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## Karl Popper about Totalitarianism : Ideas and Practices

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## KARL POPPER ABOUT TOTALITARIANISM: IDEAS AND PRACTICES

### Karl Popper o totalitaryzmie: idee i praktyki

*I see now more clearly than ever before that even  
our greatest troubles spring from something  
that is as admirable and sound as it is dangerous  
– from our impatience to better the lot of our fellows.*

Karl R. Popper (1945)

**Słowa kluczowe:** Karl Popper, państwa totalitarne, Platon, totalitaryzm, media, opór społeczny, wolność, tyrania logiki, ideologia.

**Key words:** Karl Popper, totalitarian states, Plato, totalitarianism, media, public oppositions, freedom, tyranny of logic, ideology.

#### Streszczenie

Celem tego artykułu jest pokazanie, w jaki sposób zrozumienie wydarzeń na Ukrainie oraz doświadczenia płynące z konkretnej sytuacji kryzysowej mogą prowadzić do powstania okoliczności, w których ludzie zaczynają protestować przeciwko zachodzącym zmianom społeczno-gospodarczym. Duże znaczenie ma tutaj, oczywiście, tożsamość kulturowa, etniczna i religijna.

Autor przedstawia Karla Poppera jako świadka narodzin, adopcji oraz śmierci dwudziestowiecznych państw totalitarnych w oparciu o faszyzm i komunizm. Jako uważny i spostrzegawczy naukowiec, całkowicie i dogłębnie zbadał on istotę totalitaryzmu w *Charmidesie*

#### Abstract

The aim of this article is to present the above-mentioned events in Ukraine showed how the understanding of them and experiencing of the particular crisis situation can lead to the conditions when people start protesting against the ongoing socio-economic and political changes. Certainly, cultural, ethnic and religious identities have considerable importance.

The author shows that Karl Popper was a witness of birth, adoption and death of the totalitarian states of the twentieth century, based on fascism and communism. He, as a thoughtful and observant scientist, fundamentally and profoundly studied the essence of Plato's totalitarianism in *Charmides*. The scientific princi-

Platona. Te naukowe pryncypia i skrupulatność przejawiały się również w tym, że wielokrotnie przez ponad dwa dziesięciolecia Popper rewidował swoje dzieło *Spółeczeństwo otwarte i jego wrogowie*, ostatecznie wydane w roku 1945.

Dzisiejsze media, poddane twórcom nowych pojęć i znaczeń, a także niewidzialnym ojcom netokracji, przejęły wiele kluczowych sektorów życia publicznego. Nowoczesna cenzura nie skupia się już na blokowaniu pewnych przekazów czy treści, ale na promowaniu takich przekazów i znaczeń, które pozbawiają ich odbiorcę możliwości dowiedzenia się, co się dzieje w sektorze bankowym oraz w otoczeniu infrastrukturalnym życia publicznego. Wciąż narzucać masom wartości społeczeństwa konsumpcyjnego nie idą dzisiaj z duchem czasu. Stąd świat ciągle stoi pomiędzy przeszłością a przyszłością, ponieważ autorytaryzm i totalitaryzm to nadal zjawiska nierozwiązane, a że są to zjawiska agresywne, maskują się sprawnie z wykorzystaniem mediów. Oczywiście jest, że rządząca elita społeczeństwa rosyjskiego zabrała się za odbudowę dawnego imperium.

ples and scrupulosity of Karl Popper also manifested in the fact that he repeatedly revised his study *Open Society and Its Enemies*, which was published in 1945, during more than two decades.

Present media, subordinated to the creators of new concepts and meanings and to the invisible fathers of netocracy, have already captured many of the commanding heights of public life. And the modern censorship is focused not on blocking some messages or content, but on the promotion of such messages and meanings, which deprive the consumer from the ability to know what is happening in the banking sector and infrastructural spheres of public life. Values of the consumer society, still being imposed to a mass society, today, do not meet the spirit of time. Thus, the world is still in between the past and the future, because authoritarianism and totalitarianism remain unresolved phenomena and these phenomena are aggressive and disguise themselves actively, using media resources. It is evident that the ruling elite of the Russian society has set out to restore the former empire.

For over a century our civilization has been facing a number of difficulties and contradictions, moving, as it seems to its spiritual and political leaders, to the state of humanity, rationality, freedom and justice. There were civilizations before us. They were young, then matured and, accordingly, they left quite significant mark in history. Perhaps, our civilization is still young enough and, therefore, still very romantic, still deeply believes in attainability of the abovementioned conditions. Problems, however, remain and their number surely increases.

Given as an epigraph, the words of Karl Popper define the direction of this study, which aims to show a relevant value of a scientific heritage of this thinker even twenty years after he departed out of this world; to show an imperishable importance of the searching of the answers to cornerstone philosophical problems of man's essence and their place in society. This philosopher belongs to the group of postpositivists together with Thomas Kuhn, Imre Lakatos, Paul Feyerabend, Stephen Toulmin, and others. Philosophic and political ideas of Karl Popper induced discussions and were not only supported but also criticized by certain philosophers, sociologists and philosophers of science. Critics of the ideas of Karl Popper referred to his evaluation of the classical scientific method, his concept of critical rationalism as well as the principle of falsification. Among the critics were representatives of the neo-Marxism (Theodor Adorno), Frankfurt School (Max Horkheimer), postpositivism (Thomas Kuhn) and physicists (Mario Bunge).

Referring to the ideas of Karl Popper, we would like to understand a fatal dependence of certain open and hidden theorists and practitioners of totalitarianism from something inevitably negative, which is characteristic of human nature, something that reveals itself again in the circumstances of the first quarter of the current century.

“A »piecemeal« World War III may have already begun” – said the Pope Francis during events associated with the 100th anniversary of the First World War. This statement was made at the Austro-Hungarian cemetery in a small Italian town Redipuglia on September 13, 2014. According to him, the reason of new armed conflicts are greed, intolerance and lust for power. His statement is a statement of one of the most authoritative figures of the modern world, who, like other public figures – politicians and analysts in the world leading countries, – sees that a war is growing both in scale and geography. It is a world war, because directly or indirectly, dozens of countries on all the continents are involved to some extent to the numerous armed conflicts (Sudan, Libya, Somalia, Iraq, Afghanistan, and now, Ukraine).

Why is there a war? Why is it *a part of* the Third World War? And why is this happening in the world, which, basically, contains enough resources for people not to die of hunger and diseases? To answer these questions, it is necessary to understand the main weak point of society, to understand the desires and goals of leaders of states or groups of people, organized in different parties and communities, who provoke military conflicts and actively participate in them. It is also important to understand who stays behind these forces, which ideas they are guided by and what goals are set for them. We scarcely can find the unambiguous answers for these questions, but we must try to respond, hoping that the answers and the solutions do exist.

The events in Ukraine since the end of November 2013 until the beginning of March 2014, the so-called “Revolution of Dignity”, attracted attention initially of European countries, USA and Canada, and then the other countries of the civilized world. The uproar of millions of people in Ukraine forced to think not only about why people rebelled against the anti-popular and corrupted regime, but also about the consequences it may cause for Ukraine and the neighboring countries. In the context of these events, there is a supposition, which appears in between Ukrainian and Western analysts, that the fight against the high-handed political leaders in Ukraine can cause deep changes in the global community. Naturally, such a scenario could be discussed by the commentators, who are observant enough and who have an access to the relevant information sources. Possibly, these analysts are well aware of the latest global socio-economic and innovative-informational literature, which already contain some preliminary forecasts well-founded on the facts.

These suppositions can be seen in a very short period during March, 2014. Its authors allowed the perspective of the appearing of a new system of values in the public consciousness, which will be soon embodied in a new culture. But what could the desire or requirement to create a new culture mean in the world of global information? This would mean that one can single-handedly make original discoveries, bearing in mind that these findings should be checked by the “critics of life”, socialized and transformed into practical activity.

Again, the abovementioned events in Ukraine showed how the understanding of them and experiencing of the particular crisis situation can lead to the conditions when people start protesting against the ongoing socio-economic and political changes. Certainly, cultural, ethnic and religious identities have considerable importance. The identities are chosen by everyone either according to their personal convictions or because of certain external influences. Especially when socio-economic and political changes affect the moral aspect of public life, threatening to pull a human out of the context of habitual lifestyle. Life of an individual was aggravated even further due to the statements of leaders on overcoming corruption, injustice, violence and immorality. However, these leaders did not necessary share the values and qualities of a particular individual. Moreover, a particular individual might not has encountered and might not has felt the importance of the abovementioned problems. So that happened to a part of Ukrainian society whose relative majority appeared in several south-east areas. And as a result – an armed conflict, aggravated by the active intervention from the outside: weapons supply, reinforcement of anti-Ukrainian forces by undergone military trainings, pro-Russian militants and later Russian army units, armed with the latest military technology.

Thus, being under the influence of the real events, taking into account the circumstances and the fact of their coordination by the opposing forces, we find the well-known spiritual and moral ordering of the behavior of these forces. Antonio Gramsci once admitted: “The mass of people led to a uniform and consistent way of thinking about reality is a »philosophical« fact, way more significant and »original« than the discovery of some philosophical »genius« of the new truth, which remains the property of small groups of intellectuals”<sup>1</sup>. Indeed, as shown by the current events in the Donbas, systematic and purposeful informational and ideological influence of the mass media (television, radio, newspapers, etc.) on the marginalized section of society has led to the formation of pro-Russian orientation in these people and their almost complete rejection of anything Ukrainian. Total shameless lie became a basis of propaganda. The purpose of such propaganda is the return of the Ukrainian society into the arms of a totalitarian regime, dreaming to restore the former empire.

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<sup>1</sup> A. Gramsci, *Prison Notebooks* (selected), note 4.

So, here is the totalitarianism, which seemed to be driven out in the guise of the Soviet Union, and now it breaks into our lives again, finding new explanations and excuses, updating slogans and means of its effects on the host community. And how not to recall the works of Karl Popper, the philosopher, who critically denounced the nature of totalitarianism and its origins.

Karl Popper is of the same age as the twentieth century. His young years were the 1920–1930s, the period between the first and second world wars. He, as a talented scientist and analyst, had an opportunity to live at the beginning of the global world socio-economic systems formation, and under the condition of the permanent confrontation deepening of these irreconcilable socio-economic systems, which prompted him to thoroughly reflect on the prospects for human development, government, civil society, and more generally – on humanity. Naturally, in these reflections, he was not alone. Oswald Spengler, Karl Jaspers, Martin Heidegger, Jose Ortega y Gasset, Karl Jung, György Lukács, Antonio Gramsci, Max Horkheimer, Nikolai A. Berdyaev, Kazimierz Twardowski, M. Józef M. Bocheński (recognized as the founder of the Soviet studies) – this is not a complete list of thinkers who worked in those decades.

Karl Popper was a witness of birth, adoption and death of the totalitarian states of the twentieth century, based on fascism and communism. He, as a thoughtful and observant scientist, fundamentally and profoundly studied the essence of Plato's totalitarianism in *Charmides*. He is a thinker who has shown vitality of the Plato's ideas about state and government. The basic statements of the Plato's political studies have undergone a number of transformations in the works of thinkers of the following centuries and for two millennia have been feeding the efforts of all the new rulers, who have taken the path of approval of totalitarianism in its various forms and guises, including the ideas about the prospects of transforming society on their communist principles. The scientific principles and scrupulosity of Karl Popper also manifested in the fact that he repeatedly revised his study *Open Society and Its Enemies*, which was published in 1945, during more than two decades<sup>2</sup>.

Totalitarianism, as a political regime, has attracted attention in the twentieth century when the spread of a new form of relations between society and government became apparent. Since then political powers started taking the society under the full (total) control, subjugate it and control every single aspect of human life. Throughout the force of the states, totalitarian regimes brutally and ruthlessly suppress and stop opposition activities in any form, at the same time trying to create the illusion that the government's actions are fully approved by people.

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<sup>2</sup> Along with the mentioned work of Karl Popper, the most famous works are *The Origins of Totalitarianism* by Hannah Arendt (1951) and *Totalitarian Dictatorship and Autocracy* by Carl Friedrich and Zbigniew Brzezinski (1956).

The term “totalitarianism”<sup>3</sup> in political science first appeared in 1923. Scientifically, it was introduced by Giovanni Amendola<sup>4</sup> together with Pierre Gobetti to denote the fascist regime settled in Italy at that time. Introducing the concept of totalitarianism, they sought to emphasize the essential difference between Italian fascism and other known dictatorships: tyranny, oligarchy, despotism, etc. However, Italian fascists subsequently adopted this concept and actively popularized it. Significantly, while thinking about the prospects of society development, Giovanni Gentile and Benito Mussolini saw the important role of technical means to implement the ideology to the masses. They assumed, that the development of communication technologies leads to a continuous improvement of methods and means for propaganda, and, consequently, the society will evolve in the direction of the forethought forms of totalitarianism.

Indeed, history has shown that the development of the media, which occurred since the second half of the twentieth century, led to significant changes in the society. Mass media have become powerful and effective means of influencing minds of people, determining the direction of their thoughts, assessment of what is happening, and the system of priorities and values.

The current situation is characterized by the growth of public oppositions, appearing in massive protest actions. The cornerstone of the opposition is an enormous inequality in the distribution of resources, and above all, financial possibilities. In light of the fact that there are 1645 billionaires at the beginning of 2014<sup>5</sup>, whose income for the year increased by one trillion dollars, and 11.97 millions of millionaires by the end of 2013<sup>6</sup>, the situation of many hundreds of millions of poor people looks pretty alarming. According to the World Council of Credit Unions, at the beginning of 2012, the number of poor people on the planet was increasing four times faster than the number of rich<sup>7</sup>. The study was performed for the next World Economic Forum in Davos.

Based on a real socio-economic status, the political leaders of democratic countries are forced to fine-tune properly the content of their programs and the

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<sup>3</sup> “Totalitarian states and regimes characterized by the nationalization of all legal organizations, discretionary (the law is not limited to) the powers of the authorities, the prohibition of democratic institutions, the actual elimination of constitutional rights and freedoms, the militarization of public life, the repression of the opposition and dissent in general” – *Dictionary of Philosophy*, Soviet Encyclopedia, Moscow 1983, p. 690.

<sup>4</sup> Giovanni Amendola (1882–1926) – Italian politician liberal, writer, anti-fascist, one of the first opponents of the regime of Mussolini, who became his victim.

<sup>5</sup> Online: <[www.forbes.ru/rating/milliardery-package/251646-mirovoi-reiting-milliardero-2014](http://www.forbes.ru/rating/milliardery-package/251646-mirovoi-reiting-milliardero-2014)>.

<sup>6</sup> Online: <<http://inosmi.ru/world/20131016/213898693.html/>>; Original publication: Radio-grafía de los Millonarios en EL Mundo.

<sup>7</sup> The number of poor people in the world has increased four times faster than the rich. – Available online: <<http://woc-org.com/research/publications-244>>.

key statements of their public speeches, having in mind their political responsibility. Other concepts appear as crucial in political rhetoric in countries, where authorities just hide behind democratic slogans, meanwhile strongly limiting the freedom of speech and expression of the will of its citizens. For example, by allowing to “slightly correct” and falsify the election results. The situation is much worse in countries which are controlled by the anti-democratic totalitarian and dictatorial political regimes.

In most cases an undercurrent and shamefully concealing desire to retain the existing disproportion in the distribution of resources and the difference in the financial position of people determines the content and style of the speeches of political players, who run the carnival of human life. It is especially vivid during the election campaigns. For example, during such a campaign in France (March, 2012), Nicolas Sarkozy promised to severely reduce the number of immigrants entering the country and tighten the requirements for those, who are granted for a residence permit, although he tacked: on the one hand, immigrants are good, on the other, bad. Bad, because voters think so. Sarkozy’s opponent, Socialist Party leader Francois Hollande, among the other promises, promised to cut salaries of officials and government staff by 30%. And so he won.

From everything which was promised in the election campaign of Viktor F. Yanukovich let us point out significant for an ordinary citizen: increase of pensions above the subsistence level and proportional to the corresponding labor input; financing of medicine up to 10% of GDP. Promises for businessmen were as follows: lower taxes; elimination of benefits for MPs and senior officials. However, as it turned out in reality, he aimed to usurp the country’s wealth. Pre-election promises of Vladimir V. Putin can be summarized as follows: functioning state; further development of democracy as “the mechanism of participation”; the fight against corruption; increase of scholarships; two-three-time increase of salaries for teachers and doctors; increase of child benefits; provide veterans with apartments; reduce alcohol consumption. Nevertheless, the results are completely opposite: suppression of dissent, total fooling of people through the mass media and direct aggression against Ukraine.

Thus, it appears that the meaning of what political orators put in their words is far from the sense, understood by an ordinary voter. Voters see the promise as an absolute, while the candidate for a political office articulates his commitment, referring to a number of concealed conditions. In the speech of the political orator a lie can be present in two forms. Firstly, based on some assumptions, trends, facts, the politician believes (certainly!?) in the reliability of the promises and tries to convey this confidence to the audience. In this situation, there is a place for hopes and expectations that the status quo is maintained, that there will be some favorable events, today yet unknown, etc. It seems to the orator that everything will be as he forecasts. But the everyday reality brings some “surprises”



and consequently only good intentions remain there. Secondly, the politician deliberately distorts facts, distorts the meaning of what is happening and takes the opportunity to lie. In some cases, their lie becomes total. And it happens when the politicians are aiming to eliminate all social changes. Existing in a state a socio-political situation seems to them quite acceptable, so idealistic program involved: “*Hold on all political changes! Change is an evil, peace is divine*”<sup>8</sup>.

In *The Republic*, while reflecting on philosophers-rulers, the seekers of truth, Plato supposes that lying to people is useful in a sense of a therapeutic medicine. But the right to use such means must be provided for the doctors; ignorant people should not touch it. Plato is sure: “Then if anyone at all is to have the privilege of lying, the rulers of the State should be the persons; and they, in their dealings either with enemies or with their own citizens, may be allowed to lie for the public good. But nobody else should meddle with anything of the kind”<sup>9</sup>. It was already written more than enough about the extent of how rulers-dictators and their surroundings used the lie, involving the whole world into abyss of the Second World War. It seems that a total lie in civilized countries today is impossible and unacceptable, but the world makes the same mistake once again. Radio, television, and the World Wide Web play a significant role in order to spread the total lie to people in every particular state. But let us go back to Plato. The thinker, after arguments about the right of philosopher-ruler to lie, warns about the inadmissibility for individuals to lie «like rulers». If the governor caught his citizens in a lie, “who needs to deal: astrologers or doctors, architects or artisans”, the punishment for them is inevitable. They have no right to enter a “disastrous custom, overturning a state, as a ship”<sup>10</sup>. Commenting on this portion of *The Republic*, Karl Popper pointed out that the principle of collective profit acts for Plato as a fundamental ethical criterion, characterizing the totalitarian morality<sup>11</sup>.

At the same time, Plato’s instructions, addressed to the young men who are in need for prudence, sound quite modern: “A prudence reveals itself mainly not only by obeying the rulers, but also by being the lords of the pleasures that food, drinks and love joy deliver to us”<sup>12</sup>. This instruction does not require special comment, except that it shows a very delicate transition from the indisputable obligations, which have to be executed, to the possibility of pleasures.

Exploring the nature of Plato’s philosophic ideas, Karl Popper convincingly demonstrated their close relationship and continuity with the ideas of his prede-

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<sup>8</sup> K. Popper, *The Open Society and Its Enemies*, V. 1: *The Spell of Plato*, transl. V.N. Sadovskiy, Feniks, Moscow 1992, p. 123.

<sup>9</sup> Plato, *The Republic*, 389 b.c., Mysl, Moscow 1971, vol. 3, ch. 1.

<sup>10</sup> Ibidem, 389d.

<sup>11</sup> K. Popper, op. cit., p. 179.

<sup>12</sup> Plato, *The Republic*, 389d,e.

cessors and contemporaries. For instance, Protagoras taught that man is the measure of all things. Just by himself he creates the standards of behavior and life, guided by some kind of supernatural help or force (perhaps intuition?!). However, the other thinkers showed the idea of continuity in one way or another both in antique and modern eras. And every time we try to understand the origins and depths of human nature, realizing archetypical nature of our thinking, the dependence of our thoughts and ideas on some of the primary images and meanings and the intertextuality of content of graphic and literary creation.

At the same time, contemplating the realities of life around us, sometimes it's difficult to escape the feeling that the person appears to us as a complex machine, like a musket or a windmill, in the words of the author of *Machine man*. Despite his impertinence, Julien Offray de La Mettrie is essentially right in his attempts to explain why so many people have consciousness, but are not endowed with the intelligence. Acting as complex machines, they perform a very limited set of movements. This can be explained by the form of materialism, de La Mettrie followed, believing that the essence of the matter cannot be reduced to the extension only. He was sure in his wishful thinking that all the other contemporary philosophers are more attentive "to all the properties of this substance, and the ability of matter to acquire moving force, and the ability to feel they have always been considered essential by its properties, as well as the length"<sup>13</sup>. However, this is the position of de La Mettrie. René Descartes adds: "I will try to explain the machine of our body so that we had as little reason to refer to the soul the movement, not connected with the will, as we have little reason to believe that the watch has a soul, forcing them to tell the time"<sup>14</sup>. Descartes admits the choice: either a human is a thinking being by means of the will, or this human stays a machine that is operated under the influence of external forces. You can stop being a machine, having learned the machine mechanism in your human body. The machine, which knows itself, is not a machine anymore, as it starts showing *the will of its actions*.

In Plato's utopian concept, there are clear indications of the limits of available knowledge, which are determined by the nature of human personality: the cognitive abilities, memory, wit and astuteness. From this point of view, during the upbringing process and development of their abilities under the guidance of experienced mentors only some people are able to become philosophers, namely those who were admixed with gold by god. To avoid mistakes in choosing people who are able to run the state in the long term, "it is necessary to check human in difficulties, dangers and joys... it is necessary to exercise them in many sciences, watching whether they are able to perceive the highest knowledge or

<sup>13</sup> J.O. De La Mettrie, *Works*, Mysl, Moscow: 1976, p. 66.

<sup>14</sup> R. Descartes, *Works in 2 vol.*, ed. V.V. Sokolov, Mysl, Moscow 1989, vol. 1, p. 424.

fear of it, just as people become timid under the circumstance of a different kind of effort”<sup>15</sup>.

Naturally, the ideal state arrangement problem is also important, but this arrangement seems possible according to Plato. The state will be governed by a philosopher, a man who really devoted his thoughts to the being. Therefore, he would not look down at the vanity, struggle with people or get inflated with malevolence and envy. “Communicating with the divinity and the ordering, a philosopher, also, becomes ordered and divine, as far as possible for human”<sup>16</sup>. If afterwards, the philosopher comes to necessity to establish order in social life, which is not just a desire to improve himself, then he could become a good master of virtue in general. And here we find an unambiguous epistle of Plato: “never, in any case will not prosper state, if it is not drawn alike a divine model”<sup>17</sup>. Making an outline of the state, having explored what fair beautiful and wise is by nature, you can create a prototype of the needed human. The incarnation of the ideal state, according to Plato, is associated with great effort and, I would admit, the victims. Thus, starting with the rise of knowledge, he descends to the suppression of the individual in the person and the formation of total human in the total society.

Of course, it is difficult to keep track of the windings of the thoughts of man, when their holder becomes the ruler and suddenly sees and hears the servility of the people around. And there is a risk that this person will become a dictator, that he will begin to impose the idea of autocracy and totalitarianism with the support of some, the connivance of others, and indifference of the thirds. Especially, if only a manifestation of condescending disdain is seen from some neighboring countries, but not an active resistance. This has happened more than once in the ancient times, several times in the twentieth century and, unfortunately, in our days. It occurs, because the rulers see themselves as “artists” who have the right to draw, resembling god.

But before you draw something, you have to accept the manner of drawing, Adimant noticed, being one of the interlocutors of Socrates in the dialogue. Socrates responds to the comment: “They would take the city and men’s characters as a draughting board, and first of all they would clean it, which is not at all easy”<sup>18</sup>. Indeed, it is hard. First, we need to educate the true philosopher-rulers who neglect “modern honors”, considering them low-lying and worthless. These people will arrange their own state, guided by honesty and justice, namely: “All who are in the city for more than ten years, would be sent to the village, and the

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<sup>15</sup> Plato, *The Republic*, 503e.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibidem*, 500d.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibidem*, 500e.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibidem*, 501a.

other children, to protect them from the effects of modern manners peculiar to parents, will educate in their own way, in those laws that we discussed earlier”<sup>19</sup>. Thus, the correct government system could be set, the state will flourish and the people will get a profit out of this, believed Plato.

In this way the situation was seen in the IV century BC. In 1920–1940s totalitarianism, in the spirit of Plato, tried to “clean like the board” the state and the morality of people and then to achieve a “god’s likeness” in the desired shape. Karl Popper was a contemporary and witness of those how in the name of a bright future fascists and communists sent millions of people to the concentration camps, shot them, gassed and burned in crematoria. Later in 1950–1960s in China, Red Guards teens, led by the great helmsman Mao Zedong, “cleaned the board” sending for rehabilitation in the village not only some immature citizens, but also many representatives of culture and science. Moreover, some well-respected scholars just got their “dog’s” heads smashed. It was the country, where educated people were in the minority, the media was not well developed and poverty was total. Not even everyone could read dazibao – the simple big-character posters or leaflet used during the “cultural revolution”. However, there is no example where the “board” with imprinted values and traditions was cleared to the end, despite the millions of victims.

Today the world has become global and informational. It turned out that the dream to “clean the board” and inscribe new signs of different life and different values is not yet buried in the past. It turned out that one can preserve a totalitarian society, acting with completely false and fabricated stamps and images on the minds of more than a hundred million people. The propaganda about the greatness of Russian people, in contrast to the second-quality and worthlessness of others, and the duty to protect all “Russian world” suddenly fell on the heads of the Russians, constantly intensifying during the last decade. Mass brainwashing, the totality of lie inside the country and the shameless distortion of reality beyond its borders to create a new fictional reality – that is what the modern civilized world have encountered today.

In today’s situation, many countries have unwittingly found themselves in quite complex partnerships with Russia. Apparently, there are many reasons why majority of the governments are reluctant to confront with Russia’s imperial expansion plans by adequate methods. One of them is to preserve the existing order under the pretext of maintaining the well-being of people, although the order and well-being in many capitalist countries today stays on an unsteady foundations. It is not possible to hide the exploitation of people in the third world countries anymore, even though it is shown as a virtue and an attempt to bring

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<sup>19</sup> *Ibidem*, 540e.

them new technologies<sup>20</sup>. Not everything is well in the capitalist world and in its relations with third countries, as it can be seen in numerous studies<sup>21</sup>. Society definitely needs a major transformation in a number of key areas.

Modern politicians often criticize an existing political system including the legislative, executive and judicial branches. Due to their speeches, they are not against its modernization. At the same time officials prefer not to touch the topic of *corporate-banking power* reformation. Politicians make public statements about the need for tax burden easing, tax exemptions for certain categories of business and about the punishment for bribe takers from the tax office. But certain topics are not touched again. For example, the state monopoly in taxes collection and spending. Integral part of the corporate and banking power is banking secrecy. Conceal meanings are quite obvious even here. Let us recall, for instance, the situation with partial disclosure of secret accounts in Switzerland and Cyprus, which has caused many debates.

Critics of the modern world call to reform also a *regulatory authority*, which establishes the rule of law (with constitutional law as a basis). Here we are talking about the actual semantic changes, concerning the establishment of innovative constitution, creating a new system of society's infrastructure and, in particular, social infrastructure. The new social infrastructure should be viable in the context of the global finance and economic crisis, satisfy social and individual needs of all society members<sup>22</sup>. The innovative social infrastructure should provide redistribution of added value for the benefit of all citizens; it should be focused on the needs of the individuals. Meanwhile, labors in the developed countries, all the more in the developing and the least developed countries, can hardly retake the investments in the human capital. The evidences of the above mentioned are the waves of social protests in Europe and the revolutions in the Arab world.

<sup>20</sup> See, e.g.: N. Klein, *No Logo: Taking Aim at the Brand Bullies*, Publishing house "Dobraya kniga", Moscow 2005.

<sup>21</sup> See, e.g.: A. Bard, J. Soderqvist, *Netocracy: New Power Elite and Life after Capitalism*, Stockholm school of economy in Sint-Petersburg, Saint-Petersburg 2004; P. J. Buchanan, *The Death of the West*, Publishing house AST, Moscow 2004; J. Heath and A. Potter, *The Rebel Sell*, Publishing house "Dobraya kniga", Moscow 2007; N. Klein, *The Shock Doctrine*, Publishing house "Dobraya kniga", Moscow 2009.

<sup>22</sup> See, e.g.: S.G. Vazhenin, *Social Infrastructure of National Economy*, Delo, Moscow 2007; T.I. Zaslavskaya et al., *New Generation of Business People of Russia. Social Portrait, Carrier, Business Education*, Delo, Moscow 2007; *Corporative Social Responsibility: Public Expectations*, Manager Association, Moscow 2008; *Modern Economy Today*, ed. V.K. Lomakina – Available [online] <<http://exsolver.narod.m/Books/Econom/Lomakin/index.html>>; J.A. Schumpeter, *Theory of Economic Development*, Progress, Moscow 2008; P. Ignatovskiy, *Economy and Humanity*, "Economist" 2009, no. 2, p. 3–14; A. Usov, *Rise of Innovative Economy: Gender Aspect*, "Amn and craft" 2010, no. 11, p. 33–35; *The Social Situation in the European Union 2007*, EU, Eurostat, 2008; P. Abell, *On the Prospects for a Unified Social Science: Economics and Sociology*, "Socio-Economic Review" 2008, no. 1, p. 1–26.

Another direction of social transformations is *a conceptual authority*. Possibly, this is the most closed sphere of authority in which there are active representatives inconspicuous among the masses of image-makers, political consultants, commentators and analysts. Exactly the representatives of a conceptual authority are at the origin of new regulations adoption. They create new ideas, meanings, brands and recommendations for politicians, economists and bankers. Exactly in this sense Francis Bacon wrote about the “idols of the theater”, about the power of the conception over society. The conception which is described a consequence of ideas that express purpose of society, ways and means of achieving them. Usually, the majority of society consists of principally untenable hostages of various concepts. New concepts, corresponding to the spirit of time and the needs of society, lead to novel understanding of ethno-national and religious relations, set a new scale of values.

In the historical and philosophical sense, the concept, as an innovative idea, contains a considerable creativity and creative sense<sup>23</sup>. In the historiosophical sense, the conceptual authority is the sphere of influence of “lords of opinion”, it is a power of people who are able to detect actual problems, set goals, and develop concepts to achieve the goals and implement them in the management of life of society. History shows us that meaningful and purposeful activity, even of the single person, can have an impact on a global scale for centuries and millennia (Pythagoras, Aristotle, Archimedes, Jesus, Machiavelli, Copernicus and Newton).

The informational society became global during the approval of *information and communication authority*, which can be personalized as in democratic countries, and depersonalized in totalitarian. In any case, this authority controls the media and the internet. It is indisputable that development of information management and communication technologies is one of the main causes of social and cultural progress, although the spread of information and reliable knowledge is not the same thing. As soon as the information becomes a key commodity of the new economy, the world starts sinking the ocean of random data signals. Thus, substantial and exclusive knowledge acquire an increasing value acquires, when can be infiltrated out of the informational flow.

Anxiety of scientists and researchers involved in the problem of systematization of knowledge about the media coincides with an anxiety of society: how to make the flow of information as a source of knowledge, but not errors. On the other hand, politicians who exploit pluralism in their own selfish purposes have a different idea. Seeing the emerging trend, Pope Pius XII said in 1950: “It is no exaggeration to say that the future of modern society and the stability of its inner life depend largely on maintaining a balance between the strength of the

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<sup>23</sup> G. Deleuze and F. Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*, transl. S.N. Zenkina, Institute of experimental sociology, Aleteya, Moscow – Saint-Petersburg 1998.

technical means of communication and the ability of people to self-reaction”<sup>24</sup>. Now, as in former times, the totalitarian-despotic authorities are limiting the information flows with censorship, brainwashing radio audience and TV viewers with clearly oriented propaganda material. At the same time, the elite of democracy authorities actively contribute to filling all channels of media streams with contradictory and simply incoherent information, while achieving their goals. Publicly, it looks like a viable democracy, but it is a conscious strategy to maintain the control over society. Thus, an overload of information and distortion of meaning are closely related, being two-faced Janus media.

Distortion of meanings by politicians in the media is especially clear in countries with relative freedom of speech and relatively weak democracy, where politicians have to explain the motives of their actions at least occasionally. In this situation, it is obvious that the more power someone has the more blatant lies they transmit and the more verbal blurts adherence to the principles and purity of thoughts they claim. Viewers and listeners perceive the meaning of the words of politicians on a subconscious level, but consciously they form a view about the falsification of the meanings, therefore, devaluating of the usual values. It may well be, that really deceiving others, politicians deceive themselves. They feel that they have already been doing something, they believe in it and they are offended when they were caught in their falseness.

Present media, subordinated to the creators of new concepts and meanings and to the invisible fathers of netocracy, have already captured many of the commanding heights of public life. And the modern censorship is focused not on blocking some messages or content, but on the promotion of such messages and meanings, which deprive the consumer from the ability to know what is happening in the banking sector and infrastructural spheres of public life. Values of the consumer society, still being imposed to a mass society, today, do not meet the spirit of time.

Over the last half century, mankind, while colossally multiplying its scientific, technical, industrial, informational and communicational potential, could not cope with the many challenges that continue to deepen the global contradictions, producing conflicts and wars. That is why today the position formulated by the Second Vatican Cathedral (1964) is relevant: “Never before the human race had such abundance of wealth and economic power, but still to this day a large part of the inhabitants of the globe are suffering from hunger and poverty, and a lot of them are even completely illiterate. Never before people had so acute sense of freedom, as it is now, but at the same time there are new kinds of social and spiritual enslavement. Although the world is so vividly feel its unity and rela-

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<sup>24</sup> H. M. McLuhan, *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man*, Zhukovskiy: “KANON-Press-C”, “Kuchkovo pole” Moscow 2003, p. 26.

tionship of individuals to each other in the inevitable for their solidarity, it is tearing into pieces by forces brutally fighting each other. To this day, continue to sharp political, social, economic, racial and ideological differences, and the danger of war persists, threatening to destroy everything to ashes”<sup>25</sup>. Moreover, the head of Vatican has already seen the partial beginning of the World War III.

The world is still in between the past and the future, because authoritarianism and totalitarianism remain unresolved phenomena and these phenomena are aggressive and disguise themselves actively, using media resources. It is evident that the ruling elite of the Russian society has set out to restore the former empire. The present events in the eastern Ukraine and Crimea confirm the insight of Hanna Arendt<sup>26</sup>, who in the middle of the last century (1951) said that the main threat to world civilization does not come from the outside, from natural disasters or “external barbarism”, but from the inside, since XX century has shown that world civilization can produce barbarism inside itself. The example of Russian reality once again proves that totalitarianism supports a combination of repression and internal self-constraint of people, the “tyranny of logic” of totalitarian ideology. Man delegates production of his thoughts for this “tyranny of logic”, which is spread by mass media every day, and thereby betrays his inner freedom.

Thus, while investigating the essence and practice of totalitarianism, it becomes clear, that the scientific heritage of Karl Popper allows to show the imperishable value of worldview problems determining the essence of man and his place in the modern society, which tends to the totalitarian forms in some countries.

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<sup>25</sup> *Documents of the II Vatican synod*, transl. A. Koval, Paoline, Moscow 1998, p. 380.

<sup>26</sup> H. Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, CentrCom, Moscow 1996.



