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### Judaism's Encounter with European Culture and Totalitarianism

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#### **The Totalitarian Democracy of the Oslo Peace:**

#### **Is It Really a Phenomenon Unique to this Place and Time?**

Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak's conduct before and after the Camp David Summit has caused even some of Oslo's most enthusiastic supporters to express deep concern about the status of Israeli democracy in light of his far-reaching moves.<sup>1</sup> The tendency is to attribute the faultfinding to the critics' opposition to the law calling for the direct election of the Prime Minister. However, the truth is that the attacks on democracy began long before the implementation of that law, and Barak is not the first to act in an undemocratic manner in the management of the political process. Confirmation of this claim was provided by Minister Yuli Tamir who recently said the following:

Look, we all cheered the Oslo Agreement despite the fact that it wasn't conceived in a democratic fashion. The contacts were secret, there was no transparency and they lied to the public. In this matter, what the Right claimed was true. It was presented only at the last minute as a take-it-or-leave-it proposition. There were severe flaws in the democratic nature of this process. Nevertheless, we enthusiastically adopted it, in my opinion, justifiably. I suppose that we don't want a dictatorial peace; anything but that. But that is also a difficult question to honestly answer. Because, had they told us, "Okay, gentlemen, there will be a dictatorship for a year at the conclusion of which there will be peace, and the peace will lead to prosperity and justice", would we have bought it, or not?<sup>2</sup>

The unusual frankness of Prof. Yuli Tamir is praiseworthy. However, I am forced to disappoint here. The approach, according to which it is possible to establish a dictatorship for a year in order to achieve one sublime goal or another, arouses memories of similar approaches which were employed more than once in the history of humanity in general, and of the modern era in particular. History has proven that, despite their apparent naïveté, these approaches contain within them a destructive potential.

History has proven this especially in relation to the utopias of the modern era. At the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century we can all bear witness that the utopians' belief in a "Brave New World", and their profound desire to construct it, directly paved the way for the establishment of murderous, totalitarian regimes. Anyone aware of these historical facts had best be wary regarding the misconceptions of Israeli utopians who believe in a "New Middle East", and are willing to establish it even at an extremely "painful" price. In other words, we

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must be on our guard not only because of the real dangers which threaten us in the “Old Middle East”, but also because of the totalitarian danger which threatens us from within in the race towards the new one.

The dictatorship of the utopian peace in Israel cannot, was not, and will not be limited to just one year. It has already existed for more than a few years. It was conceived in Oslo, though not necessarily to impose itself on Norwegians. It, justifiably from its perspective, declared war on the “enemies of peace” in Israel, as they constituted an obstacle in its path.<sup>3</sup> The utopian dictatorship took successful advantage, for its own purposes, of Rabin’s assassination, which enabled it to delegitimize the settlers of Judea, Samaria and Gaza and to neutralize opposition to the Oslo policies. It manifested itself in an extremely anti-democratic fashion in the violent suppression of public protest. It succeeded in preventing the new Prime Minister, who had been elected on the coattails of the wave of protest against Oslo, from implementing his democratic and ethical imperative – to suggest and execute a real alternative to the peace process initiated by the Left. It transformed Israel into a totalitarian democratic country, governed on the basis of one, exclusive ideology.<sup>4</sup> These days it has assumed the authentic characteristics of a people’s democracy and threatens, according to experts, the very essence of the democratic system in the State of Israel. Neither Netanyahu, nor Barak, nor even the late Yitzhak Rabin, who began the process, controlled the totalitarian reality that developed. Utopia is the real ruler. Neither terrorist attacks, threats of war, Nazi-style anti-Semitic propaganda in the school system, and in the media, of the Palestinian Authority and Arab States with whom we have an official, though illusory peace, nor Arafat’s positions concerning Jerusalem and the refugees – nothing from the world of reality can ruin the blind, messianic faith of the utopians, or stop them from pursuing their goal.

In any case, no matter what, Arafat will never appear guilty in the eyes of the zealous faithful of this religion, but rather it always is and always will be the Jewish enemies of peace alone who are to blame.<sup>5</sup>

This writer has published a number of articles on this topic<sup>6</sup> and in one of them staged a comparative analysis between the philosophy of the Israeli Left, holders of the utopian-messianic belief, and that of Russian radicals who laid the intellectual groundwork for the Bolshevik Revolution.<sup>7</sup> The solution to the problem would be all too simple if we believed that the roots of the Israeli utopia are grounded exclusively in Russia. It is no coincidence that the language of the utopia of peace is Western-liberal, and it is not merely “camouflage” concealing the essence. It seems that the former Soviet Union and present-day Israel are extreme, though definitely authentic, expressions of trends whose sources are traceable to the very foundations of Western civilization in its entirety. On the other hand, it is no coincidence that not only in Israel but also in Russia, the role of Jews in the utopian-totalitarian experiment was and remains extremely significant.

## **Jews Flee Their Judaism**

Not coincidentally, we are referring to Western civilization in its entirety and not only its modern cultural manifestation. The reference is to Christian civilization in both its stages. In the first stage of its development – the Middle Ages – it emerged in its religious version. In its second, present stage, it has manifested itself in its modern (and post-modern) secular version. It is idiomatic to characterize Western civilization as a Judeo-Christian culture (or civilization), in recognition of the fact that historically Christianity emanated from Judaism. Despite the wide circulation enjoyed by this characterization, and its acceptance by many as obvious, this writer dares to claim that it is incorrect. Its incorrectness is discernible in an extremely convincing manner through an analysis of the issue of the totalitarian potential intrinsic to Western civilization.

The results of our research point to the fact that the sources of the totalitarian potential under discussion are deeply grounded in the philosophical credo developed by Christianity. In Judaism, one finds the philosophical alternative to totalitarianism. This is not to say that the Jewish answer is fully developed. It must be explicated and translated into the language of the modern era, without forfeiting one iota of Judaism’s authenticity and without distorting the fundamentals of original Jewish thought. Undoubtedly, this article does not pretend to meet this challenge. Our goal is much more modest – to direct the reader’s

attention to the existence of the problem which is most certainly not merely theoretical as it contains genuine ideological, political, existential, and even metaphysical dimensions.

Therefore, from our perspective, an analysis of the totalitarian potential inherent in European civilization does not constitute a goal in its own right. Concomitant with the matter of potential is an issue that serves as one of the central aspects of the topic under discussion. From the perspective of this problem, Western culture may indeed be perceived as half-Jewish, though not necessarily in terms of the active participation of Jews in literary works or development of the sciences in Western culture. It is rather (and this is the connection to our topic), in their no-less active participation in the creation of utopias, the founding of messianic movements, the formation and implementation of revolutions, and the establishment of totalitarian regimes.

As it turns out (and we will try to prove this), the “contributions” of the Jews to Western totalitarianism stem from the unique Jewish utopia which neither exists nor ever has existed in any other nation in the course of the history of humanity. This is the utopia of Jewish flight from Judaism. In the course of their assimilation into European culture, they are liable (as in fact repeatedly happened) to influence it precisely in a manner which leads to the actualization of its totalitarian potential. This is because the parameters of the authentic Jewish philosophical credo from which they, the Jews, are unable to free themselves – like it or not – undergo a process of distortion while adjusting to the concept of non-Jewish culture and philosophy. In that way, the parameters of distorted Jewish thought become a factor which moves Western totalitarianism from potential to actual status.

Seemingly, the above justifies the claims of anti-Semites who accuse Jews of Marxism and Communism, however, this claim has no real basis as that same totalitarian potential which certain Jews “helped” to facilitate is not their creation. The Jews are not responsible for its formation but rather the Judeo-Christian civilization, deeply rooted in its own original foundations, is responsible for its birth.

This writer certainly does not intend to develop within this framework a comprehensive theory in regard to this topic. I simply would like to sketch a few lines illustrating the continuity between Christianity and modern culture as far as the existence of totalitarian potential in the heart of Western civilization is concerned, and address the Jewish aspect of this topic as well.

### **Totalitarian Potential of Western Philosophy in the Modern and Post-Modern Era**

Prominent 20th century researchers and scholars have noted the disparity between the optimistic philosophies that were developed during the European enlightenment and implemented in the modern era on the one hand, and the establishment of totalitarian regimes in the 20<sup>th</sup> century on the other. There were those who concluded that the roots of totalitarianism can be traced to classic European philosophy, while others identified its foundations in the social and/or economic realm, and still others attributed it specifically to political theory. The common denominator of all of these approaches is that they did not perceive totalitarianism as merely a political form of government but rather as a philosophical and rational – no less than political – phenomenon, and perhaps even an existential, metaphysical and religious one.

Friedrich Hayek, who dealt with the subject primarily from the economic perspective, claimed that collectivist and socialist ideas led to totalitarianism, and he perceived a clear totalitarian phenomenon even in western social democracy.

Peter Berger developed a thesis according to which the “socialist myth” and the communist totalitarianism that brought it to bear, flow directly from what he calls “the myth of modernity”. This is an extremely authentic myth because it is an integral part of Western culture as it developed on the basis of 20<sup>th</sup> century philosophy and the modernization process.

Yaakov Talmon detected two schools of thought in the understanding of democracy – liberal democracy and totalitarian democracy. The difference between them is not manifest in the specific ideas, as the disciples of totalitarian democracy believe in the ideals of freedom and propound individualism and rationalism exactly

like their liberal democratic counterparts. The actual difference between them, according to Talmon, lies in their differing attitudes towards political life. The liberal democratic school adopts a pragmatic approach that accepts the spontaneity of social and historical development and does not try to harness and mold it to fit a previously determined objective. In contrast, the totalitarian democratic school, which rests on its disciples' belief in one, exclusive political truth, evolves into what Talmon calls "political messianism" – a method of political thought and activity guided by a vision of the ultimate purpose of social and historical development. Political messianism predetermines human behavior and impels the masses to strive for that purpose and ultimately, to achieve that goal at all costs, implementing any and all measures, no matter how extreme.

Romano Guardini was one of the first, in the wake of World War II, to reach harsh conclusions regarding the delusions induced by the modern era. One of the causes of the crisis which struck European culture and manifested itself in the establishment of totalitarian regimes, resulted, in his opinion, from the historical determinism which exemplifies the Western world view. The unshakable belief in inevitable progress led to the 1930s crisis. That belief is irreconcilable with man's freedom of choice and his responsibility for his actions. According to Guardini, there is no way to prevent future crises or arrest the deterioration of European culture without first subduing deterministic philosophies. Only after European man learns to assume responsibility for his actions and to effectuate his freedom of choice will a real alternative to totalitarianism be created. This Catholic philosopher discovered the roots of the solutions to the problem in the Old Testament – the Hebrew Bible. Guardini found the basis for comprehending personal responsibility in the authentic Jewish philosophy that was revealed to him in the Book of Books. Only there did he arrive at the understanding of free choice as the essence of human existence, not merely as an abstract declaration.

The attempt to find an alternative within the codes of authentic Jewish philosophy to the totality of European philosophy occupied additional scholars, among them two 20<sup>th</sup> century Jewish philosophers – Franz Rosenzweig and Emanuel Levinas. Rosenzweig, who died before Hitler's rise to power in Germany, noted the problematic nature of the historical determinism and uniformity of European philosophy. He suggested the notion of "shattering totality", in which he referred primarily to Hegelian philosophy, which he viewed as a total system in which "the stones which comprise the building exist only for the sake of the building." In contrast to the monolithic and monologic nature of classical European philosophy, of which Hegel's philosophy is its most advanced development and extreme expression, Rosenzweig attempted to construct an alternative based on dialogic philosophy, whose foundation is in Judaism. (It should be noted that he developed his dialogic approach before scholars like Martin Buber, Gabriel Marcel and Friedrich Abner, who developed their own dialogic approaches). Rosenzweig's student, Emanuel Levinas, who set as one of the goals of his philosophical work the research into the philosophical sources of the Holocaust and searched for alternative philosophical approaches which could prevent the movement towards totalitarianism, already charted a direct connection between classical Western philosophy and totalitarianism. He, too, in the wake of his mentor, Rosenzweig, believed that an alternative philosophy based on Judaism should be established on the basis of the concept of "shattering the totality" of the old European philosophy. Levinas found that the major shortcoming of Western philosophy, from which the roots of totalitarianism developed, was that Western philosophy "forgot" its Jewish component, and as a result, he developed his philosophical approach with the goal of restoring that component. Thus, the tendency of Jews to interpret the Jewish principle of "light unto the nations" in a missionary fashion, manifests itself in Levinas' philosophical endeavor. However, in contrast to Karl Marx, Emanuel Levinas was not an atheist and anti-Semite – on the contrary, he was an Orthodox Jew. His missionary Judaism was not a result of his desire to rid himself of his Jewish identity – on the contrary, he developed his rich Jewish philosophical approach in conjunction with his general philosophical approach.

Marx, in absolute contradistinction to Levinas, did not consciously intend to inject the Jewish element into general philosophy, but he did so, and in that way strengthened the totalitarian aspect of western philosophy. On the other hand, the French-Jewish philosopher, Emanuel Levinas, in the course of consciously injecting the Jewish element into non-Jewish philosophy, developed his famous concept of "the other",<sup>8</sup> a concept which has become a central component of post-modern ideology. It should be noted that this element of Levinas' philosophy plays an especially destructive role in the context of present-day Israeli reality. The

“other” for whom the “self” is supposed to sacrifice himself, or at least to whom he must devote himself, is never Jewish, and in the local context is, of necessity, an oppressed, suffering Arab/Palestinian. The self-negation of the Jewish “self” before the Arab “other” cannot cease even while the “other” declares almost explicitly in a loud voice that his goal is to implement the same final solution regarding the Jewish question that the Nazis only partially succeeded to implement in the Holocaust. The self-negation of the Jews before the Arabs and before the entire world, whose direct result was the Oslo utopia, is the authentic manifestation of the ultimate demand of Emanuel Levinas, a philosopher who wanted to engender an intellectual alternative to the Holocaust.

### **The Paradox of Post-Modern Ideology**

The totalitarian potential latent in European philosophy is not necessarily supposed to reach fruition. The very existence of two schools of thought regarding democracy as discussed by Talmon, or of two traditions in the understanding of freedom, according to Hayek,<sup>9</sup> points to the possibility that totalitarian potential will not be actualized. The school of thought, or tradition, which does lead to its realization, is an expression of utopianism – the tendency towards which is no coincidence in Western culture. Despite the differences of opinion among intellectuals regarding the utopia issue, some of the most influential and significant scholars and researchers of the 20<sup>th</sup> century saw a connection between it and totalitarianism. Among them were Karl Popper, Isaiah Berlin, Yaakov Talmon and others.

According to Talmon, belief in one, exclusive political truth, which constitutes the heart of utopia, is the foundation of totalitarian democracy. He showed that this is a secular religion, or in the language of the intellectual leaders of the enlightenment (such as Jean Jacques Rousseau for example), “civilian religion” which was originated by militant atheists as an alternative to the transcendent religion against which they battled. Talmon referred to this utopian religion as “political messianism”, “the religion of the revolution” and “the totalitarianism of the Left”. This religion already revealed its destructive nature in its first century of existence. Both in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries it effected violent revolutions, which was no coincidence, as the actualization of utopia, whose essential goal is to destroy completely the old world in order to replace it with a new, harmonious and perfect world, can only be achieved through violence. Edmund Burke, in the 18<sup>th</sup> century and Francois Guizot in the 19<sup>th</sup> century already perceived this dynamic while learning the lessons of the French Revolution (Burke actually predicted its stages and results at a very early stage of its development). Guizot wrote the following:

The French Revolution and Napoleon I led some philosophers, including some of the most prominent of that era, to a state of feverish excitement which developed into an ethical illness; I am even prepared to say – a mental illness. They yearn for huge, sudden and strange events. They deal in the formation and liquidation of regimes, nations, religions, Europe and the world.<sup>10</sup> They are intoxicated with the enormity of their plans and blinded from assessing their chances of success. One listening to them is left with the impression that all forces in the world and all eternity are at their disposal. That these are the days of Genesis or the end of days. Here they liquidate the social infrastructure, isolate the individual, leaving people at the mercy of immorality or their own weak self-control. There they hand them over to the state and hold the state responsible for their fate. Some see people as individual beings, who can rely only on their own strength and imagination. Others gather them like a flock of sheep under the supervision of the shepherd.<sup>11</sup>

Guizot was mistaken in his belief that the disciples of the messianic religion, to whom he referred in the above quotation, “had no chance to succeed”. Their success manifested itself in the establishment of the totalitarian regimes of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. However, Talmon was also mistaken in the claim that political messianism is a thing of the past because nationalism had overcome it.<sup>12</sup> In light of the declared end of the “modern” era and the no-less declared beginning of the “post-modern” era, it is clear that the celebrated victory of democracy is still liable to turn out to be the victory of totalitarianism.

The formation of the post-modern ideology is bound, in no small measure, to events of the 1960s in Western Europe and North America. The heroes and ideologues of the “student rebellion”, also known as the “New Left”, were radicals whose philosophies were influenced by various totalitarian ideologies, such as Maoism,

Trotskyism, neo-Marxism and the like. A decisive factor in the rise and entrenchment of this approach, to the point that it has become dominant in the West, was the collapse of the Communist bloc. One can discern a profound paradox latent in the post-modern ideology. Consider the ideology that has pretenses of providing the alternative to totalitarianism, but on the other hand, it broadens the scope of that very same phenomenon to the point where it includes all of Western civilization within the definition of totalitarianism.<sup>13</sup>

On the one hand, post-modernism employs liberal terminology while on the other, its liberalism, in contrast to classical liberalism (this model of liberalism is embodied, for example, by the theories of John Stuart Mill and Alexis Tocqueville, which were formulated and influential in the 19<sup>th</sup> century), is extremely radical. Post-modern liberalism is total, intolerant and messianic, although it is a messianism antithetical to the messianism of the old totalitarian democracy. The latter viewed the complete destruction of the existing world merely as a means towards building a new world, while post-modern messianism sees the destruction of culture, the shattering of its ethic and the negation of its ideals (post-modern deconstruction), as a goal in and of itself.

The roots of the paradox lie in the fact that the post-modern philosophy is an updated version of totalitarian democracy in its reliance, like the original 18<sup>th</sup> century versions, on a belief in one, exclusive truth in politics. At the same time, post-modernism professes a relativist approach which negates the very existence of truth. The secret of the contradiction lies in an Orwellian situation: negation of the truth is precisely that which for the disciples of post-modernism, transforms it into one, exclusive truth. It is similar to the Orwellian characteristics of the totalitarian regimes, and it is no wonder. The disciples of the post-modern ideology share the same totalitarian mindset. After the collapse of the Communist regime and the rendering of Marxism totally irrelevant in the Western expanse, they changed the terminology but could not, even had they wanted to, change the essence of their thinking.

One of the manifestations of this joint mindset is evident in the parallel approaches of post-modernism and Marxism. Thus, instead of “downtrodden” and “exploited” classes in Marxist ideology, come the “downtrodden” and “exploited” minorities in post-modernism. Instead of the Marxist approach in which the ruling class oppresses these exploited people, according to the post-modern approach, Western civilization as a whole has oppressed them for its entire 2,000-year existence. The solution is essentially Marxist as well, with just a slight difference. According to the original version, a universal revolution was required to destroy the old world – in the post-modern version, the goal is to destroy mass culture, in other words, replace it with a new culture in which real control will be given to the few. Thus, “the voice is the voice of Jacob and the hands are the hands of Esau” – the words are super-liberal but the Marxist system of thought continues. A clear indication revealing the identity of the post-modern approach with Marxism, as opposed to classical liberalism, is that in contrast to classical liberalism, post-modernism essentially deals not with the individual but rather with a group perceived as a total group, just like Marx’s social class. Incidentally, nations perceived by the post-modern approach as “exploited” by Western civilization, are the very same “third world” nations dominated by the Communist bloc at the time, who, in order to achieve domination, portrayed them in its propaganda as “oppressed” by international imperialist capitalism. At the foundation of the Soviet version of Marxism stands the asymmetry between the “good guys” and the “bad guys” among groups and nations. According to this version, the “Palestinian people”, for example, are naturally “oppressed” and “exploited”, while the Jewish people naturally belong to the family of imperialist nations. New pseudo-historical theories which “prove” this distinction in a convincing “academic” fashion, are nothing more than an ideological tool enlisted to justify previously drawn conclusions. Despite their liberal form, the true function of these theories is the same function served by Soviet “scientific” theories at the time, such as the one called “Scientific Communism”.

There is an additional significant parallel between the post-modern approach and Marxism: In place of Marxist internationalism, the post-modern era ushered in the new universal approach of globalization.<sup>14</sup> It seems that communism, after its official demise, is advancing towards victory over democracy. Utopianism has not disappeared in the post-modern era. The utopia of the “New World Order”, not coincidentally, echoes terrifyingly in the ears of those who recall earlier utopias. The totalitarian element is already apparent in the globalization process. The gradual domination of post-modern values and the increase in the

extremism of post-modern moral relativism attest perhaps to the ascent of a new totalitarianism. This totalitarianism speaks a liberal language but does not tolerate those who think otherwise and stifles their free speech, employing “politically correct” terrorism. It extols individual freedoms but is only prepared to grant special privileges to an individual on the grounds that he becomes part of a homogeneous minority group. It does not allow an individual to belong to his nation because “nation” is an invalid concept. This ascendant totalitarianism needs no iron curtains, since it has already built its large, new international, the post-modern international whose totalitarianism may yet prove to be no less aggressive than the old internationals. And if all that's been said is not false prophecy, and we are in fact witnessing the actions of the new universalist utopia which brings world totalitarianism in its wake, then this development can only be viewed as coming full circle in terms of the existence of totalitarian potential in the heart of Western civilization in general and Western philosophy in particular.

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A French Christian philosopher, Jacques Maritain, and a Russian Christian philosopher, Sergei Bulgakov, independently regarded the roots of Communist and Nazi totalitarianism, in the fundamental hypotheses of the enlightenment and of classical European philosophy. Maritain, who set as his goal the revelation of the intellectual sources of what he defined as “the crisis of modern humanism”, unleashed a sharp critique of Hegel's philosophical method which he characterized as “the totalitarianism of reason”, while presenting an alternative – “Christian humanism” and the “Christian democracy” which was based on it. The two philosophers rebelled against Nazi anti-Semitism and claimed that it was inconsistent with the true spirit and essence of Christianity. Sergei Bulgakov characterized Nazism as “metaphysical anti-Semitism”, and claimed that the source of Nazi anti-Semitism was in its jealousy of Judaism and of Israel as the chosen people. Nazism was essentially a struggle against God, who chose the Jewish people. The two philosophers saw the cause of the crisis in European culture that manifested itself in the establishment of totalitarian regimes, in its abandonment of Christianity and its atheistic battle against it. Bulgakov even accused the assimilated Jews, holders of radical, atheist philosophies, of being prime contributors to this struggle and its destructive results. He explained the phenomenon in that the Jews, who leave their tradition, replace their original religion from which they become estranged with revolutionary ideologies like Marxism, believe in them in the way that religious Jews believe in God, and the assimilated fulfill the commandments of the atheist ideologies with blind devotion and fanatical religious zealotry.<sup>15</sup> Maritain and Bulgakov, two Christian philosophers, who successfully analyzed the problem of the totalitarian potential of Western culture, were unable, precisely because they were Christian, to discern the essential, internal connection between totalitarianism and Christianity.

This connection is especially clear from the perspective of the issue of modern utopianism.

### **Christian and Secular Dualism, Utopia and Jews**

Researchers of the issue of utopia tend to note in general that a gap exists between the utopian's philosophies and the visions reflecting those philosophies on the one hand, and reality on the other. The disconnection of utopians from the real world constitutes the essential difference between utopia and the non-utopian ideal. Among researchers of this phenomenon, there are those who describe utopia as a means of fleeing the existing world (Mumford). There are those who claim that its essential uniqueness lies in the fact that utopian consciousness does not fit in with its surroundings. Therefore, Karl Mannheim, who developed a well thought out theory regarding utopia, held that the implementation of utopia must inevitably shatter existing reality.

Researchers note that utopia appears when there is an unbridgeable gap between reality and the values and ideals of those who become utopians due to their maintenance of such abstruse ideals. The chasm of contrast between the world of reality and the world of ideals lies in the utopian's consciousness, and stems from the fact that he perceives the existing reality as complete, irreversible evil. As a result, the utopian strives to replace the existing reality, intolerable from his perspective, with a new, perfect world. In addition, the utopian's consciousness is entirely dualist.<sup>16</sup>

Utopian dualism has its sources in Christian dualism. The most authentic form of this was expressed by one of the church fathers, Saint Augustine of Hippo (354-430) in his discussion of two cities: the heavenly city and the earthly city, where “in one, one is destined to rule forever together with God, while in the other to suffer eternal affliction together with Satan.”<sup>17</sup> All emendations reflected in later versions of Christian theology neither neutralize nor erase this basic dualism in Christian philosophy. It appears in its clearest form in the Pravoslavic (Eastern Orthodox) version, on whose foundations Russian culture developed.<sup>18</sup> There are those who view this fact as the primary reason that specifically in Russia, whose intelligentsia tended conspicuously towards utopianism (even those who lived in generations preceding the Bolsheviks and had no familiarity with Marxism), that the dualism ultimately led to the establishment of the totalitarian regime.

The Christian dualism was manifest in the secular-modern world in the gap between two areas perceived as parallel, with different names: ideal and real, consciousness and existence, thought and action, principles and real existence, spiritual and material, subjective and objective, etc. This dualism, which was transferred from Christianity to modern culture, can be avoided. The previously stated fact that the totalitarian potential of European philosophy need not necessarily be actualized, is precisely contingent on the existence of the possibility of sidestepping dualism in one way or another, consciously or unconsciously. Classical liberalism and conservatism which created an alternative to the totalitarian democratic and political messianic schools, and as a result to utopianism, successfully bypassed the dualism, if not totally, then at least partially.

The early critics of the philosophy of the French enlightenment already pointed to the dualistic flaw in their thinking which manifested itself in the total break between their rational, abstract ideas and spontaneous reality. These critics even discerned the danger inherent in the tendency of the enlightened classes in France to distort reality to coincide with their ideas, and in that way, to eliminate the spontaneity of the development processes of history and society. Thus, Edmund Burke, the father of modern conservatism (see above), leveled extremely harsh criticism at the tendency of the French philosophers to create *ex nihilo* a new society in accordance with their ideas, which were totally out of touch with historical reality, tradition and what he called “the wisdom of the ages”. He perceived this tendency (which was essentially, clearly utopian) as a danger so great that he allowed himself to refer to the philosophy of the French enlightenment as “the cannibal philosophy” and he called its creators “man-eating philosophers”.

Yaakov Talmon described this tendency – the impact of the dualism of the enlightenment on its individualist perception – in the following manner:

The concept “man as man” as an abstract essence dependent on nothing, existing outside the historical categories to which it belongs, can serve as a powerful tool in the hands of totalitarianism.<sup>19</sup>

This gap between the realm of reason and the realm of the spontaneous development of reality and the empirical activity of man was viewed by Talmon as the source of what he called “conceptual absolutism”,<sup>20</sup> which he ascribed to the school of totalitarian democracy, political messianism and utopianism (these are all phrases describing the same phenomenon). The significance of any alternative is in its reliance on spontaneity and empirical trial and error in human activity instead of predetermining the purpose towards which people are to strive, against their will.

Soon we will return to our discussion of predetermination of purpose that flows directly from the utopianism of the totalitarian democratic school and expresses its messianism, when discussing historical determinism that, like dualism, is common to Christianity and Western philosophy as it appears in the totalitarian-democratic school. Meanwhile, we will suffice with noting that as a result of the dualist assumptions which were discussed in this section, two options for the philosophical confrontation with the dualistic gap are liable to be formed. Both did, in fact, manifest themselves in the modern era and paved the way for the two models of totalitarian regimes which were established in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

**The First Option** – the utopian, tied to trends and phenomena characterized by Yaakov Talmon as “the totalitarian-democratic school, political messianism”, “the revolutionary religion” and “the totalitarianism of the Left”. This option was first manifest, in a political sense, in the Republic of the Jacobin dictatorship, which arose in the wake of the French Revolution (1789), and later, in the Communist, Soviet regime which arose in the wake of the Bolshevik Revolution (1917). Fundamentally, however, this option can be actualized

in other totalitarian regimes as well, those which have not yet become well-known in history and which rely on different ideologies than those familiar in the past. This is because the essence and uniqueness of the discussed option, like the second alternative and the difference between them, does not lie in specific ideas but rather in thought patterns which can manifest themselves in different and contradictory ideas.

**The Second Option** – is connected with the mode of thought characterized by Talmon as “the totalitarianism of the Right”, and its political revelation was in the establishment of totalitarian regimes such as Nazism and Fascism. The fundamental distinction between these two options, from the perspective of the attempt to overcome intellectually the dualistic gap between spiritual and material, lies in that in the first case, this attempt manifests itself in the ambition to replace the given reality – which is incompatible with the utopian ideal or with abstract rational ideas which determine the purpose toward whose fulfillment people must strive – with another reality. In the case of the second option, the attempt to overcome the dualism finds expression in the preference of the material, totally lacking any spiritual or transcendental dimension. However, choosing the second option, which entails an abandonment of ideals, values and fundamentals central to classical Western philosophy, does not necessarily translate into the acceptance of existing reality. Myths appear instead of reality and in place of the utopia created through the actualization of the first option. In other words, modern myths, which masquerade as ideologies, serve in the second option, in a manner parallel to the utopia of the first option.

### **The Urge for Integration as an Antagonistic Creation**

Christianity inherited from Judaism the belief in the transcendent, which does not exist in pagan mythologies. Therefore, Judaism is not the source of Christian dualism. It is true that Judaism, too, distinguishes between the spiritual and the material, a difference which stems from the distinction between the holy and the profane, which is so central to Judaism. However, this distinction does not constitute, from Judaism's perspective, an unbridgeable, dualistic gap in the Christian sense of dualism. That is because there is an entity commanded to work towards uniting the spirit and the material, spiritual belief and earthly existence, and this entity, which establishes the connection between the “upper and lower worlds” by employing the free choice granted to him, is man.

The absence of dualism in authentic Jewish philosophy manifests itself in the Jewish perception of time and space. These appear in Judaism, not merely as the physical dimensions of material existence, but as an expression of the spiritual, transcendent dimension. Time is memory, and Jewish memory is anchored in “space”, in the place which is central to the existence of the Jewish people, a nucleus around which the historic circles of time and space revolve, and also serves as the beginning and the end of the linear axis which penetrates these circles. **The Land of Israel, Jerusalem, the Temple Mount and the Temple** – here spirit and matter, heaven and earth, routine and holy, Jewish history and destiny, unite. Therefore, the vision of the return to the Land of Israel never was and never will be utopian as it is connected to this time continuum and to the essence of space as embodied in the one exclusive place. The destiny of Jewish existence is never similar to the “purpose” of the political messianic school, as the Jewish destiny is not determined by abstract ideas unrelated to spontaneous existence and its spiritual significance. The Jewish destiny, whose source is transcendent, relies on spontaneity and fills it with significance. **However, if the vision of the return uses the Land of Israel merely as a tool and its real purpose, conscious or unconscious, is Jewish flight from Judaism, then this utopia has a destructive force, which sooner or later must fulfill itself.**

The source of Christian dualism is in the influence of various pagan religions, most of which were dualistic, on it, for example, the Manichean religion which views the world as a never-ending battlefield between the forces of light and darkness.<sup>21</sup> However, pagan dualism which deals exclusively with the earthly realm (paganism does not recognize the transcendent dimension) was elevated in Christianity to a new form, and from its perspective “the forces of light” which were still earthly in Manichean mythology are transformed into a “heavenly city” led by the transcendent God, while earthly life (“the earthly city”) is the exclusive domain of Satan, in other words, the kingdom of darkness.<sup>22</sup> Thus, Christianity, in terms of its dualism,

became a total contradiction to Judaism since Judaism has neither traces of pagan dualism nor of Christian dualism. In contrast to paganism, Judaism does not divide that which exists into forces of light and darkness locked in perpetual war, nor into “us” versus “them” in which each views the other as inhuman.

In contrast to Christianity, Judaism does not perceive life on earth as unmitigated evil and does not sanctify suffering and death as the path to the world of ultimate good. As opposed to utopia, whose foundation is in Christian dualism, both pagan and modern, the authentic Jewish way is not in the total destruction of the “old” world, rather in its improvement. **Improving the world** rather than destroying it. Maintaining spontaneity while perceiving human activity led by rational values, ideals and fundamentals is an integral part of it. This is the path of authentic Judaism, which sanctifies life and not death. Another path exists, which, though it is not authentic, is Jewish.

The dissolution of the traditional Jewish community, which left the Jew without a communal “home” of his own, and the process of emancipation which transformed him into a citizen of a secular country with equal rights – these are the phenomena which led to the modern era. This is not the forum to discuss at length the topic of emancipation and assimilation of Jews in culture, society and the European State. What concerns us is the place of the Jew, undergoing these processes, in the intellectual confrontation (subsequently not only intellectual) with the dualism of European culture, which it inherited from Christianity.

While the authentic Western man, the product of a culture anchored in dualism, who internalized it and carried on a more or less symbiotic relationship with it, the Jewish man is “made” of totally different “cultural matter”. His culture is not dualistic, as was mentioned above. Of course, there are many very powerful tensions within his personality and consciousness, among them the tension between the spiritual and the material and between values and practical creativity, but these tensions have nothing at all in common with dualism. While the Jew’s consciousness and personality patterns, as well as his worldview, do not totally correspond with the thought processes which stem from dualism, at times he finds himself in an ambivalent situation which pressures him to choose one of the options leading to totalitarianism.<sup>23</sup> As a Jew, he has a psychological imperative, which is almost certainly unconscious, to overcome this dissonance which runs counter to his essence and his worldview. What he does want, in a totally conscious manner, is to fit into non-Jewish society, and the more our Jew strives to fit in, the unconscious urge described above has a greater chance of being realized. In this way, many Jews in Western countries became utopian pioneers; just look at Karl Marx’s biography. Thus the Jewish element is manifest in the actualization of the first of the two options. The second option, that is, the Nazi regime, seems totally unacceptable to the Jew as a Jew. It turns out that this is not the case.

A Jew who in the wake of the emancipation process remained communally homeless, is from a general (neutral *vis-à-vis* his Judaism) perspective no different than any other citizen in the modern country in which he lives. The separation of man from his natural surroundings, from the “we” of which he was an organic part in earlier times, his transformation, in the period of “modernity”, into an autonomous individual standing on his own – the “solitary I” – is the process undergone by non-Jews and Jews almost equally in the transition from the Middle Ages to the modern era.

We said “almost”, since, from the perspective of the authentic Jewish approach, the Jew, in contrast to the non-Jew, neither was, nor was he able to be completely absorbed within his “we”. The affiliation to tribe, community and nation does not obliterate his individuality, on the contrary, it serves as a foundation for the “I” which is primarily free choice. Therefore, the processes of modernity on the one hand could not transform the Jewish man into a totally organic member of one collective or another to which he belonged, but on the other hand, even with all of these developments, the Jewish man, like it or not – cannot, like Western man, become an “autonomous individual” with no need to belong to a collective. Herein lies the very significant difference between the assimilated Jew and the non-Jew as it is manifest in the modern era.

The non-Jew as a result of the process which he has undergone with the advent of the modern age, and which rendered him an autonomous individual – modern, Western man – does not perceive his society and his country as an organic entity to which he belongs as an inseparable element. In liberal theory and countries, man perceives the country as a tool in the hands of its citizens. Even in totalitarian theories which constitute

a significant part of those established based on the “social contract” model (the most outstanding example is the political theory of Jean Jacques Rousseau), the absorption of man within the collective as a “limb” in the “body of the state” is the result of a willful agreement arrived at by sovereign, autonomous individuals. In other words, the organization of people into society and country – whether it is total uniformity in which man is absorbed into country or whether it is a free association of citizens who remain free within the state – is perceived within modern Western culture as a completely pragmatic action. Society and country are not spiritual values, goals in and of themselves<sup>24</sup> but rather they are exclusively means to achieve personal freedom.<sup>25</sup> This, however, is not the attitude of the Jew – who underwent the process of emancipation and perhaps the process of assimilation – towards non-Jewish society and country.

The Jewish “I” cannot be totally disconnected from the “we”. If the assimilated Jew has already severed his ties with his original “we”, what is done is done, but his psychological make-up, personality patterns and thought processes as a Jew do not enable him to treat the society, the country and the culture in which he lives in a pragmatic fashion like Western man. The psychological need to belong, to feel that he has a home, his view of any “home”, be it real or virtual, as his “we”, causes the assimilated Jew to perceive the non-Jewish society, country and culture as a replacement of the original “we” which he lost.

In contrast to European man, who lives in his own culture in a manner both natural and taken for granted, the Jewish man busies himself with the glorification of that culture – he prays to it. As opposed to Western man who is helped by his country, Jewish man believes in it. The matter of belief is central to his metamorphosis: the psychological need for transcendent belief, without which the Jew just cannot exist, be it religious in every sense, or militantly atheist to the point of cruelty – he just changes the object.<sup>26</sup> The Jew, who once believed in God, now believes in the sublime French culture or in greater Germany. It is very clear that religious transformations of this sort are liable to lead Jews with that predilection to an extreme, for example, to the deification of the “superior” Aryan race. That is just a radical example of a propensity well known in modern history.

The tendency to deify the state, the nation and the race, in conjunction with the ideologies of the “totalitarianism of the Right” (Y. Talmon), and similar to the deification of reason or man in the “totalitarianism of the Left” is not an authentic quality of the Jew as a Jew.<sup>27</sup> The opposite is true. This tendency is diametrically opposed to Judaism as noted above. Authenticity is a prerequisite for belief. It is the antithesis of that belief which leads to expressions of spiritual distortion.<sup>28</sup>

The tendency of the Jew to view the non-Jewish society and state as “home” or as the “spiritual homeland” confronts the anti-Semitism of his surroundings in a very painful and destructive way. The Jew who has already become assimilated and has already idealized non-Jewish culture, society and state, finds it easier to blame his own people rather than non-Jewish society – which constitutes for him a supreme value – and view Judaism, rather than European culture, sanctified by him, as the cause for the hatred of the Jews. All the more so if he has already internalized the fundamentals of enlightened progress according to which tradition in general, and the Jewish tradition in particular, is primitive, reactionary, despicable and inhuman.

In this way, Jews who are simultaneously “progressive” and anti-Semitic are formed, and the more progressive they are, the more anti-Semitic they are. Therefore, Jewish intellectual anti-Semitism is the result of a synthesis of anti-Semitic trends in Western culture with deviations in the spirit and thinking of Jews, molded on the backdrop of assimilation. Thus, the Jewish aspect of the second option of the attempt to overcome the basic dualism of the Western Christian civilization – the option whose actualization paves the way for Nazism whose essence, according to Sergei Bulgakov, is metaphysical anti-Semitism – manifests itself.

## **I. The Tension between Universalism and Particularism: Christianity, Judaism, Pagan Cultures and Twentieth Century Totalitarian Regimes**

- A. The Fundamental Contradiction between the Christian and Jewish Versions of Universalism: This contradiction has great significance in terms of understanding the character of Christian universalism

and Enlightenment universalism. When Christianity, through its missionary activity towards Jews, causes them to convert to Christianity, it destroys the particular aspect of their consciousness and way of life. This type of missionary activity is unlike similar activities which the Christians direct towards other nations, as if this worldwide religion was to succeed in converting the entire Jewish people, it would terminate the unique universalism of Judaism which is totally distinct from that of Christianity and constitutes an alternative to it. From this perspective, Christianity's war against Judaism is essentially the battle of total, abstract universalism (from which every unique, concrete element has been negated) for world domination. The paradox is, therefore, that many Jews participate in total universalism's war against authentic Judaism.

- B. Jewish Christianities: Original Christianity came into being thanks to Jews who relinquished their uniqueness (and therefore their Judaism) while creating a worldwide religion, which rejects any hint of particularism. Thus, they found their own solution to authentic Judaism's perpetual tension between universalism and particularism. The implication of the solution was flight from Judaism, from the overwhelming responsibility, which, according to Jewish tradition, is incumbent on the Jewish nation as the chosen people. Therefore, even after the inception of Christianity, the tension between the universal and particular aspects of Judaism could certainly not just disappear and, therefore, it continues to motivate shortsighted Jews into quick and seemingly easy solutions.

Jewish attempts to escape this tension by fleeing their Judaism have never ceased, especially when Judaism became a "stumbling block" for them in the era of emancipation, in the period of modernity with its universalist-humanist ideas.

Some of them achieved their desideratum by simply converting to Christianity, others – some the children of converts to Christianity and some the children of Jews loyal to their religion – began searching for ideas, theories and philosophies which would coincide with their predilections (whether conscious or not), some built or are building a new universal world (from which national distinctions are negated) through internationalist ideologies and the politics which implement them. The solutions are diverse and varied, but their common denominator is that the Jews in question, in their attempts to escape Jewish particularism, actually effect the new, universal "Christianity" whose very essence threatens the existence of the Jewish people. The most dangerous of all is the Marxist "Christianity", which despite the fact that it portrayed itself as atheist, was a messianic and missionary religion. Karl Marx, an assimilated Jew and the son of a father who converted to Christianity, declared in his famous article, "On the Jewish Question": "The social emancipation of the Jews is actually the emancipation of society from the Jews." The totalitarian communist state, which was established on the basis of Marxism, implemented this Jew's declaration, and emancipated Soviet society from the Jews, not in the existential sense of emancipation but in the sense of spirituality and religious faith.

Many Russian Jews who "converted" to the new Marxist religion, participated in the Bolshevik Revolution and continued to make their enormous contribution to the resulting totalitarian regime. However, Marxism and Communism are only examples of the phenomenon accompanying the history of the Jewish people throughout the generations. The source of the phenomenon is that same internal tension between the universal and the particular in authentic Judaism which gives way, among those unable to countenance it, to the tendency which can be characterized as "Jewish flight from their Judaism".

- C. To the Degree that a Fundamental Contradiction Exists between the Christian and Jewish Versions of Universalism, so, too, there exists a Fundamental Contradiction between the Pagan and Jewish versions of Particularism: To the same degree that the combination of universalism and particularism in Judaism contains one of the primary causes of the Christian war on Judaism, so, too, the same combination, in a different respect, contains one of the main causes of the pagan culture's war on Judaism. Inasmuch as Christianity's war on Judaism is the war of total universalism (which denies any particular elements at all) against Jewish universalism (which is connected to Jewish particularism) so too, the war of pagans – pre-historic and modern – against the people of Israel is the war of total

particularism (which negates all universal elements) against Jewish particularism (which is connected to Jewish universalism). Here, too, the paradoxical phenomenon of many Jews enlisting in the war against Judaism is familiar and here, too, it constitutes the attempt of those Jews to escape the internal tension of Judaism which was discussed earlier, by escaping themselves as Jews.

Just as in the case of authentic Christianity and the new "Christianities" they ease the tension through liberation from Jewish particularism, so, too, in the instance of pre-historic and the modern pagan mythologies, they alleviate the tension through liberation from Jewish universalism. In the pre-Christian era, this phenomenon was known among Jews as idolatry which Israel was forced to confront during its entire Biblical history, however, even in the modern era, paradoxical and unfathomable though it may seem, a parallel phenomenon exists. The most outstanding instance illustrating this was the case of the German Jew, Otto Weininger, whose book "Gender and Character" became one of the conceptual sources of the Nazi-racism in Hitler's state. Like Marx, though in a different manner, Weininger discovered the solution, which enables society to "free itself from Judaism". But in this case, it was no longer "the social emancipation of the Jews", but a "final solution" which culminated in the Holocaust.

- D. The "solutions" of Karl Marx and Otto Weininger manifest the Jewish aspect of the two totalitarian regimes, which arose in the framework of an enlightened, universal culture, which began with the Enlightenment, and whose roots are in Christianity. These regimes took both the universalist standpoint of Christianity and the Enlightenment *vis-à-vis* the Jews and the particularist standpoint which constituted a reaction to that universalism to an extreme.

Essentially, only from the vantage point of the Jewish question can one observe the fundamental affinity between those two totalitarian regimes. If communist totalitarianism, in its first stage, seemed like one which wanted to liquidate Judaism "only" from the spiritual-religious and not from the existential-physical perspective, that was only in the first stage, the stage when the Jews in Soviet Russia cooperated with the regime, held powerful positions and decisive influence and together battled religious Judaism.

However, this phenomenon did not last long. As always, the internecine Jewish wars boomeranged. After World War II, Stalin's dictatorial regime became more and more extremist in the Nazi exemplar, and this development was manifest, first and foremost, in his attitude regarding the Jewish question.

The persecution of Jews became systematic in the late forties and early fifties. Ironically, the saddest manifestation was the regime's use of the universal term "cosmopolitan" for the purpose of accusing them, when its real meaning was "enemy of the people" with all its connotations.

The regime planned a mass deportation of Jews to the Far East, and had the operation been implemented, it would have constituted a second holocaust, as indicated in the sources unearthed in the period of "perestroika". Only Stalin's death prevented the communist version of the "Final Solution".

Thus, the Jewish question in the two totalitarian regimes whose ideologies are diametric opposites intersect, and what they have in common is just a different background of the modern culture from which they developed. And, thus, the solutions of two Jews (Marx and Weininger), whose philosophies are diametrically opposed intersect, and what they have in common is just the single urge to escape their Judaism. The first, Karl Marx, reduced the tension between Jewish universalism and Jewish particularism by relinquishing the particularism and by affiliating himself with the Christian-Enlightenment universalism, he arrived at his radical internationalist ideology. The second, Otto Weininger, reduced the tension by renouncing universalism and by affiliating himself with German racist particularism and devised the anti-Semitic approach which served as one of the conceptual sources of the Holocaust.

Otto Weininger did not live to see the Holocaust because he committed suicide before its advent. Marx did not live to witness the establishment of the anti-Semitic totalitarian state which implemented his

ideology. However, both created the model, each in his own way, for Jewish suicide, as they brought about the radicalization of two typical inclinations of Jews escaping their Judaism, as they were assimilated in the cultural-conceptual reality which formed on the background of the European Enlightenment.

The Marxist model did not necessarily reach its direct total manifestation in the establishment of the totalitarian regime which forced the country's Jews to renounce their religion in favor of the internationalist communist religion, to forget their tradition and abandon their Judaism (and if not be deported to internment camps and perhaps lose their lives). Weininger's model, too, did not necessarily reach its ultimate manifestation in the creation of the ordered anti-Semitic theory, which constituted one of the central components of the Nazi ideology.

However, these tendencies are preserved and perpetually exist in the context of the encounter between European culture – whose origins are in Christianity – and Judaism. They may temporarily remain in a state of unrealized potential, but if the appropriate circumstances and conditions which return the Jew to the position where he must choose between loyalty to his people and some sublime goal or some supreme non-Jewish value, the Marx-disease or the Weininger-disease is liable to reappear (even if not in its original form) and once again threaten Jewish existence through a new Marxist or Weininger “final solution”, which cannot be characterized as anything other than the physical and spiritual “self-destruction” of the Jews.

In contrast to the Marx-disease, which leads the “sick” Jews to obfuscate and deny their Judaism by broadening it to the point of all-inclusive universal internationalism, the Weininger-disease leads the “sick” Jews to contract in order to make room for others, whether a “supreme race” Aryan or not, or on the contrary, for some “unfortunate, oppressed nation”, which is disturbed by their very existence in general, and their existence as Jews in particular.

The expansion in the one instance and the contraction in the other manifest two extreme forms of assimilationist Jewish behavior in concert with the original universalist approach of the Enlightenment on the one hand, and to the Nazi (or Fascist) response to it on the other; these are both the authentic approaches of European cultures. Despite the difference between the two Jewish reactions, which develop through the active and fervent religious enlistment of Jews to the culture, which defines itself as humanist, the similarity is much more fundamental – both Jewish expansion and Jewish contraction ultimately lead to Jewish suicide. This originates in the Jewish flight from themselves – a universalist flight through which they abandon the particularist aspect of Judaism. The second tendency is a particularist flight, through which they abandon the universalist aspect of the Jewish people.

Both flights, as we have seen, are associated with two forms of totalitarian regimes, and therein lies the fact that Jewish flight from themselves as Jews poses a terrible threat both to Judaism and on the world in which they live as Jews. Perhaps one alternative to the totalitarian threat is Jewish loyalty to themselves.

## II. Historical Determinism

- A. In Christianity, the deterministic concept of history manifests itself in the messianic, apocalyptic approach of this worldwide religion, according to which, humanity, which gradually converts to Christian humanity is progressing through a linear one-dimensional historical process, which is predetermined both in terms of its beginning and its end, and in terms of its direction. The beginning of the process was the First Coming of Jesus and its ultimate goal is his Second Coming.

Clearly, in terms of this deterministic, messianic approach, there is no free choice for man in his existence in history, and he certainly is unable to alter its direction and purpose.

The Protestant Reformation, as opposed to Catholic and Orthodox Christianity, emphasizes the matter of the free choice of the Christian Protestant, however, this relates only to man's activities in the

material world external to him, and in no way to his spiritual path. The Christian Protestant's activism in his earthly-material life certainly cannot be and is not designed to change the course of history as dictated from above.

## B. The Determinism Problem in Light of the Comparison between Paganism, Judaism, Christianity and the Enlightenment

1. It seems, at first glance, that Christian apocalyptic messianism is parallel (or even identical, as they sometimes claim) to Judaism's messianism. But there could be no greater mistake with the essential difference between them lying in the dualistic nature of Christianity.

Just as Christian dualism, as we have seen above, is no more than a Christian version of pagan dualism, so, too, Christian messianic determinism draws from the determinism of pagan mythology, and adapts it to the Christian point of view. In these two versions of determinism, man appears as a passive instrument in the hands of powers which lead him and control him. These powers have different names in the pagan and Christian cultures. However, man's situation in both is exactly the same. He is not allowed to change, improve and repair the world because the world is not dependent on him. Whether he is totally immersed in the material world (paganism) or whether he is entirely cut off from it through total concentration on the spiritual world (Christianity), in any case, man is merely an object locked into fatalistic processes dictated by earthly gods (paganism) or a transcendent one (Christianity). He does not engage in a dialogue with his transcendent God (Christianity) and does not accept that he is required to fulfill the commandments of the immanent idols in which he believes (paganism). He takes no responsibility for events, as in Christianity, Jesus took full responsibility upon himself and in pagan culture, no such concept exists. He does not utilize his free choice, since it cannot at all be reconciled with pagan and Christian fatalism.

In terms of Christian fatalism, Divine Providence, in total contrast to Judaism, is perceived as a decree which prevents man from any expression of freedom at all (the uniqueness of the Reformation's attitude in this matter was addressed above). Therefore, Christian messianic determinism, much like pagan determinism, is no more than an expression of man's complete servitude, while Jewish messianism does not preclude freedom at all. ("Everything is foreseen, and freedom [of choice] is granted, the world is judged according to the good, and the judgment of all is according to the majority of events".)

2. The Enlightenment, seemingly categorically, rejects Christian determinism. It views religion as a means to subjugate man. Its war on religion, from its perspective, is a struggle for unlimited freedom.

As opposed to Christianity which does not enable people to improve and repair the material world (as, from its perspective, it is predetermined to be the "world of evil"), the Enlightenment enables people (though it does not demand it of them) to change the world and even to transform it to the opposite extreme – totally to destroy the "old world".

Freedom is understood by the Enlightenment as man's ability to do anything he wants with no limitations. This "anything goes" attitude ultimately evolved into various totalitarian regimes which arose in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Fyodor Dostoyevsky, one of the outstanding figures in Russian and world literature, wrote in one of his compositions: "When there is no God, anything goes." He referred to the danger posed by the militant atheism of the radical Russian intelligentsia of the 1860s, which was profoundly influenced by the Enlightenment, in other words, was atheistic-militant even before it encountered Marxism. Dostoyevsky, in fact, predicted the events of 1917.

The principles of unlimited freedom and determinism paradoxically live harmoniously in European culture – which relies on Enlightenment ideas – and support one another. Furthermore, in the 20<sup>th</sup> century totalitarian regimes, this paradoxical combination manifested itself in an extremely significant manner.

Thus, in Russia, the anarchist revolution – an idealistic expression of unlimited freedom – led to the establishment of the state in which determinism, in its most fatal form, became the most horrible daily reality in which the citizens of that state lived.

### 3. General Determinism in Enlightenment Philosophy

This type of determinism is named after the one considered to be its founder, “La Place’s determinism”. In the Enlightenment, this approach was manifest both in the natural sciences and in philosophy, and eventually became unchallenged. From its perspective, man seemed to be a function of processes dictated by necessary laws of nature and the laws of nature themselves are described as mechanical and the result of a causal approach.

From the perspective of this approach, there is nothing random – every phenomenon has its own cause. That cause, itself, is a phenomenon which has its own cause, and so on.

So, too, according to this theory, the whole world develops as a chain of causes and effects, which automatically become the other and effect each other with man being merely one link in a chain.

The “La Place” determinism was manifest in various philosophical theories which developed during the Enlightenment and before. Thomas Hobbes, Rene Descartes, and Baruch Spinoza, to name but a few, among the period’s most influential philosophers, were firm determinists.

In the approaches of the thinkers of the French Encyclopedist (Voltaire, Diderot, Holbech), La Place determinism is translated into social determinism, in which man is the product of the influences of his education and social environment exclusively. From this perspective, essentially, man does not fulfill his free will through his actions, but rather functions solely under the influence of his environment. As a result, he is not responsible for his life and his behavior, but rather the environmental and educational factors determine his character, his thoughts, his feelings and his actions that form his personality.

Even before the people of the encyclopedia, John Locke asserted the well-known principle at the foundation of social determinism according to which, when man is born, his consciousness is totally empty (*tabula rasa*). His social environment is that which fills his consciousness with content, which corresponds to the accepted norms and values of that society. In any case, the La Place determinism leads to the conclusion that man does not have free choice, but is rather a small component in the mechanism of laws which function according to their own automatic dynamic. Furthermore, he is portrayed as a live automaton.

How is it possible that the Enlightenment did not notice the absolute contradiction between its declarations concerning absolute freedom and the mechanistic-deterministic picture which they created? That is a question in its own right. As was mentioned above, this contradiction manifests itself in the establishment of 20<sup>th</sup> century totalitarian regimes, in which man appears as a component in the mechanism of the totalitarian state. In Soviet Russia, this manifestation was current both in the official ideology and among the general public, and the loyal citizens of the country were very proud of their status as “components of their great country”. Incidentally, they believed that they were granted real freedom and that their country was extremely humanistic. Only subsequently, did the few philosophers of the 20<sup>th</sup> century discern the existence of the surprising paradox between declared principles and reality, both in the Enlightenment and in the totalitarian regimes.

### 4. Historical Determinism and Modern Culture

The La Place determinism of the Enlightenment was translated not only into social determinism but as historical determinism as well. The connection between the latter and Christian determinism is conspicuous. Just like “Christian humanity”, from the perspective of that worldwide religion, so, too, secular humanity, as viewed in light of the Enlightenment, is

progressing within the historical process, linear and one-dimensional, and this process is predetermined both in terms of its purpose and in terms of its direction. Its purpose – the best and most advanced possible future; the direction – progress. What about its beginning? The Enlightenment, seemingly, does not provide a clear answer to this question. However, its negation of the value of the past, its portrayal of earlier periods as primitive and barbaric and its perception of the Middle Ages as a dark period which contributed nothing to humanity but rather harmed it – all those attest to the fact that from its perspective, the Enlightenment constitutes the beginning of real, enlightened, advanced history.

It is easy to discern signs of a clear messianic concept in this determinist-historic approach – certainly in the secular interpretation of messianism and certainly in its lack of awareness of its existence on the part of the Enlightenment itself.

Here, too, messianic determinism cannot be reconciled in practice with man's freedom of choice in his historical existence, despite the fact that many of the founders of the Enlightenment and the formulators of the "historiosophic" theories which rely on its principles, claimed that freedom of choice exists. If so, the emphasis in their approaches was placed primarily on spiritual freedom of choice. Clearly, by placing that emphasis, it is, indeed, possible to come to terms with historical determinism, as from the perspective of Enlightenment, dualism, historical reality and the spiritual worlds of people are absolutely separate and disconnected from one another.

5. Thus, Hegel articulated in his historiosophic approach to the historical determinism of modern society which relies on the Enlightenment in a consistent and relevant manner. According to this approach, man is only a passive pawn in the historical process, while the process itself exemplifies absolute reason, which is a sort of creator in Hegelian philosophy. In other words, in Hegel's philosophy, man's freedom of choice is clearly and explicitly negated. Thus, the "totalitarianism of reason" dictates the image of total history in which man is enveloped. It is clear that this historical totality and this rational totalitarianism are one step removed from genuine political totalitarianism.

It is no coincidence that the important 20<sup>th</sup> century philosophers viewed Hegel's philosophy as a distinct intellectual and philosophical manifestation of the existence of a connection between the outline of classical Western philosophy and totalitarianism. The theoretical criticism of this approach became one of the foundations of the search for philosophical alternatives to prevent the danger of totalitarianism.

- C. However, on the basis of the historical determinism of the Enlightenment, another system was developed in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, which was philosophical, historiosophical, social, economic and political at the same time – the approach of Karl Marx, Hegel's student. In terms of the fundamental hypotheses, which he postulated, Marx, in total contrast to this master's philosophy, emphasized the matter of man's freedom of choice in history. Man is not an object, as Hegel claimed, but rather a subject. He is not a passive pawn in history but rather one who forms it with his own hands, not forming it as an individual man but rather as a member of a social class, and he does not do so arbitrarily but on the basis of familiarity with the necessary, objective laws of history. All social classes throughout human history created history through the war of the classes, however, due to the lack of familiarity with the laws it was spontaneous, unconscious activity, resembling acts of nature. Only in the capitalist era – which created the conditions for the unusual development of science and gave rise to the most advanced social class (the proletariat), whose historical destiny must necessarily lead humanity to the best possible future (communism) – the necessary objective conditions for the realization of man's freedom of choice were created. Freedom of choice is realized through the universal – world revolution of the proletariat, and by establishing communism as a universal – internationalist society. The world proletariat can facilitate the great revolution and implement communism only after it learns the necessary laws of history, according to Marx's theories, which

reveal these laws. In contrast to the philosophies which preceded it, this is essentially not a philosophy but rather an objective, precise scientific theory which reflects reality and indicates the methods for implementing the laws of history.

The matter of actualization is manifest in the principle of “praxis” and the ultimate society at the end of days (communist) was portrayed as the society in which “realistic humanism” is realized, that which fills the European Enlightenment’s principle of humanism with real, practical and genuine content.

It is superfluous to mention the type of humanism which developed, based on this “scientific” theory. Thus, Hegel’s “totalitarianism of reason” was transformed by his disciple, Marx, into “scientific” totalitarianism, which perpetuates Hegelian determinism in the absurd form of a synthesis of this total determinism with an ideology which portrays the wildest rebellion in history (a violent, terrorist proletarian revolution) as the free choice of the people.

It is no coincidence that this “scientific” absurdity, which is one of the manifestations of Enlightenment rationalism, paved the way for existential and political absurdity (see Orwell’s writings) in the Soviet totalitarian state which perceived itself as the leader of all of humanity towards communism. The path towards communism was viewed as one to which no alternative existed and this totalitarian state definitely liquidated all alternatives in the Soviet Union. Thus, theoretical determinism became political-totalitarianism, and it is no accident, because in the final reckoning and according to their inner meaning, determinism and totalitarianism are one and the same.

#### D. The Messianism of the Enlightenment and its Myths

At first glance, the claim regarding the messianic nature of the Enlightenment’s philosophy is without basis, as its thinkers do not believe in God, do not accept the authority of the sacred works, do not advocate the approach of Divine Providence, and more.

While that is true, nevertheless, the man of the Enlightenment believes blindly in other things that determine the Enlightenment philosophy: The statements of the enlightened in the name of science he accepts like the statements of priests speaking in the name of the canon; he accepts “progress” like divine providence; and the other principles of the Enlightenment he accepts as self-evident with the unshakable belief much like the “articles of faith” of the religious man.

Thus, the philosophy of the Enlightenment is a type of mythology (religion without God) among whose basic myths are: The atheist myth and the humanist myth regarding omnipotent man; the rationalist myths regarding reason and science; the dualistic myth in which there is an unbridgeable gap between the spiritual and the material; the myth about progress and about the best possible future guaranteed by the deterministic providence, the universalist myth which ignores the historical past and negates any value or significance from the connection of man to his heritage and his historical memories; and additional myths as well. All of this is in conjunction with the secular-messianic philosophy which replaced the religious-messianic philosophy of Christianity; and in conjunction with the holy war declared by this modern, secular and atheist religion against the transcendental religions; and in conjunction with the modern missionary activity of this worldwide intellectual religion, parallel to the missionary activity of Christianity.

The secret of the Enlightenment’s enormous influence lies in its religious character, similar to the secret of the no-less enormous influence of the total ideologies which were formed in conjunction with the Enlightenment and paved the way for the establishment of totalitarian regimes. Here, too, lie the roots of the profound attraction of Jews to these ideologies, utopias and myths, which originated in the Enlightenment. The Jew, as an essentially religious person, finds a replacement for his lost religion in these.

### III. The Totalitarian Potential in the Portrayal of the Relationship between the Individual and the Collective by the European Enlightenment

#### A. The Essential Approach of the Enlightenment to this Problem

The European Enlightenment, in the wake of the Protestant Reformation, distinguished between the individual and the collective in portraying individual man as sovereign and autonomous who stands alone, is his own legislator and is dependent on himself alone in terms of his human nature. In a certain sense, this distinction is Christianity's legacy to the Enlightenment. In these two philosophies, this distinction appears as the flip side of the coin, with the first side being universalism.

Just as Christianity separated man, in terms of his spiritual-religious identity, from his natural community and unique cultural collective, in order to transform him into a citizen of the "heavenly city" (St. Augustine), similarly, the Enlightenment separated him from the same collective in order to transform him into a citizen of the enlightened, cosmopolitan world which was created by the Enlightenment and as a result of the processes which stemmed from it. Just as Christianity in this way, distinguished between the collective (natural, historical, cultural and actual) and the individual, who is defined by his religious belief alone, so, too, the Enlightenment distinguished between the collective and the individual, defined on the basis of his sovereignty, as an autonomous man. Just as Christianity in basing itself on the cosmopolitan tendencies of Hellenism, presented its own alternative to the pre-Christian concept of the relationship between the collective and the individual, so, too, the Enlightenment inherited this alternative from Christianity, but provided it with its secular-rationalist interpretation, and translated it into a humanist-universalist philosophy. Thus, Christianity, in this sense, constituted an alternative to two different and contradictory concepts regarding the relationship between the collective and the individual. One is the pagan-idolatry concept, which arrived at a new, more sophisticated crystallization in the culture of ancient Greece. The second is the authentic Jewish concept. It seems that one cannot understand the Enlightenment approach, which is a continuation of the Christian approach in this matter, without addressing the comparison in this context between paganism, Judaism and Christianity.

1. The pagan philosophy, essentially, does not at all recognize the human "I", in other words, the individual as separate from the collective. There are only "we" and "they", meaning that man is subsumed within the total collective, and his identity is exclusively collective and not individual. A person of this sort views anyone not belonging to his "we" as a hostile, essentially inhuman, who threatens "we" with a fateful-existential threat, and, therefore, "we" must wage a perpetual war against "they", whose goal is the ultimate liquidation of these forces of evil.
2. Judaism also ascribes great importance to the "we" of the people of Israel, but in contrast to the pagan philosophy, the importance ascribed to the human "I" is no less than that ascribed to the "we". The "I" and the "we" in Judaism constitute the two sides of the Jewish people, which could not exist as such without either of these aspects.

Therefore, Jewish man, as opposed to pagan man, is not subsumed into the collective, while at the same time, he is not portrayed as totally disjointed from the collective, as opposed to the Christian man and the man of the Enlightenment. In other words, Jewish man, in contradistinction to the man of the Enlightenment, is not an autonomous, but rather a heteronomous individual. On the one hand, he is connected to his nation as a whole, and this connection constitutes his essence as a Jew; on the other hand, specifically on the basis of this eternal connection to his people and his God together, the Jew appears as a free man, possessor of free choice who bears total responsibility for himself and his people, in other words, he appears as an "I".

3. As was mentioned above, Christianity presented its own alternative to two philosophies and two ways of life: Paganism and Judaism. This worldwide religion had reservations about both total assimilation of man into the collective (paganism), and from the association of free man to his collective people (Judaism). Christianity, thereby, transformed the human "I" into an abstract

individual affiliated, in St. Augustine's terms, to the spiritual "heavenly city" and not to any material "earthly city".

4. The Enlightenment adopted this Christian perception while negating its religious aspect and portrayed man as a sovereign-autonomous individual. Like Christian man, this sovereign man of the Enlightenment is also spiritually disconnected from any real-concrete collective and appears as an abstract "I" lacking any land or any national, cultural or historical background. This is essentially "lonely man" lacking roots, heritage and historical memory. In contrast to Christianity, which remains a conservative approach, which does not deny the value of the past, at least as far as Christian history is concerned, the Enlightenment directs man exclusively "forward" and views the past as the "dark ages" and nothing more. Thus, the man of the Enlightenment is stripped not only of his natural collective but also of his past, not only of his unique culture but also of his history. It is clear enough that a situation of this sort, one of "lonely man" (who does not have the faith of Christian man to ease his basic loneliness either) is totally unnatural and in certain respects, intolerable.

Nevertheless, the original Enlightenment approach eases this loneliness by providing man with a kind of new, secular and earthly "heavenly city" – "enlightened humanity".

However, this abstract affiliation, which is only spiritual, cannot satisfy the needs of man for real belonging to a concrete-defined collective, as this is a natural, significant need of man qua man. Therefore, it is no wonder that as a result of the Enlightenment, actually parallel to it, two contrary conceptual approaches were developed regarding the relationship between the collective and the individual. One of them, the one precisely relevant to the spirit of the Enlightenment, was the individualistic approach. The second, which serves as an alternative to individualism by means of artificially returning man to the collective, is the communitarian approach (communitarianism). The first emphasizes the individual, while the second emphasizes the collective, but in both cases those emphases are placed in the context of a total separation between the collective and the individual – a separation that is the fundamental hypothesis of the Enlightenment.

In a certain sense, it can be asserted that communitarianism answers the basic need of the individual to belong to a concrete, defined collective. On the other hand, it may be claimed that communitarianism frees "lonely man" from his intolerable loneliness, and enables him to escape it. This is true regarding conceptual communitarianism and concerning the various, contradictory ideologies (from Marxism to Fascism) based on the communitarian or the parallel approaches and concerning the totalitarian regimes, which were established on the basis of those ideologies.

#### B. The Relation between the Collective and the Individual and Totalitarianism

Thus, we can see that regarding the issue of the relation of the collective and the individual, the totalitarian potential, latent in the Enlightenment, reveals itself already in the earliest stage of the development of modern culture (in the Enlightenment era), if not in practice then at least in terms of the specific conceptual approaches, which originated as a result of that culture.

Nevertheless, before the 20<sup>th</sup> century, this potential remained latent. One of the reasons for this is that in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, modern man was still satisfied with his culture's individualism and did not yet feel the need to create a reality which negated it.

What helped him to deal with his status as "lonely man" was his unshakable and extremely optimistic faith in human reason, progress and the best possible future guaranteed by deterministic history and its immutable laws.

It should be noted that this faith did in fact make a significant contribution, and as a result of humanist individualism, the enormous powers of modern man were unleashed. Man's faith in himself created a tremendous impetus for the development of science and technology, for creativity in all areas of his existence and to real progress in the realm of the material lives of the people.

In the era of determinism (the 19<sup>th</sup> century), the human “I” became a “hero” and it seemed that his possibilities were limitless. Thus, from within that “romanticism”, it was already possible to discern the signs of a very significant turning point in the attitude towards the spirit of the Enlightenment. Ultimately, this turning point addressed the tendency to deify man in a different manner than the original Enlightenment – by placing an emphasis on the material-corporeal, forceful-physical as opposed to the prior emphasis on intellect, pure ideals, humanism, ethics and progress. Clearly, these tendencies laid the conceptual groundwork for Fascism and Nazism. The difference between this trend and the Enlightenment is clear, although the connection between them is also clear. The deification of man in Nazism is both the alternative to the deification of man in the Enlightenment and its harmonious continuation. The emphasis on materialism and the negation of Enlightenment spirituality are, to a large extent, the coherent result of the enormous accomplishments which were achieved as a result of man's belief in himself, which was the most fundamental principle of the original Enlightenment.

Specifically in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, this belief began gradually disappearing due to various circumstances and factors (discovering of the dangers in the unbridled development of technology; the first and second world wars which showed to what extent man is capable of acting inhumanly, i.e. to such a degree that the optimistic Enlightenment approach is inappropriate; the establishment of totalitarian regimes which showed that “progress” can culminate in a totalitarian nightmare).

We stated above that what helped modern man deal with his status as “lonely man” was his optimistic belief in the myths of the Enlightenment which are gradually being shattered in the totally pessimistic reality of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

The previous, more optimistic faith is being replaced by the most pessimistic outlooks or by the creation of new myths designed to play the role of the Enlightenment belief: to provide man with one delusion or another to help him deal with his status as “lonely man” (or more accurately, to escape that status).

At the time, totalitarian regimes filled that role in their own way. They completely liberated man not only from his being alone but also from his being “I”, as in these regimes man is subsumed within the total “we” and serves as a mere component in the mechanism of the state.

Totalitarianism, paradoxically, is very comforting and good for man, who tends to be liberated from his personal responsibility for himself and for events by blaming the country, the government, the leader, the party and primarily the “we”, lacking personality or character.

Totalitarianism is comforting and good for one who does not want or is not able to exist as “lonely man”. Totalitarianism is comforting and good for one who does not want to, or is not capable of viewing, reality as it is and accepting it, as it is a somewhat harsh reality. Totalitarianism is comforting and good for one who tends to flee this difficult reality, responsibility, free choice and the truth. And all of the “peace of mind” provided by totalitarianism to the man fleeing from his “I” stems from his total integration within the collective – the total “we”. The “we” is liberated from the need for free thought, and consequently from the arrival at the sometimes unpleasant and frightening conclusions of that thought. The “we” is liberated from the need to make independent and responsible decisions, which are liable, if adopted and implemented, to endanger the man making those decisions. The “we” promises that the state will provide all the needs of the citizens and equally divide society's assets. The “we” decides that the government, which embodies it, will care for those loyal to it and punish those who are disloyal. The “we” demands and insists that anyone failing to recognize its total dominion and continuing to see himself as an independent “I”, will disappear, leaving no traces.

This total and cruel “we” of totalitarianism can manifest itself in different ways – in Nazi and Fascist guise, communist-internationalist guise or other innumerable guises including those as yet unknown to us. In all cases, the establishment of regimes based on the total “we” is preceded by the existence of that “we” itself, in other words, people's tendency to free themselves from responsibility and free will, and animosity on their part towards any who choose to bear responsibility and implement their free

choice. Flight from freedom, reality and truth, while striving to hide behind myths presenting a totally different, easy and safer reality, which does not require difficult efforts and confrontations, both precede and lay the groundwork for totalitarian regimes. In order to achieve a reality of that sort, those who strive for it are prepared to accept the authority of the dictatorial regime in place of freedom, since the dictatorship makes life easier for man when he is unable to bear the difficulties of liberty. In order to achieve that reality, those striving for it are willing to accept lies instead of truth, because lies make things easier for man when the truth is too hard to bear. It is no wonder that the opponents of the Soviet communist regime characterized it as the “regime of the total lie”. The total “we” and the total lie are two sides of the same coin – and that coin is named – totalitarianism.

## Summary

It is possible to see from our analysis that despite the very significant differences between the philosophy of the European Enlightenment, upon which modern culture is based, and the philosophy of Christianity, there is clear continuity between them. This continuity contains within it the sources of the totalitarian potential, which, as we have seen, is latent in the Enlightenment. Undoubtedly, the existence of totalitarian potential in modern culture does not necessarily mean that the potential will be realized. The fact that democracy dominates the Western world speaks for itself. However, circumstances suitable for the rise of totalitarianism do exist and the totalitarian potential is liable to be realized again and again.

These circumstances, as was emphasized above, are not limited to the modern-secular culture whose origins are in the European Enlightenment, but hark back to Christianity. In terms of the existence of the continuum, modern culture and Christian culture of the Middle Ages together constitute one Christian-Western civilization.

In its first historical stage, its Christian basis was directly manifest in the domination of religion and the church over the culture of the Middle Ages. In the second historical stage, it was manifest in the transformation through secularization and through the struggle of the atheist (especially French) Enlightenment against religion and the Church. In addition, the continuum between the two stages is not in the explicit ideologies but rather in cultural codes, thought patterns and personality patterns common to different forms of one civilization. Dualism, determinism, and universalist-comprehensive thinking, with their impact on personality patterns designed on this basis, belong, therefore, to the same cultural codes of the Christian-Western civilization which developed during the above-mentioned stages.

There are those who employ the terms “Judeo-Christian civilization” or “Judeo-Christian culture” when speaking of Western culture, and make reference to the biblical-Judaic origins of Christianity. From our analysis, it follows that those definitions are incorrect, and that Western culture and pagan culture have much more in common than do Western culture and Judaism.

At the same time, in a certain specific sense, modern culture can, indeed, be characterized as a Judeo-Christian civilization, and that is in terms of the very active participation of Jews (especially assimilated Jews) in all areas of production – the economy, the sciences, the philosophy – which developed within the context of that culture. In this framework, the ideological and political activity of the Jews was especially great, and frequently was manifest in the creation of dangerous utopias and myths, in the unshakable belief in them, and in the participation in efforts to implement them politically. The Jews played a significant and conspicuous role in the conceptual preparation leading to the totalitarian communist regime and its establishment in Russia. Fascism and Nazism, with their murderous anti-Semitism, constituted, in a significant way, the reaction to what they called “Jewish Marxism”. Other Jews played a role in the formation of the racist – anti-Semitic ideology, which was at the foundation of the totalitarian-Nazi regime. The source of the active and passive participation of Jews in the establishment of totalitarian regimes lies in the phenomenon, which we characterized in this study as “Jewish flight from their Judaism”.

The roots of the problem lie in the fact that Jewish flight from their Judaism does not destroy their not-insignificant philosophical-cultural codes which define them as Jews and are preserved in the unconscious of

their souls, without the Jews themselves being aware of the existence of these codes which bring their latent Jewish character to bear even while they are assimilating into Western culture.

When a certain Jew joins Christian-Western civilization he unconsciously translates his authentic Jewish thought patterns into those which suit the thought patterns of the foreign culture, and thereby, on the one hand, distorts his own philosophical code, and on the other hand, adds additional elements to Western civilization, which are not inherent in it.

Thus, Marx, for example, transformed the Hegelian historical determinism into a utopian deterministic approach, by adding to it the element of Jewish activism (the principle of "praxis" in Marx's own terms). He "overcame" the dualism of Christian Western culture by suggesting to bridge the gap between the ideal and reality by recreating the world through a proletarian revolution. He also solved the problem of the relation between the individual and the collective by adding his own economic determinism to social determinism, and thereby shaped the image of a total society in which "lonely man" is subsumed within it and appears as an element and function of it at the same time.

His aspiration to "overcome" the dualism stemmed from his immanent-Jewish character, since the Jew, as a complete person, does not suffer from a separation between the spiritual and the material, between thought and action, between idea and reality, and tends to bridge the gaps. His struggle with the question of the relation between the collective and the individual in the manner which he did, also stemmed from his immanent-Jewish character, since as a Jew connected to a collective, he tends to create a new collectivism, even after severing his ties to his authentic-Jewish collective and living in an individualistic society.

Finally, since the Jew is a man of faith, he tends to create a new religion even after disavowing his Jewish religion and even if his new religion turns out to be atheism.

Thus, Marx is just a conspicuous example of the above phenomenon, and his case just took to an extreme the widespread tendency among Jews assimilated in modern culture.

There are those who view Marxism and parallel phenomena as the implementation of authentic Jewish traits, and communist totalitarianism as the "sin" and "transgression" of Jews who participated in the establishment of that regime. There are those who view these accusations as expressions of anti-Semitism and racism. Nevertheless, although both of these approaches have a modicum of truth, however, the whole truth of the matter is that the totalitarian potential was an outgrowth of Christian-Western civilization and not of Judaism. Certain Jews did take part in the realization of that potential, but they did so in an attempt to escape their Judaism, in other words, by being Jewish anti-Semites consciously or unconsciously.

Jews of this sort also played a role in the totalitarian-Nazi and Fascist regimes. Both in the communist regime and in the Fascist and Nazi regimes (whether or not we choose to address Jewish participation in their establishment), there was a clear anti-Semitic character. Thus, the totalitarian issue intersects with the Jewish issue. And, thus, the totalitarian potential of modern culture (and of the Christian-Western civilization as a whole) reveals itself in the murderous anti-Semitic potential latent within it.

The Jewish-French philosopher Emanuel Levinas, in his works, devoted much attention to the search for the conceptual-cultural sources of the Holocaust. He found one of them in the determinism and the totality of classical Western philosophy, which reached its climax in Hegel's philosophy. Levinas claimed that in order to neutralize the totalitarian threat, Western culture (and primarily Western philosophy) must restore the Jewish elements which were "forgotten". The difficulty, therefore, lies in the fact that Jews fleeing their Judaism add distorted Jewish elements to modern culture and by doing so enhance the danger of totalitarianism.

Can authentic Jewish elements be "added" to modern culture? Can a Jewish "addition" be organic to that culture? Is it preferable that modern culture and authentic Judaism not synthesize? Is it at all possible?

These are difficult and painful questions. However, one must not avoid searching for answers. This escapism itself causes a tragedy: It causes the creation of delusions and blindness leaving one impotent at crucial times.

Avoiding these difficult questions leads to distorted answers. The participation of Jews in the implementation of the totalitarian potential latent in European culture is the product of false answers.

Similarly, one may conclude from this analysis that it is precisely those thought processes which correspond with authentic Judaism which constitute the real (and perhaps the only) alternative to totalitarianism.

The problem is “just” translating them into the language of the modern era, understandable by both “innovative” and “old-fashioned” Jews and non-Jews alike. Translating Judaism itself without distortion is not the easiest of challenges. It seems to me that a translation of the Torah to a current and common language through its development and actualization is that which best conforms to the spirit of Judaism and its role in the world.

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## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> In an article by Ruth Sinai (*Ha'aretz*, July 11, 2000), the reactions of several academics to Ehud Barak's moves prior to his trip to Camp David were cited. She wrote: "In academia, major concerns were expressed yesterday regarding what was characterized as clear populist tendencies of the Prime Minister. There were those who drew comparisons between him and dictators like Mussolini." Comments by Dr. Arik Carmon, President of the Israeli Center for Democracy and of Prof. Gideon Doron of Tel Aviv University were cited in the article.

Dr. Carmon:

We are now in the midst of a very, very profound governmental crisis. The question is to what degree Barak's behavior is advancing us towards a populist regime. In a divided society like ours, one individual cannot consolidate so much authority.

Prof. Doron:

What is happening here is very dangerous – a powerful leader is addressing the nation over the heads of the nation's political leaders. Democracy is judged not only according to the results achieved but also according to the processes. There is a certain procedure by which he is chosen, but that procedure should not lead to the choice of an all-powerful leader who can do whatever he wants. The renunciation of central elements of democracy is a high price to pay, even for peace.

Sharp criticism of Barak's undemocratic actions can be found in Uzi Benziman's articles (*Ha'aretz*, July 16, 2000, August 6, 2000), and more.

The critics, perhaps, hesitate to call these phenomena by name, but the repeated justification of the supporters of the Prime Minister's actions, who justify them by paraphrasing Jean Jacques Rousseau's famous maxim, according to which it is not important what the people want but rather what is good for them, attests to the fact that Ehud Barak is running the country precisely according to the totalitarian democratic model. This approach is described by Prof. Shlomo Avineri in his book *The Public Domain*: The question is not, therefore what the people want but rather what is good for them – and the overriding question is, of course, who is authorized to decide. It is clear that Rousseau and his followers – especially Robespierre – saw this as an opportunity to enable that individual or those individuals who believed that they represented moral perfection to establish a dictatorship. They represented the general will and embodied all that the general public would have thought, if they would all have followed the dictates of reason. In other words, it is clear that the seeds of dictatorship are latent within Rousseau's radical democracy. See Avineri, *op. cit.*, p. 124.

<sup>2</sup> *Ha'aretz*, August 13, 1999.

<sup>3</sup> So it is according to the objective and inevitable logic of the process of implementing utopia in all times and in all places. The implementation of utopia requires the acquiescence of all members of society to obey its instructions and therefore, anyone who does not agree, whether an individual or a group, is perceived in the reality in which the implementation is taking place as an "obstacle", or an enemy of the people.

<sup>4</sup> Yaakov Talmon sees the uniqueness of the totalitarian democratic school in that it works under the assumption that one, exclusive truth exists in politics. The situation in Israel corresponds to this description, as one, exclusive ideology dominates under the guise of the Oslo consensus. In contrast to the accepted norms of a liberal, democratic regime, this consensus was not arrived at spontaneously, as the result of an extended public debate, in which all segments of the nation participate and influence the result equally. It was imposed on Israeli society against its will, by delegitimizing those who disagree through aggressive media indoctrination. The number of enemies of peace is constantly growing. Once it was thought that only authentic "settlers", in other words, the residents of Judea, Samaria and Gaza were enemies. Later it was understood that the Golan residents were also included. These days the residents of the Jordan Valley and Jerusalem are joining them. Soon, when the refugees start their repatriation and Israeli Arabs will demand "to remove the Jewish settlers" from their neighborhoods, it will be the turn of residents of Haifa, Jaffa, the Galilee, and the Negev. One can assume that at some point we all will become enemies of the just, comprehensive peace, as the utopian peace of the Jewish dreamers is designed to benefit our "partners". They are not dreamers but do everything in their power to liberate "Palestine" from the Jews – from all of them. We are the dreamers. And one who is roused from his dream when the Arab reality violently and painfully awakens him, is immediately transformed into an "enemy", an obstacle on the ruinous path of the utopia of peace.

<sup>5</sup> The number of enemies of peace is gradually increasing. Once, it was thought that it referred only to authentic "settlers" – the residents of Judea, Samaria and Gaza. Later, they realized that the residents of the Golan were also included. Today, they are joined by the residents of the Jordan Valley and Jerusalem. Tomorrow, when the

repatriation of refugees begins and Israeli Arabs will demand to “evacuate the Jewish settlers” from their neighborhoods, it will be the turn of the residents of Haifa, Jaffa, Galilee and the Negev. Presumably, at one point, we will all have become enemies of the just, comprehensive peace, as the utopian peace of the Jewish dreamers is total reality for their “partners”. They do not dream but rather do all in their power to liberate “Palestine” from the Jews – from all of the Jews. We are the dreamers. One who stops dreaming when the Arab reality strikes with a painful wake-up call – he will immediately become an “enemy” and an “obstacle” to the path to oblivion of the utopian peace.

<sup>6</sup> See Raya Epstein, “The Destructive Utopia”, *Nekuda*, 1996, No. 191; Raya Epstein, “Israeli Bolshevism in the Guise of Liberal Democracy”, *Nativ*, 3/1997; Raya Epstein, “Ideological Tyranny in the Guise of Democracy, Ariel Center for Policy Research, Policy Paper Number 84, November 1999.

<sup>7</sup> Raya Epstein, “Israeli Bolshevism”, *ibid.*

<sup>8</sup> See, for example, the introduction by Ephraim Meir (with the translation) to the book: *Emanuel Levinas, Ethics and the Infinite, Conversations with Philip Nemo*, Jerusalem, 1995.

<sup>9</sup> See Friedrich Hayek, “Freedom, Reason and Tradition”, Translated from English, *Techelet*, No. 8, 1991, pp. 132-156.

<sup>10</sup> Now a few new 20<sup>th</sup> century additions which were unknown to Guizot can be added to this august list, among them, “The New Middle East”.

<sup>11</sup> Francois Guizot, quoted from Talmon, 1965, p. 268.

<sup>12</sup> Talmon, 1965, pp. 432-433.

<sup>13</sup> Superficially, one could get the impression that that is precisely the approach presented in the article, but that is not the case. This article is not referring to the totalitarianism of all of Western culture but rather the totalitarian potential latent in Western civilization which manifests itself only in the intellectual framework characterized by Talmon as the “totalitarian democracy school”.

<sup>14</sup> See regarding this, for example, Jason Elbaum, “The Descent of Democracy in the Global Village”, *Techelet*, No. 5, 1998, pp. 11-23.

<sup>15</sup> He cited Bulgakov’s approach in his “Racism and Christianity” which he wrote towards the end of his life and in which he carried out a philosophical analysis of Communism and Nazism, viewing them as metaphysical rather than political phenomena. Similarly, a long line of additional late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century Russian philosophers, who lived in exile in Western countries after the Bolshevik Revolution, and wrote and published their works there, saw totalitarianism first and foremost as a philosophical, spiritual, religious and metaphysical phenomenon and only thereafter as an ideological and political one. Recently, the aforementioned work by Bulgakov was published in Russian – Sergei Bulgakov, *Chistianstvo i Evreiysky Vopros*, YMCA Press, Paris 1991. Concerning Bulgakov’s outlook on the subject at hand, see also, Nikita Struve, “S. Bulgakov et la Question Juive”, *Cahier du Mond Russe et Sovietique*, XXIX, 3-4, Juillet – Decembre, 1998, pp. 533-540.

<sup>16</sup> See a detailed account of similar approaches on the matter of utopia in Szacki, 1980.

<sup>17</sup> *The City of God*, XV, 1.

<sup>18</sup> Vasily Rosanov, an influential early 20<sup>th</sup> century philosopher and a devout Christian, caused a huge uproar in the Christian-Provoslavic (Orthodox) establishment in Russia, as well as among the Christian-leaning intelligentsia, when he published his writings in which he portrayed Christianity as a religion which sanctifies death and vilifies life, and went so far as to characterize it as one which worships the coffin (among his works were “The Russian Church” (1906), “The Face of Darkness” (1910) and others.) He noted the dualism in the Christian worldview and claimed that Judaism, in total contradiction to Christianity, does not disconnect the spiritual from the material and does not view family life, and physical love between husband and wife as sinful. Rosanov also explained the utopian radicalism of the Russian intelligentsia as developing from the Christian dualistic foundations of its consciousness. In his opinion, the Christian vilification of life is translated in Russian utopianism into the struggle of the utopians to destroy the hated existing reality, with the purpose of constructing in its place a totally ideal new utopian world.

<sup>19</sup> See Talmon, 1987, p. 4.

<sup>20</sup> *ibid.* p. 7.

<sup>21</sup> See concerning the influence of dualistic pagan philosophies on Christianity and Western philosophy in, for example, Grant 1970, Grant 1986 and Couliano 1990.

- <sup>22</sup> That is precisely what Vasily Rosanov referred to in the title of his work "The Face of Darkness" which was subtitled "The Metaphysics of Christianity".
- <sup>23</sup> Over-participation of Jews in various totalitarian movements is a well-known fact. It has provided the raw material for many anti-Semitic manipulations. But the mere fact that anti-Semites (including Nazis) have used this unfortunate fact, must not prevent Jews from analyzing it, to reveal its roots and to learn lessons from it. Concerning the roots of Jewish anti-Semitism and its development from the Enlightenment through the Zionist era, see Yehezkel Kaufman, "The Destruction of the Soul", *Nativ*, 4-5, 1999. It was first published in the periodical *Mozna'im*, Tevet 5694, and thereafter in a compilation of writings of Yehezkel Kaufman, *In the Throes of Time*, Dvir Publications, 1936.
- Concerning the influence of their Judaism on the radical activity of Jews through analysis of the case of Trotsky, see Dr. Abba Ahimeir, "Trotsky's Jewish Side", *Ha'uma*, No. 134, 1998/99 (first publication of the article whose manuscript is in the Ahimeir archive in Ramat Gan).
- Among the latter-day studies concerning Jewish radicalism see, for example, Arieh Stav, "Jewish Radicalism", *Nativ*, 2/2000. Concerning the participation of radical Jews in the activities of the New Left, see, Oron, 1999.
- <sup>24</sup> Political ideologies and regimes, whose existence apparently contradict this claim, were not created and established in a spontaneous manner based on authentic assumptions of modern Western culture, but rather as a reaction against them and the theories and regimes which arise from them. Fascism and Nazism are undoubtedly examples of this.
- <sup>25</sup> So, too, in Rousseau's totalitarian state, in the Jacobin's dictatorial state and in the Communist state of Lenin, Stalin, Brezhnev, etc.
- <sup>26</sup> The members of the European enlightenment, who developed the approach of denying history and tradition, were full-fledged anti-Semites with the possible exception of Montesquieu and Toland. See concerning this intellectual anti-Semitism, Carmichael, 1992. Some of the Renaissance humanists were conspicuous anti-Semites as well. As everyone knows, they exerted a major influence on the development of the values and intellectual style of the Enlightenment. See Martin, 1985. Jews, who enthusiastically accepted the Enlightenment values, at times internalized the anti-Semitism as well. This double internalization syndrome (where Jews accept and internalize non-Jewish values and the concomitant anti-Semitism) afflicted Jews who, in a later period, accepted and internalized racist neo-Darwinist approaches whose connection to anti-Semitism was already clear.
- <sup>27</sup> Talmon, 1965, p. 9.
- <sup>28</sup> *ibid.*