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TOWARDS A POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY

KLEMENT MITTERPACH – RICHARD ŠTAHEL (eds.)

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Dear readers,

we are glad to offer you the 12th issue of Philosophica, a department volume of studies, published by the Department of Philosophy of the Constantine the Philosopher University in Nitra.

This issue is special in several respects. In the first place, it has been projected as a special English edition of five studies dedicated to subjects occupying the area of social and political philosophy. It is the first time we have arranged a compilation of studies written mostly by authors working in other, even foreign, universities, specialists who present their ideas about what has been their long-term focus in the field.

Despite the diversity of subjects and particular thematic focuses, each text deals in its own way with an issue which resonates as contemporary, regardless of its particular historical and conceptual origins or development.

In Tomáš Hauer’s text, it is the acceleration of speed to its utmost limit which moulds contemporaneity itself into the state of inertia, presented as a key subject of the French philosopher Paul Virilio, whose writing is concerned with the social, cultural and political consequences resulting from the process.

Miroslava Klečková, concerning the current discourse on the radicalization of the political scene, draws attention to N. A. Berdyaev’s ideas about revolutions, conceived by him as inevitable though thoroughly negative events.

Ideological heritage of the French Revolution, as it was confronted by Pius IX and Leo XIII, becomes a subject of Arkadiusz Modrzejewski’s contribution which outlines the project of Leo XIII in which the Church no longer plays a reactionary role, but can preserve its unity and identity as a catalyst of spiritual and material progress in the contemporary world.

Richard St’ahel presents the view that the current crisis, even though complicated by the threat of environmental and energy crises, resembles in some of its main features, such as globalization of market and de-socialization of economy, the situation of the 19th century market and the global economic crisis of 1929-1932, which represent a parallel to the present situation including its dangerous radicalization in the political sphere.

Christos Terezis and Elias Tempelis suggest that the idea of rationally organized state institutions, as it was declared by the French Revolution, had its predecessors, going back as far as the Neoplatonist philosopher Proclus, who stated that politics represents an inevitable justification of ethics and was
convinced that legislation must be based on the supreme normative principles of the metaphysical world.

We believe that these studies offer the opportunity to be inspired by the insight of authors, which, although particular, in each case represents a universal commitment as a condition of pursuing the thinking on the social and political issues today.

Editors
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PAUL VIRILIO: SPEED, POLITICS AND LOGISTICS OF PERCEPTION

Tomáš Hauer

The study Speed, Politics and Logistics of Perception analyses the theory of a French cultural critic, city planner and philosopher Paul Virilio, called dromology. Virilio's texts deal with the impact of speed on the contemporary world. The development of means of transport used by people for the purpose of movement – from horse carts, railways and cars to planes, culminated by the arrival of digitalized audiovisual hypertext, the last “vehicle” that replaces its drivers’ physical movement by total inertia. How does that historical succession starting with metabolic vehicles such as a horse, ships, railways, cars planes to the latest ways of teletransfer, telepresence and audiovisual vehicles, influence our present-day concept of the world? What are the social, cultural and political consequences resulting from continuous acceleration of social processes, from inertia of absolute speed? Can increasing the speed of our technologies lead up to the irreversible immobilization of social players? Does our effort to represent the reality depend on the kind of media and on speed? The study analyses Virilio’s texts and presents an interpretation of the main propositions of his theory.

Keywords: Speed – Dromology – Logistics of perception – Polar inertia – Integral accident

Motto: If all is movement, all is at the same time accident and our existence as metabolic vehicle can be summed up as series of collisions...

(Virilio 1991, 103)

When somebody asks us what politics we adhere to, instead of answering, let us ask him what he thinks he is – a human being, nature, history, society, state, religion. Politics hastens to switch the lights off, so that all cats are black. We seem to have succeeded in keeping the lights off for a long time.
All the great ideas look equally void and powerless nowadays. To switch the lights on means to interconnect politics again with the questions – what a human being, nature, society, state, religion are.

How is speed of movement related to experiencing topicality and spatiality? How is the present-day “logistics of perception”, i.e. that forced and confrontational organization of our life driven by the purposeful distribution of visual information, reflected in our concept of society, man, politics, values or religion? How do emerging metabolic and technical vehicles (speed media), their development and connection with transport revolutions partake in historical transformations of our concept of the world? Man has always struggled to overcome the distance and dominate the space. The development of means of transport used by people for the purpose of movement – from horse carts, railways and cars to planes, culminated by the arrival of digitalized audio-visual hypertext, the last “vehicle” that replaces its drivers’ physical movement by total inertia. How does that historical succession starting with metabolic vehicles such as a horse, ships, railways, cars planes to the latest ways of tele-transfer, tele-presence and audio-visual vehicles, influence our present-day concept of the world? What are the social, cultural and political consequences resulting from continuous acceleration of social processes, from inertia of absolute speed? Can increasing the speed of our technologies lead up to the irreversible immobilization of social players? Does our effort to represent the reality depend on the kind of media and on speed? What is the role of the excess of representations of the reality created by technical devices in our effort to grasp the contemporary culture? The French city planner, cultural critic and philosopher Paul Virilio has been wondering about such issues since the mid-seventies.

Already one of Paul Virilio’s first publications _Speed and Politics_ (1977) is an attempt to analyze the above mentioned changes. Virilio tried to defend an idea that the key factor for development and form of individual social formations in human history would be handling with speed (in transportation, information exchange and mainly waging wars). The better the given empire or state has been at controlling the speed, the more efficient it has proved in claiming its power and accumulating wealth. If we comply with this viewpoint, we can discover two fundamental novelties in the current phase of history. The first one is based on the fact that contemporary society more and more relies on speed which could not be achieved in other historical formations and which is concurrently the final and unexceeded speed: the
velocity of light. The second novelty is the fact that the absolute speed of propagating a signal utilized by modern information and communication technologies has become common in our everyday life. Virilio strives for a critical examination of this phenomenon.


Philosophic background of Virilio’s theory is neither G. Marcel’s French existentialism, nor postmodernism, which is unequivocally refused by Virilio, mainly as far as architecture is concerned. Surprisingly, it is phenomenology in M. Merleau-Ponty’s interpretation. “Postmodernism is a notion that makes sense in architecture, through the work of Robert Venturi and so on. Since I am teaching architecture, to me, postmodernism is a suitcase word, a syncretism. In architecture it is a clear-cut phenomenon: styles are mixed up, history is ignored, one goes for melting pot of approaches. But as far as thought is concerned, thought as developed in the years 1970-1980, I simply cannot understand why people are talking about postmodernism. Post-structuralism? Yes, OK. Postmodernism? It doesn’t make any sense to me. Hence, I do not feel linked at all with postmodernity” (Armitage 2000, 25).

Virilio summarizes his teacher and mentor Merleau-Ponty's influence on him as follows: “First of all, I was a pupil of Merleau-Ponty, of Jean Wahl and of Vladimir Jankélévitch, to name three French philosophers who were teaching at the Sorbonne at that time. The one to which I felt most attracted was quite naturally Maurice Merleau-Ponty, and his Phenomenology of Perception. Why? Because I am so totally involved with perception myself, through my childhood, through painting. Yes, I painted, I even worked with famous painters such as Henri Matisse and Georges Braque when I was young. I am a man of perception, a man of the gaze, I am a man of the visual school of thought. Therefore, Merleau-Ponty’s Phenomenology of Perception appeared to me to form a crossroads with the psychology of form, with Gestalt and the whole Berlin School. And thus it is at this crossroads of the
psychology of form, Gestalt theory and the Phenomenology of Perception that I position myself” (Armitage 2000, 28).

Concern for human physical existence, even obsession by it, lies in the very core of Virilio’s interest in technologies and their impact on the present-day politics and culture. Since the 1960s, Virilio has been continually interested in how acceleration, speed, increasing acceleration of technological innovations have been transforming the very framework within which our experiencing space and time have been rapidly changing. In his talk with Friedrich Kittler, a media theorist, Virilio summarizes his view of the present in the statement: “I believe that a caste of technology monks is being created in our times, and that there exist monasteries of sort whose goal it is to pave the way for new kind of civilization, one that has nothing to do with civilization as we remember. The work of these technology monks is not carried out in the way it was in the Middle Ages. Rather, it is carried out through the revaluation of knowledge, like that achieved for Antiquity. The contribution of monks to the rediscovery of Antiquity is well known. But what is not well known is that we now have technology monks, not mystics, but monks who are busy constructing a society without any points of reference. Indeed, we are confronted with what I call technological fundamentalism. That is, fundamentalism in the sense of a monotheism of information. And with information monotheism comes what I think of as greatest danger of all, the slide into a future without humanity. I believe that violence, and even hyper-violence, springs out of technological fundamentalism” (Armitage 2001, 104-105). Human body disappears under the dictatorship of movement, while, simultaneously, the acceleration of speed of transferring new technologies brings about and creates new shapes and forms of inertia and motionlessness.

While modern airports should have become new cosmopolitan ports sui generis, they have paradoxically caused “polar inertia”. This polar inertia is experienced by managers who travel between Paris and New York. “When a businessman travels from Paris to New York, New York to Paris by Concorde, he begins to experience the situation of polar inertia. This new form of sedentariness is the active tendency in technology. Sedentariness in the instant of absolute speed. It’s no longer a sedentariness of non-movement, it’s the opposite” (Virilio 1997a, 79). Polar inertia is called polar because it is the opposite of the initial acceleration. At the dawn of modern societies, in the world of natural space and time, criterions related to physical existence, the
principles of acceleration and deceleration were valid. People, things as well as information could be transferred faster or more slowly, therefore it made sense to consider terms such as acceleration or deceleration. In the era of absolute speed, these terms lose their meaning entirely. It is no longer faster or more slowly, but always and at all times – absolutely fast. We have been condemned to stay in inertia of absolute speed. The statement that we are trapped in absolute speed of transfer and transport (e.g. of digital hypertext) must be supplemented with the substitution or transformation of our earlier, usual – natural criteria of experiencing time and space. Those have been replaced with criteria coming from the new world of tele-inter-activity, from the area of digital hypertext. We have touched the absolute, observes Virilio (Virilio 1995, 144).

We live at the time when the mankind have reached its cosmologic speed limit. One of the significant consequences is the fact that the way of communication and criteria coming from the environment of inertia of absolute speed overlap time and space experienced on everyday basis in such massive way that man becomes a teleparticipant, he is not found anywhere in space and his naturally experienced time is overlapped by teletopia, the time of the particular moment. Spatial determination is disappearing due to high speed of information transfer and transport of objects, the time interval has been reduced to mere “now”. We are now in the situation of the substitution of the direct perception related to the body in movement by the perception coming from the world of tele-inter-activity (Virilio 1994b, 49). Speed! We wallow in speed. In his influential book Speed and Politics, Virilio elaborated this topic in a theory he called – dromology, according to a Greek word “dromos” denoting a track. In the course of time people have tried to increase their speed. They have done it by means of a horse, ship, train, plane.... However, this speed has always been relative, which means it has not controlled the entire space. Nowadays, we have reached the limit that cannot be exceeded – the terminal velocity of light. This has resulted in globalization of time. The world time is ahead of the local time. However, there is a risk of integral catastrophes.

Dromology – a study of speed, logic of speed as Virilio’s key construct, cannot be viewed from the standpoint of natural sciences. Dromology as well as many other Virilio’s key terms (dromoscopy, metabolic vehicle, dromosphere, optical clones, time-light, etc.) are neologisms, constructs created by Virilio as means to focus our attention to those hitherto
suppressed, overlooked or invisible aspects of objects appearing in experience. Dromology concentrates on how the phenomenon of speed influences, determines or limits the way we perceive objects, how the field of our perception and its structure change by means of acceleration of speed. According to Virilio, we cannot study and analyze social, political or military history unless we first admit that the above mentioned spheres are in a substantial way jointly formed by vehicles of movement as well as by speed of transfer through which those “movement vehicles” are realized. Instead of movement and speed of transfer, the key factors for Virilio are those which form social, political, or any other area of society life. In one of intensified formulations, Virilio escalates his construct of dromology in the statement: “In fact, there was no industrial revolution, but only a dromocratic revolution, there is no democracy, only dromocracy, there is no strategy only dromology” (Virilio 1986, 46). Movement controls events and the speed affecting movement in modern societies causes the collapse of the traditional political structures (Virilio 2005a, 105). In many of his texts Virilio emphasizes that speed is not a phenomenon, but a relation between phenomena. The difference between contemporary society and societies of the past consists in the fact that earlier speed used to be connected mainly with transport, now it concerns relations within information. Concerning the margo term speed, in the first chapter of the book The Politics of the Very Worst, Virilio states: “The question of speed is central. Speed and wealth go hand in hand. To give a philosophical definition of speed, we can say that it is not a phenomenon, but rather the relationship between phenomena. In other words, it is relativity itself. We can go even further and say that speed is a milieu. It doesn’t just involve the time between two points, but a milieu that is provoked by a vehicle. This vehicle can be either metabolic, consider the role of chivalry in history, or technical, the role of ship in maritime conquest, railroads or transatlantic planes – and it governs societies. The horse influenced history with the great conquerors, while the navy influenced colonization. The navy is a type of speed. Thus, for me, speed is milieu” (Virilio 1999, 13-14).

In the third chapter of the book Polar Inertia, subtitled Kinematic Optics, Virilio again presents one of variations on the topic – what is speed as follows: “For if speed is not phenomenon, but only relation between phenomena (relativity itself), we might adapt Bernard de Clairvaux by stating that light is the name for shadow of absolute speed, or to be more precise, that the speed of rays of light is the name for the shadow of the speed of light of
We would be led to conclude that speed is useful for seeing, but above all that it makes ‘light’ visible even before the object (or phenomena) that it illuminates. This precisely is the dromosphere. Not so much expansion of the universe brought to light by the famous red shift in the spectrum, but a purely relativistic recognition, that it is speed which enlightens the universe of perceptible and measurable phenomena” (Virilio 2000d, 45).

Concerning speed, in the book *Pure War* Virilio claims the following: “Speed is the unknown side of politics, and has been since the beginning, this is nothing new. The wealth aspect in politics was spotlighted a long time ago. One usually says that power is tied in with wealth. In my opinion, it’s tied and foremost with speed. Wealth comes afterward. People forget the dromological dimension of power, its ability to inveigle, whether by taxes, conquest, etc. Every society is founded on a relation of speed. Every society is dromocratic” (Virilio 1997b, 57). In this manner, speed is for Virilio both the means that enables us to see, however, at the same time the factor that limits the way things appear in our perception. In other words, according to Virilio, “we should never forget that the truth of phenomena is always limited by the speed at which they spring up” (Virilio 2000d, 82). We have to grasp the mystery of technology and put it on the table as ancient philosophers did with the mystery of nature, Virilio incites (Virilio 1997a, 46). As for the question about the connection between speed and wealth, Virilio answered: “Power and speed are inseparable just as wealth and speed are inseparable. Power means, above all, dromocratic power – dromos comes from the Greek and means race – and every society is a race society. Whether in ancient societies through the role of chivalry (the first Roman bankers were horsemen), or in maritime power through the conquest of the seas, power is always the power to control a territory with messengers, modes of transportation and communication. Global society is currently in a gestation period and cannot be understood without speed of light or the automatic quotations of the stock markets in Wall Street, Tokyo or London” (Virilio 1999, 14).

Virilio’s influential book *Speed and Politics* analyses new problems resulting from the fact that the development of industrial capitalism has reached the stage in which wealth and power in society have been interconnected with ever increasing speed. In view of Virilio’s statement that wealth is an aspect of speed (Virilio 1999, 49), it has become necessary to consider speed and all its aspects and consequences through a prism of a new
discipline – dromology. In an interview with J. Armitage, Virilio comments on this: “Dromology originates from the Greek word dromos. Hence dromology is the science of the ride, the journey, the drive, the way. To me this means that speed and riches are totally linked concepts. And that the history of the world is not only about the political economy of riches, which means wealth, money, capital, but also about political economy of speed. If time is money, as they say, then speed is power. You see it with velocity of the predators, of the cavalry, of railways, of ships and maritime power. So, all my work has been about attempting to trace the dromocratic dimension of societies from ancient Greek to our present-day societies. All societies are pyramidal in nature. The higher speed belongs to the upper reaches of society, the slower to the bottom. The wealth pyramid is the replica of the velocity pyramid” (Armitage 2000, 35).

Dromologic revolutions cause artificial acceleration of speed in the form of steam or combustion engine, or, nowadays, nuclear energy and they immediately form both, e.g. waging wars and kinds of communication. Vehicles of speed create new tracks and nodal points (ports, roads, airports, telecommunications etc.) through which things, goods, money, weapons, people or information will start flowing within a different structure. A territory is space across which speed, technology, politics, economy and everyday life flow by means of vehicles of speed (transport, communication, etc.). Nowadays, both politics and the city are victims of nodal points through which transport of things and transfer of information flow (Virilio 1986, 7).

Virilio connects the very origin of cities with a matter of war and defence (Virilio 1986, 38). Speed acceleration has dramatically grown since the 19th century. The arrival of the telegraph initiated the period accelerating the possibilities of information transfer by overcoming the traditional barriers of space and time. Virilio stresses that the role of speed for organizing civilization and politics is essential. His dromology focuses on studying the tools that accelerate and intensify speed as well as those social groups that control it. As a matter of fact, “technologies are never neutral, they are a mysterious and dangerous continent” (Virilio 1997a, 148).

Virilio further pays attention to connections and relations among technologies, speed and war. Virilio's perspective concerning speed leads to the conclusion that cities as well as cathedrals, economies, politics and other key building blocks of modern society are the product of military and technological mobilization and development. Nowadays, technology cleared
of socioeconomic or cultural concepts longs to become a metaphor of the world, to be constituted as the revolution of awareness. The leading idea of parapsychology of the 19th century was to challenge partitions not only among individual senses, but also among individuals, and to get the impression of sense mass. You do not have a body, you are a body, claimed Wilhelm Reich. Nowadays, power and its technologies respond to that – you do not have speed, you are speed (Virilio 1991b, 43). The present-day events of worldwide significance, such as financial crisis or stock market crash are speed accidents. Virilio calls them “integral accidents”, because they put other errors/accidents into movement. Integral accident is an immanent constituent of technological innovations. It is encoded in their DNA. For example, inventing a plane concurrently means inventing an accident, but also inventing a breakdown/accident (Virilio 2007, 9-11, 70). Jet plane engine is an amazing thing, but at the same time it is susceptible to volcanic ash, birds, etc. Thus we get from a plane that can fly very fast to a plane that cannot fly at all. It is irrelevant, whether it is due to terrorism and fear, or due to volcano and excessive risk, or something else that the future will bring. We cannot innovate without causing some damage: “Reconciliation of nothingness and reality, the annihilation of time and space by high speeds substitutes the vastness of emptiness for that of the exoticism of travel, which was obvious for people like Heine who saw in this very annihilation the supreme goal of technique” (Virilio 1991b, 109).

In his texts, Paul Virilio tries to call attention to the fact that producing higher and higher speed can lead to shattering our natural perception of time. According to Virilio, telematic vehicles pervading the contemporary film industry function by creating artificial reality, artificial day, thus altering our own reality and our perception of what is real: “‘Film what doesn´t exist,’ the Anglo-Saxon special effects masters still say, which is basically inexact: what they are filming certainly does exist, in one manner or another. It’s the speed at which they film that doesn’t exist, and is the pure invention of the cinematographic motor. About these special effects – or ‘trick photography,’ hardly an academic phrase – Méliès liked to joke, ‘The trick, intelligently applied, today allows us to make visible the supernatural, the imaginary, even the impossible’” (Virilio 1991b, 15). Virilio works with the term optical clones, denoting a number of images of contemporary man. In this way he points out that in present-day society, man is not only the owner of his own body, but also of his image. Virilio’s theories and analyses of
contemporary society, politics and culture revolve around the assumption that man is constantly exposed to attacks of two dominating forces of the contemporary world that organize and structure its logistics of perception: *speed* and *technological devices*. His books present a critical analysis of the consequences for our perception and logistics caused by polar inertia, inertia of absolute speed.

**References**


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The contribution deals with the problem of revolutions from the perspective of Berdyaev’s philosophy. The focus is laid upon the correlation between revolution and the ideas of perfect world. The clarification of the participation of the masses in revolutionary movements reveals an interesting relation between the Russian Revolution and the French Revolution. The author tries to draw attention to the potential benefits of Berdyaev’s thinking along the lines of the current discourse regarding the radicalization of the political scene.

Keywords: Masses – Revolution – Messianism – Berdyaev – Talmon

Introduction

There are many places where the organization of society has become a subject matter of wide public participation. The possibility of general population to be involved in the decision-making processes and thus determine social or political reality is a significant feature of the ongoing societal transformation. Masses of people have been playing an unforeseen role in human history. As Le Bon puts it, it is the era of crowds (Le Bon 2001, 7).

Crowds have changed. They used to be passive, scared of their own ordeal, perhaps revolting against the hardness of their destiny, but they are not alike anymore. Anonymous faces of homogeneous masses have become a substantial element of future time. This might be an outcome of all the transformations of economic systems and social structures, leading to the wider access to education and active political and civil participation. Although the direct influence of masses on politics or economy may be questioned, it is undisputable that the new economic and political systems of modern world are tightly interconnected with the power of the crowds. It
Miroslava Klečková

could be their strength, homogeneity or simply exploitability and usability which make the masses so mighty.

According to Le Bon, the primary cause of those changes lies in the modern revolutions. They have been supposed to contribute to scepticism, as well as to widespread and pervasive nihilism connected with the questioning of traditional authorities, be it in the form of institutional organization of society or its social values: “While all our ancient beliefs are tottering and disappearing, while the old pillars of society are giving way one by one, the power of the crowd is the only force that nothing menaces, and of which the prestige is continually on the increase. The age we are about to enter will in truth be the Era of Crowds” (Le Bon 2001, 8).

Russian philosophy represented by Nikolai Alexandrovich Berdyaev, manifesting the characteristics of psychologizing approach of Dostoyevsky, searches for the causes of above-mentioned changes. It integrates an extraordinary ability for moral evaluation, social and political anticipation and comprehension of existential crises of modern man.

The issue of the masses and, consequently, the phenomenon of revolution in the perspective of Berdyaev’s philosophy show the mutual penetration of individual human lives and socio-historical reality. Berdyaev reveals a strong desire of human being to prove the meaning of his own existence in the feeling of belongingness, which often leads to the participation in the mass movements. He thus outlines important implications for the field of social anthropology and psychology.

The Phenomenon of Revolutions in the Perspective of N. A. Berdyaev

For Berdyaev, revolution is a necessity, a matter of course. It is a historical inevitability, as obvious and normal as any other natural phenomena (Berd'ajev 2004a, 63). The power of revolution is demonstrated via uncontrollable destruction and negation of the old world. Berdyaev’s belief determines a unique interpretation of the relationship between man and revolutionary movements. This relationship is not to be an expression of the significance of human with regard to revolutions, but rather it is a manifestation of destiny (Berd'ajev 2004b, 137).

Berdyaev sees a deeper ontological meaning in revolutions. This is to bring a remedy of humankind and the punishment for old sins (Berd'ajev 2004b, 137). He believes that the real meaning of revolutions remains
unrevealed and hidden. In his later work Berdyaev expresses a radical opinion that the revolutionaries are the ones who least understand their revolution (Berďajev 2004a, 63).

Berdyaev reminds that despite the understandable motives of revolutionaries, the revolution itself is beyond human rationality in terms of its prediction. This is due to the unique coexistence of rationality and irrationality, which allows on the one side the unproblematic understanding of its aspirations, but on the other, it is impossible to anticipate more specific impacts and consequences of revolution. He compares it to an incomprehensible element which can possess a man or a society, as well as to a serious illness or death of a dear one. Berdyaev stresses a rampant course of revolutions, which is characterized by a high degree of destructiveness, anger and violence. Losskij believes that Berdyaev perceives revolution as a return to chaos (Losskij 2004, 375). Accordingly, Berdyaev points out the fact that the substantial manifestation of revolution includes the radical rejection of old stagnating or deteriorating social and political systems. Berdyaev also accentuates the close connection between wars and revolutions. Concerning the issue of war – revolution relations, we may consider the parallels between his standpoint and the one of Hannah Arendt. Both are convinced that the military conflicts, given the nature and potential of the weaponry of present-day armies, are nothing less but the last possible “solution” (Arendtová 2001, 9). Instead, the urgent social and political crises culminate in revolutions. Berdyaev reminds that the wars have been transformed into revolutions, or, better to say, revolutionary type of wars (Berďajev 2004a, 80).

Berdyaev’s personal experience with the Russian Revolution implies the subject matter of his philosophical analyses. In his work Berdyaev repeatedly stresses the negative evaluation of this historic event and often uses expressive metaphors. Even the analysis of the semantic field of the term “revolution” indicates its negative connotations. One may find here the words such as unhappiness, failure, cruelty, wickedness, destruction, tragedy, chaos, destruction, and depravity (Berďajev 2004a, 63-103).

As Berdyaev puts it: “Revolution is a small apocalypse of history, judgment within history.... Within the individual life of man an end periodically comes, and death, for resurrection into a new life ... In revolution judgment is passed upon the evil forces which have brought about injustice, but the forces which judge, themselves create evil; in revolution good itself is realised by forces of evil, since forces of good were powerless to realise their
good in history” (Berdyaev 1960, 34-35).

Berdyaev generalizes his categorical statement and expresses belief that the positive and beneficial revolution is not possible. The same judgement is pronounced upon the French Revolution of 1789: “The French Revolution, described as ‘Great’, was just as ugly and unsuccessful. It was no better than the Russian Revolution, was no less bloody and cruel, and was just as wicked and destructive to all values of history” (Berďajev 2004a, 63).

Berdyaev considers revolutions in France and Russia to be the greatest in history (Berďajev 1997, 154). The main difference he sees between the French and the Russian Revolution is that the French feelings of citizenship and political belonging, which were typical elements and decisive criteria of the French Revolution, absented in the visions of the participants of the Russian Revolution. Moreover, they were perceived only as an artificial construct of political rhetoric (Berďajev 2004a, 77). Another difference stressed by Berdyaev lies in the fact that the realization of revolutionaries’ ideas in the Russian environment cannot be understood along the lines of political and social practice, but rather as a sign of fate, or unknown and uncontrollable forces. Berdyaev believes that the fatalistic attitude towards the revolutionary violence and political changes in Russia proves the specific religious orientation of the Russian nation. The conceptual framework of this idea is supported by Berdyaev’s view that some historical and cultural tendencies form a unique profile of a nation. In this context, we may rely on the analysis of Berdyaev’s Russian Idea, which, according to Kåre Johan Mjør, represents “a quest for differentia specifica of Russian mentality and culture … and an attempt to imagine and formulate ‘God’s idea of Russia’…” (Mjør 2011, 219).

Mjør reflects the fact that Berdyaev tries to reveal God’s idea in the Russian history (Mjør 2011, 220). Berdyaev’s attempt to map the intellectual history of Russian nation on the basis of the study of Russian thinkers, especially writers and philosophers, has therefore very particular meaning. Consequently, the work Russian Idea may be read and understood at two different interpretation levels. The first is a type of an analysis of socio-cultural system, and the second one aspires to unveil the real substance of being by means of history and knowledge. Berdyaev interprets the Russian idea as a transcending motif of the history of Russian nation and points out the interconnection between two religious phenomena, messianism and eschatological character of Russian thought.
Messianism and Revolutions

Eschatological perception is, according to Berdyaev, a considerable feature of Russian culture. It proves the significance of apocalypse and apocalyptical worldview of the Russians: “This means that the Russian people, in accordance with their metaphysical nature and vocation in the world are a people of the End. Apocalypse has always played a great part both among the masses of our people and at the highest cultural level, among Russian writers and thinkers. In our thought the eschatological problem takes an immeasurably greater place than in the thinking of the West and this is connected with the very structure of Russian consciousness which is but little adapted and little inclined to cling to finished forms of the intervening culture” (Berdyaev 1948, 192).

Berdyaev specifies eschatological orientation of Russian nation as a rejection of imperfect social order, as well as the belief that the world is irrevocably coming to its end. Yet the apocalypse does not have a negative meaning; it is to signify the final victory of God. “The Kingdom of God is the transfiguration of the world, not only the transfiguration of the individual man, but also the transfiguration of the social and the cosmic; and that is the end of this world, of the world of wrong and ugliness, and it is the principle of a new world, a world of right and beauty” (Berdyaev 1948, 194).

According to Berdyaev, the majority of Russian intellectual heritage has eschatological character. He finds the reasons in the historical experience that led to the specific artistic reflection and questions concerning ethical controversies of human existence.

Berdyaev states that the response of Russian nation to the despotic rule, suffering and oppression is echoed in an escape to the messianic visions and in the belief in predestination: “The people of the Moscow Tsardom regarded themselves as a chosen people. The mission of Russia was to be the vehicle of the true Christianity, that is, of Orthodoxy, and the shrine in which it is treasured. This was a religious vocation. ‘Orthodoxy’ is a definition of ‘the Russians’” (Berdyaev 1948, 7).

The idea of the Third Rome, a crucial principle of Russian messianism, has resonated throughout Russian history since the 16th century. Its influence reached far and wide and contributed to an assumption of the religious role of Russia (Berdyaev 1948, 7). Yet this idea was not purely religiously or culturally motivated. Its nature was ambivalent – the
contemplative religious self-perception has been altered by the vision of power, promising the feasibility of God’s law: “The Russian religious vocation, a particular and distinctive vocation, is linked with the power and transcendent majesty of the Russian State, with a distinctive significance and importance attached to the Russian Tsar. There enters into the messianic consciousness the alluring temptation of imperialism” (Berdyaev 1948, 8).

For Berdyaev, the Russian rulers have been tempted to fulfill their messianic illusions through the application of power. Consequently, Russian Orthodoxy served as an instrument of power mechanism. The attempts to implement and adjust the ideology of the Third Rome (Berdyaev 1948, 7) into particular social or political contexts appear repeatedly. Berdyaev detects the traits of this ideology, as well as the forms of its malicious realization in both the theocratic rule of the Moscow Tsardom, which he defines as totalitarian, and the modern history of Russia. Accordingly, Russian messianism remains in the modern revolutionary efforts for secularization: “The messianic idea of the Russian people assumed either an apocalyptic form or a revolutionary; and then there occurred an amazing event in the destiny of the Russian people. Instead of the Third Rome in Russia, the Third International was achieved, and many of the features of the Third Rome pass over to the Third International. The Third International is also a consecrated realm, and it also is founded on an orthodox faith” (Berdyaev 1960, 142).

The messianic visions transcending the political sphere represent, according to Berdyaev, a serious threat of inverted theocracy. Its direct impact lies in the extreme etatism and dogmatic realization of the orthodox worldview (Berdyaev 1960, 143). However, the apologists of the false theocracy refer to the urgent need of a new world order. An earthly paradise is to be created and the requirements are echoed in the revolutionary craze.

Jacob Talmon, a Jewish scholar, presents a similarly controversial issue of political consequences of messianism. He believes that this phenomenon is specifically related to the French Revolution 1789. According to Talmon, *modern political messianism* has become a new attribute of politics due to the emancipation of human reason and will, which have determined the efforts to change society (Talmon 1998, 22). The revolutionary element is defined as an essential part of modern messianism. Talmon states that modern messianism has always dreamed of a revolution with global impact (Talmon 1998, 22). The French Revolution and its messianistic climate might be an example (Talmon 1998, 168).
The analysis of Babeuf’s correspondence provides, according to Talmon, the information about the social symptomology of the pre-revolutionary period. This could be characterized by the belief in a final cure for all evil and wrongness, as well as by the assumption that humankind was finally approaching a perfect order and happiness (Talmon 1998, 163). Both Berdyaev and Talmon reflect the linkage between the optimism and the increasing status of human rationality, as well as the number of technical inventions. Berdyaev states that the religious inclination of Russia changed its subject: “The faith of the people was given a new direction, the Russian peasants now reverence the machine as a totem. Technical undertakings are not the ordinary matter-of-fact customary affair that they are to Western people; they have been given a mystic character and linked on with plans for an almost cosmic revolution” (Berdyaev 1960, 141).

The new mysticism of modern man together with the worship of rationality had their roots in the growing importance of human knowledge and its fruits. The relationship between them and the optimistic view on human potential is evident. Talmon believes that the French Revolution represents a historic milestone, supporting it by the description of two phenomena of this historic event. The first phenomenon reflects the postulate of salvation having a form of socially motivated movement. The second consisted in the growing influence of theoretical concepts to the masses of people. Talmon points out the fact that the Revolution enabled a tight connection between abstract ideas presented by politicians or politically active intellectuals and illiterate masses (Talmon 1998, 163).

Masses in Revolutionary Movements

Masses, according to Berdyaev, are the symptom of collective enslavement (Berďajev 1997, 160). This metaphor provides evidence on Berdyaev’s criticism concerning the potential of the masses. However, he believes that the tendency to succumb to the power of collective is a significant human trait (Berďajev 1997, 160). In relation to the strengthening role of social groups, principle of which is based on the rising importance of object at the expense of the subject, Berdyaev mentions the era of collectivism (Berďajev 1997, 160). The main attributes of the era are authoritativeness of collective, collective dominance, and the influence of the masses on individuals. The masses hold an irreplaceable role in all revolutions and, through them,
revolutions can overcome a personal and unique dimension of human being. Berdyaev believes that the revolutionary element weakens both human conscience and self-evaluation and replaces them by the collective justification and conscience (Berďajev 1997, 154).

Both Talmon and Berdyaev stress the dimension of maximalism in the revolutionary consciousness. The maximalism limits the objections against the nature and means of revolutions. Berdyaev further specifies the roots of this dimension as an anger and desire for revenge; emotions connected with the radicalism of the masses. The radicalism enables a transformation of the noble revolutionary goals into terrifying actions. The face of revolution changes even due to the ressentiment, which awakens revolutionary ambitions. Berdyaev states that revolution grows upon love and hate towards the past, yet hostility is of foremost importance for any type of revolution (Berďajev 1997, 154).

Talmon’s thought touches specifically the problem of the French Revolution. According to him, the main protagonists of the revolution – Robespierre, Saint-Just and Babeuf, displayed the symptoms of paranoid personality disorder (Talmon 1998, 49). Likewise Berdyaev in connection with Lenin emphasizes an extraordinary obsession with one idea (Berďajev 2004b, 125). The absolutizing of declared doctrine and suspicious persecutions of any type of opinion discrepancy manifest this unique trait. Talmon seeks for a psychological explanation of this phenomenon and points out the latent content of human consciousness that resurfaces in the time of radical social changes culminating in mass movements and intensive struggle (Talmon 1998, 50).

The French Revolution manifested the qualitative change of human psyche. Talmon states that the change was connected with a proclamation of the ideal of volonté générale. Although Talmon admits an originally positive motivation of this ideal, he is very critical in regard to its politicization. The ideal of collective will, connected with the efforts to clean up human selfishness and change human nature, ended up in the loss of individuality in the collective entity as it had accepted the collective way of life, as well as the total identification with it (Talmon 1998, 51 – 52).

Gustave Le Bon admits that the masses display specific characteristics and behaviours that are not consistent with the characteristics and behaviours of individuals. They show a new modality that escapes rationality of individuals and their control options. Mass is like unconscious,
expression of latent forces and the properties of the human soul, a mystery, a phenomenon peculiar to particular manifestations (Le Bon 2001, 7). He also considers that the perception of the mission of the masses has changed and the masses have become an expression of some kind of higher purpose, thus replacing the traditional concept of monarchy presenting the link between secular and supernatural power: “The divine right of the masses is about to replace the divine right of kings” (Le Bon 2001, 9). The revolutionary “regicide” in France, along with execution of the Tsar and his family, is in contrast to the allusion to an earthly paradise, but it is also an expression of the new potential of the masses.

In this context Le Bon refers to the onset of a new sovereign power – the power of crowds. He anticipates the historic role of the masses in the transformation of the world and ultimately the final extinction of old forms of civilization (Le Bon 2001, 10). Le Bon stresses the destructiveness of masses in relation to historical changes and suggests a link between the masses and the barbarism, which opposes the traditional social order: “In consequence of the purely destructive nature of their power crowds act like those microbes which hasten the dissolution of enfeebled or dead bodies. When the structure of a civilization is rotten, it is always the masses that bring about its downfall” (Le Bon 2001, 10). Thus the active masses are the bearers of historical dialectics. There are clear parallels between Berdyaev’s thought and Le Bon's interpretation of the masses. The parallels are evident mainly in relation to the view on the historic events and their irrationality.

The problem of the masses is, according to Berdyaev, tied to the problem of the lie. Berdyaev lays focus on the lie perceived as a duty. This kind of lie serves to social organization and power. Berdyaev assumes the universality of so-called social lie: “Contemporary myths are characteristically and consciously an organised lie. In them is no naivete. This may sound pessimistic, but it must needs be recognised, that lie is mortared into the foundation of the organisation of society” (Berdyaev 2000).

We may find the similarities between Foucault’s detailed analysis of social discipline and order and Berdyaev’s view on social universality of the lie. In this regard, Berdyaev’s social philosophy seems to be a pragmatic conception of social order. He indicates that there is a certain level of Machiavellianism in every revolution, accepted as an essential requirement of the new organization of society. In the society the search for the truth must follow the principle of power (Berdyaev 2000). Thus the lie enables
revolutionaries to copy the ambivalent changes and requirements of reality. In this context Berdyaev used the term dialectical lie. This type of lie allows creating an imaginary dangers and threats, which leads to the strengthened cohesiveness of social groups. It also allows revolutionaries to raise terror and facilitate manipulation through the dissemination of panic and fear. For Berdyaev, the masses which follow the political vision and accept the offered lies uncritically are similar to the blindly obedient military troops (Berdyaev 2000). Berdyaev believes that the masses are prone to the myths and the modern myths are the results of political demagoguery: “Demagoguery, without which the parties cannot circulate, always presupposes the lie. The slogans, which the parties drag out during the time of pre-election agitations, usually have nothing in common with their real polities. And with all the lofty aims, there is a veiling-over of non-lofty interests” (Berdyaev 2000).

Berdyaev’s criticism touches also the problem of incapability of the masses to reveal the lie in political programs and propaganda. He stresses the power of the word and the influence of public speeches on the crowds. In relation to revolutions, Berdyaev points out the attractiveness of deceptive visions and myths. He states that the masses are willing to follow the lie mainly in the periods of complicated social and political turbulences and revolutionary changes. The reason of this willingness is, according to Berdyaev, the absence of critical reasoning of the masses. The reasoning requires not only a certain distance, but mainly human freedom – the freedom of personality resilient to revolutionary craze and the influence of a crowd. The analyses of political reality bring Berdyaev to the problem of freedom and personal responsibility. Socio-philosophical line of his philosophy thus coincides with its ethical and anthropological dimension in pursuit of a more comprehensive understanding of the complex social phenomenon.

References


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In this article, the attitude of the last two Popes of the 19th century towards the ideological heritage of the French Revolution is presented. Pius IX and Leo XIII, despite the differences in the way they presented their own attitudes, were the opponents of modernistic ideas which affected the position of the Church and religion in a public sphere. Nevertheless, the Catholic Church owes its entering to the world of modernity to Leo XIII. As opposed to his predecessor he was not satisfied with the condemnation and rejection of modernistic theses, but by means of philosophical premises which restored Thomism gave him he was able to diagnose contemporary political and social situation, critically analyse the doctrine opposing Catholicism and introduce the conclusions which were practical for the Church. Although he did not separate himself from the traditional theological doctrine propagated by his predecessors, he managed to include social Catholicism into the doctrinal debates conducted in the second half of the 19th century. Because of this, he could present his own project of progress and civilization in which the Church is not perceived as a reactionary authority but as a catalyst of changes and spiritual and material development.

Keywords: Catholic social doctrine – French Revolution – Political philosophy – Pius IX – Leo XIII

Introduction

The French Revolution, as no other revolution in Europe, was permanently inscribed in the pages of the history of political thought. Its ideological
heritage is the subject of many heated discussions also in the contemporary world. However, in a very particular way the revolution left its stamp on the philosophical and political discourse of the 19th century which caused the popularization of liberal ideas. Owing to this, middle-class liberalism became a dominant ideology in the intellectual circles of the 19th century Europe. The process of implementing revolutionary values and principles did not come to an end then. It was traditionalism, also in its modernistic form – namely conservatism, which stood in the way. Catholicism in its official interpretation called *Magisterium Ecclesiae* was in opposition to revolutionary ideology. The Catholic Church, perceived as an ideological and moral support of ancien régime, became an object of revolutionary hostility (Carrol 2009, 142). The source of the conflict seems to have a more profound philosophical background. As a matter of fact it was a conflict of axiological character. The values of one side of the dispute stood in opposition to the axiological system of the other side. And what could be regarded as a common value was interpreted extremely differently. The church and traditional religion became a natural enemy of the revolution to some extent. The French Revolution and its ideological heritage became the main doctrinal adversary of the Church at the end of the 18th century and throughout almost the whole of the 19th century. It was a peculiar fight for “reign of souls” (Filipowicz 2007, 100).

In this paper, I would like to present attitudes of the last two of the 19th century Popes, Pius IX (1846-1878) – Giovanni Maria Mastai Ferretti (1792-1878) and Leo XIII (1878-1903) – Gioacchimo Vincenzo Raphaelo Aloisio Pecci (1810-1903) towards the intellectual heritage of the French Revolution. In the middle of the 19th century the post-revolutionary order had been constituted for good on the Old Continent. However, it was not about the political victory of the revolution but about its ideological victory. Its ideas were also affirmed by the regimes which did not refer to the tradition of the revolution at all. From the point of view of the problems presented in this paper, though the creation of the secular state was one of the most significant achievements of the French Revolution, its idea had been rejected by the Church and its *Magisterium* for several decades until the Second Vatican Council. It is worth noting, that in opposition to such state the Pope Pius IX proclaimed himself “a prisoner in the Vatican” when the secular state annexed Rome and established it as a new capital of united Italy.

Very often these two, by the way longest Roman pontificates are contrasted emphasizing the conservatism of the first one and moderate
modernism and openness to the challenges of modernity of the other. In fact both popes showed a critical attitude towards the 19th century political and social order which especially in the West was a result of the French Revolution and the implementation of the accompanying modernistic ideas. The fundamental difference between Pius IX and Leo XIII does not lie in a different way of assessing and evaluating but in the methodology of presenting the pontifical message. In a traditional, casuistic way Pius IX presented the catalogue of orders and bans which those faithful to the Catholic Church should follow. Leo XIII started from the diagnosis of reality in order to assess it by referring to the values and rules of the Catholic faith. Certainly, it was the pontificate of continuity and not of a radical change (Karas 2008, 158).

**Axis of Ideological Conflicts**

Two issues – the conflict of faith with the “enlightened” mind and consequently a dispute concerning the place of the Church and religion in public space – were crucial for the 19th century debates conducted between Catholicism and secular modernism. The French Revolution needs to be treated as a characteristic catalyst which accelerated the popularization of the enlightened thought to a great extent, especially when it comes to the French Enlightenment which is in opposition not only to the Catholic theological doctrine, but also to traditional religious way of thinking as such.

The main values, which the Enlightenment seemed to profess, were Happiness and Reason. Their source was not religion based on faith (the truths recognized as revealed) as well as on sacrifice and penance as a way to salvation. The development of natural sciences started to undermine the truths revealed in the Bible. It was also the fault of the Catholic Church which used the Latin version of the Bible. Only few scholars had an access to the understanding of the meaning of its words. The rest, especially the laymen, dealt only with the knowledge of catechism. Nevertheless, knowledge confined to orders and bans originating from catechism did not endure the confrontation with enlightened rationalism. Intellectualists were effective to convince the public that one could live honestly and happily without the revealed religion. There is still the cult of naturalism which pushed people towards hedonistic utilitarianism freeing people from the religious feeling of guilt. It was Diderot who wrote that we would be much merrier, if it was not
for religion (quoted after Baszkiewicz 2002, 102). The Enlightenment was declaring the traditional formula of religion, which was represented by the Catholic Church, anachronistic and therefore unnecessary and not complying with the new times. Consequently, it resulted in the violation of traditional public order. Faith in the divine source of power was undermined. Public reason was in opposition to God’s laws and monarchs as “God’s anointed” were taking advantage of the privileges from these laws. New revolutionary authorities lost their religious sanction. Politics was freed from religion. It was obvious that it occurred at the expense of religion. As a result of secularization, the Church lost many of its earthly goods. The final accord of the creation of post-revolutionary laic political order was the final liquidation of the Papal States in 1870 (Arendt 1963, 162).

Mutual relations of both ideologies, Catholicism and revolutionary modernism, may be perceived in the categories of action-reaction. The Enlightened anticlericalism was a reaction to a political strengthening of Church institutions known in France as an alliance of the throne and altar as well as to an irrefutable status of the theological doctrine of the state legitimizing the absolutist authority as the one which comes from God. Revolutionary events led to a qualitative revaluation in the political sphere. Not only was the monarchy overthrown, but also the principle of the alliance between the authorities with the Church was undermined and eventually the state became an initiator of creating something which can be defined as “secular religion” (Baszkiewicz 2002, 176-177). According to Albert Mathiez, the historian of the revolution, this transformed into “a state in care for souls”, which was connected with the elimination of traditional forms of religiosity and taking over the religious rites by the state. In this sense, the French Revolution was not only anticlerical, but it also assumed an antichristian formula (Mezzadri 2007, 175-177). A growth in Catholic dogmatism was a reaction to this anticlericalism or even revolutionary antiChristianity, which was popularized in Europe and assumed various forms during the 19th century. It culminated in the First Vatican Council and the Papal Infallibility (in the constitution Pastor aeternus), which was evidently attacking the modernistic ideas such as freedom and anti-authoritarianism with free and searching reason to be subordinated to the authority of faith.
Political philosophy of “Prisoner of Vatican”

Pius IX evaluated a new post-revolutionary reality very critically – post-revolutionary in a long sense of duration which François Furet wrote about (Furet 1994, 10). Philosophy of history and philosophy of politics constructed by him were in fact the negation of the stipulations of modernistic philosophy of history and liberal-bourgeois philosophy of politics. The analysis of his pontifical literary input caused an impression that the time of the Catholic Church had frozen in a traditional order and the world was overwhelmed by industrial transformations which led to the French Revolution. Scholastic formula of teaching which adopted by Pius IX was not anachronistic but rather ineffective in the polemics with modern thought. The Pope limited himself to the condemnation of revolutionary opinions which were revolutionary from the point of view of the Catholic doctrine. In his encyclical he did not even express the willingness to understand the transformations and opinions which he condemned. And he condemned everything what seemed to him to be in opposition to the traditional Catholic faith. The best example is the pontifical encyclical Quanta curra with the attached Syllabus (1864) of wrong points of views. He tackled these points of views which originated from the tradition of the Enlightenment and also those resulting from the French Revolution or even those which were inspirational for the architects of the revolutionary order. Pope Pius IX treated modern, post-revolutionary world as ex definitione hostile towards Christianity and the Catholic Church and therefore the ideological heritage of the French Revolution encountered his condemnation (Kraynak 2007, 527).

In the pontifical evaluation, both philosophical trends such as enlightened rationalism and naturalism and laic ideas of political order which propagated the necessity of separating secular authority from the Church and religion, introducing the freedom of speech and religion, deserved the condemnation. Firstly, let’s focus on the pontifical condemnation of the Enlightenment rationalism and naturalism, constituting the ontic foundation for the construction of modern and bourgeois liberal philosophy of politics. In rationalism Pius IX saw the source of modern religious indifferentism which deprived the Church and religion of their influence on formation of moral attitudes of the society. In the extreme form of rationalism it is not God who becomes the source of morality but human reason which due to its skills is able to recognize moral situation and introduce moral norms appropriately.
According to Pius IX, rationalism means the rejection of the revealed truths by man for the benefit of the truths of the reason because reason is the highest form according to which man can and should gain the knowledge of truths of any kind (Pius IX 1864b, 4). Therefore, God’s revelation is perceived as imperfect and as such is subject to the rules of the development of human reason, or it even opposes human reason and then it is not conducive to the intellectual development, but on the contrary, it is harmful for the human improvement, it represents a peculiar “restraint of development” (Pius IX 1864b, 4). The power of progression does not lie in God’s words, it is not Salvation History, but it lies in a natural predisposition of man, in his reasonable life. Enlightenment history of philosophy is therefore a naturalistic history and in its essence is anthropomorphic, leaving no place for Transcendentalism. Therefore, religion, not excluding Christianity, is nothing but a collection of myths, which in fact constitute a regressive factor. Philosophy of politics constructed on this basis must negate the characteristic role of the Church in a political and social system and break away from ancient tradition of alliance between authority and religion.

By defining rationalism in its absolutist form Pius IX negated any possibility of a dialogue between faith and the Enlightenment reason. For the Pope, rationalism was the negation of a true faith. The only option of the Catholics was the rejection of rationalism. Even its moderate form stood in opposition to Catholic religion, according to “the prisoner of Vatican”. Rationalistic epistemology of moderate rationalism – as it was specified by the Pope – treats science, philosophy and theology equally. Theology does not constitute the highest form of human knowledge. It also does not constitute the ultimate but only equal criterion of truthfulness with the scientific and philosophical way of reaching the truth. This depreciates the authority of the Church and Papacy. Relying on his reason, man should reach the truth and correct his own mistakes unaided. He needs neither religion, nor the authority of the Church (Pius IX 1864b, 8-13).

Political consequences of moderate rationalism were perceived by Pius IX in the same way as rationalism in its extreme version. Since the Church is not the highest authority in the epistemological and moral sense, it will not perform any real political functions in a modern state. There ultimately lies the intellectual source of deprivation of the papal power, and consequently a political and philosophical justification of liquidation of the
Papal State.

The method of Pius IX was, as I have mentioned above, condemnation and rejection of a generally defined theses of the Enlightenment rationalism. By condemning and rejecting epistemological stipulations of rationalistic philosophy, he also condemned and negated the principles of philosophy of politics which originated from it. He opposed such Enlightenment stipulations as freedom of speech, freedom of conscience and faith or the principle of separating the Church from the state. Pius IX indicated the Catholic Church and its theological doctrine as the source of an absolute truth which both the society and the state should subject to. Therefore, according to the pontifical opinion, the state can tolerate neither freedom of speech which would aim at the truths of faith and the position of the Church, nor free treatment of religious and moral matters by the citizens (Pius IX 1864a, 3-4).

The state, similarly to times before the French Revolution, should perform the function of “the church military policeman” who would prevent heresy, decay of customs and misdemeanour against the spiritual authority. The Church as a depository of an absolute and revealed truth should hold the office of an ultimate authority. At the same time, he opposed any kinds of attempts of legal limitation of the activities of the Church. According to the Pope, the authority is not entitled to regulate the law and limits of the functioning of the Church. The Church is autonomous and its prerogatives are of divine provenience. In the pontifical philosophy of politics, the Church – state relation is asymmetric. In fact, it is a negation of some Enlightenment notions, including post-revolutionary Gallicanism. In the pontifical conviction of Pius IX, the Church enjoyed the full autonomy originating straight from God’s law and the possibility of affecting the political factors, but not the contrary.

Leo XIII change or continuation?

A profound analysis of the literary output of the Pope Leo XIII from before and during his pontificate, to which we obviously cannot devote much space in this short text, allows us to notice that with respect to the evaluation of civilizational changes which have occurred since the French Revolution, Leo XIII resembles his predecessor in Vatican. Nevertheless, in the methodological sphere he performed a revaluation which brought the Church
and its doctrine closer to modernity. This methodological “leap” is often perceived as a change of the Church towards modernity to occur during pontificate of Leo XIII, including acceptance of industrial transformations and affirmation of liberal, middle-class ideology, or at least its freedom components. In my opinion, it is too far-fetched statement. In fact, Pope Leo XIII, while he was still an archbishop of Perugia and a Roman curialist, brought the Church closer to modernity, though not in sense of a specific ideology, but closer to the main trend of intellectual debates conducted in the second half of the 19th century. The rhetoric of Pius IX was perceived as anachronistic by his contemporaries. Without changing the attitude of the Church and its Magisterium, Leo XIII used the language which included the Catholic Church in the ideological discourse of the modern world. He chose a different method than his predecessor. Instead of negation and condemnation, he started with the diagnosis of the reality of the time and he went on to present the Christian and Church interpretation of the changes. To a great extent he succeeded, owing to the restoration of the thought of Thomas Aquinas, who was its initiator and promotor (Kraynak 2007, 529).

Due to the references to Thomism, Leo XIII responded to the objections formulated against the Church, using not the theological or casuistic language of Pius IX but the philosophical language. In polemics with the Enlightenment rationalism he used the empiricism of Aristotle and Thomas Aquinas which preferred the feasibility of being to the structures of human reason (ideas). However, the aim was the same as in case of Pius IX, that is the protection of Catholic faith against the laic trends. Thomistic philosophy, as he indicated in his encyclical Aeterni patris (1879), was supposed to provide the Church with the arguments in the polemics with the ideologically hostile powers. Leo XIII was aware that the method used by his predecessor did not have any great raison d’être and it only exposed the intellectual weakness of Catholicism. Only references to philosophical arguments could introduce the Church and papacy as equal participants to the intellectual debates of the contemporary world (Modrzejewski 2010, 9). And he perceived Thomistic thought as the one supposed to defend the purity of the

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1Unfortunately such evaluations of the pontificate of Leo XIII can be encountered also in the academic course books which popularize this simplified or even false thesis. See e.g. some of most popular course books in Poland: (OLSZEWSKI, Henryk, ZMIERCZAK, Maria: Historia doktryn politycznych i prawnych. Poznań: Ars Boni et Aequi, 1994, 283).
doctrine of faith effectively. In his encyclical he claimed: “Lastly, the duty of religiously defending the truths divinely delivered, and of resisting those who dare oppose them, pertains to philosophic pursuits. Wherefore, it is the glory of philosophy to be esteemed as the bulwark of faith and the strong defense of religion” (Leo XIII 1879, 7).

According to Leo XIII, Thomas Aquinas’ a posteriori attitude proved its value for the apologetics of Christianity. He noticed that: “the Angelic Doctor pushed his philosophic inquiry into the reasons and principles of things, which because they are most comprehensive and contain in their bosom, so to say, the seeds of almost infinite truths, were to be unfolded in good time by later masters and with a goodly yield. And as he also used this philosophic method in the refutation of error, he won this title to distinction for himself: that, single-handed, he victoriously combated the errors of former times, and supplied invincible arms to put those to rout which might in after-times spring up. Again, clearly distinguishing, as is fitting, reason from faith, while happily associating the one with the other, he both preserved the rights and had regard for the dignity of each; so much so, indeed, that reason, borne on the wings of Thomas to its human height, can scarcely rise higher, while faith could scarcely expect more or stronger aids from reason than those which she has already obtained through Thomas” (Leo XIII 1879, 18).

A change on the methodological level enabled Leo XIII to have a better understanding of his opponents’ intentions, to notice valuable and universal elements in their utterances which did not always clash with the teaching of the Church and the Pope. In the matters crucial for Catholic philosophy of politics he only agreed with his predecessor and he often referred to his encyclicals. Even though we can notice some progress when it comes to the affirmation of some Enlightenment principles, and even though the theory of the state constructed by him was in fact a continuation of theological tradition of the Church, which in this way was categorically in opposition to the modernistic trends presented by Pius IX, this casuistic positivity is not to be found in Leo XIII. Nevertheless, we can notice a lasting agreement with the thought of his predecessor (Modrzejewski 2009, 126-127).

While he was an archbishop of Perugia, he propagated two Lent pastoral letters addressed to clergymen and the faithful of the diocese, which after he became the Pope were translated into many languages, including Arabic, and published as a compact whole and entitled La Chiesa e la civilta
(1878). Their analysis allows us to recognize cardinal Pecci as a great erudite, who felt at ease with the sphere of philosophy and Catholic theology, but who was also an expert in Enlightenment and positivist philosophy far from the spirit of traditional Catholicism. Moreover, he was familiar with social and political issues of the 19th century civilization. In both of the letters he defended Christianity and the Catholic Church against the objections to its hampering the civilizational progress. These letters were aimed at the atheistic, anti-Church and anti-clerical circles. He did not follow Pius IX condemnation of subversive theses and although many times he referred to the pontifical authority, he attempted to prove that a real human progress in spiritual and material spheres occurs due to Christian faith and Catholic Church (Pecci 2010, 28 passim).

If the Church caused the civilization progress of humanity or at least of the part which was under its influence, its role in the public sphere could not be diminished and limited. Religious matters are not a private matter as the opponents of Catholicism wished. And although Leo XIII is no longer a supporter of ancien régime, giving the citizens the freedom to choose a political system they would find convenient, which was mentioned inter alia in his encyclical Immortale Dei (1885), he opposed the idea of the secular state. He perceived God as the highest legislator and the ruler of the world. Referring to ontology and political philosophy of Thomism he ascertained in the above-mentioned encyclical: “The right to rule is not necessarily, however, bound up with any special mode of government. It may take this or that form, provided only that it be of a nature of the government, rulers must ever bear in mind that God is the paramount ruler of the world, and must set Him before themselves as their exemplar and law in the administration of the State. For, in things visible God has fashioned secondary causes, in which His divine action can in some wise be discerned, leading up to the end to which the course of the world is ever tending. In like manner, in civil society, God has always willed that there should be a ruling authority and that they who are invested with it should reflect the divine power and providence in some measure over the human race” (Leo XIII 1885, 4).

However, in the further part of the encyclical we can find a postulate of the division of authority into secular and spiritual, which was close to the postulate of the Gospel. Nevertheless, it is not a postulate of a radical separation of the Church from the state and the state from the Church. The Pope propagated a thesis that God divided the rule over human race into two
authorities – spiritual and secular. The first rules over divine matters and the second – over human, but each of them is the highest on its own premises. Each authority performs its own characteristic activity by virtue of the law adherent exclusively to it. Due to the fact that both authorities have the same subjects, it can happen that an individual is subject to the same laws and judgement of both authorities at the same time though in a different way and in a different respect. Therefore, Providence determines right law and order for the conduct of both authorities. There must be some kind of mutual relation between these two authorities and the relation can be rightly compared to the connection which joins the soul and body in man (Leo XIII 1885, 14). Nevertheless, soul is the factor which should rule the body. Therefore, for the state, and body as its metamorphosis, it is best to listen to the spiritual authority, the Church and its highest shepherd. The Pope, referring to the historic experience, believed that Europe owed its position in the world to such subordination. Nowadays, however, Leo XIII complained about the realities of the time, about a radical separation from the spiritual tradition of Christianity and as a result an emergence of a false notion of freedom to be popularized and connected with the rejection of religious values. According to the Pope, in this way, the state stopped to feel its duty towards God. And as such it stopped to profess any religion publicly. Thus, the Pope deplored, there is no duty either to search the true faith or to prefer one to the other, or to favour one over the others, but there is a duty to grant equal rights to such an extent that the state’s order would not be negatively affected. Therefore, state authority leaves freedom of faith, freedom of choosing faith which one prefers or not choosing any faith up to everybody (Leo XIII 1885, 25).

Leo XIII assumed a different than liberal notion of freedom. He rejected ethical relativism accompanying liberalism for making its moral revaluation dependent on the subjective evaluation of an individual. The Pope perceived the separation of liberalism from ontologism, which gave objective foundations for moral revaluation, as unacceptable. Liberal notions broke off the relation of existence and obligation and therefore they undermined the objective reality, which, according to Pecci, was the basis for moral evaluation. They shifted the gravity onto the subject freely stating the rightness of decisions taken and actions undertaken (Szlachta 2008, 222).

Thus, in his evaluation of liberal ideology and social and political situation which resulted from the popularization of modernistic ideas Leo XI
followed his traditional predecessors, including Pius IX. No radical breakthrough connected with the affirmation of principles and values of the French Revolution (including personal freedom seen as the highest social value) occurred during his pontificate. Revolutionary tradition was strange, not to say hostile, for both Pius IX and Leo XIII. Both of them distanced themselves from modernistic ideas. However, they assumed a different strategy of polemics. The one chosen by Leo XIII turned out to be much more effective. It is due to him the Catholic Church entered the era of modernity, while preserving its doctrinal continuity and its own identity.

References


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GLOBALISATION AND THE CRISIS

Richard St’ahel

Current globalization has its predecessor in the global market of the 19th century. In that time, the main sign of globalization was de-socialization of the economy. That globalization ended during World War I as a result of applying the liberal ideology of de-socialization to an economy. An attempt to rebuild the global market after World War I led to the global economic crisis (1929-1932), which in Germany allowed Nazis to take over and finally led to World War II. In result of this development after the war, the idea of a welfare state arose in Western Europe. However, the problems brought about by realization of this idea led to further globalization and consequently to the rebuilding of the global market. It is clear that current globalization rebuilds also the process of de-socialization of the economy. It seems that this causes the repetition of radicalizations from left to right extremist movements. The current global economic crisis or the combination of energy and environmental crises could end the current globalization trend in the same way as it was brought to an end in the first half of the 20th century.

Keywords: global economic crisis – economic-political system – de-socialization of economy – growth limits – environmental crisis

The global economic crisis of 2007-2008 focused the attention on examining economic, social and political systems of the global industrial civilization on national, regional as well as global levels. It first appeared in the financial and banking area, later affected the production sector and finally the social field. With the increase in unemployment the social crisis became a political crisis as well. The worldwide scale of this crisis is to an extent a consequence of the process of globalization, which has actually in the past three decades created a global civilization. The current crisis can be interpreted as a crisis of globalization, a process which began in the second half of the 18th century,
when the politics of the Great Powers demonstrated the signs of a global struggle for influence, power, resources and markets. Current globalization therefore had its predecessor in the 19th century. Then, as it is today, it was mainly about creating a global market for expansion of industry and business, which needed (as it does today) new raw materials and markets.

Globalization is motivated mainly by economy and justified by ideology. The economic crisis reaches to all areas of life of the society and all regions of the world. As P. Ricoeur emphasizes, “only the civilization as ours which in its hierarchy of values puts economy on the highest place, the economic form of crisis is promoted to an example of all the crises” (Ricoeur 1992, 33). However, it has fundamental consequences for the way such culture perceives its threats, or for what it considers a threat and what it overlooks as harmless or insignificant. Therefore, Ricoeur emphasizes that “the society ascribing the economic foundation of its existence the highest values experiences an economic disorder of the system not as partial but as total” (Ricoeur 1992, 34).

The rationalization of the economic view of the world has other consequences, connected mainly with the phenomenon of globalization. According to Ricoeur, “globalization of the market means globalization of the phenomenon of atomization and at the same time predominance of economy over other parts of the society in its whole” (Ricoeur 1992, 35). Ricoeur, however, does not regard Marx’s characteristics of the society according to the relationship between productive forces and production means, nor the Marxist ideology as the reason for preference of economic values and its justification in today’s world. In his view, the reason for this is the ideology of liberalism. He states that, “what had imposed the idea of economic phenomena ‘as separated from the society and composing in itself a different system to which everything needs to be subordinated’ on the west world, was... only... the idea of economic liberalism” (Ricoeur 1992, 35). This was brought forth in the 19th century as “ideology of de-socialization of the economy” (Ricoeur 1992, 35).

However, the first attempt to create a free market, not controlled by monarchs, their customs duties and monopolies, vanished in the chaos of the French Revolution and in limitations of trade that followed during the war conflicts. The formation of the global market of the 19th century was connected with the industrial revolution, the expansion of transport (steam engine and cheap coal) and the communication technology, the golden
standard which enabled the existence of international trade, as well as with the British colonial empire and its navy power, which helped to keep so called Pax Britannica in the world oceans. The market existed between the Napoleonic Wars and World War I with a short attempt for its renewal after World War I. It perished no later than 1929 when the global economic crisis broke out.

The course of the 19th century was marked by more or less regular repetition of economic crises (for an overview viz. e.g. Juglar 1966 and Röpke 1932), which, together with an exponential growth of population, created more and more complicated social and in its wake even political problems. One of the ways in which governments tried to solve these problems were protective duties and import quotas similar to those enforced by the German Chancellor Otto von Bismarck in 1879, couple of years after the unification of Germany. This was, according to W. Röpke, the beginning of the end of the global market and the market economy. An era of customs and business wars started and they led to real wars. It was followed by an avalanche of protective actions which contributed to the rise of economic patriotism, later even nationalism (viz. Röpke 1979, 58-59). A need for the new sources of raw materials and outlets for industrial production increased considerably. More and more people working in industry and therefore existentially dependent on an accessibility of the raw materials for industry and the possibility to sell its products on one hand, and an increasing productivity of manufacturing process on the other hand, forced governments to engage in favour of industry not only on a national, but also on an international level.

Several thinkers of the 20th century had reflected on similar globalization processes of the 19th century and their consequences. For example, A. Schweitzer during World War I or shortly afterwards wrote that “because of the modern social problems we are in a class conflict which is weakening and destroying our economic and state conditions. Those were, after all, machines and global market that led to the world war” (Schweitzer 1986, 106). During World War II a Dutch culturologist J. Huizinga stated that “the theory of economic freedom concealed in itself a germ of unrestrained exuberance of capitalism on the one hand and on the other inevitable imperialism of stronger states and nations. ... Teaching about free barter exchange and state restraints in the economic area helped national, even nationalistic configuration in Europe more than it would obstruct it”
Richard Stěhel

(Huizinga 2002, 175). At the same time an American sociologist of the Russian origin P. A. Sorokin stated that communism and fascism are both legacies of capitalism (Sorokin 1957, 78-79). A British historian and a philosopher of history A. Toynbee shortly after World War II notices that, “One of the considerations that drove the rulers of Nazi Germany and contemporary Japan into aggressive war was their inability to provide more than a minority of their young men with jobs that satisfied their expectations, or even with jobs of any kind” (Toynbee 1964, 131). In other words, the way in which the global market based itself on the principle of free trade at least contributed to the outbreak of World War I, when the price and customs wars became a reality. Another consequence of this was an installation of the communist dictatorship in Russia. An attempt to renew the global market after World War I ended in the global economic crisis which led to an unprecedented catastrophe de facto global in its dimension and far-reaching consequences not only for economic theory and practice but, if taken as foreplay to World War II, for society, culture and world politics as well. Concerning its social consequences, it helped Nazis to seize power in Germany. In the short term it made way for World War II and in the long run it enabled the Soviet influence to expand far beyond the then Russian Empire.

The reparations imposed on Germany by the Versailles Peace Treaty also considerably helped Nazis to seize power. The struggle to pay off its international debt led Germany after World War I to restrictive politics, which in its results contributed not only to de-socialization of the German economy, but also to an increase of social polarization in society. These processes were finished and multiplied by the global economic crisis. However, as Ricoeur notices, “in 1929 the disequilibrium didn’t break out in the manufacturing sector nor in the circulation of products but in the sector of capital circulation. The stock market crisis (the Wall Street Crash in 1929) followed by the banking crisis (withdrawal of deposits) caused the crisis of commerce and industry” (Ricoeur 1992, 34). The result was a social and political crisis which many democracies, so not only Germany, were not able to handle. De-socialization of the economy therefore led to the failure of the modern society, its degeneration to communist and fascist dictatorships coupled with extreme eruptions of violence and total conflicts. The flip side of de-socialization of the economy and spread over all other subsystems of a society represents social tensions which gradually accumulate. In times of growth and relative prosperity this is generally overlooked or downplayed.
However, during a crisis it can lead to a loss of legitimacy of a system and its elites or to intersocial conflicts which are destructive not only for economic, social or political systems, but also for the society itself.

The goal of political elites was to prevent the recurrence of a similar development after World War II. “Instead of an idea of inevitability, even necessity of cyclical development, a new paradigm of a stable way of growth was introduced after the thirties” (Borchardt 1992, 100). In consequence of the global economic crisis, not only the global market was destroyed, but also the politics of economic liberalism was abandoned. As a result, countries on both sides of the iron curtain made attempts for re-socialization of the economy. These were represented by efforts to build a social state or a welfare state which undoubtedly is “a product of the global economic crisis and World War II” (Keller 2005, 10).

According to J. Habermas, the economic and social politics of the Western European countries in the first three decades after World War II can be regarded as a reaction to the phenomenon of the economic crisis. “The structures of advanced capitalism can be understood as reaction formations to endemic crisis. To ward off system crisis, advanced capitalist societies focus all forces of social integration at the point of structurally most probable conflict – in order all the more effectively to keep it latent” (Habermas 1976, 37-38). One of the consequences of this was “permanent crisis in government finances, together with public poverty (that is, impoverishment of public transportation, education, housing and health care” (Habermas 1976, 38). These phenomena have appeared in countries of the former Eastern Bloc after 1990 and the crisis of 2008 has only deepened them. Habermas emphasizes that, “In decades since World War II the most advanced capitalist countries have succeeded (the May 1968 events in Paris notwithstanding) in keeping class conflict latent in its decisive areas; in extending the business cycle and transforming periodic phases of capital devaluation into permanent inflationary crisis with milder business fluctuations” (Habermas 1976, 38).

The state then took on itself a role of the participant, the regulator of the market and at the same time the compensator of its negative social, cultural and later also ecological consequences. Thus, it prevented acute crises to break out. However, the price for this is a systematic overload of public finance in the form of a long-term deficit. Moreover, in the 1970s the Western countries were also affected by acute crises caused by the stop of oil supplies. “If governmental crisis management fails, it lags behind programmatic
demands that it has placed on itself. The penalty for this failure is withdrawal of legitimation. Thus, the scope for action contracts precisely at those moments in which it needs to drastically expand” (Habermas 1976, 69). Trustworthiness of the institution of the state as a protector against crises as well as the legitimacy of the political elites had considerably suffered. As J. Habermas states, one of the features and conditions of the postwar class compromise was “civic privatism – that is, political abstinence combined with an orientation to career, leisure, and consumption – promotes the expectation of suitable rewards within the system (money, leisure time, and security)” (Habermas 1976, 37). By the end of the 1970s, it was beginning to be clear that the state, again as in the pre-war period, is not able to give all a chance for a career and employment, and is certainly not able to provide steady growth in consumption. All this happened despite the steady increase of the tax burden and broadening areas over which the state is trying to gain bureaucratic or legislative control.

During the Cold War the free movement of goods and capital was limited to such an extent it was really impossible to talk about the global market. Beside the so-called Eastern Bloc, which set itself aside voluntarily and partly due to the sanctions imposed by the Western world, free movement of capital, goods and services was limited by many legal and customs regulations of individual countries of the so-called Western Bloc. But the global market emerged again in the last two decades of the 20th century. Its emergence contributed not only to a systematic pressure to liberalize the international trade and free movement of capital from the World Trade Organization, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund and multinational organizations, but also to cheap oil allowing bulk worldwide shipping of goods and people. And with the global market the ideology of economic liberalism and also economic crises returned (e.g. Mexican crisis of 1994-1995; Asian crisis of 1997-1998; Turkish crisis of 2001; Argentinian crisis of 2002, to the global crisis of 2008). At the end of the 1990s G. Soros in this regard said that we are in the process of reliving the experience of the 19th century “interrupted by a devastating panic after which an economic crisis emerged” (Soros 1999, 126). However, according to Soros, the global market of the 19th century was more stable than the current one because it had a single currency in the form of gold (gold standard) and “people were more firmly rooted in the basic values than they are today” (Soros 1999, 133). Despite these words he yielded to the powers he himself helped to unleash.
J. Přibáň states that after 1989 “neoliberal economists took control over the politics almost as in a Marxist idyll, in which the economic base determines the political superstructure” (Přibáň 2012, 40). The recipe of economic neoliberalism for overcoming the combination of high unemployment, inflation and economic stagnation is deregulation, liberalization and privatization, in other words regulation of tasks and powers, and therefore possibilities of the state. These are considered to be the barriers to an economic growth. Promoted methods allowing another growth of economy are therefore actions that lead to reductions of social and health-care standards. Expenditures on environmental protection and removal of already existing undesirable consequences of the cycle of production and consumption are reduced as well. A further growth in consumption is massively supported. So again, we can see de-socialization of the economy spreading over all other subsystems of the society. “The last 30 years created an extraordinary strong asymmetry in the society between the economic and the political system, which consists in a primitive economic idea that deregulation increases the degree of political freedom. Economic neoliberalism was paradoxically the last phase of Marxism, naïvely considering all the social problems as economic problems and therefore requiring an exclusive economic solution” (Přibáň 2012, 44).

However, as P. Staněk points out, one of the main reasons for today’s economic crisis is a polarization of income, which is accelerating since the 1970s. The income of the majority of the population stagnates or even decreases, while the income of the richest increases in multiples. Apart from the growth of a social tension this led to a global decrease of consumption, which could be saturated only by a credit expansion (Staněk 2012, 61-62). However, indebtedness also has its limits. The first stage of the current economic crisis broke out in 2008 as a mortgage crisis when it became clear that too many credits provided to low-income groups in the USA was a wrong step. Efforts of governments to save the financial system and support the consumption led to a sharp increase of public debts. In retrospect, it is clear that the problem of indebtedness is worldwide and it affects all areas of economy. Moreover, the combination of austerity measures and massive income polarization translates into different protest movements, social tensions, an increase of political extremism and political crises.

It shows then that de-socialization of the economy is a part of, if not directly a condition of current globalization. Once again, we can talk about
competitive struggle, trade, currency and customs wars. Current states or their political-economic groupings are intensifying their efforts to gain new outlets and resources of still decreasing stocks of raw materials. Stock market speculations with prices of important commodities and equities and attacks of investors on national currencies leave damages comparable with a direct military attack. Often they are excused as a necessary price for the benefit of the economic growth brought by the freedom of establishment or they are described as something similar to natural elements whose spree we have to endure. At the same time we can observe a repeated growth in economic patriotism and nationalism as well as a certain form of a defense reaction to “globalization pressure”. And this is not limited to Europe or Japan, but we can see it in a greater extent also in India, China, South Korea, Vietnam, Indonesia and other countries with a high economic growth in the last couple of years. These countries increase spending on defense, similarly to the situation in Europe in the beginning of the 20th century.

The similarity with the development in Europe in the first half of the 20th century can be also seen in radicalization of extreme rightist and leftist movements in all European countries. Just as then, these two extremes commonly reject the principles of economic liberalism and the global market. Just as in interwar Germany, we can now observe as the pressure of creditors to unconditional debt repayment to be done as quickly as possible leads in Greece as well as in other countries not only to deepening of the economic crisis itself, but also – in the consequence of a social disruption caused by it – to radicalization of political scene on one hand and de facto suspension of already mainly formal democratic principles and institutions on the other. Increasing number of protesters clashes with the police in the streets of European cities and outbreaks of violence of frustrated unemployed resemble the situation from the 1930s. Reflections on the crisis of democracy and its failure to respond accordingly to an increasing tension between ideas of a significant number of citizens and economic elites about the level of social and health security and the extent of free rein of market forces are only one of the many similarities of the current and the pre-war development.

The current global market is in many aspects different from the previous and the economic theory has changed a lot, too. Environmental and customs arrangements are by far not as extensive as in the interwar era and it is possible they will decrease even more. The doubt remains: Can free movement of goods and capital enrich and stabilize the society or will it
impoverish and destabilize it? Majority of people unlike goods and capital doesn’t want to and, in the increasingly overpopulated world, cannot move. Therefore, it can easily happen that they will find themselves in a familiar place, but a place also dangerous or at least uninviting for life. From this insecurity a fear is born, from it anger and that is a space for all kinds of extremism.

M. Hauser denotes on the current crisis: “In the history of capitalism this is the fourth big crisis: the first was in the 1870s, the second one was the crisis of 1929, the third one the crisis in the 1970s. The news about the crisis of 2008 is that the ruling economic doctrine cannot create a program that would give us hope to overcome it. ... We find ourselves in a situation when the crisis replicates. It is an economic crisis and also a crisis of economic theories” (Hauser 2012, 91). Hauser also notices that mass demonstrations, strikes and protest movements cannot convince political and economic elites of the need to change their attitude. “We are not only in the economic crisis and the crisis of economic theory, but also in the crisis of resistance. We can say that the crisis is not double but triple” (Hauser 2012, 92). However, this can potentially have catastrophic consequences for the society because demonstrations, strikes and protest movements happen in the context of an existing constitutional system. Their continuing failure can lead to a conviction that only procedures ignoring or purposefully violating constitutional principles can be effective.

But the crisis has at least quadrupled. When in the 1970s, in the name of accelerating the economic growth, a gradual process of repeated desocialization of the economy began, ideas that questioned the imperative of the growth for still other reasons appeared. The Club of Rome reports (Meadows et al. 1972; Meadows et al. 1993) drew our attention to limits of an economic growth in a finite world. For the growth of our industrial civilization we need new resources of raw materials, and soil and water are not inexhaustible. Their shortage will not only mean jeopardizing the growth, but also an inability to at least keep the existing level of civilization including political and social institutions. This means that even fast application of the zero growth principle would become insufficient. Moreover, the growth of production and consumption is necessary at least because of the growth of the population. However, it’s not only the population that grows, but also consumerist demands of individuals. Technocratic reasoning of the need of zero growth brought by the report of the Club of Rome (Meadows et al. 1972)
proved to be insufficient. To meet the requirements of the growth in living standards, so ultimately of the growth of consumption of individuals, became one of the main criteria of legitimacy of political systems and also individual governments in the second half of the 20th century. In its name, citizens of many countries were willing to accept cuts in existing levels of social, somewhere even civil rights. However, the economic growth is not possible without the growth of environmental pollution and without other negative impacts on the ecological and climate system of the planet. An economic growth as well as the sustainable world is subject to maintaining the planetary ecological and climate system at least on its contemporary level.

A far greater threat than a reprise of the development following the failure of the previous globalization is a chance that the planet’s ecosystem would collapse or at least fundamentally change. As a matter of fact, the globalized market has a considerable influence not only on economic, social, political and cultural systems of all levels, but also on ecosystems – local, regional and the global. Most of the processes – social and ecological – suggest a prevalence of negative influences. Not only an economic crisis, but also energy (oil), food or ecological crises, and most likely their combination, could appear among the unwanted results of globalization. Ensuing social and political crises can be more menacing than those following the global economic crisis in the 1930s. However, since then, the overall risk of crisis has increased all the more the immense growth of the world population is accompanied by an equally multiple increase in consumption of raw materials and energy.

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The French Revolution promoted the ideal of the organization of state institutions on a rational basis. In an initial form this is present in the unified system of the Neoplatonist philosopher Proclus (ca. 411-485), who states that politics is essential towards the elevation of a citizen to a superior cultural level. In his commentaries on Plato he examines topics referring to social relations and financial activities. Politics for Proclus is the institutional evolution or justification of ethics. The mission of the philosopher is to understand the social and political problems, which do not allow the development of significant cultural activities. If legislation is based on the supreme normative principles of the metaphysical world, then the society becomes a just state aiming at happiness. The proposal concerning justice as a principle of social life and the construction of the responsibly acting citizens place both Proclus’ political planning and the French Revolution in the forefront of common goals.

Keywords: Plato – Proclus – Neoplatonism – Political Philosophy – Citizen – Ethics – Legislation – Happiness

If we attempt to attribute an objective characteristic to the goals of the French Revolution, we would stress that it promoted the ideal of the organization of the society and its framing by means of state institutions on the basis of the principles of rationalism. This goal is not reduced only to an abstract normality concerning the society or the state, but also to the way the citizen as a personality will freely develop his internal abilities. Thus, the citizen is shaped as a new historical subject, which, through a careful study of his self and his collective duties, will regulate his own life. Consequently, the citizen acquires the autonomy which will guarantee his specific character within the
frame of collective deliberations. This is a new clause which will abolish the relation between master and servant and the inequality among people. Under these terms, what comes to the fore is the subject – citizen, who will enter the real content of history, thus forming, consequently, the conditions of his life. He will realize that the concepts of freedom and participation function with reference to his person complementarily. If the above-mentioned conditions are fulfilled, then the state may acquire its full meaning and proceed to the implementation of logic in politics.

The above views are shared by H. Marcuse, particularly in his discussion of Hegel’s philosophy.¹ We think that in an initial form they are present in the Neoplatonist philosopher Proclus, particularly in the views he formulates about the citizen. It should be noted that Hegel was deeply influenced by Proclus with reference to the construction of his philosophical system. In what follows, we attempt to show some of the general principles of the Neoplatonist philosopher about politics. The way of construction of the rational political subject occupies a cardinal point in these principles.

In the works of the members of the Neoplatonic school the presence and the specific analysis of the term “politics” and its derivatives are very rare. This phenomenon is not contingent, and it would be mistaken, if we dealt with it this way. Based on the fact that all kinds of thinking reflect more or less some cultural circumstances, we could probably connect the scarce use of this term with the political, social and financial conditions of the late Roman period and the early Byzantine period. On the other hand, aiming at the interpretation of this phenomenon, we should take into consideration what the Neoplatonist philosophers say about the nature of these circumstances or the consequences of their presence upon themselves. In this case, however, we should keep in mind that their views are not stated clearly. It is true that from the 3rd century B.C. onwards, Greek thought was experiencing a gradual decline, with reference to the social and cultural terms, which constructed it and allowed it to express itself fully and freely. The function of the collective political institutions of democracy was only marginal, while the concept of citizen had been more or less replaced by the concept of private person or the concept of subject. These properties do not denote indifference or abstention from activities of moral or theoretical nature. The compulsory introspection which characterizes people of that era is accompanied by a fertile

¹ see: (Marcuse 1955)
philosophical thinking, by the desire to realize moral virtues and by an intense tendency of reversion to the metaphysical world. The divine is its main source, conveying the meaning to the existence of the individual, which was distanced from the bodies responsible for taking decisions. This meaning is expressed within the frame of the society through philanthropic activities and the desire for personal relations. At the same time, the person enhances the references of his existence beyond his immediate sense-perception.²

Through a careful study of philosophical texts written during that historical period, we can indirectly assume that for the Neoplatonists political institutions were not characterized by rationalism, which could be flexibly implemented. They think that the powers in charge cannot be controlled or changed, as they reflect a dictatorial form of government. They also feel that the individuals cannot freely define their own way of living, since they are governed by powers, which intervene in the formulation of the society, without the necessary control on behalf of logic and ethics. The fact that there is no political analysis in the works of the Neoplatonists reflects their belief that this institutional activity cannot function within human history as a dynamic intervention either of the individual or of the society. It is necessary to mention here that there is almost no reference to historical facts in the treatises of the Neoplatonist philosophers, with the exception of Proclus, to some extent at least. Their research focuses strictly on the mode of existence and transformation of internality.³ They examine the way the human psychic world is evolved and the way the human intellect reaches its maturity within their course of transcending their mundane limits and assimilating themselves to the divine. Thus, they promote a certain history of spirituality as self-consciousness, self-realization and self-transcendence.

An impressive exception to this general rule is Proclus, whose commentary on Plato’s Republic is one of his longest works. Proclus is keenly interested in how people will be elevated to a superior cultural level, and he states that politics is essential to this purpose. He defines politics as the

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² Concerning these topics and the way the relevant social parameters influenced Plato’s and Proclus’ philosophical thought, see, for instance (Trouillard 1972, 1-26).
³ For the particular philosophical tendencies within the Neoplatonic School, see, for instance (Saffrey 1990). This work successfully undertakes a philosophical and partially historical interpretation of the theoretical formulations, each of which belongs to a certain wider frame, which conveys corresponding meanings either partially or totally.
science, which can coordinate human activities and guide them towards their authentic existential destination. Politics has also the ability to lead people to virtue and rational behaviour. In the course of his work, Proclus examines topics referring to social relations and financial activities. It is interesting that at many places in his commentary he feels free from Plato’s views and promotes positions belonging to his corresponding theoretical frame. This is a common practice on behalf of the Neoplatonist philosopher and clearly natural within the frame of an unavoidable historical relativism. During the eight centuries which had passed since Plato’s time, it is evident that there had been social changes and developments concerning both philosophical thinking and interpretative approaches. This politics, however, is endowed with divine characteristics, since Proclus’ dominant philosophical example is metaphysical. This work of Proclus has scarcely drawn the attention of research. We hope that our discussion of the preface of this commentary will encourage similar projects. In addition, we estimate that this is a theoretical analytical and synthetic conception, which could well be examined in comparison with the political thought of posterior and modern times.

In the preface of his commentary on Plato’s *Republic*, Proclus considers it necessary to define the theoretical aim served by this dialogue. After a critical review of interpretations offered by previous thinkers, he concludes that this aim is twofold. From the epistemological point of view, it is interesting that he approaches this topic systematically. Proclus articulates the interpretations and the deriving questions in a logical sequence and his categorizations are clear. He also extends them or puts them aside for certain reasons, which he constructs in a scientific way and incorporates into general concepts. The reasons he discusses have to do with the content of the text he comments on and with his own aims as a researcher and a commentator. It

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4 For the content of Proclus’ work *In Platonis Rem Publicam commentarii*, see (Bastid 1969, 53-65). This is the only extensive presentation of the relevant commentary, without examining the political issues posed or implied by the Neoplatonist philosopher. The work was translated with comments by Festugière (Festugière 1970). In these studies, however, it is directly or indirectly noted that Proclus is not interested in politics. We think that this view is not in accordance either with the meaning or the structure of his text. What is still expected is a monograph which will allow Proclus to emerge as a political philosopher, as well, with suggestions innovative even for our own era. The above-mentioned commentary was used by Moutsopoulos (Moutsopoulos 2004).
should be noted, however, that the Neoplatonist philosopher has a complete picture of the commentaries written on the Platonic text throughout history, from the time it was composed until the era of his own study. His extensive commentary could be seen as an encyclopedic dictionary, but with the advantage of not being subject to a chronologically evolutionary scholasticism. It is a treatise which moves by means both of dialectical compositions and reversals and, in this sense, we could characterize it as critical.

Proclus argues that Plato first undertakes the task to describe the ideal state as a human society aiming at happiness. What he finds in Plato’s thought is the idea that the state is not a conventional society, which would simply aim at a superficial administration of services or at the production of things. Indirectly but clearly he also says that the ruling of Plato’s state is not despotic, as this would result in citizens who would intensely behave as slaves. In this frame, the political ideal is not a manipulated citizen, but a free citizen conscious of himself. Proclus’ position has an evident Aristotelian origin (cf. Nicomachean Ethics, 1095a20-1098b26) and explicitly shows that he is not satisfied with the Stoic conception of happiness. He reduces happiness to a political goal, thus freeing it from the restricted frame of individuality. As expected, the Neoplatonist philosopher would agree with Plato’s criticism of tyranny in the Republic (Book 9) as a wretched form of government and a factor resisting the realization both of political and

5 Proclus, In Platonis Rem Publicam commentarii, I, 5.6-10.8. It is particularly interesting in this passage that Proclus sometimes makes a comparative examination of the Republic with other Platonic works, the Laws in particular. It should be noted that the Laws is among the works he likes most and he uses it regularly in order to support his views about the relation between the divine state and the human legislation or the regulative principles which have to do with human life. The Laws is among his basic sources when he deals with divine names. See (Proclus, Theologia Platonica, I, 59.2-80.12).

6 Proclus, In Platonis Rem Publicam commentarii, I, 10.10-12: “Ἡ Πολιτεία τὴν ἀδιαιρέτως κατὰ μίαν εὐζωίαν ἀφοριζομένην κοινωνίαν ἐκφήναι τῶν εἰς τὴν αὐτήν εὐνοίκως συνοίκησιν ἡθοσμένων ἀνθρώπων.” It should be noted here that in the general theoretical unit Proclus promotes the concept of political happiness as is described in the Republic in comparison to the rational administrative effectiveness proposed by Plato in the Laws (V, 739e). In a way, he thus makes a distinction between the political philosophy of the Republic and the political science of the Laws, i.e. between the theoretical reason and the implemented one.
individual happiness. It should, however, be noted in his commentary on the *Alcibiades I* (103.14-109.13), he extensively examines happiness as a moral deed in connection with personal self-sufficiency and the conquest of the totality of virtues. Of course, a moral deed is not possible in a form of government which restricts personal freedom and, therefore, the possibility of self-realization. Indirectly, it derives that tyranny for Proclus is theologically unacceptable, because his position is that the gods provide people with the supreme moral normative principles, i.e., what is abolished by this constitution through its interventions.

Secondly, Proclus considers that Plato aims at showing how the citizens will become conscious of the value of virtues through education. Stressing this, he recognizes that politics is not independent from ethics, but that there is a mutual relation between them. Thus, the leading institution is education, the duty of which is to lead citizens to moral purification. With the intervention of education, moral values are not merely on the level of imperatives concerning duties. On the contrary, moral values are a systematic part of planning. So, we can actually say here that Proclus reveals the post-political perspectives of Plato’s research. We could actually say that he considers the political system to be the tool of moral virtues, which he approaches by means of teleological terms. We could also stress, thus verifying our previous remarks, that the Neoplatonist philosopher in his extant work *Theologia Platonica* (V, 87.15-91.18), commenting on the myth of Protagoras, insists that the gods bestow the art of politics on people. Therefore, he accepts its own metaphysical and stable definition, which also

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7 Proclus, *In Platonis Rem Publicam commentarii*, I, 10.12-17. Here Proclus accepts the usual Platonic scheme about the unity of virtues and this is the position he holds in his *In Platonis Alcibiadem I*, in close connection with references to supernatural patterns, like archetype – generated being. Having in mind the historical distance between the two thinkers, we could cite Habermas’ following remark for the sake of a correlation with modern thought (Habermas 1992, 567): “Während Moralnormen stets Selbstzweck sind, dienen Rechtsnormen auch als Mittel für politische Ziele. Sie sind nämlich nicht nur wie die Moral für die unparteiliche Beilegung von Handlungskonflikten da, sondern auch für die Umsetzung politischer Programme. Die kollektiven Zielsetzungen und die implementierenden Massnahmen der Politik verdanken der Rechtsform erst ihre bindende Kraft. Insofern steht das Recht zwischen Politik und Moral; und entsprechend verbinden sich, wie Dworkin gezeigt hat, im juristischen Diskurs die Anwendungsargumente der Gesetzesauslegung sowohl mit politischen Zielsetzungsargumenten wie andererseits mit moralischen Begründungsargumenten”.

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applies on every situation in connection with its implementations.

Clarifying the first aim, the Neoplatonist philosopher says that Plato in his research undertakes to present the characteristics of the ideal state. In addition, he aims at explaining how this state is constructed and how it becomes complete. He wants to interpret its structure and find out everything about the institutions which will bring the aim, for the sake of which it is founded, to the fore and realize it. So, Proclus argues that Plato uses a teleological political paradigm. Extending this view, we could say that here the term “city” denotes a form of reason. The city is not merely a dwelling place or a mechanism of material security. It is mainly an area where human beings realize their activities, which are of a superior quality. Thus, it is not a conventional collective entity, but a cultural possibility. With reference to the second aim, he underlines that Plato particularly insists on the scientific analysis of the virtue of justice. In other words, Plato shows that justice should not be conceived of in terms of naïve experience, but through the principles of what could be characterized as pure reason. In other words, we would stress that the superficial talk about particular cases is not a right method, as the whole issue moves within the frame of moral and political rationalism. Proclus’ text clearly shows that for him any aspect of justice should be discussed with all relevant moral justifications in mind. If justice is seen from the legal point of view, it cannot transcend the normative model of a political system, which simply fortifies the rights of its citizens. This mundane character does not express Proclus’ interest in politics, which is integrated through the realization of virtues. Combining all these, the

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8 Proclus, In Platonis Rem Publicam commentarii, I, 10.12-11.4: “… ἔργον δὲ τὴν ἀρίστην υφηγήσασθαι πολιτείαν, ὧν τοῖς ἐγένεσι καὶ γενομένῃ πῶς σώζεται καὶ διὰ ποίων ἐπιτηδευμάτων... Ὡστε διὰ πάντων ἔναι δῆλον τὸν τῆς Πολιτείας ἑαυτῷ σκοποῦν μὴ ἄλλον ἢ τῆς ἀριστης πολιτείας υφήγησιν, ὡς τῶν Νόμων τὴν τῶν νόμων.” It should be noted that, as Proclus formulates his arguments here, he refers not only to the Laws, but also to the Timaeus as well (17c), where what is recalled is the discussion in the Republic about the structure of the state and the content of justice as a moral and, principally, a political virtue (Habermas 1992, 187-207).

9 Proclus, In Platonis Rem Publicam commentarii, I, 12.2-9: “… εἰ πᾶσαν (sc. τὴν δικαιοσύνην) ὥρφη καὶ μὴ τινὰ ...”. Even though here this is not a topic he deals with, Proclus brings forward the theory of archetypal Forms, which he systematically explores in all his works, but mainly in his Commentarium in Platonis Parmenidem (Trouillard 1982, 143-186). For the concept of justice in Plato (Schiller 1968; Foster 1976).
Neoplatonist philosopher believes that for Plato justice and the ideal state are identical values. He insists that they are not mere tools for the administrators of anthropological affairs. First of all, they are means of transcending superficial circumstances and processes, which aim at agreements and conventions. The only difference he finds between them is of a strictly quantitative and qualitative character. This means that “state” and “justice” are normative principles of the same level. We think it implies here the difficulty to understand the theoretical and applied concept of justice in the frame of individual life and activity. Therefore, justice has to be studied in an amplified way. The study of the way the city-states were constructed promotes the exactitude of such a reading, since it conceives justice to be a relation as well.

More specifically, the properties of the state are collective, while justice refers rather to each particular citizen’s way of life. We would say that Proclus discovers the connection between the institutional character of the political system and the individual ethics, which gives its values to the political system. Of course, values are also suggested to the individuals through the political system, since there is neither axiological hierarchy nor temporal sequence in the connection between the political system and the individuals. Thus, based on this argumentation, he argues again that when Plato in his analysis moves from the state to justice, the topic of discussion does not change. There are only quantitative variations concerning the same topic and they have to do with changes in the frame of responsibilities and duties. According to Proclus, Plato describes the same system of principles and aims, which become particular when the instances require it, since a political organization is complex in its structure and varied in its operations. Proclus notes that when Plato discusses changes in the political system, this means that what changes are both the city as a whole and each particular citizen as well. It is clear that Proclus here does not see a conflict between

10 Proclus, *In Platonis Rem Publicam commentarii*, I, 12.15-19: “Μόνῳ ἄρα τῷ ποσῷ τῶν ὑποκειμένων διεστήκατο τὸ τῇ ἀρίστῃς πολιτείας ἑίδος καὶ τῇ πολιτικής δικαιοσύνης, τὴν δὲ ύψιαν μίαν εἰλήφατον.” On Proclus’ views about law and justice, see his *In Platonis Alcibiadem I*, 270.1-280.23. We could plausibly argue that here Proclus moves in the direction of the *Republic* (435b1-2), where Plato argues that the just man does not differ from the just city. He attributes the same property to two different subjects, which become similar because of this common attribution.

11 Proclus, *In Platonis Rem Publicam commentarii*, I, 13.9-14.2. It should be noted that
the political system and the society, but understands them to be in a mutual dialectic relation. The mode of existence of the society extends to political planning as well, while political act itself influences the way the members of the society act and choose. The distinction between the state and the society, which characterizes the era of modernity, is at its very beginning here. The absence of this distinction is evident due to the fact that things are seen through the spectrum of unity, within the frame of which topics relevant to art and education are also included, thus forming political and social qualities.

Therefore, the Neoplatonist philosopher attributes to justice political properties, as well, as it becomes part of the institutional frame of collective activities, without having discussed positive law yet. He states that an individual is an active political person. From his own anthropological principles he excludes the sort of morality, which depends on individuals only. He claims that justice and the ideal state are commonly characterized by pure reason, and thus indirectly he validates the principle, which he had initially promoted, namely that political institutions and moral principles do not function mechanistically and do not aim at a superficial administration of human affairs. Consequently, we would say that what he brings forward is the ideal of a citizen, whose actions are rational and transcend the level of simple deliberations. Proclus attempts at the connection of Ethics with Politics, but not in the sense of adding the former to the latter. On the basis of his introductory statement, this connection aims at the realization of political happiness, as one of the most important human goals. Talking about virtues in particular, he underlines that prudence characterizes what is mainly called moral virtue, while justice characterizes politics. The responsibility of justice is to adorn citizens with its presence, giving what is appropriate to each one of them. This means that justice defines hierarchies that have to do with qualities and operations in the city. Following Plato’s political and

here Proclus refers to Books VIII and IX of the Republic, where Plato discusses the different states (timocracy, oligarchy, democracy, tyranny) and the corresponding changes in the ways of living of the citizens.

Proclus, In Platonis Rem Publicam commentarii, I, 14.4-10: “... πρὸς τὴν περὶ δικαιοσύνης ζήτησιν, αὐτὸ τότῳ λέγομεν, ὃ ἐστιν ἡ δικαιοσύνη, πολιτεία ψυχής οὖσα ζωῆς κατὰ λόγον τὸν ὀρθὸν.” What is discussed here is not a particular instance of justice, but the archetypal justice. For a more systematic view, see: (Proclus, Theologia Platonica, IV, 43.24-45.15). For the same topic in Plato (Kraut 1973).

anthropological views, which are explicitly accepted by Proclus, we could argue that (a) justice corresponds to human nature, which is political, (b) justice is the most essential factor, which defines a political community, and, as a combination of the above, (c) individual and political justice are identical. In this sense, we could argue that the monistic model of interpretation introduced by Proclus is once again attested. He does, of course, distinguish the limits between political law and ethics, at the time when one empirically perceives two levels of human activity. However, the criterion, through which he approaches them, transcends the discussion of particular cases of everyday practice and discovers such mutual properties in them, which he permanently reduces to the same principles. Thus, he does not recognize a particular structure in either of the two factors. This is exactly the key point for understanding the reasons, due to which the philosopher does not connect law with administration and does not approach it through positivism. He strives to free it from any circumstance and to enable it to participate in moral dialogues. The Neoplatonist philosopher’s following thoughts particularize the above conclusions.

Proclus also attempts to combine Politics with Anthropology. In this effort he notes that, according to Plato, political life basically refers to the moral and theoretical perfection of human beings. Initially, political life aims at the purification of a human being from passions and irrational behaviour. Its ultimate goal, however, is to become the theoretical frame which will completely actualize the logic inherently existing in human behaviour. This is the sort of logic which has the ability to adorn all human activities as it unifies them and makes them coherent. Proclus approaches human affairs in a holistic way. When he discusses the pathological elements in human existence, he defines the processes through which such elements can be transcended in terms of properties, which form

its inner character. This means that for Proclus human logic rests on an ontological basis, which can lead to the completeness of existence through an appropriate fortification. Further than that, Proclus argues that the political system consists in a stimulus for the activation of human possibilities. Once again, he considers it as a platform for the widening of the horizons of the citizens or as the critical power which leads citizens to reflexive thinking. We should note here that in other parts of his work the Neoplatonist philosopher says that the passions and the irrational elements are acquired and not inherent in human existence. They derive from the imprisonment of the human being in the body, which is supposed to be far from the rational way of living and dominated by instincts. The body, however, is considered to be good as it is included among the creations by the divine. Its weakness lies in that it cannot acquire self-consciousness. This mission is undertaken by the rational soul through the guidance of political life.\textsuperscript{15} It should be stressed here that for Proclus evil does not have any authentic ontological existence. It is an accident, a by-product, and people can transcend it through the necessary moral choices.\textsuperscript{16} The teleological anthropological example Proclus brings forward here is clear and deals with what we could characterize as restoration to that which has not been realized yet. We could, however, argue that the political example introduced by the Neoplatonist philosopher places him among utopians, to which Plato belonged to as well. One could also ask whether the citizens he attempts to establish are real people or the sort of people who are adapted to his maximalist plans. Independently of his classification among utopians, we would say that he views the state as the realization of the moral idea, a thought which is later found in Hegel. Thus, Proclus gives social and political aspects to the moral problem and introduces the structure and the values of the state to the domain of philosophy.

For the validation of the above views, it is emphasized that philosophy is logic, which does not remain on the level of self-references, but

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\textsuperscript{15} In his commentary \textit{In Platonis Alcibiadem I} Proclus systematically examines anthropological, moral and pedagogical topics. His primary aim here is to show how one will discover and cultivate the genuine elements of one’s existence and how one will thus be led to moral and political perfection. In this respect, he also examines the discovery of the real content of the human body through the processes of purification and self-knowledge. On Proclus’ moral views, see: (Rosan 1949, 193-217; Bastid 1969, 398-413).

\textsuperscript{16} Proclus, \textit{Theologia Platonica}, I, 83.2-87.21; Lloyd 1987.
functions by means of reductions. The Neoplatonist thinker notes that it is the sort of logic, which forces itself to acquire completion. This will be accomplished through the elevation to that ontological reality which has universal characteristics. In the frame of this process, logic will contemplate the state of ontological archetypes and the one and superior politician of the whole world. Proclus, however, formulates the following restriction: not everybody has the duty or the possibility to contemplate either the archetype of the ideal state and of the creator of the Universe. According to his estimation, such contemplation is possible only for the individual who will dynamically implement the principles of the ideal state and organize his inner life in conformity with them.\textsuperscript{17} All this shows that Proclus unifies Ethics, Politics, Epistemology, Cosmology and metaphysical Ontology into a single and coherent theoretical scheme. The archetype he uses in the frame of his interpretation is holistic. The responsibility of a researcher is to try to show the \textit{communi loci} of this epistemological paradigm. Again, this does not mean that Proclus weakens the specified limits among the above-mentioned theoretical branches. In his proposed system, the citizens who possess the necessary scientific background are able to understand both the general principles and their specifications. As in Plato, these people are the philosophers.\textsuperscript{18} Thus, the argument, by means of which he proposes all these, becomes personal and more pragmatological.

Concluding from what we have seen so far, we could argue that politics for Proclus is the institutional evolution or the justification of ethics,

\textsuperscript{17} Proclus, \textit{In Platonis Rem Publicam commentarii}, I, 16.18-24 (Plato, \textit{Phaedrus}, 67c6, 70a7, 80e5, 83a7). We agree with Festugière, who comments on the last sentence of the passage and, with reference to an issue of grammar, gives a wider dimension to these views: “Si bien que, dans cette phrase-ci, où l’accent est mis sur la même idée – arrangement de l’intérieur, puis contemplation du Cosmos et de son unique “Politique” – on se demande si μόνος, ainsi mis en tête, n’a pas la même signification: Proclus veut dire que μόνος ὁ λόγος qui aura bien ordonné τὰ μεθ’ ἑαυτόν (comme il fait dans la \textit{Republique}) pourra ensuite se déployer pour la contemplation du Tout et du Démiurge universel (comme il est fait dans le \textit{Timée}).” Common sense, which transcends particular cases, may be possessed by anybody or may constitute the consciousness of the city as a collective scheme and may contemplate the universal reason.

\textsuperscript{18} Cf., for instance, \textit{In Platonis Rem Publicam commentarii}, II, 258.5-268.10, where Proclus systematically develops his views concerning the mission of the philosophers in the frame of the political system and their cognitive capabilities towards its transformation to something superior.
which should be the basis of all collective deliberations and decisions. In this framework there is no act, either private or public, which is defined in itself or in an autonomous way. Despite all these, every person has his own moral identity and additionally the whole society is institutionally fortified through ethics. This takes place within a set of normative principles, the majority of which are divine, aiming at the development of each particular personality. Thus, the whole society will become a better one on the basis of truly political choices, since for Proclus utilitarian strategies have to be completely rejected. Apart from all these, however, the Neoplatonist philosopher attempts to make the best use of the Platonic texts, interpret and incorporate them into a unified system, according to the criteria he adopts. This is a system the terms of which are teleological and, thus, basically non-historical. We could, therefore, argue that through his political proposals, Proclus shows how history, in order to transcend itself, gradually perceives those qualitative characteristics.

In our view, we are not far from reality, if we argue that, given the analogies between the normative tenets of a theory and the particular action, this transcendence took place through the French Revolution. Of course, in any comparison between Proclus and the basic terms of this Revolution, the metaphysical foundation should be marginalized. The French Revolution is basically a proposal for change through terms of secularism. However, the proposal concerning justice as a principle of political life and the construction of the responsibly acting citizen place both Proclus’ political planning and the radical proposals of the major Revolution in modern times in the forefront of common goals. We would say that these are the schemes of thought or action through which society acquires consciousness of itself and of the goals to be derived from this consciousness.

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