

Democracy: a Question of Self-Limitation

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As is common knowledge, the search for national identity in the socio-political sphere in Russia continues. Which type of state-political structure accords best with the Russian mentality? New socio-political conditions, wanting until now, have already appeared in rudimentary form: the market economy, private property, democracy. We will not discuss here the length of time during which these conditions have been absent in Russia. If they ever existed, communism brought them to an abrupt end. Making decisions by voting (in a people's assembly, for example, as used to be the practice in parts of Rus') is only one of the foundations of democracy. At the heart of democracy today is respect for minorities and for the smallest 'minority' of all – the individual person. Furthermore, it is not only a question of respect but also of those principles which reveal respect and find expression in legal form. One can confidently assert that this kind of democracy never existed in Russia.

Today people speak about the primacy of the individual over the state and about human rights. Unfortunately the spiritual and moral foundations for adopting these values are conspicuous by their absence. Furthermore, such values provoke decided hostility amongst a significant proportion of the Orthodox of Russia. The reason for this is not hard to find: the famous Uvarov paradigm survives, sometimes on the level of intuition, in our national consciousness in one form or another right up to the present time: 'Orthodoxy, Autocracy, Nationhood', that is, a certain symbiosis of religious, state and national factors. 'Human rights' in this context appear in some way artificial, superfluous, secular, not to say a manifestation of individualism and egoism. It is easy enough to maintain that if we have genuine faith all other problems will solve themselves. Generally speaking this is true; but what is not easy is to define what actually constitutes genuine faith, not only in the sphere of dogma and liturgy but also in everyday life. Sociological surveys show that 'Orthodox identity' does not necessarily imply the mystical aspect of religion, which is faith in God, but that it is often associated with historical, cultural and national identity. In this sense a communist can be completely 'Orthodox', sympathising in the process, for example, with the concept '*sobornost*', which is for him a synonym for collectivism, the primacy of the common interest over private interests. One is reminded of the words of Dostoyevsky: 'Orthodoxy is our Russian socialism'. It is not surprising that Orthodox in the West have a completely different attitude to this question. For a long time they have understood that democracy does not in practice hinder but rather creates relatively favourable conditions for religion. (We need simply recall, for example, what has been written about religion in America by Archbishop Ioann Shakhovskoy, who lived there for many years.) The question arises: is Christianity so

incompatible with democracy after all?

The most difficult question from a metaphysical as well as a practical point of view has always been that of the relationship and interaction between two levels of reality: the spiritual and the material, the Divine and the human; and on the ethical plane between what ought to be and what is. It is clear that what we call 'spirituality' is not projected in categories of what ought to be in society in the form of corresponding political institutions. In the Bible we read: 'My kingdom is not of this world' (John 18:36). This idea implies an unbridgeable gap between religion and politics. Religion itself, especially as it is understood in the East, is a force directed towards the transcendental, not to the visible or to the earthbound. At the same time Christian maximalism and universalism demand a corresponding interpretation of the whole fullness of the surrounding reality, including the socio-political sphere, and this presupposes an adequate treatment of the interaction with this socio-political sphere. The measure of this interaction is the measure of relations between the two levels of reality.

Two extremes are well known here: the first is the aspiration towards the Divine, linked to a disregard for the terrestrial order. This can be observed in some of the eastern religions. Here the material world is looked upon as something defective, the consequence of a fall in realms above. As a result the material level is not taken seriously. It is clear that on this line of development civilisation cannot be created, although separate spiritually developed persons or saints may appear. This approach can be described as monophysite-spiritual or as the 'purely spiritual' way.

The second extreme is the aspiration towards the material, linked to a disregard for any higher spiritual purpose. The philosophical basis for this approach is, appropriately, materialism, and its most consequential political project is communism, which proclaims principles of freedom, equality, brotherhood and justice, borrowed from Christianity. Here sanction is given to reforming activity, which is completely unlimited (as a result of unfettered atheism), corresponding with a given concept of the 'common good', which is one-sided (based on human reason alone): 'We will build a new world of our own ...', in the words of a well-known revolutionary song. The world is no longer seen as God's creation. From here develops the constructivist, power-based approach to reality. It can be seen that such a world view is possible as a consequence of an improper transfer of the determinants of reductionist-mechanistic monological thought to the socio-political sphere, which is then looked upon as an object for manipulation. The totalitarian seduction emerges: the creation of the ideal society – an incubator, a nature reserve, managed by certain people who purport to know the laws of historical development (and who, in fact, violate those same laws). In the name of the 'bright future' the result is today's nightmare of a society with the structure of a concentration camp. (The fact that a few people in this 'socialist' camp, thanks to the lax supervision of their guardians, were able to engage in intellectual and spiritual work does not alter the matter in its essence.) This whole experience, by the way, proves that coherent materialism is not possible. The pseudo-sacred, hyper-ideologised communist system gave clear testimony to this fact.

It is well known that extremes converge: religious monophysitism leads to the neglect of the factor of human individuality – that is, it leads to depersonalisation. This creates the fundamental conditions for totalitarianism, as can be seen in ancient eastern despotism and in the modern form of despotism – communism. The monophysite scheme of thinking preserves itself, filling itself with a new, ostensibly materialistic content. It is precisely in the western technocratic lineage that the modernism of communism develops, while archaic paternalism develops in the eastern lineage.

It is no accident that communism, in one form or another, sometimes with a religious flavour, has found acceptance in the East: in Korea, China, Vietnam, Kampuchea, Albania and finally in Russia – the world's main seedbed of communism. (The list of countries does not reflect the chronology of the communist regimes.) By whatever complicated paths this world-view penetrated and implanted itself in these countries, its prerequisites were nevertheless in place (except, perhaps, in the countries of Eastern Europe, where communism was implanted by direct military means). The Christian tradition and a developed legal consciousness prevented the spread of communism in the West, but in Russia, where a ritualistic understanding of Christianity prevailed, the evangelisation of life itself and the application of Biblical principles to surrounding reality were obviously not sufficiently well developed. As a result, Russia's immunity to an ideology which had so much to say about 'the common good' was weakened.

Here the starting-point of the argument is important. Is man no more than the 'sum total of social relations'? (In practice such sociological reductionism leads to the opposite outcome, where society comes to be seen as the sum total of all individuals understood as the components of a machine.) Or is it in fact impossible to 'reduce' man to anything at all, since he is created 'in the image and likeness of God'? Is the whole always more than the part? Even in mathematics it is well known that this is not always so. So mere quantity does not always reflect the reality of the 'common good'.

It is man, and not society or the state, who was created in the image and likeness of God. What we are now describing in just a few phrases cost humankind tens of millions of human lives. On the philosophical plane the question is the problem of man's freedom and the risk which is inevitably attached to that freedom – this is the problem which Dostoyevsky and Berdyayev have explored in depth and with genius in their writings. How can man's freedom be combined with the 'common good'? A more precise formulation of the same question might be: how can the inevitable limitations on the freedom of people in their life together be reduced to a minimum? After the collapse of the communist experiment it has become especially clear that a theory of social structure must be founded upon an adequate anthropology – that is, from the bottom up, and not the reverse. 'From God' (that is, from top down) God alone can build his kingdom. The communists put 'true theory' in the place of God, in order to demonstrate the universal character of totalitarianism. We must not take upon ourselves the divine role and can proceed only from the position of man, made in the image and likeness of God.

What is man? The mystery of man is making itself felt again and again today. According to Christian anthropology man has a dual nature, or more precisely, a good nature damaged by original sin. On the one hand man was created in the image and likeness of God, free, having within himself unlimited potential and called to perfection, but on the other hand, because of this same free will, he is able to move in the opposite direction – towards evil. Consequently the optimal social structure ought to be such that, on the one hand, it gives man opportunity for free development and, on the other hand, it limits the possibilities for specific crimes. The choice of social structure must moreover be made by society itself. The decision must not be dictated from outside even by very intelligent people, although they should not, of course, be deprived of the ability to influence society by lawful means. The task is further complicated by procedural questions. The very procedure for taking the decision must correspond with the gravity of the question posed. Here, of course, there is a tautological paradox: what is the procedure for deciding that a procedure is 'good'? It

is possible to get round this paradox by the method of sequential approximations, thanks to the principle of self-development in a participatory society. Such concepts as the 'principle of the separation of powers', 'private property' and 'human rights' follow from the main principle of respect for and trust in man, like safety mechanisms. The separation of powers protects against the usurpation of power, while private property poses limits to the encroachment of the state upon the individual.

It is easy to understand why a democratic society is so difficult to build: if force is the prime requirement for the creation of a monarchy, then for the creation of a democratic society a high level of social consciousness is essential, and this level is determined primarily by the degree of respect for the person which has been attained. The question of faith, or of world-views in general, is exceptionally complex. In such matters there can be no question of what we call 'consensus', and it is precisely this fact which lies at the root of the principle that 'religion is a private matter' and that the 'separation of religion from the state' is necessary. This is still sometimes mistakenly thought to be the capitulation of religion within society. Think how many caustic words have been spoken (for example by Konstantin Leont'yev) about the religiosity of an average member of the bourgeois class. No storm and stress. Lukewarm, they say, not ardent with faith. Thus the honest fulfilment of one's duties in life (family, work) loses out aesthetically in the face of a basically heathen triumphalism, a dramatised ritualistic mysticism. Nevertheless the God of revelation can be found even in a gentle breath of wind (1 Kings 19:9–13). In Christianity, the primacy of the internal over the external reaches an extreme point: there are hardly any external signs of living in truth (see Luke 16:15) except love. One can, of course, pine for the days of heroes and martyrs but it is not permissible to recreate them. History has its own growth characteristics which cannot be ignored.

There have been many attempts to make a 'programme' out of Christianity. People have tried to construct a version of the kingdom of God on Earth through their own efforts. They have even tried to identify communism with Christianity. They say communism is nothing other than demystified Christianity and that it sets itself the task of building a 'real kingdom of goodness and justice'. However, instead of the kingdom of God, something quite different has appeared, as if under a demonic influence – more often than not in the shape of a prison; from somewhere ancient paternalism has crept out, a new and monstrous type of pseudo-sacredness and similar manifestations which are already sufficiently well described in the literature. It is of interest to note that totalitarian regimes have not renounced the phraseology of democracy.

All the titanic efforts which have been made to christianise ancient monarchy have also turned out unsuccessful because monarchy is nothing other than a political Egyptian pyramid, essentially a pagan structure. Thus Orthodox imperial Byzantium fell into ruins as did Russia later. The physically visible pyramid of a monarchy (in the shape of the sacred figure of the tsar) corresponds to the external (by comparison with Christianity) character of pagan religion which represents God in the form of an object. Monarchy–despotism emerges as the political project of eastern paganism. In the words of B. P. Vysheslavtsev, 'Only paganism, with its belief in the law of "eternal return", can dream of the restoration of the monarchy of the pharaohs. Christianity does not accept the idea of "eternal return" but teaches the irreversibility of time. Therefore it is the religion of creativity and absolute renewal.'

People might ask: would not the personalistic character of Christianity, the domination of the internal principle over the external, lead to complete anarchy, everyone having his own idea about what ought and what ought not to be? After all,

people proceeding from a Christian standpoint are often unable to come to the same conclusions on particular issues. However, there are obvious and very simple things already expressed in the commandments of the Old Testament (do not kill, do not steal, do not bear false witness), and precisely here the state needs to demonstrate full control and ensure that these commandments are observed by its citizens. It is also clear that the natural boundary of man's freedom is the freedom of another person. As S. N. Bulgakov puts it, 'a "right" is freedom contingent upon equality'. In this basic definition of a right the individualistic principle of freedom is inextricably linked with the social principle of equality so that one can say that a right is nothing other than a synthesis of freedom and equality. The concepts 'person', 'freedom' and 'equality' make up the essence of so called 'natural rights'. Bulgakov goes on to show that 'natural rights' do not in fact exist naturally but have a religious basis.

An important question arises: why are laws, whose observance can be monitored, effective in the area of the external (murder, robbery), while in the area of the internal (faith, world-view and even morality) a democratic society takes no decisive action? In the words of the Gospel, 'Does not evil proceed out of the heart of man?' It is indeed so, but neither to one individual nor to all the people together is it given to control the hearts of their fellow human beings. ('He that is without sin among you, let him be the first to cast a stone at her' – John 8:7.) The area of morality remains primarily the prerogative of public opinion and not of legal action.

In the words of Bulgakov, 'Man ought to be free because this accords with his human dignity; external freedom is a means or, more precisely, a negative condition for internal, moral freedom, which is God's image in man.' Strictly dividing the internal from the external, the democratic system, if it does not show itself as the political correlate of Christianity, at least does not contradict it. Voting, which calls forth such scorn from religious aesthetes (because intelligent people are always in the minority), is not used for decision-making in questions of world-view or over religious-philosophical problems, but exclusively for external matters: questions of personnel (elections), financial and managerial questions and so on, in conditions of general acceptance of the fundamental rights and freedoms of man, the source of which is not the state but God. A democratic society does not guarantee its people spiritual development, which can only be free, but simply tries honestly to create the necessary conditions for that development, first and foremost, in the area of what is uncontroversial. In the name of the human right to life the state takes responsibility upon itself for the police force, which protects citizens from criminals. Here a power-based relationship with the criminal is justified even from the Christian point of view. However, the police force has no right to compel people to accept a particular set of views, a particular world-view, or to censor and control people's thoughts and attitudes. The area of religion and world-view remains as a matter of principle undefined by the state, and this demonstrates, if we may use a theological term, the '*kenosis*' (self-abasement) of the democratic state, which knows its place and has no pretension to be a kingdom. In keeping with this task-force image, the state is designed only to create the necessary conditions for a dignified life for the people; or, in Biblical language, conditions for the discovery of the image and likeness of God within them. This kind of perspective on power finds a firm basis already in the Old Testament: the rejection of theocracy and the desire of the people of Israel for an earthly king (a dominating type of state) is seen in the Bible as a relapse into paganism, a falling away from God (see 1 Sam. 8). It is also well known that many prominent Orthodox ascetics were supporters of an Orthodox monarchy, which would manifest itself as a kind of icon of the kingdom of God on Earth. However, we

have historical experience now of which they had no knowledge, and, in any case, the teaching about Orthodox monarchy cannot be raised to the level of dogma.

In today's language, a democratic state is the right term for the 'service' type of state. It may well be that one never comes across such a state in its pure form and that there are no states which are completely neutral in ideological terms. But here again the principle of 'self-limitation' is important: ideology must not encroach upon the higher, world-view orientations of individuals; but there are different levels of ideologisation and this difference is very important.

It is obvious that contemporary democracy as far as its formal characteristics are concerned has nothing in common with theocracy, but it is important to note that the former, on the strength of its openness, which is a matter of principle, does not exclude the possibility of the latter, which is more than the work of human hands alone. (By 'theocracy' we mean here not clericalism, but the literal etymological meaning of the word: rule by God. The Old Testament presents us with a picture of a theocracy of this type.) As we have already pointed out, perfecting and developing can be carried out only in conditions of freedom. God did not create people endowed with freedom in order that they might then deprive one another of it.

Sometimes democracy is criticised on the grounds that it destroys and levels out the hierarchical structure of the universe. It is even accused of atheism. Making these criticisms, people do not take into account the fact that democracy is non-mystical in principle. This is not to say that it denies mystery as such, but rather that it has no pretensions on the deep levels of the hierarchical structure of the world. Democracy is not responsible for the fact that some people have lost all feeling for depth or hierarchy, any more than science is responsible for encouraging atheism. It is clear that it is not scientific knowledge as such which is the cause of atheism, but the psychological law of displacement, the switching of attention to the contents of another area of competence. If, for example, a man spends his whole life looking down a microscope, he may eventually come to believe that simply no other reality exists. Thus it may seem to certain people that democracy is a self-sufficient mechanism.

Yet all through history the same question arises: if the truth has been shown in revelation then why not 'help' it to triumph in life? Here, however, it becomes clear that there is a great deal we do not know about the factors which govern the spiritual life, especially in its social dimension, and that we cannot clearly determine the level of necessary interaction with, or control over, social reality. This inability serves as a negative philosophical basis for the concept of 'freedom of conscience'. (It would be more accurate to say 'freedom of world-view'). Here the risk of an 'incorrect' world-view is consciously preferred to a compulsorily 'correct' one, as the lesser evil. Supporters of the modelling of state structure on the lines of church structure (the church having been called to represent the kingdom of God on Earth) should remember that for the church the use of force is a contradiction in terms, while a state cannot exist without structures which rely on force. It is important to understand that although, empirically, the relations between church and state may appear simple, they are in fact extremely complicated because of the paradox of freedom. The celebrated 'symphony' of church and state is hardly a possibility in conditions on Earth, and the state, while remembering the religious ideal, is bound to be concerned with reality, staving off premature attacks of hell on Earth, as V. S. Solov'yev put it. This is the necessarily negative function of the state. On the constructive plane, the state could learn something from the church. Democracy could be looked upon as a socio-secular version of '*sobornost*' (from '*sobor*', 'council'; '*sobraniye*', 'gathering');

but this is not happening because of the lack of a contemporary social doctrine in our church. At the last archbishops' council in Moscow (29 November–2 December 1994) the decision was taken to elaborate a social doctrine for today. It is also clear that a well maintained network of monasteries (as it existed up to 1917) cannot serve as an economic model for the state as a whole, but can provide only a moral example.

In politics an indispensable 'principle of indeterminacy' is probably in operation. Take the following formulation, for example. There are two possibilities: either a formally determined legal system, which does not claim to address the ultimate meaning of existence; or a prescribed path for people to follow in order to reach that ultimate meaning, with no significance accorded to legal norms, which are considered as merely conditional. Inasmuch as the second variant is possible only within theocracy – which, practically speaking, is not realisable on earth (there are things about which one can only pray) – it is obvious that the first way must be preferred. Thus democracy remains the most appropriate structure for society, not to say the best.

Using theological terminology, it can be said that a democratic social order gives expression to the apophatic principle (negativity); we can, therefore, speak of the 'social apophaticism' of democracy. More simply put, there is in democracy a conscious self-limitation of the exercise of power by the state, for the sake of the freedom given to us by God. Monarchy, under the leadership of a religious figure-head, is of course possible; and, with an exceptional personality on the throne, it can give better results than democracy. It is obvious that a strong and colourful tsar can inspire the people more than the abstract principle of the 'separation of powers'. However, in the case of an unfortunate succession, monarchy catches fever and, as a result of palace plots and coups, it may weaken to the point of collapse under the pressure of its enemies, who are always there on the lookout. The ceremonial anointing of royalty is no more guarantee against sin and error than, for example, the sacrament of baptism. The fact is that political monarchy is unstable (although it may also continue to exist for a long time if force is deployed in its defence), and in this respect it is in sharp contrast with its physical analogy, the Egyptian pyramid. If an attempt is made to exclude by law the possibility of blatant abuse and to introduce, first and foremost, principles of openness and feedback (that is, to make the system dynamic and self-regulating) then what is produced is actually a democratic system. In this case even a monarch is possible, not so much exercising power but playing a spiritual-symbolical role as in northern European countries. 'The mystical concept of autocracy is a lie from a religious point of view because it loads the burden of freedom and responsibility onto one man and lifts it from the Christian people' (Berdyayev).

Let us examine the most damning criticism levelled against democracy. Democracy is alleged to give equal value to truth and lies, to good and evil, and to lead to 'secondary simplification' (Leont'yev). But what does this mean? There is a very simple criterion by which we can judge the level of development of a state system which is oriented not towards itself (totalitarianism) but towards the well-being of the people: are the laws being observed; that is, does the judiciary work effectively in society? Criminal and civil legislation and respect for it in practice reflect the prevalent conceptions of justice and of good and evil in a society. It is enough to compare the statistical data reflecting legal proceedings and legal rulings in different countries in order for much to become clear. Behind indifference to law and to legislation which is designed to protect people stands not 'spirituality', but mere indifference towards people. This ought really to be obvious: it is not appro-

appropriate to hound people to poverty and dispossess them of all their rights for the sake of raising the level of their spirituality. Nevertheless the utopian type of consciousness, which forms the basis of contemporary totalitarianism, constantly tries to substitute law, which is always imperfect, with morality, which captures the minds of the gullible through its clarity and through the perfection of its formulation of what ought to be. (In this we see the basic reason for the longevity of utopian and, in particular, communist ideas.) It is no accident that in totalitarian systems so much is said about morality, moral upbringing and conscience, which must all be steadily improved, and, of course, about the good of the people. In this there is no understanding at all of law as the guarantor of the rights of the individual; by law, in general, is understood only the necessity of obedience to the state. This leads in turn to the subordination of judicial authority to state ideology. The highest judicial authority in totalitarian systems is appropriated by a small group of 'initiates', allegedly knowing good and evil. (See Dostoyevsky's story of the Grand Inquisitor.) In the theory of civil democratic society it is clearly understood that nobody has the right to appropriate for himself the divine role, and that the church and clergy must not take possession of state power. The power 'to bind and to loose' (Matt. 18:18) was given by Christ to his apostles – it is not administrative but spiritual power; or simply, moral power. It is not in democratic states that the concepts of good and evil are confused most readily, but in totalitarian states, where ordinary sinful people claim infallibility and start to speak out in the name of God, higher justice or the people.

One can also understand why the idea of democracy (already to a large measure discredited in our country) calls forth such mistrust from religiously-minded people in Russia. It seems to them that if the state develops along the path of democratisation then religion will dissolve into secularism and then disappear altogether. 'Look at the West,' they say. 'In Europe there are many empty churches. It will be like that here too.' We should of course note that there are far more churches altogether in the West than there are in Russia. Furthermore, the level of christianisation must be evaluated not only by church attendance but by the acceptance of the norms of Christian ethics in peoples' private lives and in the life of society. It is not a matter for regret if these ethics, to a large extent, coincide with the general ethics of humanity; after all the Lord himself repeated the 'golden rule' of morality, elaborated by mankind long before: 'Do to others what you would have them do to you' (Matt. 7:12). It is worse when the whole world divides up, in a pagan way, into sacred and profane, or, in today's terminology, into 'secular' and 'spiritual'; that is when the ritualistic-liturgical type of Christianity becomes sufficient unto itself, not having any special relationship to life in general. On the whole, questions of end results, the fate of the world, eschatology, go beyond our competence, and in this area we must live one day at a time in the spirit of Christ's teaching: 'sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof' (Matt. 6:34). Neither should we rush to separate the wheat from the tares (Matt. 13: 24–30). Of course, it might be desirable for people to go to church more often and to the supermarket less often, but the only permissible way to encourage the desired behaviour is by exhortation and not by compulsion.

It is interesting to observe the vigour of the slavophile critique of the West today, because, following slavophile arguments, one might have expected the West to have decayed to dust long ago. In the West, it is said, rationalism and materialism prevail, and if they have culture, it is generally of a superficial kind; they too lack freedom, but the fact is disguised from them. It is all the more interesting that Westerners themselves are willing to agree with this analysis. However, we will not rush to nod our assent. Western consciousness is more self-critical than Russian consciousness

and only a fool rejoices when he is praised. It is necessary to remember a simple truth: what is external is a reflection of the internal. There is no such thing as purely 'superficial culture' or prosperity, which the slavophiles hate so much.

An important achievement of the academic study of society is the concept of an 'open society' – the concept which proposes indeterminacy and a readiness for change in some state-social structures. The 'open society' is in some respects indeterminate as a matter of principle. In the same way it is important that a religious world-view should be open as a matter of principle – open, first and foremost, to divine grace, which means to everything good. Only a religious world-view can prevent the birth of totalitarianism out of a spirit of self-sufficient rationalism, because it takes another reality into account – divine reality. According to Old Testament law, on the sabbath and in jubilee years it was necessary to free Israelite slaves and forgive debtors their debts. This made a new start possible for people for whom things had not worked out well for a variety of reasons (Lev. 25: 8–12; Deut. 15:2). We can well imagine that the application of this law would lead to temporary destabilisation, but there would be compensation in the form of more dynamic development of the society.

People may say that liberal democracy at its roots is a purely Western, Anglo-Saxon phenomenon with no universal application. For us, they say, all this is unacceptable. However, it is obvious that even Eastern man (for all his fatalism) does not like it when officials scoff at him, when he is humiliated, has his belongings stolen and so on. Well, the only antidote for lawlessness is a legal one and this implies a democratic state. No other solution has yet been found. When a democratic structure is described, avoiding all reference to the word 'democracy', then everyone is pleased with what they hear; but one only has to pronounce the word and there is an immediate and negative reaction from many people. However, this is really a question for the social psychologists.

From the theological point of view, the question of the management of the state ought to come down to an understanding of self-limitation. Black and white utopian thinking, for which this issue does not exist, will inevitably build another pyramid or it will reject a trustworthy principle on the grounds of its total inapplicability to the given situation. In theology there is the concept of 'distinct yet inseparable'. I would suggest that the analogy for this principle in politics is the democratic system: unlike the totalitarian system it does not attempt to permeate the whole of life, but at the same time it is inseparable from society, which cannot, of itself, exist without a system.

People may accuse me of an abstract formulation of the question and of constructivism. However, firstly, general (abstract) ideas have the same right to exist as concrete ones and, secondly, it is not constructivism as such which is dangerous, only total constructivism, based on unlimited faith in human reason (rationalism) or on a confusion of divine and human roles (the 'Grand Inquisitor' complex). Of course, a combination of the one and the other is possible. What is important, however, is that this combination should be an authentic one.

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