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## WHAT DOES THE CULT OF PERSONALITY MEAN? HOW DID HE MANIFEST HIMSELF IN THE SECULAR RELIGIONS?

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**Abstract:** *IN THE SECULAR RELIGIONS WE CONSIDER TOTAL AND TOTALIZING POLITICAL IDEOLOGIES: ONE IS THE FASCISM AND THE OTHER IS THE COMMUNISM. THE IDEOLOGY OF FASCISM AND THAT OF COMMUNISM ARE DIFFERENT, WITH DIFFERENT MEANINGS, IMPLICATIONS AND ORIGINS. EQUALLY, HOWEVER, BOTH EXPLAIN THE COMMITMENT, THE ABILITY OF INDIVIDUALS TO PARTICIPATE IN THE TOTALITARIAN CATASTROPHES OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY. THIS EVENT WAS NAMED BY LESZEK KOŁAKOWSKI, THE DEVIL IN HISTORY. IT IS THE EXPRESSION OF THE REALITY THAT HAS FUNDAMENTALLY MARKED THE LIFE OF SO MANY PEOPLES IN HISTORY. IT IS ABOUT THE TRAGEDIES RESULTING FROM IMMEASURABLE AND RECKLESS AMBITIONS TO FORCE THE COURSE OF HISTORY IN THE NAME OF ABSTRACT IDEALS MEANT TO RESULT IN PERFECT POLITICAL COMMUNITIES. SECULAR RELIGIONS PLACE THE SALVATION OF HUMANITY IN THIS WORLD, IN A MORE OR LESS DISTANT FUTURE, IN THE FORM OF A SOCIAL ORDER TO BE INVENTED. THE GREAT THEMES OF THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION: THE FALL, THE ORIGINAL HAPPINESS, THE REDISCOVERY, THE ATONEMENT, THE MESSIANIC SUBJECT ARE FOUND IN THE HISTORICAL MYTH OF MARXISM. SECULAR RELIGIONS ARE NARRATIVES WITH SAVING CLAIMS..*

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## INTRODUCTION

In the twentieth century, the most analyzed theory of religion was the theory of secularization.

The phrase personality cult was coined by Nikita Khrushchev, one of the leaders of the Soviet Union, after Stalin's death, but similar examples existed long before. This is a term that defines the excessive worship of a single leader who is still alive.

In Vladimir Tismaneanu's vision, the cult of personality usually characterizes totalitarian states or states that have recently had revolutions. The reputation of a single leader, often characterized as a "liberator" or "savior" of the people, raised the leader to an almost divine level. The cult of personality tends to present the leader and the state as fused, becoming impossible to understand the life of one without the other. This justified a dictatorial rule, and propaganda led individuals to believe that they had the right leaders.

The beginnings of the cult of personality can be found since antiquity, when faith in God was the ontological (existential) condition for any individual. Starting from Descartes' theory by which he tried to prove the existence of God, "Hobbes and Locke had God as the guarantor of the civil states they had" built "; they all conceived of a kind of political theology and were convinced that God was directing their projects. (Rogobete, 2015, p.57)

Unlike Hobbes, Locke feels closer to the Christian tradition when he states that "natural law" is God's plan for man, thus being the source of natural rights. Human reason and Scripture can guide man in the process of fulfilling God's plan." (Rogobete, 2015, p.66)

God thus represented the supreme power and the only law.

## MAIN TEXT

In **secular religions** we consider total and totalizing political ideologies: one is fascism, the other - communism. The ideology of fascism and that of communism are different, with different meanings, implications and origins. Equally, however, both explain the commitment, the ability of individuals to participate in the totalitarian catastrophes of the twentieth century. This event was named by Leszek Kołakowski, the devil in history. It is the expression of the reality that has fundamentally marked the life of so many peoples in history. It is about the tragedies resulting from immeasurable and reckless ambitions to force the course of history in the name of abstract ideals meant to result in perfect political communities (Mărcău, 2014b, pp. 81-85).

Vladimir Tismaneanu considers that the twentieth century was not the century of conflict between fascism and communism, but the real conflict of the twentieth century was that between liberal democracies and their totalitarian rivals. Bolshevism and fascism are forms that relativize everything. The ideological drama of the twentieth century was Marxism. Marxism was born in the nineteenth century in response to the crisis of bourgeois modernity. Marx was among the first philosophers to deal with the drama of politics.

The central vision of Marxism was that of the perfect community, meant above all to suppress alienation, a theme that comes from Hegel and from German romantic philosophy. The concept of alienation was found in Marx's writings, the central theme referring to the possibilities of its abolition. He concludes that the alienation of the human being can be abolished only by a revolution directed above all against the existing economic order.

The most demonized formula by which humanity has found it appropriate to inspire organization is private property. Its abolition, considered Karl Marx in the Economic-Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844, is the secret to overcoming the crisis in which humanity subsists. Such a revolution, he believed, could only be total. The total revolution invoked by Marxism compares violence to the spear of Achilles: who, the stronger he cuts, heals. Therefore, according to Sartre,

violence had both a scalpel value and healing qualities. Thus, the cult of violence is put at the service of the supposed revolutionary liberation.

But there is an important element that distinguishes Marxism from fascism, that Marxism is based on the cult of reason in history. From a Marxist perspective, the laws that govern history impose the determinism necessary to perpetuate the faith in fulfilling the destiny of humanity. In Marxism there are also texts that support a certain part of freedom, but the revolution is justified on the basis of laws, and to be truly free means to respect them.

**Secular religions** place the salvation of humanity in this world, in a more or less distant future, in the form of a social order to be invented, and could be an opposition between the evolution and decay (Paliță, 2016, p.151). The great themes of the Christian religion: the fall, the original happiness, the rediscovery, the atonement, the messianic subject are found in the historical myth of Marxism. Secular religions are narratives with saving claims.

**The cult of personality** will develop with the influence of politics in society. Max Weber, one of the most important sociologists of the twentieth century, argued that there were 3 types of political legitimacy: traditional legitimate domination (based on tradition), rational-legal legitimacy (the power of law and law) and charismatic legitimacy. According to him, the charismatic leader shows his true qualities in the way he approaches others, emanates energy and has great success with the public. In the face of such a leader, "no one remains indifferent." The charismatic leader is the true political leader in the author's vision, he has the power to convince and even manipulate, and usually appears in crisis situations, acquiring an image of savior, a "Messiah".

In his work "Psychology of the Masses", Gustave le Bon considers that a successful leader must wrap his approach to the masses in mystery and always appeal to feelings rather than reason. This type of political legitimacy is generally attributed to despots and dictators, who, although rising from the crowd, persuaded citizens by invoking ideals to seize power.

**Lenin** creates his cult of personality by talking about the dictatorship of the proletariat in 1918 with one of Germany's great social democrats, Karl Kautsky. Kautsky had criticized the onset of totalitarianism, and noted that the Bolsheviks were establishing a dictatorship, that the social democracy he had dreamed of like Marx was suffocated. Lenin claims that only a Marxist recognizes the centrality of the dictatorship of the proletariat as "a power unrestricted by any law."

The proletariat was a class in whose name it was governed without its real participation. When the councils revolted in Kronstadt in March 1921, and the soldiers and officers of the garrison near Leningrad - then Petrograd - demanded Soviets (councils without communists), Lenin, Trotsky and their comrades sent the army and liquidated them. They did not demand the return of capitalism, but simply a direct, communist-free, participatory democracy without a dictating party.

**Stalin**, leader of the Soviet Union since 1922, Lenin's successor, developed a cult of personality in peasant society, ensuring a very harsh system of internal exile (Gulag). He convicted in 1948-49, 80% of the members of the Academy of Agricultural Sciences of the Soviet Union. In 1948, Soviet genetics was on par with American genetics in terms of scientific development. In a famous speech in 1948, the chief ideologue of Stalinism, Andrei Zhdanov, denounced genetics as a reactionary and bourgeois science.

A session of the USSR Academy of Sciences is taking place and some of the world's greatest geneticists are politically trying to defend their discipline. They are practically forced to obey the party's order, and in the end they are deported and many of them executed. But the first thing that supports the whole construction of the totalitarian system is that it can build the New Man. Stalin remains probably the most fascinating personality of communism. Nikita Khrushchev said: "All the crimes that have been committed have nothing to do with communism, but Stalin committed them convinced that by doing them communism serves them."



**Mussolini**, the fascist leader of Italy, developed his cult of personality using his charisma as a way to intimidate rivals. As one of Le Bon's successful disciples, he was so delighted with the writer's ideas that he invited him to Rome and made him a counselor when he planned his speeches. "Everything depends on the sense of control, on the artist's ability to dominate the masses," said Mussolini proudly. Mussolini's concept of himself as a creative genius, who uses his unique talent to shape people according to his will, was common among despots.

**Adolf Hitler** is a German leader who cultivated his cult of personality with great care, his conceptual theory being based on the principle of absolute power of the leader. Being democratically elected chancellor of Germany in 1933, the people fully accepted his program to persecute the Jews. A wounded and humiliated Germany after the First World War was easily manipulated by an alleged savior who promised to restore the glory of the past. Hitler's success was largely due to the techniques he had seen in Italy. It was clear to everyone that the model of Hitler's Brown Shirts was Mussolini's Black Shirts, and that Hitler had claimed the title of Fuhrer, just as Mussolini had proclaimed himself Il Duce. Hitler's true character soon came to light, with Germany still bearing the brunt of his actions.

Another despot who would develop a cult of personality, and greater than that of Mussolini and Hitler, was Kim Ir Sen. Using unscrupulous propaganda methods and mass spectacle, he sought to imprint an almost divine image of North Korea on North Korea. A notable feature of Kim's regime was his focus on brainwashing children, based on the idea that they would grow up and become his strongest supporters for the persons involved in this process.(Manasia, 2016, p.24) . They were taught that the "Great Leader" was the source of all knowledge, the liberator of the nation and, above all, infallible, perfect.

**The communism** as a secular religion is a transcendent project, as Engels said, it is the leap from the empire of necessity to that of freedom, from escaping the realities of the world.(Simion, 2015, p.56) The proletariat has the mission to worship the figure of the messianic hero, the absolute savior.

The beginnings of Nicolae Ceausescu's personality cult are to be found in the acclaim following his speech condemning the 1968 invasion of the Warsaw Pact troops in Czechoslovakia, with the aim of ending the series of reforms known as the Prague Spring. Since that date, Romania has been increasingly identified with Ceausescu, both in the national media and in official statements, throughout the European construction.(Tomescu, 2019, p.45). The cult of Ceausescu's personality had in mind the full brainwashing, the total conditioning of the individual and his transformation into the absolute subject of the totalitarian state. For the genuine communists, any sacrifice was logical, explicable, therefore necessary, and homage and veneration gained paroxysmal proportions (Mărcău, 2014a, pp. 93-102).

**The democracy** can be considered secular religion, too, and is one of the important theme of Dahl's reflections. "The Politics" he the best presented by "using, under conditions of constraints, of social power," that sustain the interests of the persons (Dobrițoiu, 2019, p.114) and the study of politics aims at "the nature and the source of those constraints, as well as the techniques of using the social power, within those constraints, a system with superior efficiency (Alecsoiu, 2019, p.72)." This perception of the politics and of the political science is by no means situated above of any challenge. There is, however, a certain spirit of the times that validates it as legitimate, without this automatically meaning the denial of their alternatives - for example, those of Platonic, Christian or Marxist inspiration. But the scientific approach took shape, at the beginning of the twentieth century, around the interpretation stated above, at the foundation of which is the concept of power.(Dahl, 2000, p.5-7)



Robert Dahl talks about the cult of personality, discussing of Madison's opinion: "The Madisonian argument exaggerates the importance, for the prevention of tyranny, of the specific control exercised over dignitaries by other dignitaries; he underestimates the importance of the social levers and counterweights that exist in any pluralistic society (Mărcău, 2019, pp. 69-76). In the absence of these levers and counterweights, it is doubtful that all intra-governmental levers (...) will have the effect of preventing tyranny ": the factions (levers and social counterweights), which for Madison posed a threat to democracy, become, in Dahl, a necessary condition for its existence. (Dahl, 2000, p.7-9)

### CONCLUSION

As an alternative to Madison's view of the state powers, Robert Dahl launches a definition of the concept of power in society: A's ability to act in such a way as to control B's answers. He notes, in this context, that "the legislature, the executive, and the executive the judiciary do not cover all power relations or control processes in the society". (Dahl, 2000, p.9)

Secular religions such as fascism or communism no longer have a future, perhaps only in a changed form through better perception of the world (Dudău, 2019, p.141) . No one can anticipate a political future, but if we consider the opinion of Winston Churchill, the future can lead us on a completely unknown path: "everything I was told when I was a student that will not happen in my life has happened. And everything I was told was going to happen, it didn't happen. "

This historic process of secular religions took place with the rapid development of the welfare state, after the outbreak of the Great Repression: being interrupted by World War II, and the process gained new momentum in the late 1960s, as a result of claims, especially from the youth part, regarding the democratization of various social institutions, encouraging moderation and maintaining social peace ",(Dahl, 2000, 14-15).



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