

prof. dr hab. Jacek Bartyzel

Faculty of Political Sciences and International Studies

Nicolaus Copernicus University, Torun, Poland

Translation: Bartosz Płotka, FoPSaIS, NCU, Torun, Poland

Substantive and Accidental Critiques of Democracy

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Translated by
Bartosz Płotka

Introducing a distinction between two types of critique of democracy, we are obliged to explain how we understand their meaning.

Hence, by the *substantive* critique we understand such a position, which finds in democracy the essential, 'elementary' evil being not only accidental and adventitious attribute, but lying within its very nature. This evil of democracy is then understood as **irremovable** and **irreformable**. Moreover, it is connected with the evil side of a human nature as well as allows this side to manifest itself and 'leaves the field clear for it'. The consequence of this approach is the absolute rejection of democracy as the incurably corrupted political regime.

Respectively, by the *accidental* critique we understand the more optimistic approach, which discerns drawbacks of democracy, even serious ones (otherwise we could not call it a critique at all), but which all the same claims that these drawbacks are adventitious, accidental, contingent and usually resulting from the erroneous understanding of democracy or from its defective institutions. Therefore, these drawbacks are curable by the use of right remedies (modifica-

tions) regarding democracy itself or by supplementing democratic institutions with counterbalancing undemocratic ones (respectively, predemocratic, in historical terms).

From the above distinction it follows that:

1) articulations of the view that there is any 'deficit of democracy' (e.g. what is a common practice in the European Union) or any shortage of civic participation resulting with the 'crisis of democracy' as well as any intertwined convictions that 'the cure for defects of democracy is more democracy' – because they express a principally prodemocratic attitude that perceives democracy as essentially or *per se* a good thing being confused only because of some secondary reasons.

2) it is not *a priori* precluded that both kinds of the critique of democracy could coexist in the same thinkers or political-philosophical stream or position. However, such a situation seems logically possible only there where we fundamentally deal with a substantive critique and where it is the 'basic intention' of the critic. The presence of elements of the substantive critique in a thought leaning towards 'reforming democracy' would lead to shaking or doubting in this reformist attitude and in consequence would move it to the camp

of antidemocrats *intrasigeants*. Therefore, their presence in this stream can be merely contingent, literally *accidental*, ‘scant’ and rather ‘unwitting’.

We also wish to prove the thesis that contemporarily in the common view on political issues and even in academic political science there is utterly mistaken recognition of positions which the antidemocrats of both types are situated in. It means that as ‘fundamentalist’ enemies of democracy are identified only these thinkers who actually are only the critics of accidental drawbacks of democracy, particularly opponents of only one, though essentially prevailing, type of democracy i.e. *liberal democracy* (or conversely, they are enemies of only plebeian *ochlocracy*) – whereas ‘true’, ‘uncompromising’, in-depth enemies of democracy (‘substantivists’) are essentially unnoticed.

1. Substantive Critiques

The paradigm of the substantive critique of democracy was of course created by Plato. According to the Greek sage, the fundamental feature – nature – of democracy is persistent and incurable lack of truth (aletheia). Democracy – as Ryszard Legutko¹ underlines – by ignoring, not knowing it or not wanting to recognise the truth, simultaneously perversely and irresponsibly ‘exploits’ the truth by nonchalantly using the general concepts such as virtue, piety, justice, nobleness etc. (and their opposites). Their sense is determined arbitrarily, depending on the hidden interests of persons who use these concepts what goes hand in hand

with the absolutisation of partial truths. As Plato says, in democracy insolence is called good breeding, licence liberty, prodigality magnificence and shamelessness manly spirit². This manifestation of arbitrariness renders politics only a struggle for domination which in turn is served by the sophistic – because not focused on the search for truth and even deliberately denying its existence and possibility of its cognition – kind of rhetorical art of persuasion.

In democracy, there is not only the rule of deliberate falses (*pseudos*), but also the rule of hullabaloo and gibberish of any noncritical ‘whims’, views, opinions and common beliefs (*doxai*) elevated almost to the rank of the superior political virtue of democracy and its reason for pride (nowadays called ‘pluralism’). Hence, although in Plato’s typology of political regimes tyranny is even worse than democracy, transition from democracy to the regime based on truth seems even more difficult than in the case of tyranny since a tyrant in some circumstances can experience an illumination, open his eyes to the truth, convert and abase himself, whereas democrat’s overconfidence in the freedom to express any kind of views seems to eliminate this possibility. Glowing flamboyance of ‘a garment of many colors, embroidered with all kinds of hues’ or trumperies on a ‘bazaar of constitutions’³, which democracy is, poisons a soul by its seeming beauty and makes it blasé and indifferent to what is ‘closer to the Being’ and what requires an effort to overcome many steep slopes. The road to Eleusis from Pireus is only geographically shorter than from despotically ruled Syracuse.

1 See R. Legutko, *Krytyka demokracji w filozofii politycznej Platona*, (Cracov, 1991), *passim*; idem, *O demokracji starożytnej*, [in:] *Oblicza demokracji*, R. Legutko, J. Kloczkowski (ed.), (Cracov, 2002), 25–56.

2 Plato, *Republic*, 560 E, trans. P. Shorey, Accessed December 12, 2014. <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/>.

3 *Ibidem*, 557 C, D.

Democracy, according to Plato, is especially the *anthropological mistake*, because it reflects a disorder in democratic state's citizen soul (a 'sophistic type of man'). In a democratic soul, the proper hierarchy of its powers is annulled and conversed: a reason does not rule via courage over appetites, but higher powers are subordinate to appetites and individual preferences. Plato depicts full of irony an image of a democratic man who to admonitions 'that some pleasures arise from honorable and good desires, and others from those that are base, and that we ought to practise and esteem the one and control and subdue the others', 'shakes his head (...) and avers that they are all alike and to be equally esteemed'⁴ and in consequence he 'lives out his life in this fashion, day by day indulging the appetite of the day, now wine-bibbing and abandoning himself to the lascivious pleasing of the flute and again drinking only water and dieting; [561 D – B.P.] and at one time exercising his body, and sometimes idling and neglecting all things, and at another time seeming to occupy himself with philosophy. And frequently he goes in for politics and bounces up⁷ and says and does whatever enters his head. And if military men excite his emulation, thither he rushes, and if moneyed men, to that he turns⁵, and there is no order or compul-

sion in his existence, but he calls this life of his the life of pleasure and freedom and happiness and [561 E – B.P.] cleaves to it to the end.'⁶ The democratic kind of man is nothing more than Rorty's 'liberal ironist' who uses the pleasures of the 'Being's lightness'.

Democracy is also an *epistemological* error. It is a system dominated by the lowest form of cognition (sensitive cognition): *ejkasija* – i.e. thinking by images; this system is characteristic for the intellectual slaves chained with the shackles to the inner wall of the cave and therefore capable to see at most the shadows that crawl on it. Democrats, by their own fault, do not have an access to the cognition of the true being but at most to the reflections of concrete things – these from behind the first $\mu\tau\alpha\phi\upsilon$ ⁷, i.e. from the light of the fire burning behind a rampart on which 'jugglers' (read: sophists) show their rhetorical tricks. It means that democracy does not have a status of ontological reality whatsoever: it 'is' a *non-being*. Of course, for Plato none of the real political regimes is *being*; only the ideal state has this status. Each of the empirically identifiable political re-

aspiring to the higher leads them to descent from the way of natural and compatible with the rules of promoting at the hierarchy ranks and gives rise to the maleficent intention of rapid and illegitimate taking place of superiors. This is how the 'crisis of *degree*' arises, in which Ate, the Goddess of disagreement, unleashes the 'hounds of war' (*Julius Caesar*, act III, scene 1). This topic of competition on the background of imitative desire, present in almost each Shakespeare's drama, was the fullest articulated in the famous speech of Ulysses on the monstrous, leading to the '*endless jar*' between justice and injustice, results of disturbing the 'hierarchy ranks' in *Troilus and Cresida* (act I, scene 3).

6 Plato, *Republic*, 561 C, D, E, trans. P. Shorey, Accessed December 12, 2014. <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/>.

7 See C. J. Olbromski, „Platońskie pojęcie $\mu\tau\alpha\phi\upsilon$ w filozofii politycznej Erica Voegelina”, in: *Dziedzictwo greckie we współczesnej filozofii politycznej*, ed. P. Kłoczowski, (Cracow, 2004), 91–106.

4 Today this claim to the equal esteem for all kinds of appetites and preferences would, in 'postmodern' vernacular, be called 'affirmative tolerance'.

5 The element of *emulation* (envy), noticed by Plato, in a wrongly structured and indulging in all appetites democratic soul was presented centuries later with incomparable expressiveness by Shakespeare in his numerous works. The thing in phenomenon called by his investigator, René Girard (See idem, *The Theatre of Envy: William Shakespeare*, South Bend 2004, pp. 376), a 'mimetic desire'. A jealous impatience of [people – B.P.] standing on the lower ranks of social hierarchy and

gimes is merely a *part of being*, although gradable. Some of them like monarchy or aristocracy are *closer* to the being, while the other are farther away; on this scale democracy occupies almost the farthest place from the being, right before dictatorship, i.e. a place where *non-being* becomes *nothingness*. In the strict sense, democracy is *not* because it lacks the truth, good and beauty. This Platonic *deontologisation* of democracy is a quintessence of a radically substantive critique of democracy.

Actually, there are also threads of the *accidental* critique of democracy in Plato, such as the indication of its ‘class’ character (‘democracy (...) comes into being when the poor, winning the victory, put to death some of the other party, drive out others, and grant the rest of the citizens an equal share in both citizenship and offices’⁸), chaos specific to it or finally – presented with humour and a satiric exaggeration – the disastrous consequences of what in this ‘youth’ regime is today called a ‘colourful tolerance’ such as an indulgence for the youngsters pranks, the lack of respect for the elders, running wild by domestic animals as well as the behaviour of the bitches which conduct themselves like their mistresses or the sense of dignity that horses and asses gain to such extent that they bump into everyone who meets them and who does not step aside⁹. All these arguments are however secondary coming from the fundamental lack of truth, good and beauty. In Plato there is no room for ‘improving’ democracy, but only for ‘liberating’ oneself from it by replacing a democratic element by at least elements of any regime standing higher

than democracy, even (otherwise poor) oligarchy: ‘And sometimes, I suppose, the democratic element retires before the oligarchical, some of its appetites having been destroyed and others expelled, and a sense of awe and reverence grows up in the young man’s¹⁰ soul and order is restored.’¹¹

A question of Aristotle’s anti-democratism is a more complex and ambiguous one. There are paragraphs in Aristotle which strength and principality are not weaker than in Plato’s critique, especially in the 4th book of *Politics*, where the emphasis is put on the irremovable lack of virtue and the rule of law in democracy. Aristotle identifies democracy as the system of uncontrollable voluntarism of mob and demagogy in which not laws but decrees govern, hence that regime – which leads to the complete relaxation of *polis* – does not even deserve to be called *order*, but *disorder*; ‘for where the laws do not govern there is no constitution’¹².

On the other hand, in the Aristotle’s typology of political regimes – based on two juxtaposed criteria: the formal one (a question: ‘who rules?’) and the teleological one (‘what is the purpose of ruling?’) – democracy being the ‘tyranny of

10 It is clear that in this fragment there is a polemic with the view of sophist Protagoras (known from Plato’s summary in a dialogue titled by Protagoras’ name) who in his adage were justifying a prodemocratic option by an argument that Zeus equipped all people with ‘respect and right’ (Plato, *Protagoras*, trans. W. R. M. Lamb, 322 C, Accessed December 13, 2014 <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/>); on the other hand, Plato claims that the occurrence of the sense of shame in the soul is conditioned by purifying the soul by removing a democratic element from it or by its (moral) aristocratisation.

11 Plato, *Republic*, 560 A, trans. P. Shorey, Accessed December 13, 2015 <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/>.

12 Aristotle, *Politics*, 1292 A, trans. H. Rackham, Accessed January 16, 2015 <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/>.

8 Plato, *Republic*, 557 A, trans. P. Shorey, Accessed December 13, 2014. <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/>.

9 *Ibidem*, 563 A – D.

the mob' is placed amongst bad regimes although not in the last place but as the most bearable evil because of power differentiation while the worst one is tyranny *sensu proprio*, i.e. rule of the one because power, i.e. a possibility to do evil efficiently, is consolidated there the most. Moreover, on the good side of political regimes exists also – the least good – the form of folk government, called *politeia*, in which people's will is inferior to the general principles of law and serves not only to the poorest, but to general benefit. There is also a characteristic Aristotle's stipulation that democracy in a negative sense (lawlessness) is an order of things in which (...) 'the law ought to govern all things, is not a constitution at all'¹³. It proves (or rather confirms, because there is plenty of proves in his reasoning) that the designate of the term *democracy* is in Aristotle extremely shaky: in different contexts it can mean (specifically) the evil kind of rules of the whole, (generically) both of their forms ('evil' democracy and 'good' *politeia*), ruthless egalitarianism¹⁴, a regime based on (low) property qualification, and that what can be named 'moral aristocracy'¹⁵, or even each lawful regime in which each free citizen somehow participates in ruling¹⁶.

13 *Ibidem*.

14 A political regime, in which 'to the fullest extent all alike share equally in the government' (*Ibidem*, 1291 B, Accessed January 16, 2015 <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/>, called democracy 'in a first row' – *ibidem*).

15 '...all the citizens that are not open to challenge to have a share in office, but for the law to rule' – (*Ibidem*, 1292 A, Accessed January 16, 2015 <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/>).

16 It is about Aristotle's (auto)reflection, who claims that the given by him definition of citizen – as a person who has an access to share in courts and people's assembly – 'applies especially to citizenship in a democracy; under other forms of government it may hold good, but will not necessarily do so.' (*Ibidem*, 1275 B, Accessed January 16, 2015 <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/>, On

Let's add that although the possibility of the existence of decent, rightful and 'staid' democracies seems to contradict Aristotle's conviction that in a good regime 'a good life education and virtue would make the most just claim'¹⁷ that is impossible to achieve by the 'majority' (*hoi polloi*), a suggested solution seems to be building not the best regime, because it is 'for many (...) impossible to attain'¹⁸, but a regime that would be the 'best under assumed conditions'¹⁹ – i.e. a regime arising from a mix of the good features of aristocracy and *politeia*.

Therefore, it seems that in Aristotle the elements of substantive and accidental critiques remain in the state of relative equilibrium and thereby also of indecisiveness. One can say that Aristotle leans towards the substantive critique as far as he remains Plato's follower and towards the accidental one as far as he formulates a view that expresses his own attitude and a specific to him quest for a middle road, a 'Golden Means'. Anyway, Aristotle's ambiguity or even hesitancy causes that both antidemocrats *intrasingeants* and the authors of the projects of 'refinement', 'aristocratisation' or 'republicanisation' of democracy use his arguments²⁰.

the other hand, the 'definition of a citizen admits of correction' – *ibidem*.

17 *Ibidem*, 1283 A, Accessed January 16, 2015 <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/>.

18 *Ibidem*, 1288 B, Accessed January 16, 2015 <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/>.

19 *Ibidem*.

20 See especially: P. Viereck, *Conservatism Revisited: The Revolt Against The Revolt, 1815–1845*, (New York 1949) *passim*; J. Maritain, *Człowiek i państwo* [1951], trans. A. Grobler, (Cracov 1993) 116–153; Y. R. Simon, *Filozofia rządu demokratycznego* [1951], trans. R. Legutko, (Cracov 1993), *passim*; J. H. Hallowell, *Moralne podstawy demokracji* [1954], trans. J. Marcinkowski, (Warsaw 1995), 68–123; Th. L. Pangle, *Uszlachtetnianie demokracji. Wyzwanie epoki postmodernistycznej* [1992], trans. M. Klimowicz, (Cracov 1994), *passim*.

The identification of the later continuers – even until our times – of the substantive critique of democracy, particularly in a ‘neo-Platonic’ stream, is not a difficult thing to do; above all they are:

1) the contemporary political philosophers referring directly to the classical tradition and trying to renew it like Eric Voegelin, who adds to the Platonic critique *sensu proprio* the argument about a gnostic ‘confusion’ of the democratic mind that afflicts democracy (liberal, i.e. ‘gnostic right’) solely to a smaller extent than it afflicts revolutionary socialism and communism (‘gnostic left’)²¹, or like Leo Strauss who underlines the inability of democracy to resolve, until now, the problem of education understood as the formation of character (*resp.* the ‘royal education’) and, in consequence, the inability of finding a defence against ‘crawling conformism’²²; 2) the representatives of the political philosophy of *reactive*, traditionalistic conservatism, like Joseph de Maistre²³, Louis de Bonald²⁴ or Juan Donoso

Cortés²⁵, Spanish carlists (like Victor Pradera, for whom democracy is an ontological impossibility²⁶), national royalists from Action Française, headed by Charles Maurras, for whom the democratic ‘reign of number’ is a contradiction of the whole Platonic trinity: the truth, good and beauty²⁷; finally so-called ‘integral’ traditionalists (René Guénon, Julius Evola), according to whom democracy is one of the least stages of the traditional hierarchic civilization’s fall in the long process of the egalitarian revolt of any ‘inferiority’²⁸. On the other hand, the appropriate to this matter Aristotle’s ambiguity is expressed by the representatives of *moderate* evolutionist conservatism, starting from Edmund Burke. In the opinion of the English thinker ‘perfect democracy’ is in fact ‘the most shameless thing in

21 See E. Voegelin, “The New Science of Politics”, in *The Collected Works of Eric Voegelin. Modernity Without Restraint*, ed. M. Henningsen, Vol. 5, (Missouri 2000), 175–220 (or Polish version: E. Voegelin, *Nowa nauka polityki* [1952], trans. P. Śpiwak, (Warsaw 1992), 158–162).

22 L. Strauss, “What Is Political Philosophy? And Other Studies”, (Chicago 1988), p. 9–55 (or Polish version: L. Strauss, *Czym jest filozofia polityki?* [1958], in idem, *Sokratejskie pytania. Eseje wybrane*, trans. P. Maciejko, (Warsaw 1958), 89).

23 In his opinion democracy can be defined simply as ‘an association of men without sovereignty’ – J. de Maistre, *Study on Sovereignty*, <http://maistre.uni.cx:8000/sovereignty.html>, trans. Jack Lively, Online access: 1.04.2015; and, in general, democratic *forma regiminis* that is a ‘transitory meteor, whose brilliance excludes duration’ – *ibidem*.

24 For whom democracy is identical with a religious *negation*, i.e. atheism: ‘Democracy furiously casts out from political society all visible unity and focus of power; it sees the sovereign only in the subjects, or the people: just as atheism rejects the original and prime cause of the universe, and sees it only in its effects, in matter. In the sys-

tem of the latter, matter has done everything; in the system of the former, the people have the right to do everything.’ – Œuvres de M. de Bonald, (Paris 1819), 128, so ‘in fact, one might call the democrats the atheists of politics’ – *ibidem*.

25 In his opinion democratic ideals are contaminated by evil in their very (rebellious) nature, because they are ‘opposition’s, not government’s, ideals [...], fruitless ideals, barren ideals, which should be fought back until their burial...’ – [This is my own translation based on J. Donoso Cortés, *O dyktaturze* [1849], trans. N. Łuczyńska, W. Przybylski, “Res Publica Nowa” 2007, Nr 1(191), 150. The original source was not available. – B.P.]

26 ‘...democracy is not a political system, neither perfect nor less perfect. In the political order democracy IS NOT. [...] Democracy is *nonentity*.’ – V. Pradera, *El Estado Nuevo*, (Madrid 1941), 126.

27 ‘Democracy is the greatest error of the past century, the enemy of culture and productivity both.’ – Ch. Maurras, *Dictionnaire politique et critique*, (Paris 1934), Vol. IV, 401.

28 ‘Liberalism, then democracy, then socialism, than radicalism, finally communism and Bolshevism have historically appeared only as degrees of the same evil, as stages that prepare each one that follows in the complex of a process of decline.’ – J. Evola, *Orientations* [1950], trans. Anonymous, Accessed April 1, 2015 <http://www.gornahoor.net/?p=4541>, (Polish version: J. Evola, *Orientacje* [1950], trans. B. Koziel, (Chorzów 1993), 11.

the world²⁹; he also does not hesitate to claim that 'the state suffers oppression' if it is 'permitted to rule' by 'hair-dresser or a working tallow-chandler'³⁰ he notes however that he does not condemn any policy in advance, 'by referring to the abstract rules' and that he allows the situations in which the democratic form can become a necessity or even be desired in specific, but very rare circumstances. Eventually, however, by referring directly to Aristotle, he agrees with the opinion of the ancients (antidemocrats) that 'an absolute democracy (...) is [hard – B.P.] to be reckoned among the legitimate forms of government' and that democracy should be recognised 'rather [as – B.P.] the corruption and degeneracy, than the sound constitution of a republic'³¹.

3) On the same ground were standing the traditional political theology of the Catholic Church, treating the democratic claim to people's sovereignty as the 'political atheism' and as the *antropotheistic* heresy towards the rule of transcendental power derivation (*per Me regnant reges; non est potestas nisi a Deo*). In a confrontation with the Revolution, proclaiming this usurpation of authority, Magisterium has confirmed its rejection for many times, with the greatest power in the *Mirari vos* encyclical written by the adamant defender of monarchical legitimacy, Pope Gregor XVI: 'We have learned that certain teachings are being spread among the common people in writings which attack the trust and submission due to princes; the torches of treason are being lit everywhere. Care must be taken lest the people, being deceived, are led

away from the straight path. (...) Therefore both divine and human laws cry out against those who strive by treason and sedition to drive the people from confidence in their princes and force them from their government.'³² Still in the encyclical 'about the godless communism' Pope Pius XI was recalling that the error of socio-political egalitarianism was paving the way for the economic egalitarianism of socialism, so: 'It is not true that all have equal rights in civil society. It is not true that there exists no lawful social hierarchy.'³³ However, yet in the (exceptionally rich in content and quantity) teaching of Pope Leon XIII, there was outlined the shadow of the dualistic break between the very strong condemnation of the very **rule** of people's sovereignty³⁴ and the exceedingly 'soft' practical position towards republic and democracy³⁵, as the permissible structural 'hypothesis', conditioned utterly (similarly as in the teaching of Pius XII³⁶) by recognising a dependence to the God's law, worship-

32 Mirari Vos, *On Liberalism And Religious Indifferentism, Encyclical Of Pope Gregory XVI*, August 15, 1832 <http://www.papalencyclicals.net/Greg16/g16mirar.htm> (Polish version: *Encyklika Ojca św. Grzegorza XVI, Mirari vos O liberalizmie* [15 VIII 1832], (Warsaw 2003), 16.)

33 Divini Redemptoris, *Encyclical Of Pope Pius Xi On Atheistic Communism*, 19 III 1937, <http://w2.vatican.va/content/pius-xi/en/encyclicals/>

34 Especially in encyclicals: on political power (*Diuturnum illud*, 29 VI 1881) and on Christian state (*Immortale Dei*, 1 XI 1885).

35 In the encyclical *Au milieu des sollicitudes* (16 II 1892), striking especially to French royalists, calling to 'joining' (*ralliement*) the Republic, and also in inconsiderate using the term 'Christian democracy' in the encyclical *Rerum novarum* (15 V 1891), which later demanded magisterial auto-correction delegitimising giving to this term politico-constitutional meaning in the encyclical *Graves de communi* (18 I 1901).

36 Radio speech broadcasted on Christmas Day in 1944; see J. Madiran, *Demokracja wedlug Piusa XII*, trans. M. Loba, 'Sprawa Polska' 1992, 10, 16–18.

29 E. Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, C. C. O'Brien (ed.), (London 1986), 2004, 167.

30 *Ibidem*, 118.

31 *Ibidem*, 202–203.

ping the public cult of the real God and respecting the natural civic hierarchy³⁷.

2. Accidental Critiques

The accidental critiques of democracy can be found mainly in the thinkers being concerned with cacistocracy (the 'reign of the worst') anyhow inseparable from modern mass democracy ('numeric', 'numbercration') but certainly accepting that democratisation is an inevitable and irreversible process and, moreover, being convinced that there are some weighty political or even moral reasons standing in the defense of democracy. These are conservative liberals (relatively liberal conservatives), being the inheritors of classical aristocratic liberalism, e.g. Alexis de Tocqueville, lord Acton, Johann J. Bachofen³⁸, Jacob Ch. Burckhardt, Benedetto Croce, Guido De Ruggiero, Gulielmo Ferrero, Émile Faguet, Bertrand de Jouvenel, José Ortega y Gasset, Florian Znaniecki or Friedrich A. von Hayek.

The characteristic for this stream is a chasm between the clarity of the critique of the 'democratic Leviathan' in action (usually not giving a way to the reactionists) and the restraint in formulating remedial postulates. On the downsides of democracy liberals watch basically only from the one point of view: a threat to the individual liberty³⁹. For the clas-

sically liberal way of thinking about democracy is the quintessential position taken by lord Acton, who – discussing on sir Thomas Erskine May's work about democracy in Europe – was concluding: 'democracy, like monarchy, is salutary within limits and fatal in excess; that it is the truest friend of freedom or its most unrelenting foe, according as it is mixed or pure⁴⁰. Taking to account that, according to Acton, the condition of liberty is the existence of power distribution and that in democracy he saw a way towards power concentration, he desired to wear a brake to this dangerously 'increasing democracy' in the form of 'constrained federalism' being, in his opinion, 'essential security for freedom in every genuine democracy'⁴¹.

The liberal distrust towards a state, not so weakening in the time of its democratisation, but strengthening because (what was clearly explicated by Burckhardt) along with the emergence of the ideal of people's sovereignty and the common equality of rights a state becomes 'subjected to the most powerful action of thought, of philosophical abstraction'⁴² and even more because 'there is a threat of the complete blur of borders between state's and *society's* tasks' of which the extreme point is a stream called libertarianism (Ludwig von Mises, Murray N. Rothbard, Robert A. Nozick).

37 More on the topic of the evolution of the relation of the contemporary Pope's teaching to democracy I write in two articles: *Katolicka teologia polityczna w XX wieku*, 'Christianitas' 2002, Nr 13, p. 109–143 and *Niefortunny konkubinat. Historia wzajemnych relacji konserwatyzmu i chrześcijańskiej demokracji, zwięźle opowiedziana*, 'Pro Fide Rege et Lege' 2006, 3–4(56), 17–24.

38 The author of famous aphorism being a quintessence of this version of anti-democratism: 'It is because I love freedom that I hate democracy.'

39 I write more about this in the article *Aporie demokracji liberalnej (w świetle poglądów liberalnej*

prawicy), submitted to a post-conference book entitled „Dylematy współczesnego liberalizmu” (Wyższa Szkoła Gospodarki w Bydgoszczy).

40 Lord Acton, "Sir Erskine May's Democracy in Europe", in Lord Acton, *The History of Freedom And Other Essays*, Project Gutenberg Ebook 2010, 63, Accessed February 23, 2015: <http://www.gutenberg.org/files>.

41 *Ibidem*, 98.

42 J. Burckhardt, *Reflections on History*, trans. M. D. H., (London 1950), 114 (Polish version: J. Burckhardt, *Państwo w dziejach powszechnych* [1905], trans. W. Buchner, 'Przegląd Polityczny' 1994, Nr 25, VII.).

For the issue considered in this article, particularly interesting fact is that in the newest phase of social philosophy, guided by Hans-Hermann Hoppe, hitherto stipulations less or more boldly formulated towards democracy gave way to its firm stigmatisation as such regime that without hesitation is indicated as the worst one from three kinds of social order outlined by this author (except democracy – monarchy⁴³ and ‘natural order’ also called ‘ordered anarchy’, ‘anarchocapitalism’, ‘selfgovernance’, ‘private law society’ or ‘pure capitalism’⁴⁴). Democracy here is openly delegitimised (‘Above all, the idea of democracy and majority rule must be delegitimized.’⁴⁵), what could make us think that we almost deal with the *substantive* critique of democracy, from what keeps us a circumstance that the evil of democracy is consequently connected with only one feature of this regime, indicated by Hoppe and being for him the measure of good and evil, i.e. a depreciation of private property: ‘eve-

ryone may openly covet everyone else’s property, as long as he appeals to democracy’⁴⁶. ‘Under democracy everyone becomes a threat’⁴⁷; in the author’s opinion democracy is merely a ‘gentle form of communism’⁴⁸.

Hoppe’s antidemocratic radicalism is, however, an exception in the liberal stream of criticism towards democracy. The conservative liberals usually, with passion that does not yield to perspicacity, point out the negative consequences of social and especially cultural democratisation, they are, however, much more cautious when they approach the matter of political regime. Palliatives suggested by them in this matter (to mention at least modest and fragmentary proposals of Italian liberals: De Ruggiero, Ferrero or even Hayek’s well-constructed concept of *demarchy*⁴⁹) usually have a nature of minor corrections towards a democratic regime, being capable to (rather intentionally than actually) merely level the work of *mobius democraticus*. The conceptual niche that allows the liberal opponents of democracy to avoid a frontal confrontation with it is a traditional distinction between *democracy* and *ochlocracy*, i.e. the ‘mob’s reign’⁵⁰ (or, in modern mi-

43 Hoppe underlines that in his work he presents a ‘definitely favourable’ interpretation of (traditional) hereditary monarchy, which he places significantly higher than democracy because he finds monarchical power as private government (*privately-owned-government*), ‘which in turn is explained as promoting future-orientedness and a concern for capital values and economic calculation by the government ruler’, while he finds ‘democratic government (...) as publicly-owned government, which is explained as leading to present-orientedness and a disregard or neglect of capital values in government rulers’. – H.-H. Hoppe, *Democracy. The God That Failed*, New Jersey 2001, p. XIX. Obviously, Hoppe is not a monarchist because of two reasons: 1) he finds that a return to *ancient regime* is impossible because ‘the legitimacy of monarchical rule appears to have been irretrievably lost’ (*ibidem*, 71) and 2) in his eyes ‘ordered anarchy’, i.e. a social system free of monopoly and taxation is higher than any else; however, the author puts a lot of energy to demonstrate that the historical leave from monarchy for democracy was a ‘civilizational decline’ (*ibidem*, p. XXI).

44 *Ibidem*, XXI.

45 *Ibidem*, 70.

46 *Ibidem*, 87.

47 *Ibidem*.

48 *Ibidem*.

49 See G. De Ruggiero, *The History of European Liberalism*, trans. R. G. Collingwood, (London 1927), pp. xi + 476 (Polish version: G. De Ruggiero, *Historia liberalizmu europejskiego* [1925], trans. A. Adeo, in B. Sobolewska, M. Sobolewski, *Myśl polityczna XIX i XX wieku. Liberalizm*, (Warsaw 1978), 538); G. Ferrero, *Between the Old World and the New*, trans. A. C. Curtis, New York 1914 (Polish version: G. Ferrero, *Między przeszłością a tem co nas czeka*, trans. J. Kuryłowicz, (Poznań 1927), 11); Idem, *Jedność świata*, trans. S. Dembiński, (Warszawa 1929), 74; F. A. von Hayek, *Law, Legislation and Liberty Vol III The Political Order of a Free People*, (Chicago 1979), *passim*.

50 See F. Znaniecki, *Upadek cywilizacji zachodniej. Szkice z pogranicza filozofii kultury i so-*

lieu and terminology and following J. L. Talmon⁵¹ between *liberal democracy* and *totalitarian democracy*); in both cases the designates of pejoratively featured terms are always connected with radical social and economic egalitarianism, revolutionary ideologies and the systems of jacobinism, bolshevism and often fascism or Nazism.

We are going to consider certainly the most controversial or maybe even demoralising thesis for the acolytes of democracy; we will try, however, to defend a view that merely *accidental* nature has the critique of democracy raised by the hardest stigmatised and presented as the most serious ‘threat’ (incidentally: in the least extent from the side of usually indulgently treated Marxism) to democracy, ideologies and *totalitarian* systems: revolutionary socialism (communism, bolshevism), fascism and national socialism.

At first, let’s remind that all of these ideologies and systems are in their genesis and essence plebeian, massive, collectivist, based on the mobilisation of masses, undoubtedly antitraditionalistic. For all of them the ‘founding myth’, the beginning of their ‘historical memory’, is the revolution from 1789⁵² and

the ‘mob’ symbol (ambiguous by itself⁵³) which for them is a ‘sacral’ term. They all verbally accept the rule of people’s sovereignty. In all of them, the critique of ‘real’ democracy (formal, parliamentary, pluralistic, multiparty, liberal) is based on pointing out its ‘falsehood’, a discrepancy between (acceptable) theory and practice ‘falsifying’ the will of people. In consequence, they are all *sui generis* the ‘secular gospels’ of more perfect, more true, higher democracy that actually, not only declaratively, gives power to the people⁵⁴.

1) In Marxist communism, the above contrast has taken, as known, the form of demonstrating a chasm between formal, therefore worthless, *bourgeois democracy*⁵⁵ and *socialist democracy* (resp.

solini, *The Doctrine of Fascism*, trans. Anonymous, Accessed March 6, 2015 <http://www.worldfuturefund.org/>, (Polish version: B. Mussolini, *Doktryna faszyzmu* [1932], trans. S. Gniadek, P. Sandauer, (Lviv 1935), 42–43).

53 See G. Sartori, *The Theory of Democracy Revisited*, (New Jersey 1987), 247 (Polish version: G. Sartori, *Teoria demokracji* [1987], trans. P. Amsterdamski, D. Grinberg, (Warsaw 1988), 37–42); J. Bartyzel, *Demokracja*, (Radom 2002), 9–13.

54 The argumentation of a Russian (or rather Soviet one, for which he would agree) writer, irritating for many reasons, Aleksandr Zinovyev, who saw the fulfilment of people’s rule in Stalinism, can be no rid of by a disregard or a ‘moral indignation’. In Zinovyev, a massiveness of terror (because if more or less one third of mankind was in labor camps, also the population of guards, who were to some extent participating in power – power over life and death!, was, more or less, the same), not yet known until now, and egalitarianism (a way from the ‘depths of hell’ to the top of power and the very same way back were open for everyone all the time) was the nature of *people’s rule*. Probably even more ‘natural form’ of *authentic folk democracy* was expressed by a commonness of the system of denunciation and exposure as a spontaneous though stimulated from above activity of masses. In a paradoxical way Zinovyev’s analyses coincide with a statement of Polish conservatist that ‘bolshevism is democracy brought to the absurd’ – M. Zdziechowski, *Europa, Rosja, Azja. Szkice polityczno-literackie*, (Vilnius 1923), 199.

55 But otherwise, treated by Marx himself

cjologii, Poznań 1921, *passim*; W. Bernacki, *Rządy motłochu, czyli zerwanie więzów z bestii ludzkiej*, ‘Nowe Państwo’ 1999, Nr 24 (185).

51 See J. L. Talmon, *The Origins of Totalitarian Democracy*, (London 1952), *passim*.

52 If some had doubts that it also affects fascism, it is only to remind a firm statement of its founder: ‘The Fascist negation of socialism, democracy, liberalism, should not, however, be interpreted as implying a desire to drive the world backwards to positions occupied prior to 1789, a year commonly referred to as that which opened the demo-liberal century. History does not travel backwards. The Fascist doctrine has not taken De Maistre as its prophet. Monarchical absolutism is of the past, and so is ecclesiocracy. Dead and done for are feudal privileges and the division of society into closed, uncommunicating castes.’ – B. Mus-

‘proletarian’⁵⁶) which will provide real power for the people by abolishing the alienating forms of exploitation connected with the private possession of production means; it will provide the material equality – economic, social and also cultural democracy – an equal access to cultural goods or even to commonness in their creation. For bolshevist *praxis*, directed on the conquest of the bourgeois state and introducing the *proletarian dictatorship*, the probably bigger meaning from the above distinction had only Lenin’s category of *revolutionary democracy*, which significance, according to Lenin, is based on that ‘that to be a democrat means reckoning in reality with the interests of the majority of the people and not the minority, and that to be a revolutionary means destroying everything harmful and obsolete in the most resolute and ruthless manner’⁵⁷. Therefore, on the ruins of the landed-capitalistic state there is a *revolutionary-democrat-*

ic state to rise, i.e. the state in which ‘the resistance of the capitalists have disappeared, when there are no classes (i.e., when there is no distinction between the members of society as regards their relation to the social means of production). Only then will a truly complete democracy become possible and be realized, a democracy without any exceptions whatever’⁵⁸. A liberal (leftist, as he underlines), Andrzej Walicki, who is disturbed by the ‘neorevolutionary’ extravagance of the contemporary exhumers of Lenin – Slavoj Žižek – reminds that ‘the essence of Lenin’s programme was a ‘jump into the kingdom of liberty’ which actually was a jump out from the civilization’, and that a dictatorship based only on violence is not only a contradiction to representative democracy but also to modern statehood’⁵⁹. It is impossible to deny, although it is hard to recognise the constation of Lenin’s hostility towards *representative democracy* as revealing, especially as the argument against *par excellence* ‘democratic mentality’, himself and communism at all. Therefore, Leninism is not the *substantive* critique of democracy, but the *accidental* critique of ‘false’ non-revolutionary democracy⁶⁰.

2) Far from the unconditional condemnation of democracy was also fascism. By the authoritative statement of the chief (*Duce*) himself and the ‘doctor’ of fascism, Benito Mussolini, he rejects ‘the absurd conventional lie about the political equality’ and unmasks the ap-

– and after him by so called orthodox Marxists – socialdemocrats like Karl Kautsky or Rosa Luxemburg, hence antagonised to bolsheviks proclaiming a possibility and a purposefulness of ‘jumping’ between phases of transitioning to socialist and communist social formation – as a necessary transition phase to the higher form of democracy.

56 After the Second World War, when revolution was implanted to countries liberated by the Red Army and less ‘advanced’ in building socialism, the dictionary of prevailing ideology was enriched by a pleonasm *people’s democracy* as a form that is lower than *socialist democracy* but adequate to the state of ‘backwardness’ of these states, expressing itself mainly by remnants of individual property. As known, an important element of competition between particular ‘Eastern blocs’ for a place in the hierarchy of vassal states towards USSR, and simultaneously an important quasi theoretical problem for socialist ‘science’, was agitating the issue whether a given country already ‘achieved’ the phase of *socialist democracy* or it still remains in the rearguard of *people’s democracy*.

57 V. I. Lenin, *The Impending Catastrophe and How to Combat It. Nationalisation of the Banks*, trans. Anonymous, Accessed March 7, 2015 <https://www.marxists.org/archive/>.

58 V. I. Lenin, *State and Revolution*, trans. F. Luttmer, Accessed March 7, 2015: <http://large.stanford.edu/history/>.

59 This is my own translation [B.P.] based on S. Žižek, A. Bielik-Robson, A. Walicki, *Czy leninowska przemoc zbawi lewicę?*, in ‘Europa. Tygodnik idei’, 31 III 2007, Nr 13(156), 4.

60 Walicki himself partly confirms, saying that Lenin ‘emphasised direct democracy’ [This is my own translation – B.P. – based on:] – *ibidem*, 3.

pearance of the power of people in liberal democracy, however, it is fascism that is 'the purest form of democracy if the nation be considered as it should be from the point of view of quality rather than quantity, as an idea, the mightiest because the most ethical, the most coherent, the truest, expressing itself in a people as the conscience and will of the few, if not, indeed, of one'⁶¹. Although fascism is antiliberal, antidemocratic and antisocialist (it should be understood as a fight with political parties which somehow hanged liberalism, democracy and socialism on their banners and appropriated them) in its programme and work; 'from beneath the ruins of liberal, socialist, and democratic doctrines, fascism extracts those elements which are still vital'⁶².

It should not be forgotten that the original programme *Fasci di Combattimento* (from 1919) was directly ultrademocratic (in a spirit of 'social' democracy) not only in phraseology but also in concrete postulates. Fascists claimed e.g. the establishment of the republic, introducing common, equal and direct election law for both sexes, abolishing the Senate, noble titles and knight orders, liquidating a political police, introducing a mandatory military service and uniform, national education system, guarantying the freedom of speech, conscience, religion, congregations and press, parcelling the great ground ownership, dissolving equity industrial, banking and stock exchange companies, estimating and taxing a private property, charging the 'owning classes' for repayment the state's debt, introducing eight-hour workday, lowering retiring age from 65 to 55 years, switching production to

cooperative rules, direct contribution of workers in a company income, in foreign policy – 'international solidarity' within League of Nations, abolishing secret diplomacy, opposing to any imperialism including 'possible' Italian imperialism. Also after 1943 in Italian Social Republic, depended on German occupants, a renewed Republican Fascist Party adopted a very socially radical programme assuming e.g. nationalising companies that hire more than one hundred workers, parcelling 'ineffectively used' grounds and transferring it to agricultural cooperatives, creating worker councils managing factories, dividing incomes among workers in a private sector, introducing a detailed economic planning at the government level, increasing a meaning of trade unions, democratic electoral system, court independence, freedom of press, in foreign policy – striving to the creation of European Union/Community which should also help with emancipation in Black Africa. Taking to account that fascists themselves from Salò, on the forefront with a 'grey eminence' of the regime (a former Lenin's companion and an activist of 3rd Political International), Nicola Bombacci, were interpreting this programme as a return to the leftist roots of fascism, it can be assumed that leaving these rules after a 'march on Rome' and at the time of 'real fascism' was merely a manifestation of action opportunism that forces a compromise with the forces of non-democratic right-wing: monarchy, an officer corps, social elites or the Church.

3) Therefore, the attachment to the 'pure' democratic-nationalistic (in the spirit of Rousseau and jacobinistic militant chauvinism) rule of people's (nation) sovereignty, through which a 'general will' manifests itself, was exposed in the ideology of German, national-socialist

61 B. Mussolini, *op. cit.*

62 *Ibidem.*

Hitlerism even more than in fascism *sensu proprio* (Italian), inheriting – by Giovanni Gentile’s political philosophy – a specific to Italian liberalism the *statolatry* of Hegel’s⁶³ origin. In his ‘confessions’, entitled *Mein Kampf*, a future 3rd Reich *Führer* – manifesting his hatred to the dynastic rule and multinational Habsburg’s monarchy and no less obstinate and free of hatred of French republicans to the ‘cosmopolitan despotism’ of Bourbon’s monarchy – was bragging that already as fifteen he understood ‘the distinction between dynastic patriotism and *völkisch* nationalism’⁶⁴.

Hitlerism was also verbally respecting the national rule (*principe des nationales*) in the international politics, i.e. the self-governance of nations based on ethnographic criteria, inseparably connected with the history of western democracy from XIX-th Century national liberation movements to ‘14 points’ of president W. Wilson. For instance, in the NSDAP programme from 1928 a demand to the rise of ‘Great Germany’ was articulated (in point 1) on the basis of its compatibility to the law of nations to self-governance⁶⁵. The equality of rights and duties of all state’s citizens (point 9) was also underlined there, however, Jews were excluded from the term of *citizenship* (point 4) and ought to be treated as the ‘guests’ of the German state (point 5), i.e. more or less as *metics* in democratic old-Greek *poleis*⁶⁶.

63 More about the cult of state, common to the liberalism and Italian fascism, I write in the essay *Destra storica. Wielkość i upadek włoskiej prawicy liberalnej*, in ‘Umierać, ale powoli!’. *O monarchistycznej i katolickiej kontrrewolucji w krajach romańskich 1815–2000*, (Cracov 2006), 388–443.

64 A. Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, trans. Unknown NSDAP member, ostarapublications.com, p. 24.

65 *The 25 Points of Hitler’s Nazi Party*, Accessed March 8, 2015 <http://www.historyplace.com/>.

66 *Ibidem*.

The ‘original’ contribution of national socialism to the doctrine of people’s / nation’s sovereignty was based only on transferring that sovereignty to a Leader, receiving a democratic legitimisation by the spontaneous *acclamatio* of nation; the national rule, however, was transferred from a sum of individuals – citizens to homogeneous, racially pure group. ‘Overcoming’ both traditional particularisms (state, national, dynastic) and a demoliberal chaos, the egalitarian and compact unity of Reich – People – Leader (*ein Reich, ein Volk, ein Führer*), even phraseologically close to the jacobinist rule of constitutional Republic, ‘one and indivisible’ (*une et indivisible*), supposed to be ‘the Germanic democracy, which is a **true** [underlined by J.B.] democracy’⁶⁷ whose leader expresses *vollonté générale* of aligned in the German *Volk*’s brotherhood. If to subtract that ‘adventitious’, particular clarifying *German*, it is the ideal of ‘pure’ Rousseau’s democracy.

Analogically to Marxist and Bolshevik rhetoric, in Nazi phraseology all accents polemic towards democracy are always of *accidental* nature, directed to the particular kind of democracy, never, however, to the very rule; they are always accompanied by the emphasis of their own ‘authentic’ democraticness. Young Hitler, studying the propagandist literature of social democracy quite urgently, was irritated not by a democratic ideal but the party-union’s ‘instruments of terror’ ‘that turned democracy into a ridiculous term, insulted the ideal of liberty and derided that of fraternity with the slogan, ‘If you won’t become one of us, we’ll crack your skull’⁶⁸. The creator of Nazi ideology hated

67 A. Hitler, *op. cit.*, 106.

68 *Ibidem*, 62 [It is hard to resist an impression that seemingly ‘disgusted’ by it ‘student’ later surpassed, significantly, ‘masters’ of this method.]

with all his soul not democracy *per se* but ‘real’ democracy – liberal and bourgeois which ‘by the introduction of parliamentarianism, (...) produced an abortion of ‘filth and fire’ (*ein Spottgebust aus Dreck und Feuer*)⁶⁹. This, that disposed by such ‘elegant’ metaphor democracy appears as a shabby deception in the service of plutocracy, does not disturb democracy to simultaneously be a hatchery of Marxism which connects with her a genetic relationship: ‘Contemporary western democracy is a herald of Marxism, which would not arise without democracy’⁷⁰. A contradiction here is apparent because both plutocracy and Marxism have in essence one and the very same face of a Jew. But discovery made by a socialist and a *national* democrat, that ‘Jewish social democracy’ fights ‘against nation’s economy’ and its ‘objective was the destruction of the national economic system and the establishment of international capitalistic domination in its stead’⁷¹, does not incline him to drop social warranties of democracy but, conversely: studying social issues reveals to him a ‘new and fascinating world’, strengthens his conviction that a ‘bourgeois took a definite stand against even the most legitimate human demands of the working classes’ and finally leads to conclusion that ‘so long as there are employers who lack social understanding’ [we will never be – B.P.] ‘conscious of (...) [our – B.P.] duty as members of the national community’⁷². *True* German social democracy does not count on a ‘brotherhood of bourgeois politicians’ protecting only selfish class interests, but on ‘proletarian masses, goaded to extremity and out to win at any cost’⁷³.

At the end we put and try to answer an ‘indecent’ question: why – so surely and imperiously entrenched in the fortresses of liberal democracy (which is presented by them as an order with *no real alternatives*) – the representatives of democratic *mainstream* delight in recalling and publicising allegedly still deadly dangerous ‘threat to democracy’ of ‘fascism’ although they know that this ‘threat’ is in fact a ‘paper tiger’? On the other hand, why do they equally consequently ignore the critique of democracy from the side of ‘substantivists’? Why the figure of – if not ‘absolute’ then in any case – repugnant evil of *antidemocratism* is not Plato but Hitler (anyway constantly replicating himself; in the last decades the count of ‘second Hitlers’ would be the task overwhelming to the strengths of even the most patient scientist)?

There is no need so the answer to the above question was exceptionally subtle. That is because in such way the identified enemy of democracy is extremely convenient due to the obvious theoretical nothingness or even a mumbling of the doctrines of fascism and Nazism and moreover due to the systems of maleficent and genocidal stigma that arose from them. Also a demonstration of the superficiality of fascist or national-socialist ‘democracy’ does not cause any problem especially when democracy *a priori* is identified with liberty, ‘respect to human dignity’, justice or law stability. However, a confrontation with the arguments of ‘substantivists’ would force democrats to a major, philosophical debate which could demonstrate a theoretical and ontological nothingness of the basis of *people’s rule*; therefore, it would be a real threat to the reign of demoliberal establishment. Fortunately, from the point of view of the defenders of democracy, studying the ancient classicists of politi-

69 *Ibidem*, 94.

70 *Ibidem*.

71 *Ibidem*, 218.

72 *Ibidem*, 59.

73 *Ibidem*, 456.

cal philosophy lets itself to be treated as a harmless toy of scholars; and XIX-th or XX-th Century reactionists could be played deaf, because their ideals were successfully confined to 'niche' areas, without a bigger concern that they can emerge to the wider surface. As long as democracy feels steady and *without real alternatives*, it can disregard Socrates trying to sting it in the neck. Only in the case of a sudden change of conjuncture the argument of hemlock has to be used.