

LIBERALISM. LOOKING FOR FREEDOM, JUSTICE, BETTER MAN, AND THE WORLD...¹

Daniel DOBIAŠ²

Abstract

The ideas of dignity, freedom, and moral will supported by the power of human reason represent the essential nucleus of the desire to be recognized as a human being in the intellectual tradition of Europe. The synthesis of the spiritual horizon of moral qualities and rational consciousness with the elements of an antique (Roman) republic, emancipation of oppositional ideas towards royal absolutism, defence of religious tolerance, and freedom of faith, J. Locke's political philosophy, and A. Smith's modern economic theory has gradually acquired a systematic form of conscious effort in constitution social reality with man as an autonomous, morally responsible being, seeking to realize (not just) freedom as a natural right. The above mentioned characteristics limit and at the same time allow the reflection of stabilised conceptual structures in the evolution of liberalism, where the individualistic ethos constantly oscillates around the attempts to accept social, moral, and collective identity transcending the individual dimension of existence.

KEY WORDS: Liberalism, freedom, rationalism, the idea of moral will.

INTRODUCTION

The pursuit of civilization cultivation, weaved over centuries of an ancient human dream of *regnum homini*, has many forms. In the arena of historical experience, we are witnessing a very interesting phenomenon, which is represented by the formulation of a vast number of theories and ideas of uninterrupted continuity of progress towards creating a new man, a better world or an equitable society. The tendency of man to acknowledge their own value, or of the people, things and ideas in which man adds value, is its immanent part. In the intellectual tradition of Europe, the ideas of dignity, freedom and moral will, supported by the power of human reason represent the core nucleus of the desire to be recognized as a human being. They limit the designing parameters for a mechanism that explains and enables the way the logic of life is working, while providing the limits for the systematic conceptualization of a political (ideological) agenda, respecting dignity and freedom as the essence of humanity.

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² doc. PhDr. Daniel Dobiaš, PhD. Department of Political Science, Faculty of Arts, UPJŠ in Košice, e-mail: daniel.dobias@upjs.sk

1 IDEA OF SEEKING A BETTER PERSON AND THE WORLD IN THE INTELLECTUAL TRADITION OF EUROPE

“So I succeeded, I sent all the passions, concepts, forms of faith as the guilty before the court; I have urged my mind to set its titles and honours on a clear day; I believed here, did not believe there, always bewildered by the urge, the motive, correctness and incorrectness, the reason for the moral obligation, which is the rule and what sanction; until I, demanding evidence and looking for it everywhere, lost all the feeling of conviction; in short, tired of disappointment in despair, I gave up my moral question ... “

W. Wordsworth

The general belief that a person respecting the autonomy of another rational being is also a subject of the moral law, has been supported by the explicit thematization of the notion of human dignity and freedom in the metaphysical sphere in the ideas of I. Kant (1724-1804). The postulate of liberty is determined in Kant's belief by a general moral law, the subject of which is man as the purpose of its own (a noumenal being), able to freely direct their will in accordance with the general requirements of practical reason. Autonomy of will is the highest principle of morality, freedom is its characteristic, and means the will to act independently of the external causes that determine it...

Kant's statement of man as a target on its own could in some sense be regarded as a positive basis in relation to the central theme of our reflections on the methodological (just individuals, not society may act) and ethical (respect for the freedom, dignity, and value of each individual) individualism as pillars of liberal political theory. In the domain of political and cultural superstructures, this fact has fully reflected the dynamics of the development of political and legal reality by the new formulations of the categories of freedom, justice, power, equality and human rights, amalgamated by an institution of private ownership from the New Age under the influence of the Renaissance and Reformation responses to Feudalism. In the field of theoretical justification of the category of private ownership, in connection with the discrepancies between the feudal structure and the emerging capitalist forms of the social process, the views of J. Locke (1632-1704) are particularly noticeable. He denied the medieval doctrine that ownership is linked to power, drawing on the idea of permanent rules of natural right, including private ownership. He considered it an unchangeable basis of morality, resulting from the natural rights of an individual given to them since birth, therefore the individual cannot be deprived of them. Lock's concept of

individual freedom - by the words of L. Blaha - was “primarily directed against feudal restrictions on free trade,” when it appeared appropriate to defend the widest possible “individual freedom in the interest of strengthening the institution of market exchange over the declining feudal institutions” (Blaha: 2009, p. 137). For this reason, ownership is independent of power, the State as a kind of entrusted administration is obliged to create the best conditions for its protection so that its content is accessible to the rational knowledge of every rational person with the right (freedom) to fully develop their unrepeatable individuality.

The new socio-political alternative, reflecting the premise of the unchangeable qualities of human nature, which are the basis of equality (the premise of human dignity) and the right of each individual to free self-determination, eliminated the demands of the factors of inborn origin, inheritance or goodwill of the monarch to an exclusive solution of the forms of governance within the European political formations. On the contrary, by adopting the methodological imperative of human dignity, whose implementation is represented by the respect of individual human rights and freedoms (followed by the extension of the original republican and monarchist principles of the representative element and the system of separation of powers), not only created a prerequisite for resolving a historically determined controversy between republican and monarchist demands, but gave birth to one of the key paradoxes of modern political science and practice where, on the one hand, a person exists as endowed with a set of rights which even the highest political power (life, freedom, property) cannot deprive them of without their consent, but at the same time we are unable to explain why history and present is overwhelmed by examples of their extreme violation!

The synthesis of the elements of the ancient (Roman) republic with a monarchist perspective and the spiritual horizon of moral qualities and rational consciousness gradually gained a systematic form of conscious efforts to establish social reality with man as an autonomous, morally responsible entity seeking to realize (not just) freedom as a natural right. It is a metaphysical variant of the concept of liberalism, which appears in “political debates ... sometime at the turn of the 18th and 19th centuries, and refers to the earlier developed socio-political streams, especially those that followed the ideas of J. Locke (1632 - 1704), A. Smith (1723 - 1790), and F. M. Voltaire (1694 - 1778) “(Novosád: 1993, p.7). However, we may see the real beginning of liberalism as the emancipation of oppositional ideas to royal absolutism (its culmination was the conclusions of the English Glorious Revolution in the year 1688), the defence of religious tolerance and freedom of faith (J. Milton’s book “*Areopagitica*” of the year 1644), the political philosophy of J. Locke, and the modern economic theory by A. Smith. In his famous work “*The Wealth of Nations*”, he has attempted to show that

the best motive that leads people to act for the benefit of others is production and trade in their own interest. When we leave people without the influence of a central authority to enter the market with the intention of producing as much goods as possible, making the most money or finding the right job, management, they will be guided by an “invisible hand” to act in their own interest, thus also for the benefit of others (a baker or a bricklayer do not produce out of their good will, but they follow their own interest, and this being the goods that others want to have).

When analysing the fundamentals of liberalism as a coherent theory, we must remember the utilitarians (the “Bentham School”) who were trying to assert that the main motive of human action is to make egoistic efforts “pleasant”, so the government should encourage the greatest possible benefit for the greatest possible number of individuals. The main representatives of the English utilitarianism of the 19th century include J. Bentham, J. Mill and his son, J. S. Mill, who, along with H. Sidgwick, had an ambition to add to the original dimension of utilitarianism (maximizing the benefits linked to increasing the production) the elements of a distributive character. The representatives of counter-nostalistic neo-utilitarianism of J. Harsanyi, R. Hare and P. Singer attempted to revive this form of utilitarianism in the mid-20th century.

Parallel to the utilitarianism theory (in opposition to the European continental interpretations of the liberal doctrine), a platform of the followers of egalitarian liberalists was formed in the United States to concentrate on identifying and addressing the negative effects of the functioning of the market mechanism and the flow of capital (poverty, economic inequality, minority status). We mean the names like L. Hobhouse, F. D. Roosevelt, and J. Dewey, who wrote the following on classical liberalism in his perhaps most important piece “*Reconstruction of Liberalism*”: “Old liberalism, with its emphasis on the emancipation of the individual, brought about the defeat of the rigid, absolutist feudal ancien régime the rational, science and technology-based social forces ... But it soon turned out that it is not about general emancipation of all individuals, but only some groups of individuals opposing others and at their expense ... The original (Enlightenment) ideal of liberalism has not been fulfilled ... because the old antagonism between the individual and the State, if it had once been socially functional, was philosophically erroneous, and the human individual is an immanently social being” (Dewey: 2001, pp. 32-33). Thus, the term “liberal” has acquired a considerably different (geopolitical) content than in continental Europe, where its libertarian aspect (property rights and economic freedom) has been emphasized. The turbulent development in the context of “the struggle between the two streams of one tradition” (Kis: 1997, p. 275) is personified in

such liberals as W. Beveridge, J. Rawls, K. R. Popper, J. M. Keynes, on the other hand, R. Nozick, F. von Hayek, L. von Mises, or M. Friedman may be included within the advocates of libertarianism.

These connections suggest that although the concept of liberalism was probably used by B. Constant³ in the sense of endeavouring to preserve the rights and freedoms of the Great French Revolution, liberalism has never acquired the character of a unified political and economic doctrine, rather, it constituted an open, internally differentiated set of ideas and the means for their implementation. In the reflection of stabilised conceptual constructions that are behind the historical metamorphoses in the evolution of liberalism, we thus may speak of classical individualistic (aristocratic) liberalism with a strong individual cult, democratic or social liberalism, connecting basic democratic principles with the social State and positive discrimination, or of neoliberalism, idealizing the mechanism of free competition and private initiative. The liberal element analysis also offers the opportunity to distinguish the diffusion of political (political freedom) and economic (market freedom) principles, i.e. to understand liberalism as an economic concept applying the principle of a self-regulatory market to all of the societal phenomena, and political liberalism as a way of applying the principles resulting from this economic concept into political life.

As we have already indicated, the socio-practical dimension of liberalism is based on the intellectual tradition of radical Renaissance humanism, coupled with the optimistically shaped vision of human well-being, with the struggle to form a person's personality and dignity of man within a better world, the basic parameters of which he acquires through upbringing and education, with the ability of a sovereign individual to think rationally (critically) and act responsibly (morally). The seeds of reflections on the radical emancipation of individuals may be found with the theoreticians of natural rights and social compact, who departed from the notion of the natural state - the freedom that everyone has to use by their own will to preserve their own substance. For T. Hobbes, the basis of the natural state was represented by the anarchist inclination of the unlimited selfishness of man (the war of all against all), J. Locke understood by it the full freedom to direct one's actions and dispose of their possessions (person) under the natural law, J. J. Rousseau considered it to be irretrievably lost happiness where man was not governed by anyone, limited by duties and without difficulty

³ Henri Benjamin de Rebeque Constant (1767 – 1830), a native of Lausanne in Switzerland, was one of the most prominent representatives of individualistic liberalism in France. Freedom was perceived as the victory of individuality over despotic power, but also over the masses claiming the enslavement of the whole in the name of the application of the principle of majority. He considered public authority the best political solution to the relationship between power and the citizen that would guarantee freedom of private enterprise and citizens' safety.

satisfying their modest needs. According to D. Hume, “this natural state must be regarded as a pure term, resembling the golden age ... except that the former is described as being full of war, violence, and injustice, while the latter is referred to as the most generous and most peace-loving state that can be imagined ... Impressions that give rise to this sense of justice are not natural to the mind of man, but they emerge in an unnatural way based on customs” (Hume: 2008, pp. 27-31).

In accordance with the ethos of the Renaissance, the Reformation, and the Theory of Natural Rights, the middle-class members (mercenaries, craftsmen) were gradually becoming the bearers of the proclaimed optimistic perspectives for whom the critique of monarchy, absolutism, and the traditional spiritual elite was the regulatory ideal of creating a “new world” and an expression of their own political and economic interests. Bourgeoisie with its increasing powers, ambitions and wealth valuable and its increasing economic independence with its new morality that attributed the economic system (industry, capital flow, economic freedom, rationality) a much higher value than until then prevailing value orientations, violated the social hierarchy. The political, economic and moral attractiveness of the proposed rules for the “in-noble” layer, followed by their codification by legal acts, caused a huge increase in the number of people who were trying to improve their living conditions and enabled the formation of a social layer described as “people” represented by a parliament where man - citizen acquired the status of a universal enemy of any tyranny and human rights defender. These facts point to the fact that on the path to universal significance, the individualistic ethos of liberalism constantly oscillates around the efforts of some liberals to accept social, moral, and collective identity transcending the individual dimension of existence⁴.

The transformation of modern societies, in accordance with the normative idea of human nature, rationalist universality and voluntarist individualism, legitimized the idea of a liberal political order with the rules allowing individuals to dispose of all the freedom to which they as rational beings are entitled. However, efforts to establish freedom and (i)rational belief in its value, have begun in theory and practice to be translated into many ambiguities, often acquiring the character of things and processes of opposite significance. It has been shown that respect for the individual, trust in the ability of ordinary people

⁴ The theory of natural rights, reflecting the arguments of J. Locke, T. Jefferson, H. Spencer, and later the attitudes of the liberals of the 20th century, M. Rothbard, R. Nozick, J. Narveson, and D. Rasmussen, was not accepted by some liberal philosophers and economists. These were mainly representatives of utilitarianism (J. Bentham) and modern economy (L. von Mises, M. Friedman) who refused to recognize natural rights as a reason for any regulation and intervention of the market mechanism.

to make rational decisions on their lives, and the elimination of hostile attitude towards tyranny (violence) may not necessarily be self-evident, since there have always been and will exist people with the tendency to live their lives as they want (freely) and also certain groups of people who will try to use the power to compel others to act (think, feel) differently than they themselves want.

The structural element of the effort to create a social order that could be reconciled with freedom is therefore the dichotomy of freedom and power in the history of political thought and practice. As I. Berlin shows, the history of human society has shown that in sharp social and political struggles the demand for the expulsion of individuals under arbitrary authority (the church, the king, the nobility, the State) played a key role, so the phenomenon of liberation and the associated problems were transformed in the form of struggles to limit cruelty, the authority of the sovereign, often possessing absolute power derived from religious, hereditary or family claims: "Concepts and actions are not understandable until they are includable in the context of the affairs dividing the people who use them ... the greatest of these is an open war between two systems of ideas, bringing different and contradictory responses to the long-standing central question of politicians - the question of obedience or compulsion. Why am I (or anyone else) to be obeying anybody else? Why am I not to live the way I like it? Do I have to obey? If I do not obey, can I be coerced by force? By whom, to what extent, on behalf of what and for the benefit of what?"(Berlin: 1993, p. 22).

Every claim of freedom explicitly or implicitly contains the idea that an entity is exempt from something to act or become a person. The roots of the concept of freedom may be found in the classical Greek phrase "eleutheria", corresponding to the political and legal status of a free citizen with a clear moral awareness of what needs to be done. The concept of freedom concentrates on the fundamental interest of radical humanism, for which the individual is the highest, the central value of society as a self-determining, morally accountable being, able to solve the problems of real life without the intervention of external power just based on their own reason. The traditional (liberal) struggle between freedom and authority (the search for the substance and limits of power that a society can legitimately apply to an individual) resonated to the end of the Enlightenment in the form of efforts to create political institutions so as to allow a limited governance, in which the executive power specifically is limited by law, by the constitution and braking political institutions. And the rise of ideas related to the effort to democratize political regimes at the beginning of the 20th century, the issue of the use of freedom, concentrated on the necessity of transition from the old to the new middle classes, from the national to the social State, but also

to the sovereignty of the people, to the representative principle and the equality manifested by universal suffrage.

In political theory and practice, these facts have led to the transformation of the original meaning of the concept of freedom into an unlimited space, liberated from any specific links (abstract freedom). In the name of that type of freedom, historical bonds, binding norms, beliefs, traditions are abolished, and freedom is perceived as a basic human need that enables man to live through consciousness in openness to the world through one's own knowledge of mediating the basic structural and functional elements of the world into the human world. This foundation of man means the fundamental freedom - as a living being man is originally "given" and must "implement" oneself. We are arriving at the already proclaimed knowledge that freedom, like any other (political) virtues, may be regarded as an inevitable, real, but not unlimited experience of human life, expressing and respecting the need for human self-understanding and dignity! It is one of the fundamental, highly privileged human needs, the existence of which is connected with the possibility of acting in a humane way, but it also allows us to behave according to our own, often egoistic, moves.

One of the responses to such a situation may be the claim that freedom should not at all be classified on the basis of what people really want or what others are deterring them from. By removing the forces and obstacles preventing the fulfilment of desires and creating a situation where people would not seek for anything they cannot achieve, their freedom would in fact be increased, but to assure it in this form, it would be possible to use and justify the coercive force that would prevent the formation of inappropriate desires, or encourage the formation of appropriate desires. The notion of freedom that leads to such a conclusion cannot be satisfactory from our point of view, as it results in the paradoxical situation already pointed out by J. J. Rousseau and some utilitarians, that it is possible to coerce people to be free and to use the desire of slaves to meet their needs. The basic condition of freedom is therefore the absence of self-interest, which could lead to various forms of abuse of State power against the people: "Let the motherland be the common mother of all citizens ... let the government leave enough participation to all citizens in the public administration to feel that they are at home here, and let in their eyes the laws always guarantee a common freedom. These rights belong in all their beauty to all people; however, the evil will of the rulers does actually change them into nothing, even though it may appear that it does not violate them. The law that is being abused serves the powerful one as an assault weapon, and also as a shield against the weak, and the pretence of general welfare is always the most dangerous broom against the people... The greatest evil has already occurred by the fact that it is necessary to

defend the poor and abound the rich. Laws are manifested in their full force only where there are no extremes; they are equally powerless against the treasures of the rich as they are against the poverty of the poor. The former circumscribe them, the latter escapes them; one makes a hole in the linen, the other one slips through it out” (Rousseau: 1989, p. 191).

It is the law which is the organizing principle, following the idea of the individual will into the social order system and taking into account the indicated context. In the theory and practice of liberalism, there exists no contradiction between freedom and the law, the law is considered (as with J. Locke) as an essential condition of freedom: “Freedom means to be free from oppression and violence of others, which cannot be where there is no law, but it is not freedom for everyone to do whatever they want to, rather, freedom is to do and to deal with one’s person, deeds, property, and all his possessions as the person wishes, if the laws which rule that person permit the person to do so, and not be subjected to fiat of another person, but be free to employ his own will” (Locke: 1965, p. 165). The aim of the law is not to abolish or restrict, but to preserve and extend freedom, because where there is no freedom in the absence of law. Every limitation of freedom naturally and necessarily results from human coexistence; the standard rules of life are created by the legislative power established in society; the requirement of the most even distribution of restrictions results in the necessity of equal restrictions on freedom for all. In the context outlined, the rule of law is the first step towards freedom, a step that brings the idea of freedom to the idea of equality.

The relationship between freedom and authority, reflecting the long tradition of defending reason and the rational principle of sovereignty, requires, as the liberals say, the creation a superior entity (government) that is in a relationship with its citizens and guarantees the system in place through State authority. The need for coercive force arises as a result of conflicts of individual interests and the coercive role of the State presupposes the protection of individual rights to do certain things. People join together to preserve their lives, freedoms and assets, they create a State, and voluntarily subdue to political power, or rather, they assign the collective power to implement the natural law (“*lex naturalis*”). Under this concept, as interpreted by Hobbes and Locke, people understood the discerned general rule, which commands man to act in a way that preserves the basic conditions of his life. The absence of obstacles that may prevent a person from exercising the right to do something freely or refrain from doing so may be transformed by law into the form and the binding nature of one of these options. The legal role of the State (theory of natural law) lies in the protection of fundamental human rights, or in the right to punish those who violate this law,

because where there is no common government, there is no law, and there is no justice.

Freedom as equality before the law (promoted by the State) is complemented by the equality of rules that people voluntarily abide in their mutual relations. The principle of the extension of equality to the rules of morality and social behaviour, together with the equality of general rules as laid down by law, is the only kind of equality that admits freedom and, at the same time, creates inequality of, for example, material property. However, to meet the requirement of equality before the law, it is quite sufficient that people are approached in the same way, notwithstanding the fact that they are different. The ultimate justification for the power to impose the power of the delegated power is the necessity of such a force if a certain order is to be maintained and the consequent interest of all on the existence of such power: "The assumption of political value ... must be the view of an authority having the power to enforce itself... That authority must have authority; that is, it must be recognized as legitimate one way or another... In order for a legitimate government to exist, there must also be a legitimization story that explains why it is possible to use State power to exert pressure on one group of citizens and not another, and to allow people to restrict the freedom of others in just that way, not another" (Williams: 2011, pp. 153-154). The legitimacy of the political regime is then deduced from how "it can mask its own substance, or to what extent it is able to conceal the mechanism of its own functioning" (Cohen, Arato: 1994, p. 265), or how subordinates take the power of others over them. We need the State to eliminate possible abuse of freedom, while we need the freedom to prevent the abuse of the State power. The area of satisfying basic societal needs therefore, in modern liberal democracies, falls outside the sphere of market economy, it belongs in the dominance of politics and law - the constitutional framework of protective institutions guaranteeing indirect, impersonal intervention, which is a basic condition of the absence of arbitrary power, a condition of freedom!

The difference between our power or the ability to act in a certain way and ordinary non-interference in our acting also establishes a very important platform for the diversity of political (ideological) orientations, representing the theoretical basis for justifying the content and exercise of political power. Understanding the essence of freedom as non-interference is characteristic of a political right-wing arrangement that considers freedom and equality as opposing ideals, and bases its concept of freedom on the idea of man as a morally legitimate owner of himself (self-sufficiency), of a free State limiting its interventions to a minimum degree (*laissez faire* free market economy, the State being just a night watchman). This platform implies the belief that not only do people own themselves, but also on

the basis of equally strong moral rights, they may become sovereign owners of a potentially unlimited, unequal amount of terrestrial resources whose legitimate origin guarantees protection against expropriation or limitation. By linking the self-ownership and uneven distribution of terrestrial resources, an inequality in status or property arises, and any attempt to promote equality to the detriment of another person is morally illegitimate, it is an unacceptable violation of human rights.

Again, the Left operates with the idea that freedom is more than mere interference, and prioritises equality at the expense of freedom, since the preference of the Left for all values is justice, requiring equality. The basic argument is therefore the need to recognize the basic principle of some sort of equality in status and to refuse self-ownership due to the inequality of the status and property that it leads to. Ensuring equality of status and at least not too much inequality of ownership (no one has the exclusive right to use their own capabilities, for example, to use power to harm others or refusing aid) is the excuse of an active State that interferes, redistributes, and gives people the ability to do what they do not, even if, let's say, they have the skills needed to do so.

Again, we are struggling with a certain paradox here: it in fact seems that even the concept of liberalism does not represent an exhaustive empirical basis for the actually exercising the right to "be free" in the sense of freely using (effectively and legally) the opportunities that we could not otherwise use (do). Notwithstanding the fact that we perceive the essence of freedom through the prism of the individualistic version (freedom to act as much as one wants, as rational and moral self-direction), or through the prism of the political-legal version (freedom as the guaranteed right to do certain things), we still did not quite completely respond to the requirement of a humanly dignified life! How in fact is the idea of the dignity and freedom of man compatible with the idea that we are (naturally?) social beings?

In the context outlined, we see the phrases of economic prosperity, generated growth, and unregulated competition as conceptual "opiates" that, in particular, for doctrinaires of (neo)liberalism have acquired the character of a religious idol. The source of worship is the belief that unrestricted competition (free market) maximizes economic progress, which makes the world an oasis of peace and abundance. It is not just that there are many aspects that create a competitive mechanism (political, social, moral), but also the fact that the scope and content of the conditions in which free trade is implemented today varies considerably from the conditions under which it had been formulated by his original theorists. We mean in particular the emancipation of economic activity from the national

(political) framework (globalization), when protectionism becomes an empty phrase because of the transfer of productive activities to foreign countries!

From the previous considerations we may see that the genesis of liberalism can be perceived as an experimental space for the application of the ideas of liberty, humanism, individualism, economic progress, natural human rights or religious tolerance. The reflection of justice, one of the most important values of the development of European civilization, has been considered as the highest ontological, gnostic, moral and political ideal since the beginning of the formation of systematic political science (along with the idea of the good). The basic platform of understanding justice is historically derived from the philosophical idea of human abilities to morally transcend the actual reality (just as we tried to show in the reflection of freedom), from a truly free, morally responsible action that does not come from violence or ignorance. We transcend the interpretation of what it is and we come to its metaphysical core - the issue of the existence of a universal criterion according to which it is possible to distinguish what justice is, what it should be as the highest virtue, or what it requires, is also good (correct)! The interpretation of justice in itself poses in fact the problem of its moral value, expressing the correct relation of man to the universality and the people to each other.

However, the positive value content, related to the attained civilization level, represents justice as an exclusive virtue, the exercise of which depends on the power relations. The essence of such an understanding of justice is its interconnection with power, assuming authority, political and legal space as a condition of subjective moral competence of an individual. The ability to achieve a state of perfect harmony, not to succumb to slavery of instincts and passion, to rule over itself, has already led in ancient polis to the crystallization of the universally accepted concept of unity of ethical, political, and legal elements in the creation of a sane social reality: "We do not establish our communities with the aim of having one state of great happiness, but the whole community was as happy as possible ... in such a community we would first find justice ... not that we would make happy just a few people in it, but the whole community" (Plato: 2009, p. 108). With a small scale of the State, the exercise of morality and compliance with the law (an organized form of justice) was inevitably linked to the harmonization of the interests of the whole and of the individual.

In particular, the ancient Greek philosopher Plato has shifted his thoughts on justice into a plane reflecting the idea of unity of the cosmos, in which all things have their functional place and does not live only for itself. Objectivizing the interconnection of the supposed universal order with human significance was for Plato represented by a political space, where justice is the expression

of the correct state corresponding to that function and position in the whole. The connecting factor between space and man is represented by the community (*politeia*), the functional and structural unity of all parts in which a person to become what that person is supposed to become, must reasonably be aware of his exact place. The principle of “*giving everyone what belongs to him, what is his*” becomes the starting point and the objective of political knowledge, from which the various forms of State arrangement (constitution) are derived. Since, according to Plato, justice in man is the equilibrium position of the virtues of the individual components of the soul (the superiority of the nervous and decisive rational component), what is justice in the soul is the constitution in the State and the order in the cosmos. It is the highest virtue, the art of giving everyone what is his own, what he is entitled to have, thus one of the many thought modifications of the distributive justice that Aristotle later developed and that became an important part of the Roman legal science. At the turn of the 5th and 6th centuries A.D., even the Emperor Justinian characterized justice as “*a constant and unwavering will to give to all what belongs to them*”; similarly, in the first theological systems of Christian patristics, the interpretation of justice took the floor as the right relation of man to universality (universe) and people to each other.

When the thoughts of the will of the people as a lawmaker came to exist (the theorists of Roman law, Marsilius of Padua), the basic platform of understanding justice has shifted to the prospect of securing peaceful human existence through a compact made by free citizens. Classical liberalism has reduced justice to the function of a contractual relationship between individuals, which determines the quality of their mutual behaviour, of exchange, and is the result of their conscious choice and acceptance. In the arena of ideological disputes, justice has gradually changed to the demand that people get what belongs to them, what they should get not because it belongs to them, and not because it would be nice to give it to them, not because it would be polite or wise. They should get it because justice is in this context very closely linked with duty, with what the moral point requires that we do for each other through political and social institutions. Since the middle of the 19th century, we have come to grips with the notion of social justice as the core value of these institutions and the highest priority in defining the principles under which we should live.

The notion of social justice in the search for optimal mechanisms for redistribution of goods has always raised a great deal of doubts among liberals; even some classical liberal economists considered it a potential threat to the spontaneous game of forces determining the character of the rules of the market order. Using the government’s coercive power to fairly distribute the results of

competition would inevitably lead not only to deformation of the game under the same rules, but also to the destruction of individual freedom and the creation of a base for a centralized (totalitarian) society. The search for opportunities to oppose the State's laxity and its interfering with the life of the society was dealt with, for example, by the Dutchman Bernard de Mandeville. The only way to bring spontaneous order and co-operation into society was for him the market ("*Fairy Bee*"). According to F. Bastiat ("*The Laws*"), economic laws are sufficient to make individuals solidary to set up a society for the benefit of all, and similar reasons for slashing the role of the State may be found in Charles Dupont-White's "*Individual and the State*" (1856) or Eduard Laboulaye's "*State and Its Borders*" of the year 1863. The negative experience with economic regulation in the absolutist monarchies continued to act as a catalyst for consideration of the need to apply the laws of the free market economy to the principles of policy management.

We may call the merging of the ideals of liberalism and democracy the revolutionary transformation in political theory, which, as G. Sartori points out, has taken place since the mid-19th century, when in particular A. de Tocqueville left the pre-liberal importance of democracy and gave it a modern meaning of liberal democracy. He divided his original concept into two parts: "Equality in accordance with liberty has been included by him in democracy accepting liberalism, included equality hostile to liberty into socialism to which he has included the non-liberal part of democracy" (Sartori 1993: p. 375). However, according to Sartori, the linkage (absorption) of liberalism to democracy caused distraction of their own characteristics, which resulted in a number of discrepancies: Is liberalism a theory and practice of liberty or the power of the bourgeoisie (the doctrine of some who have power to act), or is the theory and practice of constraint imposed on the power of the State (the doctrine of freedom as not put limitations on all)? What is the status of freedom in the logic of the idea of democracy? Is liberalism a historical part of the development of democracy, or is modern democracy part of the development of liberalism? Were the original liberalist theorists (Locke, Constant, Montesquieu) the proponents of economic freedom, free trade, survival of the fittest, or liberalism (freedom) for them meant political freedom, rule of law and constitutional State?

In analysing the liberal and democratic elements in liberal democracy, we should therefore, firstly, separate the diffusion of political (political freedom) and economic (market freedom) principles within liberalism. Consequently, if we consider liberal democracy, recognize the value of a democratic ideal as the ideal of liberty, or when thinking about liberalism and democracy separately, to perceive the democratic ideal from the position of its return to equality among

people. Indeed, democratizing means to demand more social equality and economic prosperity, therefore liberal democracy procedurally links freedom of liberty and equality of democracy, equality through freedom, never the other way round!

Power in democracy stems from the interests of the individual and takes into account the moral emphasis of the same value of all individuals. As we have shown, despite the explanations offered, democracy does not always go hand-in-hand with liberalism and automatically to mean freedom as one of the rights that generally establishes tension between a negatively understood concept of freedom (no one can prevent anyone by employing legal means to become someone or something) and a positive notion of freedom (man is free to something only if he has the ability and opportunity). The relationship between the vision of political (freedom) and social (equality) rights is also problematic, which puts the basic orientation of politics in the context of the classical doctrine of democracy (belief in the ability of each individual to understand the essence of political decisions based on rational argumentation in realizing the ideal of the good, through elected representatives who meet the will of the people) into a totally different light. For example, Alexis de Tocqueville, in his *“Democracy in America”*, highlighted the fact that the radical implementation of democratic mechanisms can even lead to extremes. Unlike many who expected the gradual development of equality to go hand in hand with the ultimate destruction of the possibility of tyranny in the world, he understood that the democratic principle, if not developed, tends to reach the previously unexperienced despotism, indicating a fundamental paradox of democracy - equality of conditions is compatible with tyranny just as well as it is compatible with freedom!

Interpretation of democracy and freedom in Tocqueville’s vocabulary is indeed full of ambiguity, as was also pointed out by R. Aron: “In most cases, Tocqueville refers to democracy as a state of society rather than a form of government. Democracy is the opposite of aristocracy... It is essentially defined by the negation of the aristocracy, the disappearance of privileged orders, the elimination of differences in the states, and the gradual tendency towards economic equality, to the uniformity of life “(Aron 1992, pp. 15-19). So, in the context of a modern, democratic concept of freedom, people are demanding (vague) rights (how far reaches what pertains to myself?), while at the same time choosing independence, the most expressive manifestation of freedom in the sense of choosing one’s own destiny. The love of independence, one of the fundamental consequences of equality of living conditions, according to Tocqueville, also creates a tendency to accept simple general ideas of equality of all, and such a platform means the ideal material for the emergence of despotic power (totalitarian ideology). In

fact, sovereign power produces citizens according to its will, it deprives them of their freedom, so freedom can be beautiful and dangerous at the same time!

In the theoretical and practical context of regulatory ideals and social institutions embodying the principles of liberalism, we can distinguish between several meaningful shades in the context of the thematised ideological lines at the beginning of the 20th century. Significant modifications to the original liberal ideas occurred especially after the First World War, when they were enshrined in the paragraph wording of the democratic constitutions (laws) and created the prerequisites for their consistent fulfilment. But all this changed as a result of the great economic crisis (1929-1933), which made the antagonism of the two opposing political (value-minded) orientations of Western democracy and totalitarianism sharp, with a strong tendency to take into account the rationale of applying rational arguments in the dispute with irrationally based theories. After World War II events, a new perspective for the development of liberal concepts and the intellectual progress of traditional liberal values culminated in the streets with the ambition of the so-called social liberalism for the functioning of the State, with the obligation to ensure equal opportunities, to ameliorate the consequences of economic inequalities and to expanding the space for the productive implementation of individual freedom. From the liberal assumptions, there also arose disputes over the character of modern theories of justice where the platform of the supporters of the autonomy of the individual, human rights and the Kantian ethics of moral duty (deontological theories of justice) collided with the concepts of ethical consequentialists, for whom the highest value is social prosperity for as many people as possible.

In the second half of the 20th century, liberalism thus regained the status of a relevant thought stream based on a political and moral ideal, enabling the development of specific (political, religious, ethnic) communities within a nation built on respect for an individual, his ability to develop his own identity in a life-supporting continuity of their own opinions as well as the opinions of their critics. Efforts to revitalize the epistemological and moral foundations of liberalism created a positive platform for the activities of some politicians (E. Boyle, H. Schmidt), bringing extraordinary productive attempts to address the normative foundations of human interactions based on the rejection of utilitarianism (especially Anglo-Saxon liberalism) and formulating the principles of fairness on the basis of the compact (contractualism). Critique of some aspects of the theory of democracy was elaborated by J. L. Talmon (*Origins of Totalitarian Democracy*), I. Berlin also gave an exemplary interpretation of liberal views in his book *Two Concepts of Liberty* (the value of choice, of individual freedom derives from a radical pluralism of values). R. Dworkin introduced the theory

(“*Taking Rights Seriously*”) of a sequence from the arguments for equality of consideration and respect to the arguments advocating equality of the means and rejection of equality of prosperity.⁵

Symmetry of rationality and morality is characteristic of J. Rawls, the author of “*Theory of Justice*” (1971), “*Political Liberalism*” (1993), “*Law of Nations*” (1999), and “*Justice as Fairness*” (2000). He presented in them, in particular as a counterpoint to the dominating utilitarian conceptions, his own alternative view of the issues of social justice, equality, human rights, and democracy. In doing so, he departed from revitalisation of the ideas contained in well-known theories of social compact (J. Locke, J. J. Rousseau, I. Kant), defining contractualism as a suitable method for creating and observing the principles of justice and conceptualizing central ideas (the original situation, the veil of ignorance) of his own theory of justice as fairness.

A sharp response to Rawls’ understanding of justice and the most systematic expression of libertarian principles is the notion of justice as authorization by R. Nozick (1938 - 2002). In his most influential work, “*Anarchy, State, and Utopia*”, he presented a rather radical idea of the moral doctrine of individual human rights as a basis for the assumption of justice, especially (following Locke’s interpretation of private ownership) of the right to hold and transfer property. For Nozick, justice is tied to the realm of ownership, meaning respect for the right of people to own themselves, their right to own property, and to freely dispose of what belongs to them. Things (food, computers, medicines) are created by the combination of human abilities and nature (earth, rocks, energy resources), they are always the property of somebody who created them by their work or someone who paid for their work. Strictly in the spirit of the liberal doctrine, Nozick postulated the idea of property rights as a result of an act of primary appropriation, production or exchange, when the property has the nature of the owner’s right to exclusive control of the given physical resources. Only a form of a political organization (state) that does not protect anyone’s natural, properly acquired rights and does not interfere with the distribution of goods (only individuals have the right to own and transfer property) was morally justifiable by him. For this reason, he perceived any assumption of the justice of distribution in accordance with the relevant model as an unjustifiable restriction of human freedom, and we may rank him among rigorous opponents of the model principles of justice.

⁵ The idea of individualistic enlightenment rationalism, on the contrary, rejected communitarists by questioning the institutional framework and the culture of democratic states. These theorists include A. Mac Intyre, M. Sandel, Ch. Taylor, who oppose an approach emphasizing the rights and individuality of an individual, hold the position inspired by the Aristotelian-Tomist tradition of the authentic community, accepting the shared "good" and "value orientation" as the basic rules of coexistence.

The ideas of classical liberalism were revived by F. A. Hayek (1899-1992) criticizing the revisionist liberal concepts of social justice and the welfare state. The idea of social justice (its reflection, especially in the second part of the trilogy "*Law, Legislation, Freedom*", was called "*mirage*", a sort of confusion or misunderstanding of its true meaning. Justice is, according to him, the attribute of the act that we attribute to the actor, to man, only man can act equitably or unfairly, never a society: "... Just the human behaviour may be called just... The bare fact or state of affairs that no one can change may be good or wrong, but not just or unfair. Applying the term "just" to circumstances other than human action or the rules that lead him is a categorical error "(Hayek: 1991, p. 34). He strictly distinguished the general concept of justice as the attribute of morality (the principle of evaluating specific human actions) from the concept of social justice (distribution of wealth and goods among people). Hayek's idea of justice reflects the evolution of traditional moral values, of universally valid rules of conscious human behaviour, and the idea of social justice is an illusion of sharing the results of mutual interaction of individuals in the market because it is not the result of the will of an individual actor.

An argumentative, clearly decipherable analysis of the problems of contemporary societies as moral - political issues, reflecting the traditional oscillation between socially and individualistically oriented tendencies within liberalism is offered by the theory of the open society by K. R. Popper (1902-1994). Through his life and intellectual output, he participated in the creation and practical implementation of the scientific and humanistic atmosphere on a global scale, based on the identification with critical rationalism as a basic attitude of life and value orientation. In constructing the basic parameters of the theory of open society, he departed from a model situation creating the space for constituting of the environment as a mode of coexistence and coordination based on the values of individual freedom, equality, and justice, the starting principle of which is a rational individual as a self-determining, morally accountable being of inherent freedom. Therefore, according to Popper, the new and only possible faith of an open society is humanism "as faith in man, faith in reason, liberty and brotherhood of all people, and faith in equality in justice" (Popper: 1994, pp. 166-167).

With a little irony we could say that nothing is more abominable than what seems clear and unambiguous. In attempting to abstain from the infinitely complex conditionality of the construction of the world order and the future of mankind, the question arises as to how to harmonize the generally valid and acceptable humanitarian programme with the forces that determine the political agenda on a global scale. The dilemma that we are repeatedly suggesting is the

theoretical foundation of ideological asymmetries (including liberalism) to which the justification of the free conduct of some at the expense of the freedom of others is associated by the fact that working for one's own benefit is not against the naturalness of human society if we respect the condition that the rights of another person are not violated (H. Grotius). The society as a random product of individual wills (interests) has begun to be understood as a natural model guiding exchange (trade) relations, and the political space has begun to acquire the character of an economic space, the only restriction of which is whether or not someone has or has not the ability to exchange. This created the vision of naturalizing the abstract way of social regulation which culminated in the moral legitimacy of organizing political (social) order on economic principles and (liberal?) perceive the category of civil society⁶ as an unrestricted market, involving all people, allowing for crossing the borderline among individual nations.

In the context of our line of developing the argument, we have come to the conclusion that the promotion of market values intended to individual decision-making in a competitive environment into a social position that is intended for collective decision-making can never fulfil the idea of civil virtues requiring cooperation and competition! In particular, the specific tradition of individualism, considering an individual to be the exclusive reality and the measure of all evaluations deprives, in our opinion, a person of any social or cultural context and, ultimately, posts his or her core value outside society. In liberalism, it is thus possible to understand a person without reference to other people, without belonging to community, people, nation or culture - in a nutshell, autonomous entity as a morally and rationally independent being is in liberalism in its essence a non-social being! This claim is primarily based on the "legitimate right" of man having rights that are contained in his or her naturalness and the existence of which does not depend on the creation of any political or social institution (government). Above all, there is freedom as the right to do everything I want until my freedom does not restrict the freedom of others - a desire whose hypothetical boundary

⁶ According to M. Gbúrová, the concepts of citizen, citizenship, civil society are most often associated by civic identity, whereas "from the functionalist perspective, the term citizen reflects the aspect of individuality, the concept of citizenship expresses a civilized (especially public) way of integrating individuals into society. The term "civil society" means the side of collectivity, but collective in the sense of society as a developed structure of social institutions and organizations, independent of the State as a primary power institution protecting its public through the principles of the rule of law and democratic government control". Thus, no society is civil in nature, but as a result of cultural and civilization development, the organizational gender principle of historically more original societies is gradually and asynchronously (due to the different pre-civil initiation centres, local civilization barriers, thought traditions of understanding these concepts) replaced by the civil principle... (More details in: Gbúrová, 2002, p. 131).

is the same desire of another person. The rise of individualism, progress, and liberty thus allowed the emergence of a (post)modern identity characterized by the gradual decomposition of the organic structures of holistic societies and the relative commitment to standards and values brought about by the mechanisms of general competition.

The polemic about the promotion of rationalist political concepts, economic globalization, the welfare state, genetic lottery, or absolute property rights brings a number of encouraging elements in the current context of civilizational emancipation. The gradual, but clear, elevation of the assumed quality of life, on the final unity, witnessed by us as both witnesses and realizers, can always be transformed into an infinite ocean of moving lava, which in some circumstances instantly spreads to pieces the humanist land and rationalist certainties, cultivated in the minds and actions of people throughout the centuries. The history of the evolution of liberalism, whose programme structure we tried to illustrate by pointing out some aspects of the internal contradiction of the categories of freedom, equality, justice, private property, individualism, political and social human rights, or humanism, are also part of this scheme. Their aspirations for universal applicability are therefore hypothetical, always expressing the “natural” ability of man to change his or her notion of their particular form, conditioned by certain historical, political, economic or cultural conditions. In fact, the obvious and undisputed component of progress, the ideological basis for justifying the content, and the exercise of political power, makes it possible to seek, create and, where necessary, adapt individual categories of (even) liberal politics to those who are always where they almost all want to get. It is not always true that liberalism goes hand in hand with freedom, justice, humanism, openness, and democracy. We may illustrate the oligarchic “ethos” of modern liberal democracies, shaped and fixed by the worldview of the wealthiest components of society, which transforms the optimism of Renaissance and Enlightenment ideals “for all” into the tragic powerlessness of an economically disadvantaged majority against an extremely advantaged minority.

CONCLUSION

The relationship between liberal ideas as a basis for a practical political agenda and an absolute ideal, the goal in itself, is always marked by resentment or acceptance of certain concrete interests or ideals which they are expected to serve. The actual, anthropologically determined position then observes the variety of justification and legitimation practices of power, for example, the interest in the highest good (well-being) for all. Perhaps, ultimately, the ambition

of the search for freedom, justice and a better world in liberalism is merely the mystical stone of the sage, through the centuries nurtured vision of the perfect material and spiritual world, illustrating the illusory unreality of human ambitions in formulating its regulatory ideals in the sphere of justification of (natural?) inequality. And perhaps, it is one of the many symptoms of knowing that the essence of the process of optimizing the development of personality traits lies in the specific aspirations of individuals in pursuing their ideas of a happy and humanly dignified life in the interests of a healthy social mechanism - a free, fair and better world waiting (just like many times so far) to its implementation ...

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