

# Is Government the New God? – The Religion of Totalitarianism

## [Is Government the New God? – The Religion of Totalitarianism](#)

by [Academy of Ideas](#)

December 28, 2021

Video available at Academy of Ideas [Odysee](#) and [YouTube](#) channels.

**The following is a transcript of this video.**

*“The State takes the place of God...the socialist dictatorships are religions and State slavery is a form of worship.”*

*Carl Jung, The Undiscovered Self*

Since the birth of totalitarianism in the 20th century much has been written about this form of rule and millions have read George Orwell's depiction of it in the classic novel 1984. But what is often overlooked is that totalitarianism is more than just a political system, it is a fanatical religion, and this religion is spreading across the globe with a ferocity not seen since the mid-20th century. In this video we are going to investigate the religious nature of totalitarianism in the recognition that we must know our enemy if we are to defeat it. Shortly after fleeing Nazi Germany,

the political scientist Waldemar Gurian wrote the following:

*“The totalitarian movements that have arisen after the First World War are basically religious movements. Their aim is not only to change political and social institutions, but also to remodel the nature of man and society.”*

*Waldemar Gurian, The Totalitarian State*

Totalitarianism shares many characteristics with organized religions. For example, Christianity and Islam are built on the belief of a future golden age that will be ushered in with the second coming of Christ. Totalitarianism movements share a similar idea – but instead of a god or prophet that transforms the world, totalitarian movements are built on the belief that mankind can recreate the world and a new golden age can be constructed under the direction of the all-powerful and all-controlling State.

*“. . .in consequence [of the decline of Christianity],” writes Carl Jung “the [religious] projections have largely fallen away from the divine figures and have necessarily settled in the human sphere...the [modern] “enlightened” intellect cannot imagine anything greater than . . . those tin gods with totalitarian pretensions who call themselves State . . .”*

*Carl Jung, Practice of Psychotherapy*

This belief that it is possible for a centralized, all-powerful State to radically change society for the better is why Hannah Arendt wrote that:

*“...[totalitarianism] is not a government in any traditional sense, but a movement. . .”*

*Hannah Arendt, The Origins of Totalitarianism*

In the totalitarian movements of the past, this golden age was envisioned to be one of racial purity, or a Communist utopia of equality, efficiency, and prosperity for all. Today this totalitarian “golden age” is one in which mankind exists in harmony with mother earth, or in its more extreme form, an age where man merges with machine and transcends biological limitations of disease and death. Needless to say, totalitarian utopias never come to fruition, for as Karl Popper warned:

*“The attempt to make heaven on earth invariably produces hell.”*

*Karl Popper, The Open Society and its Enemies*

These utopian visions do, however, succeed in stimulating the religious enthusiasm of the masses and totalitarians use these visions to convince the population that the utopian end justifies any, and all, means – be it mass-surveillance, censorship, widespread oppression, mass-imprisonment, or even the extermination of groups of people. Or as Barry Goldwater explains:

*“Those who seek absolute power, even though they seek it to do what they regard as good, are simply demanding the right to enforce their own version of heaven on earth. And let me remind you, they are the very ones who always create the most hellish tyrannies. Absolute power does corrupt, and those who seek it must be suspect and must be opposed.”*

*Barry Goldwater*

In the totalitarian religion, there are the chosen people and there are the sinners. The chosen ones naïvely believe in the possibility of a paradisaal future and the ability of the state to be the vehicle to effectuate this transformation. They are the pious who follow the State’s commands with unquestioning

obedience. The sinners are the non-believers. They are the heretics who stand in the way of the so-called "greater good" and prevent the forward march of history. To use an analogy offered by the Polish philosopher Zygmunt Bauman, the totalitarians see the earth as a garden to which they are anointed to cultivate, and the sinners as the weeds that must be exterminated to bring about the full flowering of the totalitarian utopia:

*"All [totalitarian] visions of society-as-garden define parts of the social habitat as human weeds. Like all other weeds, they must be segregated, contained, prevented from spreading, removed and kept outside the society boundaries; if all these means prove insufficient, they must be killed."*

*Zygmunt Bauman, Modernity and the Holocaust*

But removing the weeds is only one part of the totalitarian religious movement; the remaining citizens must be turned into totalitarian true believers who inwardly assent to a life of strict conformity and obedience to authority. For in totalitarianism, the mere outward display of compliance is not enough. Like all fanatical religions, totalitarian movements seek to control the innermost thoughts of its followers. Referring to Mussolini's fascist dictatorship in Italy, Giovanni Amendola explained:

*"...fascism did not so much aim to govern Italy as to monopolize the control of Italian consciences. The possession of power is not enough for fascism: it needs to possess the private conscience of all its citizens, it demands the "conversion" of Italians. Fascism makes the same claims as a religion. . . It does not promise happiness to those who do not convert."*

*Giovanni Amendola*

In pursuit of this totalitarian religious transformation, various proselytizing methods are used. Two of these are demagoguery and pedagogy, the former being the spreading of State propaganda through art, literature, music, plays, and festivals, and the latter being the ideological indoctrination of the youth via compulsory schooling.

The strategy of “terror and love” is another technique used to proselytize the masses into the totalitarian religion. Citizens are subjected to terror via ongoing wars, continual fear mongering, false flags, and the ever-present threat of loss of livelihood, property, imprisonment, or death. Yet these displays of terror are interspersed with displays of love; ceremonial rituals are held to honor the good will of the leaders and continuous propaganda assures the citizens that the regime cares for them and is working hard to keep them safe from the dangers of the world. Alexandra Stein explains in her book *Terror, Love and Brainwashing*:

*“As in the Stockholm Syndrome, thus does the abuser become the perceived safe haven – a person or an entity to whom one can turn for help, mercy, forgiveness, comfort.”*

*Alexandra Stein, Terror, Love and Brainwashing*

This alternation of terror and love triggers free floating anxiety, confusion and creates a trauma bond between the citizen and the State, a bond that lies at the basis of all cults. Stein explains further:

*“...the alternation of love and fear within an isolating environment [results] in a dissociated, loyal and deployable follower who can now be instructed to act in the interests of the leader rather than in his or her own survival interests... Processes of brainwashing rest on the creation of stress or threat with no escape other than [compliance] to the apparent safe haven of the [totalitarian regime and] group.”*

*Alexandra Stein, Terror, Love and Brainwashing*

Persistent fear mongering in conjunction with promises that compliance to the regime will bring the citizens salvation creates true believers who will do whatever the regime commands, even if these commands require them to disown friends and family, face economic ruin, spend time in prison or even go to an early grave. As one example, Nikolai Vilenchik, a man loyal to the Soviet regime, was forced to spend 17 years in the hard labor gulags for a crime he did not commit. Yet upon being released he did not condemn the Stalinist regime, instead he stated:

*"We believed in the Party – and we were not mistaken!"*

*Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, The Gulag Archipelago*

Other reports tell of political officials and party followers who cried out "Long Live Stalin!" as they were being taken out to be shot by the Soviet Secret Police. As further evidence for the mass religious conversion that takes place under totalitarianism, Hannah Arendt explained:

*"...the amazing fact is that...[the totalitarian true believer] is...[unlikely] to waver [in his loyalty] when the monster begins to devour its own children and not even if he becomes a victim of persecution himself, if he is framed and condemned, if he is purged from the party and sent to a forced-labor or a concentration camp. On the contrary, to the wonder of the whole civilized world, he may even be willing to help in his own prosecution and frame his own death sentence if only his status as a member of the movement is not touched."*

*Hannah Arendt, The Origins of Totalitarianism*

Totalitarianism is a religion that never achieves what it

promises. It creates a hell on earth in which many are sacrificed to the god of the state, but none are delivered into the brave new world they were promised. The more power the state is granted, the more corrupt become the individuals who operate the state machinery and the more the world descends into chaos. Totalitarianism must be avoided at all costs, but sadly this religion is seeing a modern-day revival. Politicians and others in positions of global power are vocal about their desire to re-make, re-build or re-set the world and the masses are expected to obey and to love the new society that is being forced upon them. If obedience does not come voluntarily, then force is being used with an alarming frequency.

*"They want to be our shepherds. But that requires us to be sheep."*

*Thomas Sowell, The Vision of the Anointed*

In these times of tyranny we each face of choice: accept the false gods of the state and allow the totalitarians to lead us into what Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn calls the "land of smothered opportunities", or resist.

*"There is but one choice: to rise to the task of the age."*

*Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, Warning to the West*

In the mid 20th century Carl Jung watched the religion of totalitarianism sweep across Europe, and his words serve as a call to action for all who see the perils we face:

*"Where are the superior minds, capable of reflection, today? If they exist at all, nobody heeds them: instead there is a general running amok, a universal fatality against whose compelling sway the individual is powerless to defend himself. And yet this collective phenomenon is the fault of the individual as well, for nations are made up of*

*individuals. Therefore the individual must consider by what means he can counter the evil."*

*Carl Jung, Civilization in Transition*

What are some tactics we can use to counter this evil? We can stop allowing our children to be indoctrinated with totalitarian ideas. We can ostracize people who blindly obey the immoral commands of the state – for ostracism is one of the most powerful means of social influence. We can mock and ridicule the so-called “priestly” class of politicians and bureaucrats and point out their hypocrisy and the absurdity of their propaganda and lies. We can create and support technology, art, memes, videos, books, merchandise or music that informs, inspires, and spreads the message of freedom. Or we can help build and participate in the “counter economy”, which consists of all voluntary exchange that is conducted outside the controlling eyes of the totalitarian State. Simply put, we can strive to live as freely as possible in the recognition that while we singlehandedly cannot liberate the world, our own personal liberation creates ripples in society and serves as a powerful example for others.

In making the choice of whether to help resist the rise of the totalitarian religion we should recognize that the choice is not between complying and living an easy life versus resisting and inviting unnecessary hardship. For compliance to totalitarianism is the riskiest of choices as it is based on the naïve hope that this time will be different, that this time power won't corrupt politicians and state officials, that this time the totalitarian monster will not devour its children and create a man-made hell on earth. But as Solzhenitsyn warned:

*“There always is this fallacious belief: “It would not be the same here; here such things are impossible.” Alas, all the evil of the twentieth century is possible everywhere on*



*earth.” (Solzhenitsyn, The Gulag Archipelago)*

*Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, The Gulag Archipelago*

**[Connect with Academy of Ideas](#)**

*cover image credit: [StockSnap](#) / pixabay*