NATIONAL UNIVESITY OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

THOMAS MOLNAR INSTITUTE FOR ADVANCED STUDIES

Working Papers No 1.

Gábor Megadja

Emigrant Critics of Democracy

2015

ISBN: 978-615-5057-58-8

The Working Papers focus on interdisciplinary scholarship in all subject areas from members of the THOMAS MOLNAR INSTITUTE FOR ADVANCED STUDIES, doctoral students and visiting scholars. The papers are published electronically and are available online.
The ideas expressed in working papers are those of the authors and do not reflect those of the TMIAS.

1101 Budapest, X. Hungária krt. 9-11. | Tel: (1) 432-9000
Email: mota@uni-nke.hu

NATIONAL UNIVESITY OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

THOMAS MOLNAR INSTITUET FOR ADVANCED STUDIES

WORKING PAPERS

Gábor Megadja

Emigrant Critics of Democracy

Table of Contents

1101 Budapest, X. Hungária krt. 9-11. | Tel: (1) 432-9000
Email: mota@uni-nke.hu

1101 Budapest, X. Hungária krt. 9-11. | Tel: (1) 432-9000
Email: mota@uni-nke.hu

Introduction and Aim of the Study

The criticism of democracy is as old as the tradition of European political thought. Here, it is sufficient to refer to Plato's and Aristotle's[1] remarks regarding the issue of democracy. Whatever similarities our inquiry might suggest (and there are numerous), modern democracy is somewhat different from the ancient one. We must say, then, that we are faced with another aspect of the problem or a different idiom of democracy as such.

In this paper, I will aim at providing a picture of what emigrant thinkers in the twentieth century thought about contemporary democracies. I will deal specifically with the works of Aurel Kolnai, Eric Voegelin, Erik von Kuehnelt-Leddihn, Friedrich A. von Hayek, Hannah Arendt, Jacob Talmon, John Lukacs, Leo Strauss, Ludwig von Mises, and Michael Polanyi.

First, what lends special credibility to their reflections is that they themselves lived in an age in which it was a crucial question whether democracy would function or not. Today, in my opinion, it is no longer a crucial question. Democracy as a regular framework for political organization is generally accepted.[2] Nevertheless, the arguments of the emigrant authors might point to some inherent problems of Western politics and democratic systems in general. Second, these authors had come from Eastern and Central Europe but became quite influential in Western political thought after World War II. It seems that the problems they put forward were, and still are of relevance and are widely discussed even today in intellectual circles. Third, their topics and approaches (apart from their differences) show enormous resemblance.

---

1 See Plato, *The Republic*, Book VIII; and Aristotle, *Politics*, Book III.

2 This does not mean that recent criticisms are entirely absent. See for instance Sheldon S. Wolin, *Democracy Incorporated: Managed Democracy and the Specter of Inverted Totalitarianism*, Princeton University Press, 2008.

Before starting the analysis, we have to make a few introductory remarks in order to put the thoughts of the emigrant authors into a historical and social context.

The Austrian intellectual life prior to the 1930's was vibrant and, immensely sparkling and in some instances, of life-long friendships was forged amongst the participants.[3] The experience of the surrounding world can be said to be a common problem. It is enough to refer here to the phenomenology of Alfred Schütz, whose arguments are mostly understood as a defense of tradition for these scholars. It is certainly not a coincidence to find that their discussions were continuing for a long period of time, which provided a unique approach to the problems in question.

I am compelled to acknowledge, and at the same time to emphasize, that the authors whom I have chosen for this paper only show one side of a general problem of an entire generation of thinkers. They were eagerly participating in an ongoing political and philosophical debate with other emigrants, who had the same experiences, – and who themselves had to flee their respective homelands. This common ground notwithstanding, they had varied and widely differing reflections on this experience. Indeed, the basic arguments of some of them were diametrically opposed to those ones which I shall deal with in this paper. Of primary importance among those with opposing views, are the scholars of the Frankfurt School (Adorno, Horkheimer, etc.),[4] and, of course, pre-eminently Karl R. Popper. It is self-evident, that while both lines of thought criticized totalitarianism and modernity to some extent, what I have endeavored to discuss in this paper are *problems of those authors who clung to the European world as it existed prior to World War I.*

Neither the representatives of the Frankfurt School, nor Karl Popper had anything to prefer in the world prior to 1914. Popper's ideas on the "open society" were liberal-democratic, in obvious contradistinction to the authors with whom we are concerned with

---

[3] See Nicoletta Stradaioli, *Voegelin and the Austrian School: A Philosophical Dialogue*, http://www.artsci.lsu.edu/voegelin/EVS/2006%20Papers/Nicoletta%20Stradaioli.htm

[4] However, the analysis of the Frankfurt scholars of the Enlightenment is not that far from Voegelin's for instance. Their criticism of "Reason" was put forward on the ground that Reason as such is understood as instrumental and used for domination. See Theodor W. Adorno – Max Horkheimer, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, Continuum International Publishing Group, 1976

here. As Michael Polanyi stated, "a free society is not an Open Society, but one fully dedicated to a distinctive set of beliefs."[5] In short, Popper's idea was that of the "future" – Polanyi's that of the "past." (We will refer shortly to their respective works as well, when needed.) I will also exclude their contemporary Carl Schmitt for two reasons. The one being that he joined the National Socialist Party and became their jurist in the early 30's, although he became disfavored by the Nazi regime as early as 1936. It must be noted again here that the emigrant authors were mostly persecuted by the National Socialists, so it would be strange to take them into account together with Schmitt. Even more importantly, however, I should not discuss him because his decisionist theory is in direct opposition to our authors in concern – for whatever the differences, they all acknowledged some normative standard to politics which in Schmitt is entirely lacking.

I need to stress that the emigrant authors with whom I shall deal, defended an ideal which was understood by them as a *liberal* one.[6] This "ideal" is not to be understood as a political ideology but, rather, as an existing social and political pattern into which they were born: namely, the German and Austro-Hungarian Monarchies. Whatever their differences, the reality which they had seen as lost and which for them was of value, was a liberal society. (As I will emphasize later, I wish to avoid placing political labels on the scholars, however, I shall make the exception for those who labeled themselves as followers of a particular political ideology or idea.) With the rise of modern mass democracies, revolutions, modern tyrannies and totalitarianisms they saw *that* ideal lost. I will argue, then, that behind their contempt of mass societies, modern revolutions and a certain variety of democracies, were the presuppositions which were affiliated to that liberal ideal which they saw destroyed by these phenomena.

I believe that these postulates lie behind their dislike of nation-states, the doctrine of popular sovereignty and also the engagement with the problem of religion in most cases. The liberal monarchies were not nation-states but states, whose inhabitants were distinct

---

5 Michael Polanyi, *The Logic of Liberty*, Liberty Fund, 1998, p. xviii.

6 This is a dividing line between old and modern liberals: for the "progressives," Austria-Hungary was "reactionary" (as is documented in the ideas of Woodrow Wilson) – for the emigrants, it was thoroughly liberal.

culturally, ethnically as well as socially and religiously. These states displayed a remarkable diversity but also a social hierarchy which was strictly traditional. The emigrants, as I suggest, saw a vivid interrelationship between this traditional society and the liberal order which was – according to our authors – maintained by the former.

The feeling of being an "alien" or a "stranger" in the world is also palpably present in the works of the emigrants, just as their experience of persecution.[7] It appears that they felt displaced in post-war Europe and its democratic nation-states. It is, therefore, not surprising that, for instance, both Strauss and Arendt turned to Zionism in their younger years and it is also not by coincidence that all of our authors were concerned with religion at some period of their lives. Strauss was a strict Judaist in his earlier life and also continued his studies in Judaism in France, while Arendt came gradually closer to Judaism with the time passing. We can also note the extremely frequent, almost commonplace, conversion to the Catholic faith of our authors – i.e., Kolnai, Polanyi, Lukacs, - who were all of Jewish extraction. However, we do not deal in this paper with anti-Semitism as such. It suffices to say that most of the emigrant scholars – irrespective of whether they were Jewish or not – experienced most exigently National Socialist tyranny. Accordingly, their reflections are products of that environment.

Despite the obvious shortcomings of the traditional societies of the German and Austro-Hungarian Monarchies, I shall argue that the emigrants felt more "naturally at home" there than in what followed these political regimes. Their criticism of modernity, collectivism, and mass societies can be seen (only to some extent, of course) as a reflection on their own experiences. Their search for the origins of these phenomena has, in my opinion, its departure in the very events surrounding them.

My argument is that the emigrant thinkers were critical against democracy as a political system and a set of ideas. However, the extent within their group to which they were critical, was highly diverse. In their works, democracy is immensely connected to *modernity*. This of course also calls for a contextualization, for modernity, as a philosophical and

[7] See Leo Strauss, *The Persecution and the Art of Writing*, University of Chicago Press, 1988. and also Alred Schütz, *The Stranger*, in: *Collected Papers II*, Martinus Nijhoff, 1964.

historical period, is over but we mostly still live in democracies. Therefore, we have to emphasize that when they put forward their arguments against contemporary democracies, their critique was *always* directed, first and foremost, against modernity.

Modernity, here, is understood as an idea historical category and not as the advancing development of technical tools and the like. In other words, we can say that there are at least two different types of modernity: the one being the Anglo-Saxon one, which includes a certain sort of skepticism towards "unlimited progress," especially philosophically understood, while the other, Continental one is more radical. However, when writing about "modernity" our authors had been preoccupied with the latter, radical, one. What the emigrants experienced was not the crisis *of* modernity *per se*, but rather that modernity *is in and of itself* crisis. Therefore, the emigrant scholars adhered to an ideal or a world that existed *prior to modern democratic nation-states*.

The anti-modernist stance is directed – at least in part, – against the rationalist[8] and ideological presuppositions underlying modernity. We have therefore devoted a chapter to demonstrate the authors' opinion about *rationalism and ideology*. "Modernity" connotes a break with the classical political tradition, places the emphasis on "scientific" premises and provides a new substance to politics.[9]

The other aspects of modernity (not altogether unconnected to the aforementioned ones) are political *mass movements* and *mass societies*. The rudimentary experience of the emigrants – in an "empirical" sense – was that of these mass phenomena. Thus, it is of high importance to dedicate some pages to the in-depth analysis of this problem as well. The last aspect is that of *totalitarianism and its interconnection with democracy*. For us today it seems quite "strange" to say the least, that such a connection was imaginable, nevertheless, the emigrants *did* see a connection between them (although not "deterministic," to be sure).

---

[8] See also Zygmunt Bauman, *Modernity and the Holocaust*, Cornell University Press, 2001.; James C. Scott, *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed*, Yale University Press, 1999.

[9] For the critique of positivism as the substrate of modern science and politics, see Leo Strauss, *Natural Right and History*, Ch. 2; and Eric Voegelin, *The New Science of Politics*, Ch. 2.

What is peculiar – and it is even more true to those emigrants who once participated in the Austrian intellectual life – to the emigrant authors is their deep seated sensibility to the problem of *collectivism*. It must be noted that there surely must have been some common experience, or perhaps a profound apprehension, that directed their attention to the specter of collectivism. Their perspective, however, was vastly different.

In the concluding section of this paper, I will turn to some "phenomenological" observations regarding the authors' possible presuppositions as well as why they were able to find their new homes in the United States or Great Britain. It is possible that they have found less "modernity" in those countries and it made them feel more comfortable there and also more sensitive to the modernist tendencies in these countries. It is instructive to refer to Mises' and Hayek's observations and warnings in 1944 regarding the inherent dangers of the policies of American and English socialist parties.[10]

Additionally, it should be emphasized that it is not the issue of the following discussion to present and "decide" the debates about the authors concerned – they have a vast array of commentary literature which is definitely not suitable for the limited space of this thesis. Here, the interpretation of the authors' writings is my own and therefore, a matter of debate.[11]

In the discussion which shall follow, the investigation thus focuses on the following questions: What were the main problems which the emigrants saw arising with the modern age? What were the roots of these problems, according to our authors? How did these ideas affect the understanding of modern democracy? What was, consequently, the problem of the emigrants with modern liberal democracies? What are the similarities and the differences in the emigrants' approach, in what ways are they interconnected and divided

---

[10] Both Mises' *Omnipotent Government* and Hayek's *Road to Serfdom* were published first in 1944.

[11] One of the most controversial persons of contemporary political thought is Leo Strauss: his ideas on the "hidden message" and the understanding of ancient political texts are issues of ongoing political debates. Here, I cannot take part in this discussion but can only provide my own understanding of Strauss. For a critical reception, see for instance Shadia B. Drury, *Leo Strauss and the American Right*, Palgrave Macmillan, 1999.

Previous Research

The commentary literature of most of the scholars in focus is ample. A huge amount of books were written on the political thought of Hannah Arendt, Leo Strauss, Eric Voegelin, Friedrich von Hayek, and the so-called Austrian School. Even in a short enumeration, I cannot provide an exhaustive list of the academic reflections provided for the political thought of the emigrants.[12] However, a few important comparative studies must be mentioned in advance.

First, the studies about the political philosophies of Hannah Arendt and Leo Strauss contained in *Hannah Arendt and Leo Strauss: German Émigrés and American Political Thought after World War II* (Cambridge University Press, 1997, ed. Peter Graf Kielmansegg, Horst Mewes, Elisabeth Glaser-Schmidt) deal with the influence of the two thinkers on post-war political thought in America and Germany as well. Another important commentary literature on Hannah Arendt is *Hannah Arendt: Twenty Years Later (Studies in Contemporary German Social Thought)* (The MIT Press, 1997, ed. Larry May, Gerome Kohn), which attempts to re-examine the political thinking of Hannah Arendt. Ted V. McAllister's *Revolt Against Modernity: Leo Strauss, Eric Voegelin, and the Search for a Postliberal Order* (University Press of Kansas, 1997) explores the anti-modern, "conservative" philosophical teachings of Strauss and Voegelin and provides a comparative and thorough analysis of them. Last but not least, Richard Allen's *Beyond Liberalism: The Political Thought of F. A. Hayek & Michael Polanyi* (Transaction Publishers, 1998) needs to be mentioned. It deals not only with the two thinkers mentioned in the title, but also with Mises, Popper, and Kolnai. [13]

I feel obliged to pay tribute to the Hungarian receptions of some of the thinkers we will be discussing. Leo Strauss' political philosophy has been introduced to the Hungarian readers by András Lánczi, in a careful analysis, *Modernity and Crisis: The Political*

---

12 I have not yet found a monographic study about Erik von Kuehnelt-Leddihn so far.

13 For a summary, see: http://www.kfki.hu/chemonet/polanyi//9601/beyond.html

Philosophy of Leo Strauss.[14] So far the only book available in Hungarian language about Eric Voegelin is Gábor G. Fodor's monograph, *The Prohibition of Questioning: The Political Philosophy of Eric Voegelin*.[15] The recently published *Hannah Arendt's Political Existentialism* by Csaba Olay also has the merit of clarifying some concepts about Arendt's thought.[16] Two introductory studies were also important in understanding the emigrant thinkers' intellectual stance, the one being Zoltán Balázs's study on Kolnai,[17] the other Attila Károly Molnár's on Polanyi.[18]

The novelty of this study is supposed to be the effort to deal with all these emigrants at once and to discuss their attitude towards modern democracies and concomitant phenomena. Therefore, the starting point and the focus of this study are different from the aforementioned ones: it starts from democracy and puts it into the paradigm of the emigrant thinkers. The analysis tries to aim at a more comprehensive picture than the already existing studies: the joint discussion of the emigrants shows that they all had *common problems*, with which they had dealt with and, consequently, also had some common presuppositions which we can connect to their highly similar native homes, cultures and experiences. The study should also bear the novel character of having (in various degrees throughout the text) in focus modern democracy explicitly; the various studies mostly deal with the issues which are presented here as "partial topics," i.e. modernity, rationalism, collectivism.

14 Lánczi András, *Modernség és válság: Leo Strauss politikai filozófiája*, Pallas Stúdió – Attraktor, 1999.
15 G. Fodor Gábor, *Kérdéstilalom: Eric Voegelin politikai filozófiája*, ***L'Harmattan, 2004.***
16 Olay Csaba, *Hannah Arendt politikai egzisztencializmusa*, L'Harmattan, 2008.
17 Balázs Zoltán, *Kolnai Aurél*, Új Mandátum Könyvkiadó, 2003, pp. 7-58.
18 Molnár Attila Károly, *Polányi Mihály*, Új Mandátum Könyvkiadó, 2002, pp. 7-59.

Rationalism and Ideology

It is important to circumscribe the intellectual and spiritual climate in which immense social changes took place. Rationalist philosophies and political ideologies are two distinctly modern phenomena having their roots in mechanistic philosophies and in the Enlightenment.

In order to understand their appearance we have to take some changes in the general approach towards human reality into consideration. First, the influence needs to be mentioned which the natural sciences had on the social and political sciences. In this process, the classical distinction between *opinio* and *scientia* had disappeared. Second, the former religious world explanations had been replaced by ideologies. As I am going to demonstrate in the following discussion, these two components may converge, as, indeed, they have in the last two centuries. We shall describe both of them as a recurring attempt to achieve the conscious control of human progress and design of society. For the emigrant scholars, these phenomena were of vital importance since both ideology and rationalism seem to contain totalitarian potentialities. Not only did they arrive at a complete control of the state but they also undermined the very moral foundations on which free societies were based. Consequently, the works we have in focus have a certain degree of anti-rationalist and anti-ideological flavor. The main argument against rationalism and ideology, however, as we shall see, was that they both end up in moral relativism *and* planning which means the *elimination of freedom*.

Objectivism and the Primacy of "Facts"

The success of the natural sciences encouraged people in the field of social sciences and humanities to treat social phenomena as "objective facts", i.e. as given entities which are independent of our inner ability to perceive actions and relations in the outside world. The ever increasing importance of the natural sciences put its methods in a generally authoritative position which at the same time meant the identification of rationality with the philosophy of

Newton.[19] As Hayek put it, the "whole history of modern Science proves to be a process of progressive emancipation from our innate classification of the external stimuli till in the end they completely disappear."[20] In this concept, "objective" or "positive" fact is which does not need any affirmation of personal beliefs.[21] These ideas run through the whole era of modern scientism and found political expression in modern mass movements and ideologies. The concept can be found from Comte's positivism through Durkheim's notion of "social facts" down to the "class consciousness" of Marxism.

However, both Hayek and Polanyi claimed that such facts do not exist at all: Hayek directed his criticism against the application of the methods of the natural sciences to the social ones[22] whereas Polanyi denied the possibility of objectivism even in the natural sciences. Polanyi's argument goes as follows: all scientific communities have certain implicit presuppositions according to which the results of scientific enquiries are judged, that is, whether they are accepted as true or false.[23] The observer cannot step outside his own body as if he was viewing things from a "non-human," outside position. The very possibility of understanding processes depends on the inner capacity of man to direct his attention to any object and to choose which observed things are of relevance. Therefore, as Polanyi claims, any scientific investigation must necessarily rely on personal beliefs and also the tradition and authority of the scientific community (that is the reason why a scientific community does not accept any explanation based on sorcery). Polanyi proves his claim by an example. He mentions a discovery made concerning the relationship between gestation periods and the multiples of the number π. The table of figures showed a strong coherence between the multiples of π and the periods of pregnancy of different animals.[24] Yet, not a single scientist would ever admit that there *can* be any relation between these two variants. The description of a relationship like this would be called untrue and irrational; however, this judgment is based on personal convictions and not on some "objective" standard, independent of personal views. According to Polanyi, the absurdity of the positivist theory is manifested in this example

19 Eric Voegelin, *From Enlightenment to Revolution*, p. 24.
20 F. A. Hayek, *The Counter-Revolution of Science*, p. 33.
21 Michael Polanyi, *The Logic of Liberty*, p. 11.
22 See also Voegelin, *op. cit.*, p. 146.
23 The argument that our knowledge is socially made was also put forward by Imre Lakatos and Thomas Kuhn. See Imre Lakatos, *The Methodology of Scientific Research Programmes*, Cambridge University Press, 1980, and Thomas Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, University of Chicago Press, 1996.
24 Polanyi, *op. cit.*, pp. 20-21.

because *if* it was possible to free ourselves from personal beliefs, then the connection between the periods of pregnancy and the multiples of π would have to be regarded as a real and true relation. The fallacy of the scientistic objectivism, as Hayek argues, is that what appears to be alike for us does not have to be necessarily alike in any objective sense.[25]

In the social and political sphere, this attitude is most dangerous because it disregards any possibility of real personal achievements and does not consider any "qualitative" phenomenon valid or real. According to Hayek, this objectivism is also collectivist, for it treats entire societal concepts as given objects.[26] It is, of course, not the same as political collectivism although it serves largely as its intellectual basis.

The error resulting from this line of reasoning is exactly what the ardent positivist wants to avoid. He mistakes for facts what are merely models constructed by the popular mind and, consequently, he turns into the victim of the fallacy of "conceptual realism." [27] It is the same false consistency of the positivists, as Hayek argues, which leads them to postulate such metaphysical entities as "humanity" conceived as a "social being." Yet, it was the very aim of positivism and scientism to discard all metaphysical concepts with regards to reality.

In contradistinction to this apprehension, in reality "wholes" are always constructed by the mind. They are an amalgam of distinct individual events. It is the perfectionism of all forms of scientism which wants to do away with the fragile, dispersed and incomplete knowledge that fills the scientistic mind with anxiety. Even the idea that social institutions are the result of several different acts – that are not necessarily directed to achieve one certain end - makes the adherent of scientism uneasy. Yet, as both Hayek and Polanyi argues, institutions, scientific discoveries, general welfare, morals, language, etc. are largely due to a spontaneous order which arose from the distinct actions of multitudes of people, who were aiming to achieve varied and different ends.

The attempt to do away with this spontaneous accomplishment and to replace it with one planning and directing authority is the outcome of what Hayek calls the *Scientistic Hubris*, which, contrary to its initial purpose to remove the imperfect individual reason, now places all faith in *Reason*, i.e. in some sort of individual "supermind," that is armed with absolute

---

25 Hayek, *op. cit.*, p. 79.
26 Ibid., p. 93.
27 Ibid., p. 95.

knowledge.[28] This "supermind" is something like an observer from a distant planet – a favorite vision of progressives from Condorcet to Mach.[29] However, simply because it is true that institutions are man-made it does not necessarily follow that they are the result of conscious, directed design, as Hayek points out. The monetary system, language, morals, etc., enable people to achieve many varied goals even though they were *not* specifically designed for that very purpose. Nevertheless, the scientistic mind concludes that we have the power to refashion them in any way we want to.[30]

Reason and knowledge, for Hayek and Polanyi, exist only in inter-individual relations. What they call "collective wisdom" is not some sort of individual supermind but the result of the intersubjective knowledge embodied in social institutions.[31] Consequently, it is a failed attempt to "plan" institutions, economy and science for what we see in them are not consciously designed and cannot be foretold.[32] If we want to direct the growth of reason we only put limits on its growth.[33] Discrediting personal beliefs and "personal knowledge" (Polanyi) in the social sciences overlooks the only viewpoint from which social relations and human action can be understood:

> So far as human actions are concerned the things *are* what the acting people think they are.[34] (...) The facts of the social sciences are merely opinions, views held by the people whose actions we study.[35]

As rationalism emerged in European thought, all formerly accepted truths came to be regarded as mere "opinions" and a new principle needed to be found for understanding the world surrounding us. Because opinions could not be maintained in the face of the new discoveries of science, a certain "positive" knowledge has to be the new principle:

> The struggle between spiritual and temporal powers is the guiding principle for the understanding of Western Christian

28 Ibid., p. 90.
29 Ibid., pp. 103-104.
30 Ibid., pp. 147-148.
31 Cf. Voegelin, *op. cit.*, pp. 14-15.
32 Polanyi, *op. cit.*, p. 110.
33 Hayek, *op. cit.*, p. 160.
34 Ibid., p. 44
35 Ibid., p. 47.

> history. But these are powers of "opinion." When the "opinions" are purified, that is when people cease to believe in the claims of popes and emperors, we enter a new period of increasing truth and reason.[36]

The natural consequence of this process is that since they cannot stand the test of the new rational-scientific criteria, all institutions, authorities and traditions are to be regarded as matters of personal evaluations. This leads us right to *subjectivism*, the problem that scientific objectivism produces in the field of morals. Subjectivism is only seemingly in contradiction with objectivism, in fact, it is its logical conclusion, as Polanyi claims.

Moral Inversion

The progress of modern science, which both Voegelin and Hayek conceived as a constant dismissal of anthropomorphic concepts, is coupled with the constant emancipation from authority. In order to understand the effect of the ideas in the past two centuries, Polanyi offers an explanation which he calls *moral inversion*.

According to Polanyi, modern chaos and totalitarianism are the outcome of a self-contradictory concept of liberty which brought about its own destruction. The doctrine contains two formulas: an anti-authoritarian one and one of philosophic doubt. The protagonists of this doctrine in the Anglo-Saxon world were Locke and Milton. They based the anti-authoritarian formula on their own experiences of religious wars and they demanded tolerance so that truth could be discovered. The philosophic doubt principle was closely connected to the anti-authoritarian one and it required the freedom of thought because one can never be certain about the truth of his opinion.

However, the same principles hold true in the case of Continental thinking, according to Polanyi. Therefore, the question is why freedom collapsed in Continental Europe and why the Anglo-Saxon world was able to preserve freedom even though they adhered to the same principles? Polanyi's answer is that the Enlightenment was a more *radical* and definitely anti-religious expression of these thoughts, and they brought these principles to their final, logical

[36] Voegelin, *op. cit*, pp. 9-10.

conclusions.[37] Therefore, the Anglo-Saxon liberals basically remained religious and did not even entertain the possibility to extend the principle of doubt to the field of morals and religion. When he was arguing for tolerance, the atheists were a notable exception for Locke.[38]

The doctrine holds that we should not impose our beliefs on others if our views are not demonstrable. The problem arises for Polanyi exactly when we apply this to ethical principles – as the philosophy of the French Enlightenment did:

> It follows that unless ethical principles can be demonstrated with certainty, we should refrain from imposing them and should tolerate their total denial. But of course, ethical principles cannot be demonstrated: you cannot prove the obligation to tell the truth, to uphold justice and mercy. It would follow therefore that a system of mendacity, lawlessness and cruelty is to be accepted as an alternative to ethical principles on equal terms. But a society in which unscrupulous propaganda, violence and terror prevail offers no scope for tolerance. Here the inconsistency of a liberalism based on philosophic doubt becomes apparent: freedom of thought is destroyed by the extension of doubt to the field of traditional ideals.[39]

We can find the same line of argument in Hayek who maintains that simply because traditional morals are not the result of conscious design it does not follow that they are useless or false.

This process created a vacuum into which new "moralities" penetrated. It was necessary to find substitutes for universal standards. Polanyi sees the attempts made to attain this end in four basic steps.

The first substitute is to be found in Rousseau's *Confessions*, in which he makes the romantic individual the only valid judge of his own actions. There are thus no universal standards of judgment which transcend the individual. According to Polanyi, this idea was extended to the actions of nations as well. This supremacy of uniqueness served as the

---

[37] Nearly the same argument is put forward by Erik von Kuehnelt-Leddihn, who connects this difference to the basic religious outlook of the Continent and the Anglo-Saxon world; while Continental Europe is predominantly Catholic and thus strives for the absolute and is predisposed to draw the logical conclusions of the premises, the Anglo-Saxon world is Protestant and ready to make compromises. See Erik von Kuehnelt-Leddihn, *Liberty or Equality*, Ch. V.

[38] Polanyi, *op. cit.*, p. 117.; See also Voegelin, *op. cit.*, p. 36.

[39] Ibid., pp. 120-121.

breeding ground for Romanticist nationalism. The most important variant was, however, that of the combined nationalist and Romanticist-individualist approach which found its clearest expression in the concept of the national leader.[40]

However, Romanticism is not yet a systematic philosophical program. The appearance of the latter came with the Hegelian dialectic in which "Hegel took charge of Universal Reason, emaciated to a ghost by its treatment at the hands of Kant, and clad it with the warm flesh of history."[41] Thus, Reason's position was made immanent in history as well as its driving force.[42]

In the works of Marx and Engels the remainder of the task is completed; all ideals, such as truth, justice, etc. are transformed into projections of "class interests," having little right or reason to be standards of judgment. According to Polanyi, with this decisive step the way is paved for the most harmful synthesis: Romanticist nationalism and Marxist materialism merge and nationalism is transposed into materialistic terms. That is how the "class struggle" can be utilized to the case of nations, where nations are called "haves" and "have-nots" (Hitler, Mussolini). Thus the Marxist "class war" of nations is set. Since all ideals of truth, justice, piety, are mere representations of class interests, the only dictum which can be called valid will be that right is what benefits the nation.[43] Consequently, "romanticism had been brutalized and brutality romanticized."[44] In this moral inversion, finally, man liberated himself from all obligations imposed upon him by truth and justice. He himself became the master of his own ideals as opposed to earlier, when he had only been their "servant."

However, this picture is far from being complete. Polanyi argues that a couple of other elements play important roles in this subversive chain of events. The first is what he calls Nihilism, a fundamentally modern phenomenon and he finds the characteristic figures of Nihilism in Turgenev's Bazarov and Dostoevsky's Raskolnikov, as well as in the history of ideas in Nietzsche and Stirner. These Nihilists are non-political individualists without faith and morals. Nevertheless, they find their ways to a narrow political creed and they have already been liberated from any former obligations of public morality. For example, the

---

40 Ibid., pp. 123-124.

41 Ibid., p. 124.

42 Eric Voegelin, *Science, Politics and Gnosticism*, in: CW5, pp. 290-292.

43 Polanyi, *op. cit.*, pp. 125-126.; For he criticism of this Benthamite utilitarian principle in connection with National Socialism see also Erik v. Kuehnelt-Leddihn [under the pseudonym Francis Stuart Campbell],. *The Menace of the Herd: or Procrustes at Large*, p. 290.

44 Polanyi, *op. cit.*, p. 126.

German Youth Movement is, for Polanyi, one of the embodiments of this Nihilism. Still, one more component is needed to describe the moral inversion in its entirety and that is the messianic moral passion:

> The morally inverted person has not merely performed a philosophic substitution of moral aims by material purposes, but is acting with the whole force of his homeless moral passions within a purely materialistic framework of purposes.[45]

This purely materialistic framework, so Polanyi's argument goes, is the reason why modern totalitarianism is more brutal than any other authoritarian system of the past that was based on some rigid spiritual creed. This is so because every authoritarian system recognizes other standards and principles which transcend their own.[46] Without these transcending boundaries to power, freedom and law disappears. That is why Polanyi saw the only future of Western societies in upholding the transcendent ideals of truth, justice and mercy.

> The downfall of liberty which followed the success of these attacks everywhere demonstrates in hard facts what I had said before: that freedom of thought is rendered pointless and must disappear, where reason and morality are deprived of their status as a force in their own right. When the judge in court can no longer appeal to law and justice; when neither a witness, nor the newspapers, nor even a scientist reporting on his experiments, can speak the truth as he knows is; when in public life there is no moral principle commanding respect; when the revelations of religion and of art are denied any substance: then there are no grounds left on which any individual may justly make a stand against the rulers of the day. Such is the simple logic of totalitarianism.[47]

Neither in science, nor in morals can we question or doubt our basic presuppositions. They are responsible for maintaining the principles of truth and justice just as well as facilitating the making of new discoveries. The same argument is advanced by Hayek:

---

45 Ibid., p. 131.

46 Ibid, p. 133.; This statement of Polanyi resembles that of Hannah Arendt, see her *What is Authority*, in: *Between Past and Future*, Penguin Books, 2006, particularly pp. 96-97.; See below the subchapter "The Meaning of Totalitarianism"

47 Ibid.

> It is essential for the growth of reason that as individuals we should bow to forces and obey principles which we cannot hope fully to understand, yet on which the advance and even the preservation of civilization depend. Historically this has been achieved by the influence of the various religious creeds and by traditions and superstitions which made man submit to those forces by an appeal to his emotions rather than his reason. (...) The rationalist [...] despises all the institutions and customs which have not been consciously designed, would thus become the destroyer of the civilization built upon them.[48]

Political Gnosticism

Since the old explanations and understandings of the world, which were pre-eminently religious, gradually disappeared new ones had to be invented. We will follow the terminology of Eric Voegelin and Hannah Arendt and use the concept of *Political Gnosticism* in order to attempt to explain ideologies. By modern Gnosticism, Voegelin means a potpourri of movements such as "progressivism, positivism, Marxism, psychoanalysis, communism, fascism, and national socialism."[49]

In accordance with the new philosophies, previously accepted frameworks of reality became rejected. As a consequence of the penetration of rationalism, Divine Providence is no longer believed in and all religious symbols are relegated to the status of "myths."[50] Nevertheless, people always need symbols that represent the reality surrounding them and the philosophy of modernity chose *knowledge* (gnosis) as that symbol, according to Voegelin. The political ideologies provided "keys" for understanding the world, and, suitably to the Age of Reason, they presented certain "laws" through which the *eidos* of reality could be discovered. Whether it be the *eidos* of the Law of Nature (National Socialism) or the Law of History (Communism).[51]

The gnostics were essentially heretic Christian sectarians who promised salvation through hidden knowledge, through a knowledge which penetrates deeply into human

---

48 Hayek, *op. cit.*, pp. 162-163.
49 Voegelin, *op. cit.*, p. 295.
50 Voegelin, *From Enlightenment to Revolution*, p. 21.
51 Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, The World Publishing Company, 1962, p. 472.

existence and thus uncovers the "real" or "truer" meaning behind visible reality.[52] Voegelin argues that there is a historical continuity of Gnosticism.[53] The difference is that in antiquity Gnosticism was religious while modern Gnosticism is *political*.

For a general outlook of the Gnostic, we have to enumerate the six basic characteristic features which Voegelin finds descriptive for the phenomenon: 1) the Gnostic is dissatisfied with his situation (which is, of course, not that peculiar); 2) if something is not as it should be, the fault is to be attributed to the wickedness of the world; 3) the belief that salvation from the evil of the world is possible; 4) the order of being has to be changed in a historical process; 5) this change in the order of being is possible through human action, and salvational acts are possible through human effort; 6) the Gnostic will henceforth construct a formula for self-and world salvation through *knowledge*.[54]

Because a perceived relief is possible from this world, a world that is alien to him, the Gnostic attempts to destroy reality. In this sense, ideological thinking becomes "emancipated from reality"[55] but this attempt of destruction will "only increase the disorder in society."[56] Voegelin and Arendt argue that ideologies are constructing a *second reality* in which they feel at home. However, this second reality by necessity clashes with reality as such. And here, Voegelin describes a component that was missing in the antique form of Gnosticism – namely, *prohibition of questioning* (*Frageverbot*).[57] Whoever wants to question the premises of the Gnostics is denied of that possibility. As a tool for safeguarding the dogmas of the ideology, a "system" has to be created. This logic is, of course, circular. The system is "justified by the fact of its construction" and the "possibility of calling into question the construction of systems, as such, is not acknowledged"[58] – just as there is no possibility of the premise to be false. The dogmatic systems of ideologies are true only by merit of being constructed.

For Arendt, *ideology* literally means what its name indicates: "it is the logic of an idea."[59] It understands events as logical outcomes of a premise, of the content of the idea

---

52 Ibid., pp. 470-471.
53 Voegelin, *Science, Politics and Gnosticism*, in: CW5, p. 297.
54 Ibid., pp. 297-298.
55 Arendt, *op. cit.*, p. 470.
56 Voegelin, *op. cit.*, 256.
57 Ibid., p. 261.
58 Ibid., p. 274.
59 Arendt, *op. cit.*, p. 469.

itself. The course of events is thus understood as an unfolding of the mechanism of certain "laws." These laws always imply a constant movement and this movement is always explained by the "idea."[60] This provides the "inherent logicality"[61] of ideologies which are, of course, only true in the second reality.

Voegelin traces back the roots of modern (political) Gnosticism to the thirteenth century when Joachim of Flora broke with the Augustinian conception of Christian society and applied the symbol of the Holy Trinity to the movement of history. The first period of history, according to the Joachitic speculation, is the age of the Father, the second the age of the Son, and the third – upcoming – age will be the Third Realm, the age of the Spirit.[62] In Gnostic construction, the Augustinian notion of history also takes a turn: while Augustine saw *progressio* in sacred history and saw the rise and fall of empires in the profane, Gnosticism interpreted progress as a profane process, or, to use Voegelin's phrase: it *immanentized the Christian eschaton*.

The three phases of Joachim's speculation are also preserved and can be observed in almost all modern ideological movements: the three stages in Comte's philosophy, from the theological through the metaphysical to the final, positive phase; in Voltaire's phases of enlightenment from the extinction (Fall) through the renaissance (Redemption) to the Third Realm of spiritual perfection (Voltaire's own age); in Marx's succession of phases from primitive communist through bourgeois class society to the final realm of communism; and the National Socialist idea of the first (until 1806), second (until 1918) and the final, Third Reich.

The immanentization contains two elements: a *teleological* and an *axiological*. The first one means a constant progress, movement, while the second means the goal of ultimate perfection.[63] The ideologies in which only the teleological part is vivid are to be called progressivism, be it Kant's or Condorcet's version. The other variant is quite clear about the ultimate goal and the perfect state of society though it is not evident in what way we can

60 Ibid.
61 Ibid., p. 472.
62 Voegelin, *op. cit.*, p. 301.; *From Enlightenment to Revolution*, p. 3.
63 Voegelin, *Science, Politics and Gnosticism*, in: CW5, p. 298.

arrive at it. Voegelin mentions Thomas More's *Utopia* as an example.[64] The third type is, nevertheless, the most important one in which both elements are combined and put into a philosophy of history. These ones, according to Voegelin, are variants of *activist mysticism*, like Comte's or Marx's philosophies.[65]

The speculations strive for the de-divinization (*Entgötterung*) of the world and fulfill their tasks in re-divinization, in the divinization of man. The divinized man is without all institutional bonds and obligations[66] and is also free from the imperfection of the world. Voegelin observed here the perfectionist attitude of ideological thinking which aims at bringing "Heaven to Earth."

From the Joachitic symbolism the vision of the community of spiritually autonomous persons is also carried over. This means a community without any mediation of institutions – be it state, church or other. This vision is profoundly present in modern mass movements which imagine the Final Realm as such a community and this symbolism "is most clearly recognizable in communism, but the *idea of democracy* also strives not inconsiderably on the symbolism of a community of autonomous men."[67]

But since the old meaning of history is lost, a replacement has to be found. The cure to the disease will be the recipe of the secularist intellectual who knows what turn world history will take and is able to predict the future.[68] The idea that history is known as a whole is at its best a contradictory notion, at its worst it is nonsense, as Hayek claims:

> To speak of a mind with a structure fundamentally different from our own, or to claim that we can observe changes in the basic structure of the human mind is not only to claim what is impossible: it is a meaningless statement.[69] (...) Historicism [...] cuts [...] the ground under its own feet: it is led to the self-contradictory position of generalizing about facts, which, if the theory were true, could not be known.[70]

---

64 It must be pointed out, however, that Thomas More's *Utopia* is rather conceived as an ironic picture of utopian visions. Cf. Erik v. Kuehnelt-Leddihn, *Leftism Revisited: From de Sade and Marx to Hitler and Pol Pot*, Regnery Gateway, 1990, p. 85.

65 Voegelin, *ibid*., pp. 299-300.

66 Ibid., p. 303.

67 Ibid., p. 304. [italics added]

68 Ibid., p. 303.

69 Hayek, *op. cit.*, p. 135.

70 Ibid., p. 137.

The meaning of secular history cannot be found, according to Voegelin, since that presupposes that we know history from the beginning to the end.[71] Without the meaning behind the chaotic events of earthly history, the sacred Christian one, the meaning of historical and political existence is lost. The remedy of ideologies will be to "rewrite" history and make history a "history of the masses", that is, to find new entities into which the "sacred" meaning can be put into: Voltaire's *espirit humain* transforms the *corpus mysticum Christi* into *corpus mysticum humanitatis*.[72]

In Voegelin's view, with the enclosure of the spirit to transcendent reality the spiritual substance of man has vanished. A new principle as the motivating factor of human existence has to be found. The object of deification can be seen in the descent from Reason to the technical and planning intellect, and in a downward spiral to the economic, psychological, and finally to the biological structure of man.[73]

Ideologies move away from reality but this in and of itself does not constitute a real danger. Ideologies, for Arendt, Voegelin, and the others, become dangerous if they couple with mass movements – as they did in the previous centuries. The threat which ideologies represent is the attempt to force the "second reality" on the first one and to transform reality according to a plan or an idea.

The attempt of ideologies and rationalism is, thus, to do away with *contingency* in human action. By contingency we mean the inescapable uncertainty in the political and human world which always compels the individual to *think, act, and decide*. In all these instances, the choice and decision[74] of the individual is indispensable and in this decision, his personal knowledge, his conviction and his culture are necessarily involved. The individual can *never be certain* that his decision will result in the way desired. Rationalism and ideology want to provide a universally valid form for the *once and for all* solution of all political and human problems and perplexities. By aiming at the removal of this contingency, these attempts destroy personal and public freedom as well.

---

71 Voegelin, *From Enlightenment to Revolution*, p. 8.

72 Ibid., p. 10.

73 Ibid., p. 13.

74 The problem of decision and authority was brought "back" to political thinking primarily by Carl Schmitt. See his *The Concept of the Political*, University of Chicago Press, 1996.

Summary

The point of criticism in the works of the emigrants is the intellectual climate of the modern age. Hayek and Polanyi both see the problem in the "scientific objectivism" of modern science which had been transposed to the field of social sciences and humanities. The result of this change, as they argue, is that traditional morals had been undermined and with it, the very bases of freedom disappeared. Their traditional individualism notwithstanding, they put their faith in the "collective knowledge" safeguarded in social institutions; this knowledge is dispersed in society, and it cannot be substituted by one institution or authority.

Voegelin and Arendt were concerned with the phenomenon of modern ideologies and they both found their roots in Gnosticism, i.e., the approach which sees the salvation of society and the world in "certain knowledge." Nevertheless, so their argument goes, ideologies cannot find such knowledge but instead create a second reality, which will be forced upon reality as such.

The arguments put forward thereby represent an attitude towards modern democracies, which, in Hayek, Arendt, Polanyi, and Voegelin's view are rationalistic, ideological, and relativistic. This rationalist attitude strives at the *overall-control* of circumstances and actions but this control, according to the emigrants, dissolves the remaining bases of freedom.

The Critique of Mass Democracies

For the thinkers we have in our focus, mass democracy is intensely connected with modernity. Modernity for them means a set of mentalities and institutions based on entirely new tenets compared to Antiquity and the Middle Ages. This totally new worldview of the world leads to a similarly new approach to politics itself.

In this chapter, I will argue that the criticism of modernity is at once the criticism of *mass culture.* It means the criticism of mass democracy, for mass democracy is (at least to some extent) the hegemony of mass culture.[75] In the philosophical principles criticized we are able to find the substance of modern politics. It is precisely this substance which these

[75] See Leo Strauss, *What is Liberal Education?*, http://www.ditext.com/strauss/liberal.html

thinkers regarded as a mark of the decline of Western culture. Probably the rise of Napoleon III heralded the beginning of a new epoch, the end of liberalism, and the age of the masses.[76]

One common theme for our thinkers concerned is that something in modernity has been lost, something, that previously corresponded to the meaning of the human and political existence of man. Whatever ways they may differ from each other in their basic philosophical stands, their point of criticism was the erosion of traditional standards. However, in order not to draw vague parallelisms between them, we shall briefly point out their most fundamental differences.

Arendt's attack on mass democracies is of an existentialist nature. The turning away from common sense and from the common world of human experience ends up in a situation where man is "thrown back upon himself" but not on the world. This loss of a common world is manifested in the disappearance of the public realm and the "rise of the social."

For Voegelin, the problem lies in the lack of interest in transcendental questions and it is manifested in a "disorder of the spirit" which is perversely conceived as order. Voegelin, when writing about modern politics, describes it as "artificial."

Strauss's presuppositions are based on rationalist and Platonist notions. His dissatisfaction with mass democracies was most importantly *relativism*, i.e. the loss of traditional categories of politics. Without these concepts, today, even the idea of "good tyranny" is conceivable which, in classical political philosophy, would have been a contradiction in terms.[77]

Nonetheless, all of them were in agreement that the substance of politics has changed considerably with the rise of modernity and mass societies. The structure and functioning of politics in mass societies has become a kind of "automation" and the enactment of certain "processes" which aim to satisfy all the wants of the people regardless, of the content of these wills and wants. Yet, how did this change come about? What ideas fueled it?

The New Substance of Politics

[76] Eric Voegelin, *From Enlightenment To Revolution*, p. 72.

[77] We shall deal with this question extensively in the subchapter of modern revolutions.

With the appearance of modernity the traditional hierarchy of activities is reversed. One of these reversals is that what happened between the *vita contemplativa* and the *vita activa*.[78] This is due to the progress of modern science with its standard "demonstrability" which means the elimination of contemplation and the concept of truth. Instead, the insistence will lie increasingly upon "process" which is one of the key concepts of the natural and historical sciences since the advent of modernity.[79]

The "life of the mind," i.e. the *bios theoretikos* is thus being completely abolished, as Arendt and Voegelin argue. What is placed in its position is an "aggregate" of empirical knowledge which must be by all means "useful." As a consequence, the "authoritative present" will take the place of all former concepts of truth (that were once considered self-evident or permanent) which at once implies that the present necessarily is "better" than all times of the past.[80] This is the cornerstone of progressive civilization which takes it for granted that "humanity" as a whole is moving forward in a never-before-seen pace even if this means the destruction of personality and the human existence in general. With the elimination of the *bios theoretikos*, however, the very foundation for the understanding of the existence of man and his surrounding world is smashed. This further demonstrates for Voegelin the "profound antihumanism underlying the Enlightenment and the Positivist creed."[81]

As we have already touched upon this subject in the previous chapter, the ordering principles of human actions were replaced by new ones. Neither the transcendental-spiritual existence (Voegelin), nor the qualities of action and speech (Arendt), and not even the concepts of good and bad order (Strauss) direct political actions. The new principles therefore, must be, entirely different from the aforementioned ones, yet, at the same time, they must be common to mankind in general. These new principles were found in the Cartesian "universal reason" and in the psychological and biological structure of man.

Since no outside reality serves as a directing principle in politics, the whole constitution of it will be built on subjective measures. This is already present in the Cartesian subjectivism, in which nothing is certain, but doubt itself. However, what is more important in our enquiry is the elevated status of the element of *passions*.

---

78 Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition*, University of Chicago Press, 1958, p. 289.

79 Ibid., p. 297.

80 Voegelin, *op. cit.*, p. 84.

81 Ibid., p. 79.

The most important one, as Voegelin observes, already present in Helvetius, is the *desir du pouvoir*, later taken up also by Nietzsche (*libido dominandi*), and the *amour de soi* (the Augustinian *amor sui*) as its supplementary element.[82] Besides Nietzsche, the most important representative of the idea of passion-driven actions, is Hobbes, who developed the concept into a political doctrine. For Hobbes, the point of the orientation towards the *summum bonum* loses its significance and the only frame of reference will be the *summum malum*. The substance, then, will be the structure of man as an aggregate of passions and interests, in all its sensualistic, materialistic, and hedonistic variants.

With this change, "wealth" and all other "economic" considerations became a central problem of politics. For Arendt, this means the disappearance of the public realm, i.e. of politics itself. In Antique politics, which serve as the point of departure for Arendt, all economic issues were considered problems of the household (*oikoia*). The main characteristic feature of all economic endeavours is the element of *necessity*. It is the "biological process" which compels man to produce and consume, in order to keep himself alive. Yet, in the classical framework, necessity is one of the most basic *pre-political* elements of existence which needs to be taken care of in order to create the precondition to *action*, the *conditio sine qua non* of freedom (politics).

Politics is independent of rule and need precisely because those are relegated into the private sphere – primarily to the family. In other words, the private realm serves as the place for liberation from necessity. This does not mean that necessity is altogether eliminated (which is the primary aim of modern revolutions, as Arendt argues), for it is a part and parcel of the human condition. Nevertheless, it seems that modern politics removed both private and public through what Arendt calls "the rise of the social."[83]

The "social" is essentially the product of modernity, which enacts all the formerly household activities in the "public" realm. But with this act, it destroys the public as the sphere for action, for it puts it under the yoke of necessity. With this act, the realm of the private is destroyed as well. For Arendt modern nation-states are, consequently, a society of jobholders, an enormous *oikoia* on a nation-wide scale.[84]

---

82 Voegelin, *op.cit.*, p. 46 ff.

83 Hannah Arendt, *op. cit.*, 1958, p. 47.

84 Ibid., p. 60.

The society of jobholders is only possible when the *animal laborans* have already gained victory and attained the most important position in the hierarchy of the *vita activa*. Its primary concern is the "life process" of man, that is, its biological process, or "man's metabolism with nature" (Marx). The process is cyclical, since the necessary aim of production is consumption itself. The logical result of this mentality will be what not only Arendt, but popular terminology also, calls *consumer's society*. As a consequence of this approach, the *animal laborans* views everything as an object of consumption.

For this very reason *abundance* becomes the most important goal of mass societies. The distinction between property and wealth is blurred. While property was necessarily a pre-political condition, wealth becomes the concern of the "social." Moreover, it comes into conflict with property itself: the private (and with it, property) will be considered as a "hindrance" to "social productivity." Thus, the wealth of an individual will be thought of as his share in the income of society.[85]

The tendency to glorify labor as the highest endeavor of man is entirely due to modern economic theories: pre-eminently to the theories of Adam Smith and Marx. It was not Marx, as Arendt remarks, but Adam Smith who distinguished "productive" and "unproductive" labor in the first place. While the initial purpose was to emancipate man from the "realm of necessity," that is, of the laboring activity itself, it ended up in the subordination of all activities to the realm of necessity.[86] Labor, thus, has taken the supreme position in the hierarchy of the *vita activa*. Eventually, no object is safe from consumption and annihilation.[87]

Society, furthermore, will be regarded as automatic machinery, where labor, like any other energy, cannot be lost.[88] In accordance with the logic of automation, the rhythm of the people becomes more and more adjusted to the rhythm of the mechanical movement of the machines.[89]

---

85 Ibid., p. 61.

86 Herein lies the basic contradiction in Marx's work: while the parameter with which man is distinguished from animals is appointed in man's metabolism with nature, the aim of the revolution is to emancipate man from this condition. Ibid., p. 131., note 83.

87 Ibid., p. 133.

88 Ibid.

89 Ibid., p. 147.

The confusion of realms and the mammoth realm of the social will, so Arendt argues, produce mass culture:

> As long as the *animal laborans* remains in possession of it [the public realm], there can be no true public realm, but only private activities displayed in the open. The outcome is what is euphemistically called mass culture, and its deep-rooted trouble is a universal unhappiness, due on one side to the troubled balance between laboring and consumption and, on the other, to the persistent demands of the *animal laborans* to obtain a happiness which can be achieved only where life's processes of exhaustion and regeneration, of pain and release from pain, strike a perfect balance.[90]

According to Arendt, the result is the loss of *meaning* of human existence and this loss is the outcome of an admixture of meaning and usefulness. Nonetheless, this is due to the understanding of the *homo faber* and not the *animal laborans* and the concomitant confusion of modern economic theory of work with labor. The most characteristic trait of the *homo faber* is the thinking related to the categories of means and ends. The utilitarian calculus and the "absence of pain" are for Arendt, again, totally private and non-political.[91] Nevertheless, as soon as the content of politics is based on a balancing between passions, it is only logical that it will be moving more and more towards utilitarianism and derives justification of political actions from the pain-pleasure calculus. The same was the problem for Strauss, who, when discussing Xenophon's *Hiero*, claimed that modern "value-free" judgments removed the classical distinction between a good ruler (king) and a bad ruler (tyrant). For what moves the modern mind is the question of pleasures and pains and not that of virtues and vices. [92]

The problem with the means-end category for Arendt is that it is circular and endless. Whatever is an "end" at a certain moment of "making" will be a means at the next one. The only way not to sink into this never-ending logic is to have ends which are ends in themselves. Here, the Aristotelian viewpoint of Arendt becomes palpable: to preserve the meaning of human activities, there must certainly be ends in themselves. But the *homo faber* does not recognize any ends in themselves. Utility emerges as the ultimate standard and from

90 Ibid., p. 134.
91 Ibid., pp. 112-113.
92 Leo Strauss, *On Tyranny*, p. 37.

this principle, instrumentalization necessarily follows. With the instrumentalization, all ends are deprived of their intrinsic value and all things that were previously regarded objectively given are eliminated. In the case of the *animal laborans*, the principle will be consumption; all things which cannot be consumed will be considered useless and therefore meaningless as well.

Since neither transcendental nor traditional standards serve as the basis of political actions, the sphere of political – *as* political – is abolished. It is emancipated from the old perplexities and contingencies in human affairs. As Voegelin argues, it is now subjected to utilitarian measures and to the "management" of the plurality of groups, all driven by their passions:

> Artificiality in politics means that the leadership of Western political units has to rely increasingly on the mechanism of passions and interests of the social group as the source of power and policy (...)[93]

For Arendt the elimination of the public scene means the loss of a space which was maintained for the exercise of human freedom through action and speech. For Voegelin, it means intramundane religiousness, the "externalization of processes of the soul and their enactment on the stage of society."[94] Society forms a "melting pot" of former private matters and increasingly takes the form of "administration" rather than politics. It is the markedly anti-political nature of mass democracies which was the point of criticism in Arendt' and Voegelin' thinking. The anti-political concepts of Marx (classless and stateless society) are not utopian at all.[95] The "administration of things" (Marx, Lenin) and the idea of society as a "big factory" are the very manifestations of "politics" based on passions and the former problems of the household. On the surface, this artificial political practice seems to be a "no-man rule," yet, simultaneously, it also carries the potential of turning into the cruelest sort of tyranny – even if it is "faceless."[96]

---

93 Voegelin, *op. cit.*, p. 71.

94 Ibid

95 Arendt, *op. cit.*, p. 131. note 82.

96 Ibid, p. 40. Cf. Thomas Molnar, *Authority and Its Enemies*, Transaction Publishers, 1995.

The problem caused by the elimination of politics gets startling if the "machinery" does not function properly. As Voegelin claims, the aggregate of passions needs constant control and if this precarious balance breaks down, the whole of society breaks down immediately as well, as for instance in the case of an economic crisis.[97] Since every activity that was formerly dealt with in the private realm is now the problem of society, the shear manageability of the tasks will become increasingly difficult. The former self-contained, small economy of the family is being replaced by society.

Furthermore, since both common sense (Arendt), and the categories of classical distinctions (Strauss), vanished from the scene, every government and all sorts of regimes are going to be justified only by virtue of being "beneficent" for the multitudes, i.e. if it serves the volition and needs of the people.[98] It is for this reason that Strauss takes his Platonic stance, reminding us that satisfying the people in their wants is not at variance with tyranny as such (similar arguments can be found in de Tocqueville as well); on the contrary, one of the hallmarks of the ancient tyrant was *precisely* his concern for the "pleasure" and "happiness" of his subjects, thereby providing his own unlimited, lawless rule. What is new to this picture, is the modern revolutionary *as* tyrant who fulfils "progressive" wishes and makes the world anew. (This novelty is revealed in the debate of Strauss and Kojéve. We shall deal with the revolutionary tyrant in due course.)

Since the satisfaction of hedonist wishes and the "will to power" are the decisive principles of modern politics, "democracy appears the best system, as it satisfies the love of power of all or most."[99]

Conformism

It appears for the emigrant scholars that mass democracies are disposed to produce an enormous degree of conformism. This conformism sets the standards for each individual and instead of actualizing sheer physical violence, it compels people to adopt certain forms of mentalities and patterns of behavior. However, merely because this method of compelling is not extolled through government force pure and simple, it is nonetheless tyrannical.

---

97 Voegelin, *op. cit.*

98 Strauss, *op. cit.*, p. 74.

99 Jacob L. Talmon, *The Origins of Totalitarian Democracy*, Secker & Warburg, 1952, p. 35.

It is not government control in the traditional, political sense of the term, rather, the control of the *social*, i.e., "society" that imposes *behavior* instead of *action* on the individual, in the interpretation of Arendt. Behavior is essentially conditioned and not a result of sovereign thought and judgment. The creation of patterns of behavior is only possible in a modern, egalitarian society which always has an equalizing tendency. This equality, however, has nothing to do with its antique form, as Arendt argues.

Equality in Antiquity always contained the elements of distinction and the form of individuality.[100] The equality which was present in the public sphere was due to the immense inequality present in the "private." Moreover, this equality was only a precondition in a sense that it provided space for the individual to set something into motion, to create something new, in short: to *act*. The possibility to act and to appear in the public realm as *equal among peers* necessarily entails the potentiality of attaining distinction as well; let alone the fact that it was also based on a high degree of inequality in the private sphere. In the realm of the social, however, the possibility is altogether eliminated.

> The equality of the members of these groups, far from being an equality among peers, resembles nothing so much as the equality of household members before the despotic power of the household head, except that in society, where the natural strength of one common interest and one unanimous opinion is tremendously enforced by sheer number, actual rule exerted by one man, could eventually be dispensed with. The phenomenon of conformism is characteristic of the last stage of this development.[101]

The sheer number of quantity means "numeralism" (Kuehnelt-Leddihn) and depersonalizes the political sphere as a whole. Personal character, ability and individual achievement will be deprived of their meaning. It is also the problem of democratic elections that the individual is not a person but the last indivisible unit – he is counted but not weighed.[102] It is for this reason that modernity is so enchanted by big numbers, statistics and "bigness." But statistical truth is possible only where conformism and behavior rule: there,

---

100 We have to point out however, that "individuality" as an independent "value" was not present in Western political thought before John Stuart Mill's *On Liberty*.

101 Arendt, *op. cit.*, p. 40.

102 Erik v. Kuehnelt-Leddihn, *Liberty or Equality*, p. 107.

deviation is only reserved for a small minority.[103] Conformist tendencies, according to Arendt, are inclined to destroy human action, i.e. the most fundamental form of human plurality and tends to enforce one opinion on all members of a given political community where "all people suddenly behave as though they were members of one family, each multiplying and prolonging the perspective of his neighbour."[104]

The shrinking of the distance between the person and society, the annexation of the private sphere is overtly oppressive; the "social Behetmoth" can be far more powerful than the "state Leviathan."[105] This can be put into power only by enforcing "public opinion" and a certain "way of life" which excludes all "non-conformists," or, in other words, "non-behaviours." Public opinion wants to produce a "common framework of reference" or a "fund of indispensible ideas" from which deviation is not allowed; this form of conformism leads to "identitarian hostility"[106], or, as Kuehnelt-Leddihn called this phenomenon, "the cult of sameness." This is easily exploited by modern mass parties, where the tenets of some sect are repeated by "millions of parrots."[107]

The significance and presence of rule, however, is definitely not eliminated with this progress of depersonalization. We can recognize the Tocquevillean flavor in Arendt's passage:

> Large numbers of people, crowded together, develop an almost irresistible inclination toward despotism, be this the despotism of a person or of majority rule (...)[108]

The "tyranny of the majority" is thus achieved by mere encroachment on the private sphere by enforced opinions and political dogmas.[109] Even if this act is not transferred to the state, it still is an utter attack on the individual person, on his sovereignty of thought, as well as on human plurality as such. The mass party, mass education, mass media, and all other specifically "mass" institutions are the executors of this indoctrination which aim at providing

---

103 Arendt, *op. cit.*, p. 42.

104 Ibid., p.58.

105 Kuehnelt-Leddihn, *op. cit.*, pp. 122-123.

106 Aurel Kolnai, *Privilege and Liberty*, in: *Privilege and Liberty and Other Essays in Political Philosophy*, Lexington Books, 1999, pp. 28-29.

107 Strauss, *op. cit.*, p. 195.

108 Arendt, *op. cit.*, p. 43.

109 Voegelin, *op. cit.*, p. 50.

social conformance by propaganda – in their sophisticated or less sophisticated forms.[110] All principles of modernity converge here, according to Voegelin: the production of the "mass individual" wants to provide "useful members of society" by "general education."

What is highly frustrating in these trends of mass democracies for Arendt, Voegelin and Kuehnelt-Leddihn in particular – and for all other in general – is the difficulty distinguishing them from totalitarianism. The similarity between the educational-propagandistic efforts of a National Socialist, a Communist and a mass democratic regime is striking. The fact that it is almost an impossible task to point out the difference between them is, for the emigrant scholars, frightening.[111] Moreover, and in connection with the aforementioned, it is of questionable nature, whether the conventionally assumed difference between the masses and the intellectual elites exists at all.[112] It is reasonable instead to assert that "the symbol of the elite" sets the standard of "the happiness that is to be pursued by the mass of the equal automata" and accordingly, the egalitarian and elitarian components "require each other."[113]

Summary

The common trait of our emigrant thinkers was the recognition of the problems which mass democracies produce; be it the lack of human plurality (Arendt), the denial of the (spiritual) existence of the person (Voegelin, Kuehnelt-Leddihn), or the erosion of the demarcation line between good and bad (Strauss). Their indictment of mass society relied upon the revelation that it is quite difficult to differentiate between a simple mass democracy and modern tyranny.

Mass democracy, according to Arendt, produces "mass thoughtlessness" and eliminates the possibility of action. Besides, so Strauss' argument follows, it also produces sheer relativism, because we are no longer capable to distinguish good ruler from the bad. No outside boundaries, or laws restricting rule will be considered valid. Rather, the only aim will be the "satisfaction" of the masses – anything is justified by virtue of being done in the name of "the people."

---

110 Ibid., p. 70.

111 Ibid.

112 Voegelin, *Science, Politics, and Gnosticism*, in: CW5, p. 295.

113 Voegelin, *From Enlightenment to Revolution*, p. 72.

The passion and interest-driven political practice eliminates all autonomous spheres and the only concern will be the abundance of "society" as a whole. "Artificial politics" thus subordinates every activity to the supreme importance of the consideration of the "welfare" of "society." Concurrently, it disqualifies all those activities which are not performed in order to achieve that end. What is more harmful, it stigmatizes all those who do not conform to this rule. This, at once, translates into a monotonous process and the loss of value of all personal achievements.

Collectivism

In the following chapter we shall deal with the phenomenon of collectivism. For the emigrant thinkers, it has primarily three distinct though not altogether separable elements. The first one, we might call the religious aspect of collectivism. This is the loss of transcendental meaning in which the focus is on the individual person and its soul. It also entails the replacement of former religious meanings with what Voegelin calls intramundane religiousness or religion-substitute (*Ersatzreligion*). In order to displace the Christian understanding, an act of *Gottesmord*, the murder of God has to be committed. The human intellect had to be vindicated as rightful to be omnipotent, in other words, to "ape" the omnipotence of God (Kolnai). The replacement of Christianity results in the creation of new divinities as well as in the transferring of the old Christian symbols into the new secular religions.

The second important component is the instrumentalization of the individual. The individual person becomes but a mere part of the "whole," the machinery, and his existence has only a meaning insofar that he serves the collective end. Existence *as* experienced as a personal being loses all its significance. With this process of depersonalization, the intrinsic value of the single person, his freedom and dignity is demolished. We are inclined to interpret this as a *liberal* criticism of collectivism, since it laments the lack of freedom of the individual.

The third dimension is, in a sense, in close connection with the aforementioned. The concept of the "rule" of the collective is bound to exclude all considerations of distinctiveness, diversity, hierarchy, and the like. Rather, it places the meaning of the divine

right of the secular religion into the collective rule. The egalitarian strain of collectivism is understood by the authors as *illiberal egalitarianism* which is not only egalitarian but at the same time also *identitarian*, i.e., hostile towards any sort of differentness.

There are also some differences between our authors. Voegelin found that the intramundane religiousness was a certain kind of perversion, the lack of the order of the soul, although he did not miss the anti-personal tendencies in collectivist political religions either. For Kuehnelt-Leddihn, Kolnai, and Talmon, the primary concern was that the *individual* or, more precisely, *personal freedom*, that was for them solely lacking not only in the crudest forms of collectivisms but in democracies as well. As we shall demonstrate in the following chapter, Kolnai recognized the seeds of collectivism already in the individualist tendencies of liberal-democracy. As an accompaniment to this, the doctrine of "popular rule" also contains grave dangers because it equates freedom with sovereignty – one of the biggest mistakes committed by modernity as it was understood by Kolnai and Arendt.

The Roots of Collectivism: Political Religions

Why is collectivism an entirely new political phenomenon? And why was it so overtly peculiar in the last two hundred years? Does this mean that before the advent of modernity and the emergence of nation-states "collectivist" thinking was non-existent? The answer lie in the sphere of their appearance: "pre-modern" collectivism basically meant religious sectarianism which was at times violent (as, for example, in the case of the Taborite faction of the Hussites), but most of the times it was rather peaceful, or, as Voegelin described it, "contemplative."

In contradistinction, modern collectivism showed its face in the political, temporal sphere and was not of a marginal nature. We should emphasize that "collectivism" is not an equivalent of "community" or even "communitarianism." Collectivism necessarily involves not only *violence*, but sheer *force* and demands unconditional surrender to a political power. Therefore, collectivism is intensely connected to the *inner-worldly community*, pre-eminently - though, not necessarily - to the *state*. To penetrate into the depth of collectivism, we have to discuss the authors' understanding of secularization, the emergence of the nation-states and, most importantly, the religious implications of collectivism as a politico-religious phenomenon.

First of all, according to Voegelin, we must disregard the common concept of secularization, as it mostly refers to a simple legal improvement, i.e., the separation of church and state. However, historically this interpretation does not touch at the heart of the matter. Voegelin did not agree with this conventionally accepted interpretation of secularization and claimed instead that "[B]y secularization we mean the attitude in which history, including the Christian religious phenomena, is conceived as an innerworldly chain of human events, while, at the same time, there is retained the Christian belief in a universal, meaningful order of human history."[114] Secularization indeed created a "secularized, autonomous sphere of politics outside the spiritual-temporal unity of Christian mankind" and brought about the autonomous sphere of the state.[115] However, it does not follow that in the modern state and in its political sphere the religious content is entirely absent; on the contrary, so the Voegelin's argument goes, while the nation state achieved monopoly in the public sphere and relegated the religious questions to the private. This very act happened to open the public field for *respiritualization* from other (non-Christian) sources, for instance "nationalism, humanitarianism, economism both liberal and socialist, biologism, and psychologism."[116] Therefore, we have to find the religious implications inherent in the symbolisms of "post-secularization" (post-Christian) political communities. Various labels are applied to these phenomena by the scholars we are concerned with, yet, they basically all point to the same phenomenon: *secular monasticism* (Kuehnelt-Leddihn),[117] *political religions* (Voegelin), and *political messianism* (Talmon).

"Intramundane religiousness" means that Christian tenets are transformed into inner-worldly concepts, even if they are anti-Christian, as in the case of the French Revolution, for which "solidarity" is the secularized version of "charity."[118] Whereas religious messianism was sporadic and its principle was God, the principle of secular messianism is "Man."[119] The symbols of apocalypse, ecclesia, and eschatology are being immanentized.

---

114 Voegelin, *From Enlightenment to Revolution*, p. 7.; Secularization and the concomitant loss of authority was also a problem for Arendt. See *On Revolution*, pp. 150-152.

115 Ibid., p. 18.

116 Ibid., p. 20.

117 Erik v. Kuehnelt-Leddihn, *Leftism Revisited*, p. 89.

118 Voegelin, *The Political Religions*, p. 46.

119 Talmon, *The Origins of Totalitarian Democracy*, p. 10.

The basic difference between "community" and "collectivism" is its voluntary or non-voluntary nature, or, to be more precise, "community" does not strive for total domination over the political sphere whereas collectivism by necessity does. Monasticism presupposes vocation, sacrifice, and mostly it is concerned with some form of spiritual end.[120] But also an important aspect of the problem is the element of and concern with *security*. According to Kuehnelt-Leddihn, the instinct to attain security is present in all of us, i.e., the vision of taking care of basic needs, such as food, clothing, medical care etc. However, it is not the same to be provided with these in a monastic order or in a prison or barrack – collectivism resembles the latter. The craving for security manifests itself in what Kuehnelt-Leddihn calls the *Provider State* which takes care of one "from the cradle to the grave."[121]

The symbols of Christianity are retained but are now inverted into a community centered in itself.[122] This means that the idea of *corpus mysticum* and that of God is also present but it excludes transcendence and the division of spiritual and temporal power which was present in Augustine and Thomas Aquinas. Whatever is considered as the ultimate reality, the *realissimum*, takes the place of God. Following the formula of the person, whose spirit takes part in the divine spirit, the person is thus the part of the new *realissimum* and his existence is connected to this newly created deity. The idea of the inner-worldly *realissimum* is already collectivist: the existence of man melts into the collective reality; he will be thus a mere component part of the whole machine:[123]

> If the community or the state are prior to the individual, if they have ends of their own independent of and superior to those of the individuals, only those individuals who work for the same ends can be regarded as members of the community. It is a necessary consequence of this view that a person is respected only as a member of the group, that is, only if and in so far as he works for the recognized common ends, and that he derives his whole dignity only from this membership and not merely from being a man.[124]

---

120 Kuehnelt-Leddihn, *op. cit.*, p. 86.

121 Ibid., p. 88.; The Provider State is equitable to the Welfare State but according to Kuehnelt-Leddihn, it is a vague description, since all states are for the "welfare" of its people.

122 Voegelin, *op. cit.*, p. 54.

123 Voegelin, Ibid., pp. 29-30.

124 F. A. Hayek, *The Road To Serfdom: The Definitive Edition*, p. 162.

The first formulation of such symbolism is to be found in Hobbes' *Leviathan*.[125] With the construction of Hobbes, the difference between the spiritual and temporal becomes meaningless. The contractualism of Hobbes is taken from the Old Covenant, and in the contract, men place a sovereign above themselves by majority vote.[126] It must be borne in mind that the sovereign does not mean a ruler pure and simple, but that the former multitude *combines its multiplicity into the unity of one person*.[127] The community is thus an intramundane *pneuma* and it is, indeed, a collective person – in contradistinction to the church and the old ecclesia which was decidedly *not* a person. In this idea we can see a communal political religion which is a unit centered in itself.[128] The sovereign, thus is the ultimate judge of all issues, such as, for example, censorship, or which teachings are suitable for the commonwealth, or who are allowed to speak in the assemblies etc.[129] What follows is that "any teachings disrupting the peace of the community cannot be true."[130] It is but one step from the contract of Hobbes to the social contract of Rousseau which places all power into the *volonté générale* and in the "people" and declares it to be *une et indivisibile*.

The primary "achievement" of political religions is the garner of all sorts of collectivist approaches which turn the individual into a *mere part of a collective organization* and into a *means to a collective end*. The *corpus* and the *pneuma* are reserved in the demand for spiritual conformity even in such movements which are at variance with the Christian ecclesia, such as National Socialism.[131] The problem for Voegelin (the disappearance of transcendence and the ascendency of the immanent) is obvious: "when the inner-worldly collective takes the place of God, the person becomes the link serving the sacral contents of the world, i.e., an instrument."[132]

Since the individual person has no significance in history as a consequence of the loss of the Christian concept, a replacement meaning has to be found. That need will give rise to the concepts of "collective entities" and "spirits" (whether they are scientific natural laws or

---

125 Though it must be mentioned that Voegelin finds the first political religion in Akhenaton's sun cult: Ibid., pp. 34-41.

126 Ibid., p. 54.

127 Ibid.

128 Ibid.

129 Ibid., p. 55.

130 Ibid.

131 Ibid. p. 47.

132 Voegelin, *The Political Religions*, in: CW5, p. 64.

have more mystical sources) which have their own meaning, regardless of the concrete individuals who took part in the "progress."

Hegel's construction was that of the state as the immediate reality where the individual is an impersonal actor in the progress of history, which is under the guidance of reason;[133] in Kant's thought, it is the progress of the enlightened person which moves in the direction of a cosmopolitan mankind;[134] for Turgot, history had no meaning for man but it has for the *masse totale*.[135] All these notions aim at the creation of a new, immanent meaning of history and try to find an ultimate reality (*realissimum*) which serves as the new deity or the bearer of divine substance – as it is the case with the proletariat of Marx, the chosen race of the National Socialists or the Popular Will of Rousseau. Consequently, the "collective" takes over the place of the individual.

Whatever is there to be told about the "meaning" thus realized, it must be a meaning originating from the *masse totale*. Of course, those who hinder "progress" will be labeled as evil, who must be removed so that further "progress" is undisturbed. Those who are not fit, must be eliminated:

> Here again the *masse totale* makes its ominous appearance – as if it were a satisfaction to the victims of an upheaval (for instance to those who were cremated in Auschwitz) to be the fertilizer for the progress of mankind. But the progressivist is happy because "no upheaval has ever occurred which has not produced some advantage."[136]

The idea of "progress" also derives from the immanentized eschatology of the political religions. This is the case with the symbolism of the Third Realm as the final end of progress and the three successive stages which are the road leading towards it.[137] The whole cosmos is conceived and understood as inner-worldly, the end realm is the "earthly condition of perfected humanity."[138] This concept is, for Voegelin, essentially Gnostic. It assumes that the entire society can be created anew. The way towards perfection lies in an overall

133 Voegelin, Ibid., pp. 29-30.
134 Ibid., pp. 60-61.
135 *From Enlightenment to Revolution*, p. 92 ff.
136 *Ibid.*, pp. 104-105.
137 We have discussed this, see the chapter on Rationalism and Ideology.
138 Voegelin, *The Political Religions*, in: CW5, p. 60.

reorganization of society. With the directed progress (whatever the specific content shall refer to) "collective salvation" (from all the troubles and shortcomings of the world, poverty, deprivation, sickness etc.) is possible. In the collective framework, the salvation of a person is *only possible* through "general" salvation.[139]

While pre-modern teleology and theology were hierarchical, modern teleology and theology are rather "egalitarian" and "horizontal." The character of chiliastic eschatology is maintained but transferred to another sphere and is connected to an equalizing or "leveling" tendency.[140] The result is, according to Kuehnelt-Leddihn, a depersonalized mediocrity and that faith is now placed in scientific "progress" which one day will bring everlasting happiness to mankind.

The concepts of scientism and intramundane religiousness converge. The religious implications in all theories of modern scientism were present from the very beginning and it was not a "deviation" from previous "purely scientific" concepts.[141] This is the reason why all modern theories are considered "scientific", whether they are "scientific race theories", "scientific socialism," etc. The political religions are the combinations of modern scientism *and* intramundane religiousness – as it was understood by Hayek and Voegelin as well. In fact, the conventionally assumed difference between scientific and romantic or religious socialism is not so great.[142] Be it Campanella's (*Civitas Solis*), Morelly's (*Code de la Nature*), Saint-Simon's (*Nouveau Christianisme*), the *religion civile* of Rousseau (which is probably the most famous expression of a democratic political religion)[143] or Fourier's *phalanstére*, the end realm must be arrived at by conscious control of the forces inherent in history or in nature. Secular monasticism, as Kuehnelt-Leddihn and Voegelin argue, thus means the *perversion* of Christian tenets and in its most extreme form it is communism. However, not only communism is secular monasticism. Democratism also culminates in some form of "Edenism" which yearns to regain a paradise lost with the help of some secret *gnosis*, an application of a technique:

139 Talmon, *op. cit.*, p. 108.
140 Erik v. Kuehnelt-Leddihn, *The Menace of the Herd*, p. 35.
141 Hayek, *The Counter-Revolution of Science*, p. 258.
142 Kuehnelt-Leddihn, *Leftism Revisited.*, p. 101.
143 Voegelin, *From Enlightenment to Revolution*, p. 171.

> Of course, this "Edenism" can be found in democracy, which, like nudism, is a conscious-subconscious effort to recreate paradise. Democracy uses the magic formula, "We are not ruled, we rule ourselves," to relativize the state – the painful result of Original Sin – just as nudism tries to solve the sexual problem by shedding clothes.[144]

There is another element that must be taken into account. All authors moving in the direction of authoritarian socialism were conscious of the paramount importance of some intellectual-spiritual leadership.[145] "Leadership" is central to the understanding of collectivism. Voegelin finds its origins in the symbol of the DUX in the speculations of Joachim of Fiore.[146] The DUX means *leader* (Führer),[147] who is the sole mediator between god and the people, just as Akhenaton was the immediate link between god and his subjects. Now, if the divinity is something inner-worldly, the leader takes on the role of the anointed mouthpiece of that divinity.[148]

The political leader thus becomes the very embodiment of the inner-worldly divinity, regardless whether this divinity be called the chosen race, the nation, the proletariat, or the people. Obviously, there is an immense danger associated with such collectivist approaches. Dissent is not tolerated. Whoever voices disapproval automatically becomes the *enemy* of the newly constructed divinity and will be marked for destruction.

Any deviation is regarded in the political-religious symbolism as the very incarnation of "Satan": for the Leviathan, it was the Catholic Church; for Kant, human desires; for Marx, the bourgeoisie; for the Nazis, the Jews as the "counter-race."[149] As Voegelin notes, the pattern to treat dissenters as sub-humans is developed already in enlightened utilitarianism, primarily by Condorcet and d'Alembert.[150]

Voegelin conceived the new political communities at best as non-Christian, at worst as anti-Christian, but it is necessary to point out that this does not mean that the religious element is absent from the new political communities:

---

144 Ibid., p. 95.

145 Hayek, *op. cit.*, p. 249.

146 We have already touched upon the subject, see above the subchapter on Political Gnosticism.

147 Voegelin, *The Political Religions*, in: CW5, p. 51.

148 We shall deal with this in more detail in the subchapter of Totalitarian Democracies.

149 Ibid., p. 61.

150 Voegelin, *From Enlightenment to Revolution*, p. 193.

> The inner-worldly religiosity experienced by the collective body – be it humanity, the people, the class, the race, or the state – as the *realissimum* is abandonment of God (...) the belief that man is the source of good and of improvement of the world, as it is held by the Enlightenment, and the belief that the collective body is a mysterious, divine substance (...) is anti-Christian renunciation.[151]

The critique contained in Voegelin's *The Political Religions* is usually understood as a criticism of National Socialism and Fascism. Not denying this element, it is *also a criticism of democracy* and *collectivism* in general. The concept of the political community which has the sacral center in itself which serves as the ultimate reality is definitely applicable to democracy. Whatever the concrete symbolism, the political community which finds its sole authority inherent in itself and deifies that very source is dangerous. The collective deity has no place for the person and his spiritual existence. The immanent sacral substance is absolutized, deified and thereby it reduces the person to a mere constituent of that substance.

Following the model of the Christian *pneuma* and *corpus mysticum* in which the individual person takes places, in the political religions, the individual participates in the new *corpus mysticum*. The dissent from the deified *realissimum* leads to persecution – the difference between the persecutions brought about by certain political religions is mostly in degree, not in essence.

The Tension between Liberalism and Democracy

According to Kuehnelt-Leddihn, there are no other concepts so fundamentally mistaken in modern political phraseology than "democracy" and "liberalism." As we have already demonstrated above, "democracy" implies some sort of progress towards an ultimate goal of human perfection. The adherents of democratism want to extend democratic principles to all spheres of life, i.e., to elevate democracy to the level of an ideology.[152] In retrospect, as

151 Voegelin, *The Political Religions*, in: CW5, p. 71.

152 Kuehnelt-Leddihn, *Leftism Revisited*, p. 18.

Kuehnelt-Leddihn argues, this ideological crusade resulted in tremendous harm to Western civilization.[153]

Regardless to the popular, almost interchangeable usage of the terms, democracy and liberalism are essentially different since their respective goals are concerned with different ends and they are based upon different presuppositions. Kuehnelt-Leddihn provides a definition of liberalism and democracy through etymological and phenomenological inquiries.

Democracy is a compound word, which consists of *demos* and *krátos* (power in a "strong, almost brutal sense").[154] It is based on two pillars: the *political and legal equality* of the citizenry (franchise) and *majority rule*. Democracy answers the question of *who* should govern; in contrast to liberalism for which the question is *how* government should be exercised. To the question of "who," the democrat answers that "the majority of the politically equal citizens" while the liberal replies that "regardless of who governs, government should be exercised in a way to preserve the freedom of the individual as much as possible, that is, as far as it is compatible with the common good."[155] Of course, the "common good" is always defined in a somewhat arbitrary fashion. Thus, liberalism has only one postulate: *freedom*.

Kuehnelt-Leddihn's dislike for democracy is based on its "formalism" which is not interested in the content and its egalitarian-collectivistic character. His basic critique of democracy was concerned with the question *whether freedom can be safeguarded* in a democratic-majoritarian framework. The fundamental problem is not as much the form of government but rather, the *quality* of government:

> [T]he true liberal is not pledged to any specific constitution, but would subordinate his choice to the desire to see himself and his fellow-citizens enjoying a maximum of liberty. If the thinks that a monarchy would grant greater liberty than a republic, he would choose the former (...)[156]

Democracy is intrinsically egalitarian and, according to Kuehnelt-Leddihn, consequently it is in opposition to the principle of freedom. As it was already recognized by

---

153 For Kuehnelt-Leddihn, the most apparent negative effect of democratism was nourished in foreign policy. See the subchapter on Totalitarian Democracies.

154 Kuehnelt-Leddihn, *Leftism Revisited*, p. 15.

155 Kuehnelt-Leddihn, *op. cit.*, p. 21; *Liberty or Equality*, p. 7., 9.

156 Kuehnelt-Leddihn, *Liberty or Equality*, p. 3.

Tocqueville, equality and liberty are not just "not the same" but they frequently are at variance with each other:

> When we speak about *equality* we do not refer to equity (which is justice). Even the so-called "Christian equality" is not something mechanical, but merely subjection under the *same* law – in other words *isonomy*. Yet to the Christian two newly-born babies are *spiritually* equal, but their physical and intellectual qualities (the latter of course in potency) are from the moment of conception unequal. (...) [I]t suffices to say that the artificial establishment of equality is as little compatible with liberty as the enforcement of *unjust* laws of discrimination. (It is obviously just to discriminate – within limits – between the innocent and the criminal, the adult and the infant, the combatant and the civilian, and so on.) Whereas greed, pride and arrogance are at the base of unjust discrimination, the driving motor of the egalitarian and identitarian trends is envy, jealousy and fear. "Nature" (i.e., the absence of human intervention) is anything but egalitarian; if we want to establish a complete plain we have to blast the mountains away and fill the valleys; equality thus presupposes the continuous intervention of force which, as a principle, is opposed to freedom. Liberty and equality are in essence contradictory.[157]

In the tenets of democracy the problem of freedom is *not involved*. If a minority of 49 percent by 51 percent, or of 1 percent by 99 percent is repressed is "regrettable" but not at all "undemocratic."[158] Thus, as Kuehnelt-Leddihn argues, even an absolute monarchy can be thoroughly liberal (but not at all democratic), while even a democracy can be tyrannical, totalitarian, illiberal, and overtly oppressive in regards to minorities.[159] The demands usually put forward to "improve" the "democratic tenets" are in reality *liberal* principles:

> The respect of minorities, moreover, the freedom of speech, the limitations imposed upon the rule of majorities have nothing to do with democracy as such. These are *liberal* tenets – they may or may not be present in a democracy.[160]

---

157 Ibid., pp. 2-3.

158 Kuehnelt-Leddihn, *Leftism Revisited*, pp. 17-18.

159 Kuehnelt-Leddihn, *Democracy's Road to Tyranny*, in: The Freeman: Ideas on Liberty, 1988 May.

160 Kuehnelt-Leddihn, *Liberty or Equality*, p. 7.

Since democracy's primary aim is to facilitate equality, it necessary needs the constant application of *force* which means that a central management has to create the conditions again and again in order to promote equality. This is the reason why egalitarianism is naturally tending towards centralization.[161] The growth of the agency of central government is but a logical consequence of the democratic progress. To be more precise,

> levelling equalitarianism demands a positive, wholesale, central management of that "artificial" apparatus of conditions for the promotion of entitative equality and the curbing of such "natural" variations as may tend to engender "privileges."[162]

What the liberal critics had in mind when criticizing democracy, was the anxiety with the power structures evolving from democracy (be it the state or "society") that intrudes into the most intimate spheres of personal lives and curtails liberty as such. The whole concept of "self-government" is but a sham for Kuehnelt-Leddihn: in reality, majorities rule over minorities – although mostly through representatives. According to Kuehnelt-Leddihn, democracy is "the concept of the totally politicized nation."[163]

We recognize the same preconceptions in Kuehnelt-Leddihn when defending monarchies and contrast their advantages to the pitfalls of democracies.[164] He considered European monarchies as liberal monarchies which respected personal and public liberties. On the other hand, he regarded the rise of Continental democracies as the emergence of collectivism, statism, majoritism, etc. – he emphasized all the regulations and rules arising from democracies, like prohibitions, universal conscription, income taxes and so forth. Kuehnelt-Leddihn claimed that *democratic governments are vested with far greater power than even absolute monarchies ever been*.[165] Furthermore, every former European government was *mixed* – consisting of democratic, aristocratic and monarchical elements.

---

161 Aurel Kolnai, *Privilege and Liberty*, in: *Privilege and Liberty and Other Essays in Political Philosophy*, p. 50.

162 Aurel Kolnai, *The Meaning of the "Common Man"*, in: *op. cit.*, p. 75.

163 Kuehnelt-Leddihn, *Leftism Revisited*, p. 21.; We have to see that this is in contrast to Arendt's approach which finds mass democracies in a permanent state of the *lack* of politics. This is due to the different concept of "politics" in Arendt and Kuehnelt-Leddihn. When speaking about politics, Arendt means the *antique* form, while Kuehnelt-Leddihn the *modern*.

164 See Kuehnelt-Leddihn, *Liberty or Equality*, pp. 133-164.

165 Kuehnelt-Leddihn, *Leftism Revisited*, p. 22.

With the ideological endeavor of democracies, this trait of "mixed" character is part of the past: "democracy has become unlimited, untrammeled, universal."[166]

The concept of the "politicized" nation, moreover, calls the exploitation of *envy* and keeps the whole nation in a constant state of mobilization into practice. The power of government rests on popularity, the basic structure of democracy is *indifferent to truth* or any values, so Kuehnelt-Leddihn's argument goes. The only goal is to garner the majority of the votes irrespective to the actual content of the politics in question. This also helps us to understand why "democracy can commit suicide democratically."[167] If a tyrant is democratically elected – because of his success to exploit the envy of a majority – there is no ground for objection which can be based on the "undemocratic" character of the process (as it was the case with Hitler's rise to power).

These contentions of Kuehnelt-Leddihn were squarely based on the experience as taught by the history of Europe in the last two hundred years. He saw the unholy alliance between democracy (i.e. the majority rule of politically equal citizens) and the most illiberal ideologies which, in the Western hemisphere, manifested themselves on the surface as nationalism (which in Europe also means *ethnicism*),[168] socialism, racism and all their variants and mixtures. Moreover, as it applies mostly to Continental Europe, he perceived it most difficult to preserve the liberal tenets in democracies in ideologically deeply divided countries which are primarily Catholic.[169]

The Postulate of Identity and the Collectivist-Democratic Concept of Rule

Any analysis or review of the issues in the field of politics or history of ideas, by necessity also has to reflect upon certain anthropological notions. Politics is comprised of human actions, and there always exists an attachment of meaningfulness to their actions which makes the action itself meaningful. Behind the actions, there are all kinds of presuppositions, rational and irrational as well as sentiments that arise from something which is sometimes vaguely

166 John Lukacs, *Democracy and Populism: Fear and Hatred*, Yale University Press, 2005, p. 11.
167 Ibid., p. 176.
168 Ibid., p. 24.
169 We have already insisted on this point; see above the chapter on Rationalism and Ideology.

called “human nature.” This vagueness notwithstanding, we are capable to detect certain *motives* of human actions which manifest themselves also in political concepts.

According to Kuehnelt-Leddihn, the human being has two basic drives: the one he calls *diversitarian*, the other *identitarian*. While the former rejoices in diversity (ethnic, sexual, national etc.), the latter is a pure herd instinct which strives for *sameness*. It seeks conformity, uniformity, and is based on the love of the self, i.e., egotism.[170] All people share these sentiments and all people have some of both. Though, so the argument of Kuehnelt-Leddihn goes, “we share with the beast the instinct to seek identity with another; we become fully human only through our drive and enthusiasm for diversity.”[171]

Identitarianism is closely connected to egalitarianism: whatever is identical must be equal as well (although, it is not by any means true the other way around). The exaggerated insistence on equality could and on certain occasion *does* end up in the demand of identity. If the identitarian drive becomes ascendant, it forms the basis for social and political collectivism which means enmity towards *anyone who dares to be different*. Under the category of such identitarian political movements, Kuehnelt-Leddihn counts such as socialism, nationalism, communism, and democracy.

Individualism and collectivism differ only in degree but not in essence. An “individual” or the “Common Man” are the constructs of “subversive sophists”[172] and rationalist doctrinaires; the “individual” is an abstraction, pure and simple, which figures a man deprived of all his particular loyalties, group affiliations, and connections. Therefore, the concept of the “individual” (as opposed to the person) is already based on the postulate of identity:

> As the subversive mind is essentially individualistic and isolationistic, so also is it essentially collectivistic and identitarian: on the view inherent in it, the curse of division and of being “set against one another” cannot be surmounted except by a “fusion into one”; an actual identification of consciousness, of qualities and of interest. In fact, individualism (tending

---

170 Erik v. Kuehnelt-Leddihn, *Leftism Revisited*, p. 3.; *Menace of the Herd*, pp. 15-30; *Liberty or Equality*, p. 15.

171 Kuehnelt-Leddihn, *Leftism Revisited*, p. 4.

172 Aurel Kolnai, *Privilege and Liberty*, in: *Privilege and Liberty and Other Essays in Political Philosophy*, p. 19.

> towards equalitarianism) prefigures collectivism from the outset, and again, collectivism is only individualism raised to the high power of an absolute monism centered in "all and every one."[173]

It is for this reason that Talmon, Kolnai, and Kuehnelt-Leddihn defended the principles of hierarchy, inequality, and manifoldness in contradistinction to egalitarian, monist, centralistic, and collectivistic principles. Kolnai insisted on an opposition between *Participation* and *Identity*. The mistake of the believers of Identity consists of an equation of the private with the common good. The common good, thus conceived, is nothing more but the sum total of private demands placed on society. Identity figures what is *lowest* in man whereas Participation points to the values which are highest in man and higher than man. The tendency which strives for the latter is manifest in Privilege, while former is contained in such words as Equality and Emancipation.[174]

The "Common Man," construed this way, shows hatred towards anything which is not identical with its own characteristics – it cannot tolerate otherness. We can observe this idea in "[T]he intolerance of the Marxist 'labour movement' for workers of another persuasion, labelled as 'traitors to their class' (...); the 'democratic' conception of a political world [made up by] uniformity and universality; the Demo-Fascio-Communist procedure (...) of securing national uniformity by uprooting and transfer 'minority' populations."[175] Whether the identitarianism in question is of a particularist or a universalist pattern is, for Kolnai, a matter of detail; what counts is that it *stimulates a kind of egalitarianism which is illiberal* because it *excludes all those who do not conform to the "We."* The inequality which irritates the identitarian is always within the concrete community proper – those detested will be excluded from "humanity," from the "nation," or the "people." As an effect, a universally accepted standard of feeling of "usness" will be developed, in other words "nostrism," to borrow a term from an Austrian National Socialist, Walther Pembaur.[176]

The gratification of human needs, instincts and volition combined with the principle of identity produces the "Common Man," "whose" justifications shall serve as the only possible bases to decide which aim is legitimate and which is not. All other considerations, which

---

173 Ibid., pp. 21-22.
174 Ibid., p. 26.
175 Ibid., p. 28.
176 Kuehnelt-Leddihn, *op. cit.*, p. 4.

restraint the "Common Man's" aims should be abandoned and all realities embodying them abolished:

> In a Liberal-Democracy, and in fact largely even under Fascism, the power of the paramount "will of Society" is hampered – and, therefore, all human freedom is made unreal – by all kinds of divisions, reservations, privileges, taboos, conventions, traditions and so forth; whereas in Soviet society "freedom" is real because the supreme power is unlimited *and* embodies the power of "every one and all" – with the exception of the "reproved," of course: those unfit for identification with the will of Society, those outside the pales of humanity.[177]

The government should be omnipotent *precisely* because it represents the true "will" of "society." Society, thus understood, is a unified, single subject, which includes the will of all. Communism for example is "real freedom" because it fulfills the "progress" of the Common Man, that is, it accomplishes the incorporation of the "will of all" into one arbitrary human will, the one identical will of the people. The Common Man recognizes *no valid law*, *no standard* outside its own will – hence freedom is comprehended as "real" in communism as opposed to the "unreal" or "partial" freedom of Western democracies, which are still restricted by all sorts of class divisions, inequalities, and hierarchies. The "rule of law" is a contradiction in terms in this *totalitarian concept of liberty*, since a "law" is something placed above the sovereignty of man, an outside check transcending the "will" of man. It must be emphasized that totalitarian tyranny is not horrible because the volition of man is confined and put between some iron chains of old, tyrannical laws, but because it is essentially "lawless" in the sense that no outside barrier is put on the subjective voluntarism. Kolnai calls this phenomenon *the self-enslavement of man*.[178]

The basis of the morality of the "Common Man" is formed by the principle of self-interest, which – as it was maintained by Helvetius, Rousseau, Morelly, Mably, Holbach, and many others – by necessity common to all and therefore serves as the only valid scheme for the common good.[179]

---

177 Kolnai, *op. cit.*, p. 31.

178 Ibid., pp. 32-34.

179 Talmon, *The Origins of Totalitarian Democracy*, pp. 31-33.

It is exactly the fulfillment of "progress" of the democratic principle which makes it for Kolnai so closely related to communism. Definitely not some transcendent, "objective" measure or law is defying human will as such, but, on the contrary, it is human will *par excellence* – which by its aspiration for omnipotence whishes to abolish all laws, customs, habits, traditions, which are outside the volition of the unified subject – that creates the cradle of a new type of tyranny. It is subjectivism written large. It is only when the conformance between private and common good is made complete,[180] that the sum of private volitions can be transformed into a totalitarian collective. It shall be noted here, that this collective is made up by identical wills but which includes only the wills of the "Common Man" and is hostile to any distinctiveness, divisions, be it class or rank, and subscribes only to the distinctions based on "functionality." Whatever is not compatible with the unified will of the idol of the "Common Man" has to be destroyed or assimilated to its will.[181]

The idea that people are concurrently rulers and ruled, that they are in the state of "self-rule," led to the conclusion that "rule" as such will eventually dissolve or already is dissolved. Yet, this is definitely not the case. As Arendt notes, an argument closely resembling Kolnai, in collectivist democracies, "rule" does not diminish but instead is only transposed and renamed:

> The most obvious salvation from the dangers of plurality is mon-archy, or one-man-rule, in its many varieties, from outright tyranny of one against all to benevolent despotism and to those forms of democracy in which the many form a collective body so that the people "is many in one" and constitute themselves as a "monarch."[182]

The core of the problem lies in the thought that "sovereignty" and "freedom" are essentially of the same nature, even identical.[183] Hence the thought that if all will be entitled as "sovereign," all will be free as well. Sovereignty means "power" and if equated with

180 Voegelin, *From Enlightenment to Revolution*, p. 73.
181 Kolnai, *op. cit.*, p. 23.
182 Arendt, *The Human Condition*, pp. 220-221.
183 Ibid., p. 235.

freedom, it becomes inherently dangerous.[184] This "sovereignty" implies, firstly, the basest motives of human nature and, secondly, a crude conformance between the personal and the general interest. This doctrine of general will which was developed to perfection by Rousseau (and with which we shall deal further below) implies that whoever does not identify himself with the general interest is not part of humanity, the nation, society, the people.[185] A "nation" or any other egalitarian, monolithically conceptualized collective should consist of individuals with the same motives, interests, without any allegiance paid to particular groups or classes, without representing any partial interest; it is only in this manner possible to constitute one collective entity with one single will.[186] Others will be considered aliens, pariahs, traitors, outcasts, and so on and so forth. This is the natural result of the identitarian instinct, which wants to dispense with all "alien" influences that may disturb and/or cannot be assimilated into, the "harmonious" framework of Identity. It is hostile to everything which is different from the "Common Man," and is vividly present on the whole path from the French Enlightenment and Revolution all the way down to Communism with its hatred of the bourgeoisie, the aristocracy, the rich, the nobility, or National Socialism with its hatred of the Jews, the nobility and royalty.

Summary

In summation some final remarks appear to be necessary concerning the nature of collectivism as identified by the emigrants. We shall see that collectivism basically means to all (all to most) of them the lack of personal liberty. But the lack of liberty, obviously, is far from being one-dimensional problem.

Firstly, we have to emphasize the disappearance of transcendental restraints, which involve religious and social divisions. The defense of authority, hierarchy, and the plurality of social institutions is not based on an equation of some "natural" hierarchy with the transcendental. The inequalities present in societies are not defended simply because they represent without aberration the order of Heaven *eo ipso*. This would amount to perfectionism

184 Hayek saw this mentality mainly in the philosophy of John Dewey, one of the most important figures of totalitarian-democratic doctrine. See Hayek, *The Road to Serfdom*, p. 78 note 4.

185 Talmon, *op. cit.*, p. 48.

186 Ibid., p. 93.

which all of our authors were quite consciously avoiding. Hierarchy and inequality are needed in order to preserve the various values and traditions which *participate* in a sense in the order of being, but resemble the latter only imperfectly.

The other dimension of the importance of transcendental barriers is that of laws which restrict the insatiable appetite of human desires and the sheer arbitrariness of the human will. The restriction of "will" is necessary to provide a sphere where a degree of *true* "self-government" is possible, where the individual can exist in a sphere which is his "little kingdom."[187]

Secondly, only with the division and coexistence of social institutions embodying traditions, with the *corps intermédiares,* is it possible to retain the liberties of the individual person. Only these are suitable to preserve essentially autonomous spheres of human existence. If the sum of human desires is transformed into a single entity, a "whole," a personified deity, the autonomous sphere of the person as such withers away. Without autonomous spheres and transcendental laws, the basis from which a resistance to tyranny can be formed is gone.

If the collective (conceived as a one great subject) assigns itself the role of omnipotence, it engages in a *hubris,* which leads to the view that in the interest of the collective, the end justifies the means, ergo, everything is permitted. Any distinctness, different, superior or outstanding character will be conceived as non-conforming and an enemy of the interest of the collective deity. Collectivism is therefore definitely egalitarian, oppressive and identitarian. The problem of modern democratic nation-states for the emigrants was exactly this egalitarian and identitarian character in various forms.

187 Kuehnelt-Leddihn, *Liberty or Equality*, pp. 109; 119.

Totalitarian Democracy

The term "totalitarian democracy" was coined by Jacob Talmon. We have already insisted on the point in the previous discussion that individualism and collectivism are but two sides of the same coin, indeed, they presuppose each other. The "individual" is a philosophical construction. He is not a "person" in the ordinary sense of the term, certainly not one with various loyalties, memberships in particular historical and social groups. He is instead an isolated being who, – as the assumption asserts it – decides "rationally." Thus, we have to view the philosophy of Rousseau, or, rather the "two Rousseaus" – the one being romantic individualist while the other the collectivist – as two counterparts which supplement each other. This connection was recognized basically by all of our authors in focus, with the possible exceptions of Hayek and Mises who are self-described "individualists." To a certain degree, even their views fit into the definition above (i.e., rationalist construction). However, we have to remark that their individualism was rather classical and not at all modern (and, also, that Hayek with the passing of time moved more and more to a Burkean, traditionalist view).

While we recognize in Rousseau both modern romantic individualism and collectivism, we also have to acknowledge in him the theoretician of *totalitarian democracy* and modern democracy in general. It must be borne in mind that it was not his views on democracy as such, but his idea of the *Social Contract* which contributed so much to modern democratic theory and modern totalitarianism.[188] He considered democracy a form of government only suitable for the gods and only fit to small areas, which closely resembles the notions of Montesquieu. We have to note, also, that in Rousseau's ideas, we can find the origins of both Left and Right totalitarianism:

> Here is the case illustrating the transformation of Rousseau's thought from individualist rationalism into collectivism of the organic and historical type. The cognizant being who wills freely is being transformed into a product at first of teaching and

[188] Kuehnelt-Leddihn, *Leftism Revisited*, p. 68.

> environment, then of historical forces, past traditions, and finally of the national spirit. Similarly the general will, a truth to be discovered, is being transplanted by the idea and experience of patriotism into the common heritage with all its peculiarities. Here is the branching out of Rousseau's contribution into two currents, into the rationalist-individualist and eventually collectivist of the Left on the one hand, and the irrational nationalist ideology of the Right, with its affinities with German political romanticism, Fichte, Hegel and Savigny, on the other.[189]

It is, accordingly, in this manner that we shall consider the term "totalitarian democracy" or "democratic totalitarianism" as a useful one. The idea of the general will, the central thesis of the *Social Contract*, is the one with which we are concerned here. We have to remember that, according to Rousseau, true majority is manifested in the general will *even if it is expressed by a minority*.[190] Rousseau's comment that minorities have to be "forced to be free" contributed more than anything else to the totalitarian trends of the twentieth century.

The general will thus becomes an "objective" will, embodied in the sovereign, who is one and indivisible and has to be recognized as such. Loyalty should be paid to one and only one authority, namely, to the general will. In the words of Thomas Molnar, Rousseau's fancy was the uniting of the two heads of the eagle.[191] At this point, we have arrived at a definition according to which "democracy (...) is, really and actually, rule in the name of the people."[192]

We will now examine the various implications of this doctrine as well as the definition of totalitarianism and its various manifestations such as, for example, economic planning. Therefore, logic dictates that we subdivide this chapter into distinct discourses. First, we shall define and dissect the concept of "totalitarianism" with all its historical and idea historical implications.

The Meaning of Totalitarianism

---

189 Talmon, *The Origins of Totalitarian Democracy*, p. 276.

190 Ibid., p. 99.

191 Molnár Tamás, *A modernség politikai elvei*, Európa Könyvkiadó, 1998. [The Political Tenets of Modernity] (Only published in Hungarian)

192 John Lukacs, *Democracy and Populism: Fear and Hatred*, p. 5.

The "standard" argument is that totalitarianism as a phenomenon is modern and did not even exist prior to the modern age. It must be distinguished from both "authoritarian" forms of government and classical tyranny as well. Nevertheless, for some decades, the understanding of totalitarianism was connected to the "authoritarian personality"[193] – an interpretation which we have to dismiss on the ground that it is futile. We shall deal with the problem in more detail in due course.

However, initially, we should take into account "totalitarianism" as a concept. Although John Lukacs is right in saying that the "total power of the state over the people" is, in the strict sense of the definition, impossible, we have to reject his argument that totalitarianism as a concept is useless.[194] Even if there is no such thing as depicted in the anti-utopias of Orwell and Huxley, if we lack a concept that differentiates between "simple" tyranny and dictatorships, we shall be unable to grasp the very nature of what renders all these phenomena (authoritarianism, tyranny, dictatorship, totalitarianism) different in kind. The claim is, then, that "totalitarianism" should be used as a concept, as an "ideal type" in the Weberian sense – although "ideal types" in reality in their pure form do not exist, they still provide us with a framework in which we are able to understand diverse phenomena.

First, we have to discard the widespread and fallacious equation of "authoritarianism" with "totalitarianism" on the one hand and "authoritarianism" and "tyranny" on the other. According to Arendt:

> Behind the liberal identification of totalitarianism with authoritarianism, and the concomitant inclination to see "totalitarian" trends in every authoritarian limitation of freedom, lies an older confusion of authority with tyranny, and of legitimate power and violence. The difference between tyranny and authoritarian government has always been that the tyrant rules in accordance with his own will and interest, whereas even the most draconic authoritarian government is bound by laws.[195]

193 Theodor W. Adorno et. al., *The Authoritarian Personality*, W W Norton & Co Inc, 1993.

194 Lukacs, *Democracy and Populism*, pp. 126-131. John Lukacs put forward a critique of Hannah Arendt's *Origins of Totalitarianism*, claiming that Arendt's thoughts on the innermost connection between anti-Semitism and modern totalitarianism are dead wrong (in which he is right) and that the distinguishing mark of modern dictatorships are popular support and populism, in some cases the indifference of the masses – with which Arendt's analysis is perfectly compatible for she also emphasized the mass support of modern political movements and totalitarian regimes.

195 Hannah Arendt, *What is Authority?*, in: *Between Past and Future*, p. 97.

Authoritarian governments in a more "demonstrative" manner can be described as pyramids, which have their source of authority (i.e., laws) outside the pyramid itself and the various layers all possess some amount of it. All layers are in contact with each other, with the top and with the source of authority, outside the pyramid.[196] In order to avoid the common confusion, we have to enumerate the governments of Franco, Horthy, Salazar, Rivera, and others under this label; they were neither tyrannies nor totalitarian governments and were dictatorships only in the older sense of the term.[197]

Tyranny can also be visualized through the image of the pyramid: in tyrannies, the intervening layers disappear and only the top and the bottom are present. This means, in contradistinction to authoritarianism, that tyranny is essentially egalitarian where the ruler has all the power while all the ruled are equal – and equally powerless.[198]

Now, "the proper image of totalitarian rule and organization seems to me to be the structure of the onion, in whose center, in a kind of empty space, *the leader* is located; whatever he does – whether he integrates the body politic as in an authoritarian hierarchy, or oppresses his subjects like a tyrant – he does it from *within*, and not from without or above."[199] Thus, we have to conceive totalitarianism of as a *novel phenomenon*, unprecedented in previous ages. Neither tyranny nor authoritarian government can aptly describe totalitarianism as such. Therefore, we have to take into account, if only briefly, its historical and idea historical context.

As we shall see in the following discussion, totalitarianism as a novelty is only conceivable with certain preconditions: the breakdown of traditional social and political authorities; the atomization of society; the entrance of politically disinterested masses into the political sphere; the claim for total rule over the person in order to create some alleged "wholeness" or "totality"; and, last but not least, ideology, rationalism, politico-religious content, propaganda and terror. The aim of totalitarianism is to create the condition where *no more autonomous sphere is left* and everything is organized into a certain, narrowly defined "oneness."

196 Ibid., p. 98.
197 Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, p. 309.
198 *What is Authority*, in: Arendt, *op. cit.*, p. 99.
199 Ibid., [italics added]

The Problem of Modern Revolutions

In order to understand the stream of modern democracy which had been criticized by the emigrants, it is unavoidable to direct our attention to the phenomena of modern revolutions. It is the readily distinguishable peculiarity of these revolutions (or, to be more precise, the French Revolution) in which Talmon, Voegelin, Arendt, Strauss, Kuehnelt-Leddihn and the others as well found something entirely new, which dramatically changed the course of affairs in Western history. The French Revolution is of primary importance because it, for our authors in concern, laid down the fundament on which later totalitarianisms had been erected.

To shortly present the points which are to follow, we have to delineate the main references of criticism in each author. Talmon was primarily concerned with the *rationalism* and *apriorism* of the revolutionaries in contradistinction with the empiricist, trial-and-error method based on liberal tenets and tradition. From the former, he saw the trend of *totalitarian democracy* arising while the latter he called liberal. Voegelin and Kuehnelt-Leddihn stressed the non-Christian, or, rather, *anti-Christian* characteristics of the French Revolution and saw this element as the deciding factor in all the followers of its trend, pre-eminently National Socialism and Communism. The analysis of Arendt, however, stressed the disappearance of the political sphere from the stage of Western societies and as we know, the political sphere is for Arendt the place for *freedom*, this means, the political existence is the *condition sine qua non* of human existence if men are considered to be free. For Strauss, as it is evident from his debate with Kojéve, the problem of the modern revolutionary is that that *the modern revolutionary is a tyrant*. As we shall see, all these elements – rationalist doctrinaire mentality, revolution as tyranny, the loss of freedom, the vanishing of the Christian tradition – all play a vital role in the defining political mass movements and regimes of the twentieth century.

The classical term *revolutio* means a cyclical motion with its inevitability and necessity. Accordingly, the idea of novelty was entirely absent from it. In this classical sense – however strange it might sound after the modern revolutions – it rather should mean “restoration,” restoration of political freedom and ancient greatness; Machiavelli was concerned with *revolutio* in this sense – though, it is true, it was him who was already grappling with the

problem of how to break the cycle of the rise and fall of empires and how to restore permanently the "glory" of the republic. However, Arendt reminds us that from the original concept of revolution (as taken from astronomy) the notions of novelty, violence and beginning had been absent. In the modern concept of the revolution, we have the combination of novelty and the irresistibility of the motion at once present.[200] The perception that the revolution "follows its own path" independent of intentional human actions is grounded in this belief of the irresistibility. However, at the same time, the modern revolutions are aiming at something entirely new.

There is a supposition which was altogether missing from previous political thought, as Arendt and Talmon observe: this is the idea of a "natural order." The natural order is an *a priori* postulate which is to be regarded as the perfect state of affairs. Traditionally, both freedom and equality were conceived as products of "artificial" circumstances. In the classical conception, the equality of the *polis* is only possible because men are *not* equal and they require an artificial institution (the political realm) where they *can* appear as equals, that is, as peers.[201] This means that the classical and modern concept of equality are diametrically opposed; modern egalitarianism is based on the assumption that in the "natural state of things" people, by virtue of being men, are free and equal. To counter this argument, Arendt claims as follows: the very fact that people can be free and equal is the result of the achievements of civilization and man-made institutions. It is this recognition which led first Burke and later Arendt presenting an outright apologia of conventions, institutions and traditions which make freedom and equality possible.[202]

It is necessary, according to Arendt, to put the ideas of the *philosophes* into a historical context. The revolt of the revolutionaries was prompted by their disgust of the hypocrisy of high society. It is their passionate emotionalism which wanted to bring the "true feelings" and the "innermost goodness" of Rousseau's good savage to the political sphere, displacing the immensely rotten patterns of society. It was the "motives of the heart" which Robespierre wanted to display in public. But the motives of the heart can only find their tranquility in their own dark corner, away from the open light of the public. Whoever wants to bring the ultimate,

200 Arendt, *On Revolution*, Penguin Books, 2006, p. 31. ff.

201 Ibid., pp. 20-21.

202 We have already mentioned that the equality of the political sphere can only be maintained according to Arendt with inequalities present in the private sphere. See the chapter on mass democracies.

immaculate goodness of the private darkness of the heart will breed criminality in the public.[203] It is this perfectionist emotional sentiment which wanted to solve the problem of theodicy once and for all (that is, root out all evil, hypocrisy from the world) which eventually ended in terror.

Epistemologically speaking, the influence of Locke has to be acknowledged. His doctrine implies that the human mind is a *tabula rasa* and man is neither good nor bad (though, by inclination, rather good) and can be formed whatever way we want to.[204] The *education* or, rather, the *re-education* of men is the primary task of the revolutionary regime in order to erase all previous habits which are the product of "irrational conservatism" and traditional morals and replace them with those with which men will be capable of being fit into the natural order, that is, the perfect scheme of affairs. There is no such thing as a "sinner" in reality, there is only the stupid and the ignorant who can be enlightened. We have to emphasize that with this intent the ultimate goal of the modern revolution (as it was noted also by Strauss, who saw the predecessor of this movement in the conquest of nature) was to *transform human nature*. We are led to think that it is for this reason that Arendt claims that totalitarianism wants to direct "from within." Rousseau's legislator is in reality the "Great Educator."[205]

With the two-fold assumption that the human mind and behavior can be formed and that the evil of the world can be eliminated, the recipe for totalitarianism is formulated:

> The totalitarian potentialities of this philosophy are not quite obvious at first sight. But they are nevertheless grave. The very idea of a self-contained system from which all evil and unhappiness have been exorcised is totalitarian. The assumption that such a scheme of things is feasible and indeed inevitable is an invitation to a régime to proclaim that it embodies this perfection, to exact from its citizens recognition and submission and to brand opposition as vice or perversion.[206]

With what Arendt calls the "social question," the problem (in a secularized form) of theodicy enters. As a matter of fact, so Arendt claims, it was the very novelty in a historical

---

203 Ibid., pp. 86-88.

204 Talmon, *op. cit.*, p. 30.

205 Ibid.

206 Ibid., p. 35.

sense that the multitudes which formerly were not concerned with political issues at all, entered the sphere of public affairs. The two-sided problem of necessity is thus being involved: it was the question of the "social," that is, mass poverty, which gave rise to the French Revolution.[207] The "good savage" of Rousseau was perceived as a human being intact of the hypocritical institutions of politics. The attempt of the Revolution (or rather, after its initial period) was to liberate these masses, i.e., *liberate them from necessity*.

Arendt suggests that the French Revolution utterly failed whereas the American Revolution succeeded in creating a body politic free from the concerns of the social question and where people can jointly act together as free and equal. The American Revolution, of course, did not aim at a "natural order" and a "total revolution."[208]

The "social question" is the root of the constant misunderstanding of the revolutionaries of the French scene, their confusion of liberty with security.[209] The whole problem of the messianic endeavor (Talmon) to root out all evil from the world, that is, to solve the social question is bound to fail since it *cannot be solved with political means*:

> And although the whole record of past revolutions demonstrates beyond doubt that every attempt to solve the social question with political means leads into terror, and that it is terror which sends revolutions to their doom, it can hardly be denied that to avoid this fatal mistake is almost impossible when a revolution breaks out under conditions of mass poverty.[210] (...) Nothing, we might say today, could be more obsolete than to attempt to liberate mankind from poverty by political means; nothing could be more futile and more dangerous.[211]

Not only is the problem with the social side of the French Revolution which bothered our authors but also with its political suppositions. According to Arendt, the fallacy of the revolutionaries in France rested on the notion that power and authority vested in the selfsame source, the people. The doctrine of the *volonté générale* implied that "will is law," indeed, the

---

207 Arendt, *op. cit.*, p. 80.

208 Talmon also contrasted the two revolutions, see *op. cit.*, p. 27; Kuehnelt-Leddihn even denies the label of "revolution" from the American one and claimed that it was a war of independence and not a revolution. See *Leftism Revisited* p. 57.

209 Talmon, *Ibid.*, p. 53.

210 Arendt, *op. cit.*, p. 102.

211 Ibid., p. 104.

only source of law.[212] But Arendt maintains that while it is right to assert that *power* (and not violence) comes from below and rests in the people, authority necessarily comes from above. It is again a difference between the American and the French scene, that the former was guided by the ancient Roman idea that *cum potestas in populo auctoritas in senatu sit.*[213] Authority is the quintessence of stability and therefore cannot be built on such a fragile principle as "will." It is because "the so-called will of a multitude (...) is ever-changing by definition, and that a structure built on it as its foundation is built on quicksand."[214] It is for this very reason that the French revolutionaries never succeeded in framing a lasting constitution, for a constitution must be based on an objective standard and not on a purely subjective one such as "will."[215] The insistence on volition rather than an outer source of authority was present already in absolutism and with this recognition Arendt closely follows the argument of Tocqueville that the Revolution in fact had been prefigured in absolutism.[216] The sovereign will of the king is thus transposed into the sovereign will of the nation.[217]

Yet, the problem of the concept of a regime formed on the basis on will does not end here; the pure arbitrariness inherent in the concept as such, is also problematic. Arendt maintains that the *general will* does not equate to the *consent of all* which can be arrived at only after an exchange of opinions and this means that opinions are formed in exchange with each other. The "general will" implies unanimity (this is exactly what made Tocqueville and later Arendt and others fearful of "public opinion") which, by its very definition cannot be formed by the plurality of opinions but only enforced – by different means of course.[218]

The "will" of the multitude is tyrannical. Since the revolutionary regime represents universal happiness, liberty and the like, opposition to this regime is opposition to humanity, liberty and happiness. Talmon emphasized that this "humanist" interpretation is the most dangerous of all because it deprives all opposition of all its legitimate claims against the

---

212 Ibid., p. 175.

213 Arendt, *What is Authority?*, in: *op. cit.*, p. 122.

214 Arendt, *On Revolution*, p. 154.

215 Ibid., p. 148.

216 Ibid.; See Tocqueville's *Ancien Regime and theFrench Revolution*, Penguin Books, 2008.

217 We have already mentioned this problem and the connection between Hobbes and Rousseau in the chapter on Collectivism.

218 Ibid., p. 66.

regime and even of its very humanity.[219] It is for this reason, that the revolutionaries, Robespierre, Saint-Just and the like were ardent defenders of the freedom of the press but became violently opposed to it at the moment they grabbed power. Competing ideas are important as long as there is still a regime of tyranny; they become superfluous, even counterproductive, as soon as the "regime of liberty" attained power. This mentality was discovered by Voegelin when analyzing Condorcet's ideas:

> The passages are a *locus classicus* for the welter of genuine social grievances, of moral indignation and justified demands for reform, of compassion for human misery and sincere social idealism, of *ressentiment* and hatred of the system (Goebbels), of the contradictions of universal philanthropy and murderous intentions against the enemy, of contempt of prejudice and fostering of still worse ones, of common sense in details and obscurantism in fundamentals, of the fanatical attack on fanaticism, of bigotry in the name of tolerance, of freedom of thought through suppressing the thought of the enemy, of independence of reason through hammering the *masse du peuple* into a dazed obedience to a public opinion which itself is produced by the propaganda barrage of dubious intellectuals – that is, for the welter from which rises the sanguinary confusion of Condorcet's time and of our own.[220]

In order to grasp the importance of this phenomenon we have to view an example which clarifies this way of thought in its concreteness. It is the opposition to parliamentarism of revolutionary or totalitarian democracy. Talmon emphasizes that purely political democracy was a later invention and that revolutionary democracy aimed at social ends, that is, substantive ends which denies the right to opposition.

Robespierre and the other revolutionaries despised parliaments because they represent "partial interests."[221] *Democracy means the execution of the general will which is one and indivisible* and all those who oppose it cannot count on mercy, in the apprehension of totalitarian democracy, as Talmon argues. Since the general will represents freedom, opposition to it means to be on the side of tyranny and counter-revolution. It is this attempt to

---

219 Ibid.; Incidentally, the same line of argument can be found in Carl Schmitt's *The Concept of the Political*, op. cit.

220 Voegelin, *From Enlightenment to Revolution*, p. 129.

221 Cited in Talmon, *op. cit.*, pp. 45; 93.

reconcile freedom with an objective scheme in which the revolutionaries failed. While the primary aims were freedom and self-interest, the ends became the establishment of an institution as a chief regulator – mainly the state – (instead of spontaneity) and the brake on all human initiative. The revolutionary concept of the nation, according to Talmon, is monolithic and egalitarian, the power of the king and the authority of tradition is displaced by unlimited popular sovereignty and only *those* belong to the nation who conform to the general will: "La volonté nationale...n'a besoin que de sa réalité" – as Saint Just said.[222] All those, who cannot conform are not people who have "different opinions" but *enemies*. And this applies not only to those who oppose openly but also to the indifferent.[223]

The principle of *tabula rasa* was applied to the political and the epistemological sphere as well: all previous institutions as well as "superstitions" of the people had to be eliminated. This requires a political clerisy, a spiritual-political leadership who create the ground on which "true democracy" can flourish. In order to fulfill this task, conditions need to be created which represent the "natural" state of affairs: equal material welfare (in this instance, the inner connection between democracy and distributive socialism is observed by Talmon), popular education and elimination of "evil influences," that is, opposition. [224] If the longed-for conditions do not follow automatically the removal of evil barriers (laws, traditions) then "education" is needed. The contradiction between the sovereignty of the people and the exclusive rationalist doctrine here is manifest.[225] It is this conception of revolutionary democracy, according to Talmon, which contains all the elements in later totalitarian systems: extensive propaganda, elimination of all autonomous and diverse spheres of existence, and political opposition, and the usage of violence as a justified means to attain "social harmony."

Of course, this attitude does not mean that only the "political" differences need to be removed; on the contrary, *all sorts* of divergence are considered evil since they obstruct the realization of the one and only general will. The anti-liberal egalitarianism and "identitarianism" can be felt in the ethnic nationalism of the French Revolution, i.e., the attempt to do away with all other linguistic, ethnic, religious etc. groups.

---

222 Ibid., p. 74.

223 Kuehnelt-Leddihn, *Leftism Revisited*, p. 71.

224 Talmon, *op. cit.*, p. 106.

225 Ibid., p. 145.

Kuehnelt-Leddihn suggests, that only the fall of Robespierre prevented the destruction of steeples and towers but the revolution, however, succeeded at least in proposing the deportation and murdering of whole ethnic units.[226] The idea of the "totally politicized nation" (Kuehnelt-Leddihn) wants to gain control over the "totality" of man, its ideas, habits, language, and the like. The one loyalty which he must pay by all means belongs to the "nation." We have to note that in this concept there is *no* division of political and social powers and no pluralism concerning authorities but only one monolithic state which derives its power from the general will and therefore, no control, opposition is legitimate in its direction. Mainly all the authors we have taken into account see this mentality as the root-cause of nationalism.

We have to analyze shortly the brutality of the revolution as well. Brutality is not only the result of moral perfectionism[227] but also the *anti-Christian stance* which was recognized primarily by Eric Voegelin and Erik von Kuehnelt-Leddihn. In fact, Kuehnelt-Leddihn sees the brutality of three horrible models (the French, the Russian and the German Revolutions) bred by this anti-Christian character.[228] The understanding of the revolution requires, as Voegelin claims, the consideration of its religious implications in the wider sense of the term. For the French Revolution was the first large-scale political religion to appear on the surface of the Occident.

The initial anti-Christianity is found by Kuehnelt-Leddihn in the writings of Marquis de Sade (whose name is the origin of our word "sadism"). The egalitarianism of de Sade is that of the extreme: he demanded total equality with the plant and the animal kingdom,[229] conceived the human being as a mere animal and contemplated with satisfaction on the possibility that mankind can eventually annihilate itself.[230] It was also his idea that children do not belong to their families but to the state. The atheism of de Sade was violent and it openly denied the innate dignity of the human being as such. With de Sade and with the materialist-atheistic trend of the revolution, it "laid down the pattern of inhumanity that set a

226 Kuehnelt-Leddihn, *Leftism Revisited*, pp. 80-81.

227 The connection between utopia and violence was also recognized by Karl R. Popper, see his *Utopia and Violence*, in: Hibbert Journal 1948/16., pp. 109-116.

228 Erik v. Kuehnelt-Leddihn, *The True Meaning of Auschwitz*, National Review, December 19, 1986.

229 Kuehnelt-Leddihn, *Leftism Revisited*, p. 66.

230 Ibid., pp. 66-67.

lasting example."[231] One of the popular examples of the senseless brutality of the Revolution usually is the murdering of Princess de Lamballe. She had not only been murdered but also humiliated: her private parts were cut out and were carried around on the streets in broad daylight. The head of the officer of the Bastille – who surrendered to the revolutionaries – was cut off with a small kitchen knife, and a young defender of the Tuileries was rolled in butter and fried alive. However, we shall not describe the brutalities in gory detail here – for considerations of both space and common decency. In general,

> the history of the revolution is a nauseating mixture of idealistic verbiage, of treachery and intrigue, of sentimental incantations and senseless butcheries, of envy and outbursts of sadism.[232]

The Revolution was indeed the beginning of a new epoch. The attempt was to create an entirely new, modern civilization, equally fit for all nations but, however, this level should be determined by the spirit of the French Revolution.[233] The disregard of the spiritual-religious question is for Voegelin a fallacy. The French Revolution was the first big project to present a potential prospect for a *non-Christian* civilization, i.e., it was "anti-Christian and tended toward the establishment of a caesaro-papistic régime of a non-Christian religion."[234] For instance, we can observe this attempt explicitly in Rousseau's idea of the *réligion civile*.[235] The source of divinity becomes intramundane and it is contained in the spirit of the republic. Nonetheless, this is not, as it is conventionally assumed, a mere separation of the religious and secular sphere:

> The idea of the state as a theocracy, with the legislators as the ecclesiastical authority, with the law as the divine manifestation, and with the commonweal as the substance, thus, is fully developed before the Revolution. The religious attempts of the Revolution pursued a tortuous path toward the realization of totalitarian theocracy.[236]

---

231 Ibid., p. 75.

232 Ibid.

233 Voegelin, *op. cit.*, p, 167.

234 Ibid., p. 171.

235 Ibid.; Cf. Rousseau, *Social Contract*, Book IV, Ch. 8.

236 Ibid., p. 172.

The revolutionary government, thus, is *not* free from religion but obtains its religious substance from other sources and requires the citizenry complete loyalty to the political and religious authority. This politico-religious authority has the full grasp of knowledge of spiritual and rational concerns alike, and therefore is able to replace the old domination of man over man by a government of scientists and engineers. This is the pure "vision of a totalitarian society dominated by theoretical and practical technocrats."[237]

Another remark of Voegelin is of importance and relevance to our topic. This is the notion that the whole "practical" theory of revolution and restoration, revolution and counter-revolution does not touch at the heart of the matter. A deeper analysis of it reveals that the "revolution has been carried by its momentum beyond the peripheral questions of governmental form to the very heart of the crisis, that is to the destruction of Western Christian civilization and to the tentative creation of a non-Christian society."[238]

As we have already suggested, all authors were conscious of the fact that the phenomenon of modern revolution in general and the French Revolution in particular aimed at something totally new. This question manifested itself in the debate of Alexandre Kojéve and Leo Strauss with which we shall deal now. The debate was a continuation of Strauss' discourse on Xenophon's *Hiero* in which he identified the precursor of the modern tyrant. Strauss stated that the *Hiero* resembles the closest to Machiavelli's *Prince* and modern politics.

Classical thought knows at least two forms of the tyrant: tyrant by usurpation (*tyrannus in titulo*) and tyrant by oppression (*tyrannus in regimine*). The modern age witnessed the rise of both types but was unable to recognize either of them, when appearing on the scene.

What makes the *Hiero* important for Strauss is the experiment with the notion of "good" or "ideal" tyranny. However, in the classical framework, "good tyranny" is a contradiction in terms and therefore unimaginable. What Strauss stresses is that tyrannies of the present age can be understood through the classics. It is the rejection of the classical wisdom that caused that the modern age could not recognize the tyrants – Robespierre, Lenin,

237 Ibid., p. 191.

238 Ibid., p. 176.

Hitler, and Stalin – when they appeared on the scene. For Strauss, modern tyranny is the outcome of the notion of "progress" which started with the conquest of nature and the popularization or diffusion of philosophy. Strauss emphasizes that the classics *were familiar* with these "progressive" presuppositions but regarded them as *unnatural and as something which is against humanity*.[239]

By contrast, Kojéve argued that what Strauss and Xenophon thought of "ideal tyranny" was unknown to the classics, since the *revolutionary* did not appear prior to the modern age.[240] Kojéve takes a Hegelian stance and argues that instead of the classical ideals of virtue, friendship and love, the striving for *recognition*[241] is important. The old problem is thus solved through virtue only playing a role as a means and not as an end: the tyrant's problem is that he is not recognized by all. This leads Kojéve to the conclusion that the tyrant will only be satisfied if his state is *universal and homogeneous*.[242] Kojéve's argument is based on the postulate that men – irrespective of whether they are philosophers or statesmen – seek recognition and that man is only satisfied if he is recognized by those who recognize him.

Regarding the relationship between the philosopher and the tyrant, Kojéve claims that today the wise would not speak in disguise but *give advice to the tyrant openly*. Through this relationship, the actualization of the ideal, that is, good tyranny is possible.

The argumentation of Kojéve, as we have already mentioned, is thoroughly Hegelian: "Now, as long as man is alone in knowing something, he can never be sure that he truly *knows* it. If, as a consistent atheist, one replaces God (understood as consciousness and will surpassing individual human consciousness and will) by Society (the State) and History, one has to say that whatever is, in fact, beyond the range of social and historical verification, is forever relegated to the realm of *opinion* (*doxa*)."[243] The question of truth is dependent on historical progress, and the arrival is only possible at history's end: that is, the universal and homogeneous state.[244] (Kojéve saw the revolution which has to be diffused in the French one.) The pedagogic intention needs to be transmitted to the tyrant and the tyrant has to

239 Leo Strauss, *Restatement*, in: *On Tyranny*, p. 178.

240 Kojéve, *Tyranny and Wisdom*, in:Ibid., p. 139.

241 Kojéve's insistence on recognition is taken from Hegel, see his *Phenomenology of Spirit*, the chapter on Self-Consciousness and primarily the subchapter on Independence and dependence of self-consciousness.

242 Ibid., p. 146.

243 Ibid., p. 161.

244 Ibid., p. 168.

educate his subjects; this is the method by which "universal recognition" can be arrived at. The philosopher *has* to engage in government unless he wants to be bound up with the prejudices of his circle or "cloister."[245]

Consequently, according to Kojéve, philosophical progress is only possible through the statesman's actualization of philosophy and vice versa:

> One may therefore conclude that while the emergence of the reforming tyrant is not conceivable without the prior existence of the philosopher, the coming wise man must necessarily be preceded by the *revolutionary political action of the tyrant* (who will realize the universal and homogeneous state).[246]

The conclusion involves the notion of Kojéve that as a result, tyranny can only be "justified" or "condemned" within a concrete political and historical reality – in other words, tyranny as such is neither good nor bad and has no objective standards of evaluation outside the realm of history. The other idea is that tyranny is *par excellence* good if it "realizes the promises of philosophy" and brings about "progressive" changes.

In his response, Strauss seems to be appalled by Kojéve's ideas: "it is almost shocking to be suddenly confronted by the more than Machiavellian bluntness with which Kojéve speaks of such terrible things as atheism and tyranny and takes them for granted."[247] Strauss argues that whatever the sophisms of modern science and philosophy might conclude, the classics were right that tyranny is by its very definition bad and cannot be combined with virtue and good. "One cannot become a tyrant and remain a tyranny without stooping to do base things; hence, a self-respecting man will not aspire to tyrannical power," says Strauss.[248] The tyrant, of course, cannot draw the line between good and bad since his main concern is not virtue but honor and prestige.

Strauss claims that Hegel's philosophy is a synthesis of Socratic and Machiavellian or rather Hobbesian politics. This teaching is fundamentally grounded in Hobbes' construction of the state of nature – which, according to Strauss should be abandoned.[249] This modern

---

245 Ibid., pp. 162-163.
246 Ibid., p. 175. [italics added]
247 Strauss, *op. cit.*, Ibid., p. 185.
248 Ibid., p. 191.
249 Ibid., p. 192.

politics lacks the sacred restrains of the classics and the Biblical tradition and Kojéve's notion of "recognition" is rooted in the ideal of "competition" (Hobbes, Smith).

To counter Kojéve's ideas, Strauss puts forward the answer that the "universal and homogeneous state" requires a diffusion of genuine knowledge (for fundamental agreement requires knowledge) but knowledge, then, would turn into mere opinion and a continuous and unending struggle between "faith" and "counter-faith."[250] The whole proposition for such a "permanent revolution" would end in disaster. Strauss uses the picture of Hobbes' state of nature to depict the probable result of such an undertaking: the end would be chaos, in which life is short, poor and brutish.

To the debate on knowledge, Strauss adds that philosophy means, first and foremost, *knowing our own ignorance*; it means acknowledging the limits of our knowledge in the *zetetic* or *skeptic* sense and this implies a genuine awareness of the problems but not of the solutions.[251] The philosopher, by all means, has to go to the marketplace to "fish for potential philosophers" and thereby he necessarily comes into conflict with politics. But does he have to determine politics and government?[252] Strauss counseled the separation of these two spheres and instead of "uniting" philosophy and politics, he argued for limited rule *under law*.

Law is of fundamental importance in our discussion since for Strauss this is the very essence of the difference between good and bad government:

> According to the *Hiero*, the tyrant is necessarily "lawless" not merely because of the manner in which he acquired his position, but above all because of the manner in which he rules: he follows his own will, which may be good or bad, and not any law. Xenophon's "tyrant" is identical with Rousseau's "despot."[253]

Strauss identifies in Kojéve's line of argument the verification of the classical conclusion: unlimited progress is destructive of humanity. In the "universal and homogeneous

---

250 Ibid., p. 193.

251 Ibid., p. 196.

252 Ibid., p. 205.

253 Strauss, *On Tyranny*, Ibid., p. 119., note 7.; This doctrine of the tyrant who "wills" and the dictator who creates something new, and is by this very act of "willing" legitimate and independent of formally existing laws, led Carl Schmitt to argue for dictatorship and to defend Hitler's rise to power. Here we can find the strictly opposite normative views of Strauss and the denial of such norms in the extreme decisionism of Schmitt. See Carl Schmitt, *Die Diktatur*, Duncker & Humblot, 1994.

state," humanity withers away and the man who lives in this state is indeed Nietzsche's "last man." There will always be men who will revolt against this state, as Strauss argues – maybe it will be a nihilistic revolt but nevertheless legitimate against such an order.[254] The actual satisfaction of "every one and all" is impossible; therefore, Kojéve's universal and homogeneous state cannot wither away, and will not be stateless but a *State* which is strictly coercive and despotic.[255] Strauss maintains that the best social order, outside of the contemplation of the philosopher, is impossible in the strict sense because of the imperfect human nature. The final tyrant will not be wise but one who represses philosophy and every teaching criticizing his state: "the coming of the universal and homogeneous state will be the end of philosophy on earth."[256]

Strauss is taking the side of classical philosophy – which reflects on the eternal order of things – instead of "history," in which being creates himself through history.[257] He argues for a separate place of existence for the philosopher and government – he also distinguishes between the "intellectual" and the "philosopher." While the best social order can remain an issue for contemplation, it can never be attempted to be put into practice. Consequently, the distinction between good and bad, lawful and lawless government remains, according to Strauss: tyranny *is* a bad form of government and the modern revolutionary *is* a tyrant.

The emigrant authors saw that something important became lost through modern revolutions, pre-eminently the French one. In their failed attempt the French, – in sharp contrast to the successful, American one – could not manage to create a stable form of government with spheres of both personal and political liberty. The result turned out to be permanent turmoil, chaos and terror. The creation of something "totally new" aspired to create, at once, a "totally new type of man" with undivided loyalties and without ties. As a consequence, all men became more and more dependent on the "general will" (state, nation, society) and independent of each other.

254 Strauss, *Restatement*, Ibid., p. 208.

255 Ibid., p. 210.

256 Ibid., p. 211.

257 For a detailed discussion on the problem of history, relativism and philosophy, see Strauss' *Natural Right and History*, University of Chicago Press, 1999.

Arendt, in her republican spirit, missed the readily available arena of public freedom, where men can appear in their plurality and exchange opinions with each other. For Arendt, the rise of the nation-state was rather a mammoth state which "administers" but not governs and in which no true expression of political freedom can be found. Arendt correctly points out that the French Revolution did indeed succeed in creating a "state of nature" where people are free from all legal qualifications and appear on the scene of politics in their very nakedness.

For Voegelin and Kuehnelt-Leddihn, the problem was mainly the dismantling of Western Christianity and its replacement with political religions and political ideologies, i.e., nationalism, socialism, and their various combinations. Though in regards to the French Revolution, both were emphasizing the anti-Christian character of the Revolution, we nevertheless must point to the fact that the perfectionist attitudes did have Christian origins. In this sense, the stated goal to "root out the evil from the world" did not begin with the revolutionaries, it was notably present in former religious, pre-eminently in Millenarian, sects, even as early as the Middle Ages. In this instance, then, we have to take into account the Christian background of the modern revolutions.[258]

In the debate between Kojéve and Strauss we can see the modern attempt to reconcile good government with tyranny through revolutionary means; Strauss argued, adhering to the classical concepts, that this was impossible or maybe "possible" but disastrous.

Talmon's criticism of apriorist rationalism is directed against the solely valid method through which society is to be organized; this, with the combination of the general will, produced the justification for totalitarian democracies in which no diverse opinions, estates and indeed no diverse people can exist. However, we have to point out that Talmon in his analysis emphasized the rationalist nature of the revolution, not paying that much attention to Rousseau's romanticist and anti-rationalist stance – the latter was rather stressed by Arendt. It is indeed reasonable to argue for the line of thinking and acting of the revolutionaries as rationalist but regarding the *aim* of the revolution, this is less tenable.

The vast majority of these criticisms (perhaps with the possible exception of Strauss and Voegelin at least to some extent), are reflections on the much lamented loss of freedom. In the eyes of our authors, modern revolutions failed to achieve their initial, overarching aim: freedom. In addition, this revolutionary idiom (again, with the exception of the successful,

258 Cf. René Girard, *Violence and the Sacred*, The John Hopkins University Press, 1979.

American one) was only the first in the line of all the followers' revolutions, primarily the National Socialist and Communist ones. The latter mentioned movements always insisted on their revolutionary character and their attempt to create a new world or a "new world order." These totalitarian trends had been traced by our authors to Robespierre's dictatorship and to the French Revolution.[259] Nonetheless, the primary underlying personal experience of the emigrant authors was that of National Socialism, and, understandably, for this reason they did scrutinize the chapters of the French Revolution with intense interest.

The Case against Planning

This subchapter is concerned with the phenomenon which is generally called planning. It denotes the conscious direction of society according to a central plan. This pre-eminently means planning in economic terms, and exercising control over the distribution of economic sources (however, as we shall try to prove here, "purely" economic matters do not exist and planning, if a totalitarian government engages in it, necessarily will dominate *all spheres*). The arguments against planning were advanced primarily by Ludwig von Mises, Michael Polanyi and Friedrich A. von Hayek. The similarities between them are quite obvious; they all considered planning inefficient, contrary to its stated goal, which is the expansion of welfare, and, what is even more important, antithetic to freedom.

Before getting into a general analysis on the reflections on planning, it is necessary to start with a clarification of this highly ambiguous term. It is also for this reason that planning had an extraordinary popularity in the previous century. The term "planning," lest its political connotations is applied in a wider sense to any activity which wants to handle our common problems as rationally as possible; and in this sense, everyone who is not a complete fatalist is a "planner."[260] Every human action is purposeful in a sense and every human being wants to attach a reasonable meaning to his or her action: in this sense, every human action is "planning."[261] It is clear that we have to have another meaning of planning which was criticized by Hayek, Mises and Polanyi:

---

259 It is worth mentioning that both Popper and Fromm also saw this connection of totalitarianism and revolution. See Erich Fromm, *Escape from Freedom*, Holt Paperbacks; Owl Book, 1994., and Karl R. Popper, *The Open Society and Its Enemies*, Routledge, 2002.

260 Hayek, *The Road to Serfdom*, p. 85.

261 Ludwig von Mises, *Planned Chaos*, Irvington-on-Hudson, New York, 1947, p. 29.

> What our planners demand is a central direction of all economic activity according to a single plan, laying down how the resources of society should be "consciously directed" to serve particular ends in a definite way. (...) The question is whether for this purpose it is better that the holder of coercive power should confine himself in general to creating conditions under which the knowledge and initiative of individuals are given the best scope so that *they* can plan most successfully; or whether a rational utilization of our resources requires *central* direction and organization of all our activities according to some consciously constructed "blueprint."[262]

Planning, thus, means the "substitution of the planner's own plan for the plans of his fellowmen."[263]

Mises defended the free market system basically in utilitarian and rationalist terms, but Hayek and Polanyi were also concerned with the "epistemological" problems underlying the idea of planning by a single authority. They both claimed that the assumption that one single person, or a group of a few people are capable of recognizing and considering all crucial deciding factors of any particular situation is fallacious, and, is the product of a sort of rationalist hubris.

The aspiration for planning is derived from the ambition based on the registry of previous progress. However, progress was considered "too slow" and the fundamental basis of progress, i.e., the order arising from the cooperation of spontaneous forces of society, was renounced. With the success of progress grew ambition and over-confidence which resulted in the overall aim to direct every activity consciously.[264] Even Hayek had to admit, though, that nothing has done as much harm to this liberal cause than the doctrinaire insistence on the principle of "laissez faire."[265] In liberalism, then, we can already find the seeds of its own destruction; since some evils and shortcomings were still present, people became more and more intolerant to even a slice of them.[266] Part of the over-confidence was also the general view that the achievements of civilizations are of a self-evident nature and cannot be lost. In

---

262 Hayek, *Ibid*.
263 Mises, *Ibid*.
264 Hayek, *op. cit.*, pp. 70-71.
265 Ibid., p. 71.
266 Ibid., p. 72.

order to get rid of the remaining parts of "ills," the project for the complete remodeling of society began. We have to see the *perfectionist attitude* of planning in this approach. This perfectionist and constructivist mentality has its source mainly in the success of the natural sciences and in the tendency to apply its methods where they are not appropriate.[267]

One of the main points emphasized when arguing against planning was its *inefficiency*. Competition, as understood by our authors, is the best possible manner in which individuals can adjust their actions to each other. In fact, as Hayek claims, the very argument brought up for planning, that is, the complexity of modern industrial civilization and the division of labor can be turned against planning. Here, the anti-rationalist point of view of Hayek and Polanyi enters; precisely because our relations are immensely complex it is well-nigh impossible for a single authority to gain a "synoptic view" on all of their parts.[268] If the role of the spontaneous coordination of the market economy is taken over by a planning authority, all the important aspects cannot be taken into consideration. What is needed instead, is an apparatus of registration which counts in all changes of relevance and to which, accordingly, the individuals can adjust their further actions to; that is the price system.[269]

What is fundamentally overlooked by the advocates of planning is the *division of knowledge* between individuals, which means fragmented and imperfect knowledge, and that a particular individual is better suited to take into account the most important aspects needed for a decision than any single authority who knows next to nothing about the particular situation in question.[270]

Another indispensible concern is the question of freedom. If planning is applied to tasks formerly taken care of by the market, it by necessity restricts the possibility for free action of the individual. What is common here in both Hayek and Polanyi is the recognition that the forces advancing growth, i.e., an idea fostering some development, or a new scientific discovery *cannot be foreseen* and, consequently, cannot be planned.[271] If an authority vests itself with the power to "plan" every aspect of future economic growth, development or

---

267 Ibid., pp. 72-72., see also *The Counter-Revolution of Science*, p. 24.; Mises, *op. cit.*, p. 80. and see above the chapter on Rationalism and Ideology.

268 Ibid., p. 95.; Polanyi, *The Logic of Liberty*, p. 136 ff.

269 Ibid.; Ludwig v. Mises, *Omnipotent Government: The Rise of Total State and Total War*, Libertarian Press, 1985, p. 57.

270 We have been discussing this point in the chapter on rationalism.

271 Polanyi, *op. cit.*, p. 110; Hayek, *op. cit.*, pp. 96-97.

discovery, it plays on the impossible notion that the future is known as a whole.[272] By adopting the methods of central planning, the planning authority restricts the very horizon on which the potential future progress is possible. The individuals are not free to act and adjust their actions to each others' but have to rely solely on the decisions on the planning authority.

One of the central characteristics of planning is, nonetheless, its ideological charge. It strives for the refashioning of society according to some "ideal" state of affairs under self-serving labels such as, for example, "social justice."[273] It was this substantive content of planning which was contrasted by Mises and Hayek by the "impersonal" character of the Rule of Law. Both maintained that the very essence of a free and orderly society rests on "formal" laws which do not contain any substantive aim according to which a "redistribution of wealth" or any other claim is justified. Thus it does not extend government interference to previously autonomous spheres. Formal laws do not decide in certain particular situations but only circumscribe the limits of the "playground" on which a wide variety of individual decisions can be made. In this sense, the Rule of Law is not a "moral" idea whereas a National Socialist or a Communist government is, for they consciously transform society according to some ideology. Though, I would describe the latter cases "moralist" rather than "moral."[274] The contrast is evident in the following lines of Mises:

> Such people condemn the formalism of the due process of law. Why should the laws hinder the government from resorting beneficial measures? (...) They advocate the substitution of the welfare state (*Wohlfahrtsstaat*) for the state governed by the rule of law (*Rechtsstaat*). In this welfare state, paternal government should be free to accomplish all things it considers beneficial to the commonweal. No "scraps of paper" should restrain an enlightened ruler in his endeavours to promote the general welfare. All opponents must be crushed mercilessly lest they frustrate the beneficial action of the government. No empty formalities must protect them any longer against their well-deserved punishment.[275]

---

272 See above the chapter on rationalism.

273 Hayek, *op. cit.*, p. 84.

274 Ibid., pp. 114-115.

275 Mises, *Planned Chaos*, pp. 64-65.; The empathic vision of the "enlightened despot" and "beneficent tyrant" is already present in the early days of modern liberalism. John Stuart Mill defended despotism as a form of government if it brings about necessary "progressive" changes needful to create a society where people are already able to progress themselves. See John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty*, Penguin Books, 1974, p. 69.

Government is only truly "impartial" in so far as it does not decide in particular cases according to an ideological code but instead warrants the laws and rules which are general and common for the entirety of society. The difference can be illustrated with a metaphor: it is the difference between a Highway Code and a definite order prescribing which route way people must take.[276]

From this difference arise two diverse forms of organization of society. Polanyi labeled them as *corporate order* and *spontaneous order*.[277] Under the corporate order, every activity is subordinated to a unitary end: this form is to be observed in wartime or other "exceptional" cases. The corporate order is formed according to the pattern of a pyramid, i.e., it is strictly hierarchical and directs the individual efforts to that single end for which the order as such is being formed. For example, a company is organized in this manner. By contrast, the market, the scientific community, art or sports follow the pattern of spontaneous order, in which the actors can adjust their actions to each other freely under the guidance of the Rule of Law. To extend the logic of exceptional cases, for instance wartime, to other spheres is dangerous and doomed to failure. Every endeavor which aims at centrally directing the actions of the market, arts or sports engages in a rationalist fallacy that the "common good" and the order which arises from spontaneous order can be created "intentionally" or, rather, "consciously."

> [...] I consider the Socialist desire to eliminate commercial profits as the principal guide to economic activity to be profoundly mistaken. There exists *no radical alternative to the capitalist system*. "Planned production for community consumption" is a myth. While the state must continue to canalize, correct and supplement the forces of the market, it cannot replace them to any considerable extent.[278]

---

276 Hayek, *op. cit.*, p. 113.

277 Polanyi, *op. cit.*, pp. 141-150.; 189-207.; Hayek, Ibid., p. 119.; 189-207.; Michael Oakeshott has similar thoughts on the two forms of society, the one is called *civil*, the other *enterprise*. Cf. Michael Oakeshott, *On Human Conduct*, Oxford University Press, Ch. 2. On the difference between the rule of law and modern substantive social efforts, see his *The Rule of Law*, in: *On History and Other Essays*, Liberty Fund, 1999, pp. 129-178.

278 Ibid., pp. 170-171. [italics added]

It was emphasized by Hayek, Mises and Polanyi as well that there is no such thing as a "third system" between socialism and capitalism. It is either the prices determined by the market *or* production is determined by a central management.[279] In this sense "the market is a democracy" for it rests on the decisions of the consumers which determine production.[280] It is the common fallacy of the interventionist doctrine, as Mises argues, which supposes that a "third way" is possible which avoids the shortcomings of both capitalism and socialism and can bring into full play the advantages of both.[281] But neither works if they are combined, according to our authors: this is an either-or proposition. However, planning and competition can make sense together but only in the case if it is planning *for* competition but not if it is planning *against* competition.[282] The state can, of course, also appear as an actor on the market[283] and it can also supplement its shortcomings; but it cannot altogether replace it.

We have one additional point to clarify. Both Mises and Hayek claim that their free market-views are *not* to be considered as some "radical right" anarchism. The state is necessarily the monopoly of compulsion (according to its sociological definition) and must remain so. The question is what tasks it is best suited to perform and in what business it should or should not engage in.

The state – at its best – should use its monopoly of violence and coercion to prevent antisocial individuals from destroying social cooperation or threatening the lives, liberties and properties of the individuals.[284] The Rule of Law, thus, has two functions: to restrict people from participating in violent actions against each other and the government from doing the exact same thing.

If planning succeeds in bringing about a total transformation of society to the corporate order and instead of preserving civilization under the Rule of Law; if the state regulates all activities following a substantive ideological pattern and leaves no place where autonomous individual initiatives are supreme, then, we are already faced with totalitarianism. There is no such thing as "purely economical" consideration, according to Hayek, Mises, and

279 Mises, *op. cit.*, p. 25.
280 Ibid.
281 Ibid., pp. 17-18.
282 Hayek, *op. cit.*, p. 90.
283 Mises, *op. cit.*, pp. 18-19.
284 Ibid., p. 63.

Polanyi: society is not as simple and "rationally divided" as rationalist constructivism wishes to portray it.

Totalitarian Democracies

Are there any valid grounds, any real substance to argue that twentieth century totalitarianisms were "democratic"? Is not that claim but a gigantic sham to justify the worst tyrannies ever? The strongest claim of the emigrant thinkers was that – more or less – there *is* truth to that claim. I will argue that this criticism was based on *liberal* presuppositions; this means that what some of these authors (explicitly or tacitly) missed from these regimes was liberalism and not democracy. National Socialism and Communism both claimed to be "true democracies," true socialism and the like; there was only one thing which they fundamentally rejected: liberalism. It is the classical liberal standpoint from which our authors argued against totalitarian democracies, with the possible exception being Voegelin as we can illustrate it with a passage from his response to Arendt in their debate:

> The true dividing line in the contemporary crisis does not run between liberals and totalitarians, but between religious and philosophical transcendentalists on the one side, and the liberal and totalitarian immanentist sectarians on the other side.[285]

In her response, Arendt claimed that it is a derailed attempt to suggest that liberals and totalitarians have anything in common.[286] In view of the reality, there is no viable connection between them. Behind Voegelin's argument are his presuppositions which picture the world in the framework of spiritual-religious postulates. However, even Voegelin's concern, and we have to stress this, was with a lost world that was pre-eminently liberal.

It is precisely this argument for liberalism which John Lukacs also put forward in his thesis: the non-democratic, liberal preconditions which are needed to restrain "untrammeled democracy," majority rule and the "potential tyranny of the latter."[287] Without liberalism, claims Lukacs, democracy is "nothing more (or else) than populism. More precisely: then it is

---

285 Eric Voegelin, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, in: *The Review of Politics*, Vol. 15, No. 1 (January, 1953), p. 75.

286 Hannah Arendt, *A Reply*, in: *The Review of Politics*, Vol. 15, No. 1 (January, 1953), pp. 76-84.

287 John Lukacs, *Democracy and Populism*, p. 10.

nationalist populism."[288] Lukacs's analysis is strictly based on Tocqueville's *Democracy in America* and it can be conceived as a "continuation" of the latter. His insistence was on "mixed government" and the liberal tenets which he finds missing in contemporary democracies – or, if not altogether lost, at least eroding.

Both Kuehnelt-Leddihn and Lukacs condemned the historical role of Woodrow Wilson, who in his attempt to "make the world safe for democracy," destroyed an order which these authors thought of as a liberal order. It was the "anti-monarchist" ideology which became the cornerstone of American foreign policy in World War I. Kuehnelt-Leddihn regretted the lack of knowledge concerning European politics in the American administration.[289] In fact, Wilson's ideological viewpoint went so far as he identified democracy with peace and monarchy with war – though, in Kuehnelt-Leddihn's view, nothing could be further from the truth. Wars, he maintains, were rather restricted in the monarchical period. The meaning of the terms "soldiers" and "civilians" still made sense and war was not fought to be total or to rewrite history and maps as a whole.[290] For Kuehnelt-Leddihn and Lukacs, the creation of nation-states ended with the disaster of the Continent; it is indeed an open-ended question for Kuehnelt-Leddihn that if the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy would have been left as an existing entity, then Hitler could have risen to power.[291]

While in the Anglo-Saxon scene, democracy as such necessarily involves the tenets of liberalism, on the Continent this is definitely not so, according to Kuehnelt-Leddihn. On the Continent, democracy rather marries with ethnic nationalism and collectivism.[292] In the admiration of Kuehnelt-Leddihn and Lukacs for the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, again, we have to see their *affinity to liberalism*.

---

288 Ibid., p. 5.

289 Ibid., p. 12; Kuehnelt-Leddihn, *Leftism Revisited*, pp. 200-203.

290 Kuehnelt-Leddihn, *Monarchy and War*, in: *Journal of Libertarian Studies*, Fall 2000, pp. 1-41.

291 Kuehnelt-Leddihn, *Leftism Revisited*, p. 219.

292 Both John Lukacs and Kuehnelt-Leddihn maintain that National Socialism has the emphasis on the first word, namely nationalism; according to Lukacs, the Russian Revolution was a "tremendous failure" and the biggest victory in the twentieth century was won by nationalism and not by socialism. Nationalism, however, according to Lukacs has to be distinguished from patriotism; the latter is defensive and loyal to the traditions to a particular country and its diversity, while the former is aggressive and relies on the myth of the "people," it is modern and populist. See Lukacs, *op. cit.*, pp. 36; 91-102.

We have to turn now to the similarities and differences of our authors concerning totalitarian regimes. Our view is that they all agreed upon the basic anti-liberalism of these regimes, however, they have diverging opinions as to whether both regimes (i.e., National Socialism and Communism)[293] are socialist or not, "reactionary" or not, etc.

For Mises, Hayek, and Kuehnelt-Leddihn as well, National Socialism and Communism were essentially the same. Their supporting arguments are predominantly based on economical observations and they contain that both were socialism, i.e., an economic system in which the means of production are in the hands of the state and not in private individuals'.

Mises argued that what makes National Socialism "different" from Communism is its specific striving for *Lebensraum* and their system which appears in the guise of capitalism but is nevertheless socialism, that is, *Zwangswirthschaft*.[294] In the German pattern of socialism, the ownership of the means of production remains in the hands of entrepreneurs but this is only by appearance; they are no longer entrepreneurs but managers (*Betriebsführer*).[295] By contrast, Russian socialism is purely bureaucratic. In each case, however, there is no labor market and the prices are established and manipulated by the central government, as are the concerns with production: "the government, not the consumers, directs production."[296] However, it is not only the economic system that Mises finds similar, almost identical. As he writes:

> Both Italian Fascism and German Nazism adopted the political methods of Soviet Russia. (...)They have imported from Russia the one-party system and the privileged role of this party and its members in public life; the paramount position of the secret police; the organization of affiliated parties abroad which are employed in fighting their domestic governments and in sabotage and espionage, assisted by public funds and the protection of the diplomatic and consular service; the administrative execution and imprisonment of political adversaries; concentration camps; the punishment inflicted on the families of exiles; the methods of propaganda (...) The

293 We do not take into account Fascism because, according to our authors, it was at worst "semi-totalitarian" but was far from being totalitarian. See Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, p. 308.

294 Ludwig v. Mises, *Omnipotent Government*, p. 59.

295 Ibid., p. 58.

296 Ibid., p. 59.

> question is not in which respects both systems are alike but in which they differ.[297]

The similarities seen by Mises as a result of both systems' anti-liberal bias and the nuances in which they differ do not make up to a bigger distinction. For Mises, Hayek, Kuehnelt-Leddihn and Voegelin – for him, both were Gnostic mass movements –, National and International Socialism are but the two sides of the same coin.

However, Kolnai presents another understanding. In his more philosophical and also perhaps even metaphysical approach, he finds it futile to argue that Nazism is only a "brown" variety of Bolshevism or even that it is socialistic.[298] While he considers Progressive Democracy and Communism as forms of Leftism, according to Kolnai, Nazism embodies an extremist type of Rightism.[299] The latter is "reactionary" in the sense that it is atavistic, tribal, and wants to erase the whole of Western civilization together with rationalism, liberalism, Christianity and even Greco-Roman Antiquity. In Nazism, in contradistinction to Communism which is a utopian vision of order with a rationalist flavor that wants to do away with contingency, Kolnai sees the exact opposite, the irrational and pagan sanctification of disorder and brute contingency, the "moment."[300] Their "reactionary" stance notwithstanding, both National Socialism and Communism are subversive and revolutionary in the sense that they both want to erase the existing order in its entirety. Nevertheless, Nazism wants to move "backwards" while Communism "forges ahead." But because of its particularist character, it is a common trait in both Nazism and Progressive Democracy that it is "incomplete totalitarianism."[301] Nearly the same has been put forward by Talmon who stated that totalitarianism of the Left is always universalist and its principle is Man, while totalitarianism of the Right is more particularist and its postulate are such things as the nation, the state, the race.[302]

---

297 Ibid., pp. 186-187.

298 Aurel Kolnai, *Three Riders of the Apocalypse: Communism, Nazism and Progressive Democracy*, in: *op. cit.*, p. 109.

299 Ibid., p. 110.

300 Ibid., pp. 114-115.

301 Ibid., p. 108.

302 Talmon, *The Origins of Totalitarian Democracy*, pp. 6-7.

Lukacs, on the other hand, refutes the argument that the National Socialists were "reactionaries."[303] His confirmation rests on historical arguments; he takes into account Isaiah Berlin's *Joseph de Maistre and the Origins of Fascism* and suggests that Berlin's claim is entirely wrong: "Maistre *was* a reactionary, a man of 'the extreme Right'; Hitler and Mussolini, and Perón, etc., were not. (...) These men knew how to appeal to the masses – something which would have filled Maistre with horror."[304] Maistre indeed had been an opponent of the French Revolution, democracy and the idea of popular sovereignty as well as of "liberal abstractions of humanity."[305] Lukacs contends that dictators of the twentieth century *had* built their power on popular sovereignty and democratic phraseology:

> In sum, Joseph de Maistre, unlike modern dictators, loathed the idea of popular sovereignty; as Berlin cites him, "a principle so dangerous that even if it were true, it would be necessary to conceal it." This was exactly what modern dictators had *not* done; instead of concealing it they appealed to it. Maistre was a true counterrevolutionary, a man of the Extreme Old Right – which none of the dictators of the twentieth century was, not even Franco.[306]

What follows, is one of the strongest statements of Lukacs and in this, we can find the influence of Kuehnelt-Leddihn:

> But Hitler was someone very different from a counterrevolutionary; and the German 1933 was not a counterrevolutionary movement. Nothing was further from Hitler (...) to see anything good in monarchy or aristocracy (let alone the world of the eighteenth century). He was a populist; and a revolutionary; and, at least in some ways, a democrat.[307]

---

303 The same position had been taken by Talmon: as he claims, "the modern totalitarian trends are rather perverse, but they could hardly be called reactionary." Ibid., p. 263.

304 Lukacs, *op. cit.*, p. 23.

305 Ibid., p. 22.

306 Ibid., p. 25.

307 Ibid., p. 21.; The hatred of the Nazis of everything that is "aristocratic" or "monarchical" is manifested in their act after the Anschluss; Bürckel announced that they will extend their hands to everyone, including the Communists – with the exception of the Legitimists. See Kuehnelt-Leddihn, *Liberty or Equality*, p. 364, note 949.

What is the common ground on which totalitarian leaders can claim the democratic label? The basis of such a claim rests on Rousseau's democratism, that is, his doctrine of the general will. (In addition, it has to be remarked that "Hitler's rise to power was legal in terms of majority rule,"[308] and Stalin could not have maintained his rule unless he had the confidence of the masses.[309]) The leader thus embodies the will of all and every one. This democratic ideology implies that, as is Rousseau's legislator, so is the leader of the movement the very embodiment of the "people," and the masses see him as the representative of themselves, indeed, in this conception, they are *identical*. As Hitler declared, "all that you are, you are through me; all that I am, I am through you alone."[310] Hitler, who frequently claimed to be an "arch-democrat" (*Erzdemokrat*),[311] said that "popularity always is the basis of authority." The connection can be seen in Hitler's words when he boasted before his collaborators that "this revolution of ours is the exact counterpart of the French Revolution."[312] Hitler's loathing of Western democracies, according to Kuehnelt-Leddihn was not that they were democracies but that they were not *real* democracies. As Voegelin noted,

> In some people, the few, the spirit of the people lives stronger; in others, the many, it is weaker, and it finds total expression in one person only, namely, in the Führer. "The 'Führer' is permeated with the idea; it acts through him. (...) The spirit of the people becomes reality in him and the will of the people is formed in him; (...) He is the representative of the people."[313]

The Führer and the will of the people (again, the *volonté générale*) forms a sacral unity; in this concept, the will of the individual is entirely missing, and the "will of the people" becomes the "voice of God."[314] The leader of the movement is thus not a "ruler" in the old sense of the term, but rather, the "executor" of the general will. As the Communists were proud to call their regimes "people's democracies," so were the Nazis, though, not that frequently as the Communists:

---

308 Arendt, *op. cit.*, p. 306.

309 Ibid.

310 Ibid., p. 325.

311 Kuehnelt-Leddihn, *op. cit.*, p. 174.; Adolf Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, Munich: Eher, 1939, p. 579., cited in Ibid., p. 328., note 608.

312 Cited in Ibid., p. 67.

313 Voegelin, *The Political Religions*, in: CW5, p. 65.

314 Ibid., p. 66.

> Hitler: Attack against Eton and Harrow, December 10, 1940 (*Völkischer Beobachter*, December 11, 1940); calls himself an arch-democrat, Munich, November 8, 1938 (*V.B.*, November 10, 1938); calls National Socialism the "truest democracy," Berlin, January 30, 1937 {V.B., January 31, 1937); calls the National Socialist constitution democratic, Berlin, May 21, 1935 (*V.B.*, May 22, 1935); also in *Mein Kampf* (Munich: Eber, 1939), p. 99: "The truly Germanic democracy with the free election of the Leader, who is obliged to assume full responsibility for all his actions." *Goebbels*: Calls National Socialism an "authoritarian democracy" (speech before the press, May 31, 1933); calls National Socialism a "Germanic democracy " (speech before the press, Frankfurt, June 21, 1933) ;951 calls National Socialism "the noblest form of European democracy," March 19, 1934; admits that Nazis do not talk much about democracy but insists they are nevertheless the executors of the "general will" {V.B., April 25, 1933). *Rudolf Hess*: Calls National Socialism the "most modern democracy of the world" based on "the confidence of the majority."[315]

The "democratic" claim of the National Socialists was also observed by socialists. The following remarks were made by the religious socialist Eduard Heimann:

> Hitlerism proclaims itself as both true democracy and true socialism, and the terrible truth is that there is a grain of truth for such claims – an infinitestimal grain, to be sure, but at any rate enough to serve as a basis for such fantastic distortions. Hitlerism goes so far as to claim the role of protector of Christianity, and the terrible truth is that even this gross misinterpretation is able to make some impression. But one fact stands out with perfect clarity in all the fog: Hitler has never claimed to represent true liberalism. Liberalism then has the distinction of being the most hated doctrine most hated by Hitler.[316]

The claims of both National Socialism and Communism relied upon the Rousseulian idiom of democracy with exceptional clearness rejecting the tenets of liberalism. This "democracy" is then what Talmon called the totalitarian one which is not only not liberal but outspokenly *anti-liberal*.

---

315 Cited in Kuehnelt-Leddihn, *op. cit.*, pp. 264-265.; notes 951, 952.

316 Cited in Hayek, *The Road to Serfdom*, p. 81. and Kuehnelt-Leddihn, *Leftism Revisited*, pp. 178-179.

We already mentioned when dealing with the problem of collectivism that in the eyes of our authors, totalitarianism is unimaginable without the extreme individualism or social atomism. According to Arendt, modern leaders succeeded in organizing disoriented, formerly politically disinterested people into these mass movements.[317] But as a precondition, so Arendt argues, the creation (or only existence) of the "classless society" is required. In its framework, all former communal and social ties are absent and the characteristic of an individual in such a society is loneliness. Arendt notes that what was provided in Germany by historical circumstances, had to be created artificially by Stalin.[318] For totalitarianism requires a "completely heterogeneous uniformity," the breaking up of all non-political social ties.[319] The system of secret police is also created in order to maintain this extreme isolationism. Contrary to the liberal or libertarian critics, Arendt does not see a sort of external tyranny or "statism" in totalitarian regimes:

> Totalitarianism is never content to rule by external means, namely, through the state and a machinery of violence; thanks to its peculiar ideology and the role assigned to it in this apparatus of coercion, totalitarianism has discovered a means of dominating and terrorizing human beings *from within*. In this sense it eliminates the distance between the rulers and the ruled (...)[320]

In a situation like this, the movement, the party and the leader can expect from the masses to pay unalterable loyalty to him and to the movement.[321] As an isolated and lonely individual, the atomized man is only "someone" through the party and the movement. It must be clear that what Arendt missed, was the "public sphere" again, and the ties independent of the collectivist movements. Arendt's argumentation is essentially republican, as is Polanyi's who can be called a follower of Christian republicanism. Polanyi's notion of totalitarianism did not rely upon the idea that totalitarian rule means a lack of "licentiousness" or extreme

317 Arendt, *op. cit.*, pp. 311-312.
318 Ibid., p. 318.
319 Ibid., p. 322.
320 Ibid., p. 325. [italics added]
321 Ibid., p. 323.

individual libertinism but on the recognition that public liberty as such is entirely absent in such regimes:

> But the scope of public liberties is not generally proportional to that of private freedom. The two may even be inversely related. Private nihilism prepares the mind for submission to public despotism; and a despotic regime may continue to tolerate unrestrained forms of private life, which another society living under public freedom would have stamped out by social ostracism. Under Stalin the scope of private freedom remains much wider than it was in Victorian Britain, while that of public liberties is incomparably less.[322]

For Arendt, as for Polanyi, it was public freedom which had been eradicated by totalitarianism. For both, so it seems, the *par excellence* place for freedom as such is the political or the public.

It is also obvious, that all of our authors found the traditional bonds of society lacking. The social and family ties, or in other words, the *communitas communitatis*, which makes it possible to resist against tyranny, if needed, was absent in totalitarian regimes.

Summary

According to the emigrant authors, with the ideological claims of being "democratic" and "executing the general will," the totalitarian movements succeed in maintaining their rule and their spell on the masses. With this structure, they provide a framework of "totalitarian democracies" without any constitutional or liberal restraints whatsoever. With these means, they indeed create regimes in which minorities are violently oppressed, interrogated, tortured and murdered. The emigrants were emphasizing these liberal ideas which could counterbalance the unrestrained rule, and the potential tyranny and totalitarianism, of the majorities.

On the other hand, what Hannah Arendt and Michael Polanyi mostly missed was a "public sphere" and the republican basis of the body politic which makes public freedom possible. Their criticism is to be labeled rather *republican* instead of *liberal*.

322 Polanyi, *The Logic of Liberty*, p. 194.

Conclusion

The emigrants' problem with the modern age was mainly its rationalist, collectivist (nationalist and socialist), and totalitarian tendencies which were seen as a result of a thinking that wants to put all the consequences of actions under control. The roots of these ideas were found by the emigrants in the thought of modern philosophy, pre-eminently in the French Enlightenment. These ideas, as they argued, became dominant in modern democratic nation-states and, with the rise of political and philosophical radicalism, they managed to bring the ideas to their logical consequences. In modern mass democracies, they claimed, there is a combination of centralization, relativism, collectivism, and totalitarian threat previously unknown in European history.

However, we should not exaggerate some of their notions and should not regard their theories and reflections as mere rejections of democracy as such. On the other hand, neither should we engage in absolutizing or totalizing democracy as a political system or using the principles of democracy as a political ideology which can be instrumentalized for the justification of the worst tyrannies ever. This is the most important point the emigrant authors had. It is now our task to add some "phenomenological" notions to the picture, that is, try to connect the ideas of the emigrant authors to their possible presuppositions.

We have already suggested that for the scholars we had in concern, modern democracy is immensely connected with the concept and period of modernity. The fact that they found their new homes in the United Kingdom and in the United States – both of which were highly admired by our authors not only as a haven but also something which embodied the very traditions seen lost by them – can be explained by another one, namely, that these countries were rather untouched by radical modernity, i.e., modern revolutions, the Continental idiom of democracy, totalitarianism etc.

This evaluation is evident from the lines of Strauss and Voegelin. In his reply to Kojéve, Strauss argued that "It would not be difficult to show that the classical argument cannot be disposed of as easily as is now generally thought, and that liberal or constitutional democracy comes closer to what the classics demanded than any alternative that is viable in our age."[323] Quite close to this claim, Voegelin concluded in his *New Science of Politics* that "In this situation there is a glimmer of hope, for the American and English democracies, which most solidly in their institutions represent the truth of the soul, are, at the same time, existentially the strongest powers. But it will require all our efforts to kindle this glimmer into a flame by repressing gnostic corruption and restoring the forces of civilization. At present the fate is in the balance."[324]

It seems possible that they discovered those very traditions, manifested in institutions, political spheres, laws and customs, which they saw lost in Central Europe after the rise of modern democracy. The United States and the United Kingdom served for them as a rough model of the elements of liberal constitutionalism, the rule of law, and the political and moral heritage of Greco-Roman Antiquity and the Judeo-Christian tradition. We have to emphasize that it was *these pre-democratic and non-democratic preconditions* which the emigrant thinkers thought of as necessary bases for the smooth "functioning" of any democracy.

This tradition had been present only before the rise of democratic nation-states in Continental Europe. With their appearance, a general striving for majoritarianism and homogeneity (political as well as ethnic)[325] came to dominate the atmosphere, and the overall history of the twentieth century showed a record of permanent turmoil, chaos and violence, in which both order and freedom had been absent. The search of the emigrant authors was directed to rediscover and

---

323 Leo Strauss, *On Tyranny*, p. 194.

324 Eric Voegelin, *The New Science of Politics*, in: CW5, p. 241.

325 See Michael Mann, *The Dark Side of Democracy: Explaining Ethnic Cleansing*, Cambridge University Press, 2004.

restore order and freedom as it was known in their original habitat. Nevertheless, they found them in the American and English constitutional democracies – some of their criticism regarding these countries notwithstanding. The sometimes anxious, and, to some extent not always founded, fear of some developments in the United States and England – as in the case of Hayek and Mises, for example – can also be explained by this background. They feared that what they had seen on the Continent will be replayed in their new countries as well.

Besides their common observations, however, there remain also big differences between their approaches. It is important thus to deal with them in advance.

The criticism of Hayek, Mises, and Kuehnelt-Leddihn is directed against the *collectivist* and *socialistic* tendencies of modernity and their viewpoint has to be considered an *individualist* one. This means that the departure of their theories is always the individual, who has it inherent moral worth and freedom. It seems plausible to say that the Austrian thinkers in general shared this classical individualism, whatever their differences. The lack of *individual freedom* was their biggest problem in modern democracies (with the possible exception of Voegelin).

By contrast, the critique of Arendt and Polanyi is a *republican* one; it is not engaged in dealing with individual freedom as such but is overwhelmingly occupied with the problem of *public freedom*. For Arendt and Polanyi, individual freedom as such is not a central problem of totalitarianism; rather it is the lack of the public sphere in which the citizens could appear as free and equal peers. Similarities can be found in their observations to Alexis de Tocqueville – their anxiety with conformism and the lack of the public is thus explicable.

The politico-religious problems involved in modernity and democracy were the preoccupation of Voegelin, Talmon, Kolnai and Kuehnelt-Leddihn. They all discovered some sort of "spiritual perversions" and false religious symbolisms (secular monasticism, political religion, political messianism) presented in

modern, immanentist ideologies. They demonstrated that modern ideologies show a *formal* resemblance to religion (foremost to that of Christianity) but the messianic principle is transformed into an immanent meaning.

In connection with the religious observations, the roots of collectivism were discovered in these perversions. And this is immensely connected to the immanentist sovereignty-theories of modernity (Kolnai, Voegelin, Talmon, Kuehnelt-Leddihn), which leaves no outside boundaries except an absolute sovereign *volition*. The doctrine of democratic sovereignty thus can be applied to justify unlimited tyrannical power (Lukacs).

The rediscovery of classical normative standards is applicable to some extent to all of our authors. Arendt found this standard in classical republicanism; Voegelin in classical and Christian philosophy; Strauss in classical political philosophy, pre-eminently in Plato; and so on and so forth. They all argued that *lowering the classical standards* leads to unreasonable thinking and concomitantly to tyrannies which the world has never seen before. The importance of the latter can be observed in the debate between Strauss and Kojéve, who defended "benevolent tyranny" on the ground that the "end of history" can be arrived at by human means.[326]

The "pre-democratic" principles, accordingly, are to be found in the classical, *pre-modern* ethical and political thought. According to the emigrants, the survival of Western civilization ultimately depends on the rediscovery of these standards.

It was, by any means, political modernism which compelled them to leave their respective homelands. This could have boded them that the Jewish or assimilated Jewish existence – or, simply a "minority existence" – is more favourable and accommodating within the circumstances of a pre-modern political world than in a modern one. Because their understanding of modern politics is

[326] For the effect of Kojéve's ideas, see Francis Fukuyama's *The End of History and the Last Man*, Harper Perennial, 1993.

outside the paradigm of liberal democracy, the emigrant scholars provide a unique and edifying viewpoint on modern democracies in general.

Bibliography

Arendt, Hannah, *Between Past and Future: Eight Practices in Political Thought*, Penguin Books, 2006, ed. and introduction by Jerome Kohn.

Arendt, Hannah, *On Revolution*, Penguin Books, 2006, Introduction by Jonathan Schell.

Arendt, Hannah, *The Human Condition*, The University of Chicago Press, 1958.

Arendt, Hannah, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, The World Publishing Company, 1962.

Hayek, Friedrich August von, *The Counter-Revolution of Science*, Liberty Fund, 1979.

Hayek, Friedrich August von, *The Road to Serfdom: The Definitive Edition*, The University of Chicago Press, 2007, ed. Bruce Caldwell.

Kolnai, Aurel, *Privilege and Liberty and Other Essays in Political Philosophy*, Lexington Books, 1999, ed. and introduction by Daniel J. Mahoney, foreword by Pierre Manent.

Kuehnelt-Leddihn, Erik von, *Democracy's Road to Tyranny*, in: *The Freeman: Ideas on Liberty*, 1988, Vol. 38, Issue 5. http://www.thefreemanonline.org/columns/democracys-road-to-tyranny/

Kuehnelt-Leddihn, Erik von, *Leftism Revisited: From de Sade and Marx to Hitler and Pol Pot*, Regnery Gateway, 1990, Preface by William F. Buckley Jr.

Kuehnelt-Leddihn, Erik von, *Liberty or Equality: The Challange of our Time*, The Caxton Printers, Ltd., Caldwell, Idaho, 1952.

Kuehnelt-Leddihn, Erik von, *Monarchy and War*, in: *Journal of Libertarian Studies*, Vol. 15, No. 1 (Fall 2000): pp. 1-41.

Kuehnelt-Leddihn, Erik von, *The Menace of the Herd: Or Procrustes at Large*, The Bruce Publishing Company, 1943.

Kuehnelt-Leddihn, Erik von, *The True Meaning of Auschwitz*, National Review, Dec 19, 1986. http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m1282/is_v38/ai_4580937/

Lukacs, John, *Democracy and Populism: Fear and Hatred*, Yale University Press, New Haven & London, 2005.

Mises, Ludwig von, *Omnipotent Government: The Rise of Total State and Total War*, Yale University Press, 1944.

Mises, Ludwig von, *Planned Chaos*, Irvington-On-Hudson, New York, 1947.

Polanyi, Michael, *The Logic of Liberty*, Liberty Fund, 1998.

Strauss, Leo, *On Tyranny, Revised and Expanded Edition, Including the Strauss-Kojéve Correspondence*, The University of Chicago Press, 2000, ed. Victor Gourevitch and Michael S. Roth.

Strauss, Leo, *What is Liberal Education?*, http://www.ditext.com/strauss/liberal.html

Talmon, Jacob Leib, *The Origins of Totalitarian Democracy*, Secker & Wartburg, 1952.

The debate of Hannah Arendt and Eric Voegelin on totalitarianism, in: *The Review of Politics*, Vol. 15, No. 1 (Jan 1953), pp. 68-85.

Voegelin, Eric, *From Enlightenment to Revolution*, Duke University Press, 1975, ed. John H. Hallowell.

Voegelin, Eric, *Modernity Without Restraint: The Political Religions; The New Science of Politics; and Science, Politics, and Gnosticism*, The Collected Works of Eric Voegelin, Vol. 5., University of Missouri Press, 2000, ed. and introduction by Manfred Henningsen.