

On Truth, Society and the World

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ABSTRACT: The victory of liberalism did not mark *the end of history*, nor did it extinguish any hope that there was an alternative. What has become extremely visible as a result of this *failure* is the nightmare of intertwined short-term interests and imperatives within which the search for human well-being does not find its place. Transition countries have entered the democratic world at a time of growing scepticism about the values of democracy, declining trust in institutions, and the global popularity of authoritarian leaders. Understanding that the idea of (political) truth is linked to pluralism and political judgments, we accept that there is no single *truth* from a single centre of power. For the effective functioning of democracy and the prosperity of society, democracy requires citizens to speak the truth to their political elites. Who should question, deliberate, speak, write and demand a public debate about the future of Human and the world? How to stimulate public debate on the real achievements of public policies in a society that does not promote accountability, does not respect the epistemic infrastructure necessary for the progress of democracy? Can intellectuals try again to save European society? It should not be only individual mission.

KEYWORDS: truth, society, human, world, intellectual.

INTRODUCTION

With the fall of the Berlin Wall, the symbolic fall of the *East*, and the proclamation of *the end of history* with the establishment of liberal democracy as the end point of ideological evolution, a belief (illusion) of the final triumph of the West was created in a real and scientific environment. To the front of the countries of the former socialism, there was no longer a single obstacle (not even in the ideological sense) to the acceptance of (liberal) democracy and capitalism. Three decades later, the Hegelian claim to the triumph of the West *possessing* the ultimate truth did not come true, in fact, it was *a false* proclamation of the victory of the *idea* of the West over the East; *a proclamation* that, not for the first time in history, transitional countries have accepted with both hands as the absolute Truth. Not long after, we witness a slowdown in democracy and stagnation of social development not only in transition countries, but also in *the homeland* of democracy. On a global level, democracy is faltering, and authoritarianism is strengthening as a result of the polarization of the capitalist model (*competitiveness*) and modernization (globalization in transition), which, not so long ago, was (only) in the *hands* of the West. Transition countries have faced (are facing) the processes of convergence (transformation) of the political and economic system, however, convergence does not refer exclusively to (liberal) democracy and the capitalism, i.e. the market economy: corporate globalization, as an economic and political process, has taken on the task of convergence of man and society, i.e. the state. The identity crisis or economization of man was subordinated to the global market without *borders* where some always sell and others (only) buy. However, after three decades of the process, nation states have not disappeared, religion has not disappeared, quite the opposite, it is shown that the national has an increasingly strong influence on liberal democracy and international relations, i.e. to the global economy.

Ideals are gone, because they only require some common sacrifices. Virtues are replaced by material status, regardless of the way in which they are acquired. The pronounced distortion or even rejection of certain social values could not fail to have consequences on liberal democracy and society. Because a functioning liberal democracy requires certain virtues – most of all, it requires the Truth. The turn of self-proclaimed democracies in transitional countries towards an illiberal and authoritarian model of society functioning, and more recently even towards corporate democracy, to model from the beginning of the 20th century, is an attempt to omission of the public (citizens) from democratic processes – by establishing an exclusive society (of money) with the ultimate idea of not burdening the people with *unimportant* topics. In the constant rush to collect unnecessary things, *unburdened* by the problems of his community, society and the world, Man lost himself, as if he lived alone isolated from others, until reality *woke him up again*.

The article aims to show the necessity of designing the activities of intellectuals in the public space [1]. Today, the world is producing more and more information that have less and less *contact* with facts, that is, the technological creation of reality is at work, to which, day by day, man is persuaded (*forced*) to unquestioningly accept (not to think) one opinion, one Truth – one way, *truth and life* as a product of one system (source) without alternative [2]. Acceptance, which often appears as a necessity (*to be* or

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to have), generally does not contain or offer opportunities or procedures for opening a deliberation about the consequences of the statements or norms made, at any level. The amount of information and the speed with which it is marketed and must be implemented leaves the average person with existential problems very little room for consideration before making a decision. He is *doomed* to an impression, a feeling, that is, to *the belonging of the* bearer of the message, to acceptance according to preferences. Accepting the offered solutions as the only correct, true and useful decision does not only refer to relationships within the community, but also to relationships with the Other, the different, neighbours, the world. The question remains open, who could or should ask questions about the future, reflect on existing norms and facts, actions and the state of the community and the nation, to question the emergence of *new values*? The decision to accept circumstances, *situations* make our life simple: what the *world* offers us will become (are) the possibilities of our life. The decision to dedicate our lives to something important: common values, a better future, justice, truth, critical reflection on the existing situation in the state and society, means to step out of the shell of institutions and step out into the public. Can intellectuals *save Europe* again?

Clergyman, professor, intellectual

In the period of the last two centuries of the Middle Age, four great, peculiar intellectuals appeared, who promoted very different critical approaches to higher education at the time: Pierre Abélard, Thomas Aquinas, Siger Barbantini, John Wyclif [3]. But at the beginning, the first step, was taken by trade that flourished in the East-West relation: with spices and silk came manuscripts that bring Greco-Arab culture. The fertile ground, not coincidentally, for new knowledge from the East was Italy and Spain. In Rome, Greek was the *second* language of educated Romans and a functioning language in the east of the Empire. In Spain, Arabic had been the official language for more than five centuries: both countries were able to receive new knowledge in its original form. Translators were the bearers of the revival. A blend of Arabic, Greek and Latin experience in the dissemination of knowledge was created. Paris has become the most powerful center of knowledge and *freedom*. In the 12th and 13th centuries, groups called *goliards* appeared, who reflected and spoke openly about the state of the Empire and the Church. Abélard is considered to have been the first great modern *cleric, professor, intellectual* of the 12th century. Abélard argued that "man agrees to good with his strength or misses evil, ...". Goliards were slowly but surely pushed to the margins of the intellectual movement, and in the 13th century they completely disappeared from the stage – critics were expelled from universities [3]. At the beginning of 1931, the obligation of university professors to swear allegiance to fascism came into force in Italy. Whoever refused to take the oath would lose his chair, be left without a pension, compensation, and be isolated. Only thirteen full professors from state faculties openly refused to take the oath; only thirteen of them, almost two thousand and three hundred [4]. Can we find them today? Do the few that have them exist or disappear? Where are they located?

The intellectuals of the 13th century were aware of their profession and social role – the importance of knowledge and teaching. The flourishing of cities opened up new possibilities and opportunities for action: from the organization of guilds, universities developed. The next step was no less current – to act independently of ecclesiastical and secular authorities. In the thirties of the 13th century, independence from the Church and royal authority was gained. However, although not all members of the university organization were priests or institutionally belonging to the Church, they were considered priests (*clerics*). And then, as now, they soon realized that it was impossible to belong to the Church and the university at the same time, or as Stendhal well described it: "I don't know if it's possible to love two women at the same time, but I am sure that You cannot love two homelands at the same time" [5]. The question of independence was related to existence, i.e. the provision of material resources for the operation of the university. Independence is a very demanding goal that makes the status of the profession challenging and at the same time uncertain, and which should guarantee thinking, manner and acting without external influence. Aware of these weaknesses, but also of the possibility of ensuring the independence of the university through independent financing from tuition fees, they were faced with the questionable achievement of the set goals of teaching and their own Christian faith: the principle of equality and the idea of spreading knowledge [3]. For the next almost a thousand years, the question of university independence did not leave the agenda, especially in Europe. How to ensure academic autonomy, freedom in financing and resource management with the *social role* of the university and the political aspects of education, in conditions in which education is available to everyone and financed from the common revenues of the state? The first and most important problem faced by European countries and the academic community is in securing sufficient financial resources and requirements for voluntary rejection of the influence (of financiers) on the work of the academic community. A folk proverb is irrefutable: "Tie the horse where the boss says!" In the time of democracy, the change occurred only in the change of the *name of the boss*. Politicians not only classify *intellectuals* as right and left, but political parties establish their own academic communities and *seek members* for them. There are many incompatible elements of that *cooperation*: truth vs. pragmatism, criticism vs. obedience, individualism vs. collectives, resistance to power and universal values vs. the mandated objectives.¹

Politics, as well as freedom, have many different definitions, however, it is always about man and his most important characteristics: will and reason. Johannes Duns Scotus reduces philosophy primarily to the postulate of the primacy of the will over reason (intellect): "the will, not reason, is a fundamental metaphysical category, because it is the only one that guarantees freedom

¹ Available at: <https://www.index.hr/vijesti/clanak/nesto-sto-se-zove-akademska-zajednica-hdza-ima-novog-predsjednika/2780323.aspx>

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of choice and action." In this way, Duns opposes nature and will, that is, he considered the action of the will to be contingent (free), while the intellect (reason) belongs to nature and is therefore part of the necessary action and is not, unlike the will, capable of free choice.² William of Ockham was among the first to put forward ideas about government with limited liability, about the separation of church and state, and about the concept of property rights. According to Ockham, the root of the power of the emperor lies in the people, who are always authentic sovereigns.³ Philosophical thought took place and was perfected in the universities that were founded in the Latin West within the Church, and were the third pillar of culture and society, along with spiritual and temporal authority. The creation of the university is one of the "greatest cultural revolutions in the history of mankind" [7].

At the turn of the 14th and 15th centuries, faith triumphed: scholasticism gave way to *blissful* ignorance, rational science gave way to fervent piety [3]. Neither zeal nor faith has retreated even after the passage of five centuries. Humanists were often close to rulers, even rulers. The Church enthusiastically embraced humanism, because the movement was man-centered. However, both humanism and the Renaissance developed in the wealthy cities of northern Italy, whose wealthy families generously supported creativity that was often in the function of politics and the Church. The Renaissance gave birth to several great names that fundamentally shook the understanding of Man, God and society, i.e. rulers. Erasmus of Rotterdam wrote a sharp satire on the spiritual, ecclesiastical and social conditions of the time; Martin Luther initiated the Reformation with his thesis, which changed the political and religious map of Europe; Niccolò Machiavelli described how to gain and retain power; Nicolaus Copernicus created a new heliocentric theory that contradicted the ruling model. Aware of social relations, Copernicus published his theory in the year of his death at Nuremberg. At the beginning of the 16th century, religious turmoil did not bypass the intellectuals, nor could they exempt themselves: they participated in the debates on the both side of the Reformation and the Counter-Reformation – *Protestantism is born*. Europe is divided. The Reformation was not a unified movement. Many reform movements across Europe formed religious communities outside the official state religion, and established new rules that affected overall social relations. Or, as John Winthrop warned his Puritan followers of the necessity of keeping the rules, because their new community would be "as a city upon a hill, and the eyes of all men are on us." The schism within the Catholic Church, the discovery and conquest of the New World, the fall of the Eastern Roman Empire, appearance of Osman, the liberation of the Iberian Peninsula, Gutenberg's invention of typography, are events that will change the dynamics of life in Europe and the world.

The 17th century was in some ways a *logical* consequence of pluralism within the Christians. It has spread to other areas and has given rise to some of the big names and ideas. René Descartes believed that everything springs from the soul of man; from ideas that are implanted in human reason. Knowing this means thinking – it means existing. Descartes laid the foundations of rationalism. The public advocacy of the Copernican system, supported by his own discoveries and findings, led Galileo Galilei to conflict with the Catholic Church, condemnation and persecution. The Catholic Church banned his works: the ban ended 133 years after his death. Five decades after Descartes' "I think, therefore I exist", John Locke completely twists the idea of rationalism: the soul is "a blank sheet of paper, all the ideas that reason operates with come from experience – empiricism was created. There is nothing in the intellect that was not previously in the experience. Locke had a strong influence on European philosophers and political thinkers of the 18th century.

The intellectuals of the 18th century, also known as the *Enlightenmenters*, in the period called the "Age of Reason", were dedicated to critiquing the existing social order, absolutism and ecclesiastical dogma, contrasting them with science, rationalism, freedom and progress. They were extremely critical of absolutism based on theistic authority, advocating reason as *a tool* (knowledge) for understanding society and the world: Voltaire (critic of the church and tyranny), Jean-Jacques Rousseau (proposing the social contract), Montesquieu (split of powers), Denis Diderot (dictionary of science), John Locke and David Hume brought cognitive skepticism; the primacy of reason over the will and a critique of all metaphysics, especially religious metaphysics; Immanuel Kant believed that human cognition takes place within the limits of experience. Locke presented a liberal approach to religion and churches, in political life according to the character of the state and society: the provision of individual freedoms and the right to reason, the separation of powers, the concept of the organization of the state (constitutional monarchy) and the principle that the people have the right to resist by force a bad or violent government (to overthrow it). His view of the state and society (1690) was directly opposed, at that time, to Hobbes's conception of the state (1651), which arose from the need for order and security, and arose in response to the fear of the natural state of "war of all against all", considering that the state of nature is a state of universal freedom and equality, and the task of the state to guarantee such a state. Robert Filmer (1680) defends absolute monarchy and the "divine right of kings" to rule. Filmer was equally harshly critical of the idea of human equality and freedom, considering it a source of anarchy. From today's point of view of international *relations*, the state fulfilled Hobbes's predictions and Locke's hopes, although the state of "war of all against all" was, broadly speaking, longer-lasting, but it also *accepted* Filmer's claims: there are twelve monarchies in Europe, six of them are members of the European Union. Locke's principles became the basis of the British constitutional tradition, but also of the French constitution of 1871. Voltaire, Rousseau, Condillac and other thinkers of the 18th

² Available at: <https://www.enciklopedija.hr/clanak/duns-scotus-johannes>

³ Available at: <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/ockham/>

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century developed his philosophy in different directions. Given that the disagreements in France were basically in relation to the Others (Jews), it is necessary to keep in mind the environment in which they grew up and developed.

The "long nineteenth century", which can be placed from the French Revolution of 1789 to 1914 and the beginning of the First World War, was a period of great change: the age of revolutions, the age of capital and the age of empires. It was a period marked by a clash of ideologies in and around the speed of progress, i.e. the birth (sovereignty) of nations. The agreement and disagreement of intellectual views of that period was perhaps more influenced by events than by principles with regard to the construction of modern society, the struggle for political rights and the formation of nation states. We can say that the creation of the modern age was interwoven with an anti-modern approach: much more doubts and nostalgia than explicit negation or anti-modernists, whom Nietzsche considered "the true founders of modernity" [8]. Do we consider intellectuals as people *outside the box*, those who are "affected by a high degree of intellectual independence; not adapted to the standards of thinking, speaking and acting of those who have created a harmonized image of themselves; in conflict with the majority; in short, unusual" [9], we begin our short journey through the long nineteenth century with Joseph de Maistre. De Maistre, along with Fénelon, Saint-Simon and Montesquieu, belonged to the first theme of anti-modernism – counter-revolution, advocating the return of France to its former institutions. It seems interesting that the *defenders* of historical rights were initially inclined of the *Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen*, but after the abolition of class rights and privileges, they changed their minds and began to attack democracy and republicanism. Within the theme of counter-revolution, *reformists* appear as followers of moderate, pragmatic and rationalistic approaches of English (The *Glorious Revolution*), or the American model (constitutional revolution) – constitutionalists, ironically of history a return to De Maistre's *modernism*: to the Constitution and monarchy tempered by intermediary bodies, embodied in American democracy. Charles Baudelaire, considered "the *natural* delight in destruction: man has a *natural* inclination to destroy, a *natural* love of crime, and the revolution is a prime example of this. François-René de Chateaubriand attributed the same to Napoleon I (Bonaparte), the first leader of the Republic and the Empire, but also to the French: "(...) The French are instinctively inclined to power; they don't really like freedom; their only idol is equality. But equality and despotism are connected by mysterious connections." Gustav Flaubert was deeply imbued with philosophical pessimism, skepticism and a harsh critique of bourgeois society: the opposition of numbers to the elite of the intelligentsia. Flaubert was a *sober* observer who did not believe in the better nature of his contemporaries, skeptical of humanity and pessimistic about human fate. Paul Bourget mockingly spoke of peoples' rights and "other political follies", and noted that "the rule of any fool, such as that of Napoleon III (the first president, second emperor and last monarch of France in a period in which there was rapid industrialization in France, the rapid expansion of infrastructure and the rise of French influence in world politics after several decades of instability), was better than today's general turmoil". Ernest Renan believed that the evil that befell France had its roots in the despotism of the Revolution, the lack of freedom since 1815. Renan believes that France was a victim of egalitarian materialism, the disobedience of individuals to authority for the sake of the common good. Renan points out: "If universal suffrage does not compensate for the defects of universal suffrage: universal suffrage cannot be subjugated by it alone." Renan was sure that universal suffrage could not bring order to society. In fact, Renan believed that the most important thing for France was the reform of the school system, because (only) education would be capable of permanently correcting the shortcomings of universal suffrage. Renan considered equality "a dangerous utopia, and democracy an unstable political system, and concludes: "Since the people are what they are, that is, uneducated, the political function must remain the monopoly of the elite, in a hierarchical but free society." Renan concluded: "Stupidity has no right to rule the world." Michael Proust "unforcedly commented on the state of society: "Democratic comedy is better than revolution" [8]. One of the important political promises in transition process was to raise the level of the share of higher education in the working-age population. Social results after three decades of all possible incentives and liberalization of education system show that quantity did not contribute to quality – the opposite happened.

Edmund Burke saw the Revolution with completely different eyes: "In England, the Revolution was carried out in such a way as to preserve our old incontestable laws and liberties, and the old structure of government, as our only guarantee of legality and liberty." Burke makes fun of theorists who "imagine that they can start from the field, (...)". Burke, of course, did not forget to name the actors: We are not Rousseau's converts or Voltaire's disciples; Helvetius did not prosper in our country. "Atheists are not our preachers, the frenzied are not our legislators," Burke points out. Alex de Tocqueville agrees with Burke: "When one studies the history of our Revolution, one sees that it was guided by the very same spirit that inspired the writing of all those abstract books on government, the same allure of general theories, of comprehensive systems of legislation, and of the mathematical symmetry of laws, the same contempt for real facts and reliance on theory, the same inclination to originality, new inventions and new institutions, the same desire to rearrange the entire social organization at once according to the rules of logic and a single design, instead of trying to improve it in parts. (...)" Burke rejects the abstract method that has made it possible to bring down a work that has been built up for centuries with one blow, emphasizing: "We do not draw from history the moral lessons that we could. (...) There is a great, undeveloped scroll in history for our lesson, in which the material for our future wisdom is drawn from the past mistakes and weaknesses of mankind. (...) History consists for the most part of the misfortunes inflicted on the world by pride, ambition, greed, revenge, lust, rebellion, unbridled zeal, and all the other procession of immoderate desires that shake society." Friedrich Nietzsche warned of the real state of affairs: "The truth, the real truth is that the state of nature is terrifying, man is a predatory animal, and the

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stupid 18th century has overembellished and rationalized man." Nietzsche thought so badly of the 18th century because he felt that an attempt was made to "rationalize man, wash away his wild nature and make him tame, which led to the emergence of the 'last man' – a being without ambition, creativity and strength." This life is immoral, it is not a sweet song of salvation, but a frantic struggle in which... The stronger, more capable, bolder win. The will to live is the basic criterion, but in the state of nature it is also the will to power. A century later, Francis Fukuyama [2] argued that liberal democracy, after the fall of communism, has become the end point of the ideological development of humanity and the ultimate form of governance – there is no alternative. The idea of demystifying the *belief* in progress (as a kind of religion that replaced Christianity) is a central theme of Georges Sorel: "The enormous successes achieved by material civilization have led to the belief that happiness will arise by itself, for all people, in the near future" [8]. During a hearing in the U.S. Congress (1953), Charles Elvin Wilson, chairman of General Motors, stated, "What's good for Ford is good for America," is one of the most famous business and political slogans in U.S. history, symbolizing the close connection between corporate power and the national interest. "Anyone who believes that exponential growth can last forever in a finite world is either a madman or an economist," said Kenneth Boulding (1965).⁴ De Maistre leans on Sorel, but is pessimistic: "There is only violence in the world. But we have been spoiled by modern philosophy that says that everything is good, while evil has defiled everything and while, indeed, everything is evil, because nothing is in its place." Pierre G. Frédéric le Play, advocated social stability strengthened by family relationships, based on a social morality rooted in Catholic tradition: "Whenever individualism dominates social relations, people quickly fall into barbarism." If political stability means political *standstill*, since, as François-René de Chateaubriand believed, "political standstill is impossible", there is no stability. "It is necessary to advance with human intelligence" [8]. Tocqueville had a similar opinion, as he was well aware of technical progress, i.e. the unimaginable imagination (mind) of man, but at the same time he was cautious and worried, believing that the development of technology should be harmonized with the progress of the possibility of cooperation between people. Tocqueville was rightly concerned about democracy with advances in technology and material comfort, which can steer a man towards his own interests and the loss of concern for the expansion of the power of the state [10]. Even Blaise Pascal realized that reliance and *trust* in the mind or reason are not enough to explain human behavior: "the heart has its reasons". Two centuries later, Arthur Schopenhauer regarded that "unlike reason, the will is a blind, irrational, eternally unsatisfied force that moves everything in nature, (...)" [8]. Schopenhauer argued that religion must "lie" by presenting its allegories as literal truths, as the people need to understand the "sublime meaning of life" through vivid simple narratives. If we look at today's results of researches on trust in politics and political elites, in institutions, especially in transition countries, we can say that transition countries are in a state of apathy, strengthening populism, depoliticizing life and trying to reduce public deliberation, already of a modest scope, to discussions about performance or *to drag* it within the process of (inevitable) belonging and acceptance of integration. Before the new democracies were consolidated, they were gripped by an anti-political *period* – a *disease*, according to which political elites divide the world into *us* and *them*, a world of friends and enemies – but this is not politics [11]. Reliance on the individual, according to Jason Brennan, is very dubious. The electorate is not an individual. This tangle of different goals, behaviors and intellectual capacities makes decisions that are a political choice for everyone, not only harming themselves [12]. The basis of expectations is not on the electorate, but refers to *faith* in the results of the education system: on the citizen as a rationalist or as an empiricist; on the empiricists British or rationalist continentals, who have formed their views in completely different conditions of the establishment of different models of state and governance: Europe has eleven constitutional monarchies; of the ten functioning democracies for 2025, six are constitutional monarchies [13].

Joseph de Maistre associates the Revolution with something sublime, unusual; Tocqueville, on the other hand, believed that the Revolution was not so extraordinary, "its effects are exaggerated and warns of a certain tension between the *old* and the *new*, simultaneous admiration and fear"[8]. De Maistre calls the tension between the old and the new "experimental politics" that emphasizes the power of history, and contrasts it with "metapolitics", a concept or philosophical discourse that opposes traditional political philosophy. For Alain Badiou, politics is something special. Irreducible in its contingency it signifies the opinion of equality and freedom. The distinction between political and politics is of strategic importance. The political is a condition for the possibility of freedom. The reason lies in the fact that it is placed in the event of democracy in the community, while, in turn, politics appears through the institutional order of democracy or the form of the state." If politics is "opinion", according to Badiou, "then it is the articulation of the procedures of truth. However, he argues that the art of the impossible is a condition of the possibility of politics, that is, a space that transcends the domain of politics of practical goals rather than ideals. Although conceptually he partly relies on Descartes, Badiou considers politics to mean *metapolitics* in relation to existing models of politics – to think of an alternative to "capital-parliamentarism"[15].

Intellectuals are not valued, they disappear: because of themselves or because of activities against them [16]. The contempt for intellectuals is based on the moral law of the heirs of modern consciousness that celebrates faith in Truth, Morality and Justice, as universal values. Intellectuals are a hindrance and a threat in environments where cunning and robbery are valued, where miraculous pragmatism prevails, while knowledge and science are considered necessary in the ideological confirmation of power. Žarko Pačić is crudely direct: "The novelty of modernity is that hatred towards the Others (people, cultures, religions) becomes scientifically

⁴ Available at: <https://sustainabilitybites.com/from-cowboy-economy-to-spaceman-economy/>

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encouraged. *Clerics* take on the role of ideologues. The multitude goes into action guided by the idea of national pride. (...) Only a few remain faithful to the spirit of cosmopolitanism and the truth of the spirit, and in the majority, they follow the law of the masses and enjoy the benefits of the leaders of organized hatred" [17].

On the Truth

Our discussion of truth starts from the concept of *truth*, as a universal value that, in the current postmodern era, finds fewer and fewer supporters, because it is increasingly difficult to distinguish the truth from the lies that are presented to citizens, and on which they create views about themselves and others. Due to the failure of modernity to enthrone Reason and base an ethical theory on it, in postmodernity we are faced with the consequences of this failure: from resignation manifested by the persistent "celebration of death" (*salvation*), the replacement of ethics with aesthetics to the equalization (*acquis communautaire*) of individual behavior without moral scruples, supported by the celebration of a new Sublimity - the singularity [18]. In fact, it seems that the world is rapidly imposing (by force) a new phase of human *evolution* in which Reason, and therefore Truth, not only pose a threat, but disappear as a value and destroy the structure of the community. Today, in an increasing number of countries, citizens are primarily facing existential problems and it is completely wrong to believe that they can draw certain conclusions based on the available information and create their future decisions based on them. In the new *democratic* and *capitalist* countries with unconsolidated democracy and foreign capitalists, the modern world that is advertised is full of material achievements that are only possible if the *new* citizens and their political elites *abide* by the rules, by introducing institutions that will *enable* citizens to *become* (in the future) rich. The combination of techno-feudalism [19] that promotes the Sublimity and the political elites of the mandated future, has created a limited space for questioning the *great* Truth of eternal progress, which will solve all the problems of man. Transitional societies are torn between the lust for materialistic goals of modern and postmodern individualization, accompanied by a virtual reality without solid structures. The gap between modernity and postmodernity has also resulted in disbelief in the existence of two *truths*: truth and post-truth. Post-truths as a reflection on contemporary (modern/postmodern) events and a strong distrust of political elites and institutions, especially in new democracies [20]. Three *movements* on the social scene are crystallizing: techno-feudalists, political populists, and the public, which is *doomed* to the omnipresence of technology and the feeling that the truths presented have little to do with the facts, but are focused exclusively on making a profit. Citizens feel and see that the world is changing before their eyes, however, but they are far more concerned about the disintegration of social structures and the life they valued to live. It remains for the vast majority of citizens to try to find models of *unification* around the ideals of truth under the guidance of those who have or should have the greatest insight into it – contemporary *clerics* as bearers of epistemic virtues [21]. Given that there are no *random* elections or changes that will happen by themselves, it is up to the *third* group – the public – to question the existing direction of development and fairness of institutions in society, especially from the aspect of the truth about prosperity in transition countries [13]. Jürgen Habermas was very critical of the public, questioning the problems of rationalization, communication and democracy. Habermas saw capitalist society as a "power" that colonizes the "world of life" in which money becomes the only value in interpersonal relationships, which consequently reduces the number of active participants in the debate (exclusivity *vs.* inclusiveness). It is time to ask: where has the truth in politics gone? [21].

Although the article emphasizes contemporary *clerics*, *professors*, intellectuals, we are actually talking about a man with all his good and bad sides, and this is where *our* story about both truth and post-truth begins and ends. Friedrich Nietzsche believed that the attempt to "tame" man with knowledge failed because it could not tame his natural instincts: aggressiveness, egoism, instinct. Nietzsche warned of the aporia between instinct and reason, rationalism as the highest good. Nietzsche wrote about Europe after the "Spring of Nations" (1848) and questioned: is man prepared to take power? Although Nietzsche had a Western view of man as an *animal rationale*, he also believed that in order to exercise the responsibility of power, man must transcend himself, which means that he should be able to reject everything that has been despicable in his past. Nietzsche did not believe in the possibility that man could *overcome* his natural instincts [22].

In the existing conditions of change within or even the disintegration of the world order, can the ideal of truth remain *unchanged* or, like other concepts, will it experience or has already undergone ideological refinements – be *modernized*. Why is truth necessary in politics, or why does a functioning democracy require truth, are just some of the questions related to the results of governance in the new democratic-capitalist states. From the point of view of the political elites, the truth should, as much as possible, be avoided and limited.⁵ Because facts cannot be consensuated by a simple or consensual majority, they possess a destructive force that is difficult to fight against – the truth demands recognition – and recognition and politics are incompatible values. Political elites and media *feudal lords* are trying to reduce public debate, which is the essence of political life, to opinions that can be more easily or very easily refuted on the basis of personality, beliefs, perspective or subjective point of view, especially when it comes to people who are existentially dependent on the state.

Hannah Arendt warned in the mid-20th century about the characteristics of rulers: "Before mass leaders seize the power to adapt reality to their lies, their propaganda is marked by their extreme contempt for facts as such, because in their opinion facts

⁵ Available on: <https://www.tportal.hr/showtime/clanak/masakr-u-uglednom-listu-sokirao-svijet-demokracija-umire-u-tami-a-be-zos-je-upravo-ugasio-svjetlo-20260205>

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depend entirely on the power of the one who can invent them" [23] A decade later, at the time of America's struggle against discrimination (racism) and for civil rights, James Baldwin (1962) in the *New York Times* points out: "We live in a country where words are mainly used to cover sleepers, not to wake up." At the beginning of the new millennium (2005), the winner of the Nobel Prize for Literature, Harold Pinter, was extremely critical (politically) engaged in the description of American and British foreign policy, especially after receiving the prize. Speaking at the Stockholm Academy, Pinter said: "I believe that, despite the enormous obstacles that exist, an unwavering, fierce intellectual determination as citizens, to define the real truth about our lives and our societies, is a key obligation that is passed on to all of us." Regardless of civilizational periods, two questions can be extracted from social relations: "what can truth possibly be in the subjective realm of politics" and the second question, "how can truth be a central value for politics that celebrates diverse and opposing opinions?" [24].

If we are committed to an inclusive society, it means that we are committed to equal opportunities, respect for diversity, reduction of barriers and social cohesion. These values apply to all areas of human life and work; they are not reserved for experts in certain fields. What is needed for a strong inclusive society is an equally strong independent knowledge infrastructure. At least two things are absolutely necessary for the truth to penetrate the public: independent intellectuals and independent media. The established materialistic system does not publicly oppose the spread of knowledge; makes a completely opposite, seemingly magnificent shift in privatization and fragmentation of knowledge for the needs of the market (money). The consequence of the expansion of *educational opportunities* has turned into supervised areas of growth of the highly educated and the equally rapid collapse of public participation in development in the democratic political process. The idea of creating a broad front of experts did not contribute to the strengthening of critical thinking about society, but limited (expertise) and directed discussions on a particular problem or event. The idea that the postmodern Enlightenment (in *transition* countries) would make man more reasonable, tolerant and loyal was directed towards the values of the neoliberal conception of economics and *society*, and not with the aim of strengthening national democratic societies. Liberalism distinguished between the state and society, but it understood civil society primarily as an area of private economy. True, (as) a universal value is threatened anywhere and in any form of government by those who want to profit. "Never have words meant so little as they do today," John Dewey said back in 1941. Dewey hit the heart of the political process: it is not about *stretching* the truth in politics, "the problem is the complete inversion of the truth" [24]. If you have information resources at your disposal (under *control*), political lies can create a state of "intoxication" (with *progress* in transition countries), which lasts long enough for the initial claims to be forgotten.

The extent to which man has become more rational (through enlightenment) has perhaps been best and most painfully experienced by transitional countries. The open process of political pluralism *has brought to the fore the "brave"*, those for whom lies have always been a (justified) means to achieve their goals. The way how politicians show their position and power clearly shows that they are aware that a person should have a good memory to remember everything what they were promised (declared). The state of affairs in politics has always been a lie, with the difference that today it is abundant and unhidden. Lying has become a daily occurrence. Truth needs to look for its place of promotion, and the speakers of truth are outside the domain of politics. The fate of intellectuals today is no less *dangerous* than it was in the time of Socrates: they are subjected to pressures, the question of existence, social status, environment and circumstances, sometimes even exile, because lies have become an instrument for gaining power – political advantage and profit.

Politics has been and remains the privileged realm of lies. Hannah Arendt writes that "truthfulness has never been counted among the political virtues." Plato or Machiavelli believed that lying was necessary, desirable and permissible, especially if the recognition could cause harm. Given the invisible line of publicly *permissible* lies and lies for their own benefit, other issues such as fairness or success also arise. Malcolm X was adamant: "I am for the truth, no matter who says it. I'm for justice, regardless of who it's for or against." The promotion and creation of lies cannot be considered a *transition* of untruth, but an act that seeks to deprive or diminish the freedom of choice or autonomy of citizens, turning the public into a mere means to achieve personal or party, often other people's goals.⁶

Seeking the Truth and speaking in the name of the Truth is an effort to revive the public debate between those for whom the truth serves as an ideological weapon (through the manifestation of experts) and those who seek to challenge the misconceptions that are created in society by hiding truths or presenting untruths. Facts (real or created) are increasingly subordinated to ideology, by performing in principle *of the independent* media in which "the truth is a fact as much as it confirms the dogmatic truth of the ruling ideology". On these grounds, it is hardly possible to establish a fair discussion and dialogue because exponent of ruling ideology opposes the diversity of argumentation (not only opinions) and the pluralism of ideas. Transitional countries have decades of experience in possessing or having the exclusive right to interpret the *new* Truth. At the beginning of the nineties of the 20th century, they were (for a moment) faced with a *new* "end of history" – the end of the ideological development of humanity and the *choice* of liberal democracy as a universal system (the only truth). The task, perhaps too strictly, of intellectuals and their institutions is to encourage the explain of truths about society in liberal democracy and to propose how to find the strength to live the life what citizens value to live again.

⁶ Available at: <https://www.dailygood.org/story/2661/hannah-arendt-and-the-politics-of-truth-samantha-rose-hill/?lang=hr>

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On society

A century after the Revolution, Émile Zola published an open letter in the newspaper *L'Aurore* in which accuses French government and army of anti-Semitism and unlawful conviction of captain Alfred Dreyfus. Zola was aware of the risk, he was taking to expose the staged process, claiming that the truth had been stifled. Zola's engagement divided French society. Zola's appearance in public marks the beginning of the active role and importance of culture in modern society [25].

Julien Benda, spurred on by the greatest political event, the Dreyfus case, publishes his first book, *Dialogues à Byzance* (1900), whose title is *borrowed* from General Auguste Mercier's remark that the intellectuals (who defend Dreyfus) were like the Byzantine philosophers who continued *their deliberations* regardless of the fact that the Turks were at their doorstep. The Dreyfus case introduced the term "intellectual" into public use and caused controversy. The intellectual scene of France until the First and between the two wars was very lively and conflictual. At the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century, with the rise of political anti-Semitism, there was a common idea that anti-Semitism was an archaism of the *ancien régime* that, sooner or later, would completely destroy modern progress [26]. Renan pointed out: "If you look closely, you will notice that the enemies of Judaism are usually the enemies of the modern spirit. Every Jew is a liberal"[8]. Ferdinand Brunetière, editor-in-chief of *La France juive* (1886), writes: "Blinded by his hatred of the Jews, which he (Édouard Adolphe Drumon) tries in vain to disguise with nice names for a situation from which they may have benefited, but which they by no means caused." In addition to the military forces of the Coalition against France, the financing of the British government by Nathan Mayer Rothschild and the brothers ("The best job I have ever done!", Nathan declared.) played a key role in the victory at Waterloo [13]. Charles Péguy, who often criticized the modern world, materialism and bureaucracy, believed that Benda based his deliberation on the alternative between Jews and Christians. James Darmesteter connected the success of Jews in contemporary society with Protestantism and capitalism, that is, he pointed out the correspondences between the original principles of Judaism and modern ideology" [8].

Pierre Paul Leroy-Beaulieu believed that modern ideas had their origins in classical civilization and not in Judaism: "What gave rise to the modern world, the Renaissance, the Reformation, the Revolution, is neither the Jew nor the Jewish spirit." What Leroy-Beaulieu considered Jewish influence "was in fact the Americanization of societies and their materialism," he concluded: "There is a people who perhaps with more right than we could accuse the Jews of having contributed to its corruption. This is Germany", where Heine, Marx, Lassalle were prominent figures, but even there they did not have "a monopoly of intellectual radicalism and philosophical or political negations" [8].

On the occasion of Holocaust Remembrance Day, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu sharply criticized Europe, saying it was "struck by a deep moral weakness" and that Israel was now defending a continent "that has forgotten so much since the Holocaust." Netanyahu accused Europe of "losing control over its own identity, its values and its responsibility to defend civilization from barbarism." "They have a lot to learn from us," Netanyahu said, "a particularly important lesson about the clear moral difference between good and evil, which in moments of truth requires going to war for what is good, for life. Israel does not forget this eternal responsibility. Together with the United States and other countries with whom we are creating alliances that are yet to be talked about, we are defending ourselves - and thus the whole world." The European Union's positions on the war in the Middle East are defined in the manner of *calls* for calm and restraint, respect for international law, the Charter, humanitarianism, moratorium, expression of regret etc.⁷

Life is in no way only political, but every day it is more economic, moral, religious and intellectual, regardless of which political representatives we are more inclined to. José Ortega y Gasset [27] was very direct in this regard: "Being a supporter of the left current, as well as being a supporter of the right, is just one of the countless ways one can choose to become an imbecile: both are, in fact, forms of moral hemiplegia" [3]. Can education itself be a way out of this, obviously not easily curable, condition, or should we add authorship to it, but not anonymously, which means writing critically about the dominant, taking responsibility for clearly not pleasing the majority and the minority that has power? Is it possible *for* intellectuals to rally around the idea of presenting the unrepresented and "at the same time having the civic courage and moral integrity that made them decide they had to stand up to the powerful"? Can an individual intellectual do anything in today's world in which the means are in the hands of techno-feudalists, powerful who have the right to "objectivity"? is not only a question of the enlightenment of the 21st century [16]. In addition to the growing skepticism towards the values of democracy, perhaps the loss of trust in the value of truth, that is, the willingness of politicians (democracy) to create and endlessly repeat untruths supported by technology without fear of political or other consequences, has created circumstances in which the public and epistemic infrastructure have become ready to tolerate or even accept obvious untruths. Many big Lies are related to political preferences and persist among *comrades* (left or right), often supported by *left* or *right* intellectuals. The history of the 21st century points to the conclusion that there is little left of rationalism. Reality convinces us every day that nature (instincts) and empiricism are far *more effective* than reason. David Hume put it very soberly: "We rationalize, we only listen to what we want to hear. We are biased, prejudiced and think instinctively. We tell ourselves that "we" know and "they" don't, even when what we "know" is obviously wrong" [24]. Even Aristotle argued: "It is more important for the stability of a state that it is governed by a moral and wise man than that there is a perfect law that is not justly enforced." At the

⁷ Available on: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/hr/policies/eu-position-situation-middle-east/>

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heart of a just and good society is man, his ethics and responsibility. In the passage of more than two thousand years, *nothing* important, except for technology, has changed. The change has happened in the fact that we have become aware that man must *limit himself* in the possibilities of his own choice between rationalism and empiricism – by establishing social values – we are talking about culture. "Cultures are," Michael Walzer argues, "hard; they prescribe the institutions and models of behavior that guide human beings along the paths that are right in a particular society..." A key message from Singapore's president and government in the early 1990s was: "Singaporeans are not Americans, they are not Anglo-Saxons, although we can speak English and wear Western clothes (as well as the Japanese). If Singaporeans become a poor imitation of them over a long period of time, we will lose an advantage over Western societies, an advantage that allows us to maintain our society internationally" [28]. In the preface to Lee Kuan Yew's book *From the Third World to the First*, Henry Kissinger emphasizes: "... The unambiguity of technology is accompanied by the blind assumption that policies, and even cultures, will become equal. Western countries with a long tradition, in particular, have fallen victim to the temptation to ignore history, judging each new state by the criteria of its own civilizations. Lee did not ask us (the West) to change our pattern, only to refrain from imposing it on societies with different histories and needs" [29].

Whichever way we approach the problem/solution, we are stuck on education and the creation of thoughts (*cogito, ergo sum*), i.e. *directed* education and production of *technical* intellectuals. Almost a century ago, Joseph Schumpeter offered an intriguing and influential analysis⁸ of the role of intellectuals in capitalism: "capitalism will not *be headed by* the impoverished masses, but by the intellectuals that capitalism itself has created and enabled to live well within that system." Live well and be quiet! Or, as the Jewish proverb celebrates: "May you be healthy, rich and unknown!" Schumpeter believed that intellectuals lean towards socialism and criticism of capitalism; articulate discontent, spread criticism and create an atmosphere in which capitalism loses its legitimacy, which ultimately leads to socialism" [30] How to create a functioning society (democracy without *thinking* people and leave all "thoughts" to capitalists), if the truth is not important, that is, if it is a topic outside the public debate [31]. An inclusive society requires its citizens to speak the truth about politics (the powerful), whether they left or right, to be publicly engaged and to care about the fulfilment of political promises, otherwise, the realization of these values becomes impossible [32].

For John Dewey, the problem of encouraging a more rational public debate was (and remains) a problem of politics. Discussion essentially contains elements of cooperation, tolerance, search for facts on which one's own and other opinions are based. However, if society has not created an institutional framework for promoting debate in institutions responsible for information, education, journalism, science, history, etc., in institutions that should provide the general public with coherent (accurate) information for the implementation of public debate, the space for public action is dramatically narrowed. If the foundations for the "epistemic infrastructure", the conditions for building a functional democracy are not established, conditions are indirectly created that threaten the values of truth, the disparagement of science and history; society gives up on enlightening its citizens – only technology remains [24].

The reference to Martin Heidegger's philosophy of existence and his emphasis on the "common destiny", the "historical people" and the critique of liberal individualism is still very relevant today. Heidegger paved the way for postmodernism by questioning the Western metaphysical tradition, reason and subjectivism, opposing the world of modern technology that treats man exclusively as a "resource". Existing (controlled and created) sources of information (possibilities), together with integrating determinism, have reduced authenticity to the style of *clothing* and *hairstyle*.

Albert Camus advocated humanism without religion and moral responsibility in an *absurd* world. In the introduction to *Algerian Chronicles*, Camus begins with a description: "The 17th century was the century of mathematics, the 18th century of physics, and the 19th century of biology. Our 20th century is a century of fear." Camus based his claims about a century of fear on his opposition to the use of the atomic bomb immediately after Hiroshima, tirelessly standing up in defence of human dignity and the right to one's own life. He was lonely, called an "ignorant reactionary", alone against the *scholars* who dragged him through the mud in Paris, while he was alive and long after his death. Camus, based on the experience of the 20th century, correctly predicted: "... we live in a world in which killing is legitimate and in which human life is considered a trifle" [33]. By emphasizing the struggle between "good and evil" and justification (killing) by which evil should be eliminated, there has always been a basis, once more theological, today ontological, which *draws the facts* for its definition of "evil" from the theology of civilization.

Herbert Marcuse, in his work *One-Dimensional Man*, analysed the repressive nature of a developed industrial society. Marcuse argued that capitalism and technology have created a totalitarian system that stifles critical thinking, absorbs opposition and produces false needs, which ultimately makes man unfree. Marcuse tried to oppose the existing order in which society becomes "comfortable and passive", in which the satisfaction of needs through consumption stifles real human potential and the aspiration for freedom. Marcuse clearly saw how technologies are used as a means of domination, it does not serve *the liberation of man*, but transform technical efficiency into ideology.

In the final phase of the 20th century (1980s), Richard Rorty declared epistemology dead and wished it farewell. For Rorty and many other thinkers in that field, the idea that we needed a theory of knowledge at all was based on outdated Cartesian

⁸ Available at: <https://liberal.hr/zasto-intelektualci-tako-cesto-naginju-socijalizmu-ovaj-ekonomist-je-ponudio-zanimljivo-ob-jasnjenje-125>

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assumptions that the mind was an innocent mirror of nature. Rotry urged us to reject truth along with 17th-century rationalism. *What is the purpose of truth?* he asked with the provocative title of one of his last books [24]. Rorty believed: Truth is not a "thing" to be discovered, but a word used to describe beliefs that have been successfully justified. Those truths that are *available* or can be *established are successfully justified*. Rorty concluded: "The search for *the Truth* is of no use. (...), what is true is what is *useful* for human prosperity, that is, what is Western, and not what is factually *true*, that is, corresponds to reality." The extent to which the two *worlds* differ is evident in *What's the Use of Truth?* by Richard Rorty (the American) and Pascal Engel (the Frenchman) (2007), in which they present their radically different views on the truth and its coherence with reality. Rorty doubts that the concept of truth can have a practical purpose and points to the prejudices behind truth in the intellectual and social spheres. Engel prefers a realistic conception, defending the relevance and value of truth as a norm of belief and research in science and the public sphere. Rorty found more danger in using the notion of truth than in eliminating it. Engel, on the contrary, believes that it is important to stick to the idea that truth is an accurate representation of reality. Our reality is completely polarized by political life, everything that happens is given or considered a political meaning. The idea that the Truth may at some point be less important for political ends, or that the Truth is the product of political or technological action/development, brings us back to the concepts of (private) ownership of the Truth [34].

On the world

The world is not the West. What is the West? Europe is not the European Union, and the West is not Europe, although, in terms of the concept, they have a lot in common. The term "West" appeared in the 1830s, because the "northern" power, Russia under Peter the Great, appeared at the Congress of Vienna. The invasion of Russia, which ended with the defeat of Napoleon and Russia's entry into the European system, changed relations within Europe in terms of terminology. Most of the participants in the Congress of Vienna began to refer to the northern power (the *bear*) as "eastern", which implied the creation of a new "Western" alliance against the Russian threat. In the middle of the 18th century, the fear was the strengthening of Germany, with the defeat of France by Prussia and the unification of Germany, in different ways on both sides, influenced reflections on the meaning of the term "West" and whether Germany was an integral part of it. Oswald Spengler argued in the early 20th century that the term "Europe" is unnecessary, even confusing, because it leads people to associate Russia with the West [35]. In his work *The Fall of the West*, Spengler described the West as a "Faustian" civilization defined by a longing for infinite space, power, and technical progress. He based his pessimism about the future on the transition of culture into a materialistic civilization ruled by money, a civilization that would give birth to new "Caesars". Thomas Mann, in his work *Reflection of a Nonpolitical Man*, defended Germany and its culture as an eternal "protest" and resistance to the universal/homogenizing tendencies of Rome, and then of the "West", from Western influences, civilization and democracy. Mann opposed the penetration of liberal ideas from England and France, which he then considered superficial and incompatible with the German spirit. In 2002, German authorities arrested members of the Patriotische Union group who were planning a *coup d'état* and the restoration of the German Reich. The Reichsbürgers ("citizens of the Reich") deny the existence of the German Federal Republic after World War II, as they believe that it is governed by the United States, the United Kingdom and France.⁹ They invoked, like Mann, the Battle of the Tetebuorg Forest, in which the Germans (9 AD) defeated the Roman legions, in order to establish the Empire [36]. In historical aspect, Charlemagne's Empire was called the "empire of the West"; until the schism between the Churches in Rome and Constantinople, the West was called the Latin Church. In the vast majority of cases, the term "West" has been used in opposition to Russia. During the Cold War, the West also included the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, which Kundera considered "the kidnapped West." During the 18th and 19th centuries, the term "West" was mainly used in a geographical or historical aspect (with Rome). Today's term West, which describes a political-cultural community, began to appear in the works of Auguste Comte, who replaces the "confusing" term Europe with the term West [35].

From Comte to the present days, it is evident that there is no single, unified idea of the West. Many definitions from the past period are still, depending on the circumstances, part of the potential repertoire for use. The West as a concept, at the time of Comte, which considered the core of the West (Western Europe) primarily to be nations that emerged from the Carolingian Empire, with special emphasis on France as the leader, and England, Germany, Italy and Spain. In the contemporary (economic) context, the West refers to a group of developed countries of America (the USA and Canada) and Western Europe, often Australia and New Zealand, but also developed parts of Asia. In the context of civilization, however, the term West implies a civilization based on the legacy of antiquity, Christianity, the Enlightenment, liberal democracy and capitalism. Despite the different definitions of the term West, in the historical aspect, the only thing that seems stable is the fact that the West is based on *opposition to others*.

A whole series of institutions and institutes established in the past two centuries (which the West considers its *property*) are trying to impose/condition themselves as a condition of belonging to the West. Another approach, a more liberal one, would be the open possibility that the implemented (western) institutions and institutes are worth considering because they deserve to be adopted not because they are *Western*, but because they promote freedom, justice, prosperity, peacemaking, progress, make a life worth living. The latter approach means the possibility of choice – the previous classification.

⁹ Available at: <https://www.populismstudies.org/what-does-patriotic-unions-coup-plan-in-germany-tell-us-about-threats-posed-by-far-right/>

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If the historical philosophy of the West is marked by a singular movement from René Descartes to Friedrich Hegel, in the period in which "a philosophical edifice was completed", begun by Descartes' rationalism and ended by the absolute idealism of Hegel, not only did a *fruitful* philosophical period end, but history and the future were brought to a crossroads. Karl Marx took the most radical implications from Hegel's philosophy, believing that change could only be achieved through "practical revolutionary modification." With the disintegration of absolute metaphysics, the problematization of the roots of philosophy itself and the questioning of the possibilities of man in general began. What followed, the two world wars, was an external manifestation of a deep crisis and, subsequently, a hope (if any) for the "healing" of the world, which is losing its momentum in the new millennium. The world today, as if returning to the *initial* settings at the beginning of the twentieth century [37].

Rudolf Carnap bases positivism on the facts of scientific statement, based on two assumptions: metaphysics is meaningless and therefore neither true nor false, and positive science is the only truth in the world. Bertrand Russell focused on the construction of thought as a philosophy of common sense, opposing Hegel's as well as British idealism: "The British differ from other peoples of modern Europe on the one hand by the excellence of their philosophers, and on the other hand by their contempt for philosophy. In both respects, they show their wisdom" – Russell humorously observes. John Dewey looked with concern at philosophy which, he believed, did not pretend to be absolute truth, but to practical hypotheses useful, especially to socio-political institutions. Dewey advocated the renewal of social sciences, social philosophy, starting from the fact that every society is made up of individuals. Dewey was seeking a *new* solution to the relationship of the individual to the state and society, believing that individualism and collectivism are not a good solution. He opted for liberalism and democracy, because he believed that democracy can regulate social conflicts and establish the relatively most favorable relations between the individual and the state. Max Scheler developed a material ethics of value, which opposed Kant's formalism. Scheler believed that values are objective, independent of the subject, and that we know them not only through reason but also through emotions. He put the values of material qualities in the first place. Scheler considered knowledge to be a social phenomenon formed by cultural and real factors, so the sociology of knowledge exists between cultural and real sociology [37, 24].

Karl Jaspers was known as a citizen of the world. However, "the idea of a single sovereign power ruling the whole Earth (...) is not only a terrifying, nightmare of tyranny, but it would be the end of all political life as we know it. (...) The establishment of a sovereign state, which is by no means a prerequisite for world citizenship, would be the end of all citizenship," Jaspers believed [38]. As early as the 1960s, Jaspers saw the interconnectedness of the world as a "common present", because no event can be hidden anymore or remain a marginal coincidence wherever it occurred. Communicational globalism has turned states into neighbours, and world events are becoming everyone's everyday life. However, it is important to point out that a common present is not based on a common past, which "does not guarantee a common future in the least". Jaspers concluded: "The idealism of the humanist tradition of the Enlightenment and its notion of humanity in the light of present realities seem like reckless optimism" [37]. These realities, in turn, by bringing us a global present without a common past, threaten to render irrelevant all traditions and all individual histories. Six decades later, the world does not seem any closer, and cultural differences are becoming more pronounced [28].

We end the presentation of different ideas about truth, society and the world with the prototype of the intellectual, who considered that the philosopher should not only observe the world, but must be actively involved. Jean-Paul Sartre was a key figure of existentialism: he argued that "existentialism precedes essence", that is, that man first exists and is determined only by actions. Sartre emphasized freedom: one cannot delegate responsibility for one's actions and fate to others. Sartre was an engaged (public) intellectual, who criticized capitalism, supported decolonization, and when it came to France [37]. In the preface to his work *Despised in the World*, he justified the violence of the colonized as a legitimate tool for liberation. In 1966, Russell and Sartre established the International War Crimes Tribunal as a private, civil court – a court of conscience. The court acted as a moral body and a court of "public opinion" with the aim of breaking censorship and mobilizing the world public. The court publicly exposed and condemned the U.S. military intervention and tactics in Vietnam. Due to political pressure from the United States and European governments, the court was not desirable in either London or Paris: at two sessions during 1967 (Stockholm, Roskilde), the court unanimously found the United States government guilty of aggression, violation of international law and bombing civilian targets (hospitals, schools, dams). Sartre compiled an extensive and rigorous legal-philosophical text in which he concluded that U.S. military methods in Vietnam ultimately constituted the crime of genocide against the Vietnamese people. Sartre refused to accept the Nobel Prize and justified the refusal with personal and objective reasons. He believed that accepting the prize would compromise his freedom, and the work of the Academy would be biased towards Western ideology and cultural patterns, ignoring top authors from the East or colonial countries. And the third, very topical reason, Sartre believed that the dialogue between the people and cultures of the capitalist West and the socialist East must take place without the interference of powerful institutions that impose courts.

On the basis of the trials in Nuremberg and Tokyo, representatives of more than one hundred and fifty countries established the International Criminal Court (ICC) in Rome in 1998 by a majority vote. Among the countries that opposed the establishment were the United States, Algeria, China, Libya, Iraq and Israel. The world is not America. Three decades after the Russell-Sartre Tribunal, Noam Chomsky and Michael Mandela compiled a report on the airstrikes on Serbia, in which they accused the international community of "violating international law". Chomsky and Mandela prove that violence was significantly increased by the

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action, suggesting that the action was not taken to stop the massacre, but to establish US dominance in the Balkans. The report was submitted to the ICC.

Of the two hundred and fifty years of history, the United States has been or has participated in war operations for approximately between 230 and 235 years, or over 90 percent of its history. No U.S. president has been a peacetime president, and each of the forty-seven incumbents has spent at least part of their reign as a wartime president. From its foundation to the present day, the longest period without war lasted only six years: between 1935 and 1940.¹⁰ The insatiable desire for war can be attributed to two facts: 1) because the United States has the most powerful army and thus can carry out "its (God's) will" wherever it wants, not shy away from using all possible weapons, and 2) America has never (after 1945) given up imperial policy, i.e. global domination. Chomsky considers the beginning of U.S. hegemony to be "the first war on terror" (1801-1805). The actions taken by the U.S. leadership are necessarily just in their intent, because the leadership has "lofty ideals" and is committed to "stability and justice." Wartime activities feed the economic lifeblood of the U.S. (as well as ancient Rome). Therefore, the evaluation of such activities is unnecessary, or even provokes ridicule. This type of action also includes preventive war, which Chomsky believes falls into the category of war crimes and poses a danger to world peace. America is a country with the highest degree of social inequality and poverty, and it presents an image of itself (the political-economic model) and society as a well-functioning *paradise*, a system that is defended in a scientific, political and military context. The welfare state model, like those in northern Europe, poses a serious threat to the American economic elite, which is also the political elite, and which is trying in every possible way to repel or eliminate this threat. Twenty-three years ago, Chomsky, in his analysis of U.S. foreign policy in his work *Hegemony or Survival*, prophetically wrote that a successful European Union defies America's radical neoliberalism of business elites with its social policy. The *virus*, Chomsky said, "is too dangerous and the U.S. will soon have to deal with it."

Understanding the world has never been easy, but today it is much more difficult. A Man is exposed to a huge amount of information and images, which makes it easier for him to record and perceive, but at the same time it makes it difficult for him to reason, verifying the truth of what is received. What is true and what is false? To whom does he belong? How, based on the information about what he has seen and read, he can, and should at all, make the right decisions, fighting simultaneously against his own *demons*: feelings and impressions, inclinations and *Situation* [34, 40]. A series of events were taking place about which it is difficult to speak and impossible to remain silent [41], events about which we should speak, write and preach. In the new *Situation*, the intellectuals have to find a way (philosophy) to use what they have the strongest – the power of facts – to oppose the "rights of the strongest" and the public's need to hear the Truth. Silence is the last stage of democracy. *Liberals* need to take responsibility and make it know how intelligentsia is a social asset endowed with a function that is public [42].

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