Intellectual History of the western civilization.

Essay on the topic:

4.The political thinking of Hobbes, Locke and Rousseau decisively shaped the western intellectual tradition. An essay specifying what I consider the essential contribution of each of these thinkers to political philosophy. I must explain how do they differ from each other.

“ICEF”

First course.

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Group 5.

Introduction

The political philosophy is the very important part of the philosophy. Perhaps, it has brought the most noticeable results to out everyday life, the most famous explanations and basic ideas were introduced by Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, and Jean-Jacques Rousseau. They developed theories on human’s evolution and how men should govern themselves . Hobbes, Locke, and Rousseau were closely connected with developing differing versions of the social contract. Each philosopher agrees that before men came to govern themselves, they all existed in a state of nature. They created a revolutionary idea of the state of nature, the rejection of the idea that the government is coming from the heavens, they divide the church from the authorities.

Anyway, the theme is seemed interesting to me because almost each of us is used to the politic. It is not possible do divide oneself from the politic. These philosophers “worked out principles on which the modern democracy is based”, they affected our life. This cause is only enough to examine a question in details.

\*I was basically using the Russian language material, my translation may cause some inaccuracies. I apologize for caused discomforts.

**John Locke**.

Each man, on a nature is free, and nothing can put him in submission of any terrestrial authority, except of his own consent.

John Locke “Second treatise on government”

John Lock described his political issues in his book “Second Treatise on Government”. According to Locke before the appearance of the government people were living in a natural state. There wasn’t war “everybody versus everybody”, like Hobbes was representing in his works. The individuals, were not asking somebody permission and not depending on anybody will, they freely dispose their property. The equality dominates, " at which any authority and any right are mutual, nobody has more another ". The natural state for Locke is a state where people are free to work and they are mutual independent between each other.

In contrast to Hobbs, Locke thought that community was constructing or constructed before the state, the state doesn’t come to limit social freedom or equality, but to guarantee them. Not the government rules the nation, the nation rules itself through the government.

To force the laws to work in a natural state, the nature has given everyone an opportunity to judge violated laws and to impose a penalty on trespassers . However in a natural state there are no institutions, which could impartially solve disputes between the people ,to prove and carry out appropriate punishment for an aggressor .All this derivates uncertainty. To overcome this , to provide execution of the natural laws, equality and freedom, protection of the person and property , people decided to form the political community, to find out the state. But, the tricky question derives then , if there isn’t agreement between people to obey the laws how people can come to a state? There are always people like the anarchists who wouldn’t like to follow even the majority of the mankind. Locke emphasizes the moment of the agreement : " Any peaceful formation of the state has in the basis the agreement of the people ". According to Locke only the majority of the community can do this. “The obligation to obey to the decision of the majority and to consider it final ". I think such conclusions describe Locke as a very contemporary and democratic thinker at his time. A time when arguing with king’s word was mortally. A total refusal by the individuals of all natural rights, belonging to them, and freedom for the benefit of the state (that took place, for example, in the doctrine of Hobbes) Locke considers unacceptable. The right on life and possession of property, freedom and equality the man does not alienate to anybody and at any circumstances These not alienated values - final borders of authority and action of the state which are prohibited to violate.

I especially would like to specify that Locke more than 300 years ago carried out democratic principles which live so far. Live, liberty and estate – this is the constitutional basis of the today’s countries. Locke denied slavery, he was against the feudal lords. He speaks about clear competition which is based on mutual acknowledgement. I think he was trying to explain that business is based on the mutual trust which is very valuable thing now. An Equality and a freedom are the main things in a free market. Anyone, even poor or a man with intellectual or physical lacks can not to be excluded from a competition, from a free exchange of the goods and services. These things he offered to bring to life by constructing a political system and issuing the laws.

John Locke suggested to divide a political power in the branches. Every branch was supposed to obey the laws. Therefore we get the jural state with doctrine of law, an ideal which countries are aiming towards even now.

The question on the state form traditional for the European political idea from Aristotle interested Locke as well. As I can understood Locke could accept any form of the state which has grown from the public contract and voluntary agreement of the people, that it has an appropriate " structure of government ", protecting the natural rights and freedom of the individuals and caring the general weal. Locke was inclined to consider a constitutional monarchy as the most close a political system to be ideal. Locke denied the Hobbs’s conception of absolutism as opposite to his views.

In conclusion with Locke I would like to emphasize that his ideas haven’t been leaved in papers. He wrote a constitution for a North Carolina in 1669, which was approved and carried into effect. I think it is the most full confession that a philosopher might receive.

**Thomas Hobbes**

“The man is a wolf for man.” Thomas Hobbes

Political and legal doctrine of the Hobbes are contained in his works: “The Philosophical beginning of the doctrine about the citizen " (1642), " Leviathan , or Matter, form and authority of the state church and civil " (1651). “ . In a basis of the theory of the state and right Т. Hobbes puts a certain notion about a nature of the individual. He considers that initially all people are created equal concerning physical and intellectual abilities and each of them has identical with others " the right on all". However man also an essence is deep egoistic, influenced by greed, fear and ambition. The contenders, the enemies surround him only. "In conditions of such war - means actually do not have any right on anything. This distress Т. Hobbes names " a original condition of a sort human ". Hobbes understands an original state as what would exist if there were no common power to execute and enforce the laws to restrain individuals. In this case, the laws of the jungle would prevail where the war “all versus all” is. People’s desires are greedy. Since resources are scarce, humankind is naturally competitive, all this lead to the inevitable war. This constant state of war is what Hobbes’ believes to be man’s original state of nature. According to Hobbes, man cannot be trusted in the state of nature. Limits and bounds are put to the rights of the people.

Locke underlines an opportunity of human beans to divide good and bad and certainly, the sense of a property is inside everyone, the difference between what is theirs and what belongs to someone else. Hobbes has been thinking another way. In contrary, in a state of nature nobody knows what is theirs and what is belongs to someone else, according to Hobbes. Property exists solely by the will of the state. He proceeds constantly from the nonpeaceful ideas. Men is not able to divide good and evil like Locke thinks. Therefore can only live in peace together by subjection to the absolute power of a common master, hence there can be no peace between kings. Peace between states is merely war by other means.

To end the era of uncertainty and of the funk being killed by your rivals Hobbes set up a state.

A state can be found either by the agreement of the society of by the force of the ruler. The idea of dividing powers of the state is completely denied by Hobbes. The absolute power – the only possible way of ruling. The prerogatives sovereigns are indivisible and are not transmitted to anybody. To divide authority of the state, means, to destroy it, as the divided authorities mutually destroy each other ". The authority of the sovereign is actually his monopoly to life and death of his people; " everything, what the Supreme representative has made in relation to the citizen under any pretext, can not be considered as injustice or lawlessness in own sense ".

I would like to point out his idea, it was proved that this way is totally wrong to rule. Fascism, Stalinism and the decade of Mousallini bring so many evil, suffering and millions of victims of its regimes. Moreover, Hobbes understands that this approach would be terribly face by people, however he continue to persuade. " In absolute authority there is nothing burdensome, that the human establishments can not exist without some inconveniences. These inconveniences depend on the citizens, instead of from authority. ”Encouragement of any sort crafts, as navigation, agriculture, fishery, and all industries showing demand for working hands ." Yes, this are the positive intents, but we know to what extent it comes 50-60 years ago. The arms race, directed society, not only lack of freedom but the fear to be executed if you are opposite the regime. It is very like the feudal times. So, I consider this ideas unacceptable not only nowadays but the appliance of it in past was the one of the greatest mistake of the humankind.

**Jean-Jacques Rousseau**

“As soon as the service to a society ceases to be the main business of the citizens and they prefer to serve to it by their purses, instead by their-self , - the State is already close to destruction”

“About the social contract.”

# Jean-Jacques Rousseau

His social and political sights are stated in such works as: " The Reasoning on a question: whether the revival of sciences and arts clearing of customs promoted? " (1750), " The Reasoning on an origin and bases of an inequality between the people " (1754), " About political economy " (1755), " The Judgement about the eternal world ". However, his major work is “About the social contract” – “Rousseau proves with briefly and strongly language that the just state and the morality themselves arise by effort of our rational abilities”.

The problems of a society, state and right are covered in the Rousseau doctrine from the positions of a substantiation both protection of a principle and ideas of the national sovereignty. In a natural condition, according to Rousseau , there is no private property, all are free and equal. An inequality here in the beginning only physical, caused by natural distinctions of the people. However with occurrence of a private property and social inequality, the struggle between poor and rich begins. After destruction of equality follows, according to Rousseau “the terrible distempers – unjust captures of the rich, robberies of the poor” . Characterizing it the nature condition, Jean-Jacques writes: " the Arising society has come in a condition of the most terrible war: the human sort, got stuck in defects and despaired, could not already neither return back nor refuse from unfortunate purchases made by them ".

The exit from such situation is in the agreement on creation of state authority and laws, to which will submit all. “There is only one law, which itself demands for the unanimous consent”.

Rousseau didn’t deny the private property but at the same time acts for relative alignment of a property rule and criticizes luxury and surpluses, polarization of riches and poverty. The general will lays in a basis of the public contract and competences of the formed sovereignty. He acknowledges the laws are made only by the general will. The general will, according to Rousseau is expressed throw the nowadays system. Liberalism is the one of the main base. However, this system is not perfect. “….people think that they are free: they are hard mistaken. They are free only during the election of the Parliament: as Parliament has been elected – they are slaves , no more”.

On the contrary , Rousseau express the ideas which we are know like anarchism. “There is not and there can not be no basic law, obligatory for the people, for them even the public contract is not obligatory”. Such controversial points of views I think arose from the willing for the logical explanation of the transfer from the nature condition to a state. The mutual utility is the basic principle of the system. " If it is necessary for the State, that you have died , you should die, because only that you lived till now in safety and consequently that the life is not only the benefit of a nature, but also gift received by you on certain conditions from the State ".

By the doctrine about the law as expression of general will and about legislative authority as a prerogative of the not alienated national sovereignty, concept of the public contract and principles of organization of the state Rousseau has rendered huge influence on the subsequent development of a state legal idea and social - political practice. His doctrine became one of the basic ideological sources during preparation and realization of the French Bourgeois Revolution.

Conclusion

Locke, Rousseau and Hobbes represent their views of nature state, the government system and the issue on the humankind’s development. In some cases the have similar issues on the problems, in some they have completely opposite points of view. Let’s revise as I think the main contributions of this great people.

After the social contract we retain the right to life and liberty, and gain the right to just, impartial protection of our property, according to Locke. There is an strong opportunity to control the power, the government could be easily overthrow. Hobbes think that the power can not do something wrong, because lawful and unlawful, good and evil, are merely commands, merely the will of the ruler. The liberal movements are hardly available. Roughly saying Hobbes's theory has far more in common with fascism, than it does with Locke's theory . In the treatise Rousseau has described the ideal state, in which the people, having given back the forces, freedom and property in a name of a society, receive in exchange civil freedom, equality, legislative authority and protection. Any ideal is unattainable. May be , one the of the main similarities in theirs theories is that they don’t believe that government organized thought the Church can rule successfully. They abandoned that the king’s power is come directly from the god. The king was no more a divine power.

**However, the thoughts of Rousseau, Locke and Hobbes influenced somehow or other the development of the humankind. History knows a lot things closely connected with their theories. Some experiences were successful some were not. But, I am sure that this philosophers would be studied many centuries further, because their key issues are the base of the political philosophy. After all, I can confidently say that they have shaped the western intellectual tradition.**

Used material:

1)”About philosophy”. Wolff R.P

2)”The appearance of the state” .The work for a degree. Danilov A.N

3) “The History of Law and Political study” . V.S.Nerse’iansa.

4)The parts of the Locke’s, Hobbes’ and Rousseau’s works from the Reader.

5)Different websites with works of above mentioned philosophers.