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Two Ways to Freedom:

Christianity and Democracy in the Thought of István Bibó and Dietrich Bonhoeffer

PhD

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- 8 NOV 2002

2002

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Abstract

Two Ways to Freedom:
Christianity and Democracy in the Thought of István Bibó and Dietrich Bonhoeffer

András Csepregi

The broad scope of my study is the encounter of Christian theology and democratic social theory. Within this area I relate as well as compare to each other the thoughts of the theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer and the political thinker István Bibó. The possibility of the comparison is supported by the fact that both thinkers elaborated a characteristic understanding and concept of freedom on whose basis they investigated a viable political order for post-war Europe. Their understanding of freedom was significantly different and this difference became manifest in the manner of the political reconstruction they proposed.

In my analysis of some early writings and wartime considerations of the two thinkers, my main concern is to reveal the relationship of thelogical reasoning and political argumentation, both within the two thinkers' own thoughts and in their encounter. In the first chapter I create an elementary map of the development of the mutual influence of Christianity and democracy. Here I venture to understand democracy from a Christian point of view as tradition, vision, system and process. In the second chapter I show the relationship between Bibó's concept of freedom and his democratic theory. The third and the fourth chapters are devoted to an analysis of Bonhoeffer's theology that was determined by definite political values already at their roots. I conclude that despite several converging elements in their thinking and understanding of the challenge of the times, some fundamental differences remain in the political theories of Bibó and Bonhoeffer, which have their roots in their opposing understanding of freedom.

Acknowledgments

I am indebted to my fellow Christians, colleagues and teachers in the Lutheran Church in Hungary who have influenced my theological thinking. Many thanks are due to the professors at the Department of Theology at the University of Durham, especially my tutors, Professor Peter Selby and Dr. Colin Crowder. I am grateful to the Presidency of the Lutheran Church in Hungary for supporting my studies abroad. Special thanks to the Lutheran World Federation and the Evangelical Lutheran Churches of America for their generous financial assistance.

I must conclude by expressing my joy about having been able to share all the pleasures of this study process with the persons closest to me.

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Abbreviations

Works of István Bibó

DRS	Bibó, István, *Democracy, Revolution, Self-Determination, Selected Writings,* edited by Károly Nagy, translated by András Boros-Kazai, with an 'Introduction' by Géza Jeszenszky and a 'Postscript' by Sándor Szilágyi, Columbia University Press, New York, 1991 (East European Monographs, 317)
ÉD	Bibó, István, *Életút dokumentumokban [Life in Documents],* edited by György Litván and Katalin S.Varga, 1956-os Intézet - Osiris-Századvég, Budapest, 1995
VT-I.	Bibó, István, *Válogatott tanulmányok [Selected Works],* Volume I., selection and 'Postscript' by Tibor Huszár, edited by István Vida and Endre Nagy, Magvető, Budapest, 1986

Works of Dietrich Bonhoeffer

AB	Bonhoeffer, Dietrich, *Act and Being: Transcendental Philosophy and Ontology in Systematic Theology,* translated by H. Martin Rumscheidt, Fortress Press, Minneapolis, 1996 *(DBWE 2)*
CF	Bonhoeffer, Dietrich, *Creation and Fall: A Theological Exposition of Genesis 1-3,* translated by Douglas Stephen Bax, Fortress Press, Minneapolis, 1997 *(DBWE 3)*
D	Bonhoeffer, Dietrich, *Discipleship,* translated by Barbara Green and Reinhard Krauss, Fortress Press, Minneapolis, 2001 *(DBWE 4)*
E	Bonhoeffer, Dietrich, *Ethics,* edited by Eberhard Bethge, translated by Neville Horton Smith, Macmillan, New York, 1965
FTP	Bonhoeffer, Dietrich, *Fiction from Tegel Prison,* translated by Nancy Lukens, Fortress Press, Minneapolis, 2000 *(DBWE 7)*

LPP Bonhoeffer, Dietrich, *Letters and Papers from Prison,* The Enlarged Edition, edited by Eberhard Bethge, translated by Reginald Fuller, Frank Clarke, John Bowden and others, SCM, London, 1967

LT Bonhoeffer, Dietrich, *Life Together,* translated by Daniel W. Bloesch, Fortress Press, Minneapolis, 1996 *(DBWE 5)*

NRS Bonhoeffer, Dietrich, *No Rusty Swords: Letters, Lectures and Notes 1928-1936 from the Collected Works of Dietrich Bonhoeffer,* Volume I., edited and introduced by Edwin H. Robertson, translated by Edwin H. Robertson and John Bowden, Collins, London, 1965

SC Bonhoeffer, Dietrich, *Sanctorum Communio: A Theological Study of the Sociology of the Church,* translated by Reinhard Krauss and Nancy Lukens, Fortress Press, Minneapolis,1998 *(DBWE 1)*

TP Bonhoeffer, Dietrich, *True Patriotism: Letters, Lectures and Notes 1939-1945 from the Collected Works of Dietrich Bonhoeffer,* Volume III., edited and introduced by Edwin H. Robertson, translated by Edwin H. Robertson and John Bowden, Collins, London, 1973

Introduction

This study was originally planned as a comparison of a number of contextual receptions and interpretations of Bonhoeffer: some Anglo-Saxon interpretations, read from a Hungarian perspective and compared to the Hungarian interpretation. After two years of research the original plan had to be given up, for a number of reasons.

First, I realised that the Anglo-Saxon interpretations - British, South African and North American - and the Hungarian interpretation are incomparable to each other, because the conditions of research and theological work have been rather different. From the very beginning of Bonhoeffer interpretation Anglo-Saxon scholars could employ all possible academic means in their research of Bonhoeffer and enjoyed and ever-widening circle of readership, interested as well as critical. Hungarian scholars, at the same time, worked in a manifold isolation: they could not freely organise a working circle and they were, as theological work in general in the country, also artificially isolated from a wider circle of readers. Contacts were strictly controlled by the co-operation of state and church authorities, and even though a natural interest in Bonhoeffer's theological legacy emerged here and there - indeed, Bonhoeffer belonged to the most frequently quoted theologians - relevant questions were raised and serious efforts were made, in the absence of a lively academic and social context a substantial scholarship could not have developed. A single datum is probably sufficient to characterise the circumstances: the most abundant collection of Bonhoeffer's texts that was published prior to 1989, edited by the well-known expert, Bonhoeffer's one-time Berlin student Ferenc Lehel, is a version of one of Otto Dudzus's short Bonhoeffer readers, whose text has been truncated by the unknown censor to such an extent that in several instances Bonhoeffer's original argument cannot be identified. Although the political control of theological work disappeared after 1989, a new,

dynamic, theologically as well as socially conscious generation of Bonhoeffer-researchers did not appear in Hungary to date.

The second reason for giving up the original plan was that I made an unexpected discovery with respect to Anglo-Saxon interpretations as well. When I started my research I thought that I would find significant differences that originated in the different contexts. I found, instead, that the contextual interpretations were rather similar. I have found that interpreters who belong to different contexts often use the same elements of the *great narrative* of Bonhoeffer's life and work and apply to it aspects of a particular understanding of their own context, rather than making the Bonhoeffer-narrative really *con-textual.* Since the Bonhoeffer-narrative, based decisively on Eberhard Bethge's monumental biography, has a tendency of developing a rather simple reading of complex events as the struggle of Good against Evil, it may be effective in supporting the same simple reading of the complicated social and personal tensions intrinsic in any context. I concluded that *mainstream* Bonhoeffer-interpretation often cannot fulfil its declared promise to help in the understanding of a certain situation; on the contrary, it may hinder a sensitive understanding by forcing on it the simple pattern of the fight between Good and Evil.

As a result of the above findings, as my research proceeded, I felt a growing distance within me towards the possible political and theological consequences of the contextual interpretations. In short, I felt that if Bonhoeffer's message could be understood the way I have encountered it, I would rather not promote this message among Hungarian readers. Hungarians, similarly to other peoples, have a strong inclination to see the world around them *in black and white,* therefore, they need help in understanding their personal and communal history in a way that overcomes the friend-enemy or oppressor-liberator dichotomy, an assistance that *mainstream* Bonhoeffer interpretation, I believe, is unable to provide. For a long time I thought that my frustration was caused by the interpreters, but later I realised that the chief reason for the frustration is Bonhoeffer himself,

whose own evaluation of the tensions he participated in as well as his own role within these tensions dominated Bethge's biography to such an extent that, to exaggerate a little, the latter can even be regarded as Bonhoeffer's autobiography. Thus, the second year of my research ended in a massive disillusionment about the possible relevance of Bonhoeffer's theology in a Hungarian context.

Nevertheless, by the end of the second year a different process reached fruition as well. Having read several contextual interpretations I had become captivated by the ability of certain writers to relate Bonhoeffer's theological legacy to their own burning questions, and, in a broader sense, the possibility of pursuing a theological understanding of social events. I thought it would be meaningful to attempt this with respect to the presently most demanding questions of my country, that is, to the problem of the transition to democracy, a theme that also some Bonhoeffer scholars addressed in a remarkable way. A study like that, I thought, was meaningful even though I was not a Bonhoeffer-enthusiast any more: a critical encounter with Bonhoeffer's legacy and the problems of transition would be certainly instructive.

From this point onwards the form of the present study started to take shape. After experimenting with several possible perspectives for interweaving the challenge of Hungary's transition to democracy with Bonhoeffer interpretation, I finally decided to embark upon a comparative reading of the political theory of István Bibó and the theology of Dietrich Bonhoeffer.

Bibó is widely regarded as *the* Hungarian political theorist of the XX. century who made an unparallelled impact on the clarification of the possibilities of Hungarian democracy. I will not discuss Bibó's life story[1] later, but here I must list the most important facts to show that his life can be

[1] For a short but informative essay on Bibó's life see Sándor Szilágyi, 'István Bibó, Central Europe's Political Therapist', in DRS pp. 527-545. See also Bernard Crick's 'Introduction' in Bibó, *The Paralysis of International Institutions and the Remedies,* Harvester Press, Hassocks, 1976, pp. iii-xi.

compared to that of Bonhoeffer to a remarkable extent. Bibó had a broadly cultured middle class background. He was born in 1911; he had remarkable intellectual achievements at an early age; he spent a couple of years studying abroad. He occupied a responsible position in the state administration and got involved in anti-Nazi activities as well as taking part in actions on behalf of the Jews in 1944. After the war he launched into a large-scale political journalism and was silenced by the Communists in 1949. He was a member of the Imre Nagy government in 1956; after the revolution he was arrested in 1957 and got a life-sentence in 1958. He was released by amnesty in 1963 but he was silenced until his death in 1979. After his death his writings had an incomparable effect on Hungarian intellectual resistance. He was a devoted Christian.

By deciding in favour of a substantial incorporation of Bibó into the argument of the study I, in fact, joined the several attempts of comparing Bonhoeffer to someone else - in this respect the present work is rather typical. The comparison of Bonhoeffer and Bibó, however, could have been made in a number of ways, and in this respect I had to make a clear choice. Their life-stories offer more than one point of comparison. Documents would allow one to do research into their ways of relating to their respective heritage; or their road towards involvement in active anti-Nazi resistance; or their understanding of the predicament of the Jews, their related actions and reflections; or their prison experiences; or their understanding of the role of the church and the person of Christ, and so on. Regrettably, none of these can be addressed within the limits of this study. Instead, we will follow the development of their understanding of the concept of freedom, up to the early forties, when both of them were seriously occupied by the same question: the political order of Europe after the Second World War and the possible place and role of Germany in the new order. For Bonhoeffer this phase meant almost the end of his life. Bibó wrote his more influental and well-known writings after 1945; however, as it has already convincingly been shown, the fragmentary essay that he wrote from 1942 to 1944 contains

all the important tenets that characterise his later, mature work[2]. Therefore, while we confine ourselves to the limits of the comparison that is naturally determined by Bonhoeffer's early death, we will not lose sight of the substance of Bibó's writings that are usually related to the later, better known essays.

A note on the term *comparison* should be taken here, to avoid misunderstanding. I will compare the thought of Bibó to that of Bonhoeffer not by putting myself into a third, neutral position, equally far from or equally close to both thinkers. My deliberate choice of Bibó and not someone or something else is also a way of identifying my own position: I have found in Bibó a source of a relevant answer to the challenge of Hungary's transition to democracy. Therefore, Bibó's thought will be the starting point of the comparison, and I will draw the appropriate pieces of Bonhoeffer's thought into the perspective that will be developed by a critical analysis of Bibó's theory. In other words, Bibó will determine the agenda, and I will make Bonhoeffer answer the questions raised by the interpretation of Bibó. A treatment like this necessarily excludes several possible approaches to Bonhoeffer's theology; at the same time, the characteristic challenge created on the basis of Bibó helps us formulate certain questions that *mainstream* Bonhoeffer-interpretation would not raise. Further, the *comparison* will be uneven in one more sense: I will give more space to Bonhoeffer's answer than I will devote to the interpretation of Bibó: while Bibó's position can be identified in a rather straightforward way, a fair reading of the more complicated argumentation of Bonhoeffer requires a more complex effort.

The comparison of the thought of a political thinker of theological relevance to the thought of a theologian full of political implications demands some preparation. First I will construct an *elementary map* for understanding the relationship of Christianity, freedom and democracy in

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[2] Sándor Szilágyi, 'Bevezető' [Introduction] in Sándor Szilágyi ed., *Bibó István*, Magyar Panteon 11., Új Mandátum Könyvkiadó, Budapest, 2001, pp. 7-17.

general. *Christianity* will not be presented in a thematic manner within this map, rather, the overwhelming presence of Christian theologians commenting on social and political topics will represent the Christian perspective. Christianity and European social theory can hardly be separated from each other within the last two thousand years. Even relatively modern concepts of freedom and democracy have easily demonstrable Christian roots, and, in turn, modern social thought influences theological thinking.

I shall start drawing this map by a short analysis of the concepts of *negative freedom* and *positive freedom*. The relationship of negative freedom and positive freedom is not only crucial with respect to the understanding of the several ways the sense of freedom can be effective in formulating a certain kind of democratic idea; it is also decisive for our present comparison, since negative freedom - or *freedom from* - and positive freedom - or *freedom for* - appear as a key pair of concepts both in Bibó's social theory and Bonhoeffer's theology.

As a second step I shall continue drawing this map by outlining the understanding of democracy within a Christian perspective. Here I plan to create a fourfold approach to democracy: as tradition, as vision, as system and as process. Having finished this map I shall conclude that the understanding of freedom plays a crucial role in the understanding of democracy, and a concept of freedom can be regarded as a possible point of encounter for theology and social theory. Within this framework an awareness of the importance of the understanding of *self* or *human identity* emerges: it turns out that the latter has a crucial role in the development of the sense of freedom and democracy. This is the subject of chapter 1.

Chapter 2 is devoted to the analysis of Bibó's understanding of freedom and democracy. As a first step I shall make an attempt to clarify the relationship between Bibó's Christianity and the coherence of his thought, an attempt that, I believe, is original in this field. Within this clarification the crucial impact of Max Weber on Bibó's thinking will become obvious. As a second step I shall outline the concept of freedom in the early Bibó,

established in his first dissertation, *Coercion, Law, Freedom.* In this work Bibó's view of human identity, which stresses the inevitable importance of spontaneity, also appears in close relationship with his understanding of freedom. Finally, I shall analyse the first large-scale - albeit fragmentary - essay of the mature Bibó, *On the Equilibrium and Peace of Europe,* where his early findings reach a complex understanding of democracy which could be converted into a direct and detailed plan for re-creating a viable political order for post-war Europe. In the course of chapter 2 I shall also make a number of tentative attempts at a theological reading of Bibó's developing social theory.

Chapter 3 and chapter 4 will be devoted to a close reading of some of Bonhoeffer's theological texts, pursuing an understanding of his concept of freedom and the latter's political implications as they appeared within Bonhoeffer's idea of the political order of post-war Europe. In the course of my argumentation I shall utilise some of my findings in chapter 1 and chapter 2. With respect to chapter 1 I want to emphasise the importance of the concept of self or human identity in a development of an understanding of freedom; with respect to chapter 2 I plan to pay attention to Bonhoeffer's evaluation of Max Weber's theory as well as the role of spontaneity in his understanding of person. These aspects of my research, I believe, lend some originality to my approach to Bonhoeffer's theology. Further, in the course chapter 3 and chapter 4 I shall engage in a critical discussion with some leading Bonhoeffer-scholars who, I think, are inclined to incorporate Bonhoeffer's theology into their own theory to such an extent that the characteristics of Bonhoeffer's theology sometimes evaporate.

Chapter 3, the longest unit of this work, is based on a close reading of Bonhoeffer's first dissertation, *Sanctorum Communio.* This first study represents a role within the whole work of Bonhoeffer that is similar to the role of *Coercion, Law, Freedom* in the thought of Bibó: although immature here and there; the seeds of long-standing important patterns are already present. In *Sanctorum Communio* we can witness how one of Bonhoeffer's

chief theological ideas, *vicarious representative action* and his understanding of person and human sociality became intertwinned right at the outset. We can also observe a characteristic twofold understanding of human identity, as Bonhoeffer sets his concept of person into two different perspective, created by two different patterns of I-You-relations. I-You-relations pattern 'A', as I call it, is used for the description of theological-sacramental relationships, while I-You-relations pattern 'B' is applied to social-ethical relations. As Bonhoeffer keeps changing the two patterns as his argument proceeds, he connects theological argument to the social ideas cultivated by his upper-middle class family, gaining for the latter a theological justification at the end. His understanding of sociality, centered around the motif of *vicarious representative action,* is the basis of his theological concept of the freedom of God, that, in turn, is the source of his idea of human freedom.

The development of Bonhoeffer's understanding of freedom and its social implications shall be discussed in chapter 4. In the first section of this chapter I will follow the development of Bonhoeffer's concept of freedom from *Act and Being* to *Life Together,* showing that on the solid basis set in *Sanctorum Communio* Bonhoeffer was determined to think about freedom one-sidedly as *freedom for* to such an extent that even obvious experiences of negative freedom could not be given a conceptual reflection within his theory. The political implications of this concept of freedom, necessarily, supported the social basis of the concept itself. In the second section of chapter 4 I will show that while thinking about the post-war political order of Europe, Bonhoeffer was led by the patriarchal values of his own family. I reconstruct Bonhoeffer's own view on the basis of some of his writings, written during the early forties, and I will show that both a comparison to Anglo-Saxon perspectives of the time and to the political idea intrinsic in the commentaries of Bonhoeffer's friend and biographer Eberhard Bethge reflect on Bonhoeffer's part the peculiar understanding of sociality of Prussian leading intellectuals, generally identified as the *Sonderweg.* In the closing

section of chapter 4 I shall pursue a tentative reading of the prison theology to see whether the last phase of Bonhoeffer's life brought any change in Bonhoeffer's understanding of sociality, whose basic assumptions show a remarkable consistency from *Sanctorum Communio* to *Ethics*.

Concluding my work I will emphasise the interrelatedness of the concept of person, of freedom and the understanding of democracy again, as it becomes apparent in the thought of both Bibó and Bonhoeffer. With respect to the present-day challenges of the transition toward democracy in Hungary - and, naturally, not only in Hungary - I shall conclude that while Bibó's theory, being compatible with the democratic idea, can be a source of a clearer understanding of the process of transition, Bonhoeffer's theology, a valuable legacy in several senses, can offer little help in answering this particular challenge.

Chapter 1

Understanding Freedom and Democracy

A. The Twofold Understanding of Freedom

a. Theologians on 'Negative' and 'Positive' Freedom

"The notion of freedom is central to the vocabulary of moral and religious thought in the Western tradition"[1], David Little begins his dictionary entry on freedom. He defines freedom first from the perspective of the capacity of making the right choice between good and bad, and then he emphasises acting on the same choice without being restrained by a coercive force. The idea of constraint, he concludes, is generally taken as the standard complement to freedom; the connection of the two ideas, however, is a complicated one. "Restraints may, in general, be 'internal' or 'external', as well as 'positive' or 'negative'."[2] Further, since the relation between freedom and restraint is not simply descriptive but also normative, that is, the evaluation of their relation is determined by the preceding evaluation of the action they belong to, the character of the relation of freedom and restraint cannot be determined by simple, general statements. On this basis Little questions the general validity of the well-known definitions of Bertrand Russell and John Stuart Mill, such as the one that states that freedom is 'the absence of obstacles to the realisation of desires' and 'all restraint *qua* restraint is an evil'. By questioning Russell's and Mill's definitions, David Little, criticises, in fact, a one-sidedly negative understanding of freedom, without mentioning this characterisation. By doing so, his short evaluation is harmonious with some recent theological discourses on the nature of freedom.

In the following paragraphs we will examine two recent theological

---

1 David Little, 'Freedom', in Alan Richardson and John Bowden eds., *A New Dictionary of Christian Theology*, SCM, 1983, p. 216.
2 Little, 'Freedom', p. 217.

interpretations of freedom. Both understand freedom as 'negative' and 'positive', as 'freedom from' and 'freedom for'. One of the theologians, similarly to David Little, refers back to Isaiah Berlin's classical essay, 'Two Concepts of Liberty'[3]; therefore, as an outstanding treatment of this issue, we will consider Berlin's understanding of negative and positive freedom as well.

Miroslav Volf offers a fresh reading of the modernist concept of freedom in his *Exclusion and Embrace*[4], a remarkable piece of political theology. His thesis is that a 'theology of embrace' would provide a broad framework for a right understanding of freedom. The 'theology of embrace' is based on the theology of the Cross, a trinitarian understanding of God, and a theology of the Eucharist. 'Embrace' consists of four consecutive acts: opening the arms, waiting, closing the arms, and opening the arms again[5]. The right understanding of freedom requires - Volf argues, following Gustavo Gutiérrez - regarding love as superior to freedom: "love, not freedom is ultimate"[6]. More specifically, it requires the rethinking of the schema of oppression and liberation, in which a modern Western understanding of freedom has long been given a characteristic interpretation.

Having Berlin's 'Two Concept of Liberty' in mind[7], Volf briefly summarises the liberal and socialist understanding of freedom and places these concepts into the schema of *oppression and liberation*. According to the liberal approach,

"[a]ll people are equal and all are free to pursue their interests and develop their personalities in their own way, provided they respect the same freedom in others. (...) When this inalienable freedom is either denied by a totalitarian state or suppressed by a dominant culture we speak of oppression; when the cage that holds people back from doing and being what they prefer is dismantled, we speak of liberation."[8]

---

3 Isaiah Berlin, 'Two Concepts of Liberty', in Isaiah Berlin, *Four Essays on Liberty*, Oxford University Press, 1969, pp. 118-172.
4 Miroslav Volf, *Exclusion and Embrace: A Theological Exploration of Identity, Otherness, and Reconciliation*, Abingdon Press, Nashville, 1996
5 Volf, *Exclusion and Embrace*, Chapter III, pp. 99-165
6 Volf, *Exclusion and Embrace*, p. 105.
7 Volf, *Exclusion and Embrace*, p. 102, footnote 2.
8 Volf, *Exclusion and Embrace*, p. 101.

Socialist thinkers, however, regard the liberal notion of freedom empty: they think that

"the concentration on the negative notion of freedom creates the kind of social dynamics which empties freedom of meaning. Freedom can therefore never mean simply the absence of external interference with the individual's will to do or not to do what she or he wants, as the Hobbsian tradition claims; freedom is actual power to live life with dignity, to be the artisan of one's own destiny. (...) The iron gates of social dungeons must be shattered; slaves must become their own masters. Every social project built around the notion of freedom tends therefore to operate with the stable pair of 'oppression' and 'liberation'. Oppression is the negativity, liberation its negation, freedom the resulting positivity."[9]

We cannot follow Volf's nuanced argumentation about the problems of the application of the oppression-liberation schema in detail, but we shall highlight one element of his criticism. The main reason for regarding the oppression-liberation schema misleading, Volf argues, is that in most cases it is difficult to determine who the oppressor, the victim, and the liberator is.

People who are familiar with Central-European realities would regard rather persuasive the native Croatian author's arguments about each side claiming to be the victim, the swiftly changing roles and the fact that the half-beheaded martyrs turn out to be prospective great persecutors[10]. The point is that Volf relates the question of freedom to the problem of identity; in fact, identity is the central issue in his book.

Let us return to the conceptual appearance of freedom in *Exclusion and Embrace*: the conceptual bridge between the general characterisation of freedom and Volf's own use of the concept is clearly discernible. Berlin's 'negative freedom' and the 'freedom from' used by other thinkers correspond to Volf's 'liberation' in the above sense of the word, while 'positive freedom' or 'freedom for' corresponds to the meaning of 'freedom' given from the perspective of socialist thinkers. We leave these findings undiscussed now and turn to the treatment of the problem of freedom provided by Reinhard Hütter.

9 Volf, *Exclusion and Embrace*, p. 102.
10 Volf, *Exclusion and Embrace*, p. 104f

In his essay on 'The Twofold Center of Lutheran Ethics: Christian Freedom and God's Commandments'[11] Hütter offers a straightforward theological criticism of 'negative freedom'. The context of his study is the cultural and intellectual situation of the Western world that he regards "the habitat and ambiance of relative material affluence, legal security and domestic peace", whose idol is, as Hütter believes, "individual freedom"[12]. Against the background of this context Hütter argues:

"Christian freedom is the embodiment of practicing God's commandments as a way of life. It is necessary to reintroduce this positive and substantive notion of Christian freedom because in modern Protestant ethics 'freedom' has come to be understood primarily as 'negative' freedom. It is seen as a freedom 'from' and not a freedom 'for'. Two complex developments have led to a deeply problematic dichotomy between a purely 'negative' freedom and its archenemy, the law, which is seen to have a purely legislative and enforcing character. The first development is an outgrowth of the 'Luther renaissance' [...that] misapplied the doctrine of justification by faith alone by making it into the formal principle of Protestantism. The second development is associated with the overarching influence Immanuel Kant's philosophy - especially his concepts of 'freedom' and 'law' - had on modern Protestant ethics. Consequently modern Protestant ethics understands 'freedom' primarily negatively as freedom 'from' and views 'law' either as heteronomous and thus a threat to autonomy or as mediated through autonomy and thus as purely formal."[13]

These two developments, Hütter explains, have led to fatal consequences for Protestant ethics in general, such as antinomian tendencies; a concept of freedom without a substantive *gestalt*, which means that even Christ does not have a substantive place in freedom; the gospel turns into an impetus for a utilitarianism of love directed towards an abstract neighbour; a new moral agent who is free to love spontaneously as well as to sin boldly; replacing Luther's happy exchange between the person's sin and Christ's righteousness with an *unhappy exchange* between God and the self-sufficient subject; a radical

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11 Reinhard Hütter, 'The Twofold Center of Lutheran Ethics: Christian Freedom and God's Commandments', in: Karen L. Bloomquist and John R. Stumme eds., *The Promise of Lutheran Ethics*, Fortress Press, Minneapolis, 1998, pp. 31-54.

12 Hütter, 'The Twofold Center of Lutheran Ethics' in Bloomquist, Stumme eds., *The Promise of Lutheran Ethics*. pp. 31f

13 *ibid.*

anthropocentricity; all in all, a fatal impoverishment of Protestant ethics. However, the author continues, three twentieth century movements that intend to overcome the 'Protestant fallacy' can also be taken into account.

The first movement can be associated to the theology of the Word of God. By reestablishing a theocentic approach, this theology *decentered the moral agent* as the ethical subject. By speaking about God as the only good and the only free one, and the human being as finite and mortally wounded by sin, the center of Christian ethics became God - or, by taking a christological approach, Christ - again. Consequently, the commandments of God and the obedience to Christ have emerged as constitutive to Christian freedom.

The second movement can be related to the Protestant rediscovery of Aristotle and of Thomas Aquinas, and originated in the 1970s and 1980s in North America. This movement *differentiated the moral agent,* showing, that the ethical subject is a much more complex phenomenon than the nearly mathematical point at the center of the Kantian ethics.

"Introducing concepts of character-formation and virtues shows how particular goods and practices can direct and form the agent's character in a significant way, positively and negatively. 'Freedom' is concretely enabled by particular virtues, such as prudence, justice, or courage, and hindered by particular vices, such as greed, pride, or impatience. Character and virtue ethics put flesh and bones back on the Kantian moral agent..."[14].

The third movement attempted to overcome the abstract universalism of Protestant ethics by *recontextualising the moral agent.* It occurred through two theological foci: creation and God's economy of salvation. A focus on creation emhasises the sociopolitical location of the moral agent as a crucial aspect of one's identity and particular struggle: feminist theology and other liberation theologies as well as ecologically oriented theologies belong to this possibility. A focus on salvation considers the context of God's people as a particular community as decisive in making moral judgements. Although the two sorts of

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14 Hütter, 'The Twofold Center of Lutheran Ethics' in Bloomquist, Stumme eds, *The Promise of Lutheran Ethics,* p. 39.

contexts, rooted in a focus on creation and a focus on salvation, are in tension to each other - which, Hütter argues, can be resolved in the perspective of the relationship of 'freedom and law' - both are effective in enhancing the moral subject with a contextually determined substance.

These three movements, *decentering, differentiating and recontextualising* the moral agent, can be understood as ways of overcoming the fatal dominance of the concept of negative freedom in modern Protestant ethics. We will not follow the specifically Lutheran solution of the problem that Hütter elaborates in the rest of his perceptive study. At the end of the review of his article, we may underline that Hütter, similarly to Volf, related the qestion of identity to the problem of freedom; moreover, the latter made a rethinking of the meaning of freedom fundamentally dependent on a renewed interest in a more nuanced understanding of identity.

Regarding the concepts of freedom, it may be interesting to note that all three theologians consider it necessary to promote some sort of a positive understanding of freedom over against an - allegedly menacing - negative one. Having summarised their views, now we may turn to Isaiah Berlin's classical treatment of the concept of freedom.

b. Berlin's 'Two Concepts of Liberty'

In the above review we concluded that both Volf and Hütter related the understanding of freedom to the problem of identity. For Berlin, I think, the determinative role of the understanding of identity to the meaning of freedom is similarly evident. Within his explanation of positive freedom Berlin writes:

"This demonstrates (if demonstration of so obvious a truth is needed) that conceptions of freedom directly derive from views of what constitutes a self, a person, a man. Enough manipulation with the definition of man, and freedom can be made to mean whatever the manipulator wishes."[15]

15 Berlin, *Four Essays on Liberty*, p. 134.

Berlin begins his treatment of freedom with an analysis of negative freedom. His definition of negative freedom includes a reference to coercion, understood exlusively in a social sense, that "implies the deliberate interference of other human beings within the areas in which I could otherwise act"[16]. Negative freedom, therefore, is "not being interfered with by others; [t]he wider the area of non-interference the wider my freedom."[17] This area of freedom cannot be unlimited, because it would lead to social chaos. A certain minimum of negative freedom, however, should be guaranteed: it is necessary for the person "to pursuse, and even to conceive, the various ends which men hold good or right or sacred"[18].

Berlin is well aware of the ambiguities of this classically liberal notion of freedom. He knows that private and public life cannot perfectly be separated, 'freedom for the pike is death for the minnows'; he also sees - together with socialist thinkers - that negative freedom can be meaningless without adequate conditions for using it; and he knows the feeling of guilt of some conscienscious Western liberals who rightly think that the negative freedom they enjoy can be sustained only at the expense of the vast majority who do not have the same freedom. All these ambiguities, however, cannot provide a reason for eliminating negative freedom: it should be limited, regulated, some practical compromises between freedom and other social goods, such as equality and justice have to be found, but giving up negative freedom would lead to self -surrender and self-defeat. One of the main liberal thinkers whose arguments provide a basis for Berlin is John Stuart Mill[19], who declared that

"unless men are left to live as they wish 'in the path which merely concerns themselves', civilisation cannot advance; the truth will not, for lack of a free market in ideas, come to light; there will be no scope for spontaneity, originality, genius, for mental energy, for moral courage. Society will be crushed by the

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16 Berlin, *Four Essays on Liberty*, p. 122.
17 Berlin, *Four Essays on Liberty*, p. 123.
18 Berlin, *Four Essays on Liberty*, p. 124.
19 See also Berlin's essay on Mill, 'John Stuart Mill and the Ends of Life' in the same volume, *Four Essays on Liberty*, pp. 173-206.

weight of 'collective mediocrity'."[20]

Berlin adds three remarks to this characterisation of negative freedom. First, he believes, Mill simplifies reality by regarding freedom as good and coercion as bad without qualification, and he does the same too by thinking that noble values can develop only within liberal circumstances. Second, the sense of privacy is a relatively new development of human history. Third, negative freedom is neither incompatible with autocracy, nor is it necessarily connected with democracy or self-government. This third remark guides Berlin's argument towards the discussion of 'positive' freedom by making and important distinction:

"The desire to be governed by myself, or at any rate to participate in the process by which my life is to be controlled, may be as deep a wish as that of a free area for action, and perhaps historically older. But it is not a desire for the same thing. So different is it, indeed, as to have led in the end to the great clash of ideologies that dominates our world. For it is this - the 'positive' conception of liberty: not freedom from, but freedom to - to lead one prescribed form of life - which the adherents of the 'negative' notion represent as being, at times, no better than a specious disguise for brutal tyranny."[21]

Positive freedom, derived from one's wish to be his or her own master, thus enters into Berlin's argument as not only having a distinctly different aspect from that of negative freedom, but also as a possibly menacing human desire. While explaining the opressive possiblility, Berlin shows the importance of the awareness of identity. In the course of a liberating experience, he argues, people may become aware of a dominating self and of "something in them which is brought to heel"[22]. The former is regarded as one's 'higher nature', identified in various ways, while the latter is considered as 'lower' in comparison to the former self. The 'higher', 'real' or 'true' self , that can be concieved also as a social entity, may allow one to constrain others for their own sake, to make them discover their - latent - true self. "Once I take this view, I am in a position to ignore the actual wishes of men or societies"[23] and may become a tyrant while promoting

20 Berlin, *Four Essays on Liberty*, p. 127.
21 Berlin, *Four Essays on Liberty*, p. 131.
22 Berlin, *Four Essays on Liberty*, p. 132.
23 Berlin, *Four Essays on Liberty*, p. 133.

the 'freedom' of others.

Berlin demonstrates the consequences of distinguishing between two selves by relating the two major historical forms which the desire to be self-directed - directed by one's 'true' self - has taken:

"the first, that of self-abnegation in order to attain independence; the second, that of self-realisation, or total self-identification with a specific principle or ideal in order to attain the selfsame end"[24].

The ultimate root of self-abnegation is a search for security, a solid ground under one's feet; to act and not to be acted upon. It is "[t]o rid myself of fear, or love, or the desire to conform (...) to liberate myself from the despotism of something which I cannot control."[25] This search can lead to seemingly contradictory outcomes: a fight for autonomy on the one hand and a happy submission to the will of a wise and manipulative tyrant on the other; a disclaim of desires as well as a resistence until the bitter end to secure a safe area to live. Positive freedom of this kind, therefore, may be radically different to negative freedom, an ability to do what one wishes; likewise, a feeling of freedom can be the very antithesis of political freedom.

Self-realisation, Berlin argues, is based on the conviction that "[t]he only true method of attaining freedom (...) is by the use of critical reason, the understanding of what is necessary and what is contingent"[26]. Understanding the world around me and applying my wishes to its possibilities and necessities, is the way to freedom. Any interpretation of the world, any 'great narrative' is given a crucial role; the key to freedom is knowledge, and the way to freedom is a resolute act of turning away from anything that is considered obscure in comparison to knowledge. "Knowledge liberates not by offering us more open possibilities amongst which we can make our choice, but by preserving us from

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24 Berlin, *Four Essays on Liberty*, p. 134.
25 Berlin, *Four Essays on Liberty*, p. 138.
26 Berlin, *Four Essays on Liberty*, p. 141.

the frustration of attempting the impossible."[27] And because the single true interpretation of reality is not only true for myself but for anyone else, this positive concept of freedom may serve as a basis for all kinds of authoritarian, totalitarian and nationalist ways to make people happy and free. If right understanding makes true freedom possible, liberty will be identical with authority, obedience to superior persons will be the greatest virtue, education can be turned, in practice, into compulsion, coercion will be understood as loving service toward those who are unable to discipline themselves. All these may be the logical outcome of the elevating presupposition that there is a universal interpretation of the world that can be understood and followed by everyone, as Berlin exemplified it by Mozart's *Magic Flute*; however, if the original thesis is questionable, the whole superstructure will lose its validity.

Berlin discusses two more related aspects of positive freedom as self-realisation: the relationship of liberty to her sisters, equality and fraternity, and the relationship between liberty and soveregnity. In both cases, as follows from the intrinsic logic of positive freedom, the related value may dominate the relationship to such an extent that freedom will be understood as identical to it. In the first case, the very natural wish to be someone and gain a recognisable status may lead people to give up their individual negative freedom for the sake of participating in the effort of a group whose success promises an independence that is greater than the person felt to have had before. In the second case, the drive to acquire authority, a sovereign power may obscure the fact that - according to the liberal tradition - freedom does not depend on the person who possesses power but on the limits of power: "no society is free unless it is governed by at any rate two interrelated principles: first, that no power, but only rights can be regarded as absolute, so that all men, whatever power governs them, have an absolute right to refuse to behave inhumanly; and, second, that there are frontiers, not artificially drawn, within which men should be

27 Berlin, *Four Essays on Liberty*, p. 144.

inviolable"[28].

Having explained the several possible consequences of a one-sided understanding of freedom as solely positive freedom, Berlin insists that a clear demand for negative freedom has to be sustained if a society wants to avoid the possibility of turning into a tyranny. The metaphysical basis for negative freedom, Berlin argues at the end of his essay, is the conviction that values and social goods cannot be derived from a single harmonious system; on the contrary, conflict between different ends, a pluralism of values is natural and unavoidable. Berlin does not state that individual freedom or the freedom to choose has to be the single or even the dominant criterion of social action, however, he considers this aspect a sobering perspective that might be indispensable on the road towards maturity. As he finishes his discussion of the two concepts of liberty:

"'To realise the relative validity of one's convictions', said an admirable writer of our time, 'and yet stand for them unflinchingly, is what distinguishes a civilised man from a barbarian'. To demand more than this is perhaps a deep and incurable metaphysical need; but to allow it to determine one's practice is a symptom of an equally deep, and more dangerous, moral and political immaturity."[29]

c. Understanding Freedom - a Summary

This short review of the works of the theologians and the political thinker shows some important common features as well as differences in their understanding of freedom. First, and most significantly, the intrinsic relationship between the way of concieving human identity, a concept of the self and a sense of freedom has convincingly been shown. Second, all the thinkers maintain a differentiation between a 'negative' and a 'positive' aspect within the concept of freedom. This formal similarity, however, cannot disguise the great differences with respect to the material content of the twofold concept of freedom. We could witness two contradictory approaches: two theologians argued that a negative understanding of freedom is more dominant, at the same time, it poses a danger

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28 Berlin, *Four Essays on Liberty*, p. 165.
29 Berlin, *Four Essays on Liberty*, p. 172.

for human sociality without a related positive sense of freedom, while the third theologian and the social thinker insisted that an overwhelming desire for positive freedom can paralise humanity without the balance of negative freedom. Further, while an agreement about the meaning of negative freedom could be found, we have been given three rather different descriptions of what positive freedom may originate in and what it might mean. Thus, even this brief review can provide us with a sense of the diverse understanding of freedom within the formal characterisation of negative and positive freedom.

My thesis is that the manifold understanding of democracy can partially be traced back to this varied perception of freedom. Having acquired some sense of this perspective, now we embark upon an attempt at understanding democracy.

B. Understanding Democracy

The problem of defining democracy, as John de Gruchy remarks, is notorious[30]; yet, it is not an entirely hopeless task.

We may begin our attempt at a definition with some classic and succinct formulas, such as the words from Abraham Lincoln's Gettysburg address: democracy is "rule of the people by the people for the people"[31]. Nearly a century later and reflecting on various experiences Winston Churchill stated:

"Democracy is the worst form of government except for all those other forms that have been tried from time to time."[32]

Reinhold Niebuhr bases his definition onto his theological and anthropological conviction:

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30 John de Gruchy, *Christianity and Democracy: A Theology for a Just World Order*, Cambridge University Press, 1955, p. 6.
31 'Address Delivered at the Dedication of the Cemetery at Gettysburg, November 19, 1863', in Abraham Lincoln, *Great Speeches*, New York, Dover Publications, 1991. Quoted by de Gruchy, *op. cit.* p. 6.
32 Winston Churchill, November 11, 1947. Quoted in Robert I. Fitzhenery ed., *Barnes & Noble Book of Quotations*, New York, Harper & Row, 1983, p. 85.

"Man's capacity for justice makes democracy possible, but man's inclination to injustice makes democracy necessary."[33]

E. B. White presents a comprehensive definition:

"Democracy is the recurrent suspicion that more than half the people are right more than half the time. It is the feeling of privacy in the voting booths, the feeling of communion in the libraries, the feeling of vitality everywhere ... It is an idea that has not been disproved yet, a song the words of which have not gone bad."[34]

Within a comparison of Germany and Switzerland at the immediate aftermath of the Second World War Carl Gustav Jung arrived at the following definition:

"True democracy is a highly psychological institution which takes account of human nature as it is and makes allowances for the necessity of conflict within its own national boundaries."[35]

Reflecting on the recent process of global democratisation, Walter Wink remarks:

"Ideally, democracy is non-violence institutionalised (...) a system for the non-violent resolution of conflict and disputes through representative forms of government and civil life."[36]

With respect to the recent development of world-wide democracy, Pope John Paul II claims that

"Authentic democracy is possible only in a State ruled by law, and on the basis of a correct conception of the human person"[37]

As a next step, we may consider a recently formulated theory that pictures the process of global democratisation in three waves, each of which might correspond to endeavours on the part of Christianity. Just after the collapse of Eastern European state socialism, Samuel Huntington published his

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33 Reinhold Niebuhr, *The Children of Light and the Children of Darkness*, New York, Scribner's, 1944, p. xiii.
34 E. B. White, *The Wild Flag*, Boston, Houghton Mifflin, 1954, p. 31.
35 Carl Gustav Jung, *Civilization in Transition*, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1964, p. 225.
36 Walter Wink, *Engaging the Powers*, Fortress Press, Minneapolis, 1992, p. 171.
37 John Paul II., *Centesimus Annus*, published in Catholic Truth Society, 1991, p. 34.

view of the three waves[38]. As John Witte Jr. summarises it,

"[t]he first wave built on the English, American, and French Revolutions and swept over more than thirty European and British Commonwealth countries by the end of World War I. The second wave, following World War II, restored democracy to much of Western Europe and brought new democratic governments to several nations in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. The third wave, building since the early 1970s, has swept over more than thirty African, Latin American, and Eastern European nations. These three waves of political democratisation, Huntington shows, have been 'cumulative', one building on the momentum and advances of the other. They have also been 'regressive', invariably experiencing anti-democratic backlashes and undertows."[39]

Witte adds his own contribution to Huntington's theory, suggesting, that

"[t]hree waves of Christian democratic impulses (...) have anticipated and accompanied these three waves of political democratisation. The first was a Protestant wave that broke into political form in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries principally in Western European nations and their colonies. The second was a missionary wave that broke in Africa and Asia and a related Christian political wave that broke in Europe and Latin America in the middle third of the twentieth century. The third is a Roman Catholic wave that has emerged since the Second Vatican Council and effectuated political change principally in Latin America and Eastern Europe. These three waves of Christian democratic impulses, like their political analogues, have been both 'cumulative' and 'regressive'. They provided an important, even indispensable, impetus to the three waves of political democratisation."[40]

A systematic treatment of our problem, however, requires more than succinct definitions or overall theories, however exact and expressive they may be. In his attempt to understand the relationship between democracy and Christianity, de Gruchy makes a distinction between democratic system and democratic vision.

"By democratic *system* we mean those constitutional principles and procedures, symbols and convictions, which have developed over the centuries and which have become an essential part of any genuine democracy whatever its precise historical form. When we speak about the democratic *vision* we refer to that hope for a society in which all people are truly equal and yet where difference is respected; a society in which all people are truly free, yet where social responsibility rather than individual self-interest prevails, and a society which is

38 See de Gruchy, *Christianity and Democracy*, p. 2. Also see John Witte Jr. ed., *Christianity and Democracy in Global Context*, Westview Press, Boulder, 1993, pp. 4f

39 Witte ed., *Christianity and Democracy*, p. 4.

40 Witte ed., *Christianity and Democracy*, pp. 4f

truly just, and therefore one in which the vast gulf between rich and poor has been overcome."[41]

Democracy as system and as vision can be related to Christianity, I believe, by using the tools and terms of systematic theology. An explanation of the democratic system may correspond to a systematic treatment of Christian social ethics, the norms and values of community life; while an interpretation of democratic vision could be achieved from the angle of Christian eschatology. However, a comprehensive approach to democracy from a Christian viewpoint cannot be limited to a strictly systematic investigation. Thus, I suggest, we should add two more ways in which democracy can be interpreted and related to Christianity, ways which are implicitly present in de Gruchy's study as well. Besides democracy as system and vision we shall examine democracy as *tradition* by pursuing an historical and contextual approach as well as a *process*, looking for the relationship of democracy in the making to Christian doctrine, life, practice and spirituality.

Thus, for preparing an encounter between Christianity and democracy, I will try to explain the meaning of democracy in four consecutive ways. First, I will summarise the historical lesson of democracy as *tradition*. Second, I will introduce the promise that democratic *vision* offers. Third, I will explore the *system*, that is, the norms and values democracy employs while trying to turn its vision into reality. Fourth, I will investigate the way, *process* or development in whose course democracy is gradually able to utilise its norms and values for achieving its goals.

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41 de Gruchy, *Christianity and Democracy*, p. 12.

a. Democracy as Tradition

When we approach democracy as a tradition we shall distinguish between three main historical legacies: that of liberal democracy, social democracy, and Christian democracy.

Liberal Democracy

Liberalism, as David McLellan introduces this expression,

"is based on a concept of freedom of the individual which has two main sources. The first is the Protestant Reformation with its opposition to traditional Catholic notions of hierarchy and its emphasis on dissent and freedom of conscience; the second, and later, is the secular Enlightenment which advocated government by consent, the idea of social contract and the use of calculative reason in politics. In the latter, particularly, an analogy was drawn between the emergence of market relationships and the growth of modern liberal democracy."[42]

Liberalism, as it appeared at the time of the transition of Medieval Europe into the modern era, was both reactionary - in the literal meaning of the word - and revolutionary at the same time. It

"appealed to reason and conscience rather than to tradition, it advocated resistance to tyranny and affirmed individual human rights. Society was no longer conceived of in organic terms. The individual rather than the collective was a priori."[43]

It took a long time before liberalism became crystallised as the characteristic worldview and way of life we know today. Luther, the powerful advocate of the 'Freedom of a Christian' still lived in an organic society, answering to social challenges mostly in terms of Augustine's theology.[44] A generation later Calvin, although much closer to modern thought-patterns than

42 David McLellan ed., *Political Christianity: A Reader*, SPCK, 1997, p. 171.

43 de Gruchy, *Christianity and Democracy*, pp. 95f

44 See the succinct summary of Luther's social thoughts in Ulrich Duchrow, *Two Kingdoms – The Use and Misuse of a Lutheran Theological Concept*, Lutheran World Federation, Geneva, 1977, pp. 3ff

Luther, still can be seen as "an adversary of modern democracy, believing neither in popular sovereignty nor in individual rights"[45]. Neither was the encounter and association of liberalism and democracy a natural process. The terror of the French Revolution made the idea of popular sovereignty suspicious in the eyes of many who advocated personal liberty. Liberty, however,

"required a civil society in which individuals were able to pursue their personal goals free from the constraints of state control. The means to achieve this was through insisting that the power of the state was not based on divine right, but on the sovereign will of the people themselves. This led inevitably to an espousal of democracy."[46]

According to McLellan's selection, the four major representative agents of liberal democracy are John Locke (1632-1704), Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778), Alexis de Tocqueville (1805-1859) and Michael Novak (1933-)[47].

In his *Two Treatises on Government* (1690) Locke rejects the idea that "Adam's private dominion and paternal jurisdiction" would be the source of all power which, consequently, would legitimise the constant power-struggle as normal and necessary. Instead, Locke suggests, we must derive political power from the natural state of the human being, that is, "a state of perfect freedom to order their actions, and dispose of their possessions" and a "state of equality, wherein all the power and jurisdiction is reciprocal". The state of freedom must not end in "an uncontrollable liberty"; it is governed by law and reason, given by the "one omnipotent and infinitely wise Maker" whose "workmanship" people are. The demand that "there cannot be supposed any such subordination among us that may authorise us to destroy one another" for Locke is absolute. Thus, although he endorses civil government as "the proper remedy of the inconveniences of the state of nature" on the basis of God's will "to restrain the partiality and violence of men", he would limit the absolute power of even such a

45 de Gruchy, *Christianity and Democracy*, p. 76.
46 de Gruchy, *Christianity and Democracy*, p. 96.
47 It has to be noted here, that in John Atherton ed., *Christian Social Ethics: A Reader*, The Pilgrim Press, Cleveland, Ohio, 1994, which we will employ later, Novak is regarded as a representative of conservative political thinking. I think, however, that McLellan's classification is more accurate; Novak's dependence on the classical liberal theory, namely on Locke and on Rousseau, seems to be more than obvious.

government, arguing that no one could be expected to judge rightly in his or her own case. For this reason, the "governors of independent communities" have to be limited by contracts "of agreeing together mutually to enter into one community, and make one body politic". But even in the community "truth and keeping of faith belongs to men, as men, and not as members of society".[48]

While religion (Christianity, to be exact) is the starting point for Locke to achieve the necessity of contracts, the same for Rousseau (in the form of Romantic deism) is just a useful means that may guarantee the stability of *The Social Contract* (1762). In Locke's case the strength of the contract is based on the same faith of the natural state of human being of governors and subjects, Rousseau's Sovereign, however, is interested only in the moral outcome of any religious belief of the people. To be sure, "it matters very much to the community that each citizen should have a religion; that will make him love his duty". While for Rousseau Christianity "is entirely spiritual, occupied solely with heavenly things" and, in the most likely situation when not all the members of the community are devoted Christians it is ultimately useless in resolving power-conflicts ("in this vale of sorrows, what does it matter whether we are free men or serfs?"), "a purely civil profession of faith" would be effective enough to discipline the "anti-social being".[49] Rousseau summarises his rather simple idea of religion this way:

"The dogmas of civil religion ought to be few, simple, and exactly worded, without explanation or commentary. The existence of a mighty, intelligent, and beneficent Divinity, possessed of foresight and providence, the life to come, the happiness of the just, the punishment of the wicked, the sanctity of the social contract and the laws: these are its positive dogmas. Its negative dogmas [would be] one, intolerance, which is a part of the cults we have rejected"[50]

While the spirit of (Christian) religion and the spirit of freedom were

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48 This paragraph is a summary of John Locke, *Two Treatises of Government,* Dent, 1993, pp. 115-122.
49 This section is based on Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *The Social Contract,* ed. and trans. G. D. H. Cole, Dent, 1913, pp. 304-308.
50 Rousseau, *The Social Contract,* p. 308.

"marching in the opposite direction" in France and industrial Europe during the Enlightenment and after the Great Revolution, in America, as de Tocqueville observes in his *Democracy in America*, (1835-40) "they were intimately united and (...) reigned in common over the same country". He found in America a form of Christianity that he described as a "democratic and republican religion". This religion played a role of a basis of fixed and determinate moral principles, held by "universal consent", which would encourage as well as frame and limit the "enterprising spirit" of the pioneers of the New World. "Thus, while the law permits the Americans to do what they please, religion prevents them from conceiving, and forbids them to commit, what is rash or unjust."

De Tocqueville was most fascinated by the solution Americans had achieved in relating religion and the secular realm to each other. "Religion in America takes no part in the government of society, but it must be regarded as the first of their political institutions"; and those of the clergy de Tocqueville had asked, whether Roman Catholic or Protestant, had all agreed that the "peaceful dominion" of religion was due to "the separation of church and state". This solution fits into the inclusive character of Christianity, since "[w]hen a religion founds its empire only upon the desire of immortality that lives in every human heart, it may aspire to universal dominion; but when it connects itself with a government, it must adopt maxims which are applicable only to certain nations." In the latter case, the church would share "a portion of that animosity which [the state] excites; becoming almost as fragile a thing as the powers of earth". On the other hand, "as long as a religion is sustained by those feelings, propensities, and passions which are found to occur under the same forms at all periods of history, it may defy the efforts of time".[51]

In *The Spirit of Democratic Capitalism* (1981) Novak creates a contact between the practice of liberal capitalism and the Christian tradition through the enterprising individual. In a pluralist society, he believes, the mission of

51 This section is based on Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, Knopf, 1945, pp. 311, 345-346.

Christianity is "uniquely difficult": neither the political system of democratic capitalism, nor a market system can be a Christian system. Christian values are, on the one hand, "counter-natural": "no intelligent human order (...) can be run according to the counsels of Christianity". On the other hand, "economic liberty means that all [people] must be permitted to establish their own values and priorities"; since even the consciences of Christians are different, Christian doctrine or counsel must not limit the practices employed in the service of the free market.

However, there are some areas that remain for Christianity within the spirit of democratic capitalism. Christianity is to be a source of bold inventions, creativity and economic activism: the profit motive, illustrated by the parable of the talents, "is designed to inspire a higher level of common benefit by respecting the individual judgement of economic agents". Furthermore, the doctrine of original sin can serve as a reminder that neither moral-cultural nor economic systems are perfect. Here Novak builds up a full parallel: "at the heart of Judaism and Christianity is the recognition of sin, as at the heart of democratic capitalism is a differentiation of systems designed to squeeze some good from sinful tendencies". Finally, Christianity may suffuse "the highest goal of the political economy of democratic capitalism", that is, the desire "in each and every citizen to become all that each can become" with the spirit of *caritas*. *Caritas*, which, contrary to collectivist ideas, must not encourage dependency or limit individual insights, seems to be the heart of the spirit of democratic capitalism:[52]

"*Caritas* is at one at the same time an ideal of individual autonomy - respecting the good of the other as other - and an ideal of community. It is the spiritual ideal which attracts from afar the only approximating drives of a democratic polity, a capitalist economy, and a liberal pluralist moral-cultural system. It is the spiritual ideal whose betrayal most injures the system in its every part. It is not an easy ideal to realise. That is why the institutions which try to approximate it in practice are best guided by the motto 'In God we trust', for no lesser source suffices for its self-realisation. Renewal, reform, and self-transformation are, in the light of that transcendent ideal always called for".[53]

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52 This section is based on Michael Novak, *The Spirit of Democratic Capitalism,* Institute of Economic Affairs, 1991, pp. 351-353, 355-358.
53 Novak, *The Spirit of Democratic Capitalism*, p. 358.

Social Democracy

Similarly to that of liberalism and democracy, the encounter and eventual connection of socialism and democracy was not a natural process. Socialism or at least fragments of socialistic ideology can be regarded as old as Christianity itself: 'they held all things in common' (Acts 2,44). This vision of community life appeared in the course of Christianity time and again: many of the early Church Fathers, the Franciscans, Thomas Münzer, the Diggers and Levellers in England, the Jesuits in Paraguay are important proofs of the power of socialistic ideas before socialism as an explicit politico-economic doctrine first appeared, as a response to the social and economic dislocations produced by the industrial revolution in the early nineteenth century in France; and even there it was identified with Christianity. But this happy equation, McLellan writes,

> "came under increasing pressure as the nineteenth century progressed. As capitalist social and economic relations spread, forms of Protestant Christianity closely associated with capitalism and based on an individualist ethos began to gain the upper hand: the more collectivist Catholicism (which in any case became dramatically reactionary under Pius IX) was seen as distinctly *passé*. And socialism, too, became increasingly dominated by a rigid Marxist interpretation. The message of Marx and his followers was that socialism is a strictly secular doctrine which made Christianity irrelevant. Socialism might give substance to certain Christian ideals, but it thereby abolished the Christian religion."[54]

Since McLellan begins the introduction of the socialist tradition with Karl Marx (1818-1883), I will also note Marx's influence here. However, although Marx's program has determined the socialist agenda on the European continent and, by the mediation of world Communism, in several places of the world, there are living heritages within the socialist tradition which are either independent from Marx or have given his legacy only a limited space. Therefore I intend to pay more attention to two traditions, the tradition of British social Christianity and North American Christian socialism. For this reason, I will turn to John

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54 McLellan ed., *Political Christianity*, pp. 185f

Atherton's *Christian Social Ethics: A Reader*[55] as well.

Probably the most important characteristic of Marx's critical social theory is that it is based on a general criticism of religion. Expressed by the basis-superstructure framework, human consciousness is the product of people's relations to each other, that is, their place in their society, and "religion is the self-consciousness and self-feeling of man who has either not yet found himself or has already lost himself again". Religion is a "reversed world-consciousness" produced by a reversed world; "the fantastic realisation of the human essence because the human essence has no true reality. The struggle against religion is therefore mediately the fight against the other world, of which religion is the spiritual aroma." Accordingly, "the criticism of heaven turns into the criticism of the earth, the criticism of religion into the criticism of right and the criticism of theology into the criticism of politics."[56] While criticism of religion served Marx as the starting point of his critical social theory, its success may signify also the success of the social transformation:

"The religious reflex of the real world can, in any case, only then finally vanish, when the practical relations of everyday life offer to man none but perfectly intelligible and reasonable relations with regard to his fellowmen and to nature".[57]

British social Christianity started to develop through a growing solidarity with industrial workers as well as a theoretical reflection on their conditions, but was neither revolutionary, nor democratic at the beginning. Frederick D. Maurice (1805-1872), the promoter of co-operatives and adult working-class education, represented a Christian socialism that was intended as a response to the political revolutions and economic disruptions of 1848, sharing the belief in social ranks.[58]

In 1890 Brooke Foss Westcott (1825-1901), Bishop of Durham, spoke about socialism that had been "discredited by its connection with many extravagant and revolutionary schemes, but it is a term which needs to be claimed

55 See footnote 47.
56 Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels, *On Religion*, Moscow, 1957, pp. 41-42.
57 Karl Marx, *Capital: A New Abridgement*, Oxford University Press, 1955, p. 50.
58 Atherton ed., *Christian Social Ethics*, p. 54.

for nobler uses". For him socialism was "a theory of life and not only a theory of economics", which, contrary to individualism, regards humanity "as an organic whole, a vital unity formed by the combination of contributory members mutually interdependent". He did not think that socialism could be "committed to any one line of action, but every one who accepted its central thought would recognise certain objects for immediate effort"[59].

During the time of the immediate aftermath of the First World War, in 1921, R. H. Tawney (1880-1962) wrote about the radical rejection of the "Acquisitive Society". He championed social principles in the teaching as well as the practice of the Christian Church, hoping to make it effective in building a society that is based on functions rather than rights. Admitting that his own theory may be regarded as a "sentimental idealism", Tawney nevertheless argued that a society could be organised by principles, namely the principle of limitation, unity and distribution, rather than chance or bare power.[60]

The careful consideration of economic conditions is particularly apparent in William Temple's book, *Christianity and Social Order* (1942). As the backbone of his theory, Temple (1881-1944) laid down a set of principles. The primary principle is the "respect for every person simply as a person" independently of his or her usefulness to society, since "the person is primary, not the society". As a next step Temple derived three additional principles from this primary principle, that of freedom, social fellowship and service. Freedom for him is both freedom *for* something and freedom *from* something, "the actual ability to form and carry out a purpose", or in other words, "self-control, self-determination and self-direction". By social fellowship he means the smaller social units or intermediate groups between the individual and the State, the necessary circles in which freedom can be actualised, since "actual liberty is the freedom which people enjoy in these various social units". He saw as the

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59 See Brooke Foss Westcott, *Socialism*, The Guild of St Matthew, London, 1890, quoted by Atherton ed., *Christian Social Ethics*, pp. 81-82.
60 See R. H. Tawney, *The Acquisitive Society*, Bell, 1921, Chapter 6: 'Porro Unum Necessarium...'

"common failing of revolutionary politics to ignore or attempt to destroy these lesser associations". Drawing on Roman Catholic social thought from *Rerum Novarum* to Maritain's works, Temple emphasised personhood, which meant an inevitable relationship both to God and the neighbours. "A democracy, which is to be Christian, must be a democracy of persons, not only of individuals. It must not only tolerate but encourage minor communities as at once the expressions and the arena of personal freedom; and its structure must be such as to serve this end". The third derivative principle is service, ushered in by the combination of the principles of freedom and fellowship. Building up the set of ethical principles Temple was able to demonstrate to what extent unemployment, malnutrition, bad housing, lack of proper education and poverty in general could prevent people from realising their life in terms of freedom, fellowship and service; in other words, how far those conditions may hurt their person. His suggestion about the church's manner of interfering with the social order thus corresponds both to his principles and the lack of necessary economic conditions in fulfilling them.[61]

In his later works, Ronald H. Preston (1913-) wrestles with the social and economic tensions of our time. In Atherton's words, "[l]earning from a careful appraisal of the strengths and limitations of free market capitalism and command economies, [Preston] has recognised the important contribution to human living of the mixed economies of social democracy and democratic socialism."[62]

At the level of anthropology, Preston tries to establish a balance between self-affirmation and self-sacrifice: "without a proper self-affirmation it is not possible to relate adequately to others, or even to have a proper self to lose when it is necessary". This anthropological position may become a part of an economic program, as he quotes Temple: "the art of government in fact is the art of so ordering life that self-interest prompts what justice demands"[63]. This direction leads Preston to establish the desire of an ethical socialism:

61 This paragraph is based on William Temple, *Christianity and the Social Order*, SPCK, 1976, pp. 29-98.

62 Atherton ed., *Christian Social Ethics*, p. 130.

63 These thoughts - together with Temple's words - are from Ronald H. Preston, *Church and Society in the Late Twentieth Century*, SCM Press, 1983, pp. 45-52.

"The easiest line for [governments] is to bypass the problems of injustice by economic growth, but when international factors do not permit the buying off of competing claims, the next easiest policy is to resort to inflation, which makes matters worse. The lucky and the unscrupulous in the use of power are the ones who benefit at a time of inflation. Yet government cannot easily deflate because of the danger of creating an unacceptable level of unemployment. (...) We all want stable prices and full employment and most of us want free collective bargaining. How to achieve the right mix between the three calls for the highest art of government. There is no reason to suppose, however, that it is inherently impossible to achieve, and therefore no reason to suppose that either social democracy or democratic socialism is necessarily unworkable."[64]

As far as the church's role to support a government in its "highest art" is concerned, Preston reconsiders the use of "middle axioms", first suggested by J. H. Oldham at the Oxford Conference on Church, Community and State in 1937.[65] When expressing her contribution to social and economic matters, the logic of "middle axioms" would enable the church to keep a healthy balance between general assertion and detailed proposition, as well as to enter into an encounter to experts of certain secular areas, while keeping the theological emphasis of her own argumentation.

While British social Christianity has found its democratic framework in the course of a gradual process, in North America the affirmation of democracy preceded social Christianity, and socialism has appeared as an inevitable perspective which was to serve true democracy.

Walter Rauschenbusch (1861-1918) in his *Christianising the Social Order* (1912) affirms freedom, the basic principle of democracy as "the condition of a Christianised social order", but acknowledges the relative failure of democratic practice: "political democracy without economic democracy is an uncashed promissory note, a pot without the roast, a form without substance". The formulation of the terminology here can be followed closely: Rauschenbusch spoke about the democracy of labour, or industrial democracy, in the words of John Stuart Mill "the association of the labourers themselves in terms of

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64 Ronald H. Preston, *Religion and the Persistence of Capitalism*, SCM , 1979, p. 40.
65 See Ronald H. Preston, *Explorations in Theology 9*, SCM, 1981, Chapter 3.

equality", whose more radical realisation is socialism while a less radical one is trade-unionism. Socialism, he said, "stands in the midst of capitalistic society like a genuine republican party in a monarchical State, and seeks to lead the working class from the kingdom of compulsion into the republic of freedom". For Rauschenbusch, socialism is an option which may give a better answer to the challenge of the day: "in some future social order democracy may possibly stand for the right to be unequal; in our present social order it necessarily stands for more equality between man and man". To fulfil this aim, "democracy aids in Christianising the social order by giving political and economic expression to the fundamental Christian conviction of the worth of man". In turn, "a Christian Church will constantly enter the departments of politics and of economic relations, because it is only a bad modern convention which allows men to forget that these things, as much as personal conduct, are the sphere of the spirit and the expression of character"[66].

More recently, John Cort entered the discussion about the social order in relation to mixed economy. Engaging himself in a direct argument with Michael Novak in his *Christian Socialism* (1988), Cort expressed his doubt about the meaningfulness of Novak's term "democratic capitalism" (by calling it an oxymoron) as well as questioning the latter's right to refer to John Stuart Mill as its forerunner. Mill, Cort argues is rather a representative of pre-Marxian socialism and he may also become influential for a post-Marxian socialism. For Cort, the engine of the implementation of the *social gospel* is neither revolution nor the vanguard of the proletariat, but the democratic process. The democratic process, on the one hand, as Cort uses this term, "is based on the assumption that *given the facts*, the ordinary person will make the right decisions most of the time" and also they have "enough intelligence" and "enough basic human decency"[67]. Socialism, on the other hand, "is the extension of democratic process

66 This paragraph is based on W. Rauschenbusch, *Christianising the Social Order*, Macmillan, 1912, pp. 353-364.
67 See John Cort, *Christian Socialism*, Orbis, 1988, p. 353.

from the political to the economic sphere"[68]. Socialism, therefore,

"is the vision of a pluralist society in which the advantages of competition, a free market and political democracy are reconciled with the maximum socialisation of production and the demands of justice, full employment and the realisation of that minimum of worldly goods for all which Thomas Aquinas told us is necessary for a life of virtue".[69]

To the question: "if Christian socialism is grounded ultimately on faith, how is that socialism viable in a pluralist, secular society" Cort offers a simple answer. In human nature there is an unwritten law of human decency, and "all the basic tenets of Christian, democratic socialism can find some motivation and support in that unwritten law"[70].

We have seen that liberalism's emphasis on negative freedom is the necessary precondition of socialist theories, either in their Marxist form, as freedom for a general critical attitude, or its less radical variations, which regard the analysis and transformation of social conditions as an inevitable stage in actualising the promise of freedom. Also, the capitalist economic order, as a consequence of liberal way of thinking and life, with all its effect of people's consciousness that previously lived in a feudal or organic society, is an essential basis on which a pluralist democracy and a related welfare state may be built.[71] The task itself is extremely difficult and no wonder that both the liberal and the socialist experiments have been burdened by several shortcomings, some of them painful and cruel. Christian democracy, the third of the three main democratic traditions, has emerged as an intended correction of the mistakes which liberal democracy and social democracy had made.

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68 Cort, *Christian Socialism*, p. 355.

69 Cort, *Christian Socialism*, pp. 355-356.

70 Cort, *Christian Socialism*, p. 356.

71 See Alistair Kee's argument about the contemporary relevance of Marx's thoughts, in his *Marx and the Failure of Liberation Theology*, SCM, London, 1990; especially in the concluding part, 'Confirmation of Historical Materialism' and 'The European Way', pp. 268ff

Christian Democracy

The Christian democratic movement was born into a twofold conflict. On the one hand, it was a part of the reaction of the Roman Catholic church to the liberal and industrial revolutions - the second of which gave rise to the so called "social question"' which soon led "to a triangular conflict between Christianity, liberalism and socialism, a conflict in which the third element is always present even when only two elements are being discussed"[72]. On the other hand, Christian democracy has developed as a lay movement of religious, social and political reform, an alternative to the Roman Catholic hierarchy. "It was not easy for the church to recognise an independent worldly reality that was still part of the Kingdom of God, and a democracy of lay Christian inspiration led by lay Christians was a most alarming challenge to a church that was opposed to making distinction between the temporal and spiritual spheres."[73] Therefore, Christian democracy as a mediating movement has retained a conservative character while formulating its answers to the social and political challenges of the day. Thus, before we turn to some significant documents of Christian democracy, it is perhaps wise to consider what McLellan means by conservatism, the third important ...*ism* besides liberalism and socialism.

McLellan points out six interlinked elements in conservative political thought:

"First, an emphasis on the importance of custom, tradition itself, the inherited wisdom of previous generations, and the reliability of experience. Second, while there is recognition that change and adaptation are necessary, there is approval for the slow, incremental, organic nature of this change, as opposed to the abstract blueprint for radical reformation. (...) Third, conservatism wishes to stress the value of private property the possession and use of which is both a defence against too much state power and a useful school of practical experience for those engaged in public affairs. From these follows, fourth, a sense of

72 Roberto Papini, 'Christianity and Democracy in Europe: The Christian Democratic Movement', in Witte ed., *Christianity and Democracy*, pp. 48f

73 Roberto Papini, 'Christianity and Democracy in Europe', in Witte ed., *Christianity and Democracy*, p. 48f

hierarchical order in society since individuals are very differently equipped with the culture necessary for governance. (...) Fifth, conservatives typically wish to anchor their political thought in the transcendent, the work of God of which human laws can only be an imperfect manifestation. (...) Lastly, there is a pessimism about human nature which fits well with the Christian doctrine of original sin: corrupt human nature needs the force of tradition and hierarchy to prevent its running out of control. More generally, conservative thought emphasises the importance of ideas and values, unlike approaches which prefer to anchor themselves in individual rights or more worldly notions of economic and social justice."[74]

If we observe the relationship of Christianity and democracy from the point of view of the Roman Catholic Church, as Roberto Papini does, we may regard it

"as one chapter in the much wider relationship between the Church and the world, which can be roughly divided into three phases: (1) medieval Christendom, in which the Church assumed above all the burden of the rights of God; (2) the modern age, in which the Church defended its own rights in its clash with the state; and (3) our own age, in which the Church defends the rights of man *tout court*, and in defending these rights also defends the rights of God and His Church. The Church's acceptance of democracy is by far the most important event of the third phase. It had also begun to defend the rights of man during the second phase, but these were still mainly social rights. Only in its fight against totalitarianism did the Church come to realise that the dignity of the person should also be defended and nurtured at a political level."[75]

With these phases in mind we may mention the papal encyclicals *Mirari Vos* (1832) and *Quanta Cura* (1864) with its appended *Syllabus Errorum* in which popes condemned the 'modern liberties'; we can refer to Pope Leo XIII's *Rerum Novarum* (1891) as the first significant address of the social question and its embodiment in Don Luigi Storzo's successful, but short lived political party, the *Partito Poplare Italiano*, established in 1919 in Sicily; we shall also refer to the works of Henri Bergson and Jacques Maritain in which the modern expression of Christian democracy has appeared and the role these ideas played not only in Europe but also in North and Latin America. It also needs to be said that after the Second World War Lutheran and Calvinist Protestant authors have

74 McLellan ed., *Political Christianity*, pp. 157f

75 Papini, 'Christianity and Democracy in Europe' in Witte ed., *Christianity and Democracy*, p. 53.

also contributed to a more articulated concept of Christian democracy, particularly in Germany and Holland. Finally we should highlight the breakthrough of the Second Vatican Council, and the application of Christian democratic ideals in the latest papal encyclicals[76]. For a closer look at Christian democratic thinking, we turn to a short essay of Jacques Maritain (1882-1973), a German Lutheran reflection on Christian democratic policy by Helmut Thielicke (1908-1986), and the encyclical *Centesimus Annus* of Pope John Paul II (1920-).

Maritain's *Christianity and Democracy* was first published in French in 1943, when the defeat of Germany already seemed inevitable and an outline of a new world order expressed a realistic hope. The very structure of the short essay reveals a lot about Maritain's thinking. He started his treatise with a discussion about "The End of an Age", the modern world which had been shaped by Machiavelli, Luther, Descartes, Rousseau and Hegel, embodied in the ambiguous French Revolution and later in the murderous German New Order, but may be renewed on the basis of the Judeo-Christian tradition and classical antiquity. Part of the crisis of the modern world is "the Tragedy of the Democracies", that is, "that they have not yet succeeded in realising democracy"[77]. This statement is followed by "Three Remarks" on the nature of democracy, and an explanation of the "Evangelical Inspiration" which underlines secular democratic conscience. After preparing his way by these steps, Maritain finally arrives at an exposition of "The True Essence of Democracy". "Wherever a religion other than the Christian religion holds sway, there slavery is sanctioned, and wherever the Christian religion weakens, the nation becomes, in exact proportion, less capable of general liberty".[78] The heart of his exposition sounds like a hymn to freedom:

"The essential characteristic of the democratic philosophy of man and society, or of the humanist political philosophy stand forth with the greatest clarity in their

76 See the following essays in Witte ed., *Christianity and Democracy*: J. Bryan Hehir, 'Catholicism and Democracy: Conflict, Change and Collaboration', pp. 15-30.; Roberto Papini, 'Christianity and Democracy in Europe: The Christian Democratic Movement', pp. 47-64.; Paul E. Sigmund, 'Christian Democracy, Liberation Theology, the Catholic Right, and Democracy in Latin America', pp. 187-206.

77 Jacques Maritain, *Christianity and Democracy*, Geoffrey Bles: The Centenary Press, London, 1945, p. 17.

78 Maritain, *Christianity and Democracy*, p. 41.

opposition to the slave philosophy. This humanist political philosophy may be identified by the features which I stressed above: the inalienable rights of the person, equality, political rights of the people whose consent is implied by any political regime and whose rulers rule as vicars of the people, absolute primacy of the relations of justice and law at the base of society, and an ideal not of war, prestige and power, but of the amelioration and emancipation of human life - the ideal of fraternity. For this philosophy the political task is *par excellence* a task of civilization and culture; it tends above all to provide the common good of the multitude in such a way that the concrete person, not only within the category of the privileged, but in the whole mass, truly accedes to the measure of independence which is compatible with civilized life and which is assured alike by the economic guarantees of labour and property, political rights, civic virtues and the cultivation of the mind."[79]

Nevertheless, Maritain's explanation offers also pragmatic insights as well, such as the following:

"The principles of the democratic philosophy of man and society can adjust themselves to a (constitutional) system of monarchic or oligarchic government. But by right, and in fact, it is to the republican system that these principles tend as their most normal expression."[80].

He also stresses the difficulties that those who wish these ideas turned into reality must face:

"[The democracies] must triumph over Hitler and over their own self-contradictions in the social and spiritual realms. And not only must they recover on the one hand their genuine social and political impulse, and on the other hand their genuine spiritual impulse, but they must reconcile the two - and to that end get rid of bitter prejudices and ill-will."[81]

To serve this end, Maritain enumerates the requirements "The New Leadership" has to fulfil; he discusses "The Communist Problem" in an excursus (while he rejects Communism as a totalitarian ideology, he wishes to reintegrate Communists, including the Russian people as a whole, into a regenerated Western democratic community); finally he invites his reader to "An Heroic Humanism".

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79 Maritain, *Christianity and Democracy*, p. 45.
80 Maritain, *Christianity and Democracy*, p. 46.
81 Maritain, *Christianity and Democracy*, p. 49.

Helmut Thielicke's *Theological Ethics* was first published in its German original in 1958 and 1959. The Lutheran theologian's observations about Christianity and party politics, written in a West Germany led by Adenauer's Christian Democratic Union[82] can be read as a Protestant contribution to a predominantly Roman Catholic view of Christian democracy. These remarks are placed into Thielicke's discussion of "The Roman Catholic view of Church and State". Although the Roman Catholic view of the relationship between theology, church and politics is based on the doctrine of natural law, which Protestants cannot accept,

"[t]his difference in theory between the Protestant and Roman Catholic views of church and state should not be exaggerated in respect of its practical effect, at least as regards the modern situation of the secularised state. (...) For though the theocratic tendency of Roman Catholicism and the two kingdoms doctrine of the Reformation are very differently constructed, both lead in the end to a common front against secularism, i.e., against a world which seeks to transcend its worldliness by self-exaltation through ideologies, utopias, and philosophies. (...) [T]he concrete implications of an ecclesiastically controlled natural law, and those of a conscience which though oriented to the kingdom of the left hand is also aware of its responsibility before God, may be very much the same. Thus the wisdom of papal encyclicals with respect to matters of political, social, and international affairs may often be admired on the Protestant side..."[83]

Nevertheless, a significant difference remains, which best expresses itself through a discussion of a "Christian" party. While the Roman Catholic natural law

"carries within it the general outlines of a political program, and hence also an impetus toward the building of a political will in keeping with that program (...) [Protestant] theological ethics does not contain in principle any such program but is content (...) simply to indicate the concrete forms of natural law-lessness. (...) What is more in accord with Protestant ethics is not to declare a specific institution (in this case a party) particularly Christian, but to have Evangelical Christians in all the various parties. According to the Protestant way of thinking, the adjective 'Christian' applies, not to institutions, but to men. On the basis of their own maturity, and in responsibility to the commandments of God in the

82 For Thielicke's view of Adenauer see his autobiography, Helmut Thielicke, *Notes from a Wayfarer*, trans. David R. Law, James Clark & Co, Cambridge, 1995, pp. 340ff

83 Helmut Thielicke, *Theological Ethics, Volume 2: Politics*, ed. William H. Lazareth, Adam & Charles Black, London, 1969, pp. 558f

kingdom on the left hand, these men have to act independently and on the basis of the facts, deciding in favour of a specific program of action, whether by ballot, by active membership in a party, by helping to draw up party programs, or by representing the parties in government. (...) In principle, i.e., in terms of their faith, they can belong equally well to Socialist, Liberal, or other parties."[84]

However, there may be situations of political emergency in Christian affairs of two kinds: either the other parties may be in no position to implement certain Christian concerns, or there may be a historical catastrophe when the very foundations of life are so radically threatened that a return to Christian substance must be ventured and politically affected in a direct way.

"If all other authorities break down - as happened in Germany in 1945 - the church itself may feel called, vicariously as it were, to spring into the breach on behalf of the kingdom on the left hand which has become totally ineffective. (...) [In case of emergency] the forces of Christianity, as the only remaining power of resistance, should be mobilised with a political directness which does not accord with the indirectness demanded in normal times."[85]

If a case of emergency results in a permanent party which calls itself a *Christian* one, as it happened in the context of Thielicke's discussion, the question may not be whether it is desirable or not, but whether its policies are acceptable or not.

"Here the decision depends on two things: first, whether one can accept the foreign, social, and other policies of such a party from the standpoint of their political utility, and second, whether the implications of the term 'Christian' in its title are obviously intended to remain an open question, so that there will be no doctrinaire appropriation of the word and so that justice will be done to Christians in other parties, and the body of Christ will not be rent by the claims of one party that alone is Christian."[86]

The immediate context of the encyclical of Pope John Paul II, *Centesimus Annus* (1991) is the aftermath of the sudden collapse of the Eastern European Communist regimes and the world-wide hope for a new world order which was to replace the deadlock of the Cold War. The indirect context, the one hundredth

84 Thielicke, *Theological Ethics*, pp. 560f

85 Thielicke, *Theological Ethics*, pp. 563f

86 Thielicke, *Theological Ethics*, p. 564.

anniversary of *Rerum Novarum* has been emphasised by a reference to Pope Leo XIII's awareness "of the need for a sound *theory of the State*", expressed by "the organisation of society according to the three powers" that is, legislative, executive and judicial, and although their mutual balance is stressed in the document, it is legislation which is clamed to be "capable of protecting the freedom of all". Thus, law "which is sovereign and not the arbitrary will of individuals" becomes the ruling principle within a theory of the State in the encyclical, put into obvious opposition to the practice of the totalitarian state, which has been short of an acknowledgement of objective law as well as objective truth as its basis. The demand for objective law and objective truth meets in the succinct definition of democracy:

"Authentic democracy is possible only in a State ruled by law, and on the basis of the correct conception of the human person. (...) As history demonstrates, a democracy without values easily turns into open or thinly disguised totalitarianism."

Truth is defined as *Christian truth* and is set in opposition to ideology; while the latter may

"claim the right to impose on others [its] own concept of what is true and good, (...) Christian faith does not presume to imprison changing socio-political realities in a rigid schema, and it recognizes that human life is realized in history under conditions that are diverse and imperfect. Furthermore, in constantly reaffirming the transcendent dignity of the person, the Church's method is always that of respect for freedom, [nevertheless] freedom attains its full development only by accepting the truth."

In other words, democracy must be realised by "the explicit recognition of [human] rights", which are listed as follows:

"the right of the child to develop in the mother's womb from the moment of conception; the right to live in an united family and in a moral environment conducive to the growth of the child's personality; the right to develop one's intelligence and freedom in seeking and knowing the truth; the right to share in the work which makes wise use of the earth's material resources, and to derive from that work the means to support oneself and one's dependants; and the right freely to establish a family, to have and to rear children through the responsible exercise of one's sexuality."

In a certain sense, the document concludes according to the underlying logic of the whole text, "the source and synthesis of these rights is religious freedom, understood as the right to live in the truth of one's faith and in conformity with one's transcendent dignity as a person." On this theoretical basis, the encyclical offers several points of criticism as well as advice with respect to contemporary moral, cultural, political and economic issues.[87]

Having looked over the three main democratic traditions, we may conclude that the central question of all of them is human freedom. Liberal democracy, social democracy and conservative Christian democracy all consider themselves as promoters of the freedom of people both as individual persons and as members of a community. The reason for their most characteristic differences is the difference between their understanding of human identity - individual as well as social; the same reason we noted with respect to the different senses of freedom itself. Notwithstanding the differences, however, all the three democratic traditions show a decisive similarity: they all operate with a certain combination of both negative and positive freedom. To put it in a simple way, negative freedom is more dominant in the liberal tradition and more balanced by - with different emphases - in the socialist and the conservative tradition. Nevertheless, neither social nor Christian democracy, as we witnessed in the case of some of their representatives, can afford to entirely neglect negative freedom. According to these traditions, no democracy can be conceived without a dynamic interplay of negative and positive freedom.

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87 This rather long review of *Centesimus Annus* is based on Sections 44-52. Source: Catholic Truth Society, 1991, pp. 33-38.

b. Democracy as Vision

As we have seen in the course of our overview of the main traditions of thinking about democracy, all of them are informed by a vision as an aim to be achieved. The core of the vision is more or less the same, regardless of the tradition around it: its aims are the fulfilment of human dignity, the full achievement of equality, freedom and justice within the human community[88]. From a theological point of view, a vision can be brought into connection with God's *shalom,* the Kingdom of God, the realisation of Christian faith as the objective truth, or the consummation of creation. The short formulas are usually similar to each other, yet the way they have been shaped and the underlying logic of their development is often typical to the tradition they belong to.

Utopia

Before we turn to some of the visions which may be regarded either as representatives of one of the three main democratic traditions or that of other concerns which cannot be identified with any one of the traditions, we have to clarify what vision means.

John de Gruchy has introduced the term as distinct from system, that is, while the democratic system indicates the way democracy works, democratic vision reveals both its purpose and the driving force behind it. This definition inevitably makes it necessary to clarify the meaning of vision with respect to *utopia,* as de Gruchy does. Anticipating the very vision he is going to offer - a characteristically socialist vision of democracy [89] - he says: "[u]topian as it may be, it is this vision which has been, and remains, the driving force behind the struggle for democratic transformation across the world, even if it can never be

88 See for example John de Gruchy's short formula in his *Christianity and Democracy,* p. 7.
89 de Gruchy, *Christianity and Democracy,* pp. 40ff

fully realised and embodied in democratic systems of government"[90]. Later in the same book, de Gruchy returns to a more detailed discussion of the meaning of utopia. Following Karl Mannheim, he makes a distinction between "abstract utopianism" and "concrete utopianism"; the former designates "a form of escapism", while the latter "engenders socially transformative action and enables the achievement of penultimate anticipations of what may be ultimately unattainable"[91]. By a reference to Pope Paul VI's call for a "rebirth of utopias" de Gruchy asks for a "concrete utopian vision of reality" which is "the only way whereby we can break free of the circularity of a closed ideology, express judgement upon it, and pursue the goal of a more just world order"[92].

However, a differentiation between "abstract utopianism" and "concrete utopianism" is just as notorious a task as a differentiation between ideology and faith. "All systems of thought," de Gruchy writes, "including theologies, are ideological in the broad sense." Ideology in a pejorative sense, however, means "uncritical rationalisations of a closed worldview which claims ultimacy in the protection of self- or group interest".[93] Nevertheless, a decision about which worldview is closed and which one is open is usually a personal one, highly influenced by the tradition a thinker belongs to and may regard as the broader framework of his or her own biography. Similarly, a judgement on a rationalisation of a thought form, that is, whether it is critical or uncritical, or the recognition of particular interests within the struggle of several groups and several contradictory interests may be an intellectual act which is very difficult to verify.

Therefore, a distinction between "abstract utopianism" (escapism) and "concrete utopianism" (creative, transformative imagination) as well as between faith and ideology is a highly personal act which must be carried out very carefully if one wishes to avoid to bring about judgements on a – negatively

90 de Gruchy, *Christianity and Democracy*, p. 7.
91 de Gruchy, *Christianity and Democracy*, p. 230.
92 de Gruchy, *Christianity and Democracy*, p. 231.
93 de Gruchy, *Christianity and Democracy*, p. 230.

understood – ideological basis.[94] Ideological wars sometimes turn into real wars and wars may have the most negative effect on a democratic process. For this very reason it is vital to let the other nurture a vision which may be different from mine. Moreover, it may be important to develop a democratic vision that directly reflects on the needs of areas that have been exhausted by long-lasting ideological war.

Ideology

In the next paragraphs, we will examine some typical democratic visions that are rooted in a distinct democratic tradition, liberal, socialist or Christian democratic. We will see that all of them could be understood as ideological not only in the broad sense of the attribute, but also in its negative sense. For the sake of a clearer critical approach, I will briefly introduce an idea of Nicholas Lash before we turn to the texts.

In the article 'Ideology, Metaphor and Analogy' Lash offers some observations on the form of Jewish and Christian religious discourse, which, in my opinion, may be extended also to the "political discourse" we are dealing with in this chapter. Lash suggests that

"the paradigm or 'focal' forms of Jewish and Christian religious discourse are not simply narrative, but are, more specifically, autobiographical. They are autobiographical both in the sense that they are self-involving (...), and in the sense that, as self-involving, they locate the speaker (or the group of which he or she represents) in a particular cultural, historical tradition"[95].

From the autobiographical character of the narrative four consequences follow. First, however truthfully a spokesman tries to tell his story, the narrative

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94 I think, even John de Gruchy provides us an example of the practice of a not careful enough use of the label "ideology" in the negative sense. In p. 230 in his *Christianity and Democracy* he regards liberal democratic capitalism as an ideology alongside with Marxism-Leninism and Fascism, which the prophetic witness of the church is expected to unmask. The identification of liberal democratic capitalism as an ideology probably serves him as a tacit background some pages later in his book, where he criticizes Ronald Preston and John Atherton, both known as Christian Socialists, for their "surprising" reassessment of the market, pp. 271ff

95 Nicholas Lash, 'Ideology, Metaphor and Analogy', in B. Hebblethwaite and S. Sutherland eds., *The Philosophical Frontiers of Christian Theology*, Cambridge University Press, 1982, p. 74.

is subject to ideological distortion. Second, it "tends to attribute an unwarranted universality to the particular forms in which, in particular circumstances, it finds expression".[96] Third, the narrative is designed to make sense of the facts, but this very effort threatens the veracity of the tale. Fourth, as a variation of the former point, the storyteller is "tempted, for the coherence of the story (which is the coherence of his human ... experience) to claim a clearer apprehension of the 'plot' then the evidence warrants"[97]. Therefore, this autobiographical narrative is threatened by "self-indulgence and even dishonesty"[98]. With regard to Christian religious discourse, Lash suggests that it has to be challenged by reflections from various perspectives from outside, that is, philosophical considerations, literary-critical considerations and historical considerations, and, equally importantly, it has to keep its ability of internal correction alive. As far as the latter is concerned, while the expression of Christianity is often verbal, ritual and iconographic, it can also be silent, simple and iconoclastic. The same is true for a *political* discourse. The political thinker has to be aware of the autobiographical character of his or her narrative, which is claimed to be a political theory. Therefore, the political theorist has to try to reflect to his or her theory from perspectives outside of the tradition he or she belongs to, and has to keep the self-critical potential of his or her discourse alive.

The Vision of the Three Traditions

Our chosen contemporary representative of the liberal tradition, Michael Novak puts into the centre of his vision the free individual as God's creature.

"To look upon human history as love-infused by a Creator who values others as others, who sees in those originating sources of insight and choice which we have come to know as 'persons' the purpose of his creation; and who in loving each as an individual creates of the contrarious many an unseen, hidden, but powerful

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96 *ibid.*
97 Lash, 'Ideology, Metaphor and Analogy', in Hebblethwaite and Sutherland eds., *The Philosophical Frontiers of Christian Theology*, p. 75.
98 *ibid.*

community, is to glimpse a world in which the political economy of democratic capitalism makes sense. In order to create wealth, individuals must be free to be other. They are not to be understood as fragments of a collective, members of a kinship group or ethnic enclave, but as individual others; originating sources of insight and choice. Such persons are not isolated or alienated from one another. Sympathy, co-operation, and association are to them as natural, and as necessary, as breathing air. Yet when they form communities, they *choose* them, *elect* them, *contract* for them. The natural state of political community for persons is arrived at not by primordial belonging but by constitutional contract. Before the human race chose its communities, it had only a form of *pietas*, a type of *amor*, love of country. It had not yet glimpsed the possibility of *dilectio*. Even primordial love of country is good. But choice, contract, election is better. (...) In the economic sphere, creation is to be fulfilled through human imitation of the Creator."[99]

To prevent Novak's vision from being or becoming a piece of ideological discourse, one must ask whether "sympathy, co-operation and association" are really "natural" to the subject of democratic capitalism. Likewise his assumption that the same subject will share his or her profit liberally[100] seems an exaggerated expectation, or a premature anticipation of the fulfilment of God's plan for the person, "the purpose of his creation", rather than everyday empirical reality.

For a socialist vision of democracy we may turn to the anticipation which John Cort offers. The "spirit of Christian love", he insists,

"cannot be reduced to a political imperative, granted, but it most certainly has a political dimension. Feeding the hungry and clothing the naked are not precisely identical with a systematic redistribution of wealth, but in the present situation of gross inequality, obscene wealth and wretched poverty, they most certainly cry to heaven for both systematic and unsystematic redistribution. (...) [Therefore, [f]ull implementation of the economic democracy calls for democratic structures at the level of the individual enterprise, such as the producer co-operative, but at many other levels as well, the industry level, the state, regional and national economic level. (...) Every trade union, incidentally, every union contract, is an 'engine' for the implementation of the social gospel. (...) Socialism is the vision of the pluralist society in which the advantages of competition, a free market and political democracy are reconciled with the maximum socialisation of production and the demands of justice, full employment and the realisation of that minimum of worldly goods for all which Thomas Aquinas told us is necessary for life of virtue. (...) [T]here is in human nature an unwritten law of decency (...) [and a]ll

99 Michael Novak, *The Spirit of Democratic Capitalism*, p. 355.
100 See Novak, *The Spirit of Democratic Capitalism*, pp. 356f

the basic tenets of Christian, democratic socialism can find some motivation and support in that unwritten law."[101]

It seems to me that Cort refers to the "unwritten law of decency" as an axiomatic fact that is the basis of the viability of democratic socialism.

For a Christian Democratic vision of democracy, we turn to the encyclical Centesimus Annus. In promoting charity as the main mechanism of redistributing wealth, the vision of the encyclical is similar to the liberal democratic one. At the same time, its definition of the human being with respect to his/her surrounding culture is significantly different.

"All human activity takes place within a culture and interacts with culture. For an adequate formation of a culture, the involvement of the whole man is required, whereby he exercises his creativity, intelligence, and knowledge of the world and of people. Furthermore, he displays his capacity for self-control, personal sacrifice, solidarity and readiness to promote the common good. Thus, the first and most important task is accomplished within man's heart. The way in which he is involved in building his own future depends on the understanding he has of himself and of his own destiny. It is on this level that *the Church's specific and decisive contribution to true culture* is to be found. The Church promotes those aspects of human behaviour which favour a true culture of peace, as opposed to models in which the individual is lost in the crowd, in which the role of his initiative and freedom is neglected, and in which his greatness is posited in the arts of conflict and war. The Church renders this service to human society *by preaching the truth about the creation of the world*, which God has placed in human hands so that people may make it fruitful and more perfect through their work; and *by preaching the truth about the Redemption*, whereby the Son of God has saved mankind and at the same time has united all people, making them responsible for one another."[102]

Thus, by the way of changing hearts the Church wishes to be at the frontline of human development, which the encyclical calls the other name of peace, as a most reasonable way to avoid war. By discussing what the promotion of development may mean the encyclical gets close to the socialist vision.

"Just as within individual societies it is possible and right to organise a solid economy which will direct the functioning of the market to the common good, so too there is a similar need for adequate interventions on the international level. For this to happen, *a great effort must be made to enhance mutual*

101 John Cort, *Christian Socialism*, pp. 353-356.
102 John Paul II. *Centesimus Annus*, published in Catholic Truth Society 1991, p. 37.

understanding and knowledge, and to increase the sensitivity of consciences. This is the culture which is hoped for, one which fosters trust in the human potential of the poor, and consequently in their ability to improve their condition through work or to make a positive contribution to economic prosperity. But to accomplish this, the poor – be they individuals or nations – need to be provided with realistic opportunities. Creating such conditions calls for a *concerted world-wide effort to promote development*, an effort which also involves sacrificing the positions of income and of power enjoyed by the more developed economies."[103]

In terms of traditional opinions, the encyclical expresses an eloquent flexibility. On the one hand, it promotes charity, but on the other hand, through the employment of the medieval Catholic teaching of subsidiarity the encyclical finally reaches the idea of the redistribution of wealth on an international level. The centre of this program, however, is the change (conversion?) of human heart and behaviour, inspired and controlled by the teaching of the (Roman Catholic) Church. Nevertheless, the encyclical's obvious claim that the Christian faith (as proclaimed in the Roman Catholic Church) is fundamentally different from ideologies, is an essential weakness behind the carefully designed social vision. The claim sounds like a solemn confession:

"[T]he Church [does not] close her eyes to the danger of fanaticism or fundamentalism among those who, in the name of an ideology which purports to be scientific or religious, claim the right to impose on others their own concept of what is true and good. *Christian truth* is not of this kind. Since it is not an ideology, the Christian faith does not presume to imprison changing socio-political realities in a rigid schema, and it recognises that human life is realised in history in conditions that are diverse and imperfect. Furthermore, in constantly reaffirming the transcendent dignity of the person, the Church's method is always that of respect for freedom."[104]

If "ought" and "is" are placed so close to each other, where will the necessary self-critical distance, in the manner of Lash, find a place?

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103 John Paul II., *Centesimus Annus*, p. 38.
104 John Paul II., *Centesimus Annus*, p. 34.

c. Democracy as System

Although, as we have seen, the way democratic visions are pictured and the priorities they stress may be different according to the tradition they were born into, there is a general agreement about what a democratic system should mean. De Gruchy offers a summary of the basic principles and procedures which comprise the democratic system:

"universal adult suffrage or the right to vote; free and fair elections; representation of a fair proportion of the electorate in a legislative body; decisions reached by a majority vote on all major questions of policy; equality before the law; an independent judiciary; equality of opportunity; freedom to organise political parties; freedom of speech, conscience and dissent; the freedom of the press and of assembly; the rule of law and therefore freedom from arbitrary arrest or punishment ('due process'); the separation of church and state; the freedom of religion and individual liberty consonant with social requirements."[105]

However impressive the list of principles may be, however, a basic contradiction of democratic practice remains unsolved, between "the democratic need to participate in the political process, including the right of individuals to choose their own representatives" and "the need to ensure competence and efficiency in government"[106]. The number of solutions that have been offered to this problem, represent some alternative priorities within the same general democratic system.

Albert Weale presents a systematic overview[107] of this problem. He distinguishes two broad classes of opinion about democracy: according to the first democracy is principally about holding accountable a government for its honesty, efficiency and competence, while according to the second democracy is a form of participatory or self-government. For the first opinion, the essential function of democracy is to select government, but it is equally important to

105 de Gruchy, *Christianity and Democracy*, p. 19.
106 de Gruchy, *Christianity and Democracy*, p. 18.
107 The following two paragraphs are based on Weale, 'Democracy' in Paul Barry Clarke and Andrew Linzey eds., *Dictionary of Ethics, Theology and Society*, Routledge, London and New York, 1996, pp. 226ff

prevent the government from using its position of pre-eminent power to tyrannise over society or misuse its power in any other way. One of the virtues of democracy, in this conception, is that it allows for the peaceful transfer of political power. For the second opinion, democracy is a form of life in which the members of society participate, and the merit of democratic government is that it expresses the ideal of people's self-government, while representing the popular will. In turn, the exercise of the virtues of citizenship has a high place in the participatory conception of democracy.

The distinction between democracy as an accountable government and democracy as self-government may be related to the distinction between direct democracy and representative democracy. Participatory accounts of democracy favour direct democracy, but this form is conceivable only in small-size communities. A different way of expressing the distinction is in terms of whether the function of democratic institutions is seen primarily as restraining the arrogance of power of those in government or primarily as enabling the government to act in accordance with the will of the people in the formulation of public decisions. Behind these contrasting accounts of democracy there typically lie contrasting accounts of human interests and human motivation. The first opinion holds a pessimistic view of human nature and attributes to politics an instrumental role in making collective arrangements between conflicting interests. Those who support the second opinion usually hold an optimistic view of the ability of citizens to have an intelligent and dispassionate intention about public affairs, and to internalise a sense of the common good.

Genuine Democracy, Elitist Democracy

With respect to the efficiency of a government, and in relation to the above distinction, another way to approach the same problem is to speak about "genuine democracy" and "elitist democracy"[108]. The first stresses the broad participation in political decisions, based on the optimistic view of human nature, while the second emphasises the expertise and skills of those in charge. Looking at the difference from another angle, the *genuine democrat* fears the rule of an elite while the *elitist democrat* fears popular rule.

De Gruchy emphasises the fundamental difference between the two kinds of fear; nevertheless, whether the difference is fundamental or rather an option that is based on different circumstances and different previous experiences, is, for me, an open question. In societies of long-standing democratic culture it is conceivable that people usually make the right decisions, out of their personal experiences and with the help of the democratic culture that nurtured them (without being ontologically different to other people). However, in the so-called young democracies people have to familiarise themselves with the liberating experience that they can really participate in decisions about themselves and to use this possibility wisely without the support of a democratic culture and previous experiences at once. Thus, in a young democracy, the role of a leading elite is crucial, and since usually more than one elite emerge and try to control the society, the real question for the people is not whether they want a "genuine democracy" or an "elitist democracy" for themselves (it might be an academic question for them at best), but which elite they may trust.

Moreover, even in a long-standing democracy doubts may emerge about the thesis that "ordinary people are competent to make political decisions", not because the human, moral, or intellectual competence of people is questioned, but because of the complexity of the decision-making process itself. Arne

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108 de Gruchy, *Christianity and Democracy*, p. 19.

Rasmusson points out some problems is this regard, of which I will refer to four.

First, voters usually do not have definite preferences over the whole range of alternatives that affects them, and by choosing one option or the other, within certain material limits, the issue then becomes how to relate votes to alternative cots and to willingness to pay the costs. Second, there is no procedure, even in principle, by which all sets of expressed preferences can be aggregated into a social decision that guarantees an optimal solution to the task of reconciling them. Third, practical social decision-making requires negotiations and the number of parties in a fruitful negotiation process is limited. Consequently, most decisions have to be left to representatives with a large degree of freedom, which makes the role of voting or direct participation small. Fourth, concerning referendums, due to the possibility that a relatively apathetic majority might block a proposal that is of great advantage to a minority simply out of distaste for change or because it involves some relatively trivial adjustment on their part, people ought to be given votes in proportion to the degree in which they are affected by the decision. Determining this is of course very difficult. Therefore, it might be that a smaller, well-informed body often makes better decisions than the general public.[109]

These problems do not indicate that democracy itself should be doubted, but do testify to the fact that the contrast between popular rule and elitist leadership must not be considered to express moral or qualitative differences between those who hold one or the other opinion, as the very expression of 'genuine' democracy might suggest. De Gruchy offers a paradoxical solution to this problem: "[t]he weakness of democracy, which is the danger of incompetent and inefficient government is, paradoxically, indicative of its strength, namely, that such government is regarded as legitimate and remains accountable"[110]. Within extreme circumstances, however, the cost of this legitimacy may be the

109 Arne Rasmusson, *The Church as* Polis*: From Political Theology to Theological Politics as Exemplified by Jurgen Moltmann and Stanley Hauerwas*, Lund University Press, 1994, pp. 358ff
110 de Gruchy, *Christianity and Democracy* p. 19.

imminent danger of the failure of democracy itself, together with the whole social order for which democracy has taken up responsibility, to which the probably most well-known example is the fall of the Weimar Republic.

Legal Positivism and Value-Based Law

If we regard democracy as system as the outward order of society, we may ask about the way this order is organised and rationalised. This question leads us to the problem of law making, which is closely connected to the rise and the present formulation of democratic order in Europe and North America. In his book *Theology of Reconstruction*, Charles Villa-Vicencio pays substantial attention to the two main schools of law making, which I will now briefly summarise. Villa-Vicencio distinguishes between two main traditions of the process, legal positivism and the search for value-based law. Historically, legal positivism belongs to the time of the religious wars of the late sixteenth century, to the time when

"the primary political question shifted away from what constituted true religion and the absolute 'good' to how people of different religious and ethical persuasions could co-exist. The demand was for a *sovereign authority* capable of transcending these differences and holding crumbling nations and communities together."[111]

According to Jean Bodin's classical words, "law is nothing else than the command of the sovereign, in the exercise of his sovereign power"[112], or, in Hans Kelsen's' more recently formulated position, "law is that which can be effectively imposed"[113]. The assumption of legal positivism is "that parliamentary supremacy in an open democratic society [is] morally and responsibly used"[114], thus it does not lack a moral concern. However,

"[c]onflicting interests have at times given rise to a sterile, adjudicating,

111 Charles Villa-Vicencio, *A Theology of Reconstruction: Nation-building and Human Rights*, Cambridge University Press, 1992, p. 86f

112 Villa-Vicencio, *A Theology of Reconstruction*, p. 87.

113 Villa-Vicencio, *A Theology of Reconstruction*, p. 91.

114 Villa-Vicencio, *A Theology of Reconstruction*, pp. 92f

balancing, non-promotional notion of legal positivism. Eager to offend no one, the sovereign has sought simply to balance conflicting interests without affirming any one set of values in preference to another. Without a clear sense of direction legal positivism has often left people in panic (...) without direction in life."[115]

Therefore, the alternative of value-based law has to be kept open. Rooted in the old natural law theory, and in this sense reaching back behind the rise of legal positivism,

"value-based law is an attempt to articulate a minimum set of values which apply to the rights of individuals within a social union. If law is not legitimated by the acceptance/efficacy of sovereign command, as legal positivists suggest, then what is it that provides this legitimacy?"[116]

Nevertheless, this question is much easier to ask than to answer. In a pluralist society, in which not only conflicting material and cultural interests but also rivalling ethical principles and value-systems divide the people, *"[w]hose* values and priorities are to be relied on beyond the letter of the law?"[117] The solution of the 'legal positivism – value-based law dichotomy' gives a significant characteristic to any concrete democratic system.

Civil Society

Within a discussion of democratic system we must mention the concept of civil society. Civil society, de Gruchy writes,

"is of key importance in relating representative and participatory forms of democracy. If political society refers to the structures of government of the state, including the civil service, then civil society is that network of non-governmental organisations, churches and other religious communities, trade unions and voluntary associations, which in modern societies provide the means whereby people can participate in pursuing social goals and protecting particular interests. When it is functioning best, civil society provides an intermediate layer of governance between the individual and the state that is capable of resolving conflicts and controlling the behaviour of members without public coercion. A strong civil society is necessary if democratic transition from authoritarian rule is

115 Villa-Vicencio, *A Theology of Reconstruction*, p. 94.
116 Villa-Vicencio, *A Theology of Reconstruction*, p. 96.
117 Villa-Vicencio, *A Theology of Reconstruction*, p. 97.

to be sustained, reversals resisted, and democratic transformation pursued."[118]

To put it in a different way, civil society designates those communitarian approaches that

"focus on the life-giving, natural and thus more genuine communities (the family, the neighbourhood, the collective) and contrasts these with the artificially created and basically parasitic state community (a community made possible by positive law), thus, distinguishes the social order from the state and from the market"[119].

The idea of civil society appeared first at the eighteenth century, and although mostly disappeared later, it can be recognised under different names, for example, in William Temple's references to "lesser associations" or "minor communities"[120]. It is probably not incidental, that it is Central and Eastern European intellectuals, reflecting their experiences about the so-called "people's democracies", who are regarded as chiefly responsible for the recent renaissance of the idea.[121] The reference to the importance of civil society within a democracy may lead us directly to the last section of our exposition of democracy.

d. Democracy as Process

The three approaches to democracy we have discussed so far can also be understood in temporal terms: democracy as tradition is the *past*, democracy as vision is the *future* and democracy as system is the *present*. The interrelatedness of the past, future and present with respect to the three approaches to democracy might aptly be expressed with the words of Paul Lehmann about the emergence of values: "one generation tells another how the future shapes the present out of the past"[122]. The expression *democracy as process* intends to describe the way the present is being shaped; the way one generation tells about the future with respect to the past, that is, the human factor

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118 de Gruchy, *Christianity and Democracy*, pp. 20f

119 Arne Rasmusson, *The Church as* Polis, p. 361.

120 See William Temple, *Christianity and the Social Order*, SPCK, 1976, pp. 29-98.

121 Arne Rasmusson, *The Church as* Polis, p. 361.

122 Quoted in Villa-Vicencio, *A Theology of Reconstruction*, p. 110.

of pursuing a democratic social order. If democratic tradition, vision and system were understood as *text,* democratic process would be *subtext;* if the former were regarded as *content,* the latter could be called the *style.* Within this circle of reference we could even risk to say that while democracy as tradition, vision and system may be called "democracy *consciously* conceived", democracy as process might be regarded as "democracy *unconsciously* promoted". Without the proper style even the most appropriate references to tradition, vision and system might be merely empty lip-service; a confused subtextual attitude may also confuse those texts which, in a different context, could be revealing in themselves; and we know how influential our unconscious in our visible deeds may be. Therefore, the proper process in creating a democratic order is a crucial factor with respect to the outcome.

Naturally, each distinct way of democratic thinking discloses something about the process it intends to inspire as well as to follow, as the most subjective or most personal hallmark of itself. Speaking about the process as such, a thinker may reveal a great deal of his or her personal conviction about what democracy should mean within a concrete situation that the thinker wishes to address. Thus, speaking about democracy as process, I cannot help anticipating a great deal about the challenges which the present transition of Hungarian society is expected to meet. Nevertheless, as we will see, the preferences which have risen out of the Hungarian situation may have some broader validity as well.

Jung and the "Fight with the Shadow"

I start my explanation of democracy as process with a reference to a short talk of Carl Gustav Jung, broadcasted by the BBC in 1946, 'The Fight With the Shadow'[123]. After he had addressed the political turmoil of the time on some

123 Carl Gustav Jung, 'The Fight with the Shadow' in Carl Gustav Jung, *Civilization in Transition.* Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1964, pp. 218-226.

occasions [124], Jung applied his well-known shadow theory - which might be considered the secularised version of Jesus' parable of the speck and the log - to the description of the moral and political challenge the post-war world faced. Jung tried to understand the German National Socialist revolution as well as the similar mass movements as a collective neurosis, a miscarried compensation of the collective unconscious for the disorder of the conscious side of the collective psyche. The Germans, Jung thought, were not the only nation in which the violent and primitive forces had become dominant, their onslaught was more or less universal.

"The only difference lay in the German mentality itself, which proved to be more susceptible because of the marked proneness of the Germans to mass psychology. Moreover, defeat and social disorder had increased the herd instinct in Germany, so that it became more and more probable that Germany would be the first victim among the Western nations – victim of a mass movement brought about by an upheaval of forces lying dormant in the unconscious, ready to break through all moral barriers."[125]

Thus, the failure of the German nation as a collective can serve as a typical example of a more general danger for the observer. Masses of Germans, feeling weak and even non-existent, compensated for their conscious feelings "by the hitherto unknown desires for power"[126]. Unfortunately, Jung believed,

"there were no values in the conscious mind of the individual which would have enabled him to understand and integrate the reaction when it reached consciousness. Nothing but materialism was preached by the highest intellectual authorities. The Churches were evidently unable to cope with this new situation; they could do nothing but protest and that did not help very much."[127]

Thus, while the Germans were longing for a new world-order, they were as much greedy for power, and chose Hitler as their leader for themselves, the exponent of both of their expectations, who represented the shadow, the inferior

124 See especially his article 'Wotan', 1936, (pp. 179-193) about the psychological background of the German "awakening" and his 'After the Catastrophe', 1945, (pp. 194-217) about the way post-war Germany and the rest of the Western world should face German guilt, both published in Carl Gustav Jung, *Civilization in Transition*.

125 Jung, *Civilization in Transition*, p. 219.

126 Jung, *Civilization in Transition*, p. 222.

127 Jung, *Civilization in Transition*, p. 223.

part of their personality. Their falling victim to their own shadow is the pitfall that everyone has to learn to avoid.

It is the picture of "the fight with the shadow" that Jung extends into a short exposition of what democracy may mean. Speaking about Switzerland, he thought they had built up the "prefect democracy" where their warlike instincts expend themselves in the form of domestic quarrels called "political life". "We fight each other within the limits of the law and constitution, and we are inclined to think of democracy as a chronic state of mitigated civil war."[128] Switzerland may have succeeded in locating the warlike instincts of her citizens into domestic affairs, yet, there is still a lot to be achieved.

"[E]ven our national, mitigated state of war would soon come to an end if everybody could see his own shadow and begin the only struggle that is really worth while: the fight against the overwhelming power-drive of the shadow. (...) Our order would be perfect if only everybody could direct his aggressiveness inwards, into his own psyche."[129]

Arguing this way, Jung is able to point out the possible common responsibility of the psychologist and the politician, and finally achieves a psychological description of democracy. The most a psychologist is able to effectuate in the life of others is to make them aware of their complexes and to encourage them to start a conscious conflict within themselves. "Anything that disappears from your psychological inventory", Jung's message says, "is apt to turn up in the guise of a hostile neighbour, who will inevitably arouse your anger and make you aggressive. It is surely better to know that your worst enemy is right there in your own heart."[130] His definition of democracy, therefore, is based on both his understanding of human nature and the awareness of its fragile character:

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128 Jung, *Civilization in Transition*, p. 224.
129 *ibid.* It shall be noted here, however, that Jung's advice that everyone should direct his or her aggressiveness inward into his or her psyche must not be taken as an absolute norm; its context is the world of hopelessly confused mutual projections. It would be a mistake to perceive this suggestion as a general appeal to suppress one's aggressiveness. The "creative role of aggression" (see Wink, *Engaging the Powers*, pp. 288ff) has been finely worked out within Wink's theory, as a part of his rejection of the "fight or flight" alternative.
130 Jung, *Civilization in Transition*, p. 225.

"Man's warlike instincts are ineradicable – therefore a state of perfect peace is unthinkable. Moreover, peace is uncanny because it breeds war. True democracy is a highly psychological institution which takes account of human nature as it is and makes allowances for the necessity of conflict within its own national boundaries."[131]

Two Examples of Democratic Process

In his *Christianity and Democracy* de Gruchy offers two contemporary examples which, in my view, can be read as illustrations for the thesis I have presented above. One of the examples is his discussion of the problems of the transitory process of Nicaraguan society after the end of the Cold War; the other one is his exposition of the tensions between traditional social ideas and Western democratic thoughts in sub-Saharan Africa. Both Nicaragua and some sub-Saharan African countries can be regarded, with some simplifications, as areas where Western democratic ideas and related outward political and economical interests have waged a war against each other, dividing the population of the countries and finally leaving behind a mixed legacy and a still fragile, so-called low density democracy, whose ability to establish itself still has to be proven. In situations like these the nature of democratic process is of crucial importance.

Within his discussion of the transitory process in Nicaragua, de Gruchy pays considerable attention to a document, *Nicaraguan Revolutionary Christians Face the Crisis of Civilisation*, issued by the Sandinista aligned Antonio Valvidiesco Ecumenical Center in Managua as a self-critical evaluation of the role of the popular church and liberation theology within the democratic revolution in 1991.[132] The direct reasons for their self-criticism was the electoral defeat of the Sandinista Liberation Front, the collapse of Communism in Eastern Europe and the emergence of the United State as the only superpower. The positive propositions, which have been born out of their self-criticism, are

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131 Jung, *Civilization in Transition*, p. 225.
132 de Gruchy, *Christianity and Democracy*, pp. 159ff

significant. They proposed

"a search for new ways of being a revolutionary movement, and new models of society independent of the dead legacy of European Communism. This meant the abandonment of the armed struggle, and an acceptance of the loss of political and military power; conversely, it meant the espousal of non-violence as 'the historical force of truth, right, justice and love'. Christians could help the revolutionary movement recover its original non-violent inspiration and make Nicaragua a laboratory in which the revolutionary and the non-violent traditions of struggle could create a new cultural synthesis, thus contributing to 'humanity's search in the crisis of civilisation".[133]

In their emphasis on the rediscovery of non-violent methods, these Nicaraguan liberation theologians show a remarkable convergence with the legacy of Martin Luther King [134]. After overcoming, at least in their intention, the classical ideological differences, and having reached some deeper sources of struggle, Nicaraguan theologians may turn to their more urgent common task. The re-evaluation of the importance of national sovereignty is a clear sign of a change, that is, a renewed identity that is able to represent their difference within global ideological fronts and economic interests. They realised that

"[a]n imposed process of democratisation might bring about a new sense of freedom to some, but it might also accentuate recession and deepen the economic crisis as the economy opens further to the competitive winds of the world and global capital. Thus an emphasis on national sovereignty by a small and weaker country may be an appropriate means of defending democratic rights and freedoms against dominant powers, even though the doctrine of national sovereignty has serious drawbacks in other respects for word peace and global democratisation."[135]

Finally, de Gruchy stresses the importance of Non Governmental Organisations and the churches, that is, the civil society within the democratic process.

"Democracy requires educating people to participate in the political process, the need to develop a culture of human rights and tolerance, and an ability to break out of dogmatic ideological positions in seeking solutions to the problems which divide a country."[136]

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133 de Gruchy, *Christianity and Democracy*, p. 161.
134 de Gruchy, *Christianity and Democracy*, p. 162.
135 de Gruchy, *Christianity and Democracy*, p. 162f
136 de Gruchy, *Christianity and Democracy*, p. 163.

The examination of the process of transition in some sub-Saharan African countries provides us with a similar lesson.

"The sorry tale of failed political orders in much of sub-Saharan Africa since independence indicates that systems of government, whether liberal democratic, socialist, or Marxist-Leninist, foisted on the people of Africa, cannot be expected to work. Democracy has to grow from within in ways appropriate to Africa and each nation's particular history and political tradition."[137]

Thus, a gathering of African church leaders in Kenya in July 1993 tried to relate African traditional insights to contemporary political problems. As de Gruchy reports,

"[r]eflecting on the extent to which competition and conflict are built into European political systems, [the church leaders] stressed the contemporary importance of the traditional African insistence on consensus-making. 'If', they argued, 'the goal of political change is harmonious community', then 'it does not necessarily follow that the politics of competition provides the means'. They urged the churches 'to become actively involved in the search for alternative democratic models appropriate to the respective countries, taking into account the African heritage, the colonial legacy, and post-colonial pressures'."[138]

This task, however, is an enormous one. Traditional African society may be best understood as an organic society, similar to that of Medieval Europe, with its strict hierarchical order and its sacralised notion of authority, fairly incompatible with the idea of modern pluralist democracy. In this respect, Christianity is expected to challenge the tradition. Nevertheless, traditional African understanding of person, embedded into the organic social order, that is, "a person is a person through other persons"[139], would pose a positive challenge over against possessive individualism, therefore this part of the legacy has to be strengthened. The creative evaluation of the mixed African cultural legacy would require a strong cultural theology, which, in turn, ought to be able to co-operate with socially conscious critical theologies. However, as de Gruchy observes, a

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137 de Gruchy, *Christianity and Democracy*, p. 188.
138 de Gruchy, *Christianity and Democracy*, p. 189.
139 de Gruchy, *Christianity and Democracy*, p. 141.

balanced co-operation between prophetic liberation theology and culturally focussed theology in sub-Saharan Africa is yet to come.

e. Democracy and Freedom - a Summary of their Relationship

At the end of our discussion of democratic traditions we have already noted that each of the three main traditions, the liberal democratic, the social democratic and the Christian democratic approaches have been seeking the solution of the problem of human freedom. The proposal that democratic traditions can be read as attempts to answer the question of freedom, may easily be drawn out to the fourfold exposition of democratic theory. *Traditions* are the living legacies of the quest for actualised freedom, with all the binding force as well as inspiration a living legacy can offer. Here the bearer of a tradition has to be able to handle the real tension between continuity and change, and has to be aware of not only the richness but also the limits of his or her tradition. A detailed analysis of the concept of freedom within a particular tradition, therefore, may be a helpful contribution to the preservation of this delicate balance. A critical clarification of democracy as *vision*, as we have seen, requires an accurate conception of ideology, an ability to distinguish between ideology in a general sense and ideology as a distortion, or, following Mannheim's thought, between a concrete utopia and an abstract utopia. Again, a concept of freedom is presupposed in these distinctions, or, to put it differently, a particular concept of freedom might be determinative in making particular distinctions. Democracy as *system* can be understood as a description of how institutionalised freedom works. The different opinions about the democratic system, hence, might be translated into questions about which part of freedom should be institutionalised and how, or how differing or even opposing claims based on the demand for freedom should be organised into a single social order. Finally, democracy as *process* can be conceived as "the way to freedom".

Chapter 2

From Spontaneity to Balance: Bibó's Understanding of Freedom and Democracy

The Purpose and the Method of this Chapter

The aim of this chapter is to show the development of Bibó's thought from the beginning to his essay 'On the Equilibrium and Peace of Europe'[1]. This essay was written during the years 1942-44, with the strong intention of having it translated and sent to those who were to be responsible for the territorial and social reorganisation of Europe after the Second World War. The essay he planned was eventually left unfinished, neither was a translation of the finished parts possible for the peacemakers to read. The completed material, however, contains - in a more or less final form - the ideas that were to have an important role in Bibó's essays written after 1945. Several important parts of the original essay were turned into individual studies that became famous pieces of Bibó's public activity from 1945 onwards; some of them have been published in foreign languages.[2]

The essay 'On the Equilibrum and Peace of Europe' is particulary important for us in view of the fact that Bibó here deals with questions that occupied Bonhoeffer's thoughts in the same period and appeared in his writings as well. From the perspective of the future of Europe, Bibó assigned great importance to the reintegration of Germany into the new order of postwar Europe and to the stabilisation of the so-called "middle zone countries", Hungary among them. Therefore Bibó deals extensively with the situation in Germany: he

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[1] Its original Hungarian text is titled 'Az európai egyensúlyról és békéről', published in VT-I. pp. 295-635.

[2] Ideas that were first elaborated in 'On the Equilibrum and Peace of Europe' reappeared in some of Bibó's post-war essays. Two of them have also been published in English: 'The Distress of the Eastern European Small States' (1946), DRS pp. 13-87 and 'The Crisis of Hungarian Democracy' (1945) DRS pp. 89-183. The treatment of German political hysteria, which is the most important part of the essay in the perspective of this study, unfortunately has not been published in English. German translation: *Die deutsche Hysterie: Ursachen und Geschichte*, trans. Hans-Henning Paetzke, Insel Verlag, Fankfurt am Main - Leipzig, 1991. French translation: *Misere des petit Etats d'Europe de l'Est*, trans. György Kassai, L'Harmattan, Paris, 1986, pp. 7-129.

analyses the process that led to the development of national socialism and the catastrophe caused by it, and he offers his vision of the recovery of German social and political life. Germany thus appears as one of the major themes in Bibó's essay, which can be directly compared to what Bonhoeffer wrote about the state of his own national community and the possibility of her restoration.

In the development of the ideas of the two thinkers, their particular image of freedom plays an important part. Consequently, the ideas that lead to their vision of a post-war Germany and Europe may be detected by following the development of their respective images of freedom. Furthermore, by looking at their ideas about freedom we can follow the development of their thinking with respect to democracy, in Bibó's case quite directly, and in Bonhoeffer's in a more indirect manner.

Bibó's and Bonhoeffer's images of freedom, naturally, are not isolated components of their thinking but are deeply embedded into their wider theory, their *Weltanschauung*. In Bibó's case *Weltanschauung* means a dominant social theory that has some theologically relevant elements; in Bonhoeffer's case it is a theological theory that has been intertwinned with a characteristic social theory from the very outset. Bonhoeffer's *theology of sociality* has been described in a comprehensive way and Bonhoeffer scholars usually agree that his theology and its social implications are in a mutually influential connection to each other. Bibó scholarship, however, has not yet explored the concrete contents of the theological relevance of Bibó's social theory. Therefore, one of the tasks of this chapter is to compensate for this shortcoming: to clarify the concrete contents of the theological relevance of Bibó's social theory as accurately as possible.

A. Bibó's Christianity and the Coherence of his Thought

Interpreters of Bibó usually occupy three typical positions according to their starting point from where they approach Bibó's text's: a liberal position[3], a

[3] For example: Béla Faragó, *Nyugati liberális szemmel,* Les Livres des 'Cahiers Hongrois', Volume 10, Dialogues Européens, 1986

Marxist socialist position[4] or a non-Marxist, that is, a popular or Third Way socialist position[5]. All of these aspects reveal some contradictions in Bibó's written heritage, being unable to demonstrate the fundamental unity of his thought. However, there is a fourth possibility, that, as far as I know, appeared as only a tentative attempt in Bibó scholarship to date. In the Bibó Congress, held in Szeged in the *annus mirabilis,* 1989, Péter Kende argued that "the liberal and socialistic elements of Bibó's image of society can be viewed as a harmonious complex only by the mediation of Christian thought"[6].

Although this statement seems to be a rather trivial assertion, its concrete content cannot easily be explained with respect to Bibós texts. Interpreters agree that Bibó was a Christian thinker and his Christianity naturally marks his social theory[7]. However, it is not easy to indentify the concrete shape and content of Bibó's Christianity. He never spoke about his personal faith or the characteristics of the Christianity he personally identified with. Even a rather dramatic expression of his faith was not related by him but by an earwitness more than two decades after his death[8]. In his studies Bibó did not argue theologically and left only rather infrequent references to theologians whose writings he read. Thus, his presentation of the person and work of Christ within the introductory section of his late essay 'Reflections on the Social Development of Europe' appears as a surprise without any apparent precedents. This picture of Christ[9] is incomplete against any systematic theological standard and so unusual in some ways that we may resonably argue that here Bibó created his personal image of Christ. Within the same period he wrote another piece in which the unusual argumentation frames a discussion of the personal faith of *others.* Here Bibó analysed the poems of two well-known Hungarian poets about their experience of "the eclipse of God" and he finished his study with a long quotation from

[4] For example: Tibor Huszár, 'Bibó István - a gondolkodó, a politikus' in: István Bibó, *Válogatott tanulmányok,* Volume III. Magvető, Budapest, 1986 pp. 386-534.
[5] For example: Zoltán Szabó, 'Bibó Istvánról' in: István Bibó: *Összegyűjtött munkái,* Volume I. EPMSZ, Bern, 1981 pp. 8-35.
[6] See György Litván, 'Jászi Oszkár és Bibó István', in: György Litván, *Októberek üzenete*, Osiris, Budapest, 1996, p. 371.
[7] Árpád Göncz, 'Bibói magatartás - bibói életmű', in ÉD, p. 9.
[8] I think of a radio talk of Imre Mécs, broadcasted in the autumn of 2000.
[9] DRS pp. 431ff

Bonhoeffer's famous 16 July 1944 letter[10]. Similarly to Bibó's picture of Christ, we may be right in assuming that the unusual approach was intended to reveal Bibó's own thoughts about the suffering God who was with him especially when he had forsaken him. Nevertheless, these two particular texts of the late Bibó have to be regarded as rare exceptions: indirect expressions of his personal faith. Whatever richness of theological thought may be attributed to them, these exceptional texts cannot serve us as a solid ground for reconstructing the shape and content of Bibó's Christianity. The starting point for this reconstruction lies elsewhere. If a solid ground can be found, the expressions of Bibó's personal faith can be associated to it.

The Influence of Max Weber

My thesis is that it was Max Weber's sociological theory of Christianity that exercised the most important individual influence on Bibó's image of Christianity and on his view of the impact of Christianity on social development. My argument is built on Bibó's first public address and his later comment on it. As a student in his final year at Gymnasium (grammar school) Bibó was asked to give a talk on the day of the Reformation, 31 October, 1928. Thus, the Reformed student of the Roman Catholic Gymnasium addressed his audience with a talk titled 'What has the Reformation Meant to Humankind?'[11] In the autobiographical interview, recorded during 1977 and 1978, he remembered the address like this:

"Regarding Max Weber I also need to tell that in my eighth year as a Reformed young man I had to give a memorial talk about the Reformation, that I held on the basis of the famous article of Max Weber, given into my hand by my father. It was my first encounter with Max Weber who excercised a great influence on me then and ever since."[12]

This statement remains the only direct reference to the influence of Weber on Bibó. Bibó never mentioned Weber's name in the interview again, and

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[10] István Bibó, 'Két verselemzés' in *Confessio*, 4 (1979) pp. 75-80.

[11] István Bibó, 'Mit jelentett a reformáció az emberiség számára?' in: *Egyházi Híradó*, 1928 november 10, pp. 2-3, also in: ÉD pp. 85-86 .

[12] ÉD p. 216.

only very few marginal references to Weber's works can be found in Bibó's studies as well[13]. Apart from this statement and the address that Bibó reffered to in it, I know only two important writings of Bibó with which a connection to Weber's theory can be built.

The first writing is an extensive review of Karl Mannheim's *Diagnosis of our Time*[14], published in 1943 and reviewed by Bibó in the same year. In the seventh lecture of his collection of his essays, 'Towards a New Social Philosophy', Mannheim refers to Weber's theory and applies it to his own research in a rather characteristic manner. The way Mannheim underlines the characteristics of Weber's scholarly approach may closely be associated to the Weberian impact reflected by Bibó's writings from the very outset.

The second text is a passage from the late essay, 'Reflections on the Social Development of Europe', that contains some comments on the Protestant Reformation[15]. These comments also reflect the Weberian background that appears behind the student address. The student address, the review of Mannheim's study and the comments on the Reformation will serve us as a literary basis for elaborating our hypothesis of Weber's impact on Bibó.

The literary evidence for the statement of the late Bibó is rather weak. Nevertheless, I think, the statement should be taken seriously. A careful reading of Bibó's writings will not only justify its weight but also help us identify the way Bibó approached Christianity and theological theory. First we will see the contents of the address and then we will examine the emphasis given by Mannheim to Weber's theory, and finally we will review the comments on the Reformation.

In his student address Bibó spoke of "great thoughts" of the Reformation that were to reshape the face of the world. These great thoughts are: returning to the basis of the Gospel; the free search for the truth instead of being determined by dogmas; the focus on humans as individuals instead of regarding them as

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[13] VT-I. p. 26. and p. 66., references to Weber's *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft* (Tübingen, 1922) in his *Coercion, Law, Freedom*.
[14] Karl Mannheim, *Diagnosis of our Time: Wartime Essays of a Sociologist*. Kegan Paul. London, 1943
[15] DRS pp. 469f.

members of social orders; putting the grace of God into the centre instead of the outward means of salvation; active faith instead of contemplative religion.

Returning to the basis of the Gospel meant to evaluate Chrisian teaching and practice in the light of the Scripture again and allow laypeople to be nurtured and strengthened by daily Bible-reading. Bibó stressed that this blessing was accessible for rich and poor alike. Free search for truth, secondly, was practiced first only within theology, but this practice later was extended to the areas of natural science and culture as well. The medieval understanding of the human being as collective person, thirdly, was replaced by the focus on individual values, and, although individual evaluation of people sometimes reached extreme forms, it was still the basis of European culture that needed a special attention at a time when Communism wished to degenerate people into a mass. Fourthly, the Reformation created a self-conscious, disciplined type of person by stressing the gracious election of God and abandoning the use of outward means of salvation: this new type embodies a great moral strength and capability of perseverance. Finally, however,

"[i]t was the Christian world-view (Weltanschauung) that has changed by the Reformation to the highest degree. According to medieval thinking, the ideal Christian life could be pursued only in isolation from the world. According to the Protestant world-view, however, perfect Christian life can be pursued only in the world, among sinful people and real temptations to sin, since perfect Christian life is not only the means of our own salvation but also a witness to Christ in the world, whose way is continouos labour in the world and the faithful completion of our calling. The word "calling" appeared first in Luther's translation of the Bible and remained significant for the whole of Protestantism to our days. While according to medieval ideology work for those who did not have to pursue it for providing their daily bread by it meant only an aid in fighting against temptations, Protestantism made the Pauline sentence important again: those who do not work should not eat."[16]

In his closing sentences Bibó spoke of the "eternal ideas" of the Reformation. They are a permanent feeding on Scripture, an unflagging search for the truth, a high evaluation of work, the development of our talents to put them into service of "the idea of Christ" that are to be realised in our own life and our own circles.

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[16] ÉD p. 86.

What the "famous article" of Weber that Bibó relied on was, cannot exactly be determined now, still, we may identify the possible source. The argumentation of the address closely reminds us to the train of thoughts of *The Protestant Ethics and the Spirit of Capitalism.* The "great thoughts" that Bibó identified as significant fruits of the Reformation are leading topics of Weber's study. Bibó could even read the study in a Hungarian translation - or at least a review of it - before 1928.

The student Bibó's reception of Weber's argumentation shows a tendency to simplification and concentration at the same time. Simplification is probably a most natural treatment in a case like this: fine distinctions as well as presentations of complex connections between causes and effects simply evaporated from Bibó's text. The concentration, however, is more than a mere compression of Weber's thoughts into a telegram-style text. Bibó presents all the "great thoughts" in a form that reflects the structure of a pronouncement of freedom.

Although freedom appears literally only in the reference to the "free search for truth", all the "great thoughts" express a content that can be described as an event of freedom: both freedom from something and freedom for something. Returning to the basis of the Gospel is understood as returning to the source of freedom, that, as its social consequence, sets lay people free from the tutelage of the clergy for pursuing a responsible life in their own right. Free search for truth means freedom from the rule of preconceptions and freedom for relaxed observation of experiences. Emphasising individual values means setting people free from their social order and making them free for building up their own identity. Further, the Reformation freed the believer from the control of the outward means of salvation, possessed by the medieval church, for being able and ready to accept the strengthening grace in a direct relationship with the gracious God. Finally, the new world-view proved to be effective enough in setting people free from a legal evaluation of this-worldly work and free for the acknowledgement of work as God's calling. Whatever reflections and evaluations these statements may receive - even Bibó made a critical remark on the possibility of extreme individualism - it is clear that the student Bibó's general assertions reflect his understanding of freedom as both freedom from and

freedom for something. The presence of these two aspects of freedom seems to be finely balanced; all the "great thoughts" are structured by the balanced togetherness of the aspects of "from" and "for".

The element of "free search for truth", however, has a greater significance than being merely one item among others. Within Bibó's order it stands at the second place, following the first element, "returning to the basis of the gospel". By beginning his presentation of the influence of the Reformation with this element Bibó expressed his awareness that the original causes of the Reformation were theological ones. By putting "free search for truth" at the second place he emphasised, I think, the most important consequence of the theological breakthrough. Let us remember the development of this thought again: free search for truth was practiced first only within theology, but this practice later was extended to the areas of natural science and culture as well. Originating from the theological event, free search for truth became the source of the secular fruits of the Reformation.

By concentrating on this aspect of Bibó's argument I not only suggest that, having encountered the scholarship of Weber, Bibó was aware of the social impact of theological thoughts and forms of piety that continuously played a part in his own scholarship later. It is true in itself, but I emphasise a more important correspondence of their thoughts. Highlighting the element of a free search for truth Bibó prepared the ground for following an experiential method in his own research. I am not sure whether or not the seventeen-year-old student was aware of the significance of the direction he had taken; however, as we will shortly see, years later he made a conscious decision for the experiential method to which he adhered until the end of his life.

At this point, and as the second piece of writing in our literary evidence, I present Mannheim's application of Weber's theory that renders the utmost significance of the experiental method both for theological and sociological research. Here I wish to display the perspective Bibó turned to when he had chosen the experiential approach. The development of his thought will be easier for us to understand if we see its epistemological framework as well as the possibilities the framework is able to offer. The framework and its possibilities are nowhere described in Mannheim's concentrated manner in the works of Bibó,

therefore I make Mannheim speak for Bibó here. Apart from Bibó's thoughts that can be fitted into this framework, our indirect literally evidence for ascribing Mannheim views to Bibó is the latter's enthusiastic review of the Mannheim study.

Within a comparison of the positions of Protestantism and Catholicism with respect to a planned democratic order, Mannheim wrote:

"The genuine contribution of Protestantism is bound to come from its emphasis on the freedom of the individual, its self-determination, its emphasis on voluntary co-operation, self-help and mutual aid. These will always be the great antitheses to the coming forms of authoritarianism, centralisation and organisation from above. It would be misleading to interpret our appreciation of the significance of systematic thought in Thomism as an attempt to ignore the contribution Protestantism has made to the growth of modern rationalism. Just the opposite is true. Max Weber's historical investigations have shown how the spirit of modern Capitalism - foresight, calculation, systematisation of life - developed as an answer to the challenge of the Calvinist doctrine of predestination. Let us add to this that the attempt to replace the Church-dictated interpretation of the world by sects and individuals represents a continuous effort to reinterpret the world in terms of one's own peculiar experiences. Those reinterpretations equally make use of rational thinking, but in a completely new sense. It is as if one were to look at a previously established universe from the angle of one's own, i.e. from the individual's perspective. (...) Rationality becomes individualised rationality, departing very often from the authoritatively established universe of discourse to lend expression to the experience of the world as it presents itself to struggling smaller groups or to the lonely individual. (...) [M]odern experimentalism is born out of this individualised rationality which does not accept a pre-established system of metaphysics, but is ready to change the hypothesis if new facts and unexpected experiences do not fit into the scheme."[17]

Here Mannheim drafted an outline of a comprehensive critical theory on the basis of Max Weber's investigations. The subject of this theory is the self-determined individual. The theory begins with the experience of individuals or marginal groups - "Protestant sects" in the setting of Weber's research; it emphasises the rationalistic understanding of these experiences to question the validity of "grand theories" of any kind, pre-established and imposed in an autoritative way from above. I have mentioned earlier that Bibó adhered to the experiential method until the end of his life. Here I can add that the method served as a critical theory for him. Now we will take an unchronological step to

[17] Mannheim, *Diagnosis of our Time*, pp. 107f.

see how Bibó formulated his claim for this critical theory at the end of his last significant work, 'Reflections on the Social Development of Europe':

"It is said that Moltke once advised a young soldier to turn to the classics if he wanted to read good writing on the science of strategy, because the classical authors had not yet lost their instinct to look for the intrinsic causes of things. Public thinking in today's Europe is, by and large, lacking this instinct. This is not exclusively the fault of Marxism. Originally, it may have been Christianity - with its ideologised cosmic explanations - that for centuries eroded the ability of Europeans to follow simple phenomena back to their own causes, instead of trying to force them into special stereotypes, be they the schematics of salvation and divine providence or class interests and class society."[18]

The expression of the "instinct to look for the intrinsic causes of things" may be understood as the inclination to give preference to experiences over grand theories; thus the late Bibó seems to represent the critical theory we identified in Mannheim's words. From a theological point of view and even from a purely epistemological aspect "experience" and "intrinsic causes of things", however, are highly problematic expressions. I will be unable to pursue a comprehensive analysis and evaluation of these notions within the limit of this study. The most I can do is to clarify later as closely as possible what Bibó meant by these expressions, and what role they play with respect to his social theory and its theological relevance. This clarification will prepare his theory for a comparison to that of Bonhoeffer, that is, the ultimate aim of this study.

The third text of the few pieces of literary evidence is the late comment on the social significance of the Protestant Reformation. The argumentation of the text follows the fundamental conviction of the late Bibó, that European history is part of the "Christian experiment" of eliminating the spasms of fear, hatred and violence[19], and Weberian elements have been inserted into this framework. In accordance with his fundamental conviction, Bibó regarded as a negative consequence of the church schism that "the medieval sructure of the Christian Church's organisation was eliminated (...), the universal credibility of the Church's moral-ideological teaching-power rooted in the papacy of Rome (capable of much greater achievements) was also eliminated (...), and in the

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[18] DRS pp. 521f.
[19] DRS p. 453.

German Low Countries" an absolutist rule had been developed. At the same time, he continued, "regardless of how many dangerous side effects Puritanism and Pietism had, we must qualify as a positive development the greater seriousness, bordering on deadly earnestness, with wich moral requirements were treated in the Protestant countries"[20]. His emphasis on moral values is an unmistakable sign of the impact of Weber. Similarly, he emphasised "that the modern rationalist thesis, according to which Reformation in itself was a special propagator of political liberties, is not valid for Lutheranism, or even Calvinism; it is applicable, at most, only to the non-affiliated free sects. The true effect of the Reformation was not in its direct striving for political liberties, but in its influence in creating a morally demanding type of people, who subsequently increased their requirements for political liberties."[21] We can see that the late Bibó modified his rather uncritical first adaptation of Weber's evaluation of the impact of Protestantism, and he highlighted the particular attention Weber payed to the role of "free sects".

Having reviewed the literary evidence of Weber's lasting impact on Bibó, and before we proceed to explore into Bibó's texts, I should record one more problem that may make the common view of Weber, Mannheim and Bibó troublesome in the perspective of today's Western Protestant theologians. Weber, Mannheim and the young Bibó seem to share the unquestioned view that the subject of Protestant ethics and, consequently, sociologically relevant Christianity is the self-determined individual. This liberal view was radically criticised by early twentieth century neo-orthodox theologians - Bonhoeffer among them - and is still regarded by many as a failure of Protestantism. Against this background the starting point of Bibó's critical theory would seem a hopelessly anacronistic one, so much so that one would not even consider it is sensible enough to engage into a critical discussion with it.

To bridge the gap between this liberal view and contemporary theological awareness, I refer to Reinhard Hütter's study, 'The Twofold Center of Lutheran

[20] DRS p. 469.
[21] DRS p.470.

Ethics - Christian Freedom and God's Commandments'[22], that I briefly reviewed in chapter 1. We have seen that Hütter listed three theological answers to the challenge of "the modern theological impoverishment of Protestant ethics", caused by the overemphasising of the idea of the self-determined individual. We will keep in mind the three possible answers to the fallacy of modern Protestant ethics, decentering, differentiating and recontextualising the moral agent while we will discuss the development of Bibó's concept of freedom.

B. Bibó's Understanding of Freedom in his Dissertation: 'Coercion, Law, Freedom'[23]

a. The Method: the Empirical Way of Developing a Concept

There are basically two ways of developing a concept of any phenomena of human society or the human spirit: the rational way and the empirical way. The rational way means defining a concept first then classifying and analysing the raw material of experience later by approaching it through the pre-defined concept. According to the empirical method, however, the first step is the classification and analysis of empirical facts until finally a concept emerges. A choice between the two ways is not a question of the logical priority of experience or concept but, first of all, a question of terminological practicability. Nevertheless, a decision about a terminological question is related to the fundamental question of epistemology.

The rational method is apparently clear: if we define a concept in advance, it is sufficient to subsequently draw its conclusions, that is, describe the experiences that belong to the concept. This process is, however, a dangerous one. The defined concept may happen not to match the experiential facts.

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[22] In Karen Bloomquist and John R. Stumme, eds., *The Promise of Lutheran Ethics,* Fortress Press, Minneapolis, 1998, pp. 31-54.

[23] 'Kényszer, jog, szabadság' [Corecion, Law, Freedom] was written in 1933 and won a competition for its author that year that made Bibó qualified to apply for a state-sponsored scholarship. First publication: István Bibó, *Kényszer, jog, szabadság,* Szeged Városi Nyomda és Könyvkiadó Rt., Szeged, 1935. (Acta Litterarum ac Scientiarum Reg. Universitatis Hung. Francisco-Josephiane. Sectio: Juridico-Politica, 8.) The new critical edition was published in: VT-I. pp. 7-147. Numbers in parentheses in this section refer to the page numbers of this edition.

Moreover, the defined concept may step into the place of the experiential facts and an inversion may take place between them.

The empirical method, contrary to the rational method, apparently suffers from an inner contradiction: it aims to develop a concept by the completion of the investigation; however, it cannot even start the process of developing it without creating some concept about the phenomena in question. A process of investigation that begins with an – albeit provisional – pre-defined concept is unable to avoid to have some rational or even dogmatic elements in it. The dilemma may be solved, however, if we insist that the pre-defined concept is, by its nature, different from the *concept* that is finally to be developed. The pre-defined concept is created not logically but merely grammatically: it is a grammatical description of irrational empirical facts as well as related spontaneous reflections and primary notions. Thus, while operating with pre-defined concepts, which is a grammatical necessity in itself, one has to bear in mind that they are not logical definitions. At the same time, while marking off and naming the piece of empirical reality that is to be investigated means using rational tools, it is far from being a rational process. On the contrary, it is the most appropriate way of empirical cognition: it seeks to grasp the empirical reality of the phenomenon. Therefore, the empirical method of developing a concept is not a deduction from a rational standpoint, but a critical treatment of an irrational standpoint that is gradually developed into a piece of conceptual knowledge (*VT-I.* 7-9). This is the way Bibó wishes to proceed in his investigation.

Bibó's choice of his method, naturally, reflects more about the character of his thinking than being merely an answer to "a question of terminological practicability". On the one hand, he does not express any deliberation with respect to the trustworthiness of experience. He regards it as necessary to identify a piece of empirical reality as the object of an investigation, and he seems to be certain that empirical reality can be appropriately investigated. On the other hand, he expresses a radical distrust towards pre-defined concepts that may obscure empirical reality before it can be fully investigated. It seems to be clear that he wishes to set the empirical facts free from the rule of concepts and not *vice versa.* He does not want to suspend the use of rational concepts; his

readiness to use pre-defined concepts as "grammatical necessities" and also his purpose to reach "a piece of conceptual knowledge" makes him different from a merely empiricist thinker, showing that Bibó's main purpose is rather to establish a priority between concept and empirical facts, even if he tries to deny it.

It is striking to remember here the already quoted sentences that ten years later Mannheim wrote with Weber in his mind, because they throw light on the social significance of Bibó's decision that Bibó was most likely unaware of in 1933:[24] As the train of thought of the study develops, we will see how "empirical fact" will gain the concreteness of "one's own peculiar experience".

b. Coercion

Bibó found it necessary to investigate the phenomenon of coercion as a starting point. Scholarly literature, he argued, discussed freedom and law extensively: freedom had often been regarded as an opposite of coercion and law as something related to coercion, but few words were spent on coercion itself. Although coercion as an experience had been rather clearly described, a conceptual knowledge of coercion had not been developed, because different authors emphasised different components of the phenomenon of coercion (*VT-I.* 10).

1. Coercion as an Inner Experience; Three Preliminary Observations; the Appearance of the Fundamental Concept of Bibó's Study

Following his self-chosen method, the empirical mode of developing a concept, Bibó stated *that coercion is first of all an inner*[25] *phenomenon* (*VT-I.* 11). Coercion has to be manifested as the personal experience of someone who is capable of taking up a position of will. Therefore, the centre of gravity of coercion as an inner experience is to be found on the part of the constrained

[24] Mannheim, *Diagnosis of our Time,* p. 108.

[25] The Hungarian word that is translated as *inner* here is *lelki* that might be translated as mental or psychological as well.

person. Lived experience provides the first and basic information about coercion, and other components, such as where or in whom the origin of coercion can be found are only of a secondary importance (*VT-I.* 12).

The second characteristic of coercion as an inner experience is that the coercive phenomenon always appears as an opposing, alien power against the will of the constrained one. Whether they are outward or inward forces, even ethical principles that someone follows without identifying with them, are alien to *the spontaneous will* of the constrained person (*VT-I.* 12). Here spontaneity, the decisive concept of Bibó's study appears in his argumentation.

The concept of spontaneity is the starting point of Bibó's train of thought. The concept itself is taken from the work of Henri Bergson[26], whose decisive influence is reflected also in the main text of Bibó's dissertation (*VT-I.* 58). Bibó's fundamental conviction that the spontaneous self is independent from causal determination, which appears in the subsequent argument in several forms, shows Bergson's influence too. However, as the Editor of the Selected Works notes, it makes the understanding of Bibó's dissertation rather difficult that the author himself did not elaborate the concept of spontaneity right at the beginning of his study[27].

The third characteristic of coercion is that it is not identical to either the phenomenon in which it originates or the will that suffers from it; coercion is rather *a certain relationship* of the originator and the receiver. Therefore, a constrained will appears as a phenomenon that is dependent on, preconditioned and caused by the constraining phenomenon. Thus, coercion is more than being affected, it is rather being determined. Here the original experiential description turns into a conceptual definition, as *being determined* may be related to the category of *causality* (*VT-I.* 13).

[26] Bergson, Henri: *Zeit und Freiheit*, Jena, 1911

[27] See editorial note 1., VT-I. p. 638.

2. Coercion as Viewed under the Aspects of Causality and Spontaneity: the Introduction of the Synoptic Method

These three observations relate coercion both to the category of spontaneity and causality. Bibó regards these categories as *aspects* under which phenomena can be viewed and observed. When speaking about coercion as viewed under both the aspects of causality and spontaneity, Bibó applies the so-called *synoptic method*[28], developed by his teacher, Barna Horváth. In Horváth's theory of the sociology of law the synoptic method means a method of observation that applies the *normative* and the *factual* approach in a parallel way. The observer views facts not only according to the factual approach but also the normative approach and *vice versa*: norms are viewed according to the factual approach besides the normative approach. Thus, both norms and facts are viewed according to approaches that are *characteristic to them* on the one hand and *alien to them* on the other. The result of this method is a knowledge of social reality in which facts appear as touched by norms and norms appear as related to facts.

When Bibó finally reaches his first short definition of coercion, he applies the structure provided by the synoptic method:

"Coercion is nothing else than a *synoptic view* of the phenomena of spontaneity, that is, their view under the aspect of spontaneity as their characteristic approach, and the aspect of causality as their alien approach." (*VT-I.* 17)

The definition contains three important statements. First, coercion appears primarily in human spontaneity (cf. the second preliminary observation above); therefore, second, the characteristic approach of viewing coercion is the aspect of spontaneity; third, although coercion can be viewed under the aspect of causality, causality always remains an alien approach to viewing coercion. From these statements a decisive assertion follows:

"The relationship of the coercive force and the constrained person never turns into a causal relationship, even if extreme coercion occurs, because a position of

[28] For a detailed description of the synoptic method see editorial note 7., VT-I. pp. 643f.

will [on the part of the constrained person] is always wedged in this relationship as an indispensable phenomenon of coercion." (*VT-I.* 17-18)

This is the core of Bibó's understanding of coercion, and his fundamental conviction works as an organising force in the course of the discussion of further details. First he discusses coercion as subjective experience, then as social objectivation. These sections are followed by a summary of the traditional differentiation within the concept of coercion, an inquiry into the ethical aspects of coercion, and finally a re-statement of the unified concept of coercion. Disregarding several details, now we turn to Bibó's treatment of coercion as subjective experience and as social objectivation.

3. Coercion as Subjective Experience

Since coercion is, first of all, a psychological experience, its most direct manifestation is the experience of *being constrained.* There are two components of this experience. The first one is the awareness that the constrained person's position of will is dependent on the coercive force: this component seems to represent a causal necessity. The second one is the awareness that the view of the position of the same will under the aspect of causality is alien to it. When Bibó applies the category of causality, he stresses that it may be used to a great extent with respect to the phenomena of nature (although its absolute value had been questioned by Heisenberg, whose discoveries Bibó was aware of), but when it is related to social phenomena, its alien character must not be overlooked[29]. Two important statements arise from this distinction. Any foreseeable or seemingly necessary event will not be regarded as coercion, if someone considers it harmonious with one's spontaneous will. In turn, any force outside or inside the constrained person's psyche, whatever positive meaning it may have, if it opposes the spontaneous direction of the will, will manifest itself as a source of coercion. That may be observed at an experimental level: any coercion that would force some high moral standard or a good outcome is in need of some justification. This very need shows that coercion has to legitimate itself over against the will that regards it as an opposing force. Finally, the need of

[29] See Bibó's extensive footnote 15., VT-I. pp. 15f.

legitimisation reflects the relative evaluation of coercion: it is regarded as *bad* on the part of the constrained one (*VT-I.* 19).

Thus, the innermost core of coercion as a subjective experience is the position of will, reacting against an alien force. Only after the resisting direction of personal will has been born can we speak about coercion as a subjective experience. Therefore, a distinction between effective and ineffective coercion is nonsensical, since we cannot speak about coercion before the will has reacted against it: coercion begins with its effect on the will. Further, since it is totally up to the constrained person to say whether he or she feels constrained, a high degree of *relativity* is characteristic of coercion as subjective experience. A spontaneous act of will may be turned into the effect of *irresistible coercion*, or an alien force may be regarded as the *spontaneous choice of the will* by conscious or unconscious judgement, depending on what effecting factor appears as alien or as characteristic to the personality *later*. This relative character of coercion as a subjective experience is intrinsic, and it may even become outwardly objective to some degree (*VT-I.* 21).

4. Coercion as Social Objectivation

The primary manifestation of coercion, as stated, is a subjective experience. However, if members of society become mutually aware of each other's experiences of being constrained, if they are able to recognise the constrained character of outward acts, if they are capable of deducing the typical features of coercion from similar features of several constrained acts of behaviour and identifying the peculiar contents of constrained behaviour, thus finally creating an objective social institution out of the experience of coercion; if members of society follow this direction, then as a result, the subjective experience of coercion will turn into a socially significant phenomenon, *a relational concept of social relevance*, or, in short, *a social objectivation* (*VT-I.* 22).

Bibó, accordingly, explains the development of a social objectivation[30] in four steps. First, the experiencing subject turns his or her experiences into objects by reflective thinking. Second, repeated experiences serve as a basis for abstraction; their common characteristics can be named and identified. Here the objectivation of a *personal* experience is completed. The *social* objectivation starts when, as a third step, our personal experiences will be related to acts of outward behaviour. Finally, the generalisation of this outward behaviour allows us to relate it back to the personal experiences of other people. Thus, social objectivation is a process with manifold aspects that proceeds from lived experience to reflected knowledge, from the unique to the repeated, from the concrete to the abstract (*VT-I.* 23).

A comparison of a unique experience to a social objectivation reveals a certain *fictional* character of the latter. Objective expressions like 'a people likes its ruler' do not refer to every possible personal experience, but presuppose their likely existence until their opposite will does not become objective as well. However, if objectivations become empty of their respective personal experiences, they will become *fictitious* assertions and loose their social reality.

Acts of social coercion may be very different with respect to the degree of their objectivation. Only *some* social rules reach a high degree of accountability, like certain conventions, moral practices and, especially, written law. Nevertheless, *absolute* coercion is a contradiction in terms, since an expression like that would regard coercion as a necessity that resembles the law of nature, and would deny the indispensable role of the resisting human will (*VT-I.* 25).

[30] Similarly to the synoptic method, Bibó took the concept of social objectivation from the works of his teacher, Barna Horváth. Bibó uses some – but not all – of Horvát's distinctions within his own work, such as formal and material objectivation, but generally he applies the concept according to the need of his own order of ideas. Formal objectivation may happen in case of the similarity of individual - both psychological and biological - acts, but it does not have any distinguishable contents. Material objectivation, however, has a content, such as grammar, or cultural and social phenomena. For a detailed presentation of the original use of the concept of objectivation in Horvath's works see editorial note 10., VT-I. pp. 645f..

5. *A Working Definition of Power, Originating from the Concept of Coercion*

At this point of his investigation of the phenomenon of coercion Bibó offers a working definition of *power*. Arguing that really significant socially objective coercion comes from socially objective phenomena (e.g. rules of public action), Bibó states that people usually attribute power to those social phenomena that are capable of overcoming resistance. Thus, *power is a potentiality of practising coercion* (*VT-I.* 26). When reaching this definition, Bibó immediately challenges his own view by mentioning a different understanding of power just to express his own view even sharper. It is customary, he says, to define the phenomenon of power so broadly that the generation of the positive, non-resistant answer of the spontaneous will is also regarded as power. However, a definition like that forgets that inward resistance refers to coercion not less than open resistance does. While the free participation of *some* is an indispensable factor of power, it creates power only because it makes it possible to constrain *others*. Whenever we speak about the power of convention or moral rules, we do not regard them as phenomena that call the will to spontaneous following, but that overcome inward or outward resistance (*VT-I.* 27).

Bibó's definition of power reveals a fundamental characteristic of his thinking. His concept of coercion is as broad as possible: he regards even a short-term inward resistance of the will against whatever positive effect as coercion. To coercion, broadly understood in this way, also a relative evaluation is added, since coercion represents something that is bad (*VT-I.* 19). This broad understanding - and also the related evaluation – is also applied when he defines power as effective coercion. However, if power is defined with respect to a *broadly* understood coercion, the concept of power turns into a rather *narrow* one. Here Bibó's strange statement, that although the free participation of some people is an indispensable factor of power, it creates power *only* because it makes it possible to constrain others, seems to come home: already at this point

of his argumentation Bibó tries to exclude a possible definition of power from the perspective of freedom. Within our analysis of Bibó's understanding of freedom we will pay particular attention to what he might say about the relationship of freedom and power.

6. *A Tentative Theological Reading of Bibó's Understanding of Coercion*

By starting his investigation into the complex phenomena of the interrelationship of coercion, freedom and law with coercion, and by identifying coercion as an inner psychical experience that is alien to the spontenous will of the person, Bibó stabilised the ultimate *locus* of his research that is to provide the decisive information for his developing theory. The ultimate *locus* is the human psyche and the ultimate information originates in the spontaneous reaction of the psyche to outward events. With this decision Bibó asserts no less than that the spontaneous attitude of the human being is an ultimately decisive, unavoidable factor for any attempt to build a theory. This conviction can be detected in a rather implicit way throughout the later phases of Bibó's studies, and not earlier than in the introductory part of the 'Reflections on the Social Development of Europe' it appears in an explicit and a thematised manner. Here Bibó starts his theory "with the existentialist thesis that man is the only living being aware of his mortality"[31].

The phenomenon of coercion is described in a relational manner, a relation of the spontaneous position of the will to an outward effect. This relational description makes room for basic theological insights. Let us highlight the twofold thesis of Bibó's argumentation again: any event will not be regarded as coercion, if someone considers it harmonious with his or her spontaneous will, however, any force outside or inside the constrained person's psyche, whatever positive meaning it may have, if it opposes the spontaneous direction of the will, it will manifest itself as a source of coercion. The first thesis resembles Luther's

[31] DRS p. 425. The translation uses gender-exclusive language throughout; and although I would rather use gender-inclusive language, I do not want to change the translation, because I think that Bibó in the late sixties - early seventies was not aware of this problem.

description of the 'prelapsarian life' of human beings, and also the life of the believer, who has been placed 'back to paradise' by his union with Christ, and who is capable of doing 'intrinsically good acts' that are born out of Christian freedom[32]. The Christian, pictured this way, will not consider God's commandments as coercion, since the direction of his or her spontaneous will is identical to that of the commandments, they are not considered as alien forces. The second thesis resembles the sate of the human being *post lapsum,* outside of the union with Christ: God's commandments, that are positive in themselves, are perceived and regarded as alien, constraining forces.

Notwithstanding these resonances, there is a fundamental difference between Luther's and Bibó's understanding of the human situation: the latter does not pass an *a priori* and general judgement on the spontaneous position of the human will, stating that it is radically sinful. Nevertheless, Bibó does not say that the spontaneous will is right either. Instead of constructing a formal evaluation, he stays within the limits of his empirical method when he speaks about the relative, that is, the unreliable character of subjective experience. The human psyche is capable of deceiving itself and also the other about one's own spontaneous experiences. Therefore, while Bibó does not say formally that the human psyche is sinful, he does say that it is capable of sinning, pointing at the possibility of lying. We may emphasise here that according to much traditional theology lying is one of the most fundamental forms of sin; likewise, we may also think that the way Bibó expressed the unreliable character of subjective experience may be a reaction to a contextual background that is implicit here. The closing thought of his argumentation, that this relative character of coercion as a subjective experience is intrinsic, and it may even become outwardly objective to some degree, reflects both his awareness of the radicality of sin and its capability of developing into a supra-personal organism. Nevertheless, Bibó's awareness of the unreliable character of subjective experience does not distract him from insisting that for the empirical method the thorough investigation of subjective experience is an unavoidable task.

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[32] Cf. Hütter, 'The Twofold Center of Lutheran Ethics: Christian Freedom and God's Commandments', in: Bloomquist and Stumme eds., *The Promise of Lutheran Ethics,* pp. 40f.

This last comment is also important with respect to the identification of Bibó's description of the development of a socially relevant phenomenon or a social objectivation. He pictures this development as a process from below, starting from subjective experience, in which subjective experience remains active even at the more abstract level. Bibó stresses that if subjective experience evaporates from a developed social objectivation, the objectivation will loose its social reality. We can read it as a yet another argument for the unavoidability of subjective experience, even for a complex social theory, and, consequently, for a theology of sociality.

I think we can risk a fundamental insight about a possible theological reading of Bibó's texts already at this point of our research. We have seen that the empirically perceptible human self forms the basis for the reflections that are constitutive in the development of Bibó's social theory. Consequently, we are looking for possibilities of a theological reading that provide a creative role to this empirically perceptible human self. Among the three movements that are gathered together in Hütter's study as endeavours to overcome the fiasco of modern Protestantism, both differentiating and recontextualising the moral subject seem to provide a framework for a reading like this. As we continue our reading of Bibó's texts, we will try to answer the question whether Bibó, if interpreted in these frameworks, can provide some viable way out of the fallacy of modern Protestantism as identified by Hütter..

c. Freedom - a Preliminary Definition

Generally speaking, Bibó understands the concept of freedom as the opposite of system, determination or necessity. However, a more accurate way of speaking would require us to avoid the expressions of determination or necessity as varieties of *system*[33], since they are burdened by confusing connotations, thus it is proper to use only system instead of them. Thus, a preliminary definition can

[33] I have translated the Hungarian word *törvényszerűség* as system. The closest translation of the word is lawfulness in English. Since this word is closely associated with the theory and practice of the law in English, I have chosen system for its more general meaning, as Bibó understood this expression.

be formulated as follows: *freedom is a kind of exemption from a kind of system*, to which a question is to be added: *what kind* of exemption from *what kind* of system (*VT-I.* 38)?

If we are inclined to assign system to the world of nature and, alternatively, exemption from system to the world of spontaneous human will, we may tend to conclude that freedom cannot be found in the natural world and the law of human will is freedom itself. Neither conclusion is true. We cannot say that there is no authentic understanding of freedom outside of the human will. We cannot say either that freedom simply means all kinds of exemption from all kinds of system. On the contrary, the *unconditional rule* of some kinds of system may also mean the realisation of freedom (*VT-I.* 39). Therefore, it is to be decided which system effects freedom and which one causes captivity. To formulate a more refined preliminary definition, we may speak about freedom when a phenomenon is effected by a system of a *corresponding nature*, while a phenomenon under the influence of a system of an *alien nature* can be regarded as being in *non-freedom*. According to spontaneous evaluation, something is free if it is determined by an adequate or proper system or, speaking negatively, if it is exempt from an alien system.

When, discussing the concept of coercion, Bibó introduced the notion of the *synoptic view*, he showed a possibility of observing a phenomenon according to different aspects. Arguing that since things can be viewed under the rule of a certain system, therefore system, in fact, may be understood as a certain aspect from the point of view of the observing person, he applies the synoptic view by saying that phenomena can be effected by different kinds of system at the same time. A proper distinction between different kinds of aspects (or systems), however, is crucial. There is a difference between an aspect that is applied to the relationship of phenomena that are already known and another aspect that is of fundamental importance of primary cognition. In the latter case the aspect becomes a *ruling system* that is inseparable from the phenomena in question, while in the former case the alien aspect stands against the phenomena, even if it is applicable for their observation. Therefore, we will not call a phenomenon *free* for standing apart from the order of other things, but for being related to other

things in a way that is completely understandable according to aspects or systems that are characteristic to it (*VT-I.* 41).

Having reached this distinction, however, Bibó defines freedom as being exempt from the rule of alien systems and not as the status of phenomena ruled by systems which are characteristic to them. He argues that a rule of any system does not mean freedom if this ruling is undisturbed, that is, if even the mere possibility of an interfering alien system is excluded. Freedom means not a state of an undisturbed being but is born out of a situation when the reflecting consciousness relates the rule of a characteristic system to the presence of an alien system. Thus, freedom is a relational concept that is based on a negative viewing of the constellation of aspects. Therefore, its most general definition is created in a negative way: *freedom is being exempt from any alien system* (*VT-I.* 41).

The preliminary definition of the concept of freedom reveals an unresolved tension at the very heart of Bibó's understanding of freedom. At one point of the working out of his definition Bibó allows for the possibility that the rule of a characteristic lawfulness can be regarded as freedom (*VT-I.* 39), but later on he insists that the most general definition must be a negative one[34]. This conceptual dilemma sheds a sharp light on the character of Bibó's understanding of freedom whose significance we will discuss later.

1. Freedom and Coercion

When Bibó starts discussing freedom and coercion in their direct, opposing relationship, he first asks the question whether this relationship is *contrary* or *contradictory* (*VT-I.* 41). By *contrary* he means a mutually exclusive relationship, while *contradictory* means an encounter that excludes a third possibility (principium exclusi tertii). His answer to this question is more than interesting.

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[34] A certain swinging movement in Bibó's use and understanding of the concept of freedom was already noted by the opponents of Bibó's study, Professor Horváth and Professor Ereky. See their evaluation in ÉD pp. 94ff.

Concerning the whole natural and social world *in general*, Bibó argues, the opposition of coercion and freedom is contrary and not contradictory. At the same time, in the world of human behaviour, that is, *in the purely social world*, their relationship is contradictory. The argument that Bibó offers here is so dense that it is beyond intelligibility, however, his motives and purposes seem to be clear enough to reconstruct them.

The framework of the understanding of reality within which Bibó organised his thoughts was informed by Nicolai Hartmann's ontology[35] and the relatively new developments of quantum-theory. Both represented a world-view that presupposed a certain relatedness of the natural and the social world. Hartmann considered reality as a gradual organism of several strata from the inorganic level to the highest intellectual one. Similarly, the discovery of the statistical possibility within the world of nature questioned the unconditional rule of causality, which made the distinction between the natural and the social world a more relative one. Bibó took consideration of these theories but wanted to avoid a possible consequence of them (in accordance with Bergson's social theory): to allow laws of the natural world to be applied to the world of human sociality. That is why he declared such a sharp difference between *contrary* and *contradictory* relationships. In the world of human sociality, whose characteristic system is spontaneity, it cannot happen that in some cases spontaneity could contrast with and exclude causality and in other cases causality would be strong enough to contrast with and exclude spontaneity. Spontaneity is always present as a characteristic system, and *freedom is born out of spontaneity's victorious contradiction to causality*, the system that is alien within the world of human sociality. Therefore, the preliminary definition of freedom is completed as follows:

"When the phenomena of the human soul and human society are considered, all forms of behaviour are to be regarded as free that are not constrained and *vice versa*. Consequently, different forms and variations of the concept of coercion that were discussed before, presuppose the same forms of freedom. Subjective experiences of coercion are opposed by subjective experiences of freedom,

[35] As the Editor of the *Válogatott tanulmányok* notes, Bibó's reception of Hartmanns's theory was rather selective: that is why we cannot say that he followed Hartmann's ontology, he was only informed by some of its elements. See editorial note 2., VT-I. pp. 638ff.

objectivations of coercion stand against objectivations of freedom as well." (*VT-I.* 43)

2. Freedom as Subjective Experience

The experience of freedom, similarly to the experience of coercion, is rooted in the psyche of the acting person. Freedom is a personal, individual, thus a *relative* phenomenon. It may mean both an effective resistance against the constraining force of an alien system and the unconditional acceptance of the characteristic system of human soul, that is, spontaneity. Thus, the broadest definition of freedom is a *negative* one: it *contradicts* the rule of any alien system (*VT-I.* 44).

The *relative* character of freedom reveals itself in the possibility of 'liberation of a certain group of people against their own will' (*VT-I.* 45). Since the characteristic system of social reality is spontaneity, there is no freedom that has a social reality apart from experienced freedom. Any other sort of 'freedom' is nothing else than *postulated* freedom.

Personal experience is capable of testing the efficiency of an alien system as well. If it is debated whether a rule is regarded by a person or a group of persons as an effectively constraining, alien one, an experience of liberation that comes out of an exemption from the rule will affirm the coercive character of the latter.

3. Freedom as Objectivation

Freedom as a subjective experience may become objective in two forms: as a *personal and negative* freedom or *positive* freedom. The two forms are related to each other, but their relation is other than a gradual one: differences in their contents remain even at the highest grade of their development.

Freedom grows into a personally objective phenomenon when unique experiences that belong to different situations and different decisions of the will become not only repeated ones but also related to each other. A person may consider his or her different experiences as part of the same freedom, and assign freedom as an objective, discernible reality to his or her personality. Objective

personal freedom will be recognised by others and compared to their own personal freedom. As a result, society itself can be characterised by *free spheres of action* that have been developed out of objectivations of personal freedom.

The way from subjective freedom to objective personal freedom may be characterised by the difference of inward and outward. Likewise, this development can be recognised by reflecting on the gradual difference between an unwritten ethical rule and written law. Written law represents the strongest constraining force among ethical rules, and law is the most effective force also in providing the space for objective personal freedom by setting its limits. If everything is free that is not against the law, solid limits are effective in defining a space for personal freedom. Moreover, if limits are developed into a system of law, the institution of *human rights* appear as the highest objectivation of personal freedom (*VT-I.* 48).

So far Bibó has defined freedom as *negative*; now we can turn to his understanding of *positive* freedom. If we argue, he asks, that freedom means being exempt from causal determination, does it also mean that all sorts of calculable and foreseeable positions of the will that depend on outward factors should be regarded as constrained will? Experience shows that people whose will is determined like this do not always feel constrained. Here Bibó returns to his earlier statement that freedom can be defined not only as freedom from an alien system but also as adherence to a rule that belongs to the system that coheres to the will (*VT-I.* 39). Positive freedom is a detailed description of this possibility.

Following the logic of his empirical method, Bibó first asks which rule means coercion and which one does not. All rules or value judgements that appear to the active person at first are regarded as an alien system and probably remain the same afterwards as well. However, a requirement that is expressed by the rule may meet the acceptance of the person, and merge into one's spontaneous way of action, thus becoming one's characteristic system (*VT-I.* 50). *Positive freedom, in other words, is coercion that has been turned into freedom* (*VT-I.* 51). Bibó regards positive freedom the most intensive experience of freedom, since the theoretical - or reflected - presence of coercion is the strongest, while the experience of being exempt from the same coercion is the

most direct. The positive contents of this freedom are consciousness and activity that are related to ethical standards.

Within the category of positive freedom Bibó distinguishes *ethical freedom* as "positive freedom that is opposed to *and* created by ethical rules"(*VT-I.* 51) However, if ethical freedom is regarded as coercion that has been turned into freedom, it should be questioned whether this understanding meets the general requirement of the *autonomy* of ethical action, that is, that ethical action has to be exempt from coercion. Bibó's answer is that if the broad understanding of coercion is applied, the requirement of autonomy cannot be fulfilled. Thus, he affirms the possible heteronomy of ethical action, making at the same time a clear distinction between ethical action and an action that springs from ethical freedom. This answer leads him to an important insight.

Bibó argues that even a *pure ethical rule* that is claimed to be void of the element of coercion may exercise coercion against the spontaneous will of the person. The only difference between the coercion of pure ethical rules from that of other social rules is that the former cannot become a social objectivation. A pure ethical rule claims an absolute, unconditional validity, thus it requires identification to such a degree that makes objectivation impossible, since objective coercion presupposes an empirical ethical rule or law instead of a pure ethical rule. In other words, objectivation suspends a pure ethical rule. A pure ethical rule, at the same time, may be the source of the most intensive subjective experience of coercion, since the mere existence of the rule and its opposite direction to the will necessarily includes its positive following. Although the outcome of this form of coercion may be very similar to the result of ethical freedom, they are not identical. People who regard pure ethical rules as something merciless and coercive may never experience what the spontaneous following of a rule might mean. Thus, Bibó concludes, the highest ethical rules are the ones whose following makes a positive freedom the hardest to attain. If people contrast duties and obligations with their inclinations, it is revealed that coercion still has not been turned into freedom. Only when ethical rules become united with the spontaneity of the acting person, if "bad inclinations" are opposed by "good inclinations", that is, spontaneity is enriched by ethical values, can we speak about ethical freedom. Not following the rules itself, not even

convinced following of the rules means positive freedom, only the following of the rules that is embedded in spontaneity does so (*VT-I.* 52).

Approaching his most complete definition of positive freedom Bibó puts an emphasis on its unidirectional character, saying that the final unification of the original coercion and the spontaneous will makes positive freedom especially *effective*. Therefore, besides generality and repeatedness as criteria of objectivation, *effectiveness of action* becomes a special criterion that applies to positive freedom. And since the basis of positive freedom is the final agreement of constraint and spontaneous will, Bibó builds this element into its definition and coins the phrase of *positive freedom based on agreement or common consent* (*VT-I.* 53).

At this point Bibó formulates the logic of the development of positive freedom again. The objectivation of positive freedom, its generality, repeatedness and effectiveness, may be ascribed to the agreement of the constraining one and the constrained one. The agreement may appear also in an objective way, therefore agreement means the objectivation of the *sources* of positive freedom. If defined like this, *agreement* corresponds with the objectivity of the source of constraint, that is, *power*. (*VT-I.* 53)

At this point it becomes obvious why Bibó insisted on a *narrow* understanding of power earlier in his study. He stated that power is effective coercion and belongs *only* to coercion (*VT-I.* 26) to prepare the way for a related development of the understanding of agreement, that is, in fact, effective freedom. Power and agreement, therefore, appear at the top of Bibó's ideological construction: the first on the side of coercion, the second on the side of freedom, just to represent their inevitable contradiction at the highest level. Power and agreement are made essential for the definition of coercion and freedom in human sociality; the description of their relationship, however, requires a move forward from the areas related to either coercion or freedom.

4. Reinforcing his Characteristic Understanding of Freedom

Having established the concept of negative as well as positive freedom, Bibó reinforces the two decisive characteristics of his understanding of it. He

stresses again that freedom is to be understood primarily as a *negative* and a *relative* phenomenon. He achieves his aim by two short discussions.

In the first discussion, 'Review of the Theories of Freedom', Bibó presents the most fundamental thoughts about freedom of a number of scholars, such as Kant, Fichte, Schelling, Hegel, Comte, Boutroux, Hartmann and Bergson. We are especially interested in his reflections on the theories of Hegel and Bergson, who, in Bibó's view, represent two clear examples of distinct possibilities. Hegel's theory, Bibó says, denies any possibility of a negative understanding of freedom, freedom for him is exclusively a positively understood ethical freedom. Negative freedom leads, according to Hegel, to arbitrariness and accidentality, the very opposites of freedom (*VT-I.* 56). On this basis, Bibó concludes, Hegel could regard law and the state the very realisation of freedom, freedom itself. As a result of the understanding of freedom within German idealism in general, Bibó adds, the image of freedom in real life and the philosophical concept of freedom have become entirely unrelated to each other. The philosophers' rejection of an everyday, negative understanding of freedom was expressed, consequently, by an ethical scepticism as well; therefore Bibó considered it important to show how ethical freedom can be developed on the basis of a negative concept of freedom (*VT-I.* 57).

Turning to Bergson's theory, Bibó praises it for showing the basic relation of freedom to spontaneity. For Bergson freedom is the relation of the concrete I to his or her action; therefore freedom is one of the clearest facts of life. According to this description, Bibó adds, Bergson actually makes freedom and spontaneity identical, thus his concept requires some corrections. While it is decisive to stress the spontaneous character of freedom over against ethical speculation, it is similarly decisive to show that freedom is relative and may be applied to phenomena other than the human soul (*VT-I.* 58).

At the end of the review Bibó restates:

"After the consideration of the significant landmarks of theories of freedom we can insist that it is only the negative definition of the most general concept of freedom that is capable of involving all the practical images as well as the philosophical descriptions of freedom. However, this most general negative definition allows that certain manifestations of freedom, like ethical, intellectual and practical freedom may be given positive contents and significance too." (*VT-I.* 59)

The *relative* character of freedom is stressed in the second discussion, 'On Absolute Freedom'. Bibó argues that absolute freedom, although thinkable as a theoretical possibility, cannot become an experience, moreover, it cannot even have a real meaning. In this passage Bibó narrows down his own earlier definition of freedom, as he excludes the possibility of freedom as the unconditional rule of a characteristic system (cf. *VT-I.* 39) and defines it simply as exemption from an alien system. If viewed together with possible alien determinations, freedom cannot be anything but a relative phenomenon, that is relational and resistant to opposing forces. On this basis Bibó rightly concludes that "as soon as freedom loses its relativity it loses its meaning too" (*VT-I.* 60). Nevertheless, the change of the definiton of freedom referred to above is a precondition of this conclusion.

5. *Theological Comments on Bibó's Concept of Freedom*

Having reviewed the development of Bibó's concept of freedom, we are now able to comment upon it theologically in a more concrete manner.

The first comment concerns the peculiar shifts in Bibó's concept of freedom, with respect to the possibility of defining freedom as the state of an undisturbed rule of a characteristic system. We have seen that although some of his statements would allow this possibility, more often he resolutely excluded it. Freedom, he writes, means not an undisturbed existence but is born out of a situation where the reflecting consciousness relates the rule of a characteristic system to the presence of an alien system. Spontaneity, he argues later, is always present as a characteristic system, and freedom is born out of the victorious contradiction of spontaneity to causality, the system that is alien within the world of human sociality. Speaking about positive freedom, Bibó calls it a kind of coercion that has been turned into freedom, and he regarded positive freedom the most intensive experience of freedom, since here the theoretical - or reflected - presence of coercion was the strongest, while the experience of being exempt from the same coercion was the most direct. We have also seen that this specific limitation of the concept of freedom was a means in Bibó's hands to formulate

the most fundamental definition of negative freedom, that was also reinforced by the purposeful presentation of Hegel's and Bergson's theories. Now we consider the theological consequences of his decision.

Against the background of Lutheran theology characterised through the study of Hütter[36], we can now say without doubt that Bibó's concept of freedom cannot include the possibility that Luther assigned to the 'prelapsarian life', or later to the status of the believer, who, in union with Christ, can go 'back to paradise'. Bibó's expressions of freedom rather presuppose a life *post lapsum* in which the believer is confronted by God's commandments as ethical rules, and where his or her sinful spontaneity regards the commandments as part of an alien system, and, for this reason, a source of coercion. However, in Bibó's view ethical rules can become united with the spontaneity of the acting person, spontaneity may become enriched by ethical values, and "bad inclinations" may be opposed to "good inclinations" within the same person. The ethical values that have been embedded into the spontaneity of the person represent the realm of ethical freedom that makes the person capable of following ethical rules spontaneously. Bibó's theory raises two theological problems.

First, Bibó does not say how the unification of ethical values and human spontaneity may take place. We will see later that Bibó regarded this problem as being outside of the limits of his empirical method, and it would be improper to risk any guesses here about what the private person, even the Christian behind the scholar might have thought in 1933.

Second, Bibó seems to allow the possibility that ethical values do not penetrate the totality of human spontaneity: he speaks about spontaneity enriched by ethical values and an opposition between good inclinations and bad inclinations. From an ethical perspective, thus, he seems to think of two different qualities of spontaneity; nevertheless, he does not seem to allow thinking of two distinct spontaneities within the same human being, a good one and a bad one, an ethically penetrated and an ethically untouched one. All of his references to spontaneity present the core of the human psyche as a unified whole.

[36] Hütter, 'The Twofold Center of Lutheran Ethics' in: Bloomquist and Stumme eds., *The Promise of Lutheran Ethics* pp. 31-54.

This sketch of Bibó's understanding of the subject of ethical freedom clearly shows its partial incompatibility with Luther's picture of the free Christian. On the one hand, they would agree that following ethical values, or obeying to God's commandments may originate in freedom, that is, a spontaneous agreement with the value or the commandment. On the other hand, their identification of the subject of this freedom is radically different. For Luther, the subject of freedom is the inner person who has been made by Christ his own in a "happy marriage"; and a "happy exchange" of their properties has taken place. Thus, the subject of freedom is Christ himself who lives within the believer and fights a deadly fight against the outer person, urging him to obey the commandments, with varying success. The pattern of inner and outer person had been taken over by Luther from Paul, and provided him with a useful means to interpret the extreme tensions within a single human being. Contrary to Paul and Luther, Bibó does not distinguish between the spontaneity of being ready to do the good and the spontaneity of being able to oppose the good; thus he leaves the tension unresolved. With respect to the commandments, it can even be said that Bibó's pattern would allow the co-existence of the spontaneity that freely obeys the commandments with the spontaneity that freely disobeys the commandments in one and the same person. Positive, that is, ethically valuable freedom does not replace negative freedom but completes it, and negative freedom remains the basic possibility of the human being even if it is aware of positive freedom to some extent.

This solution is certainly unsatisfactory against the background of Lutheran theology. However, it sheds light on a latent, albeit intrinsic characteristic of Bibó's view of the human being. He is reluctant to attribute a negative ethical evaluation to human spontaneity, even if explicit ethical values cannot be perceived in relation with it. He is reluctant to assign a negative ethical evaluation to the negative freedom that springs from an ethically unidentified spontaneity, contrary to Paul, Luther, and Hegel. On the contrary, he ascribes an intrinsic value to negative freedom, simply on the basis that the human being experiences its manifestation, that is, a resistance against the coercive force of an alien system as good. For Bibó this value does not require any ethical affirmation or justification. This high, even transmoral evaluation of negative freedom as the

ability of human spontaneity represents the centre of Bibó's anthropology and social theory. While it is open to criticism from outside and also from a theological standpoint, it seems to be the unquestionable point of origin for him that he would be unable to explore from an objective distance. Using an expression of contemporary theological language, it was Bibó's faith-decision that he could not possibly go beyond.

Bibó's high evaluation of spontaneity makes the human self an unmovable subject of ethical action, that is a self able to make free decisions even if they are ethically wrong, and whose integrity would not change if ethical values became embedded into it. Such a self would certainly resist the attempt of decentering, the way Luther solved the problem of sinful human life and also the way neo-orthodox theologians tried to overcome what they saw as the fiasco of modern Protestantism. Our question now is whether Bibó's image of the human self as ethical subject, if it resists the radical transfiguration of decentering, will remain under the judgement that it is capable of only a "freedom from" and its freedom remains essentially without *gestalt*.

Having become familiar with Bibó's description of the different forms of positive freedom, we can confidently answer that an ethically valuable freedom, a "freedom for" is equally important for Bibó. His picture of the nature of the self shows an unresolved tension from the perspective of a Pauline-Lutheran theology, but this very picture makes it possible for him not to place "freedom from" and "freedom for" into an antagonistic opposition. He can speak of "freedom for" without suspending the validity of "freedom from". Moreover, his mature work suggests the same harmonious correspondence of the two kinds of freedom that the structure of his student address indicated.

At the end of the theological reading of Bibó's discussion of the concept of coercion, I have said that among the three corrective movements it is possibly differentiating and recontextualising that may be related to Bibó's image of the development of the moral agent. Having familiarised ourselves with his concept of freedom, we may speak in a more concrete manner. Since in Bibó's view positive freedom is created by the agreement of the spontaneous will with a system that is characteristic to the will, and requires consciousness and activity that are related to ethical values, the development of positive freedom is

inevitably in touch with those characteristics and virtues that the movement of differentiating the moral agent has rediscovered for Protestant ethics. Therefore, it is this endeavour to which Bibó's theory, despite its theologically unresolved tensions, can be most closely associated.

d. The Theological Significance of Bibó's Understanding of Freedom in Connection to Law

We do not have the space to discuss Bibó's treatment of the relationship of coercion and freedom to the law in detail, but I may summarise it briefly. In the course of the development of positive freedom we have seen how the possibility of "freedom for" appears on the basis of a negatively identified freedom. Bibó speaks about coercion that turns into freedom by becoming embedded into human spontaneity. Regarding ethical freedom Bibó mentions that the requirement of the autonomy of the ethical element cannot be maintained, since the ethical first appears in a heteronomous position as a source of coercion. The autonomous character of positive freedom, however, is finally upheld by involving it into the realm of spontaneity and identifying all the impacts originated from outside of spontaneity as coercion. The discussion of law, nevertheless, opens the way towards a heteronomous understanding of freedom.

Bibó discusses law as the most objective coercion as well as the most objective freedom. Both formal and material objectivations of freedom may reach a high degree of objectivation. The highest degree of the formal objectivation of negative freedom is the system of human rights. The highest degree of material objectivation of positive freedom is political freedom. (*VT-I.* 102f) Therefore, objectivations of both positive and negative freedom may be understood as components of the theory and practice of a balanced parliamentary democracy.

The category of *ethical freedom* is given a creative interim position within the development of objective freedom. Ethical freedom, on the one hand, is positive freedom that is contrasted and created by ethical rules, and on the other hand, it is the starting point in the definition of political freedom: a high

degree of ethical freedom that is manifested in political institutions. Thus, ethical freedom represents *a stage of a qualitative leap* within the course that begins with negative freedom and ends up in political freedom. Most remarkably, Bibó was unable to give a satisfactory interpretation of the essence of this leap; he acknowledged that it was beyond the capacity of his empirical method to say what really happened when ethical freedom came about (*VT-I.* 107). Bibó, in other words, left the crucial turning point of the development of political freedom *empty* for explanations other than observations based on empirical analysis; he made room for metaphysical, philosophical or theological arguments at this crucial point.

In relation to law, freedom and coercion do not merely appear as antagonists of each other but as phenomena that mutually support and strengthen each other. According to their static relationship in law, they act as limiting forces to make law effective. In their dynamic relationship in law, coercion in the form of power and freedom in the form of agreement engage in a functional relationship to each other. The concept of common consent is straightforwardly created as a free agreement supported by coercion. Finally, proper law is described as a balance of the proper distribution of social coercion, that is, order, and proper distribution of social freedom, that is, righteousness. (*VT-I.* 125f)

By bringing together freedom and coercion into a mutual and functional relationship in the law, Bibó lays the foundation of a heteronomous understanding of freedom. The final development and completion of freedom requires the presence of some kind of coercion. For human spontaneity coercion never appears as an abstract phenomenon; it is always experienced as the power of others, be it brutal force or a different value judgement. The point is that coercion is always tied to the different other, therefore it is the different other who is to make some contribution through its coercive capacity to the freedom of the self. During this process, however, the other would preserve its otherness, just like the self would experience its presence as coercion, in spite of the other's constructive contribution to the freedom of the self.

No wonder, therefore, that at the end of his discussion of the law Bibó is able to sketch the contours of a democratic system of checks and balances, or, using a different metaphor, the art of living together. As a theological parallel of

this development, we may add that the constructive presence of the other through its coercive power makes Bibó's concept of freedom appropriate to be discussed within the framework of a theology of sociality.

Bibó's detailed treatment of the *law* can be regarded as his genuine contribution to the complex understanding of freedom from our point of view. Law is the form of freedom, Bibó argues, that may represent its most mature development, political freedom. At the same time, law is the most mature manifestation of coercion, and neither freedom nor coercion would be able to reach their highest manifestation without the effective presence of the other.

Within the treatment of the phenomenon of the law *the characteristics of Bibó's understanding of power* get their proper place. We have seen that power was derived exclusively from coercion, and Bibó was adamant in excluding any organic relationship between power and freedom. We have also seen that coercion and its derivative, power, were regarded as *bad*, while, at the opposite end of the argumentation, freedom and its derivative, agreement were considered as *good*. This preliminary value-judgement goes through a complex transformation within the area of law, where it turns out that neither power nor agreement are good or bad in themselves, but a certain mutual relationship of them can be regarded as good or bad. The technical term for a good relationship of power and agreement is *proper law*. It is obvious, however, that Bibó wishes to say something more general by the application of this term. The key value that is to qualify law as proper law is *balance*, and it is the balance of *order* and *righteousness* that assigns the final value to a legal system.

Against this background it is particularly telling how Bibó evaluates the *new forms of state organisations*, that is, Soviet Communism and German National Socialism. Both started with a revolution that promised a counterbalance of disproportional power, but both ended up in a denial of the institutions of political freedom. However, Bibó found some pieces of truth in both endeavours, that allowed him to hope that both may be capable to complete their institutions of freedom and finally acquire a balance (*VT-I.* 128f).

Finally we may ask what Bibó's real purpose might have been: to reach a more complex understanding of law by analysing coercion and freedom, or to reach a more complex understanding of freedom, by showing its ultimate

contradiction with coercion and its relatedness to coercion within the realm of law. *Our* purpose is to understand his interpretation of freedom and we read the dissertation from this point of view; but is it possible to determine which phenomenon stayed at the focus of Bibó's interest? I think Bibó focused his attention on freedom rather than law. Although the formal topic of his dissertation is the philosophy of law, and the order of the discussion of the issues moves from coercion through freedom until law, he seems to venture to show how far freedom can be developed if objectivated as law. Similarly, coercion is explored to show how the antagonist of freedom may turn into the creative counterpart of freedom, if they are related to each other in the law. Therefore, the investigation into the nature of both coercion and law may have a functional role to express the meaning and intrinsic possibilities of freedom all the more sharply. To put it in a different way, the study can be read as a presentation of *how spontaneous inclinations can turn into good inclinations and become institutionalised as political freedom.* The order of the issues in the title of the study, therefore, may mark the direction Bibó himself thought his train of thought was taking.

e. Highlighting the Empirically Inaccessible Aspect of Bibó's Social Theory

At this point we may ask whether the charge of thinking *etsi Deus non daretur*, as if God did not exist can be applied to Bibó's thinking. We can see that within the net of Bibó's empirically approached world that he investigates in his study there is no place for God: neither spontaneity as the primary locus of freedom, nor coercion as the presence of an alien system or the development of law would require any reference to God. Bibó's argumentation, as an abstract construction of ideas, is perfectly immanent. However, Bibó himself pointed at the unsatisfactory character of his argumentation at a point that has a decisive significance with respect to the functioning, the very life of his ideological construction. This point is the coming into existence of the subject of ethical freedom. The existence of this subject is a fundamental condition of ethically valuable positive freedom; consequently, both Bibó's construction of the concept

of law and the system of democracy as the latter's derivative would be an abstract framework of thought that lacks any perceptible content without this subject. According to Bibó's empirical method, every new step of the development of his thought has to be empirically affirmed to avoid building merely fictious elements into it: as he builds on the presence of the ethical subject he refers to its empirically perceptible being that he is unable to explain in an empirical way.

If we consider Bibó's fundamentally Christian orientation that he witnessed to in his student address, we may risk the presumption that the ethical subject whose existence he is unable to explain is the Christian. This statement suggests a different answer to the question whether or not Bibó's argumentation may be characterised by the *etsi Deus non daretur* to the one we gave above. Although God does not appear explicitly in Bibó' construction of thoughts, the decisive role of the ethical subject, the Christian cannot be explained without God. From the perspective of the logic of his empirical argumentation Bibó places God beyond the limits of the field he ventures to investigate; at the same time, the very requirement of the empirical reality of higher ideological constructions gives the ethical subject, or the Christian a central role within the argumentation, therefore, God's effective presence is given a central role. In other words, the logical order of Bibó's ideological construction can be maintained *etsi Deus non daretur*. Its empirical reality, however, cannot be preserved as if God did not exist. Without God Bibó's image of the development of both coercion and freedom within the law and the democratic system turns into a merely fictious construction.

On the basis of the few words that Bibó said to explain the event that transcends the limits of his empirical method it is difficult to determine what kind of Christian might have been on Bibó's mind. If we turn to the exact description of this event, we may get two pieces of information.

We can see that Bibó' rather tentative explanation - two dense and grammatically not impeccable sentences - allows two interpretations: it is either the coercion of the law that sets a person free from the coercion of the law and presents him or her with an ethical freedom, or it is a change that may be effected by the follower of a norm, an inner event that is not accessible to

objective observation (*VT-I.* 107). In both cases law or norm is given a constructive role: in the first case it is law itself that establishes freedom for the subject, in the second case it is the subject who gains freedom by following a norm. These explanations may be associated to discussions of the role of law in the process of becoming a Christian. Here it is sufficient to refer to the "three uses" of the law that is charactersitic of Protestant theological tradition. The "first use of the law", summarised in the Ten Commandments and the double-love commandment, informs the person about the form and contents (*gestalt*) of freedom that is in accord with God's intention. The "second - or theological - use of the law" confronts the person with his or her radical sinfulness, preparing the one to accept the liberating gospel. Bibó's wording of the coercion of the law that sets the person free from the coercion of the law seems to present something of the paradoxical meaning of the second use of the law. The "third use of the law" (developed in the Calvinist tradition) reflects the role of the law in the life of a Christian who is already justified and, with the help of the Holy Spirit, tries to adjust his or her life to restore God's image or to fulfil his or her God-given vocation. Bibó's image of the follower of the norm who is an active agent of the development of ethical freedom seems to be associated to the figure of the Christian who guided by the law, proceeds on the way of sanctification.

This attempt to create a link between Bibó's rather tentative sentences and the Protestant theological tradition of the uses of the law, naturally, is open to criticism. I cannot require theological correctness from Bibó and also I may not turn his expressions into correct theological statements. My only purpose here is to show the possible place in Bibó's argumentation where, had he aimed at theological correctness, he might have developed a theologically accessible argument.

C. The Social Dimension of Freedom: ' On the Equilibrium and Peace of Europe'

In the second section of our investigation into Bibó's texts we will consider two of Bibó's studies. The two studies represent a rather different quality, however, from our perspective they belong closely together. The first one is a review, the second one is a large-scale study. The first one intended to inform a wide readership and was published immediately, the second one was hidden from the public and Bibó even carefully concealed the names of those whose thoughts contributed to its ideas. The book that Bibó surveyed landed on his desk later than he had begun the study, however, as regards the final study, the book and its review may be considered as a methodological introduction to it. The writing of the study was finally finished - albeit the study itself remained unfinished - a year later than the review had been published. The review deals with the art of and inevitable need for planning in a mass society, the study comprises the plan itself, Bibó's plan for the regeneration of European values after the Second World War.

a. A Theory of Planning: Bibó's Reception of Mannheim's Diagnosis of our Time

A few months after the publication of Karl Mannheim's *Diagnosis of our Time* Bibó published a detailed review[37]. The common denominator of the seven essays, as Bibó makes clear, is the crisis of social values and community education. Of the reviews of the seven lectures we are concerned here with the first and the last.

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[37] István Bibó: 'Korunk diagnózisa' in: *Társadalomtudomány*, 4-5 (1943) pp. 454-474. Also in VT-I. pp. 243-269.

The dangers of mass society had often been drawn attention to before, but it is evident that mass society can be led not only in the direction of mechanistic uniformity but also of freedom and variety. Leadership in a mass society

"does not necessarily lead to dictatorship; it can be realised in a democratic framework as well, but this democracy needs to be deepened through social justice, which does not necessarily mean a mechanistic equality. (...) The new democracy, if it wants to survive, must transform itself into a militant democracy and it cannot remain neutral, because a prerequisite of its functioning is that an agreement is sustained concerning certain fundamental values, inherited in a smaller part from antiquity and largely from Christianity. At the same time the achievement of liberalism has to be sustained, concerning the freedom of individual choice and experiment in the area of the more detailed and complex values that are beyond the fundamental values." (*VT-I.* 246)[38]

According to Mannheim, Bibó says, the war brought about a synthesis of this kind, in which the most important values of Western civilisation could be preserved by the most up-to-date techniques designed for organising the masses. These new social techniques, by making social revolution against the state ineffective, make space for evolutionary methods. These methods, especially if they include alternatives by which representatives of the former ruling classes can take part in the organisation of the new society[39], would amount to a "planning for Freedom", which is the task of the current generation. If they fail, and one group or another succeeds in monopolising the new social techniques in its own interests, it would make dictatorship inevitable. (*VT-I.* 247)[40]

The seventh lecture was given to an audience of Christian thinkers with the title *Towards a New Social Philosophy: A Challenge to Christian Thinkers by a Sociologist*. In accordance with the first lecture, Mannheim argued that at a time when the significance of social planning, responsibility for the whole community and long-term decisions had increased, it became clear that powers of integration with religious roots are needed. In Mannheim's view, the church in

[38] Cf. Mannheim, *Diagnosis of our Time,* p. 4ff;
[39] Bibó turned this thought into action in the summer of 1944, when he wrote his 'Békeajánlat' [Peace Proposal] (see ÉD pp. 204-211), a detailed plan for the possible agreement and cooperation between the Hungarian middle class and the organised workers. The 'Békeajánlat' belongs to Bibó's activity concerning Hungarian home policy that blossomed after 1945, therefore it is outside our field of investigation.
[40] Cf. Mannheim, *Diagnosis of our Time,* pp. 10f.

the Christian middle ages was able to connect ultimate values and everyday activities by means of "paradigmatic experiences", as the Hero, the Wise Man, the Virgin, the Saint, the Penitent, Baptism, Absolution, Eucharist, the Good Shepherd, the Cross, Salvation.(*VT-I.* 260)[41] Without such images, or the similar paradigmatic experiences offered by rationalist humanism, personal and community life falls apart. Traditional Christianity living in a secular Europe, however, will be capable of fullfilling this role only if it is able to connect its tradition and institutions to these ultimate experiences, and renew herself at the same time. Since Mannheim (and Bibó) approach this question as social theorists, he addresses the possibility of a co-operation between theology and social theory. He thinks that theology must allow complete freedom to sociological inquiry, so that it can reach the farthest limits of its method, and it is only at this point, and not before, that the theologian should voice his own concerns based on his deeper experiences. A theology that summarises its truths in terms of timeless and sharply defined statements, has no place for sociological research in practice (262f)[42]. The essence of a Christian moral stance, however, appears not in abstract statements; rather, in images and paradigms. The task of the Christian is not an imitation of the concrete image, which may not even be possible because s/he lives in a different world, rather,

"s/he should try to transport the intention of Christ to all sorts of different situations, and, amid the changing social circumstances, should creatively understand and enact the content expressed by the fundamental paradigms and patterns of Christian teaching."(*VT-I.* 263)[43]

It may be debated, Mannheim says, whether the basic Christian experience is original sin, redemption, the liberating and creative power of love or the Cross, or the deeper meaning of suffering. The point is that they are those ultimate roots - as paradigmatic experiences - to which one can reach back to become capable of reinterpreting the patterns of conduct and right behaviour (*VT-I.* 264)[44].

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[41] Mannheim, *Diagnosis of our Time*, p. 135.
[42] Mannheim, *Diagnosis of our Time*, pp. 115ff
[43] Mannheim, *Diagnosis of our Time*, pp. 117f.
[44] Mannheim, *Diagnosis of our Time*, pp. 134f.

In Mannheim's view, "planning for Freedom" and the contemporary demands of Christian ethical thinking may coincide in the attempt to resolve the crisis (*VT-I.* 263f)[45]. In this co-operation, the spirit of service, which is a most valuable heritage of medieval Christianity may acquire a profound meaning for the secular thinker as well (*VT-I.* 266)[46].

At the end of the review Bibó gives a short evaluation of Mannheim's ideas, stressing that when Mannheim discusses the relationship of facts and values, he relates it to the ultimate experience of life, and thus avoids the ossified Central-European notion of German idealism, that of "absolute value". This way of thinking enables Mannheim to appreciate the Christian ethical heritage in a secular environment as well, which, according to Bibó, is the greatest merit of his work. Mannheim's political program, the "Third Way" as he understood it, can be situated against this wider spiritual and social background.

Having surveyed Bibó' review of Mannheim's book now I will add four comments to it to clarify its significance for the Christian character of Bibó's social theory.

a. We have already discussed the role of Max Weber's theory as a possible common denominator behind Mannheim's and Bibó's view of Christianity. They approach Christianity with the interest of a sociologist, investigating it first of all as an empirical phenomenon, with special reference to its social influence. Weber's particular understanding of (Protestant) Christianity affected Bibó's concept of freedom in a significant way: the section I have quoted in the introductory part of this chapter[47] indicates that Weber's influence may have been formative in Bibó's basic conviction that freedom has to be understood most generally as a negative freedom.

b. Against this background it is particularly telling how far Bibó seemed to be captured by Mannheim definition of a sociologically approachable Christianity as "paradigmatic experience". Bibó may have regarded this definition as one that expressed his own identification of Christianity: his fondness is reflected by his repeated return to the part of Mannheim's study

[45] Mannheim, *Diagnosis of our Time,* p. 139.
[46] Mannheim, *Diagnosis of our Time,* p. 163f.
[47] Mannheim, *Diagnosis of our Time,* pp. 107f.

where the latter explained the meaning of paradigmatic experience (cf. *VT-I.* 260, 261, 264). Mannheim's concept of paradigmatic experience offered a conceptual framework to Bibó, within which he was able to interpret his earlier, rather formless views about the relationship of Christianity and sociologically approachable empirical reality. We have already discussed the significance of his awareness of the limits of his empirical method, reflected in the 1933 dissertation, and also made some guesses about the possible contents of the "behind" that Bibó, faithfully to his self-chosen method, left empty. In the Mannheim study Bibó was offered a structure that helped him to relate the sociologically approachable realm to its "behind", at the same time, the logic of this structure retained its relation to experience at its heart. Moreover, Mannheim offered to Bibó several possible contents for this previously empty area of the "behind", that Bibó eagerly made available to his Hungarian reader. Among and above the several possible paradigmatic experiences (Mannheim's wording is rather loose, he sometimes speaks about basic experiences, archetypes or primordial images, but it is paradigmatic experience that seems to be his final and most general version) it is the "intention of Christ" that Bibó regarded as the most inclusive one (*VT-I.* 263). *Nota bene*: not directly Christ, but the intention of Christ whose influence to human sociality can be sociologically approachable.

c. We will pay attention to a seemingly marginal note of Bibó, that, I think, bears greater significance. Beginning his review Bibó mentions that *especially in Continental Europe* churches are inclined to ally themselves with the ruling classes (*VT-I.* 259). This note refers to a piece of argument of Mannheim that reads:

"To [the] loss of a foothold in society at large by the Churches very often corresponded a readiness on the part of their leaders to co-operate with the ruling classes and to identify themselves with their vested interests both in a spiritual and in a material sense. Still even here there seems to exist an important difference between the basic situation on the Continent and England. As the emergence of Capitalism and the corresponding social revolutions occurred at a very early stage in England, when religion was still alive and permeated society as a whole, both the conservative and the progressive forces developed their philosophies within the set framework of religion. For that reason it is in this country still possible to be progressive and religious at the same time, whereas on the Continent, where the social antagonisms were formulated before and during the French Revolution, the dominant polarity (with some exceptions) is to

be either progressive and atheist and rationalist, or conservative and very likely religious."[48]

Mannheim's analysis of the difference between England and the Continent may help us to interpret Szilágyi's - otherwise enigmatic - argument that Bibó was an "independent socialist"[49]. Bibó was independent in the sense that he did not accept the "dominant polarity" that was (and still is) characteristic in the Continent, as he managed to be "progressive" and "religious" at the same time. In his mature works he frequently argued that it was England and the Netherlands where an organic social development happened, and countries of the Continent suffer by unecessary false antagonisms of several kind. As Szilágyi rightly points out, it was the overall program of the *March Front* to overcome these false antagonisms[50], and Bibó's social Christianity was formed in relation to it. From this angle it is obvious why Bibó's socialism cannot be identified with Christian Socialism, since the latter represented a conservative reaction to Marxism and Social Democracy in the Continent, especially in Germany and east of Germany.

d. Finally I will show that the way Mannheim perceived the social crisis in 1943 and what Bibó also stressed in his review (*VT-I.* 259f) is akin to the way Hütter characterised the fiasco of modern Protestantism. Hütter argued that one of the reasons for Protestant ethics had lost its *gestalt* was the dominant influence of Kantian ethics[51]. Mannheim approaches formalistic ethics or *Gesinnungsethik* as a sociologist, explaining both its original setting and contemporary influence. In Kant's time, Mannheim argues,

"society was completely in the re-making; [it was] based upon expansion and constant dynamics, pioneering and exploration of new fields. This is the world of early Capitalism and Liberalism, in which free competition and individual adjustment defined the scope of relevant action, and where a concrete pre-determination of the patterns of right action would deprive man of that elasticity

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[48] Mannheim, *Diagnosis of our Time,* p.101.

[49] The argument reads: "Bibó was a socialist thinker; not in the social democratic, even less in the Marxist Communist sense of the word, and not in the Christian Socialist tradition either - even though he frequently alluded to the social organising power of Christianity and the moral example offered by Jesus. One might say that Bibó's principles were those of an *independent socialist.*" Szilágyi, 'István Bibó, Central Europe's Political Therapist', in: DRS p. 536.

[50] *ibid.*

[51] Hütter, 'The Twofold Center of Lutheran Ethics' in: Bloomquist and Stumme eds., *The Promise of Lutheran Ethics,* p. 34.

which is the main requirement of survival in a rapidly changing world. (...) Kantianism (...) is historically nothing more than an elaboration of the Protestant idea that conscience is the essential thing in action. (...) [It corresponds] to a stage in which the ethical and the active person is bound to remain society-blind, because there is less scope for pre-calculation than in a society which is nearing the stage of planning or which is already planned."[52]

The way Mannheim expresses the remedy for this situation closely corresponds to the effort that we identified as the differentiation of the moral agent:

"We must establish a set of basic virtues such as decency, mutual help, honesty and social justice, which can be brought home through education and social influence, whereas the higher form of thought, art, literature, etc., remain as free as they were in the philosophy of Liberalism. It must be one of our main concerns to establish the list of those primary virtues without which no civilisation can exist, and which make for that basic conformity which gives stability and soundness to social life."[53]

To sum it up, in the review the characteristics of Bibó's Christianity reveal themselves and decisive features of the theological aspects of his social theory seem to come together. These features are part of the methodological arsenal that was to be creative in the working out of Bibó's concrete plan for the future of Europe.

b. Bibó's Plan: 'On the Equilibrum and Peace of Europe'[54]

1. The Forewords as Bibó's Self-Identification

Bibó wrote two versions of the possible 'Foreword' of the book. The one he considered the final version says that it is obligatory for all scholarly work to acknowledge the influences that have enriched it, in a more or less detailed way. This work, however, refers to a relatively small number of works, and a complete list of influences would include lots of friendly discussions apart from - not only scholarly - books. It is, nevertheless, not sensible to name those who

[52] Mannheim, *Diagnosis of our Time*, pp. 111f.
[53] Mannheim, *Diagnosis of our Time*, p. 110.
[54] For some introductory thoughts see Szilágyi's 'István Bibó: Central Europe's Political Therapist', DRS pp. 532ff.

inspired the book at the moment (*VT-I.* 295)[55]. Bibó therefore named only one inspirator, Guglielmo Ferrero, his former teacher in Geneva whose influence on Bibó cannot be overestimated.

The other version of the Foreword is more outspoken:

"Since nowadays it is a general habit to inquire into the hidden interests behind all written works, I prefer to provide the necessary data in advance. The writer of these lines is Hungarian, who loves his country deeply, but who cannot identify with the demands for supremacy that some of his compatriots make in relation to neighbouring countries. He is a democrat, and his most fervent wish is to see the peoples of Eastern Europe set out on the road towards democratic development; nevertheless, he does not shrink from suggesting a monarchic solution to a number of countries, while at the same time rejecting the most often recommended monarchic solution, the Danube-side Habsburg monarchy. He is a professing socialist, and a believer in the classless and oppression-less society of the future, and yet declares that the end of this war must not be the moment of the simultaneous realisation of socialist regimes, rather, it should be the moment of stability, lawfulness and the reestablishment of the primacy of European models. Finally, he is devoted to a Federal Europe, but he still does not cease to analyse - in sixty percent of this book - the territorial questions of the old Europe divided into independent states, because he firmly believes that an European federation does not render the solution of territorial problems superfluous, on the contrary: the stabilisation of territorial issues is a prerequisite of the functioning of an European federation."(*VT-I.* 604)

2. Freedom and Democracy in the Perspective of Political Hysteria and Political Equilibrium

This long essay which takes up more than 300 pages in the first volume of the critical edition even in an unfinished form, contains a vast amount of information and data. In what follows, we cannot attempt to review and evaluate all the important ideas in this essay; we must confine ourselves to the examination of the two issues that have the closest connection to Bibó's ideas about freedom: the idea of political equilibrium and the idea of political hysteria. The fundamental pattern of Bibó's argumentation is that the essence of the crisis leading to war is the upsetting of political equilibrium. The reason for this imbalance is a few interrelated hysterias. The first step out of the crisis is thus an

[55] The Editor notes that Bibó might refer to members of the Association of Artists, Writers and Researchers (Művészek Írók, Kutatók Szövetkezete, MIKSZ) that continued the activity of the *March Front* until Hungary declared war on the Soviet Union in 1941. VT-I. p. 680.

understanding of the nature of these hysterias, to be followed by their effective cure, which would result in the foundation of the new political equilibrium.

What does Bibó mean by political equilibrium? Although, as he notes, it was fashionable in his day to speak about the obsoleteness of the system of political equilibrium, and some forms of the equilibrium had indeed proved a fiasco, Bibó insists that equilibrium is a fundamental condition of all community life.

"It is a basic necessity for all creative life, especially in community, that the fundamental principles and relations of power be neither too rigid nor too fluid. A too rigid system shows too strong an opposition to change and development, so that it can change only by means of a catastrophe, while a too fluid one does not show any resistance to the outside world, which means a lack of a minimum of identity and therefore security which is a condition of all fruitful individual and community life. *Equilibrium* is the proportional presence of agility and stability, a situation in community life when the principles and power relations of the community enable the community to find its place between the extremes of rigidity and fluidity with an optimum of flexibility and stability." (*VT-I.* 300)

This description of political equilibrum can directly be related to Bibó's early definition of freedom. In 'Coercion, Law, Freedom', as we have seen, law was regarded as the form of freedom, that may represent freedom's most mature development, political freedom. Law, however, was also understood as the most mature manifestation of coercion, and as Bibó concluded, neither freedom nor coercion would be able to reach their highest manifestation without the effective presence of the other. The law that is able to provide these possibilities to both freedom and coercion Bibó called the proper law.

As Bibó built up the concept of proper law he used the image of balance in several aspects. First, he made it the requirement of proper law that outward institutions of coercion and freedom should be in balance with both inner experiences of coercion and freedom and concrete forms of behaviours that come from these experiences. Second, and more importantly, he explained the value of the process of objectivation as the proper distribution of coercion, that is, order, and the proper distribution of freedom, that is, righteousness. He posited order and righteousness as mutually limiting values, concluding, that with respect to law's characteristic standards of value, order and righteousness should be in balance with each other. Although Bibó's formal concept of freedom is extended

into the concept of righteousness and formally not related to order, the balance of order and righteousness is seen as both a fruit and a condition of freedom. It is not only the disproportional strengthening but also the disproportional weakening of order that is precarious to freedom: the chaos that makes its way in the place of order finally threatens the institutions of political freedom too.

This is the background against which the expressions of the 'On the Equilibrium' gain their place in the structure of Bibó's concept of freedom. "Neither too rigid, nor too fluid", or the "proportional presence of agility and stability" as well as "the optimum of flexibility and stability" reflect directly to the structure of political freedom that Bibó thought through in his dissertation. When he explains his program of creating equilibrium in the next passage, however, it becomes clear how far the originally formal expression of balance has become rich in meaning to express more than a narrow understanding of political equilibrium might allow:

"To create equilibrium in the life of a community means to prevent a limitless concentration of power that demoralises both those who exercise it and those who are subordinated to it. It means to place the organisations of power and spheres of competence next to one another in a way that makes it possible, in an event of destructive forces erupting from one or the other, to confront it not only with principles and precepts, but also with the strength of the others. It means to provide organisations of power with moral fibre and the dignity of their role to make them gain in stability and lose in brutality. It means to increase the feeling of security in the active and passive agents of power by a clear division of objective and territorial spheres of competence. It means to find methods and procedures for the continual changes of life, lest the explosion of the rigidified framework destroy the whole system. It means to create possibilities and models of brave and magnanimous action and thus free individuals from the fear that the others will use the full range of possibilities in their hands. It means to nurture the kind of person who preserves the conventions and traditions of the whole system, lest the intellectual laziness of people take for granted what requires a constant moral exertion. It means to awaken, with all the above, the sense of security in people against chimerical fears, and a matter-of-fact bravery in the face of real dangers. It means to engage the powers of destruction, confusion and barbarity and facilitate a rich flowering of creative energies." (*VT-I.* 300-301)

The notion of freedom and democracy had occurred together in Bibó's previous writings as well, but in this essay they were actually conjoined. For him European democracy is none other than the embodiment of the program of freedom inspired by Christianity.

"Humanity have, for millennia, lived in social and political systems - apart from isolated or blocked experiments - which were based on the power of man over man, and on the fact that this rule could be obtained by birth, moreover, could mostly be obtained as a birthright. Western civilisation first tamed this hereditary and power structure, then, starting from the *Christian idea of the inalienable dignity of the human soul*, it dared to deduce the secularised demand of the equal dignity, freedom and equality of all people. Also, it dared to set, as a practical goal, the spiritualisation of power, self-government and merit-based selection."(italics mine) (*VT-I.* 306)

Bibó's thesis is that the development of democracy had its hitches and upheavals in Western and Northern Europe as well but within a stable political framework these societies could develop into mature democracies. In Central and Eastern Europe, however, amid the disorders of political frameworks these upheavals led to a lasting deformation of political culture. The deformation peaked in political hysteria, and the crisis that started in 1914 can be traced directly to these types of hysteria. According to the logic of the essay Bibó first describes this crisis, and then shows the way out of it. The notion of democracy has a key role in this argumentation, as well as the description of those factors that threatened democracy in Central and Eastern Europe. In what follows, we will concentrate on these aspects of Bibó's argumentation.

3. *Political Hysteria in Perspective: Democracy in Central and Eastern Europe*[56]

In Bibó's view, the development of democracy has a long prehistory in the life of European societies. It was the French Revolution that brought about a decisive change in this process: it attacked hereditary aristocracy, tamed but at the same time sanctified by Christianity. By this it freed the political and social development of Europe from a great dead weight. At the same time it released a fear that continental Europe has not been cured of ever since. The dislocation of the organisms of community life created a void that "were filled by new, fearful and disorderly structures of the community spirit".(*VT-I.* 308)

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[56] The argument of this section can be found in 'The Distress of the East European Small Nations' DRS pp. 13-87.

Bibó lists the following phenomena of these new creatures of community spirit. With the elimination of hereditary aristocracy society was overcome by a feeling of disorganisation and lack of leadership. From this the *false romanticism of the genius leader* was born, with Napoleon as its archetype. "For him power is not a vocation and a system of roles, but a romantic, heroic and grandiose individual enterprise." (*VT-I.* 309) The second phenomenon is *modern nationalism*. While up to 1789 it was the aristocracy that consciously represented national interests, afterwards the nation was triumphantly taken over by the third order, and it was "invested with all the warm and direct emotions that the bourgeois had hitherto lavished on his immediate environment". (*VT-I.* 310) From this emotion the third phenomenon was born, the *romantic ideal of the patriot*, "the person who is qualified for sympathysing with all the glory of the fatherland and bearing all its burdens, not because of his birth, rank or office, but solely by the fervour and purity of his feelings". (*VT-I.* 311) Fourth, there is the belief in the *romanticism of the people*, according to which the risen people are capable of managing their affairs spontaneously and wisely. Another disquieting legacy of the French Revolution is the *romanticism of revolution itself*. The desire for change at all costs and an overblown fear as a reaction to it created two opposing, deformed and barren types: the professional revolutionary and the professional reactionary. Finally, all these developments came together in the fact that after the French Revolution it was no longer the aristocracy that fought limited wars, but whole nations, who endowed war itself with the mass emotion of democracy, making it much more difficult to finish wars afterwards. Bibó argues that these phenomena created a crisis in all countries of continental Europe, and ony those countries could resolve this crisis "where the development of democratic political culture and education could catch up with the surge of democratic mass emotions" (*VT-I.* 316). In Central and Eastern Europe this did not happen.

By Central and Eastern Europe Bibó means the area extending from the Rhine to Russia. In a detailed historical analysis he shows that while in Western and Northern Europe a stable state organisation came about, built on the national community, these stable state systems failed to materialise in Central and Eastern Europe, for various reasons. Thus when, following the French Revolution, these

democratic mass emotions and principles reached these areas, the new elites were uncertain about the national and state framework that these mass emotions ought to occupy. The creation of a stable national framework, simultaneously with the reception of democratic ideals proved to be a task that was impossible to fullfil. This fiasco is the root of the deformation of political culture in these countries.

The people (peuple) that simply represented the dynamics of social betterment in Western Europe, became at the same time the decisive carrier of national traits (Volk) in Central and Eastern Europe. It is only against this background that linguistic nationalism could be born, which provided the most important arguments in the territorial disputes of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Linguistic nationalism made the borders fluid, and the framework of national life chronically insecure. These insecure frameworks could not endure the pressure of democratic ideals, and stabilised the emotion born in earlier clashes with great empires: the existential fear for the community even in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. "The existential fear for the community was the decisive factor that made the situation of *democracy and democratic development* unstable in these countries." (*VT-I.* 334)

It is at this point in Bibó's train of thought where he first expresses the antagonistic opposition of fear and democracy. It is here that we can read the definition of democracy that later became famous and much quoted. In our argumentation the immediate environment of this quote is also significant:

"Mature democracy corresponds to the psychological state of adulthood, and the historical shocks that befall a nation correspond to the individual shocks that involve the not sufficiently resistant, non-adult psychic types in all kinds of hysterics. Accordingly, the political culture and morals of mature, democratic societies are not undermined by historical shocks, but rather strengthen them even more. On the other hand, they upset the development of communities that are at the beginning of the road to democracy, and involve them in spasms of communal psychology that are difficult to release. To be a democrat means first of all not to be afraid: not to be afraid of those with different opinions, different languages, of a different race, of revolution, of conspiracies, the unknown, evil designs of the enemy, hostile propaganda, derogation, and altogether of all the imaginary dangers that become real dangers because of our fear of them. The countries of Central and Eastern Europe were afraid *because* they were not

mature democracies, and *since* they were afraid, they were unable to become ones." (*VT-I.* 334-335)[57]

Perhaps the most original part of Bibó's study is where he describes the deformation of political culture caused by this vicious circle. He creates the idea of the *false realist*, who is a characteristic type of Central and Eastern European politics. He relates how the *national intelligentsia* became politically important. He analyses the role of *militarism* and shows how the insecurities of national life are expressed by *obscure political philosophies*.

For a systematic approach the most tangible aspect is the way Bibó shows how the consequences of the French Revolution, endured by healthy nations, became aspects of a permanent deformation of Central and Eastern Europe. The romanticism of the leader-genius became the *dictator* embodying the hysteria of the community in these countries. The romantic patriot was deformed into the *anti-democratic nationalist*. The romanticism of the people has also undergone change: the infantile psychic state of national communities became permanent, the idea of the mature, sovereign people was discredited, and an aristocratic tendency of contempt for the people was renewed. These societies, however, could not return to hereditary aristocracy, thus the absurdity of *popular contempt of the people* came about, embodied by the leading elite that is deeply pessimistic about the moral worth of people, feels contempt for the infantile character of the crowd, "and does not notice that they share fully the infantile psychic state and infantile desires of the people under their leadership". (*VT-I.* 344) Further, the romanticism of revolution as an end in itself turned into the absurdity of *reactionary revolution* in Central and Eastern Europe. This revolution stands up for the traditional values of the family, the past etc. in a way that also appeals to revolutionary feelings and rejoices at the destruction of traditional methods and conventions. Finally, the war involving whole nations was deformed into a *campaign of extinction of nation against nation*. These products of the deformation of Central and Eastern European social development came together in the ideology of fascism. (*VT-I.* 347)

[57] Cf. DRS p. 42.

4. Political Hysteria: the Example of Germany

It is the analysis of the core of the German problem within which Bibó gives a detailed account of his understanding of political hysteria. In Bibó's argumentation the concept of political hysteria appears in several positions: it is the root of the crisis that led to war (*VT-I.* 299), a central phenomenon of the deformed political culture of Central and Eastern Europe (*VT-I.* 343), or a status that is counterproductive to a balance, that is, creative freedom. A community that fell into political hysteria was one way Bibó described Nazi Germany, but he also presented Nazism as a distorted democratic revolution. While the first way applies the central metaphor that Bibó employs in describing Germany's status, the second way helps him to list those contents that would take part in a possible regeneration of the German nation. Both portraits are fundamentally important with respect to Bibó's suggestion to the restoration of Germany within post-war Europe.

The starting point of political hysteria in the life of a community is always a shocking historical experience which the community is unable to stomach. While a well-balanced community is able to face a historical shock and mobilise her political and moral strength to cope with it, a community without the necessary inner balance rather evades the problem and chooses political hysteria instead of a costly long-term solution. A hysterical community, similarly to a mentally hysterical person, becomes fixated on a single historical experience. She gradually looses her ability to find the real causes of events, loosing sight of reality in and around her, trying to create consistency out of inconsistency, thus building up a false and all-embracing system of reference. A world-view that is developed by a hysterical community is perfect and offers a clear answer to every possible question, exactly what the members of the community want to hear. Because she lives in a false relationship with reality, a hysterical community is going to be sooner or later bankrupt: after a catastrophe there comes either healing or a more severe hysteria.

As far as Germany was concerned at the time of writing the essay, the specific historical burden of Germany had been her repeated failure to establish her territorial status. The defeat of the Holy Roman Empire by Napoleon'a army

in 1806 happened to be the historical shock that became the starting point of the process of political hysteria. The bankruptcy came with the fall of the Wilhelmine Empire at the end of the First World War; the Versailles Treaty, however, proved to be an even more severe shock - instead of an opportunity of facing the disease - and thus the starting point of a fully developed hysteria. (*VT-I.* 376-382)

By applying the metaphor *hysteria* Bibó refused to treat the German problem as a moral problem. He argued that "we could not do worse to a hysterical state of mind than passing moral judgement on it" (*VT-I.* 447). Moral judgement makes a hysterical self even more closed; the only hope to break through it lies in its confrontation with bare facts. These facts, however, may not only be negative, that is, a summary of what the Germans did; they consist also of positive elements, referring to the goodwill of the winners. Today, Bibó finished his account of German political hysteria,

"the regeneration of German political life depends upon the clear sight, fearless composure and humane wisdom of the world around Germany. Germany's disease is not incurable and organic, it is nothing but a kind of social spasm of the whole social organism; to loosen and release it will be one of the great tasks of the future" (*VT-I.* 482)

5. On the Basis of the Political Regeneration of Germany

I think that the application of the metaphors hysteria and disease has also a theological significance, to which we will return later. Now we will turn to Bibó's concrete suggestions about Germany's political regeneration. One element of the basis of his suggestions is his understanding of Nazism as a distorted democratic revolution. Bibó summarised the preliminaries this way:

"The German democratic movement which had progressed so hopefully towards democratic and socialist evolution until 1918, suffered a terrible breakdown after the war. The past and authority of the German social democrat party could obtain as a last result the abdication of all the dynastics and the declaration of the German Republic. But after the breakdown of the old political authorities, no new authority grew out of the German democratic forces. True, there could be no question of the old, discredited system of territorial principality claiming its old position in the political vacuum thus created. Territorial principality was superannuated and decayed and it had no chances to be revived. But it was possible to revive its most dangerous moment: *personal rule*. Germany did not posess real democratic forces and democratic experience and *she had therefore*

no occasion to learn the most essential part of the lessons of democracy: the art of governing and obeying without personified rule and power. After 1918 Germany felt as if she were ruled, governed and guided by nobody at all. That is why, on the first occasion presenting itself, she preferred Hindenburg to any democratic statesman; that is why she addicted herself so easily to the romantic folly to expect redress of all her grievances from a pretended political genius." (italics mine) (*VT-I.* 450f)

The fact that Hitler came to power in the course of a democratic mass movement and the will of the majority of the voters, and at the same time he applied anti-democrtatic measures from the very outset, confused many of the observers. Bibó referred to the "curious game" about the definition of Fascism played by conservatism and radicalism in Europe.

"The adherents of European tradition consider Fascism simply a kind of revolution which, in their eyes, is always destructive of values; they see only the common features of Fascism and Communism. The partisans of progress, on the other hand, see in Fascism a revolution of hirelings, backed by obscure, reactionary and feudal elements. That is to say: the Right blames Fascism as a movement of the Extreme Left, the Left sees in it the machinations of the Extreme Right. This is no mere chance, but deeply inherent in the essence of Fascism." (*VT-I.* 465f)

Bibó points out three elements of progressive politics, or, in other words, the system of European values as he understood it, which were absorbed and also distorted by Hitler's program and practice: the right for self-determination, democracy and equality.

The *right for self-determination* had been denied to the Germans at Versailles and also during the time of the Weimar Republic. Therefore Hitler's claim that the Allied Powers approved at Munich in 1938, was considered as a just one by many Germans. However, this very event and what came shortly after it revealed that Hitler himself never took the principle of self-determination seriously, being led by his *cult of power*. Cult of power thus appeared as a real content of the principle of self-determination, or the latter as an alibi of the former. Consequently, "[t]he movement and the leader who had promised Germany moral satisfaction were the main causes of Germany's moral degradation, they justified *post facto* all that Germany had once suffered unjustly". (*VT-I.* 475)

The second element of the sytem of European values is *democracy*, which, for reasons we discussed above was coupled with the *practice of personal rule* that appeared in Nazism as the *Führerprinzip*.

"The people was longing for democratic leadership and oppressed by a feeling of not being guided: the tension was solved by the *Führerprinzip* of Hitlerism which gave a definite and seemingly satisfactory answer: dynastic personal rule is dead for ever, instead you have obtained the up to date, most advanced, the most popular rule, the personal rule of the *Führer*..." (*VT-I.* 476).

Nevertheless, Bibó thought, even this deeply infected "democracy" might bring good fruits for Germany. Democracy starts where a mass movement begins and a mass emotion occupies the people:

"The German people accepted the *Führer*, but was more and more disgusted by all that went with him. (...) In Hitlerism - paradoxically though this statement may sound - the German people went through the experience that a European nation cannot live under boundless personal rule and without spiritualised power. However devastating Hitlerism has been to the democratic forces of German society, it was the first to teach the German people, always too loyal and submissive to personal rule, to be truly and with the force of a real community emotion disgusted with personal rule, which is a primary condition of democracy." (*VT-I* 476f)

The third element of the system of European values is *equality*, connected to *racial theory*. In Bibó's view, Germany was the European country where privilege by birth represented the heaviest burden on social development. Hitlerism brought about a change in this respect:

"[b]y radically denying any difference of birth or social standing *within* the German nation, it succeded in casting off the terrible burden of social organisation based upon birth privileges. At the same time, it overshadowed all the old worn-out privileges by the promise of a new one, exalted without measure and glorified in mystical splendour: the privilege of being born German." (*VT-I.* 478)

Nevertheless, since this theory was not proved true in practical life, as a worker was more interested in being equal to a *Betriebsführer* than superior to a British aristocrat, and he was disappointed in this respect, the inner insufficiency of this theory became obvious even for many Germans. In the long run, therefore, Bibó thought, *equality* would gain a greater significance for German society than its negative relation, *racial theory*.

Accordingly, the balance of the situation that would come after Hitlerism is not entirely negative.This statement does not suggest that Hitlerism has any

merit or the damage that Hitlerism caused to the world could be relativised in any way. Apart from its own intention, Hitlerism played a peculiar role in Germany's social development:

"References to 'true' self-determination, true democracy, true socialism were mere tactical tricks to the leaders of Hitlerism engrossed in their dreams of power and racial mythology, but they were ensnared by their own tricks: the strength and the success of Hitlerism lasted until it really represented self-determination, democracy and socialism. When it discarded these ideas as tactical weapons that had done their duty and were considered superfluous in future, it became evident that Hitlerism had no ideological weapons of its own: it was defenceless. It is lasting insofar only as it was really based upon self-determination, democracy and socialism. Its durable results are: that it was the first to outline clearly the frames of the German nation; that it was the first to demonstrate with the convincing force of experience to the German people the absurdity of personal rule; and that it abolished the superannuated privileges of birth. (...) Deep and irresistible currents of the social psyche were realised in it which are stronger than any kind of ideology, slogan or propaganda." (*VT-I.* 479f)

Bibó presented his analysis of Germany's place in the crisis with an optimistic overtone. This optimism would be the tenor of his suggestions about the way out of the crisis.

6. "European Methods" and the Possible Factors of Power in their Service

There are five essential tasks to be performed on the road out of the crisis of Central and Eastern Europe. The first of these is the restoration of the dominance of European methods in this region. The second is leading Germany back into Europe from a political and psychological point of view.

At the start of his train of thought, Bibó notes three aspects of his study to which he expects a critical reaction. First of all, he does not assign great importance to economic questions, because he thinks that the restoration of socio-psychological conditions would eventually bring about economic prosperity. Secondly, despite the fact that he himself is a socialist, he does not think that postwar exhaustion would allow for the introduction of socialism. Finally he explains what he means by European methods.

He admits the one-sidedness of his own train of thought, inasmuch as he uses the word Europe consequently in a morally positive sense. This expression

has no exclusive sense that contrasts with any other continent or culture. "The frequent use of the word "European" has no importance and meaning other than the fact that there is no better word to be found even today for the complex of attributes and modes of behaviour that are usually described as humane, decent, Christian, liberal etc. in the Anglo-Saxon world." (*VT-I.* 551)

Expounding what he means by the restoration of European methods, Bibó first claims that the debate between the traditional left and right is fruitless in this respect. As a second step, he enumerates "the political and social factors of power in Europe". He divides these factors into three groups: the church and the army as conservative factors, organised workers as the progressive factor, bureaucracy and the peasantry as static factor. He argues separately for discounting the aristocracy and capitalism as conservative factors, and the free-thinking intelligentsia as a progressive factor.

7. Germany's Reintegration into the Political Life of Europe

After this consideration of factors of power, we turn directly to Bibó's ideas about Germany: what the most desirable peace treaty with Germany, as well as the most desirable form of government in the new Germany would be. The tasks concerning Germany have two aspects: she must be reintegrated in the framework of European cooperation, and must make her return to the abandoned line of European political development. (*VT-I.* 585)

The reintegration of Germany into European political life stands or falls on one question in Bibó's view: whether the spirit of objective responsibility can be awakened in Germany. Responsibility must be born by the whole of Germany as a nation, at the same time this responsibility must be bearable. Keeping this goal in mind, Bibó considers the desirable content of the future peace treaty parallel to the peace treaty of Versailles.

First he thinks that calling Germany a war criminal should be avoided. The statement to this effect had caused resentment towards the Versailles peace treaty as well, and the aim is for the German people itself to make this judgment, not the winners or the treaty. Furthermore, asking the question of war crime

makes the issue of war unnecessarily and dangerously moralistic. The end of the war will cause a huge moral crisis in Germany anyway,

> "for whose healthy course it is imperative that Germany be faced not with moral tenets but with facts. The main content of the German moral crisis will be a revulsion from moralising turned upside down, and of suspicious political motivation. This revulsion will cover, and will reach its high point in the face of the moralising of the victorious side." (*VT-I.* 587)

Bibó thinks that an allusion to the mere fact of victory will suffice, in view of the German cult of power. In relation to the punishment of concrete war criminals, Bibó warns that a possibility of the German people to consider them martyrs should be avoided. (*VT-I.* 589) As far as disarmament is concerned, he notes that the spirit of German militarism was strengthened by the one-sided demand for disarmament in the Versailles treaty (*VT-I.* 591). With respect to the reparation he warns that it should be worded unambiguously, and should not aim at revenge, but should be determined in view of European reconstruction. (*VT-I.* 592) All these injunctions should be defended from the pretences of a peace dictate: "All such scenes are unnecessary that the self-esteem of the winners does not need, but may have a catastrophic effect on the psychological regeneration of the loser." (*VT-I.* 593)

At the end of the enumeration of the elements of peace Bibó stressed that a possibility must be left open for the areas populated by the Germans to unite in one country. (*VT-I.* 595)

8. On the New German Government

Finally Bibó asks the question what conditions must be met by the German government that has to make peace in the name of Germany at the end of the war, and has to govern Germany before, during and after the peace negotiations. Bibó's answer can be summarised as follows: this government must ensure the supremacy of the European methods (as discussed earlier). He thinks that a democratic liberal government of the Weimar kind could not meet this condition. In his view there are still few people in Germany who believe in the suitability of liberal democracy for ensuring the European methods. Germany experienced the Weimar Republic as a fiasco, while she did not fight for the

conditions of liberal democracy. It does not follow from this, Bibó thinks, that, as the British Howard Cole suggests[58], a Soviet-type socialism should be introduced. In his detailed analysis, Bibó shows that Stalinism is merely an arbitrary historical form of Socialism that would lead to the development of dictatorship under German conditions. He refers back to his general conviction that a defeat in war is not a suitable psychological situation for the development of Socialism. Finally, he sees the basic mistake in H. Cole's thinking in that

> "he can and wants to imagine only a Socialist Germany after the fall of Nazi Germany, and he turns away in aversion from the third possibility: reactionary, or at least more or less conservative Germany. The aversion might be justified, but the turning away is not: if we agree that the first task in Germany is the restoration of European methods, then those European factors must be used that can be found in Germany, be they progressive or not. Progress should be left to the Germans after the hegemony of the European methods had been reestablished." (*VT-I.* 598f.)

Thus the two "reactionary" solutions must be considered: military rule and the monarchy.

As far as military rule is concerned, although it does not lack European values, distrust of criticism would not make it suitable for encouraging the necessary self-critical attitude in Germans. Moreover, the legitimacy of such a military government can easily be called into question, and this would destabilise the government. Bibó therefore sees the monarchy as a special possibility, and he carefully weighs the dangers and the promises of the monarchy.

The first drawback is the political form of the monarchy based on hereditary selection, and the second is the tendency of the monarchy as an institution on the defensive, to ally itself with static interests. A future monarchy needs to mimimalise the dangers of these drawbacks as far as possible.

The greatest advantage of the monarchy is that it represents "not a raw and elemental, but a developed, spiritualised form of personal rule that is capable to be spiritualised further". (*VT-I.* 601) For a community that has just escaped from the rawest and most personal dictatorship, this monarchy may represent a useful transition towards growing into impersonal rule, and it also ensures that

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[58] Bibó refers to the book of George Douglas Howard Cole: *Europe, Russia and the Future*, London, 1942, 143-156. Cf VT-I. pp. 727f, editorial note 212.

the community experiences the presence of a leader. Moreover, Bibó thinks that in the case of Germany the monarch, more than any other form of government, is capable of becoming the instrument of moral responsibility. Finally, the monarchy would make the Germans feel historical continuity, and could be capable of representing the new beginning from where, since 1806, the five deadlocked political developments, up to and including Hitlerism have started.

The last question is who could represent this suitable monarchy. It can only be a dynastic monarchy, since the monarchy of a personal hero would be identical to dictatorship. It can only be the monarchy of a German dynasty, a foreign monarch would not be able to solve the problems. The head of the house of Hohenzollern, since the Hohenzollerns are a part of the deformation of German politics, is not suitable either. Therefore, "in the sense of the only useful legitimacy, there is no legitimate German monarchy". (*VT-I.* 603)

D. An Outline of a Possible Theological Evaluation of Bibó's Plan

Let me begin the outline with a comment on the rather disturbing ending of Bibó's thoughts about the ideal German government. One of its possible readings is that there is no good solution. However, it has an alternative reading too: there is a good solution, even though its conditions do not seem to be at hand. In this case the tension between the ideal solution and the possibilities is especially sharp: there is no legitimate monarch, and a monarch cannot be created. Nevertheless, it is just the sharpness of the tension that particularly highlights an important feature of Bibó's view of history: although the factual conditions are entirely missing, the lack of conditions cannot prevent him from thinking about really good solutions.

This incurable optimism reveals itself also in the way Bibó observes the historical past. For him events did not necessarily happen, they happened, but they could have happened also differently.

History for Bibó reveals a great possibility for human society, a possibility that in most cases has not been fulfilled, but in some cases it has, so it could have been fulfilled other times and it can be fulfilled again. This view

makes it possible for him to regard the past couple of centuries in the history of Central and Eastern Europe a detour, a detour from the ideal that these countires and communities may be able to return to. In his late essay he will call this ideal the *social development of Europe*.

Similarly to his understanding of the European methods in 1944, his image of the social development of Europe is not exclusive either: he refers to a possibility that has developed into a social experience in Europe but it is accessible for all communities in the world. In this sense the late Bibó may be regarded as an early representative of the notion of global democratisation, which he thought through in the middle of the Cold War, both in the temporal and the spatial sense of the latter word. For Bibó the entertaining of this idea was not merely an intellectual adventure: the same aspect of history appears in a painfully concrete way in his evaluation of the 1956 revolution: 'The Hungarian Revolution of 1956: Scandal and Hope[59]. The publication of this article created the main charge against him for which he was given a life sentence in "socialist" Hungary.

In the title of the above article a word appears that may be the focus of a tentative theological evaluation of Bibó's social theory: *hope*. It was a perspective of hope in which he organised the data of historical past and assessed the possibilities of the present. However, the theological content of this hope is rather different to that of dominant theologies of hope in the twentieth century, characterised by, for example, the work of Jürgen Moltmann. To this difference we will return later.

The second point of the outline could be the investigation of the theological significance of using *the metaphor of sickness* - and, in natural relation to it, health - in the description of the status of Germany and the rest of Central and Eastern Europe with respect to European methods and the European social development. Sickness, as we have seen, replaces sinfulness in Bibó's view, as his conscious intention of avoiding moralisation and acting as a therapist instead requires. The metaphor of sickness allows one to see a - probably tiny - healthy core in the other that may be the starting point of his

[59] DRS pp. 331ff.

recovery (as we have seen in Bibó's evaluation in the status of Germany). Also, it allows me to recognise a similar sickness - even at a different level - in myself, that creates a consciousness of relatedness not only with respect to the common hope but also to the common predicament. Although it is implicit in Bibó's texts, the social context clearly indicates that Bibó writes and counsels as a member of a similarly sick, that is, a hysterical community, who is also a potential victim as well as a bearer of the very sickness he wishes to cure. The realisation of sickness as a common predicament may give concrete content to the process of recontextualisation: while placing myself into the context of the other I will finally recognise myself in the apparently different and even disturbing characteristics of the other. There may be two effects of this possibility: a greater understanding of the other and a liberation from misplaced roles, such as being a judge of the other. The significance of Jesus' application of the metaphor of sickness to sinners may be considered here, just like Bernard Crick's 1970 characterisation of the nature of Bibó's scholarship as well as Szilágyi's decision of calling Bibó a therapist.

The third point of the outline would focus on the very roots of Bibó's Christianity and would explain their theological significance. Here we can return to Mannheim's study to ask, what "paradigmatic experience" among the several may the most closely describe Bibó's Christianity. Among those that Mannheim mentions - original sin, redemption, the liberating and creative power or love, the Cross as the deeper meaning of suffering, it is obviously the liberating and creative power of love that most closely matches Bibó's image of Christianity. (This point is extremely important to raise, since Bonhoeffer's Christianity can be described differently, related to the deeper meaning of suffering, and this difference may hide behind the difference between their social theories as well.) From this point through the expression of "the intention of Christ" we can arrive at Bibó's image of Christ that he did not describe earlier than in the essay 'Reflections on the Social Development of Europe'. Here[60] he pictures a Christ who embodies the possibility of the victory of nonviolent love over all the

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[60] DRS pp. 431-434.

consequences of misunderstood and misdirected power that is rooted, finally, in human fear. This picture of Christ opens up Bibó's social thoughts for a theological evaluation from the perspective of the *Christus Victor* tradition. Also, this picture of Christ reveals why the theological interpretation of the dominant motif of Bibó's social theory, hope, is troublesome to relate to twentieth century theologies of hope, since the latter are reflections of the picture of the crucified Christ.

Thus, a broadest possible framework for a tentative theological evaluation of Bibó's social theory - reflected by his writings up to 1944 - may be created around the perspective of hope, the significance of the metaphor of sickness and the image of Christ as Christus Victor. This framework may provide a theological perspective for his understanding of freedom and its social dimensions.

Chapter 3

Vicarious Representative Action: the Origins of Bonhoeffer's Understanding of Freedom

A. Identifications of the Political Character of Bonhoeffer's Theology in Contemporary Bonhoeffer Scholarship

At the beginning of our investigation of Bibó's social theory I briefly mentioned that interpreters pass different judgements on it according to the interpreters personal convictions: for liberals Bibó is not liberal enough, while for socialists his socialism is far from being an orderly socialism. From the point of view that we decided to take, that of Bibó's Christianity, both criticisms seemed to be justified. What we see in the identification of Bonhoeffer's theory by interpreters of different political conviction, is partly similar, partly radically different. Similar, because different interpreters attribute different political characteristics to the same theory. Different, because different interpreters claim that Bonhoeffer's theological legacy may be interpreted *according to their own reading of human sociality*: liberals tend to think that Bonhoeffer was close to liberalism, socialists discover a socialist thinker in him, while conservatives argue that Bonhoeffer was one of the unmistakable representatives of genuine conservativism. While in Bibó's case it is possible to agree both with the liberal and the socialist critics, since they speak about the same Bibó and the same written scholarly heritage from different points of view, it is, obviously, impossible to agree with all who claim that Bonhoeffer would strengthen their own ideological position in today's ideological struggles. Since this research aims at the clarification of the political implications of Bonhoeffer's theological legacy, it has to face this wide plurality of evaluations as one of the basic problems in this field of research.

In what follows, we will list some typical and significant pieces of argument that represent this pluraity of evaluations. First we listen to Clifford Green who argues for a liberal Bonhoeffer.

Green has added an editorial note to a piece of a conversation beween two figures of Bonhoeffer's prison novel, Ulrich (the character for Bethge) and Christoph (the character for Bonhoeffer himself). The conversation is about equality and distinction between people. Christoph wonders about the contradiction that although according to Christianity all people are equal, they (the two friends) think that the same Christianity has to help to set up a new upper class, an elite. Having listened to Christoph, Ulrich speaks to him about Christoph's grandmother:

"She certainly takes Christianity seriously and understands it better than most pastors. Do you think she does not make any distinction between people? Doesn't she think just as we do that some people must be in higher and others in lower position, and that everything depends on the right people having authority"? (*FTP* 107f)

To this text Green adds the following note:

"See especially the recently discovered letter of September 20, 1941, from Bonhoeffer to Paul Lehmann. Probably reflecting the views of his co-conspirators, Bonhoeffer states that after a successful coup Germany would need "an authoritarian 'Rechtsstaat'"as a basis for justice, lawfulness, and the freedom of the church. As much as he would personally prefer in the aftermath of Nazism an Anglo-Saxon liberal democracy, Bonhoeffer believed 'that short of thing would throw Germany right into the same abyss'."[1]

We will analyse the letter[2] referred to above in detail at the end of this study. Here it is sufficient to observe that Green attributes to Bonhoeffer a social conviction compatible to Anglo-Saxon liberal democracy, which is different to that of his co-conspirators. The liberal Bonhoeffer, however, wishes for his post-war Germany an authoritarian government, because in the present state of Germany it would provide the proper order within wich life can begin again. The position Green attributes to Bonhoeffer here closely resembles Bibó's position that he himself announced: as a socialist he would have favoured a socialist Germany, but right after the war a monarchy seemed to be a more viable road to a new beginning. Bibó's words about his position cannot be misunderstood; whether Green understands Bonhoeffer properly, however, is a question we should leave open here.

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[1] FTP p. 108. note 46.

[2] The letter is published in Clifford Green, *Bonhoeffe: A Theology of Sociality*, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, Michigan, Cambridge U.K. 1999, pp. 345f.

The arguably socialist Bonhoeffer is presented by John de Gruchy. "The political position which most accords with Bonhoeffer's theology lies somewhere, I suggest, along the spectrum between social democracy and democratic socialism."[3] To be sure, de Gruchy does not suggest that Bonhoeffer thought of himself to be either socialist or democratic, this view expresses the impact or influence of his theology in the context of the nineties, as de Gruchy evaluated it. In the introductory part of his article on Bonhoeffer's possible contribution to a better understanding of present transitions to democracy, under the heading of *A Theological de Tocqueville*,[4] de Gruchy shows in a most perceptive manner the extent to which Bonhoeffer's politically comprehensible thoughts do not correspond to liberalism and democracy as we understand these words today. Rather, he thinks through some relevant pieces of Bonhoeffer theological legacy as a criticism of liberal democracy, both for Bonhoeffer's own time and the present. De Gruchy begins to approach his conclusion by asking why Bonhoeffer distrusted liberal democracy. Among other things, de Gruchy argues, "Bonhoeffer was aware of the connection between liberal democracy and capitalism and of the failure of Weimar to provide economic security for the masses. Unless this was planned for in the new world order, the result would be as catastrophic as the failure of Weimar, opening the way for bolshevistic totalitarianism."[5] This suggestion presupposes a genuine interest on Bonhoeffer's part in economic matters and strategies to overcome poverty, a political position that corresponds with that of Bibó in a remarkable way. The same suggestion is repeated with respect to present-day divisions among political standpoints, by turning Bonhoeffer into a contemporary to an extent that, I think, is not necessarily justifiable on the basis of his written heritage:

"Bonhoeffer's critiques of democracy had to do, first of all, with the fact that, for him, democracy was tied to liberalism and capitalism. His problem with democracy was not its insistence on human rights and the rule of law, which he strongly affirmed, but the equation of democracy with the protection of the possessive rights of individuals and an economic policy which had little regard for the common good. (...) [Bonhoeffer]

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[3] John de Gruchy, 'Dietrich Bonhoeffer and the Transition to Democracy in the German Democratic Republic and South Africa', In: *Modern Theology*, 12:3, July 1996, p. 359.
[4] de Gruchy, 'Dietrich Bonhoeffer and the Transition to Democracy', pp. 348-351.
[5] de Gruchy, 'Dietrich Bonhoeffer and the Transition to Democracy', p. 350.

rejected both individualism and collectivism, liberal capitalism and communism, and called for a society in which persons related to each other in responsible freedom, and therefore a society in which the interests of the weak rather than the strong were protected."[6]

This Bonhoeffer could hardly be interpreted apart from the possibility of social democracy and democratic socialism. It is a crucial element within de Gruchy's argument, however, that the latter doesn't derive this position from Bonhoeffer's political conviction but from his Christology. "What motivated him, however, was not a political ideology, but a concern for the weak, a concern for justice. For this reason, the political order which he sought was always a penultimate one which corresponded with reality understood in the light of Christology."[7] The implicit statement in this suggestion may be that Bonhoeffer's explicitly expressed political convictions do not necessarily correspond with the political implication that may be derived his Christologically centered theology. Whether or not it may be the case, and whether or not Bonhoeffer's theology may be read as an impulse for a socialistically characterised democracy, are questions that we have to leave open here.

The first reference to a possibly conservative Bonhoeffer is taken from Keith Clements in a form of a rather gentle criticism. Whether or not he had de Gruchy's article in mind, we cannot know; however, Clements' study on Bonhoeffer's understanding of community published some months after de Gruchy's essay had appeared might partially be regarded as a reaction to the latter. Clements shows the distance not only between Bonhoeffer's time and ours but also Bonhoeffer's perspective of community and community as we understand it amongst current political changes. He believes that "Bonhoeffer himself would have been aghast at any treatment of him so reverential that any criticism was ruled out of court"[8]. Here we take the first of his three critical questions:

"[O]nce Bonhoeffer moves beyond the community of the church, does he really tell us much about community as such, or does he remain at the level of the individual subject relating responsibly to other subjects? What does he have to say about the shaping and structuring of society, beyond the very generalised 'mandates' of family,

[6] de Gruchy, 'Dietrich Bonhoeffer and the Transition to Democracy', p. 359.
[7] *ibid.*
[8] Keith Clements, 'Community in the Ethics of Dietrich Bonhoeffer', in: *Studies in Christian Ethics*, 10. (1997) p. 29.

work, government and so on? Social ethics surely has to do with political and economic ordering, with social structures and power relationships. After Marx none of us can be innocent of such issues. Does Bonhoeffer really move beyond an essentially bourgeois position of individual responsibility, albeit always responsibility to others in the public sphere? Or, as some might want to put it, can we be sure that in modern Germany he would not simply be voting with the Christian Democrats?"[9]

Clements does not state that Bonhoeffer was a conservative thinker, he only asks this question to express his opinion that it is not at all a simple task to identify the political character of Bonhoeffer's theology. His criticism remains within the limit of critical co-operation with scholars of different opinions. Others, however, argue for a conservative Bonhoeffer in a more resolute way, as can be seen in Georg Huntemann's picture of Bonhoeffer.

The explicit purpose of Huntemann's book, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer: An Evangelical Reassesment* is to reclaim Bonhoeffer's honorable theological legacy for the conservative-evangelical movement. Bonhoeffer's conservative interpretation, he thinks, may be crucial for the evangelical movement itself: "[Bonhoeffer] is very close in spirit to the evangelicals, for whom this book was chiefly written. He will be their church father in the future - or else the evangelicals will have no future."[10] (It may be interesting to quote here Dorothee Sölle's appreciation of Bonhoeffer, printed on the back jacket of the volumes of the new Fortress edition of Bonhoeffer's works: "Dietrich Bonhoeffer is the one German theologian who will lead us into the third millennium." It may be an important question why theologians from the opposite corners of today's theological landscape can shout Bonhoeffer's name as a battlecry; what is the nature of a theological legacy that recieves such emphatical echoes from theological camps, so contradictory in their objectives.)

Huntemann doesn't only present a radically conservative Bonhoeffer in his book, a picture he builds onto an analysis of a rich selection of Bonhoeffer's texts, he also determines Bonhoeffer's place with respect to present-day ideological struggles: "The patriarchal figure Bonhoeffer, for whom the assigned place of the woman was the household of her husband and to whom it was crucial that the wife be subject to

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[9] Clements, 'Community in the Ethics of Dietrich Bonhoeffer' in: *Studies in Christian Ethics,* 10. (1997) p. 29.

[10] Georg Huntemann, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer: An Evangelical Reassessment.* Baker Books, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1996. p. 12.

the husband, this Bonhoeffer who fought for an ethos 'from above' and for a governmental authority 'by God's grace' - this Bonhoeffer was no comrade of the Nazis nor fitting contemporary of his times. Neither does he fit the spirit of our times. On the contrary, this consciously 'Christian Westerner' is a witness against our times. Furthermore - and this is a very important aspect of this book for me - all of the anti-Christian elements of the Nazi period continue to be at work precisely among those who count themselves, often with such careless disregard of history, part of the progressive or left-wing scene. This is the case in spite of the fact that these anti-Christian elements appear in a different conceptual raiment than the garments they wore during National Socialism. The more or less matriarchal, socially utopian, and merely selectively biblical theology in Germany (and not only in Germany) cannot appeal to Bonhoeffer to suport its claims. Moreover, its stands in complete contradiction to that which Bonhoeffer wanted to accomplish through his thought and his life."[11]

Huntemann's political position and his conviction that he can count on Bonhoeffer as his comrade, I think, is unmistakable. Besides his insistence on the fundamentally conservative character of Bonhoeffer's theology, his evaluation of Nazism is a yet another distinctive point that contrasts Huntemann with other scholars. Theologians of the International Bonhoeffer Society usually agree that one of the distinctive contents of Nazism is racist ideology and racism is a typical reaction to complex political and economic situations on the part of the political right: this is the lesson the twentieth century teaches us. Bonhoeffer's attack on the Nazis began with his criticism of the way the Nazis treated the Jews, and this concern remained alive in Bonhoeffer throughout his life, and his concern with the Jews creates a fundamental distance between Bonhoeffer and the political right. If these elements are part of the agreement, the only remaining question is how far Bonhoeffer's thoughts and actions against the racist Nazi state and on behalf of the Jews were complex and consistent enough[12], but the question whether he could be interpreted as belonging to the political

[11] Huntemann, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer,* p- 11.
[12] The scholarly literature that discusses the significance of Bonhoeffer's stance for the Jews in Nazi Germany is abundant and well known. Recently even the controversial opinion appeared that the ultimate motivation behind Bonhoeffer's participation in the resistance was not patriotism, as for his co-conspirators, but his wish to rescue Jews whom destiny he wanted to share. See Andreas Pangritz, 'Sharing the Destiny of his People' in: John de Gruchy ed., *Bonhoeffer for a New Day,* Eerdmans 1997, pp. 258-277. Recent literature, however, also reveals the limits of Bonhoeffer's commitment to the victims of the Nazi state, both in theoretical and in practical terms. See Kenneth C. Barnes, 'Dietrich Bonhoeffer and Hitlers's Persecution of the Jews', in: Robert P. Ericksen and Susannah Heschel eds., *Betrayal, German Churches and the Holocaust,* Fortress, Minneapolis, 1999, pp. 110-128.

right cannot be raised. Huntemann, however, turns the underlying logic of this argumentation upside down by arguing that the Nazi revolution has to be regarded as a revolution from below, therefore, a leftist revolution. He sets into a parallel relationship the 'Marxist-Socialist revolution' and the 'National Socialist one' by calling them a 'revolution against fatherhood and order', and even relating both of them to Freud's scholarship.[13]

I cannot engage in a critical evaluation of Huntemann's view of twentieth century history here; now I only recall Bibó who already in the early forties spoke about the 'strange ballgame' between the left and the right concerning the evaluation of Nazism. It seems that the ballgame lives on, and, naturally, the position one occupies in it fundamentally influences one's opinion about the political character of Bonhoeffer's theology. This ideological confrontation cannot be solved by the means that are provided by an interpretation of a theological heritage, like that of Bonhoeffer. What would be within the sphere of competence of Bonhoeffer scholars, however, is to show why Bonhoeffer's texts are capable of supporting reconstructions of the political character of Bonhoeffer that are diametrically opposed to each other.

As far as I know, this challenge have not been answered yet. First, I have not met a thorough study of Hunteman's interpretation of Bonhoeffer's texts that would create a basis for either justifying or refuting the picture of Bonhoeffer he has created. Moreover, it seems to me that the problem itself is minimised. John de Gruchy devotes a section to the problem of diversity in the reception and interpretation of Bonhoeffer in his recent study on 'The Reception of Bonhoeffer's Theology'. Huntemann is given a footnote among several writers who are grouped by de Gruchy as being representatives along different confessional lines: thus Huntemann is placed between a Catholic writer (his work was published in 1967) and an anabaptist writer (with a study from 1971) as a representative of 'conservative evangelicalism'.[14] This judgement is mistaken for two reasons. Huntemann does not represent a confession as a Lutheran writer, for example, but a complex and radically anti-modernist ideological

[13] See the first chapter of Huntemann's book, 'Challenged by a Revolution', in Huntemann, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer*, pp. 15-26.
[14] John de Gruchy, 'The Reception of Bonhoeffer's Theology', in: John de Gruchy ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Dietrich Bonhoeffer*, Cambridge University Press, 1999, p. 95.

standpoint; and Huntemann does not simply write from a different standpoint, but also presents a rather different Bonhoeffer who is at odds with the dominant and widely accepted figure. This challenge should not have been ignored.

This unanswered challenge leaves a question with me that I cannot avoid while trying to identify the political implications of Bonhoeffer's theology: how is it possible to present such opposing pictures on the basis of the same text? Is it posible that the nature of the text itself allows such a diverse interpretation?

Besides this question that comes from the above analysis of contemporary ventures of determining the political character of Bonhoeffer's theology, our purpose to compare Bonhoeffer's legacy to the political thoughts of the young Bibó will, naturally, also guide the following analysis. A conversational partner with whom we are already familiar, Bibó will be kept within our perspective throughout the coming argumentation.

B. The Relationship between Bonhoeffer's Concept of Freedom and his Understanding of Vicarious Representative Action; the Rationale of the Following Analysis

Unlike Bibó, Bonhoeffer never turned to the theme of freedom as a central topic of one of his studies. Nevertheless, his interest in the meaning of freedom both at a theoretical and a practical level penetrated several of his writings from the beginning to the end. The scope of his interest in investigating into the meaning of freedom gradually widened. In *Sanctorum Communio* an explicit treatment of freedom occurs only with respect to the empirical church[15]. *Act and Being*, however, is much more detailed on freedom: the text begins with a reference to God's freedom[16] and ends with a discussion of the freedom of the child[17], containing several substantial analyses of divine freedom and human freedom in between. In *Creation and Fall* the investigation continues, describing created freedom[18]. In *Christology*, Christ the Center is described

[15] SC pp. 250ff.
[16] AB p. 25.
[17] AB p. 161.
[18] CF pp. 63ff.

as the new creation, the fullfilment of fallen creation's expectant waiting for a new freedom[19]. In *Discipleship* Bonhoeffer points at complete freedom as the fruit of simple obedience[20]. In the experience of community depicted in *Life Together* the other's created freedom from me shows itself as a burden and an unavoidable reality[21]. In *Ethics* freedom is discussed as a condition of responsible life, that is, in turn, described in the form of deputyship[22]. Finally, as a prisoner Bonhoeffer explained the way and direction of his own life as *Stations on the Road to Freedom*[23].

With respect to the explicit topics of Bonhoeffer's individual theological works freedom appears as one of the sub-themes. These sub-themes, however, are related to each other as referring to one of the basic motives of Bonhoeffer's theology. My thesis is that Bonhoeffer's understanding of vicarious representative action (*Stellvertretung*) provides the immediate theological context of his explanation of the nature of freedom. Vicarious representative action, as the basic structure of divine-human and human-human relationships, had already been elaborated in *Sanctorum Communio* in detail[24]. Its significance for the understanding of freedom was not explicitly explained in the first dissertation. The train of thought of *Act and Being*, however, carries forward the "being acted upon"[25] aspect of vicarious representative action, deriving from it the characteristic understanding of freedom as not "freedom from" but "freedom for"[26]. Later in *Ethics* freedom is placed into correspondence with deputyship, the expression that refers to the structure of vicarious representative action[27]. In prison even Bonhoeffer's most personal approach to freedom has a christological as well as an ecclesiological character: it refers to Jesus who "is there only for others" and the church that is "church only when it exists for others". The christological and the ecclesiological dimensions meet in the description of human

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[19] Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Christology*, Collins Fount Paperbacks, 1978, p. 64.
[20] D p. 168.
[21] LT pp. 95ff.
[22] E p. 224 .
[23] LPP p. 370f.
[24] In a summary form see SC p. 178.
[25] AB pp. 116, 121, 126.
[26] AB pp. 90f.
[27] E pp. 224f.

existence: "our relation to God is a new life in 'existence for others' through participation in the being of Jesus"[28].

Vicarious representative action as one of the leading motifs - or even *the leitmotif* - of Bonhoeffer's theology has been recognised by Bonhoeffer scholars for a long time.[29] Its significance with respect to our present research is outstanding, since it is not simply a motive of Bonhoeffer's theology but also provides an organic link between his theology and the related social theory. Vicarious representative action describes the structure of both divine-human and human-human relations. The persistent focussing on vicarious representative action makes Bonhoeffer's theology a theology of sociality - Clifford Green's well-know expression - from the very outset. There is no need to create an artificial link between his theology and the references to social theory that appear in his writings here and there; the link is already provided in the very heart of his theology. This, however, does not make an attempt to analyse and evaluate the social implications of his social theory unnecessary. The social theory that he incorporated into the structure of vicarious representative action has had distinct social characteristics right at the beginning, and the presence of these characteristics can be recognised during the whole development of Bonhoeffer's theology. These characteristics create a sound basis of reference with respect to the social implications of Bonhoeffer's theology, and provide us with information about the possible democratic impact of Bonhoeffer's theological legacy.

We have already seen that the concept of vicarious representative action, the permanent attendant of Bonhoeffer's concept of freedom, had already been formed in *Sanctorum Communio*. In *Sanctorum Communio* the concept of freedom plays only a

[28] LPP pp. 381f.

[29] It was John Godsey who first revealed that the above mentioned expressions can be related to *Stellvertretung*, elaborated in SC. See: John Godsey: *The Theology of Dietrich Bonhoeffer*, SCM, London, 1960, pp. 260f. See also Clifford Green, *Bonhoeffer: A Theology of Sociality*, Eerdmans, 1999. In the first edition of his book, (*The Sociality of Christ and Humanity: Bonhoeffer's Early Theology*, Missoula, Montana: Scholars Press, 1972) Green showed the link beetween Bonhoeffer's early theology and the prison letters with respect to vicarious representative action. In a purposeful follow-up of Green's work, Mark S. Brocker presented the constructive role of vicarious representative action *between* the early theology and the prison literature, namely, in *Ethics*. Mark S. Brocker: 'The Community of God, Jesus Christ, and Responsibility: The Responsible Person and the Responsible Community in the Ethics of Dietrich Bonhoeffer.' Unpublished PhD-dissertation, Chicago, 1996. See also Joachim von Soosten's editorial 'Afterword' in SC, pp. 303ff, and Keith Clements' 'Community in the Ethics of Dietrich Bonhoeffer', in *Studies in Christian Ethics*, 10. (1997).

marginal role, the argument related to vicarious representative action, however, is all the more detailed, rich and complex. It is also *Sanctorum Communio* where the structure of the relationship of sociological and theological elements within Bonhoeffer's theology can most clearly be revealed. This structure has a decisive importance for the *social consequences of the concept of freedom*, our primary interest in this study.

On the basis of this sociological-theological structure, Bonhoeffer's concept of freedom has received its final shape within a relatively short period, as is documented in *Act and Being* and *Creation and Fall*. *Act and Being* has determined God's freedom as "freedom for", while *Creation and Fall* has extended the nature of God's freedom to human beings by applying the *analogia relationis*. From that time onwards Bonhoeffer answered the ever-renewing challenges of his life according to this pre-determined concept of freedom. His famous statement written in his 22 April 1944 letter from prison that he had not changed very much[30] refers also to his concept of freedom.

The material unity in Bonhoeffer's use of the concept of freedom in the course of the early, the middle and the late period of his theological work is not difficult to demonstrate. The question of the material unity of the complex social consequences of his concept of freedom, however, is a more difficult one. Can we apply his above statement about the basic permanence of his life to his social theory and socially relevant convictions too? Or might the change that Bonhoeffer designates in the same prison letter, from the 'phraseological to the real', be understood as a change especially in the way he was perceptive towards human sociality?

In answering these questions a thorough analysis of *Sanctorum Communio* has a crucial importance. It is this study where the web of social and theological elements is first worked out; therefore its detailed knowledge is unavoidable for a clear understanding of *what continuity and change mean* in the development of Bonhoeffer's social and theological perception. The analysis of *Sanctorum Communio* will be disproportionally long so it will occupy the present chapter; the application of

[30] LPP p. 275.

the findings we will gain from it will be carried out in a relatively straightforward way in the next chapter.

C. Theology of Sociality in Sanctorum Communio

While it is unmistakable that, from a hermeneutical viewpoint and because of their dominant way of reasoning, the dissertation can be placed within the area of ecclesiology and dogmatic theology, the contents of the train of thought reveal a much broader perspective. As Clifford Green has convincingly argued, Bonhoeffer's early theology, beginning with the dissertations, establishes a widely conceived theology of sociality. Green was successful in going beyond the general understanding of previous Bonhoeffer scholarship that considered either ecclesiology or Christology the central topic of Bonhoeffer's early theology and, consequently, his whole theological development. Green recognised that Bonhoeffer's Christology has been informed by his soteriology that, in turn, relied on his theological anthropology.[31] In the first edition of his work Green extends his investigation beyond the limits of the early theology, to *Discipleship* and the prison letters and literary fragments. In the second, enlarged edition he adds a similar analysis of *Ethics*, thus Bonhoeffer's *theology of sociality* is given an even broader literary basis[32]. A summary form of Green's view of Bonhoeffer's theology of sociality is available also in a recent article that suggests that it is *human sociality* that informs Christian community in Bonhoeffer's works[33].

On the one hand, Green's discovery that the whole corpus of Bonhoeffer's theology and, more inclusively, his literary work has a dominant social character, is a decisive factor from the perspective of the present research. The very possibility that Bonhoeffer's theology can be drawn into correspondence with democratic social theories, and also with Bibó's social theory in particular, is based on the intrinsic social character of Bonhoeffer's theology. Therefore, the argumentation below is based on

[31] Green, *The Sociality of Christ and Humanity, p.* 1.
[32] Green, *Bonhoeffer, A Theology of Sociality,* p. xiii.
[33] Clifford Green, 'Human Sociality and Christian Community', in: de Gruchy ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Dietrich Bonhoeffer* pp. 113-133.

the fundamental insight provided by Green. On the other hand, this basic indebtedness must not mean that we follow Green in his particular assumptions and judgements in the course of our investigation into the *character* of Bonhoeffer's social theology. Although Green's work seems to be unanimously praised by the international circle of Bonhoeffer scholars[34], I am not convinced that his reconstruction of Bonhoeffer's social theology, including its underlying psycho-social factors, is the only proper medium for the identification of the social character of Bonhoeffer's works. Rather, I think, Green is inclined to read his own sociality into Bonhoeffer's texts uncritically and the picture of Bonhoeffer he eventually offers bears his own image as well, to the extent that the two faces are not always distinguishable from each other. Criticism of some of Green's insights will be offered as my argument proceeds - I regret that I cannot undertake a comprehensive critical treatment of Green's interpretation of Bonhoeffer within the limits of the present study. Here it is sufficient to note that Green's work is considered but also critically considered. Interpreting Bonhoeffer on his own terms means, right at the beginning, that while I basically agree with Green that the hermeneutical key to Bonhoeffer's theology is his peculiar anthropology, I disagree about the characteristics that he attributes to it. For a clearer picture of the focal point of Bonhoeffer's theological thoughts I will rather let him speak for himself first.

In the following investigation we will not undertake a comprehensive examination of all the important concepts - not even in a summary form - of *Sanctorum Communio*. It is neither possible nor necessary within the framework of the present study. Rather, the analysis is dictated by the intended comparison of Bibó's and Bonhoeffer's social theory that focusses on their respective understanding of freedom. As a first step we will consider Bonhoeffer's method and compare it to that of Bibó. Keeping in mind the formative influence of Max Weber upon Bibó's social theory and general way of thinking, we will search for ways in which Max Weber's sociology is reflected in Bonhoeffer's sociological thoughts. This search is intended to create a link between the intellectual background of Bibó and Bonhoeffer. We will

[34] The latest review has been written by Jean Bethke Elshtain in the *Newsletter* of the International Bonhoeffer Society's English Language Section, Number 76 June 2001, pp. 16-18.

also determine the type of social anthropology behind the basic presuppositions of Bibó's understanding of freedom, and gather together some references that Bonhoeffer made to it, creating another link, now moving from Bonhoeffer's dissertation towards that of Bibó.

After these steps we will devote a detailed examination to the social-anthropological rootedness of the principle of vicarious representative action. Finally we will test our findings on Bonhoeffer's discussion of the relationship of the church and the proletariat.

a. Three Preliminary Observations

Bonhoeffer, just like Bibó, begins his study with a clear statement of his method. The ultimate aim of the study is to gain "a conceptual understanding of Christian community, the sanctorum communio" (*SC* 33). This conceptual understanding is approached from three different angles, using three different methods, that of "theology, social philosophy and sociology" (*SC* 33). However, these approaches have a clear order: the study "does not properly belong to the sociology of religion but to theology. It will be carried out on the foundation of Christian theology and will make fruitful for theology the fundamental insights that derive purely from social philosophy and sociology" (*SC* 32f).

He starts his study with a distinction between social philosophy and sociology. They are related disciplines in a distinct epistemological subordination as "sociology relates to social philosophy by building on its theoretical constructs ... [and] social philosophy provides the continuing norm of sociology" (*SC* 25ff). Due to their order within the epistemological process, their subject matter is clearly different.

The order of the epistemological process can be reconstructed as follows: it begins with the church, participating in its life with passionate zeal (*SC* 33), then it considers social philosophy as the normative study "of the primordial mode-of-being of sociality per se" (*SC* 29). The latter provides the guideline for the interpretation of empirical sociological data. At the third place comes sociology. Its data, however, are not considered either historically or merely in themselves, but in a further

subordination of the study of the constitutive structural principles of empirical social formations, yet another systematic discipline. In other words, although sociology itself has already been subordinated to theology at the first place and social philosophy at the second, it is still not regarded as merely a study of 'relations and interactions' of empirical data. On the contrary, its concern "is to trace the many complex interactions back to certain constitutive acts of spirit that comprise the distinctive characteristic of the structure" (*SC* 30). The structure of community is composed by three determinants: "original social relationships, the structures of empirical communities and the personal units who are centers of agency"[35]. It is the third 'determinant' and the very last unit within the epistemological process that represents some kind of empirical data - a presence of the perceiving human spontaneity (if we recall Bibó's method here) - but it is already surrounded by several walls of theoretical considerations. Therefore, even if we had not been informed by Peter Berger's view about the real weight and role of empirical data in Bonhoeffer's study of the *sanctorum communio*[36], we could estimate it on the basis of his method.

If we recall now Bibó's method of the empirical way of developing a concept, the fundamental difference between the method of the two scholars is not difficult to recognise. Bibó begins with experiences and proceeds gradually towards more and more fundamental concepts, while Bonhoeffer starts with the discussion of speculative notions to prepare a framework within which experiences may be investigated. Bibó obviously trusts experience rather than speculative frameworks, while Bonhoeffer regards concepts more reliable than experience. However, this difference in 'intellectual taste' has a far-reaching consequence concerning the underlying social character of the investigation they pursue. While everyone has experiences, conceptual knowledge belongs to the learned minority. Many people can be fellow-travellers and co-thinkers with respect to a study based on the empirical method, since findings may be discussed continuously on the basis of individual experiences as the investigation is pursued. Conversely, the mere demand that the appropriation of certain conceptual structures are inevitable right at the outset, *ab ovo* select those who can participate in

[35] Here we accept the help of the Editor, SC p. 30. note 8.
[36] Peter Berger, 'The Social Character of the Question Concerning Jesus Christ' in: Martin Marty ed., *The Place of Bonhoeffer: Problems and Possibilities of his Thought*, SCM, London, 1963, p. 59.

the intellectual venture. Briefly, while Bibó's method has intrinsic democratic implications, Bonhoeffer's method is characteristically elitist. We have seen that Bonhoeffer set up several conceptual gates that his reader has to get through to reach the empirical content that, at least in theory, awaits to be discovered. Importantly, the first precondition of travelling along is being a passionate member of the church. This *condition sine qua non*, theoretically, could refer to accessible and broadly shared experiences. How far Bonhoeffer's concept of the church is empirically graspable, however, remains to be seen.

In the next step we will examine the influence, the presence, or, rather the absence of Max Weber's theory from Bonhoeffer's intellectual horizon. We have already seen the decisive influence of Weber on Bibó that established the latter's first appropriation of freedom as both *freedom from* and *freedom for* that finally became constructive in the development of Bibó's democratic theory. Regarding Bonhoeffer, "Weber's sociology of religion and his exploration of the question of church and sect appear to be no more [to him] than a foil against which [he] developed his theological interpretation of the church and community"[37]. Weber was highly influential in the intellectual milieu in which Bonhoeffer grew up, and he himself studied his works early on[38]. The results of this encounter are some reflections to Weber's theory that appear in *Sanctorum Communio* as focal points in which the author could demonstrate the fundamental difference between his approach and that of Weber. Bonhoeffer distanced himself from Weber already in the methodological section. When he defined sociology of religion as a "research phenomenologically [on] the structural distinctiveness of religious communities", he passed a critical remark on Weber, accusing him of discussing several different aspects of culture in a historical perspective, under the rubric of "sociology of religion".[39] Bonhoeffer's main objection against Weber is based on the latter's historical method that results in a genetic sociological approach. "The task of sociological study is not to demonstrate the

[37] Martin Rumscheidt, 'The Formation of Bonhoeffer's Theology', in: de Gruchy ed, *The Cambridge Companion to Dietrich Bonhoeffer*, p. 66.; see also Berger, 'The Social Character of the Question Concerning Jesus Christ', in: Marty ed., *The Place of Bonhoeffer*, pp. 58, 73.
[38] See editorial note 24 in SC p. 7.
[39] SC p. 31, note 4.

thousands of motives and their many variants that led to the *genesis* of a social structure (...) rather, its task is to study the acts of will that are *constitutive* of a social structure." (*SC* 89) Similarly, Bonhoeffer rejected Weber's (and Troeltsch's) distinction of church and sect, saying that "there is no essential sociological difference between the two" (*SC* 267). In view of Bonhoeffer's method it is not surprising that he could not employ the significant elements of Weber's theory - although in some marginal cases he made affirmative references[40]. It is also only of a secondary interest for us whether Bonhoeffer was always correct in understanding Weber[41]. The main point is that Bonhoeffer remained untouched by two characteristics of Weber's scholarship that exercised a decisive influence on Bibó. First, it was Weber's historical-empirical method that was able to demonstrate the interrelatedness between theological thoughts and experienced freedom, second, Weber's concrete analysis of the political impact of the Protestant sects as voluntary religious associations. Both Weber's points made a contribution to Bibó's image of historically manifested freedom, while Bonhoeffer was not open to these influences.

With the discussion of the role of Weber's influence with respect to Bonhoeffer's theory we created a concrete link between Bibó's and Bonhoeffer's social theories. Another possibility to create a link is to find a place for the basis of Bibó's social theory on the 'map' of several possible bases that Bonhoeffer displayed for identifying the fundamentals of his own social theory. We can find the 'map' in Bonhoeffer's exposition of the four conceptual models of basic social relations in chapter 2. Before entering this 'map', I will briefly summarise what we may understand by the basis in Bibó's case.

We have seen that Bibó did not provide a detailed account of the social-anthropological fundamentals of his examination of the relationship of coercion, freedom and law. His field of study was the philosophy of law, and a discussion of the fundamentals of human sociality were involved in the argument only with respect to the human subject of the experience of either coercion or freedom. (Sociality appears

[40] For exapmle: SC p. 227.
[41] On this topic see Berger, 'The Social Character of the Question Concerning Jesus Christ', in: Marty ed., *The Place of Bonhoeffer*, p. 73; and Green, *Bonhoeffer: A Theology of Sociality* p. 27.

in a detailed manner as the social effects of coercion, freedom or law.) Regarding the human subject, the only information we are given that both coercion and freedom can be identified with reference to human spontaneity, spontaneous experience and spontaneous will. Bibó depicts human subjects as entities that influence each other, feel constrained, feel free from or free for each other. Later, as he discusses social objectivations, he understands them as aggregrations of several personal wills and experiences. Objectivations of coercion or freedom, like power or agreement, are generated by several individual experiences of coercion or freedom, and the objectivations can keep their 'social reality' only if the individual experiences still exist. On this basis we can confidently say that Bibó, even if he did not state it explicitly, held an atomistic view of human sociality.

This atomistic view appears on Bonhoeffer's 'map' as the third type of the ontic basic-relations, that he calls Epicureanism. According to it, "[s]ocial formations (...) have a purely utilitarian basis, arising only from a *synthēkē* [agreement] and so are inconcievable as natural community" (*SC* 38). Natural community, as the Editor notes, is a key concept here: it refers to those communities that Bonhoeffer will explain as *real*: "original" or "primal" community, or "community as an end in itself".[42] Most importantly,

"[t]he Epicurean position is characterised by its deficient concept of spirit. The deficiency can be construed as a doctrine of basic-relation holding that there are no essential or meaningful relations between human beings that are grounded in the human spirit: connections to others are not intrinsic but only utilitarian. One person is fundamentally alien to the other." (*SC* 39)

Bonhoeffer holds that this is the doctrine that the Enlightenment took up and developed further. He relates it to Hobbes' *status hominum naturalis est bellum omnium contra omnes*, adding, that all social forms created on this bases "should be interpreted as purely contractual. This and the next chapter contain my implicit argument with this theory."(*SC* 40)

To sum it up, we have found three important differences between the social theories of Bibó and Bonhoeffer at their fundamental level right at the outset: in their

[42] SC p. 38, note 12.

method, in their consideration of Max Weber's scholarship, and in the social-anthropological basis of their theories that Bonhoeffer calls social-basic relation. Having sharpened our comprehensive investigation, now we proceed to identify the meaning of vicarious representative action.

b. The Concept of Person and Vicarious Representative Action

1. Towards the Concept of Person - the Role of I-You-relations

Vicarious representative action appears in Bonhoeffer's train of thought within the discussion of sinful or broken community, the community represented by 'Adam'. (*SC* 120) The three decisive concepts that lead to vicarious representative action from the starting point, that is, the ontic basic-relations, are the *Christian concept of person, collective person* and *ethical collective person*. These concepts of person are continuously informed by the concept of God and the concept of community (*SC* 34), but the decisive assertions are worded with respect to the concepts of person: vicarious representative action is a characterisitic form of acting as well as being together of persons.

Before we embark upon the detailed examination of Bonhoeffer's understanding of person, we should specify our attention with respect to the comparison of Bonhoeffer's and Bibó's image of freedom once again. We have found that Bibó understood freedom first of all as *negative freedom*, freedom from some coercive force; and we have already noted that Bonhoeffer argued that freedom was - using Bibó's term here - *positive freedom*, freedom for, embedded into an ethical responsibility for the other. We have also seen that the antropological basis of Bibó's understanding of freedom is his unconditional affirmation of human spontaneity: *negative freedom is rooted in the rule of spontaneity*, the characteristic system of the human subject, over any alien, coercive force. The spontaneous act and its reflection in the human consciousness is, therefore, the anthropological core of Bibó's understanding of freedom. Thus, a comparison of Bibó's and Bonhoeefer's image of freedom inevitably begins with an examination of Bonhoeffer's concept of personhood

with respect to its relation to human spontaneity. In the following exploration we will pay special attention to the possible role that spontaneity plays in Bonhoeffer's understanding of personhood.

In the course of the examination of the three concepts of person, that is, the Christian concept of person, collective person and ethical collective person, Bonhoeffer discusses the relationship of the I and the You first with respect to the Christian concept of person. The pattern of the I-You relation developed here will be taken up again at the beginning of the treatment of the broken community in chapter 4:

"The essential task of this chapter is to expose the new social basic-relations between I and You, as well as between I and humanity, that are inherent in the concept of sin. The concept of the Christian person presented in chapter 2 will be central to this discussion." (*SC* 107)

However, before we arrive here, Bonhoeffer discusses the nature of the "primal state" or "original community" in chapter 3, where several of his basic concepts, collective person among them (*SC* 77), first emerge. In this section he filled the I-You relation with a content different from what he worked out in chapter 2 and reintroduced in chapter 4. The clear recognition between the different contents of the I-You relations discussed in different respects is decisive for a proper understanding of the structure of vicarious representative action.

The place and function of vicarious representative action can be depicted as a sort of medium between the broken community and the restored community, the community of Adam and the community of Christ. Vicarious representative action arises in the fallen world, where the first pattern of I-You relations, developed in chapter 2, is valid. In fact, as we will see, this pattern of I-You relations was designed to house the social-theological content of vicarious representative action. However, the vicarious representative act is possible only with reference to the restored community in Christ, whose I-You relations are depicted in accordance to that of the "primal" or "original" community. Vicarious representative action, therefore, reflects both patterns of I-You relations at the same time.

This simultaneous position of the two patterns of the I-You relations is in full accord with the simultaneity of the broken community and the restored community, concieved in a characteristically Lutheran manner.

"The world of sin is the world of 'Adam', the old humanity. But the world of Adam is the world of Christ reconciled and made into a new humanity, Christ's church. However, it is not as if Adam were completely overcome; rather, the humanity of Adam lives on in the humanity of Christ." (*SC* 107)

Bonhoeffer clearly marked the shift from one pattern of I-You relations to another. At the beginning of chapter 3 he wrote:

"First, as a matter of principle, when in the following we speak of 'I' and 'You' and their relations, it is in a fundamentally different sense from the second chapter." (*SC* 65f)

Our first task now is to analyse the different natures of the I-You relations as constructed one after the another. The different types of I-You-relations we will identify as I-You-relations, pattern 'A' and I-You-relations, pattern 'B'.

I regard the distinction between the two patterns of I-You-relations as a decisive element for a clearer identification of the subject of the vicarious representative action. This distinction I have not encountered in Bonhoeffer scholarship so far. Rather, it seems, Bonhoeffer scholars refer to I-You-relations in Sanctorum Communio as a given pattern with a fixed meaning. Clifford Green, for example, writes:

"Given this concept of the person whose individual existence essentially consists of historical, socio-ethical relations with others, Bonhoeffer concludes that for Christian theology the relation of I and You is the 'social basic-relation'. 'You' is the specific designation for 'other' in Christian thought. By 'social basic-relation' he means that fundamental perspective in which relations between individual persons, between individuals and groups, and between corporate bodies are all to be envisaged. To choose the I-You relation as the social basic-relation is not to deny the mutations, so to speak, which are involved in the contexts of creation, sin and redemption. It is rather to decide the basic perspective in which these several human 'states' are to be viewed"[43]

My point is that it is not only the social context that changes with respect to the shifts from created community to broken community and restored community, but the very content of the I-You relation itself. Without this basic recognition the peculiar character of Bonhoeffer's image of vicarious representative action as well as freedom cannot be grasped.

[43] Green, *Bonhoeffer: A Theology of Sociality*, p. 34.

The observation that we are dealing with two distinct patterns of I-You-relations should in the following investigation be combined with our specific perspective, provided by the purpose of the comparison of the anthropological core of Bibó's and Bonhoeffer's social and theological theories. We have already seen why the possible role of spontaneity is important in determining whether a concept of negative freedom might be conceivable. Therefore, we will pay attention to the place and possible influence of spontaneity with respect to an understanding of person in three subsequent instances. First we will examine spontaneity that is related to the concept of person characterised by I-You-relations pattern 'A'. As a second step, we will do the same examination with respect to I-You-relations pattern 'B'. Thirdly, we will look at the place and influence of spontaneity in the life of the person whose being is formed by the theological content of vicarious representative action. These three steps provide the framework of the following investigation.

2. I-You-relations Pattern 'A' and the Christian Concept of Person

In the second chapter, as we have seen, Bonhoeffer takes his first step in the investigation of the Christian concept of community. He chooses the *concept of person* as a starting point. Specifying the content of the Christian concept of the person first he examines the four ontic basic-relations that pose both the norm and the limit to all empirical sociality. Having shortly discussed three versions of the ontic basic-relations - the third of them is the 'Epicurean' type in which we identified the possible basis of Bibó' social theory - he arrives at the subject-object relation from the point of view of German idealism. His main concern is to demonstrate that the subject-object scheme is unable to host the Christian concept of person, because it cannot show the concrete barrier over against the person. Bonhoeffer demonstrates the lack of barrier in several ways. In order to enter the social sphere, the *intellect* of the knowing subject has to be confronted by some fundamental barrier in the intellectual sphere before, but "idealism's object is ultimately no barrier. What is important is not the nature of the barrier, but the fact that it is experienced and acknowledged as a real barrier. But what does it mean to experience and acknowledge a barrier as real?" (*SC* 46) Bonhoeffer

thinks that idealism, lacking a *concept of reality*, cannot answer this question. The absence of a concept of reality is demonstrated by the idealist thesis that essential reality is "the self-knowing and self-active spirit, engaging truth and reality in the process, [thus p]ersons have at their disposal their own ethical value" (*SC* 46).

The fact that self-imposed ethical motives cannot pose a real barrier is further explained by involving the *concept of time* in the discussion. Bonhoeffer confronts the person by the absolute ethical demand to see how the one "enters a state of *responsibility* or, in other words, a decision" (*SC* 48). This person is

"existing [not] in timeless fullness of value and spirit, but in a state of responsibility in the midst of time; not one existing in time's continuous flow, but in the value-related-not value-filled-moment. *In the concept of the moment, the concept of time and its value-relatedness are co-posited.* The 'moment' is the time of responsibility, value-related time, or, let us say, time related to God; and, most essentially, it is concrete time. Only in concrete time is the real claim of ethics effectual; and only when I am responsible am I fully conscious of being bound to time." (*SC* 48)

It is very telling to see how, as the argument proceeds to clarify the barrier, the element of the ethical that has been included is accompanied by such attributes as "absolute", "concrete", "real". But Bonhoeffer is able to increase the tension even further:

"[I]dealism has no understanding of the moment in which the person feels the threat of absolute demand. The idealist ethicist knows what he ought to do, and, what is more, he can always do it precisely because he ought. Where is there room, then, for distress of conscience, for infinite anxiety [Angst] in the face of decisions?" (*SC* 49)

In the course of the proceeding argument a peculiar interchange of the "ethical" and the "divine" can be observed. According to "a Christian insight" a person is born out of "passionate ethical struggle, confrontation by an overwhelming claim"; but the human person originates also "only in relation to the divine; the divine person transcends the human person, who both resists and is overwhelmed by the divine" (*SC* 49). Some sentences later we meet "the concrete ethical barrier of the other person" (*SC* 50) that helps us to grasp the *social ontic-ethical basic-relations of persons.* The Editor comes to the aid of the bewildered reader by explaining that Bonhoeffer's understanding of person "presupposes the theological axiom that the human person always exists in relation to an Other, namely God, and that human relations are in

some way analogies of this fundamental relation"[44]. It is exactly the indefinite character of the analogy, *some way*, that makes Bonhoeffer's argument difficult to follow, and, also, his concept of person problematic. This problematic aspect is revealed right in the next section where Bonhoeffer introduces the I-You-relationship pattern 'A'.

Bonhoeffer, naturally, recognises the problem. "One could object that so far 'other' has been understood as referring to God, whereas now a concept of social relation has suddenly been introduced, in which 'other' refers to another human being." (*SC* 50) In the following pages of his study Bonhoeffer ventures to maintain his conviction that the pattern of the same I-You relationship can be applied both to God-human and human-human relationships, and in both cases the I becomes a person by being confronted by the barrier created by the You.

Bonhoeffer completes his argument in two steps. First he asks what the concrete You - inevitable for the existence of the concrete I - means in philosophical terms. Aswering this question Bonhoeffer doubts that this concrete You needs necessarily to be an "other" I. With respect to the recognition of the "other" he distinguishes epistemological knowledge and ethical-social knowledge.

"The other can be experienced by the I only as You [in terms of the ethical-sociological knowledge] but never directly as I [in terms of epistemological knowledge], that is, in the sense of the I that has become I only through the claim of a You." (*SC* 51)

Although the You, as a thinking and acting mind should be understood as an I "in the general sense", the "two I-forms [ethical and general?] should be strictly distinguished" (*SC* 51). Bonhoeffer calls the You a "reality-form", that is "by definition" independent while it encounters the I in the ethical spere. To be sure, independence means that the encountering You is not immanent to the knowing I, that is, the I cannot approach it through epistemological knowledge. If the knowing I thought that (s)he would still know the 'other' as an I, Bonhoeffer does not delay the warning:

[44] SC p. 50, note 56.

"what was said above about the distinctive spheres was not understood: *the transcendence of the You says nothing at all about epistemological transcendence.* This is purely ethical transcendence, experienced only by those facing a decision..." (*SC* 52)

What happens here is nothing else than a radical reductionism: the concept of person can be concieved solely in ethical terms. In accordance with the previous argument, this reductionism is extended also to the Christian concept of the person: "Thus everything that can be said about the Christian concept of person can only be grasped directly by the person who is facing responsibility." (*SC* 52)

To avoid any misunderstanding, Bonhoeffer also offers the counter-test of this argument. On the one hand, "I can never become a real barrier to myself", and I cannot "leap over the barrier to the other" (*SC* 52). I cannot know the You who confronts me as the 'other': the other may be an I or not, or may even be God. By giving up the possibility of knowing the "other" who confronts me as a You Bonhoeffer intended to move the Christian basic-relation beyond the epistemological subject-object relation. At the same time, by arguing that the You is 'deprived of its I-ness' from an epistemological point of view, Bonhoeffer made a place for God, "an impenetrable You whose metaphysical personhood, which presupposes absolute self-consciousness and spontaneous action, implies nothing at all about God being an I as described above" (*SC* 52), (that is, God's I-ness does not need a You in order to be born). This way the You has become able to 'house' God, while it remains deprived of its I-ness. Bonhoeffer, however, is able to face this loss. He asks: "[d]oesn't the statement that the You is not necessarily an I militate against the concept of community comprised of persons?" (*SC* 53) Before his reader could give an affirmative answer, he answers by posing a second question: "Is the person not completely isolated, in effect?" (*SC* 53f) The answer sounds like a verdict:

The person arises only in relation to a You, and yet the person stands in complete isolation. Persons are unique and thus fundamentally separate and distinct from one another. In other words, one person cannot know the other, but can only acknowledge and 'believe' in the other. Psychology and epistemology find their limitation here; the ethical personhood of the other is neither a psychologically comprehensible fact nor an epistemological necessity." (*SC* 54)

What is striking to consider is the epistemological basis of Bonhoeffer's understanding of the persons's uniquness. The ethical perspective serves as a basis of the intrinsic relatedness of human beings, the epistemological perspective establishes their uniquness and individuality. The epistemological factor, however, works by its *absence* towards this purpose. The other one is not unique to me because I know his or her unique characteristics, on the contrary, the other is unique because I don't know anything about him or her. Within the pattern of the relationship of the I and the You uniqueness does not mean positively affirmed, acknowledged, let alone celebrated otherness, no, uniqueness is separation, complete isolation. I am unique because the other - for whom I may happen to be the ethical You - does not know me, and the other is unique, because - although born as an I because of my You-ness - I do not know him. Bonhoeffer's understanding of the I and You relationship between human persons carries this deficit on its way to the encounter with the concept of God.

So, the task ahead of Bonhoeffer is, again: to maintain the pattern of the I-You relationship in both God-human and human-human relationships, and, at the same time, to uphold the difference between God and the human being. His awareness of this problem is reflected in his question: "this [pattern] seems to make one human being the creator of the ethical person of the other, which is an intolerable thought. Can it be avoided?" (*SC* 54) The answer is in accordance with the previous argument that deprived the You of its epistemologically accessible I-ness: "The person-creating efficacy of the You is independent of the personhood of the You." (*SC* 54) But Bonhoeffer goes even further: after depriving the You of its 'personhood', a great loss in a conceptual level in itself, he thinks it necessary to deprive it also of its 'will'. Thus the conclusion follows:

"One human being cannot of its own accord make another into an I, an ethical person conscious of responsibility. *God or the Holy Spirit joins the concrete You; only through God's active working does the other become a You to me from whom my I arises. In other words, every human you is an image of the divine You.* You-character is in fact the essential form in which the divine is experienced; every human You bears its You-character only by virtue of the divine." (*SC* 54f)

Thus, the human You is eventually made an image of the divine You. The problem is solved this way: God, the "impenetrable You" is given a place within the

pattern of the I-You relationship in the position of the You, since the human You is *per definitionem* a creature, an image of the divine You. However, this conceptual 'success' has made the character of the You hopelessly fluid. Who is the You, after all? Regarding the human-human relationship, Bonhoeffer deprived the You of all of its attributes except its ethical being, that is, in fact, the You is nothing more than a barrier. Now this mere barrier has been made the image of the divine You, the image of God. Bonhoeffer argues that it "is not to say that [being an image of God] is a borrowed attribute of God, and not really a you. Rather (...) it is a *real, absolute and holy You*, like the divine You." (*SC* 55) Here the fluidity reaches its zenith: the You, who is not even neccessarily an I, bears the reality, the absoluteness and the holiness of the divine You.

This fluidity of the You makes, finally, both the person of God and the person of the human being, participators in the I-You relationship, peculiarly fluid too. It can be observed in two directions.

On the one hand, since "[m]y real relationship to another person is oriented to my relationship to God" (*SC* 56), I get to know the other person in the way I get to know God. Contrary to my relationship with the other person whose I is not accessible for my epistemological knowledge, I do have access to know God as an I "*in the revelation of God's love, so too with the other person; here the concept of the church comes into play.*" (*SC* 56) So, in the church I can know not only God's I but, analogically, the I of the other. God's self-revelation makes him an I to me, an I that transforms his You-ness into an I: "it will become clear that the Christian person achieves his or her essential nature only when God does not encounter the person as *You but 'enters into' the person as I"* (*SC* 56). God's You-ness turns into an I-ness this way. Bonhoeffer does not say whether this transformation may happen to the human You after, in the peresence of the revelation, I get to know him/her as an I; however, in a deleted section he tries to distance his view from mysticism.[45] In any case, the fluidity of the You appears as its capacity to flow into the I, thus the distinction between the I and the You, on which Bonhoeffer has built his concept of person, looses its meaning.

[45] SC p. 56, note 79.

Besides the lack of a clear difference between the I and the You, on the other hand, Bonhoeffer's concept of You is also fluid in the sense of being unable to mark the difference between God's person and the human person. We have followed the way the deprived human You, the merely ethical barrier to the other, the not-necessarily I has turned into the real, absolute and holy image of the divine You. In terms of the content of identitiy, this You moves unhindered between zero and the absolute. Bonhoeffer seems not perfectly satisfied with this solution, since at the end of this section he worded an objection: "when discussing content we were quite one-sidedly oriented toward the ethical and ignored the 'human spirit' that was at issue in idealism, as if it were not part of the person" (*SC* 56). His answer is difficult to understand on the basis of the preceeding argument: "we reply that human 'spirit' with its moral and religious capacities is certainly an indispensable presupposition in order for the ethical person to come to be" (*SC* 57).

My purpose in the analysis of Bonhoeffer's understanding of the I-You relationship, as it has been depicted in chapter 2 as pattern 'A', was certainly not to discuss every important aspect of the problem. In the perspective of the present study, there are two significant findings we discovered here. First, the *ethical* in the relationship of the I and the You (pattern 'A'), and, similarly, in the creation of the I as a person, plays an inevitable *structural role*. The ethical, primarily, plays the role of the barrier, over against the I as a person is being born. Thus, the ethical in this respect is not necessarily the identifiable ethical deed or influence that refers to the other person's identity, will or intent, the ethical is a formal barrier without which the person cannot be born. Likewise, the category 'other', who represents the You for the I within the vital and fundamental I-You relationship, marks a rather formal entity for the same reason. The second finding comes from the first. Since Bonhoeffer concieved the I-You relationship in purely ethical terms (contrary to his later objection), the identity of the You became rather fluid. Since the same formal ethical structure has been applied - through the I-You relationship - to both the God-human and human-human relationships, the You, housing God as a You and the other person as a You at the same time, created a sphere where God and the human other are not clearly distinguishable. The lack of a clear distinction between God and the human person

may lead, finally, to the suspension of the difference between the You and the I. Since God, the 'impenetrable You' is able, in his revelation, enter into my I as an I, his You therefore may turn into an I, and the same may happen also to the human You.

At this point of our investigation we can diagnose the entire lack of spontaneity in Bonhoeffer's understanding of person involved in I-You-relations pattern 'A'. The very existence of this person is dependent on an other, a You who appears as an ethical barrier to make the person a real one. This person doesn't have a life of its own, its identity is rather fluid, its self-awareness doesn't play any role in its interpersonal relations. The activity of this person is not motivated by its self-awareness - that, as we have seen, Bonhoeffer regarded as an idealist illusion - but the recognition of the other, and nothing happens to this ethically defined person before and without the recognition of the other. We have also seen his adamant rejection of the idea of any psychological or epistemological accessibility of the person who participates in I-You-relations pattern 'A': both are ways that would be relevant to reveal a person's spontaneity. His only reference to spontaneity with respect to God's 'metaphysical personhood' cannot be transferred to human persons.

With respect to a deeper understanding of vicarious representative action the detailed analysis of the structure and the content of the I-You relationship pattern 'A' is inevitable. Vicarious representative action as a topic, in fact, has been introduced within the final section of the discussion of *this* I-You relationship:

"[o]ne might then speak here of the human being as the image of God with respect to the effect one person has on another (cf. the later discussion of the problem of community of spirit and how one person becomes Christ for the other)." (*SC* 55)

The second reference to vicarious representative action has been made at the end of chapter 4, where, as we have seen, the I-You relationship pattern 'A' were already reintroduced. By that time, the concept of *Christian person* had been enriched by the considerations of the *collective person*, to which had also been added the perspective of the *ethical collective person.* The discussion of the ethical collective person is the immediate context of the second reference to vicarious representative action, "which will be treated later" (*SC* 120). The fundamentaly ethical character of the I-You relationship pattern 'A' is reflected in the ethically conceived collective

person here. The real discussion of vicarious representative action, nevertheless, does not begin before the positive explanation of the nature of the restored community, the sanctorum communio, the church. At this point the other pattern of the I-You relations, originally concieved in the context of the primal community, will also be effective. Now we turn to the analysis of I-You relations pattern 'B'.

3. I-You-relations Pattern 'B' and the Collective Person

At the start of our attempt to explain the content of I-You relationship pattern 'B', first we return to a piece of argument in the previous section, that, I think, was not entirely understandable within *that* context. In stating that "[w]hen discussing content we were quite one-sidedly oriented toward the ethical and ignored the 'human spirit' that was at issue in idealism, as if it were not part of the person", Bonhoeffer made an objection against his own theory, but also provided the answer:

"human 'spirit' with its moral and religious capacities is certainly an indispensable presupposition in order for the ethical person to become. This assertion has already been made above and will be elaborated further in discussing the doctrine of the primal state in the next chapter." (*SC* 57)

We have seen that "human spirit" and any of its moral and religious capacities did not play any role in characterising the nature of the I-You relation pattern 'A'. However, the case with I-You relation pattern 'B' is quite different.

In the following section we will examine Bonhoeffer's argument about the social significance of *spirit*, in which I-You-relations pattern 'B' have been interwoven. Already in chapter 2 Bonhoeffer emphasised the inevitable role of the concept of spirit in establishing a concept of person.[46] It is this section where the origins of I-You relations pattern 'A' and pattern 'B' are referred to and from where the ways will part. Pattern 'A' belongs to the "Christian concept of person", worked out in chapter 2 and reintroduced in chapter 4. Pattern 'B' belongs to the 'general concept of personal spirit' that takes shape in chapter 3. For the time being, it remains to be seen

[46] SC p. 44.

what Bonhoeffer might have meant by the statement that pattern 'A', created for the "Christian concept of person", necessarily builds upon the fact of the human spirit.

The programmatic statement of the introduction of the theme of spirit into the train of thought of the study reads:

"The social-philosophical problem in this section is the relation between human spirit and sociality per se. It will be demonstrated that human beings, as spirit, are necessarily created in a community - that human spirit in general is woven into the web of sociality. Such knowledge is very important for our argument because it clarifies fundamentally the problematic relationship of individual and community. This knowledge gives us the correct perspective for our typology of community. Ultimately, both are necessary to clarify the problem of religious community and the church." (*SC* 65)

We have already reffered to Bonhoeffer's clear reference to the change between the meaning of I-You relations within the "Christian concept of person" and the concept of person in the primal state. Bonhoeffer's full statement runs as follows:

"First, as a matter of principle, when in the following we speak of 'I' and 'You' and their relations, it is in a fundamentally different sense from the second chapter. The I is not the person called upon by You and only thereby awakened to become I; the You is not the unknowable, impenetrable, alien other. On the contrary, we are in a different sphere altogether. It will be shown that the whole nature of human spirit, which necessarily is presupposed by the Christian concept of person and has its unifying point in self-consciousness, (of which we will also be speaking in this context), is such that it is only conceivable in sociality. Though we must show that self-consciousness only arises in relation to the other, one must not confuse this interaction with the Christian I-You-relation. Not every self-conscious I knows of the ethical barrier of the You. To be sure, it does know of an alien You - this may even be the necessary presupposition for the ethical and real experience of the You. However, it does not know the You as an utterly alien being, as pure claim, as erecting barriers. This is to say, it does not know the You as real, but as irrelevant in the last analysis to the I itself. The following, then, is to be understood in this sense, as the necessary general account of human spirit that is the presupposition of the foregoing and following argument." (*SC* 65f)[47]

We will briefly summarise the conceptual development that originates from the concept of spirit, keeping in mind that this is the set of concepts that offers the framework to Bonhoeffer both to clarify the relationship of the individual and community and to set up a typology for social communities. "In terms of its form,

[47] A similar argument can be found in SC p. 71, note 31.

spirit in a person is *the bond of self-consciousness and self-determination that documents its structural unity*; this spirit can be *formally defined as the principle of receptivity and activity*. In terms of its function, spirit is effective in acts of thinking, self-conscious willing, and feeling. We can conceive of these acts only as based upon human sociality; they arise simultaneously from, with, and in such sociality". (*SC* 67) From this statement Bonhoeffer derives his twofold definition of personal being: as structurally open and as structurally closed.

The decisive argument for a concept of person that is structurally open is based on the priority of spirit before the individual person. "People find themselves immersed in an infinite richness of possibilities for expression and understanding. Before humanity was aware of it, a stream of spirit entered into millions of veins, and one can only notice it when standing in the middle of the stream." (*SC* 68) The "stream of spirit" is further specified as intellectual act and language, that are manifestations of sociality: "with language, a *system of social spirit* has been built into human beings; in other words, *'objective spirit' has become effective in history."* (*SC* 70) The concept of objective spirit receives an extensive treatment already with respect to the primal state of being[48], it is the social-philosophical concept that is going to be the counterpart of the theological understanding of the Holy Spirit within the discussion of the sanctorum communio[49]. What is important to see now is, that Bonhoeffer understands by objective spirit a "spirit of sociality, which is distinct in itself from all individual spirit," "extending beyond every individual" (*SC* 74). I-You-relations pattern 'B' is introduced against this background.

The priority of objective spirit becomes manifest also in other instances of the explanation of the I-You-relation. Summarising the discussion of personal being as structurally open compares I-You-relation to the life of a family of great traditions:

"[H]uman spirit in its entirety is woven into sociality and rests on the basic-relation of I and You. 'Only in interaction with one another is the spirit of human beings ever revealed; this is the essence of spirit, to be oneself through being in the other.' In infinite closeness, in mutual penetration, I and You are joined together, inseparable from one another forever, resting in one another, intimately participating in one

[48] SC pp. 97ff.
[49] SC pp. 208ff.

another, empathising, sharing experiences, bearing together the general stream of interactions of spirit." (*SC* 73)

The relationship of the individual and the objective spirit becomes more dialectical in the section where Bonhoeffer explains personal being as structurally closed, since here he focuses on the self-determined individual, but the image of great family traditions can also be recognised:

"[H]uman beings *really know their I only in the You-relation.* Thus, they clearly are not only reservoirs or receptive organs for a certain quantity of objective spirit, but much more they are spontaneous 'bearers', active members of the great social nexus. Otherwise there would be no I-You-relations at all - and thus in turn no spirit. The more the individual spirit develops, the more it plunges into the stream of objective spirit, the more it becomes a bearer of objective spirit, and this immersion is precisely what strengthens the individual spirit." (*SC* 73f)

This paragraph is one of the few where Bonhoeffer refers to sponteneity. The context is crucial: he speaks about human beings who are spontaneous bearers, active members of the great social nexus. Spontaneity thus focuses on and is motivated by the great heritage nurtured and provided by the objective spirit. Objective spirit, therefore, is prior even to spontaneity.

In the section about personal being as structurally closed, nevertheless, Bonhoeffer insists that there is no priority, let alone subordination, of either personal or social being, since *"personal and social being have equal weight"* (*SC* 76). Bonhoeffer does not think, however, that the problem of the relation of the individual and community would be thereby solved. After asking several questions about this peculiar relationship, he concludes:

"If the equal weight of social and personal being is to be maintained, what is the meaning of community as a *metaphysical unit* [mine italics] in relation to the individual person? *We maintain that community can be interpreted as a collective person with the same structure as the individual person."* (*SC* 77)

To avoid the Platonic idea of the subordination of the individual to the whole Bonhoeffer introduces the phrase *individual collective person.* Bonhoeffer applies the concept of collective person to I-You relations: "I-You relations are also possible between a collective person and an individual person" (*SC* 78). Moreover, the concept of collective person deepens the meaning of I-You relations:

"[T]he collective person is, after all, also an individual person; only when collective persons are included in social intercourse can its richness be fully grasped. Thus to postulate a collective person does not mean to limit the sociological basic-category of I-You relations. Rather, one must articulate the similarity of structure of the collective person and the individual person in the eyes of the universal person of God: closedness and openness, mutual enrichment, social and inward intentions within this structural unity." (*SC* 78f)

It seems that he concept of "God's universal person", used only in this section of the study, is introduced here only to establish an ultimate reason for operating with the concept of collective person as an unavoidable one. The concept, however, is in need of further specification, and while identifying its character, Bonhoeffer is careful with the attribute of *real*. "Yet we still hesitate to *declare the reality* of the collective person. Since the problem of reality can be solved fundamentally only from the perspective of ethics, we must first consider the degree to which ethical categories can be applied to a collective person, in the sense of ethical personhood." (*SC* 79) The way to the phrase *ethical collective person* thus has been prepared.

After the summary of the development of the two key terms, objective spirit and collective person, we can see the extent to which Bonhoeffer relies on idealism while pursuing these ideas. When he developed the Christian concept of person in chapter 2, he proved to be an adamant critic of idealism, especially by making a sharp distinction between an epistemological and a social approach to the concept of person (*SC* 45). The concepts of objective spirit and collective person, however, are inconcievable without a solid idealistic basis. In some cases Bonhoeffer is quite explicit: idealism's "monumental perception, especially in Hegel, was that the principle of spirit is something objective" (*SC* 74). In a deleted section he wrote: "our turning against idealist theory is clear; equally clear, of course, is what we have to learn from it"[50].

The idealist concept of spirit, however, has also been subordinated to an understanding of revelation and the church. In the methodological section of chapter 3 Bonhoeffer writes:

[50] SC p. 75, note 43.

"If the revelation in Christ speaks of the will of God to create from the old humanity of Adam a new humanity of Christ, i.e., the church, and if I know myself to be incorporated into this church of Christ, then it follows that we should project the idea of the unbroken community with God and with human beings back to the doctrine of the primal state as well." (*SC* 62)

Likewise,

"the concept of person in the primal state must be understood differently [to the concept of Christian person], corresponding to the idea of the new humanity" (*SC* 63).

Here Bonhoeffer states the ultimate theological content that, in the first place, informs the concept of person:

"The formal and general concept of person should be thought of as fulfilled by positive Christian content, i.e., established by God and oriented toward God. Willing and thinking come from God and go toward God; that is to say, community with God is completed in love and truth. The miracle of the Christian concept of community is that love for God involves submission, but that God's love, in ruling, serves." (*SC* 63)

This is the "positive Christian content" that the concept of person should house. We have seen that in the analysis of the person of the primal state of social being, within which the I-You relations pattern 'B' was constructed, a general account of human spirit has also been given a key hermeneutical role. We may conclude, therefore, that the shape of the "human spirit" will finally match the "Christian content". As we proceed in exploring the nature of I-You relations pattern 'B', we will also follow the way the generally concieved human spirit takes shape.

4. The Sociology of the Primal State of Being

Having completed the social-philosophical section, Bonhoeffer turns to the sociological problem of the primal state of being. The first concept he takes up is *will:* community is not commonality, "rather, reciprocal will constitutes community" (*SC* 83). The reciprocal will of the separate I and You includes strife that makes unity relative, as regards its content. Since difference within individuals is *willed* by God,

"strife is recognised as a fundamental sociological law and basically is sanctified. Concretely, this implies the necessity and the justification of partisanship in every community relation. Genuine life arises only in the conflict of wills; strength unfolds only in strife." (*SC* 84f)

After the Fall the conflict of wills has lost its concrete and productive character; however, even in evil conflict "the most intimate social bond of the human spirit becomes visible" (*SC* 86): the other will is recognised. The opposition of wills may be resolved only in the cooperation of wills: this principle

"is just as valid for the relation *between God* and *human beings* as it is for that between persons. Through conflict, the will of the sinful human being is forced into the holy will of God and thus community is established." (*SC* 86)

The second sociological problem, typology of social communities, originates from the problem of will. Bonhoeffer examines the nature of the bonds between wills. It can be considered from the standpoint of the relation between the *willed goal and the will to communal formation*, or the relation of *strength of the wills* to each other. (*SC* 86f)

Both ways of interpretation lead through an additional consideration: wills within a community may be meaningfully depicted only as wills together but not beside or against one another. Togetherness of wills can be understood in two ways:

"*Being-with-one-another [Miteinander] can be willed as an end in itself* (this also includes willing-for-one-another [Füreinander-wollen]. *Being-with-one-another* can also be willed as a means to an end." (*SC* 88)

In the first case we speak about a *will to meaning* that corresponds with a *structure of meaning*, while in the second case we have a *rational purposive will* that corresponds with a *structure of purpose*. Following Tönnies' terminology, the first type of will and structure Bonhoeffer relates to *community* while the second one to *society*. According to their simpliest distinction, "[i]f community is essentially a life-community, then a society is an association of rational action" (*SC* 90).

If the bond between wills is considered as the relationship of the strength of the wills to each other, we can distinguish a *relation of force* and a *relation of rule*. The relation of force, again, is associated with society, while the relation of rule is made into a characteristic of community.

"[I]n the association of force community is not possible anymore. By contrast, *a genuine association of authentic rule not only makes community possible, but in most cases realises it.*" (*SC* 92)

So far we have rewieved the conceptual development of the sociological factors of the primal state of being. Now we take a look at some particular social insights that are woven into the conceptual framework. First we will consider Bonhoeffer's characterisation of community and society, then we will turn to the nature of authentic rule.

In distinguishing community and society Bonhoeffer avoids the genetic approach again that would identify the former as *grown* and the latter as *made*. The task of a sociological study, he argues, is "to study the acts of will that are constitutive of a social structure". (*SC* 89) Accordingly, a community is willed by its members as an end in itself, while society is willed as a means to a specific purpose. Although psychological differences are not constitutive for a distinction between community and society, it is meaningful to consider them and speak about the *closeness* and *looseness* of the bonds of will.

Following Scheler, Bonhoeffer argues that all communities are life-communities, since "human beings, intended for vital and personal existence, can live" in them. The subsequent characterisation of community is of utmost importance in the perspective of our research:

"The first act of affirming that one belongs to a community is usually *embedded in a concrete, living, nonformal act such* as conscious participation in the work of the community. Thus even young children can sense it, for example, through an act of love, trust, or obedience. Unlike the society, a *community can support young children as well.* This is not to introduce the genetic concept of community; rather, young children in a community are a *part of their parents' will* until they can will for themselves - a thought that would be absurd in a society. This insight will be very important for the sociological concept of the church. Common feeling, common willing, and co-responsibility are forces of inmost cohesion. The basic attitude is mutual *inner interest.* This takes visible shape, for example, in the household community as a community of table, living space, festivities, shared culture through tradition, custom, usage and order; for such forms of community, memory and custom are intellectual, vital qualities of human spirit. Only in community is such education possible."[51]

[51] SC p. 90, a deleted section provided in note 101 is also included.

For an understanding of the full significance of the above characterisation of community we will consider the following explanation of the nature of society in this context:

"If a community is essentially a life-community, then a society is an association of rational action. It appeals to human beings' ability to use their reason most effectively, as demonstrated in the search for the most appropriate means to a willed purpose, and in using the society itself extensively to this end. The only reason this is not called unethical is that it is based on consent and applies equally to all. Moreover, the other person must be treated with utmost consideration, precisely in order to be used to full advantage. *This is the basis for the inner self-preservation of a society.* The voluntary act of joining a society must be directly expressed and contractually secured. Everything intimately personal is excluded here. In the system of means, complete isolation of spirit goes hand in hand with communication between purposeful wills. People accept responsibility for the society only in their very own interest. In principle a society has no tradition. The basic attitude is expressed in mutual inner indifference, in strictest caution toward one another, and thus in simultaneous reserve and personal self-assurance - and finally, insofar as it suits one's purpose, in conventional amiability. The organised structure of purpose has its basis in the contract, *which is the origin and measure of the association;* the organisation then develops into an elaborate system of means and is fixed in written documents and agreements." (*SC* 90f)

The introduction of the distinction between community and society follows from the explanation of the relationship of wills, Bonhoeffer's starting point of the sociological problem of the primal state of being. I think, however, that it breaks the fundamental logic of the discussion. The central problem of chapter 3 is the relationship of person and community in the primal state of being. I-You-relations pattern 'B', as we have seen, are given a constitutive role in describing this relationship. The description of community as an end in itself is harmonious with the I-You-relations of persons, both as structurally open and structurally closed. However, the description of society as a means to an end is difficult to understand in terms of I-You-relations pattern 'B'.

It is obvious from the comparison of Bonhoeffer's descriptions of community and society that he regards community as a worthy and constructive type of human togetherness while society is regarded as a negative possibility that is destructive for personal life. Community represents cohesion, society is nothing else than organised selfishness, a well-balanced mutual inner indifference. Although Bonhoeffer argues

that no pure type exists in concrete form, since, as he states, every community includes the connection of wills that is typical in a society and every society has some remnants of community, since it is rooted in community (*SC* 91), community and society are structurally clearly to be distinguished. At this point Bonhoeffer's way of reasoning and Scheler's way of reasoning, based on two distinct methods, have been joined to each other.

For Scheler, the connection between community and society is a genetic one: "*No society without community* (but, to be sure, community without society in some cases). All *possible* society is necessarily *based* on community."[52] This genetic connection allows the possibility to regard community as the social type of intact I-You-relations and society as the social type of distorted I-You-relations.[53] For Bonhoeffer, however, this way of reasoning is not possible: the difference in the directions of will makes community and society phenomenologically different with respect to their constitutive characteristics. The tiny alteration of Scheler's thought in Bonhoeffer's reception reveals their fundamentally different approach. Scheler allows the existence of community without society, that is, the possibility of community in a pure form in which I-You-relations have not been distorted to create a society. The *genesis* of society is a likely possibility, but not a necessity. Bonhoeffer, on the contrary, does not allow the concrete existence of a pure community even in the primal state of being. He rejects the possibility of a transition from community into society and maintains their fundamentally different characteristics.

The other reason why a genetic view that would include an intact as well as a distorted phase would not be possible in Bonhoeffer's system is that both community and society is discussed in relation to the primal state of being, that is, the social life of human beings prior to the Fall. No distortion of I-You-relations can be considered before the Fall, therefore, I-You-relations pattern 'B' simply can not be applied to

[52] SC p. 91. note 105.

[53] Bonhoeffer is aware of the fact that Scheler's - and also Tönnies' - method can be understood as a genetic one. However, he regards it as a mistake and believes that Scheler consciously strives for a phenomenological method. Bonhoeffer's main objection against the genetic method is that its consequences, he thinks, are unacceptable with respect to the church (as community and not society). Bonhoeffer's debate with the genetic method and his reference to the church in SC p. 87. note 29. does not invalidate my criticism as regards the uncertain role of I-You-relations in the society type of the primal state of social being.

human relations in a society. Statements such as "everything intimately personal is excluded here" do not fit into this pattern. Further, I-You-relations pattern 'A', elaborated with respect to the Christian concept of person according to an exclusively ethical understanding, does not suit society either. Bonhoeffer seems to regard society as fundamentally unethical; the way he offers a *saving grace,* "[t]he only reason this is not called unethical is that is based on consent and applies equally to all" suggests that apart from *this* ethical content society does not represent any ethical character.

The ethical evaluation of society is further complicated by the fact that, according to his general theory, Bonhoeffer places the ethical after the Fall, alongside with human history. In this view any mention of the ethical is simply meaningless in the primal state of being.[54] After the Fall, then, the ethical is interpreted according to the logic of I-You-relations pattern 'A', as being encountered by a You as an ethical barrier: the general application of the demand of consent as an ethical value, again, simply does not correspond to Bonhoeffer's understanding of the ethical. The above assertion is clear enough to express Bonhoeffer's low evaluation of society, at the same time, it strengthens the possibility of the discussion of society as being outside of the main line of Bonhoeffer's argument, outside the realm of I-You-relations. As a result, society, as Bonhoeffer understood it following and partly altering the social theories of Tönnies and Scheler, would not be considered as the social framework of freedom either.

Two more observations should be considered here. Bonhoeffer finishes the explanation of the primal state of social being with a discussion of objective spirit. The way he connects the significance of objective spirit to the distinction between community and society affirms the above statement that Bonhoeffer does not regard

[54] It has to be noted that my statement, "any mention of the ethical is simply meaningless in the primal state of human being" is only one possible reading of Bonhoeffer's application of the epithet *ethical*. Bonhoeffer's own application of this decisive epithet, however, seems to be so fluid that it is difficult to determine its meaning with respect to the difference between the primal and the fallen state of social being. SC p. 58, note 1. and SC p. 59, note 1. support my reading of Bonhoeffer's application of the ethical (that is also valid for the historical). In contrast to these sections see SC p. 61. note 1. It is more than obvious that the two applications of the ethical logically exclude each other, nevertheless, this contradiction is meaningful to the understanding of Bonhoeffer's usage of this epithet. What I mean by the 'tacit reference to the intrinsic ethical character of community', even in the primal state, is rooted in this logical contradiction, that bears, naturally, significance to the ethical evaluation of community also after the Fall.

society as a social framework meaningful for freedom. Bonhoeffer explains their difference with respect to time. Community reaches the boundary of time, while society is timebound, it exists only within history, lacking any eschatological character. The eschatological character gives community its deepest meaning: it is from God to God. Bonhoeffer quickly explains the social significance of this eschatological reality:

"[t]his is the basis for the 'holiness' of human community life, whether we think of physical communities of blood and clan, historical communities like a nation, or life-shaping communities such as marriage and friendship. This holiness reveals the fundamental indissolubility of all these life structures." (*SC* 101)

Society, naturally, cannot bear the marks of this "holiness", and this difference also explains "why only a community and never a society can or should become 'church'" (*SC* 101). The really significant difference, however, becomes visible through the involvement of objective spirit into the argument:

"[t]he most profound difference between the two social forms is that the objective spirit of community (but not that of a society) can be ascribed personal character" (*SC* 102).

From the stating of the personal character of the objective spirit of a community Bonhoeffer builds up the concept of the collective person again, adding, that "[c]ollective persons are self conscious and spontaneous" (*SC* 103). The personal character of community thus has been reinforced again by being contrasted to the lack of personal character of society. With respect to I-You-relations, the previous finding that I-You-relations cannot be concieved within a society we should extend into the observation that a society, unlike a community, cannot be a collective subject of I-You-relations either. Being at odds with I-You-relations in both respects, society has no meaning for Bonhoeffer's understanding of freedom either.

The second observation considers a tacit reference to the intrinsic ethical character of community. The mere fact that Bonhoeffer qualified a condition that saves society from being unethical, and, at the same time, he did not make any similar reference to community, suggests that he regarded community as an ethical social type without any conditions or further qualification. We should remember that we deal with the primal state of social being where there is no meaningful understanding of the ethical; against this background this uneven qualification is all the more significant.

In the short characterisation of community Bonhoeffer lists some noble values of social life: it supports vital personal existence, invites even young children to an act of love, trust and obedience, provides a home for common feeling, common willing and co-responsibility. It seems that Bonhoeffer attributes a self-evident ethical value to these social phenomena without applying to them the sole criterion he worked out for the Christian concept of person and will introduce as a general rule for life after the Fall: being addressed by a You. This tacit appreciation of community and devaluation of society in the social realm that, significantly, does not know about the ethical at all reflects, I think, Bonhoeffer's - probably unconscious - preference for community over society[55]. If we consider the social *contents* of Bonhoeffer's descriptions of community as well as society, we may conclude that he gave preference to organic community over open society, given social bonds over chosen social bonds, order based on tradition over order based on common consent, in short, a conservative set of values over a liberal set of values[56].

At this point we can move on to consider the second way to look at the bonds between wills, that is, the relation of the strength of the wills to each other (*SC* 87). Bonhoeffer distinguishes a relation of force from a relation of rule.

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[55] Clifford Green also recognises the fundamental problem in Bonhoeffer's distinction of community and society with respect to their ethical character. "[T]he most powerful social institutions - of business, government, education, labor, communications, etc. - are not constituted as ethically responsible in their very essence. (...) Since a great deal of the life of any person consists of instrumental, rational-purposive activities - without thereby diminishing one's status as an ethical agent - Bonhoeffer might have found a way to apply his concept of person in its corporate sense to Gesellschaften." (Green, *Bonhoeffer: A Theology of Sociality*, p. 43, note 57.) I think, it is clear from my analysis of Bonhoeffer's way of reasoning why his doubtful distinction was a necessary element of his early social theory, so the above possibility was not open for him to choose. I think, Green's critical remark is rather mild, and is made further milder by his insistence that Bonhoeffer was not "simply following Tönnies' position, he [was] deliberately moving away from the conservative and romantic elements of Tönnies' theory. But he did not go far enough at this point, and so the problem remains." (Green, *op. cit.* p. 44, note 57.) I heartily agree with Green that Bonhoeffer's choice of Tönnies' theory is really problematic, however, I cannot see the readiness on Bonhoeffer's side to leave behind "conservative and romantic elements". See also the next note and the coming analysis of Bonhoeffer's treatment of church and proletariat.

[56] Clifford Green notes that Tönnies' *Community and Society* became broadly read only shortly before the First World War in the context of the youth movement's opposition to Wilhelmine society. The pair of concepts "was advanced as a popular slogan in the arsenal of conservative social criticism, quite apart from Tönnies", albeit the latter prepared the way for this ideological turn. I think that Green attempts to deprive Tönnies' theory from its obvious conservative character just to avoid the supposition that Bonhoeffer chose an obviously conservative thinker for gaining a decisive insight for his own theory. In my view, Bonhoeffer's own texts provide enough proof to recognise the fundamentally conservative character of his own thought. (SC p. 87, note 91.)

"Whereas in the former the will that is dominated is brought into motion in a purely mechanical way by the will that exerts force upon it, in the latter it is presupposed that the obedient will understands the meaning of the command. Sociologically, this is significant insofar as in the association of force, community is not possible anymore. By contrast, *a genuine association of authentic rule not only makes community possible, but in most cases realises it.* These insights *will be very important for the concept of the church.*" (*SC* 92)

Both excercising force and giving commands presuppose an unequal relation of strength. Bonhoeffer argues that equality is possible only in legal terms, in concrete instances, however,

"there is no balance of power among the members of a social form. In every community that is apparently based on the dynamic coordination of wills, there exists in reality a relation of subordination." (*SC* 92)

This sociological principle, however, goes through some important alterations when viewed with respect to the church. Including the view of the church as Bonhoeffer suggested above, at the same time, creates a constant movement between sociological and theological categories in the course of the identification of authentic rule. As a matter of principle, Bonhoeffer begins his argument, "in relation to the will of an absolute ruler, there is real coordination of those who are ruled" (*SC* 92), that is, if I understand Bonhoeffer correctly, there is no necessary subordination among those who are ruled. Bonhoeffer gives this principle a theological as well as a legal meaning: "[t]he idea of equality before the law, but also that of the rule of God, includes the coordination of those who are ruled"; the legal and theological qualification, however, gives rule a constructive role over sociology: "the only sociologically new structure that remains is the association of authentic rule" (*SC* 92). An association of authentic rule will be, in the next step, applied both to community and society, finally, it will be applied also to the concept of the church.

Looking at this sociological problem from the perspective of the church, that is, from Bonhoeffer's own perspective, it is quite understandable why Bonhoeffer insisted earlier that in concrete instances the types of community and society always exist together, and added to it later that authentic rule applies both to society and community. In his description of the church as community and society (*SC* 262ff) we can find all the important elements together: authentic rule personalised by the Holy

Spirit that applies to the church both as community and society. Although the ecclesiological point of view can be regarded as a legitimate one, the consequences of this with respect to *Bonhoeffer's general view of the primal state of social being* should not be suspended by this legitimate demand and have to be considered independently.

We have seen that Bonhoeffer applied a genuine association of authentic rule, characteristic to community, to society too. An association of authentic rule involves, on the one hand, an intrinsic relation of subordination, and on the other hand, obedience as a meaningful response to a command from above. These attributes, derived from and associated with community, have been made characteristic also to society. By involving society into the typical relation of strength that belong to community Bonhoeffer refuses to consider the possibility of drawing any meaningful consequence from the relation of strength typical of society, namely, the relation of force.

Having finished our review of the social-philosophical and sociological contents of the primal state of social being, characterised by I-You-relations pattern 'B', we can now summarise our findings about the significance of spontaneity that Bonhoeffer attributed to social life in the primal state. We have seen that Bonhoeffer depicted human beings as 'spontaneous bearers, active members of the great social nexus' that is embodied in and by the objective spirit. The objective spirit of a community, therefore, may be grasped by the individual in a spontaneous way, at the same time - naturally - it is the 'social nexus', transferred by the objective spirit that can be the material contents of the individual's spontaneous acknowledgement of his or her sociality. Spontaneity is limited by the socially relevant aspects of the objective spirit.

When discussing the nature of human will, Bonhoeffer describes spontaneity, or, to be correct, the *possibility* of spontaneity in a similarly limited way. He speaks about strife as a fundamental sociological law willed and sanctified by God. In strife, in the open conflict of wills spontaneity may manifest itself, conflicting views may articulate themselves against each other. Bonhoeffer argues, however, that wills within a community may be meaningfully depicted only as wills together but not beside or

against each other. Even sinfull will - in the state after the Fall - reveals this togetherness by the recognition of the will of the other, and it is conflict through which "the will of the sinful human being is forced into the holy will of God and thus community is established" (*SC* 86). While spontaneity is given space by the introduction of the God-willed conflict of wills, it is limited again by the elevating of togetherness into the position of the only meaningful relationship of wills.

A similar argumentation may be revealed in Bonhoeffer's description of community in which young children "are part of their parents' will until they can will for themselves" (*SC* 97). These children take part in the life of the community "through an act of love, trust, or obedience"; these "spontaneous acts" that are parts of their parents' will are concieved similarly to what we have seen above with respect to the limiting effect of the objective spirit of the community. Any spontaneous manifestation of a demand of freedom from the will of the parents on the part of a child is inconceivable within this structure of argumentation.

This recognition of the consistently limited image of spontaneity we can now relate to Bonhoeffer's low evaluation of society. We have seen that society is described as organised selfishness, a well-balanced mutual inner indifference. We have also seen the inconsistency in Bonhoeffer's argument as he placed this society within the realm of the primal state of social being. Society as a certain sociological type of human sociality has been given a rather marginal place in Bonhoeffer's social and theological argumentation. The main line of Bonhoeffer's train of thought deals with community as created, fallen and restored; society appears against this background as a necessary complement of a rather relative value. Even the concept of person, the most significant cohesive element of Bonhoeffer's social-theological theory, cannot be related to society, only to community. Thus, Bonhoeffer seems to be rather reluctant to consider the character of social life in society that has, I think, a decisive consequence for his concept of freedom.

What Bonhoeffer attributes to society in the primal state of being can, in fact, be most closely compared to community in the fallen state. About fallen community we read :

"[w]hereas the previous spirit-form grew out of love, the fall replaced love with selfishness. (...) Whereas in the primal state the relation among human beings is one of giving, in the sinful state it is purely demanding. Every person exists in complete, voluntary isolation; everyone lives their own life, rather than all living the same life in God." (*SC* 107f)

If we consider again what Bonhoeffer wrote earlier about society in the primal state (*SC* 91), we will see that this description of society is nothing else than a well-managed, pacified version of the relation of "pure demanding", characteristic to the community of the fallen state. Had Bonhoeffer attributed a continuous significance to society for human's living together, he probably would have considered the difference between social relations organised by pure demanding on the one hand and governed by contract on the other. In this case, he would also have discovered the significance of negative freedom, born out of unqualified human spontaneity, for the transition from social relations controlled by naked force to relations shaped by mutually respected agreement.

Society as Bonhoeffer describes it, indeed, can be regarded as a rather advanced development on the long road that begins with people's desperation to live out their spontaneity in the form of negative freedom. When speaking about society, I add the epithet 'unqualified' to spontaneity, to reveal its difference to spontaneity as Bonhoeffer understands it with respect to community in the primal state: spontaneous participation in something already given either in the objective spirit or in the parents' will for a child. "In principle a society has no tradition" (*SC* 91), as we have learned: spontaneity in a society, therefore, cannot mean a participation in a "great social nexus" but it expresses the person's self-awareness as well as the person's perception of his or her relations. This spontaneity, nevertheless, seems to be unknown to the author of *Sanctorum Communio,* as well as its related phenomenon, negative freedom.

Their absence, at the same time, was not necessarily a real lack for Bonhoeffer, since he did not regard the difference between a fallen community and its prospective version (in my perspective and not in Bonhoeffer's, naturally) a decisive one either. Here the interrelationship between his 'qualified' understanding of spontaneity with respect to the community in the primal state, his low valuation of society and, most

importantly, his lack of interest to establish a negative understanding of freedom reveals itself.

5. Vicarious Representative Action and the Ethical Collective Person

Following the logic of the main argument, now we move on to the concept of the *ethical collective person,* discussed with respect to the broken community, where the issue of vicarious representative action is raised again.

Beginning the discussion of sin and broken community, Bonhoeffer first announces his return to I-You relations pattern 'A', designed with respect to the concept of the Christian person, presented in chapter 2. As we have seen, the Fall creates a fundamental change in human relations: "[w]hereas in the primal state the relation among human beings is one of giving, in the sinful state it is purely demanding" (*SC* 108). In the status of fallenness the "ethical" is born:

"Human beings, hearing the divine law in solitude and recognising their own sinfulness, come to life again as ethical persons, albeit in ethical isolation. With sin, ethical atomism enters history. This applies essentially to the spirit-form. All natural forms of community remain, but they are corrupt in their inmost nature." (*SC* 108)

We have already seen that, as a preparation for the developing of the concept of collective person, Bonhoeffer spoke about the old humanity of Adam and the new humanity of Christ. A link to biblical theology has, therefore, been established this way. An establisment of the ethical nature of the collective person, however, is equally important, and it happens by referring to biblical theology as well. Being ethical, as Bonhoeffer worked out earlier, is being addressed by a You: thus, "the 'people of God', which only arose from being (...) called by God, by the prophets, by the course of political history, by alien peoples" (*SC* 118) emerge as the ethical collective person. "The call comes not to the individual, but to the collective person" (*SC* 118), Bonhoeffer argues, probably not feeling it necessary to explain whether Abram was also called already as a representative of the people of God.

In the subsequent argumentation the content of the "call" refers to two topics: either to repentance or to some collective purpose. Regarding the latter, Bonhoeffer's

example reflects his conviction that the status of being called is a more decisive determinant of the ethical than the material content of the act itself.

"Where a people, submitting in conscience to God's will, goes to war in order to fulfill its historical purpose and mission in the world - though entering fully into the ambiguity of human sinful action - it knows it has been called upon by God, that history is to be made; here war is no longer murder." (*SC* 119)

The original variant of the closing statement, "here war is more than murder" is an equally ambiguous statement, as Seeberg was right in stating.[57] This example clearly shows the structure of the ethical as Bonhoeffer constructed it with respect to the Christian concept of the person: the ethical is solely derived from the status of being called upon by a You.

It is, however, the first topic, repentance, that carries the argument towards the appearance of vicarious representative action, as *action* that involves the ethical collective person as well as the individual. It is the people - as the humanity of Adam - that had fallen into sin, but it is the individual prophet who hears the call and does penance for the people.

"If the 'people' must repent, it does not matter how many repent, and in actuality it will never be the whole people, the whole church; but God can regard the whole 'as if' all had repented. 'For the sake of ten I will not destroy them.' (Gen. 18:32) God can see the whole people in a few, as God could see and reconcile the whole humanity in one man." (*SC* 119f)

It is telling to note here that the quoted sentence has gone through a twofold shift of meaning in Bonhoeffer's interpretation. The first one is also noted by the Editor: Scripture refers to the city and not the community[58]. The second one is more important: there is no hint in the text that "the ten" would do penance, rather, they are the "righteous" over against the "wicked", and the purpose of the negotiations is to save the "righteous" from being killed together with the "wicked". It seems, therefore, that while Bonhoeffer applied this biblical reference, he was already looking ahead to the soteriological *actus*, the vicarious representative act of Christ. The argument finally reaches "'Adam', a collective person, who can only be superseded by the collective person 'Christ existing as church-community'" (*SC* 121).

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[57] SC p. 119, note 24.
[58] SC p. 120, note 28.

Having completed the review of the social-philosophical argument, now we turn to the exploration of the theological content of the social-philosophical framework.

c. A Detailed Discussion of the Theological and Sociological Content of Vicarious Representative Action

1. Sin and Culpability

The succint theological content of vicarious representative action is given in the section whose 'heart' reads: "what characterises the Christian notion of vicarious representative action is that it is vicariously representative strictly with respect to sin and punishment"[59] The related argument itself is not original, rather it is a close reproduction of the relevant thoughts of Luther and Bonhoeffer's teacher, Seeberg[60]; however, Bonhoeffer's *choice* of theological content must be regarded as his higly important personal decision that reflects as well as has a crucial influence on his wider social thought. Before we consider the detailed theological content of vicarious representative action that is built on and around Christ's vicarious representative act, we will concentrate on its relationship to the social-philosophical argument again.

2. The Two Patterns of I-You-relations Joined Together - a Hypothesis

Following the social-philosophical and theological argument up to this point, we could perceive some elements that serve as inevitable prerequisites for an understanding of vicarious representative action as taking the sin and punishment of others upon oneself. The concept of ethical collective person is a necessary social-philosophical antecedent in the argument that, as we have seen, centers on the

[59] SC p. 155. see also the broader context of this sentence.
[60] Considering Luther's influence see note 87. in p. 155; about Bonhoeffer's reliance on Seeberg see note 49. in p. 146 and note 88. in p.155.

theological theme of culpability and repentance (*SC* 118ff). At the beginning of chapter 5 Bonhoeffer stated that he was going to unite lines of argument that had been pursued independently so far; here we are most interested in the encounter of the two different patterns of I-You relations. At first it does not happen in an explicit manner, rather, their specific social backgrounds have been drawn together:

"On the one hand, there was the line of thought about the ontic basic-relatedness of human beings to one another as persons. On the other hand, there was the discovery of the pre-volitional sociality of the human spirit, and the subsequent investigation of the forms of empirically existing communal relations, which always require intentional social acts in order to manifest themselves as personal social relations. The ontic-ethical basic-relations in the state of sin not only are fundamental for all personal social relations, but also condition even their empirical formation. When they are modified, or re-created, in the concept of the church, the concrete form of the community must change as well; *indeed this provides the possibility and necessity of developing a unique empirical form of community* (italics mine). Since we recognised certain basic forms as belonging to the created order, we now must ask about the extent to which the church as a social form participates in them, and even whether in the synthesis of them all might be found." (*SC* 124f)

The I-You relations, typical to the Christian concept of person *and* the ontic-ethical basic-relations in the state of sin (pattern 'A'), and the I-You relations that belong to the created order (pattern 'B'), will be joined together in 'a unique empirical form of community', the church. Regarding vicarious representative action, both as a turning point between the old and the new and "the life-principle of the new humanity" (*SC* 147), we can find the first reference to the I-You relations as follows:

"The cord between God and human beings that was cut by the first Adam is tied anew by God, revealing God's own love in Christ, by no longer approaching us in demand and summons, purely as You, but instead by *giving God's own self as an I, opening God's own heart. The church is founded on the revelation of God's heart.* But since destroying the primal community with God also destroyed human community, so likewise when God restores community between human beings and God's own self, community among us also is restored once again, in accordance with our proposition about the essential interrelation of our community with God and human community." (*SC* 145f)

God's self as an I that reveals Godself acts according to the order of pattern 'A'. Here the You has been given the role of the barrier, the Other who encounters me to turn me into an I, who, if it happens to be God, may represent a pure demand or

summons to me. This You-ness, as we have seen, becomes manifest in a purely ethical being and its act can be understood as a purely ethical act. However, it may happen that God, as a You, turns into an I, and this metamorphosis fundamentally changes my relationship also to the other human person. (*SC* 56) After this fundamental change of human relationships the original (primal, created) community of human beings will be restored again, where personal relations will follow a different order, I-You relations pattern 'B'.

At this point of our investigation we may formulate a working hypothesis about the relationship of the two patterns of I-You relations with respect to both Bonhoeffer's understanding of vicarious representative action, the 'life-principle' of the church and, *per definitionem,* his wider social theory. For human beings who belong to the sinful state of being, the realm where the 'Christian concept of person' is also rooted, the order of the I-You relations follows pattern 'A'. Even God acts according to pattern 'A', entering into relationship with the human being as the divine You, the ethical barrier, but, unlike humans, God is capable of revealing God's self as a loving I. The theological content of God's self-revelation is the vicarious representative action, executed by Christ, as Bonhoeffer depicted it. Christ's vicarious representative action restores human community after the order of created community, where humans are capable of living according to the I-You relations pattern 'B'. Therefore, from the perspective of the 'real community', that is, the church, I-You relations pattern 'A' characterises *becoming*, while pattern 'B' describes *being*. Participating in the phase of *becoming* is necessary for all human beings after the Fall, that is, the historical and ethical person. There is no way between the One and the Other apart from pattern 'A'. However, by the vicarious representative action of Christ, that is the theological content of God's revelation, living in accordance with pattern 'B' will be a simultaneous possibility, as a fruit of Christ's salvific work.

3. The Theological and Social Consequences of the Togetherness of the Two Patterns; a Test

In the following section we will test this working hypothesis on Bonhoeffer's detailed description of vicarious representative action and its social implications. First we will have a closer look at the texts that discuss the peculiar relationship of the two different patterns of I-You relation in more detail.This is the fundamental explanation of the transformation of the I-You relations:

"*Faith acknowledges God's rule and embraces it; love actualises the Realm of God.* Love is therefore not an actualisation of the metaphysical social-relation, but rather of the ethical social-affiliation. But, as we saw, in the state of sin this ethical social-affiliation exists only in a broken form, which became intelligible when we considered the reality of the ethical personality and of sin. As a theological proposition it is founded on the doctrine of the primal state. Every human social formation is an actualisation of the metaphysical social-relations. What is unique about the actualisation effected by the Holy Spirit is that it links both basic-relations [that is, the metaphysical and the social-ethical basic relations[61]]. In every previous social formation the ethical-basic-relations continue to exist in their brokenness. *Here they are renewed and as such actualised, thereby producing a concrete from of community.* The person living in the community of the I-You-relationship is given the assurance of being loved, and through faith in Christ receives the power to love also, in that this person, who in Christ is already in the church, is led into the church. For that person the other member of the church-community is essentially no longer claim but gift, revelation of God's love and heart. Thus the You is to the I no longer law but gospel, and hence an object of love. The fact that my claim is met by the other I who loves me - which means, of course, by Christ - fulfills me, humbles me, frees me from bondage to myself, and enables me - again, of course, only through the power of faith in Christ - to love the other, to completely give and reveal myself to the other." (*SC* 165f)

We can summarise the structure of the above statement as follows: Love is the actualisation of the ethical-social relations described in accordance with pattern 'A', and is nothing to do with pattern 'B', which is related to metaphysical social-relations. However, the brokenness of ethical-social relations (pattern 'A') can be recognised only in the perspective of the primal state, that is, metaphysical social-relations (pattern'B'). Pattern 'B', therefore, has been elevated into the position of the norm of social relations, but it is not enough: *"every human social formation is an*

[61] See note 120 in SC 166

actualisation of the metaphysical social-relations". This statement hangs within the text without any supporting argument. Here Bonhoeffer cannot refer to love, since its role has been made exclusive with respect to pattern 'A'. Nevertheless, Bonhoeffer finds an argument from higher above: "what is unique about the actualisation effected by the Holy Spirit is that it links both basic-relations": metaphysical social relations become influential in the restored community, therefore, not by "love", but by "the Holy Spirit". Securing a place for the metaphysical social-relations and pattern 'B' by a reference to the Holy Spirit, Bonhoeffer now is free to explore into the meaning of the transformation of pattern 'A'. They are the ethical-basic-relations that are transformed into a mutually loving relationship by the work of Christ. The self-centered I will be freed from "bondage to" him- or herself for a complete self-giving love. This is a radical transformation of I-You relations pattern 'A', that, as we have seen, is already linked to pattern 'B' by the Holy Spirit.

The social role of Christ and the Holy Spirit within this transformation is important to be clarified. We have seen that the person of Christ has been related to I-You-relations pattern 'A', while the person of the Holy Spirit has been mentioned with respect to I-You-relations pattern 'B'. Their role is different according to the structure of the given I-You-relations. In pattern 'A' persons live in ethical isolation; the person of Christ, acting vicariously for them, sets them free from themselves for being able to love each other, thus, Christ *mediates* between them. The mediating act of Christ is related to two extreme ethical possibilities: in isolation there is an absence of love while in mutual relationship there is a fulfilment of love. The role of the Holy Spirit with respect to pattern 'B' is quite different. In pattern 'B' no mediation is needed since there is a mutual relationship of persons characterised by given social factors; this given set of social values is *carried* by the Holy Spirit in its effect in linking the two basic relations, the metaphysical and the social-ethical one. An intrinsic reason for making the Holy Spirit a carrier of the social values of the metaphysical basic relations may be that the latter depicts the sociality of human spirit; subjective spirit, objective spirit and Holy Spirit are related to each other in a way that makes the relation of the social values, attributed to them, easier. The point is, that the characterisation of the human sociality of the primal state of being is fully transferred to the renewed

Christian existence by the carrying of the Holy Spirit, in inseparable relation to the ethical-social relations transformed by the vicarious, mediating act of Christ.

A special significance of this argument is that Bonhoeffer involves in it the Lutheran distinction between law and gospel: "the You is to the I is no longer law but gospel, and hence an object of love". The suspensation of the presence of the law in the person of the You marks the utmost radicality of the transformation of the I-You-relationship.

A decisive observation from the perspective of our research is that the two kinds of social relations, represented by I-You-relations pattern 'A' and pattern 'B' do not only exist simultaneously, but are related into a single concrete social existence, thus, they mutually determine and limit each other. Their simultaneous existence within a single Christian existence is affirmed by Bonhoeffer in a characteristically Lutheran manner[62]; on this theological basis the mutually limiting relationship of the two different social relations appears as a social consequence. The detailed description of the theological content of vicarious representative action reflects the way Bonhoeffer added a strong theological affirmation to this socially significant consequence.

In the following section we will pursue a straight line of argument. First I refer to our previous findings about the conservative set of values that characterise Bonhoeffer's understanding of the primal state of social being. In the second step I will show how this conservative social framework serves as a social preconception of the theological concept of vicarious representative action, as the latter is intended to provide a remedy for the hopeless social and ethical isolation that characterise social life in the sinful state. Thirdly, we will see the function of the conservative set of values with respect to the empirical church, already embedded into the theological framework of vicarious representative action.

[62] SC p. 161. note 108.

4. The Theological Application of a Conservative Set of Values

Considering the primal state of social being, now we recall Bonhoeffer's distinction between community and society as two different possibilities of relations of wills, and the distinction between a relation of force and a relation of rule, as two different possibilities of relations of strength. In relation to both pairs of concepts Bonhoeffer created the concept of the *genuine association of authentic rule*, the power that is characteristic to community, but, it is also applicable to society too. Authentic rule presupposes an unequal relation of strength and establishes a relation of subordination (*SC* 92). Subordination and the related social unequality are characteristic to the primal state of social being, willed by God as good and necessary, not merely consequences of sin[63].

Bonhoeffer's understanding of subordination at a social level is related to a theological interpretation as well. The source of subordination is authentic rule, and authentic rule is understood by Bonhoeffer, first of all, as God's rule: the "association of authentic rule between God and us in revelation is paradoxical because God rules by serving; this is what the concept of the love of God entails" (*SC* 177). In his formally purely social-philosophical argument Bonhoeffer characterised the relation of rule as based on conscious obedience: "the obedient will understands the meaning of the command" (*SC* 92), thus it does not simply surrender to bare force. Obedience is given a theological significance too by an extension of the logic of the social-philosophical argument. Obedience to God may mean the fulfilment of the law "in spirit through the spirit", "through perfect love", by "an unbroken will" (*SC* 149). Obedience to the word of Christ requires us to "give up all claims whatsoever on God or on our neighbour", so we may "understand our love to be the love of God given to our hearts by the Holy Spirit, and our will conquered by God and obedient to God's will for our neighbour" (*SC* 168). Similarly, "[c]hristian community of love between human beings means unrestrictedly surrendering to the other out of obedience to God's will" (*SC* 176). Finally, the absolute obedience to the word or to God exempts one

[63] See Bonhoeffer's long 'Historical Excursus on Social Theory in Patristic Writings and Thomas Aquinas', SC pp. 96ff, note 116.

from the demand of the relative obedience to the church (*SC* 250ff). We can see that God's authentic rule demands obedience as the only possible answer: this theological thesis may be understood as the extension of the social-philosophical thesis. A significant difference between them, however, is that while the social-philosophical argument speaks about conscious obedience, theological obedience is not necessarily conscious. Community based on obedience to God's will, Bonhoeffer argues, "is not consciously intended: rather the You is willed while giving up the I. But this is precisely what proves and establishes the new I in accordance with the will of God." (*SC* 176)

In the following step we will see how the demand of obedience and the related demand of subordination originating in the social-philosophical argument and affirmed by theological reasoning, would present a social order for the renewed community too. The origin of the new order is Christ's vicarious representative action. In the explanation of vicarious representative action the motif "God's rule as service" plays a significant role.

5. The Constitutive Role of the Conservative Set of Values; Unequal Relation of Strength

Vicarious representative action, first of all, is based on the unequal relation of strength. "[W]e *ought* to let our sin be taken from us, for we are not able to carry it by ourselves; we *ought not* reject this gift of God." (*SC* 156) This fundamental insight, closely connected to Bonhoeffer's conviction about the central importance of culpability and punishment, will be elaborated after Bonhoeffer reintroduces the motifs of *with-each-other* and the *being-for-each-other* into the discussion of *sanctorum communio*, originally worked out with respect to the primal state of being. The insight will go through a twofold extension, both with respect to the participants of the relation and the contents of the relation.

The unequal relation of strength, previously applied to the relation of God and human beings, is first extended to human-human relations in a characteristically Lutheran manner: "[w]e are God through the love that makes us charitable toward our

neighbour" (*SC* 178). It is telling to consider the background of this thought in the theology of the early Luther: "any Christian should acknowledge himself to be great, because, on account of faith in Christ who dwells in him, he is God, a son of God and infinite, since God is now in him"[64]. The original idea that referred to the taking away of sin, has been extended also in terms of its contents. "Christians can and ought to act like Christ; they ought to bear the burdens and sufferings of their neighbor. 'You must open your heart to the weaknesses and needs of others as if they were your own, and offer your means as if they were theirs, just as Christ does for you in the sacrament'." (*SC* 178f)[65]

The idea of unequal relations of strength, that at the beginning of the train of thought was applied to the taking away of sins and reflected in the sacramental encounter of Christ and the human being, has also been given a general ethical understanding: the strong should open his or her heart to the weaknesses and needs of the weak. This direct relationship between sacramental and ethical life is present already in the theology of the early Luther whose thoughts were not only consciously used but also explicitly referred to by Bonhoefer. Luther applied the analogy of faith and love. "We are God's children through faith that constitutes us heirs of all divine blessings. But we are also 'gods' through love that makes us beneficent towards our neighbor. The divine nature is simply pure beneficence..."[66]. Following Luther, Bonhoeffer sets up the close analogy between unequal relations of strength in sacramental life and unequal relations of strength in social-ethical life as a central thesis of his understanding of vicarious representative action.

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[64] SC p. 179. note 161.

[65] SC 178f. See the utmost importance of Luther's early sermon, 'The Blessed Sacrament of the Holy and True Body of Christ, and the Brotherhoods' (1519) in the argument on the sacramental aspect of vicarious representative action, as noted by Bonhoeffer himself (note 41. in SC p. 179.) and also by the Editor, who pays attention to the fact that the sermon was a part of Bonhoeffer's argument against Ritschl's theory. Ritschl found Reformation theology's concept of community ethically inadequate; Bonhoeffer's rejection of this opinion reflects on the heart of the problem we face in Bonhoeffer's argument. See editorial note 160. in SC p. 178..

[66] Quoted by the Editor in note 161. in SC p. 178f. Bonhoeffer's own reference is note 40. in the same page.

6. The Problem of the Distinction Between the Theological-Sacramental and the Social-Ethical Understanding of Unequal Relation of Strength

This analogy appears in the following discussion several times. We can see, however, that in the course of the exposition the structure of the analogy may loose its clarity. If we insist that unequal relations of strength have been originally established with respect to God-human relations *and* with respect to sacramental life, we also maintain that this beginning gives the analogy a solid structure: social-ethical aspects have to be derived from the sacramental aspects, at the same time, the two aspects have to be distinguished from each other. Bonhoeffer does not seem to follow this logic.

Proceeding in his argumentation, Bonhoeffer applies the analogy by referring to Luther again: "the weaknesses, needs, and sins of my neighbor afflict me as if they were my own, in the same way as Christ was afflicted by our sins." (*SC* 180) Luther's sentence referred to here shows that the Reformer began the analogy with the sacramental side: "our sins assail him [Christ], while his righteousness protects us"[67], expressing here a variant of his famous image of *happy exchange*. Bonhoeffer - not contrary to the Reformer's intention - completes this thought with the social-ethical side, saying that "[i]t belongs to the sociological structure of the church-community" (*SC* 180). When Bonhoefer arrives at his normative statement, however, the original order is reversed. "*Three great, positive possibilities of acting for each other* in the community of saints present themselves: *self-renouncing, active work for the neighbor; intercessory prayer; and finally, mutual forgiveness of sins* in God's name." (*SC* 184) Here the social-ethical side of the analogy comes before the sacramental side, but precisely because of this change of the order we should not forget that the unequal relation of strength has originally been established as a sacramental relation.

The second issue is the distinction between the sacramental aspects and the social-ethical aspects of the unequal relations of strength. Vicarious representative action, if regarded first of all as a sacramental relation, is considered as a mutual

[67] SC p. 180. note 44.

possibility within a community, characterised by the structures of *being-with-each-other* and *being-for-each-other*. "Bear one another's burdens", Bonhoeffer quotes Gal. 6,2 (*SC* 180). This possible mutuality within a community would hide the fundamentally unequal relation of strength if we would overlook that a single, concrete vicarious representative act is always one-sided and based on unequality: one gives and the other receives. The strong gives and the weak receives. The subject of the vicarious representative action can only be the strong one, never the weak. The strong one is the one who has something to give. What is possible to give can determine what we may understand by strength. Let us consider the wide scale of what Bonhoeffer regarded as 'something to give':

"All of these involve giving up the self 'for' my neighbor's benefit, with the readiness to do and bear everything in the neighbor's place, indeed, if necessary, to sacrifice myself, standing as a *substitute* for my neighbor. Even if a purely vicarious action is rarely actualised, it is intended in every genuine act of love.
It is apparent that in self-renouncing work for the neighbor I give up happiness. We are called to advocate vicariously for the other in everyday matters, to give up possessions, honor, even our whole lives. With the whole strength that we owe to the church-community we ought to work in it. The 'strong' do not have their abilities for themselves, in order to consider themselves superior to the church-community; they have them 'for the common good' (1Cor 12,7).Every material, intellectual or spiritual gift fulfils its purpose only when used in the church-community. Love demands that we give up our own advantage. This may even include our community with God himself." (*SC* 184)

In this exhaustive list of *possessions* that make one strong and put him into the position to give and so exercise vicarious representative action for the neighbour, Bonhoeffer does not distinguish between sacramental gifts or benefits and social-ethical gifts or benefits. Accordingly, he does not distinguish between different qualities of strength that make the one unequal to the other either in a sacramental or in a social-ethical respect. Rather, all kinds of strengths are gathered together, and, as Bonhoeffer argues, all these the person owes to the church-community and, having been made strong by them, one has to give them back to the church community. With the disappearance of the distinction between different qualities of strengths the analogy between unequal relations of strength in sacramental life and in social-ethical life is suspended as well. The *analogy* is replaced by a *totality* where all social-ethical aspects of life are included into the sacramental life of the church.

The suspension of the analogy that is given in the theology of the early Luther and, potentially, in Bonhoeffer's reception of Luther too, has a crucial consequence for Bonhoeffer's concept of freedom. For the sake of the clear understanding of this point we will now examine the way the two distinct patterns of I-You-relations 'behave' with respect to vicarious representative action.

We have seen that I-You-relations pattern 'A' create a purely ethical relationsip between persons. Here the *ethical* means being encountered by the other, who poses a barrier to the I, represents a demand, and the mere personhood of the I is born out of the encounter with the You. *Ethical personhood* is used by Bonhoeffer as a limiting concept: "the ethical personhood of the other is neither a psychologically comprehensible fact nor an epistemological necessity" (*SC* 54). Consequently, the I does not know about the I-ness of the You and also my I-ness is hidden from the other to whom I pose a You: epistemologically or psychologically comprehensible qualities do not play any role in the encounter. God also enters this relationship as a You, with the decisive difference that God, in the revelation of God's love, reveals God's I-ness to me, as "enters into the person as I" (*SC* 56). This is the structure of personal relationship that provides a framework for the possibility for one person to become "Christ for the other" (*SC* 55), that Bonhoeffer learns from Luther and applies to his understanding of vicarious representative action.

I-You-relations pattern 'A' serve Bonhoeffer to describe the sacramental relationship between both Christ (God) and the human person and between one human person and the other. The church-community as an ethical collective person also participates in this relationship, in both ways: in the relationship with Christ (God) *in the place of human beings*, and also in the relationship with human beings *in the place of Christ (God).* An example for the first type of relationship: "[t]he unity of the church as a structure *is* established [by Christ] 'before' any knowing and willing of the members" (*SC* 199). The second type of relationship, in which the church-community occupies the place of Christ, is expressed in the famous definition: "Christ existing as church community" (*SC* 199)[68], therefore, a personal relation to Christ is identical to

[68] Note the Hegelian background of this expression, referred to in Bonhoeffer's long note 68. in SC p. 193ff and also the Editor's note 218. in SC p. 198. that refers to the mediating role of Seeberg's *Dogmatik* between Hegel and Bonhoeffer.

the personal relationship with the chruch as an ethical collective person. The two types of relationships meet in Bonhoeffer's dense definition of Christian existence: "[b]eing in Christ means being in the church" (*SC* 199). As a result, the nature of Christ (God)-human-relationship and human-human-relationship, concieved within I-You-relations pattern 'A' is entirely homogenised by the introduction of the church as an ethical collective person.

Now we will see how I-You-relations pattern 'A' appears as a framework for sacramental relationship. First I shall clarify what I mean by sacramental relationship with respect to Bonhoeffer's understanding of vicarious representative action.

We begin with a reference to our finding that the central question of God-human relationship for Bonhoeffer is sin and and the remedy of sin. We have also seen that Bonhoeffer gained decisive insights for expressing his thoughts from a sermon of the early Luther on the body of Christ as sacrament. Sacramental relationship, therefore, is the personal relationship between both Christ (God) and human beings as well as that of one human being to the other that is centered on the sacramental means of the church that participates in Christ's (God's) salvific work to set humans free from the bondage of sin.

In Bonhoeffer's exposition of vicarious representative action we don't find a thematic treatment of the sacraments (either in a Catholic or in a Protestant sense), and we also have to keep in mind that even the early Luther's thoughts about the sacrament does not reflect the 'official' Protestant view of the two sacraments, that was formulated years later. Therefore, instead of looking for any thematically correct sacramental theology here, we concentrate on the identification of the function of the sacraments in the above sense.

To avoid any conceptual confusion it has to be noted here that Bonhoeffer explicitly states that he does not discuss "every function of the church community, such as preaching, sacraments" in this context, rather, he is concerned "only with the social acts that constitute the community of love and that disclose in more detail the structure and nature of the Christian church" (*SC* 178). Thus, what I call *sacramental* in this section, Bonhoeffer labels as *social act.* His identification is necessarily derived from his general understanding of person as social-ethical personhood, while my

identification refers to the sacramental contents in the above sense, thus, the two different identifications of the same acts are not contradictory to each other. At the same time, my underlying interest, that is, to show the distinct behavior of the two different patterns of I-You-relations, which is not Bonhoeffer's concern here, does not allow me to overlook the relationship between the sacramental contents and I-You-relations pattern 'A'. The expressions we find that bear this meaning are *forgiveness of sins*, *intercession*, *the priesthood of all believers*, and, above all, *being in the church*.

All of these concepts refer to the salvific work of Christ in the taking away of sins, and the possibility of the human being to participate in Christ's salvific work, being a Christ for the other. If we return to the first appearance of the problem of sin and salvation in the context of the discussion of vicarious representative action again, we will find a clear description of the distinction that here I call the distinction between the sacramental and the social-ethical.

"[H]uman sin cannot be viewed by the true God 'as if it did not exist'; it must truly be 'undone', that is, it must be wiped out. This occurs not by reversing time, but through divine punishment and re-creating the will to do good. God does not 'overlook' sin; that would mean not taking human being seriously as personal beings in their very culpability; and that would mean no re-creation of the person, and therefore no re-creation of community. But God does take human beings seriously in their culpability, and therefore only punishment and the overcoming of sin can remedy the matter. Both of these have to take place within concrete time, and in Jesus Christ that occurs in a way that is valid for all time. He takes the punishment upon himself, accomplishes forgiveness of sin..." (*SC* 155)

This definitive description of taking away - or forgiveness - of sin is followed by its application to the structure of vicarious representative action (as we have already seen), after which Bonhoeffer asks the following question:

"Is this Christian view of vicarious representative action for sin ethically tenable? As ethical persons we clearly wish, after all, to accept responsibility ourselves before God for our good and evil deeds. How can we lay our fault upon another person and ourselves go free? It is true, the doctrine of vicarious representative action includes more than our ethical posture, but we *ought* to let our sin be taken from us, for we are not able to carry it by ourselves; we *ought not* reject this gift of God. It is God's love that offers it to us, and only for the sake of this love ought we abandon our ethical position of responsibility for ourselves - a position that counts for nothing before God - thereby demonstrating precisely the necessity for vicarious representative action. The idea of vicarious representative action is therefore possible only so long as it is based on an offer by God; this means it is in force only in Christ and Christ's church-

community. *It is not an ethical possibility or standard, but solely the reality of the divine love for the church-community; it is not an ethical, but a theological concept.* Through the Christian principle of vicarious representative action the new humanity is made whole and sustained." (*SC* 156)

This is the broader context of the sentence that has established our statement that vicarious representative action, first of all, is a relation of unequal strength. Inequality here is based on God's love that enters the relationship, unparallelled by any human qualities conceivable, so far that it annihilates the human person's position of ethical responsibility. (With respect to Bonhoeffer's understanding of the ethical, that, as we have seen, is not consistent enough in *Sanctorum Communio*, a human being without an ethical personhood is concievable only outside of the sinful state of being, either in the primal state or in the restored state. We must also keep in mind, however, Bonhoeffer's repeated assertions that social-ethical basic relations, that is, I-You-relations pattern 'A' remain valid simultanously with the person's being in Christ.) In any case, the extreme inequality of God's strength in God's saving encounter with the human person forces Bonhoeffer to make a distinction between a theological and an ethical possibility, a rare piece of argumentation in *Sanctorum Communio*. On the basis of this distinction we can establish our own distinction between the sacramental and the social-ethical, and we can extend our investigation to the other expressions of sacramental contents, *intercession* and *the priesthood of all believers* that are manifestations of *being in the church*. However, before we proceed in this direction, we stay for a moment to observe Bonhoeffer's struggle to identify an ethical meaning of vicarious representative action immediately after he deprived the latter of this meaning. In a footnote, explaining the above distinction, he writes:

"There is, however, also an ethical concept of vicarious representative action; it signifies the voluntarily assumption of an evil in another person's stead. It does not remove the self-responsibility of the other person, and *remains as an act of human heroic love* (for one's country, friend, etc.) *even within the bounds of the highest ethical obligation.* In acknowledging it we do not put our ethical person as a whole at stake, but only as much as we owe (body, honor, money) to the person who acted vicariously on our behalf; we acknowledge Christ, however, as vicarious representative for our person as a whole, and thus owe everything to him."[italics mine] (*SC* 156)

In a comparison of a theological (sacramental) and a (social)-ethical understanding of vicarious representative action, we may highlight the following findings. Theological vicarious representative action is based on an extremely (absolutely) unequal relation of strength: on the human side an ethical position counts for nothing and we owe everything to Christ (God). Ethical vicarious representative action is based on a relatively unequal relation of strength, in which the ethical self-responsibility of the person who is acted upon remains intact to some extent, and one owes to the person who acted vicariously only a limited part of one's personal properties, proportional to the act itself. The relation between the theological and the ethical understanding of vicarious representative action may therefore be described as a relation between the limitless and the limited, the unconditional and the conditional, the whole and the partial, or, to apply a distinction used by Bonhoeffer later, the ultimate and the penultimate. In this section the nature of the relation is not explained, only the difference between the theological and the ethical understanding of vicarious representative action is underlined.

7. The Theological-Sacramental Understanding of Vicarious Representative Action; an Affirmation of Christian Equality

Now we continue to explore the content of the theological-sacramental use of vicarious representative action as *intercession* and *priesthood of all believers*. In both cases forgiveness of sins happens on the basis of *being in the church*. I have already argued that these acts fit into the framework of I-You-relations pattern 'A'; we will test this hypothesis now.

Intercession can happen only in and through the church-community, moreover, it is also limited by the church: "[w]here there is no possibility for the person [for whom intercession is offered] to be incorporated into the church-community, intercession is futile and sacrilegious" (*SC* 186). Intercession as the prayer of the church that leads a single life in Christ is the ultimate criticism of individualism that would prefer personal prayer to intercession. When he begins to explain of the personal aspects of intercession, however, Bonhoeffer seems to represent a view that

contradicts my hypothesis that I-You-relations pattern 'A' is at work here; he states that "it is not meaningless and unimportant who prays" (*SC* 186). The following explanation, nevertheless, does not support this assertion.

"For the positive form of intercession has a positive meaning: intercession must be viewed from two angles, namely *as human action and as divine will*. The first makes it manifest that the members of the church-community belong together. A third person is drawn into my solitary relation with God, or rather, in intercession I step into the other's place and my prayer, even though it remains my own, is nonetheless prayed out of the other's affliction and need. I really enter into the other, into the other's sin and affliction; I am afflicted by the other person's sins and weaknesses. It is not as if I, through my gift for empathy, would have to share or reproduce in myself what hurts the other. If this were necessary, intercession for all people as a whole would not be possible, of course, and especially I could not pray for a person living in complete isolation. Here, all psychologism has to vanish. The sins of the unknown sailor, for whom intercession is offered, in the pastoral prayer following the sermon, afflict me no less than those of my closest friend. For the affliction springs from the recognition of my own culpability for the sins of the world, or, what is the same thing, my own culpability for the death of Christ. Once this culpability is recognised, a person can act upon humanity as a Christian, that is by praying for it. In our intercession we can become a Christ to our neighbor. In intercession we are thus not given the cold comfort that others are also in the same situation, but that, if God wants it and we accept it, our debts are canceled, our sins are forgiven.(...) Like any other form of prayer, intercession does not compel God, but, if God does the final work, then one member of the community can redeem another, in the power of the church. This conclusively eliminates the ethical self-confidence of one human being towards another." (*SC* 186f)

This passage reflects a radical shift from the assertion that it is not meaningless and unimportant who prays, that is, from intercession as human action towards a purely Christological understanding of intercession where, as Bonhoeffer understands it, the human factors do not play any role. At the beginning Bonhoeffer states that the praying person is afflicted by the other's sins and weaknesses; the role of the other as a characterisitc human being is, nevertheless, later suspended and the source of the affliction changed: the affliction springs from the recognition of my own culpability. From this point onwards both the other as a concrete character and the praying person as an irreplacable individual are excluded from the act of intercession, understood purely in terms of the encounter of Christ and the sinner. Consequently, the only recognisable result of the intercession is placed into the relationship of Christ and the praying person: the latter's debts are canceled. In this christological act the ethical

position of the participating human persons are eliminated, humans become changable agents of the act of God, carried out in the power of the church. That is all that Bonhoeffer says about intercession as *human action*; in addition to that he continues his explanation of intercession *from God's standpoint.*

The *priesthood of all believers*, the second type of theological-sacramental vicarious representative action, is explained in a similar way. Priesthood is understood as the capability of forgiving another's sin with priestly authority, that only Christ can do, "which for us means his church as the sanctorum communio. The individual Christian can do it only by virtue of membership in the church-community, and in that capacity ought to do it. The Christian takes sin from the other's conscience and bears it; but clearly one can do that only by laying it in turn on Christ." (*SC* 189) Consequently, its effectiveness is not dependent on any one of its members, its possibility is based on the existence of the church-community. Again, personal characters do not play any role in it.

The fact that the theological-sacramental understanding of vicarious representative action is described within the framework of I-You-relations pattern 'A', where personal characteristics do not play any role, has an important consequence with respect to its social contents.

Explaining the "Christian idea of equality" within the discussion of the unity of spirit of the church-community Bonhoeffer argues that it

"does not say anything about interpersonal relations, but merely places everybody before God's eyes by, first of all, stating the absolute distance separating not only the creature from the creator, but even more so the sinner from the holy: the equality of human beings consists in their universal sinfulness (Rom 3,23), which also means their universal need for redemption and an equal share in God's grace." (*SC* 204)

Bonhoeffer calls the "Christian idea of equality" a "formal equality", and it is not difficult to recognise the "Christian concept of person" behind this structure. The "Christian idea of equality" is related, further, to the doctrine of the *priesthood of all believers*:

"The equality, by which every Christian is a priest, is as such invisible. It becomes 'visible' only for faith - and can never be deduced without it! - through the unity of the gift in word and sacrament. As the whole church now rests on the unity in Christ, on the fact of 'Christ existing as church-community', so all Christian community rests on

the equality of all established by God. All this must be said with respect to the perspective from above." (*SC* 206f)

So far we have followed a straight line to see how a theological-sacramental understanding of vicarious representative action, I-You-relations pattern 'A' as personal relations typical to the "Christian concept of person" and the "ethical-ontic-basic-relations", and finally the "Christian idea of equality" are related to one another. At the latest piece of the chain,however, the *priesthood of all believers*, we witness a different line that is connected to the former one. The priesthood of all believers, Bonhoeffer argues, expresses a *duality in the idea of equality*. One component of the duality is the "Christian idea of equality", the other one is "the concrete dissimilarity of individuals [that] becomes part of mutual service, through which one becomes in practice a priest for the other. Thus all we have said above about community of spirit applies here too." (*SC* 207)

8. Dissimilarity as the Social Contents of Theological Equality; the Peculiar Relationship between Priesthood of all Believers and Patriarchalism

With the introduction of 'concrete dissimilarity of individuals' coupled with the reference to the 'community of spirit' Bonhoeffer has introduced, in fact, the system of personal relations in the primal state of being, described by I-You-relations pattern 'B'. As we have seen, this set of arguments has already been represented in the description of sanctorum communio: unequal relations of strength, subordination and obedience, community *versus* society, and, most closely related to the idea of vicarious representative action, being-with-each-other and being-for-each-other. We have also seen Bonhoeffer's attempt to distinguish between theological and ethical vicarious representative action (*SC* 156), which we may understand as his venture to differentiate between vicarious representative action framed by I-You-relations pattern 'A' and pattern 'B'. Later we have witnessed, however, that describing the actualisation of being-for-each-other, Bonhoeffer grouped social and sacramental strength together, and related them all to the church-community. (*SC* 184) When we arrive at Bonhoeffer's understanding of the priesthood of all believers that expresses a duality

in the idea of equality, a theologically founded egalitarianism and a socially-ethically founded dissimilarity, we can see a similar treatment: the social-ethical argument has, first, suspended in the theological argument, than, second, it has been given also a theological justification. Let us see these steps in the elaboration of the contents of the priesthood of all believers.

The Christian idea of equality, Bonhoeffer argues, is based on the fact "that God is always the same" (*SC* 205). This concept of equality, however,

"does not allow for any schematising; rather, it includes concrete dissimilarity of all people. It is quite possible, and even necessary, to acknowledge that, from a Christian perspective, there are some who are strong and others who are weak, some who are honorable and others who are dishonorable, some who are, from an ethical and religious perspective, exemplary and others who are inferior; and then, of course, there are the obvious social dissimilarities. But this insight can exist only within the confines of the very idea of equality before God that is beyond our perception. This equality must now also be realised within the framework of what is possible in principle, in that strength and weakness, honor and disgrace, morality and immorality, piety and impiety exist together and not just in isolation. Thus the idea of equality leads us again into the very idea of community." (*SC* 206)

This is quite a remarkable piece of argumentation. Bonhoeffer tells us that dissimilarity exists in several respects. He adds that it can be perceived "from a Christian perspective"; it is an insight that exists only within the idea of equality before God "that is beyond our perception". Why this observation needs a Christian perspective and the idea of equality before God as a framework is beyond, in fact, my perception. Is it necessitated by the "dialectical relation between plurality and unity" (*SC* 206), as Bonhoeffer claimed? In any case, the obvious and perceivable social, ethical, religious and anthroplogical dissimilarities are drawn into an unperceivable theological framework, in which the former is made contingent on the latter, without giving any hint that a theologically conceived equality would alter a socially, ethically etc. conceived dissimilarity in any way. This standpoint reaches its final consequence in the connection between the priesthood of all believers and patriarchalism:

"The Christian idea of equality does not allow for an egalitarianism but indeed only for the acknowledgement of the particular circumstances. And this is where Paul's patriarchalism, for example, finds its justification. This is the difference between the Christian and all socialist as well as idealist ideas of equality." (*SC* 207)

It is significant that Bonhoeffer not only acknowledges dissimilarities as "particular circumstances" in general in the name of a *Christian* idea of equality, but he also raises the concrete example of patriarchalism. Patriarchalism does not only represent dissimilarities like strength *versus* weakness, honesty *versus* dishonesty that can be found in persons in several combinations and can also change during someone's life; patriarchalism expresses a dissimilarity based on birth and sex, unchangeable realities of a concrete human life. This is the social dissimilarity that has been given a theological foundation in the 'Christian' idea of equality in general and in the idea of the priesthood of all believers in particular.

In this study Bonhoeffer raises the theme of patriarchalism several times. Discussing the typology of communities in the primal state of social being he asserts that although patriarchalism in its perceptible state may be regarded as a consequence of sin, subordination belongs to the created order and is "restored to sanctity again by Christ" - in this section also the "heavenly hierarchies" and "the divine right of emperors" receive their justification (*SC* 97). Close to the statement about the relationship of the priesthood of all believers and patriarchalism Bonhoeffer argues that

> "*egalitarianism* (the communist idea of equality) goes against God's order (...), it says nothing at all sociologically about the form of church government, e.g. a democratic model. Rather, what was created unequal must be accepted as such, and this, in turn, sanctions and introduces the idea of patriarchalism." (*SC* 205)[69]

In his next reference to patriarchalism Bonhoeffer relates it to the theological thought that God's will as absolute authority invites obedience, and the subordination that is based on God's absolute authority, in turn, creates a coordination of wills among the subjects (*SC* 92). This reference is further complicated by Bonhoeffer's effort to apply both the type of community and society to the church, therefore, an involvement of the work of the Holy Spirit becomes unavoidable. "The Holy Spirit combines the claim to authority with the will to establish purpose and to establish meaning by drawing the person into the Spirit's own course, thus being at once ruler

[69] It is also telling to see that Bonhoeffer found justification in grouping together Gal 3,28 and 1 Cor 14,34, as the sayings of the *same* Paul. An analysis of this kind of reading of the Scripture would lead far away from our present argument.

and servant".(*SC* 262) We must keep in mind here that formerly Bonhoeffer referred to the Holy Spirit as a carrier of the social characterisics, described in the primal state of being, into the life of sanctorum communio. As we have seen, patriarchalism is an excellent manifestation of these characteristics. Therefore we should not be surprised if we see that the objective spirit of the empirical church, based on "the act of *love* [that has been] brought about by the Spirit" (*SC* 262) will be related to patriarchalism:

"As far as I can see, only the original patriarchal structure of the family is a sociologically comparable form, even if only approximately; this is then replicated in smaller circles, however. The object of the father's will is community between children and servants, and preserving community means being obedient. This is why the image of the family occurs most frequently in the Christian vocabulary, and furnishes the most common name in the New Testament by which Christians called on another, namely 'brother'. It is very significant when Paul in Eph 3,15 says that all faterhood on earth derives its name from God's fatherhood. This relation is also the reason why the idea of patriarchalism has played such a prominent role since earliest Christianity. Admittedly, the emphasis it received in the Middle Ages was also related to developments within the class structure and culture, but it also represents a recovery of one of the earliest sociological insights of Christianity. (...) It indeed seems that here we have a structure similar to that of the church, and yet it is not possible to define the patriarchal family as a pure union of purposeful obedience and true communal relation; it is either one or the other. The true interconnection of both elements within the church is brought about through the work of the Holy Spirit alone..." (*SC* 263f)

Here we witness not only a theological affirmation of patriarchalism again, but also an extension of the validity of this theologically founded patriarchalism. On the one hand, Bonhoeffer extends its validity historically, from the earliest time of Christianity through the Middle Ages until his present time. On the other hand, he applies patriarchal structure not only to community but also to society: the pattern of the patriarchal family may be defined also as *purposeful* obedience. Therefore, patriarchalism as a sociological structure is given a general validity within the realm of living together.

Patriarchalism appears again in a train of thought where Bonhoeffer explains the intrinsic conservativism as well as the principle of progress in the Protestant understanding of the church-of-the-people, *Volkskirche* (*SC* 269ff). Nothing is added to the theological affirmation and the social consequences of patriarchalism, what interests us though is the context of its appearance. What Bonhoeffer says about the

intrinsic conservativism of the church-of-the-people, that is, his own Prussian church, contains no surprise. Its intrinsic ability to progress, however, deserves a closer attention.

For Bonhoeffer, it is the Christian appreciation of history that gives rise to the princpile of progress within the church:

"The church ought to be a contemporary church; it ought to accept and test all the forces it encounters in life today. Past history is in principle no more right than the present. As a contemporary Christian, I have the right and the obligation to wrestle with history and to shape the Gospel for today. (...) [T]he progressive element in the church finds expression in the concept of organism. All vitality of the community derives from the cooperation between its members." (*SC* 270)

The question is whether Bonhoeffer's idea of progress can be understood as being capable of eliminating the social structure of patriarchalism? Can he concieve a historical future with a social life beyond patriarchalism? The answer is no. As we have seen, progress is confined within history, it is historical past that may and should be overcome by the novelties of the present. Patriarchalism, however, has been founded and affirmed, both in a social-philosophical and a theological argumentation, from outside history. The principle of subordination belong to the primal state of being, and its derivative, patriarchalism is characteristic both to community and society, the sociological types that also belong to the primal state of being. Historical changes, therefore, simply do not touch the social structure of patriarchalism.

9. On the Relationship of Church and Proletariat - an Illustration

Having clarified the constitutive role of patriarchalism within Bonhoeffer's social theory, now we turn to his famous discussion about church and proletariat. Our question is what would and could be offered by Bonhoeffer's church, and his social theory embedded in his view of the church, to the proletariat? Before answering this question, however, I need to make two observations.

First, the treatment of the possible encounter between the church and the proletariat belongs to Bonhoeffer's most passionate texts in *Sanctorum Communio*. The text witnesses Bonhoeffer's genuine interest in the predicament of the proletariat

on the one hand, but also, and probably more forcefully, a genuine interest in the predicament of his church on the other. The proletariat, he thought, needed help, while the church, he believed, needed a demanding challenge: these needs would meet and mutually satisfy each other. The passion Bonhoeffer shows here is similar to the ardour with which he approached the possibility of the encounter between his Western Protestant Christianity and Gandhi's India years later, or the church's turning to the world come of age during his last months in prison.

At the same time, secondly, Bonhoeffer reveals a great deal of material incompetence in discussing this matter. His supervisor's notes are rather telling in this respect. I do not only think of Bonhoeffer's ignorance of several attempts of practical engagement with working-class people on the side of his own church-body (that, of course, betrays a fundamental ignorance of the real life of his church as well) but also his apparent inability to identify his social position with respect to a possible encounter with the proletariat. He labelled Thorwaldsen and Mendelssohn as 'bourgeois' in a negative sense, yet at the same time he overlooked the same 'bourgeois' character with respect to Dürer, Rembrandt and Bach: a blindspot that expresses the extent to which the young Bonhoeffer was reluctant to acknowledge his own characteristically bourgeois identity.

Contrary to the uncertanties that come from the combination of passion and material incompetence, the text clearly reveals the characteristic social theory that Bonhoeffer elaborated throughout his study.

"The living proletariat knows only one affliction, namely its isolation, and only one cry, namely that for community." (*SC* 272) The proletariat lives in a mass, the sociological type of a group of nonpersons, and is waiting for the church that would help it to become a community of persons, Bonhoeffer believed. What Bonhoeffer acknowledged on the side of the proletariat is this passionate desire of becoming something different: "[t]he proletariat is after something (...) that was never sought with such intensity by the bourgeoisie", and he was ready to consider proletariat's "desire for discipline and competitive sports" also "a cry for community" (*SC* 272).

However, he explicitly refused to take seriously the self-awareness and self-identification of proletariat itself. Bonhoeffer does not only leave the topic of social

tension entirely out of the scope of his interest in the relationship of his admittedly bourgeois church and the proletariat; he overtly rejects a serious consideration of the proletarian view of social life too. "The church dare not let the proletariat proclaim 'peace for humanity' without speaking its own word on this subject. It must not let the socialist youth movements speak of community without addressing them loudly and clearly with its own word of the sanctorum communio." (*SC* 272) Even if these statements allow for a two-way relationship - only formally, of course, since Bonhoeffer's method fundamentally rejects any mutual relationship between sociological-empirical data and social-philosophical-theological doctrine - the next one removes all doubt: "We do not seek the proletarian spirit as such, nor to imprison freedom within socialist doctrine, but instead want to take the church-community to the proletariat, and to transform the 'masses' into 'church-communities'." (*SC* 273) Finally: "[t]he criterion for judging the masses must be the concept of the church-community, not vice versa" (*SC* 274). This verdict is not to be understood as merely a critique of Tillich's approach to the proletarian predicament, it expresses the characteristic voice of the whole discussion, namely, the voice of paternalism. Paternalism, as a form of behaviour, is derived from patriarchalism, the strongly defended tenet of Bonhoeffer's social theory.

At the end of his discussion of church and proletariat, Bonhoeffer summarises the social background as he elaborated before:

"Our earlier reflections on the problem already made it clear that the socialist idea of equality is theologically and sociologically untenable; and this is why the attempt to impose equality by force is not only bound to fail, but is also unchristian. The Christian community is based on the dissimilarity and inequality of persons that is part of creation. But the priesthood of all believers can nevertheless be considered its basic sociological principle, as was shown earlier. Those who are free remain free, and the servant remains a servant, and yet both are one in Christ." (*SC* 274)[70]

[70]The selection of Bonhoeffer's writings, *A Testament to Freedom,* that contains a part of Bonhoeffer's treatment of the relationship of church and proletariat, does not quote this paragraph. An acknowledgement of this aspect of Bonhoeffer's understanding of the above relationship would, of course, make questionable the Editors claim, that "[i]n *The Communion of Saints* [a different translation for *Sanctorum Communio*] we see, too, a statement of the ideal ground of those actions on behalf of the oppressed that would become the pulse of Bonhoeffer's own resistance to nazism and of his role in the conspiracy." The Editors summarises the message of Bonhoeffer's life in a similar way: 'Solidarity with the Oppressed: Bonhoeffer the Man'. A claim like that reveals not only a rather superficial theological judgement but also an incomprehensible irresponsibility towards especially those whom support is

10. The Theological and Sociological Contents of Vicarious Reprsentative Action: a Summary

In our previous analysis of the theological and sociological contents of vicarious representative action we have seen that the latter is built on a social-philosophical basis that provides a framework. This framework is filled with a distinct theological content from the very outset: thus, the social-philosophical and the theological origins are intertwinned into a complex foundation that represents the final characteristics of vicarious representative action. The social-philosophical framework is the unequal relation of strengths and its related principle of subordination, elaborated with respect to the primal state of social being, while the theological content is human culpability, divine punishment and redemption.

On this complex foundation Bonhoeffer builds up a theological as well as a sociological argumentation that are related to each other in a peculiar way. Parallel to these two distinct argumentations the two patterns of I-You-relations are also at work at the very beginning of the detailed description of vicarious representative action: pattern 'A' is related to the work of Christ while pattern 'B' is associated with the work of the Holy Spirit. While relationship *with* Christ may be understood as the stage of *becoming* a Christian, relationship *in* the Holy Spirit may be regarded as *being* a Christian. These stages, however, do not follow each other but exist simultaneously.

The theological argumentation speaks about the relationship of God's person (or the person of Christ) and a human person, or the church as a collective person and the person of the individual Christian according to the I-You-relations pattern 'A', characteristic of the "Christian concept of person". This theological argumentation leads, among others, to the notion of "priesthood of all believers", that establishes a theological equality among Christians. The sociological argumentation speaks about the life of restored community (church, family, nation etc.), in which relations are governed by I-You-relations pattern 'B', characteristic of personal life in the primal state of social being. Accordingly, life in the restored community preserves the

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intended to be given, the oppressed. See: Geffrey B. Kelly and F. Burton Nelson, eds.: *A Testament to Freedom: The Essential Writings of Dietrich Bonhoeffer*, Harper, San Francisco, 1995, pp. 1, 55, 60-61.

consequences of unequal relations of strength, the principle of subordination that receives a characteristic expression of patriarchalism within and without the church.

That the two patterns of I-You-relations, the theological-sacramental and the social-ethical understanding of vicarious representative action are related to each other shows itself most clearly in the association of the priesthood of all believers and patriarchalism. We have seen that the distinction between the theological-sacramental and the social-ethical understanding of vicarious representative action is not consequent, contrary to Bonhoeffer's explicit intention. The distinction may be suspended, social-ethical characteristics may be taken up into the theological-sacramental argumentation, and social-ethical contents may be given the support of theological reasoning. The peculiar connection between the priesthood of all believers and patriarchalism can be read as an example for the above, while the suspension of law in the gospel is a typically Lutheran theological reflection of the same treatment. Thus, a conservative set of values, introduced with respect to the primal state of social being and transferred to the understanding of vicarious representative action by both I-You-relations pattern 'B' and the work of the Holy Spirit, receives a theological justification and becomes a constitutive social factor for the life of the restored community.

Since our analysis is a part of a comparison of Bonhoeffer and Bibó, we must pay special attention to the possibility of negative freedom, 'freedom from the other', in Bonhoeffer's theological and social theory. In Bibó's theory, negative freedom is rooted in spontaneity; that is why we were looking for the possible place of spontaneity within the realm of personal relationships as Bonhoeffer understood it. We have seen that neither I-You-relations pattern 'A' nor pattern 'B' offer a possibility for counting on a manifestation of 'unqualified', individual spontaneity. Vicarious representative action is elaborated by a combination of arguments that are related to one or the other pattern; thus, the same lack of possibility can be stated with respect to vicarious representative action too. Therefore, the psychological basis for Bibó's negative freedom simply does not exist in Bonhoeffer's understanding of social relations, embedded into his notion of vicarious representative action.

This summary offers us a straightforward way to proceed towards a comparison of Bibó's and Bonhoeffer's thoughts about a post-war order of Europe an Germany's place within it, with special reference to their understanding of freedom. First, we will see how the final form of Bonhoeffer's concept of freedom took shape. Second, we will examine the role this concept of freedom played in the thoughts of Bonhoeffer the conspirator, writing about the future of Germany.

Chapter 4

Bonhoeffer's Concept of Freedom and its Social Implications

A. The Formation of Bonhoeffer's Concept of Freedom on the Basis of the Theological and Sociological Understanding of Vicarious Representative Action

a. Act and Being*: God's Freedom as* Freedom For

Bonhoeffer's well-known general definition of freedom, according to which freedom is not freedom from something but freedom for something, or more emphatically, for someone, received its final shape relatively early, already in *Act and Being* and *Creation and Fall.* John de Gruchy calls *Act and Being* a theology of freedom[1]: here freedom refers, first of all, to God's freedom, which is the main theme of *Act and Being.* In discussing God's freedom Bonhoeffer was motivated by a double purpose: on the one hand he wanted to overcome his own voluntaristic understanding of God, presented in *Sanctorum Communio,* and on the other he debated the purely actualistic idea of God that he observed in Barth's theology. Both interests led him towards a comprehensive treatment of God as both act and being; this twinned perspective, necessarily, was applied to the identification of human existence as well, expressing its final and most succint form in the phrase: "being acted upon"[2]. This is the phrase we have already related to vicarious representative action, and, as we will see, the God whose freedom Bonhoeffer describes is no one else than the vicarious representative who is able to turn human existence into "being acted upon". The definitive statement of God's freedom reads as follows:

"The entire situation raises the question whether the formalistic-actualistic understanding of the freedom and contingency of God in revelation is to be made the foundation of theological thought. In revelation it is not so much a question of the freedom of God - eternally remaining within the divine self, aseity - on the other side of revelation, as it is of God's coming out of God's own self in revelation. It is a matter of God's *given* Word, the covenant in which God is bound by God's own action. It is a question of the freedom of God, which finds its strongest evidence precisely in that

[1] John de Gruchy: *Dietrich Bonhoeffer: Witness to Jesus Christ.* London, Collins, 1988, p. 17.
[2] AB pp. 116, 121, 126.

God freely chose to be bound to historical human beings and to be placed at the disposal of human beings. God is free not from human beings but for them. Christ is the word of God's freedom. God *is* present, that is, not in eternal nonobjectivity but - to put it quite provisionally for now - 'haveable', graspable in the word within the church. Here the formal understanding of God's freedom is countered by a substantial one." (*AB* 90f)

If we apply Bibó's terminology here, negative freedom and positive freedom - that never occurs in Bonhoeffer's writings in this form - we may say that Bonhoeffer here argues for God's positive - substantial - freedom against his negative - formal - freedom. In Bibó's understanding of the general meaning of freedom, positive freedom completes the more fundamental negative freedom; here the relationship of the two possibilities is not inclusive but exclusive: the formal understanding of God's freedom *is countered* by a substantial one.

God's freedom ultimately determines human freedom, according to the reasoning of *Act and Being*. Human being is either in Adam or in Christ. Being "in Adam means to be in untruth, in culpable perversion of the will, that is, of human essence. It means to be turned inward into one's self, *cor curvum in se*." (*AB* 137) It is senseless to speak about the freedom of the human being in Adam. Being in Christ, on the contrary, means being placed into the truth (*AB* 141) and the human being becomes free "in the sense of escaping from the power of the I into the power of Christ, where alone it recognises itself in original freedom as God's creature." (*AB* 150) Freedom in Christ means, first and foremost freedom from myself. The perspective of *freedom from myself* is emphatically affirmed in *Act and Being*, in fact, it is the final fruit of God's *freedom for:*

"The echoless cries from solitude into the solitude of self, the protest against violation of any sort, have unexpectedly received a reply and gradually melt into the quiet, prayerful conversation of the child with the father in the Word of Jesus Christ. In the contemplation of Christ, the tormented knowledge of the I's tornness finds 'joyful conscience', confidence, and courage. The servant becomes free. The one who became an adult in exile and misery becomes a child at home. Home is the community of Christ, always 'future', present 'in faith' because we are children of the future - always act, because it is being; always being, because it is act." (*AB* 161)

Freedom from myself, therefore, means the child's freedom in the father's house, at home. This home may be as wide as the new creation itself, and also the

child may grow to become a 'disciple' who may experience liberation into 'maturity'[3]. Nevertheless, the God-human relationship - as Bonhoeffer knew it - that nurtures this freedom, does not change, nor may *freedom from* be understood as freedom from the other.

Freedom in Christ, secondly, means to act like Christ, since the human being in Christ - as a member of the church - "may and should 'become a Christ' to the others". (*AB* 113) Here the human being's *freedom for* has implicitly been established, in the likeness of God's freedom.

b. Creation and Fall: *Human Freedom in the Likeness of God's Freedom*

The implicitly stated likeness becomes entirely explicit in *Creation and Fall*. Explaining humankind as the image of God, Bonhoeffer undertakes a detailed examination of the nature of human freedom. The following train of thought even resembles the affirmation of God's freedom in *Act and Being* in some details.

"To say that in humankind God creates the image of God on earth means that humankind is like the Creator in that it is free. To be sure, it is free only through God's creation, through the word of God; it is free for the worship of the Creator. *For in the language of the Bible freedom is not something that people have for themselves but something they have for others.* [italics mine] No one is free 'in herself' or 'in himself' - free as it were in a vacuum or free in the same way that persons may be musical, intelligent, or blind in herself or in himself. Freedom is not a quality a human being has; it is not an ability, a capacity, an attribute of being that may be deeply hidden in a person but can somehow be uncovered. Anyone who scrutinises human beings in order to find freedom finds nothing of it. Why? Because freedom is not a quality that can be uncovered; it is not a possession, something to hand, an object; nor is it a form of something to hand; instead it is a relation and nothing else. To be more precise, freedom is a relation between two persons. Being free means 'being-free-for-the-other', because I am bound to the other. Only by being in relation with the other am I free." (*CF* 62f)

We can see here that Bonhoeffer, similarly to Bibó, argues that a concept of freedom is a relational term. The content of this relation, however, is different: freedom for Bonhoeffer is understood exclusively as positive freedom. In his final argument, the reference to the language of the Bible is remarkable. In *Creation and*

[3] See Hans-Richard Reuter's 'Afterword' to the new Fortress edition of *Act and Being*, AB p. 183.

Fall Bonhoeffer analyses Genesis 1-3, where this very reference pertains to the creation narrative, but Bonhoeffer neither specifies his reference, nor does he clarify that other Bible stories may be read as great narratives of deliverance. It may be safely thought that Bonhoeffer attributed to this reference and to the language of the Bible a decisive importance, especially if we consider his newly awakened interest in the Bible.[4]

"Being-free-for-the-other" as originating from "being-bound-to-the-other" is an obvious extension of God's "freedom for" to human relations. Bonhoeffer, however, also draws a different conclusion from the nature of God's freedom:

"Because God in Christ is free for humankind, because God does not keep God's freedom to God's self, we can think of freedom only as a 'being free for...' For us in the middle who exist through Christ and who know what it means to be human through Christ's ressurrection, the fact that God is free means nothing else than that we are free for God. The freedom of the Creator demonstrates itself by allowing us to be free, free for the Creator. That, however, means nothing else than that the Creator's image is created on earth. The paradox of created freedom remains undiminished. (...) Created *freedom* then means (...) that God's self enters into God's creation." (*CF* 63)

The closing expression is familiar from *Sanctorum Communio*: God's I enters my I as an I (*SC* 56). This creative divine act establishes both the created person's and the redeemed person's freedom for God, a "freedom for" whose content is radically different from the freedom of one human being for another. Freedom for God does not mean *service in God's place;* rather, it means an acknowledgement of belonging to God. This acknowledgement, however, expresses itself in a "freedom for" another human being: "[T]he creature is free in that one creature exists in relation to another creature, in that human being is free for another human being. And God created them man and woman."[5] The distinct meaning of 'freedom for God' will play a role later with respect to the relationship of human beings to the rest of the creation; here it is sufficient to record that while 'freedom for' as *the* freedom of human beings was

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[4] I think of Bonhoeffer's 1936 letter to Rüdiger Schleicher (DBW 14:144-148), in which he explained how he started reading the Bible from sometime the summer of 1932 onwards. In this letter Bonhoeffer speaks about the possibility of sacrificium intellectus, thus the Bible for him was elevated above rational criticism. This high demand makes his apparently selective reading of the Bible - did he ever consider the Exodus narrative, for example? - all the more problematic. See the letter also in Martin Rüter's and Ilse Tödt's 'Afterword' to *Creation and Fall* in CF 153f

[5] CF p. 64. Here Bonhoeffer asks: "in what way does the freedom of the Creator differ from the freedom of that which is created?" His answer, I think, does not reveal the difference.

affirmed in a soteriological manner in *Sanctorum Communio* and *Act and Being*, in *Creation and Fall* it was also supported by the theology of creation. This contact is established by the introduction of *analogia relationis*.

Bonhoeffer interprets *imago Dei* in the way of *analogia relationis* instead of the traditional *analogia entis*. It is God, at the first place, who is relational: God

"is there for God's creature, binding God's freedom to humankind and so giving God's self to humankind - [God] must be thought of as one who is not alone, inasmuch as God is the one who in Christ attests to God's 'being for humankind'. (...) [Relation] is not a human potential or possibility or a structure of human existence, instead it is a given relation, a relation in which human beings are set, a justitia passiva. And it is in this relation in which human beings are set that freedom is given. (...) [A]nalogia or likeness must be understood very strictly in the sense that what is like derives its likeness *only* from the prototype itself... (...) The relation of creature with creature is a relation established by God, because it consists of freedom and freedom comes from God." (*CF* 65f)

By the introduction of *analogia relationis* as the interpretation of the likeness of human beings to God Bonhoeffer is able to transfer all the characteristics of God's freedom, established already in *Act and Being*, to human freedom. The relation of creature to creature is a relation established by God, after the relation in which God has been engaged with the creature. In other words, there is only *one* relation, that is characterised by freedom for the other, and the created human being is invited to be related to the other just like God is related to God's creation. This analogy, however, does not apply to the relationship of created human beings and the rest of creation. By distinguishing between the two kinds of creaturely relations, Bonhoeffer completes the concept of freedom with a new aspect.

"[W]hereas the freedom of human beings over against one another consisted in being free *for* one another, humankind's freedom over against the rest of the created world is to be free *from* it. That means that humankind is its lord; humankind has command over it, rules it. And that constitutes the other side of humankind's created likeness to God. Humankind is to rule - though it is to rule over God's creation and to rule as having been commissioned and empowered to rule by God." (*CF* 66)

Bonhoeffer characterises the relationship between human beings and the rest of creation by the dialectic of being bound and to rule: "this freedom to rule includes being bound to the creatures who are ruled." (*CF* 66) While explaining the relationship

of human being to the rest of created world, Bonhoeffer applies the image of subordination in quite an anthropomorphous manner:

"The ground and the animals over which I am lord constitute the world in which I live, without which I cease to be. It is my world, my earth, over which I rule. I am not free from it in any sense of my essential being, my spirit, having no need of nature, as though nature were something alien to the spirit. On the contrary, in my whole being, in my creatureliness, I belong wholly to this world; it bears me, nurtures me, holds me. But my freedom from it consists in the fact that this world, to which I am bound like a master to his servant, like the peasant to his bit of ground, has been made subject to me, that over the earth which is and remains my earth I am to *rule*, and the more I master it, the more it is *my* earth. What so peculiarly binds human beings to, and sets them over against, the other creatures is the authority conferred on humankind by nothing else than God's word." (*CF* 66)

As people after the Fall or 'being in the middle', Bonhoeffer continues, we have lost our authority over the created world, instead, the world rules over us. The ultimate reason for this is that we do not accept dominion over the world as God-given but regard it as our own. "There is no 'being-free-from' without a 'being-free-for' [that is] there is no dominion without serving God; in losing the one humankind necessarily loses the other." (*CF* 67) The way back to created rule over creation can lead only through serving God and the other human creature, as is reflected in the final reference to freedom : "[h]uman freedom for God and the other person and human freedom from the creature in dominion over it constitute the first human beings' likeness to God" (*CF* 67).

This is the point where the main thread of Bonhoeffer's discussion of created freedom ends and where two observations need to be made.

c. A Possible Consideration of Freedom From: *Society in a Fallen World*

We have already seen that in *Sanctorum Communio* Bonhoeffer did not consider seriously social life after the Fall according to the types of society. By avoiding a serious account of life in society, Bonhoeffer also avoided the challenge to consider the importance of 'freedom from the other' in a social world were the person is attacked by the other's illegitimate power. In *Creaton and Fall*, if possible, Bonhoeffer's thinking focusses more exclusively on the dynamic of created

community, fallen community and restored community. The only place where society after the Fall could be found is Bonhoeffer's short exegesis of Gen 4,1: it is Cain's story. Cain's story is described as a transitory phase of an entirely negative meaning:

"Cain is the first human being who is born on the ground that is cursed. It is with Cain that history begins, the history of death. (...) The new thing about Cain, the son of Adam, is that as sicut deus he himself lays violent hands on human life. The human being who may not eat from the tree of life grasps all the more greedily at the fruit of death, the destruction of life. (...) The history of death stands under the sign of Cain. The end of Cain's history, and so the end of all history, is Christ on the cross, the murdered Son of God. That is the last desperate assault on the gate of paradise. And under the whirling sword, under the cross, the human race dies. But Christ lives. The trunk of the cross becomes the wood of life, and now in the midst of the world, on the accursed ground itself, life is raised up anew. (...) The tree of life, the cross of Christ, the center of God's world that is fallen but upheld and preserved - that is what the end of the story about paradise is for us." (*CF* 145f)

What makes Cain's history endurable is that the fallen world is preserved by God. Bonhoeffer elaborates his - frequently interpreted - thesis of *orders of preservation* by explaining the piece of narrative about God's clothing of fallen humans: "God does not expose them to one another in their nakedness; instead God covers them". (*CF* 139) God's new action for fallen humankind is one that orders and restrains: it shows their wickedness and restrains their obsessive passion, limiting it by means of order. While the shift from *orders of creation* to *orders of preservation*[6] was a significant decision on Bonhoeffer's part in 1933, we are more concerned with the fact that both images speak about God's *order*; a tolerable life within Cain's history can be preserved by participating in or being obedient to God's - not eternally fixed - orders of preservation. From this position Bonhoeffer could logically have derived the possibility of 'freedom from the other' as the consequence of the insistence on God's orders of preservation within a fallen world, however, he did not take this step and did not elaborate this possibility.

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[6] CF p. 140; see also the secondary literature listed in editorial note 3 in the same page.

d. The Non-Reflected Presence of Freedom From - *the Bearer of an Office*

The second observation leads us to another document that has been written during the months when *Creation and Fall* was delivered, the broadcasted address, 'The Leader and the Individual in the Younger Generation'. The link between the two texts is created by the appearance of subordination in both writings: what occurs in a rather implicit way in *Creation and Fall* becomes explicit in the address.

We have seen that Bonhoeffer reintroduced the element of subordination with respect to the relationship of humankind to the rest of creation in *Creation and Fall,* and he explained this relationship in a rather anthropomorphous manner. Ruling over the rest of the world constituted humankind's freedom from the world; this freedom and rule, at the same time, is contingent on humankind's freedom for God, that is, serving God. People 'in the middle', as Bonhoeffer reflected on his own present time and society, however, do not accept dominion as God-given, but try to get hold of it for themselves; that is why they finally fail to rule, moreover, they are ruled by the world. This model of rule is applied to Bonhoeffer's contemporary German society.

In the address Bonhoeffer contrasts genuine leadership, or, in other words, the authority of the office with "the political, messianic concept of the Leader as we know it today" (*NRS* 199).

"The Leader has authority from below, from those whom he leads, while the office has authority from above; the authority of the Leader depends on his person, the authority of the office is suprapersonal; authority from below is the self-justification of the people, authority of the office is a recognition of the appointed limits; authority from below is borrowed authority, authority of an office is original authority. The slogan of the authority of the Leader is 'The Reich', the slogan of the authority of an office is 'the state'." (*NRS* 200)

The typical representatives of the authority of the office are the father, the teacher, the judge and the statesman. Their authority is limited by the office they bear, their individual freedom is restricted by those whom they serve. The office-holder serves his office, being aware of the fact that even the office is "a penultimate authority in the face of an ultimate, indescribable authority, in the face of the authority of God" (*NRS* 203). Either the Leader recognises his real position and leads "his

followers towards a responsibility to the orders of life, a responsibility to father, teacher, judge [and] state" (*NRS* 202), or he becomes a misleader.

Genuine authority within human society is described here like human authority over the rest of creation, and the danger of deviating from it and the possible way back is shown in a similar manner too. The holder of an office acts like God, rules by serving, and this identification is in accordance with everything we have learnt about human being as the image of God so far. The same arguments also affirm that we should think about the freedom of the office-holder essentially as a "freedom for". At this point, however, we refer back to Bonhoeffer's description of the relationship between created humankind and the rest of creation, upon which the "freedom from" of humans is established, asking the question whether it is possible that Bonhoeffer was simply reluctant to acknowledge the practical negative freedom of the father, the teacher, the statesman in their relation to their children, pupils and citizens?

Describing the negative freedom of humans in their relation to the earth Bonhoeffer was ready to apply the relationship of the master to the servant in a symbolic way - why did he not acknowledge the negative freedom of a real master in his relationship to the real servant? Why he was reluctant to see, as a practicing teacher, that the authority of the father or the teacher over their subjects consists not merely of awareness of their responsibility and observance the limits of their power, but also freedom from their subject to act, to choose, to decide? Why did not Bonhoeffer, to put it simply, reverse his thesis of 'ruling by serving' to 'serving by ruling'? As we have seen, the complex conceptual framework that Bonhoeffer created up to this point is resistant to including a possibility of human freedom from the other human being. Within this framework we cannot answer these questions. The answer, I believe, lies behind the realm of Bonhoeffer's concepts, in the psychodinamic roots[7] of

[7] For the psychodinamic roots see: Clifford Green, 'Bonhoeffer in the Context of Erickson's Luther Study, in: Roger A. Johnson ed., *Psychohistory and Religion, The Case of 'Young Man Luther'*, Philadelphia, Fortress Press, 1977, pp. 162-196. Also: Green, *Bonhoeffer, A Theology of Sociality*, chapter 4, pp. 105-184. Also: Kenneth Earl Morris, *Bonhoeffer's Ethic of Discipleship, A Study in Social Psychology, Political Thought and Religion*, The Pennsylvania State University Press, University Park and London, 1986. If both the contributions of Green and Morris are considered, we gain a rather complicated picture. I personally prefer Morris's reconstruction to Green's.

Bonhoeffer's theology. Any investigation of these roots, however, is beyond the scope of the present study.

e. The Christological Foundation of Freedom From *in Life Together*

Having made these two observations we will pursue yet another significant element of the early Bonhoeffer's understanding of freedom beyond the early phrase..

In our review of *Act and Being* we have found that Bonhoeffer described the fruit of Christ's salvific encounter with the human person as the freedom from the self, from myself, the liberation of *cor curvum in se.* This motif of 'freedom from myself' was later creatively interwoven with created human freedom, elaborated in *Creation and Fall.* In 1939 Bonhoeffer wrote in *Life Together* about those Christians, in fact, the ordinands in the seminary, who were able to observe the "discipline of the tongue":

"Where this discipline of the tongue is practiced right from the start, individuals will make an amazing discovery. They will be able to stop constantly keeping an eye on others, judging them, condemning them, and putting them in their places and thus doing violence to them. They can now allow other Christians to live freely, just as God has brought them face to face with each other. The view of such persons expands and, to their amazement, they recognise for the first time the richness of God's creative glory shining over their brothers and sisters. God did not make others as I would have made them. God did not give them to me so that I could dominate and control them, but so that I might find the Creator by means of them. Now other people, in their freedom with which they were created, become an occasion for me to rejoice, whereas before they were only a nuisance and trouble for me. God does not want me to mold others into the image that seems good to me, that is, into my own image. Instead, in their freedom from me God made other people in God's own image. I can never know in advance how God's image should appear in others. That image always takes on a completely new and unique form whose origin is found solely in God's free and sovereign act ot creation. To me that form may seem strange, even ungodly. But God creates every person in the image of God's Son, the Crucified, and this image, likewise, certainly looked strange and ungodly to me before I grasped it." (*LT* 95)

The structure of I-You-relations we have discovered in *Sanctorum Communio* can be beautifully demonstrated in this text. By taking seriously the Other through an observance of the discipline of the tongue, I encounter the 'strange', crucified Christ in the Other's otherness. This encounter sets me free from myself, from my *cor curvum in se*, and enables me to recognise the Other 'for the first time' not as a trouble but as a

gift. The Other's otherness would not force the I into isolation - that may also manifest itself in my intention to dominate the Other - but invites the I into a rejoicing relationship. All these happen according to I-You-relations pattern 'A', as we have understood the *becoming* of the Christian person. The result of this saving encounter is the restoration of God's created community in which the Other's freedom and soveregnity, based upon God's free and sovereign creative act, is emphasised. The Other's freedom from me is shown as the decisive contents of God's created and restored order, in which the *being* of a Christian takes place. In the affirmation of the Other's freedom from me also my freedom from the other is implicit; however, this tacit possiblity was not made explicit by Bonhoeffer.

The Christological character of the encounter is so dominant that it does not allow an emphasis on created differences: there are strong and weak, talented and untalented individuals within the restored community, but they are not organised into a structure of subordination. "Rather, this diversity is a reason for rejoicing in one another and serving one another". (*LT* 95) "Every Christian community must know that not only do the weak need the strong, but also that the strong cannot exist without the weak." (*LT* 96) But is the strong affirmation of the freedom of the Other from me and the refusal of rigid subordination on the basis of unequal relation of strengths enough to assert the right of the fellow Christian to freely determine his or her place and service within the community? "Even in this new situation all the members of the community are given their special place; this is no longer the place, however, in which they can most successfully promote themselves, but the place where they can best carry out their service." (*LT* 95) Thus, the 'freedom of a Christian', reached in a Christological way of reasoning in the framework of I-You-relations pattern 'A' finally encounters its limit in Bonhoeffer's concept of community, created according to I-You-relations pattern 'B'.

The 'freedom of a Christian' that shows such promising beginnings in *Life Together*, meets another limit in the argument where the role of the motif of *vicarious representative action* is constitutive. The theme, again, is the Other's freedom from me:

"First of all, it is the *freedom* of the other, mentioned earlier, that is a burden to Christians. The freedom of the other goes against Christians' high opinions of themselves, and yet they must recognise it. Christians could rid themselves of this burden by not giving other persons their freedom, thus doing violence to the personhood of others and stamping their own image on others. But when Christians allow God to create God's own image in others, they allow others their own freedom. Thereby Christians themselves bear the burden of the freedom enjoyed by these other creatures of God. All that we mean by human nature, individuality, and talent is part of the other person's freedom - as are the other's weaknesses and peculiarities that so sorely try our patience, and everything that produces the plethora of clashes, differences, and arguments between me and the other. Here, bearing the burden of the other means tolerating the reality of the other's creation by God - affirming it, and in bearing with it, breaking through to delight in it." (*LT* 101)

Becoming a Christian, thus, happens by acting vicariously for the other in bearing the *burden* of the other's freedom. The active element in this event is my vicarious representative action, the other's freedom is the burden to tolerate. What I enjoy in the first place is not the other's created freedom, but my perseverance in my sacrificial vicarious representative action. The point is that the whole act is viewed from the perspective of those who act vicariously for the other in tolerating their freedom. Does it, we ask again, mean a general affirmation of human being's created freedom from the other? Not necessarily; and the reason for saying no lies in the controlling role of vicarious representative action over the possibility of created freedom. Vicarious representative action is giving and not receiving, affirming or tolerating but not demanding. Just like it is Christologically meaningless to speak about Christ's freedom from the human being, vicarious representative action does not allow an acknowledgement of the "freedom from" of those who act vicariously, even though elemental experience would affirm it.

This limit is set explicitly by Bonhoeffer, immediately after the above discussion, where applying it to the relationship of the strong and the weak again, he states: "Neither must seek their own rights." (*LT* 101) The other's "freedom from" exists to the extent that I acknowledge it by acting vicariously for the other, but it does not exist in the other's own identification to establish the other's right to determine him- or herself. The same applies to my freedom: it exists to the extent that others tolerate it as my vicarious representatives (and if they endure me long enough, they

may delight in my created freedom), but it does not exist as my freedom from the other according to which I can live spontaneously as a matter of fact.

Bonhoeffer's ambivalent treatment of 'freedom from' is expressed in *Life Together* in a different way as well. Discussing the mutual service of Christians to each other through personal conversation Bonhoeffer considers not only the fear of those who feel responsible to speak but also the fear of those who are spoken to. He takes the question seriously: "[w]ho has permission to force oneself on one's neighbor?" (*LT* 103) He knows that "the spirit of doing violence to others could insinuate itself in the worst way" (*LT* 104). Therefore,

"others have their own right, responsibility, and even duty to defend themselves against unauthorised intrusions. Other persons have their own secrets that may not be violated without the infliction of great harm. Nor can they divulge them without destroying themselves. They are not secrets based on knowledge or emotion, but secrets of their freedom, their redemption, their being. And yet this good insight lies perilously close to Cain's murderous question: 'Am I my brother's keeper?' Our seemingly spiritually based respect for the freedom of the other can be subject to the curse of God: 'I will hold you responsible for their blood.' (Ezek 3,18)." (*LT* 104)

I think this is the only place in the whole corpus of Bonhoeffer's writings when he so unmistakably affirms someone's right to defend himself (even though this someone is always the other and never myself): a manifestation of one's freedom from. Nevertheless, even this single expression of this possibility has instantly been questioned and made suspicious from the perspective of Bonhoeffer's concept of Christian community. As we have seen, a *responsible* relationship between the I and the You within a Christian community was made an ultimate characteristic of community itself. This ultimate demand of responsibility simply cannot tolerate a situation in which the Other, being led by his or her claim for remaining free from me, however justified and reasonable, could declare his or her *freedom from* without recalling the acute danger of the disintegration of the community itself. So, a simple "leave me alone" on the Other's side necessarily conjures up the danger of getting into the irresponsible Cain's place on my side.

Although Bonhoeffer refrains from affirming the other's general right and possibility for "freedom from", he nevertheless does not want to avoid the problem of 'unauthorised intrusions' that may be committed in the name of Christian

responsibility. His solution given in *Life Together* is a Christological one, just like his treatment of I-You-relations in general is pursued in a characteristically Christological manner, and framed dominantly by I-You-relations pattern 'A'.

In the fundamental first chapter of *Life Together* on *Community* the dominant role of I-You-relations pattern 'A' is easily recognisable.

"Christian community means community through Jesus Christ and in Jesus Christ. (...) It means, *first,* that a Christian needs others for the sake of Jesus Christ. It means, *second,* that a Christian comes to others only through Jesus Christ. It means , *third,* that from eternity we have been chosen in Jesus Christ, accepted in time, and united for eternity." (*LT* 31)

This relationship in and through Jesus Christ excludes all other kinds of relationship among the members of the Christian community. "We have one another only through Christ, but through Christ we really do *have* one another." (*LT* 34) In other words, "*Christian community is not an ideal, but a divine reality*", and "*Christian community is a spiritual and not a psychic reality*" (*LT* 35). By "spiritual" Bonhoeffer means "what is created only by the Holy Spirit, who puts Jesus Christ into our hearts as lord and saviour"; while "psychic" or "emotional" (in a better translation: human) means "what comes from the natural urges, strengths, and abilities of the human soul". (*LT* 38)[8]

This thesis is illuminated in several practically graspable ways in *Life Together.* Most significantly, while "[w]ithin the spiritual community there is never, in any way whatsoever, an 'immediate' relationship of one to another, (...) in a self-centered [that is, human] community there exists a profound, elemental emotional

[8] A note on the English translation of Bonhoeffer's expression, *seelisch* as 'self-centered' or 'emotional' has to be made. Both expressions, just like their Hungarian translations, have a strong negative connotation in themselves: emotional means something partial and also unethical while self-centered is understood as straightforwardly selfish. I think these directly negative words obscure the meaning Bonhoeffer intended to give the expression *seelisch*: in Bonhoeffer's perspective it signifies every anthropologically and socially graspable dimension of human life that is not the fruit of the direct work of the Holy Spirit, manifested in the Christian community. *Seelisch* simply means belonging to the human soul. An attribution to any self-evidently unethical meaning to it obscures the ontological logic of Bonhoeffer's argumentation, namely that these contents are alien to the Christian community because they are human. Human in *Life Together* means being part of Creation distorted by the Fall, and not having been renewed by the Holy Spirit in the Christian community through Jesus Christ. If we replace 'emotional' and 'self-centered' by 'human' in the text, the radical distinction between life through Jesus Christ and 'immediate' life that corresponds with the difference between sociality according to I-You-relations pattern 'A' and pattern 'B' will be much clearer. Cf. editorial note 14. in LT pp. 38f.

desire for community, for immediate contact with other human souls." (*LT* 41) In the following description of human community we can identify created community as depicted in *Sanctorum Communio,* that has been distorted by the Fall: here love is identical with excercising power and influence, as well as "human bonds, suggestive influences, and dependences are everything" (*LT* 41). Marriage, family, and friendship represent the human 'layers' in the community in which "the element of self-centeredness as such already assumes a central importance" (*LT* 46); these 'layers' have to be carefully distinguished from the spiritual contents of a given community. In terms of the two different patterns of I-You-relationships, in the description of Christian community we can witness the overwhelming dominance of pattern 'A' and the hardly recognisable presence of pattern 'B'. This is the structure within which the Christological solution of the defence against 'unauthorised intrusion' without declaring a general right of self-defence has been made.

Spiritual love, Bonhoeffer writes,

"will not seek to agitate another by exerting all too personal, direct influence or by crudely interfering in one's life. It will not take pleasure in pious, emotional fervor and excitement. Rather, it will encounter the other with the clear word of God and be prepared to leave the other alone with this word for a long time. It will be willing to release others again so that Christ may deal with them. It will respect the other as the boundary that Christ establishes between us; and it will find full community with the other in the Christ who alone binds us together. This spiritual love will thus speak to Christ about the other Christian more than to the other Christian about Christ." (*LT* 44)

f. Bonhoeffer's Concept of Freedom - a Summary

Our quick review from *Act and Being* to *Life Together* testified that Bonhoeffer developed a concept of freedom on the basis of vicarious representative action, concieved both in theological and social terms. As God's (or Christ's) vicarious representative action identifies the being of humans as "being acted upon" as well as determines one human's action for the other, God's freedom as freedom for the human being informs human freedom as freedom for the other. Therefore positive freedom, established on ethical responsibility as its inevitable basis and necessary content, is identified as Bonhoeffer's characteristic understanding of freedom. The possibility of negative freedom, "freedom from", however, has also been detected in three instances.

We have found that it is possible to consider negative freedom with respect to people's living together after the Fall in a form of togetherness that Bonhoeffer described as society. The demand of freedom from the other as a means of defence from the excessive power of the other may be regarded as justified, and also Bonhoeffer's description of God's orders of preservation might serve as a theological basis for self-defence based on negative freedom. In fact, however, life in a society was not taken seriously by the writer of *Creation and Fall* neither were God's orders of preservation elaborated in this respect.

The second instance revealed a situation in which 'freedom from' is tacitly counted on without being explicitly treated. We have seen that Bonhoeffer described the authority of a bearer of an office within his own German society analogously with the responsible stewardship of human beings for earth before God. Regarding the relationship between created human beings and the rest of creation that Bonhoeffer described as the relationship of master and servant, Bonhoeffer spoke about human freedom from creation as a condition of their stewardship. He did not make, however, the same explicit with respect to excercising authority from above over the subjects. This discussion of power relations - even they are regarded as responsible power-relations - was conceived according to the description of the primal state of social being in *Sanctorum Communio,* in which we have identified I-You-relations pattern 'B'. The blatant disregard of the negative freedom of office holders in their relation to their subjects I regard as a significant blindspot in Bonhoeffer's view of anthropological as well as social factors of human life.

In the third instance we have followed how Bonhoeffer affirmed the possibility of freedom from the other in a Christological mode of reasoning. In *Life Together*, where we witnessed the dominant role of I-You-relations pattern 'A' in the description of Christian community, a strictly theological affirmation of negative freedom reaches its zenith. Nevertheless, this theological understanding is not converted into a corresponding social understanding: even here Bonhoeffer seems to refrain from considering a concept of negative freedom that would establish a general right for self-defence.

B. Bonhoeffer's Concept of Freedom and his Vision of a Post-war Germany: Bonhoeffer's "New Order" *in Context*

In this section we will review Bonhoeffer's thoughts on the social and political order of post-war Germany. His most direct proposals can be found in two documents: his response to William Paton's book, *The Church and the New Order*[9], written together with Visser't Hooft, and his recently published letter to his friend Paul Lehmann; both texts have been written during September, 1941. These thoughts can directly be compared to Bibó's thoughts concerning a new Germany within the order of a post-war Europe.

After this comparative reading, in which Paton's book will serve as a context to Bonhoeffer's texts, we will consider some of Bethge's remarks concerning the political character of the conspiratorial activity of Bonhoeffer that are intended to provide historical and biographical comments on it. Bonhoeffer's concrete proposals will also be related to some politically relevant texts from his *Ethics*. This examination will be rather tentative in both cases. In the first case we will look through some of the comments that Bethge added to the narration about the time of the conspiracy; in the second case we will consider whether patterns of Bonhoeffer's thinking that we discovered to be at work during the formation of the notion of vicarious representative action and his understanding of freedom can also be found at the material of the *Ethics*.

Finally, we will pursue some selected lines - in a highly tentative way - up to the latest phase of Bonhoeffer's theological writings to find out whether any change in the possible political implications of his theology may be revealed after the period of his life examined here.

[9] William Paton, *The Church and the New Order*, London, S.C.M., 1941

a. *Bonhoeffer's* "New Order" *in the Context of Paton's* The Church and the New Order

Bonhoeffer's response to Paton's book[10] can be read not only as a Continental - or characteristically German - reply to the thoughts of an Anglo-Saxon thinker from a different *context*, but it also discloses a fundamentally different set of political *principles*. At the same time, it reveals several simultaneous thoughts with Bibó's ideas, that, as we have seen, have been written partly as a reaction to Anglo-Saxon thinkers as well. A careful reading of Bonhoeffer's text, considered together with Paton's book and Bibó's ideas, may be able to distinguish between certain elements of Bonhoeffer's response that come from his Continental perspective and those elements that reflect his particular view of politics.

A connection between Bibó's and Paton's perspective can be established, as a first step of this examination, by referring to their common indebtedness to Mannheim's scholarship. We have already discussed Bibó's application of Mannheim's images, principles and perspectives at length. Paton lists the name of Mannheim among the name of those scholars who made a contribution to a better recognition of "the relevance of God's message in the church to the present world order" concerning "the preservation of freedom in the face of the increasing and inevitable mass organisation of society"[11]. Paton's reference to Mannheim's expression, 'planning for freedom'[12] signifies their common understanding of the joint assignment of Christianity and democratic politics, a conviction that penetrates Paton's train of thought[13]. This is the common ground that Bibó shares with them as well.

Bonhoeffer, however, does not share this ground. At the beginning of his reply he regards it necessary to distance himself from these convictions as a 'Continental Christian':

"Continental Christians are acutely conscious of the fact that the future is in God's hands and that no human planning, however intelligent and however well-intentioned, can make men masters of their own fate. There is, therefore, in Continental Churches

[10] 'The Church and the New Order', in: TP pp. 108-117.
[11] Paton, *The Church and the New Order*, p. 153.
[12] Paton, *The Church and the New Order*, p. 156.
[13] See especially the chapters 'Guiding Principles' and 'The Church: Human Worth and Freedom'.

today a strongly apocalyptic trend. This trend may lead to an attitude of pure other-wordliness, but it may also have the more salutary effect of making us realise that the kingdom of God has its own history which does not depend upon political events, and the life of the Church has its own God-given laws which are different from those which govern the life of the world. We are, therefore, glad that Paton emphasises so strongly that the life of the Church does not depend upon victory in the war." (*TP* 109)

This beginning, in fact, is a thorough criticism of the fundamentals of Paton's argumentation, despite the apparent agreement it seeks to demonstrate. We have already mentioned the central role of planning in Paton's message. The mere possibility of planning from a Christian point of view is based on the conviction that neither is the kingdom of God totally independent from political events nor is the Church governed by laws that are entirely different from those that govern the world. In Paton's argument the repeated - and nuanced - references to the Christian origins of democratic politics are to establish this relation. From this self-imposed distance Bonhoeffer puts a heavy emphasis on a single thought that appears in Paton's text within a balanced argument. Before Paton reached the conclusion that "the Church's life does not depend upon victory in war"[14] he discussed the necessity to think through peace aims even before the war was won, through several pages; and the whole book's objective is to show the difference between a world-order informed by Christianity and Hitler's New Order. True, the mere existence of the Church is conceivable also in catacombs, as Paton affirms too, but his main problem is not the mere survival of the Church but the possible influence that a free Church can exercise to make the world a better place. Thus, the 'strong emphasis' is added by Bonhoeffer, probably to lessen the difference he felt and also started to express.

Nevertheless, the difference has been established, and from this different vantage point Bonhoeffer embarks upon the discussion of some of the questions that Paton raised in his book: "this does not mean that Continental Christians are indifferent to the problem of the post-war order" (*TP* 109). Having implicitly rejected the - say: Anglo-Saxon liberal democratic - manner of relating the Church to the world, Bonhoeffer first tells about the 'proper' relations on whose basis a consideration of the post-war order may be possible:

[14] Paton, *The Church and the New Order*, p. 32.

"There is very especially a new recognition of the implications of the New Testament faith: that Christ is the King to whom all powers are subjected. Because the world is created 'for him' (Col 1,16), we dare not consider it as a domain which lives by itself, quite apart from God's plan. The commandments of God indicate the limits which dare not be transgressed, if Christ is to be Lord. And the church is to remind the world of these limits. (...) Now the task of the Church in relation to the 'new order' is to be seen in the light of this ministry. The Church cannot and should not elaborate detailed plans of post-war reconstruction, but it should remind the nations of the abiding commandments and realities which must be taken seriously if the new order is to be a true order, and if we are to avoid another judgement of God as this present war." (*TP* 109f)

It is quite amazing to see how Bonhoeffer is able to operate with two differently concieved Church-world relations within a short section of his reply. If he wishes to reject a cooperation between the Church and different secular powers in a democratic manner, he argues for distinct laws that govern the Church. If he asks about the way Christ's rule will prevail over the world, he points at the Church who knows the laws the world must obey to. Instead of being a partner in planning for a new order, the Church is elevated into the position of a relative moral authority, above the secular world, as a representative of Christ. The relationship of the Church and the world, both fulfilling distinct functions, is unmistakably hierarchical.

To be sure, Paton also makes distinctions between tasks and competences, in a rather similar way:

"It is not for the Church as such, whatever individual Christians may find it right to do in their capacities as citizens and statesmen, to propound new territorial boundaries or revisions of treaties. But the churches can give voice to the truth which alone will make such change possible without resort to violence, namely, that justice is grounded in the will of God. (...) Mankind will not be able to establish a workable world order until it realises that on earth, as it is in heaven, it is not itself sovereign, but is only the mandatory of God."[15]

Exactly the same thoughts, rather similar words - I think of Bonhoeffer's famous expression, mandate, in *Ethics* - yet the broader implications are radically different. Bonhoeffer speaks of the authority of Christ and the Church, Paton tells what the Church can give voice to. For Bonhoeffer, the limits dare not be transgressed

[15] Paton, *The Church and the New Order*, p. 163f

if Christ is to be Lord, for Paton, God's will has to be considered for the sake of a workable world order and avoiding violence.

The comments Bonhoeffer adds to Paton's chapter 1, 'Why peace aims?', come as genuine reflections from his context not only as a German but also as a conspirator who knows about the resistence that emerges within the army. The point that Germany needs endurable peace-terms has been made by several observers, Bibó among them, but the idea that "[a] positive statement of peace aims may have a very strong influence in strengthening the hands of this group [of patriots]" (*TP* 110) assumes Bonhoeffer's special perspective. The 1941 hopes of the resistance group are reflected more directly in the statement that "[t]he only group which can take action against the regime is the army" (*TP* 111); this strong hope may explain the fact that Bonhoeffer payed a special attention to the ambiguous prospect of military disarmament.

Paton's chapter 2, 'The chaos behind the war' has received a short but all the more telling comment from Bonhoeffer:

"There is an important point which Paton has not mentioned in his description of the chaos behind the war. The deepest reason for the moral confusion in Germany, and to some extent in Europe as a whole, is not merely the opposition against Christian ethical convictions (for this by itself might have created clear fronts rather than 'chaos'), but rather the ability of National Socialism to present its injustice as true justice. (...) there was just enough relative justice in some of Germany's claims to make it possible for Hitler to present himself as a prophet who came to re-establish justice." (*TP* 111f)

The context suggests that Bonhoeffer thought of the obvious injustice involved in some of the points of the Versailles Treaty whose remedy had been expected from Hitler by many Germans. True, Paton spoke about the Treaty in a rather favorable way, giving way to an opinion that "the Versailles Treaty was one of the more creditable efforts of treaty-making"[16], and the only objection he made was that unfortunately "the Treaty was completed without any opportunity for discussion or negotiation by the Germans"[17]. As we have seen, Bibó was much more critical about the Treaty; at this point Paton seemed to be unable to see with the eyes of the loosers. (It is a later part of his essay where he expresses a more outspoken collective self-

[16] Paton, *The Church and the New Order*, p. 35.
[17] Paton, *The Church and the New Order*, p. 36.

criticism: "Christian judgement of Germany, in the case of an Englishman, must begin with the recognition that some of the diseases of Germany are acute versions of diseases which we, like the French, have passed through"[18].) Another piece of Paton's explanation of the Nazi success, that "the masses joined fascism (and national socialism) not because they believe in its promises (...) but because they do not believe in them"[19], Bonhoeffer could quite rightly recognise as superficial.

There is no sign, however, that Bonhoeffer thought of anything else apart form the unjust Versailles Treaty while explaining the material reasons of Nazi success. Here Bibó's perspective offers an additional factor. He argued that Hitler's program seemed to fulfil three decisive factors of the system of European values: the right for self-determination, democracy and equality. While Bonhoeffer understood the seductive profile of Nazism as a promise to re-establish past justice, Bibó also perceived the illusion of social progress that Nazism awakened in many people, and, as we have seen, he hoped for a survival of people's interest in democratic values that originally was related to the rise of Nazism.

Interestingly, Paton made a similar pont towards the end of his study. He asks: "[a]re there forces of constructive and re-creative power [in Germany] to which we can turn with any confidence?

"No one can say. But there are materials with which men of goodwill will attempt to build. I think of the youth movements. Probably it was the generous enthusiasm with which masses of German youth entered the Nazi movement that mainly commended that movement in its early stages to many English minds. We have seen, as Lord Eustace Percy said in his matriculation address at Newcastle, 'generous impulses transmuted into wickedness; a Gestapo staffed by young men who in the beginning had been nobly intent on national regeneration, on a new equality and a new fellowship.' They were mistaken and they were corrupted; but there is still youth, an ever-flowing fountain of youth, in all the warring lands. They will get together again, they may understand one another better than their elders, they will use directness of speech. There may be hope there."[20]

On the basis of Bonhoeffer's 1933 evaluation of the *political nature* of the youth movements' response to the Nazi program in 'The Leader and the Individual in

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[18] Paton, *The Church and the New Order*, p. 168.
[19] Paton, *The Church and the New Order*, p. 53.
[20] Paton, *The Church and the New Order*, pp. 172f.

the Younger Generation' we should not be surprised that Bonhoeffer did not count the semi-democratic elements among the seductive features of Hitlerism.

In our perspective the most important part of Bonhoeffer's response is the section in which he replied to chapter 3 of Paton's book, 'Guiding principles'. In these paragraphs Bonhoeffer's perceptive inner understanding of the German situation and his political principles are tightly interwoven.

Bonhoeffer's worries concerning the possible consequences of a sraightforward introduction of "full-fledged democracy and parliamentarism" (*TP* 112) right after the end of the war in Germany and in other countries that have not "been prepared by a long spiritual tradition" (*TP* 112) for it, seem to be very similar to Bibó's worries about the consequences of a forced social progress in Central and Eastern European countries that not only lack the necessary 'spiritual' preconditions but are also exhausted by war, and a lost one in many cases. The political content of their precautions, however, is far from being identical. Bonhoeffer speaks about "an immediate return" to democracy, that refers to the liberal democratic interlude of the Weimar Republic. Bibó considered a socialist development of parliamentary democracy that had never been tried out in this area, but could be an organic sequel to a highly spiritualised authoritarian rule. Thus, in Bibó's view, a well-established monarchy in Germany could have represented a - shorter or longer - transitory phase towards a socialist parliamentary democracy.

When Bonhoeffer promotes an authoritarian rule in Germany, however, he does not think of a transitory phase towards something different. He wishes to counter "state absolutism", by which he means a totalitarian state of any kind, and for this reason he promotes a state limited by law.

We have seen that earlier in this reply Bonhoeffer identified the task of the church with respect to the state as one that reminds the state of God's commandments as limits. A detailed description of Bonhoeffer's understanding of the divine origin of government and the church's task in safegarding this character can be found in his study on 'State and Church', that may be related to the reply to Paton's book[21].

[21] E pp. 332-353. Eberhard Bethge suggests that the essay was written together with the study 'On the Possibility of the Word of the Church to the World' for the Freiburg plans, that is, during the autumn of 1942, a year after the reply to Paton's book was written (Eberhard Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer, A*

Keeping this background in mind, let us read Bonhoeffer's criticism of Paton's proposal:

"The Anglo-Saxon world summarises the struggle against the omnipotence of the state in the word 'freedom'. And Paton gives us a charter of human 'rights and liberties' which are to provide the norm of action by the state. But these expressions must, as Paton indicates, 'be translated into terms which relate them more closely to the life of other peoples'. For freedom is too negative a word to be used in a situation where *all* order has been destroyed. And liberties are not enough when men seek first of all for some minimum security. These words remind too much of the old liberalism which because of its failures is itself largely responsible for the development towards state absolutism.
This is partly a quarrel of words, about the realities which lie behind such expressions as 'civilian religious liberties', 'freedom of speech' or 'equality of all before the law', which must certainly be safeguarded in the new order. But it is also much more than a matter of words. For the whole orientation of the post-war states will depend on this ideological question. *Now we believe that the conception of order limited by law and responsibility, an order which is not an aim in itself, but which recognises commandments which transcend the state, has more spiritual substance and solidity than the emphasis on the rights of individual men.*" (italics mine) (*TP* 113)

Paton's 'Guiding Principles' are, in fact, a solemn yet nuanced summary of democratic principles with respect to the crisis of the time. At the beginning of his train of thoughts he states:

"[T]here is a place of supreme importance for the enuncuation of principle. (..) In a sense there is only one ultimate choice to be made in the realm of principle. That choice is between the belief that all human things are judged by God and find their principle of reference in him, and the belief that there is no such transcendent standard. From the one belief flows the acknowledgement of an 'ought' in practical affairs and public policy; there is still the technical problem of the means to be adopted towards the desired ends, and the discernment of the relevance of methods to

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Biography, Fortress Press, Minneapolis, 2000, p. 776.). According to Clifford Green's reconstruction, however, 'State and Church' was written prior to the beginning of the work on *Ethics*, that is, before the spring of 1940 (Green: 'Textual Research for the New Edition of Bonhoeffer's Ethics', in: Guy Carter and others eds., *Bonhoeffer's Ethics: Old Europe and New Frontiers*, Kok Pharos Publishing House, Kampen, 1991 p. 36.). A third suggestion is given by John de Gruchy who thinks that the essay was written in the second half of 1941, that is, it is contemporaneous to the reply to Paton's book (de Gruchy, 'Dietrich Bonhoeffer and the Transition to Democracy', *Modern Theology* 12:3 July 1996. p. 349.). The question of the timing of this outright conservative treatment of the relationship of state and church (cf. de Gruchy *op. cit. p.* 349.) may be significant for a judgement about the persistence of socially conservative elements in Bonhoeffer's thought: the earlier one supposes the paper was written the more ground one gains to argue that the late Bonhoeffer grew out social conservativism. Thus, Green is quite right in asserting that "questions of *ordering* the manuscripts and questions of *interpreting* the text cannot ultimately be divorced" (Green, *Bonhoeffer: A Social Theology*, p. 313.). Although Bonhoeffer's social conservativism is one of the main problem of the present study, I cannot make a judgement with respect to this particular case, since the investigation of the right order has not been finished yet (cf. Green , *op. cit.* p. 303.).

concrete conditions - but there is an 'ought'. From the other belief flow both the cynical and non-moral attitude in public affairs..."[22]

Thus, Bonhoeffer misread Paton when he claimed that for the latter either freedom or human rights and liberties were to provide the norm of action by the state. The norm is unmistakably the judgement of God; freedom and all the related contents belong to the contingent sphere, informed by the ultimate 'ought'. On the basis of this misreading Bonhoeffer could create a contradiction between a state based on a secularly conceived set of individual human rights and another state rooted in divine commandments, transcendent to it. This contradiction, of course, does not refer to Paton, who, obviously, regards individual freedom as approved by God. He quotes Emil Brunner whose words met with an unanimous approval in an 1940 ecumenical Geneva meeting:

"The gospel ... contains directions for life and for the mutual relations that should exist between states and nations, which every Christian ought to know and obey. (...) Among these principles must be included the equal dignity of all men, respect for human life, acknowledgement of the solidarity for good and evil of all nations and races of the earth, respect for the plighted world, and the recognition that power of any kind, political or economic, must be co-extensive with responsibility."[23]

In Brunner's words the connection between God's will, revealed in the gospel, and individual freedom as well as the relation between individual freedom and responsible life have been established. In the words of another Christian gathering the intrinsic relationship of different aspects of freedom has been expressed. The gathering promotes a world order in which

"the unit of value is not some body corporate or some personification of nation, race or class, but the individual human being. Even the least of these should be assured of certain fundamental rights, including freedom of thought, of conscience, of worship and of expression, and an opportunity for livelihood, *without which intellectual and spiritual freedoms have little practical content.*"[24] [italics mine]

Bonhoeffer's overlooking of the explicitly expressed divine roots of individual freedom can be regarded as his chief mistake in reading and answering Paton's proposal. Bonhoeffer's smaller mistakes derive from this major one.

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[22] Paton, *The Church and the New Order*,p. 57f.
[23] Paton, *The Church and the New Order, p.* 63.
[24] Paton, *The Church and the New Order,* pp. 64f.

First, he tries to simplify the reason for the differences between Paton's and his own views by operating with the traditionally regarded controversy between the Anglo-Saxon world and the Continent. True, Paton quotes mainly British and American voices, however, his ground of reference is much more inclusive: beside Brunner, as we have seen, it includes even Pope Pius XII[25].

Second, and more importantly, I have not found in the referred chapter of Paton's text a sentence that indicates that freedom and the related expressions must 'be translated into terms which relate them more closely to the life of other peoples'. Instead, Paton quotes the Pope saying: "[i]f a better European settlement is to be reached there is one point in particular which should receive special attention: it is the real needs and the just demands of nations and populations, and of racial minorities."[26] Similarly, in the next chapter, *The ideal and the next steps* Paton quotes Chamberlain's 1939 words: "no effective remedy can be found for the world's ills that does not take account of the just desires and needs of all countries", and especially, "we desire nothing from the German people which should offend their self-respect"[27]. In a later chapter on *Britain, America and the Future* these thoughts became more direct: "[i]t is a matter of the gravest importance for the world that what the world demands from Germany should not be merely what would mean freedom in England or America or Sweden, but *what means freedom in Germany*"[28].

If I did not overlook the highlighted sentence in Paton's text and it is really not Paton's own wording, an important observation can be made. I think, these and similar sentences that express Paton's concern about other people's needs, self-respect and peculiar political traditions had been turned in and by Bonhoeffer's mind into an intention that it is the very expressions of freedom that needed to be applied according to the need of others. This misrepresentation may be understood as logical on Bonhoeffer's side who was well aware of the fact that, *in theory,* freedom might have different meanings, but, as he believed, *in reality* freedom should be interpreted characteristically as *freedom for* and not *freedom from*. Consequently, if someone did

[25] Paton, *The Church and the New Order*, p. 59.
[26] Paton, *The Church and the New Order*, p. 60.
[27] Paton, *The Church and the New Order*, p. 72.
[28] Paton, *The Church and the New Order*, pp. 107f.

not respect *this reality* - as, he correctly saw, Paton held a different interpretation - it was better to translate freedom into a different term to avoid confusion. Thus, it might be Bonhoeffer's concern that he might have projected into Paton's text to create a basis for a desired common understanding. In fact, however, this concern can not only be not found on Paton's side, but he even directly expressed its opposite. Discussing *the ideal and the next steps,* he asks:

"How then are we to proceed to the realisation of those higher levels of existence for which we are told we are fighting? How, for instance, move from where we are to President Roosevelt's famous 'four freedoms' - freedom of worship, freedom of speech, freedom from want, freedom from fear? I believe, that there are three intermediate and necessary steps. The first is that it should be made possible to get a settlement of which such words as 'freedom' or 'justice' could be used without irony."[29]

Thus, far from indicating a translation of freedom according to the limits of the perspective of others, he was keen on working for a situation in which the full meaning of freedom can be expressed. Having seen Paton's explicit intention, its misrepresentation in Bonhoeffer's text is all the more telling. However, this pregnant misreading speaks not only about Bonhoeffer's personal limitations but also the political culture he was a part of, the uniquely German road to modernity, *Sonderweg*[30].

This possible misrepresentation of Paton's intention placed Bonhoeffer into an advantageous position of communication. Once Bonhoeffer identified Paton's concern with that of his own, he was free to express his peculiar social criticism. We learn about the low value of freedom in critical situations, we hear the charge that it was liberalism that was responsible for the rise of totalitarian state, and we meet the theory that it is order that safeguards freedom and not the other way round. This view is elevated into the position of the chief ideological question and ends in a proclamation about the state as a guardian of order. We may wonder whether Bonhoeffer understood Paton's fine distinction:

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[29] Paton, *The Church and the New Order,* p. 75.

[30] See two relatively recent studies about the German *Sonderweg,* Reinhard Kühnl, 'The German *Sonderweg* Reconsidered: Continuities and Discontinuities in Modern German History' and Lutz Niethammer, 'The German *Sonderweg* After Unification', in: Reinhard Alter and Peter Monteath eds., *Rewriting the German Past, History and Identity in the New Germany,* Humanities Press, New Jersey, 1997.

"There is here an absolute difference of value between two types of society. Either we prefer, on its merits, a society in which, granted the necessities of maintaining the security of the community, everything is done to increase the *range* of responsibility, or we prefer a society in which the achievements of order and efficiency and obedience are set in the forefront of the values admired. In the final analysis one's choice is dictated by one's ultimate philosophy of life, and there can be no doubt on which side should be cast the vote of one who believes that reality is unveiled in Jesus Christ."[31]

In order to reveal the simple and unambiguous character of this choice, naturally, the meaning of at least two words, responsibility and reality should be clarified; as well as the question, who Jesus Christ is, should be answered. With respect to Bonhoeffer's theology, none of them are easy questions. At any rate, Bonhoeffer voted for a wordly order that is limited by God's law and human responsibility, and not an order that is rooted in God's love to increase the range of responsibility. In a structure of power like this, the "full freedom of the church" that Bonhoeffer wishes to be provided may only mean the freedom for being a moral authority in interpreting the meaning of God's law to a government that - as proposed in 'State and Church' - is not only conscious of its divine origin but in which the latter is also clearly apparent (*E* 352).

When Bonhoeffer's text arrives at the comments on Paton's chapter 4, 'The ideal and the next step', it is already burdened by the above - possible- misreadings and misrepresentations. Therefore, we have good reasons to read his introductory sentences that express agreement with Paton with a faint suspicion:

"We agree whole-heartedly with the conception of international order which is given in Paton's chapter on 'The Ideal and the Next Steps'. We are especially glad that he makes it clear that this order cannot be a mere restoration of the pre-war political and economic system. For it has become very clear on the Continent (and is understood by many who did not understand this a few years ago) that there must come drastic changes in these two domains. In the political domain there must be effective limitation of national soveregnity. In the economic domain there must be limitation of economic individualism, in other words, planning for economic security of the masses." (*TP* 114)

Our first question may be what Bonhoeffer might mean by the pre-war political and economic system that had to be drastically changed. I think he meant the

[31] Paton, *The Church and the New Order*, p. 69.

inter-war period that he regarded as an especially low point of German past also in comparison to the period before 1918. The two phenomena he refers to, a demand for national soveregnity and economic individualism, became significant factors of German political and economic life after 1918; Bonhoeffer wanted to see a drastic turning back from these features. An indirect evidence for this view may be that, wishing to prevent a return of National Socialism, he also wanted to "safeguard the world against a repetition of the psychological process which has taken place in Germany between 1918 and 1933" (*TP* 116). It seems again that Bonhoeffer located the roots of the present misery within the interwar period. This finding may give a rather concrete meaning to his sentence that is intended to express the most pressing need of his and his co-conspirators' predicament: "There remains the question as to how Germany may find its way back to a system of government which is acceptable to the Germans and also be an orderly member of the family of nations." (*TP* 115) I am convinced that this 'way back' indicates a direction beyond 1918 and a system of government that resembles the Germany prior the First World War.

From this perspective it is clear that Paton and Bonhoeffer do not talk about the same thing again. Bonhoeffer quotes Paton: "the ultimate settlement is bound to be influenced profoundly by the nature of the temporary measures which are taken in the interim period, and upon the proper shaping of those measures the future may depend" (*TP* 114)[32]. The "temporary measures" that Paton suggests are regarded insufficient by Bonhoeffer, so the latter offers his own solution instead.

What Bonhoeffer wants to see is a 'positive policy' on Britain's side that counterbalances the restrictive measures, not only by assuring that the mistakes of the Versailles Treaty will not be repeated, but by helping the opposition get into a position in which the latter is able to safeguard German integrity, either by being provided acceptable peace terms to negotiate on, or by making a genuine peace offer on its own. This prospective government of a distinctly conservative character would demand a strong support from the Allies - through being offered such terms - that would make it acceptable for the German people; otherwise people will regard their predicament as a "complete collapse of German integrity", and will not support this prospective

[32] Cf Paton, *The Church and the New Order*, p. 75.

government and either they will prefer Hitler to them or they will chose an even worse future[33]. In short, Bonhoeffer asked the Allied Powers to make a simple choice: either they support a conservative opposition that would restore the old spirit in Germany or they expose Germany and also themselves an even worse evil. This is the simple content of Bonhoeffer's solemn words:

"We believe that it is possible to find men in Germany who have shown by their attitude during these last years that they are not infected with National-Socialist ideas, and who can be counted upon as loyal collaborators in a European community of nations. And we believe that they should be given a chance for the sake, not only of Germany, but of Europe as a whole." (*TP* 116)

In the closing section of his reply, 'The Russian problem', Bonhoeffer even proposes the Eastern-European export of his peculiar solution. Referring to the Bolshevik menace, he continues: "[t]his is then another very strong confirmation of the necessity for authoritarian, though non-Fascict, regimes in the post-war era, and also of the necessity of strengthening the hands of those non-Nazi elements in Germany which would be able to form a new government in that country." (*TP* 116f) Does not one face a political *Drang nach Osten* in this proposal?

The offer Bonhoeffer made in the name of the opposition circle did not receive a substantial answer not only from government representatives but - apart from a polite reply - from William Paton either. The thoughts Bonhoeffer expressed were, in fact, incompatible to those of Paton. First, Paton could not imagine any negotiations without a precedent victory[34]; temporary measures in his vocabulary did not mean actions to be taken before the end of the war but after the Allied victory, during the interim period before a permanent settlement would take shape. Second, Paton had a rather different image about the contents of the temporary measures. To some extent his words are parallel to those of Bonhoeffer: "[i]f 'freedom' means only a return to the economic organisation of Europe between the wars, even Hitler's new order may seem to have its points"; but later he makes it obvious that he thinks about more than simply going back beyond 1918: "[w]e shall be compelled (but surely not against our will) to

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[33] Bethge tells us that some in the opposition might push Bonhoeffer to represent a 'strong' Germany that appeared in his public view (Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer,* p. 743.); at the same time he privately expressed his famous words: 'I pray for the defeat of my country...' (Bethge, *op. cit.* p. 744.).

[34] Paton, *The Church and the New Order,* p. 77f.

move towards a genuine new order worthy of civilised men, and we should recognise in that compulsion and in the inevitable destruction of so much that was old and familiar, a challenge to find new and better ways of human living"[35].

A third point may reveal yet another similarity in Paton's and Bibó's thinking that may highlight a peculiar element in Bonhoeffer's political thought. We have seen the great emphasis Bibó put on the importance of continuity in the development of European societies and especially with respect to the post-war reconstruction of healthy German social life. Paton expressed a similar concern:

"I am not urging revolutionary change for its own sake (...) The tension between the conservative and the reformer is a fruitful thing; the one recognises the necessity of change, welcomes it, labours to make things more nearly into the image of an ideal which he sees, while the other understands that growth is organic and gradual, that we must work with what we have and within its limiting conditions and that we can do harm by trying to do too much good."[36]

Against the image of organic growth it may be telling to point out Bonhoeffer's claim of "drastic changes" in the inter-war political and economic system. We have seen that the revolutionary character was related to a distinct set of conservative values in his proposal of the new world order. The coexistence of conservativism and revolutionary attitudes is characteristic of Bonhoeffer's way of thinking in general, as James W. Woelfel revealed a long time ago[37]. With respect to political thought, and especially in a Central and Eastern European context, this characteristic may strengthen the possibility of a *reactionary revolution*, that Bibó called one of the most menacing absurdities of Central and Eastern European political life: a revolution that stands up for traditional values by applying revolutionary feelings that rejoices at the destruction of traditional methods and conventions. I think the overall character of Bonhoeffer's political thoughts is dangerously close to this feature.

Within the context of the discussion of Bonhoeffer's 'New Order' we will now turn to Bonhoeffer's letter to Paul Lehmann, written in the same month, September 1941 from Geneva. We have already seen that Clifford Green built up a statement on

[35] Paton, *The Church and the New Order*, p. 85.
[36] Paton, *The Church and the New Order*, p. 86f.
[37] James W. Woelfel, *Bonhoeffer's Theology: Classical and Revolutionary*, Nashville, Abingdon Press, 1970; especially the chapter on 'Conservative, Radical, or Liberal?' p. 290ff.

this letter, saying that Bonhoeffer would personally approve Anglo-Saxon liberal democracy. I think this assertion cannot be justified even on the basis of the letter itself; when we see it also in the context of the reply to Paton, the groundless character of the assertion will be all the more obvious.

The prospect of US domination over Europe, Bonhoeffer writes, is troublesome, even if it would be one of the best solutions of the crisis.

"But what is to become of Europe? What, for instance, of Germany? Nothing would be worse than to impose upon her any anglo-saxon form of government - as much as I should like it. It simply would not work. The four liberties of your President seem to indicate something in this direction. As far as I know Germany, it will just be impossible, for instance, to restore complete freedom of speech, of press, of association. That short of thing would throw Germany right into the same abyss. I think we must try to find a Germany in which justice, lawfulness, freedom of the churches is being restored. I hope there will [be] something like an authoritarian 'Rechtsstaat' as the Germans call it. I[t] will need a long process of education before the people as a whole will be in the position to enjoy all the liberties it used to have."[38]

All the details of the political standpoint that Bonhoeffer expresses in this letter are identical to those we have found in the reply to Paton's book - if one thought that the co-authorship of Visser't Hooft included elements into the reply that were alien to Bonhoeffer, the letter could be read as a counter-argument. The letter itself reveals a contradiction. Bonhoeffer expresses his problems with a possible Anglo-Saxon form of government in post-war Germany; he expresses his personal sympathy for this government; finally he expresses his wish that the German people will enjoy all the liberties *it used to have*. It is obvious that *these liberties* are not identical to President Roosevelt's four liberties that Germans had never enjoyed before, thus Bonhoeffer does not indicate that after a long process he would welcome the 'four essential human freedoms' in Germany. Likewise, his reference to the "long process of education" indicates that he does not think of a democratic process from below, rather, a process of *Bildung* through which his family and his wider upper middle class, the *Bildungsbürgertum*[39] received its world-view together with a peculiar understanding

[38] Dietrich Bonhoeffer's 20 September 1941 letter to Paul Lehmann, in: Green, *Bonhoeffer, A Theology of Sociality*, p. 345f.

[39] For a short and perceptive analysis of *Bildungsbürgertum* see Frits de Lange, 'A Particular Europe, a Universal Faith - The Christian Humanism of Bonhoeffer's Ethics in its Context,' in: Carter, van Eyden, van Hoogsraten and Wiersma eds, *Bonhoeffer's Ethics - Old Europe and New Frontiers*, pp. 81ff.

of freedom that Bonhoeffer would readily pass on in the same way he himself received. Thus, there is a real contradiction between the personal view Bonhoeffer expressed and his view of the favorable shape of post-war German government and political life.

This contradiction, however, can be resolved in the context of the reply to Paton. We have seen that Bonhoeffer expressed his agreement with Paton more then once, but his agreement was not supported by the material contents of his declared views. I think we face the same problem here. In his 2 August 1941 letter Lehmann wrote his friend about his committed, yet nuanced democratic views with enthusiasm[40]; Bonhoeffer might have wanted to express a friendly agreement with him, but, as in the case of his encounter with Paton's thoughts, the friendly gesture simply did not correspond with the objective contents of his thoughts.

b. Bonhoeffer's "New Order" *in the Context of Bethge's Biography*

Commenting on Bonhoeffer's reply to Paton's study, the 'highly political book review', Bethge expressed its significance both with respect to Bonhoeffer's own past and the present state of his church. "Ten years earlier he would barely have been able to endure the secular Anglo-Saxon tone of the resolutions. Now, in contrast to most of his friends at home, he was preoccupied with that very secular future which might soon have to be shaped."[41]

This remark echoes the keynote of Bethge's understanding of Bonhoeffer's activity as a conspirator: it can be seen as a gradual moving away from his church and most of his friends, as well as a gradual ability to join ways of thinking that he would have considered too secular before. Against this background some particular comments reflect Bethge's view of the direction in which, he thought, Bonhoeffer was moving.

In his reply to Paton, Bethge tells us, "Bonhoeffer (...) attempted to discourage expectations that the revolt would make it possible for the 'other Germany' to

[40] The letter is printed in Green, *Bonhoeffer: A Theology of Sociality, p.* 337ff.
[41] Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer,* p. 739.

immediately establish a government that would be democratic in the western sense. The government that would emerge from a military coup 'might be formed suddenly'."[42] These sentences contain words from the original German draft of the reply, especially those that refer to the urgency of the proposed action. Thus, using the adverb 'immediately' is harmonious with the original text, but using it in the above way may suggest that Bonhoeffer thought of a non-democratic government that would be, after a time, capable of developing into a democratic one.

Several of Bethge's comments suggest that the political character of Bonhoeffer's thought was transient, or that its conservative aspect was only apparent. These comments are usually made in connection with the discussion of Bonhoeffer's political relations. While relating the events of the autumn of 1941 Bethge introduces the 'Kreisau circle', a recently emerged 'intelligent group', that pursued a line that was different to that of the already active resistance movement. "They charged that Goerdeler's plan were full of reactionary elements, and they naturally rejected the monarchist ideas that had recently emerged."[43] Bethge tells that neither Dohnanyi nor Bonhoeffer contacted the Kreisau group, although, he suggests, the latter "had enough grounds, intellectually and personally, to have done so. One reason was that [Bonhoeffer] was already too deeply involved elsewhere in practical preparations for the revolt. Another was that by the time the Kreisau group became more active Bonhoeffer already faced the possibility of being arrested. In addition, the composition of the group made him cautious."[44] The Kreisau group comes into the picture again in connection with the report on the Sigtuna meeting, June 1942. Analysing some particular details of Bishop George Bell's account of the meeting and trying to determine their origin, Bethge refers to an observation that "the emphasis on the 'truly socialist lines' of the conspiracy could only have come from Schönfeld, with his Kreisau connections; since, at the time, Bonhoeffer thought more about the renewal of conservative possibilities."[45] However, "[t]he question of the British attitude toward a possible restoration of the monarchy, with Prince Louis Ferdinand, was probably

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[42] Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer*, p. 740.
[43] Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer*,. p. 750.
[44] Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer*, pp. 750f.
[45] Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer*, p. 761.

raised by Bonhoeffer, who knew about such considerations through his brother Klaus."[46]

The plan of a possible monarchy is referred to later in the Biography in a more concrete from. Bethge narrates that in 1942 several resitance groups became active and made concrete proposals, but "Bonhoeffer himself did not outline or advocate any special form a future government should take"[47]. Nevertheless, he told Bell in Sigtuna "that the resistance was considering a Hohenzollern because of the royal family's popularity, stability, and potential authority to issue the order."[48] Bethge's comment says: "The Bonhoeffer brothers assented to these considerations mainly on pragmatic grounds, not royalist motives. Bonhoeffer did not seek the restoration of the monarchy through a revolt; but if a monarchical beginning could offer advantages when the revolt was launched, it should be considered a possibility."[49]

The monarchical plans are related to another circle of the resistance that Bonhoeffer did take part in, the 'Freiburg group'[50]. The group worked on a memorandum that was to be issued right after the war at an ecumenical conference. Surviving parts of the text finally were edited by Gerhard Ritter in July 1945 under the heading: 'Political Ordering of the Community: An Attempted Self-Reflection of the Christian Conscience in the Political Troubles of Our Time. "Ritter confirmed that the work was a German reply or preparation for a reply to Paton's and Bell's suggestions."[51]

As a conspirator remembers, "... a consultation about the draft of the memorandum that had already been worked on took place at the beginning of 1943 in the Bonhoeffer home; and I met with Bonhoeffer at Dibelius's home once, and another time with him and Walter Bauer in a restaurant."[52]

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[46] Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer*, p. 762.
[47] Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer*, p. 772.
[48] *ibid.*
[49] *ibid.*
[50] For references to the members of the Freiburg group as well as the destiniy of some of them see Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer*, pp. 775, 902, 907.
[51] Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer*, p. 776.
[52] Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer*, pp. 775f.

Bethge suggests that two essays, 'State and Church' and 'On the Possibility of the Word of the Church to the World' Bonhoeffer concieved for the 'Freiburg plans'.[53] Therefore, according to the logic of Bethge's reconstruction, the politically relevant contents of these writings are higly informative about Bonhoeffer's personal political standpoint that he took within the personally and politically complex branch of the resistance he seemed to belong to. We do not have the space to undertake a thorough analysis of these writings here, but we can select some passages that characterise Bonhoeffer's political views.

About 'The Church and the Form of the State' we read:

"In both Protestant and Catholic political theory the question of the form of the state is always treated as a secondary problem. Certainly, so long as government fulfils its assigned mission, the form in which it does so is of no great importance for the Church. Still, there is justification for asking which form of the state offers the best guarantee for the fulfilment of the mission of government and should, therefore, be promoted by the Church. (...) [Even] relative differences may be of great practical consquences.
a That form of the state will be relatively the best in which it becomes most evident that government is from above, from God, and in which the divine origin of government is most clearly apparent. A properly understood divine right of government, in its splendour and in its responsibility, is an essential constituent of the relatively best form of the state. (...)
b That form of the state will be relatively the best which sees that its power is not endangered but is sustained and secured (i) by the strict maintenance of an outward justice, (ii) by the right of the family and of labor, a right which has its foundation in God, and (iii) by the proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ.
c That form of state will be relatively the best which does not express its attachment to its subjects by restricting the divine authority which has been conferred upon it, but which attaches itself to its subjects in mutual confidence by just action and truthful speech. It will be found here that what is best for government is also best for the relationship between government and church." (*E* 352f)

Unmistakably, the 'relatively best' form of a state for Bonhoeffer is a monarchy of a very high ethical standard where government is appointed by the monarch. This text, I think, questions two of Bethge's assertions. Bonhoeffer did, in fact, advocate a rather identifiable form of a future government, and it is not likely that he considered monarchy mainly on pragmatic grounds; on the contrary, his words sound much more determined. Not to mention the fact that 'considering a monarchical beginning' with

[53] Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer*, p. 776.

respect to a necessarily short-term revolt is a contradiction in itself: monarchies are long-term institutions.

The second writing, 'On the Possibility of the Word of the Church to the World' may reveal something about what Bonhoeffer might have meant by the well-sounding "outward justice" as a feature of the relatively best form of state. Entering into a debate with an Anglo-Saxon understanding of the church's responsibility in and for the world - as he himself comprehended it, of course - Bonhoeffer makes some unmistakable judgements:

"Jesus concerns himself hardly at all with the solution of worldly problems. (...) His word is essentially determined not from below but from above. It is not a solution but a redemption. (...) Instead of the solution of problems, Jesus brings the redemption of men, and yet for that very reason He does really bring the solution of all human problems as well ('All these things shall be added', Mt 6,33), but from quite a different plane." (*E* 355)

This 'quite different plane' however has a regrettably identifiable political characteristic. Bonhoeffer goes on:

"Who can actually tell us that all worldly problems are to be and can be solved? Perhaps the unsolved state of these problems is of more importance to God than their solution, for it may serve to call attention to the fall of man and to the divine redemption. Perhaps the problems of men are so complicated and so wrongly formulated that they really are simply insoluble. (The problem of the poor and the rich can certainly never be solved otherwise than by remaining unsolved.)" (*E* 355f)

At this point, let us deviate from routine scholarly discourse in the interests of illuminating the character of this argument through deliberate caricature.This statement recalls the high priest of a theocratically ruled organic society, where the leader can put himself (rather than herself) into the place of God with full authority and self-confidence to represent as well as mediate God's point of view to the people. This high priest, secured in his divinely ordained authority that cannot be reached by any criticism from below, can refer to such problems like poverty with absolutely meaningless formally dialectic statements, undisturbed. From this elevated position the 'high priest' gives the Anglo-Saxon understanding of the task of the church its due as well:

"One of the characteristic features of church life in the Anglo-Saxon countries, and one from which Lutheranism has almost entirely freed itself, is the organised struggle

of the church against some particular worldly evil, the 'campaign' or, taking up again the crusading idea of the Middle Ages, the 'crusade'. Examples of this are slavery, prohibition and the League of Nations. But precisely these examples betray at the same time the critical weakness of these 'crusades'. The abolition of slavery coincided with the coming into being of the British industrial proletariat. (It might be said that the world will have its due.) Prohibition, which was forced through mainly by the Methodists led to worse experiences than those of the preceding period, so that the Methodists themselves supported its abolition. (This experience was of decisive importance for the American churches.) The League of Nations was intended to overcome national antagonisms, but its result was to intensify them to the highest pitch. Such experiences as these must give food for earnest thought in the face of the question of the extent to which the Church is called upon to solve worldly problems." (*E* 356)

This idea appears in a similar form in *Sanctorum Communio,* where Bonhoeffer comments on the 'historical nature' of the church in the following way:

"Many presumptuous attempts have been undertaken to purify the church, starting with the formation of the perfectionist sects in the ancient church, continuing with the Anabaptists, Pietism, the Enlightement, and Kant's secularised concept of the Kingdom of God; we can further see it in the beginnings of Count Saint Simon's socialist expectation of the Kingdom of God, in Tolstoy, and finally in the contemporary religious-socialist Youth Movement. In all of these movements we find the attempt to have the Realm of God finally present not only by faith but by sight, no longer veiled within the strange forms of a Christian church, but clearly manifested in the morality and holiness of human beings, and in a perfect solution to all historical and social problems. The fact that God's revelation actually takes place in history, i.e., in a hidden way, that this world remains a world of sin and death, which also means a world of history, and that this history is itself sanctified by the fact that God created, entered, and uses it for God's own purpose - for all this there is a lack of understanding, a lack of love, which alone is capable of recognising these things. (...) The church ought to let the weeds grow in its field, for where should it find the criterion for recognising them? (...) [T]he church will never condemn and judge but remain conscious of the limits of its historical nature." (*SC* 222f)

The limits of the 'historical nature' of the church in the 1927 text and the limits of the church's social responsibility in the late essay are not only identical, but are also identical to the limits of the social-historical awareness of Bonhoeffer's socially not too imaginative but intellectually eloquent upper-middle class. It is is probably understandable that the 21 year-old student, completing his first highly demanding intellectual work, was unable to examine his own *a priori* social determinations using some basic tools of the hermeneutic of suspicion to make his own social theory transparent. The fact, however, that this early blindspot appears probably fifteen years

later in exactly the same shape teaches us a rather sobering lesson. It says that after so many rich expreriences, years of study and work in Spain, in the US and Great Britain, having been enriched by so many and so diverse personal relationships, friendships and ecumenical contacts, the social *Weltanschauung* of this highly intelligent young German bourgeois had not changed. It says that the roots of this social *Weltanschauung* were deeper than either study, travel or personal relationship could have reached and altered it.

In our discussion of Bonhoeffer's "New Order" in the context of Bethge's biography we arrived at the essays 'State and Church' and 'On the Possibility of the Word of the Church to the World' following Bethge's direction. We suspend the logic of this section for a little while now and take a look at some relevant passages of *Ethics* to see whether we find a picture that is different to those that come from the above essays.

c. Bonhoeffer's "New Order" *in the Context of his* Ethics

Among the particular topics of *Ethics* there are two places where the question of social order directly appears: in the 'Penultimate' in relation to the 'Ultimate' and within the 'World of Things'. According to Green's order of the *Ethics* manuscripts, the section on the penultimate and the ultimate was written during the autumn 1940, up to 10 December, while the section on the world of things sometime between 25 March and 25 October, 1941[54]. So, this period roughly overlaps with the time of the conspiracy under discussion in this section.

While discussing the ultimate and the penultimate - the pair of concepts that, as we have seen, Bonhoeffer applied already in 1933 - the most important thing for him, it seems to me, is to determine their theologically correct relationship. He sets up two extreme solutions of the problem as it appears in Christian life: the radical and the compromise solution. After discussing several possibilities that may be labelled either

[54] Green, 'Textual Research for the New Edition of Bonhoeffer's Ethics', in Carter, van Eyden, van Hoogstraten and Wiersema eds, *Bonhoeffer's Ethics, Old Europe and New Frontiers*, p. 35. I have already noted the relative value of the ordering attempts.

as radical or representing compromise, Bonhoeffer summarises his findings in the form of dialectical contradictions that reach their zenith in the form: "[r]adicalism hates the real, and compromise hates the word" (*E* 130). Having announced the total collapse of this descriptive kind of approach, Bonhoeffer proposes the Christological solution:

"To contrast the two attitudes in this way is to make it sufficiently clear that both alike are opposed to Christ. For in Jesus Christ those things which are here ranged in mutual hostility are one. The question of the Christian life will not, therefore, be decided and answered either by radicalism or by compromise, but only by reference to Jesus Christ Himself. In Him alone lies the solution for the problem of the relation between the ultimate and the penultimate." (*E* 130)

In the following paragraphs Bonhoeffer speaks about Jesus Christ as the incarnate, the crucified and the risen, suspending all the previous social-ethical considerations in a formally impeccable Christological solution.

We can witness a similar treatment in Bonhoeffer's next attempt to determine the relationship of the ultimate and the penultimate in his discussion of the penultimate as the preparing the way to the ultimate. We witness a dialectical approach again: on the one hand, "it is the ultimate which determines the penultimate" (*E* 133), but the penultimate must satisfy "the claim of the word to pass freely and unhindered" (*E* 134). Within this relation the penultimate has a definite purpose: "[p]reparing the way for the word: this is the purpose of everything that has been said about the things before the last" (*E* 135). This preparation should involve resolute action: "[t]he hungry man needs bread and the homeless man needs a roof; the dispossessed need justice and the lonely needs fellowship; the undisciplined need order and the slave needs freedom" (*E* 137). These concrete actions, however sacrificial and risky they may be, nevertheless remain isolated deeds without developing into a program of social progress. Bonhoeffer writes:

"Certainly one would have misunderstood all this if one were to say that before he can become a Christian the slave must have received his liberty, the outcast his rights, and the hungry man his bread; in other words that values must first be set in order. This is refuted by the evidence of the New Testament and of Church history; indeed it has perhaps been precisely at times when the world has seemed to be relatively in order that the estrangement from the faith has been especially deep-seated and alarming. The preparation of the way for Christ cannot, therefore, be simply a matter of the establishment of certain desirable and expedient conditions; it cannot be simply the

realisation of a programme of social reform. It is quite certain that the preparation of the way is a matter of concrete interventions in the visible world and it is certain that hunger and satisfaction of hunger are concrete and visible matters; yet everything depends on this activity being a spiritual reality, precisely because ultimately it is not indeed a question of the reform of earthly conditions, but it is a question of the coming Christ. Only a spiritual preparation of the way will be followed by the merciful coming of the Lord. And this implies that the visible actions which must be performed in order to prepare men for the reception of Jesus Christ, must be acts of humiliation before the coming of the Lord, that is to say, they must be acts of repentance. Preparation of the way means repentance (Mt 3,1ff). But repentance means a concrete turning back; repentance demands action." (*E* 138)

Just like the Christological interpretation of the relation of the penultimate and the ultimate as radicality or compromise suspended all the describable characteristics of either the one or the other possibility, the theological-sacramental interpretation of preparing the way, as spiritual preparation or preparation by repentance suspends all the socially describable characteristics of the concrete action on behalf of the needy. While the denotation of the ultimate is rich in theological substance, the description of the penultimate is empty in social substance insofar as *any action* can satisfy the demand of preparing the way. Bonhoeffer certainly does not exclude a possible program of social progress, he only undervalues it by stating that social progress alone cannot be regarded as preparing the way, while any action that satisfies any need, if related to repentance and has a spiritual nature, become part of the right preparation. In fact, within the seemingly balanced attention to both social and spiritual factors, the focus of the attention finally has one-sidedly shifted to the spiritual side: "[o]nly a spiritual preparation of the way will be followed by the merciful coming of the Lord" (*E* 138).

We encounter a rather similar treatment of the social-political factors in the section 'The World of Things - Pertinence - Statecraft'. This passage was composed as part of the essay on 'The Structure of Responsible Life', that begins with a discussion of vicarious representative action as deputyship."[R]esponsibility is a matter of deputyship" (*E* 224), in turn, "[d]eputyship, and also responsibility, lies only in the complete surrender of one's own life to the other man. Only the selfless man lives responsibly, and this means and only the selfless man *lives*. Wherever the divine 'yes' and 'no' become one in man, there is responsible living." (*E* 225) In other words,

responsible life is life in Jesus Christ, who gives responsibility its origin, essence and goal.[55]

The essay ends in an explanation of freedom. In the opening statement of the explanation the understanding of freedom as 'freedom for' is clearly recognisable:

"Responsibility and freedom are corresponding concepts. Factually, though not chronologically, responsibility presupposes freedom and freedom can consist only in responsibility. Responsibility is the freedom of men which is given only in the obligation to God and to our neighbour." (*E* 248)

Like responsibility, also freedom participates in the divine nature:

"[t]he man who acts in the freedom of his own most personal responsibility is precisely the man who sees his action finally committed to the guidance of God. The free deed knows itself in the end as the deed of God; the decision knows itself as guidance; the free venture knows itself as divine necessity." (*E* 249)

This freedom also serves as a basis for a proper historical perspective:

"[i]t is in the abandonment of knowledge of his own good that a man performs the good of God. It is only from this last point of view that one can speak of good in historical action." (*E* 249)

Thus, the first and the last sections of the essay endow both responsibility and freedom with the attribute of divine nature. We must keep all this in mind when we examine the function of 'free responsibility' in the discussion of 'The World of Things - Pertinence - Statecraft'.

Bonhoeffer calls the relation of the responsible person to the domain of things pertinence. This relation is understood in two ways: "this attitude to things is pertinent which keeps steadily in view their original, essential and purposive relation to God and to men" (*E* 235), and that considers "in every thing its own law of being, no matter whether this thing is a natural object or a product of the human mind, and no matter whether it is a material or an ideal entity" (*E* 236). Statecraft, or political science

"also has its technical side; there is a technique of administration and a technique of diplomacy; in its widest sense this technical side of statecraft includes all positive legislation, all positive treaties and agreements, and even all those rules and conventions of internal and international political coexsistence which are not legally defined but which are sanctioned by history. Finally, it even includes all the generally accepted moral principles of the life of the state. (...) Pertinent action will conform

[55] Cf. E p. 226.

with these laws and conventions; (...) it will regard them as an essential element in all order." (*E* 237)

This description of political science is very close to Bibó's 'European system of values and methods', and the continuation of the description even resembles Mannheim's understanding of 'paradigmatic experiences' as ultimate roots of human sociality. Bonhoeffer continues:

"[P]ertinent action will be incontrovertibly compelled to recognise that the essential law of the state comprises something more than these rules and conventions of statecraft. Indeed, precisely because the state is indissolubly bound up with human existence, its essential law extends ultimately far beyond the range of anything that can be expressed in terms of rules. And it is precisely at this point that the full depth of responsible action is achieved." (*E* 238)

This remarkable correspondence is further strengthened by Bonhoeffer's note in which he interprets pertinent action in a much broader way than it was understood in Germany, so giving to it a rather 'democratic' basis instead of confining it to the world of a professional elite.[56] However, the following argumentation gradually brackets and finally suspends all that was said up to this point.

First Bonhoeffer considers the demand of an "extraordinary situation of ultimate necessities, a situation which no law can control" (*E* 238). These necessities, that Bonhoeffer relates to Machiavelli, "no longer leave a multiplicity of courses open to human reason but they confront it with the question of *ultima ratio.* In the political field this *ultima ratio* is war, but it can also be deception and the breaking of treaties for the sake of one's own vital needs." (*E* 239) Following Baldvin Bonhoeffer clarifies that the *ultima ratio* as irrational action cannot be converted into a rational law, in other words, lawlessness cannot be turned into law. Rather, the extraordinary necessity demands an extraordinary answer: it "appeals to the freedom of the men who is responsible" (*E* 239).

Here we may remind ourselves of our previous findings that being free and being responsible is understood as participation in the divine nature in the argument of this section. Now we listen to Bonhoeffer:

[56] See Bonhoeffer's note 4. in E p. 238.

"There is now no law behind which the responsible man can seek cover, and there is, therefore, also no law which can compel the responsible man to take any particular decision in the face of such necessities. In this situation there can only be a complete renunciation of every law, together with the knowledge that here one must make one's decision as a free venture, together also with the open admission that here the law is being infringed and violated and the necessity obeys no commandment. Precisely in this breaking of the law the validity of the law is acknowledged, and in this renunciation of all law, and in this alone, one's own decision and deed are entrusted unreservedly to the divine governance of history." (*E* 239f)

Thus, 'free responsibility' is simply understood as a direct relationship with God and a direct participation in the divine governance of history. This understanding bears two consequences. On the one hand, a 'free responsible deed' receives its justification solely from God, being undisturbed by any control that is manifested in law. On the other hand, a 'responsible man' remains infinitely closer to God than a law-abiding person who may seek cover behind the law. If a personal relationship to God is the highest value for Bonhoeffer as a Christian theologian, which we have no reason to doubt, the person of free responsibility, understood this way, is incomparably highly regarded within this value system. In this light we must pay close attention to the last paragraph of this section.

"There can be no theoretical answer to the question whether in historical action the ultimate goal is the eternal law or free responsibility in the face of all law but before God. Great nations are opposed in this in an insurmountable and ultimate antinomy. The greatness of the British statesmen, and I am thinking here, for example, of Gladstone, is that they acknowledge the law as the ultimate authority; and the greatness of German statesmen - I am thinking now of Bismarck - is that they come before God in free responsibility. In this neither can claim to be superior to the other. The ultimate question remains open and must be kept open, for in either case man becomes guilty and in either case he can live only by the grace of God and by forgivenes. Each of these men, the one who is bound by the law and the one who acts in free responsibility, must hear and bow before the accusation of the other. Neither can be the judge of the other. It is always for God to judge." (*E* 240)

First of all we must recognise that here Bonhoeffer seeks a *theoretical answer about the ultimate goal of historical action*. The two epithets, *theoretical* and *historical* give a concrete as well as a limiting scope to the question and the possible answer: this scope is relative to the *ultimate* that Bonhoeffer approaches by *theological* questioning while asking about *God* or *reality*. We have seen that with respect to *God* or *reality* Bonhoeffer already answered the question of free

responsibility: the person of free responsibility acts "in accordance with reality" (*E* 238) and the person's "decision and deed are entrusted unreservedly to the divine governance of history" (*E* 240). Bonhoeffer already had his ultimate word about it; it is not this question that is opened up once again.

Accordingly, it is *the theoretical question about the ultimate goal of historical action* that cannot be answered *at its own level*. It is this level where the 'ultimate antinomy' can be stated and the greatness of Gladstone and the greatness of Bismarck can be compared and mutually contrasted to each other. This comparison is valid only *at this level*: before the *ultimate*, that is, *God's reality*, the acknowledgement of the law 'as the ultimate authority' that Bonhoeffer attributes to the politics personified by Gladstone, is simply untenable. Likewise, only *at this level* can it be stated that neither view can claim to be superior to the other. Nevertheless, as we know, this level represents a limited scope of relative validity.

It should also be considered what Bonhoeffer might mean by saying that "in either case man becomes guilty". We know what guilt means for the person of free responsibility: it is breaking the law for being obedient to God's reality. But what is the guilt of the law-abiding person? It logically cannot be anything else than keeping the law even if God's reality demands to break the law, keeping the law against God's will, being disobedient to God, regarding, indeed, the law as an ultimate authority instead of accepting God's ultimate authority. For the person of free responsibility guilt means guilt for the sake of God and the other. It is, indeed, the *acceptance of guilt* that Bonhoeffer discusses immediately after this paragraph. It is Jesus' acceptance of guilt in which "lies the origin of every action of responsible deputyship. If it is responsible action, if it is action which is concerned solely and entirely with the other man, if it arises from selfless love for the real man who is our brother, then, precisely because this is so, it cannot wish to shun the fellowship of human guilt." (*E* 241) The guilt of the person of free responsibility is guilt out of self-forgetting love for the other, guilt for God; on the other hand, the guilt of the law-abiding person is a guilt out of a self-centered observance of the law that withdraws from loving the other, a guilt against God. Against this background, God's final judgement can boldly be presupposed.

Nevertheless, this background cannot be seen behind the stage where Bonhoeffer looks for an answer to *the theoretical question about the ultimate goal of historical action*. It is the quite limited perspective of this stage that allows the spectator to wonder about ultimate political antinomies, contradicting greatnesses, apparent equalities and mutual bowings before mutual accusations, before God as *Deus ex machina* will finally come down and announce God's judgement. This is for the spectators and all the excitement of the play is only for the spectators too. We, the readers of Bonhoeffer, having the same perspective of God and reality as he has, being able to look beyond and above the stage of theoretical questions and history, we do not have to wait for God, we already know which one of the great statemen will be announced as the obedient servant of God.

Have I gone too far? In his 21 February 1944 letter to Bethge Bonhoeffer discussed the question of resistance and submission, treating the figures of Don Quixote and Michael Kohlhaas as symbols of resistance carried to the point of absurdity. His solution is characteristically dialectical: "[w]e must confront fate (...) as resolutely as we submit to it at the right time" (*LPP* 217). He closes the letter with the following words:

"It is therefore impossible to define the boundary between resistance and submission on abstract principles; but both of them must exist, and both must be practiced. Faith demands this elasticity of behaviour. Only so can we stand our ground in each situation as it arises, and turn it to gain.
Would differences between theological and juristic existence emerge here? I am thinking, for instance, of the extreme contrast between Klaus and Rüdiger *within* a 'legalistic', juristic approach (...) on the other hand our more flexible, livelier 'theological' approach, which has this character because in the end it is more in accord with reality." (*LPP* 217f)

Therefore, those who are in accord with Bonhoeffer's reality, do not have to be disturbed either by the apparent contradictions that appear at a political level nor by an uneasy choice between opposing ways: reality has already made its testimony for those who are in accord with it.

Bonhoeffer interpretation is well equipped by critical analyses of Otto von Bismarck's poltics[57], so we may have a rather detailed knowledge of what Bonhoeffer might mean when he personifies the theological expression 'free responsibility' in Bismarck. Against this background, it is all the more telling to see how Clifford Green takes pains to show a Bonhoeffer with a rather different view of Bismarck. In the new edition of his *Bonhoeffer: A Theology of Sociality* Green makes a single reference to Bismarck. Discussing Bonhoeffer's July 1932 address, *The Theological Basis of the World Alliance*, Green tells us:

"Significantly, Bonhoeffer refers to Bismarck, as symbolic of the demonic development found in modern warfare. Despite efforts late in his career to out-flank and repress socialists with sweeping social reforms, Bismarck deservedly earned the name of 'iron cancellor'. He was a symbol of Prussian military imperialism, constitutional arbitrariness, and reactionary military imperialism - in short, militarist power-politics."[58]

Here Green's words about Bismarck end. In a note he also adds Barth's post-war words to his own, suggesting a common substance of Bismarck's and Hitler's bad heritage: "Bismarck - not to mention Hitler - was (in spite of the *Daily Bible Readings* on his bedside table) no model statesman because he wanted to establish and develop his work on naked power."[59]

Bonhoeffer's text that Green refers to, however, *does not* suggest that even the young, pacifist theologian distanced himself from Bismarck. What he distanced himself from was the perspective of war that burdened his own time. His reference to Bismarck may suggest that Bonhoeffer thought that *after Bismarck* modern warfare had taken a dangerous turn rather than, as Green believes, a conviction that Bismarck was part of the "demonic development". Here are Bonhoeffer's words:

"There is, however, a very widespread, extremely dangerous error about today that the *justification of struggle* already contains the justification of war, affirms war in principle. (...) Anyone who has seriously studied the history of the concept of war from Luther to Fichte and Bismarck and then on to the present, knows that while the word has remained the same, its content has become something absolutely incomparable. War in our day no longer falls under the concept of struggle because it

[57] See for example John A. Moses: 'Bonhoeffer's Germany: the Political Context' In: de Gruchy ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Dietrich Bonhoeffer*, pp. 3ff.
[58] Green, *Bonhoeffer: A Theology of Sociality*, p. 129.
[59] *ibid.* note 50.

is the certain self-annihilation of both combatans. (...) No word of condemnation of past deeds even in the last war - that is not permitted to us, 'thou shalt not judge' - but all the power of resistance, of refusal, of rejection of the next war." (*NRS* 170)

This text simply does not allow us to argue for a Bonhoeffer who was a critic of Bismarck *in any sense*. How Green interprets the 1942 reference to Bismarck as the model German stateman, we do not know. Although he quotes part of the relevant text of the *Ethics* within his discussion of responsible action in extraordinary situation in his same book, he carefully avoids mentioning Bismarck's name in relation to 'acting in free responsibility'[60].

One more remark before we turn back to Bethge's biography. Interpreters of *Ethics* usually agree that elements like war, deception and the breaking of agreements as deeds of free responsibility refer to the extraordinary situation of the conspirators and, indeed, Germany in general, thus they belong to a distinct 'ethics in the boundary situation'. This opinion is certainly justified on the basis of the historical context as well as Bonhoeffer's own awareness and evaluation of the context. However, the question remains, whether the context was the only reason for Bonhoeffer to conceive a distinct ethics for the boundary situation or there may be found other reasons in his thinking and theology? This question is justified in our comparative reading of Bibó and Bonhoeffer, since, as we have seen, Bibó did not show any interest in an extraordinary ethics as he was planning the way out of the chaos and war towards a new, feasible order. He explicitly mentioned, not knowing about the conspiracy in which Bonhoeffer was involved, that the success or failure of a possible coup against Hitler did not bear any significance with respect to the post-war order of Germany.

I think that besides the pressure of the situation there is another, intrinsic root in Bonhoeffer's theology proper from which his inclination to think in terms of an ethics in the boundary situation might have developed. We have seen that already in *Sanctorum Communio* Bonhoeffer understood the ethical - with respect to the ethical collective person - as *created* by God's call. God's call, however, does not only create the ethical, but it may also create the *extraordinary situation* itself, moreover, the call

[60] Green, *Bonhoeffer: A Theology of Sociality*, p. 316.

may originate the *means* by which the obedient should answer the extraordinaly situation:

"*Where peoples are called, God's will for their purpose in history is at work* (...) Where a people, submitting in conscience to God's will, goes to war in order to fulfil its historical purpose and mission in the world - through entering fully into the ambiguity of human sinful action - it knows it has been called upon by God, that history is to be made; here war is no longer murder." (*SC* 119)

Here are the theological roots, I think, of the freely at the same time obediently responsible deed whose embodiment, as we have seen, Bonhoeffer saw in the 'iron chancellor'.

Having finished our excursion to *Ethics*, now we return to Bethge's biography. Towards the end of the discussion of Bonhoeffer's participation in the conspiracy, Bethge explains Bonhoeffer's position with respect to the different branches this way:

"In the course of his collaboration on the [Freiburg] memorandum, Bonhoeffer did not contact the members of the Kreisau group, nor did he attempt to work out an agreement with them. Apart from the fact that the Kreisau circle's work reached its climax somewhat later than that of the Freiburg group, Bonhoeffer believed that the conclusions related to the period after a coup belonged in the ecumenical forum that had emerged out of the direct responsibility of the Confessing church. Despite his demand that the Confessing church, which was dangerously narrow, should open up and expand its horizons, Bonhoeffer still found it difficult to cooperate with church people who had not made the sacrifices that characterised the provisional leaders of the Councils of Brethren. And the Confessing church, to the extent that it stood by Barmen and Dahlem, could not regard the Protestant churchmen in the Kreisau group, such as Schönfeld, Gerstenmaier, Harald Poelchau, or even Steltzer, as its own people. It was somewhat tragic that the Kreisau and Freiburg groups did not seek out and complement each other at the time. Bonhoeffer did not live to see what doors opened in that direction."[61]

Bethge's narrative of Bonhoeffer's role in the conspiracy in general and this section in particular clearly expresses Bethge's regret that Bonhoeffer did not get closer to the socially and politically more progressive Kreisau group. We have followed Bethge's efforts to explain it with outward, incidental factors; at the same time, it has become clear enough from Bonhoeffer's texts that his vision of a post-war Germany was fundamentally at odds with a Germany that set out on the road of thorough social progress. In short, the 'other Germany' that Bonhoeffer tried to

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[61] Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer*, pp. 776f.

represent in ecumenical circles, was not an 'other one' in comparison to the Third Reich only, but also opposed a prospective democratic state.

Whatever personal or other reasons Bethge might have had to present a Bonhoeffer whose theology and its social implications could be understood as open and inspirative to social progress, its effect on Bonhoeffer scholarship has been tremendous. The crown witness of Bonhoeffer's life, the mediator number one in the manner of Plato and Socrates, not only provided the highly valuable biographical details for Bonhoeffer's written theological legacy, but he also created an interpreted biography - necessarily, to be sure, since all biography and all autobiography is a conscious interpretation - that is attractive for people who need - for whatever reasons - an authority figure for supporting a theory or movement of social-political liberation. Bethge's 'offer', that has been accepted by several interpreters, is, however, a deceptive one. On the one hand, it is relatively easy to find weapons for a short-term theological-ideological warfare on the side of social progress in the arsenal that Bethge presents by his interpretation of Bonhoeffer, but it is all the more problematic, on the other hand, to identify plainly what Bonhoeffer might mean by social liberation, if not only his selected works are considered in the perspective of Bethge's interpretation, but the whole of the corpus of his writings, *etsi Bethge non daretur.* (Here the improper character of the Socrates-Plato analogy becomes clear: we *do have* direct access to Bonhoeffer's writings.)

This 'deception', I think, may deeply hurt people who really seek theological support for a thorough social-political change and seek more than merely weapons for a short-term strategic warfare. Disillusioned voices that express the limits of the liberating capacity of Bonhoeffer's theology can be met here and there in Bonhoeffer scholarship; it would be instructive to gather them together once and interpret them comparatively. I mention here only a relatively recent instance that appeared at the highest forum of international Bonhoeffer scholarship. In the Seventh Bonhoeffer Congress, Cape Town, 1996, Korean theologian Chung Hyun Kyung expressed with unmistakable clarity how *little* Asian women can gain in their 'way to freedom' from

Bonhoeffer's theological legacy[62]. Her critical questions may be best summarised by these sentences: "We ask not what we can die for, because our children's lives are dependent on us. We ask rather what we can live for?"[63] But one swallow does not a summer make: John de Gruchy still found it possible to avoid a critical discussion of the Asian women's perspective, maintaining instead that Chung Hyun Kyung contributed to the picture of Bonhoeffer as a popular theologian[64].

C. A Look at the Prison Theology: can any Major Changes in Bonhoeffer's Awareness of Sociality be Expected?

This closing section of our examination of Bonhoeffer's concept of freedom and its social implications should be brief and tentative: instead of entering into an analysis of the several relevant data of the prison literature, that is impossible within the limits of the present study, I will only hint at some crucial points.

It has become common to argue that the prison experiences and reflections had changed Bonhoeffer so much that he would probably have left behind his characteristically conservative *Weltanschauung.*[65] In other words, the remarkable continuity of the peculiar awarenes of human sociality that we could witness from 1927 to 1942, that no outward experience, friendship, metanoia, 'turning from the phraseological to the real', participation in the resistance could break, would have ended while Bonhoeffer was in prison to give place something different. I fundamentally disagree with this view.

What I propose here is no more than an outline for my possible argument, indeed, an outline for *another* book.

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[62] Chung Hyun Kyung: 'Dear Dietrich Bonhoeffer: A Letter' In: John de Gruchy ed., *Bonhoeffer for a New Day:A Theology in a Time of Transition,* Eerdmans 1997, pp. 9ff.
[63] *ibid.* p. 17.
[64] John de Gruchy, 'The Reception of Bonhoeffer's Theology', in de Gruchy ed. *The Cambridge Companion to Dietrich Bonhoeffer,* p. 104.
[65] See for example de Gruchy, 'Dietrich Bonhoeffer and the Transition to Democracy' in *Modern Theology* 12:3 July 1996; de Gruchy: 'Bonhoeffer, Apartheid, and Beyond: The Reception of Bonhoeffer in South Africa' in de Gruchy ed. *Bonhoeffer for a New Day;*and Clements, 'Community in the Ethics of Dietrich Bonhoeffer', in *Studies in Christian Ethics,* 10. (1997)

The starting point is that during his prison months the immediate mental and spiritual context of Bonhoeffer personal life had not changed: he continously lived and encountered the outside word in and through his family. The dominant influence of Bonhoeffer's family and its long and rich traditions has been discussed by several Bonhoeffer scholars, sometimes with enthusiasm[66], at other times showing a rather critical attitude towards its authoritarian structure[67]. The characteritics of the 'primal state of social being' as appeared in *Sanctorum Communio* and bear such a lasting effect on his social awareness, are, in fact, the characteristics of his own family life, as he perceived and understood it[68].

Apart from the several and deeply personal letters to and from members of his family, including, naturally, Eberhard Bethge and Maria von Wedemeyer, we have two large-scale works that present us with Bonhoeffer's understanding of the nature and perspectives of his family. In the Drama and the Novel we can see the family, including Dietrich himself, through the eyes of Bonhoeffer. In 'the prison theology proper', concieved after 30, April, 1944 under the label 'Christianity in a world come of age', we can witness how Bonhoeffer rethinks the intellectual heritage of his own particular social class and draws from this rethinking theological conclusions that, he thought, had general validity[69]. In both instances he remains confined within the limits of his inherited social perspective.

Both the prison fiction and the 'new theology' need a careful interpretation in whose course authorities of previous Bonhoeffer interpretation are questioned. I mention here the most important points. With respect to the drama and the novel, several attempts have been made to mitigate Bonhoeffer's strong patriarchal views, first of all by Renate and Eberhard Bethge and, following them, several other scholars. These arguments have to be reconsidered. Further, Bethge's belief that in the figure of Christoph Bonhoeffer presented conservative opinions that were characteristic not of

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[66] See for example Green, *Bonhoeffer: A Theology of Sociality*, especially pp. 145f.
[67] I think of especially Thomas I Day, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer on Christian Community and Common Sense*, The Edwin Mellen Press, New York, 1982; and Kenneth Earl Morris, *Bonhoeffer's Ethic of Discipleship.*
[68] See for example chapter 6, 'The Prison Letters and the Theology of Sociality' in Green, *Bonhoeffer: A Theology of Sociality*
[69] See Ralph K. Wüstenberg, *A Theology of Life, Dietrich Bonhoeffer's Religionless Christianity*, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, Michigan, Cambridge, U.K. 1998.

him but his brother Klaus[70], which, as we have seen, is not necessarily justified on the basis of Bonhoeffer's own texts, has to be scrutinised too. This particular opinion serves as a supporting argument for Green's belief that Bonhoeffer voiced his own views through the major's words[71]. If it was true, a Bonhoeffer committed to social justice and peace as, on the basis of the Anglo-Saxon democratic tradition it could be understood today would be a tenable opinion.

The problem is that the novel's Christoph distances himself from the novel's major in a remarkable way, and if the reader does not accept that the Christoph of the differing opinion may be other than Dietrich Bonhoeffer, he cannot accept either that it is the major and not the arguing Christoph who expresses Bonhoeffer's own thoughts. However, if the reader is able to suspend Bethge's and Green's beliefs for a while, she can recognise a remarkable accord in the views of the conversation partner of William Paton and Paul Lehman, the author of 'The Structure of Responsible Life' and Christoph who argues with the major. On the other side, a similarly remarkable accord can be found in William Paton's and Paul Lehman's texts and the major's views. If it can be revealed, even the otherwise enigmatic fact that Bonhoeffer placed the major into South Africa, that is, a country of Anglo-Saxon political traditions, may gain some relevance. In short, it may be presented that in the discussion and partial disagreement of the major and Christoph Bonhoeffer, in a way, re-enacted his discussions with his Anglo-Saxon friends.

A particular element of the prison drama, I think, gains a great theological significance within the 'new theology'. "[T]he difference between the two types of people is that the rabble only know how to live, but the noble also know how to die." (*FTP* 36) We confine ourselves to the perspective of Bonhoeffer now and *will not* wonder whether Bonhoeffer ever considered people who did not know how to live; here the point for us is to recognise that Bonhoeffer identified readiness to die or suffer with the high values represented by the elite. Suffering and dying is a theme to which Bonhoeffer paid a persistent attention from the very outset of his theological career and, as it is frequently discussed, suffering and dying became one of the central

[70] Quoted by Green in his 'Editorial Introduction' in FTP p. 7.
[71] *ibid.* pp. 10f.

interpretative motifs in his prison theology. God's suffering in a godless world, participating in Christ's suffering in Gethsemane, and, most closely related to our theme, suffering and death as the third and the fourth stations on the road to freedom are the most important examples.

Interpreters who are otherwise critical about the social contents of Bonhoeffer's theology, tend to think that his prison theology, centered around the theme of suffering, finally became more open to relate to other people's experiences through sharing their suffering[72]. We cannot ignore the possibility, however, that Bonhoeffer regarded suffering at least as much of a distinctive characteristic of the noble as a possibility of participating in other people's human predicament in a broader sense than he shared the destiny of his social class. The thesis of his drama is probably reversible: it is not only that the noble one is the one who is ready to die but also the one who is ready to die is the noble one. He probably considered suffering and dying as a merit that creates nobility and authority, establishes leadership. Bethge was probably in accord with Bonhoeffer's own understanding of suffering when he actualised it with respect to 'right and possibility' more than twenty years later:

"We as Christians in Germany, for instance, have lost in our generation the right and power to speak words of faith to the Jews. We are not to evangelize them. Western Christianity might have lost the power to speak words of faith to people behind the Iron Curtain. Christ may not use our present form of proclaiming him. Only he who participates in Jesus' suffering may speak the renewing word of his participation."[73]

There is, however, an element in the prison literature that can be regarded as a possibility for a really new beginning in Bonhoeffer's thinking: his joyful reflections on his own personal spontaneity. These reflections belong to the two most intensive human experiences he was presented with in prison: love and friendship. He ventured to enact his love of Maria in the relationship of Renate and Christoph in the prison novel, while his friendship with Eberhard Bethge is nicely documented in the letters.

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[72] For example Thomas I. Day, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer on Christian Community and Common Sense,* see the closing section of his book.

[73] Eberhard Bethge: 'The Challenges of Dietrich Bonhoeffer's Life and Theology', in Ronald Gregor Smith ed., *World Come of Age,* London, Collins, 1967, p. 81.

Most significantly to the present study, his reflections on spontaneity are consequently related to his renewing understanding of freedom.

"The first thing that happened all by itself was that the two began to talk, carefree and open to each other. (...) In this way began one of those rare and delightful conversations in which each word is received as a gift freely given from one to the other." (*FTP* 131) The awakening spontaneity between Renate and Christoph is probably still reflected upon within the limits of the old concept of freedom, but an approaching change can be perceived already here.

Bonhoeffer's 23 January 1944 letter to Bethge may represent the next station to his road to a new understanding of freedom. Here we are given a promising, albeit still ambiguous account. Friendship, he wrote, ""in contrast to marriage and kinship, has no generally recognised rights, therefore depends entirely on its own inherent quality" (*LPP* 192). Together with culture and education, friendship "belongs not to the sphere of obedience, but to the broad arena of freedom" (*LPP* 193). In the following highly exciting sentences we can witness Bonhoeffer's struggle to gain a new understanding of friendship *within as well as without* his old conceptual framework, indeed, for gaining a new understanding of the meaning of the 'freedom of a Christian'.

The last station on this road is his poem, written to Bethge, 'The Friend'. The opening lines are remarkably unambiguous:

"Not from the heavy soil, / where blood and sex and oath / rule in their hallowed might, / where earth itself, / guarding the primal consecrated order, / avenges wantonness and madness - / not from the heavy soil of earth, / but from the spirit's choice and free desire, / needing no oath or legal bond, / is friend bestowed on friend." (*LPP* 388)

Here, I think, a new direction may open up: form the recognition and acceptance of my spontaneous freedom there is a way leading to the acceptance of the same freedom in the other as well.

Nevertheless, it is only a possbility, and even at the latest phase Bonhoeffer's writings remain ambiguous. In his 8 July 1944 letter he still operated with his distinction of the peasant and the bourgeois, related order to the first and free responsibility to the second (*LPP* 345). His famous 'Stations on the Road to Freedom'

still begins with discipline only to arrive at, through action and suffering, "the greatest of feasts", death (*LPP* 370f). Thus, his own peculiar way to freedom, lacking a clear affirmation of individual negative freedom rooted in spontaneity, leaves an ambiguous legacy with us.

Conclusion

In chapter 1 I discussed the relationship of freedom and democracy. In the first section I examined the two concepts of freedom, then I made an attempt at interpreting democracy under four headings: democracy as tradition, as vision, as system and as process. At the end of this chapter I proposed that all four approaches can be related to a search for the meaning of freedom. In the course of the investigation of Bibó's and Bonhoeffer's texts I followed the logic of the texts themselves and did not try to apply the proposed framework to them too soon. Now it is time to examine our findings against the background of this approach.

The Two Concepts of Freedom

We have seen that it is common both for theologians and political theorists to regard freedom as negative and positive, a "freedom from" and a "freedom for". The interpretation of the relationship of the two concepts as well as the exact description of each concept may vary widely; a certain combination of the two concepts, however, seems to be a minimal requirement for a complex understanding of freedom.

Having briefly introduced some theological approaches, we paid attention to Isaiah Berlin's seminal essay. Berlin was resolute in arguing that a sense of negative freedom is necessary to avoid the danger for positive freedom to turn into paternalism or even despotism. We have found a similar approach in Bibó's works. Although the definition of negative as well as positive freedom of the two authors is not identical - a closer look at their differences would deserve a separate study - their insistence on negative freedom as unavoidable is remarkably harmonious.

In Bonhoeffer's case, however, we have witnessed a different standpoint: he regarded only positive freedom as *true freedom.* We have seen that there are both theological as well as social arguments in Bonhoeffer's theory that lead to his one-sided understanding of freedom. The motif of vicarious representative action and the related concept of person provides the theological argument that corresponds to the

collectivist as well as patriarchal-paternalistic social theory that Bonhoeffer learnt in his own family.

Democracy as Tradition

During the examination of Bibó's and Bonhoeffer's texts I had to restrain myself from discussing the inherited traditions of the two thinkers in detail, but here I shall engage them in a deliberately brief and general manner.

Bibó inherited the tradition of an elite whose life had long been determined by attempts to gain independence from great powers, the Ottoman Empire and the Habsburg Empire on the one hand, and efforts to control ethnic minorities within the borders of their country on the other. This long historical tradition naturally nurtured an intensive sense of being free from, first of all in one's own self-awareness, and, in people who were capable of identifying themselves with others, a respect for the demand of negative freedom of the other one. On the other hand, the endless and repeatedly failed independence struggles nurtured a different sense as well, a sense of the command to survive at all costs, and a corresponding awareness that freedom, either my declared freedom or the other's respected freedom may damage the basic conditions of life. It was part of Bibó's tradition that each generation had to make a clear choice between freedom and safe survival. Those who chose the first were usually looking for political examples from the West, while those who chose the second were always convinced that any Western pattern of political life cannot be emulate in this part of the world. Almost a hundred years ago the poet Endre Ady wrote: Hungary had always been a "ferry-country", always moving between the East and the West. Bibó belonged to the tradition that usually opted for the West, he inherited a sense of political life that was able to keep up with the development of democratic theory and practice. At the same time, he was able to consider the fear of those who chose survival instead. His Calvinist-Protestant Christianity, whose Hungarian reception had been deeply interrelated with the struggles of the elite from the XVI. century onwards, provided him with a theological background, that, he was convinced, was self-evident.

Bonhoeffer inherited a rather different tradition. The elite he belonged to regarded itself as a guardian of great intellectual, cultural and scientific traditions whose continuity it felt to be responsible for. This elite was well aware of the fact that these achievements were partly due to the relative tranquillity of German domestic life, and tranquillity was supported by a strongly centralised order, earlier in the territorial units, later in the *Kaiserreich*. This elite followed the beginnings of Western democratic development with suspicion, and the coherent web of political theories we know as the *Sonderweg* did not only express a different historical awareness but also a different ontological awareness of life itself. The main line of XIX. century German theology, intellectually liberal and socially conservative, provided theological support. With respect to the understanding of freedom according to this awareness of life, the concepts of freedom and obedience overlapped: spontaneous freedom that did not respect a given order was regarded as an ethically irresponsible, rebellious, arbitrary act. Bonhoeffer's theological reflections on freedom were nurtured by this tradition and remained within the limits of this tradition.

Democracy as Vision

We have seen that a democratic vision bears the influence of the inherited tradition and builds its image of the future out of inherited elements. Both Bibó's and Bonhoeffer's vision of a post-war Germany can be seen as an organic outcome of the traditions they received and thought through. With respect to developing a particular vision we discussed the importance of the awareness of the nature of ideology, utopia and the necessarily autobiographical character of a vision. We have found that it is rather difficult to determine a way that helps us to distinguish between ideology in a broad sense and a restrictive sense, concrete utopia and abstract utopia, and, let us say, the inclusive or exclusive autobiographical character of the vision. However, it can be established as a general rule, that the more a thinker is ready to engage in a critical discussion of his or her own theory with others, the more he or she will be able to recognise his or her blindspots and control the negative possibilities that lay in the ideological, utopian and autobiographical character of one's vision. Within our

comparison of Bibó and Bonhoeffer we shall also add that a theoretical standpoint that respects the other's spontaneous reactions is more promising, at least in theory, with respect to this self-controlling process. As far as I can recognise, Bibó's way of reasoning invites the reader to this critical exchange while the manner of Bonhoeffer's discourse is rather discouraging in this respect.

Democracy as System

If we consider democracy as a system, the possibility of a comparison of Bibó's and Bonhoeffer's theory is reduced to the minimum. If the system is based on certain democratic principles, the consideration of any details is meaningful only if these principles are intact and alive; if not, individual elements of the system represent something different from elements of a democratic system. Therefore, I think it is misleading to discuss some elements of Bonhoeffer's ethical theology, like free responsibility, acceptance of guilt, sharing the destiny of others, as meaningful to think through with respect to a democratic system: they are meaningful, indeed, in their own right, but neither do they reflect the necessary coherence of a democratic system, nor do they mediate the meaning that they would contain if they were conceived in the perspective of a democratic system. I think Bonhoeffer's understanding of free responsibility may serve as a chief example: freedom for the elite, order for the rest. (It may be added here that the notion of socialist democracy that was developed by the leaders of the Soviet satellite states meant something similar: the proclamation of selected and rather distorted democratic practices without the support of the generally acknowledged basic principles; a falsification that Bibó rejected time and again.) As far as Bibó is concerned, besides the basic principles all the discussed nuances of democratic principles can be recognised even in his early writings.

Democracy as Process

It is this section of my study where the autobiographical (utopian, ideological) character of *my* approach is most obvious. While highlighting some features of the

democratic process, I kept in mind not only the most pressing needs of Hungarian society in transition towards democracy, as I understand them, but also the possible contribution that Bibó's legacy could make. In other words, and using a lighter language, this section is the nucleus of my coup against Bonhoeffer, or, more exactly, against the possibility of the authoritative position that Bonhoeffer's legacy may gain if interpreted with respect to the Hungarian transition without keeping a necessary distance. Thus, the themes that are discussed here, fighting with one's own shadow and the lessons of improper imports of democratic doctrines are considered as a means of achieving a more organic understanding of the roots of the difficulties Hungarian society - and, I believe, not only Hungarian society - faces in trying to establish democracy on the one hand, and of creating a necessary distance from the political message of Bonhoeffer's theological legacy on the other. I believe, if Bonhoeffer's theology is made transparent in the light of these approaches, some shortcomings of his legacy will be visible that are not necessarily obvious in different perspectives, but that may be menacing if they serve as a vantage point for thinking through the democratic transformation of nascent democracies in Central and Eastern Europe. A detailed elaboration of this could be a subject of a separate study.

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