

NEO-TOTALITARIANISM, THE BEGINNING  
OF ANARCHIC CIVILIZATION? A VOEGELIN READING OF OUR TIME

“No one is obliged to take part in the spiritual crisis of a society; on the contrary, everyone is obliged to avoid this folly and live his life in order.”  
(Eric Voegelin – *Science, Politics and Gnosticism*)

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ABSTRACT

Eric Voegelin, a scholar surprisingly ignored in the Romanian academic world, answered his troubled times marked by two World Wars and two totalitarianisms, with a tenacious life-long research explaining what was happening to the world, especially with the harsh political realities of modern times. He proved that a type of modern Gnosticism was the climax of modernity and the totalitarianism was the end of a gnostic dream. We use a Voegelin key to understand these times, marked by serious challenges for society and man, times that made us wonder whether totalitarianism acquired another face, thus becoming a *neo-totalitarianism*, with anarchic vulnerabilities. In the end of this reading, we try to confine *neo-totalitarianism*, using categories that could attest for new anarchic dangers found in our drifted times.

**Keywords:** Voegelin, totalitarianism, Gnosticism, neo-totalitarianism, second-reality.

INTRODUCTION

Many societies are nowadays confronted with surprising social upheavals, with violent ideological content spread through social media, and with the purpose of creating a new reality as well. Social theorists and political scientists are trying to explain these social problems and the repercussions they might have. In these times we return to the studies and reflections made in the context of the two World

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Wars, by one of the greatest minds of the XX<sup>th</sup> century, with remarkable contributions in political science, philosophy, and, not least of all, in sociology – Eric Voegelin, an author surprisingly ignored in the Romanian academic world.

We believe that the challenges brought by the new political movements all over the world demand imperatively the studies of a witness of the World Wars. In this way we begin to be more aware of the dangers that the new ideological warfare supported by the development of social media is an important medium for the appearance of a new type of totalitarianism, marked by intensive violent social activism.

Political theorists cannot ignore the studies of E. Voegelin, especially when violence in the political sphere is manifesting itself under different faces, demanding from sociology powerful theoretical explanations for what we believe it could be pertaining to *neo-totalitarianism*<sup>1</sup>.

To reach this point, we need extensive understanding of Voegelin's thinking, which will help us see the dangers of societies in these drifted times.

We try to understand current time with the help of E. Voegelin, by perceiving how his introduction to a new political science could have a remarkable impact on political sociology, discovering the sources of the violence of modern man, the creator of two World Wars and of totalitarianisms, from which it seems we have not healed, but, on the contrary, we might have a new form of disease. We discover the construction of a *second reality* and society on the verge of violence, in a new type of social manifestation that could lead to anarchic individual and social behavior.

For this reasons Voegelin recommends a return to the principles of political theory, but not before we understand the spiritual causes and the contexts that engendered this powerful and violent revival of constructed *second realities*, so

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<sup>1</sup> We try to confine *neo-totalitarianism* at the end of this study, proposing categories of an individual profile and of a societal dimension, inspired by E. Voegelin's research, in a quest to understand these troubled days from a sociological point of view. We have to mention the binding concept of *inverted totalitarianism*, proposed by Sheldon Wolin, similar with what we describe with predilection as this new political reality, from the individual and social points of view. His 2003 article, *Inverted Totalitarianism. How the Bush regime is effecting the transformation to a fascist-like state*, could help us understand the Romanian current political context. "Thus the elements are in place: a weak legislative body, a legal system that is both compliant and repressive, a party system in which one party, whether in opposition or in the majority, is bent upon reconstituting the existing system so as to permanently favor a ruling class of the wealthy, the well-connected and the corporate, while leaving the poorer citizens with a sense of helplessness and political despair, and, at the same time, keeping the middle classes dangling between fear of unemployment and expectations of fantastic rewards once the new economy recovers. That scheme is abetted by a sycophantic and increasingly concentrated media; by the integration of universities with their corporate benefactors; by a propaganda machine institutionalized in well-funded think tanks and conservative foundations; by the increasingly closer cooperation between local police and national law enforcement agencies aimed at identifying terrorists, suspicious aliens and domestic dissidents." (*The Nation*, 19 May 2003, <https://www.thenation.com/article/inverted-totalitarianism/>).

successfully promoted in social media. Regarding this, we try to formulate an explanation based on a lifetime career researching the disorders of spiritual realities in social and political history of mankind. He reached this knowledge by developing a philosophy of consciousness, by understanding the Hellenistic and Christian legacy for Western history, by searching for order in the history of mankind, confronted with the disruption of totalitarianism, and the alienation of man as the creator of ideological warfare (dogmatomachy). These studies brought us to foresee the risk of another type of totalitarianism: a *neo-totalitarianism* with potential of anarchic behavior.

At the end of this short analysis, we can see the warnings of this witness of World Wars, in our opinion the most important mind of contemporary political science, philosophy, and sociology, especially after the dryness of quantitative studies, needing more than ever the efforts for theoretical explanation in the sociological understanding of today's troubled societies<sup>2</sup>.

### 1. AN OLD BUT NEW POLITICAL SCIENCE

In the turmoil of the World Wars, E. Voegelin proposes a new science of politics<sup>3</sup> that could make sense of this type of human decline. Unfortunately, the shadow of positivism still stands at the beginning of this new century, a more so reason to remember what science is.

“Science is a search for truth concerning the nature of the various realms of being. Relevant in science is whatever contributes to the success of this search. Facts are relevant in so far as their knowledge contributes to the study of essence, while methods are adequate in so far as they can be effectively used as a means for this end.” (Voegelin [1952], 1987: 4–5)

Considering the premise that the theory of politics is a theory of human existence in history, Voegelin brings a restoration of political science, through a re-theorization after the destruction of nineteenth century positivism. Following Voegelin, this restoration is needed through a return to the consciousness of classical principles.

This destruction of positivism is performed in two ways: one that imposes the method of mathematics on all sciences, and another one according to which “the

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<sup>2</sup> See *Noology. On the spiritual order of the world. System of noological sociology*, 2002, Bucharest: Valahia. Euxin Collection, in English translation since 2013, where the author depicts a different kind of sociology with great potential, that restores the spiritual dimension in understanding man and society; also M. Măndiță (2017). *Compared noology of Jewish and Romanian peoples. A sociology of communities*, Aachen: Shaker Verlag GmbH; I. Bădescu (2006). *Noopolitics. The theory of asynchronous phenomena*, Bucharest: Mica Valahie.

<sup>3</sup> See Dante Germino (1964). “Eric Voegelin’s Contribution to Contemporary Political Theory”, in *The Review of Politics*, 26(3), 378–402. DOI:10.1017/S003467050000509X.

methods of the natural sciences were a criterion for theoretical relevance in general.” (Ibidem: 4) In this way the theoretical relevance of problems is subordinated to methods, ignoring the search of truth of *various realms of being*, as well as the fact that the accumulation of irrelevant information precludes the way to the study of essence, which means science in search of truth.

These characteristics of positivism brought a series of destruction to science, according to Voegelin: the uselessness of information accumulation through major research projects; the defective interpretation of relevant material under criteria like political preferences or *Zeitgeist*; here Voegelin, gives the example of Plato, read as neo-Kantian, utopian, socialist, fascist; and the changes brought in methodology, meaning the objectivity obtained by the exclusion of value-judgements.

In the attempt of Max Weber to establish an objective political science through the elimination of *value judgements* and *free science values*, Voegelin sees the end of positivism, considering Weber’s studies as “the last of the great positivistic systems.” (Ibidem: 22)

The notion of value judgements opposing fact judgements<sup>4</sup> “was created through the positivistic conceit that only propositions concerning facts of the phenomenal world were ‘objective,’ while judgments concerning the right order of soul and society were ‘subjective.’ Only propositions of the first type could be considered ‘scientific,’ while proposition of the second type expressed personal preferences and decisions, being unable of critical verification and therefore devoid of objective validity. This classification made sense only if the positivistic dogma was accepted on principle; and it could be accepted only by thinkers who did not master the classic and Christian science of man, for neither classic nor Christian ethics and politics contain ‘value-judgments’ but elaborate, empirically and critically, the problems of order which derive from philosophical anthropology as part of a general ontology.” (Ibidem: 11–12)

The *successful failure* of Max Weber, as Voegelin says, is the point in which a restoration of political science can restart through the rediscovery of rationality in metaphysics and in philosophical anthropology, thus returning to the classical principles of political science, to the new empirical realities. The realities of modern age could demonstrate that ‘progress’ is actually mere irrationalism, and that the progressives “would find themselves in the position of retrogressive irrationalists.” (ibidem: 24)

Voegelin starts from the definition that “a political society comes into existence when it articulates itself and produces a representative.” (ibidem: 49), dealing with *elemental representation* (an external type of articulation of institutions) and an *existential representation* (meaning the truth that a society has; Voegelin adds here a different type of existential representation that Christianity

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<sup>4</sup> See Javier Franzé, *Ethics, Politics and Truth: Recovering Weber “Dialogue” with Strauss and Voegelin*. Accessed at: <https://ecpr.eu/Filestore/PaperProposal/82a87386-54b4-473c-a038-6c78c6a6a5ce.pdf>.

brought). An example offered by Voegelin is the one in which foreign policy aggravates the international disorder by imposing one type of articulation where the existential conditions are different, a “civilizational provincialism” that “obscures the structure of reality”, and “brings a continuous warfare.” (Ibidem: 50)

Thus the question of truth is fundamental for science, while the problem of identifying and representing the truth of societies is a gradual development. Voegelin asks if there is a representation of truth that can be found in political societies in history. In this case, it is important that “society itself become the representative of something beyond itself, of a transcendent reality.” (Ibidem: 54)

The truth is inseparable from order, and, studying the history of order from ancient times, Voegelin emphasizes three types of truth: a *cosmological truth*, in which the early empires viewed themselves as representatives of the order of cosmos, this type being also present in China, in some symbols of Middle Age, and even in the Marxian dialectics where “the truth of cosmic order is replaced by the truth of a historically immanent order.” (ibidem: 59) This was an *anthropological truth*, and developed between 800 and 300 B. C., in what was called *axis time*, in various civilizations. For this type of truth, representative are Plato and Aristotle, for whom society includes the men that reflect the order of the soul, the discovery of psyche open to the transcendental reality. This meant the discovery of “the divinity in its radically nonhuman transcendence” (ibidem: 67), of theological truth; a *soteriological truth*, with the advent of Christianity, when we have a collaboration of God and man, a differentiation of consciousness impossible to be ignored in theoretical exploration and in searching for truth. Following Voegelin, we can say that:

“Since the maximum of differentiation was achieved through Greek philosophy and Christianity, this means concretely that theory is bound to move within the historical horizon of classic and Christian experiences. To recede from the maximum of differentiation is theoretical retrogression (...). Whenever in modern intellectual history a revolt against the maximum of differentiation was undertaken systematically, the result was the fall into anti-Christian nihilism, into the idea of the superman in one or the other of its variants.” (Ibidem: 79–80)

The struggle of representation in the Roman Empire, *i.e.* the struggle between different truths ended with the victory of Christianity, meaning “the de-divinization of the temporal sphere of power; and it was anticipated that the specifically modern problems of representation would have something to do with a re-divinization of man and society.” (Ibidem: 107)

According to Voegelin, throughout the Middle Age the representation was double (church and empire), until modern time, when this de-divinization meant actually a re-divinization of society and man, with tremendous consequences, with the height in World Wars and totalitarianisms.

Voegelin proved the retrogressive irrationalism existent in human sciences, a reality that did not stop after the World Wars, but actually increased, finding us

now in the presence of a new type of extremism, in another era of dogmatomachy, the ideological warfare, of a *neo-totalitarianism* that becomes a *second reality* with tremendous power and unpredictable consequences. Before we analyze this new reality, we must understand properly how it was possible for the calamities of the twentieth century to have happened.

## 2. GNOSTICISM AS THE CLIMAX OF MODERNITY

Understanding the locus of the two World Wars, and of Western civilization cannot be oblivious to the tremendous misinterpretations of its foundations: Greek philosophy and Christianity. We reach modern times as the most aggressive distortion of fundamental principles in the Western culture, as proved by Voegelin using the characteristic of *Gnosticism*<sup>5</sup>.

After publishing *The New Science of Politics* (1952), Voegelin deepens the study of Gnosticism for modern thought in *Science, Politics and Gnosticism* (1968).

The main characteristic of Gnosticism<sup>6</sup> is the feeling of alienation in this world, from which man can escape through the mediation of a *gnosis*, a special kind of knowledge, stating that one world being created by a bad God, while the good God is outside, hidden. If ancient Gnosticism is a scattered phenomenon, with multiple ways of escaping this world, modern Gnosticism (with an intra-mundane salvation) is a phenomenon that includes a series of different movements. Escaping this dimension means the destruction of this world and the creation of a new one, in which man can be complete again. If in ancient Gnosticism this *gnosis* was mystical, in modern Gnosticism the *gnosis* can be represented in different ways, like Marxism or scientism, according to Voegelin. Modern Gnosticism is different from the ancient one because of the “historical element derived from Christianity, and second, the specifically modern immanentism” of this phenomenon, this is why Voegelin is analyzing the “modern attempt to deny human limitations and abolish the structure of reality.” (Jardine, 1995)

The victory of Christianity meant a de-divinization of the world, one that opened the human soul to the transcendent God. In Modern times, we see a re-divinization of men and society, generated by the removal of God altogether.

If St. Augustin understood history as having spiritual and temporal orders, rejecting the idea of a Second Coming that would bring a revolutionary

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<sup>5</sup> We discuss here the phenomenon of Gnosticism as understood by Eric Voegelin, which we consider to have a wide sociological potential, apart from ancient Gnosticism and its many religious manifestations, maintaining only the central features of this category, in its political and philosophical relevance, as well as its sociological dimension.

<sup>6</sup> See David J. Levy (2002). *Hans Jonas and Eric Voegelin on Gnosticism and the Unease of Modernity*, accessed at: <https://sites01.lsu.edu/faculty/voegelin/wpcontent/uploads/sites/80/2015/09/Levy.pdf>

transfiguration of history, Joachim of Flora uses the symbol of Trinity in understanding history, bringing a resurgence of eschatology. The age of the Father, the age of Christ and the age of the Spirit – “in his Trinitarian eschatology Joachim created the aggregate of symbols which govern the self-interpretation of modern political society to this day.” (Voegelin [1952], 1987: 83)

The symbols described by Voegelin in this conception are still used in modern political understanding:

– *The Third Realm* (the last one), with the correlations: three periodizations of history, Comte’s phases of evolution, Marx classless society, the Third Reich.

– *The Leader*, with the supermen of Comte and Marx.

– *The Gnostic Prophet* of the new age, when the meaning of history becomes intelligible and accessible to man through revelation or speculative gnosis; modern intellectual; often combined with previous one.

– *The brotherhood of autonomous persons*, which in this third stage will no more need a mediation of grace through the church or institutions (with multiple variation, from the monks of medieval times, until the Marxian realm of liberty, without the state) (ibid.);

This new eschatology affects, according to Voegelin’s thesis, the entire structure of modern political thought. If the Joachitic immanentization brings fulfilment in history, the Augustinian history has a profane and a sacred dimension, looking towards an eschatological fulfilment.

The problem, according to Voegelin, appears when “Christian transcendental fulfilment becomes immanentized. Such an immanentist hypostasis of the eschaton, however, is a theoretical fallacy. Things are not things, nor do they have essences, by arbitrary declaration. The course of history as a whole is no object of experience; history has no eidos, because the course of history extends into the unknown future.” (Ibidem: 120)

Three problems appear when this Christian transcendental fulfilment is immanentized<sup>7</sup>, according to Voegelin: the first is *progressivism*, conception regarding the move towards a goal; the second is *utopianism*, that accentuates the state of perfection; and the last is the *immanentization* of both aspects, through revolutionary transfiguration of nature and man.

The explanation for this phenomenon lies in the uncertainty that is the essence of Christianity (Voegelin [1952], 1987), explains Voegelin; this is why we are tempted by these theoretical fallacies. The certainty of *hic et nunc* is traded for the uncertainty of the *beyond*. The fall from faith is either despair or nothingness, either something similar with faith, like different types of *Gnosis*, the transcendent is immanentized, the *beyond* can be right here, right now. And the consequences of

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<sup>7</sup> See Bruce Douglass (Feb., 1976). *The Gospel and Political Order: Eric Voegelin on the Political Role of Christianity*, *The Journal of Politics*, vol. 38, no. 1, p. 25–45, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2128960>.

this modern reality, of a constructed *second reality*, imposed often by force, can be seen in the powerful reality of politics.

This understanding is necessary for a truthful knowledge of Western political thought, medieval immanentism through Enlightenment, progressivism, liberalism, positivism, and political extremism of the twentieth century. Thus, for Voegelin, the essence of modernity rests in this growth of Gnosticism since the beginning of Christianity, with dramatic tones in recent times and with much more victims.

#### *SCIENTISM*<sup>8</sup>

The evolution of sciences meant that the Gnostic truth could be developed in other ways, scientism reaching an extreme through the replacement of the era of Christ with the one of Comte, following Voegelin. Despite these exacerbations, “scientism has remained to this day one of the strongest Gnostic movements in Western society; and the immanentist pride in science is so strong that even the special sciences have each left a distinguishable sediment in the variants of salvation through physics, economics, sociology, biology, and psychology.” (Ibidem: 127)

This way, the uncertainty of salvation becomes the certainty of intra-mundane actions, of the scientific path that promises a new kind of fulfilment, a “mystical work of self-salvation.” (Ibidem: 129)

According to Voegelin, this civilization is the creation of the gnostic dream because the premium for this effort is its very salvation, even with the price of two totalitarianisms, and with another potentiality for the destruction of what we call *neo-totalitarianism*.

In his extensive research Voegelin proves that the “life of the spirit is the source of order in man and society” (ibidem: 131), and this is why the removal of transcendent from the human history exacerbated in the Gnostic movement could bring the decline of this civilization, a decline that we still pay since twentieth century. The death of God announced by Nietzsche is a “Gnostic murder constantly committed by the men who sacrifice God to civilization. The more fervently all human energies are thrown into the great enterprise of salvation through world-immanent action, the farther the human beings who engage in this enterprise move away from the life of the spirit.” (Ibidem)

Although the gnostic theory was revised and expanded in the course of his studies, it is important to mention that an explanation for the troubled modernity is not found only in the characteristic features of Gnosticism, but also in other symbolic types (Riedl, 2012), such as the apocalyptic one, which rests a special place in our understanding of *neo-totalitarianism*.

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<sup>8</sup> See David N. Whitney (2007). *Scientism and the Dogmatics of Modernity*, also accessed at: <https://sites01.lsu.edu/faculty/voegelin/wp-content/uploads/sites/80/2015/09/David-Whitney.pdf>.

### 3. THE END OF THE Gnostic DREAM: TOTALITARIANISM

As long as the Church maintained itself as a civilizational factor in the Middle Ages, Christianity functioned as a civil theology. When the centers of lay culture developed, along with city governments, the problems of societies increased, meaning that “the rise of Gnosticism at this critical juncture now appears in a new light as the incipient formation of a Western civil theology. The immanentization of the Christian eschaton made it possible to endow society in its natural existence with a meaning which Christianity denied to it. *And the totalitarianism of our time must be understood as journey’s end of the Gnostic search for a civil theology.*” (Ibidem: 163)

The dangers of this new Western reality, according to Voegelin, was the destruction of Christianity. If initially the movement was called a reformation of religion, afterwards it became openly anti-Christian. These new realities meant that centuries of Christian culture and philosophy were removed from the history. This new gnostic truth was actually a repression of the truth of the soul, and the most atrocious manifestations will occur in the totalitarian movements of the twentieth century.

The spread of this gnostic reality in the form of positivism, scientism, progressivism, or what we may call ‘Westernization’ of the less developed countries is still an ongoing process, under different motivation (of power, influence, economic), but Voegelin warns “that human nature does not change. The closure of the soul in modern Gnosticism can repress the truth of the soul, as well as the experiences which manifest themselves in philosophy and Christianity, but it cannot remove the soul and its transcendence from the structure of reality. Hence the question imposes itself: How long can such a repression last? And what will happen when prolonged and severe repression will lead to an explosion?” (Ibidem: 165)

Relevant in understanding these times is a series of characteristics that help us see the directions of social dimensions, especially in the political one, troubled with so many aggressive and controversial actions. As we shall further see, these days are marked by a type of violence that reminds us of the two totalitarianisms humanity faced, warning us about the direction we are taking. In this perspective we can also use the concept and features of modern Gnosticism to make sense of the existent theoretical chaos in human sciences, still under the powerful shadow of positivism.

We try to answer these questions in the second part of this analysis, bringing the social problems of present day under this theory and through another concept – *neo-totalitarianism*, but first we must understand the dangers that this repression can have on societies and individuals, fulfilled in *totalitarianism*.

Along with this repression of the soul, according to Voegelin, another danger lies in the denial of the fundamental principles of existence; this means the attempt

to immanentize the Christian eschaton by the misinterpretation of social realities visible in political actions.

In the face of deep uncertainties and troubles of life, the Gnostics have the meaning of existence and they work to implement it by creating a *dream world* for the masses, a *second reality* specific for the anomies of social existence.

Voegelin warns that only the order of society is intelligible, not that of its existence. This situation brings a series of perversions, a pneumopathological condition<sup>9</sup>, like the negation of reality prior to the creation of a *dream world*, morality and immorality reversed. In such a context moral action in coordinating means-ends becomes impossible and we witness the lack of critical inquiries, the apparition of magic operations that include the declarations of intention, resolutions, the effort to making enemies to be aggressors, and the propaganda for peace in the world and world government, implemented by using intellectually and morally corrupted people, by practicing continuous warfare and various dogmatomachies.

The self-defeating characteristic of Gnosticism consist in the fact that although it dreams of world peace and eschaton, it actually brings wars, precisely because it disregards the structure of reality; the effects being either wars, either constant revolutionary changes of social order, as we see in present times, or different types of social anomies.

The Gnostic dream does not reach only one political wing, but it slides from right to left, proves Voegelin in his *New Science of Politics*. There are three form of immanentization (teleological, axiological and activist), either corresponding to the right wing (like the teleological and axiological – the progressive, the utopian, with the dream of gradual progression toward the dream), or to the left wing, like the activist one, that will choose the violent action to achieve his dream.

Could there be a solution for this devastation that started a long time ago and intensified during the World Wars and the totalitarianism as the climax of modernity? Voegelin considers that the falsification of the structure of reality by the gnostic will continue “as long as the recognition of the structure of reality, the cultivation of the virtues of sophia and prudentia, the discipline of the intellect, and the development of theoretical culture and the life of the spirit are stigmatized in public as ‘reactionary’, while disregard for the structure of reality, ignorance of facts, fallacious misconstruction and falsification of history, irresponsible opining on the basis of sincere conviction, philosophical illiteracy, spiritual dullness, and agnostic sophistication are considered the virtues of man and their possession opens the road to public success. In brief: as long as civilization is reaction, and moral insanity is progress.” (Voegelin [1952], 1987: 178)

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<sup>9</sup> See I. Bădescu (2002). *Noology, On the spiritual order of the world, System of noological sociology*. Bucharest: Valahia. Euxin Collection, where spiritual maladies manifested in societies are viewed in the light of noological theory.

These are the most important lines of the Voegelinian theory of political science, elaborated in the proximity of the two World Wars, and witnessing of the Cold War. The *New Science of Politics* proposed by Eric Voegelin views the essence of modernity as being Gnosticism. His new science is indebted to Greek philosophy and Christianity in understanding the very troubled destiny of man and society in their history. *Science, Politics, and Gnosticism* deepens the research of modernity as a Gnostic climax, one that has not lost power, especially in our days, after the fall of the Communist power in Eastern Europe.

Among the Gnostic mass movement of our time, like progressivism, positivism, Marxism, psychoanalysis, Communism, fascism and National Socialism, Voegelin structures their foundation on a Gnostic attitude, their essence being:

- the dissatisfaction with the current situation;
- the belief that the world is poorly organized (as opposed to believing that the world is good but that human beings are inadequate);
- the belief that salvation from the evil of the world is possible;
- the belief that the order of being will have to be changed (as opposed to the Christian belief that the world will remain as it is and salvation lies in the receiving of grace through death);
- the belief that changing the order of being is within human possibilities;
- the belief that man’s task is to seek out the method of altering reality. The Gnostic is the prophet proclaiming his knowledge (Voegelin, 2012);

The realization of a *dream reality* in these days, especially through an activist imposition of a certain political program, always violent in different degrees, reveals the pathology of trying to “realize a kingdom of transcendent perfection historically and immanently.” (Voegelin, 2000a: 236)

This fundamental theoretical basis is now completed by the explanation of other concepts like *alienation* and *second reality*, helping us to understand the new mass movements of current days and shedding some light on the risks of *neo-totalitarianism*, also marked by violent social activism supported mainly in social media channels.

### 3.1. ALIENATION, TOWARD A SECOND REALITY

The social and psychological disorders of present day demand an understanding of what represents the reality of order, following Voegelin, going back to the Stoic concept of alienation (*allogtriosis*), which means “a state of withdrawal from one’s own self as constituted by the tension toward the divine ground of existence. Since the divine ground of existence is in Classic as well as in Stoic philosophy the logos or the source of order in this world, the withdrawal from one’s self as constituted by this ordering force is a withdrawal from reason in

existence. The result will then be the use of reason, which man has after all, for the purpose of justifying existence in the state of alienation.” (Voegelin, 2011: 102)

Alienation is a condition in Stoic psychopathology that represents a distancing of the Self from this tension towards the ground of existence and a contracting of the Self from reason, a reality mostly seen in the ideological movements of modern times. An example of Voegelin is Hegel, in whose work we find reflected an alienation that inevitably produced the death of God, as long as the “divine reason has been rejected in the egophanic revolt.<sup>10</sup>” (Ibidem). To the Ego found in *egophanic revolt* this new reality contracted from reason and from the tension towards the ground of existence, the only solution is a *second reality*. According to Voegelin, this falsification of reality, the eclipse of reality as alienation in need for justification is found in political systems that engendered a tremendous social disorders.

### 3.2. THE SECOND REALITY AS ECLIPSE OF REALITY

Voegelin starts from concepts proposed by the Austrian authors, like A. P. Gutersloh, Robert Musil, and Heimito von Doderer (Voegelin, 2011), who describe the acute state of *alienation* that created a *second reality*. Voegelin refers to the *refusal to perceive* used by von Doderer, which is characteristic for this state of alienation that contributes to the construction of *second realities*. This refusal is defining for the ideological struggles of present days, combined with a type of aggressive behavior strongly supported in social media.

If defining for man is the turning toward the divine ground of existence, *alienation* is moving away from this ground, what Voegelin considers “the fundamental categories descriptive of the states of order and disorder in human existence. (Voegelin, 2011: 125)” There is no doubt that “turning away means to refuse to apperceive the experience of the divine ground as constitutive of man’s reality. This willful turning away from the fundamental experience of reality was diagnosed by the Stoics as a disease of the mind.” (Ibidem) According to Voegelin, this is a pathology that started a long time ago, reaching high levels in modern times, when this contraction of humanity in the human soul or this occultation of reality is marked by symptoms such as mass spiritual, intellectual and political disorientations.

Reality can be experienced and projected, this meaning that a projected reality may eclipse the *First Reality*. (Voegelin, 1970). Speaking of the Self, that eclipses the reality, which is translating in a deformation of his humanity, Voegelin identifies a few characteristics of this behavior like: denial of humanity in man,

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<sup>10</sup> “Designate the concentration on the epiphany of the ego as the fundamental experience that eclipses the epiphany of God in the structure of Classic and Christian consciousness. I had already used the term apocalypse of man to cover this problem in *The New Science of Politics*.” (Voegelin, 2011: 94)

denial of a complex perception of reality, man considering himself as the model for everybody else, of a contracted Self. The danger is when man will try to impose his view of reality to others, with aggressiveness that “betrays itself the anxiety and alienation of the man who has lost contact with reality.” (Ibidem: 186) This type of aggressive attitude will become manifest through its effects, being identifiable in a series of social conflicts, most evident in political conflicts.

#### 4. TOTALITARIANISM AS THE END OF PROGRESSIVE CIVILIZATION

If Voegelin wrote his studies as a reaction to the disorders of his time, trying to explain what had happened with this Western culture that had just experienced World conflicts, we have now the same challenge to explain why the violence is so exacerbated, in all dimensions of societies, especially after we see that the lessons of totalitarianisms seem still far away. Voegelin tried to understand and explain the peculiarities of these totalitarianisms, as we saw it, identifying in modern Gnosticism a source for the explanations of political nightmares that humanity had passed through.

We are now to see how and why world conflicts were the climax of the Gnostic *dream world*, with its Gulag or concentration camp as the supreme signs for annihilating human nature in the march to immanentize the eschaton. This image is representative of what Voegelin defined the totalitarianism of the twentieth century, “as the existential rule of Gnostic activists, as the end form of progressive civilization.” (Voegelin [1952], 1987: 132)

The explanation of totalitarianism can be made by understanding certain social realities, political behavior or changes that could mean a fatalistic causality, explains Voegelin, but also through a complex dimension like the intensity of passions, the character of man, his virtues and spiritual realities that may be determinants of a phenomenon. (Voegelin, 2000c)

Relevant for Voegelin are three decisive moments that contributed to the ideological upheaval of modern times: the advent of Christianity, the decline of this religion starting with the Reformation, and scientism (Corey, 2017), the climax being represented by the two totalitarianisms as the end of the Gnostic dream, and of a progressive civilization. It is important to specify that Voegelin does not consider totalitarianism caused only by economic, political or racial actions, but also by deep spiritual maladies, as those manifested in Western civilization. Identifying the uniqueness of this explanation based on these motives, Voegelin pushed the causes of ideology further back, and locating them in this affected spiritual dimension. (Ibidem)

Having such a complex approach towards this event, not only social, economic or demographic conditions could be used in the theoretical understanding. Especially the spiritual disintegration that brought this outcome,

“the rise of immanentist sectarianism since the high Middle Ages; and the totalitarian movements would not be simply revolutionary movements of functionally dislocated people, but immanentist creed movements in which medieval heresies have come to their fruition.” (Ibidem: 21) The stake is fighting for a deep transformation of man, the Christian transcendent perfection of man through grace.

That is for Voegelin the essence of totalitarianism, one by which there are not fights to resolve social evils, but a fight to create paradise on earth, an “immanent perfection through an act of man.” (Ibidem)

It is worth remembering that the red line in actual controversies, political or social, in the context of new challenges for the entire human culture, “does not run between liberals and totalitarians, but between the religious and philosophical transcendentalists on the one side and the liberal and totalitarian immanentist sectarians on the other side.” (Ibidem: 22)

These are important remarks as long as we see that the social, economic and political crises are accelerating with the speed of internet light all over the world, posing new threats for world stability. Or we may discover, still using the Voegelinian categories, a transformation of totalitarianism, one for 21<sup>st</sup> century – a *neo-totalitarianism* that we can suspect to be a *beginning of anarchic civilization*. We try to identify some characteristics of totalitarianism in the studies of Voegelin, some, maybe not all of them, so that we can still see them as being relevant or working in a special type of totalitarian thinking.

An imperative warning that Voegelin made concerned the fact that a scientist cannot be an ideologue, especially in these times when science is used for the benefit of political and economic interests, and science is confiscated. This is why “nobody who is an ideologist can be a competent social scientist” (Voegelin, 2011: 74), warns Voegelin. We must keep this in mind when we analyze the *neo-totalitarianism* of present days, with its corrupted intellectual promoters that join functional illiterates in social media, supported by the social terrorism of intellectuals used to promote certain political and economic policies.

#### 4.1. FUNCTIONAL ILLITERATES

Discussing the works of Robert Musil that portray the disintegration of modern times, Voegelin uses the question of stupidity connected with the phenomenon of totalitarianism. This problem is discussed when analyzing the effect of functional illiterates. For Musil, “totalitarianism was the most menacing and murderous political form of stupidity.” (Isenberg, 2016). The functional stupidity is a very important concept in Musil’s novel, *Man without qualities*. For Voegelin, the functional illiterates mean a rejection, condemnation of philosophical and historical realities from the part of those that are nothing else but *intellectual*

*crooks*, that have only a strong “desire for personal aggrandizement.” (Voegelin, 2011: 77)

Following Musil, who speaks of simple and higher stupidity, Voegelin characterizes the higher stupidity as a “disturbance in the equilibrium of the spirit. The spirit now becomes the adversary, not the mind. It is not a defect of the mind as with simple people, but a defect of the spirit, a revolt against the spirit, which gives rise to saying or doing things against the spirit” (Voegelin, 1999: 101), here Voegelin recalls the concept of *pneumopathology* used by Schelling, that can characterize this form of functional illiteracy.

We can see included in this category a type of *betrayal of the intellectuals*, meaning the compromises that the representatives of science made to the political sphere for different interests, abandoning the essential dimension of science, as Voegelin taught us, which is the search for truth. But, in the meantime, using the name of science in justifying their position or guaranteeing policies, for their own aggrandizement.

#### 4.2. SPIRITUAL EUNUCHS

Through the ideology of science as salvation, where science becomes a new God that will cure all evil from us and from earth, we reach another question concerning the potential for totalitarianism, that of *spiritual eunuchs* (Voegelin, 2000a), as Voegelin names them. It is important to specify that this reality is present also in liberal or progressive movement. The domination of nature will be followed by the domination of man over man, and the government of people is actually replaced by the *administration of things*, warns Voegelin. And this we saw under the two great totalitarianisms of the last century.

“The age of science will appear as the greatest power orgy in the history of mankind” (ibidem: 191), and the collaboration of science and power that enabled the growth of utilitarianism, with the shrinking, and contracted life of the spirit. The *spiritual eunuchs* have gained great power once this alienation happened, and with “the politically effective organization of these masses in the totalitarian movements, the schism assumed the external forms of social suppression and physical extermination.” (Ibidem, 196)

In analyzing the new reality of modern thinking, like the pathos for science, Voegelin underlines the belief that the existence of man can be orientated in the absolute sense by science, the scientific mass ignorance concerning the place of phenomenal knowledge transferred to the order of existence, the pathos for science of spiritual eunuchs, the dilettantism in the philosophical domain, all brought a “primitivization of cultural and spiritual culture.” (Ibidem: 192)

Here we can mention our present day developments in computer science, with the creation of artificial intelligence, robots, and the dilemma of consciousness, or the extension of life with the help of science. A warning of

Voegelin needs to be remembered here, the one concerning the efforts to change human nature that would actually mean the destruction of man.

#### 4.3. THE SOCIAL TERRORISM OF INTELLECTUALS

Referring to a series of difficult existential questions that demand answers, Voegelin identifies two ways to react: one which in the so-called free societies questions are prevented to be asked using the method of *social terrorism* (Voegelin, 2000c) of intellectuals, and in the totalitarian regimes, where the physical annihilation by force is used as a method to stop any uncomfortable questions. If for the totalitarian regimes history has its duty in documenting these complex technics of suppression (starting from the suppression of man and of his ideas, or of those realities that stand in the way of the immanentization of a dream world), in the so-called free societies the situation needs a special attention from the part of social scientist. Here, especially in the new realities of social media, the *social terrorism* of intellectuals is extremely efficient, rapid and with tremendous impact. If the efficiency of this attack had been carried at a different rhythm until the twentieth century, now the rhythm is accelerated, a reality that is reflected in the *neo-totalitarianism* of our days.

#### 4.4. DOGMATOMACHY

*Dogmatomachy* represents the battle between different ideologies, a concept that can help us when analyzing the political situation of current reality. When Voegelin analyses modern man, he identifies three characteristics, a portrait extremely relevant, especially today. For Voegelin modern man is:

- a *fundamentalist* (a dogmatist, for which Voegelin uses the term dogmatomachy, reflecting the war between dogmas that started in the sixteenth century, with the fights among the religious dogmas, and continued in the twentieth century in the dogmatic ideologies that fought with each other). Dogma means the literalist and fundamentalist form of symbolism that lost its original experience that produced it and left the symbolism dogmatized;

- an *illiterate man* in what concerns the fundamental problems of reality, and in the meantime a person endowed with an elevated level of literacy in irrelevant problems. Here it is emphasized the deficit of understanding the experiences that engendered the complex symbolism that he is attacking, especially in understanding the defining spiritual dimension of man or the alienated Self, that lost contact with reason;

- an *apocalyptic* man with one “ambivalent attitude, of being frightened and expectant at the same time” of something good that will happen, a contradictory situation characteristic of alienation (Voegelin, 2004: 175). This fright is also

manifested through an *expressive violence* defining of this era on the verge of multiple social conflicts.

Extremely important is the role of sociological inquiry, the only one able to show how this powerful theoretical construction discharges in current social and political realities, especially when science is meant mostly for the benefit of economic and political purposes, not for searching for the truth.

We further use the categories of Eric Voegelin to read current social reality, and this could help us to better understand these troubled times. We approach various perversions in communication, expressive forms of violence with cancerous growth, special tactics of Gnostic type used to seize the power, the construction of a *second reality* through social media as the only (first) reality, one that is profoundly alienating, in which there predominates the apocalyptic characteristic of modern Gnosticism. Following this line of thought, at the end we try a delineation of *neo-totalitarianism*, that we consider a beginning of an anarchic type of civilization.

#### 4.5. COMMUNICATION CONFISCATED

E. Voegelin views three dimensions in communication: the *substantive* one, as a way to develop and form personality, “is concerned with the right order of the human psyche” (Voegelin, 2000c: 54); it is an education and formation question, “the process in which the substantive order of a community is created and maintained” (Ibidem: 47); the *pragmatic* one, created with the purpose to obtain a certain behavior from the part of the receiver of the message; this is mere political, commercial communication, indifferent to a higher good that we find in the substantive form. Here Voegelin underlines that if the pragmatic facets take the role of substantive communication, we risk a sinister reality of conformist thinking and behavior. In order not to question the alleged substantive role of pragmatic communication, the communicator uses emotional and psychological tricks, which bring us to the most dangerous form: the *intoxicant* one, which prevails in media (although here can also be found types of substantive and pragmatic forms) with mass audience. An example used by Voegelin is the phenomenon of *divertissements*, studied by Pascal, the distractions needed to bear the anxieties of existence especially in industrial society, when the pragmatic and intoxicant forms of communication are “certainly a symptom of moral crisis.” (Voegelin, 2000c: 50)

The role of communication cannot be stressed enough, especially in our era of mass communication and social media. What we can see in this reality, specific for *neo-totalitarianism*, is the confiscation of the *substantive* form of communication (one endowed by Voegelin with morality and rationality), this being suffocated by the pragmatic and intoxicant forms.

Using the definition given by Etienne Gilson, according to which “conscience is the act of judgment by which we approve or disapprove our actions in the light

of rational moral principles”, Voegelin highlights that “in order to act rationally, a man must know who he is, in what kind of a world he lives, and what his station is in the order of being. A man who is confused about the essentials of his existence is incapable of rational action; and if he is incapable of rational action, he is incapable of moral action.” (Voegelin, 2000c, 57) We are witnessing today a massive redefinition of empiric realities regarding the fundamental data of existence, like family, gender, politics, security, identity, liberty, press, migration etc., having the power to weaken the individual and societal stability and identities necessary for economic and political objectives to be implemented. After this redefinition, the new constructed realities acquired dogmatized and ideological authority, which becomes impossible to counteract, once the spiritual eunuchs, the ideological corrupt intellectuals and the functional illiterates are being activated.

#### 4.6. GNOSTIC STRATEGY FOR SEIZING THE POWER

Voegelin analyzes the tactics of the Puritan revolution, still appropriate these days, for different struggles for power, at a low and more violent level in comparison with those that participated in the Puritan movement. According to Voegelin, we can say that the Puritans invented the *cause* of a revolution, an important weapon for the modern Gnostic revolutionaries, applied in different situations that made necessary various tactics. During the Puritan Revolution there existed: the criticism of social evils, the holiness of the speakers, the wrong direction of the government that needed to be changed, the necessity of actions for removing the evil from the world, the struggle for a new government, the clear separations of the camp, the role of the women used for the cause. (Voegelin [1952], 1987)

Being aware of the changes that modernity brought and demonstrating the risks of modern Gnostic politics entails, Voegelin considers that any attempt on the part of a Gnostic leader to take power and impose a truth (like progress, race) must be opposed vehemently.

#### 4.7. EXPRESSIVE VIOLENCE

The transformation of the old world and the building of a new one is not an easy or peaceful process, the salvation through Gnosis demands sacrifices, and even though the shape of Gnosticism is different (from left to right, as we saw), “the aim is always destruction of the old world and the passage to the new. (Voegelin, 2012: 19) “But reality must be destroyed – this is the great concern of gnosis.” (Ibidem: 32) We nowadays have reached this tremendous power of destruction, from the nuclear risks to a soft computer hacking as leverage to impose a certain political direction or convenient economic policies.

Violence is manifesting in two ways: the *instrumental* one, used as an end in itself, it defends, rejects an attack, it has a limited and immediate objective; and, secondly, the *expressive* violence, where important is “to realize that underlying the explosion of violence has been the fact that many of its perpetrators see nothing wrong with violence, but regard it as the highest manifestation of the vitality of their personal existence” Violence for the sake of violence (Germino, 1998: 43), freeing or attenuating the big anxieties of life, and coping with deep alienation.

Here we can understand this manifestation as a *psychopathological* condition (among other psychological vulnerabilities) and a *pneumopathological* condition<sup>11</sup> (supported by corrupted intellectual assessments), explained by an assumed agenda or ideology, contrary to the scientific truth.

In addition to Voegelin’s analysis, Dante Germino’s assertion concerning the potentiality for violence from the part of ancient Gnosticism is based on three points of view:

- the desire for the total destruction of the world as we know it;
- the dualism, or the division of the world into forces of Good and those of Evil;
- the hatred of the body and of the material world as experienced in their chaotic and disorderly manifestations. (Ibidem: 45)

In *The Ecumenic Age*, considered Voegelin’s greatest work, he links modern Gnosticism with totalitarian systems, reminding us that every violence that modern Gnostic systems produced (mass murder, concentration camps) and their perpetrators are covered with a *halo of idealism* (Voegelin, 2000b) in the search of an imagined immortality, according to their constructed *second reality*. (Germino, 1998)

Dante Germino agrees with Voegelin that the differences between ancient and modern Gnosticism are not so important, because “in both versions there is the passion, or pre-intellectual disposition, for destruction of the only cosmos we know. Violence as its own justification, the cult of violence as something liberating” (ibidem: 51) and the merit of Voegelin is that “we must begin by exposing the Gnostic dream construction for the nightmare it can produce.” (Ibidem: 52).

## 5. NEO-TOTALITARIANISM, THE BEGINNING OF ANARCHIC CIVILIZATION?

Voegelin proves that modernity is the end of progressive civilization in his extensive research through a series of forms of spiritual degradation with a long history, from Christianity until the scientism of our time. On this model we reach

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<sup>11</sup> See I. Bădescu (2002). *Noology, On the spiritual order of the world, System of noological sociology*. Bucharest: Valahia, Euxin Collection; V. E. Frankl (2008). *On the theory and therapy of mental disorders. An introduction to logotherapy and existential analysis*, Bucharest: Trei; V. E. Frankl (2009). *Men’s search for meaning*. Bucharest: Meteor Press.

our time, marked by extensive social, economic and political conflicts, at a current reality marked by a new type of totalitarianism, one exacerbated type of modern Gnosticism, sustained by massive ideologization in all social dimensions, implemented by using social media as prime battlefield.

We design a pattern to identify traits of anarchic behavior at the *individual* and *societal* levels. We have to underline that this height we reach today might be seen as an expansion of Western civilization worldwide through scientific and economic interests, sustained by political interests, and strongly ideologized.

Eric Voegelin dedicated his life to the study of the order of man, society, God and the world. He reached deep understanding in the order of humanity by researching the disorders that man faced throughout history. This was the way through which he views modern ideologies with roots in ancient time, with an apogee in the two totalitarianisms created by one of the most effervescent cultural space.

The distortions of the fundamental principles of Western culture, as emphasized by/in the phenomenon of *Gnosticism*, continue in this century with powerful overtones that we try to identify at the individual and societal levels, in what might be considered a new profile of totalitarianism.

We see how the repression of the spiritual dimension in man and society brings the dissolution of man or a transformation of his humanity and society.

We see how the *second reality* constructed by social media is serving either specific interests in society, or economic and political ones.

We see how the alienation of man in society and in his interpersonal relationships could bring about a type of aggressiveness towards others or toward himself, thus a *second reality* becoming the *only* reality.

We see that totalitarianism, as the end of progressive civilization is not the end of history, because history has no eidos, it is extending into the future, following Voegelin, towards a new manifestation of totalitarianism.

We see that the truth, which is the purpose of science, has become largely mere ideology, in the benefit of economic and political interests.

We see that higher stupidity, the main quality of functional illiterates and corrupted intellectuals, as a disease and a defect of the spirit, is put in the service of economic and political interests.

We see that the social terrorism of corrupted intellectuals is more and more intensified, with new methods of propaganda, especially through social media channels, proceeding in public annihilation or labeling of the truth of science as being unscientific.

We see a real warfare between different ideologies, with fundamentalist, illiterate and apocalyptic overtones that give a certain desired meaning of reality, of constructed convenient realities, creating only well-established *second realities*.

We see how communication is confiscated, evading the meaning of the substantive dimension of communication, which means that the truth of communication in education is also perverted, while the intoxicant type becomes dominant.

We see how the expressive violence is present everywhere, because of the psychopathological and pneumopathological vulnerabilities of individuals, becoming a purpose in itself, as a manifestation of perverted lived vitality.

We see the special tactics for seizing the power in the name of a *dream reality* constructed on the spiritual illiteracy of the intellectual 'elite', guilty of renouncing the truth of science.

Individual behavior builds the foundation for the societal behavior in the structure of disorders. We can see in man a complexity of traits that reflects the societal dimension. We can have the following categories that could help in explaining the profile of our time, in an effort to confine *neo-totalitarianism*, having in mind extending them according to different cultural contexts.

#### 5.1. THE INDIVIDUAL IS NOW CHARACTERIZED BY:

- living in the extremes of anxieties, fears, lack of control over his own life, of his profession, of his social medium;
- personal relationships superficial or with short duration;
- alienation of his mind and soul, lacking the meaning of life;
- retreating in alcohol, drugs, movies, *divertissements*;
- depression as a widespread disease;
- anarchic emotionality;
- contracted Self, the phenomenon of the Selfies – the effort of trying to find his Self;
- consumerism as a purpose of having something, of being someone;
- the need to be someone, being validated from outside;
- false liberty, a liberty to consume, to own, not to actually be;
- having continuous needs that demand satisfaction;
- alternative ways to explain life and its meaning;
- the excessively competitive spirit to the detriment of collaboration, one of the defining component of sociability;
- hope for prolonged human survival in the development of medicine and computer science, indicative for the fear of death, corroborated with the lack of meaning in/of life;
- false unity, actually atomized individuals – lonely together;
- man viewed as a commodity.

#### 5.2. AT THE SOCIETAL LEVEL THERE CAN BE DETECTED:

- interests in upbringing economic and political viable subjects for the needs of mass society (highly specialized individual, competitive, with unilateral development, thinking or being, a unilateral man with constructed needs);

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- mass stimulation through public events (concerts, music festivals, sports events);
  - creating behaviors, reactions and attitudes, values through movies, social media, along with the function of defusing or intensifying existential frustrations;
  - the power of divertissements (cultivating the zeal to travel worldwide – but one needs to produce in order to consume tourism);
  - economic interests of multinational companies;
  - using identity vulnerabilities that could facilitate the interests of political and economic targets;
  - political interests are actually the political interests of certain groups with economic targets, regardless of the public good;
  - lack of diplomacy between states, which means a deficit of real political relations; the prevalence of different types of power with nontransparent ways of obtaining political and economic targets;
  - uncontrolled power of multinational companies;
  - vulnerabilities of families and communities due to migration, redefining and reorganizing family;
  - using different strategies to trigger waves of migration, a new way to conquer or weaken spaces;
  - gender ideology with multiple ramifications;
  - the health system, the man is not a patient anymore, but a client;
  - confiscating science for economic reasons;
  - social terrorism of aggressive activist movements;
  - powerful migration movements, the weakness of people, communities and individuals;
  - identity national challenges, reconstructing national culture;
  - political extremism, propagating hate speech and demonization of political opponents, thus any dialogue being impossible;
  - opprobrium of others with different political views, hand in hand with censorship;
  - the impossibility of politics, understood as pursuing public good in the democratic balancing of powers – the prevalence of dogmatomachies most evident in pursuing economic interests;
  - apocalyptic political views, the destruction of policies made by opponents, while implementing new ones;
  - political extremism, based on owning the absolute truth, no discussion with others;
  - social atomization facilitating intoxicant forms of communication;
  - apocalyptic attitudes and behaviors, no hope for change unless total destruction is achieved;

- impossibility for rational dialogue, refusing or being incapable of conducting such a dialogue; we might name this phenomenon the *ghettoization of thinking*;
- diffused power, decentralized diffusion at society's level (unlike Communism or National Socialism, with leaders, organization and clear Gnostic objectives), bringing anarchic potential in the confrontation of ideologies;
- weakening the states, occupying institutions by means of the *new way of thinking*.

These are a series of characteristics that could structure this phenomenon of *neo-totalitarianism* having the capacity to expand according to different cultural contexts, and having a wide sociological potential in understanding the individual behavior and the social manifestations marked by violent, anarchic components, as we see in many European societies.

A confinement/definition of *neo-totalitarianism* could be: holding/delivering only a limited and corrupted type of truth, with no possibility to understand the complexity of reality, sustained by unilateralism in education and by intoxicant forms of communication in education and social media, mainly with economic and political purposes, aiming at the *ghettoization of thinking* and at a diffused but intensified power of having controlled groups in society.

The essential difference from totalitarianism is the multiple radiation points of ideological corruption through which interests are conducted, followed, and diffused with a false transparency. This reality makes it more difficult to identify them and to counteract.

This diffused and aggressive power of *neo-totalitarianism* has a great potential to develop and sustain anarchism in society, having in mind the multitude of groups that fight for power and the changing interests that motivates them, which might throw men in civil conflicts. Unlike totalitarianism that had an *idée directrice* (according to this French phrase) and a forced internal unity, this is impossible in *neo-totalitarianism*, with its many conflicting economic and political interests, representing vulnerability elements capable of social disintegration.

These are a series of characteristics that could help social theorists to investigate the current times under the Voegelinian understanding of our political realities. To expand and verify these political developments and to understand their sociological manifestation could be a way to surpass the confiscation of science by different ideologies, following only the truth, the purpose of science, whose mission is to light the multiple realms of being.

At the end of this Voegelinian reading, we might say that there is no conclusion for this new social and political reality (*neo-totalitarianism*), even though we may resume these troubled times with a title that could be Voegelin's entire life and work... *In Search of Order*.

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