

—— Hjalmar Falk, »Did somebody say political religion? Notes on an ideologeme«

—— A B S T R A C T ———

This article deals with the concept of »political religion«, a term often used to connote certain features of totalitarianism. The aim here is twofold. First, to summarize certain features within this discourse for critical analysis, via an initial naming of it as an ideologeme, a concept developed by Fredric Jameson. Second, the article attempts to show how the ideologeme of the politico-religious narrative or discourse can and has been used in a critical-theoretical agenda by exemplifying its use in the early work of Slavoj Žižek. I argue that certain features of the ideologeme open up for hermeneutical critical work on political ideologies through a confrontation with the growing and many-faceted discourse on political theology.

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■ — INTRODUCTION — ■

If Fredric Jameson's thesis is correct, and »the history of thought is the history of its models«,¹ then what are we to think of the constant connections made between conceptions of ideology and religion in critical theory and Marxist discourse? And what are we to think when confronted with the designation of twentieth century totalitarianisms as »political religions«, especially in the light of the critical tradition's never ceasing engagement with the liberation from religious authority?

Marxism's complex relation to religion goes all the way back to the confrontation with Feuerbach and the Young Hegelians in Marx's early writings. The »Theses on Feuerbach« can be and has been read as a reformulation of and a distancing from the critical project of the Enlightenment, something that to some extent is thought to entail a different way of relating to religious phenomenon. The polemic against Young Hegelian »critical criticism« in *The German Ideology* not only gave rise to the specifically Marxist conception of ideology. It also meant a restatement on the attitude towards religion. In short, what had been the central issue for the likes of Bauer and Feuerbach – the critique of theological ideas dominating philosophy and public imagination – was displaced and generalized into a theory of social ideology, of which religious ideas were just one feature.²

This was not a simple solution to the problem of religion in critical thought, however. Transposed to a question of the relationship between theory and praxis, it also spawned a complex relationship between Marxism and religion. In practice, Marxism has generally acted in opposition to the established authorities of religion (or used them when in power). The official anti-religious sentiments of Marxist revolutionaries remain unquestioned, even if their fervor have made conservative and liberals critics of Marxism reflect upon possible religious dimensions within Marxist theory itself, at times referring to it as a »political religion«.

This critique of totalitarianism – Marxist and Fascist – as »political« or »secular religions« has resulted in a vast and widespread discourse. As Alberto Toscano has noted, this discourse manages to unite conservative religious critiques of secularization as the foundation of oppressive politics with liberal secularist critiques of totalitarian politics as the consequence of a failure of secularization.³

In what follows, I aim to show that the anti-totalitarian concept of »totalitarianism as political religion« is problematic not only from a critical-theoretical viewpoint, but also from a more traditional scholarly perspective. At the same time, I wish to suggest that there may be some useful resources for critical theory to be found in this discourse. I shall start by describing the analytical tool which I use in this interweaving of critical theory and the conservative-liberal study of totalitarianism.

— THE IDEOLOGEME —

I would like to suggest the concept of »ideologeme« as a constructive way to approach the term »political religion« as used within the study of totalitarian movements and regimes. Fredric Jameson, to some extent the popularizer of this concept, describes the ideologeme as »a historically determinate conceptual or semic complex which can project itself variously in the form of a 'value system' or 'philosophical concept,' or in the form of a protonarrative, a private or collective narrative fantasy«. ⁴ Jameson designates »ideologemes« as »narrative unities of a socially symbolic type« that must be understood »not as a mere reflex or reduplication of its situational context, but as the imaginary resolution of the objective contradictions to which it thus constitutes an active response«. ⁵

The ideologeme can therefore be seen as working in an intertextual way, becoming a meaningful »sign« within different semiotic contexts and narrative structures, playing different roles within different discourses, while ostensibly retaining a surprisingly consistent form. The same concept can therefore be construed to carry radically different meanings depending upon the social, historical and conceptual context in it is situated, bringing illusions of consistency to differing discourses.

According to Jameson, the ideologeme itself is a form of social praxis, that is, »a symbolic resolution to a concrete historical situation«. ⁶ It is my contention that the ideologeme of »political religion« is such a result of symbolic resolution to a concrete historical situation of political antinomies within the political culture of modern society, something I hope to illustrate in the final part of this paper.

I will now try to sketch some fundamental features of what might be viewed as an ideologeme within the discourse on totalitarianism. What will follow here is not a full critical reading that lays the ideologeme of »political religion« bare from the massive discourse on the topic. I believe that further investigation along such lines would be highly fruitful for the historical study of political thought. However, I hope that I will be able to supply some evidence to a case for viewing certain formulations on the topic of »political religion« as an ideologeme. My intention is that this will amount to what Jameson calls an »initial naming« of ideologemes »in instances

where for whatever reason« they have not been »registered as such«. ⁷

The »initial naming« performed below connects a few selected expressions of what could be called the politico-religious ideologeme. The examples collected here are not systematically organized through an estimation of their importance or centrality in this discourse, but chosen rather for the way that they clearly and emphatically express features of the conservative-liberal formulation of the ideologeme in question.

The conceptual history of »political religion« deserves more thorough investigation, which cannot be conducted here. While relying heavily on Emilio Gentile's conceptualization of »the sacralization of politics«⁸ as to some extent paradigmatic of the politico-religious ideologeme, I would argue that the naming here does constitute a necessary and legitimate first step towards such an investigation.

—— »POLITICAL RELIGION« AS A »SACRALIZATION OF POLITICS«: OUTLINING AN IDEOLOGEME ———

In a 2010 editorial of the journal then named *Totalitarian Movements and Political Religions*, which has since symptomatically changed its name to the more neutral *Politics, Religion, & Ideology*, Naveed S. Sheikh wrote that the journal featured »field-leading research on illiberal ideologies and religious politics«. ⁹ A more modest or at least more nuanced analysis would suggest that the fields of »illiberal ideologies and religious politics« are much wider than those of »totalitarian movements and political religions«.

This constitutes a central shortcoming of the conception of totalitarianisms as »political religions«. The notion has a tendency to turn anything »illiberal« into totalitarianism and everything »religious« and not thoroughly de-politicized into a threat. Sheikh claims that the journal's intention during its first ten years built on the idea that »a watchful eye on the past entailed avoiding the pitfalls of the present, lest the past become a prologue to another bloodied chapter of ideological extremism«. ¹⁰

While the original founders of the journal »in particular« had warned of developments in »China, India, the Middle East and Russia«, Sheikh suggests that the dangers are no longer to be found outside of »the West«: »Living in the new age of mutual terror, we can no longer be so comforted that radical ideology, imposed conformity and militancy are conditions of the non-West alone.«¹¹ One might object that imposed conformity and political militancy seems to be a strong feature in western states without dominance of ideologies deemed »radical« in this respect, but the shift in attention is noteworthy. Ten years of war on terror and »homeland security« does indeed seem to take its toll on liberal values.

During the Cold War, liberal and conservative critics of the totalitarian states behind the Iron Curtain began to use terms like »political« or »secular religions« to describe the political movements that had shaped these states. In actuality, the concept was probably first used in an analysis of totalitarian movements by Eric Voegelin in 1938. After World War Two, his conception of »political religion« was wedded to the analysis of totalitarianism as a unifying concept for Nazism, Fascism and Stalinism.

Other classical examples of early attempts to link totalitarian movements and governments to religious ecstasy, fanaticism, eschatology and messianism are found in writers such as J. L. Talmon, Raymond Aron and Norman Cohn during the 1950s and 60s. In a way, Karl Löwith's 1949 classic on Western history of philosophy, *Meaning in History*, can also be read as a contribution to this literature.¹² Latter day examples of this style of thinking are found for instance in Michael Burleigh, Mark Lilla and John Gray.¹³

Cold War ideology still seems to affect the way the ideologeme of political religion is framed within this field. For instance, Anthony James Gregor, a sometimes contributor to the abovementioned journal, claims that members of totalitarian movements, and in particular Marxists, regularly behave as if they were in the possession of »revealed truth«, something that supposedly makes them inheritors of the prophetic tradition.¹⁴ »At their best,« he writes, »'secular' ideologies are functional surrogates for traditional religion.«¹⁵ The root of this problem is according to him to be found in the speculative character of post-Kantian continental philosophy, Hegel being the chief culprit.

In a reflection on the meaning of the inheritance from Voegelin for the study of this kind of political religions, Hans Otto Seitscheck normatively argues that »the state should not become an institution that promises salvation, because this is how the political sphere incorporates the religious one to the extent that it ultimately consumes it.«¹⁶ For Voegelin, it was the division of church and state in traditional Christianity that spelled the alternative to and salvation from political religion. Later in his career he would develop an analysis of totalitarian politics as being secularized Gnosticism, intent on *immanentizing the eschaton*, that is trying to bring about transcendence within immanent reality.¹⁷ In a way, aspects of this solution seem to have stuck with later scholars in this field, for instance Emilio Gentile.

In his work on political religion as a feature of totalitarianism, Gentile makes a distinction between *political* and *civil* religion. Not equating political religion with totalitarianism, Gentile argues that it can be viewed as constituting an *element* of totalitarianism.¹⁸ This element first and foremost signifies a

sacralization of politics within totalitarian movements, as opposed to the *civil* religion of more liberal political organization. The sacralization of totalitarian politics consists of instituting myths and rituals which serve to mobilize the collective, something that »effectively generated fanatical enthusiasm and apocalyptic terror, ferocious cruelty and implacable hatred, the hope of salvation and the sentence of death«. ¹⁹

However, Gentile does not rely on the binary of civil versus political religion to do all the work for him. He writes that »historical reality demonstrates« how the distinction cannot always be made clear and precise. While it may appear absolute in a comparison made between the USA and Nazi Germany, civil religion can transform into political religion, as was the case during the French Revolution, during which such a process presumably led to »integralism« and »intolerance«. ²⁰ In this distinction, Gentile not only repeats some aspects of Voegelin, but also makes a point similar to J. L. Talmon's distinction between »liberal« and »totalitarian« democracy. ²¹ In short, it is the messianic promise and eschatological claims of »political religions« that make them politically problematic for Gentile.

But integralism and intolerance cannot be said to be specific to »political religion«, since the »civil religion« of the USA was compatible with legally instituted slavery for nearly a hundred years and with racial segregation for a hundred more. One could also add that Hannah Arendt's insight into the importance of the dark heritage of imperialism for totalitarianism's emergence in Europe is seldom seen in these discussions of the »politico-religious«. ²² Colonial discourse may lack in messianism, but it certainly features its own share of genocidal eschatology.

From the perspective of the analysis of religion and religious modernity, another point of critique of this line of thought can be raised. As Alberto Toscano has noted, the analysis of totalitarianism as a secularized or politicized form of religious fanaticism tends »to assume a vision of human nature which includes some kind of disposition to the religious as a basic feature of being human«. ²³

Its tendency towards an *a-* or at least a *trans-*historic anthropology risks a reification of the category of religion. In a comment on the liberal-conservative critique of Marxism's politico-religious aspects, Fredric Jameson argues that »the nonbeliever strengthens his adversary's case by his tendency (a properly superstitious one, we might point out) to attribute some unique and specialized, intrinsically *other* type of psychological or spiritual experience to the believer«. ²⁴ To some extent, analysis ends where it is supposed to start: the »religion« in »political religion« is categorized, pathologized, and even stigmatized, but not really interpreted in its full socio-symbolic capacity and relevance.

Given the combination of the abovementioned points derived from political history, combined with the critique of an almost banal sociology of religion, one might start to wonder if the whole concept of »political religion« and its problematic relation to the analysis of »totalitarianism« points to a weakness of conservative-liberal thought. What it seems to fail in conceptualizing or even to visualize are important features of modernity, de-politicized by its liberal gaze, but nonetheless fully functioning institutionally and politically. It could also be argued that it contributes to the way religious belief is allowed to appear and work in modernity. It is therefore neither politically nor religiously neutral.

As the constitutional theorist Paul W. Kahn has argued, a certain kind of political sacrifice, containing what should be viewed as religious connotations, remains a central experience in US politics (and, one might add, not only there).²⁵ To this we could add Simon Critchley's observation, not far from that of Carl Schmitt in *Politische Theologie*, that liberalism in its own way is a certain form of politicized religion: if »totalitarianism« is political messianism, then liberalism can be seen as political deism.²⁶

Liberalism has its own theologico-political roots, often simply ignored by its adherents, even when archeologically excavating other political orientations for theirs.²⁷ As the jurist Ernst-Wolfgang Böckenförde puts it, in what has become known as »the Böckenförde-dictum«, »the liberal, secularized state lives off presuppositions that it in itself cannot guarantee«. ²⁸ One could rephrase that to »presuppositions that it cannot and does not want to acknowledge«.

Still, this does not mean that the establishment of the politico-religious ideologeme should be regarded as a simple expression of liberal-conservative false consciousness. After the so-called »return of religion« and the entry of a nominally »post-secular age«, great hermeneutical possibility may be found in this anti-totalitarian discourse, opening both the contemporary world and the history of the twentieth century to renewed critical investigation.

— THE TRAUMA OF TRANSCENDENCE: FROM POLITICAL RELIGION TO POLITICAL THEOLOGY AND BACK —

In what remains of this article, I will argue for an appropriation of the politico-religious ideologeme for critical purposes, along lines already hinted above. Kahn's, Critchley's and Schmitt's work on the concept of political theology (as well as Böckenförde's, who is a social democrat, clearly favoring the modern liberal state), contribute to an understanding of secular, liberal parliamentarism which attributes it neither political, nor religious neutrality. In general, it is important to

uphold a distinction between the concepts of »political religion« and »political theology«, which are often conflated. To put it bluntly, theology is theoretical, religion is practical.

Theology's ancient Greek root denotes a »discourse about the gods«; religion could be said to refer to »the facts of belief, faith and worship«.²⁹

I would agree with Richard Shorten that a critical agenda, based on a »'thinner' interpretive claim« than that of the established discourse on »political religion«, which »takes note of the structural affinity between aspects of theology, religion and particular political ideas and practices«, has much to offer to »the study of ideology«, especially concerning the »process through which core political concepts are imparted with meaning«.³⁰ In my view, however, this »interpretive claim« must relate to the field of political theology. From a certain perspective, it has to *become* or realize itself as »political theology« when attempting to grasp and explicate these issues.

Shorten has suggested that his thinner interpretive agenda concerning political religion could be aimed at studying »'sacralisation' (in a metaphorical sense) as denoting a process in which certain kinds of political idea are imparted with meaning«, »a form of 'decontestation' that is peculiar to those kinds of political ideology that are plausibly conceived as political religions«.³¹ This is an agenda I find promising. It does however beg the question whether, for instance, liberal »depoliticization« and »de-sacralization« are not to be viewed as ideological »decontestations«, worthy of the name »sacralization« themselves.

Are human rights not often treated as sacrosanct in official liberal rhetoric, and to what extent is that not political theology, relating to something like a politico-religious praxis? I would argue that thinking along the lines of political theology opens critical perspectives which would allow for a historically conscious hermeneutic, allowing for awareness of, as well as dialogue and comparison between, differing traditions in the world of contemporary politics, after the so-called »return of religion« and the emergence of »post-secular« thought as an ideological phenomenon. I would like to add that this in no way forms a claim about liberalism that would make it »truly« or »simply« religious. Rather, the modes and objects of »sacralizations« may differ in determining ways. A critical hermeneutic taking heed of »sacralization« does not by definition indicate sameness between ideologies and discourses.

I would also add that the concept of ideologeme may contribute to making critical use of the established discourse on »political religion«. The mobility of the ideologeme enables ideological innovation, unexpected shifts of valences and counterhegemonic restatements of established ideas.³² Thus, a well-respected, if controversial, theory proclaiming

totalitarian movements as being political religions opens up a potential field of political meaning. To some extent, I would claim, this is what is at stake in Slavoj Žižek's early anti-totalitarian work, which led to his subsequent turn to outspoken political theology during the late 1990s.

In the final chapter of the book *For They Know Not What They Do: Enjoyment as a Political Factor*, originally published in 1991, Žižek uses Ernst Kantorowicz's politico-theological concept of »the King's two bodies«, picked up through Claude Lefort, to discuss and analyze the totalitarian leader's double nature. Kantorowicz's classic conception historicizes a medieval juridical figure which separates two essences in the king: one earthly and one supernatural. Kingly authority draws on this doubling, which forms the basis for the view that the king, or that in him which is the authority of »kingship«, never actually dies – *dignitas non moritur*.

From this, Žižek analyses the function of law and what role the king (or kingship) plays in upholding the law: »The emergence of this sublime body is clearly linked to the illegal violence that founds the reign of law.« When established, law simply rotates in its »vicious circle«, »posits its presuppositions« – but to remain functional it requires some support in the form of »a little piece of the real« which »'stops up' and thus conceals the void of a law that simply refers to itself as its own ground. The »sublime body« is, according to Žižek, precisely what fills this function.³³ However, in this aspect the totalitarian leader differs significantly from the king.

Rather than to uphold the law, the totalitarian leader has to act as its replacement. His mission is to extract a new people from its old body, tainted as it is by tyranny and the »corruption of previous history«. To Žižek, totalitarianism amounts to a »fantasy of a radical annihilation of tradition«³⁴: »By conceiving of himself as an agency through which the People gives birth to itself, the Leader assumes the role of a *deputy from (of) the future*; he acts as a medium through which the future, not yet existing People organizes its own conception.«³⁵

According to Žižek, this »sublime body« is a materialization of »pure enjoyment«, and it is that which tempts the Subject »'to give way to his desire' and thus entangle himself in the paradoxes of *servitude volontaire*«. ³⁶ It is to Žižek's disadvantage that he does not mention the imperial logic of colonialism here, with its *mission civilisatrice* and its interpellating implication for colonial subjects, identified by Frantz Fanon as »turn white or disappear«. ³⁷

Here it becomes clear that the problem of the totalitarian leader is a problem of *transition* and thus, in a way, of »transcendence«. According to the leading liberal scholar of fascism Roger Griffin, this conception of the possibility of transcendence »*within* secular time, through the medium of such mythic

entities as the nation, the race, or the international proletariat« is defining for totalitarian movements.³⁸ For Griffin, it is crucial to distinguish between this and metaphysical conceptions of transcendence.

One might ask if this liberal distinction between metaphysics and politics, specifically religion and politics, really is possible, given Griffin's own stated view in the same essay that the political and the religious are at times »organically inseparable«?³⁹ In liberal and conservative political theory, law is generally figured and theorized as *established* and the question of its *founding* is seldom or never answered. Law's immanence in its own »vicious circle« of »posited presuppositions« is taken for granted as a steady state of normality. The sovereignty of decision is disavowed; the constituted powers of the day take precedence before neutralized, non-active constitutive powers, imagined as being of the past.

The connection of anomic political circumstances and transcendence is found already in Carl Schmitt, whose work on the connections between absolute sovereignty, the state of exception and transcendence has been a thorn in liberalism's side since 1922.⁴⁰ With the exclusion of the exceptional from the analysis of politics, one wonders if liberalism does not risk making itself redundant in politico-epistemological issues of contemporary theory.⁴¹

What remains open in Žižek's Lacano-Marxist schema of political enjoyment and desire under totalitarianism is the possibility of a radically *other* form of enjoyment.⁴² In a Lacanian reading, there are of course no non-pathological subjective positions in relation to enjoyment and trauma. I do not have the space here to properly explicate on Žižek's discussion of the ethical status of the drive, which he favors against those of hysteria, neurosis and perversion, but I would argue that his analysis of »enjoyment as a political factor« would seem to open up a radically different perspective on the phenomenon of those troubles and transitions that seem to motivate conservative-liberal students of so called »political religions«.

Fredric Jameson's more orthodox Marxist argument on the value of studying reactionary authors, an argument that can be used *contra* Griffin's grouping together of ideas regarding political transcendence (which finds resonances in the general expression of the ideologeme), is that there is nothing revolutionary in a »fascist revolution«, nor anything that can be called more than »the optical illusion of thought« in fascism, but that such »illusions« may be regarded as rationalizations and disguises for some »basic source of energy«, of which Marxism would be the proper conduit.⁴³ Without having to believe Jameson's full argument here, we may definitely agree with him that what he calls »a Marxist hermeneutic« has a potential to properly visualize the sparks of social energy that

the experience of fascism – or for that matter Stalinism – gives expression to.

To sum up, I would argue that the politico-religious ideologeme in conservative-liberal discourse serves to depoliticize certain manifestations of social energy by reading them in the light of something supposedly inherently un-political in the modern age: *religion*. Religion in its privatized and »civil« form is put forward as the condition of normality, and conditions of normality are upheld as norms for politics, a way of bypassing the theorizing of norm-breaking exceptions and anomie circumstances. Therefore, exceptional politics, or the politically exceptional, can be read as »religious« and thereby excluded, unrecognized as anything but expressions of social and psychological pathology. Mass politics and collective action are viewed with suspicion and politicized expressions of faith are taken as proto-totalitarianism. Here, we can clearly see the ideological purposes of and historical reasons for imagining certain radical political and religious movements along the lines of a »politico-religious« model.

But by acknowledging the conceptual complex of the politico-religious ideologeme as a narrative fantasy, an attempt at symbolic resolution to political conflict and unsolved social contradictions, this particular model of thought becomes graspable as the interpretative tool of a critical agenda. It can make for innovative readings of social theory and political restatements of positions, in short: a fruitful tool for a critical hermeneutic study of contemporary and modern social energies, beyond a liberal-secularist model. ■

■ — E N D N O T E S —

1 Fredric Jameson: *The Prison House of Language. A Critical Account of Structuralism and Russian Formalism* (Princeton, 1972), V.

2 The literature on Marx, Engels, their relationship to Hegelianism and the effects this relationship has had on Marxism is vast. For descriptions on the specific issue of the theory of ideology emerging from dissatisfaction with the critique of religion amongst the Young Hegelians, see for instance Harold Mah, *The End Of Philosophy and The Origin of »Ideology«*. *Karl Marx and the Young Hegelians* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London, 1987) and Jorge Larrain, *The Concept of Ideology* (London, 1986).

3 Alberto Toscano: *Fanaticism. On the Uses of an Idea* (London & New York, 2010), 203 f.

4 Fredric Jameson: *The Political Unconscious. Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act* (London & New York, 2002), 102.

5 Jameson: *The Political Unconscious*, 172, 104.

6 Jameson: *The Political Unconscious*, 103 f.

7 Jameson: *The Political Unconscious*, 73.

8 As developed in Emilio Gentile: »The Sacralisation of Politics: Definitions, Interpretations and Reflections on the Question of Secular Religion and Totalitarianism«, in *Totalitarian Movements and Political Religions* 1:1 (2000). See the third section of this essay.

9 Naveed S. Sheikh: »A Decade is a Short Time in Scholarship«, in *Totalitarian Movements and Political Religions* 11:1 (2010), 1.

10 Sheikh: »A Decade is a Short Time in Scholarship«, 1.

11 Sheikh: »A Decade is a Short Time in Scholarship«, 1.

12 Karl Löwith: *Meaning in History* (Chicago, 1949).

13 Michael Burleigh: *Sacred Causes. Religion and Politics from the European Dictators to Al Qaeda* (London, 2007); Mark Lilla: *The Stillborn God. Religion, Politics and the Modern West* (New York, 2007); John Gray: *Black Mass. Apocalyptic Religion and the Death of Utopia* (London, 2008).

14 Anthony James Gregor: *Totalitarianism and Political Religion. An Intellectual History* (Stanford, 2012), 9.

15 Gregor: *Totalitarianism and Political Religion*, 8.

16 Hans Otto Seitscheck: »Eric Voegelin's concept of 'gnosis'«, in Hans Maier (ed.): *Totalitarianism and Political Religion. Concepts for the Comparison of Dictatorships: Theory and History of Interpretation* (London & New York 2007), 219.

17 For Voegelin's development of this analysis, see the works collected in *The Collected Works of Eric Voegelin. Volume 5. Modernity Without Restraint. The Political Religions, The New Science of Politics, and Science, Politics, and Gnosticism*, (Columbia and London, 2000).

18 Gentile: »The Sacralisation of Politics«, 51.

19 Gentile: »The Sacralisation of Politics«, 52.

20 Gentile: »The Sacralisation of Politics«, 10. That »civil religion« here has to turn into »political religion« for it to become »integralist and intolerant«, which would maintain his ostensibly neat distinction by default, does not seem to bother Gentile.

21 See J.L. Talmon: *The Origins of Totalitarian Democracy* (London, 1952), and *Political Messianism. The Romantic Phase* (London, 1960). The chief culprits are in the first work Rousseau and the Jacobins, in the second supplemented by Socialist and Nationalist appropriations of »Totalitarian Democratic« thought during the 19th Century.

22 See part two, »Imperialism«, in Hannah Arendt: *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (New York, 1976).

23 Toscano: *Fanaticism*, 208.

24 Fredric Jameson: *Marxism and Form. Twentieth Century Dialectical Theories of Literature* (Princeton, 1971), 117.

25 See for instance Paul W. Kahn: *Sacred Violence. Torture, Terror and Sovereignty* (Ann Arbor, 2008), and by the same author, *Political Theology. Four New Chapters on the Concept of Sovereignty* (New York, 2011).

26 Simon Critchley: *Faith of the Faithless* (London & New York, 2012), 152; Carl Schmitt: *Politische Theologie. Vier Kapitel zur Lehre von der Souveränität* (Berlin, 2004), 64.

27 For radically differing, complementary perspectives on this, see Thomas L. Pangle: *The Theological Basis of Liberal Modernity in Montesquieu's Spirit of the Laws* (Chicago, 2010), and Gil Anidjar: »Secularism«, in *Critical Inquiry* 33:1 (2006).

28 Ernst-Wolfgang Böckenförde: »Die Entstehung des Staates als Vorgang der Säkularisation«, in *Recht, Staat, Freiheit. Studien zu Rechtsphilosophie, Staatstheorie und Verfassungsgeschichte* (Frankfurt am Main, 2006), 112.

29 Richard Shorten: »Political Theology, Political Religion and Secularisation«, *Political Studies Review* 8 (2010), 181. This distinction could be complemented by Arne Rasmusson's distinction between »political theology« and »theological politics«, the latter signifying political action in which the church is viewed as an *alternative »polis«*, not as a »corrective« to secular political community. Cf. *The Church as Polis. From Political Theology to Theological Politics as Exemplified by Jürgen Moltmann and Stanley Hauerwas* (Lund, 1994).

30 Shorten: »Political Theology«, 189 f.

31 Richard Shorten: »The Status of Ideology in the Return of Political Religion Theory«, *Journal of Political Ideologies* 12:2 (2007), 183.

32 Relatedly, Fredric Jameson argues that the theological controversies surrounding the English Civil War allows for such a reading – see *The Political Unconscious*, 72.

33 Slavoj Žižek: *For They Know Not What They Do. Enjoyment as a Political Factor. 2nd ed.* (London & New York, 2008), 260.

34 Žižek: *For They Know Not What They Do*, 261.

35 Žižek: *For They Know Not What They Do*, 262.

36 Žižek: *For They Know Not What They Do*, 263.

37 Frantz Fanon: *Black Skin, White Masks* (London, 1986), 100.

38 Roger Griffin: »Introduction: The Evolutions and Convolutions of Political Religion«, in Mallet, R., Tortorice, J., Griffin, R. (eds.): *The Sacred in Twentieth-Century Politics. Essays in Honour of Professor Stanley G. Payne* (New York, 2009), 13.

39 Griffin: »Introduction: The Evolutions and Convolutions of Political Religion«, 14, 2.

40 Primarily found in the first chapter of *Politische Theologie*.

41 Such is the argument of Paul W. Kahn in *Sacred Violence*, see esp. p. 5.

42 Žižek, *For They Know Not What They Do*, 272.

43 Jameson, *Marxism and Form*, 119.