

SCTMG 2020**International Scientific Conference «Social and Cultural Transformations in the
Context of Modern Globalism»****ORGANIC THEORY OF DEMOCRACY BY I.A. ILYIN: BASIC
PRINCIPLES AND RULES**

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Pavic69@mail.ru***Abstract***

The crisis of the sovereign nation-state of the modern era, legitimation systems of power and political representation is obvious and repeatedly described in the literature by authors belonging to different/opposite research traditions in political philosophy and political theory. The assertion in the context of liberal paradigm of political philosophy of the need for a consistent replacement of political dominance by management and organization and, consequently, the “abolition” of sovereignty, political boundaries, and nation-states is presented by many researchers as the only possibility of the global political order evolution. Along with this, there has been an increasing assertion that the functions of a nation-state remain necessary and, at the same time, there are no supra-national mechanisms of legitimizing power that correspond to generally accepted democratic principles; the gap arising in the new global political order between decision and responsibility actually eliminates what is considered to be democracy. The foregoing explains the interest in theories of democracy, which emphasize the content maintaining the distinction between formal democratic procedures and the content of democratic institutions. The theory of Organic Democracy by I.A. Ilyin combining the ideas of German classical philosophy of law (primarily Hegel) and the desire of ontological and religious foundations of social and political phenomena traditional for Russian philosophy of the late 19th and early 20th centuries to examine them in the perspective of their metaphysical deepening, opens (in theory) the opportunity to study democracy and democracy-oriented political activities beyond the prevailing liberal paradigm.

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1. Introduction

The life of the state is built organically, and not in the sense that the state like a totalitarian Leviathan is everything in everything, absorbs everything and enslaves everyone, but in the sense that the “fabric of state life” is composed of the organic life of all its citizens. Each individual villainy is committed “in the fabric” of the state, harms it and destroys its living nature; and every good, noble and cultural deed of a citizen is committed in the “fabric of the state”, builds and strengthens its life. The state is not some kind of abstraction that rushes over citizens; or some kind of “I-you-all-crush”, like a fabulous bear that sits on the inhabitants of the house and crushes everyone. The state is not “somewhere” outside of us (government, police, army, tax department, bureaucracy); it lives in us, in the form of ourselves, for we, human beings, we are its “parts”, or “members”, or “organs”. This participation is not reducible to external affairs and to external “order”; it includes our inner life. However, this “inclusion” does not mean that “we dare nothing”, but “the state dares everything”; that we are slaves, and the state is a slaveholder; that a citizen should live by the principle of “What would do you like?” Not at all. A totalitarian perversion is a phenomenon immediately painful, absurd and criminal. The state includes (they are building it, strengthening it, vibrating it, perfecting it or, on the contrary, destroying it) free, private initiative, spiritual and creative, internal moods and external acts of citizens (Ilyin, 1993a).

2. Problem Statement

A commonplace of modern political theory is the requirement of democratic legitimation of power (a dispute is possible only regarding the combination of mechanisms of such legitimation). At the same time, the question of the content of democracy is not stated: It seems to have been resolved initially; democracy is credited with all the virtues that are now considered valuable. The distinction between the formal principle of democracy and the content of democracy is not maintained. The crisis of the modern liberal democratic sovereign nation-state, and in particular the system of political representation, actualizes the problem of the content of democracy, and, therefore, the study of the organic theories of democracy; here the theory of democracy by I. A. Ilyina (founded by theories of normal justice and free loyalty) is quite representative.

3. Purpose of the Study

The study of the theory of democracy by I. A. Ilyin in the context of his “substantive” political philosophy makes it possible to understand the problems associated with systemic crisis of the nation-state of the modern period. The “qualification” approved by Ilyin for a system of political representation demonstrates (in theory) the prospect of maintaining and improving democratic political institutions outside and besides the liberal paradigm of political philosophy.

4. Research Methods

The methodology for studying texts and comparing the identified meanings involves the use of hermeneutic procedures.

5. Findings

Political life should be understood as an organic phenomenon: “Here, the Whole creates its necessary organs, and not pieces are shifted into violent unity in the struggle with each other” (Ilyin, 1993b), that is, knowledge of politics, political science should be based on the “knowledge of the soul of its lonely social life” (Ilyin, 1994, p. 36).

“Deprived of a sacred policy it turns into a pursuit of personal success and power, into the war of interests and very soon becomes unprincipled, creatively powerless and totalitarian. This is how platitude devoid of shrine is manifested in life“ (Ilyin, 1998, p. 52). This is how one can describe the essence of political crisis and its two stages: democratic and totalitarian. Ilyin (1994) believes that it is high time we should abandon the outdated point of view about the opposition of democracy and totalitarianism. The first thing that makes them related is the opposite of Politics (we remember “there is only one way, but many deviations from it.” However, there is also a more “intimate” connection between these two “perversions”. We can talk about the “logic of political development”, in this case, about the logic of “non-objective freedom”: starting with “unlimited freedom”, as we recall, Shigalev in Dostoevsky’s Demons ended with “unlimited enslavement” and added, “There is no another way and there cannot be one” (Dostoevsky, 2015). By unbridling personal instincts and selfish interests, a person destroys a state whose “self-preservation instinct” requires “external curbing” for “unbridled mob”. This is an external description of the process. Here is his possible “internal description”: The unbridled instincts make a man their slave, the strongest of instincts is the “will to power”, that is, the desire for unlimited strengthening of this organism, which in its development enters into a “war” with everyone else. The struggle for existence ends in the victory of the fittest, who have nowhere else to “expand” and no one else to “enslave” and who perishes as a result of it. However, he dies even earlier: God’s remission does not extend as far as it is “recorded” in the description of the ultimate fulfillment of the “will to power” in the novel of the Marquis de Sade’s 120 days of Sodom (Sade, 2012). The dialectic of the “will to power”, or, which, according to Ilyin (1994), is almost the same, the “dialectic of evil”, is the “depth” of the process of political degeneration: first to shapeless democracy, anarchy, ochlocracy, and then, through or without many intermediate stages to totalitarianism and (or) the death of the state: The totalitarianism itself “postpones” this death if there is no strength to return to the path of true Politics.

However, bearing in mind everything mentioned above, we would follow Ilyin in the political science description of this process. The crisis of democracy is a crisis of an empty, formal policy, which in turn is a consequence of a certain anthropology: democracy sees in man an “animal individual” that has its own desires and needs of an “animal” nature. People are “equal” by nature, and therefore they should be given equal rights in satisfying these desires and in understanding these needs. Each individual has a right to vote and freedom of association with his own kind for convenience, satisfaction of his “lusts”, which cannot be satisfied outside of society (Ankersmith, 2000).

The quality of all the “desires”, “motives”, “plans”, “impulses” is not taken into account until they “suppress” all the others, but, as a rule, when this happens, it is too late to change anything. Therefore, modern democracy requires “guarantees” in order to prevent this from happening. Let us recall the description of democratic guarantees in Popper’s *The Open Society and its Enemies*; let us quote the enumeration itself

The democracy can exist only if the main parties strictly fulfill their functions, which can be summarized in the form of some, for example, the following rules:

1. The democracy cannot be reduced to the rule of the majority, although the institution of general elections is its most important element. After all, the majority can rule with tyrannical methods. In a democracy, the power of the ruling forces should be limited. The criterion of democracy is as follows: in democracy people can change government without bloodshed. Thus, if those who have power do not guard special institutions that provide the minority with the opportunity to make peaceful changes, then their rule is tyranny.
2. It is necessary to distinguish between two forms of government, namely, governments that have the institutions of democracy mentioned in the first paragraph, and all the rest, that is, tyranny.
3. A truly democratic constitution should exclude only one type of change in the existing system, i.e. those changes that could pose danger to its democratic nature.
4. In democracy, a full legal protection of a minority should extend to those who violate the law, and especially to those who incite others to violently overthrow democracy.
5. The policy of creating institutions for the defense of democracy should always be carried out under the assumption that latent anti-democratic tendencies are possible, both among those who rule and among the subordinates.
6. If democracy is destroyed, then all rights are violated. If at the same time the subordinates retain some economic advantages, then they are preserved only because of mercy.

The democracy provides an excellent “battlefield” for any sensible reform as it allows to implement the reform without any violence. However, if during each “battle” on this battlefield the preservation of democracy is not paramount, the hidden anti-democratic tendencies that always exist and which appeal to those who suffer under the burden of civilization can lead to a fall in democracy. (Popper, 1966, p. 165)

Therefore, the most important thing in the freedom is “equality”, “secret ballot” and the inviolability of individual rights in case of freedom of expression. However, let us quote Mr. Ilyin (1993a):

Each citizen, as such, is considered reasonable, enlightened, well-meaning and loyal, incorruptible and respectable in advance; everyone is given an opportunity to discover their entire “valor” and cover up with their words the “public good” all their ideas and undertakings. Until caught, he is not a thief; not yet taken red handed, he demands universal respect for himself. Anyone who has not yet been caught red handed (for example, betrayal, foreign espionage, enemy agents, plotting, bribe, embezzlement, forgery, cheating, trafficking girls, faking false documents or coins) is considered a political “gentleman” regardless of his profession and a full citizen (“everyone knows about his art, but you can’t prove it”). The main thing is “freedom”, “equality” and “vote count”. The state is a mechanical balance of private (personal and party) desires; the state is established as a compromise of centrifugal forces, as acting of political actors. The politics should move “along the resultant” (along the parallelogram of forces!) of mutual distrust and competing intrigues ... (p. 38)

Of course, this view is not the “formal doctrine” of democracy, quite the opposite: there are so many great words in its “justification” (if it was necessary to justify it!), which no other “political issue” was addressed to. However, the “democratic dogma,” as Mr. Ilyin (1993a) defines it, is unchanged: “Everyone is formally free, everyone is formally equal, and everyone is fighting with each other for power, for the sake of their own interests, covered up by common good” (p. 53).

This is the essence of “formal” and “quantitative” understanding of the state, which “makes its fate dependent on how and by what the emptiness and the indifferent quality that people are granted with “formal freedom” are filled. The state and government are only a “mirror” or “sum” of what is there in the soul and the sense of justice of general population. There is always something cooked in this impenetrable and at the same time untouchable pocket: any interference is forbidden as a “pressure”; any restriction or impact is branded as “constraint of freedom”. Every citizen is guaranteed the right to crooked and crafty political paths, to disloyal or treacherous plans. They are allowed to sell the votes, to have vile motives of voting, to underground conspiracies, to inconspicuous treason, to secret “double citizenship”, i.e. to all the basenesses that people take advantage of and so often seduced by. Any citizen is given the unlimited right of secret self-temptation and seduction of others, as well as inconspicuous self-sale. He or she is ensured the freedom of insincere, deceitful, insidious, insinuating words and ambiguous, prudent silence of the truth; he or she is given the freedom to “believe” liars and villains or to pretend to believe (selfishly pretend to be in different political mood). In addition, for the free expression of all these spiritual temptations, he or she is given a “ballot paper.” “Voting motives” should be free; party formation is not constrained; to limit political propaganda means “to show violence”; it is impossible to judge and condemn for “political views”: it would mean to encroach on “heart study” and “to prosecute for the way of thinking” (in German “Gezinnungs – Justices”). Freedom of opinion must be complete; government officials do not dare to encroach on it and curtail it. Moreover, the most stupid, harmful, fatal and infamous “opinion” is “inviolable” because of the mere fact that there was a harmful fool or a traitor who proclaimed it, hiding behind its inviolability. Is it possible to make him think not in an active manner? How to prevent him from putting his opinion into practice - in a whisper, quiet sap, secret conspiracy, clandestine organization, imperceptible accumulation of weapons depots? Freedom of speech, unions and weapons only expresses and exercises freedom of opinion ... (Ilyin, 1993a). It is quite understandable that this “disarms” the state “in the face of its enemies and degraders; and at the same time provides these enemies and degraders with complete freedom and impunity. The state and the government are obliged to provide people with freedom of seduction, and to the degraders and traitors - the freedom of seduction. It is natural that the next vote sums up the success of the secured temptation” (Ilyin, 1993a, p. 11). This weakens the true patriots: To follow the path of unbridling is always easier than to follow the objective path. Ilyin (1993a) argues that formal freedom in democracy “includes the freedom of secret betrayal and apparent destruction” (p. 15).

If to go back “to the framework” of specific “academic style” and sum everything up, then one should summarize the essence of the crisis that hit the democracy. First, historically, the democracy opposed bad governance and bad rulers and claimed that

It was to indicate good rulers and good governance. The democracy claimed to highlight a new, true political selection: A new “aristocracy” of freedom, justice, honesty and character; and all this

had to be carried out periodically by universal and equal elections. And now, this claim is not always justified” (Ilyin, 1993b, p. 64).

Secondly, “the crisis of democracy is caused by the fact that its form deactivates the state and state power” (Ilyin, 1993b, p. 53). Democracy does not affirm the autonomy of citizens, but freedom in the struggle for achieving selfish goals and satisfying selfish interests, unleashes centrifugal forces, and possible collusion ruins solidarity.

Thirdly, “the principle of democracy is an irresponsible human atom and its personally interested and incompetent will. This is the sign denoting the beginning of the crisis” (Ilyin, 1993b, p. 57). That is, the process of voting in a democracy is fundamentally flawed. When a person votes in a democracy, he, firstly, “is not competent in most of the issues on which he casts his vote. He does not know these subjects, he does not understand what is useful to people and the state and what is harmful, he either votes at random, or replaces the benefit of the state with his personal benefit” (Ilyin, 1993a, p. 78). Secondly,

Every person who is going to cast his vote carries his complex composition, i.e. here is an acquirer and a citizen; a skater and a patriot; conscientious person and climber; class “demander” and the real politician, and maybe even an unscrupulous wickedness. However, sometimes this “complexity” is simplified and a sly skater votes. (Ilyin, 1993a, p. 62)

And finally, the democracy leads to “backstage” power, that is, those who have enough money to pay for a very expensive election procedure and, secondly, for the bribing of voters (the times when money was handed out at polling stations may have passed in “civilized countries”, but the times of “political engagement” of the so-called “stars”, i.e. singers, showmen, etc., up to “intellectuals” the venality of which cannot be understated, as well as their greed, will never pass). The democracy demands for “bread and circuses” and those who are able to pay for them, not without benefit for themselves, of course. Mr. Ilyin (1944) cites the words of an Italian teenager: "I want some entertainment" (p. 36).

The very essence of democracy is its party structure. There is a classic definition of a political party given by Spengler (1991): “A party is when the unemployed are organized by idlers” (p. 58) Mr. Ilyin, of course, could agree with this. The party is the only [at least for today] way to organize the vote in a democracy. On the one hand,

“the main significance of political parties is that they provide several ready-made program stencils for adjoining the voting mass” (Ilyin, 1993b, p. 36). That is, “a party affiliation gives people an opportunity to do without independently thinking people and “vote” not knowing, not understanding, not thinking” (Ilyin, 1993b, p. 36).

On the other hand,

“a party is an alliance of people who have agreed with each other on which way and method is best for them to seize the state power in their hands. Some parties resolve this issue legally and loyally, others illegally and forcefully. But the encroachment on the power is inherent in all parties, with the exception of small ones, deprived of any prospects and chances” (Ilyin, 1993b, p. 41).

The very concept of the party is its "partiality", the party consciously

"divides its people into friends and foes and seeks the success for friends. We had enough real examples. It does not depart from the Whole and does not think about the Whole, but represents the interests of only one part of people (no matter if it is a class, estate, trade union or church). It

seeks to betray this party interest as a popular interest and thereby impose it on people; and for this it seeks power” (Ilyin, 1993a, p. 42).

This desire to present a part as a whole, an encroachment on power based on selfish motives of most people is anti-political. Nevertheless, this is not enough. Ilyin (1993b) believes that “an encroachment on the dictatorship was revealed in the party and partisanship” (p. 58);

“each party has always encroached and encroaches on the power, wants to turn it into its own monopoly. The essence of any political party is that it attempts to become an integral thing. Former parties did this in the order of electoral sport adhering to the “rules of the game”. Now there are parties that do this in the manner of selective terror and fraud, trampling (more or less frank) on all the rules of freedom and loyalty. Having seized the monopoly, each of them becomes totalitarian, suppresses the others and tries to implement its program, no matter how one-sided, absurd, ruinous or even monstrous it may be” (Ilyin, 1993b, p. 74).

6. Conclusion

Thus, on the one hand, fragile “party swings”, coalitions, conspiracy, wakening of passions during elections; on the other, a monopoly of one party and party dictatorship. The establishment of a party monopoly “will never lead to good anywhere: the best people will step aside, the worst will tumble down the party; for the best think independently and freely, and the worst are ready to adapt to everything, just to make a career. Therefore, the monopoly party lives a life of self-deception. It starts the quality selection and requires the unity of mind making it a condition for political legal capacity and relevance. It appeals to nonsense and hypocrisy; thereby, it opens the door wide open to all kinds of idiots, hypocrites, crooks and careerists. The party’s quality level breaks down and simulators, bribe takers, predators, speculators, terrorists, flatterers and traitors come to power” (Ilyin, 1993a, p. 95).

Does this mean that democracy is unacceptable to I. Ilyin as a whole? In order to answer this question, we establish the meaning of what Ilyin called “creative” or “organic” democracy. So, the “democracy (in Russian – “popular sovereignty”) implies the ability not only to lead a state life, but precisely rule the state” (Ilyin, 1993a). To do so, the people need the following:

1. First: A confident and vibrant sense of state responsibility (Ilyin, 1993a).
2. Secondly: Democracy is impossible without free loyalty and without honesty (Ilyin, 1993a).
3. Thirdly: Democracy requires the people to have a state-political outlook that corresponds to the size of the country and the sovereign tasks of this people (Ilyin, 1993a).
4. Fourth: Democracy requires people’s knowledge and independent thinking about what is known (Ilyin, 1993a), that is, special political knowledge and state control methods and a broad foreign and domestic outlook.
5. Fifth: Democracy is feasible only where personal strength is inherent in the people (Ilyin, 1993a). This applies to the “spiritual foundations of democracy”. We may sum it up in the following way: Most of the people should have a “normal legal consciousness” and this legal consciousness should at the same time correspond to the historical and sovereign tasks of the state. Ilyin (1993a) also highlights the “social foundations of democracy”:

6. Firstly: People who have lost their homes, family fortresses and respect for work become baseless and politically untenable” (Ilyin, 1993a, p. 108).

7. Secondly: A party to democracy should have strong-willed independence and civic courage” (Ilyin, 1993a, p. 108).

8. Thirdly: Certain historical-national and “state fabric of solidarity” should be inherent in it (Ilyin, 1993a, p. 108).

It turns out that a combination of all these conditions is a very rare phenomenon; it is possible only in small states that are not faced with the “sovereign tasks”, and even then only in exceptional conditions conducive to the development of legal awareness. If to recall that Mr. Ilyin wrote about the “gravitations” of the republican legal consciousness, which is opposite to the normal legal consciousness (monarchical) then, one can say that in most cases democracy is “historical nonsense”, explained by a unique local combination of many factors, accountable post factum. Moreover, it is a very unstable entity, which is constantly at risk of totalitarianism. Here it seems appropriate to recall those articles from *Our Tasks* where he writes about the threat of world communism to Western countries. Mr. Ilyin always believed that “communism is at the door”. At times he even fell into a semblance of “political panic” regarding this subject (articles on “cleanings” in America of the 1950s, on McCarthyism, which he not only supported, but in this matter he was even more radical, and demanded more tough purges and even greater “vigilance”, which had a sense. Several of his articles on conspiracy, reading which one does not know whether to cry or smile: smile because of the naivety or cry about the insufficiency of all these measures).

Ilyin (1993a) wrote that the democracy “holds its death in itself”: The death of democracy is prepared by its “left wing” – the Social Democratic parties of Europe. He wrote the following:

“the social democrats of all countries are, according to their basic plan, the third totalitarian party in the world (after communists and Nazi fascists). Thus, the fact that they are trying to implement their left totalitarianism in an evolutionary order and in accordance with all the rules of formal democracy does not mean that they are non-totalitarian. The totalitarian penal servitude introduced gradually does not change its nature.” (p. 73)

It was revolutionary democracy throughout the 19th century that “prepared the utmost expansion of the state-administrative volume, i.e. approaching totalitarian regime” and it is European social democracy that is doing everything possible to implement economic and cultural totalitarianism in all democratic countries (starting from the industry and ending with the nationalization of medical care, etc.) ... That is why the opposition of democracy and totalitarianism is prejudice, illusion, error (Ilyin, 1993a). According to Ilyin (1993a), fit was formal democracy with its internal voids, errors and temptations resulted in left and right totalitarianism. These two political regimes are connected with each other, as an ugly reaction to painful exaggeration, or as tyranny arising from decay; or as slavery, returning to the one who failed to find and observe a spiritually true measure of freedom” (p. 42). The logic here is simple: on the one hand the “belief in quantity has reduced quality. Hypocrisy on the issue of the power of judgment and decision gave power to the hands of the political mob, and the political mob had joined the demagogues and tyrants, sold them freedom and law and resulted in the crisis that we face today” (Ilyin, 1993a). On the other hand, the democracy itself is tyrannical: Mr. Ilyin (1993b) wrote a lot about the

“democratic inquisition” directed against honesty, thinking process, non-democratic and non-liberal attitudes, that is, against everything, what Mr. Ilyin defended.

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