THE NEVER-ENDING REVOLUTION

PHILOSOPHICAL AND HISTORIOGRAPHIC REFLECTIONS ON THE FRENCH REVOLUTION AND ITS LEGACY

Edited by
Dušan Dostanić
& Aleksandar Novaković

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Dušan Dostanić
&
Aleksandar Novaković
(Editors)

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In memory of Živojin Đurić, our dear colleague, friend and supporter

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OPENING REMARKS

Friedrich Romig

The French Revolution was not a meteorite which came out of nowhere and, to the surprise of the French people, hit the Bastille in Paris on 14 July 1789, thus opening the prison doors. But, rather, it was an epochal event and a culmination point of a political-historical development which had started, at the latest, with modern times, or, as we now say, with "modernity," and which – by promoting the reign of parties, democracy, human rights, Enlightenment, anti-clericalism, and atheistic humanism – had a crucial influence upon the fact that the world then came off its hinges, and that the European civilization of Christian imprint lost its strength. Those who opposed the Enlightenment – the traditionalists, conservatives, romantics, and idealists, just as it is the case with most of contributors to this volume – had to limit themselves to the role of being a "restrainer." The Apostle Paul and the conservative revolutionaries, such as Carl Schmitt or Wilhelm Stapel, call them *katechons* ["the ones who withhold"].

For me as a social historian and social philosopher, it is relatively practical and helpful for furthering our insights to approach those historically important events – such as the French Revolution – from some four or five different levels.

The first level is the level of facts, or, as I call it, the "forensic level". The later term is due to the fact that most revolutions go along with crimes. So what really happened at the Storming of the Bastille? How were the gates opened for the ten prisoners who were imprisoned there? How did it come to the brutish massacres of the prison guards and their superior, the Governor de Launay, who had surrendered to the storming masses and who had been promised a free passage by the leaders of the mob?

The second level, as I propose it, should look at the background of the event, the motives of the deed. Who organized the storming of the Bastille, who led the mob, who ordered the massacres? Did spontaneous mass-psychological events take place, as for example Le Bon had described them? Was the Marquis de Sade actually involved, with his own lust for murder and torture?

The third level tries to grasp the consequences of a historically important deed. What were the effects of the French Revolution? What led to the sinking of the French Revolution into the terror of Robespierre, Marrat and St. Just? The genocide in the Vendée has been well described by now, not least of all by my now-deceased friend Erik Ritter von Kuehnelt-Leddihn in his book „Die falsch gestellten Weichen" (Graz 1985). Was the uproar and storming precisely plotted by conspirators like the Jacobins or Free Masons? And is not „Emperor" Napoléon a product of the FR, who created the French „Volksarmee", whirled through Europe, sacrificed millions of Europeans in the name of liberté and égalité and ruined France by his downfall?

With the fourth level, we enter the level of speculation, of interpretation, and of placing the event into the larger process of

history. This is where subjective inclinations, convictions, ideologies, and historical theories come into play, and which lead, as also this conference will show us, to very controversial discussions.

In order somehow to bring order into this chaos of disputes, one of my teachers strongly defended – if not posited – the thesis that behind every historical-political mega event, there is hidden a theological question, which at the same time reveals itself. The philosopher of history and theologian of history finally leads historical-political events back to the changes with regard to the image of God, the image of man and of society – or he at least tries to do so. Erik Voegelin, a close student of Othmar Spann, has described this change in his ten-volume work *Order and History*, from pre-antiquity up to the last third of the 20th century, and he has summed it up in the notion "Gnosticism." For Voegelin, the final reason for this change is the self-empowerment of man, the wish for self-redemption, to dethrone God and to follow the whispers of the serpent: "*Eritis sicut Deus*." Through the Original Sin, the distinction between Good and Evil became lost, and this loss is now being regarded as the cause for the "Death of the West" (Patrick Buchanan) and the "Culture of Death" (John Paul II), but also by all the great historical philosophers, from Plato, to Thomas Aquinas, the alumni of the Tübinger Stift, Fichte, Schelling, Hölderlin, Hegel up to Ranke, Burckhardt, Burke, Carlyle, Eliot, Chesterton, Dostojewski, Solowjew, Ilyin, Nietzsche, Toynbee, Spengler, Sombart, Max Weber, Evola, Leopold Ziegler, Guénon, Maurras, Thomas Mann, Adorno, Horkheimer, Scruton, and finally also by Spann, Voegelin, Huntington, Heidegger, and Ratzinger – to name only a few.

This thesis of the necessity of making a real distinction between Good and Evil for the life of human beings and of societies of peoples has also been stressed by the Second Vatican Council (*Gaudium et Spes* 13): history, and with it "all of human life, whether individual or collective, shows itself to be a dramatic struggle between good and evil, between light and darkness." "Light and darkness" are here

to be understood as symbols for the perpetual battle between idealism and materialism; realism and nominalism; substantialism and empiricism; supernaturalism and naturalism; *civitas Dei* and *civitas terrena*; *fides et ratio*; natural law and Human Rights; theism and atheism; Christ and Antichrist.

It remains true what Leo XIII had stated in his encyclical *Diuturnum illud*: "The well-being of the state depends upon the religion with which God is being adored" (*societas* = society, community, state).

This is, therefore, not only a thesis stemming from conservatives, romanticists, or idealists, but, rather, from all those who have ever reflected upon the deeper sense of history in East and West and who wish to contribute to the *Bonum commune*, the Common Good, in German Gemeinwohl or, as the French say, to the well understood „salut public", very different from what the French revolutionaries meant by this term.

I wish this important volume on the revaluation of the French Revolution and the correction of its mainstream narrative a lasting success.

INTELECTUAL LEGACY

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FRENCH REVOLUTION AND ITS INTELLECTUAL LEGACY

Aleksandar Novaković

I am not afraid that they will find in their leaders tyrants, but rather tutors.
Alexis de Tocqueville

What is nowadays seen as passionate appeals for new rights and freedoms exhibit a structural similarity with the progressive ideals of the French revolution. They reflect aspiration for "totalitarian democracy."[1] In contrast to liberal democracy, a proud child of 19th century liberalism, totalitarian democracy presupposes reconciliation of social and individual freedom. It is the place where the paradox between freedom and desirable social order is to be resolved.[2]

Conceptually, the totalitarian aspect of democracy is realized where all individual volitions transform into one, where there is no difference between the state and society. But there is an important

1 Cf. Jacob Talmon, *The Origins of Totalitarian Democracy*, London: Mercury Books, 1961.

2 Since having individual freedom, by definition, presupposes that different social virtues are acceptable to those who can choose, the only way to impose a particular ideal of social virtue is by force, that is, by state imposition of the "preferred" social virtue.

difference here between the brutalism of Nazism or Stalinism and totalitarian democracy. For the latter involves *voluntary* adjustments, acceptances, and decisions of the large portion of a population during a longer time, leading to the constitutional erosion. In such a democracy, gas chambers and gulags are not necessary; people consciously decide to renounce individual freedom through democratic means: in fair and democratic elections, referenda, through petitions, social activism, etc. Government is not there to safeguard the borders defined by the constitution, but to please the majority whose opinion is already manufactured by influential media, organizations, "scientific community" or individuals, regardless of the set limits. In totalitarian democracy, wills are freely and responsibly expressed. Dissent voices are precluded from the start and abolished as "fringe," "obscure" and even "unscientific." You do not need to kill or to imprison anybody, if you manage to secure that dissenters are stigmatized as conspiracy theorists, right-wingers or simply unreliable and irresponsible individuals. You just need to push them to social margins, where their voice can be heard only by an inaudible minority.

In totalitarian democracy's contemporary, emerging form, all traditional institutions of liberal society, such as free speech, diversity, tolerance, religious freedom, and sanctity of property are cherished insofar they affirm what priests of new progressivism postulate as the civilization's values and standards. There can be no other social ideal apart from the one totalitarian democracy cherishes. Between modern despotism of Putin or the Islamic fundamentalism on the one side, and the outdated 19th-century ideals of freedom and an unfettered market on the other, the only civilizational response left to follow is democracy based on enlightened, revolutionary ideal.

The ideal's rudimental, brutal embodiment during the Reign of terror is supplanted by piecemeal and humane version. The goal remains the same: piecemeal, but revolutionary construction of social reality. In some respects, the paradox between freedom and social virtue is already resolved, and the "truth" established. From

the jargon of political correctness[3] to the institution of "fact-checkers,"[4] policymakers are promulgating that the truth is consensually acknowledged, and it is to be blindly followed. For in totalitarian democracy "a sole and exclusive truth in politics exists."[5]

What the French Revolution brought about in a highly condensed form of its short-lived, but profoundly devastating totalitarian phase, has been steadily evolving through the political history for more than two centuries now, sometimes in extreme form of the twentieth century's red and black terrors and sometimes as crawling totalitarianism disguised under the cloak of democratic legitimacy. To fully understand the significance of the revolution, we should delve deeply into the roots of intellectual change it brought to modern society.

INTELLECTUAL RECEPTION

Although the revolutions' ideals were initially centered around the values of liberty and the rule of law as conceived in Lockean

3 Jeff Deist suggests that even this term is obsolete and that should be replaced with "broader and even more amorphous" one, such as "woke"; "woke demands ever changing language, and constantly creates new words while eliminating old ones." See Jeff Deist's "Evolution or Corruption? *The Imposition of Political Language in the West Today*," *The Austrian* vol. 8, no. 6 (November-December) 2022, p. 5.

4 Outside of political instrumentalization, the institution of fact-checkers has proven beneficial as an additional instrument for establishing credibility in journalism and might support free society in general. This is especially noticeable in cases where the fact of the matter can be easily established by answering straightforward questions – who, where, what, and how (see Graves, Lucas. *Deciding What's True: The Rise of Political Fact-Checking in American Journalism*. United States: Columbia University Press, 2016.) But when this cannot be done, for example, in the cases of long-standing scientific controversies or where there is a plethora of conflicting evidence supported by credible studies – or when the institution lacks competence in a specific field, then the logical question arises: who will fact-check the fact-checkers?

5 Ibid. p. 1.

tradition, they were promptly supplanted with the leveling down egalitarianism of Rousseau. Historian Niall Ferguson,[6] as well as libertarian author David Boaz[7] stress the ambivalent character of the *Declaration of the Rights of the Man and of the Citizen* of 1789. The document embodies classical liberal or Lockean primacy of liberty simultaneously with the concept of sovereignty of *volonté générale.* The former rests on the idea of legitimate property from which the concept of a state – the minimal one – emerges, with free cooperating (or non-cooperating) individuals and associations of individuals (also free to disassociate). The latter is the idea of sovereignty of *volonté générale* that must be imposed, coercively, by the repressive apparatus of modern state.

Nevertheless, the general appraisal of the revolution is predominantly favorable. Yes – it brought unprecedented terror, but the terror was avoidable, for it did not logically follow from the humanitarian premises of the Declaration *per se*. It was rather a consequence of historical contingency – psychological factors, such as the bad mentality of Jacobins. The lessons were learned, and the rise and establishment of modern liberal democratic states was perceived as the confirmation that humanity has finally overcome the state of "self-incurred immaturity" (Kant). On the other side, the rise of national socialism was seen as retrograde and irrational setback, and the Bolshevik revolution as merely belated abolishment of feudalism. This simplified perception neglects ideological similarities and structural analogies between the revolution and these historical events.

Classical liberal and libertarian authors nourish optimistic or mostly neutral-to-optimistic view of the revolution. Scholars such as Murray Rothbard, David Boaz, Deirdre McCloskey acknowl-

6 Niall Ferguson, *Civilization: The West and the Rest*. London: Allen Lane, 2011.

7 David Boaz, *the Libertarian Mind: A Manifesto for Freedom*, Simon & Schuster, 2015.

edge that the revolution had its aberrations, but on the other side, these are explained away as a natural and expected outcome of the centuries of monarchial absolutism.[8] The pendulum had just swung in the opposite direction. The days of old regime were numbered. Under the pressures of a political and ideological shift of epochal scope the last remnants of feudalism and its hierarchies were crumbling away. Their majesty, the "abstract individual" with their "rights" – set by God or Nature – enters the scene of history. *This* was the revolution's undisputed contribution that marked the definitive turning point in history and spread the word throughout Europe (and the World) that nothing is the same anymore.

On the opposing end of ideological spectrum, the revolution enjoys favorable reception for various reasons. The mainstream, liberal left and all its branches see in the revolution the inspiration for the much-needed changes in social life, economy, and politics. From Green agenda to identity politics, everywhere left-inclining voices praise the revolution for its determination to radically challenge, and change, the entrenched status quo. They cherish the idea of permanent and radical change, predominantly in intellectual sphere, where they strive for "purity," as did Jacobins.[9] The

8 It does not need to be stressed that the libertine side of this intellectual school finds even more praiseworthy elements in the revolution. To find confirmation for this, one should only recall sheer revolutionary devastation of all norms of behavior and standards of decency and compare that with the philosophy of free lifestyles of modern libertines and their not-so-distant relatives, hippies.

9 Samuel Gregg fittingly summarizes the point about the similarity between wokedom and Jacobinism: "The primary similarity between revolutionaries like Robespierre and twenty-first century wokedom is a yearning for ever-increasing ideological purity, something which lends itself to identifying more and more categories of people and ideas as unacceptable. That generates chronic instability as people can never quite know if they and their ideas remain among the elect. Indeed, cancel culture cannot help but actively seek out opponents whose existence is seen as obstructing the creation of a new world purified of error. For without new enemies, it loses its *raison d'être*." See: Samuel Gregg, "Our Great Awokening and France's Great Terror" available at: https://lawliberty.org/our-great-awokening-and-frances-terror/

revolution is a role model for social activism on the wings of the "cancel culture" as well.

Marx himself was cautious though. He was not as cynical as his contemporary followers, who pretended to be horrified by the Terror, while simultaneously accepting the logic that brough the Terror about. He was aware that radical change brings radical violence. In revolutionary events he saw a confirmation of the thesis of class-struggle and historical determinism, but with actors that did not articulate the interest of the popular masses. The revolution was the reaction of the new class, whose interests opposed the needs of the exploited workers of nascent capitalist order. It was the "bourgeois" revolution, the turning point in the historical chains of necessity that Marx postulated by turning upside down Hegel's philosophy of history. Bourgeoisie will eventually be replaced by Proletariat, the most vanguard and advanced class. To delve into the moral illegitimacy of violence while the historic mill grinds the social and political status quo, is petty talk of those still not fully dispensed with bourgeois ethics and its pathetic sentimentality.

Other prominent leftists demonstrated a more ambivalent attitude towards the revolution, especially after the gloomy events of the XX century. Here and there rejecting the dogmatic elements of original doctrine of Marx and Engels, they embark on critical assessment that revealed not only underground stream of historical development through which one should understand the epoch, but also opportunities for a new political mobilization. Members of the Frankfurt school saw in the revolutionary terror[10] the most drastic implementation of "instrumental reason," a child of Enlightenment, whose development brought even worse calamity with the rise of Hitlerism and gas chambers, whereas others sought in the bloody climax of the revolution-

10 While simultaneously turning the blind eye to the Stalinists purges. In *Towards a New Manifesto* (1956), Max Horkheimer asserts: "The Russians are already halfway towards fascism." Cf. Theodor W. Adorno, and Max Horkheimer, *Towards a New Manifesto*. London: Verso, 2019, p. 49.

ary terror an inspiration for the appropriate answer for the supposed misdeeds of their own time. The latter is reflected most vividly in the deification of the idea of a revolution in the thought of Herbert Marcuse[11] whose name, alongside the names of Marx and Mao Zedong was hailed during the students' unrests of 1968 and the rise of American New Left. Furthermore, leftist intellectuals felt that revolution revealed the true character of human nature and some prominent structuralists and poststructuralists supported the thesis. Man is *nobody* – echoing the answer of Ulysses to the Cyclope Polypheme, and thus he can be *anything* - a saint, but also a bloodthirsty beast. No transcendence, no sense, no purpose, nothing whatsoever underpins a human cosmos, but ever-sweeping nihilism. Rousseau opted for the benevolent savage as the role model for a new society, but his modern followers could not afford such an optimistic perspective. Underneath Foucault's concept of power lurks the dark vision of human nature fully disclosed in all its bestiality during the revolutionary terror of 1793 and depicted in the writings of de Sade.[12]

But how in the XXI century, after all totalitarian and authoritarian experiences of the past, one should think about the revolution? Should our time take the critical, but nevertheless positively tuned attitude as some libertarians do? When thinking about the revolution, one must always keep in mind that its much-admired aspects – namely, that it initiated the termination of preexisting order of privileges and hierarchies in Europe must be taken into consideration simultaneously with all other important developments that it inspired, such as the formation of contemporary highly-centralized and over bureaucratized (democratic) state.

11 Herbert Marcuse, *An Essay on Liberation*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1969; *Counterrevolution and Revolt*. London: Allen Lane, the Penguin Press, 1972.

12 The human nature conceived in such a way was deeply suppressed in the dungeons of the new bourgeois state only to be revealed with the eruption of National Socialism and Bolshevism. It is still waiting to be rediscovered in so-called neoliberal era. The leftist *Gleichstellung* being its sole panacea.

Erik Ritter von Kuehnelt-Leddihn effectively captured this point:

> *...it seems that ... monarchs such as Louis XIV, Frederick II, or George II are genuine liberals by modern standards. None of the aforementioned could have issued a decree whereby he drafted all male subjects into his army, a decree regulating the diet of his citizens, or one demanding a general confession of all his economic activities from the head of each household in the form of an income tax declaration. We had to wait for the democratic age to see conscription, prohibition, and modern taxation made into laws by the people's representatives who have much greater power than even the absolute monarchs of old dreamed of. (It must be noted further that in Western and Central Europe the "absolute" monarchs-thanks to the corps intermediaries-never were really absolute: the local parliaments in France and the regional Landtage and Stände in the Germanies never failed to convene.) Modern parliaments can be more peremptory in all their demands because they operate with the magic democratic formula. "We are the people, and the people that's us.*[13]

The very acknowledgment of the fact that the power of the modern state and totalitarian potential it invokes enormously surpasses the most autarchic monarchy of the past, should diminish and relativize initial appreciation for the revolution – especially among people who cherish liberty.[14]

THE PERVERTED IDEA OF FREEDOM

Complementary with these considerations, the intellectual legacy of the revolution raises the question of the philosophical character of political ideas and their historical incarnation. It, thus, raises the question of the relation of ideas to time. We see how lapse

13 Erik Ritter von Kuehnelt-Leddihn, *Leftism: from de Sade and Marx to Hitler and Marcuse*. Arlington House, 1974, p. 34.

14 Those sympathies should be suppressed from the start, lest their advocates share the same fate as Malesherbes.

of time can reveal their full practical potential, while only few of great minds were capable to pass a sign of warning in advance: Socrates and his sacrifice, Plato and Aristotle on the pernicious logic of democracy, Burke's gloomy observation one year in advance of the terror, de Tocqueville's prophetic insights about the coming of the new age of sublime totalitarianism. French revolution is the most striking example of how attractive political concepts tend to blend with entirely different and even opposing ideals that pollute the political mind and make preconditions for all sorts of manipulations.

For Kuehnelt-Leddihn, the paradigmatic case was the drowning and disappearing of liberty in the longing for equality. The identification of two opposing ideas rests on "psychological reasons."[15] "If all are equal," Leddhin says, "nobody is 'superior,' nobody has to be afraid of everybody else."[16] A person is free from fear of everybody else, he is always "at home" and pleased, he is "safe" and "secure."[17] He directs us then to Treitschke, who showed how the distorted idea of freedom blended with the Rousseau's general will, since in democracies the majorities are seen as "the whole."[18]

Drawing inspiration from Plato and Tocqueville, Leddihn locates the roots of egalitarianism and democracy in envy and fear. They both nurture what he calls identitarian instincts that stand in opposition to the traditional liberal urge for diversity. The identitarian drive, stemming from the feeling of fear and envy, tends to absorb every sphere of personal and social life into one – political. It seeks for sameness, for identical conditions in every regard, often from the inferiority complex and generally from a fear of embracing personal

15 Erik Ritter von Kuehnelt-Leddihn, *Liberty or Equality: The Challenge of Our Time*. Mises Institute, 2014, p. 304. note 368.

16 Ibidem.

17 It is remarkable how this identification resembles today's culture of safety, or "safetysm" which seems nowadays to become the primary individual and social value. Cf. Greg Lukianoff and Jonathan Haidt, *The coddling of the American mind: How good intentions and bad ideas are setting up a generation for failure*. Penguin Books, 2019.

18 Ibidem.

responsibility and life challenges. Identitarian always needs a tutor, but a tutor who he himself recognizes as such, and whom he trusts, who can anticipate his thoughts and react promptly whenever some transgression of acclaimed standards is attempted.

The story of benevolent dictatorship echoes in prophetic words of Tocqueville:

> *So the State is full of solicitude for the happiness of the citizens, but it wants to be the unique agent and the sole (illegible word) of it. It is the State that takes care of providing their security, facilitating their pleasures, directing the principal affairs; the State itself creates roads, digs canals, directs industries, divides inheritances. It may even be able to plow the earth and finally take away from each man even the difficulty of living! Equality of conditions has prepared men for all these things; it has disposed them to bear them and often even to regard them as a good.*[19]

For a contemporary man, and contemporary Western-democratic-liberal-civilized man is a *progressive man*, this idea of separation of politics from personal life is not self-evident as it was for the liberal of 18th or 19th century. This is perhaps even more manifest in the case of a peasant under the rule of Maria Teresia. Very often the peasant did not know what his ruler looked like – the sphere of politics was as distant as was the semblance of his king. But still, as Kuehnelt-Leddihn observes, the peasant was freer than "the average dweller in New York Lower East Side tenement."[20] Freedom in this sense is gradually becoming more detached from our own understanding of personal and political freedoms.

If this psychological urge finds its political institutionalization – which it tends to in many spheres of modern political life (sexuality, interpersonal and intercultural relations, attitude toward

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19 Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America: Historical-Critical Edition of de La Démocratie En Amérique*. Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 2010, p. 1254.

20 Erik Ritter von Kuehnelt-Leddihn, *Liberty or Equality: The Challenge of Our Time*. Mises Institute, 2014, p. 109.

markets, ecology, education…) – and if this institutionalization becomes decisive, then the road to the leveling egalitarianism is wide open and prospects for liberty, conceived in its true, classical form, are grim. What now becomes readily comprehensible for an average man is the vision of the world in which everything is predetermined and known, and where everyone shares the same views, speaks in the same manner, and loves the same things. The equalization of all conditions cannot be done without the coercive force of the State which leads, naturally, to the blessed state of ignorance and improvidence, of not being disturbed, of not being responsible, of not even being able to think and observe. Leddihn states: "Egalitarianism, … cannot make much progress without the use of force: Perfect equality, naturally, is only possible in total slavery."[21]

Thus, we can see how under intense identitarian pressures, the idea of freedom becomes perverted and lost under the urge for sameness. What once was personal liberty has now become freedom for a democratic, national, or racial herd pleased to be served by a demagogue ("a leader of a mob" – an ancient Greek term for leaders in democracies), an attractive label for the will of the collective in which no dissonant voices can be heard.

THE PIECEMEAL JACOBINISM

The idea of ubiquitous equality,[22] which was conceived in the democratic ideal of Rousseau, his concept of *volonté générale,* had an effectful, but short-lived realization during the Reign of Terror. But did the disastrous phase of the revolution

21 Erik Ritter von Kuehnelt-Leddihn, *Leftism: from de Sade and Marx to Hitler and Marcuse*. Arlington House, 1974, p. 25.

22 It has become trendy among the proponents of progressivism to use the term "equity" instead of "equality." The latter connotes old-fashioned Marxist concept of equality of outcomes as opposed to equality before the law. Cf. Jeff Deist's "Evolution or Corruption? The Imposition of Political Language in the West Today," *The Austrian* vol. 8, no. 6 (November-December) 2022, p. 7.

mark the end of revolutionary ideal itself, the one cherished by the Jacobins?

François Furet reminds us how ideas have the quality of transcending the present moment. At least in intellectual sense, the revolution "has a birth but no end."[23] Because the revolution comes with "a promise of such magnitude that it becomes boundlessly elastic," it enabled the trajectory of the endless human emancipation towards the ideal of full equality. Moreover, in the words of famous French historian, the revolution "does not simply 'explain' our contemporary history; it *is* our contemporary history."[24] The same ideal is still shaping the dynamics of political life, because it is the point of departure, the main inspiration and driving force for the ones who perceive themselves as keepers of civilizational progress. Progressive politics would not be the *spiritus movens* of contemporary politics if its ideal was not inherently attractive and promising, almost utopian.[25]

23 Ibid. p. 3.

24 François Furet. *Interpreting the French Revolution*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981, p. 3.

25 At least in understanding economic life, and with few exceptions, the contemporary right-wing movement (right-wing "populism") also accepts the perverted idea of freedom and, indirectly, associates itself with the ideological legacy of the revolution. We do not need to delve here into Bismarckian *Staatsocilismus* and its French origins, to acknowledge the connection. One of the most prominent conservatives today, Patrick J. Deneen, defends it as an original tenet of conservatism that should be set as programmatic aspect of the populist right: "…a great deal of the economic program of the 'the new right' takes its cues from the older social democratic tradition of the left. […] This tendency is more than merely accidental but represents a *return* of conservatism to its original form – a consolidated opposition to liberalism." See: Patrick J. Deneen, *Regime Change: Toward a Postliberal Future*, Sentinel, 2023, xiv. One thing is certain, wherever there is economic redistribution backed up by the need to level up those "underdeveloped" with the ones who are better off, equality transforms into equity. There are plenty of works today demonstrating the shift of right-wing parties from initial "neoliberal" economic views towards the ideology of the welfare state. See for example, Sarah L. de Lange, "A New Winning Formula? The Programmatic Appeal of the Radical Right." *Party Politics*, vol. 13, no. 4, 2007, p. 411-435. See also, Juliana Chueri, "An emerging populist welfare para-

What was unachievable in 1789 becomes achievable today with all ideological, institutional, and technological capacities of the modern state, albeit democratically and voluntarily. For only a fully operational and centralized democratic super-state that has already claimed much of the private sphere of its citizens, and in which the ideal is deeply embedded in the hearts and minds of people through educational system, can demonstrate how one's mind can be enslaved without even been aware of the enslavement.

The concept of piecemeal Jacobinism is not unknown. Tocqueville was fascinated with the idea, which he traced in democratic ideal of equality, but was struggling to find an adequate term.[26] Finally, in the absence of more suitable expression, he coined the phrase "administrative despotism:"

> *Above those men arises an immense and tutelary power that alone takes charge of assuring their enjoyment and of looking after their fate. It is absolute, detailed, regular, far-sighted and mild. It would resemble paternal power if, like it, it had as a goal to prepare men for manhood; but on the contrary it seeks only to fix them irrevocably in childhood; it likes the citizens to enjoy themselves, provided that they think only about enjoying themselves. It works willingly for their happiness; but it wants*

digm? How populist radical right-wing parties are reshaping the welfare state" *Scandinavian Political Studies*, no. 45, 2023, 383– 40; Christian Joppke, "Explaining the Populist Right in the Neoliberal West" *Societies* 13, no. 5, 2023, p. 110; Laurenz Ennser-Jedenastik, "Welfare Chauvinism in Populist Radical Right Platforms: The Role of Redistributive Justice Principles" *Social Policy & Administration*, no. 52, 2018, pp. 293– 314.

26 "So I think that the type of oppression by which democratic peoples are threatened will resemble nothing of what preceded it in the world; our contemporaries cannot find the image of it in their memories. I seek in vain myself for an expression that exactly reproduces the idea that I am forming of it and includes it; [the thing that I want to speak about is new, and men have not yet created the expression which must portray it.] the old words of despotism and of tyranny do not work. The thing is new, so I must try to define it, since I cannot name it." Cf. Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America: Historical-Critical Edition of de La Démocratie En Amérique*. Eds. Eduardo Nolla, and James T. Schleifer. Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 2010, p. 1248.

> *to be the unique agent for it and the sole arbiter; it attends to their security, provides for their needs, facilitates their pleasures, conducts their principal affairs, directs their industry, settles their estates, divides their inheritances; how can it not remove entirely from them the trouble to think and the difficulty of living?*[27]

There are numerous contemporary descriptions of the concept. Talmon's totalitarian democracy is already mentioned, but traditionally, libertarian authors are most ardent in their attacks on what they depict as "Nanny State." A libertarian icon Ronald Regan famously summarized the essence of the role: "Government exists to protect us from each other. Where government has gone beyond its limits is in deciding to protect us from ourselves."[28] More conservative writers such as Paul Gottfried direct our attention to the concept of therapeutic dimension of "managerial state."[29] However, the idea of managerial state is underpinned by the insights of psychiatrist Thomas Szasz and his notion of therapeutic state.[30] On the other side, philosopher Peter Sloterdijk is keen to speak about "the Hand of the state that gives." In most recent publications, he even cautions us that the State has taken off its "velvet gloves."[31]

Tocqueville was indeed prophetic. The rise of the State he envisaged is neither a subject of theoretical imagination any longer, nor

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27 Ibidem, 1250.

28 Cf. Alan Greenspan, *The Age of Turbulence: Adventures in a New World*, Penguin Press, Chapter 4 (Private Citizen), 2007, p. 87.

29 The central places where Gottfried developed his idea of managerial state are *After Liberalism: Mass Democracy in the Managerial State* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001.) and *Multiculturalism and the Politics of Guilt: Toward a Secular Theocracy* (Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 2004).

30 Thomas Szasz, *The Myth of Mental Illness.* New York: Harper & Row, 1961; *Law, Liberty, and Psychiatry: An Inquiry into the Social Uses of Mental Health Practices*. New York: Collier Books, 1963.

31 Cf. Peter Sloterdijk, "Die Revolution der gebenden Hand." *FAZ* vom 13. Juni 2009; Sloterdijk, *Der Staat Streift Seine Samthandschuhe ab. Ausgewählte gespräche und beiträge 2020-2021*. Berlin: Suhrkamp, 2021.

a matter of a more developed sense for political history. Of course, Tocqueville could not depict concrete forms of administrative despotism, but he nevertheless presented the essence of the phenomenon that is unveiling in front of our eyes.

THE INTELLECTUAL LEGACY

It does not need to be stressed that the revolution cannot be responsible for all the negative developments of several centuries of modern history. The bureaucratic centralization was the proud achievement of absolutistic monarchies; democracy, as a perverted form of political organization was acknowledged as such in the political life of ancient Greek city states and in the political theory of Plato and Aristotle, while proto-national sentiments were detectable in Europe long before 1789. Neither should its true contribution be sought in the sheer scope and brutality of the revolutionary terror, with the episodes of sadistic enjoyment in bestiality. The revolution's "contribution" is to be sought rather in intellectual sphere, in a legitimization of dangerous conception created to solve the paradox of social organization – *once and for all*.

We should seek to uncover those intellectual presuppositions working behind the scene, which made this perverted idea of freedom possible and self-evident. What is then, from the pure intellectual perspective, the true legacy of the French Revolution? Or, in other words, what *intellectually* supports this perverted idea of freedom? [32] It is not the Declaration, for all the proclaimed ideas form the Declaration were already known and circulated long before the revolution; it is not even the pathos *of égalité, liberté*, and

32 Now deeply entrenched in the mind of European man. This would not be possible had the Bourbon Restauration not been an act of historical recognition of *fait accompli*, the tacit acknowledgement that revolutionary ideals were civilizational ideals. For the situation in France during the period of the Restauration, see Bertier de Sauvigny Guillaume, *The Bourbon Restoration*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1967.

fraternité that swept over Europe like nothing else before. From our own perspective, and time, it is not the human rights ideology prone to endless interpretations and innovative upgrades, for it is only a manifestation of the underlying intellectual presupposition. The ideology, and consequently the perverted idea of freedom would not be possible had it not been supported by the refined change in self-perception. The change was brought about most vividly and effectively by the revolution. Its true legacy, thus, is to be sought in a subtle, but definite intellectual transformation, in the idea that man does not owe anything to his own origin, his culture, his civilization – *his past*. It is the idea of an entirely self-consciousness being, a moment when genuinely modern man – as a citizen of centralized democratic state – emerges on the scene of history.

No one summarizes the insight more eloquently than one of the most ardent supporters of the revolution, Thomas Paine. In *The Rights of Man*, Paine confronts Edmund Burke's thesis of society as a partnership of the dead, the living and the unborn consistently applying what would become the credo for any future social constructivism:

> *Every age and generation must be as free to act for itself, in all cases, as the ages and generations which preceded it. The vanity and presumption of governing beyond the grave, is the most ridiculous and insolent of all tyrannies. Man has no property in man; neither has any generation a property in the generations which are to follow. [...] Every generation is, and must be, competent to all then purposes which its occasions require. It is the living, and not the dead, that are to be accommodated.*[33]

The revolution brought about the idea of absolute and devastating critique of everything – even itself; it presented liberated individual, liberated from any preceding social relations and bonds, habits, and traditions. It demonstrated that one could build anything in the

33 Thomas Paine, *The Rights of Man, Common Sense and other political writings*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998, pp. 91-92.

present if one does not owe anything to the past. And one does not owe anything to the past because such expectations and commitments are excluded by the revolutionary mindset as reactionary atavism. Precisely this, the self-consciousness that "one does not have to" was the spark that ignited the revolutionary fire. Theoretically, it conceived of a concept of a man as a creature possessing no previous obligation to anything whatsoever. "Man was born free, and he is everywhere in chains" (Rousseau). This has opened the door wide for all other historical experiments that followed, but also the ones in which we live today. There are no limits to social constructivism. Everything is allowed and possible if it is legitimized democratically and based on the progressive ideals of the revolution. A man is a free being, free in the *absolute* sense of the words, and the feeling was the most inspiring and, at the same time, the most dangerous legacy of the revolution which still inspires progressive souls. In this very important respect, the revolution is in complete accordance with the way contemporary man understands himself and understands time. Everything is changeable, and everything is a construct – no sanctity, transcendence, no permanency in the world which is in constant flux of change and construction.

The idea of the limitless possibility of the construction of social reality is the idea that shapes modern understanding of life and politics. The revolution brought it about in a condensed form, but it started to be fully exploited only when all remaining elements of the *Ancien Régime* were dismantled throughout the Western world, paving the way for the rise of modern Leviathan – highly centralized democratic super-State.

THE HISTORICAL EMBODIMENT

The revolution, and its intellectual legacy, laid down presuppositions for the structural changes that define the modern world of politics and life in general. And although the sole responsibility for

such changes cannot be leveled completely on the revolution and its legacy, the influence is detectable.

In the political sphere, this amounts to a decommissioning of the monarchial systems and the introduction of general suffrage, with a rising model of a highly bureaucratized and centralized state.[34] In the sphere of culture and the questions of identities, the heterogeneous hierarchical societies of Europe were transformed into states in which a single identity – national – is constitutive.[35] The model of a new political subject, the citizen, being empty and abstract in its nature, favors certain identity over all others. In egalitarian societies, where each individual is legally equal to any other and where a citizen is always a citizen of a specific state, the notion of ethnic nationalism is coterminous with the notion of a citizen. It might be said that only a national state brings the question of identity to the fore. Previously, the question was under the radar of political life; it started prevailing only with the rise of a society of mass culture spurred by the informational possibilities of a technological age. However, since the premise of modern understanding of politics is a constant change and a (re)construction of social reality, it took time to accept that nothing, not even the national sentiments developed through centuries and cherished vociferously, is exempted

34 Cf. Hans-Hermann Hoppe, *Democracy, the God That Failed: The Economics and Politics of Monarchy, Democracy, and Natural Order*. New Brunswick: Transaction, 2001.

35 As Kuehnelt-Leddihn concludes: "The significance of the French Revolution lies not only in the revival of democracy, and it represented not only the adoption of political patterns prevailing in antiquity and among primitives, but it also gave a new impetus to state worship and to ethnic nationalism. The all-powerful polis-state again made its appearance. In other words, the identitarian drives culminated not only in a frantic demand for equality (which went so far that only Robespierre's fall prevented the destruction of all steeples and towers), but also of ethnic sameness." (*Leftism: from de Sade and Marx to Hitler and Marcuse*. p. 97.) Together with many conservative and liberal authors Kuehnelt-Leddihn also notes that the only way to escape this totalitarian destiny is to reverse existing trends. Whether that is possible is another question.

from being abolished or replaced. The new era of progressive democracies sought new content to fill the abstract denominator of "citizen" reacting in such a way to the fact of erosion of national identities. And new identities emerged – from those of indigenous peoples, women, to, most recently, those of immigrants and transgender persons – that should be protected and cherished, not less arduously. This has put an enormous amount of pressure on the constitution of the modern, liberal state and its idea of individual rights, by subverting it and paving the way for the installation of the tribal idea of society (institutional multiculturalism), in which new tribal leaders, democratically elected, are choosing, every now and then, an identity that will be cherished and protected, depending on the contingency of what tribe has an advantage over others.

In an economic sphere, the introduction of central banking with the abolishment of the golden standard opened the door for unrestricted monetary manipulation and interventionism.[36] The short-lived era of laissez-faire capitalism could have persisted only before the implementation of these changes.[37] The risk-taking of millions of (crazy) courageous individuals destined to pay the price of their own business failures was quickly supplanted by the irresponsible adventurism of the State, which was (and still is) responsible to no one. Regardless of its causes, the Industrial Revolution saved the world from poverty and paved the way to unprecedented technological innovation.[38] But this victory of capitalism and the wealth it generated did not receive a deserved

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36 Cf. Murray N. Rothbard, *The Mystery of Banking*. Auburn, AL: Ludwig von Mises Institute, 2008.

37 Cf. Ludwig von Mises, *Liberalism: in the Classical Tradition*. 3rd. ed pref. by Bettina Bien Greaves. New York: Found. for Econ. Ed., 1985.

38 For the explanation how this was possible see the trilogy of Deirdre N. McCloskey, *The Bourgeois Virtues – Ethics for an Age of Commerce* (2006), *Bourgeois Dignity – Why Economics Can't Explain the Modern World* (2010), and *Bourgeois Equality – How Ideas, not Capital or Institutions, Enriched the World* (2016), University of Chicago Press.

reward[39] and instead provided resources for the political class of the modern Leviathan. The welfare state born out of Keynesianism supplanted the minimal state of the classical liberal era of the 19th century. Together with the rise of flammable collectivism, the apparatus of the modern state, armed with an arsenal of high-tech military resources, has enabled mass depopulation by dragging a "civilized" part of humanity into world wars.

Symbolically, the revolution marked the beginning of the erosion of political traditions of spontaneous social change. Now everything is produced and constructed and almost nothing is taken as such and unquestioned (except for the omniscience and omnipotency of the benevolent super-state.) *Taxis* took a decisive victory over *cosmos*.[40] Laws are declarations of political arbitrariness, they are not discoveries based on the insight of existing practices and informal rules, but rather expressions of the will of social planners. Of course, the political and legal heritage of spontaneous order could not be dismantled at once, but the revolution was the impetus, the driving force that changed the perspectives on how one should perceive laws, rules, and social norms in general.

The question of contemporary totalitarian excursions, like the one with the Covid lockdowns and suppression of traditional freedoms, directs one's attention to those remaining elements of life and politics that are still taken for granted, *but should not be.* Global calamities of various sorts, from economic to health crises, might have at least some beneficial effects on the dormant denizens of the democratic world. They might shake them up, making their atten-

39 Because it was in the nature of capitalism to create "that atmosphere of almost universal hostility to its own social order." Cf. Joseph A. Schumpeter, *Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy*. London and New York: Routledge, 206, p. 143.

40 On the difference between these notions see: Friedrich A. von Hayek, *Law, Legislation and Liberty: a New Statement of the Liberal Principles of Justice and Political Economy,* New pbk. edition. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1982, pp. 35-55.

tion focused and sharpened. Sadly, it seems that only events of such a magnitude can help restore the receptiveness to the dimensions of life for which regular circumstances do not provide an opportunity to be felt.

CONCLUDING REMARK

The intellectual legacy of the revolution, as sketched here, is the ideological precursor of the most recent attempts to infringe on individual freedom and erode the barriers set forth by modern constitutions. The attacks on the foundations of free society come from outside, too, from the regimes that seek to take advantage of what they call the "decadency of the West." Modern constitutionalism is, thus, under attack from both inside and outside, and its adherents should not seek support from the very forces working on its demise; they should not make alliances neither with the rogue regimes nor with progressives – the ardent supporters of piecemeal Jacobinism. The answer should come from commitment to the productive traditions – embodied most notably in the American Constitution – that still present the strongest barriers to the rise of the state's relentless power. For if there is at least one comforting thing in our not-so-optimistic time, it is the fact that the world is not solely shaped by the historical and intellectual legacy of the French Revolution. The great past traditions and their modern transformation centered on the freedom of the individual and the sanctity of property[41] are at the foundations of our world. As long as they are preserved, there might be chances to repel the pernicious legacy of the revolution.

41 What Richard M. Weaver calls "the last metaphysical right." Cf. Richard M. Weaver's "The Last Metaphysical Right" in *Ideas Have Consequences*, University of Chicago, 2013, pp. 129-147.

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HEGEL'S "EGOPHANIC REVOLT" AND VOEGELIN'S CRITIQUE

Christian Machek

As the title indicates, the thinking of the German philosopher Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770-1831) and the critique of his thinking is the subject-matter of this paper. This implies that Hegel is understood to be part of the intellectual legacy of the French Revolution, or at least a translator and even a transformer of the ideas of the French Revolution. One must admit that Hegel, as an outstanding thinker of German Idealism together with Immanuel Kant (1742-1805), had an enormous impact on German intellectual life and also the so called "West" up until today.

In my paper I will in particular refer to the political scientist and philosopher of history Eric Voegelin (1901-1985).[1] A brief introduction to Voegelin's thoughts shall serve as a point of reference for a comparison to Hegel's thinking: At the center of Voegelin's

1 Voegelin was originally from Vienna, where his academic career began; later he also taught in the United States of America and in Munich/Germany. For more information for his life and work see the Voegelin Societies in the United States and Germany: https://ericvoegelin.org and http://ericvoegelin-gesellschaft.de.

work is a theory of the order of man and society: "The reality of order is not my discovery. I speak of order in reality. By order we mean the experiential structure of reality and the attunement of man to an order that is not created by him, i.e. the cosmos."[2] For Voegelin, order always has a religious dimension. While searching for the concepts of order in the history of ideas, Voegelin stated that political ideas have their roots in "existential experiences" and beyond that always have an evocative character, i.e. they not only describe, but also always evoke political reality. True religious experiences form the foundation of every good political order, because it is the source of moral orientation in society and the basis of truth and rationality in general. In his studies on order in history Voegelin distinguishes three different "types of truths": the "cosmological truth" of the oriental kingdoms, the "anthropological truth" of the Greek classical period and the "soteriological truth" of Christianity. Where they exist, there is order, where they are destroyed, order is being destroyed.

Voegelin's philosophy is in particular also known for a critique of the deformations of the traditional notions of order. Voegelin sees the fundamental characteristic of modernity in the turning away from transcendence, which has led to the dissolution of the spiritual substance of our Christian civilizations. As a result, a whole bundle of measures came about with the help of which man tries to compensate for the loss of faith and meaning in the modern world. Voegelin tried to sum up these measures as "gnostic". Gnosis in Voegelin's understanding is characterized by the attempt to bring about man's self-redemption, which is, however, an expression of human hubris. This hubris became increasingly socially effective in the process of secularization and finally became the dominant force whose sign was a re-deification of the world. A well-known phrase out of Voegelin's thinking is the "immanentizing of the Eschaton."[3] Voegelin's think-

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2 Cf. Eric Voegelin, *Ordnung und Unordnung,* in: *Autobiographische Reflexionen*.

3 Full quote: "The problem of the eidos in history, hence, arises only when a Christian transcendental fulfillment becomes immanentized. Such an im-

ing thus implies, we may conclude, also a critique of the ideas of the French Revolution with its anti-religious impulse – Voegelin defines the French Revolution as a "radical wave of gnosticism" (*New Science of Politics*).

Let us turn to Hegel who, next to Immanuel Kant (1724-1804), is being understood to be the main representative of German Idealism. The analysis of the German poet Heinrich Heine (1791-1856) shall serve our inquiry:

> *Just compare the history of the French Revolution with that of German philosophy and you might really begin to believe: the French, who, having so many real responsibilities, needed to remain completely awake, asked us Germans to sleep and dream for them in the meantime, and thus our German philosophy is nothing but the dream of the French Revolution. We, in the realm of thought, broke with our past tradition and present institutions, just as the French in the realm of society; our philosophical Jacobins gathered around the Critique of Pure Reason and would accept nothing which could not stand up to that critique. Kant was our Robespierre. – Afterwards came Fichte with his "I," the Napoleon of philosophy, the highest love and the highest egoism, the despotism of thought, the sovereign will, which improvised a quick universal empire which vanished just as quickly; idealism, despotic and horribly solitary (...) – Until Hegel, the Orléans of philosophy, founded a new regime...*[4]

Following Heine's assessment, the premise of this paper is that even though neither Hegel nor Kant were political executors of their own ideas, both revolutionized German philosophy and became part of the intellectual legacy of the revolution. Even so, Hegel was like most thinkers in that his thinking has many facets and layers, which also deserve acknowledgment, e. g. bearing in mind

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manentist hypostasis of the eschaton, however, is a theoretical fallacy." Eric Voegelin, *The New Science of Politics,* p. 187

4 Heinrich Heine, *On the History of Religion and Philosophy in Germany – And Other Writings*, Terry Pinkard (ed.*), Cambridge University Press, 2007,* p. 130-131.

that he understood man not as an autonomous individual but as a *zôon politikon* in the sense of Aristotle. Eric Voegelin argued that the modernity of Hegel can be characterized "as the coexistence of two selves, as an existence divided into a true and a false self – holding one another in such balance that neither the one nor the other ever becomes completely dominant."[5] Yet, how is Hegel to be understood properly? Can he be understood as a revolutionary philosopher of Enlightenment, also as a Christian philosopher, or even as a reactionary glorifier of the Prussian state? All these categorisations are of secondary importance considering the overriding fact that Hegel professed himself to be a philosopher of the French Revolution.

As a young man Hegel joined a "Political Club" in order to involve himself in the enthusiastic discussions about an alleged rebirth of Europe after the Declaration of Human Rights. He planted a liberty tree in Tübingen, singing the Marseillaise. Throughout his life Hegel celebrated the Bastille Day and even had contacts with Jacobin secret societies. Hegel considered Napoleon to be the "Great Man", because he was supposed to be a world-historic "servant of the Idea that brings itself forth" (*Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences*) as it comes to its fulfilment. Hegel saw Napoleon as the man destined to make the French Revolution a positive reality in Germany. In 1814, he wrote that the abstractness of the idea of freedom moved from France to Germany. We can conclude with Voegelin that the impact of the Revolution was indeed the experience that fundamentally formed Hegel's existence as a thinker. It should be noted that Hegel, while he was a rather unimportant scholar teaching at the University of Jena, asked himself how he could participate in the Revolution as a non-combatant and concluded that death in battle and philosophy are the same – provided the battles are conducted to establish a "free people" – and that this process results in "absolute knowledge" (*Phenomenology of the Spirit*). This understanding differs

5 Eric Voegelin, *A Study in Sorcery*, p. 213. This analysis can be argued of several modern thinkers such as Friedrich Nietzsche for example.

from the practice of art of dying to prepare oneself for immortality that Socrates spoke of, whereas Hegel speaks of death for the ideals of the French Revolution.

HEGEL'S ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF TRADITION

For both acknowledging and criticizing Hegel, and other thinkers of the French Revolution, there has to be a point of reference. This point of reference ought to be in particular Plato (427-347 BC). As to the importance of Platonic thinking one should be reminded of the famous statement by the English philosopher Whitehead, that all "Western," or rather Christian thinking consists of a series of footnotes to Plato. Likewise, Voegelin's critique on Hegel has its measure in Platonic thinking. Even so, Hegel's thinking includes Platonic ideas and concepts. Hegel can be understood to be one of the last thinkers to develop a philosophical theology seeking to defend Christianity yet, in his own way, laying out new tracts of thinking.

Acknowledging Hegel's political thought, one must mention that Hegel criticized the contract theories, especially Kant's, which, in his opinion, fell short because they are derived from the sum of the individual interests and are born of the abstract mind. These theories have no relation to concrete history and therefore do not consider traditions, customs and also the family. A state, which is derived from contract theory, would be left to arbitrariness and thus to destruction, Hegel analyses. The abstract freedom can only be available in the context of the tradition-governed social order. And a political order is, according to Hegel, the communal expression of ethical life (*Sittlichkeit)*, according to which politics itself is the outward aspect of morality. In this sense Hegel picks up the ancient Platonic concept of the inner relationship of morality, religion and

politics.[6] In other words, in order to overcome the weak points of the contract theories, Hegel ties in with Plato and Aristotle by seeing also an inner connection between the law, religion and the state. Religion and state should complement each other. A human must not be split into a political and religious being. The self does not exist prior to society, but is in Hegel's understanding "created" in society through the resolution of conflict and through custom, morality and civil association. One may conclude that Hegel attempted to rescue the human individual from the philosophy of individualism, because he saw the interdependence of institutions and individuals.[7]

Yet keeping these aspects of his thinking in mind, there are also flaws, big intellectual, and also spiritual mistakes. that Hegel can be held accountable for – as the critique of Eric Voegelin clearly expressed. In the following, the focus will be set on three aspects of Hegel's thinking, namely his epistemology, his history of philosophy and his understanding of the state with all its possible implications.

HEGELIAN EPISTEMOLOGY

Hegel was convinced that man can obtain "absolute knowledge" (*absolutes Wissen*) in all its clarity about the nature of things. In this Hegel contradicted Kant, who cared about not crossing the boundaries of theoretical philosophy. Hegel compares the agnostic Kantian position with someone who buys a knife and then *asks* whether the knife can be used to cut instead of cutting with it himself. These questions are of importance today considering that positivism, critical rationalism and also pragmatism are questioning the existence of metaphysical and eternal truths. Hegel would speak of a false

6 Compare Plato: "We understand nothing of these things, we entrust them to no one else even at the foundation of our state, if we are reasonable, and we make no use of any other interpreter of them than the God worshipped by the fathers." *The Republic*, IX. Book.

7 Roger Scruton, *Meaning of Conservatism*, p. 23-25.

humility and agree with Plato on this matter. At this point it would not come as a surprise that Karl Popper (1902-1994) is in opposition to Hegel. Between the Hegelian position of the existence of *absolute Wissenschaft*, on the one hand, and the view on the provisional nature of all knowledge on the other hand, which Popper himself has elevated to a dogma, hardly any reconciliation is possible.[8]

However, being aware of man's ability to acquire truth, in the preface to the *Phenomenology of the Mind* Hegel states that it is his intention

> *to work to bring philosophy closer to its goal of being called the 'love of knowledge', to be able to lay aside and to be real knowledge – that is what I have set for myself.*[9]

At this particular point, Voegelin's critique sets in: Hegel formulates a claim that in principle goes beyond human possibilities. Voegelin argues that when we set Hegel's understanding of philosophizing next to the Platonic one, we must say that, while there is progress in the clarity and accuracy of knowledge of the order of being, the leap from the limits of finiteness into the perfection of real knowledge is impossible.[10] When a thinker tries it, he does not promote philosophy, but leaves it and becomes a "gnostic". According to Voegelin, human existence is always and everywhere "existence-in-tension", that is, existence in the "in-between" reality. What Plato termed *metaxy,* is man's constitution in a tension between mundane existence and the transcendent "divine ground" (Voegelin).

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8 Walter Hoeres, *Heimatlose Vernunft*, p. 151.

9 G. W. F. Hegel, *Phenomenology of the Mind,* Chapter 2: "Daran mitzuarbeiten, daß die Philosophie der Form der Wissenschaft näher komme – dem Ziele, ihren Namen der *Liebe* zum *Wissen* ablegen zu können und *wirkliches Wissen* zu sein –, ist es, was ich mir vorgesetzt." In contradiction to this understanding Leo formulates Strauss: "Philosophy is quest for wisdom, is quest for universal knowledge, for knowledge of the whole. It is the attempt to replace opinion about the whole by knowledge of the whole," *What is political philosophy*, S. 10-11

10 Eric Voegelin, *A Study in Sorcery*, p. 215-216.

A healthy, balanced, and well-ordered consciousness accepts this "tensional structure of existence" (Voegelin).[11]

In Platonic thinking, the *metaxy* is man's participation in the divine *Nous*, this in Hegelian thinking now becomes an identification with the *Nous* in self-reflective consciousness. The "existential tension" (Voegelin) between immanence and transcendence is thereby abolished and replaced by the dialectical progress in history. In a historical development opposites are supposed to find resolutions, for example: the thesis/tyranny generates a need for freedom – but once freedom has been achieved there can only be anarchy until an element of tyranny is combined with freedom, creating the synthesis "law". In such a concept, for Voegelin there is no existential tension towards the divine (as a source for a just law), but a construction of absolute knowledge in a constructed system. Hegel thereby constructs what Voegelin calls a second reality which is destroying the first, "real" reality (Voegelin).

At this point let us be reminded of Hegel's interpretation of biblical story The Fall of Man. Instead of acknowledging the divine reality, obeying God and thus acknowledging the distinction and "existential tension" between man and God, Hegel offers a slightly different interpretation, respectively different accentuation: Adam and Eve gained their first self-confidence through the Fall. They stepped out of an absolute dependence. The Fall had to happen for a developmental step to take place. Therefore, the bite into the apple and the associated transgression of the divine commandment is not evil, but only the enabling of consciousness. In other words: Adam and Eve had to eat from the fruit in order gain real knowledge.[12]

Voegelin claimed that Hegel's thinking neglects the distinction between God and the Self, which is a misconstruction of being and thought. In this way, thinking is reduced to self-consciousness and

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11 Eric Voegelin, *A Study in Sorcery*, p. 217.

12 Markus Renner, *Der Sündenfall in der Philosophie des Deutschen Idealismus – Kant, Schelling, Hegel,* p. 14-15.

to the construction of a system, which is supposed to be a science (*Wissenschaft*). This new *Wissenschaft* is supposed to provide an understanding of the whole, the true, the rational, and the necessary. Voegelin further argues that Hegel is reducing the *logos* of revelation to a system of absolute knowledge through a *libido dominandi*, for which he in particular uses words of magic (*Zauberworte*).[13] Hegel's attempt to acquire knowledge of the whole can be called a belief in science as a „systematic science"; science is supposed to be the "true tissues of divine life" (*das wahre Gewebe des göttlichen Lebens*), a system of the living *logos*. Karl Marx (1818-1883) would later take the Hegelian concept of *Wissenschaft* in order to create his *Marxistische Wissenschaft*. Hegel constructs an imaginary *Wissenschaft*, which is constructed in the consciousness of man – this is what Voegelin refers to as an "egophanic revolt" or just egophany. In this revolt one's consciousness replaces the metaphysical source of knowledge, morality and thus order. The egophanic revolt is the opposite of "theophany", it is the epiphany of ego leading to the death of God. This for Voegelin is an attack on man's consciousness of his existence under God, which thus is also an attack on the concept of human dignity.[14]

PHILOSOPHY OF HISTORY OR THE NECESSITY OF PROGRESS

Speaking of Hegel, we need to further address a core aspect of modernity, namely its idea of progress for which Hegel is particularly known. Hegel's philosophy of history is to be distinguished from the understanding of progress most thinkers of the Enlightenment had, simply because it is more profound.[15] According to Hegel, world history necessarily moves towards more and more rationality and also freedom. For Hegel, nature itself is always in process; nature means becoming and thus is in a historical development. This de-

13 Eric Voegelin, *A Study in Sorcery*, p. 225.
14 See Eric Voegelin, *Ecumenical Age*, p. 260-271.
15 Walter Hoeres, *Heimatlose Vernunft,* p. 115-117.

velopment is not mechanical as with the materialistic evolutionists, but sense-controlled; for Hegel it has a highest goal, namely the "presence of the idea". History is a teleological development towards a more perfect state in which the "absolute spirit" (*absoluter Geist*), and thus also God himself, realizes itself. Hegel understands this development to be inherently necessary. However, with his theory of history Hegel becomes the creator of a blind theory of fate and also of fatalism, which has a paralysing effect on the individual human being. In history there are in fact no necessities, there can only be a blind faith in them, which in fact is a faith in empty formulas, disconnecting man from reality again.[16]

One important question must be asked to clarify this core concept in Hegelian thinking, namely concerning his dialectics. How is development in a dialectic process supposed to come about? Breaking with the understanding of the dialects in the sense of the ancient philosophers, as a method with the goal to acquire truth through reasoned arguments, for Hegel dialectics is a process of contradicting ideas as thesis and antithesis, that would resolve in a synthesis. As both for Heraclitus as well as for Hegel, every development to a higher level is the result of a struggle and thus of the efforts and renunciations of the individual. But how is the freedom of the individual to exist in this conception? Hegel's answer: through a "cunning of reason" (*List der Vernunft, Lectures on the Philosophy of History.*). Ultimately, the individual who thinks he is following his own, highly private purpose actually acts in the service of the "world spirit" (*Weltgeist*). According to Hegel, the "cunning of reason" should make this possible and for this also sacrifices have to be made. The great historical figures like Napoleon knew the right interpretation the signs of the times, and more or less consciously placed themselves at their service. It is doubtful whether this world spirit is a real or a personal power. It is a power that comes "to itself". The question arises: What should be the goal of the whole of progress, including

16 See Rudolf Rocker, *Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel.*

the immense suffering in the world history? Hegel answers: On Golgotha the ground is prepared for the "absolute knowledge" in which the divine spirit comes to itself in man's consciousness as well as in nature, history and the institutions created by human reason. In the "absolute knowledge" all opposites of nature and spirit, subject and object, are abolished or dissolved. Hegel explains:

> *Every single man is but a link in the chain of absolute necessity, by which the world builds itself forth (sich fortbildet). The single man can elevate himself to dominance (Herrschaft) over unappreciable length of this chain only if he knows the direction in which the great necessity wants to move and if he learns from this knowledge to pronounce magic words (Zauberworte) that will evoke its shape (Gestalt).*[17]

These words are, according to Voegelin, a key passage for the understanding of Hegel and modern man: Man has become nothing, he has no reality of his own, and he is a blind particle in a process of the world.[18] The spirit working in history will be self-actualizing, ultimately the absolute truth will be achieved – what is left of the freedom of the individual, which for Hegel is still supposed to have a conscience? The German and Catholic philosopher Robert Spaemann (1927-2018) aptly pointed out that there are "progresses", but there is no thing called progress: "The singular 'progress' is a pure myth, capable of befogging all of us."[19]

THE ABSOLUTE AUTHORITY OF THE STATE

Hegelian philosophy is concerned with the highest realization and shaping of freedom, which for him takes place not only in and through history, but also through the state. Hegel claims that his state is the final culmination of the embodiment of freedom. While

17 G. W. F. Hegel, *Dokumente*, p. 324.

18 Eric Voegelin, *A Study in Sorcery*, p. 221.

19 Robert Spaemann, *Planungsgesetze zur Gentechnik wären unerhörter Totalitarismus*, in: *Junge Freiheit*, 8. Februar 2006.

Kant defined practical freedom individually and negatively, as independence from exogeneous determinants, to the arbitrariness and positively as self-determination of the individual, for Hegel freedom was objectified and generalized in the state: the state is the "reality of the ethical idea" (*Elements of the Philosophy of Right*), the true idea of freedom is only the state. Hegel's idea of freedom thus, in contrast to Kant, refers to society, the state, only in which freedom for all can be realized . The principle of freedom can only become real for all people in modern states and this is, according to Hegel, only possible after the French Revolution.

For Hegel there are different "moments" of the "ethical life" (*Sittlichkeit*): There is the family and civil society, which are "fulfilled" in the state. Ethical life ultimately has its root in religion, which is the source of authority and also the authority of the state. However, Hegel intends to merge religion with the state respectively giving the state a religious meaning:

> *for it is now known that the moral and the right in the state are also the divine and the commandment of God, and that there is no higher and more holy content.*[20]

For Hegel there is an individual's "supreme duty is to be a member of the state" (*Elements of the Philosophy of Right*). In the words of Hegel, morality can only exist in the unity of the individual with the general consciousness of the state. The individual conscience should be adjusted to the reasons of the state and the personal responsibility should be replaced by the consciousness to act in the interest of the state. In Hegel's thinking the state even becomes "God's walk through history" (*Gang Gottes durch die Geschichte*):

20 G. W. F. Hegel, *Philosophy of History.* This theory of the state can, as Hegel himself said, only be realized in Protestantism and not in Catholicism: "In the Catholic Church, on the other hand, conscience can very well be set against the laws of the state. Kingslaughter, state conspiracies and the like have often been supported and carried out by the priests."

> *It is the way of God in the world that the state is, its reason is the violence of reason that is realized as will. In the idea of the state, it is not necessary to have particular states in mind, nor particular institutions, but rather to consider the idea, this real God, for itself.*[21]

In others words: for Hegel the state is identical with an "absolute authority and majesty", whereby, we can conclude, Hegel is the "state mystic". In his "absolute" state theory the question of the ideal state is excluded. But precisely the question of the "right order" in the state and its best constitution is the central question of the philosophy of the ancient thinkers such as Plato.[22] And it should also be pointed out that the state in the traditional understanding ought to be of limited size, whereas Hegel had the evolving Prussian state in mind, whose advocate he actually was.

CONCLUSION

Many different thinkers have tried to diagnose the so-called *modern age* as a project of subject oriented totalizing reason. Max Weber (1864-1920), for example, defined the modern world as a "housing of bondage", or Theodor Adorno (1903-1969) as an "administered world". There are also voices that have proclaimed the end of history, the *Posthistoire*. As the most important modern thinkers, René Descartes (1596-1650) and next to him Hegel ought to me mentioned. Hegel's thinking offers key concepts for a better un-

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21 G. W. F. Hegel, *Grundlagen der Philosophie des Rechts*, p. 258. "Es ist der Gang Gottes in der Welt, daß der Staat ist, sein Grund ist die Gewalt der sich als Wille verwirklichenden Vernunft. Bei der Idee des Staates muß man nicht besondere Staaten vor Augen haben, nicht besondere Institutionen, man muß vielmehr die Idee, diesen wirklichen Gott, für sich betrachten."

22 As interpreted by Voegelin, Plato showed that the order of the human soul depends on the experience of God. This in turn forms the inner disposition of the human being. It is the philosophical experiences that evoke man that establish a true order of the soul. Such a person, who participates in the divine spirit (nous) and whose soul is therefore also ordered, should be an example and ruler in the state. According to Voegelin he is the measure of the paradigmatic order in the state and representative of cosmological truth.

derstanding of modern thought, which became politically powerful through the French Revolution. Interpreting Hegel himself is no easy task. Hegel had a holistic approach; terms to describe his thinking would be "idealistic pantheism" or "monism"; Pope Pius XII in his Encyclical *Humanae generis* (1947) spoke of "systematic idealism."

Hegel attempted to create a great unification theory and in particular saw a culmination of rationalism in the history of philosophy. The "absolute idea" (*Science of Logic*) is the "absolute spirit". When the finite spirit thinks the absolute, the absolute spirit thinks in it, and so on – Voegelin would speak of words of sorcery. Voegelin in particular pointed out that in Hegelian ideology man does not live in an "in-between" (*metaxy*), in a participatory tension towards the "divine ground of existence" (Voegelin), but constructs a false consciousness which is an imaginary attempt to gain power over reality. This Voegelin understands to be an attack of man's existence under God, in particular the Christian loving God, and thus could and should also be seen as undermining the dignity of man. Any way of thinking has an evocative character, it not only describes, but always evokes political reality. In other words: ideas have consequences in the political reality.

Hegel did not remain unchallenged. One of his first critics was the (Protestant) Danish thinker Sören Kierkegaard (1813-1855). For Hegel, all reality is only reality insofar as it is reasonable: "What is reasonable is real, what is real is reasonable" (*Elements of the Philosophy of Right*). Kierkegaard's accusation was directed against this thought. Hegel wanted to capture phenomena of life into a logical system, which would have ruinous effects on man's religious-ethical existence as Kierkegaard pointed out.[23] Hegel transfers the "authority of the spiritual sources of order" (Voegelin), revelation and philosophy to a system: Hegel does not "capitalize" the presence of eternal being, but the system in which one can get "locked" in. In Hegelian thinking the divine mystery is penetrated by the logic of the system,

23 See Soeren Kierkegeaard, *Either/Or, A Fragment of Life.*

which leads to the alienation of man from God. The consequences of this are, in the words of Voegelin: "The Spirit as a system requires the killing of God, or: the killing of God is committed in order to create the system."[24]

Hegel has just like Plato shown that every state worthy of the name is ultimately based on religion. Religion gives rise to morality in the state. Yet, for Hegel religion is "the reality of the state". How does not the state have the status of an imminent religion in Hegelian thinking, a concept one would clearly find again in socialism? Three aspects of the political implications of Hegelian thinking ought to be pointed out:

- Central in Hegel's thinking and the French Revolution is the idea of "freedom". For Hegel the idea of freedom is not quite emancipatory, but still predominant. The idea of freedom replaces the importance the classical thinkers would give to virtue.
- Hegel's political thinking is political theory and not philosophy: Just like in his epistemology, where he wants to capture the "absolute knowledge", in his political theory Hegel wants to "think" the "absolute state". By doing so he is omitting the question of the right order, which was the guiding question of the philosophers of tradition.
- As a consequence, political philosophy in the sense of tradition loses its normative power; politics are consequently left to a mystical *Weltgeist*, which in fact is nothing else then the *Zeitgeist*.

The history of Hegelian thinking is known: there has been a moderate, a conservative-reactionary-Prussian and also an effective leftist interpretation of Hegel. Hegel provided core concepts for the socialist and radical leftist interpretation. The core myth of Enlightenment thinking, liberalism and socialism is their understanding of

24 Eric Voegelin, *Gnosis, Science, Politics*.

history as a permanent process in the form of a necessary progressive human emancipation. Hegel spoke of a dialectic progress laying the ground for what a socialist would call "revolution". The Russian philosopher Alexander Herzen (1812-1870) called the dialectics of Hegel the "algebra of revolution."[25] Hegel's "absolute science" was adopted into a *Marxistische Wissenschaft,* which is ideological and thus rather a system of beliefs that contradicts classical thinking and in particular its sense of reality. The consequences of socialist thinking in history with all its human casualties is known – it has to be pointed out that Marxism with its Hegelian foundation today in particular lives on in the West as "Cultural Marxism," causing the destruction of all (Christian) values that are the source of a true order of the soul and society, especially including the family.[26]

Does the following dictum apply to Hegel: What is true in his thinking is not new, and what is new is not true? Voegelin sharply analyzed a crisis of our civilization and particularly sharply criticized the thinking of Hegel, which in his understanding is a cause for spiritual disorder. And Voegelin did not cease to say: The spiritual disorder of time is not an inevitable fate. We have the means to overcome it. No one is obliged to take part in a spiritual crisis; on the contrary, everyone is obliged to refrain from this nonsense and to live in order.[27]

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25 Alexander Herzen, *Wladimir Lenin: Dem Gedächtnis Herzens*, p. 10.

26 Cf. *The Black Book of Communism: Crimes, Terror, Repression (Stephane Courtois).*

27 "The order of the Western world goes back to antiquity. At the occasion of the great legislative work of Justinian, its sources were expressly defined as power, reason and revelation. (...) Through the Middle Ages the three sources are alive as imperium, studium and sacerdotium. In the historicizing examination of the 19th century, Ernest Renan could say that the foundations of Western culture were Hellenistic philosophy, the Judeo-Christian religion and the Roman legal and official order. Power, reason and revelation have remained the primary sources of order in the Western world to this day." Eric Voegelin, *Democracy and Industrial Society*, in: *Philosophy and the Question of Progress*, p. 61.

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CHRISTIAN HISTORICAL THINKING AND THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

Felix Dirsch

1. INTRUSIVENESS OF HISTORY IN THINKING BETWEEN THE HOPE FOR A BETTER TOMORROW AND ESCHATOLOGICAL SALVATION: SIMILARITIES AMONG JEWS AND CHRISTIANS

Building a bridge between the biblical-Christian concept of history as it has been subsequently laid out in many presentations, and the modern age in which historical processes tend to accelerate, may seem risky. And this problem is not only rooted in hermeneutical difficulties. History is based on the understanding of the former epoch and therefore it is not the same as an inclusion in another.

Despite this insight which one always has to bear in mind, it is undisputed that there are turning points in the historical awareness that still cast their shadows in much later periods. It is essentially due to the belief in an eschatological final goal at the end of time that the focus moves into the future. Those who feel committed to such thinking – and there are many people, especially in modern times – know that they come from the past and live in the present;

one of the driving forces behind their actions, however, lies in the hope for a better future. Marxist thinkers in particular have made this "principle of hope"[1] strong, whereby this remains in the area of the profane well-being.

Of course, such a belief in a tomorrow rather more refreshing than the present may reveal different motives. They have been more or less strong at almost all times of world history. Looking back, there is a caesura that needs to be examined more closely: The biblical view of history reverses the meaning of the Greek expression "historein," which primarily refers to present and past events:[2] The focus is now in the future. Unlike other cultures, hope spreads in the biblical scriptures that it is people who make a crucial contribution to the improvement of their own circumstances. The wish that everything, or as much as possible, may turn to the better rests on them.

The fact that human activity in the culture as a whole is given a relatively large scope for action, which of course also has its limits, only seems trivial at first glance. In comparison to other cultures, the opposite becomes evident. In the Bible, it is usually great men, such as the prophets and the patriarchs, who are entrusted with important actions for the community as a whole. As is well known, they play no small role in the biblical continuum. But the significance of history in Judeo-Christian thinking shows in other ways, too.

Let us consider for comparison: the registration of historical processes is not natural, not even in the later Christianized cultural areas.

One only needs to take a look at the power of the mythical traditions. The myths which have produced countless forms of meaning over a very long period of time, place only a little or no value on history and temporality. Here, Christianity brought an important turning point, regardless of the survival of some myths under Christian conditions.

1 As most important representative to be quoted see Bloch, 1985.
2 Löwith,1990.

As a contrast to that change which still remains relevant, a short look at different cultures is required. In both Indian and Chinese traditions in philosophy and religion historicity as a culturally significant factor has a significantly lower status.[3] So, in Chinese Universism the order of heaven is the eternally constant guideline for human activity. The Tao marks both moral and cosmic law. The harmony of Heaven and Earth is fixed in this way. Of course, within the framework of such an order, human activity also has a certain value. This is, however, fundamentally strongly restricted by the unconditional requirement of the millennia-old tradition not to abandon the traditional cosmic structure.

We encounter something similar when analyzing the Indian concept of Dharma. Even in this time-honored Eastern tradition cosmic, ethical and social aspects are closely intertwined. The behavior of the individual should be referred back to the cosmos. Buddhist traditions deviate from such ideas insofar as they postulate an emergence from the cosmos. Even in this vision an independent political-social scenario that has the potential to lead into an open future is nevertheless neither explicitly nor implicitly revealed. Seen from this perspective, a draft of progress that could at least have the independence to differentiate itself from the past in the sense of a new, previously unknown space of possibilities, is unthinkable. Every historical action is ultimately tied back to cosmic forces of existence. Basically, in the important, millennia-old religious conceptions, there is no room for secular-autonomous models of action.

In comparison, these decisive impulses emerge particularly with regard to modern history, which can easily be derived from the biblical specifications. In the course of this are the often-mentioned tendencies of demythologizing and decosmization of central importance. Of course, they do not mean that mythical and cosmic influences have not left important traces in

3 References to be found in Ratzinger, 2005, 11 f.

the Bible.[4] The debates about it have been countless, especially in the last century.

Nevertheless, the events that we find in the Holy Scriptures of Jews and Christians – in the following the focus should be more on the Old Testament – open a horizon that directs the focus on the future in particular. Historical theological models are constantly being drafted. Multiple starting points can be found in the Bible. In particular, the work of the prophets is to be mentioned. Their approach and theological processing mark differences to the Egyptian belief in the hereafter, to Babylonian astrology as well as to Greek-philosophical speculation, as we find it in Plato. He is always discussed in his dependencies on biblical thinking. Of course, the biblical authors are probably more influenced by him than the other way around (as was often assumed earlier).[5] The biblical theology of history shows lasting effects on the modern age. This connection becomes also clear in the Exodus story, which like hardly any other account in the Bible shows the interplay between an active God and his acting in history.[6]

The Old Testament vision of King Nebuchadnezzar in the second book of Daniel may be another, later much receipted, example of biblical history on the horizon of apocalyptic together with its multifarious facets.[7] At this point the reader is met by an image composed of golden, silver and bronze components, partly out of iron, partly out of terracotta. The image is crushed by a stone that loosens, but not by human hand.

Daniel interprets the dream of the ruler. The last, fourth kingdom, destroys the other three. The regime of oppression ends violently. In this apocalyptic view lies a huge potential of hope for

4 The Noachistic covenant that can serve as a model of a cosmic rule to be quoted as an example Ratzinger 2005, p. 12.

5 References to be found in Ratzinger 2000, 108 f.

6 To that from the newest literature cf. Assmann 2015.

7 For apocalyptic thinking of the Bible that entailed many secular implications, pls. see detailed considerations in Taxacher 2010.

the enslaved Israel. Those who feel they are chosen by the Lord put emphasis on tomorrow – they virtually have to – not on that which is always the same. Given the desperate situation in which the seer of the God's chosen people is, this outlook is understandable.

Of course, very different interpretations of the vision are possible – and this is still the case today.[8] In the interpretation of these imaginations one has always seen a sequence of different empires. Four empires succeed each other: the Babylonian, the Persian-Median, the Greek, and lastly the Roman Empire, in which one is at the moment. In the seventh book of Daniel four animals appear, this time in Daniel's dream, that God judges over finally. After the judgment over the earthly empires, the Son of man is supposed to come and create an eternal kingdom, such is the eschatological expectation of Christians.

Although the focus of hope lies on extra-historical forces, the category "history" does not focus on a cosmic basis. The exploited pray to God, who is expected to interfere in history and change their fate. Herewith it is indisputable that even the individual has to do something, to improve his situation. The Maccabees have understood this appeal and rose up against the Greek occupiers, the Seleucids.

The Apocalypse of the New Testament, written by an author named Johannes, probably on Patmos, can connect to such requirements. This time it is the Romans who suppress the chosen nation. In the present context, it would lead too far to highlight the central breaking points of both Christian and Jewish thinking, regardless of similarities. Wilhelm Kamlah has shown a lot of material in an investigation published in 1940, that is intended to show that early Christian thinking had the necessary consequence of a renunciation

8 Recently the opposition against the force of destruction of big empires has also been presented in the context of contemporary debates on World government and World state. Important is the question, how Catholics, especially right-wing Catholics, should relate to contemporary trends of the globalization. (Cf. Dirsch, 2020, esp. p. 86).

of "historical self-assertion."[9] The author focuses his approach centrally on the topic "expectation." Hence he emphasizes that there are hardly any of Jesus' concepts towards the political-social future of his nation handed down. At the same time (according to Kamlah) a renunciation of the historical self-assertion in Christianity is accompanied by a renunciation of the self-assertion of an individual in general. In the New Testament we encounter many testimonies that expose the Christians as an Unworldly (literally). It is the Romans who noticed this trend towards segregation and outsiderhood from the beginning. Another point which also affects the early Christian approach to history and its abolition in the apocalypse is the rivalry between the Jews who confess to Jesus and those who (in view of Jesus' disciples) seem stubborn. This dispute is particularly evident in the Paulinic scriptures and intensifies in the figure of Katechon, the hold-up.[10] It is him, as it is often assumed in the end time controversies, who prevents Christ's return. The debates referring to the *locus classicus* in the second letter to the Thessalonians (II Thess 2,1-12*)* were severe up until the 20th century.[11] Who can be identified as a "hold-up" remains unclear to this date. The "antichrist" was frequently associated in the reception of the cryptic point with the Jews who did not want to convert. The damage caused by such an interpretation for the coexistence of Jews and Christians can only be called considerable.[12]

Already in the New Testament, but also by the church fathers and other early Christian authors, a salvation historical scenario is unfolded: the curve reaches from the creation via the Old Covenant to the redemption in Christ and the final dawn of the kingdom

9 Kamlah 1940. Pp. 36-39 (summary).

10 From the extensive literature with the countless suggestions for interpretation cf. Metzger 2012.

11 With reference to the revival with all genuine accents in Carl Schmitt see Meuter 1994.

12 Also, Romig (2011) who, when at some points exaggerated, takes seriously the rivalry of Jews and Christians who are most strongly relativized (in front of the background of the long shadow of the Holocaust).

of God. Characteristic is the focus on God's providence and on a connection between action and outcome, as well as the teleological argumentation, which also takes into account events that are envisaged in the future. Looking into the future remains central. There lies the salvation, even in eschatological terms. However, things in detail look more complicated again. The double meaning of the early Christian historical view between the "already" and the "not yet" testifies to that – a separation coming to light with the appearance of Jesus Christ.[13] This oscillation does not contradict a historical view of events; for it is unarguable that Christ has come in fullness of time.[14]

Has the kingdom of God already arrived or is it still to be expected? For the Christians of the first generation the historic act and the resurrection of the Lord already lie in the past. With an incising of the chronological distance from these events it naturally becomes more plausible to interpret the coming of the resurrected in the futuristic way. The draft by the Calabrian abbot Joachim von Fiore, which still had an impact on the 20th century, bears witness to this shift in emphasis. In any case, the tradition of the Christian historical thinking has meant, at least in the consequence, that the antic-cyclic thinking is finally being overcome. Here, biblical influences have their crucial influences, although detailed research has not been able to determine more precise details.

2. Between the Apocalypse and Profane Historical Course: The Actual Christian 'In-Between' with Augustine as Consequential High Point and Further Starting Point

The turning point that Augustine represents for the Christian historical thinking should not be overestimated. He is considered as

13 Summarized in Schwaiger 2001, pp. 43-45.
14 Cullmann, 1948.

the "Old Church's biggest thinker in history" [15] – and far beyond that. If, looking at the primeval church, it can be denied that self-assertion has been one of its goals; church at the time of the later bishop Augustine could not denounce the defense of its terrestrial existence.

Why are we bringing Augustine's approach as paradigmatic for Christian historical thinking? Augustine is not the only great historical thinker in Christianity, but he influenced several important texts of this genre that have been published after him. To name especially the magnificent conception of the Empire Bishop Otto von Freising (*Weltchronik oder die Geschichte der zwei Staaten,* 1143-1146), but also the historical theology of the Saint Bonaventura, who exposes the critique of the encroachment of pagan influences in the course of the high medieval Aristoteles-reception.[16] One has to mention especially Philipp Melanchton's *Chronicon Carionis* (1532) among the outstanding Christian interpretations during the early modern age. In the 17th century, the influence of Augustine was still evident in the work of Bishop Jacques B. Bossuet. After that we will no longer find comparable interpretations of history from the biblical point of view, at least not in a comprehensive style, apart from the little-known work of the Württemberg pietist Christian Gottlob Barth (*Allgemeine Weltgeschichte nach biblischen Grundsätzen bearbeitet für nachdenkliche Leser*) from 1837. During the 20th century Christian ideas play only a marginal role at best in the context of much noticed presentations of history by Oswald Spengler (*Untergang des Abendlandes*) and Arnold Toynbee (*A Study of History*). A noticeable and outstanding effort we owe to the historian Axel Schwaiger.[17] He bypasses the historic flood and biblical events to date in a fascinating manner. Even though the scientific community is likely to fundamentally object to his approach – he lets dinosaurs appear with humans and understands the narrative of the Bible in the sense of historical facts – the approach deserves

15 Loewenich, 1947, p. 11.

16 Fundamental to that cf. Ratzinger, 2009.

17 Schwaiger, 2017.

attention. Like Augustine, he applies biblical standards to history, however in a world much more complicated than before.

Augustine's historical-philosophical thinking should also be reflected in the light of some predecessors of the Old Church. The thinking of early Christian authors (church fathers, apologists) had to – some more, others less – deviate from the thought of being time's witnesses of the dawning reign of Christ on Earth. You couldn't help but get involved in the story to find out its ending. In the course of this, biblical references provided the chronological framework. One launched out trials in order to determine the last days. The early Christian author Hippolytus, for example, kept an eye out for signs that could indicate a nearing end of the world.[18]

Until the early 4th century it couldn't be expected of Christians to assess the progress of the profane history in any other way than skeptical. The pagan environment was considered mainly and over a long time as hostile, even during phases without persecution. Changes only occurred after the so-called Constantinian turning point. The Rome and Empire theology, – Eusebius of Casarea, Lactanz and Paulus Orosius can be cited as outstanding representatives – saw the Roman Empire having reached its peak after the triumph of Christianity. From this perspective of victory it was possible, and even necessary, to take a positive look at Roman history for the first time – namely insofar as its progress represented a necessary, even though not a satisfactory, prerequisite for the birth of the Messiah. In such a position of triumph the retrospective looked different than in times of hardship and persecution. So prophecies of pagan authors such as Vergil (in his famous fourth *Eclogue*) can be referred not only to emperor Augustus, as intended by his court poet, but to a consecrated child whose special significance will be understood later.

The direction set up by Eusebius and then continued by Orosius and others, may be seen as exemplary for the understanding of history among Christians propagated after the Constantinian turning

18 Schwaiger, 2001: 69.

point. The increased number of comforts in everyday life (tolerance, return of confiscated buildings, partial possibility to take advantage of the civil infrastructure and so on) seems to have led to not few Christian strangers of the early time becoming indigenous since the 4th century. Not everyone who has followed this trend has been pleased by this. The number of martyrs has gradually decreased in the Roman empire. Here and there laxism has crept in. These changes may have dampened the passion for eschatological considerations. However these imaginations have not completely disappeared.

The most famous historic thinker of Christianity, Augustine von Hippo Regio, has early registered this trend towards profanation. The scholar tried to counteract this development by means of his highly extensive literature. In his great work *De civitae dei* he set the course for a large-scale show of history as a whole which caused a big echo even in the Modern times. Augustine's perspective is also important for the evaluation of profane Modern times major events, including the French Revolution in the most prominent sense. He provides a key for the classification within the Christian horizon. Ultimately, a Christian interpretation of history has to include events that do not explicitly arise from Christian actions. It is probably in no small part due to this insight why the time-honored genre of historical theology, to which Augustine's master plan can also be attributed, has produced only a few outstanding concepts in the 20th century.[19]

The first emperor's conversion to Christianity, and decades later also the elevation of Christianity to state religion, led to a new view of the profane history, at least in central works. Even Augustine cannot ignore this trend. The starting point of these extensive discussions is an incident that is highly important for Christians as well as for Pagans: the conquest and sack of Rome by Alaric's troops in 410.

19 On the Catholic side Balthasar (1959), on the protestant side Thielicke (1964), count to the outstanding exceptions; Essen (2016) to be used as current overview.

Unlike the theologians of Rome and the Empire, who ushered in a time of ruler panegyrics under Christian auspices, Augustine noticed a disastrous continuity between the pagan regime and the regime that had been officially Christian for a few generations: representatives of the old pagan religiosity such as Symmachus were structurally not so different in their arguments from the apologists of the new regime. Ultimately, both sides assume a close concordance of religious and political rule. Since time immemorial, a catastrophe, whether natural or man-made, has been viewed as the result of culpable action that is responsible for God's ensuing punishment. Such a deeds-consequences connection seems fundamentally plausible and even indispensable for the believer, regardless of the specific confession.

After decades of formal Christian emperors' ruling, Christianity can be taken hostage by pagan relicts that must have seen themselves on the losing road of history. Doesn't the defeat prove that the old gods, who were responsible for the Grandeur of Rome, got angry after not being brought any more offerings from the official side? The Christian god seems weaker than those who were previously worshiped by the state.

Augustine also knew that due to the increased global responsibility since Constantine, Christian actions in government needed to be justified. This action can perhaps be justified pragmatically, such as the task of the state as a whole, which is primarily supposed to ensure peacemaking. The North African Roman does not see a theological apotheosis as appropriate beyond profane considerations of benefits, although he definitely rejected an escape into the afterlife. But the theological writer is clear that earthly Rome, as it has a long and lasting pagan tradition, has not and could not change completely. He sees a decoupling of the Christian fate from the Roman one as theologically necessary. It was also advisable from a diplomatic perspective given the expectation of doom. To him and many others, standing up to the last for an empire that

has persecuted Christians for long periods of time hardly seemed worth it.

This assumption is not surprising, as religion and politics in the Antiquity nearly everywhere were considered as two sides of a medal. But it is surprising that opponents of Augustine, who critically examines such a connection, overlook the fundamental innovation which Christianity was responsible for in the old world: namely for the fundamental difference of the spheres of politics and faith. The numerous similarities cannot hide away the differences. The famous pericope wasn't handed down by Jesus by accident, according to which the emperor should be given what should be his, and God should be given what belongs to him. The Lord could not have distanced himself stronger from the political eschatology that was spread widely at the time. Violence is unknown to him which doesn't mean that one won't be able to attribute special sympathies to him.

It can be assumed that Augustine is well aware of everyday advantages that the end of persecutions mean for believers. His actions as a bishop, when he called on the secular arm to help in the African church dispute against the Donatists, show him this benefit very clearly.[20] This (if one so wishes) church-political action must be separated from the theological reflection.

Nevertheless, the action of the now nominally Christian emperors is definitely a proof of continuity. It is, however, not necessarily hopeful in central points of regency: Augustine is, with regards to the Christian proprium of political rule, rather skeptical: it is perfectly understandable, when he notices, that generally not worse politics were conducted among the Christian emperors. This judgment is rather sober, though! He knows that a fundamental approach of the pagan emperors, who often pursued a religiopolitical program as part of their reign and placed certain gods at the center of their actions, cannot be copied by Christians: what is meant is the close

20 It was mentioned often that Augustinus' relationship towards the state was not negative in all aspects (Loewenich 1947: 17).

connection between the preference for one Cults and the victorious actions of armies and emperors – a connection that can also be reversed. A defeat means thereafter insufficient practice of the cult. A common belief was that the gods get angry. If one were to follow such a pattern, Christians would get into trouble. They would be in need of justification and would have to excuse their god's weakness; after all, their emperor belongs to the Christians who have counted as state religion for decades. Augustine breaks with this idea, which was very common in antiquity, and the close correlation between the performance of traditional cult rituals and political success. Even in much later eras, such views of gods as partisans of their own cause were widely accepted, but also criticized.[21]

In contrast to the Christian adulation of the emperors Augustine is reflected more theologically: he sees the Christian as an inhabitant of two *civitates*, though: the terrestrial (*terrena*) as well as the heavenly (*coelestis*.) Nonetheless they couldn't be more different in existential regard. Augustine recognized their roots in two basic attitudes, two ways of living.[22] The earthly community bases in self-love, the heavenly ultimately in the love of God. It is differentiated between angel and demon. The deep gap between both existential living spaces is central for Augustin.

Such an opposition makes a Christian state, the close connection of throne and altar that acted as an ideal in long historical times, hopeless. Augustine was skeptical towards such forms of symbiosis. He sees the Devine kingdom granted to the pious, every terrestrial kingdom populated by the pious and the impious.[23] So far, the earlier often popular translation "State of God" makes little sense in its theological intention, Augustine has looked at the phenomena of the state critically. The famous Alexander anecdote stands for his undisguised skepticism as well as the hint to structural agreement with

21 Revealing a letter exchange from the 1970s, see Lobkowicz / Hertz 1984.
22 Instead of others, see Maier 1986, pp. 94-109, here 105 f.
23 Augustinus 1991, p. 269 (Book V, Ch. 21).

robber bands. They, as well as the rich, lack justice, who in reality don't have more to offer than oppression. Only Judgment Day will free us from such forms of violence and evil. Augustine's attempt to place salvation in the future has been drawn into modern times, which of course only offer earthly alternatives to liberation from earthly vales of misery, which sometimes cause even greater weeping and gnashing of teeth.[24] The visions for a better world reach from the utopias of the medieval ages until the *Reich der Freiheit* and the *Tausendjährigen Reich,* lastly a perversion for the Johannes-apocalypse. They have never brought a better life.

If one looks at modern times against the background of such a perspective, attempts at symbiosis between both citizens are reduced to absurdity. The fact that even architects of theocratic models were able to rely on Augustine is not only due to the increasing Christian influence in the secular community in the Middle Ages as well as to shortened and incorrect reading, but also to different, even contradictory, references in the very powerful scripture. Augustine's study of the New Testament highlighted those passages that particularly appealed to him. This also includes the separation of the chaff and the wheat at the end of days. The earthly community is one of the temporary things, not the last. When looking at the earthly community, realism prevails: evil and good are gathered in the world state. You have to wait for the separation.

Augustine probably saw the eschatological heritage of the old church, which has probably faded a little since the overall situation for Christians has improved, as a trump card. If the Roman empire sinks in the Orcus of history, for which there have been not a few indications even before 410, so it may be grievous even for Christians, as for them the seemingly eternal empire is also a home to which duties exist. But Augustine knew: Christ's empire is not from this world. This realization creates hope, especially then, when a temporal

24 Löwith, 1990; Sternberger, 1984: 309-380, count towards the more influential interpretations in this respect.

great power stands at the end of its existence and before the ruin of its own pomp – as so many political figments before. Even generations before Augustine the outstanding theologian Origenes referred triumphantly that the downfall of an empire didn't mean the end of Church that was primarily aligned towards the kingdom of God. The following applies to the Old Church as well as for Augustine: love for the homeland and prayer for the (even non-Christian) emperors, but no theological apotheosis. Only God deserves worship.

There have been endless debates about how the two "citizenships," as a popular translation goes, relate to the empirical variables of church and state. Is there a close relationship between the two or should they fundamentally be kept apart? The church father's exegetes have found evidence to consider both plausible.

The triumphant Church of the Middle Age, from time to time also in the Modern times, has claimed the "God's State" for itself. However, Augustine' skepticism has been verified in many phases of Church History. Pope Gregor VII and his court stand for the underpinning of claims to curial power. As part of a rather unintended consequence he didn't only fight for the *libertas ecclesiae* (Gerd Tellenbach), but also achieved a (albeit careful) liberation of the empire, the secular power. This (slow) separation will continue in later epochs and under different circumstances.

3. STRUCTURAL CONSENSUS OF THE DESCRIPTION OF THE LATE ANTIQUITY AND THE 18TH CENTURY FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE AUGUSTINIAN HISTORICAL THINKING

Even during the age of Enlightenment, despite all hostilities, Christian historical thinking was very popular. An example is provided by the already mentioned, outstanding personality of Bishop Bossuet (1627–1704) who also influenced Ludwig XIV's politics. He compiled a universal history. Compared to Augustine, this con-

temporary of the early Enlightenment came to a more positive judgment of the political history.[25] Instead of the God's State, it is the History of the Church, still a triumphant one, that stands at the focal point of his grand historic story. This extends from the beginnings of the world into his time. The destiny possesses a wide status. It is here he meets Augustine who, as is generally known (despite all the high respect of the free will), has fought for the priority of the mercy of God and (at least in reception), was claimed to be a defender of the doctrine of predestination. Bossuet, as Augustine, embraces light and shadow in history. The actors ought not to know their mission in the Devine plan of history. What seems to be coincidence and fate, often falls into place in the bigger plan.

While historical thinking during the 17th century was still widely Christian, despite a few free-thinkers, an ideological turning point occurs in the 18th century. The Enlightenment period proceeded, and at the same time some emphases shifted permanently. The historical outlook is no exception.[26]

Reflection about historical progress in the discourse of the elites is taking a much stronger profane-secular alignment orientation, especially in France. Among individual representatives – the Marquis de Condorcet can be cited as an example – a pointed-hyper optimistic view of the future can be noticed.

Condorcet embodies the euphoric Enlightener. This connects him with Voltaire and Turgot. The contrast to the huge civil pessimist Rousseau is obvious. Condorcet is an influential science politician of his epoch. He stands out through his enormous universality. He even presents a constitutional draft that unfortunately doesn't find a majority.

Given his confidence in the future it is not surprising that he – similar to Descartes – looks for a safe foundation that is supposed to

25 Löwith. 1990, p.130; Bossuet was, other than Fenelon, accepted rather less in Germany, as an exception. Cf. Voegelin, 2004.

26 To be used as an overview, cf. Demandt, 2011, pp. 140-163.

underlie both the moral and the political science. This task shall be fulfilled by mathematics once again. It awakens at that time – as frequently until the 20th century – an actual fascination. Condorcet may be considered one of the prototypes of modern social engineers and technicians. His optimism goes so far to say that correct application of mathematics may lead to peace and prosperity. He even considers the possibility of a long life and long health if basic thoughts of the enlightened mind found further dissemination. Unfortunately, so far only a small upper class has internalized these ideas. In his opinion, all that is required is the correct transfer of theory into practice, then one comes close to the ideal.

In the present context it would lead too far to exemplify the secular Chiliasm of many enlighteners. The findings confirm a proposition of Löwiths: the Christian eschatology postponed (with increasing temporal distance from Christ's terrestrial work) the salvation into the future. This shift, regardless of its dogmatic content, was a strategically smart move. It gave consolation and created hope even in the dark times – throughout the whole history of the Church. Important thinkers of the Enlightenment maintained this future-oriented perspective, but negated the beyond-orientated view. As in the early modern utopia, which seamlessly transitioned into the enlightened one, salvation was supposed to be earthly. Everything else was viewed by the mainstream of enlightened intellectuals as priest fraud and illusion. Hope was possible only in the here and now, therefore in a better future on one's own real planet. In practice though, this new accentuation means that one also had to give reassurance. The earthly paradise will definitely come – enlightened optimists such as Condorcet did not doubt that. One only had to wait and practice patience. This argument was also often used against the heir of the enlightenment philosophy, namely Marxism. As is well known, Marx dressed his secular hopes with the metaphor of the *Reich der Freiheit*. He didn't find more than a few floral decora-

tions (*Hirten, Jäger, Kritiker*). Communist propagandists could defer this blessed condition up to the communist stage, that has never occurred though.

The hope for a better future, conveyed by the philosophy of the Enlightenment, as well as an improved provision in 18th century France, similarly had a dedicated political dimension and corresponding effects. As is well known, the pre-requirements of "1789" are complex. Spiritual-philosophical (undercutting of the old order through *Literaten im Untergrund*) reasons were as dominant as the political crisis of the Ancient Regime (convocation of the estate generals!); further, economic causes are to be named that concretized especially in widespread hunger due to failed harvests. Furthermore, the French Revolution comprised three partial revolutions: firstly the political-social which flows into the proclamation of human rights in 1791, and which later turned into a model for the liberal reorganization of Europe. The uncontrolled dynamics resulted in the abolition of royalty in the second phase. From 1792 onwards the terror gradually made itself felt. With Robespierre's entry into the Welfare Committee, the reign of terror became increasingly systematic. Thousands lose their lives before the practice of terror slowly ends in the period after July 28, 1794.

An event as Janus-faced as the French Revolution is not easy to bring to a common denominator in terms of its relationship to traditional Christianity as well as to traditional Christian historical thinking, which itself is not uniform. In all modern revolutions one finds Christian admixtures in more or less different ways. Even the French Revolution is no exception here.[27] It didn't start, as was often noticed, as anti-Christian shock device. It is no coincidence that many of their followers come from the clergy, especially from the lower clergy, who benefited less from the symbiosis of traditional rule with the altar than the higher prelates.[28]

27 References to be found in Maier, 1988, esp. pp. 75-80.
28 Cf. Erdmann, 1949.

Even at the end of the 18th century, Christianity and churches did not represent a unified block. This can hardly astonish in view of a strongly structured society, whose layering can again be seen in the church. In addition, the origin also shapes you even when you want to shed it. Even enlightenment thinkers and the later radicalized revolutionaries cannot completely eliminate their Christian origins, no matter how anti-traditional they behaved. This observation applies, of course, to modern times as a whole. No matter how differentiated this must be seen: Christian traces can be found everywhere. Modern times, the Enlightenment and the Revolution, which are connected in a well-defined way, can neither be baptized across the board nor declared un-Christian. Let us take protagonists of the later German Enlightenment such as Kant and Lessing as an example. They have never denied the relevance of Christian doctrine for their works – in view of their writings this view slightly hardens. At the same time, they make clear changes to the Christian message, which they – not dissimilar to other enlighteners – often view formally and in an instrumental way. For Lessing, the religious content is a crutch that, he hopes, will become superfluous in the future. The not yet fully enlightened humanity who doesn't view ethical behaviour as self-purposed, needs a pedagogical resource, in order to be encouraged to comply with certain commandments. This status of the definite stage of coexistence applies when reason doesn't only enlighten the manageable elite, but also wider parts of the population. Kant uses, as it is known, the belief in God in order to emphasize its necessity for the ethics.

Naturally, such an attitude towards Christianity as it is briefly explained here exemplary to Kant and Lessing, doesn't portray the full scale of the Enlightenment. One can also find representatives of a radical atheistic Enlightenment, such as Paul Henri Thiry d'Holbach and Julien Offray de la Mettrie, but also severe critics of the Church like Voltaire. Similarly, representatives of a Catholic En-

lightenment can be determined,[29] who can, in toto, count as Church friendly. Even critics of the events such as the (later magisterially sentenced) priest Lamennais could see something positive from the caesura. He considers the separation of state and Church as best for the latter, and can keep it free this way from worldly decadence and antipathy towards the political regime.[30] Lamennais saw the hatred towards the Church reasoned in its merge with the secular regime.

If you take a closer look at this background, it is not surprising that there was some agreement from Catholics rooted in the church at the beginning of the drastic incidents of "1789."[31] Among the activists, the later prominent priest Jacques Roux is to be mentioned, as representative of many. He supported the revolution in his sermons, soon gave up his Parish, radicalized quickly and swore an oath on the civil constitution. Later he worked in the environment of the Jacobins. He counts towards many "children" who were eaten by the Moloch of "revolution." Followers of the revolution on the Christian side were fascinated especially by the revolutionaries emphasizing the equality of humans and following Christian basic principles this way.

The beginning of the great upheavals also divided the church. After all, there was an event that, for many, is suitable for separating the wheat from the chaff: the forced oath that priests had to take to the civil constitution. Two thirds of the clergy refused to take the oath, which had lasting consequences. The split could hardly have been documented more blatantly. Many had to leave the country. These measures are only a short step to the "history of violence" of the French Revolution.[32]

29 As an overview cf. Maier, 1993, pp. 40-53.

30 Maier, 1988, pp. 173-188.

31 Instead of many others, the opinion of the Sicilian theologian Spedalieri is to be mentioned, who protocolled 1791 ("Freedom, Equality, Brotherhood") was to be understood as a Christian solution, exposed Christian roots (closer in Taxacher, 2015, p. 139).

32 Cf. Gebhard 2011, in traditional-Christian interpretation patterns this opinion can be found frequently, which is comprehensible, as in Stückelberger 2011, pp. 374-386; Schwaiger 2017, pp. 487-495.

The crimes at the opponents in the Vendée present one of the horrific highlights. These atrocities are sometimes viewed as the first genocide in European History.

This extremely short sketch is intended to prove that the "world" – without making any more precise distinctions – has hardly changed from the perspective of a realistic view of history – no matter how much one can distinguish (late) Antiquity from Modernity.

Probably the most influential historical thinker of Christianity, Augustine, summarized the ambiguities and ambivalences of "World history" in relation to "Salvation" with his consequent biblical-eschatological view: a clearly "Christian" world in toto does not exist. Even in detail the following verdict applies: "Christian" politics, economics, literature do also not exist from this point of view. Clearly, even Augustine knew that under the circumstances, Christian ways of living and influences could improve the world, create more justice, enlarge the ability to love and so on. It certainly is the responsibility of a Christian to strive for and implement inner-worldly improvements. Commandment of charity alone obligates him to that. But such possibilities for influence, especially on a moral level, are, in view of the last things, always insufficient. Christian emperors are very helpful, and a state that a bishop like Augustine can use as a "secular arm" if necessary also brings advantages. But they only ever complete penultimate tasks. They, too, can only be effective in culpable contexts. When Christian rulers use violence against heretics, such action may be justifiable under the (of course always controversial) assumption that the Catholic faith embodies the truth; but this does not change the reprehensibility of violence. Intellectuals of the Enlightenment in particular may have seen such connections more easily than would have been obvious over large stretches of the dominance of Christian culture.

According to Augustine, earthly existence is always determined by a mix of pious and sinners. No one can actually know whether they are among the saved or the damned. The leaders of the heavenly

legions do not dominate on earth. Rome is not the heavenly Jerusalem. The earthly kingdom always remains – regardless of whether the most powerful person is baptized or not. The state is not founded by and for angels, but by sinful people. The reference of the founding of the state to Cain speaks for itself.

Now the Rome of the Christian emperors probably gave some pious people a bit of earthly security. The conquest of the seemingly Christianized city led Christian panegyricists to sing the praises of the new era. One could ignore the manageable number of pagan remainders especially within the upper class. An analogy in the late 18th century comes to mind. France is still, in spite of an increase of the Church criticism by enlightened intellectuals from Voltaire over Rousseau to Diderot, who all died before 1789, a Catholic country. The salvation still lies on the State of the "most Christian kings," the oldest sister of the Church. The excesses of 1793/94 were shocking, not least because one could hardly expect them – independently of how one stood towards faith and absolutistic monarchy.

Certain parallels in the outcome of antiquity and the late phase of the Enlightenment are palpable, at least in retrospect. The obvious difference doesn't change this: at the beginning of the fifth century AD – this date is also not known to contemporaries at the time[33] – Christianity still appeared as a relatively young religion. Its triumphal march seems unstoppable even after the caesura of the Constantinian turn. The progressive intellectuals of the 18th century often view Christianity as an aging force that hinders the progress towards a worldly-scientific paradise. The confession of Christ is no longer opposed by competing cults, but rather by secular views that claim to improve existence. This view can only be understood against the background of a certain secularization trend and a noticeable improvement in the everyday world in the 18th century – both of which were certainly discussed in contemporary sermons.[34]

33 To the history of the Christian calendar Maier 2000.
34 Cf. Groethuysen 1978.

While in the generations before Augustine throne and altar came together – which was not undisputed even in his time, as pagan objections prove – after 1789 a gradual development began that went in the opposite direction. A Catholic liberal like Lamennais wants to encourage this tendency.

If one considers Augustine's historical thinking as paradigmatic, then one captures the situation of his time as much as the time of radical changes at the end of the 18th century. Neither Rome nor Paris anticipate the Divine Jerusalem. At both places one could see human weaknesses (casually expressed) – especially with the regard to the official politics. In this century an observer looking from a Christian perspective could recognize (as always) chaff and wheat. Much of the supposedly intact is rotten and – at least in retrospect – spirituality decayed. If one takes theorems of the Roman and empire theology, one could have grasped the time before 1789 step-by-step – but only when describing the façade as profane Christian, which would have been rather euphemistic, though. The alliance of throne and altar seems to work under the king Ludwig XVI (as under his predecessors) without any problems. A glorification of this connection (as from the point of view of state-theological assumptions) is only possible, if one glosses over drastically.

One may oppose the following against this mind game: it isn't reliable to apply historical-theological ideas that were conceived around 1600 years ago to events that occurred less than 250 years ago. But Augustine's pattern, his dualism of *Civitas dei* and *Civitas terrena*, is timeless, not only for pious Christians. His judgment on the terrestrial truth is more realistic from a Christian viewpoint than the cheering over assumingly inner-secular Christian structures, which mostly prove fragile on a closer look. So far it makes sense to understand even the muti-layered events of the French Revolution with the help of Augustine's historical-philosophical *specificati* that remain with the biblical foundations. Lest we forget that the traditionalist opponents of the French Revolution, primarily Joseph de

Maistre, reveal in the quintessence of their argumentation certain parallels to the Roman and empire theologians.[35]

So it can be summarized: the biblical narratives – from the Exodus up to the book of Daniel – show that the old and new Nation of God is strongly rooted in historical processes. The incarnation of the Logos keeps revaluing the history, even though the Christian self-assertion is delayed by the Parousia expectation and only becomes more apparent in the course of early Christian development. This process was not yet complete at the time of the mass exodus. But Augustine's Apology, which rejects the arguments of the pagan accusers of the Christian faith, shows that this process is already well advanced. Augustine's anti-political "eschatology" (Sternberger) is based on a millennium of biblical revelation and apocalyptic allusions in the Gospels. This view prevents faith from being drawn too far into the depths of the state-earthly sphere. The salvation is projected into the future. Even Christian emperors also commit violence and can never fully reach the Christian ideal. The Enlightenment and the culmination during the French Revolution reveal an acceleration of the historical change, which was enshrined many centuries ago in the biblical worldview. With all diversity of the events: in view of Augustine's draft it is so far part of the tradition of Christian historical theory, as it refers the salvation (world immanent, though) into the future. This connection with Christian origins becomes all the clearer when one considers a conception such as that of the Calabrian monk Joachim of Fiore in the High Middle Ages,[36] which was subsequently condemned as heretical. He sees inner-worldly salvation as effective in the future, but it has already begun in his own time.

35 To de Maistre see an overview in Dirsch 2020, pp. 17-27; Maier 1988, pp. 143-150.
36 For the criticism, cf. Voegelin 1959.

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BURKE'S REFLECTIONS, VINDICAE GALLICAE AND JAMES MACKINTOSH'S CONTRA-REVOLUTIONARY TURN

Zoltán Pető

There is no doubt that the most important and radical political event of the 18th century was the French Revolution in 1789, later called "great" by its intellectual and emotional adherents, and condemned as one of the greatest disasters on mankind in the field of society and politics by its antagonists and adversaries. The French Revolution of 1789, though not without antecedents, represents a symbolic dividing line between what we might call "modern world" and what we could name the traditional civilization and culture.

The contemporary observers have already considered it a unique and unprecedented event. For example, Thomas Paine, one of the most enthusiastic supporters of the French Revolution, said:

> *In the declaratory exordium which prefaces the Declaration of Rights, we see the solemn and majestic spectacle of a Nation opening its commission under the auspices of its Creator, to establish a Government; a scene so new, and so transcendently unequalled by any thing in the European world, that the name of a Revolution is diminutive of its character, and it rises into a regeneration of man.*[1]

1 Thomas Paine. *Rights of Men*. W.T. Sherwin, London, 1987. p. 69.

Alexis de Tocqueville wrote in the opening pages of his *The Old Regime and The Revolution*:

> *The French made, in 1789, the greatest effort that has ever been made by any people to sever their history into two parts, so to speak, and to tear open a gulf between their past and their future. In this design, they took the greatest care to leave every trace of their past condition behind them; they imposed all kinds of restraints upon themselves in order to be different from their ancestry; they omitted nothing which could disguise them.* [2]

There is no doubt that the French Revolution provoked the greatest public debate on political principles in Britain since the Civil War of 1640.[3] The debate on the revolution focused on the fundamental questions of politics, religion, society and history.

What is the basis of political legitimacy? Where are the limits of the state? How do the state and the church relate to each other? What is the role of leadership in political life and what does it mean to subordinate? What are the basic rights and obligations of a citizen? What is the actual purpose of government and what is the most appropriate sphere of government authority?

Emerging modernity, in political thought, starting with Machiavelli, tried to separate the moral, metaphysics and politics from each other.[4] The purpose of the existence of the state seemed to both the revolutionaries and counter-revolutionaries not to be based solely on reaching some "passive" criterion. Therefore, the idea of the state and an "ideal political constitution" was an earthly

2 Alexis de Tocqueville. *The Old Regime and The Revolution*. Harper and Brothers, New York, 1856. Preface p. i.

3 See Hampshire-Monk (eds.). *Impact of the French Revolution: Texts from Britain in the 1790s*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2005.

4 As Cassirer suggests in his *The Myth of the State* the Prince talks only about how to keep power, says nothing about the good use of power. (Ernst Cassirer. *The Myth of the State*. Yale University Press, 1946. pp. 130-139.)

representation of their ideas of the world order – or a world without order.

We can say that since Socrates and Plato the fundamental question of classical political thinking has appeared here in a new vein: if there is any need for a state, what should be the best or the "least bad" one? How can an "ideal" form of state be defined in this sense, or is an attempt to find one futile, and if we are to find it, is it feasible in practice?

Could the role of the state be *merely* to "protect" the weaker individual against the tyranny of others, or simply to do justice in disputes between individuals, as Thomas Hobbes or John Locke, classics of contract theory, had argued? Does the state have to carry out some positive τέλος, as stated in pre-modern, antique and/or medieval political conceptions in general, most of all, to make its citizens "better," "more righteous," to help them transcend themselves, or – as in Christian state theory – to help them gain their transcendental salvation?

The debate that ensued in the wake of the revolution was the first to formulate the meaning and main issues of political modernity, which were now in their full "armour" – or, if we prefer the phrase, in their bare, ugly and terrible nakedness, in front of the debating parties. In this regard, perhaps no other text has provoked greater public debate in England than Edmund Burke's *Reflections on the Revolution in France*. Apart from Burke's, no other work, dealing directly with the events of the revolution was able to tackle the most important points of the period's thinking: nearly a hundred books and pamphlets were written in response to Burke's anti-revolutionary attack.

Burke's *Reflections* is not only a classic of British conservative thinking, but also a dividing line related to the evaluation of the revolution, which had an impact for two centuries. The book is not a strictly precise, pre-designed work, but rather a pamphlet. It did not

come to be written in the wake of the writer's theoretical inclinations, but due to the dramatic circumstances. Perhaps the subjective, passionate, and deliberately dismissive voice of political rationalism, which stunned Burke's contemporaries, stems from the letter-form of the work. This revolutionary critique of the revolution was astonishing to contemporaries, because the author was officially a member of the camp of "liberals" at the time. Burke, as a theoretical adherent of the American Civil War and Revolution and a defender of the Irish under British rule, was a declared "friend of mankind" in the eyes of liberal intellectuals. Burke's passionate attack on the French Revolution provoked a lot of equally passionate responses by revolutionary writers. The line of Burke's critics was headed by Mary Wollstonecraft, in her anonymous publication *Vindication of the Rights of Men* in 1790. Above all, she accused Burke of sentimentalism, an emotional impulse to undermine political rationality. Someone who, in pursuit of his political goals, "seeks to shed tears of compassion." Wollstonecraft was well aware that Burke's criticism was directed not only against the French revolutionaries and their English believers, but also against enlightenment rationalism. Among the shorter works, the work of the historian Catharine Macaulay in 1790 can be mentioned, titled *Observations on the Reflections of the Right Hon. Edmund Burke*. Macaulay, following the radical Whig interpretation of the Glorious Revolution of 1688, sees the French Revolution as an attempt to reiterate its principles, while accusing Burke of Torysm: in her opinion, the *Reflections* only repeat the Tory criticism of the British Revolution of 1688. In a similar vein, Joseph Priestley, a nonconformist theologian, published a work in 1791 titled "*Letters to the Right Hon. Edmund Burke, occasioned by his Reflections on the Revolution in France*."

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As an observer could see, the debates over the revolution shed light on two different approaches to the nature of the world and

human existence, community, society, state and politics. The one, of which Burke was the prominent defender in Britain, I call (with Burke's own words) the "politics of beauty." By this I mean a view of existence in which symbols and aesthetics play a decisive role,[5] while it considers the sphere of politics and complexity of interests and human relations as something that originates from a sphere that goes beyond rationality. It derives state, society and the whole world "from above," which means that the inferior is derived from the superior, and not the other way around. Burke presents the importance of "political aesthetics" in post-"Glorious Revolution" British society,[6] and its link to the socio-political order we might call *Ancien* Régime in a broader and narrower sense.[7]

Regarding the role of transcendence and the irrational (non-rational) in politics: the core of this view is, of course, not Burke's own, but typical of any non-modern and non-secular human civilization that establishes its ex-

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5 Burke's early work, *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* brought him into the literary, philosophical and political consciousness of the era. The impact and fundamental ideas of his early work was not to be neglected by Burke in the wake of the Revolution.

6 The so-called "Glorious Revolution," was the November 1688 deposition and replacement of James II/ VII as ruler of England, Scotland and Ireland by his daughter Mary II and Mary›s husband, William III of Orange. The overthrow of James was hailed at the time and ever since as a "revolution," the term of "Glorious Revolution" was popularized later by Protestant preachers. Edmund Burke formulated the voice of more than two centuries of analysis of historiography when he wrote: "The Revolution was made to preserve our ancient indisputable laws and liberties, and that ancient constitution of government which is our only security for law and liberty." (Gary S. Dekrey. "Between Revolutions: Re-appraising the Restoration in Britain," *History Compass*, May, 2008. pp. 738-773.)

7 Several books, articles, Ph.D. theses and studies have been written on the obvious links between Burke's aesthetic and political views. Some of the most important are: Anthony Quinton: Burke on the Sublime and Beautiful. In: *Philosophy*, January, 1961. pp. 71-73; Peter H. Melvin. Burke on Theatricality and Revolution. In: *Journal of the History of Ideas,* July-September, 1975. pp. 447-468; James Connif: Edmund Burke and His Critics. The Case of Mary Wollstonecraft. *Journal of the History of Ideas*, April, 1999, 4. pp. 299-318;

istence on transcendence, on the Being in itself (or, in theological sense: on God). Burke's own views were not completely untouched by the ideas of the "Enlightenment," he was a prominent member of the Whig ("pre-liberal") party, and a former defendant of the American Revolution. Nevertheless, it is clear that Burke was not the man of "progress," "democracy" or radical liberalism. Not even early Burke. This can be clearly seen in his anthropology: man does not stand in and by itself, and all particular existence relies on an underlying reality that vastly transcends the human person and *individuum*. Consequently, according to Burke, the judgments of human reason, within the framework of individuality, cannot be wholly autonomous, but they need to be aided by transcendental revelation. In his view, both man and his world are symbols beyond themselves, a testimony of the Supreme Being, the Absolute, and the spheres of reality in the "Great chain of Being" a hierarchy not made by man, but which is based on the spiritual dignities of different and unequal beings. The notion of the "Great chain" implements the idea of Order, and this Order has no foundation in the world of human relations, but in the sphere of transcendence.[8] As Burke states:

> *Taking it for granted that I do not write to the disciples of the Parisian philosophy, I may assume that the awful Author of our being is the Author of our place in the order of existence, – and that, having disposed and marshalled us by a divine tactic, not according to our will, but according to His, He has in and by that disposition virtually subjected us to act the part which belongs to the place assigned us.*[9]

According to the critiques of the "politics of beauty," human existence, and especially its social and political dimensions, can be

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8 According to the idea of the chain, the socio-political system does not live an independent life, but is only one of the planes of the cosmic order of nature. The Great Chain of Being runs from God to inanimate objects, Man who is the only actor of physical reality in which the soul dwells, standing on the boundary of the spiritual (inscrutable) and the material (perceptible) existence. Man combines the qualities of the heavenly and earthly hierarchies. (See Arthur Lovejoy. *The Great Chain of Being*.)

9 Edmund Burke. *An appeal from the new to the old Whigs*. 1791. J. Dodsley, London, 1791 p.121.

wholly approachable by reason. What is common in these criticisms is that Burke, a former "liberal" is most accused of betraying the enlightenment and denying its political consequences. They all agreed to reject Burke's state of the world as the "age of chivalry", which he tied to the *Ancien* Régime, replacing it with a world order based on the principles of strict political rationality, pure reason. The "old order," as a social and political system in which taste played such a big part, and which Burke glorified as "mixed government," was considered by the critics a "Gothic" society which, above all, was an unjust system.

Even if assuming the existence of God, for the radicals the context of social and political life does not point toward transcendence. According to their view, it is possible to eliminate the irrational element from the structure of human existence. It is possible to tear down the "aesthetic veil" from the face of the state, to purify the state of its mystery, the *arcana imperii* (which, as Shakespeare says, is in the spirit of the state[10]), it is possible to rationalize it. Radicals, representing the "progressive creed," argued that a supposed greater freedom that mankind should globally strive for, can ultimately not be found in the spiritual community with divinity, but in the earthly, humanistic, rationalistic, and moralistic ends.

We can trace in the history of modern thought, as early as the 18th century, the growing identification of the idea of "progress" with its technological-economic-social sense, and the identification of the idea of liberty with a supposed progressive historical evolution of freedom that offers earthly prosperity in the future. This progressionism of radical-democratic thinkers implied a typically materialist concept of justice, which was mostly the justice of the merchant, the inventor, the citizen, the technician, the justice of Sieyès's third

10 *There is a mystery – with whom relation*
Durst never meddle – in the soul of state;
Which hath an operation more divine
Than breath or pen can give expressure to
(William Shakespeare. *Troilus and Cressida*: Act 3, Scene: 3)

order. It is Sieyès's third estate – with the active aid of the intellectual background of the emerging freemasonry[11] – which, at the eve of the French Revolution, formulates its own ethics, its own *Weltanschauung*. It was an open declaration of war to subvert the world and world's order. Declaration that only a lifestyle that produces material products is valuable, and other life activities, such as heroism or contemplation (the main focus of the traditional first and second estate: the priesthood and the nobility), which are unrelated to production, may have to be annihilated. This is the time when the idea of the nobility, aristocracy, monarchy and priesthood would be declared as functionless or "superfluous" classes: the third estate was nothing so far, and from then on will be everything![12] The notion of this pamphlet was closely related with the basic ideas of Anglo-Saxon liberalism which was, long before the French Revolution, more or

11 One of the main causes of the initial success of the French Revolution might be traced in the fact, that the French high nobility was also associated with freemasonry, the ideological flag-bearer of the Enlightenment and hotbed of anti-monarchist sentiment in France. The Grande Loge de France was formed under the Grand Mastership of the Duke of Clermont, and his successor, the Duke of Orléans a cousin of Louis XVI , reconstituted the central body as the Grand Orient de France in 1773. In 1792, during the French Revolution, he changed his name to Philippe Égalité. Louis Philippe was one of the richest men in France, he actively supported the Revolution of 1789, and voted for the death of king Louis XVI; however, he was himself guillotined in November 1793 during the Reign of Terror. Today Masonic statements are ambiguous about the responsibility for the revolution. According to the Grand Lodge of British Columbia and Yukon website "While it is both simplistic and specious to lay the responsibility for the French Revolution at the door of Freemasonry, there is no question that freemasons, as individuals, were active in building, and rebuilding, a new society. Considering the large number of bodies claiming masonic authority, many men identified today as freemasons were probably unaware of each other's masonic association and clearly cannot be seen as acting in concert. Yet they did share certain beliefs and ideals." (https://www.freemasonry.bcy.ca/texts/revolution.html#1)

12 See. Abbé Emmanuel Joseph Sieyès'es revultionary pamphlet, written in January 1789: *Qu'est-ce que le Tiers-État?* (*What Is the Third Estate?)*

less represented by the British (mostly Scottish) economists Adam Smith, James Stuart or Adam Anderson. Their fundamental idea is that history, like other modes and sequences of existence, will, after a long experimental period, realize something in the sense of the *survival of the fittest*. It is a kind of "mature" world which, like Leibniz's "best possible world," may not be perfectly conceivable, but the best that can be thought of without contradiction. All this, when projected to the political sphere, means that the idea of progress was confronted with the state and the representatives of the state as a hindrance to freedom. Since the state was monarchical at the time, materialist progressionism was intertwined with republicanism and democracy, which people increasingly began to see as progressive, thereby branding the existing state, the monarchy as "oppressive," "an irrational remnant of the past," or tried to reduce its functions to a mere symbolic role. One of the most important premises of the evolutionary concept, which continued in Anglo-Saxon liberalism: a restriction that does not favor the purely economic principle is in itself detrimental. It carried out a sharp separation between state and society, and with it the perception of the state as a "force of violence," which exercises power over society, thereby limiting man's "inherent" freedom.

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One of the most significant reactions to Burke's text was the "moderately radical" James Mackintosh, who published his work *Vindiciae Gallicae* in 1791. Contrary to Burke's "evolutionary-gradualist" model based on historical continuity, Mackintosh's argumentation for the need of rational social organization was derived through an in-depth analysis of English and French history. In his view, the "general reasons" determined by historical processes inevitably led to the outbreak of the revolution.

After Paine's *Rights of Man*, Mackintosh's book was considered the most successful reply to Burke. Charles James Fox, the

contemporary leader of the Whig party, singled out Mackintosh's book as that which did most justice to the French Revolution, and he preferred it to Burke and Thomas Paine.

Sir James Mackintosh was born near Inverness. At the age of thirteen he proclaimed himself a Whig, and during playtime he persuaded his friends to join him in debates modelled on those of the House of Commons. In April 1791, he published *Vindiciae Gallicae: A Defence of the French Revolution and its English Admirers*, a reply to Edmund Burke's *Reflections on the Revolution in France*.

Mackintosh wrote his *Vindicae Gallicae* at the age of 25. The views of the Scottish philosopher had been shaped by the works of the Scottish Enlightenment, such as the writings of David Hume and Adam Smith. Mackintosh provided an in-depth analysis of the causes of the French Revolution, in which he often proves more convincingly than other authors, why the revolution could not be avoided.

His philosophy was based on the unlimited trust in human reason: the defining feature of his doctrines is faith that man is infinitely improvable. With the advancement of science, man is able to control processes that have gone beyond the bounds of cognition of earlier times – social science is changing, just like the Newton-paradigm changes the world-view. All we have to do is get rid of our inherited prejudices and irrational passions that oppose the criteria of "pure reason." The French revolutionaries were exceptional in their ability to dispense with tradition, passion and prejudice when the Constitution was being drafted.

He wrote:

> *The National Assembly were therefore not called on to make discoveries. It was sufficient if they were not uninfluenced by the opinions, nor exempt from the spirit of their age. They were fortunate enough to live in a period when it was only necessary to affix the stamp of laws to what had been prepared by the research of philosophy.*[13]

13 Donald Winch (ed.). *Sir James Mackintosh, Vindiciae Gallicae and Other Writings on the French Revolution*. Liberty Fund, Indianapolis, Liberty Fun, 2006. p. 43.

Mackintosh shared the optimistic views of the radical British and French writers about the improvement of human institutions and the changeability of human nature – emphasizing in *Vindicae* the importance of education in shaping the minds of the citizens of modern Europe. However, he differs from Burke's other critics already mentioned here, in his caution against revolutions in general – he expects the advent of a better world not primarily from the spread of revolutionary action, but from the spread of erudition.

For Mackintosh, understanding the French Revolution is based on England's 1688 Whig revolution, which was later called "Glorious Revolution." This revolution was a turning point for the British public at that time. Britain's current system of rule by the Hannoverian dynasty was a product of that revolution, and in the evaluation of the French Revolution the "Glorius Revolution" was significant. For Burke, the "Glorious Revolution" was a conservative revolution – for preserving the "ancient constitution" and for the British radicals – it was a progressive revolution.

Also, as for the radicals, according to Mackintosh, the Glorious Revolution was not a preventive act, as Burke and the "old Whigs" thought, but it was a true revolution, and at the same time rather an incompletely executed revolution, and its greater potential was not to be carried out, because of the revolutionaries' hereditary prejudices.

The Glorious Revolution was "solemn, deliberate, national *choice*[14]" and therefore Reverend Price's statement that the English were entitled to change their form of government during the Revolution, is not flawed or in vain, as Burke tried to prove. It was England's peculiar system of government that emerged as a result of the Revolution, that sets it apart from other European countries, and if Burke's interpretation of the Revolution is correct, the great story of the Glorious Revolution is just a legend.

14 Ibid. p. 88.

Mackintosh also agrees with Price that the purpose of the revolution was to remove one king and choose another: Burke refers in vain to the fact that England's current regent "disregards" whether people agree with his rule or not – the "glorious revolution" is a set of precedents, that guarantees the right to elect a king, even if that right exists only at the level of fiction. He quotes the source that Burke ignores - the Tory representative Lord Nottingham, who put forward the need for an elective monarchy in 1688 – although the Lord emphasized that the rule of succession could not be interrupted in every case, but only in emergencies. However, what the Tory Nottingham had admitted at least as a legal fiction, the Whig Burke denies a hundred years later. According to Mackintosh, this also proves that Burke's views are out of date.

As he states:

> *The Revolution of 1688 deserves more the attention of a philosopher, for its indirect influence on the progress of human opinion, than for its immediate effects on the Government of England.*[15]

By undermining the building of tyranny, it has made the systems of repression so unstable that they could be overturned by a "thrown gravel." The Glorious Revolution is a precedent for American freedom fighters to claim rights similar to those of the mother-country – and as a result, the Americans, and then the French, were much more capable of formulating revolutionary principles.

Mackintosh raises fewer problems with England's form of government than Thomas Paine, Mary Wollstonecraft and other radical writers – he does not question some of the benefits of a "mixed constitution," which respects the rights of the people and their influence in the governance of the country, and which is against the excesses of the crown and the aristocracy. He also emphasizes that the problems of England cannot be resolved by force

15 Ibid. p. 96.

– a revolution similar to that of France – i.e. not by a revolution, but by a reform. Nor does he share the views of the radicals on the very fact of the revolution.

The spirit of revolt breaks out with fatal violence after its object is destroyed, and turns against the order of freedom those arms by which it had subdued the strength of tyranny.[16]

Mackintosh, in the spirit of Enlightenment-philanthropism, expects from education to end revolutionary violence, and this must be encouraged by the government in the quiet times which – he thought – will follow the violence of the revolution. (He wrote it before the period of "great terror.") He saw the French Revolution as a fundamentally peaceful event, that claimed far fewer lives than other revolutions. For example, he wrote, the number of victims is not comparable to the numbers of the English Revolution of 1640, or the thousands who died from the whims of monarchical systems. He attributed the violent events made by the revolutionaries to the barbarity of the *Ancien* Régime, because

> *[…]it is vain to expect that a people, inured to barbarism by their oppressors, and which has ages of oppression to avenge, will be punctiliously generous in their triumph, nicely discriminative in their vengeance, or cautiously mild in their mode of retaliation.*[17]

According to Mackintosh the murders of priests and nobles by the rural peasant population were caused by the less cultivated morals: "the rural people held in the darkness were unable to understand freedom" – there was no basis upon which they could have conceptualized it.

He was convinced, that these atrocities were against the will of the National Assembly, while Burke said the very leaders of the revolution in Paris ordered the assassinations. If people can suddenly experience their own power, they can do

16 Ibid. p. 55.
17 Ibid.

the most extreme things, this is inherent in every revolution. Because:

> *A Minister is not conceived to be guilty of systematic immorality, because he balances the evils of the most just war with that national security that is produced by the reputation of spirit and power; nor ought the Patriot, who, balancing the evils of transient anarchy with the inestimable good of established liberty, finds the last preponderate in the scale.*[18]

Anarchy, created as a result of the revolution is, by the way, short-lived, while despotism can last for ages – since it is impossible to live in anarchy, a more peaceful state must be restored after a while.

While defending the British "friends" of the French Revolution, Mackintosh based his arguments on the reasoning: "Nothing would be more absurd than to assume that anyone who admires the French Revolution wants to emulate it. So Burke's concern that Price, Paine or the London Society would want to make a republic of England is completely unfounded. Burke constructed the accusation of revolutionary societies on the model of the anti-Catholic conspiracy theories of the Tudor and Stewart periods – and if we were to make every conspiracy theory true in history, we would be accused of ridicule."

The enthusiasm of British admirers of the French Revolution comes from seeing scientific thinking overcome the system of prejudice and outdated dogma. They are not advocating revolutionary violence or calling for the disruption of state order, but seeking to enforce the universal rights of man in Britain.

He considers absurd Burke's arguments which seek to explain the validity of a certain condition by its antiquity, such as the system of rights and privileges of the English government. Burke's failure to recognize the idea of "natural rights," according to Mackintosh, stems from the fact that he alone recognizes

18 Ibid. p. 56.

history as a guiding principle, but ignores the fact that "society is unquestionably progressive" – so privileges from an earlier state by change in the structure of society may become time-barred, while new rights, which are more adapted to the changed circumstances may be created.

But these "new" rights are actually the oldest. Mackintosh, unlike Wollstonecraft and Paine, does not follow the rights of the individual back to creation. He emphasizes that these "natural rights" can be grasped and recognized by reason, when one comes to accept them through the process of enlightenment.

According to Mackintosh, it would be inaccurate to just use the word "democracy" for the new French system, because the new order is not comparable to the democracies that have emerged in history, but of course it can be called etymologically, "government of the people." His position on antique democracy is rather dismissive – he would deem most of the Greek democracies to be an ochlocracy – that is to say, mob rule. Antique democracies basically functioned on a territorial basis: they were only effective for a while. With the growth of the population of the polis, all citizens became unable to attend rallies, poorer voters were corrupted by the rich, and management of democracy inevitably fell into the hands of demagogues.

In the French government, however, the principle of representation came to the forefront, helping to eliminate the mistakes of direct democracy. One of Burke's major objections to representative democracy was that the overcomplicated, multi-phase voting system in France did not ensure that MP-s really acted in the interest of their voters, as the distance between them was too great.

Although the best-performing system cannot nullify the difference between the will of the voter and the will of the voted, Mackintosh says that the new French system proves this difference can be minimized. What the most perfect constitution can guarantee is that the will of the voter and the representative are most likely to

coincide – which seems to be exactly what is happening in France. The number of electors elected in the *départements* was so large and so overwhelming, that they were most likely to make their choice according to the will of their voters. On the other hand, they themselves emanate from the people, so they were not exposed to the "corporate spirit" inherent in every long-standing political association: they represent the interests of the public, not the corporation. So, in Mackintosh's view, everything is in place to create the best democracy in France.

For him, the most important result of the French Revolution was that the idea of "natural rights" was codified – this is the basis of the whole structure, so if we question that, the whole building must collapse. This is precisely what Burke, who holds that the ideas of natural rights are absurd and inconsistent, does: according to Burke's doctrine, people derive their rights from society and "give up" their natural freedom when they enter into society.

Mackintosh emphasizes that we must not forget the purpose for which this supposed "transfer of rights" has taken place. People transfer their rights only to protect themselves from the tyranny of their fellow human beings – laws and rights and obligations are created for this purpose. A man who has become a member of society has not given up all of his rights – nothing is more misleading than asserting it. In fact, those who enter society forgo only part of their natural rights – only those that can be harmful to their fellow human beings. A government which justifies the deprivation of rights of its subjects with the theory of transferring of rights is a fraud: it merely pretends to protect the natural rights of the governed – in fact, it establishes tyranny. The common "transfer of rights" of those who enter society does not, in fact, destroy, but assumes the equality of the people: they all give up part of their rights in the same proportion. Inequalities in civil society stem only from the various social functions that people perform.

Analyzing the circumstances surrounding the emergence of the French *Ancién Regime*, Mackintosh first wants to prove to Burke that the revolution is not due to the conspiracies of certain individuals, but to "general causes" resulting from a change in the socio-political environment. The English and French "Ancien Régime" grew out of the same "Gothic" government structure that had laid the foundations for other states in modern Europe, after the fall of the Western Roman Empire: these systems had "similar births and childhoods." The offspring of the barbaric conquerors everywhere formed representative bodies, rallies, where the upper layers of the social hierarchy could represent their interests against the ruling power. However, the power of the French nobility declined before the development of trade could bring other classes close to power. By the fifteenth century, the institution of representation of the estates had declined to mere formality, and full power had come to the crown.

It could no longer be argued that the system of representation of the estates was a remnant of the free institutions that existed before the advent of feudalism, as Burke argued. "The nobility was no longer a congregation of fearsome warriors who subdued the people and dictated to the king. Absolutism had made of the nobility crown-officials," and the military virtues of the nobles declined in the era of the mass armies. The priesthood was no longer "the order of the priesthood, which in a superstitious age caused fear and humility among the people." But the building of absolutism was increasingly shaken in France. The millions of government debt indicated that the state had become unmanageable by means of regulations and that no government could sustain itself due to lack of financial resources. Absolutism was unable to solve the situation and that's why Louis the XVI was forced to call for the parliament. Mackintosh attaches particular importance to the elimination of the nobility. While Burke compared the nobility to the "Corinthian capitals of the sophisticated states," Mackintosh notes that these capitals were of "gothic ornamentation." Only the "Gothic" medieval feudal sys-

tem linked the titles of state administration to ranks – there were aristocratic bodies with certain political prerogatives in the ancient states, but we cannot compare them to the medieval nobility, which like a caste privileged the rights to govern the state. Thus, the elimination of ranks is, in fact, only the elimination of an abnormal state: it has eliminated a layer of leadership that has lost its meaning and purpose.

Burke called the societies of pre-revolutionary philosophers an "alliance of atheist philosophers," who swore to "put an end to Christianity." To Mackintosh, it does not matter if the revolutionary philosophers were atheists, as it only matters how they think about political issues. The possible atheist views of the philosophers did not affect the socio-political doctrines of the revolution and the accusation that they had conspired to overthrow Christianity was one of the most extreme phantasmagorias in human history.

According to Mackintosh the *Philosophs* raised their voice against the secular aspirations of the priesthood, not of faith, and democratizing the organization of the French Church could have a beneficial effect on people's faith, while according to Burke, people will be unable to honor the chosen priesthood, and this process will lead to the degradation of religion. For Mackintosh, this can be the other way round – ordinary people will honor the priesthood better if they are deprived of the personal luxuries and splendor that they have associated with aristocracy. If the appointment of the priesthood depends primarily on the will of the people, rather than on the court, people will be better able to identify themselves with it.

According to Burke, all financial operations of the National Assembly are aimed at filling the purse of capitalists, while Mackintosh emphasizes the much-mentioned "financial interest" in the (supposed) positive development of humanity in general. Money and commerce deal with more people, more ideas and newer ideas than the traditional owner classes interested in agriculture, so we cannot be surprised if they are more enlightened than the latter.

Trade plays an important role in the "liberalization" of the world, so it goes without saying that these classes will also be most active in political reform. According to him, even in Burke's much-appreciated revolution of 1688, "financial interest" created the power of Whiggism, while the majority of landowners formed the Tory party.

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When we seek to justify the views of Burke's critics in history, we often find ourselves getting into contradictions. The optimism of these authors, their political doctrine based on abstract rationality, were hardly justified by the course of history – it is enough if we are thinking of the wars never seen before, of the 20th century. The complete break with tradition and the elimination of "prejudices" have proved to be *contradictio in adjecto* again and again. As Hans-Georg Gadamer points out, prejudice is an inevitable part of the process of thinking and understanding – the Enlightenment, for example, was precisely the prejudice against prejudice. An essential prerequisite for human existence is historicity, as Gadamer suggests: The truly historical thinking must also think about its own historicity.[19]

If we consider the arguments of Burke's critics in the light of European history in general, Burke seems to have been the better foreteller. With the radicalization of the French Revolution, the majority of events he had predicted, came to be realized: the Revolution drowned first in the Jacobine terror and then in dictatorship. In Burke's lifetime he may have seen the correctness of his thinking, while most of the former supporters of the revolution were disappointed. England became the world's leading power in the 19th century, while France was undergoing a series of shocks, and the British prevailed – if we think of sheer international politics and the politics of power – by the end of the century.

19 Hans-Georg Gadamer. *Truth and Method*, Bloomsbury Academic; Reprint edition, 2013. p. 159.

However, the too optimistic opinions of these radical and liberal authors could have been shaped, not (just) by their lack of deeper approach, but also by the mere naïveté, if we bare in mind that their works were published before 1792, the period of "Great Terror."[20] The darkening of their worldview begins with the reign of the Jacobins. Earlier that year, many revolutionaries, such as Novalis or Friedrich Schlegel in Germany, Blake or Wordsworth in England, became more and more skeptical about the events from this year on, and very few maintained their original position. Mary Wollstonecraft's views were also altered by the biting of revolutionary terror. By the second half of the 1790s, she had already considered that in France the aristocracy was replaced by plutocracy, and in her later work (The French Revolution), almost "Burkean" fears of political chaos and mob rule emerged.

While one group talked about the tragic barbarization of what was originally a good cause, or the "unintended consequences," the other group fundamentally re-evaluated its views on the revolution.

James Mackintosh met Burke personally in 1796 to excuse himself. As we can read in the introduction of his republished works by *Liberty Fund*:

As a result of the violent turn of events in France after the September massacres of 1792, and the execution of Louis XVI and the outbreak of war between France and England in the following year, Mackintosh was forced to stage a retreat on all fronts. Although he continued to regard the war conducted against France by a coalition of European powers as both unjust and inexpedient, a war that for Burke had taken on the character of a holy crusade against revolutionary principles, Mackintosh

20 Although, an observer who is attentive enough could always doubt and question the value and reality of "social progression" as a mere wishful thinking and non-existent experience.

became increasingly anxious to distance himself from his earlier defence of the Revolution.[21]

He wrote to Burke saying:

> *From the earliest moments of reflexion your writings were my chief study and delight […] The enthusiasm with which I then embraced them is now ripened into solid Conviction by the experience and meditation of more mature age. For a time indeed seduced by the love of what I thought liberty I ventured to oppose your Opinions without ever ceasing to venerate your character […] I cannot say … that I can even now assent to all your opinions on the present politics of Europe. But I can with truth affirm that I subscribe to your general Principles; that I consider them as the only solid foundation both of political Science and of political prudence.*[22]

Burke invited Mackintosh to spend Christmas with him at his home. He spoke of Burke as "… Minutely and accurately informed to a wonderful exactness, with respect to every fact relative to the French Revolution." James Mackintosh called the French Revolution in 1799 a "shameful thing" and he wrote that he really hated and despised it. Mackintosh wrote to George Moore on 6 January 1800, that he abhorred, abjured, and renounced for ever the French Revolution, that "conspiracy against God and man."[23]

When Mackintosh visited Paris in 1802 during the Peace of Amiens, he responded to compliments from French admirers of his defence of their revolution by saying: "*Messieurs, vous m'avez si bien refuté*."[24]

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21 Donald Winch (ed.) *Sir James Mackintosh, Vindiciae Gallicae and Other Writings on the French Revolution*. Liberty Fund, Indianapolis, Liberty Fund, 2006. p. 43.

22 R. B. McDowell and John A. Woods (eds.), *The Correspondence of Edmund Burke.* Volume IX: Part One May 1796-July 1797. Part Two: Additional and Undated Letters. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1970, p. 193.

23 Jane Rendall: *The Political Ideas and Activities of Sir James Mackintosh,* (1765-1832) University of London, 1972, p. 104

24 Patrick O'Leary. *Sir James Mackintosh: The Whig Cicero*. Aberdeen, Aberdeen University Press, 1989, p. 23.

Undoubtedly, one of the most important issues of the French Revolution was democracy, and since democracy is the dominant paradigm of political theory today, for the superficial spectator this may be the point where Burke's critics seem to have been right.

But critics of democracy have been calling attention to its dangers since Burke. The fact of democracy seems inevitable in that the traditional, aristocratic elites have declined, and the age of aristocracy, which largely defined human history before the French Revolution, inevitably gives way to the rule of the masses (but not to the "people" or "government of the people.")

Burke could see more clearly than the radicals, because he understood the "revolutionary spectacle," which he criticized in the *Reflections*, was intimately tied to the concept of power base and concept of democracy: popular sovereignty. He understood that there was something fearful and materialistic in the emerging power of the masses, and he understood the monumental dangers which could be based on a rising democracy. He was able to conceive that, because, as Plato and Aristotle have already argued in the past, there is no such thing as "self-government" and the people never rule. The popularization of the term "democracy" – a form of government which was condemned by them – was an open invitation to demagogues and tyrants. This is why Burke considered natural aristocracy a prerequisite for the constitution of the social body, because "a great mass of people" can only be formed in a shape by authority and outstanding persons, whom people look up to as their natural leaders. As Burke writes in his *Appeal*:

> *For this reason no legislator, at any period of the world, has willingly placed the feat of active power in the hands of the multitude: Because there it admits of no control, no regulation, no steady direction whatsoever. The people are the natural control on authority; but to exercise and to control together is contradictory and impossible.*

As the exorbitant exercise of power cannot, under popular sway, be effectually restrained, the other great object of political arrangement, the means of abating an effective desire of it, is in such a state still worse provided for. The democratic commonwealth is the foodful nurse of ambition.[25]

Regarding monarchy, in connection with the British system of rule, Burke wrote:

We are members in a great and ancient monarchy; and we must preserve religiously the true legal rights of the sovereign, which form the key-stone that binds together the noble and well-constructed arch of our empire and our constitution.[26]

In other words, according to him, it is possible that in some individuals the true excellence could be recognized and this recognition does not diminish the excellence and autonomy of those who recognized it, but rather multiplies by "proud submission," "dignified obedience" and "generous loyalty."[27] In his defence of monarchy, we can clearly see the notion and idea of the above mentioned "Great Chain." Burke sees the source and legitimacy in the sovereign monarch, not merely as a human personality, but as a spiritual dignity represented by and embodied in that personality. The principle of monarchy is in contradiction with the notion of "popular sovereignty" – as he can see in the events of the French Revolution. The people are not "free" and not "wise," therefore they are not to be identified as a sovereign.

In the subsequent centuries following the French Revolution, we can see that various forms of this utopian egalitarianism occurred. There were two main tendencies – the totalitarian and the democratic form – but at the same time, all democracy is inherently totali-

25 Appeal p. 120

26 Appeal p. 36.

27 Quoted from Burke by Isaak Kramnick. Eighteenth-Century Science and Radical Social Theory: The Case of Joseph Priestley's Scientific liberalism. In. *The Scientific Enterprise. Boston Studies in the philosophy of science*. Vol 146. Springer Science + Business Media Dordrecht, 1992, p. 17.

tarian, and all totalitarianism is democratic by nature. According to Kuehnelt-Leddihn, one of the important critics in the 20th century, the French Revolution takes democracy in its literal meaning: this means the *kratos* (power) of the *demos*, which means primarily that the origin of power is from the people and the people can govern themselves through this power.[28] This concept assumes that all the actors of the political community are equal, there are no qualitative differences between them, and because of that, the decision of the majority is the sole criterion for political decision-making. According to him, the problem with that mechanism is the same as with modern political ideologies in general: this method is blind to the *real* qualitative differences in the world and between people, such as intelligence, discretion, knowledge and competence, and because of this blindness, it sacrifices quality on the altar of quantity. This mechanism is, according to Kuehnelt-Leddihn, inherently totalitarian, because in a full democracy, there is no limitation on the power of the majority (*in abstracto*). The majority is the absolute sovereign, and it can do everything because it is the source of all law. Democracy is a utopia as it is based on the assumption that the majority is wise. Nevertheless, as experience suggests, the majority is not wise but can easily be manipulated.

According to him, in the seemingly opposing currents of modern political movements, we can only see various *versions* of egalitarian utopianism, so there is no *essential* difference between the ultimate goals of these political currents. All wanted to *homogenize* society, all wanted to create a *uniform*, monotonous world of ants, in which there are no more individuals, but merely screws in the socio-political mechanism. The final conclusion reveals that freedom might exist only in inequality and there are as many just inequalities as unjust equalities. This has also been emphasized in the 19th and 20th century authors such as Gustav Le Bon, René Guénon, Julius

28 Erik von Kuehnelt-Leddihn. *Leftism: From de Sade and Marx to Hitler and Marcuse*. Arlington House Publishers. New York. 1974. p. 27.p

Evola, Ortega y Gasset or Santayana. The paradigm of the French Revolution seems to be continuing, but politics based on the "popular sovereignty" of the masses can still be the breeding ground for manipulation and tyranny. In the first quarter of the 21th century we can clearly see: from the postulate of equality, we can only answer the question of "what is right" if we identify the bigger part with the "truthful" part.

It has become clear and evident that the paradigm of "progress," in which British radicals believed, was increasingly questioned by history. The environmental crisis, social and political crises, overpopulation, migration, nuclear pollution, and terrorism are really just the surface of today's problem.

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EDMUND BURKE AND THE ANCIEN RÉGIME

Carl Johan Ljungberg

Politics is not only a struggle for power. It is also a superb arena for what psychologists call *projections*, which means those highly emotional judgements fired against antagonists. Projections are fueled by all kinds of misunderstandings, prejudices and hatred. In today's politics and social media, such reactions still play a large role.

If we turn to history, few prominent politicians have probably been so misunderstood and misinterpreted as Edmund Burke.

The Anglo-Irish 18-century politician and philosopher is often referred to as "the father of conservatism." As a rough epithet it is correct. But Burke was more complex than that. Trained as a lawyer and acting as a politician, he was also a literary man who commanded vast areas of learning. People often take the term "conservative" to mean what they happen to like – or dislike. No less than "liberty," "conservatism" can be interpreted in different ways – often deeply at odds with each other. In Burke's case, his temperament and verbosity, his use of expressive allusions and his ambition to approach his subjects of thought from several angles, but also his sense of the complexity and elusiveness of earthly matters, makes it easy to misunderstand his everyday views as well as his deeper philosophy.

The strongly historical character of Burke's thought, for instance, has made some think that the past for Burke was a kind of given. It was a fixed entity which provided him with an infallible guide to action. A similar assertion is that he loved the past in an almost aesthetic fashion, just as another "object" to revere. Undoubtedly, Burke understood that every historical situation is unique, so that no lesson of the past can simply be copied into the present. Another issue concerns his temperament, which is not thought to be that of a cautious conservative. Many of Burke's contemporaries became tantalized, but also puzzled by his speeches. He often became upset when he spoke in parliament, and even "positively violent" as Irving Babbitt contends. Could he then be a friend of preservation or careful renewal? One way of answering the question is that Burke, who realized how frail man and human society is, saw so clearly the threat against inherited customs that he became highly upset when they were called in question.

Another issue is whether Burke had a "prophetic" talent, or at least was able to forecast in an imaginative way the general direction of current events. Although familiar with contemporary issues, Burke undeniably left room for "varieties of untried being," in his own words. According to the British poet-philosopher Coleridge, "[Burke] was a *scientific* statesman and therefore a *seer*."[1] "A first-rate legal mind" is another description. For sure, the depth of Burke's learning and wisdom, his receptivity and analytical gift, coupled with unusual visionary powers, made those he met feel that he was an outstanding person.

So, how did Burke look upon the European past and its common heritage? In this context, what were his views of the "ancient régime," which the French revolution in his view had sought to exterminate? Let us go somewhat deeper into the question.

Burke's views on the "ancient régime" appear with great em-

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1 By "scientific," Coleridge may have meant that Burke held wider or more penetrative views than expected from a politician.

phasis in his famous book *Reflections on the revolution in France* published in 1790. We also get indirect hints of this by his many strictures against the revolution in other sources.

In fact, Burke's first reactions to the "recent events" in Paris were rather cautious. He took the role of an observer, regretting his lack of knowledge of the situation. He says he distrusted his judgement, speaking in general terms, like: "I should certainly wish to see France circumscribed within moderate bounds."[2]

The events that roused Burke and brought him to a more decisive stand did not occur in France, but in Britain. We learn from what he writes before *Reflections,* that he observes influences and effects in London of the political events and obstructive mood in Paris. In a letter Burke writes: "Extraordinary things have happened in France… in order to draw us into a connection and concurrence with that nation upon the principles of its proceedings, and to lead us to an imitation of them."[3] By such words Burke not only made clear that he found the events in France "highly dangerous," but also saw their power to stir an uprising in Britain. The revolution would not respect borders or national sovereignty. We also understand that Burke saw early the mental and imaginative power of the ideas behind the French events.

Among those most receptive to the French message were the so-called British Dissenters, theologically and politically in opposition to the Church of England. Among the Dissenters, a certain reverend Dr. Price stood in the first line. A fiery and uncompromising man who hated Catholicism, he became a natural rebel against the French nation, so heavily influenced by the creed of Rome. But the equally fiery politician Charles James Fox, affiliated with the New Whigs, met with Burke a similar dislike.

2 Conor Cruise O'Brien, "Indtroduction," in: Edmund Burke. *Reflections on the Revolution in France*. Ed. with an introduction by Conor Cruise O'Brien. Harmondsworth, England, 1969, p. 16.

3 Ibidem, p. 26.

We can hardly understand Burke's stance on the French events without considering his early and deep worry over what Jacobine feelings and modes of action might trigger. He worried for Britain, knowing that dissatisfaction was growing among certain parts of its population. But at least as present in his mind was the Irish question. As his modern compatriot Conor Cruise O'Brien reminds us, Burke always had a deep concern for Ireland which had been so mistreated by the British. In his last years, he even felt that an Irish revolution was imminent. Since his childhood he had observed how widespread the hatred against Britain was among the Irish. And his apprehension was right, for in 1798, the year after Burke's death, a rebellion started. The ambition of the United Irishmen was to rally all dissenters around far-reaching demands for change in the British policy towards Ireland.

Burke was no given protector of the Irish. He was a defender of private property, who served property-owning Whig notables. That the unusual fervor of Burke's criticism of the French Jacobins would have been motivated by his worry for his property-owning friends is unlikely. His motives were deeper. Burke feared the chaos which a violent mass conflict would trigger. Therefor he wanted to promote as much as possible prudent action and conciliation.

Bearing this in mind, how does Burke treat the "ancient régime" in his *Reflections*?

One should note, at first, that Burke does not systematically describe the "old régime." He was known as an empiricist and a man of practical views. Well-known was his dislike of abstractions and false metaphysics. Maybe he abstained from describing the "ancient régime" because he knew his knowledge of them to be limited? In a sense it was not his intention to describe or praise prerevolutionary France. Whatever the reason, he chose to begin his *Reflections* by summarizing the principles of ordered liberty, claiming them to be his measure for examining the events in France. Burke talks of the need for good government and public force, he welcomes a disci-

plined army, a well-ordered system of tax-collection, a good morality and a moderate religion, he presupposes solid laws regulating property, peace and order, as well as well-established civil and social manners.

With those demands as his measuring-rod, Burke claims that he can reliably examine the present state of French affairs. Again, this does not include any deeper analysis of the "ancient régime."

He refers in passing to a handful of French documents, among others a protocol from a Parisian intellectual club, and two letters from a duke de La Rochefoucault and the bishop of Provence. Studying them, Burke finds the tenor of their argument dubious. They worry him because of their lack of realism, and if realized he thinks they would trigger confusion and disorder resulting from their authors' vanity and arbitrariness. Although Burke grants that the French must decide upon their own affairs, he also concludes that the authors of the mentioned documents want the British to apply the same principles in their country. Reading these opinionated texts and watching their effects on British radicals, Burke feels that he must make his voice heard in order to warn his countrymen.

Early in his *Reflections*, Burke declares that the events in Paris have more than national significance: "It looks to me as if I were in a great crisis, not of the affairs of France alone, but of all Europe, perhaps of more than Europe. All circumstances taken together, the French revolution is the most astonishing that has hitherto happened in the world."[4]

If Burke thinks the revolution will have a wide impact in the world, the "ancient régime" of France in a sense loses significance. From its beginning, the revolution declares itself to be a universal, not a national, phenomenon.

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4 Edmund Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France*. Ed. with an introduction by Conor Cruise O'Brien. Harmondsworth, England, 1969, p. 92.

As a prelude to his criticism of revolutionary France, Burke dwells at length upon the British Glorious revolution of 1688 when the catholic king James II was overthrown. Whereas the French revolution was led by "warm and inexperienced enthusiasts," he notes, the British one was a "wise, sober and considerate declaration." By that act the British did not wish to overthrow their political or social order, they wanted to restore the balance between king, lords and commons. A good constitution, Burke emphasizes, must be built on "a strict order of inheritance," the monarchs must succeed one another on the throne according to a firm hereditary principle. Such a principle may be broken only in exceptional circumstances.

Burke rebukes the French precisely for not taking advantage of their own heritage. They ought to be proud of this "generous and gallant nation," which was "actuated by a principle of public spirit." Some argue falsely that the king is treated with undue deference. Burke denies this and clarifies: "it was your country you worshipped, in the person of your king." If the French would not be able or willing to imitate "the almost obliterated constitution of your ancestors," Burke suggests, they might at least have followed the example of the British who believe that freedom must be reconciled with law. In addition, the British have kept alive the "ancient principles and models of the old common law of Europe." Needless to say, in Britain that law has been adapted to British circumstances.

As mentioned, in *Reflections* we look almost in vain for descriptions or comparisons between revolutionary France and the "ancien régime." It is no surprise, for Burke does not study pre-revolutionary France in terms of French institutions or modes of administration. Its thrust is *ethical* and addressed to timeless principles. He associates France with a sense of classical measure and with time-tested principles. His France is not just a nation among others, it is a model and an embodiment of the best in Europe's ethical and legal heritage. Great values and virtues in his opinion were at risk in the emerging revolutionary practice, especially in the field of political

and legal prudence and property rules. Ultimately, Burke speaks of the need to preserve a decent civilized conduct. That Burke uses a language of despair as well as scathing irony is understandable if we consider how strong is the ongoing challenge. A lengthy part of *Reflections* is dedicated to the Jacobine mismanagement of public affairs after 1789. Probably Burke would not contend, therefore, that French finances had always been well handled before that ominous year.

How much Burke knew about the scheming and factionalism within the court and political circles of pre-revolutionary France is uncertain. He may also have had limited knowledge of the currents of fashionable ideas in French leading circles. In letters to friends, he spoke critically of a movement like mercantilism, for instance, so characteristic for absolutistic France. In economics a market liberal in the vein of Adam Smith, Burke would have had reasons to question heavy strains of anti-liberalism in the economic policies of 18th century France. And as for Burke's uneasiness with theological politics and political theology, he might have questioned that several chancellors and officials of the "ancien régime" had been Catholic clergymen. The conflicts between Catholics and Huguenots had also been sharper in France than the repression of Catholics in Britain in Burke's time. The great exception of course was Ireland. The idea of politics as respecting different denominations, so apparent in Enlightenment thought, only slowly worked its way through the minds of French public servants.

As a jurist, Burke paid strong attention to the rule of law in any country. We note that Burke recognized the "ancien régime" as a nation ruled by the law. This position is expressed in a stricture against the Jacobins and their policy of equality:

> *All other people have laid the foundations of civil freedom in more severe manners, and a system of a more austere and masculine morality. France, when she let loose the reins of legal authority, doubled the licence, of a ferocious dissoluteness in*

> *manners, and of an insolent irreligion in opinions and practices; and has extended through all ranks of life, as if she were communicating some privilege, or laying open some secluded benefit, all the unhappy corruptions that usually were the disease of wealth and power. This is one of the new principles of equality in France.*[5]

What Burke recognized in the operations of the National Assembly was not only a deviation from the principles and customs of the "ancien régime" *per se*, but a complete break with the older customs of Europe. He speaks of "a great departure from the ancient course."[6] A mighty and rising nation, as France had become in the late 18th century, had decisively changed course and was now heading for unmitigated disaster, that was Burke's conclusion.

By a striking observation which follows next, Burke shows that he was familiar with the working conditions of the new French legislative assembly. He admits that "a very great proportion of the members" were "practitioners in the law." This fact might have pleased him. But he adds that none of these representatives was a leading advocate or university professor. The members belonged largely to the "inferior, unlearned, mechanical, merely instrumental members of the profession."[7]

If we disregard the bitter and indignant tone of the passage, Burke shows he is aware of the immense loss of political competence that the revolutionary shift of power has brought. As a man of law, Burke knew that the preceding century had witnessed a steady professionalization of French courts and bureaus of public administration. As a friend of the rule of law, he feared that France now was paving for disorder and arbitrariness. What had so far been public offices manned with qualified men, would now become career ladders of political opportunists and social climbers. (Can these even "read and write?" Burke characteristically asks).

5 Ibidem, p. 125.
6 Ibidem, p. 129.
7 Ibidem, p. 129f.

Another reason for worry was the new rules of property. Can we expect, Burke asks, that the "inferior, unlearned" and untrustworthy professionals do care about the stability of property, that is, will they make the effort to minimize the arbitrary, vague and ambiguous ways of handling the law? As Burke notes: "Their objects would be enlarged with their elevation, but their disposition and habits, and modes of accomplishing their designs, must remain the same."[8] In fact, unlike in most other revolutions, one may note that the Jacobins did not take land from the rich and give it to the poor. As the Jacobins needed money, they auctioned landed estates to the highest bidders (Nöel Johnson).[9]

Again, Burke does not go into a deeper description of the system called "ancien régime." His attention is directed towards the ethical and psychological qualities of the men who fill the vital positions, their character if you wish, while he cares less about how these positions were constituted. As mentioned, the National Assembly was filled with men of inadequate knowledge and experience. Burke seems to take for granted that the men who made the decisions in the old political order, if not entirely representing what he calls "the natural landed interest of the country," at least were more civilized and adequately prepared than the raw and poorly educated upstarts in the National Assembly. Raw and incompetent men, but also men willing to exert powers way above their ability. They might even be prepared to make decisions against the common interest. Burke compares the National Assembly to the British house of commons, which he says is "circumscribed and shut in by the immovable barriers of laws, usages, positive rules of doctrine and practice, counterpoised by the house of lords, and every moment of its existence

8 Ibidem, p. 131.

9 Regarding the revolutionary redistribution of land, see: Garrett M. Petersen "The French Revolution, Property Rights, and the Coase Theorem with Noel Johnson." In *The Economic Detective*, July 28, 2017, Podcast, website, 52:09. https://economicsdetective.com/2017/07/french-revolution-property-rights-coase-theorem-noel-johnson/

at the discretion of the crown to continue, prorogue, or dissolve us."[10] Again, Burke speaks as a friend of proper checks on legislative power. Only the deeply unwise can entrust with power people with confined views: "*Fools rush in where angels fear to tread.*"

In Burke's view, the French revolutionaries are obviously lowering moral standards. They reward selfish behavior and narrow convictions. Instead of providing worthy examples to emulate, they act as criminals and thugs, persons who do little to measure up to their country's great personalities in the past. According to Burke, there were even in the past men who did not always act according to law and established convention. Yet they did so in order to restore the right order, or to acquire a position which they deserved. Such men, here exemplified a bit surprisingly by Oliver Cromwell and Cardinal Richelieu, despite their flaws were worthier of office than the present Jacobin leaders.

Burke has sometimes been accused of irrationality. It is a view based on prejudice or lack of knowledge. Rather than irrational, Burke's *Reflections* may be called a sermon of sorts, one in which the moral and virtuous part of human action is central. It is a sermon in a quite different key of course than that of the mentioned Dr. Price. The true nature of the events of 1789, Burke holds, is a break with the old ethos of France, but thereby also with the ethos of Christian Europe. The core of Burke's thinking seems to be an idea of participation, in which self-restraint and imaginative foresight in the conduct of the nation's leaders is regarded as good for the commonweal of that nation. A corresponding lack of elevated conduct brutalizes the common national life.

If we suppose that Burke has in mind what classical Platonism recognizes as *methexis*, or participation of the particulars in the universal, that is, of the Many in the One, one may also understand why Burke did not offer an empirical presentation of the situation in France, or an elaborate view of the "ancien régime." What Burke

10 Ibidem, p. 133.

admires when, in a much quoted passage from his *Reflections*, he catches sight of the young crown princess Marie Antoinette in the park at Versailles, is not an "ideal," "perfect" or "magical" royal personality, but a person acting humbly to fill her position in a harmonious and virtuous whole. She is of the "ancient régime," not by sheer force, or mechanical nomination, or marriage, but in the sense that she embodies a "conscious dignity, a noble pride, a generous sense of glory and emulation," to use Burke's own words. Her acting does not rebel against "the natural order of things."[11] To participate in a higher ethical order, the reader feels, in Burke's eyes gives monarchy its ultimate legitimacy.

When, in another part of his book, Burke notes that he saw "the abyss yawn" at him, we should not take this to mean that he saw European society literally collapsing, in a sheer logistic or technical manner. It is the whole inner connection with, and participation of French citizens in their higher selves or in an eternal reality, that in Burke's eyes has been broken. Those therefore miss the point, who lament that Burke does not describe the concrete processes which the revolution triggers. That which France has abandoned is not necessarily the "ancien régime" – a phrase which at the time had not even come into use – but the mentioned "natural order of things" or the "edifice of society."[12]

Burke argues that the old ways are gone, and yet he does not endorse the new ethics of the Jacobins. One must ask: does he then leave the French people in a sort of void? Burke openly questioned the "rights of man" as heralded by the friends of the revolution. Instead, he claims a set of rights which he traces to a classical concept of order, a *ius naturalis* or Natural Law. These rights include justice, a right to the fruits of one's labor, a right to the means needed to earn one's living, but also a right to inherit one's parents and a right to care for one's offspring, as well as a right to education. In short,

11 Ibidem, p. 137.
12 Ibidem, p. 138.

such a right includes all that society can do in one's favor. It is an un-offensive kind of right, more like those conventions enacted after the Second World War, for instance by the UN, than are the revolutionary rights. It can be said that the commands of *ius naturalis* were not perfectly observed in the "ancien régime," but there were in that régime at least strong and rising movements towards their fulfillment.[13]

Another point concerns the question, whether revolutionary France broke completely with the "ancien régime," as Burke argued, or whether France – despite its declared strong will to break with its past – in fact continued its institutions and customs in other forms, as Tocqueville later argued. Alexis de Tocqueville was not only a Frenchman of noble family, he conducted impressive research in public archives where he read old protocols stemming from local political assemblies. The result of his work was published in Paris 1856 under the title *L'ancien régime et la révolution*. Tocqueville's conclusions are often paradoxical and at odds with received truths on the "ancien régime."

Tocqueville argued that the old French administration was strongly centralized. But it was more than that. He writes: "In the eighteenth century public administration was already … to a large extent centralized, most powerful and very active. " "It [the public administration] affected in a thousand ways not only the operation of public affairs but also the fate of families and the private life of each human being."[14] Thus, French centralization according to Tocqueville did not start with the Jacobins and their striving for equality and uniformity. In his view, it had older and less modern and less

13 For more on Burke and the natural law, see Peter J. Stanlis, *Edmund Burke and the Natural Law*. Lafayette, LA, Huntington House, 1986.

14 Alexis de Tocqueville, *Den gamla regimen och revolutionen*. Med förord av Stig Strömholm. Stockholm, Bokförlaget Atlantis, 2007, p. 399. See, also, english edition, Alexis de Tocqueville, *The Ancient Régime and the French Revolution*. Introd. by Hugh Brogan. Collins/Fontana, Fontana Classics of History and Thought, 1974.

ideological roots, as the king and his administration in various situations and for various reasons chose to transfer powers from local assemblies and the civil society to the state. In a rather summary fashion, Tocqueville compares central features in prerevolutionary France with other countries in Europe. He notes that, unintentionally, French kings did much to isolate their subjects and hinder their cooperation on smaller and larger issues. One ominous consequence was that the lack of civic training on the local level made the French people ill prepared for greater political tasks.

Unlike Burke, Tocqueville regards the revolution as impossible to halt. He regards the upheaval as part of the triumphal march of democracy in history. To argue for prudence, piety or necessity in a way then becomes pointless. Tocqueville rebukes Burke, expectedly, for not understanding that the revolution was committed to crush the old European law. Democracy as the will of the people was the fate of Europe. But democracy can take on better and more responsible forms, Tocqueville hoped, above all if it learns to protect freedom and keeps some crucial institutions from aristocratic society. A democracy which wants to survive should honor old virtues and not take social levelling too far. In this the two thinkers agreed with one another.

From his early career, Tocqueville emphasized that practical politics differ much from theoretical speculation. In this aspect, too, his opinion was shared by Burke. When Burke mourns the "age of chivalry," and when he regrets the rise of revolutionary "calculators" and "metaphysicians," that is, persons who governed the country by numbers and theorems, Tocqueville is similarly affected. He traces these figures back to a kind of technocracy which was already in place when the revolution broke out.

Although Tocqueville dedicated most of his studies to older institutions and life patterns, he seems to have regarded the critical moving power of the revolution in lifestyles and modes of thought prevalent in the old leading classes. In this respect we see an obvious

similarity with Burke. As Tocqueville emphasizes, France had long been among the foremost literary nations in Europe. Still, in old times its writers had been practically experienced. Many of them had held leading positions in public life and had often been regarded as model citizens. From the mid-eighteenth century, however, the writers and intellectuals began to think and write in a speculative and abstract fashion, a mode of writing which attracted followers and readers in the old elites and increasingly in the middle classes. Tocqueville notes that the king and his court, as well as the old nobility, in fact were fascinated by the new kind of literature. If nothing else, it became an antidote to the troubled and boring life during the last pre-revolutionary decades. It was striking, he adds, how few Frenchmen were able to clearly see what harm these pamphlets with their explosive messages would cause in the real political world.

It is easy to dismiss Burke's view of the French revolution, arguing that he idealized and misjudged French monarchy. The thorough and meticulous study of Tocqueville may seem more modern and methodically convincing, particularly to readers in the 21st century. The late Gunnar Heckscher, political scientist and former leader of the Swedish liberal-conservative party, argues that Burke was ignorant of French politics and "never understood its problems."[15] It is true that our knowledge of the "ancient régime" has increased after Burke's death. But given his personality and motivation, his objective was not to write a mere causal or "scientific" study. He never wanted just to describe how a new French society evolved from its forerunner, the "ancient régime." What he sought to do was to make his countrymen and other Europeans aware of the risk that revolutionary ideas might spread and disrupt the inherited order. That order, in turn, was not France before 1789, but a régime existing in various degrees in the different European nations, and promoting by traditional and incremental means the freedom as well as spiritual and material development of their populations.

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15 See his foreword in: Edmund Burke, *Reflektioner om franska revolutionen*. Stockholm, Contra Förlag & Co KB, 1982, p. 8.

That Tocqueville discovered much evidence as to the political and administrative procedures of the "ancient régime" is no matter of contest. Ladurie says in his huge study of the "ancient régime" that Tocqueville "exaggerates" the centralization.[16] One can add that Tocqueville may have put too much emphasis on the administrative side of the "ancient régime." Burke's stress on the mentality of the literary figures and their role in radicalizing their country in some ways has better withstood criticism. The fatal role of the *literati* is by no means denied by Tocqueville, but since he was more aloof in his attitude, he may not fully have grasped the nature of the danger. In our present propaganda and information society, with its volatile influence of public opinion, we can perhaps more easily see the relevance of Burke.

Again, we must remember that *Reflections* is not primarily a sociological study on a certain instance of historical upheaval, it is a study which may be called a philosophical digression or a "sermon," aiming to call men to action. We should consider it as such in order to understand its true genius and its enduring value.

16 Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie, *The ancien régime: A history of France, 1610–1774*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1998.

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GERMAN ROMANTICS AND THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

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The German Romantics were never fervent ideological supporters of the French Revolution or its goals and ideas. Contrary to some established interpretations, the initial approval of the Revolution by some Romantics was not ideologically motivated and had no connection with their political conceptions or ideas. Rather, it was an expression of their enthusiasm for a new and strange phenomenon combined with their repulsion towards the reality of the life in German absolutist bureaucratic and mechanical states. Yet, this initial enthusiasm did not last long. By 1800, all representatives of the Romantic Movement had turned away from the Revolution and become its critics, some even transforming into proponents of conservative ideas. However, this did not represent a break within romantic thought. Already in the early days of the Revolution, the Romantics had formulated all the important concepts of their criticism of it, which they later expanded upon. This criticism of the Revolution was in accordance with the Romantic understanding of the concepts of tradition, state, and religion, as well as with their general criticism of the Enlightenment and modernity.

WHAT IS ROMANTICISM?

If we want to speak about the relationship between the German Romantics and the French Revolution, the logical question to ask is – what really was German Romanticism? Although Romanticism occupies an important place in the intellectual history of Europe and especially Germany, there are still disputes among scholars concerning the definition of this movement. In fact, "there are about as many definitions of Romanticism as there are books on it"[1] and "the literature on romanticism is larger than romanticism itself."[2] Yet, Romanticism was certainly much more than simply an artistic movement. It was seen as a "worldview" or a "cultural movement,"[3] as "an outlook on the world and life as such."[4] A profound feeling of the mystery of existence is one of the dominant features in Romantic art and writing. This means, then, that Romantic elements can be found in any historical period and across all cultures. Hence, as an outlook on life, Romanticism is more than just a historical phase. Elements of Romanticism can be found in such diverse sources as ancient Indian texts, treatise of the Neo-Platonists, medieval Christianity, and works by Ranke, Nietzsche, Wagner, and Thomas Mann, as well as Ernst Jünger.[5] Traces of romantic ideas even found their way into the work of

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1 Reinhold Aris, *Political Thought in Germany 1789–1815*, Russell & Russell, New York, 1965, p. 209.

2 Isaiah Berlin, *The Roots of Romanticism*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1999, p. 1.

3 Othmar Spann, *Die Haupttheorien der Volkswirtschaftslehre,* Verlag Quelle & Meyer, Leipzig, 1930, S. 95.

4 Jakob Baxa, *Einführung in die romantische Staatswissenschaft*, Verlag von Gustav Fischer, Jena, 1931, S. 9.

5 See: Jakob Baxa, *Gesellschaft und Staat im Spiegel deutscher Romantik*, Verlag von Gustav Fischer, Jena, 1924, S 5–9; Rüdiger Safranski, *Romantik, eine deutsche Affäre*, Carl Hanser Verlag, München, 2007; Stanislav Vinaver, „Susreti sa nemačkim romantičarima“ u: Zoran Mišić (ur.) *Nemački Romantičari I*, Nolit, Beograd, 1959, str. 10.

rationalists like Max Weber.[6] On the other hand, as a single, relatively cohesive worldview and outlook on life, it found its best expression in the Romantic Movement. For this reason, if we want to avoid errors of imprecise systematization, it would be best to talk about Romanticism as a distinct historical and German movement.[7] This does not mean that there were no similar movements in other European countries, nor that Romanticism should be seen as exclusively German. However, the origins of Romanticism indeed lie in Germany, its most important representatives were Germans, and it was closely related to German Idealism, which is often seen as a genuine "philosophy of the Germans."[8] Furthermore, in Germany, Romanticism attained "an importance which far exceeded its importance in any other country."[9]

Not only do disputes exist concerning the definition of Romanticism, but also regarding its character and nature. "Since Rudolph Haym wrote the history of the Romantic school as a history of a literary revolution, scholars have tried to solve the puzzling problem of the character and meaning of this movement."[10] For a long time, German Romanticism was seen as a conservative movement, or, as one scholar wrote about the most important political thinker of Ro-

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6 Hans S. Reiss, *The Political Thought of the German Romantics 1793-1815*, Blackwell, Oxford, 1955, p. 41; Jeffry Herf, *Reactionary modernism. Technology, culture, and politics in Weimar and the Third Reich*, Cambridge University Press, 1998, p. 13.

7 The German character of Romanticism was championed by Georg Mehlis, who claimed that Romanticism in its essence was the product of the German spirit. Similar statements can be found in the works of Spann and his student Baxa. For Oskar Walzel, Romantics wanted to learn to feel German again and for Arthur Moeller van den Bruck, Romanticism was a will to Germanness. See: Georg Mehlis, *Die deutsche Romantik*, Rösl & Cie, München, 1922, S. 26; Oskar Walzel, *Deutsche Romantik*, B.G. Teubner, Leipzig, Berlin, 1923, S. 1.

8 Friedrich Romig, *Die Rechte der Nation*, Leopold Stocker Verlag, Graz, Stuttgart, 2002, S. 161.

9 Maurice Cranstom, *The Romantic Movement*, Blackwell, Oxford, 1994, p. 47.

10 Aris, *Political Thought in Germany 1789–1815*, p. 209.

manticism, Adam Müller, a "holy protest against the individualistic method of thought."[11] According to Nicolas Gomez Davila, German Romanticism was, together with Italian Humanism and French Classicism, one of the greatest reactionary movements, a protest against the seizure of culture through the "pursuit of happiness."[12] After the First World War, some German conservatives (Georg von Below, Othmar Span) invoked the rehabilitation of the romantic spirit as a prerequisite for a German national renewal. It is thus completely understandable that many conservatives, even non-Germans, were under the strong influence of German Romanticism.

For the same reasons, German Romanticism has been severely criticized by left-wing or liberal authors, and was even accused of being reactionary, as proto-fascist and totalitarian, and thus a central element in the German "special consciousness" and their "special way"[13] (Sonderweg).[14] According to Georg Lukács, Romanticism played an important role in the

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11 Friedrich Bülow, "Einleitung" in: Adam Müller, *Vom Geiste der Gemeinschaft*, Alfred Kröner Verlag, Leipzig, 1931, S. XVI.

12 Till Kinzel, *Nicolás Gómez Dávila, Parteigänger verlorener Sachen*, Edition Antaios, Schnellroda, 2003, S. 56.

13 For example, Goetz Briefs writes that Adam Müller developed "a totalitarian doctrine of government," but he also adds that "it would be wrong to confound it with modern totalitarianism..." Briefs also emphasised that "Nazism … had adopted certain Romanticist elements which had their foundation in the German south." Goetz A. Briefs, "The Economic Philosophy of Romanticism" in: Journal of the History of Ideas, Vol. 2, No. 3, University of Pennsylvania Press, 1941, pp. 284, 299. Also see: Arthur O. Lovejoy, "The Meaning of Romanticism for the Historian of Ideas" in: Patrick Riley (ed.) *Essays on Political Philosophy*, University of Rochester Press, New York, 1992, pp. 316-324.

14 The negative interpretation of the German *Sonderweg* puts forward the thesis that there is continuity in German thinking from the early modern period to Hitler's dictatorship. According to this thesis, there is a direct link from Luther (or at least Herder) to Hitler. See: Peter Viereck, *Metapolitics: From the Wagner and German Romantics to Hitler*, Routledge, London, 2017. For a critique of this thesis see: Panajotis Kondylis, "Der deutsche "Sonderweg" und die deutschen Perspektiven," in: Panajotis Kondylis, *Das Politische im 20. Jahrhundert. Von den Utopien zur Globalisierung*, Heidelberg 2001, S. 161-180.

genesis of irrationalism and the "hate of progress."[15] This means that Romanticism was not only an immoral, but also a dangerous worldview that had to be eliminated.[16] According to this interpretation, Romanticism was not only a typical product of the German mind and soul, but also the birth place of German nationalism and expansionism. Although one-sided, largely simplistic, and eventually refuted, this interpretation still finds it proponents in some left-liberal circles.

However, not all conservatives have been enthusiastic about Romanticism. Some of them have been rather skeptical about it and its legacy. According to Carl Schmitt, Romanticism was in essence "subjectified occasionalism,"[17] a mere aesthetization of politics without any political energy, political creed, or convictions of its own. "As long as the Revolution is present, political romanticism is revolutionary. With the termination of the Revolution, it becomes conservative, and in a markedly reactionary restoration it also knows how to extract the romantic aspect from such circumstances. After 1830, romanticism becomes revolutionary again…"[18] According to Schmitt, the Romantic subject "treats the world as an occasion and an opportunity for his Romantic productivity."[19] In short, for Schmitt, Romanticism was a part of European modernity. Similar

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15 Georg Lukács, *Skizze einer Geschichte der neuen deutschen Literatur*, Aufbau Verlag, Berlin (Ost), 1955, S. 55. Also see: Georg Lukács, *Die Zerstörung der Vernunft*, Luchterhand Verlag, Berlin-Spandau, 1962.

16 "Muller, Novalis, Fichte, Johann Josef Gorres, all play the same tune. The German people avidly listen to this martial music. It stirs their emotions. They are hypnotized by it frenzy and they follow it with brutal boots. The theme is recurrent through the ages of German development. They are familiar with it, and the leader of the day is not the inciting cause of their reactions. It is the tom-tom which calls them and to which they devote their lives finally on the battlefield." Luis Nizer, *What to do with Germany?*, 1944, p. 38.

17 Carl Schmitt, *Political Romanticism*, The MIT Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1986, p. 17.

18 Ibidem, 115.

19 Ibidem, 17.

criticism came from Charles Maurras, who saw Romanticism as connected to the Revolution and republicanism. For Maurras, Romanticism was synonymous with individualism, rebellion, disorder, and revolution. "Romanticism and revolution resemble nothing so much as two stems, which, though they look different, grow from the same root."[20] According to Maurras' interpretation, Romanticism had its roots in Rousseau and his individualism.[21]

ONE OR TWO ROMANTICISMS

These interpretations express such radical disagreements on the essence of the Romanticism that one has to wonder whether these scholars were talking about one and the same phenomenon: how could the same Romantic authors possibly be proponents of both individualism and collectivism (or at least "sociological method of thought"),[22] of pantheism and Catholicism, of apolitical artists and fervent nationalist demagogues? How could the same basic Romantic texts be interpreted as both conservative and liberal works? No worldview can incorporate within itself radical modernity and radical opposition to modernity at the same time. Does this then mean that Romanticism was not a coherent worldview?

One possible solution could be seen in a division within the Romantic camp, such as the distinction between early and late Romanticism, between the "theoretical" and "practical,"[23] between Jena and

20 Charles Maurras "Romanticism and Revolution" in: J. S. McClelland (ed.), *The French Right: From De Maistre to Maurras*, Harper & Row Publishers, New York and Evanston, 1970, p. 239.

21 See also: Andreas A. M. Kinneging, "Comment on Peter Simpson's Political Illiberalism" in: *The American Journal of Jurisprudence*, Vol. 62, Issue 1, June 2017, pp. 89–101.

22 Georg von Below, *Die Entstehung der Soziologie*, Verlag von Gustav Fischer, Jena, 1928, S. 2–10, 24, 26.

23 Benedetto Croce, *Geschichte Europas im neunzehnten Jahrhundert*, Europa Verlag, Zürich, 1935, S. 40.

Heidelberg[24] and Vienna... According to most of these interpretations, only early Romanticism was inspiring, fresh, rebellious, progressive, and modernistic, while late Romanticism was allegedly anti-enlightenment, religious, anti-rational, anti-modern, reactionary, and sterile. This would mean moreover that only the early period represents true Romanticism, with the later phase as something like an unworthy corrosion or abandonment of the original positions of the movement. After the Second World War, this distinction acquired a moral dimension, the early Romanticism perceived as modern, enlightened, progressive, revolutionary, and thus "good," while late Romanticism was seen as anti-modern, conservative, counter-revolutionary, and thus "bad." This late Romanticism was accused of "trivializing" and "falsifying" its own initial ideas.[25] During the 1960s, numerous authors attempted to develop this alternative image of early Romanticism, or "the other Romanticism"[26] by overemphasizing the division within the Romantic movement.[27]

Of course, no-one would dispute that different phases of development of the Romantic movement indeed existed. These phases have been established before,[28] but if the differences were so great and even unbridgeable, how can we still talk about Romanticism as

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24 See: Alfred Baeumler, "Euthaniasie des Rokoko. Entdeckung der Erde und des Muttertums," in: Gisela Dischner, Richard Faber (Hrsg.) *Romantische Utopie, Utopische Romantik*, Gerstenberg Verlag, Hildesheim, 1979, S. 37-52.

25 Wm. Arctander O'Brien, "Friedrich von Hardenberg (Pseudonym Novalis)," in: Paul Hamilton (ed.) *The Oxford Handbook of European Romanticism*, Oxford University Press, 2016, p. 206.

26 See: Helmut Schanze (Hrsg.) *Die andere Romantik. Eine Dokumentation*, Insel Verlag, Frankfurt am Main, 1967.

27 See: Karl Heinz Bohrer, *Die Kritik der Romantik, Der Verdacht der Philosophie gegen die literarische Moderne*, Suhrkamp, Frankfurt am Main, 1989; Ludwig Marcuse, "Reaktionäre und progressive Romantik" in: Helmut Prang (Hg.), *Befriffsbestimmung der Romantik, Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft*, Darmstadt, 1972, S. 377–385.

28 See: Paul Kluckhohn, *Persönlichkeit und Gemeinschaft, Studien zur Staatsauffassung der deutschen Romantik*, Max Niemeyer Verlag, Halle/Saale, 1925; Paul Kluckhohn, *Das Ideengut der deutschen Romantik*, Max Niemeyer Verlag, Tübingen, 1966.

a single phenomenon or a single movement? As we shall see later, the embryo of all later ideas was already present in the early stage.[29] From the very outset, Romanticism was a critique of modernity and a strong connection and continuity between the different phases can be established. Young and old Friedrich Schlegel is still the same man.

Even if we accept that there was a strong difference and even a gap between the early and the late phase, the question arises – what happened? What and when was the turning point and why were the original ideas of the movement abandoned by their proponents? Why did such an initially "progressive" movement end up on the other side? How could all Romantics have changed their mind? What could have provoked such a radical change?

One of the possible explanations offered by Ljubomir Tadić is that opportunism was the main characteristic of the social inconsistency of the German Romantics, which implies that they were only opportunists who betrayed their ideas for material reasons and went to work for Metternich in order to secure their existence.[30] This old-fashioned Marxist argument is rather weak and superficial, however, as there is a great deal of evidence showing that the Romantics were not unconditional supporters of Metternich, and that their relationship with the Austrian chancellor was marked not only by similarities, but also by differences and tensions.[31]

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29 See: Hans-Christof Kraus, "Die Jenaer Frühromantik und ihre Kritik der Moderne," *Zeitschrift für Religions- und Geistesgeschichte*, Heft 3, Brill, Leiden, 1995, S. 206–230.

30 Ljubomir Tadić, *Tradicija, legitimitet i revolucija*, Zavod za udžbenike, Službeni glasnik, Beograd, 2007, str. 95–96.

31 For example, the diplomatic careers of Friedrich Schlegel and Adam Müller were rather short and neither of them died as a rich man. There is also Gentz's letter to Müller where he quotes Metternich's remarks against the most important representatives of the late Romanticism. Friedrich Gentz, "Brief an Müller vom 20. 10. 1820." in: Günter Kronenbitter (Hrsg.) *Gesammelte Schriften*, Band XI, Olms-Weidmann, Hildesheim, Zürich, New York, 2002, S. 330.

A different answer is offered by Frederick Beiser, who claims that the early Romantics were "neither revolutionaries nor reactionaries," but rather "simply reformers, moderates in the classical tradition of Schiller, Humboldt, and Wieland."[32] In his opinion, the early Romantics approved of the principles and the goals of the Revolution, but disapproved of its practices. He claims that the task of the young Romantics was to educate and enlighten the people so as to prepare them for the "grand moral ideals of a republic."[33] As we shall see, this interpretation rests upon a rather one-sided reading of Schlegel and Novalis. Also, it is not entirely clear what Beiser meant by "reactionary" or "reformers." Certainly, Romantics were not advocates of absolutism or the *status quo*, but this still does not imply that they supported the goals of the Revolution.[34] Also, Beiser fails to explain why the Romantics eventually turned their backs on the ideas they had supposedly been advocating wholeheartedly.

THE FRENCH REVOLUTION AS THE TOUCHSTONE

In this context it is of utmost importance to re-examine the Romantic attitude towards the French Revolution, because at its

32 Frederick C. Beiser, E*nlightment, Revolution, and Romanticism: The Genesis of Modern German Political Thought, 1790-1800*, Harvard Univesity Press, Cambridge, 1992, p. 229.

33 Frederick C. Beiser, *The Early Political Writings of the German Romantics*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1996, p. xv. Similar interpretation is offered by Brinkmann. See: Richard Brinkmann, "Deutsche Frühromantik und französische Revolution," *Wirklichkeiten: Essays zur Literatur*, Max Niemeyer Verlag, Tübingen, 1982, S. 189–220.

34 At that time, "German Jacobins" and defenders of the "rigid holding on to the *status quo*" or even "prophets of the turning back to the long bygone state of affairs," were only a minority among the German authors on the margins of the political discourse. Central motives of the German political thought at that time were reform – against the holding on to the present – and continuity – against the revolutionary upheaval. Hans-Christof Kraus "Kontinuität und Reform. Zur Geschichte des politischen Denkens in Deutschland zwischen Spätaufklärung und Romantik" in: *Politisches Denken Jahrbuch*, Dunker & Humblot, Berlin, 2015, S. 184–185.

time the Revolution was a touchstone for every philosophy, and every philosopher had to make his stand. In other words, the dilemma of how modern or anti-modern the Romantic movement really was can be resolved based on their attitude towards the Revolution. Relatedly, we can also examine if there was some continuity between the phases and if the later counter-revolutionary ideas were already anticipated in the early stage.

Those authors who have claimed that the Romantics were supporters of the ideology of the Revolution to begin with, but later changed their opinion, fail to see the historical context. Not only the Romantics, but many of their contemporaries all across Europe also supported the Revolution at first, and many of them changed their opinion sooner or later. It was also the case with many conservatives, such as De Bonald and Coleridge, and Friedrich Gentz, August Wilhelm Rehberg, and Ernst Brandes among the Germans – at least in the period 1789–1790. Some Germans, like Christian Garve, were so puzzled by events unfolding in France that they changed their minds several times, finally turning their back on the Revolution. In this context, initial support does not stand for much.

On the other hand, the Romantics were primarily very young men (most of them were born between 1767 and 1775) at that time, some mere teenagers, who reacted emotionally to the Revolution, and who romanticized it without knowing much about it nor its goals. For example, Novalis and Friedrich Schlegel were only 17 years old when the Bastille was stormed. "To precocious youth, starting out on the great adventure of self-realisation, the spectacle of a whole nation engaged on the same task came like a draught of water to the thirsty throat."[35] Likewise, the young Romantics were still children of their own time, educated and socialized in the world of the Enlightenment. It is true that they, just as many of their fellow citizens, were dissatisfied with the social order of the absolutist German states and turned

35 G. P. Gooch, *Germany and the French Revolution*, Longmans, Green and co, New York, 1927, p. 230.

against that order and *status quo*. The first generation of Romantics excitedly awaited all the news from Paris and closely followed the experiment which was said to promise a new world. It is perfectly understandable that the Revolution played an important role in the lives of these young people, who realized they were living in an age of profound changes. However, this enthusiasm for the Revolution was not ideological but aesthetical and related to the Romantic inclination for everything authentic, unusual, or strange. For them, the Revolution was a gigantic drama and a large-scale experiment and they quickly understood the universal importance of this event.

As representative examples, three of the most important figures of German Romanticism, all turned their back on the Revolution after expressing initial approval.

LUDWIG TIECK

A typical example of the Romantic attitude towards the Revolution can be found in the letter of Ludwig Tieck to his friend Wilhelm Wackenroder from 1792: "Oh! To be in France! It must be a glorious experience to fight under Dumouriez, to send the slaves flying, and even to fall; for what is life without liberty? I salute the genius of Greece, which I see hovering over Gaul. France is now my thought day and night."[36] Tieck salutes the Revolution, and he calls the Germans then fighting against France barbarians, in doing so sympathizing with the enemies of his country. Tieck also fantasized about being in France and taking part in the glorious events over there, but he did not express anything regarding the goals or ideas of the revolution. At that time, he believed that rulers outside of Prussia were more freedom-loving,[37] which shows that Tieck knew little about the

36 Ludwig Tieck, "Tieck an Wackenroder (28. 12. 1792)" in: Claus Träger (Hrsg.) *Die Französische Revolution im Spiegel der Deutschen Literatur*, Verlag Philipp Reclam jun. Leipzig, 1975, S. 376.

37 Roger Paulin, *Ludwig Tieck. Eine literarische Biographie*, C. H. Beck, München, 1988, S. 36.

actual political situation in Europe. In Göttingen he called himself a democrat and declaimed freedom and equality. He still supported the Revolution after the September massacres, and0 in 1795 expressed his dislike for the French emigrants. In other words, Tieck's enthusiasm for the Revolution was detached from the reality of France.

Yet, this enthusiasm was short-lived, with Tieck soon turning away from the Revolution. In his novel *Franz Sternbalds Wanderungen* (1798), Tieck gave expression to his disinterest in politics. Years later he explained that this had all been merely a youthful mistake.[38] For the most part, Tieck was never political in nature and his interest in the Revolution was purely aesthetic.

NOVALIS

Novalis held similar enthusiasm towards the Revolution as a young man. In one of his letters to Schlegel from 1794, he wrote: "I only wish to heaven that my wedding night were a Bartholomew night for despotism and prisons; then I would really have a happy marriage to celebrate. My heart is heavy that the chains are not yet falling like the walls of Jericho."[39] Like Tieck, he did not mind the revolutionary terror and in his enthusiasm he wrote: "Things are now being realized which ten years ago were consigned to the philosophical madhouse."[40] Yet, his idea of the Revolution had more to do with the world of unbridled fantasies and endless possibilities than with actual political goals and principles. He was deeply conscious of the fact that he was living in an interesting time, when the old world of bureaucratic absolutism was collapsing and the new one was not yet born. Even later Novalis retained his interest in the Revolution, reading revolutionary journals such as *Moniteur*. Yet, "this feverish

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38 Baxa, *Einführung in die romantische Staatswissenschaft*, S. 262.

39 Novalis, (Friedrich von Hardenberg), "Hardenberg an Friedrich Schlegel (1. 8. 1794)" in: Helmut Schanze (Hrsg.) *Die andere Romantik. Eine Dokumentation*, Insel Verlag, Frankfurt am Main, 1967, S. 31.

40 Ibidem

mood melted away, and the conservative temperament of the poet asserted itself."[41] Soon, Novalis proved to be an anti-revolutionary writer.

He changed his views sometime around 1797. He was not a republican anymore, but a monarchist.[42] His attitude towards the Revolution had probably changed under the influence of Edmund Burke's *Reflections on the Revolution in France.* In *Pollen* (1798), Novalis mentioned Burke explicitly. "Many anti-revolutionary books have been written for the Revolution. But Burke has written a revolutionary book against the Revolution."[43] At that time, Novalis connected the Revolution with philistinism and saw it as a product of philistinism, meaning egoism, and utilitarianism. "The worst among them are revolutionary philistines, to which belongs the dregs of the progressive minds, the greedy ilk. Gross self-interest is the miserable result of a pathetic narrowness. For a wretch the present passing sensation is the most lively, the highest. He knows nothing higher than this. It is no wonder that the intellect, trained *par force* by external circumstances, is only the clever slave of such obtuse master, plotting and catering for only his whims."[44] In *Pollen*, Novalis described the Revolution as "a crisis of emerging puberty."[45]

In his fragments Novalis also drew interesting connections and associated monarchy with the Catholic Church and democracy with Protestantism.[46]

A year later, in his fragments *Faith and Love; or, the King and Queen*, Novalis expressed his monarchism. "The king is the pure life

41 Gooch, *Germany and the French Revolution*, p. 235.

42 Kluckhohn, *Persönlichkeit und Gemeinschaft*, S. 49–50.

43 Novalis, *Blüthenstaub* in: Jakob Minor (Hrsg.) *Novalis Schriften*, Zweiter Band, Verlagt bei Eugen Dieberichs, Jena, 1907, no. 104, S. 136. For English translation of the texts by Novalis and Friedrich Schlegel see: Frederick C. Beiser, *The Early Political Writings of the German Romantics*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1996.

44 Ibidem, no. 77. S. 130-131.

45 Ibidem, no. 105, S. 137.

46 Ibidem, no. 137, S. 143-144.

principle of the state, just like the sun in the planetary system."[47] Not only did he argue for a revival of traditional monarchism, but he inevitably referred to the French Revolution: "A collapsing throne is like a falling mountain that shatters the plain. It leaves behind a dead sea where there was once a fertile earth and happy dwellings."[48] When the natural order with its hierarchies falls down, the "happy dwellings" perish. The result of the revolutionary disorder is a "dead sea" of equalization. However, Novalis did not defend every hierarchy as such, nor every kind of inequality. "Make all mountains the same height and the sea will be grateful to you."[49] Yet, once again he readily warned against any kind of radicalization, revolutionary zeal, and intervention into the social body. "Nevertheless, we should be warned against stepping on sulphuric gravel; otherwise, there will be a volcano there and with it the germ of the new continent."[50]

Monarchism of Novalis was connected with his critique of democracy. Obviously, Novalis was not a democrat and he did not believe in the rule of the majority. For him, democracy represented the rule of mediocracy and it opened the way to partisan demagogues and eventually disorder and anarchy. He even prefers the despotism of the one to the democratic despotism and partisan struggle of the other: "It is obvious that the one cannot compose from dead matter any living body; and that from unjust, selfish and partisan nothing just, unselfish and liberal can be fashioned. Of course, that is an error of a partisan majority, and a long time will elapse before one becomes convinced of this simple truth. … The despotism of the single individual is superior to this despotism in that at least one saves time and effort when one has to deal with the government. The former plays with an open deck, while the latter one does not know who exactly is the government and in which way the

47 Novalis, *Glauben und Liebe oder der König und die Königin*, in: Jakob Minor (Hrsg.) *Novalis Schriften*, Zweiter Band, Verlagt bei Eugen Dieberichs, Jena, 1907, no. 11, S. 150.

48 Ibidem, no. 5, S. 148.

49 Ibidem, no. 6, S. 148

50 Ibidem

most advantageous policy is to be pursued."[51] In this fragment, Novalis challenges Rousseau's defense of democracy and with it the founding principle and justification of the French Revolution.

In *Faith and Love*, Novalis once again underlined the connection between the spirit of the revolution and philistinism. "Those who nowadays declaim against princes as such, who affirm salvation only in the new French manner, who recognize even a republic only under a representative form, and who dogmatically maintain that there is a republic only where there are primary and elective assemblies, directories and committees, municipalities and liberty trees – they are miserable philistines, empty in spirit and poor in heart, and mere pedants who attempt to conceal their shallowness and inner weakness behind the colorful banner of the latest pompous fashion and under the imposing mask of cosmopolitism."[52] In this fragment Novalis not only criticizes revolutionaries and demagogues as philistines, pedants, and slaves of letters, but he also expresses a typically romantic idea of the synthesis of the monarchy and republic. In other words, a real republic, which for him means a community of the people, is possible only within a true monarchy and under the fatherly figure of the king. Republic and king are indivisible, like body and soul, and a republic without a king is just an empty word without meaning, just as is a king without a republic.[53] As Friedrich Schlegel before him, Novalis used the word "republic" as synonymous with the ethos of the community[54] and togetherness, while the state was understood in the traditional way as a greater family. Thus, his idea of the republic had nothing to do with its modern, i.e., revolutionary, understanding of this concept. For him, republic was something like a great family where the king and queen should be seen as father and mother of the state. This patriarchal model had little in common with mechanistic absolutist monarchy or with the

51 Ibidem, no. 54, S. 168-169.
52 Ibidem, no. 17, S. 152-153.
53 Ibidem, no. 16, S. 152.
54 Kluckhohn, *Das Ideengut der deutschen Romantik*, S. 87, 93.

individualistic approach of the revolutionaries, or with their ideas of freedom and equality. Novalis stood firm on the grounds of the traditional understanding of the state. Furthermore, Novalis clearly argued that the French attempt to establish a spirit of community without any common tradition, but with only the help of "liberty trees" and invented institutions such as directories and committees was disastrous. In other words, community could never be invented or created anew, as it was the intended by the French revolutionaries. In this way, Novalis again showed his debt to Burke and his critique of the constructivist rationalism of the Revolutionaries.

Same as in *Pollen*, Novalis once again described the Revolution as puberty, with young people standing on the side of democracy, while the more stablished father of the household stands on the side of the monarchy: "Perhaps in certain years we all love revolutions, free competition, elections and similar democratic phenomena. But for most those years soon pass, and we feel ourselves drawn by a more peaceful world where a central sun leads the dance, and where one prefers to be a planet rather than to fight a destructive battle for a first dance."[55] Revolution was thus for Novalis something like the rebellion of youth. It can be an inevitable and even understandable phenomenon, but still negative and unproductive. "Just as it is perhaps necessary that at certain intervals everything be brought into flux to create new necessary mixture and new purer crystallisation, so it is also indispensable to alleviate a crisis and to prevent total dissolution, so that a branch, a seed, remains from which a new plant can grow and form beautiful branch."[56] Novalis wanted to save the essence of this order and prevent its total destruction. He wanted to avert the "softening of the bones." Obviously, Novalis would have not wanted the Revolution to enter into Prussia.

In his well-known essay, *Christianity or Europe* (1799) Novalis articulated his assessment of then recent history and his critique

55 Novalis, Glauben und Liebe, no. 55, S. 169.
56 Ibidem, no. 15, S. 152.

of modernity as a whole. Many researchers have argued that this essay is "one of the most important literary documents of the great counterrevolutionary and revivalist movement which set in after the French Revolution and which found expression in such political phenomena as the Holy Alliance."[57] Confronted with the world of revolutionary anarchy, Novalis turned back with longing to history and the idealized medieval, Christian tradition: "Those were beautiful, magnificent times, when Europe was a Christian land, when *one* Christianity dwelled on this civilized continent, and when *one* common interest joined the most distant provinces of this vast spiritual empire."[58] Novalis explored the roots of the forces behind the Revolution going back to the Reformation. In this essay he denounced Protestantism, the Enlightenment, Deism, and the Revolution alike, as attempts to interrupt organic development. He also condemned them as destroyers of the religious spirit and the sense of the Sacred, which, in his opinion, flourished during medieval times. Losing this sense of the Sacred or the religious sense meant the profanation and banalization of the life. Once again, he emphasized that this Revolution was the product of the spirit of philistinism, rationalism, utilitarianism, and, finally, egoism: "The result of the modern manner of thinking one called 'philosophy,' and regarded it as anything opposed to the old order, especially therefore as any whim contrary

57 Aris, *Political Thought in Germany 1789–1815*, p. 274. Similar interpretation is to be found by Wilhelm Dilthey, Friedrich Meinecke, Wilhelm Metzger and Paul Kluckhohn. See: Wilhelm Dilthey, *Das Erlebnis und die Dichtung*, Verlag B.G. Teubner Leipzig und Berlin 1922, S. 298; Friedrich Meinecke, *Weltbürgertum und Nationalstaat*, von R. Oldenbourg, Berlin München, 1928, S. 75; Wilhelm Metzger, *Gesellschaft, Recht und Staat in der Ethik des deutschen Idealismus*, Carl Winter Verlag, Heidelber, 1917, S. 251; Kluckhohn, *Das Ideengut der deutschen Romantik*, S. 95. There are also contrary interpretations, for example: Beiser, *Enlightment, Revolution, and Romanticism*, pp. 275– 277. Some of them went so far to refer to *Christianity or Europe* as a "joke." O'Brien, "Friedrich von Hardenberg (Pseudonym Novalis)," p. 215.

58 Novalis, *Die Christenheit oder Europa*, in: Jakob Minor (Hrsg.) *Novalis Schriften*, Zweiter Band, Verlagt bei Eugen Dieberichs, Jena, 1907, S. 22.

to religion. The original personal hatred against the Catholic faith gradually became a hatred of the Bible, of Christian belief, and finally of all religion. Furthermore, the hatred of religion extended very naturally and consistently to all objects of enthusiasm, disparaging fantasy and feeling, morality and the love of art, the future and past. This new philosophy placed man of necessity at the top of the series of natural beings, and made the infinite creative music of the cosmos into the uniform clattering of a gigantic mill – a mill in itself driven by and swimming in the stream of chance, without architect or miller, a genuine *Perpetuum mobile*, a self-grinding mill."[59] The Revolution was thus just the final stage of a process which had begun long ago, a natural outcome of the modern hatred of religion. In other words, post-revolutionary chaos and war were just logical consequences of this general condition and spiritual weakness. "Where there are no gods, phantoms rule."[60] Slogans of the Revolution such as equality, freedom, or sovereignty of the people were for Novalis these very phantoms and surrogates for true religion and the sovereignty of God.

Novalis dismissed the idea of the sovereignty of man and with it the purely secular solutions to political and social problems as superficial. Spiritual crisis demanded spiritual solutions. Harmony and order could not be established by revolutionary means and the revolutionary was to Novalis something like Sisyphus. "Does not the revolutionary seem like Sisyphus to him? Now he has reached the summit only for his mighty burden to roll down again. It will never stay on top unless an attraction toward heaven keeps it balanced there."[61] Thus, in order to arrest the process of decay, a visible Church had to be restored. Novalis explicitly stated that the earthly pillars were too weak and only a renewed church could provide a connection to the heavens. He also placed his hopes not in France, but in

59 Ibidem, S. 33.
60 Ibidem, S. 40.
61 Ibidem, S. 36.

Germany as a leader of spiritual renovation. According to Novalis, after the puberty of the Revolution would come a return to religion and the rejuvenation of the order as it had been during the middle ages.

In other fragments, Novalis showed similar tendencies. He defended nobility as "the moral faculty" in the State[62] and spoke out against the ideas of natural equality and freedom. "All men are by nature only relatively equal, which in fact is the old inequality, the stronger has also a stronger right. Likewise, men are not by nature free, but only more or less bound."[63] In this way, Novalis undermined the theory of natural rights and with it the main principles of the Revolution. He also negated the whole concept of the social contract. "The need of the state is the most pressing need of a person. To become and remain a person one has need of a state."[64] For him an individual became a person only within the organic community, i.e., within the state. Hence there could be no stateless society or Rousseauan state of nature. Once again, Novalis had identified the republic with the spirit of community. "This is of course better in republics, where the state is the chief concern of every person. The life and needs, the activity and viewpoints, of everyone are bound up with the life and needs, the activity and viewpoints, of a more powerful and wide society; a person feels his life connected to a more potent life, and so his fantasy and intellect are broadened with, and exercised by, greater objects."[65]

Starting in 1797 Novalis was clearly a critic of the Revolution, its principles, and modernity as a whole. This opposition is visible in all of his works. If as a young man he showed some enthusiasm

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62 Novalis, *Fragmente vermischten Inhalts (aus den Schlegel-Tieckischen Ausgaben)*, in: Jakob Minor (Hrsg.) *Novalis Schriften*, Zweiter Band, Verlagt bei Eugen Dieberichs, Jena, 1907, no. 290, S. 270.

63 Novalis, *Fragmente (Nachlass von Bülow)*, in: Jakob Minor (Hrsg.) *Novalis Schriften*, Dritter Band, Verlagt bei Eugen Dieberichs, Jena, 1907, no. 490, S. 108-109.

64 Novalis, *Fragmente vermischten Inhalts*, no. 295, S. 272.

65 Novalis, Fragmente (Nachlass von Bülow), no. 202, S. 40.

for the Revolution and the republic, he grew rather quickly to be a monarchist. As Rudolf Haym stated, all the main ideas of the later romantic theory of the state are to be found in his aphorisms.[66] In this way, Novalis is the father of romantic conservatism.

FRIEDRICH SCHLEGEL

Another example of the romantic anti-revolutionary and the conservative viewpoint is Friedrich Schlegel. Together with his brother August Wilhelm he was the most influential member of the Romantic movement not only in the early stage, but also in the late phase of Romanticism. Alongside Adam Müller he was the main figure of conservative Romanticism in Vienna and one of the leading voices in the age of the European Restoration.

However, young Schlegel was commonly characterized as a "Jacobin" who "hailed the revolution wholeheartedly and retained his enthusiasm for it longer than most of his fellow Romantics."[67] Yet, this interpretation is not entirely correct. Schlegel showed little interest in politics before he met Carolina Böhmer, through whom he came in touch with ideas of Georg Forster. His serious interest in politics did not begin until the summer of 1793[68] and it went on to become his main preoccupation. He was a disciple of Fichte, studied the works of Rousseau and Kant, and followed the unfolding events in France. At that time, Schlegel advocated for the idea of the republic, but not necessarily the Revolution.

In his famous review of Kant's *Perpetual Peace*, which was published under the name *Essay on the Concept of Republicanism occasioned by the Kantian tract "Perpetual Peace"* in 1796, and which was widely considered as an example of "other" (meaning "liberal")

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66 Rudolf Haym, *Die romantische Schule*, Weidmannsche Buchhandlung, Berlin, 1906, S. 344.

67 Aris, *Political Thought in Germany 1789–1815*, p. 281.

68 Harro Zimmermann, *Friedrich Schlegel oder die Sehnsucht nach Deutschland*, Ferdinand Schöningh, Paderborn, 2009. S. 67.

Romanticism,[69] Schlegel did not mention the Revolution nor the developments in France. There is no doubt that he was a democrat at that time, who believed that a republic was by necessity democratic. "Equality and freedom demand that the *general will* be the basis of all particular political activities (not only the laws, but also their application and execution). But just this is the character of *republicanism. … Republicanism is therefore necessarily democratic*."[70] Yet his democratism was inspired by ancient Greece and stood in the tradition of the ancient polis and *res publica* in the traditional sense, and not with the French Revolution.[71] Like Novalis, Schlegel understood the republic as synonymous with community. In this text Schlegel advocated direct democracy, which was again inspired by an ancient polis and democracy without division of power.

Schlegel also challenged Kant's veto on insurrection and even supported it as a means to establish a republic. "Insurrection is not politically impossible or absolutely illegitimate … Hence that insurrection is *legitimate* whose motive is the destruction of the constitution, whose government is a merely provisional organ, and whose goal is the organization of republicanism."[72] Although this may sound like a vindication of the French Revolution, Schlegel is still on the ground of the traditional understanding of the polis. Insurrection against despotism was legitimate, because despotism, as he defined it, was the negation of the state.

Although a democrat, Schlegel was no blind doctrinaire. He condemned ochlocracy and described it as the "despotism of

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69 Schanze, *Die andere Romantik.*

70 Fridrich Schlegel, *Versuch über den Begriff des Republikanismus; veranlaßt durch Kantische Schrift zum ewigen Frieden*, in: Ernst Behler (Hrsg.) *Kritische Friedrich-Schlegel-Ausgabe*, Band 7, Ferdinad Schöningh Verlag, München, Paderbon, Wien, 1966, S. 15, 17.

71 Zimmermann, *Friedrich Schlegel*, S. 89; Hans-Christof Kraus, "Die Jenaer Frühromantik und ihre Kritik der Moderne," S. 281.

72 Schlegel, *Versuch über den Begriff des Republikanismus*, S. 24-25.

the majority" and, along with tyranny, as the "greatest physical evil."[73] Schlegel even equalized Sans-culottism with the Neros of the world.

At the same time, Schlegel's essay contained a number of interesting and unexpected moments, such as praise for the British constitution: "With regard to the *community of morals*, the political culture of the modern state is in a state of infancy compared to the ancient; and no state has reached a greater degree of freedom and equality than the British."[74] It is interesting that Schlegel explicitly mentioned England and not revolutionary France. At that time, Britain was in war with France and no "Jacobin" would praise the British constitution. One has to keep in mind Burke's contrasting of the British order and the organic, gradual development of its institutions with the French Revolution. All German friends of the Revolution thought at that time that England was a threat to the freedom of the European nations. On the other hand, German conservatives like Rehberg, Brandes, and later Adam Müller were advocates of the British constitution.

Schlegel's definition of the state was also plainly not Jacobin. "[T]he State comprises an uninterrupted *mass*, a coexistent and successive *continuum* of human beings, the *totality* of which stand in relation of physical influence to one another, e.g. all inhabitants in a country, all descendants of a family."[75] This emphasizing of successive continuity illustrates a clear break with an individualistic natural law theory of the Enlightenment and similarity with Burk's views. This break with individualism and the social contract theory of the Enlightenment is also evident in his words: "The proposition 'the *ego should be*' means in this specific case 'the *community of humanity*

73 Ibidem, S. 19.

74 Ibidem, S. 17. Some authors claim that the term British is most probably a printer's error and that it should be replaced with the term Attic. See: Beiser, *The Early Political Writings of the German Romantics*, pp. 103–104.

75 Schlegel, *Versuch über den Begriff des Republikanismus*, S. 15.

should be' or 'the *ego should be communicated.*'"[76] Here Schlegel laid the foundations of his organic understanding of the relationship between the individual and the state. Schlegel argues that the individual does not exist prior to the community of which he is a part – even less so without the community or against the community. Actually, an individual needs a community in order to develop his personality. Hence, there can be no stateless "state of nature." This critique of social contract theory later played an important role in the Romantic theory of the state as it was developed by Adam Müller.[77]

In short, the writer of the *Concept of Republicanism* was a republican and democrat in the tradition of the ancient model, not an ardent supporter of the French Revolution.

In his *Athenaeum* fragments (1798), Schlegel on several occasions mentions the Revolution explicitly and his skepticism towards the Revolution is clearly visible. "The French Revolution, Fichte's *Wissenschaftslehre*, and Goethe's *Meister* are the greatest tendencies of the age. Whoever is offended by this juxtaposition, whoever takes seriously only a revolution that is noisy and materialistic, has still not elevated themselves to the broader, higher perspective on the history of mankind,"[78] remarked Schlegel in his famous fragment. But what does this mean? Similar to Novalis and even to Burke, Schlegel viewed the Revolution as an important intellectual force and not merely a historical event, or a matter of France's internal affairs. Like Burke and Novalis, Schlegel indicated no interest in the noisy and materialistic side of the Revolution, but rather he wanted to go beyond these simple bounds and explore its deeper layers and its spiritual background. For him the Revolution was not just a local rebellion, but a European tendency. His stating that

76 Ibidem

77 Adam Müller, *Die Elemente der Staatskunst*, Haude & Spenersche Verlagsbuchhandlung, Berlin, 1939.

78 Friedrich Schlegel, *Athenäumsfragmente*, in: Jakob Minor (Hrsg.) *Friedrich Schlegel 1794-1802, seine prosaischen Jugendschriften*, Band 2, Verlag von Carl Konegen, Wien, 1882, no. 216, S. 236.

the Revolution was the tendency of the age does not automatically imply that it held a positive value. His apparent sentiment was that even those who were against the Revolution should understand its true and universal meaning in order to fight against it. Moreover, Schlegel compared the Revolution with a worldwide earthquake or a flood, before continuing further: "One can regard the French Revolution as the greatest and most remarkable phenomenon in the history of states, as an almost universal earthquake, as an immeasurable flood in the political world, or as the model of revolutions, as *the* revolution. These are usual standpoints. But one can also regard it as the centre and summit of French national character, in which all its paradoxes are compressed together; or as the most horrible grotesque of the age where the most profound prejudices and their most powerful forebodings are mixed together in a terrible chaos and woven together bizarrely as possible into a gigantic tragicomedy of humanity."[79] Schlegel was conscious of the possible critiques of the Revolution and was himself far from any kind of enthusiast.

In his *Athenaeum* fragments, Schlegel broke with his previous democratism and egalitarianism.[80] His republic was not necessarily democratic anymore, but a synthesis of democracy, aristocracy, and monarchy. "The perfect republic must be not only democratic but also aristocratic and monarchical."[81]

Schlegel's critic of the Revolution became even more apparent in *Ideas* (1799), where he wrote: "There is no greater need of the moment than a spiritual counterweight against the Revolution, and against the despotism that is exercises over minds by the concentration of the highest worldly interests. Where should we seek and find this counterweight? The answer is not difficult. Indisputably, within

79 Ibidem, no, 424, S. 281.
80 Ibidem, no. 81, S. 215; no. 212, S. 236.
81 Ibidem, no. 214, S. 236.

ourselves."[82] Schlegel saw a kind of despotism within the Revolution and was seeking a counterweight. Since the Revolution was a spiritual tendency of the age, its counterweight also had to be spiritual and to come from within. In other words, Schlegel's fight against the Revolution and its despotism was not material, but spiritual. It was a fight against materialism, rationalism, and egoism. This implied that the problem of the Revolution had to be solved not in the realm of politics, but in the realms of the spirit, science, and art.[83] Once again, the parallels with the thoughts of Novalis are noticeable. The revolution is understood as a product of the philistinism, materialism, utilitarianism, and egoism and the revolutionary as Sisyphus.

In *Ideas*, Schlegel also distanced himself not only from the Revolution, but from the world of politics as well. In his fragments he advised Novalis not to squander his faith and love on the political world, but to sacrifice his inner self to the world of science and art in a holy firestorm of eternal creation.[84] This sentiment was in clear accordance with his idea of spiritual and religious renovation.

Just like Novalis and his brother August Wilhelm, in his fragments from *Philosophical Apprenticeship* (1796–1806), Schlegel also celebrated the Middle Ages: "Never was there more freedom, equality and fraternity than in the Middle Ages – and these were their best in Germany. The great alliances, the trails of the peasants, the Swiss, the Hansa, the free cities, the law of the club. The best in the state then was the masculinity, the friendship."[85] Once again, the normative model was not revolutionary France, but the traditional order of the German Middle Ages, not centralization and universal rationalization, not organization from

82 Friedrich Schlegel, *Ideen*, in: Jakob Minor (Hrsg.) *Friedrich Schlegel 1794 1802, seine prosaischen Jugendschriften*, Band 2, Verlag von Carl Konegen, Wien, 1882, no. 41. S. 293.

83 Baxa, *Einführung in die romantische Staatswissenschaft*, S. 72.

84 Schlegel, *Ideen* no. 106. S. 300

85 Friedrich Schlegel, *Philosophische Lehrjahre 1796-1806*, Teil I, in: Ernst Behler (Hrsg.) *Kritische Friedrich-Schlegel-Ausgabe*, Band 18, Ferdinand Schöningh Verlag, München, Paderborn, Wien, 1963, no. 1255. S. 299.

the top, but a diversity of the local autonomous bodies and even the law of the club (Faustrecht). Schlegel praised the order that the Revolution sought to abolish and would have liked to see it replaced with a new enlightened, rationalistic model. This is in accordance with Schlegel's words about British constitution from *The Concept of Republicanism*, as Britain was at that time seen as a shining example of the organic development of the medieval order and its traditions.

In these fragments Schlegel also mentioned the critics of the Revolution. "The most vulgar opponents of the Revolution, who detest it as a diabolical chaos, are much better than those who get involved in principles."[86] He also called it "the tragic arabesque of the time,"[87] and explicitly praised Burke.

By the end of 1790s, Schlegel had become a staunch critic of the French Revolution. Also, he had turned away from his democratism and strongly emphasized aristocratic and conservative elements in his writings. In his later texts he developed and articulated conservative political theory. In 1808, together with his wife, Schlegel converted to Roman-Catholicism.

CONCLUSION

The story about Romantic enthusiasm for the Revolution in the early phase is largely exaggerated. At its most extreme, this enthusiasm was only aesthetic in nature, without any clear political program behind it. Also, already in the early stage, Romantics had challenged individualistic natural right theory and social contract theory, undermining the principles of the Revolution. They understood the state not as a rationally constructed machine, but as an organic community, a big family with the king as its father. Their concept of the republic was not revolutionary at its roots, but synonymous with the ethos of community. In this early phase, conservative, anti-egalitar-

86 Ibidem, no. 591. S. 77.
87 Ibidem, no. 380. S. 57.

ian, and generally anti-modern elements were already present, and they would be further developed and articulated in the later stages.

Romanticism as a movement came into existence as a protest against the Enlightenment, Individualism, one-sided Rationalism, utilitarianism, mechanical approach to life, and the growing secularization. It was an attempt to rebuild a new religious stance and to preserve the organic unity of the world. In other words, Romanticism was an anti-modern movement from the outset. "In its essence, Romanticism was a radical and fundamental critique of the core principle of modernity, of the thesis that the autonomy of the 'rational subject' makes the fundamental principle of human thought and praxis, that the thinking subject is 'autonomous,' (which means independent from all natural, religious or social determinedness) and that it is not only possible, but also legitimate to act according to principles of pure thinking in all spheres – most importantly in the sphere of politics – and to shape and 'construct' reality in accordance with these principles of the pure thinking."[88] Thus, Romanticism was bound to turn against the Revolution sooner or later and not just against its methods but against its goals. This implicit anti-revolutionary position was evident already in the early phase and when the Romantics came to know the Revolution and its goals, they turned against it. As proponents of "qualitative"or "aristocratic" individualism Romantics were bound to be anti-egalitarian thinkers. They saw Revolution as a sad, but logical outcome of the process which had started a long ago with the Reformation, Secularization, and eventually the Enlightenment. Hence, not only were Romantics against the Revolution, but they also offered "alternative visions for a Europe shaken by revolutionary developments and radical restruc-

88 Hans-Christof, Kraus, "Romantik, politische" in: Caspar von Schrenck-Notzing (Hrsg.) *Lexikon des Konservatismus*, Leopold Stocker Verlag, Graz, Stuttgart, 1996, S. 465– 466.

turing in politics, science, philosophy, economics and organized religion."[89] This vision was developed by the late Romantics analogous to the ideas which had already been postulated at the early stage with their rehabilitation of the middle ages. In this sense, there can be no strict line which could be invoked to separate early and late Romanticism one from another. Rather, one can only speak of the different phases within the same process, or of "the moving of the accent" (Kluckhohn). From its beginning, the Romanticism was an anti-modern and thus an anti-revolutionary movement.

89 Dennis F. Mahony, "Heidelberg, Dresden, Berlin, Vienna" in: Paul Hamilton (ed.) *The Oxford Handbook of European Romanticism*, Oxford University Press, 2016, p. 354.

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KLEMENS METTERNICH AND THE EUROPEAN RESTORATION

Carl Johan Ljungberg

As most of us know, great historical transformations trigger counterforces. These become particularly strong when changes aim at basic conditions or privileges of certain groups, or when a change is violent and supported by armed violence.

No surprise, then, that the French Revolution released countermeasures and gathered coalitions of states and interests which sought to roll back, by any available motives and methods, what had been achieved by the revolutionary forces. One should add that the time we are dealing with is called *restorative*, implying that it merely sought to bring back what had been lost.

It may not be that simple, however, but we will get back to that.

That a set of persons in the French case opposed the revolutionary left was not just a reaction that occurred after the Jacobins had completed the first phase of their programme. Already in the French National Assembly (1791-1792) moderate fractions had arisen, such as the Girondists. These men, who represented pragmatic merchant circles, for instance in Gironde and around a commercial and mar-

itime town like Bordeaux, wanted to fight the Jacobins. A working legal order and equal rights was on their agenda.

Among the wider opposition against 1789, we find the aristocratic and bourgeois so-called emigrés who fled their country only to collaborate with brothers in Austria and elsewhere. These exiled Frenchmen were seen by the Jacobins as a dangerous and perfidious group, despite the fact that their opposition remained weak and ineffective.

Before the international opposition against revolutionary France formed, it had had its forerunners. There was a difference, in that the later international opposition was more well thought-out and better organized, and if you like, more professional. It was also carried, to a growing degree, by statesmen and military planners rather than by isolated fugitives and adventurers. The question how the new France should be dealt with was thus brought to the government level and with the take-over of Napoleon in 1799 the question became acute. A slow but steady process was started, which engaged the monarchs and political advisors of the mightiest European countries.

Klemens Metternich belonged to a leading princely family in Germany. Since the Middle Ages, its family members had been entrusted with important official tasks and the family had won respect by loyally and competently serving German princes, not least the house of Habsburg.

This has sometimes been interpreted as though Klemens Metternich was a person embossed in and limited by the patterns and expectations of an old empire. But from persons who aspired to become trusted servants of their realm, the Habsburg dynasty expected something else – diligence, a keen judgement and integrity. Klemens Metternich possessed these traits in rich measure.

Besides, his education had started early. To its components belonged not only to learn how to act in a self-conscious and urbane manner, to command languages and customs as well as proving in every way

and situation one's cosmopolitan frame of mind. Further, anyone who aspired to a career in Austria at the time had to learn to know this huge kingdom and its people, and to take part in its daily administration or diplomacy. Metternich had studied in Strasbourg under the tutelage of the greatest and most advanced authorities in law and public administration. It is obvious that this gave him great lead even in his own social circles.

Obviously those who have portrayed Metternich as a mere rigid bureaucrat lacking longer views have been wrong. More recent historians have understood that his home was enlightened and both parents liberally minded in the sense that his time and class gave the concept.

One may well ask when Metternich and his close circuit began to realise his talents for political matters and diplomacy. In fact it became clear quite early, when Klemens was around 20 years of age and already served under his father, Franz Metternich, who held high offices in Austria.

It resembled an apprenticeship during which the young man was introduced by his father into the reality of contemporary politics and higher administration, but also was enabled to meet, observe, and build friendships with paramount European politicians and diplomats. The importance of his father's posts and commissions also enabled them to be in a number of places where significant events occurred, a fact that gave young Metternich experiences with which few of his age could compete.

Still, Metternich could have settled for a more ordinary career. His interests widened under pressure of truly cataclysmic events, however, and offered him a challenge he could not resist. Step by step, his vision of a reasonably peaceful and balanced Europe formed. The purpose of his vision was to solve the great conflict of the day, that between revolution and a reformistic social order. For this purpose Metternich wanted to apply Enlightenment ideas in a pragmatic

spirit, but he also wished to avoid hurting the political order which had emerged in response to wars and conflicts in previous centuries.

When the French revolution broke out, Metternich was only 16 years old. Already a critical and analytical mind, he foresaw the wide consequences which such an event would bring.

It is remarquable how well his early apprehensions would be fulfilled. For example, he thought that the revolution would be radicalized as its most extreme wing – the Jacobin faction – acquired more power. The same applies to the consequences of Napoleon's power grab which Metternich suspected would spread the revolution all over Europe.

Metternich received ever higher positions because his early achievements gained respect with the emperor. Metternich received diplomatic assignments and key commissions where he could represent Austria, but also was able to make observations of great value for his future career. (The Metternich archive is full of his numerous memorabilia and other comments). In Sachsen and even more in France he got acquainted with persons in leading circles. He diligently collected information and personal impressions of the political situation and of its leading actors.

In France Metternich became ambassador at a time when Napoleon was already launching his manipulative and expansive policies. At an early stage Metternich realized that the French regime would never be content with peaceful and persuasive measures to achieve its ends. A military confrontation with the other European powers seemed inevitable, sooner or later.

The wars against Napoleon were preceeded by a delicate and lengthy preparation on the part of those states which were most hit by, or concerned with, his long unstoppable rampage. In a skillfull and cunning fashion Metternich sought to win Prussia, Russia, Great Britain and his own Austria for a forceful campaign against Napoleon. Starting with diplomatc pressure, but also gradually gath-

ering military force, these countries became ready for the complex campaign and for its violent grand finale. Napoleon would make great efforts to split the forces set againt him, so Metternich had to play carefully and appeal to the self-interest as well as to the fear of Austria and her allied powers.

What, then, did Metternich really think of the actors that he had to bring into his plans?

In fact, he was far from uncritical towards them. Some of them and their leaders he even regarded as saboteurs whose ignorance, poor judgement, vanity and self-mindedness, although personal, amounted to key obstacles for his plans. To the European politicians whom Metternich found it easiest to work with, one must count the French foreign minister Count Talleyrand (who held this position in periods between 1797-1815) and his British colleague lord Castlereagh (1812-1822). To them one might add some of the other actors, such as the Prussian state chancellor Hardenberg, although he was hampered by loyalty to his country's policies.

What about Metternich's relation to the other German-speaking states? One might have expected a deep soul-matery or sympathy between these states and the Austrian chancellor. But in Metternich's opinion, the Prussian foreign politicians and King Wilhelm III were at best a mixed blessing. They appeared as expansionists, unwilling to become part of the plans for a carefully balanced European order that were Metternich's vision. Also, it was hard to get their wholehearted support for building a powerful coalition against Napoleon. In Czar Alexander, Metternich saw an indispensable yet a naïve idealist, but also a vain choleric whose primary wish was to seek glory and victories on the battlefield. Alexander never realized the need for carefully crafted diplomatic solutions. The Czar had another blatant weakness as he lacked the ability to pick the right moment for launching military operations.

At least as important for Metternich as his ability to build coalitions were his encounters with Napoleon and the observations which he was able to make then. Without the assessments that Metternich made on those occasions, his task of reforming the European order would have been even more difficult.

So, how did Metternich handle Napoleon at their private meetings?

Whether as an Austrian ambassador or in other missions, Metternich took an attitude of cool distance, while at the same time recognizing the analytical capability and strategic gaze of the French leader. Realizing that in him the older states had a formidable opponent whom Europe had all the reasons to fear, nevertheless Metternich saw through Napoleon and understood that his ability to mislead and undermine his opponents also sowed the seed to his own downfall. As Metternich's latest biographer Wolfram Siemann reminds us[1], in an essay written the year before Napoleon's death in 1821, the Austrian skilfully scrutinized his old antagonist in an unprejudiced and passion-free manner. What Metternich primarily recognized was Napoleon's ability to foresee future consequences of different measures, but also his obvious ability to pick the individuals from whose services he might benefit the most. Metternich in turn impressed him by his courage to tell the Frenchman his upright opinion.

Did Metternich then consider Napoleon an evil person? No, his opinion was rather that the emperor was a coldly rational man who acted without passions or vengeance. Napoleon gave himself a right to clear out of the way persons who might sabotage his plans, all while he spared his affection and empathy for his immediate family.

Napoleon was a field commander – one of the greatest ever. Obviously, Metternich was a public servant, not an officer. Yet he was quite familiar with military issues – in his early years he had

1 Wolfram Siemann, *Metternich: Strategist and Visionary*, Cambridge, MA, and London: Belknap 2019.

been present or in the vicinity when crucial battles were fought – and to some extent able to judge the strategies of a military man like Napoleon. Still, his main interest was the greater strategy and long-range political manipulations of the French commander.

Metternich also saw the intention when Napoleon created the Rhine Federation in order to get a buffer zone against attacks from "reactionary" states. Metternich conducted his own campaign against Napoleon, built on the assessments which he had started early and which he continually updated. To persuade like-minded states and leaders to get along with Austria became his goal. Just as splitting Napoleon's coalition in different ways – among other things through breaking into the Rhine Federation created by France and winning over its constituent states to Austria and her allies. Of course Metternich knew that the task was nearly insurmountable and he invested almost unimaginably his personal time and powers to solve it.

We now come to the question of political philosophy.

Was Metternich a solitary thinker or part of the greater conservative mainstream?

In traditional interpretations, he has long been held to be highly different from Edmund Burke, the "father" of Conservatism. As Metternich's latest biographer Wolfram Siemann seeks to show,[2] though, making a sharp distinction between the two is misleading, just like seeing the continental tradition per se as much differing from the Anglo-saxon "Old Whig" tradition to which Burke belonged. The fact is that Metternich took an evolutionary view of historic events. He had studied, as we noted above, with some of the most renowned German jurists of his day. He had attended a liberal school and his family was formed by enlightened ideals and a "liberal education." As a young man he came to spend some time in London where he was much pleased to experience Britain's pragmatic, common

2 Ibidem, xiv, and pp. 116-121.

sense kind of politics. Not least Metternich got to know the British Parliament, in which he particularly liked to attend the House of Lords. It was a forum whose combination of sharp polemics and over-arching consensus and dignified tone appealed to him. He also followed sessions in the House of Representatives and listened to its more prominent speakers. Metternich had the opportunity to visit House sessions when important issues were on the table, such as the war with France and the accusations against Hastings, the governor in India. In all these debates, Burke was prominent. We may suspect that Burke's criticism of King George III, for instance, although in a way anti-royal, appealed to Metternich because of his dislike of absolutism. He also heard Burke recommend war against France and probably got more than a hunch of Burke's deep dislike for the French revolution. We know that in 1790 Metternich had bought a copy of Burke's *Reflections on the Revolution in France*. He now immersed himself in Burke's ideas on the matter, a fact which is also reflected in Metternich's notes from the gallery. The evidence for his deep sympathy for Burke's position have become stronger as the archives have been investigated. Other traits in Burke such as his deep admiration for the ideal of chivalry, and his belief in a step-wise, evolutionary development of law, must have found a willing recipient in the imperial prince.

Because of his high social background, Metternich was able to meet with the British elites starting with the royal court, where he was received in audience by King George III. He also spoke to members of the cabinet and kept himself informed through the country's media, debating clubs and similar institutions.

Also in the mid 1800s, when Metternich had been pushed away from Austrian politics, he went into exile in London, where among others he got to know the young Disraeli, who would later become the country's Prime minister.

Through his effort to build a Europa on simple and clearly understood principles, Metternich not only became skeptical towards

radical remaking of society, but also towards purely restaurative solutions. He did not want old regimes to persist no matter how illegitimate or incompetent their ruling princes were.

Metternich was by no means hostile to modern solutions. Born into a partly feudal society – at the time integrated with the fading, but (until 1806) formally still existing Holy Roman Empire. In fact Metternich promoted, both as a political thinker and as a squire, an early form of industrial business. He stood among those who recommended a modernity which upheld the best of the older European traditions.

For this reason, Metternch was deeply skeptical towards the French emigrés with their ill-considered demands for politics unfit to cope with new challenges. With Burke he might have said that a state which is unable to promote necessary reforms is also unable to conserve its basic political principles. As fragile and imperfectly conceived Metternich also regarded the Holy Alliance, the initiative launched in 1815 by Alexander I to introduce a European thinking directly built on Christian teachings.

As mentioned, Prince Metternich had put an almost inhuman amount of work in forming the peace order which he had sought since he begun his public career. During the years which followed upon the Congress of Vienna he continued (up till 1821) to act as Austria's foreign minister, and thereafter as its prime minister, till 1848. He now saw himself as guardian of the European peace order. He took the right to intervene with remarks and demands whenever he thought that the other states acted against the spirit and letter of the treaty which regulated the dealings in Europe after Napoleon.

But new forces were asserting themselves. Gradually, a national power politics emerged which put new population strata and their interests above the balance conducive to the *communum bonum*. Had Metternich foreseen the force of this challenge? Maybe not. He

managed to fend of the first nationalistic onslaught in 1830, but not the second one which culminated in 1848, when he was forced to resign and flee his country.

One should remember that the new nationalism was a cultural movement more than a political one, even if it was getting support from Napoleon's fiery rhetoric with its promises of equalization and steady progress. To issue such promises was politically contagious. In many countries, not least in southern Europe, young people, not seldom students, appeared and asked their peers to contribute to the *spring of their nation*. While such a perspective began to tempt many, others saw it as equally dangerous and destabilizing.

Conventional historiography describes the negative reactions to the nationalistic movements as merely retrogressive. But in fact, the upsurge of youthful enthusiasm was not to be taken casually and far from benign. Inspired as it often was by left radical models, it rightly caused fear among people who considered themselves law-abiding and *gutbürgerlich*. Violence was practiced and even murders occurred. The reason was the explosive and divisive nature of the nationalist propaganda. In Metternich's eyes, the multinational empires had been able to do without such agitation and ought to continue along those lines.

Some extremists excelled in rhetoric, music and literature which incited young persons, not least students. This fact explains the so-called Carlsbad Decrees which were in force between 1819 and 1848 and which brought heavy censorship and surveillance to the German-speaking universities.

Metternich had expected a regular conflict-solving to take place on the basis of constitutional law and mutual agreements between the European nations after 1815, but his hope did not come true. Conflicts, minor wars and rebellions occurred despite the regulations enacted. Still, and that was a tribute to his peacekeeping efforts, no major wars broke out until 1914.

In Austria a number of bureaucratic reforms took place, even if they left major institutions pristine. Even if Metternich had long wanted such reforms to happen, he was critical towards the so-called neoabsolutism which also resulted.

Still, Metternich in his later years could think that he had witnessed a re-design of the empire that brought it from late feudalism to early capitalism. As a squire he was part of his country's modernization in that he ran a profitable business in winemaking as well as a successful manufacture. His reputation as a rigid, bureaucratic person lacking financial knowledge in retrospect must be looked upon as a sheer caricature. Metternich was far-sighted and receptive. He saw what consequences suggested solutions would have. He saw beyond the present power relations and was positive to changes, in case they did not pose fatal threats to the current order in Europe. His assessments and the advice he presented after having left active service bore traces of deep legal and historical knowledge.

Historians influenced by liberalism and by the idea of sovereign nation states as a universal solution tend to belittle Metternich. Persons born during the interwar years of the 20th century saw him, by contrast, as a far-sighted European, a peacemaker and an excellent international diplomat. (Helmut Rumpler largely interprets Metternich[3] in an understanding and sympathetic manner). Others have assigned to him clichés as an absolutist and oppressor, a self-decepting and anti-democratic person.

The influential but strangely ambivalent biography which was published in the 1920s by the Austrian historian Heinrich von Srbik[4] designates Metternich as a forerunner to Nazism with its Rousseauistic idea of a sacred "Volkstum" and further saw him as a mystic

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3 Helmut Rumpler, *Österreichische Geschichte, 1804–1914: Eine Chance für Mitteleuropa: Bürgerliche Emanzipation und Staatsverfall in der Habsburgennonarchie.* Vienna: Ueberreuter, 1997.

4 Heinrich von Srbik, *Metternich: Der Staatsmann und der Mensch.* 2 vols. Munich, 1925 (Vols. 1 and 2 republished Munich 1956.)

link between the folk soul and the nation. As we may conclude, Srbik is insinuating an inclination in the famous chancellor which has little to do with his real convictions. The lack of "heroism" which Srbik ascribes to Metternich in turn appears more like an advantage than as a character error.

Metternich's view of the Austrian empire was not hierarchical, as some have believed, since its constituent parts were mutually equal. Metternich all his life saw his Austria as a non-nation state. In the last instance, he built his Europe "not on national entities, but on historic-legal countries-formations, and he did not want to let [federalism] go further than to the legal-administrative sphere," Srbik contends (as quoted by Siemann.[5])

Thereby Metternich – despite the injuries to his reputation inflicted by the friends of 19th century nationalists – can well deserve to be acclaimed by those who in our days struggle with the problems of a stable world order.

5 Ibidem, p. 13.

FRENCH REVOLUTION AND SERBIA

UDC: 944"1789"+949.71"1806/1876"+94(495)"1821/1827"
DOI: https://doi.org/10.18485/ips_nend_frev.2023.ch8

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE FRENCH REVOLUTION AND THE SERBIAN AND GREEK NATIONAL UPRISINGS OF THE 19th CENTURY

Marko Pejković

After the First Serbian Uprising of 1804 had been unwittingly – but by all means clumsily – proclaimed to be a "Revolution" by the famous German historian Leopold von Ranke in 1829, it seems that intellectual and public opinion mainstream in Serbia inexorably drifted toward "revolutionization" of one of the most important events of Serbian modern history. And much worse. Many have gone too far in equating the First Serbian Uprising with nothing less than the French Revolution. The main argument of such a mainstream in Serbia can be summed up in the following sentence of the prominent Serbian historian Dusan Bataković:

> *Because of its basic demands for sovereignty, abolition of feudalism, citizen equality and free peasant holding, the First Serbian Uprising was a Balkan-style version of the French Revolution (...) The jacobin model of nation state (État-nation) was a blueprint for the renewal of the Serbian state according to the principle of national sovereignty..."*[1]

1 Dušan T. Bataković, "Srbija na putu nacionalnog oslobođenja: ustanci, autonomija, revolucija (1788-1813)," in: *Zbornik radova u čast akademiku Desanki Kovačević Kojić*, Sveska 1, br. 10 (2015), str. 68.

On the other hand, the similar Greek mainstream regarding the Greek War of Independence boils down to the following sentences of the prominent Greek leftist historian Yanis Kordatos:

> *It is well known that throughout Europe the ideas of the French Revolution had created a some kind of revolutionary mindset among the members of the so-called Third Estate. The liberal ideas of democracy, equality, freedom, etc., have had a great resonance outside of France. (...) And because of the pan-European turmoil caused by diffusion and fanaticism of the French revolutionary and democratic ideals, the Greek bourgeoisie embraced the idea of the revolution against the Turkish yoke."*[2]

Before we proceed with refutation of these two aforementioned lines of reasoning, let me briefly mention the main criterion upon which my argument of difference between the French Revolution and these two Uprisings will be based. This criterion asks whether the respective violent political change is *inspired* and *conducted* by some kind of intellectualism, rational constructivism (i.e. scientism) or by tradition (i.e. traditional prudence). The former should be treated as a progressive or leftist revolution criticized by Burke and the latter as a traditionalist, conservative or rightist uprising approved by Burke.[3] This difference can be visualised as presented below in the picture 1.

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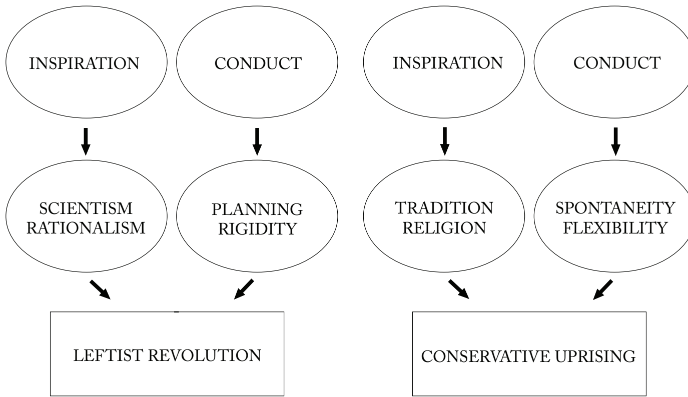
2 Κορδάτος Γιάννης, *Η κοινωνική σημασία της ελληνικής επαναστάσεως του 1821*, Γ.Ι. Βασιλείου, Αθήναι, 1924, pp. 46-47.

3 *The works of the right hon. Edmund Burke – Vol I*, Holdsworth and Ball, London, 1834, p. 417: "It is the first and supreme necessity only, a necessity that is not chosen but chooses, a necessity paramount to deliberation, that admits no discussion, and demands no evidence, which alone can justify a resort to anarchy. This necessity is no exception to the rule; because this necessity itself is a part too of that moral and physical disposition of things to which man must be obedient by consent or force. But if that which is only submission to necessity should be made the object of choice, the law is broken, nature is disobeyed, and the rebellious are outlawed, cast forth, and exiled, from this world of reason, and order, and peace, and virtue, and fruitful penitence, into the antagonist world of madness, discord, vice, confusion, and unavailing sorrow."



Picture 1: Leftist revolution vs Conservative uprising

For reasons of expediency, we must further concretize these two dimensions of *inspiration* and *conduct* of violent political change in the form of two questions:

(1) What was the opinion of the leaders of the French Revolution and Serbian and Greek Uprisings regarding traditional religion which unequivocally implied the utmost importance of Revelation? Was it their inspiration or not? If one thinks that traditional religion should not play any role in political life, but on the contrary, that it should be gradually or abruptly oppressed and persecuted institutionally until extinction and other thinks that it should be not only protected, but regarded as a driving force and highest ideal of state and society – then in no way we can equate this Revolution with these Uprisings. Neither can we say that they are similar. And we must underline here exactly traditional religion based on notions of Revelation in order to exclude possible claims that deism also could be treated as a religion. Because, in my point of view, deism is nothing more than a disguised form of atheism, which identifies the so-called deistic God, Supreme Being or "religion" ultimately with human reason, with the very essence of rational constructivism,

bearing in mind that many figureheads of the French Revolution were either atheists or deists.[4] Here we actually have an *ideational* or *ideological* dilemma – whether the main idea which inspired the violent political change came from traditional religion or abstract reason of Enlightenment?

(2) What was their view concerning possible reversal of any of the newly created political, economic or any other institutions whatsoever during the respective turmoil – were these innovations regarded as something dogmatic according to rational constructivism that was not possible to restore back to the older version of itself, just because it would have meant complete betrayal and regression of the cause for which they had been fighting? Or to put it in simpler terms – what was their stance toward adaptability or rigidity of any of the non-religious novelties of their struggle? Here we have an opposite dilemma in comparison to the previous question – here we want to ascertain whether dogmas and highest values of society and state are to be found in pure secular, non-religious domain. If they are to be found in such a domain, than we have a true progressive revolution, not a conservative uprising. This is actually a *structural dilemma* – whether the nascent constitutional order was spontaneous, as defined by Hayek (evolutive, adaptive, contextual, flexible and prone to "downward causation") or planned-planified, as defined by rational constructivism of the French Enlightenment (rigid and prone to one-directional laws of cause and effect).[5]

These two dilemmas can be visualised as presented below in the picture 2.

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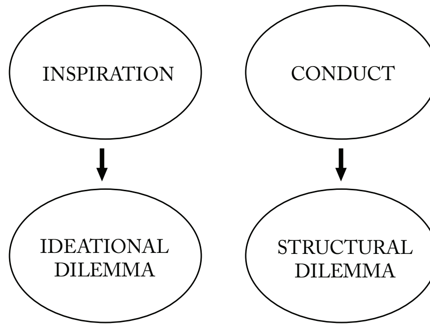
4 Charles Lyttle, "Deistic Piety in the Cults of the French Revolution," *Church History*, Vol. 2, No. 1 (Mar., 1933), pp. 22-40.

5 Friedrich A. Hayek, *The Political Order of a Free People*, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1979, pp. 141, 152, 158, 163, 168; Ilija Vujačić, *Politička teorija*, Čigoja štampa, Beograd, 2002, str. 86.



Picture 2: Ideational vs. structural dilemma

IDEATIONAL-IDEOLOGICAL DILEMMA

The fact that the French revolutionaries were imbued with atheistic, anti-clerical or deistic ideals of Enlightenment is beyond any doubt. What is less known is the fact that these revolutionaries had started to implement into practice these ideals very early, at the beginning of the Revolution. The Constituent Assembly nationalized the property of the Roman Catholic clergy in november of 1789.[6] After that came the interdiction of monastic vows, dissolution of clerical orders and the Civil Constitution of the Clergy, which broke up any relation between Roman Catholic clergy in France and the Pope. The clergymen who were reluctant to take an oath of allegiance to this Constitution had to undergo discrimination, persecution, torture, mass killings and exile. And the fact that few days after this Constitution, one of the main instigators of all these attacks on Roman Catholicism – the Bishop Talleyrand – officiated a mass during the *Fête de la Fédération* should not be seen only as a matter of hypocrisy or irony, but also as a tactical maneuver, devised in order to temporarily appease possible counterrevolution. Which was soon

6 Pierre Chaunu, "La sécularisation des biens d'Église: signification politique et conséquences économiques," *Le livre noir de la Révolution Française*, Les éditions du Cerf, Paris, 2008, p. 10.

proved to be true, when Talleyrand was defrocked and excommunicated by the Pope. The thing that didn't bother him at all, since he resigned forever, even as a fictitious bishop.

In the end, the revolutionaries decided to transform temples of Roman Catholicism into so-called Temples of Reason, where altars were demolished and crucifixes replaced by female figures of the so-called Goddess of Reason or symbols of the deistic Supreme Being of Robespierre. The French revolutionaries in this way tried to abolish Roman Catholicism and any belief in Revelation or in traditional religion, religion which was incompatible with their constructivist worldview. And we observe this revolutionary, linear tendency of ever-greater enmity toward traditional Roman Catholicism all the way up to the Thermidorian Reaction. Day after day with the French revolutionaries meant only less and less traditional religion in public domain. And almost all of these leading personalities, responsible for the persecution of Roman Catholicism, had lost their lives or gone to exile until the Thermidorian Reaction. This Reaction was due to some other historical figures. There are no traces of eventual volte-face of those who had started religious oppression. Those who used to gradually persecute Roman Catholicism back then, now try to utterly destroy it. On the other hand, we have absolutely opposite situation concerning traditional religion in the Serbian and Greek cases.

The spiritual beacons of the leaders of the Serbian Uprising were not haughty intellectuals or philosophers, but simple priests of the Orthodox Chruch. One Serbian historian of the Uprising reminds us who was an ideological prime mover during the first preparatory meeting of the Uprising:

> *A key protagonist of the gathering was not Karađorđe (a soon-to-be main secular leader of the Uprising), but the Priest Atanasije. On that occasion, he delivered a speech from which the basic ideas of the Uprising can be grasped.*[7]

7 Although Ljušić wrote here literally "revolutionary thougths" ("revolucionarne misli") it is more suitable terminologically to translate

The priest spoke in medieval and religious terms and cursed all the potential traitors and he was present at the next meeting a few months later, which marked the very start of the Uprising. We should bear in mind that the list of almost all of the Uprising's goals had been constantly in a state of flux, but one of the first goals proclaimed was a full respect of Serbian religious traditions and a right of Serbian people to erect Orthodox Christian temples and monasteries with a degree of ecclesiastical autonomy greater than before.[8] Also, one of the last proclamation of the main leader of the Uprising Karađorđe in 1813 urged soldiers on the front to continue the fight for their Faith, People and Fatherland in order to enter the Kingdom of Heaven.[9] Priests and theologians of the Church had been endowed with the task of spiritual guidance and encouragement of Serbian soldiers before their departure for the front lines.[10] Institutionally speaking – Church, Orthodox Christianity and clergy were protected, highly valued and promoted as the most precious pillars of the Serbian society. Quite contrary to the French Revolution.[11] Besides, the leaders of the Uprising were illiterate peasants, merchants or – in the eyes of the Turkish autorities – outlaws. Therefore, there

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these words as "basic ideas of the Uprising," precisely with the intention to avoid any sort of conceptual overlap of the French Revolution and First Serbian Uprising. See more: Radoš Ljušić, *Vožd Karađorđe – prva knjiga*, Udruženje za srpsku povesnicu, Beograd, 2000, str. 49.

8 Dušan Perović, "Osnovni ciljevi Prvog srpskog ustanka," *Istorijski časopis – knjiga XXIII*, Istorijski institut, Beograd, 1976, str. 53.

9 Radoš Ljušić, *Vožd Karađorđe – druga knjiga,* Udruženje za srpsku povesnicu, Beograd, 2000, str. 162-163.

10 Ibid, str. 154-155.

11 Except for rare quarrels between Karađorđe and the Greek Metropolitan Leontios regarding necessity of further resistance to the Turks (in fact, a highest clergyman was a Greek after 1766 who had been aloof from Serbian people because of language gap and Serbs usually circumvented him by working shoulder to shoulder with Serbian bishops in Austria) and one case when one priest was threatened with death by Karađorđe (as was once a Metropolitan himself) because that priest refused to read last rites to one poor peasant contrary to Orthodox tradition, I don't know any other case of similar disagreements between the Uprising's leaders and the clergy.

was an obvious mental and physical obstacle that prevented them from being in any way influenced by contemporary Enlightenment and european rational constructivist intellectuals. One russian envoy during the Uprising even noted that almost all the Serbian leaders as former swineherds and outlaws possessed very meagre conceptual-categorical apparatus.[12]

Although it is true that – in contrast to the Serbian pre-Uprising context – in Greece, before the Greek Uprising, had existed one full-fledged intellectual, Greek liberation movement known as the Modern Greek Enlightenment (Νεοελληνικός Διαφωτισμός) which was headed by progressive secular minds, such as Rigas Feraios and Adamandios Korrais, and by some clerical figures enchanted with the ideals of the French Enlightenment also, nevertheless, we cannot argue that the Modern Greek Enlightenment as a whole was a mere duplication of the French Enlightenment. It was a mimetic movement, but at least partly and publicly it was not atheistic nor deistic movement. Let's take just two aforementioned secular leaders of the Greek Enlightement for example. If Adamandios Korrais was an unswerving admirer of the French atheistic or deistic principles, Rigas Feraios was an Orthodox Christian, although some of his political ideas could have been unconsciously influenced by some progressive or masonic authors, notions and works. Although he cites the French *Encyclopedia* regularly in his works, Rigas personally believes that marriage is a sacramental bond, that human reason is not perfect and infinite, that God has created nothing evil, that the future Greek national flag should depict crosses, that the national oath should be given above the cross, he considers the Serbs to be "fellow brothers of the Greeks in Christ."[13] Also, as Rimikis has shown,[14] the main Greek secret organization which had prepared

12 Radoš Ljušić, *Vožd Karađorđe – prva knjiga*, Udruženje za srpsku povesnicu, Beograd, 2000, str. 244.

13 Δημήτριος Απ. Καραμπερόπουλος, Ρήγας και Ορθόδοξη πίστη, Επιστημονική Εταιρεία Μελέτης Φερών-Βελεστίνου-Ρήγα, Αθήνα, 2005, pp. 37-46.

14 Nicholas Michael Rimikis, "Filiki Etaireia: The rise of a secret society in

the Uprising known as *Filiki Etairia* was not a masonic organisation, because the majority of its members were not freemasons, even though it was influenced to some extent by the freemason minority, especially regarding its secret foundation and arcane work methods.

But, even if someone assumed that all the individuals and groups that had prepared the Greek Uprising had been devout, fanatical and strict adherents of the French Revolution, freemasonry and French Enlightenment, and that, therefore, the Greek Uprising was a mere repeat of its French counterpart – all further developments of this Uprising would refute such kind of assumption. The preparation and very outbreak of the Uprising in the Peloponnese happened under the aegis of three local bishops, especially the Bishop of Patras Germanos who was a member of Filiki Etairia, one of two members of the War Council of the Uprising in the Peloponnese, he was present together with other secular leaders in the monastery of Agia Lavra when the flag of the Uprising "Eleftheria y thanatos" (Ελευθερία ή θάνατος) with a cross was raised and he performed a doxology in the honour of the Uprising.[15] All three temporary constitutional acts of the Greek Uprising contained several traditional Orthodox Christian concepts that would have been completely incompatible with the basic ideas of the French Enlightenment and Revolution. The first words of two of these acts in the preamble are actually an invocation of the Holy Trinity: "In the name of the Holy and Indivisible Trinity" (*εν ονόματι της Αγίας και Αδιαιρέτου Τριάδος*). The first article of all three constitutional acts is dedicated to religion (Περί θρησκείας). That article says that the official religion of the Greek nascent state is Orthodox Christianity as defined by the Eastern Orthodox Church. The next few articles

the making of the Greek revolution," *Bard Undergraduate Senior Projects – Senior Projects Spring*, 2017, pp. 85-86. (http://digitalcommons.bard.edu/senproj_s2017/317)

15 Απόστολος Ε. Βακαλόπουλος, Ιστορία του νέου ελληνισμού: Η μεγάλη Ελληνική Επανάσταση (1821-1829) – Οι προϋποθέσεις και οι βάσεις της (1813-1822), Σταμούλης Αντ., Θεσσαλονίκη, 1980, pp. 330, 334-335.

of these acts define who is considered to be a member of the Greek nation – namely, only those who believe in Christ (*Οσοι αυτόχθονες κάτοικοι της Επικρατείας της Ελλάδος πιστεύουσιν εις Χριστόν, εισίν Ελληνες*). What a striking difference between this and constitutional activity of the French revolutionaries! In the French Constitution of 1791, God is mentioned only in reference to the king's right to proclaim laws by the grace of God. The preamble doesn't invoke God or the Holy Trinity – btw. Roman Catholicism, religious dogmas or the Pope are not mentioned at all – and all the other public institutions have nothing to do with religion, even symbolically (as the king has). The second revolutionary Constitution of 1793 abolished the French monarchy and with it, any symbolical reference to God disappeared from the French revolutionary law. The rule of less and less traditional religion was once more corroborated in the context of the French Revolution.

We should also debunk the myth of the alleged "anathema" of the Greek Uprising by the Patriarch Gregory V in 1821, since the leftist propaganda in Greece used it to fabricate a history of fierce enmity between the leadership of the Uprising and the Church. Actually, the anathema was artificial inasmuch as it was a desperate maneuver of the Patriarch to prevent large-scale atrocities. The Patriarch considered it possible, with this extorted anathema, to avert a *fatwa* from the Shaykh al-Islām against all Greeks of the Ottoman Empire, a *fatwa* that could have caused an unbridled tide of total extermination of civilians. The Patriarch succeeded—the fatwa was not issued. Nevertheless, the Sultan's wrath against him was not mitigated. The Patriarch was executed precisely for complicity in the preparation of the Uprising ("*... ήτο και ο ίδιος αυτός, ως αρχηγός, μυστικός συμμέτοχος της επαναστάσεως...*" – a charge that was actually founded, the Patriarch had close connections with members of Filiki Etairia and other Greek leaders). Shortly before the execution, the anathema was revoked by the Patriarch and his bishops synod-

ically in secret.[16] Everyone interested in this topic concerning the anathema of 1821 should read the book of the professor emeritus of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Father Theodoros Zisis, under the title "Leaders of the Church and Nation" (*Ιεράρχες εθνάρχες*) in more detail. The Father Zisis is a cleric of the Greek Orthodox Church, renown for his anti-progressivist, anti-ecumenist and patriotic acitivity, who sharply criticizes the contemporary left-leaning Orthodox bishops and who therefore is not in the slightest bit interested in praising the Patriarch Gregory V by definition.

STRUCTURAL DILEMMA

The problem of the second question, or structural dilemma from the introductory part of this article, is much easier to solve.

In the course of the French Revolution, in parallel with an ever-decreasing role of traditional religion in politics, one can observe an ever-increasing wave of modernization of political institutions in the spirit of rational constructivism. And this trend was unidirectional – the gap between the *Ancien Régime* and newly established institutions was continuously widened. It is impossible to think otherwise even in terms of counterfactual conditionals. The revolutionaries were willing to make some tactical compromises, but only in the sense of temporary delay of some of the progressive reforms, in order to gain strength or consolidate power. But by no means did they want to empower the king again, or to restore any of the old institutions which had been extinguished previously by themselves. The same or higher level of leftist progress is allowed, but less of it – is out of the question.

As we have already said, almost all of the secular goals of the

16 Θεόδωρου Ζήση πρωτοπρεσβύτερου, *Ιεράρχες εθνάρχες*, Εκδόσεις Βρυέννιος, Θεσσαλονίκη, 2003, str. 15-50; Emmanouil G. Chalkiadakis, "Reconsidering the Past: Ecumenical Patriarch Gregory V and the Greek Revolution of 1821," *Σύνθεσις*, Τμήμα Θεολογίας (Θεολογική Σχολή) – Αριστοτέλειο Πανεπιστήμιο Θεσσαλονίκης, Θεσσαλονίκη, 2017, str. 182-192.

Serbian Uprising had been constantly changing. The only immutable goal of this kind could be formulated as follows – maximum possible independence from the turkish occupation, given the current circumstances. But, the question of what to do with new political, social and economic institutions, was a whirlpool of virtually never-ending debates, reversals and changes, not only at the level of factions and groups, but at the individual level also. It was a process of perpetual going back and forth. Very often, one and the same personality had alternating doubts, perceptions or ideas about the same subject, influenced by different external and contextual factors that could have been even mere rumours, prejudices, personal insults or just news about looming foreign interventions and meddling. Not a single theory, book or philosophical principle could be attached to any of the factions or leaders of the Serbian Uprising who had been predominantly illiterate and cut off from all kinds of intellectual circles. For example, the claim that the leaders of the Uprising had been fanatically against feudalism as a principle from the very beginning, just doesn't hold water. According to their own confession in a letter sent to the one Serbian bishop in Austria soon after the outbreak:

> *We have obeyed righteous laws until now (i.e. the turkish feudal laws), but turkish perpetrators transgressed them and neither the Sultan nor the Grand Vizier have proved to be capable of protecting us from their violence.*[17]

Of course, the Serbs quickly demanded full abolition of turkish feudalism, but on the eve of the collapse of the Uprising, they again were ready to consent to turkish feudalism under few

17 Dušan Perović, op. cit., str. 55; It is interesting to note that what angered the leaders of the Uprising – at least at the beginning of the Uprising – was not the turkish feudalism as such, but its distortion through illegal doubling of the feudal masters to whom the Serbian people was obliged to pay cumulative taxes: Miljana Todorović, "Hatišerifi iz 1830. i 1833. i zemljišna svojina u Srbiji," in: *Zbornik radova Pravnog fakulteta u Nišu – Zaštita ljudskih i manjinskih prava u evropskom pravnom prostoru*, Pravni fakultet, Niš, 2012, str. 471-472.

conditions.[18] And let's take the topic of centralization/decentralization of political power. Nobody had a clear and consistent idea as to who should be politically dominant – the main leader of the Uprising Karađorđe (Вожд) or the Council of Leaders (Совјет) and even decisions and laws issued by provisional bodies of the Uprising were often ambivalent or contradictory.[19] As Karađorđe himself acknowledged:

> *I don't know how to govern, my task is to wage a war...*[20]

This situation led the Serbian leadership to frustration and attempts had been made to obtain advice on this matter from foreign Russian ally:

> *We had no our own ideas how to legislate or govern (...) therefore we are seeking advice on this point first by God and then by you and your Emperor...*[21]

This is as spontaneous an order as can be.

Apropos this structural dillema in Greece, it is less pronounced than in the Serbian case. Probably because the Greek leadership was more susceptible to the ideas of intellectuals from the West than its Serbian counterpart. By comparing three constitutional acts of the Greek Uprising, one can notice a gradual democratization of the nascent Greek polity. The legal borrowings from the western legal systems are indisputable. For example, the principle of popular sovereignty (λαϊκή κυριαρχία). But, we should be careful not to argue flippantly that every constitutional article which could be

18 Radoš Ljušić, *Vožd Karađorđe – druga knjiga*, Udruženje za srpsku povesnicu, Beograd, 2000, str. 139-140.

19 Ljušić, *Vožd Karađorđe – prva knjiga*, Udruženje za srpsku povesnicu, Beograd, 2000, str. 196, 122-123, 219-220, 235, 240; Radoš Ljušić, *Vožd Karađorđe – druga knjiga*, Udruženje za srpsku povesnicu, Beograd, 2000, str. 24, 81.

20 Ljušić, *Vožd Karađorđe – prva knjiga*, Udruženje za srpsku povesnicu, Beograd, 2000, str. 210.

21 Ibid, str. 216.

interpreted as democratic is certainly a mere borrowing from the western, progressive legal systems. Let's take the article 7 which says that all Greeks are equal before the law (Όλοι οι Ελληνες είναι ίσοι ενώπιον των νόμων) or the article 27 which prohibits political power from bestowing noble titles (Κανένας τίτλος ευγενείας δεν δίδεται από την Ελληνικήν Πολιτείαν...). The first of these two articles was actually a part of the medieval byzantine tradition, since the concept of equality before the law of all the subjects of the Byzantine Empire had been recognized at least from the VIII century, thanks to the compilation of the byzantine law known as *Ecloga*,[22] while the second one only reflected social relations which go back centuries, since during the Turkish occupation the medieval aristocratic circles had been completely extinguished. At any rate, a single rupture of this trend toward "democratization" and turnabout toward "monarchization" would suffice to dispel any doubt about dissimilarity of the Greek Uprising and French Revolution. And such a rupture or turnabout happened when – by consent of the newly formed Parliament – Ioannis Kapodistrias suspended the Constitution for an indefinite period of time (the next convocation of the Parliament happened 16 years later) and concentrated all power in his hands.[23] The Parliament accepted his justification for this – the national liberation and salvation are higher than any other positive law, that is to say the present circumstances do not allow the Greeks to stick to the Constitution and positive law.[24]

22 Alexander A. Vasiliev, *History of the Byzantine Empire (324-1453)*, The University of Wisconsin Press, Madison, 1952, str. 242.

23 Δημακόπουλος, Γ., "Αι Κυβερνητικαί Αρχαί της Ελληνικής Πολιτείας (1827-1833)," Ο Ερανιστής – *The Gleaner*, The Greek Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies, 4, 1966, str. 121-122.

24 Ανδρέου Ζ. Μάμουκα, *Τα κατά την αναγέννησιν της Ελλάδος* (Τόμος εκτός), εκ της του Ηλία Χριστοφίδου τυπογραφίας, εν Πειραιεί, 1839, str. 40; Γιώργος Κοντογιώργης, "Το 'κράτος' του Καποδίστρια – Μια συγκριτική αποτίμηση σε σχέση με την απολυταρχία της εποχής και το κράτος έθνος," *Πάπυροι - Επιστημονικό Περιοδικό*, τόμος 3, Η Ακαδημία Θεσμών και Πολιτισμών, Θεσσαλονίκη, 2014, str. 37.

CONCLUSION

On the basis of the above, I feel free to conclude that the Serbian and Greek Uprisings of the 19th century are ideationally or ideologically and structurally different from the French Revolution. The up to date attempts of scientists, journalists, politicians or educational system as a whole to identify these Uprisings as younger and Balkan-style versions of the French Revolution are nothing more than a conscious or unconscious leftist propaganda. And it seems to me more than suitable to finish this article with the words of one of the most distinguished leaders of the Greek War of Independence – Theodoros Kolokotronis. He himself gave the most precise answer about the alleged similarity between these Uprisings and the French Revolution:

> *Our own Uprising doesn't resemble anything that is going on now in Europe. The Revolutions in Europe are directed against their own respective regimes and they represent a form of civil war. Our own fight was the most righteous one, it was a war between two nations... My dear children! You should defend and support your Faith, because when we took up arms we said – first we fight for our Faith and then we fight for our Fatherland!*[25]

25 Θ. Κολοκοτρώνης, Απομνημονεύματα, εκδόσεις Ωρορά, Αθήνα 1992, str. 214; Ο Λόγος του Κολοκοτρώνη στην Πνύκα, https://www.sansimera.gr/articles/565: "Η Επανάστασις η εδική μας δεν ομοιάζει με καμιά απ΄ όσες γίνονται την σήμερον ημέραν εις την Ευρώπην. Της Ευρώπης αι επαναστάσεις εναντίον των διοικήσεών των είναι εμφύλιος πόλεμος. Ο εδικός μας πόλεμος ήτον ο πλέον δίκαιος, ήτον έθνος με άλλο έθνος... Πρέπει να φυλάξετε την πίστη σας και να την στερεώσετε, διότι, όταν επιάσαμε τα άρματα είπαμε πρώτα υπέρ πίστεως και έπειτα υπέρ πατρίδος"

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"FRENCH SEEDLINGS IN SERBIAN FOREST" INFLUENCES OF THE FRENCH REVOLUTION ON CONSTITUTIONAL AND LEGAL DEVELOPMENT OF SERBIA

Mijodrag Radojević

This article discusses the influence of the French Revolution, i.e., the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen of 1789, on the constitutional development of Serbia in the 19th century. The written constitution and the rule of law, the separation and limitation of powers, human rights and freedoms were avowedly adopted as the principles for the formation of political and legal institutions. The political life is characterized by the struggle for independence and the conquest of freedom and democracy. However, the process of absorbing and adapting of the achievements of the French Revolution was gradual, slow, and limited, often contradictory, due to difficult circumstances and Serbia's position as a tributary vassal principality in the Turkish Empire.

The greatest support for the revolutionary ideas came from a few liberal-minded intellectuals. However, the obstacles were poverty and lack of enlightenment in Serbian society, dynastic conflicts, as well as the influence of the great powers (large countries). In all this,

attempts to incorporate liberal values of the French Revolution into the legal order failed to this day.

Between the contradictory views on the nature of the Serbian Revolution in the first decades of 19th century and the French Revolution, the author presents a thesis on the hidden and indirect connection of these two historical processes. This point of view is confirmed by the fact that even at the early stage of the Serbian Revolution, the authors of the proposal for the first constitutional act (in the year 1805) and later the first Constitution (in the year 1835) intended the ideas of the Declaration of human and civil rights to become the flywheel of the struggle for independence from the Ottoman Empire and the creation of a modern state. Finally, some of the liberal political principles have been integrated into the constitutional system after gaining independence and adoption of the Constitution of 1888.

I THE CONTRIBUTION OF THE FRENCH REVOLUTION TO MODERN CONSTITUTIONALITY

The First French Revolution is considered one of the epochal events in recent political history.[1] With the "Glorious Revolution" that took place a century earlier, and the American Revolution, it had influence not only on the creation of the modern French nation, but also on the social transformation and political changes in Europe and around the world. More than two centuries, it shaped new forms of polities and legal institutions that will become universal values and an inspiration to numerous political movements. Revolution was based on the ideas of freedom, equality, and fraternity, as well as natural and inalienable human rights, it shook the Christian worldview and offered a different vision of society. First, the French Revolution overthrew monarchical absolutism and established a

1 In France, four revolutions took place during the 19th century (in the years 1789, 1830, 1848 and 1871)

constitutional monarchy, then a republic, and from a social point of view declared a political community of equal citizens. However, like any other revolution, it also showed its other face – violence in the form of terror, dictatorship, and war,[2] a legacy in the form of a "perverted idea of freedom."[3]

The revolutionaries believed that it was possible to create an ideal society based on reason and embodied in a written Constitution.[4] During the revolution, six constitutions were adopted (in 1791, 1793, and 1795, as well as the Napoleonic Constitutions of 1799, 1802, and 1804).[5] During its first phase, the Constitution of 1791, a constitutional monarchy was created, class privileges were abolished and fundamental rights and freedoms were proclaimed. The Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen (1789), the preamble to this first written Constitution in Europe, guaranteed the liberal values of the new order of government. In the second phase, the Constitution of year 1793 was adopted, the Constitution known as Montagnard or the Jacobin Constitution, in accordance with the principles of the Republic, popular sovereignty and the supremacy of the *Assemblée Nationale*. The Constitution never came into force, but the guarantee of new social rights and the concept of Radical Constitutional democracy were implemented later in other

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2 Read more: Marvin Peri, *Intelektualna istorija Evrope*, translated from English by Đorđe Krivokapić (Marvin Perry, *An Intellectual History of Modern Europe*, Houghton Miffin, 1993), p. 218.

3 About the contradictory meaning of the French Revolution – in this book, in more detail: Aleksandar Novaković "French revolution and its intellectual legacy."

4 The American and French Revolutions combined the political and legal concepts of the Constitution. Cf. Olivije Bo, *Država i njena vlast,* translated by Marko Božić (Olivier Beaud, *La puissance de l'*état, Presses Universitaires de France, 1994), Faculty of Law of the University of Belgrade, Official Envoy, Belgrade, 2016, p. 202).

5 To paraphrase Tocqueville, Napoleon's Constitutions were that other stream of the river that led to unlimited power in the hands of one man.

conditions.[6] At the stage of the Thermidor of the Constitution of the year 1795 the separation of power with a "Directory model of governance" was restored. Based on this brief and rich constitutional history, the literature concludes that the French Revolution is a kind of legal revolution. Summing up its significance, the Italian constitutionalist Giuseppe De Vergotini in his work *Comparative constitutional law* concludes that the French Constitutions of the revolutionary era represent a special cycle in the development of the constitutionality of the world.[7]

The Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen (1789) is the most important achievement of the French Revolution (Joseph-Barthélemy).[8] Adopted at the beginning of the revolution, drafted in the form of a "program law" (Fassò), it contained ideas about the foundations of a new social regulation and human rights and freedoms. The revolt against the "old order" is an expression of liberal political ideology about sovereignty of the people, freedom and equality, secularism and tolerance, constitutionalism, separation of powers, inviolability of private property, personal security and re-

6 The experience of working with the assembly system and direct democracy inspired Marxists and later founders in communist and socialist countries, as well as in the former Yugoslavia. About these impacts, see: Smiljko Sokol, *Politička i ustavna povijest jakobinskog razdoblja Francuske revolucije,* Globus, Pravni fakultet Sveučilišta u Zagrebu, Zagreb, 1989, p. 249 and further.

7 Đuzepe de Vergotini, *Uporedno ustavno pravo,* translated by LjiljanaGrubac, Službeni glasnik Beograd, 2015, p. 336 (Giuseppe De Vergotini, *Comparative Analysis of the Constitution*, vol. 1, 2011).

8 Joseph-Barthélemy, *Précis de Droit Public,* Dalloy, Pariz, 1937, p. 43. The Declaration was supplemented in the year 1793, and as such was an integral part of the new constitution. In this declaration, the provision on the division of powers was abolished, and new rights were proclaimed: the right to work, the right to welfare and the right to education. In addition, the Declaration indicated not only the rights, but also the duties of a citizen to the state, which was a significant difference from its predecessor, since it allowed the state to violate the indisputable autonomy of the individual. Finally, the Declaration of the year of the Third revolution also pays considerable attention to responsibilities (nine of the 31 provisions relate to responsibilities).

sistance to oppression.[9] On the one hand, it proposed a new ideological paradigm, not entirely original,[10] because some ideas were borrowed from the American Revolution.[11] On the other hand, the declarations also proclaimed a ban on arbitrary persecution of a person, freedom of conscience and religion, freedom of speech and press. A person should enjoy those rights that are "natural" or congenital, and they belong to him or her regardless of political regu-

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9 Critical discourse provides a more nuanced interpretation of the Revolution from the point of view of democracy, which is why taco Eric Hobsbawm notes that "this document is a manifesto against a hierarchical society of noble privileges, but not in favor of a democratic and egalitarian society." See in, Eric Hobsbawm, *The Age of Revolution 1789–1848*, Random House, New York, 1996, p. 59. For example, the democratic deficit in the first stage of the Revolution was that the Constitution was not received on the basis of the general right to vote.

10 Guido Fassò, an Italian legal theorist, believes that there was a reversible influence on the text of the declaration through French thinkers, such as the doctrine of the separation of powers by Charles Montesquieu (Gvido Faso, *Istorija filozofije prava,* translated from Italian by Dragan Mraović, CID, Univerzitet Mediteran, Podgorica, 2007, p. 381). Edmund Burke, however, in his Reflections on the French Revolution, also noted disagreements between the American and French understandings of legal institutions and concepts. According to Burke's critique, A. Novakovic concludes that the Declaration only absorbed ideas that "circulated" earlier, and its character is ambivalent, and even "schizophrenic." Trouble with the Declaration arises when it is interpreted in accordance with the theory of the Social Contract, which was already done in the Jacobin period of the revolution. According to Rousseau, freedom, one of the cries of the French Revolution, is a goal, not a means, as liberal theorists like Edmund Burke believed. Such "freedom" is possible only in pure democracies, where there is no difference between the government and those governed. The paradox of Rousseau's understanding of freedom is that in order to become free, a citizen obeys the general will, and thus renounces his inherent rights. As Hans Kelzen notes, the contradiction is that instead of a free individual, we have a "free state," whose real name is – a totalitarian state. Compare: Philippe Lauvaux, *Les grandes démocraties contemporaines*, PUF, Paris, 1990, pp. 15-17.

11 Georg Jellinek identified these similarities by comparing the texts of the declaration of rights of individual US states with the Declaration of Rights of 1789. See: Georg Jellinek, *The Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizens: The Struggle for Modern Constitutional History*, Henry Holt and Company, New York, 1901, pp. 25-42.

lation.[12] The French Revolution established the catechism of future constitutions – responsible and limited government, sovereignty of the people and human rights. In a rigid or flexible version, the separation of powers implies that unlimited power is precluded. Instead, there are numerous carriers of various functions, while in the declaration of the year 1793, it was announced that "the boundaries of public functions should be clearly established."

In his work *The Old Regime and the Revolution* Alexis De Tocqueville writes that the French Revolution began as a political revolution and received the distinctive features of a religious movement transmitted through propaganda and the press. The goal of the revolution was not only the transformation of France, but also the rebirth of humanity.[13] Based on the experience of the French Revolution and, in particular, the Declaration of the Rights of Man, this radical makeup of legal systems was based on legality and constitutionality, and not on the ruthless will of absolute rulers and customary law. With the first French Constitution (1791) – which established a constitutional monarchy and a one-house parliament as an organ of the sovereign people – the era of written constitutionality in Europe began followed by the introduction of numerous constitutions and constitutional charters during the XIX century. Abstract philosophical values of the Declaration were concretized with the help of legal norms, and its ideas

12 French theorist Michel Troper concludes that, contrary to many other points of view, the Declaration of 1789. in addition to the naturalistic, it also has a positivist character, which means that it has not only a declarative, but also a constitutive character (Mišel Troper, *Pravna teorija države*, translated by Marco Christmas [Michael Troper, Pour unethéoriejudigue de l'etat, Presses Universitaires de France, 1995]), pp. 320 et seq.

13 A similar observation is made by Edmund Burke, who compared the French Revolution with the religious movement of the Reformation. The French Revolution is simultaneously a "revolution of doctrine and theoretical dogma." See Edmund Burke, "Thoughts on French Affairs," in Daniel Richie, *Further Reflections on the Revolution in France*, Liberty Fund, Indianapolis, 1992, p. 182.

and principles, as well as specific rights, were introduced into modern constitutions.[14]

There are conflicting points of view about the influence of the French Revolution on the development of constitutionality in Serbia. According to some, the influence is barely noticeable and almost insignificant. According to another point of view, the French Revolution represented a general blueprint for Serbian constitutions in the 19th century, and some researchers even claimed that it partly inspired the First Serbian Uprising against the Turks in 1804. The influence is defined as twofold: direct, which formed the specific content of the Constitution, and indirect, which directed political life and struggle in Serbia. This is especially evident in the attempts to write and adopt the first declaration of rights and the first Serbian constitution.

II THE FRENCH REVOLUTION AND THE CONSTITUTIONAL QUESTION IN SERBIA

At the end of the 18th and the beginning of the 19th century, most of the current territory of Serbia was part of the Ottoman Empire. The population, in accordance with the pragmatic policy of the conqueror, was divided into several administrative units, in which the Turkish feudal system of governance ruled, with a limited degree of self-government in villages and districts (so-called self-governance and patriarchal democracy). Islamization of Serbian people was carried out forcibly or with the help of rewards in the form of tax benefits or rights to perform certain professions in certain ar-

14 Explaining this influence on European Constitutions at the beginning of the 20th century, Jellinek argues that similar enumerations of human rights were adopted in accordance with the Declaration. The differences in their content are due to the adaptation of individual terms and phrases. Georg Jellinek, ibid, p. 4-5. In the Preamble of the Constitution of the Fifth French Republic (1958) it was written that the French people “proclaim their commitment” to the Declaration of year 1789.

eas. Dissatisfied with their position, oppression and violence of the local Turks, the Serbian people began two great uprisings (in the years 1804 and 1815). After the Second Uprising, Serbia received the privileged position of a principality with self-governance, established by the Bucharest Peace (1812), the Akkerman Convention (1826) and subsequently confirmed by *the Hatisherif* (1830).[15] By a special act of the Sultan to Miloš Obrenović, the leader of the Second Uprising, the right of the crown prince was recognized, which was a unique example compared to other provinces. Although a vassal tributary principality, Serbia adopted three constitutions. The first (1835) was simply a "letter on paper"; the second, known as the "The Turkish Constitution" (1838), adopted in the form of a hatisherif, was significantly modified and put out of force by the adoption of organic laws in 1861 and 1862;[16] The Third Constitution (1869), modeled after the German principalities, established a constitutional monarchy. After gaining independence (1878), Serbia declared three more constitutions (in 1888, 1901 and 1903). The 1888 Constitution was a modern constitution with a parliamentary system of government and a wide catalog of human rights and freedoms. The coup of 1901 restored the 1869 Constitution, but two years later, after the coup and the assassination of the legitimate king, the amended 1888 Constitution was applied.

In the 19th century, Serbia, like France, had a turbulent political life and constitutionality, with frequent changes to the constitution and of the rulers. During this period, six constitutions were adopted, as many as during the French Revolution. Dynastic conflicts and constitutional battles were influenced not only by the

15 In Turkish: *Hatt-ı* Şerif – order of the sultan in a special written form. The sultan issued four hatisherifs to Serbia – in 1829, 1830, 1833 and 1838.

16 Considering that the great powers opposed the adoption of a new constitution, Serbia found a wise way to suspend 1838 constitution, without provoking the reaction. When special laws were passed in 1861, which were known as the "Transfuguration Day Constitution" (*Preobraženski ustav*), a permanent convocation of the National Assembly was also organized, which is not mentioned as a body in the so-called Turkish Constitution.

internal political circumstances, but also by the geopolitical map of Europe. The constitutions symbolized state autonomy and independence, and also spread between liberal aspirations and absolutism of Serbian princes and kings. Serbian constitutional question was less influenced by political and legal doctrines and ideologies, but rather by its vassal status and the relations of the Great Powers.

The influence of the French Revolution is present in Serbia, at various moments: events during the First (Serbian) Uprising, during the adoption of the first Constitution, and then in the struggle for written constitutionality and the establishment of a constitutional order based on the principles of separation of powers and human rights and freedoms. Summing up this influence, Miodrag Jovičić, a renowned expert of the constitutional history of Serbia, concluded that it was a twofold institutional and ideological influence.[17] Students studying abroad, mostly familiar with the achievements of the French Revolution, supported the simultaneous struggle for national liberation and political changes,[18] the adoption of the constitution and the guarantee of freedoms and rights. The French Revolution, according to Stojan Novaković, indirectly influenced the political position of Serbia in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. Although France had no geopolitical interests in destroying its relations with its then ally, Napoleon's raids on Egypt and the Balkans led to internal reforms in Turkey. The wars that France waged with other powers (Austria, Russia and Prussia) also raised the question of autonomy for the oppressed Balkan peoples.[19]

17 The direct influence was reflected in the principles and institutions of the Serbian constitutions, adopted between 1835 and 1903, while the indirect influence was felt in the entire public life of Serbia, first in the struggle for constitution, and then in the permeation of the entire Serbian society. Cf. Miodrag Jovičić, "Uticaj ideja Francuske revolucije na ustave i ustavnost u Srbiji," *Zbornik matice srpske za društvene nauke,* broj 96, Novi Sad, 1994, p. 73.

18 See: L. Ford, *Evropa u doba revolucija 1780–1830,* translated from English Ksenija Todorović (Frenklin L. Ford, *Europe 1780*–1830, the 2nd edition, Longman Group Limited, 1989), Clio, Beograd, 2005, p. 169).

19 Stojan Novaković, *Vaskrs države srpske i druge studije,* Novinsko-izdavačka ustanova Službeni list SFRJ, Beograd, 1986, pp. 36–37. Napoleon's raids

The First Serbian Uprising against the Turks (from 1804 to 1813), by its nature an anti-feudal and democratic, national and social movement, in professional literature, by analogy with the events in France since 1789, was also designated as the "Serbian Revolution."[20] However, such an understanding can be seen as a radical interpretation if one insists on common similarities between these two events. After all, the "Serbian Revolution," like a number of other national liberation movements during the nineteenth century, was a unique historical, political and social phenomenon.[21] On the other hand, such interpretations ignore the fact that the French Revolution was perceived as dangerous and "heretical" event not only for the forces directly involved in the resolution of the Serbian question (Turkey, Russia and Austria), but also for the dynasties that ruled Serbia in the 19th century.

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caused an internal political crisis in the Ottoman Empire, weakened the sultan's power, and, in some provinces, defected Turkish leaders seized power to the detriment of enslaved peoples. In Serbia, they were known as the "Dahije," they revoked the rights granted by Selim III and conducted a reign of terror. These Turkish mutineers organized the killings of prominent Serbs, which sparked the First Uprising among the people, also known as the "Rebellion against the Dahija." The influence of the French Revolution is also noticable in other events and the situation of the Serbian people in Hungary. See also: Marko Pavlović, "Odjeci velike francuske revolucije u obnovljenoj Srbiji," *Anali Pravnog fakulteta u Beograd,* br. 6/1989, pp. 724-725.

20 The German historian Leopold von Ranke was the first to compare the Serbian uprisings with the French Revolution, calling them the Serbian Revolution. Theorists of leftist and romantic provenance uncritically accepted this qualification: Vasa Čubrilović, *Istorija političke misli u Srbiji XIX veka,* Prosveta, Beograd, 1958, p. 85; Andrija B. Stojković, "Ideologija 'srpske revolucije' i filozofska misao u Srbiji," Vasa Čubrilović (ur.), *Istorijski značaj srpske revolucije 1804. godine*, Srpska akademija nauka i umetnosti, Beograd, 1983, p. 57-87.

21 Also in this volume, an interesting interpretation of the relationship between the Serbian Revolution and the French Revolution was provided by Marko Pejković ("The Difference Between the French Revolution and the Serbian and Greek National Uprisings of the 19th Century.") Comparing the goals and actors, he concludes that there is no sign of equality between the two revolutions, that is, that the Serbian revolution is structurally and ideologically different from the French Revolution.

At the beginning of the First Serbian Uprising in the liberated territory, the rebels decided to organize the government and establish legal order. They also tried to get new laws, since their disputes were resolved in accordance with the "old" medieval Serbian regulations (legal code of Tsar Dušan dating back in the 14th century).[22] However, these rules did not correspond to the changed social and political conditions and did not answer the question of how to organize the supreme power. Therefore, Serbs turned to theirs allies for help, first of all Austria, which ignored their appeals, and then to imperial Russia, as well as to educated Serbs who lived in other parts of Europe.

1. From the "A Word on Freedom" to the 1835 Constitution

During the First Serbian Uprising, two constitutional acts were passed into law (in 1808 and 1811). However, different political factions emerged with opposing ideas about the organization of the new state.[23] Most of them did not cherish democratic values; still, some of them advocated progressive ideals, such is democracy and the rule of law. One of them was Božidar Grujović, the first secretary of the Governing Council, who came to short prominence at the beginning of the First Uprising. According to his political views, Serbia should have enacted a written constitution with the separation of powers, and proclaimed freedoms and human rights.

22 See also: Stojan Novaković, *Ustavno pitanje i zakoni Karađorđeva vremena – studija o postanju i razviću vrhovne i središnje vlasti u Srbiji 1805–1811,* Nova štamparija – "Davidović," Beograd, 1907, pp. 9-10.

23 Centralism supported the leader Karađorđe Petrović, believing that his power should be unlimited. The second option advocated the decentralization of power, but with broad powers of local leaders, while the third "enlightening" flow was for a moderately limited central body regulated by the Constitution and laws. More detailed: Jaša M. Prodanović, *Ustavni razvitak i ustavne borbe u Srbiji*, Geca Kon A. D., Beograd, 1936, p. 10

Grujović presented his ideas, mainly taken from the Declaration of the Rights of Man (1789),[24] in a document entitled "A Word on Freedom."[25] He intended to publicly read his political program before one of the assemblies in 1805. It was the same year in which he proposed reorganizing the Council's role to reflect a representative body of a highest authority, higher even from that of a revolutionary institution of *vožd* (the leader of the Uprising). The key novelty was the separation of civil and military authorities, in which the leader of the Uprising (vožd) should become *primus inter pares* – one of the 12 elected advisers. A council organized in such a way, following the principle of separation of powers, would prevent the concentration of power and ensure the "freedom of the people."[26] "A Word on Freedom" was written in the form of a declaration and had a programmatic character. It is rightly considered perhaps not as "evidence of the Liberal Democratic tradition,"[27] but undoubtedly one of the founding documents of this tradition that reflect the penetration of liberal ideas in revolutionary Serbia at the beginning of the XIX century. According to some (e.g., Danilo Basta), this text was of great importance in the later development of Serbian statehood: "With his Word, which raised the law, freedom, and security

24 On the influence of the French Revolution on Božidar Grujović's "A Word on Freedom," see: Srđan Šarkić, "Začeci pravne države u ustaničkoj Srbiji," in *Vladavina prava i pravna država u regionu,* Istočno Sarajevo, 2014, pp. 772–774; Momir Milojević, "Francuska revolucija i ljudska prava," *Anali Pravnog fakulteta u Beogradu,* br. 4/1991, p. 383.

25 The text of "A Word on Freedom" was also published in the book: Vladan Petrov, Darko Simović, Mijodrag Radojević (prir.), *Srpski ustavi – knjiga prva, Ustavi Kneževine i Kraljevine Srbije sa ustavnim aktima od Prvog srpskog ustanka,* Službeni glasnik, Beograd, 2021, pp. 55-57.

26 No sources could also give us an interpretation of Grujovic's concept of the organization of power. We assume he felt the assembly would be entrusted with exercising legislative power and professional judges with judicial power.

27 Danilo Basta, "Životni put Božidara Grujovića (Teodora Filipovića)," in *Liberalna misao u Srbiji – prilozi istoriji liberalizma od kraja XVIII do sredine XX veka,* Dragoljub Popović, Jovica Trkulja (eds.), Centar za unapređivanje pravnih studija, Beograd, 2001, p. 18.

to prominence, Grujović sided with the great legacy of the French Revolution, trying to sow that seed, the seed of the liberal-democratic state and free citizen, in the new Serbian state."[28]

Although a former Hungarian student, and then a professor of law at the University of Kharkov in the imperial Russia,[29] Grujović is closer to the liberal French and Anglo-Saxon tradition in terms of understanding law and democracy. "A Word on Freedom" begins as follows: "The law is the will of the people," equal for all, reasonable and just, which all obey. Grujović practically copied Article 6 of the Declaration and the principles of legality, i.e., equality before the law (égalité). The interpretation of law as an expression of natural law is similar to the one that can be found in Montesquieu[30] and the English constitutionalists. In explaining the origin of law, he does not start from the constructivist approach, but from the organicist concept according to which law or the constitution is an expression of the people's spirit, which is close to David Hume and Montesquieu. The task of the law and the constitution is to legally limit the government.

However, Grujović is not consistent in his understanding of the origin of law. In accordance with his legal and theoretical syncretism, he defines the law as an expression of the general will (*volonté générale*), but also of the mind (*reason*) and justice.[31] The law unites

28 Ibidem, p. 29.

29 In the Austro-Hungarian monarchy, persons of the Orthodox faith could not become civil servants. Grujović graduated from the Faculty of Law in Pest (Hungary), but he could not be entered into the list of lawyers.

30 Cf. Basta, ibid, p. 19.

31 One of the first scientific analyzes of Grujović's political and legal philosophy was made only on the eve of the Second World War (Cf. Rade Vl. Radović, "Demokratsko prirodno pravo u političkoj i pravnoj filozofiji Bože Grujovića," *Arhiv za pravne i društvene nauke,* br. 1–6/1940, round 2, book 57, p. 42). Later research is mainly based on the mentioned scientific work: Milovan Ristić, *Ustanički zakonopisac Teodor Filipović (Božidar Grujović),* Prosveta, Beograd, 1953; Samir Aličić, "Pojam zakona u delu Božidara Grujovića," *Zbornik Matice srpske za društvene nauke,* br. 1/2016, Matica srpska, Novi Sad, pp. 815-829.

these interests. By renouncing the acts of absolute freedom, the individual obeys the law, acts in accordance with reason and justice. In that way, the law is a means to achieve freedom, which for Grujović is supreme value (*Liberté*).

> *[...] reason and justice are two halves of welfare. Where there is no reason and justice there is no law. Let us raise and establish in Serbia these two – reason and justice, and make them bold with all our strength so that each force and power shall be subjugated to them. And let this wise and righteous law be our overlord and commander.*[32]

These ideas about inalienable *natural rights, the rule of law and the sovereignty* of the people were radical and revolutionary in the Balkans. According to Grujović, sovereignty is general and indivisible, and its bearer is the people. His understanding of sovereignty is eclectic and inconsistent, because it is based in part on the social contract, but also on rational natural law. The people must submit to a sovereign (abstract) legal norm, which is close to English constitutionalism.[33]

When Grujović talks about the so-called Civil law, he has in mind a citizen, a political and legal entity, which did not exist at that time. The citizen is the antipode to the feudal position of serfs (dependent peasants) in Serbia. In this perfect community of the future, citizens live in solidarity (*fraternité*), in a state governed by the rule of law, where power is limited by law and where the rule of law prevails. The teaching is permeated by the influence of different legal theories, French, German and English legal theory. Also, in "A Word on Freedom" we come across the seeds of the principle of independence of the judiciary, clearly defined principles of constitutionality and legality.

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32 A translation of this text in English was published in the book: Dragoljub Popović, *Constitutional history of Serbia*, Brill, Schöningh, Paderborn, 2021, pp. 241–242.

33 Compare with another research: Rade Vl. Radović, ibidem; Andrija Stojković, ibid., p. 71.

Judges should judge according to law and reason. These principles, as well as the understanding of freedom, stand at the opposing side from the doctrine of absolute monarchy and feudal social relations.

> *"Where there is a good constitution, that is where the law is well established, and the authority is well set up under the law, there is freedom, there is a willingness. And where one or few command at their own will, and disobeying the law do what pleases them, there the country has perished, there is no freedom, no security, and no well-being. There is only banditism and renegade under a different name.*[34]

According to Grujović, it is necessary to guarantee rights, first of all right to life, equality, freedom of property, and to prohibit abuse of power, slavery ("freedom distinguishes us from beasts, and slaves are worse than beasts [...]") and to prohibit breaking the law.[35] Legal certainty includes the prohibition of arbitrariness and retroactive validity of the law. The government must be responsible, and it is the duty of the government to guarantee basic human rights and freedoms. Grujović ends his text with the words – "where there is no freedom, there is no life."

Grujović's declaration of rights, entitled "A Word on Freedom," contains the basic slogans of the French Revolution (equality and freedom) and the principles of the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen. The origin of the highest power is in the people (people's sovereignty); the law is an expression of the general will, equal and the same for all; a written constitution regulates and limits power; rights are inalienable and natural rights, and their protection is the goal of political association.

Unfortunately, neither Grujović read his declaration before the assembly, nor has the integral version of this text been preserved. The interpretation of "A Word on Freedom" is based on a partial docu-

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34 Božidar Grujović, ibid.

35 Compare with Art. 1-2, 4 and 17. Declaration.

ment, only a few surviving handwritten pages. We assume that there were several other elements in the complete version, that would confirm the similarity between the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen and Grujović's text. It is also interesting that until the Second World War "A Word on Freedom" was published only in the first edition of the *Memoirs* of the priest Mateja Nenadović in 1867. His ideas were subversive not only in Serbia, which was getting freed of Turkish pressure, but also in the wider environment, even decades after they were written. The influence of the French Revolution during the First Uprising, after an attempt to make a declaration in the form of "A Word on Freedom," weakened but did not completely subside. The attitude of France towards Serbia also significantly contributed to that.

France, unlike Russia, was not interested in the position of the Serbian people in the Ottoman Empire and the outcome of the First Serbian Uprising.[36] Moreover, there were fears that the fire of the Serbian rebellion would spread, which would endanger their traditional ally – the Turkish Empire. Russia, on the other hand, tried to strengthen its influence in the Balkans, seeing that chance in the First Uprising when it takes the role of a protecting force for the Serbian people. However, Russia had better relations with some other insurgency leaders than with the leader of the uprising – Karađorđe Petrović.[37] Because of that, the Russian diplomacy tried to use his political opponents to bring the uprising under its control. Its representatives in Serbia proposed a collective body, with executive and judiciary powers, which would be the supreme body of the insurgent government. Karađorđe was reluctant to accept such a proposal, so a compromise was made in the constitutional acts of 1808 and 1811. In such a way, Imperial Russia succeeded in limiting

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36 On the policy of France towards Serbia during the First Uprising, see: Dimitrije Đorđević, *Stvaranje moderne Srbije 1800–1918,* Zavod za udžbenike, Beograd, 2018, pp. 56, 67–68.

37 Russia was distrustful of Karađorđe, because it revealed that he had sent a message to France to put Serbia under its protection (1806).

Karađorđe Petrovic's personal power, but also supported his political opponents, who accepted the oligarchic or aristocratic political structure of the new government.[38]

The constitutional movement, conceived with the document "A Word on Freedom," was gradually expanding. The mentioned constitutional acts also show traces of the struggle for written constitutionality. In the next two decades, three hatisherifs (1829, 1830 and 1833) were issued, which guaranteed autonomy to the Principality of Serbia. The French influence would be identified in this period as well, and the July Revolution in France (1830) also contributed to that.[39] In political life, concepts such as the constitution, nation, rights and freedoms that are used as tools in the fight against autocracy of Miloš Obrenović, the leader of the Second Uprising and the Serbian prince, are increasingly encountered.

The strong critique of his political regime, based on the principles of the French Revolution, was directed by the reformer of the Serbian language and orthography, Vuk Stefanović Karadžić in 1832.[40] In his letter to the Serbian prince, he explains his view on the organization of the Serbian state. The key point of his thinking is the sovereignty of the people and the written constitution, which represent a sort of revival of Grujović's political ideals. V. S. Karadžić proposed the adoption of the constitution and the establishment of the principles of legality, respect for basic human rights (equality, freedom of speech and opinion, education…).[41] In the meantime,

38 Stojan Novaković, *Ustavno pitanje i zakoni Karađorđeva vremena – studija o postanju i razviću vrhovne i središnje vlasti u Srbiji 1805–1811,* p. 33.

39 Marko Pavlović, "Odjeci velike francuske revolucije u obnovljenoj Srbiji," p. 726.

40 Read more in: Dragoljub M. Popović, *Prapočetak srpskoga parlamentarizma – klice i preuranjen plod,* Pravni fakultet Univerziteta u Beogradu, Beograd, 1996, pp. 36–37.

41 On the occasion of this letter, we come across interpretations that V. S. Karadžić took care not to mention the French Revolution in his letter, in his words "the spirit of the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen." Although Vuk distanced himself from the Constitution of France, his

the French traveler, writer and diplomat Bois le Comte (1834), who had spent some time in Serbia, offered his services in drafting the constitution in the form of the Draft Fundamentals of the Constitution. The project was based on separation of powers, ministerial responsibility and a bicameral system.[42] Prince Miloš Obrenović was not a sworn opponent of written legal acts, if they could fit his understanding of the ruling power. With the intention of consolidating the acquired autonomy, he initiated the drafting of the constitution, and a little earlier, the translation of Napoleon's Civil Code. Both attempts were unsuccessful, especially the reception of the Code Civil in the Serbian law.

The reason for the adoption of the first constitution was the rebellion against the regime of Prince Miloš Obrenović. Less than a month after the Uprising, in February 1835, the first Serbian constitution ("Candelmas Constitution") was adopted.[43] The Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen, as well as the French constitutions of 1791 and 1814,[44] influenced the content of the 1835 Constitution.[45] One of the most prominent Serbian

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letter was 'French' intoned. M. Pavlović, "Odjeci velike francuske revolucije u obnovljenoj Srbiji," p. 727).

42 More about the Bois le Comte mission: Dragoljub M. Popović, *Prapočetak srpskoga parlamentarizma – klice i preuranjen plod,* pp. 66–69; Marko Pavlović, *Pravna evropeizacija Srbije 1804–1914,* Pravni fakultet, Pogledi, Kragujevac, 2008, pp. 41–44.

43 During the 19th century, it was common in Serbia for important events to take place and for legal acts to be passed on religious holidays as well. The current constitution in Serbia from 2006 was adopted on a religious holiday and that is why it is called the Mitrovdan Constitution.

44 See more: Mijodrag Radojević, "Sretenjski ustav i razvoj političkih ideja i institucija," *Politička revija,* br. 3/2010, Institut za političke studije, Beograd, p. 51.

45 In Serbia, it is almost a rule that important political events take place and legal acts are passed on church holidays. About Candelmas Constitution see more: Ljubica Kandić, "Ustav od 1835. i njegov značaj za dalji razvitak ustavnosti u Srbiji," *Arhiv za pravne i društvene nauke*, br. 1–2/1960, p. 137. Miodrag Jovičić will shake up this understanding, directing our attention to the influence of other constitutional systems: Miodrag Jovičić, "Ustav

theorists, Slobodan Jovanović, explained that this influence was a consequence of the fact that Dimitrije Davidović,[46] the author of the 1835 Constitution, was "a great fan of French constitutions." The similarity of the Constitution with the Declaration is "indisputable,"[47] and this can best be seen in the eleventh chapter, in the provisions on human rights entitled "Universal Rights of Serbs," but also in the provisions on the division of power.[48] Critics say one should be careful with such interpretations. For example, the Constitution provides for a rudimentary form of the parliamentary system,[49] with modest powers of the National Assembly, and the power structure inclines to a specific variant of non-parliamentary legislation.

Knjaževstva Serbije od 1835.," Miodrag Jovičić (ed.), *Ustavi Kneževine i Kraljevine Srbije 1835–1903*, SANU, Beograd, 1988, pp. 37–42.

46 Dimitrije Davidović was born in Hungary in the year when the French Revolution began. Although without a thorough legal education, with some journalistic experience, he became the secretary of the prince's office and participated in diplomatic negotiations during the drafting of the *Hatt-ı Şerif* from 1830 and 1833. As a person of the greatest trust of Prince Miloš Obrenović, he dedicated himself to drafting the constitution, in which he had the help of one commission. Historian Radoš Ljušić believes that Count Bois le Comte had a decisive influence on Dimitrije Davidović, when he was preparing the Constitution. To see: R. Ljušić, *Kneževina Srbija 1830–1839*, Zavod za udžbenike i nastavna sredstva, Beograd, 2004, p. 151.

47 Pavle Nikolić, "Deklaracija prava čoveka i građanina od 1789. i prava i slobode u srpskim ustavima u XIX veku," Jovičić Miodrag (ur.), *Inostrani uticaji na naše pravo,* Srpska akademija nauka i umetnosti, Beograd, 2002, p. 64.

48 Slobodan Jovanović, "Naše ustavno pitanje u XIX veku," *Političke i pravne rasprave I–III, Sabrana dela Slobodana Jovanovića,* Beogradski izdavačko-grafički zavod, Jugoslavijapublik, Srpska književna zadruga, Beograd, 1990, p. 19.

49 Miodrag Jovičić compared the provisions on the organization of the government of the 1835 Constitution 1835, with 1791 Constitution, the charters of 1814 and 1830, as well as 1831 Belgian Constitution. (Miodrag Jovičić, "Ustav Knjaževstva Serbije od 1835 ['Sretenjski ustav'] i njegovo mesto u svetu savremene ustavnosti," Ratko Marković [ed.], *150 godina od donošenja Sretenjskog* ustava, Univerzitet "Svetozar Marković" u Kragujevcu, Centar za marksističko obrazovanje, Kragujevac, 1985, p. 86). Takođe: M. Pavlović, ibid., p, 728).

The influence of the French Declaration, as well as the mentioned constitutions and constitutional acts, is partially disputed in relation to the 1835 Constitution (Sretenje Constitution or Candlemas Constitution) when the provisions on freedoms and rights are analyzed. In a way similar to the Declaration, 1835 Constitution proclaims the equality of citizens, the inviolability of private property, but also personal rights, such as the protection of the individual, the right to a lawful trial.[50] However, there are significant differences, for example, compared to the 1791 Constitutions and the Constitutional Charter. The 1835 Constitution did not contain political rights (freedom of speech, freedom of assembly and association, suffrage), and did not proclaim the principle of people's sovereignty. The omission of these provisions, as well as other solutions within the Constitution, served as arguments for pointing out similarities with other constitutions, and only modest influence of French constitutionality and of the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen.[51]

Despite the fact that the 1835 Constitution was below certain standards in terms of proclaiming and guaranteeing human rights in relation to the highest achievements of contemporary constitutionality – which is attributed to a particular political context (authoritarian regime of Prince Miloš, and adapting the constitution to internal circumstances) – other countries pointed to its connection to the French constitutionalism. The Austrian press claimed that liberal French regulations were not for Serbia,[52] Russian diplomats did not accept this "French paper," and Turkish officials emphasized the "contagious" nature of the Constitution. This opinion was later widely accepted, thanks to the French writer Cyprien Robert, who

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50 Compare: Miodrag Jovičić, "Ustav Knjaževstva Serbije od 1835 ['Sretenjski ustav'] i njegovo mesto u svetu savremene ustavnosti," pp. 96–98.

51 See an overview of these different points of views: Sima Avramović, "Sretenjski ustav – 175 godina posle," *Anali Pravnog fakulteta u Beogradu,* br. 1/2010, Pravni fakultet Univerziteta u Beogradu, Beograd, pp. 55–62.

52 Jaša M. Prodanović, ibid, p. 60.

noted that the first Serbian constitution was "French seedlings in the Turkish forest."[53] The argument in favor of such reasoning is that the flag of France was chosen as one of the state symbols, a tricolor type with the same colors turned horizontally (Article 3 of the 1835 Constitution). Also, certain provisions were literally copied from the French constitutions, such as the provision on customs (Article 106 of the Constitution of Sretenje).

A careful analysis denies the previously stated assessments. Although certain provisions of the French constitutional charters and the Napoleonic Code have been transposed in the constitutional text, other foreign influences are also recognized.[54] The Constitution is stricto sensu a specific cocktail of provisions devised from comparative law. However, considering that it also regulated internal legal institutions based on the frameworks imposed by the hatisherifs, it is also referred to as an autochthonous legal product.[55]

The Constitution, however, was soon suspended under pressure of the great powers. Austria, Russia and Turkey were unanimous in their assessment that the constitution should not be implemented. It did not suit Turkey because it violated the vassal status of Serbia, and it spread "heretical" ideas of the French Revolution towards Russia and Austria, especially those that referred to the anti-feudal order and rights and freedoms. The doctrine of people's sovereignty, embraced during the First Uprising, and expressed in written laws and the constitution of the people gathered in the Assembly, was later the detonator in the explosion of revolutionary events and revolts of oppressed peoples in the Habsburg Empire and Imperial Russia.

53 Sima Avramović, ibid, p. 56 (fn. 72).

54 About these influences in the literature: Dragan Stojanović, "Ustav Srbije od 1888. i ljudska prava," Aleksandar Fira, Ratko Marković (ur.), *Dva veka srpske ustavnosti,* Srpska akademija nauka i umetnosti, Beograd, 2010, p. 273; Sima Avramović, ibidem.

55 Based on the analysis, we conclude that there were three sources of influence on the final appearance of constitutional provisions: ideas and solutions in foreign constitutions, forms of domestic institutions and provisions of the Hatisherif. Cf. R. Ljušić, ibid., pp. 150–152.

2. Intellectual elite and the constitutional question

The Serbian constitutional issue was settled after the enactment of 1838 Hatisherif, known as the Turkish Constitution. According to the manner of passing the international treaty between Turkey and Russia, this act took the form of an organic law, the content of which lacked the system inherent in constitutions: internal relations in the vassal principality were regulated by Hatisherif, which did not have a liberal character.[56] Provisions on the National Assembly and personal rights and freedoms have been omitted, and instead of "the citizen" mentioned in the 1835 Constitution, there is "a subject of the Ottoman Porte." The main goal of the Serbian delegation, which participated in the writing of Hatisherif, was to recognize the rights and privileges of autonomy of Serbian Principality, so it avoided criticising the omission of institutes and provisions of a liberal character.[57]

The intellectual elite, which was only just emerging then, was mostly liberal. France has become one of the most important countries where Serbs have been educated since the mid-19th century. Apart from France, Serbs studied in the Habsburg monarchy and Germany.[58] Bringing valuable knowledge to their country, they were mostly divided into Francophiles (Parisians – *Parizlije*) or liberals, and Germanophiles (*Nemačkari*) or conservatives.[59] This rough di-

56 See more: Mijodrag Radojević, "Ustav Kneževine Srbije od 1838. godine (Turski ustav)," *Politička revija,* br. 2/2010, Institut za političke studije, Beograd, p. 415-416.

57 "[...] in prescribing rights and freedoms, the creators of this Constitution did not noticeably, as the creators of the Constitution of Sretenje, find inspiration in the French Declaration of 1789 and other declarations and constitutions of that time." P. Nikolić, ibid., p. 69.

58 In the face of significant social turmoil (1858), Serbia had about two hundred university educated people (Dimitrije Đorđević, *Stvaranje moderne Srbije 1800–1918,* Zavod za udžbenike, Beograd, 2018, p. 161).

59 Dušan T. Bataković, "French Influence in Serbia 1835–1914: Four Generations of Parisians," *Balcanica XLI – Annual of the Institute for Balcan Studies*, Institute for Balkan Studies, Belgrade, 2010, pp. 99-100.

vision ignores the fact that there were French students who were in favor of conservative ideas, such as Milutin Garašanin, Milan Piroćanac, and later Živojin Perić, and vice versa, students educated in Germany who were liberals. As a rule, the Germanophiles were supporters of a strong state, with an enlightened ruler and bureaucracy; they were advocates for gradual development of institutions in accordance with the spirit of the people. The Parisians propagated the values of the French Revolution. The constitutional movement took two forms. The first, so-called protectors of the Constitution (*ustavobranitelji*), supported by conservatives, gravitated around the prince and the state council, and advocated a constitutional monarchy modeled on German principalities; the others, marked as liberals, were in favor of a new constitution, in which the position of the assembly and parliamentary government should be strong. Francophiles found their place in the liberal movement, and became the bearers of the movement (Jevrem Grujić,[60] Ljubomir Nenadović, Vladimir Jovanović[61]) and advocated the ideas of the French Revolution.[62] Their contribution was not of a theoretical nature, but had a practical effect in the adoption of Constitution (1861 "Transfigu-

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60 One of the politicians at the time, Jevrem Grujić, began his studies in Heidelberg, but after racist comments from his professor about the Slavs, he left his studies and went to Paris. (Jovan Milićević, *Jevrem Grujić – istorijat svetoandrejskog liberalizma*, Nolit, Beograd, 1964, p. 36). Grujic later became an enthusiastic francophone, believing that there are many similarities between French and Serbs, that even Serbs cultivate numerous customs and rights as in France, except that they do not have a written form. (Jovan Milićević, ibid., p. 43).

61 As a prominent liberal, Vladimir Jovanovic strongly advocated that the constitution be based on people's sovereignty and human rights and freedoms. V. Jovanović, "Slobodnjački preobražaj Srbije: Kakav Ustav Srbiji treba," *Zastava,* br. 65-67, 1869; See also: Vladimir Jovanović, *Izabrani spisi,* Službeni glasnik, Beograd, p. 155.

62 Marko Pavlović, "Odjeci velike francuske revolucije u obnovljenoj Srbiji," pp. 729-732. This view is partially accepted in modern theory (B. Milosavljević, D. M. Popović, *Ustavno pravo, treće izmenjeno i dopunjeno izdanje*, Pravni fakultet Univerziteta Union, Beograd, 2009, p. 87).

ration Day Constitution"),[63] which had repealed the Turkish Constitution. In accordance with laws (1861 Constitution), the Constituent Assembly convened and adopted a new constitution in 1869.

The 1869 Constitution did not meet the requirements of the liberal movement, because it had characteristics of a compromise. The National Assembly became an unavoidable constitutional factor, but without full legislative power. New political rights were guaranteed (suffrage, the right to inviolability of home, the right to self-defense), but also, they were limited (e.g. the threshold for using active and passive suffrage).[64] Forms of the Constitutional institutions and other state institutions were partly a consequence of the influence of contemporary French law. The Council of State was established on the model of the French system of administrative justice, and the second house (the Senate) on the model of the Constitution of Louis Napoleon of 1852. The constitution-makers were also influenced by Benjamin Constant's theory of the neutral role of the monarch in the system of government organization. Regardless of its shortcomings, the significance of this constitution is in creating preconditions for the development of parliamentarism.

The 1888 Constitution of the Kingdom of Serbia, proclaimed a decade after gaining independence, marked the culmination of the development of Serbian constitutionalism in the 19th century. The 1831 Belgian Constitution and the French Constitutional Charter of 1830 served as blueprints. A parliamentary system was es-

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63 The three laws (on the National Assembly, on the State Council, the People's Army and the tax) composed an uncodified constitution. In the opinion of Marko Pavlović, this is the first Serbian constitution (*Transfuguration Day Constitution* – Preobraženski ustav), which was adopted independently (Marko Pavlović, "Ustavno zakonodavstvo kneza Mihaila," doktorska disertacija, Pravni fakultet Univerziteta u Beogradu, Beograd, 1989, pp. 256-272 i 354-358; Marko Pavlović, *Preobraženski ustav,* Pogledi, Kragujevac, 1997). In Serbian legal theory, this theory is criticized.

64 See more: Mijodrag Radojević, "Jedan ogled o razvoju srpske ustavnosti – Namesnički ustav," *Politička revija,* br. 1/2010, Institut za političke studije, Beograd, pp. 479-482.

tablished, with organized local self-government, a wide catalog of human rights and freedoms and modern institutions, so opinions were expressed that it was "one of the most democratic constitutions of that time in Europe."[65] Considering that the Radical Party had a great influence on the adoption of this constitution, it was named after this political party. Yet the Constitution was partially different from the 1883 Draft Constitution, in which the introductory words, modeled on the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen, enshrined the fundamental principle of people's sovereignty: "The Serbian people are sovereign and the source of all power."[66]

III BETWEEN STATE SOVEREIGNTY AND CIVIL LIBERTY

At the beginning of the French Revolution, the French poet André Chéniee prophetically remarked that the world would no longer be the same after the French Revolution – "Europe's destiny will change. People will rule with their rights and the people with their sovereignty."[67] Did these words come true? If we look at the modern political map of Europe, we notice realization of Tocqueville's metaphor of two political rivers or contradictory faces of the god Janus – libertarian and totalitarian.

The French Revolution undoubtedly inspired the constitutional development of Serbia, but this influence was partial and limited, less noticeable until the second half of the 19th century. Revolutionary ideas had weak roots in insurgent Serbia, because there were real

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65 P. Nikolić, ibid., p. 74.

66 The similarity of these formulations was pointed out by Milan Vladisavljević (Milan Vladisavljević, *Razvoj ustavnosti u Srbiji*, Politika i društvo, Beograd, 1938, p. 57). This provision was not contained in the final text of the Constitution.

67 Quote taken from the book: Marvina Perija, *Intelektualna istorija Evrope,* preveo sa engleskog Đorđe Krivokapić, CLIO, Beograd, 2000, p. 213 (title of the original: Marvin Perry, *An Intellectual History of Modern Europe*, Houghton Mifflin, 1993).

limitations. The struggle for independence and national liberation were not a good environment for the development of democracy, because strong political power was needed, which had authoritarian characteristics. Austria, Russia and Turkey, which decided the fate of the Serbian people, were distrustful toward any French influence. Serbia was bound by its vassal tributary position, so it could not independently pass the highest legal act that would organize the internal organization of government. Ottoman Empire and other great powers were extremely anti-liberal, so they prevented any attempt to transplant or receive ideas of the French Revolution. In an uneducated society and in one of the poorest countries in Europe, political changes took place gradually and with great problems. Very low percentage of the population knew how to read and write,[68] and primary place for education and dissemination of literacy were Serbian monasteries. The reformer of the Serbian language and grammar, Vuk Karadzic, learned to read and write in the Tronoša monastery.[69]

Although patriarchal political culture, with a powerful ruler and strong administration, was more conducive to conservative political ideas, a liberal political movement also get off the ground. In the second half of the 19th century, there was no "third estate" in Serbia; Serbian society, in which there were no great social differences, was a fertile ground for the values of the French Revolution: egalitarianism, human rights and freedoms, written constitution, division of power and inviolability of private property. All of these become popular not only among the most enlightened class, the intellectual elite, but among the common people. However, the Serbian Revolution, as was the case in other Balkan countries, had to adapt the

68 In the second half of the 19th century, the vast majority of the population was illiterate (96%). Data taken from: Zoran S. Mirković, "Grk Georgije Zaharidis – nesuđeni srpski zakonopisac," *Zbornik radova Pravnog fakulteta u Novom Sadu,* br. 3/2015, p. 1077.

69 The first schools, in the rank of secondary schools and faculties, were introduced after the First Uprising (Great School, 1808, and then the Lyceum 1838).

achievements of the French Revolution to its local conditions.[70]

The idea of a written constitution during the First Uprising, but also political conflicts between the prince and his opponents, led to the first constitution which was a mixture of the principles of the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen and solutions taken from other foreign constitutions. Since the mid-19th century, Serbia had increasingly relied on the Austrian and German legal tradition. However, with the changing geopolitical situation, especially after 1856, when France assumed the role of protecting the Principality, its influence on the appearance of the legal system of Serbia increased again.

An important factor in that process were the so-called cadets – students educated in France, who upon returning back to the country formed a liberal political group. The French understanding of the nation, citizens, democracy, rights and constitutional institutions was increasingly penetrating Serbia. By the beginning of the First World War, these doctrinal influences, in cooperation with other factors, shaped the legal system with a written constitution, constitutionality and legality, parliamentarism, guaranteeing human rights and freedoms and establishing other democratic institutions.

The French Revolution had more far-reaching goals, it changed the political map of Europe, as Hobsbawm notes, "kings are no longer gods on earth," while the Serbian Revolution had a more modest demand at the beginning – national liberation as the primary goal. The keyword, however, in both revolutions remains the same – *freedom*, but with different content.

70 Dušan Bataković, ibid., pp. 93-94 ("Despite differences in historical experience, economic development and social structure, the two countries, France and Serbia, have shared joint efforts to bring the political system into line with the basic provisions of the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen.," p. 95).

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THE MAN WHO ATE DEATH: BORISLAV PEKIĆ'S LITERARY HOMAGE TO TOCQUEVILLE

Milena Pešić

The main goal of this paper is to synthesize two critical views of the French Revolution, which at first glance, with the exception of the object of criticism, provide no basis for deeper connections. These are Tocqueville's observations made primarily in his work *The Old Regime and the French Revolution*, on the one hand, and Borislav Pekić's narrative *The man who ate death* on the other.[1]

Although these are two very different discourses, scientific and literary, and authors distanced by a two-hundred-year period, we find that linking their similar and complementary insights regarding

1 The story *The man who ate death* is part of the collection of short stories *New Jerusalem*, first published in 1988. This story was translated into French in 2005, and won the French "Book of the Day" award the same year. The political activist and writer, Borislav Pekic is considered one of the most important Serbian literary figures of the 20th century. As a liberal thinker and activist, he experienced the consequences of revolutionary (socialist) repression, arrested as a very young man, and as political emigre he lived and worked for much of his life in England.

the character and effects of the French Revolution provides one, if not new, then undoubtedly interesting view to this problem. The basic line of elaboration of the connection between the works of these two authors is the state – society – individual relations.

While in Pekić's case those relations are some of the obsessive themes of his work and the story we are dealing with here, in *The Old Regime and the French Revolution*, we find it in developing Tocqueville's crucial and, above all original, thesis about the political and bureaucratic centralization of the Ancient Regime as one of the key factors that caused emergence of egalitarianism, individualism, as well as the French Revolution itself.

Here, dealing with the real effects and consequences of the revolution in the context of French society and its organization, Tocqueville concludes that sixty years of revolution (1789-1848) reveal that one form of power was in fact replaced by another. According to author, the Old Regime contained a whole set of institutions of the modern age which, since they were not opposed to equality, could easily find a place in the new society, but still provided unusual benefits for despotism.[2]

Administrative centralization, as an important measure of the Old Regime, caused political centralization that destroyed all the mediating structures of civil society that could protect the individual from the coercive power of the state. The royal administration, as a system of bureaucratic control, concentrates all aspects of social, political and economic life under its wing, thus creating a symbi-

2 The new regime has recovered the centralization of power and administration that the old regime had begun. In a way, the Revolution completes the march of the Old Regime. Many reforms that were not achieved under Louis XVI were completed during the Revolution: the abolition of tax privileges, the standardization of weights and measures, territorial reorganization (end of provinces and creation of departments), the creation of the Louvre Museum. See: Noé, Jean-Baptiste. "A Reading of the French Revolution by Alexis de Tocqueville: Continuity between the Old and New Regime." Jean-Baptiste Noé, 2018. Accessed September 4, 2023. https://www.jbnoe.fr/IMG/pdf/tocqueville_et_la_revolution_en.pdf.

otic link between the patronizing state and an individual deprived of meaningful involvement in public affairs and anything beyond egoistic self-interest.

Local freedoms were destroyed, or subverted, local elections were eliminated, the judiciary emasculated. "In doing so, the monarchy leveled society, encouraged democracy and destroyed the power of the aristocracy. Its effects outlasted the old regime, and made it near-impossible for the French to establish a free and stable government after the old regime ended."[3] Thus, already under the old regime, the basis was created for the deviant form of atomizing individualism and unifying egalitarianism further developed by the French Revolution.

> *Because men are no longer tied to one another by bonds of caste, class, guild, or family, they are only too apt to attend solely to their private interests, only too inclined to think exclusively of themselves and to with-draw into a narrow individualism that stifles all public virtue. Despotism, far from combating this tendency, makes it irresistible, for it deprives citizens of all common passions, all mutual needs, all necessity to reach a common understanding, and all opportunity to act in concert. It immures them, as it were, in private life. They were already apt to hold one another at arm's length. Despotism isolated them. Relations between them had grown chilly; despotism froze them.*[4]

Administrative centralization caused the emergence of a new social class and a new aristocracy, that of civil servants in ancient and in new regime. As the author points out, "Administrative officials, who were nearly all bourgeois, already formed a class with its own spirit, traditions, virtues, honor, and pride. It was the aristocracy of the new society, already fully formed and

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3 Kahan, Alan S. "Alexis de Tocqueville", *Major Conservative and Libertarian Thinkers Series Volume 7*, Ed. John Meadow croft, The Continuum International Publishing Group Ltd. London, 2010, pp. 63-64.

4 Tocqueville, Alexis de. *The Ancient Regime and the French Revolution*, ed. Elster, Jon, and Arthur Goldhammer, Cambridge University Press, 2011, p. 5.

drawing breath. It was simply waiting for the Revolution to make a place for it."[5]

Tocqueville was one of the first to perceive the role and importance of the public servants whose network was the backbone of the old and new regime.

> *They are going through all regimes, all coups d'état, all constitutional changes. France experienced eight different political regimes. From this political instability comes the power of the shadowy men who are administrative officials. The danger well perceived by Tocqueville is that the civil service class will take complete control of the country, establishing an administrative despotism that in turn aggravates the consequences of government centralization.*[6]

The protagonist of Pekić's story *The man who ate death,* citizen Jean-Louis Popier embodies both of the above-mentioned phenomena that Tocqueville wrote about. He is, on the one hand, the smallest screw in the bureaucratic machinery that the French Revolution took over from the Ancient Regime, and on the other, he represents an atomized individual who has lost all sense of solidarity and common interest, in the absence of family, social, class ties. Squashed by his miserable position, he was scared of everything and everyone until he reached for the very specific kind of administrative power.

At the very beginning of the story, the motto of the French Revolution "liberté, egalité, fraternité" served to Pekić as an ironic framework for the characterization of a dormant man – hero Popier.

> *There was nothing the Revolution could either give him or take from him. In the early days it probably made him more equal with other citizens than he had been before, and possibly, though I doubt it, freer as well. (...) True, he could say whatever he wished. Not exactly, of course. But he had felt no particular need for the king even before Revolution. And so he could express his opinions at will. The problem was that*

5 Ibidem, p. 64.

6 Noé, p. 3.

> *either he had no opinions to speak of or, out of modesty, he did not consider them worth voicing. Freedom of speech, stemming from the celebrated 'Declaration of Human Rights' of August, did not have the same importance for him as it did for Robespierre, Desmoulins, Danton, Vergnaud or Hebert, the orators of the Revolution. (...) If he ventured to take an evening stroll among the cafes of the Palais Royal, whose tables were rife with talk and conspiracy, he could not but feel that most of acquired Equalities and Liberties did not concern him and that, however enlightened they might be, he personally would benefit very little from them.*

Popier didn't live like most of his colleagues who could afford some small pleasure.

> *(…) Lastly, he could not even enjoy the third advantage bestowed by the new state, that of Brotherhood, because it entailed the concept of sharing and he – all sources concur – had no one to share with. No family, no relatives, no friends, not even people of like mind.*[7]

The Pekić's story follows the time of the so-called power struggles, more specifically the reign of Jacobin's terror. The protagonist Popier works at Revolutionary Tribunal as a clerk who lays down the verdicts in the Protocol, which would later be forwarded as execution order. Popier is precisely part of the bureaucratic machinery that, according to Tocqueville, the French revolution took over from the Ancient Regime, and in this sense it is indicative that his father was also public servant.

The specificity of Tocqueville's understanding of the French Revolution is also manifested in the specificity of its periodization. "On the one hand, he reduced the French Revolution to the sequence

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7 All references from Pekić's novel are taken from the website dedicated to the work of Borislav Pekić: Borislav Pekić. Accessed September 6, 2023. http://www.borislavpekic.com/. For the quotation above see this link: Pekić, Borislav. "The Man Who Ate Death (2nd Part)." Borislav Pekić. Accessed September 4, 2023. http://www.borislavpekic.com/2006/06/man-who-ate-death-2nd-part.html.

1787-1789, on the other hand, he extended revolutionary violence well beyond the period of terror that ran from 1792 to 1794."[8] Tocqueville postulates division of the duration of the French Revolution between a stage of liberty and a stage of equality. The first, "revolution of liberty", lasted until no later than the *journee* 6 October 1789, when the king and the National Assembly were brought from Versailles to Paris by the women of the Faubourg St. Antoine. After that time, it was no longer the liberal revolution, the one that defended the rights and freedoms of individuals. The second stage, "the revolution of equality", lasted from then until 18 *Brumaire*. "These two stages correspond to the two different passions Tocqueville had noted in eighteenth-century France, hatred for inequality and love of liberty. The hatred for inequality had ancient roots, but the thirst for liberty was recent and relatively weak."[9]

Tocqueville had not written of revolutionary dynamics, violence and political upheavals, of Terror, the guillotine, Jacobin messianism, the wars of the Vendée, the shootings in Lyon, the assassination of the king, the ideological war that began in 1792, etc. The reason for this is that, for him, the French Revolution ended in 1789. "The rest is only the consequence of the emergence of democracy, whose exacerbated form goes so far as to erase people."[10] Where Tocqueville stopped, Borislav Pekić continues his narrative in a very compelling, synthesizing way, giving the reverse of the French Revolution a more universal anthropological sense, accentuating certain problems as if he was in collusion with Tocqueville.

By analyzing the features of the Ancient Regime that were

8 "This Tocqueville's periodization of the French Revolution served to demonstrate that violence was the foundation of democracy itself. In doing so, it does not end the revolution in 1795 or even 1815, but it gives the possibility of linking it to all the totalitarian systems of the 20th century and beyond." Noé, p. 6.

9 Kahan, Alan S. *Aristocratic Liberalism: The Social and Political Thought of Jacob Burckhardt, John Stuart Mill, and Alexis de Tocqueville*, New York Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1992, p. 24.

10 Noé, p. 5.

important preconditions for the outbreak of the French Revolution, Tocqueville, in some way, showed the contours of those deviant phenomena which Pekić depicted, by using dramatic accentuation and ironic hyperbolic-grotesque shaping. Having presented the time of Terror, Pekić concretized, with a series of seemingly incidental historical references, the period about which Tocqueville had not written.

The qualities of the protagonist of the Pekić's story are completely in line with the time in which he lives, they are, in fact, formed under the pressure of a social atmosphere of insecurity and fear, and of his profession. Popier was submissive and not less, "surrounded by suspicion, distrust, doubt, fear – the inseparable companions of revolutionary vigilance," he was "paralyzed with anxiety." But, he is, first and foremost indifferent to social and historical events. The author emphasizes that several times in the tale. Even a description of his apartment suggests so: it was "the mansard in the Palas de Justice, from where you could see Paris without seeing Revolution and from where everything had the dark, still, soothing silhouette of indifference."[11] Popier just listened to history. Although constantly in its physical vicinity, immersed in the scriptures, he did not see it.

Pekić explains how Popier, due to the uniqueness of his handwriting, received an offer for a job that he was not allowed to refuse. By linking numerous historical and cultural references, author creates a symbolic description that is at the same time a synthetic depiction, cross-section of the historical moment:

> *Popier's handwriting had what the Revolution required: puritanical sharpness, Roman clarity, patriotic legibility, with none of the flourishes that characterized royalist charters. His penmanship was like a Gothic church, deconstructed down to its spiked stereometric form and reminiscent of the sans culottes' spear, which, during the*

11 Pekić, Borislav. "The Man Who Ate Death (3rd Part)." Borislav Pekić. Accessed September 4, 2023. http://www.borislavpekic.com/2006/06/man-who-ate-death-3rd-part.html.

nights of the September massacres, bore the head of the Princess de Lamballe, and on the day the Bastille fell, the head of its governor, M. de Launay…[12]

The author uses the same artistic procedure to symbolically mark the Popier's position as a crossroads: And so

… he found himself at the magic crossroads between ideas and reality, Philosophy and History, Draft and Deed, and inevitably, seen with a writer's hindsight, between Revolution and Counter-Revolution, at a watershed which at the time lay in the luminous stone corridors of the Revolutionary Tribunal, where the paths forked: one leading to J.-J. Rousseau's 'The Social Contract', 'La Nouvelle Heloïse' and from there to heaven; the other descending down to the dark dungeons of the Conciergerie, then, following the rue Saint-Honoré, arriving at the guillotine at the Place de la Révolution and from there disappearing below ground.[13]

Describing the Popier's problems in a job he did mechanically, Pekić says:

He entered the personal details of the condemned persons without going into the particulars, adhering to the substance of the guilt. It took considerable intellectual effort to summarize the counter-revolutionary crimes which grew in number as the Revolution became more successful. The Protocols were legacies of the ancient régime, and their sparse columns had not been designed for such an epidemic of anti-state sentiment.[14]

Author's ironic comment suggests both: that the practices of revolutionary court has extremely overcome its heritage from the Ancient Regime, and that Popier could notice problematic nature of "antirevolutionary crimes", but he choose not to see, as well as many other facts of his work.

12 Pekić, Borislav. "The Man Who Ate Death (1st Part)." Borislav Pekić. Accessed September 4, 2023. http://www.borislavpekic.com/2006/06/man-who-ate-death-1st-part_03.html.

13 Ibidem.

14 Ibidem.

Tragic and grotesque tale precisely begins with the inadvertent Popier's ingestion of the verdict. The hero broke the rules of his work routine, which consisted of a constant rush, and began to eat his lunch instead of writing death sentences. Caught by the unexpected arrival of his boss, he wrapped his lunch in one of those papers and hid it in his pocket. Attending, afterwards, the talk of two revolutionary officials about the problems with the slow work of the guillotine and the increasing number of liquidations, he forgot what he had done and took the judgment home in his pocket. Realizing what he had done, he was terribly scared of the consequences, so he ate proof of that.

Later, having imagined the image of the woman he has saved by eating her death sentence, Popier felt joy stronger than fear, because it was his carelessness that was responsible for that image. Thus began a series of transformations that the dormant citizen Popier will go through, during his mission. The hero's motivation for its starting remains the puzzle which reader needs to interpret. The author provided to us only a number of his assumptions, which are "permissible, but not sufficient to explain how non-descript little scribe (…) dared to chew up the court's death sentences and arbitrarily revoke sovereign will of the people, the natural course of revolutionary justice and decisions made by those both more powerful and wiser than he."[15]

The author's assumptions about the psychological motives for Popier's action provide an idea of what a man he could be like, but not about what he has become.

> *It aroused a sense of pity that had been rendered dormant by the marginal and even innocent part he played in the mechanics of the Reign of Terror. Perhaps, too, there was the defiance*

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15 Pekić, Borislav. "The Man Who Ate Death (3rd Part)." Borislav Pekić. Accessed September 4, 2023. http://www.borislavpekic.com/2006/06/man-who-ate-death-3rd-part.html.

> *of someone anonymous and innocent against a fate that made him an accomplice of the guillotine, the co-executor of acts which were decided by others.*[16]

After doing it once, half-consciously in panicked fear, the protagonist ate another death sentence again, now feeling the sweet taste of his own will. Being indirectly in the service of the Terror of the Revolution, through the combination of ironically shaped circumstances, this dormant man — being outside history, has been finally awaken. Soon the swallowing of death sentences became his daily activity and need. But, he also became aware of the responsibility of his choice. Whom to save? His own mind and decisions were tormented by fears and doubts. He was undergoing a series of involuntary transformations, until he became the righteous savior of many death row inmates, a hidden and unknown hero, whose head, finally, found its place under a guillotine.

Pekić's story is a story of power, a story of metaphorical opposition of so-called "small man" to a system of unscrupulous power during the Reign of Terror. Reconstructing the life and destiny of the Revolutionary Tribunal clerk, author develops a kind of genesis of this relentless power, thus shaping his own vision of the French Revolution and the individual in it.

However, the position of the protagonist Popier is not as simple as it seems at first glance. He was not an ordinary small man, he was a Tocquevillian screw in the mechanism of the bureaucratic machinery, inferior man intoxicated by equality, and a newly awakened sense of free will and personal choice. The complexity of the hero's motivation for saving death convicts is especially interesting, and as we have seen, the author leaves that question open.

It seems to us that the need of the hero to satisfy his personal will, the desire for dispensing justice, and the feeling of power that results from that, were a much stronger motivation than compassion

16 Ibidem.

for the convicts. Finally, freed and intoxicated by the experience of his own power to decide whether to save or not to save a life, he became dependent on it. In the continuation of the story, the author gradually reveals the egoistic and pathological back of Popier's mission, by entering the consciousness of the hero. The feeling of omnipotence that appears in him is a sign of the losing a sense of reality, and the need to constantly feel and feed it has become more important than the concrete people that should be saved from death.

The news of the imminent end of the regime of Terror did not make Popier happy, he was horrified by the possibility of losing death sentences for eating. Paradox is obvious. Instead of being made freer by his secret resistance, heroism and humanity, the hero actually succumbed to slavery in his own need to feel the power. In this mental state, Popier became careless in choosing the death sentence, and therefore was soon revealed. As in the case of eating of the first verdict, the author ironically shapes set of circumstances. The hero revealed himself by choosing to eat the verdict of one who did not want to be saved from the guillotine, because he believed that such death could provide him paradise. The meaning is clear, imposed salvation is also a form of repression.

With the development of the chronicle of Popier's mission, his reflection on his choice of judgments also grows. Genesis of universal transformation can be traced from the Popier's internal changes to the grotesque external ones. Physical change seems to be accompanied by a growing sense of power.

> *He forwent meals in order to be able to buy a small item of clothing that would distinguish him from the motley group of clerks and scribes around him. (...) But the biggest change was in his comportment. He got lost his stoop, by which a scribe could always be recognized in the corridors of the Tribunal. His myopic eyes, ruined by reading by candlelight, now had round metal-framed glasses and a cold sharpness of insight, which was so piercing that it left even the righteous helpless. Before, he had been withdrawn and reserved. And he re-*

> *mained so. But in a different way. If before his transformation he had been the taciturnity of someone who had nothing but his powerlessness to hide, now it was that of someone who did not want to show his power.*[17]

The fact that Popier's transformation manifested precisely in the Popier's physical similarity with the most significant figure of the French Revolution, Maximilian Robespierre, has a strong ironic meaning in the story. Robespierre's nickname "Incorruptible" was testifying of his invincible character and unscrupulousness. In the story, a historical fact became an ironic allusion to ideas whose ideologists sowed death, by advocating virtue. A small man who ate death begins to look like the most powerful man who sowed death, precisely because of the power related to those deaths, although these two powers were of completely different kind.

Synthesis of two dominant structural layers of the tale, the historical and the fictional one, served Pekić to reconstruct the drama of the French Revolution and to unveil the ruthless struggle for absolute power. It stems from the deviation of the original progressive ideology whose tenets were for the purpose of achieving full freedom and human rights. Popier's deviant attitude towards his humane endeavor, his loss of limitation and awareness of the primary importance of a particular man in it, can be interpreted as an ironic reference to one of the most problematic features of revolutionary rule. It erases all restrictions in choosing ways and means of realization of the achievement of revolutionary goals.

Pekić's artistic approach to the French Revolution created a parabola with anthropological meaning, whose purpose is to show atypical kind of power that arises from the man's free will, and as such, leads to resistance and rebellion, but often in a sort of tragic farce. That farce is perpetuated by the appearance of the double-fig-

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17 Pekić, Borislav. "The Man Who Ate Death (5th Part)." Borislav Pekić. Accessed September 4, 2023. http://www.borislavpekic.com/2006/06/man-who-ate-death-5th-part.html

ure Robespierre – Popier. In the striking drama of the finale, the author will accompany the original Robespierre and his copy Popier to the guillotine.

By intertwining external circumstances and internal psychological motivations of the protagonist of the story, Pekić showed how the inability to give the right meaning, direction and control to the freedom easily turns into its opposite. Inability to handle freedom is one of the thought centers of the story, and it was precisely that problem with his compatriots that worried Tocqueville. Popier thus becomes a character-paradigm, the embodiment of Tocqueville's conception of the deviant form of individualism.

The whole interconnected process of democratization, centralization and bureaucratization in France is characterized by a kind of "inorganic individualism.[18]This specific kind of individualism, according to Tocqueville, arises from imbalances of equality and freedom. Although the concepts of freedom and equality were so conjoined in democratic doctrine to seem necessarily compatible, Tocqueville was one of the first political theorists who recognized the tension in their relations. According to him, the interplay between freedom and equality determines the character of democracy, that is, what democracy stands for and can become. He claimed that the viability of democracy requires equilibrium of freedom and equality, and he was aware that in democracies the passion for equality is stronger than the passion for freedom, so he was concerned with the ways that equality can limits political freedom.

> *You can satisfy the taste of men for equality, without giving them liberty. Often they must even sacrifice a part of the second in order fully to enjoy the first. Consequently, these two things are easily separable. The very fact that they are not intimately*

18 Kuehnelt-Leddihn, Erik von. *Liberty or Equality: The Challenge of Our Time*. Mises Institute, 2014, p. 52. According to Leddihn, this inorganic individualism evokes the spectre of collectivism. "The French Revolution was the real and *conscious* overture to this age of collectivism, control and combined (horizontal and vertical, societary and governmental) pressure," p. 67.

> *united and that the one is infinitely more precious than the other would make it very easy and natural to neglect the second in order to run after the first.*[19]

In order to understand why democracy in France was harder to reconcile with freedom than democracy in America,[20] Tocqueville turned to the history of the French Revolution, and in 1856. published "The Ancient Regime and the Revolution"[21] with intention "to point out the events, errors, and miscalculations that led these same Frenchmen to abandon their original goal, liberty, and narrow their desires to but a single wish: to become equal servants of the master of the world."[22]

The relationship between democracy and freedom becomes largely negative in France. "Government more powerful, and far more absolute than the one the Revolution overthrew, then seized and concentrated all power, suppressed all the liberties," and "put useless imitations in their place." This government "applied the name 'popular sovereignty' to the suffrage of voters who were unable to ed-

19 Tocqueville, Alexis. *Democracy in America: Historical-Critical Edition of de La Démocratie En Amérique*. Eds. Eduardo Nolla, and James T. Schleifer. Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 2010, p. 878.

20 The complex conceptual relationship between equality and freedom has even led Tocqueville to controversy of the postulating institutional genealogy of individualism and equality. There are "three different and contradictory concepts of individualism and equality of conditions all uneasily cohabitating, without any indication as to how to reconcile them in a general theoretical framework. American equality of conditions, a strong leveling spirit of democracy and majoritarianism, tyranny of the public opinion and so forth, heralding what the future has in store for Europe (see: Jankovic, Ivan. "Das Tocqueville Problem: Individualism and Equality between Democracy in America and Ancient Regime," *Perspectives on Political Science*, 45:2, 2016, p. 128). In France, equality of conditions and individualism were not developed as the outgrowth of social and economic modernization but rather as a sinister effect of government regimentation and centralization, while in England equality of conditions was a product of the absence of feudalism and the caste system.

21 Kahan, 2010, p. 61.

22 Tocqueville, 2011, p. 4.

ucate themselves, organize, or choose" and "it applied the term 'free vote' to the assent of silent or subjugated assemblies", and deprived the nation of the most precious achievements of the revolution – "the ability to govern itself, of the principal guarantees of law, and of the freedom to think, speak, and write."[23]

In such a state of democracy, "the actual equalization and leveling took place in unison with individual self-isolation and separation and estrangement of some groups from the others."[24] Although equality of social conditions, as the absence of any fixed social hierarchy, could unite members of different classes, it could lead to opposing political results – what Tocqueville called individualism.

Tocqueville's use of this term is different from its contemporary connotation, and also it differs from egoism. "Individualism is a considered and peaceful sentiment that disposes each citizen to isolate himself from the mass of his fellows and to withdraw to the side with his family and his friends; so that, after thus creating a small society for his own use, he willingly abandons the large society to itself."[25] According to him, it is usually at the beginning of democratic societies that citizens show themselves most disposed to separate themselves; "having reached independence only yesterday, are intoxicated with their new power, they conceive a presumptuous confidence in their strength, and not imagining that from then on they might need to ask for the help of their fellows, they have no difficulty showing that they think only of themselves."[26]

Tocqueville was deeply concerned about the connection between "seemingly contradictory pair" of political equality and despotism, "which are 'two things [that] mutually and perniciously complete and assist each other."[27] Despotism, by its nature sees in

23 Ibidem.
24 Jankovic, p. 128.
25 Tocqueville, 2010, p. 882.
26 Tocqueville, 2010, p. 885.
27 Gençoğlu, Funda. "Why Alexis de Tocqueville is not a republican but a liberal," FLSF (Felsefeve Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi), Autumn, issue: 26, 2018.

the isolation of people the most certain guarantee of its own duration and it ordinarily puts all its efforts into isolating them. As he explained, "equality places men side by side, without a common bond to hold them. Despotism raises barriers between them and separates them. It disposes them not to think about their fellows and makes indifference into a kind of public virtue. So, despotism, which is dangerous in all times, is to be particularly feared in democratic centuries."[28]

That is the reason why liberty was particularly necessary in those times. "By occupying citizens with public affairs, it draws them out of themselves. By making them deal in common with their affairs, it makes them feel their reciprocal dependence."[29] Liberty, on the contrary, tends constantly to draw citizens closer together, showing them in a practical way the tight bond that unites them. The free institutions are therefore particularly necessary to those who are led by an instinct constantly to separate themselves from each other and to withdraw within the narrow limits of personal interest.

Tocqueville describes equality not only as equality of social condition, but also as a passion. Its legitimate form rouses desire in all human being to be strong and respected. Nevertheless, this passion tends to elevate little and week to the rank of the great and strong, and to fuel desire in them to drag other down, to their level.[30] In Pekić's story, both negative consequences of the passion for equality act. That passion took Popier beyond the limits of the reality of his own powers and took him right under the guillotine; it also lowered his fellow citizens below every level of humanity.

In Pekić's story, Parisians accuse each other to the revolutionary government for insignificant things, they rejoice as they watch

pp. 364-365. Accessed September 4, 2023. https://dergipark.org.tr/tr/download/article-file/612363

28 Tocqueville, 2010, p. 889.

29 Tocqueville, 2010, p. 887.

30 Lom, Petr. *Alexis de Tocqueville: The Psychologist of Equality*, European University Institute, Fiesole Fi, 1999.

the public executions of former powerful people, collect as souvenirs pieces of clothing, hair and personal belongings of death row inmates, and women with braids in their hands follow public trials, screaming frantically for execution of convicts.

From the beginning of the tale, just as he wanted to follow Tocqueville's thesis that democracy is corrupted by indifference to freedom, the author emphasizes the extent to which Popier was indifferent to freedom. He had no opinions to speak of, he did not consider them worth voicing, even freedom of speech did not have any importance for him. He had no friends, not even people of like mind. The only relationship between Popier and other people shown in the story is the fear of his colleagues that his change and resemblance to Robespierre arouse in them.

> *The change could not go unnoticed. He may not have wanted to show it, but he had. He owned it and felt it. With all his being. With his dark blue jacket, pale blue wig, round glasses, and stiff, unapproachable manner, didn't Popier look more and more like the Incorruptible Being?*
>
> *Yes, damn it, he really did!*
>
> *I noticed this a long time ago and wondered how he dared.*
>
> *He wouldn't, if he couldn't.*
>
> *No, I wouldn't ...*
>
> *But since he could ...Since he could, people have begun being afraid of him. Initially, except for his manner, which befitted neither his occupation nor his standing, nor Popier as they knew him, there was no real reason for such fear. But soon it became imperative to find one. And it lay in the general conviction that Popier was a secret agent of the Public Safety Committee."*[31]

31 Pekić, Borislav. "The Man Who Ate Death (5th Part)." Borislav Pekić. Accessed September 4, 2023. http://www.borislavpekic.com/2006/06/man-who-ate-death-5th-part.html

The author's commentary in which he ironically compares the revolutionary time and the time of the old regime, in the continuation of the story, further confirms our thesis about Pekić's artistic collusion with Tocqueville.

> *Here too, revolutionary customs differed from the ways of the ancient régime. Secret police agents used to be despised and were to be avoided. Now, however, people were scrambling to be in his company. It was dangerous to avoid him, because it looked suspicious. Virtue had nothing to fear, Robespierre declamed.*[32]

According to Tocqueville, "yet while equality may allow for immediate identification and pity, 'a general compassion for all the human race', equality also drives human beings apart. For more than ever, it focuses the individual's attention on himself." Among the several reasons for this increased self-attention is a philosophical one.[33] As Tocqueville explains, it is philosophy's demand of the individual to use "his own judgment as the most apparent and accessible test for truth"[34] which rises skepticism and doubt. "In such times of skepticism, Tocqueville warns, 'men ignobly give up thinking at all' and may 'easily fall back into a complete and brutish indifference about the future.' Such a state, says Tocqueville, 'inevitably enervates the soul, and relaxing the springs of the will, prepares a people for bondage.'"[35]

The transformation of Popier's criteria for selecting a death row inmate to save from the guillotine has an ironic treatment in the story, which in a way resonates with Tocqueville's thesis of emphasizing the importance of personal judgment and disorienting skepticism, especially having in mind that Popier after all doubt decided for a state of inspiration. In the beginning, for the sake of impartiality, he ran-

32 Ibidem.
33 Lom, p. 17.
34 Lom, pp. 19-20.
35 Lom, p. 21.

domly took death sentences that he would eat, and later, for the sake of fairness, he left the choice to the dice. When he began to dream in nightmares those he didn't save, he realized that he had to take full responsibility for his choice, so he introduced the principle of choice based on facts about convicts, because "anyone who reaches for power must first believe in himself and in his own judgment." However, given that "no fair decisions could be made on the basis of unreliable and variable facts. Only he could find the answer and for that he had to let his own inspiration, his instinct guide him (…) Even Fouquier-Tinville raised charges on the basis of his own revolutionary instincts, not facts. Admittedly, the charges were mostly wrong and at the very least exaggerated, inappropriate to the nail, but the power of the Revolutionary Tribunal's State Prosecutor was of quite a different order than his own. It killed, whereas his restored."[36]

The first death row inmate rescued by Popier was the poor spinner. She was convicted because of misinterpreting the homophony of the French words "king" and "spindle", more precisely, she declared in the presence of patriotic witnesses that what she missed most in her life was the spindle/king. In court, she defended herself by claiming that she had said not king, but a spindle. The court took the view that a spinner needed a king more than a spindle and condemned her to death.[37] She was declared a counter-revolutionary because of spindle, to which the guillotine resembled, and which Popier dreamed of in nightmares, after swallowing that first verdict and many times after that. Although he had never seen it in reality, he knew it looked like a spindle.

Thus, through its different functions in the story, and the metaphorical turning of the wheel of Terror, a connection is made to the

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36 Pekić, Borislav. "The Man Who Ate Death (5th Part)." Borislav Pekić. Accessed September 4, 2023. http://www.borislavpekic.com/2006/06/man-who-ate-death-5th-part.html

37 All the other accusations that sentenced people to death were also, like the first one, unfounded, unjust and absurd, creating a more concrete representation of paranoid society in which so-called revolutionary attention rules.

complex symbolism of turning and spinning of the spindle. The story begins and ends with this powerful leitmotif. At the end of the tale and Popier's life, In front of the executioner, he recognized the same spinner he saved, and became sure that the guillotine does indeed resemble a spindle.

The term "spindle" can be meaningfully related with the etymology of the word "revolution", which was certainly the intention of the author. The word "revolution" comes from a late Latin term *revolutio* – "to turn around," which is a literal translation of the Greek term *anakuklesis* and a derivative of the classical Latin word *revolvo* – "roll back, revolve."[38] The old notion of revolution Tocqueville understood right as a cyclical change within a limited number of possibilities, and it is akin to the notion of revolution as a concrete, violent events. Thus, the entire, large model of political change presented in Tocqueville's main writings may be figuratively called a "Tocquevillian spiral."[39] Kuź uses the metaphor of a spiral "since with each turn the modern wheel of regimes approaches the 'soft despotism,' thus the scope of the regime change in each cycle becomes smaller and the administrative power increases. At the 'soft despotism' point the turns of the wheel of regimes stops and only a complete change of the political paradigm can reestablish the movement of history."[40]

Tocqueville uses the word revolution in two meanings that are closely tied to his two notions of democracy.[41] The first notion treats

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38 See "Revolution (n.)." Online Etymology Dictionary. Accessed September 4, 2023. https://www.etymonline.com/word/revolution, and Kuź, Michał. *Alexis de Tocqueville's Theory of Democracy and Revolutions*, Lazarski University Press, Warsaw, 2016, p.80.

39 Ibidem.

40 Ibidem, p. 82.

41 "Democracy, as we have established, is for Tocqueville a complex term. The complexity is a result of the fact that democracy for Tocqueville combines the feature of a regime and those of a social and anthropological principle. For Tocqueville, democracy as a theory is the goal of a grand historical movement; a point this movement approaches but never reaches. Therefore,

a revolution as a slow, long lasting social process, the global democratic drive towards greater equality of conditions, while the second concept denotes the concrete, violent event that carries a political change. These smaller revolutions are for Tocqueville the "epiphenomena of larger processes; they are the way in which gradual, slowly developing changes are translated into the political present."[42]

At the ironically shaped end of the story, faced with imminent death, Popier felt neither fear nor anger with the poor spinner, the first who he had saved, and who had hit him with a stone because he looked too much like Robespierre. He did not notice a thing, "squinting through his round glasses as he watched the approach of the guillotine from the Place de la Révolution. He was right. It did look like a spindle."[43]

The way the story ends leaves the possibility of interpretation in the key of the Tocqueville cyclical change of political regimes. It remains unclear why the hero went to his death so peacefully. In our interpretation, he was calmed by the cognition that his dangerous and painful hunger for death sentences would finally end, hunger that was insatiable just like the restless passion for equality in Tocqueville's vision. According to him, imagination of equality is an imagination that is both constantly fed and constantly unsatisfied; the more equal social conditions, the greater will be the longing for equality.[44] Staring at the guillotine that looked like a spindle to him, Popier could not realize something that remains out of his reach, which certainly tran-

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the notion of democracy only makes sense when it is tied with the notion of revolution. Indeed, given that modern descriptions of democracy define it as a stable state rather than a social process; we need to stress the importance of the notion of revolution in Tocqueville." Kuź, p. 20.

42 Ibidem, p. 57.

43 Pekić, Borislav. "The Man Who Ate Death (6th Part)." Borislav Pekić. Accessed September 4, 2023. http://www.borislavpekic.com/2006/06/man-who-ate-death-6th-part.html

44 As Lom explains: "Tocqueville's account of democratic equality is Hobbes' dream come true: a world of restless desire after desire ending only in death," pp. 24-25.

scends his death and the time in which the cycle of change has just begun, in the direction of achieving freedom and equality.

With an ironic inversion in the final point of the story, Pekić sends his protagonist to his death, as a final liberation from the burden of a life dedicated to liberating others and achieving personally understood justice and equality. Like Tocqueville, Pekić also saw how crucial the balance between freedom and equality would be for the character of future democratic societies.

Although critically minded, Tocqueville did not deny the value and importance of the French Revolution. With its appearance, people of the liberal spirit began to influence historical events with their teachings and works, something imagined in the theory of philosophers, a different form of order came to life, although he clearly saw all the negativity of the gap between theory and practice. Borislav Pekić made the great political narrative of that gap.

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There are few historical events that aspired to such a radical and comprehensive change of reality as the French Revolution. Not only has the Revolution itself been positively evaluated but also all of its consequences have been accepted without critical assessment. Too often have the dark sides of the Revolution been interpreted simply as exaggerations and a deviation of basically good ideas. The critics of the Revolution have often been pushed aside, marginalized, and labeled as "obscurants."

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The French Revolution is not a meteorite which came out of nowhere and, to the surprise of the French people, hit the Bastille in Paris on 14 July 1789, thus opening the prison doors. But, rather, it was an epochal event and a culmination point of a political-historical development which had started, at the latest, with modern times, or, as we now say, with "modernity," and which – by promoting the reign of parties, democracy, human rights, Enlightenment, anti-clericalism, and atheistic humanism – had a crucial influence upon the fact that the world then came off its hinges, and that the European civilization of Christian imprint lost its strength.

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L'incendie de Granville par les Vendéens
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