

Toward a Kierkegaardian Understanding of Hitler, Stalin, and the Cold War

Charles K. Bellinger

[This essay was published in: George B. Connell and C. Stephen Evans, eds. *Foundations of Kierkegaard's Vision of Community: Religion, Ethics, and Politics in Kierkegaard*. New Jersey: Humanities Press, 1992. 218-230. It was originally presented at a conference of Kierkegaard scholars at St. Olaf College in June, 1988.]

He came to his own home, and his own people received him not. John 1:11

Søren Kierkegaard is widely acknowledged today as one of the most insightful philosophical and religious thinkers of western history. Although he was ignored in the 19th century, he has become a widely read, if not widely understood, contributor to 20th century intellectual life. Can he assist us in our ongoing attempt to understand the large-scale political violence of our age--the wars, persecutions, and holocausts which have made the 20th century the bloodiest in history? I believe that he can, and it is my purpose in this paper to suggest the way in which his thought helps us to understand the basic motives which impel human beings to violence. In this task I will draw on *The Concept of Anxiety [Dread]*, *Philosophical Fragments*, and *The Sickness Unto Death*. A brief discussion of these works will lay the groundwork for the subsequent comments on Naziism, Stalinism, and the East-West conflict. In the concluding section, the theory of violence which is implicit in Kierkegaard's thought will be compared with the contributions of Carl Jung, Ernest Becker, Alice Miller, and René Girard. Throughout, I will be arguing that Kierkegaard's insights into the roots of violence grow out of his distinctive interpretation of the Christian doctrine of creation.

In the first chapter of *The Concept of Anxiety* Kierkegaard is at pains to make the point that Adam and Eve must not be placed "fantastically on the outside" of human history. That is, there is no essential difference between their spiritual situation and ours. The key to the spiritual situation of Adam and Eve and all their descendants is the concept of anxiety, which Kierkegaard describes as "a sympathetic antipathy and an antipathetic sympathy." [1] The following passage from the *Journals* relates to this expression: The nature of original sin has often been explained, and still a primary category has been lacking--it is anxiety; this is the essential determinant. Anxiety is a desire for what one fears, a sympathetic antipathy; anxiety is an alien power which grips the individual, and yet one cannot tear himself free from it and does not want to, for one fears, but what he fears he desires. [2]

What is it that we both fear and desire, at the most basic level? It is freedom, possibility, the future.

I must point out that [anxiety] is altogether different from fear and similar concepts that refer to something definite, whereas anxiety is freedom's actuality as the possibility of possibility. For this reason, anxiety is not found in the beast, precisely because by nature the beast is not qualified as spirit. [3]

That which we simultaneously fear and desire, that which awakens anxiety in us, is not a "thing" in the external world, but--possibility. This possibility which we both fear and desire is the possibility of our own spiritual transformation. That is, the roots of anxiety are to be found in the spiritual relationship between we human beings and our Creator which excludes us from the immediately determined world of nature, and throws us into our own world in which our deepest, most primitive relationship is to the possibilities inherent within our own developing beings. Anxiety arises within us when we both fear and desire the spiritual transformation which we must undergo as beings who are coming into being. That which we both fear and desire is our own creation.

The subtle but profound shift which Kierkegaard is accomplishing in *The Concept of Anxiety* is a shift away from thinking of creation in the past tense to thinking of creation in the present tense. [4] Instead of looking backward through human history to find the origin of sin in Adam and Eve's disobedience, Kierkegaard is teaching us to look inward

(within ourselves) and upward (to God), to find the origin of sin in our own individual flight, in anxiety, away from our origin, God the Creator.

Through every man's sin, sin comes into the world; that is, through every individual's failure to respond in faith to the creative Word of God, the sin of Adam and Eve is repeated once again. Kierkegaard defends himself against the apparently Pelagian implications of this thought by stressing that even though each individual sins through his own disobedience (sin is not a category of necessity), nevertheless, in this act of disobedience he reveals his solidarity with Adam and Eve and all other persons in history, who together make up the collective human race which, in Adam, stands guilty before God. Because every individual is at the same time himself and the race, the solidarity of sin is inescapable, even though the leap into sin is made by the individual without external compulsion. For Kierkegaard there is no "solution" to this paradox, other than the greater paradox of the God-man, who, without ever making the leap into sin, became sin for us, i.e., accepted his human solidarity with us, so that in him we might be reconciled with God through the Atonement. The underlying theological dynamic here is the sovereign act of creation which brings human beings into being as God's children in spite of their anxiety, disobedience, and guilt.[5]

In *Philosophical Fragments*, which was published in 1844 along with *The Concept of Anxiety*, this same dynamic of creation is presented from a different angle. In *Fragments*, the Christian doctrines of sin, the Incarnation, and redemption are contrasted with the Socratic doctrine of recollection. Essentially, this is a clash between a world-view which is grounded in an ongoing gracious act of creation, and a world-view which presumes a static order of reality from which the individual has become estranged through ignorance, and to which he may return through recollection and self-knowledge. In the Socratic doctrine there is no true sin, there is only the mist of ignorance which is dispelled by the discovery of the truth within oneself; and there is no true Savior, because the identity of the midwife is inconsequential; and there is no true moment in time, because the moment of self-awareness is swallowed up by the recollection of the eternal truth. In the Christian doctrine, on the other hand, sin is presented in its starkest reality as an act of rebellion against the Creator which throws the individual into a bondage from which he cannot save himself; the only hope for the individual lies in the coming into time of God himself, so that the individual may be given both the truth and the ability to receive it, which he has forfeited through his own fault; thus the moment in time in which God came to us in person acquires an eternal significance, and the moment in time in which the individual is met by this God-man and becomes contemporaneous with him also acquires an eternal significance. This eternal significance, this meaning which transcends all human meanings, is the sovereign act of creation through which God speaks to us and brings us into being, an act which is completely "over our heads"--beyond our powers of rational understanding.

--In the moment, a person becomes aware that he was born, for his previous state, to which he is not to appeal, was indeed one of "not to be." In the moment, he becomes aware of the rebirth, for his previous state was indeed one of "not to be." If his previous state had been one of "to be," then under no circumstances would the moment have acquired decisive significance for him, as explained above. Whereas the Greek pathos focuses on recollection, the pathos of our project focuses on the moment, and no wonder, for is it not an exceedingly pathos-filled matter to come into existence from the state of "not to be"? [6]

In *The Sickness Unto Death* Kierkegaard describes the self which is coming into being as a synthesis of paradoxical elements: the infinite and the finite, the temporal and the eternal, freedom and necessity. The self is constituted by this synthesis, which he calls a "relation that relates itself to itself." But a self is not a static, given entity; a self is a potentiality. There are two sides to this potentiality; on the divine side there is the creative call of God, and on the human side there is the response to this call--either willing to be oneself or not willing to be oneself. Kierkegaard's formula for the state of the self when despair is absent is this: "in relating itself to itself and in willing to be itself, the self rests transparently in the power that established it." [7] This is the formulation of the ideal relationship between the infinite creator and the finite creature.[8]

But as is only too obvious, this ideal relationship is not seen in the life of individuals and the life of the nations which they make up.[9] Human beings do not will to be their self before God; they evade the Word of God which is calling them into being, and fall into despair. Despair is sin, which is understood by Kierkegaard to be active avoidance of the possibility of being a self constituted by the coming together of the infinite and the finite, the temporal and the eternal, freedom and necessity.

If I may use a simile, responding to the call of God, the call of creation, is like walking up a narrow mountain ridge which drops off steeply on either side. The way of willing to be oneself before God keeps one moving forward on the ridge. Sin, on the other hand, is falling off to one side or the other of the ridge. Kierkegaard spends much of the first half of the book describing the various forms of despair which result from falling off to one side or the other. His section titles are: "Infinitude's Despair is to Lack Finitude," "Necessity's Despair is to Lack Possibility," "Despair Over the Earthly or Over Something Earthly," "Despair Over the Eternal or Over Oneself," etc. For Kierkegaard, the self which God is calling into being is a synthesis of these paradoxical elements. The way of faith is the way of allowing these paradoxical elements to come together within one's being. To be in despair is to not allow the synthesis to come together.

* * *

As we shift from a focus on Kierkegaard's writings in themselves to their application to contemporary life, we must bring in the concept of the spheres of existence, in connection with the fourth chapter of *The Concept of Anxiety*. [10] In this chapter Kierkegaard speaks of anxiety before the good and anxiety before the evil. Anxiety before the good is the category which he uses to interpret the demoniacs in the gospels. While he does not explicitly refer to the Pharisees in this context, it seems clear that the category of anxiety before the evil is an allusion to the particular form of offense which the Pharisees manifested. These two character types represent the extreme, pathological forms of the aesthetic and ethical spheres of existence. In this dialectic we see once again what I have described as falling off to one side or the other of the ridge of human existence before God.

The essence of the demoniac mode of existence is anxiety before the good, a shrinking back from the redemption which God offers in the person of Jesus Christ. The demoniac is afraid of the future, that is, he is afraid to allow God to transform and recreate him. He tries to hide from God's voice because he is afraid that this voice is out to undo and "destroy" him. He prefers the unfreedom of closed-upness (*Indesluttethed*) to the expansive world of freedom and communication. In this state, the appearance of freedom before the demoniac, that is, the appearance of Christ, can only awaken anxiety once again. The demoniac becomes anxious when he hears the call of creation, spoken to him through the incarnate Word. In Kierkegaard's words:

The demonic is closed-upness and the involuntarily revealed. These two definitions indicate, as they should, the same thing, because closed-upness is precisely the mute, and when it is to express itself, this must take place against its will, as the freedom which is the ground underlying unfreedom revolts upon entering into communication with the freedom without; it now betrays unfreedom, and the individual betrays himself against his will in anxiety.... The demonic does not close itself up with something, but closes itself up, and in this lies the profundity of existence, that unfreedom makes a prisoner precisely of itself. Freedom is constantly communicating (even if we consider the religious meaning of the word [i.e. communion], no harm is done), unfreedom becomes more and more closed-up and wants no communication.... Closed-upness is precisely the mute; language, the word, is precisely that which saves, that which saves from the closed-upness of empty abstraction.... A demoniac in the N.T. says therefore to Christ, when he approaches: *tiv e*moiV kai soiv* [What have I to do with you? (Mark 5.7; Luke 8.28)]; he continues that Christ has come to destroy him (anxiety before the good). Or the demoniac begs Christ to go another way. [11]

Adolf Hitler's life reveals anxiety before the good in its ultimate demonic extreme. The demoniac fears above all else the possibility of becoming that self which God is calling him to become. He thus desires above all else to be in complete control of his environment. He must be like God in order to prevent himself from being changed by God. The social form which this spiritual panic takes is a deification of the nation-state of which

one is a part, creating a sacred "nest" which protects one from the voice of God. The social group which is made up of people who are "in untruth"--who are fleeing from God--aesthetically idolizes itself in its attempt to hide from God. A charismatic leader can exploit this untruth very easily:

The crowd is untruth. Hence none has more contempt for what it is to be a man than they who make it their profession to lead the crowd.... For it is not so great a trick to win the crowd. All that is needed is some talent, a certain dose of falsehood, and a little acquaintance with human passions.[12]

The demoniac is afraid of the future and wants to keep it away; the essence of Pharisaism, on the other hand, is a dissociation of oneself from the sinful past in an anxious movement into "repentance." Anxiety before the good switches over to anxiety before the evil as the individual seeks to create his own world of "righteousness," separate from the "lost" world of the "sinners." But he is just as closed-up and unfree as the demoniac because he is still evading the Word of God which is calling him into being as a synthesis of temporal creatureliness and eternal spirit.

In the century and a half since Kierkegaard's time the world has witnessed the eruption into history of a fervent political form of ethical Pharisaism. I am referring to the appearance of Marxism and the subsequent polarization of the world between the revolutionary impulse and the conservative reaction against it.

In Kierkegaardian terms, Karl Marx is a classic example of the ethical sphere of existence. Marx became profoundly alienated from the "aesthetic" milieu in which he found himself, which was a scene of misery for millions of workers, while a few business owners reaped huge profits. Marx rebelled against this exploitation and began to develop in his mind a vision for an alternative social order in which all exploitation would disappear.

The key to the ethical sphere of existence is confidence in humanity's ability to bring the good into existence in time. The person who has entered into this sphere begins to believe that this good has come into being in his own existence and in the existence of others who have begun to think and act as he does. Those who have not entered into this new sphere of ethical existence, those who continue to be trapped by the past, are seen by the revolutionaries as the enemies of this good which is coming into being in time. A sharp moral dichotomy is drawn between *we* who are for justice, peace, equality, etc., and *they* who are the "capitalists," "reactionaries," "imperialists," etc. *We* are good and *they* are evil.[13] The following quotation from Lenin evokes very clearly this dichotomizing outlook:

Thousands of practical forms and methods of accounting and controlling the rich, the rogues and the idlers should be devised and put to a practical test by the communes themselves, by small units in town and country. Variety is a guarantee of vitality here, a pledge of success in achieving the single common aim--to cleanse the land of Russia of all sorts of harmful insects, of crook-fleas, of bedbugs--the rich, and so on and so forth. In one place half a score of rich, a dozen crooks, half a dozen workers who shirk their work ... will be put in prison. In another place they will be put to cleaning latrines. In a third place they will be provided with "yellow tickets" after they have served their time, so that all the people shall have them under surveillance, as *harmful* persons, until they reform. In a fourth place, one out of every ten idlers will be shot on the spot. In a fifth place mixed methods may be adopted, and by probational release, for example, the rich, the bourgeois intellectuals, the crooks and hooligans who are corrigible will be given an opportunity to reform quickly. The more variety there will be, the better and richer will be our general experience, the more certain and more rapid will be the success of socialism, and the easier will it be for practice to devise--for only practice can devise--the best methods and means of struggle.[14]

The revolutionary is one who cuts himself off from the sinful past of the human race in a movement of "repentance" that leads to the setting up of another closed-up, unfree sphere of existence.

Kierkegaard's understanding of personality as a synthesis of opposing elements leads us to understand the concept of scapegoating in dialectical terms, in relation to the spheres of existence which humanity divides itself into.

For those who inhabit the aesthetic sphere of existence, such as the Nazis, the creating Word of God continually brings the possibility of redemption and new life. This possibility is feared and is struggled against (*Mein Kampf*). The demoniac personality attempts to fight off the possibility of its "destruction" by finding scapegoats and destroying *them*. In other words, the scapegoat is an unconscious symbolization of the self which the individual is called to become. *For those who live in the aesthetic sphere, the scapegoat is the "shadow" of the future.* The Nazis killed the Jews because they were panic-stricken before the redemptive future which God was calling them into.

The sphere of existence opened up by Marxism is a mirror image of Naziism. Here, the scapegoat which is killed is the symbol of the sinful past which has been left behind in the wake of the righteous revolution. The scapegoat now represents the ego centric, backward, "aesthetic" being who is responsible for the alienated condition of society. The revolutionary has escaped from this "bourgeois" sphere of existence, and now turns against it with a vengeance, separating himself from it completely. *For those who inhabit the ethical sphere of existence, the scapegoat is the "shadow" of the past.* In this we can see the "anxiety before the evil" which signifies once again the human avoidance of becoming a self, a paradoxical synthesis. Stalin's "purges" were a working out of the inner dynamic of this form of flight from God.

There is a sense in which World War II has not yet come to an end.[15] The struggle between Naziism and Stalinism which was set up at that time has continued on in the form of the struggle between the capitalist West and the communist East, the so-called Cold War. In Kierkegaardian terms this is a struggle between the aesthetic and the ethical spheres of existence. In the violent polarity which has developed between the eastern and western blocs we see the way in which people fall off to one side or the other of the dialectic of human existence. Each person is being called by God to become a synthesis of the temporal and the eternal, the finite and the infinite, necessity and freedom, the past and the future, and yet it is possible for us to reject this call and prevent the synthesis from coming together within our existence. We thus become estranged from ourselves and enter into a battle with the other side of the dialectic, from which we have alienated ourselves. We battle against the shadow of the future or against the shadow of the past, turning our fellow human beings into the embodiment of that against which we are struggling. We either try to kill the "new Adam" which we are called to become, or we try to kill the sinful "old Adam" from which we are attempting to escape. In either case, we are preventing the coming together of the synthesis which constitutes true human personality.

From the point of view which we have been developing it becomes apparent that the citizens of the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. need each other in order to play out their despair; they need to have a scapegoat against which to battle in order to fortify their precarious sphere of existence. This is the central fact which lies at the root of the insanity of nuclear weapons. The magnitude of our weapons is a measure of the magnitude of our fear of being brought into being by God.

* * *

It is due chiefly to the influence of Carl Jung that the idea of the "projection of the shadow" has entered into popular consciousness.[16] My use of the word "shadow" in this paper is in a sense an echo of Jung, but unlike him I do not see the "shadow" as one among various elements which make up the psyche. I see the "shadow" as a possibility of being which is held at bay by the individual who is trying to avoid becoming the self which God is creating. The "shadow" is oneself, changed by the hearing of the Word of God. A Jungian reading this paper might say that what I have referred to as recognizing one's own sinfulness is essentially what Jung meant by the "withdrawal of the projection of the shadow." I have no objection to this comparison, but the question which needs to be asked is: "How does this withdrawal come about?" Is it a matter of a person simply deciding to stop hating his enemy? Is it a matter of a psychotherapist meeting with a person once a week for five years? Is it a matter of reading a book by Jung or Neumann and thinking about it? For Kierkegaard the recognition of one's sinfulness is only made possible by the reality of God's judgement; it is not an autonomous human possibility. If Kierkegaard were here today, he might say that instead of speaking of "the unconscious"

we should speak of that of which we are not conscious, because of our closed-upness. We are unconscious of the God who brings us into being as he forgives our sins and calls us to enter into the new creation.

In relation to Kierkegaard's thought, Ernest Becker's theory of scapegoating is interesting but seriously flawed. In *The Denial of Death* and *Escape from Evil* Becker tries unsuccessfully to force Kierkegaard's thought into the mold of his own theory.[17] He argues that the "mainspring of human behavior" is the fear of death, and he seeks to explain all human culture on this basis. But his main blind-spot in relationship to Kierkegaard was his inability to see that, for Kierkegaard, the individual exists before the living God, who is calling him into fullness of life. Sin, for Kierkegaard, is avoidance of this call; in other words, sin is the denial of life, fear of creation, flight from God. Becker never took this essential theological basis of Kierkegaard's thought seriously, which left him fixated on the individual's relationship with his own physical death.

In *For Your Own Good: Hidden Cruelty in Child-Rearing and the Roots of Violence* Alice Miller argues that all violent actions of adults, whether self-destructive or destructive of others, are the result of some form of neglect or abuse which they suffered as a child. In her words: "... every act of cruelty, no matter how brutal and shocking, has traceable antecedents in its perpetrator's past." [18] Instead of looking primarily toward the past, Kierkegaard's thought leads us to find the roots of violence in the violent person's evasion of the call of God, the call of the future. Miller remains limited to the web of human relationships, and does not acknowledge the theological dimension of human existence. In the language of *The Concept of Anxiety*, she only sees the "quantitative determinations" of sinfulness in human history, without seeing the "qualitative leap into sin," which is human evasion of God in the present moment in time. She sees victims everywhere, but no sinners, no willful defiance of God. Her thought is analogous to the Marxist mythology which identifies evil with the bourgeoisie, the past, and identifies good with the proletariat, the future; Miller identifies evil with the parents and good with the children. But the human condition cannot be divided up so simply; the buck must stop being passed at some point. The doctrine of sin must be grounded in the real, active sin of each individual, instead of being watered down and lost in a universal haze of repetitious victimage which absolves everyone of responsibility (even Adolf Hitler!).

Among the various attempts to understand political violence of which I am aware René Girard's is the most impressive and thought-provoking.[19] His writings are justly described as having an epochal place in social science, and in general I find myself in agreement with his theses, to the extent that I can grasp them. My criticism of Girard is, however, that he is stronger in "social psychology" than in "individual psychology"; that is, his sociological edifice seems to lack the understanding of individual motivation which I have been attempting to articulate in this paper. Kierkegaard's dictum, "the crowd is untruth," is the perfect epigraph for Girard's work, but an understanding of the "untruthfulness" of the individuals who make up the crowd is only vaguely presented there, in the presupposition of a "desire" which drives the mechanism of mimeticism. In the end it seems that Girard's doctrine of sin is essentially Socratic: sin is ignorance, unconsciousness of the scapegoat mechanism. For a deeper understanding of sin we must turn to Kierkegaard. From him we can learn that the "social crisis" which is resolved through the "scapegoat mechanism" is in reality the crisis of human existence before God, the crisis of creation. Sin is flight from the possibility of new creation.

In fairness to Girard, I must say that he realizes very clearly that the key to the whole problem is found in the Prologue of John, but he writes in the genre of sociological theory rather than the genre of theology, which prevents him from speaking as freely as he might of the Incarnation of the Word of God in human history. The central point of the preceding criticisms is that it is not possible to understand human violence without acknowledging that human beings are addressed by the Word of God, and live their lives in reaction to this Word. I believe that Girard would agree with this statement.

In this chapter I have argued that Kierkegaard's thought helps us to understand the basic motivations which impel human beings to violence. This insight which Kierkegaard has into the human condition is not simply a product of his own genius; his source of knowledge is the New Testament. Everything which he knows about humanity comes

from his life-long attempt to understand the meaning of Christ's life, teachings, and death.

Christ is the creating Word of God. As such, he speaks the message which humanity cannot bear to hear in its attempt to flee from its own creation. This message is a paradoxical call to the individual: a call "forward" into fullness of life as a child of God, and a call "backward" into a true awareness of one's sin. The gift of forgiveness brings new life and hope as it opens up the individual to God's future, but at the same time forgiveness brings with it the sorrow of confession and repentance. The person who is brought into being by Christ must live in this tension, without trying to escape from it.

That we do in fact try to escape from this tension is the most obvious fact of the modern world, for those who have eyes to see. Speaking very generally, we can see that the capitalist sphere manifests "anxiety before the good," a rejection of the call to move forward into the kingdom of God, while the communist sphere manifests "anxiety before the evil," a rejection of the call to confess one's own guilty participation in the sinfulness of humanity. In this sense the East-West conflict unwittingly witnesses to the world-creating message spoken by Jesus Christ, the Word of God.

AFTERWORD (1990)

The essay you have just read was presented at a conference in 1988 and revised in the following months. Since that time the remarkable events that have occurred in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, which can be called a "thawing" of the Cold War, have made some of the sentences in the paper sound a bit dated. In this connection, I have three brief comments to add: (1) The heart of the paper is an attempt to use Kierkegaard's thought as a help in understanding certain momentous events in 20th century history--the Holocaust, Stalin's purges, and the nuclear arms race. These events have occurred; they have become a permanent part of human history. If there is any validity in the way in which I have applied Kierkegaard's thought to the task of understanding these events, that validity will not be lost due to the occurrence of any other events later on in history. (2) I did not say, and did not mean to imply, that the Cold War would continue on indefinitely. To the extent that the Cold War has indeed "thawed" (in the Eastern Bloc, if not in China), that is a sign that individuals in both the East and the West have become less fearful (less anxiety-dominated) and more open to change (more open to the process of creation). Once again, that does not invalidate anything that was said in the paper, but is in fact the sort of change which was implicitly hoped for in it. Neither the present author nor Kierkegaard is a determinist with regard to the future. (3) I believe that there is a value in allowing this piece of writing to stand intact as an artifact of the year in which it was written. If it so happens that ten or twenty or fifty years from now all nuclear weapons have been abolished, a few of the persons who grow up in that post-nuclear era may read this essay at some point in their lives and glean from it a feeling for what it was like to live under the threat of global nuclear war. Of course, there is a wealth of other writing which they could read to similar effect, but this one is rather unusual in being a piece of Kierkegaard scholarship.

As a final note, even if 50 or 100 years from now all armies have been abolished (or if they haven't), there will still be an ongoing debate between the advocates of differing social philosophies. If this debate is still being carried on by those whose interpretation of human existence is distorted by what I have called falling off to one side or the other of the ridge, this essay will still be as relevant then as it is today, although the tone of urgency in which it was written will indeed be dated. That Kierkegaard's thought is an important contribution to the debates over social and political philosophy is my firm belief, as against those who would dismiss such an idea with a wave of the hand and a chuckle. When social and political thought is distilled to its essence, it always returns to the problem of understanding human nature, human psychology, the human condition. In this realm, those who wave off Kierkegaard do so at the risk of their own intellectual stultification (which is precisely what the Master of Irony expected to happen). It is my hope that at least a few persons will see in Kierkegaard not an impossible "individualist" but a profound visionary of the actualities and potentialities of human community.

NOTES

1. *The Concept of Anxiety*, trans. Reidar Thomte (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980), p. 42.
2. *The Journals and Papers of Soren Kierkegaard*, trans. Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1967-1978), vol. 1, entry 94.
3. *Anxiety*, p. 42.
4. Stephen Crites gives a strikingly similar analysis of divine creation as something to be understood in terms of creative possibilities. See p. 154 in this volume.
5. The theme that the doctrine of creation is fundamental to Kierkegaard's understanding of human life and relationship is also prominent in the chapters by Michael Plekon and George Connell in this volume.
6. *Philosophical Fragments*, trans. Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985), p. 21.
7. *The Sickness Unto Death*, trans. Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983), p. 14.
8. Compare Stephen Crites' account of the self-synthesis on pp. 149-158 in this volume.
9. Notice how naturally this analysis is extended from individuals to nations, confirming Crites' argument on p. 150.
10. For an introduction to the spheres, see Gregor Malantschuk, *Kierkegaard's Way to the Truth*, trans. Mary Michelsen (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1963).
11. My translation. Cf. *Anxiety*, pp. 123-124.
12. *The Point of View for My Work as an Author*, trans. Walter Lowrie (New York: Harper and Row, 1962), pp. 113, 115. I have found an extraordinary quotation from Franklin Roosevelt that bears directly on the subject of this essay. It is found in a book by Frances Perkins, *The Roosevelt I Knew* (New York: The Viking Press, 1946), p. 148. Perkins describes how during World War II Roosevelt had become acquainted with a young Kierkegaard scholar named Howard A. Johnson, who encouraged the President to read some of Kierkegaard's writings. Roosevelt did so (apparently he read at least *The Concept of Dread*), and Perkins recounts a conversation with him that went as follows:
Some weeks later I happened to be reporting to Roosevelt on problems concerning the War Labor Board. He was looking at me, nodding his head, and, I thought, following my report, but suddenly he interrupted me. "Frances, have you ever read Kierkegaard?"
"Very little--mostly reviews of his writings."
"Well, you ought to read him, " he said with enthusiasm. "It will teach you something."
I thought perhaps he meant it would teach me something about the War Labor Board.
"It will teach you about the Nazis," he said. "Kierkegaard explains the Nazis to me as nothing else ever has. I have never been able to make out why people who are obviously human beings could behave like that. They are human, yet they behave like demons. Kierkegaard gives you an understanding of what it is in man that makes it possible for these Germans to be so evil. This fellow, Johnson, over at St. John's, knows a lot about Kierkegaard and his theories. You'd better read him."
13. Of course Marxists by no means have a monopoly on this kind of dichotomous thinking; all of us tend to think that "God must be on our side."
14. *The Lenin Anthology*, ed. Robert C. Tucker (New York: W.W. Norton, 1975), pp. 431-432.
15. Perhaps the recent events in Eastern Europe mean it has finally ended. See the Afterword to this essay.
16. See "After the Catastrophe," in *The Collected Works of Carl Jung*, vol. 10, *Civilization in Transition*, trans. R.F.C. Hull (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1964); *The Undiscovered Self*, trans. Eugene Rolfe (New York: Mentor Books, 1957); and Erich Neumann, *Depth Psychology and a New Ethic*, trans. Eugene Rolfe (New York: Putnam's Sons, 1969).
17. See *The Denial of Death* (New York: The Free Press, 1973); *Escape from Evil* (New York: The Free Press, 1975); and "The Heroics of Everyday Life," in *Voices and Visions*, ed. Sam Keen (New York: Harper and Row, 1974).
18. *For Your Own Good*, trans. Hildegard and Hunter Hannum (New York: Farrar, Straus, Giroux, 1984), p. ix.
19. See *Violence and the Sacred*, trans. Patrick Gregory (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1977); *Things Hidden since the Foundation of the World*, trans. Stephen Bann and Michael Meteer (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1987); and *The Scapegoat*, trans. Yvonne Freccero (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986).

Kierkegaard—who while widely considered to be the first existentialist philosopher, is globally regarded as being modern history's most influential Christian theologian and moralist—and about whom, in June-1988, I was honored to be among the conference attendees at St. Olaf when the landmark *Toward A Kierkegaardian Understanding Of Hitler, Stalin, And The Cold War* presentation was made—the most important parts applicable to what is now occurring are: Kierkegaard's understanding of personality as a synthesis of opposing elements leads us to understand the concept of scapegoating in dialectic. Hitler and Stalin established a regime of brutal violence and terror on the occupied territories. The Germans turned what they now called the General Governorate into a "discharge tank" to which thousands of deported Jews and Poles flocked. Here, in the Governorate, the Holocaust began, the mass murder of European Jews. Years later, at the height of the Cold War, Stalin yearned deeply for the lost treaty. "Together with the Germans we would be invincible!" At that time, the attitude toward the pact defined the entire debate surrounding Europe's common historical memory. The demand for equal recognition of the victims of Stalinist and Nazi terror was sometimes mistakenly seen as an attempt to deny the singularity of the Holocaust. BELLINGER, Charles K. (1992): *Toward a Kierkegaardian Understanding of Hitler, Stalin, and the Cold War*. In: George B. Connell and C. Stephen Evans (eds.), *Foundations of Kierkegaard's Vision of Community: Religion, Ethics, and Politics in Kierkegaard*. New Jersey: Humanities Press, pp. 218-230. What is forgotten is that it was Stalin and the Soviet Union that were Hitler and Nazi Germany's ally in starting this horrific war that took the lives of well over 50 million people, and set the stage, after the defeat of Hitler, for the nearly half-century enslavement of the eastern half of Europe under communist tyranny. Stalin, in the Soviet Union, had a clearer understanding of this threat and showed greater resolve to resist fascism's increasing power. He ended the Soviet Union's aggressive propaganda against the West, and attempted to form a "popular front" with other anti-fascist nations and groups in Europe on the basis of "collective security." Stalin supported both a massacre in Katyn and the mass rapes in East Germany upon its capture. Stalin by no means believed in a world where all people were like in *Star Trek*, Soviet Communism was centred around labour and equal enjoyment of the output of such labour, if Communism took over the world, we would all have Stalin's virtues forced on us. It's hard to answer this without understanding the nature of Hitler and Stalin's leadership style. They both plumbed the worst depths of human depravity and trafficked in mass suffering. While they were both definitely evil men, they were very different types of evil. The reason for such hatred toward Stalin is pretty obvious - he made Soviet Union an industrial and nuclear superpower able to resist US wishes to control everything.