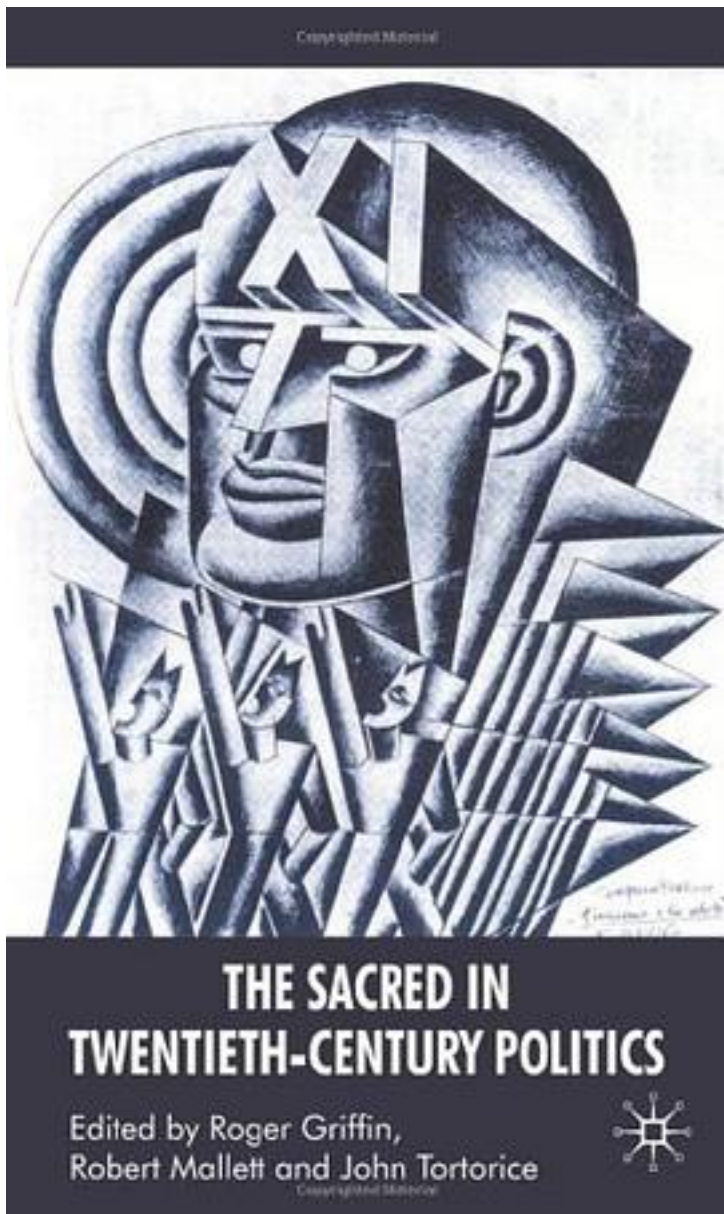


# The Sacred in Twentieth-Century Politics



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September 11th 2001 brought the entire question of religion's place in modern political ideology into sharp focus. Yet in effect this dysfunctional symbiosis had already been a feature of the international landscape for many decades. Scholars such as Eric Voeglin and Raymond Aron, to name but a few, delineated and assessed the way in which regime types such as Stalin's Soviet Union, Mussolini's fascist Italy and Hitler's Nazi Germany assumed quasi religious forms, substituting an omnipotent divine being with a corporeal and illuminated leader, as early as the 1920s and 1930s. But it is only recently that academic attention has returned with a vengeance to examine the manner in which revolutionary movements frequently adopt a religious form, or even hijack existing mainstream faiths in order to pursue a frequently brutal and violent political agenda based on sweeping social and individual transformation along the lines of official dogma and doctrine. This volume, dedicated to the great scholar of fascism and the Iberian world, Professor Stanley G. Payne, aims to emulate his spirit of enquiry by offering a new series of theoretical and case study analyses of the 'sacred' dimension of politics in the modern era. An international team of highly respected scholars examines the political religion and politicised religion concepts on a truly global basis, bringing together considerable knowledge and experience in one volume. Both the 'totalitarian' regimes of the mid-twentieth century and other political forms such as Castroism, Hindutva, Missiology and American Apocalypticism are all discussed in provocative and detailed essays. Together they offer readers the first ever comprehensive judgement on the continuing importance of the sacred within the political in the modern era.

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