurian explicates the religious dimension with reference to National Socialism as well. The National Socialist *Weltanschauung* is understood as both the 'logical continuation' and 'final immanentisation' (33ff.) of a process that seeks to abolish both the religious and the political tension of the German people in the sense of a 'third confession' (16). Using the terminology of the National Socialist leadership, this third confession acquires the name 'positive Christianity'. Alluding to Carl Christian Bry's *Verkappte Religionen. Kritik des kollektiven Wahns* (1924), Gurian warns against a 'new, albeit "disguised" ersatz religion' (46). The religiosity that 'lays claim to the entire human being, in a totalitarian mode and in all aspects of his life', exposes Hitler as the 'actual enemy of the Church'. Besides posing a danger, this enemy also poses a challenge to attain a Christian faith that lies beyond the traditional confessions, one that could serve as the foundation for a 'true unity of the German nation' (117).

In 'The Philosophy of the Totalitarian State' (*Proceedings of the American Catholic Association* XV (1939), 50–66) and *Totalitarian Religions*, Gurian later systematises his ideas on the religious dimension of the totalitarian phenomenon with reference to the theory of totalitarianism, which he accuses of throwing all political systems opposed to modern democracy into one pot – including those that are not necessarily totalitarian. The criterion that determines the nature of a system is much more its ideology. A totalitarian system is characterised solely by its opposition of an artificial world to reality and its claims to explain the world and provide ultimate meaning. Thus does it inevitably come into conflict with the Church to become a

political religion. Gurian locates the causes of the rise of 'pseudo-religious movements' and 'anti-religious political-social religions' in the secularisation process of the twentieth century.

### **Hayek, Friedrich August von**

Austrian-British economist; born in Vienna 8 May 1899; died 23 March 1992 in Freiburg. Taught in London from 1931 to 1951, from 1950 to 1962 in Chicago, thereafter in Freiburg until 1968. In 1974 he received the Nobel Prize for economics.

#### **Work**

In his book *The Road to Serfdom* (Chicago, 1944; *Der Weg zur Knechtschaft* (Erlenbach/Zurich, 1952)), Hayek investigates the political consequences of collectivism in the economic sphere. In discussing 'planned economy and totalitarianism', Hayek seeks to show how a centralised, planned economy of any kind necessarily leads to political totalitarianism – even if the defenders of economic planning do not intend it. Due to the complexity of economic processes, every planning authority must be equipped with comprehensive authorisations of power that render a separation of the political from the economic impossible.

Hayek sees the roots of National Socialism to lie in international socialism. Both movements are said not only to have similar theories restricting individual freedoms, but also to be rooted in 'Prussianness and socialism' – in the state-led organisation of the economy against the ideas of freedom, individualism and political liberalism.

In *Die Verfassung der Freiheit* (Tübingen, 1971), Hayek pits his economic genealogy of totalitarianism against a legal-philosophical one. Here, he critically analyses legal positivism, historicism, the school of free right and the jurisprudence of interest. The jurisprudence of interests in particular, which strives for justice of a higher – that is, not merely procedural – order, is said to have 'paved the way for the arbitrariness of the totalitarian state in particular measure'. With legal positivism too, Hayek sees a tendency toward the totalitarian dissolution of the legal order. Thus is there a 'tendency to allow the essence of the constitutional state to submerge into the concept of the state as such'. The result is that 'no fundamental obstacles issuing from political theory will any longer [ ... hinder] the victory and sole validity of the fascist and Bolshevik states' (305).

### **Heidegger, Martin**

German philosopher. Born 26 September 1889 in Messkirch, Baden; died 26 May 1976 in Freiburg. Studied first theology, then philosophy; student of Heinrich Rickert, later of Edmund Hüusserl; habilitated in 1915 in Freiburg. From 1923 to 1928 professor at Marburg, from 1938 to 1945, professor at

Freiburg. Publication of his major work, *Sein und Zeit*, in 1927. NSDAP member from 1933 to 1945.

In his lectures on Hölderlin, Heidegger carefully guards against the monopolisation of classical Greek philosophy by totalitarian interpretations. He sees only very distant affinities between the polis as the quintessence of all possibilities of human life and existence and modern totalitarian rule. He states as much in a lecture entitled, 'Hölderlins Hymnus, "Der Ister"'. The way in which the polis is the centre of being for the Greeks is said to mean something entirely different from the unconditional pre-eminence of the modern 'totality of the political' ('Hölderlins Hymnus "Der Ister"', *GA-II-Abteilung, Vorlesungen 1923–1944*, vol. 53 (Frankfurt, 1984, 118). At some points in the lecture, Heidegger seems to call what is now described as totalitarianism as the 'totality of the political'.

That all deeds and omissions of the historical human being are situated in the polis, the site of belonging, in all respects, cannot be conflated with the modern 'totality of the political', which is of a completely different type historically. This only falsifies the Greek type.

(Ibid., 117)

Heidegger rejects the view that 'the Greeks would all have been National Socialists'.

## **Heiler, Friedrich**

Theologian and scholar of religions. Born 30 January 1892 in Munich; died there 28 April 1967. After two semesters of study of Catholic theology, he studied philosophy, psychology, religious history and oriental languages in Munich. In 1918 he became private lecturer in religious studies at the philosophical faculty at the University of Munich. In 1919, he accompanied Nathan Söderblom on a lecture tour through Sweden. In 1920 he was called – at the urging of Rudolf Otto – to assume a position teaching the history and philosophy of religion that had been created for him at Marburg. There he taught as a full professor beginning in 1922. In 1934, Heiler was transferred to the philosophical faculty in Greifswald for disciplinary reasons (prompted by his resistance to the 'Aryan paragraphs'). In 1935 he was transferred to the philosophical faculty in Marburg. Only in 1947 was he returned to the theological faculty. After becoming an emeritus professor, he held lectures on the history of religion in Munich.

### ***Work***

In his doctoral dissertation, *Das Gebet* (Munich, 1917), Heiler develops a phenomenology of the religious act of prayer. Occasioned by an analysis of the concepts 'personal piety', 'mysticism' and 'prophetic religiosity', he



discusses the object of prayer in terms of both the history and the psychology of religion. Heiler's investigation, *Die buddhistische Versenkung* appeared in Munich in 1922. Heiler's insightful reconstruction of the 'meaning-logic' of the religious act drew attention to his writings attention within the disciplines not only of theology, but of philosophy and the social sciences as well. His last work, *Erscheinungswesen und Wesen der Religion* (Stuttgart, 1961), offers religious-phenomenological investigation of the commonalities of all religions. Although Heiler's attempt to expose primarily the commonalities among religions brought him some criticism within the guild, that attempt has nonetheless made a significant contribution to the clarification of concepts in the study of religion. It therefore provides an important basis of differentiation by which to develop a heuristic concept of 'political religion'.

### **Heller, Hermann**

German political theorist; born 17 July 1891 in Teschen on the Olsa (Austria); died 5 November 1933 in Madrid. Studied law in Vienna, Innsbruck, Graz and Kiel; received his doctorate in law in 1915 in Graz; habilitation for the philosophy of law and political theory in 1920 in Kiel. In 1921, private lecturer at the University of Leipzig; in 1926, Referent at the Kaiser Wilhelm Institute for foreign public law and international law in Berlin. In 1928, full professor of public law at the University of Frankfurt; in 1932, represented the Social Democratic Party fraction of the Prussian state parliament (on the opposing side was Carl Schmitt) before the state court in Leipzig. The trial concerned the dismissal of the Prussian regime by Papen. Emigration to republican Spain and death in 1933.

### **Work**

Together with Rudolf Smend and Carl Schmitt, Heller was one of the first thinkers to transcend legal positivism in Germany. Sharing with the others his rejection of the Kelsian *Reinen Rechtslehre*, he also distances himself from the Smendian theory of integration and assumes a political counterposition to Carl Schmitt with his theory of the 'social constitutional state'. Heller's political theory (edited after his death by Gerhart Niemeyer in Leiden, 1934) remained unfinished. His work, *Europa und der Fascismus* (1929, 2nd edn, 1931), made him one of the earliest German theoreticians and critics of fascism.

In his early writings, *Die politischen Ideenkreise der Gegenwart* (Breslau, 1926) and *Sozialismus und Nation* (Berlin, 1925), Heller's ideas are already formed along the lines of a confrontation between tradition and socialism. In *Europa und der Fascismus*, however, he sets fascism, National Socialism and Bolshevism parallel as totalitarian for the first time:

according to the national-fascist theory, the national state should be the totalitarian one, the state that envelops every movement of life; nothing outside the state, nothing against the state, everything for the state. Fascism is the religion of the Fatherland, as one of the many posters advertising fascism states. In the nationalist experience, therefore, Italy encountered the 'new faithful' like a glorious spiritual vision which, elevating itself above reality, 'gradually assumed gradually the form of a goddess'.

(58)

Here, Heller interprets the totalitarian state as a 'state and Church in one', as a return to antiquity that is 'only possible through a radical rejection of Christianity' – whereby Christianity is said to hinder the total absorption of the individual by the state.

### ***Horkheimer, Max***

German philosopher and sociologist. Born 14 February 1895 in Stuttgart-Zuffenhausen; died 7 July 1973 in Nuremberg. First studied psychology and national economy (Horkheimer was supposed to take over his father's textile factory), then studied philosophy (of Kant in particular) in Freiburg and Frankfurt; in 1925, habilitation with the neo-Kantian, Hans Cornelius. Horkheimer became full professor of social philosophy at the University of Frankfurt in 1930. In 1931 he became director of the Institute for Social Research, with branches soon established in Geneva and London; in 1934, the institute (along with its director) was relocated to New York, where it was annexed to Columbia University. In 1940, move to California for health reasons. Here, Horkheimer leads various research projects and becomes director of the scientific department of the Jewish Committee in the United States. In 1949, accepted a call to a chair for philosophy and sociology at the University of Frankfurt and re-established the Institute for Social Research. From 1954 on, simultaneously guest professor at the University of Chicago; in 1951 and 1952, rector of the University of Frankfurt. After becoming an emeritus professor, he returned with his friend, Fred Pollock, to Montagnola near Lugano.

### ***Work***

With *Traditionelle und kritische Theorie* (1937) and *Dialektik der Aufklärung* (1947, together with Theodor W. Adorno), Horkheimer became the main figure of the 'critical theory of society'. In the inter-war period he worked on classical German philosophy and its transformation by Karl Marx. Created a programme for an interdisciplinary analysis of contemporary society, one withdrawing both from the non-historical empiricism of the individual sciences and from a 'meaning-endowing metaphysics'. Pessimistic

features emerge in Horkheimer's aphoristic late work following 1945; here, modernity is understood as an 'administered world'. Approaches theological thought, articulation of the issue regarding God as a question concerning 'absolute meaning'. In his interpretation of National Socialism and Bolshevism, Horkheimer places both within the category of 'authoritarian state'. Describing National Socialism as 'state capitalism' and Bolshevism as 'integral étatism', he thereby – for all the similarities to the phenomenal image – emphasises the structural differences of two systems for which he makes no unified subsumption to the concept of 'totalitarian'.

### **Hornung, Klaus**

German historian and political scientist. Born 26 June 1927 in Heilbronn. Studied history, political science, German studies, and English in Tübingen; in 1955, doctoral study with Hans Rothfels and Theodor Eschenburg; habilitated in 1974 and began work as an independent lecturer in Freiburg. Beginning in 1987, professor of political science at the University of Hohenheim. In 1987, Federal Order of Merit. Has been in retirement since 1992.

#### ***Work***

In *Das totalitäre Zeitalter* (Frankfurt, 1993), Hornung presents an outline of the history of the twentieth century as one marked by totalitarianisms. Following Talmon, he traces the driving impulse of totalitarianism back to the political messianism of the French Revolution and the dictatorship of the Jacobins. For Hornung, therefore, fascism, National Socialism and Stalinism are 'branches of the same tree' (55). 'The similarities and commonalities ... culminate in a pseudo-religious veneration of the "leader" by the masses ...' (56). Political messianism as a common root thereby also delivers the prerequisite for a comparison of totalitarian systems.

### **Hürten, Heinz**

German historian. Born 1928 in Düsseldorf; full professor of contemporary and recent history at the University of Eichstatt; retired in 1993.

#### ***Work***

In *Verfolgung, Widerstand und Zeugnis. Kirche im Nationalsozialismus. Fragen eines Historikers* (Mainz, 1987), Hürten shows that one characteristic of the totalitarian regime can be gleaned from its mode of dealing with resistance and opposition. On the example of the churches' resistance to Hitler, Hürten demonstrates that the National Socialists defined actions and

attitudes that lie beyond the political sphere as resistance as well. This fact is said to evince the totalitarian claim of the regime, which does not content itself with a position of absolute power within the political sphere, but expressly lays claim to the 'innermost spheres' (64) of the human being and thereby moves unavoidably into a conflict with the churches.

## **Jünger, Ernst**

German writer. Born 29 March 1895 in Heidelberg; died 1999 in Wiflingen. Foreign legionary before the First World War; officer from 1914 to 1918; 'dishonourable discharge' from the *Wehrmacht* in 1944 following the attempt on Hitler's life on 20 July. Founded the journal *Antaios* with Mircea Eliade in 1959, as a forum for topics surrounding mythology, the history of religion and cultural history. Bearer of the French Order of Merit. His experiences fighting in the First World War are described in the works, *In Stahlgewittern* and *Der Kampf als inneres Erlebnis*.

## **Work**

From the conviction of a 'heroic nihilism' that he gained during the First World War, Jünger developed the figure of the future, anti-bourgeois human being in his essay *Der Arbeiter* (1932). Knowing nothing of the individualism of the nineteenth century, this new type also transcends the Marxist economic restriction to a particular class; it is based instead on the technical possibilities of modernity, which demands an authoritarian – perhaps even a total state – in transition to a world situation based upon technology. In *Die totale Mobilmachung* (1931), Jünger investigates the preconditions of this new situation. With its indifference to friend and enemy and with an anonymity that manifests itself, for Jünger, as a cloud of poisonous gas set loose in the First World War, technical progress leads to total mobilisation. To the extent that it can be transformed into a total state, democracy is said to provide preconditions for such a mobilisation superior to those provided by a monarchy. It therefore corresponds better to the anti-bourgeois type of the worker. Having refused to be classified as either 'left' or 'right', Jünger understood his writings to be a 'seismographic' mirror of the developments of his time.

## **Kalandra, Závís**

Czech philosopher and journalist; born 10 November 1902 in Frenštát pod Radhostem. Died 1950 in Prague. Studied philosophy and philology at the Charles University in Prague; studied ancient Greek philosophy (Parmenides) in Berlin from 1928 to 1930; from 1930, freelance journalist working for the left-oriented press; cooperation with the surrealists. In 1939, imprisonment. Kalandra lived in various concentration camps in Germany until 1945; from

1945 to 1948, he made intensive criticism of all attempts, whether open or hidden, to restrict the freedom of artistic creation and warned against the one-party state. After 1948, Kalandra numbered among the first victims of the political trials in Czechoslovakia. Imprisoned in 1949. In 1950 he was condemned to death as 'Trotskyite' in a show trial and executed.

### **Work**

With essays from the 1930s and 1940s (Prague, 1994), the collection entitled *Der Intellektuelle und die Revolution* provides a survey of Kalandra's analysis of the intellectual currents of his time. During this period, Kalandra is especially interested in the relationship between the individual and the supra-personal collectivity. Kalandra always condemns the left intellectuals when they let their individual insights be corrected by the mythic, collective logic, thereby succumbing to a fideism that is inaccessible to any kind of rational criticism. Given the tension between the individual and the collectivity, Kalandra's philosophical work always circles around two themes: around the problem of the rise, transformation and atrophy of ideological systems on the one hand and that of an anthropology that does not allow itself to be restricted by Marxist materialism on the other. From 1933 on, Kalandra criticises the National Socialist *Weltanschauung*, one he exemplifies with reference to National Socialist political processes. Elections, for example, do not occur for their own sake, but are said to serve solely to mobilise adherents and disorganise opponents. National Socialist thought is said to construct magical connections: the temporal coincidence of the execution of two German anti-fascists (Sally Epstein and Hans Ziegler on 10 April 1935) and Hermann Göring's wedding evince the barbaric understanding according to which Göring's happiness was to be assured through the spilling of innocent human blood. Kalandra makes a similar argument concerning the Stalinist show-trials, for which reality is said to be overpowered by symbols whose actual goal is not the maintenance and enforcement of order, but the creation of an atmosphere of fear.

### **Kolakowski, Leszek**

Polish philosopher. Born 23 October 1927 in Radom. Studied philosophy at the University of Łódź from 1945 to 1950; assistant in logic at the University of Łódź from 1947 to 1949. From 1950 to 1959, assistant of Adam Schaff at the University of Warsaw. Attained his doctoral degree in 1953, with a work on Spinoza. In 1956, leader of the intellectual opposition during the 'Polish October'. Research trips in 1957 to Amsterdam and Paris; from 1958 to 1968, professor of the history of philosophy at the University of Warsaw. In 1966, exclusion from the Communist Party – to which he had belonged since 1945 – on grounds of an accusation of revisionism. Loss

of his chair and emigration to Canada in 1968; guest professor at McGill University in Montreal in 1968 and 1969. From 1969 to 1970 guest professor at the University of California, Berkeley. From 1970 onward, Senior Research Fellow at All Souls College, Oxford; in 1975, teaching activity at Yale University in Connecticut. Beginning in 1981, teaching activity at the University of Chicago; participation in the Committee on Social Thought, the Western Representation of the Polish Independent Committee for Culture, Science and Education. Numerous awards and prizes – among others, the 1977 Peace Prize of the German Book Trade.

### **Work**

Following a phase of revisionism in the 1960s, Kolakowski moved increasingly from orthodox Marxism in the direction of a comprehensive critique of utopian thought. For him, the modern despotisms mark a ‘despairing imitation of paradise’. Kolakowski points out the presence of eschatological ideas in communism in particular (*Der Mensch ohne Alternative. Von der Möglichkeit und Unmöglichkeit, Marxist zu sein* (Munich, 1967)). As a foil to this, he emphasises the person’s total responsibility for his deeds, whereby this responsibility cannot be transferred to supposed historical laws. The practical decision is therefore a decision of values, a moral act; it is not determined by a ‘thus and not otherwise’ of some philosophy of history or other. Nothing that extends into the future is subject to an inevitability that can apply only to the past.

### **Leeuw, Gerardus van der**

Dutch scholar of religion, Protestant theologian and Egyptologist. Born 18 March 1890 in The Hague, died 18 November 1950 in Utrecht. Obtained his Ph.D. with the dissertation, *Godsvoorstellingen in de oudaegyptische pyramidetexten*. Beginning in 1918, professor of the history of religion, Protestant theology and Egyptology at the University of Gröningen; in 1933, his major work, *Phänomenologie der Religion*. This work ensured that the phenomenology of religion would be recognised as an independent branch of religious studies. From 1945 to 1946, Minister of Culture of the Netherlands; numerous publications on questions of the history of religion and Egyptology, as well as on theology, history of music and the history of culture. In 1940, publication of *Bilanz des Christentums*.

### **Work**

Van der Leeuw’s *Phänomenologie der Religion* (Tübingen, 1933) places numerous materials and categorisations at the disposal of any effort to indicate common elements of totalitarian movements and religions. Van der Leeuw describes the religious experience in both its individual and its insti-

tutional forms (purification cults, sacral festivals, traditional customs, etc.). As a parallel to the totalitarian regimes, religion has something to do with power in van der Leeuw's view; this is because it takes life to the most extreme limit, a limit the human being seeks to overcome – whether through worship or through an attempt to transcend it himself. Thus does the ultimate creation of meaning in life become a question of the governability of human life.

The numinous experience of salvation is incarnated in the figure of the saviour: in Osiris, Apollo, Dionysus and Baldur. Opposed to these in a dualistic sense are the figures of chaos: the snake, the dragon, the werewolf, the gods of death, the curse, etc.

Romano Guardini's work is based on that of van der Leeuw to the extent that he places his intramundane saviour among the bringers of chaos.

### **Le Guillou, Marie-Joseph**

French theologian. Born 25 December 1920 in Serval, Brittany, died 25 January 1990 in Paris. Studied at the Sorbonne; entered the Dominican Order in 1941; lecturer in theology at the Dominican university, Le Saulchoir, in Paris. Directly thereafter, professor of theology at the *Institut Catholique de Paris*. Director of the Institut supérieur d'études oecuméniques and editor of the journal *Istina*, which is devoted predominantly to ecumenical questions in conversation with the Eastern Church.

#### **Work**

His *Le Mystère du Père, Foi des Apôtres – Gnosés actuelles* (1973) attempts to structure the 'era of ideologies' (the nineteenth and twentieth centuries) into a French, German and Russian cycle. Understanding ideology as a 'perverse imitatio der religion', Le Guillou describes the twentieth century as a series of 'movements' that have formed counter-models of faith, 'ersatz transcendences' that are genuinely gnostic. This gnosis, which is above all a spiritual attitude, proves to be a 'perversion of the Christian truth'. Although its form of expression and preoccupations are from the faith, it understands both in a manner that is entirely peculiar to it and that runs counter to faith.

The description of the religious dimension of totalitarian phenomena as gnosis corresponds to Eric Voegelin's transition from the concept of political religion to the concept of gnosis as the defining feature of totalitarianism.

### **Ley, Michael**

Social scientist. Born 1955 in Konstanz. Studied sociology at the University of Bremen and the Free University of Berlin; editorial activity and research for television; lives in Vienna.

### **Work**

In his article, 'Apokalyptische Bewegungen in der Moderne' (M. Ley and J. H. Schoeps, eds, *Der Nationalsozialismus als politische Religion* (Bodenheim bei Mainz, 1997), 13ff.) and his book, *Genozid und Heilserwartung* (Vienna, 1993), Ley sets up the thesis that the origins of political religions and criminal genocide lie with the Revelations of John and in its continuation in the work of Joachim of Fiore. In religiously motivated anti-Judaism, in the anti-Semitism of Enlightenment humanism, and in the politically motivated hatred of Jews, Ley finds the direct roots of modern anti-Semitism.

### **Lübbe, Hermann**

German philosopher. Born 31 December 1926 in Aurich; in 1943, *Abitur* and war service. Studied philosophy and several social scientific disciplines with Theodor W. Adorno and Joachim Ritter (among others) in Freiburg, Münster and Göttingen. In 1951, received doctoral degree and became an assistant of research; habilitation in 1956. From 1956 to 1963, teaching activity at universities in Erlangen, Hamburg, Cologne and Münster; from 1963 to 1969 full professor of philosophy at the University of Bochum; permanent secretary at the Ministry of Culture of North Rhein-Westphalia from 1966 to 1969; 1969–70, permanent secretary to the minister-president. From 1969 to 1973, full professor of social philosophy at the University of Bielefeld; full professor of philosophy and political theory at the University of Zurich from 1971 to 1991. Has been an honorary professor there since 1991.

### **Work**

Lübbe has enriched the totalitarianism debate primarily through his investigations on the connection between the expectation of salvation and terror and on the origins of the revolutionary ideas of 'purity' and 'purging'. In *Religion nach der Aufklärung* (1986) and other writings, Lübbe sought to make distinctions between 'political religion' and 'civil religion', as well as to analyse 'totalitarian right-belief' – the truth-claim with which modern despotic regimes (by contrast to 'fallible' liberal political organisations) make their appearance.

### **Mannheim, Karl**

British sociologist and philosopher of Austrian origins. Born 27 March 1893, in Budapest; died 9 January 1947 in London. After attending a humanistic *Gymnasium*, Mannheim began his study of philosophy in Budapest in 1912; immediately thereafter, research years were spent in Berlin, Paris, Freiburg and Heidelberg. In 1918 he obtained his doctorate with a work entitled *Die Structuranalyse der Erkenntnistheorie* at the Philosophical Faculty



of the University of Budapest. After the fall of the communist Bela Kuhn regime, he was forced to flee from Hungary via Vienna, Berlin and Freiburg to Heidelberg. There he married his long-time fellow student, Juliska Láng. Under the influence of Alfred Weber, he turned to sociological topics in Heidelberg. In 1926, he habilitated at the University of Heidelberg, with a work on conservative thought in the discipline of sociology. In 1930 he was called to occupy a chair of sociology at the Johann Wolfgang Goethe University in Frankfurt. After the National Socialists came to power in 1933 he was forced to leave university service and fled – via Paris and Amsterdam – to London, where he received a teaching job in sociology at the London School of Economics and Political Science. In 1941, he went to the Institute of Education at London University, where he became a professor of education in 1945.

### **Work**

In his major work, *Utopie und Ideologie* (1929), Mannheim justifies the sociology of knowledge, with its starting point in the historically and socially conditioned nature of all knowledge. On this basis, Mannheim arrives at his critique of the contemporary totalitarian dictatorships, which he opposes to the development of ‘planned democracy’ – through the education of elites, for example – in later writings devoted to diagnosing the problems of the epoch and to social planning (*Freiheit und geplante Demokratie* (1950) among others).

### **Maritain, Jacques**

French philosopher. Born 8 November 1882 in Paris, died 28 April 1973 in Toulouse. From 1901 to 1902 he studied philosophy with Henri Bergson at the Collège de France. Marriage to Raïssa Oumançoff in 1904; on 11 May 1906 the married couple were baptised. From 1906 to 1908 he studied biology with Hans Driesch in Heidelberg. Residence in Paris from 1910 to 1939. In 1914, teaching activity in modern philosophy at the Institut Catholique; from 1921 to 1922, organisation of the Cercles Thomistes with the intellectual support of the Dominican, Réginald Garrigou-Lagrange. From 1939 to 1945, residence in the United States and activity at many universities. Ambassador of France to the Holy See from 1945 to 1948; from 1948 to 1956 teaching activity at Princeton University. On 4 November 1960, death of Raïssa. From 1961, with the Petits Frères de Jésus. On 1 November 1971, taking of vows with the Petits Frères de Jésus.

### **Work**

Maritain set Catholic thought on the path to human rights. He influenced both the United Nations Declaration of 1948 and the declaration of the

Second Vatican Council on the freedom of religion (1965). Beyond this, he made decisive contributions to understanding the situation of religion in modern pluralistic society. In analyses of Action Française and its 'politique d'abord' – a way of thinking he originally shared – he developed criteria by which to differentiate between the 'autonomy of the temporal' and the 'primacy of the spiritual' (*Primaauté du Spirituel*, 1927; *Humanisme intégral*, 1936). Concerning the modern totalitarianisms, particularly Marxism as the 'last Christian heresy', Maritain holds fast to the Thomistic insight: 'homo non ordinatur ad communitatem politicam secundum se totum, et secundum omnia sua'. Politics is subordinate to ethics. In Christian times, by contrast to the 'theo-polities' of antiquity, politics is not a main activity, but a subsidiary one. The human being is not completely absorbed by the political.

### **Masaryk, Tomas Garrigue**

Czech philosopher and politician. Born 7 March 1850 in Hodonín (Moravia), died 14 September 1937 in Lány near Prague. After the completion of his *Abitur* in Vienna, he studied classical philology, philosophy, aesthetics, and psychology from 1876 to 1878 at the Universities of Vienna and Leipzig. In 1878, Masaryk habilitated at the University of Vienna with a work entitled *Über den Selbstmord*. In 1882, full professor of philosophy at the Charles University in Prague; from the mid-1880s on, active engagement in Czech politics. Elected member of the Imperial Council in Vienna; from 1914 to 1918, politician in exile; leading personality in the struggle to found the Czechoslovakian Republic. On 14 November 1918, Masaryk was elected president of the republic. Re-election in 1920, 1927 and 1934; on 14 December 1937 he resigned on grounds of age.

### **Work**

In his work, *Rusko a Europa* (*Russia and Europe*, Prague (1913–21)), Masaryk presents the problem of Russia in the course of investigating the relationship between Russian literature (Dostoevsky, among others) and the Revolution as an argument between the man of God and the godded man. According to Masaryk, theocracy will always bring forth nihilists and titans. Masaryk understands by theocracy every authoritarian or aristocratic regime that is based on myths and politicised religions. He regards Russia as the 'most tenacious theocracy'. The revolutionism of the Bolsheviks is said to be 'aristocratic', and their revolution to be a 'reverse theocracy' (i.e. it eliminated the tsars, not tsarism). Masaryk speaks of a new Caesarism. He finds a strong desire for faith to be anchored in Russian thought. Russian thought is said to be more mythic than European thought and therefore to have reacted more sensitively to the shock of the European Enlightenment.

In *Svetová revoluce 1914–1918* (*Die Weltrevolution 1914–1918* (Prague, 1925)), Masaryk reaches the conclusion that Russian Bolshevism has more

in common with the anarchism of Bakunin than it does with Marxism. The Bolshevik regime is said to put into practice an abstract state ideology in a way that is entirely centralised. Russia serves hereby, not as the site of the realisation of communism, but as an instrument by which to realise communism in the rest of Europe. As a positive aspect of the Russian Revolution, Masaryk observes the awakening of a sense of freedom, a growing understanding of the significance of organisations and a higher estimation of work.

In evaluating the isolated situation of Germany, Masaryk comes to the conclusion that its isolation was not the result of the First World War, but a consequence of modern philosophical thought instead. With 'his absolute idealism', Hegel is said to have served the authoritarian Prussian state. Yet here he took leave of the humanism and universalism of Goethe and Kant, laying the foundations for violence in both theory and practice. This meta-physical Titanism has necessarily led to loneliness, according to Masaryk; and it has brought forth nihilism and pessimism.

### **Mommsen, Hans**

German historian. Born 5 January 1930 in Marburg. Studied history in Marburg and Tübingen; received his doctorate in 1959, with a work on Austrian social democracy in the multi-national state of Austria-Hungary. Following activity as a lecturer at the Institute for Contemporary History, he was an assistant at the University of Heidelberg from 1964 to 1968; from 1968 to 1996, full professor of contemporary history at the Ruhr University in Bochum. Numerous publications on the history of the workers' movement, on National Socialism and the resistance to it.

### **Work**

In his article, 'Nationalsozialismus also vorgetäuschte Modernisierung', (W. H. Pehle, ed., *Der historische Ort des Nationalsozialismus. Annäherungen* (Frankfurt, 1990), 31–46), Mommsen interprets National Socialist politics – in terms of both theoretical content and practical execution – as a simulation of modernisation. Under the surface of its apparent progressivism (its enthusiasm for technology and 'social politics') is buried an ideology that is essentially 'backwards-looking'. The period of National Socialist rule is said to have represented the climax of a 'deep-going crisis of modernisation' that had existed from the end of the First World War (46). The meagre powers of resistance of the German society should be understood in connection with this crisis, one that benefited the National Socialist regime. The National Socialists' temporary functional capacity is said to have been based upon this social constellation, not on a 'superior technique of manipulation and rule' (46). According to Mommsen, the 'deficient convincing power of the theory of totalitarian dictatorship' results from this,

as well as from the National Socialists' lack of an insular *Weltanschauung* (31). Mommsen is also critical of the interpretation of National Socialism as a political religion.

### **Nichtweiss, Barbara**

German theologian. Born 17 December 1960 in Ankara, Turkey, grew up in Tripoli, Libya and Seligenstadt, Germany. Graduated from college in 1979 in Offenbach; read German studies, Catholic theology, art history and Latin in Trier and Freiburg from 1979 to 1984. From 1985 to 1993 she served as a research assistant to the bishop of Mainz; obtained her doctorate in theology in Freiburg with a study of the life and work of Eric Peterson. Since 1993 she has been advisor to the ordinariate at the bishop's ordinariate in Mainz and speaks on the diocese for South West Radio.

#### *Work*

Nichtweiss' work, *Erik Peterson. Neue Sicht auf Leben und Werk* (2nd edn Freiburg/Basel/Vienna, 1994), makes decisive advances in clarifying the relationship between Erik Peterson, Karl Barth and Carl Schmitt.

### **Nitti, Francesco Saverio**

Italian politician. Born 19 July 1868 in Melfi, died 20 February 1953 in Rome. In 1898 he was professor of finance in Naples. From 1904 to 1924, liberal member of parliament and prime minister from 1919 to 1920. Exiled to Paris as an opponent of fascism in 1924; from 1943 to 1945, imprisoned in Germany. In 1945, Nitti co-founded the liberal *Unione Democratica Nazionale*.

#### *Work*

The investigation, *Bolschewismus, Faschismus und Demokratie* (Munich, 1926), which issued from a conference of exiled Italian democrats, is one of the earliest works in which Bolshevism and fascism are systematically compared and identified. In essence, Nitti finds three points of agreement between the two totalitarian regimes – although the concept 'totalitarian' does not appear in this work! The first is the denial of the basic principles of 1789; the second is the rule of an armed minority and the third, the 'ceaseless and bitter revilement of the parliament'. At their core, both dictatorships represent reactionary movements to the liberal, Nitti. Where such movements should be traced back to the specific circumstances of their respective countries, they remain restricted to them. In his opinion, democracy can be secured only within the framework of a united Europe.

**Nolte, Ernst**

German philosopher and historian. Born in 1923 in Witten, Ruhr. Studied philosophy, history and classical philology in Freiburg with Martin Heidegger and Eugen Fink, among others. Obtained his doctoral degree in 1952 with a work on self-alienation and dialectics in German idealism and the work of Marx; from 1953 to 1964 he worked as a philologist of antiquity in the teaching profession. Habilitated in 1964 at the urging of Theodor Schieder in Cologne based on the publication of his book, *Der Faschismus in seiner Epoche*. Professor at the University of Marburg from 1965 to 1973; from 1973 to his retirement in 1991 at the Free University of Berlin. Nolte was the central participant in the so-called 'historians' fight'.

**Work**

In his main work, *Der Faschismus in seiner Epoche. Action française – Italienischer Faschismus – Nationalsozialismus* (Munich, 1963), Nolte places German National Socialism within a European and epochal context. He understands the confrontation between communism and fascism after 1918 as a 'world civil war', his analysis of both totalitarianisms as 'trans-political phenomena' approaches the concept of political religions. A thesis of his that has remained disputed has been the claim of historical causality: fascism as an 'answer' to Russian communism.

**Orwell, George**

English writer. Born Eric Arthur Blair on 25 June 1903 in Mothari (Bengal), died 21 January 1950 in London. He assumed the pseudonym of Orwell in 1933. Educated at Eton from 1922 to 1927, after which he followed the example of his father and entered the British colonial service in India. From 1928 to 1936, years of search for identity in both personal and authorial respects; from 1936 onwards he becomes an increasingly political writer; from 1937 to 1938 he participates in the Spanish Civil War on the side of the Republicans. His first concrete experience with totalitarianism of the communist variety led to a sobering and a change of Orwell's political world-view. In 1938 he returned to England. From this point he began to sketch a nightmare world in literary form; from 1947 to 1949 he was the height of his literary career.

**Work**

Orwell translated the totalitarianism model into literature as no other author has done. 'German Nazis' and 'Russian communists' are expressions of the model. Stalin was the basis for 'Big Brother' in the black utopia of *1984* (London, 1948).

## **Otto, Rudolf**

German theologian. Born 25 September 1869, in Peine near Hannover, died 6 March 1937 in Marburg. In 1897, Otto became professor of the history of religion at Göttingen. In 1914, became professor of the history of religion in Breslau; transferred to Marburg in 1917; retirement in 1929; co-initiator of the 'alliance of religious humanity' and the collection of religious lore in Marburg. Editor of the works of Kant and Schleiermacher; publications on liturgy.

### **Work**

In *Das Heilige. Über das Irrationale in der Idee des Göttlichen und sein Verhältnis zum Rationalen* (Breslau, 1917), Otto sketches a concept of religion that can be annexed, as a descriptive category, to the description of the totalitarian regime. According to Otto, the 'holy' is composed of three elements: a moral one, a rational one, and a numinous one. The latter is the actual 'innermost' of religion. Bearing the double character of 'tremendum et fascinosum' (the dreadful and the fascinating), it is the essential element of the holy. The 'dreadful' element especially can be shown to be a central characteristic of the totalitarian regime – as Hannah Arendt has demonstrated in her work, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*. Guardini follows Otto's differentiation as well, and can thereby develop a concept of religion that is distinct from the concept of faith precisely on this point.

## **Paquet, Alfons**

German writer. Born 26 January 1881 in Wiesbaden, died 8 February 1944 in Frankfurt. Author of travel reports as well as stories and essays; his work is devoted predominantly to political and social themes, among others, to events following the October Revolution.

### **Work**

In his *Briefen aus Moskau* (Jena, 1919), Paquet describes the new form the reign of terror had assumed following the October Revolution in Russia. The hallmark of this kind of terror is that people, whether innocent or guilty, must fear being imprisoned on the grounds of pure suspicion. Terror is characterised as the programmatic revenge of a party – the Communist Party of the Soviet Union – on its individual opponents. Opponents of the communists are condemned by 'kangaroo court' that is said to replace the standard due process of law. Political enemies of the state are randomly incarcerated in various prisons, so that the inquiries of relations remain unsuccessful. The official terror is accompanied by gangster terror, which serves to reinforce the arbitrariness and legal uncertainty of the system.

Paquet's reports are interesting not only as an historical source, but in terms of the history of the concept as well. Thus does he speak, in the context of the reordering of the Russian borders, of the revolutionary 'totalism of Lenin'. Guardini and Nolte have also adopted this concept that originated with Nietzsche.

## **Patocka, Jan**

Czech philosopher. Born 1 July 1907 in Turnov, died 13 March 1977 in Prague. Studied philosophy and philology at the Charles University in Prague, later at the universities of Paris, Berlin and Freiburg; at the latter, acquaintance with Edmund Husserl and Martin Heidegger. In 1937, habilitation at the Charles University with the work *Die Lebenswelt als philosophisches Problem*. After the war, Patocka taught at faculties of philosophy in Prague and Brno; from 1948, did research activity on the work of J. A. Comenius at the Academy of Science. From 1968 to 1972, professor at the Charles University. In 1972, forced retirement and continuation of philosophical instruction in private seminars. In 1976 he joined protests against the imprisonment of young musicians, and in January 1977 became co-founder and one of the first three speakers of Charter 77, a citizens' movement for human rights.

## **Work**

In *Kacíorské eseje o filosofii dejin (Heretical Essays on Contemporary Philosophy, Prague 1975)*, Patocka describes the character of the history of the twentieth century using the examples of three interconnected phenomena: (1) Total mobilisation of human and natural reserves, (2) Permanent war, for the sake of the 'better tomorrow' that would follow. This, in turn, becomes (3) a revolution of everyday life, one that robs human life of the celebratory, the sacral and the divine. According to Patocka, everyday life and enthusiasm for the struggle belong together. This connection is said to have remained largely latent during the nineteenth century; in the twentieth century, however, war becomes an accomplished revolution of ordinary life and thereby becomes 'total'. In war, daily life and orgies are organised by the same hand. Patocka finds a similar cruelty and orgiasticism already present with the Wars of Religion of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries; these gain their completion, however, only in the maximal sobriety and rationality of the twentieth century. The actual contradiction, therefore, does not play out between liberalism and socialism or between democracy and totalitarian regimes, because these share their ignorance of the subjective, non-objective element. The genuine contradiction lies between a life alternating between ritual celebrations and ordinary life on the one hand, and one consumed by the totality of everyday life on the other.

## **Peroutka, Ferdinand**

Czech journalist. Born 6 February 1895 in Prague, died 20 April 1987 in New York. In the 1920s and 1930s, the liberal socialist Peroutka was one of the most significant Czechoslovakian commentators on political life. From 1924 to 1939 he was editor-in-chief of the journal of culture and politics, *Poitomnost (Present)*. Imprisoned in September 1939; until May 1945 lived in the concentration camps of Buchenwald and Dachau. From 1945 to 1948, resumption of journalistic activity; editor-in-chief of the journal *Dnesek (Today)*. Following the communist putsch in February 1948, exile in the United States, cooperation there with the Czech producers of Radio Free Europe.

### **Work**

In his work, *Jací jsme (What we are like (Prague, 1924))*, Peroutka locates the causes of German totalitarianism in the Germans' preparedness to acknowledge the superordinate role of the state in society and to dispense with personal freedom. The German inhumanity is said to be an expression of this idea of the state. From this, Peroutka draws the conclusion that the realisation of a 'great state' is always bound up with imperialism and inhumanity. In his work, *Demokratický manifest (The Democratic Manifesto (New York, 1959))*, he ascertains that National Socialism and communism represent a breach with the tradition of the Enlightenment. The two movements are said to mark an attempt to elude the enlightened claims of the individual by means of a monolithic process of violence. Communism, therefore, is said to have originated as a political movement that might be described as a secular religion and to evince such religious characteristics as inwardness and hardness of faith. At the same time, communism is based on myth, a myth that has political consequences the moment it is realised, for at that point, it requires power, ideology and propaganda. Fascism, National Socialism and communism share their intent to destroy democracy and humanity. In Peroutka's view, therefore, Mussolini and Hitler had to do only half the work; Lenin and Trotsky had already done the other half. Lenin is said to be the true inventor of the kind of totality that strives to suck, from the spiritually rich European human being, all that transcends the intentions or horizon of a political party.

## **Peterson, Erik**

German theologian. Born 7 June 1890 in Hamburg, died 2 October 1960, also in Hamburg. From 1911 to 1914 he studied Protestant theology in Strasbourg, Berlin, Greifswald, Basel and Göttingen. Doctoral dissertation and habilitation on a topic of the history of religion (the formula of the acclamation *Heis Theos*). From 1920 to 1924, full professor of New Testament



studies and church history at Göttingen. From 1924 to 1929, full professor of New Testament and church history at Bonn. In 1930, conversion to Catholicism, thereafter predominantly a lecturer in Rome. Beginning in 1946, professor at the Papal Institute for Christian Archaeology.

### **Work**

Little of Peterson's work was published in his lifetime. Those parts that were are essentially summarised in the essay collections, *Theologische Traktate* (1951) and *Frühkirche, Judentum and Gnosis* (1959). An extensive stock of manuscripts is now held at the University of Turin in Italy and awaits publication. Regardless, the influence that Peterson has exerted on numerous theologians, historians and political theorists can hardly be overestimated. (Worth naming in particular are Karl Barth, Carl Schmitt, Ernst Käsemann, Heinrich Schlier, Joseph Ratzinger and Gilles Quispel.) With his critique of 'political monotheism' and the Roman *Pax Augustana*, Peterson accentuates the ancient Christian doctrine of the trinity and the eschatological nature of Christianity in face of the attempts of his contemporaries to renew 'political theology'. In the years after 1933, the work entitled *Monotheismus als politisches Problem* (1925) should also be read as a critique of National Socialism (and against the Church leaders' playing-down of its danger). The work marks a confrontation with the political theology that had been renewed by Carl Schmitt. Peterson attempts to develop the impossibility of political theology after Christ on the mystery of the Trinity. Where the divine triune structure is particular to God and foreign to the creature, it is impossible to create an image of the triune structure of God. Every equation of earthly ruling forms (empire, etc.) with divine rule, therefore, is bound to fail. In his *Theologischen Traktaten* (Munich, 1951), Peterson later developed this challenge posed by the rule of Christ to earthly ruling forms (*Christus als Imperator*, 1937, *Zeuge der Wahrheit*, 1937) in eschatological and theologico-historical terms.

Information on contemporary history is provided both by the correspondence volume, *Briefwechsel mit Adolf Harnack*, and by Peterson's *Epilog* (1932); the latter addresses the problem of the public position of the Protestant Church once the supremacy of the sovereign princes had ended.

### **Popper, Karl Raimund**

Austrian-British theoretician of science and social philosopher. Born 28 July 1902 in Vienna, died 17 September 1994 in London. Graduation from middle school in 1918; guest student of lectures at the University of Vienna; main interests are mathematics and theoretical physics. In 1922, graduation as a private student and beginning of a full course of study. Trained as a cabinetmaker from 1922 to 1924. Gained his doctorate in 1929 with a work

entitled *Zur Methodenfrage der Denkpsychologie*; took exams to become a high school teacher of mathematics, chemistry and physics in 1929; taught until the end of 1936. In 1937 he emigrated to New Zealand and became a lecturer in philosophy at Canterbury University College in Christchurch. In 1946, gained a readership at the London School of Economics through Friedrich August von Hayek. In 1949 became tenured professor at LSE for the theory of logic and methodology. Was knighted in 1965 and retired as an emeritus professor in 1969. Popper's late works now appear: among others, *Objective Knowledge* (1972) and *The Self and Its Brain* (1977, co-written with John C. Eccles).

### **Work**

Prepared in *Logik der Forschung* (1934) and completed in *Conjectures and Refutations* (1963), Popper's *Kritischer Rationalismus* was one of the most influential works of the twentieth century. Opponents accuse him of an unfruitful positivism concerning his position in scientific theory, and of an affirmative understanding of society concerning the contents of his social philosophy. Popper's followers, by contrast (who are not restricted to the scientific community), praise his philosophical legitimation of the pluralistic social order, which is as unmistakable as it is understandable. With numerous variations, Popper's central idea states that we have no certified theory at our disposal – and this not even in the exact, natural sciences – because it is impossible inductively to derive universal regularities from a series of observations of individual phenomena. For this reason, theories can only have a hypothetical character and must therefore be open for rational criticism – hence, for refutation. This is the postulate of falsification. From Popper's conception of science follows his vote for an open, pluralistic social order against the unconditional claim to rule of totalitarian regimes – a claim based upon the supposed possession of the truth. Just as the dogmas within which the individual researcher must think cannot be permitted to reign in the sciences, so can an ideology that establishes a framework for individual patterns of life not be permitted to form the basis of state action. Just as theories must prove themselves in both empirical tests and in contest with other theories in order then to be modified or even surrendered if necessary, so must political decisions be retractable – by means of periodic elections – if they are no longer supported by the judgement of the critical public.

### **Rhodes, James M.**

Political scientist. Ph.D. at the University of Notre Dame, Indiana, in 1969. In 1979, Pere Marquette Award for Teaching Excellence. Alpha Sigma Nu Award for his book, *The Hitler Movement* (Stanford University Press, 1980). Currently teaches political science at Marquette University.

**Work**

In his work, *The Hitler Movement: A Modern Millenarian Revolution* (Stanford CA, 1980), Rhodes follows Norman Cohn's work on millenarianism and asserts that all attempts to explain the National Socialist ideology are deficient. Reductionistic, tautological, irrational and inadequate, they neglect the self-understanding of the adherents of National Socialism. A consistent theory would have to begin, first and foremost, with this self-understanding. For Rhodes, all millenarian movements share six views: adherents (1) regard themselves as the victims of a catastrophe, (2) receive revelations that explain the situation of need and promise salvation, (3) know the principle of evil, (4) feel they have been chosen, (5) regard the final struggle against evil to be imminent, and (6) see, following this struggle, an eternal, paradisiacal state to break in. Rhodes attempts to prove that the National Socialist self-understanding fulfils these criteria. The roots of National Socialist millenarianism lie in the refusal to acknowledge human finitude.

**Rohner, Ludwig**

German historian of literature. Born 19 April 1927 in Goldach, obtained doctorate in 1955. From 1974 to 1992, professor at the Pädagogische Hochschule in Schwäbisch Gmünd. In 1967 and 1970, guest professor of German Literature at Middlebury College in Middlebury, Vermont.

**Work**

In his study, *Kalendergeschichten und Kalender* (Wiesbaden, 1978), Rohner provides a survey of German-language calendars that is almost complete. Extending back to the Mainz printing in the fifteenth century, the investigation indicates the forms of calendar sayings that are developed in them. Beyond this, it contains valuable details on the topics of political religions and the politics surrounding the calendar of the Third Reich. Directed against the traditional Christian calendar in particular, it sought a comprehensive substitution with new holidays and memorial days.

'In the neo-pagan "German Farmers' Calendar" of the Work Front for 1934, German mythology and "stew Sundays" replaced the prior saints' days and Christian holidays – the churches, even the Vatican, protested unanimously' (476). Although the National Socialist calendar failed to find resonance in the population, the prohibition or blocking of the distribution of paper for the ecclesiastical calendar weakened resistance in the long run. Following 1945, the new beginning proved difficult.

**Rohrwasser, Michael**

Scholar of German literature. Born 29 September 1949 in Freiburg. Read German studies and political science in Freiburg; obtained doctoral dissertation

with a work on Johannes R. Becher. Professor of contemporary German literature at the Free University of Berlin, with publications on the literature of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries (Romanticism, exile literature, literature in the GDR). Path-breaking research on the 'fascination history' of communism.

### **Work**

Rohrwasser understands his study, *Der Stalinismus und die Renegaten* (Stuttgart, 1991) both as a literary history of renegade literature and as a clarification of the historical and psychological situations of the renegades (among others, of Robert Bek-Gran, Georg K. Glaser, Alfred Kantorowicz, Richard Krebs, Walter Krivitsky, Gustav Regler, André Gide, Arthur Koestler, Ignazio Silone, Manès Sperber). Renegades are those who have changed their previous political or religious convictions; in the case of the ex-communists he investigated, they were those who had left the Party. Whether assuming the form of autobiography, historical novel, negative utopia or an historical sketch, the literature arising from this 'process of transition', describes conversion as an existential purification, a movement from darkness into the light, a salvation from a life-endangering situation, a convalescence from a serious disease. In the foreground stands the dissolution from a tie, the sobering of an intoxicated hope, the awakening from a euphoric state.

Describing the psychological site of religious or quasi-religious processes, Rohrwasser's investigation also enables a better understanding of the mutual influence between the 'totalitarian system' and the individual.

### **Sakharov, Andrei**

Russian physicist and politician, winner of the Nobel Peace Prize. Born 21 May 1921 in Moscow, died 14 December 1989 in Moscow.

Sakharov was the leading participant in the development of the Soviet hydrogen bomb. His superlative scientific and technological achievements gave him direct access to political leadership. Despite this, he was one of the 'dissidents of the first hour' – his criticism of the internal lack of freedom within the Soviet Union brought him into ever-increasing conflict with the regime. In 1980 he was exiled to Gorki and was allowed to return to Moscow only by Gorbachev in late 1986. He participated actively as a member of parliament and advisor during the initial reconstruction of the Soviet society.

### **Work**

Sakharov's memoirs were completed shortly before his death (and after the KGB had repeatedly confiscated or purloined them). Together with Solzhenitsyn's

statements on contemporary history, these memoirs have provided the most important source on the rise, development, persecution and rehabilitation of the inner-Soviet opposition from 1959 to 1987. They contain a great deal of information not only on Sakharov himself, but also on such other leading dissidents as Chalidse, Grigorenko, Bukovsky, Lubarsky and others.

### **Scholz, Heinrich**

German philosopher and Protestant theologian. Born 17 December 1884 in Berlin, died 30 December 1956 in Münster. A student of Adolf Harnack; in 1917, became professor of systematic theology and the philosophy of religion in Breslau; became professor of philosophy in Kiel in 1919; transferred in 1928 to Münster. In 1936, served on a teaching commission for logic and in 1943, became a professor of mathematical logic in Münster.

#### ***Work***

Following the work of Rudolf Otto, Scholz's early work is devoted to questions of the philosophy of religion. Under the influence of Whitehead and Russell, Scholz later attempts to provide philosophy an exact foundation in mathematical logic; having missed such foundations in theology, he found only first attempts to gain them in the work of Karl Barth. After publishing works on Schleiermacher, Hegel, questions in the psychology of religion, philosophy of religion and history of philosophy, he attains his own concept of religion in his *Religionsphilosophie* (Kiel, 1921). Here, religion is understood as a creation of the human imagination (by contrast to a creation of reason) on the one hand. On the other hand, it is based on an 'unusual' experience, one that supplements the 'earthly' consciousness of reality with 'elevating impressions of a trans-subjective character and a-cosmic quality' (167). Religion is thereby the product of human, empirical consciousness. In structural terms, Scholz's conception of religion as a product of human consciousness resembles Guardini's conception of religion as a phenomenon that is distinct from faith. As with Guardini's conception, that of Scholz is suited to describing processes in human consciousness without assigning a value judgement to them. These processes can be ascertained as phenomena occurring in totalitarian regimes.

### **Schmitt, Carl**

German political theorist. Born 11 July 1888 in Plettenberg, died there on 7 April 1985. In 1907 he began to study law in Berlin, Munich and Strasbourg, where he received his doctorate under F. von Calker. After having successfully completed his final examinations in 1914, Schmitt also habilitated in Strasbourg with the study, *Der Wert des Staates und die*

*Bedeutung des Einzelnen.* In 1919 he lectured at the *Handelshochschule* in Munich and maintained a close contact with Max Weber, whose seminars he attended. In 1921, full professor at Greifswald; in 1922, at Bonn. Following the failure of repeated attempts to gain an ecclesiastical annulment of his first marriage (which had been dissolved by civil law in 1924), Schmitt was excommunicated for having remarried in 1926. In 1928 he assumed the chair for political theory at the *Handelshochschule* in Berlin (succeeding Hugo Preuss). Until 1932, he came to influence legislation and the circle surrounding von Papen and General von Schleicher through his close friendships with the secretary of finance, Johannes Popitz and other representatives of the high ministerial bureaucracy. In October 1932, Schmitt represents the Reich before the state court in Leipzig in 'Prussia v. the Reich'. In 1933, he cooperates on the drafting of the *Reichstatthaltergesetzes* seeking to make the German provinces uniform. In the summer semester of 1933, he was chair at the University of Cologne. On 1 October 1933 he took up a chair in public law at the University of Berlin. On 1 May 1933 he joined the NSDAP. Schmitt lost his many honorary posts as a result of sharp attacks on him in the SS journal, *Schwarzes Korps*; these were issued by populist-minded colleagues – primarily Otto Koellreuters. With restricted authority, Schmitt remains occupant of the Berlin chair. Animated contact with Ernst Jünger, Hans Freyer and Werner Weber, among others. Interned (with interruptions) at a camp from September 1945 to 1947. Following confiscation of his library, Schmitt lost his Berlin chair in December 1945. Although interrogated in 1947 at Nuremberg as a possible party to war crimes, no charges were laid.

### **Work**

In *Politische Theologie* (Munich/Leipzig, 1922), Schmitt first develops a connection between theology and politics via the concept of sovereignty. 'Sovereign is whoever decides as to the state of emergency.' He then justifies the absolute sovereignty of the state in emergency situations in terms of political theology. This absolute sovereignty empowers the state to legislate decisionistic law – a power Schmitt had rejected in earlier works. Together with his political theology, Schmitt develops a theory of the theologisation of politics ('all concise concepts of modern political theory are secularised theological concepts'). At the same time, however, he works out a critique of secular, this-worldly religions.

In 'Der Begriff des Politischen' (*Archiv für Sozialwissenschaft und Sozialpolitik* 58 (1927), 1–33), however, Schmitt's thought takes a new turn, releasing the political – an activity said to precede the state – from the state. Having lost its monopoly in constituting the political, the latter now represents only a possibility of the political. What now becomes constitutive of the political for Schmitt is the distinction between friend and enemy. Because it is accessible from every sphere, whether of economy, religion, art

or science, the political field can no longer be escaped; it lays claim to the individual at the level of his existence. In *Das Zeitalter der Neutralisierungen und Entpolitisierungen* (1929) Schmitt turns against depoliticisation, blaming liberalism for its appearance. This total enlistment of the individual is interpreted by the National Socialists as a legitimisation of the 'Führerstaat' by legal philosophy.

As a political theorist and legal philosopher, Schmitt is a controversial figure – primarily with regard to his attitude to National Socialism. Despite this, the anthropological and theological bases of his theory of the political world of the 1920s hold some points of departure for a concept of 'political religion'.

### **Slavík, Jan**

Czech historian and journalist. Born 25 March 1885 in Slapanice near Kladno; died 1978 in Prague. Studied history at the Charles University in Prague. From 1925 to 1939, director of the Russian Foreign Archive at the Ministry of External Affairs of the Czechoslovakian Republic. Because documents on the Russian emigration were collected here, this archive became a significant centre for research on contemporary Russian history and the Russian Revolution. In 1939, Slavík retired.

### **Work**

In *Základy carismu (Fundamentals of Tsarism)* (Kladno, 1937) and *Smyl ruské revoluce (Meaning of the Russian Revolution)* (Prague, 1927), Slavík investigates the preconditions of the Russian Revolution. He finds them in the influx of European philosophy – the work of Hegel, Feuerbach, Marx – into Russian intellectual life. This influx undermined the authority of the Russian orthodoxy and drove the Russian intelligentsia into absolute negation: this is how nihilism is said to have been born. The resulting feelings of weakness and powerlessness then provoked the rise of Slav messianism, which Slavík sees to be inadequately explained by the customary references to Byzantine and Tatar influences. Whereas these influences had already subsided in the Middle Ages, tsarism first developed in modernity. For its part, tsarism – thus Slavík in the second of the aforementioned writings – collapsed with nihilism: the sudden fall of the tsarist idol with which the Russian had associated his citizenly virtues opened the door for anarchy. The consequences were the Russian Revolution, which possessed an anti-feudal and agrarian character. This revolution marked a continuation of the ambivalence of overcoming one's own weakness with messianism on the one hand and the nihilistic violence of Bolshevism and the actions of the Bolshevik regime on the one hand. The international echo was divided along similar lines – thus Slavík in *Leninova vláda (Lenin's Regime)* (Prague 1935).

## **Spengler, Oswald**

German philosopher of history and culture. Born in Blankenburg, 29 May 1880, died in Munich on 8 May 1936. In 1899, begins his study of mathematics and natural sciences in Halle. Received his doctorate in Berlin in 1904, with a work on Heraclites. In 1908, began teaching at a high school in Hamburg; from 1911, private scholar in Munich.

### **Work**

*Jahre der Entscheidung. Erster Teil: Deutschland und die weltgeschichtliche Entwicklung* (Munich, 1933) was published shortly after the National Socialists came to power. Here, Spengler analyses the endangering of the Western world by the 'white' (Bolshevist) and 'coloured' (resistance of the colonised peoples) world revolutions. These revolutions can be met only with recourse to imperialism, technocracy and socialism, with the last understood in the sense of the earlier essay, *Preussentum und Sozialismus* (1919). Spengler distanced himself from National Socialism in the *Jahre der Entscheidung*; despite praise for the 'national revolution', Hitler is not mentioned by name in this work. This led to a campaign against Spengler, who withdrew from public life as a result. A relation to the problem of political religions is evinced primarily by the section entitled 'Church and Class Struggle, Communism and Religion'.

Marxism too is a religion, not in the intention of its originator, but in what the revolutionary following has made of it. It has its saints, apostles and martyrs, its church fathers, bible and mission; it has dogmas, courts for heretics, an orthodoxy and scholasticism. Above all, it possesses a popular morality or, more precisely, two: one pertaining to believers and one pertaining to unbelievers. Yet this is something that only a church of some kind would have.

(93)

## **Strauss, Leo**

German-American philosopher of Jewish origins. Born 20 September 1899 in Kirchheim in Hessen, died 18 October 1973 in Annapolis, Maryland. From 1917 to 1923 he studied philosophy in Marburg, Frankfurt and Hamburg. Attained his doctorate under Ernst Cassirer in 1921, with a study of the problem of knowledge in the work of Friedrich Jacobi. From 1921 to 1925, studied with Husserl and Heidegger in Freiburg; from 1925 to 1932, was an assistant at the Academy of Science of Judaism in Berlin. Publications in Jewish journals, co-editor of the works of Moses Mendelssohn; from 1932 to 1934 he received a stipend from the Rockefeller Foundation;



studied in France and England. Emigrated to England in 1934, where he conducted research on Thomas Hobbes at Oxford. Emigrated to the United States in 1938; taught political science at the New School of Social Research in New York from 1938 to 1949. From 1939 to 1940, guest lecturer at Union College, Amherst College and at the Wesleyan University, among others. In 1941, Strauss first became an associate professor, then a full professor, at the New School for Social Research from 1941 to 1948. In 1944 he became an American citizen. Co-editor of *Social Research* and the *Universal Jewish Encyclopaedia*. From 1949 to 1968 he was a professor of political philosophy at the University of Chicago. In 1953 he was a guest professor at the University of California, Berkeley; from 1954 to 1955 he was a guest professor at the Hebrew University in Israel. In 1959 he received the Robert Maynard Hutchins Distinguished Service award of the University of Chicago. From 1967 to 1969, taught at the Claremont College Graduate School in California. Became emeritus professor in 1968; was the Buchanan Distinguished Scholar at St John's College in Annapolis from 1969 to 1973.

### **Work**

Strauss analyses the modern phenomenon of totalitarianism in his commentary on Xenophon's *Hieron* entitled *On Tyranny* and in the concluding correspondence with Alexandre Kojève on this topic. In his analysis, Strauss applies the ancient concept of the tyranny, thereby restoring its usefulness for the description of totalitarian phenomena. According to Strauss, there is no essential difference between ancient and modern tyranny, only one of (technological) degree. According to Strauss, the essence of tyranny reveals itself in the manner in which the tyrant treats the philosopher – who has exerts a subversive influence through his thought alone. Thus does the philosopher become the measure of the failure or success of the totalitarian experiment, for Strauss: so long as the philosopher is and thinks, the tyrant fails in his claim to determine the truth. The question as to truth remains in the world. For Strauss, tyranny consists in the attempt to supply a firmly established answer to the question 'Quid sit deus?' – the question concerning truth – with the means of political power. Yet this question must be left open, because the essence of the human being – one that is personified socially by the philosopher – requires that this question be left open.

### **Sturzo, Luigi**

Italian social philosopher and politician. Born 26 November 1871 in Caltagirone, Sicily; died 8 August 1959 in Rome. Studied theology, economy and sociology in Caltagirone and Rome; consecration to priesthood in 1894; strong engagement in Catholic Action and the social movement surrounding G. Toniolo and R. Murri. In 1919, founding of the Partito Popolare

Italiano. Following Mussolini's assumption of power, Sturzo emigrated to Britain in 1924, and later to the United States. In 1946 he returned to Italy.

### **Work**

*Italy and Fascism* was written in exile in London as an Italian text (and can now be found in *Opera Omnia di Luigi Sturzo* (Bologna, 1954ff), vol. 1, 1). With this work, Sturzo was one of the first to use the concept 'totalitarian' to describe Italian fascism. Here, 'totalitarian' also becomes a concept by which to compare Bolshevism and fascism. Sturzo works the concept into a complete theory in his 1938 book, *Politica e Morale* (*Opera Omnia I*, 4, 30–34). In his discussion of the totalitarian claim laid upon the human being in the context of education, Sturzo describes the totalitarian systems as religions: 'Bolshevism, Fascism and National Socialism are and must be religions' (33). Sturzo thereby became the first to conceive of a totalitarianism theory in conjunction with a concept of political religion.

### **Tillich, Paul**

German-American Protestant theologian and philosopher. Born 20 August 1886 in Starzeddel in Guben; died 22 October 1965 in Chicago. Following a period of pastoral activity from 1915 to 1919, he entered the Berlin-based 'Alliance of Religious Socialists' in 1920. In 1924, Tillich became a professor of theology in Marburg. From 1925 to 1929, he was a professor of religious studies and social philosophy in Dresden and Leipzig. Transferred to Frankfurt in 1929. In 1933, Tillich was suspended by the National Socialists. He then emigrated to the United States, where he assumed American citizenship in 1940. From 1937 to 1955 he was professor of philosophical theology at Union Theological Seminary in New York. Further professorships at Harvard from 1955 to 1962 and at Chicago from 1962. In 1962, Tillich received the Peace Prize of the German Book Trade.

### **Work**

In an article entitled 'The Totalitarian State and the Claims of the Church' (*Social Research* no. 4 (1934), 405–33), Tillich characterised National Socialism as 'mythological'. Reintegration as a nation is to be achieved through a national mythology composed of the myths of blood, race, state, leadership and the people. With the help of this mythology, the uncertainty of historical existence is to be overcome. The totalitarian state is said to grow from the ground of Central Europe, where a militant nationalism and an old feudal feeling of authority has eliminated liberal rights and democratic tendencies. The totalitarian state is not an earthly representative of a God, but itself a god or demon. This brings it into a relationship of insoluble

conflict with the Church, which asserts and guards the relation to transcendence as an unconditional claim and thereby refuses to be restricted to 'mythical' immanence. The Church cannot agree to a ranking of the unity of the blood above sacramental unity, to the attempt to replace the Christian virtues (faith, love and hope) with vitalist pagan values and to replace the Christ image of the New Testament with the myth of the hero. The Church must reject the 'polytheism' of national mythologies. To this extent, 'the idea of the total state will fail with the Church and the Gospel; the new myth will be destroyed by them' (145). For Tillich, fixation with myth becomes the central characteristic of the religious dimension of totalitarian regimes.

### **Voegelin, Eric**

German-American political scientist. Born 3 January 1901 in Cologne, died 19 January 1985 in Stanford, California. In 1922 he wrote his dissertation under Hans Kelsen in Vienna (with research trips to France and England). In 1929, habilitation; from 1929 to 1936 he was a private lecturer in Vienna; from 1936 to 1938, professor in Vienna. Following the annexation of Austria, Voegelin fled to Switzerland and from there emigrated to the United States. Scientific activity at various American universities – among others, at Harvard. Beginning in 1946, professor at Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge. In 1958, Voegelin accepted a call to assume a professorship in Munich. After returning to the United States in 1969, he accepted a research position at Stanford University in California.

### **Work**

Voegelin is one of the fathers of the concept of 'political religion'. His analysis of the religious dimension of totalitarianism begins with *Die politischen Religionen* (Vienna, 1938), in which he opposes National Socialism and communism, as inner-worldly religions, to the supra-worldly religions. This thesis is revised and differentiated in the works that follow (*The New Science of Politics*, Chicago, 1952; and *Religionsersatz. Die gnostischen Massenbewegungen unserer Zeit*, Tutzing, 1985) – works in which totalitarian phenomena become 'gnostic' ones. According to this thesis, the basic situation of the modern human being requires that he attempt to compensate for the loss of a personal tie to a transcendent entity with strivings for self-salvation. As the price of this, the human being not only suffers a loss of transcendence, but a loss of the immanent world as well. In their efforts to establish a saved world, both National Socialism and communism are said to reinterpret the world magically, to reconfigure it as a conspiracy. They thereby become caught up in a dream world that leads to their self-destruction.

## Vondung, Klaus

German professor of literature. Born in 1941 in Ulm on the Danube; studied German literature, history, political science and philosophy at Tübingen and Munich. Research activity at Stanford University in California; is presently professor of German and contemporary literature at the University of Siegen. Guest professorships in Houston and Osaka.

### Work

In *Magie und Manipulation. Ideologischer Kult und politische Religion des Nationalsozialismus* (Göttingen, 1971), Vondung investigates the relationship of National Socialism to reality. For him, that relationship involves both instruments by which to manipulate reality for others and the magical overcoming of reality for National Socialism itself. Through the observation of rituals, festivals, songs and cults, Vondung takes a religious-phenomenological approach to the relationship of reality and the magical world. The relationship ends, according to Vondung, with the self-destruction of the magical world, because reality no longer allows itself to be manipulated.

### Weil, Simone

French philosopher of Jewish origins. Born 3 February 1909 in Paris, died 24 August 1943 in Ashford, England. Studied philosophy from 1925 to 1928 under the direction of Emile Chartiers, and thereafter at the Ecole Normale Supérieure. In 1931, Weil passed the final state exams and received a promotion to become an *agrégée*. She then became a teacher at a high school for girls in Le Puy. Following participation in a strike in 1932, she was imprisoned. Teacher in Auxerre. In December, 1933, encounter with Trotsky in Paris. In 1934, she took in political refugees from Germany; following this, factory work. Sickness in 1935, residence in Paris and in Montana, Switzerland. More factory work, residence in Portugal. Taught at the lycée in Bourges. In 1936, involvement in the Spanish Civil War on the Republican side. Return to Paris in 1937, hospital stay in Montana, Switzerland and teacher at a high school in Saint-Quentin. In 1940, assisted in the defence of Paris; two-month residence in Vichy. In Marseilles, illegal activity in the Resistance. In 1941, participation in an assembly of the Christian Worker Youths; interrogation by the police. Acquaintance with the Dominican priest, Jean-Marie Perrin. Trip to the United States in 1942; on the way, was forced to stay at a camp near Casablanca. Following a brief sojourn in the United States, trip to Great Britain; work for the Force de la France Libre in 1943. Hospital stay in London followed by a period in a sanatorium and death in Ashford.

**Work**

Simone Weil's most important political work is *L'enracinement*, a memorandum written for the Force de la France Libre in London in 1942/43 and published after her death in 1949. Here, she reminds of the 'needs of the soul' from which the 'great human being' builds a state, mercilessly criticises French politics during the Third Republic, and demands (in the sense of Péguy) a 're-rooting' of virtues that had been lost. Neither Marxism, which 'has baptised violence in the name of history', nor naturalistic fascism is suited for the work of renewal. 'The means of salvation would be to allow the spirit of truth come down to us again – in religion and science above all. Yet this assumes a reconciliation of the two'.

**Werfel, Franz**

Austrian writer of Jewish origins. Born 10 September 1890 in Prague, died 26 August 1945 in Beverly Hills, California. The volume of poetry, *Der Weltfreund* (1911) made him the spokesperson of expressionist lyricism. Following the First World War, he lived in Vienna. Marriage to Alma Mahler, gradual turn to the Judaeo-Christian faith. Wrote dramas and narrative works, which in part had contemporary political themes; the novel, *Die vierzig Tage des Musa Dagh* (1933), for example, portrays the extermination of the Armenians by the young Turkish regime during the First World War. Analysis of communism and National Socialism in lectures and essays written in the 1930s (collected in the volume *Zwischen oben und unten*, 1946). Here, the exemplars of modern totalitarianism are described as a 'primitive forms of ego-transcendence', as 'anti-religious, but nonetheless ersatz religious types of faith'.

As genuine children of the nihilistic epoch, they have not fallen far from the tree. Like their father, they know no transcendent ties; like him, they hang above emptiness. They no longer content themselves with this emptiness, however, but set up excesses in order to transcend it.

Emigration to France in 1938; flight over the Pyrenees to Spain, Portugal during the advance of German troops in 1940. Later emigrated to the United States. As thanks for the rescue the novel *Das Lied der Bernadette* appeared during his American exile in 1940 and 1941.

**Work**

Werfel's essays 'Realsmus und Innerlichkeit', 'Können wir ohne Gottesglauben leben?', 'Von dern reinen Glückseligkeit des Menschen', and 'Theologoumena' are collected in the volume *Zwischen oben und unten* (Stockholm, 1946). These essays mark a first literary preoccupation with

totalitarianism under the aspect of religion. Werfel describes both National Socialism and communism as two forms of 'naturalistic nihilism'. 'Communism and National Socialism are ersatz religions, or, if you prefer, an "ersatz for religion"' (85). The true decision does not lie for Werfel between the right and left of National Socialism or communism, but between the above of faith in God and the below of 'naturalistic nihilism' and the 'empty superficiality of the materialistic-realistic interpretation of the world' (11f.).

### **Widengren, Geo**

Swedish orientalist and scholar of religions. Born 24 April 1907 in Stockholm, died 28 January 1996 in Stockholm. Following his study of theology, the history of religion, Latin, Semitic and Iranian languages, he began teaching at Uppsala (where religious studies had first been introduced in Sweden; Nathan Söderblom and Tor Andrae had built it up into a centre of this discipline). In 1940, Widengren became professor of the history and psychology of religion. From 1950 to 1960, he was vice-president of the International Association for the History of Religion (IAHR) and from 1960 to 1970, the association's president. From 1957, he was member of the World Council for Jewish Studies.

### ***Work***

Widengren's research interest lies not only with the ancient Oriental and Iranian religions, but also with studies of Judaism, Islam and the general phenomenology of religion. Meticulous philological decipherment, together with a focus on decoding religion on its own terms (rather than from previously existing phenomena) is an integral aspect of his method.

His major work, *Religionens Värld* (1945), analyses the 'sacred', among other things. This he understands neither as a primordial religious 'horror' (contra Rudolf Otto) nor as an impersonal 'power' (contra Söderblom), but as a quality of a divine sphere conceived as a personal sphere as well. The power of the sacred arises from a personal divinity. Thus does the 'holy' become a definition of the supreme God in the religions.

### **Wippermann, Wolfgang**

German historian and political scientist. Born 1945 in Bremerhaven. Read history, German studies and political science at Göttingen and Marburg; obtained his Ph.D. with a work entitled *Der Ordensstaat als Ideologie* in 1975. Habilitated in 1978 with a work on Bonapartism in the thought of Marx and Engels. Since 1992, Wippermann has been a private lecturer in contemporary history at the Free University in Berlin.

**Work**

With *Faschismustheorien. Stand der gegenwärtigen Diskussion* (Darmstadt, 1972) and *Totalitarismus-Theorien. Die Entwicklung der Diskussion von den Anfängen bis heute* (Darmstadt, 1997), Wippermann presents two compendia of various approaches in the interpretation of National Socialism and Soviet communism. In the former work, the historical outline and systematic portrayal are supplemented by a survey of various critical inquiries into the theory of fascism. Here, Wippermann also mentions the concept of totalitarianism, which he characterises as being essentially a ‘political fighting concept’. This estimation is reinforced in *Totalitarismus-Theorien*. For Wippermann, as for Habermas and Barth, the theory of totalitarianism marks more a ‘political ideology’ aimed at trivialising National Socialism than a scientific theory seeking to interpret it.

**Zangerle, Ignaz**

Austrian pedagogue, historian and Germanist. Born 20 January 1905 in Wängel, Tyrol, died 5 July 1987 in Innsbruck. Zangerle was engaged in numerous alliances and councils on adult education in Austria and internationally. In his main work, *Unterwegs zu einer christlichen Erwachsenenbildung* (Salzburg, 1987), he advocates a personal adult education that is not merely extensive, but also intensive – one that both animates and matures the individual and renders him capable of a critical analysis of both past and contemporary ideological currents.

**Work**

Zangerle’s essay, ‘Zur Situation der Kirche’ (*Der Brenner* 14 (1933), 42–81) is a key text in the analysis of the phenomenon of totalitarianism. His topics are both the situation of the Catholic Church in the German Reich and Austria in the narrower sense, and the relationship of Church and politics in the broader one.

Zangerle ascertains that, at the end of the nineteenth century and outset of the twentieth, the Catholic Church has increasingly withdrawn from material goods and worldly power. Yet, as the mystical body of Christ, it still exists in the tension between the already-now and the not-yet. Through its own de-statifying, the Church runs the danger of being enlisted by the state. This is why the Christian, as an individual, is repeatedly called to account for his actions in a situation to which he must bear witness. Lay apostleship is not simply help in the care of souls or a centralisation of existing church organisations. Only this, according to Zangerle, can be understood as lay apostleship: the declaration of the layperson for his responsibility to bear witness in the world.

Analogies between the Church and the state are possible only at the price of a false transposition of religious concepts into the political sphere; there is no shared path, therefore, 'to the ruling of people who have become restless' (32).

Ultimately, the unparalleled success of National Socialism can be explained only through its having been driven by secularised religious energies – as was previously the case with socialism and Bolshevism. 'Only the individual who stands fast in his conscience' can withstand 'the untrammelled influence of this intramundane faith in [the National Socialist] mission' (33).

Besides possessing the character of an appeal, this text also includes a differentiated analysis of the relationship between state, society and church. Recurring repeatedly to the positions of Theodor Haecker, Ernst Michel, Johann Adam Möhler and Erik Peterson, it argues that the total state – with its religious energies – wrestles for the Christian's internal reference to religious faith. This is why an insurmountable situation of competition always exists between the total state and the Christian individual.

### **Zemanek, Heinz**

Austrian computer scientist and cybertechnician. Born 1 January 1920 in Vienna; obtained his doctoral degree in 1951. In 1959, began lecturing at the University of Vienna; became assistant professor at the University of Vienna in 1964. In 1984, was made full professor there. Has been in retirement since 1985.

### **Work**

Zemanek's book, *Kalender und Chronologie. Bekanntes und Unbekanntes aus der Kalender-wissenschaft* (Munich, 1978), provides basic information on the science of calendars (on calculation of day and year, on the Julian and Gregorian years, etc.). Besides this, it includes a brief portrayal of the calendar of the French Revolution and the Soviet experiments with calendars extending from October 1929 to June 1940 (five-day weeks with flexible holidays, colour counting, etc.). Zemanek's portrayal of the calendar is connected to the topic of political religions to the extent that it exposes the attempt of the totalitarian regimes to seize hold of history by means of marking time. Because this attempt was aimed against the Christian marking of time (which had previously been undisputed), it has a religious thrust.



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