

# Plato, Hegel and the Crisis of Liberalism

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**How to cite this paper:** Egyed, B. (2022). Plato, Hegel and the Crisis of Liberalism. *Open Journal of Philosophy*, 12, 433-451. <https://doi.org/10.4236/ojpp.2022.123028>

**Received:** March 4, 2022

**Accepted:** August 19, 2022

**Published:** August 22, 2022

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## Abstract

In this paper I propose to use Hegel's theory of history, especially as he applies it to Plato, to diagnose the crisis of liberalism. In other words, I will argue that in the same way Plato's Republic is a rational reconstruction of the aesthetic political unity of the ancient world, Hegel's Philosophy of Right is a rational reconstruction of the politics of the modern, liberal, world. My main thesis, based on a Marxist reading of Hegel, is that the crisis of liberalism is intimately bound up with the crisis of capitalism. Hegel, in my view, was aware of this crisis but failed to resolve it because he could not see beyond the horizon of free enterprise capitalism.

## Keywords

Plato, Hegel, Liberalism, Crisis and Pivot

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## 1. Introduction

Liberalism, or more specifically liberal democracy, is under serious attack in much of the Western world. Its main enemy seems to be populism, nourished by anger, resentment and a general disenchantment with the way things are. Attempts have been made to identify the causes of this disenchantment: some think it is a response to the adverse effects of globalization and the economic dislocations following from it; others think it is a product of rapid changes in technology; still others think that populist resentment was fuelled by corporations who, in an effort to protect their profits, mounted attacks on expert (scientific) knowledge that threatened to expose the harm caused by their products: one needs only to think of the tobacco industry of the past and the oil industry of the present. If these two, the economical and the ideological, were the only two causes of the rising political power of populism one might have some reason to be optimistic; technology, if it were properly managed might solve the economic problem, and better education in critical thinking might enable citizens to

distinguish between demonstrable falsehoods and established objective facts. However, the problem with liberal democracy goes deeper than its current vulnerability to populist attacks. The problem may lie within the very ideas of democracy and liberalism themselves.

Plato and Hegel have a bad reputation among liberal democrats. One needs only to look at Popper's two volume work: *The Open Society and its Enemies*.<sup>1</sup> The first volume is devoted entirely to Plato, seeing the Athenian philosopher as the enemy of democracy, liberty and critical thinking. Hegel, in the second volume, receives less attention, he is presented there as the source of the idea of historical determinism<sup>2</sup>. Not all, but many among Plato scholars adopt Popper's views on Plato. On the other hand many, but not all defenders of Plato's major political work: *The Republic*, follow Leo Strauss' interpretation of that work.<sup>3</sup> I will say more about these two conflicting interpretations later in the paper. Recent commentaries on Hegel are more nuanced. His defenders and opponents attack more concrete, and immediate, political questions treated in his political writings, especially in his *Philosophy of Right*. The main critical question regarding this work is to what extent it presupposes Hegel's metaphysics and his philosophy of history. Other questions revolve around his discussions of more specific political themes such as: monarchy, democracy, corporatism and private property.

My purpose in this paper is to show, in opposition to their critics that 1) neither Plato nor Hegel were sworn enemies of democracy: Plato's attacks on democracy were, in fact, attacks on what today we would call populism; Hegel thought that democracy was the ideal form of government for "virtuous" citizens such as were the Athenians in the first half of the Fifth Century BC.<sup>4</sup> 2) While it would be farfetched to call Plato a liberal, there is a sense in which he did promote an aspect of liberty, namely, having the capacity of realizing, fully, one's potential. Hegel, by contrast, could legitimately be called a "liberal": he was an advocate of a free market economy and of individual self-realization. Both 1) and 2) are controversial claims, and in their defence I will make use of the distinction between "positive" and "negative" freedoms. But contrarily to such liberals as I. Berlin I have a more favourable view of positive than of negative liberty.

Populism with its fears, anxieties and resentment cannot be conquered by philosophical arguments alone. And my purpose here is not to engage populist in a philosophical argument. Rather, I would like to engage those who think of themselves as liberals. By talking to them about Plato and Hegel I want to alert them that both liberalism and conservatism are complex political concepts both of which deserve serious and charitable examination. In the end, it might turn out that, for

<sup>1</sup>Karl R. Popper, *The Open Society and its Enemies*, Vol. 1 and 2, Harper Torch Books, Evanston (Popper, 1962).

<sup>2</sup>Popper calls him a "historicist" in that sense only, disregarding the more usual meaning of that term as "seeing ideas and events in their historical context".

<sup>3</sup>Leo Strauss, *The City of Man*, University of Chicago Press, 1978, Chicago.

<sup>4</sup>See Hegel's discussion of early Greek democracy in *The Philosophy of History*, pp. 250-256 (Hegel, 1956) especially p. 252: "The democratic Constitution here is the only possible one: the citizens are still unconscious of particular interests, and therefore of a corruptive element: the Objective Will is in their case not disintegrated".

better or for worse the difference between them is not as sharp as their respective advocates would like to believe. I begin with Hegel's interpretation of *The Republic* which will allow me to put both philosophers in their historical context.

## 2. Reading Plato's *The Republic* with Hegel

Hegel's *Philosophy of Right* (Hegel, 1971) contains three major subdivisions: 1) **Abstract Right** 2) **Morality** and 3) **Ethical Life**.<sup>5</sup> The first corresponds to the classical liberal (and Roman) idea of abstract personality, whose identity is defined by its legal rights. The second corresponds to the idea of free, self-conscious, autonomous, but still abstract, moral individuals. This idea of freedom was first introduced by early Christianity<sup>6</sup> and had reached its ultimate expression in the Kantian doctrine of internal moral autonomy. The third corresponds to the modern synthesis of the first two. "Ethical life, says Hegel, is the concept of freedom developed into the existing world (rights) and the nature of self-consciousness (Hegel, 1971: p. 105)."

The third major subdivision is, again, divided into three further subdivisions: **The family**, **Civil Society** and **The State**. It is not clear whether Hegel sees these subdivisions also in historical terms, but it might be that, in Hegel's mind the **Family** corresponds, in addition to the traditional nuclear family, to the unconscious relation citizens had with their political authority in Ancient Greece, and in the feudal world of early Christianity. **Civil Society**, as Hegel sees it, is a product of the "Germanic" world: a combination of Protestantism and small craft industries emerging in the context of a still dominant agricultural economy. **The State**, as Hegel notes, is the result of the synthesis of a sense of union with the community (present both in the family and the religious community), and the striving for individual self actualization unleashed within realm of needs. This union between objective ends and subjective will is what Hegel means by "rational freedom": "The state is absolutely rational inasmuch as it is the actuality of the substantial will which it possesses in the particular self-consciousness (Hegel, 1971: p. 155)."

One question Hegel's *Philosophy of Right* raises is just how precisely the modern state achieves rational freedom: the synthesis of "substantive" freedom present in the family and, by implication in ancient ethical life and "subjective" freedom present in modern civil society. In order to answer this question it might be helpful to look at what he says about Plato's *Republic* as "an interpretation of Greek ethical life". This is what he says:

In his *Republic*, Plato displays the substance of ethical life in its ideal beauty

<sup>5</sup>Ethical life is the usual translation of the German word *Sittlichkeit* (J. Sibree translates it as "Customary morality"). In its most general sense it means concrete morality embedded in a rational social order. Hegel uses the term in this sense in the preface to (Hegel, 1971), p. 10, referring to "Greek ethical life". But, according to him, ethical life reaches its highest form in the modern state.

<sup>6</sup>In (Hegel, 1971), p. 269 Hegel suggests that Socrates was the "*Inventor of Morality*" (Hegel's italics): "The Greeks had a *customary* morality (*Sittlichkeit*); but Socrates undertook to teach them what moral virtues, duties, etc. were. The moral man is not he who merely wills and does that which is right, not the merely innocent man, but he who has the consciousness of what he is doing". Christianity involves a still higher stage of morality. Speaking of morality in PR he says; "This principle dawned in an inward form in the Christian religion".

and truth; but he could only cope with the principle of self-subsistent particularity, which in his day forced its way into Greek ethical life, by setting up in opposition to it his purely substantial state. He absolutely excluded it from his state, even in its very beginning in private property...and the family, as well as in its more mature form as the subjective will, the choice of a social position, and so forth. (Hegel, 1971: p. 124)

And in the “Preface” (written after the work was completed) he adds:

Still, his genius is proved by the fact that the principle on which the distinctive character of his idea of the state turns is precisely the **pivot** on which the impending world revolution turned at that time. (Hegel, 1971: p. 10)

Socrates was one of those ancients who articulated the principle of individuality. This is what he says about Socrates in a section of **Morality**:

As one of the commoner features of history (e.g. Socrates, the Stoics and others), the tendency to look deeper into oneself and to know from within oneself what is right and good appears in ages when what is recognized as right and good in contemporary manners cannot satisfy the will of better men, when the existing world of freedom has become faithless to the will of better men, that will fail to find itself in the duties there recognized and must turn to find in the ideal world of the inner life alone the harmony which actuality has lost (Hegel, 1971: p. 92).

Isolated individuals may often feel the need and the longing for a better constitution, but it is quite another thing, and one that does not arise till later, for the mass of the people to be animated by such an idea. The principle of morality, of the inner life of Socrates, was a necessary product of his age, but time was required before it could become part and parcel of the self-consciousness of everyone (Hegel, 1971: p. 287).

Putting together what he says here about Socrates and about Plato in the previous two passages, we can see here the distinction between Socrates, the tragic figure seeking refuge in his inner life (see also (Hegel, 1971: p. 255); and Plato the world historical philosopher, who rather than escaping from the world of actuality offers a rational reconstruction of that actuality.<sup>7</sup> I agree with Hegel that in the ancient Greek world of substantive ethical life the principle of self-conscious individuality was absent. Whether the principle was also missing from Plato’s reconstruction of it in *The Republic*, is another question, one which I will address later in this paper. More controversially, I want to say about Hegel what he says about Plato in his *Philosophy of Right*. It, too, is, in my view, a rational reconstruction, a rational reconstruction, this time, of modern ethical life, a life in which substantive freedom has become the object for self-conscious individuals who follow the direction of their subjective will.

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<sup>7</sup>One may question the basis for drawing such a sharp distinction between Socrates and Plato’s views as is expressed in these quotations, especially in view of the difficulty of deciding what in the Platonic dialogues is, or is not, Socratic. Popper also makes a similarly sharp distinction, based on viewing the “Apology” and the “Crito”, Socratic. Hegel seems have relied, instead, on Xenophon’s *Memorabilia*.

In Hegelian terms both Plato and Hegel are great political philosophers. They have both succeeded in apprehending the political world of their time in thought. They were not utopian dreamers longing for a better world.<sup>8</sup> They were sober analysts telling their contemporaries **what their world would have looked like if it had been rational**. And, they could do this because they were living at the “twilight” of their times, a time when that world was in the process of exhausting its vital spiritual energy. Hegel is the one who remarked that “The owl of Minerva spreads its wings only with the falling of dusk” (Hegel, 1971: p. 13). In the same Preface he also remarks, with serene resignation that, “Philosophy in any case always comes too late (to give instruction) as to what the world ought to be” (Hegel, 1971: p. 12). So, not only is philosophy “its own time apprehended in thought” (Hegel, 1971: p. 11), but at a certain moments, practiced by the best, it can also apprehend that its time has come to an end. Yet, in spite of this, there is a sense in which both Plato and Hegel were revolutionary thinkers. By fully comprehending the stage when the human spirit has completed its historical task they signalled, “...**at the same time the rejection of that stage and its transition to a higher**”. (Hegel, 1971: p. 216) The view of Hegel I propose in this paper is controversial because it refuses to see Hegel’s (political) philosophy as marking the end of world history. In my view, it marks the end of only one phase of it, the one beginning in the 16<sup>th</sup> and ending around the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. On this view, Hegel need not be seen as a conservative thinker. In fact, as I shall argue later in this paper, by grasping the limits of his world he may have, unconsciously, pointed to the impending revolution.

As I have suggested, I take Hegel’s assessment of Plato’s *The Republic* to be basically correct. Still, I find in it a number of important errors. Plato did not, as Hegel says, “absolutely exclude” private property and the family from the state. (Hegel, 1971: p. 124) Most citizens of that state, the “third class” would have a family and private property. The claim that **no** citizens of Plato’s City would have a family and private property had also been made by Aristotle, leading one to wonder what version of *The Republic* he had in mind.<sup>9</sup>

Hegel is also wrong about ordinary citizens not having free choice over what

<sup>8</sup>Both Plato and Hegel have often been accused of “utopianism”. However on my interpretation Plato was no more of an utopist than was Hegel. There is a difference between a rational reconstruction of what is, and an idle dream of what might be. For example, in defence of Plato one might say that he had a view about what human beings, and human societies, were, essentially. And based on that, he asked how human beings and human societies might reach their true potentials.

<sup>9</sup>Plato’s *The Laws* may have contributed to the confusion. In Book 5 [739A3-740C3] (Plato, 2004) Plato suggests that in the best city “Friends have all things in common”, meaning by this that all private citizens would have their property and wives in common. In *The Republic* the famous proverb is meant to apply only to guardians [Book IV 423e-424a] (Plato, 1992). So, it is possible, though strange, that Aristotle and the tradition following him simply read the comments at Book V in *The Laws* back to *The Republic*. In any case, the introduction of the proverb in *Republic IV* is somewhat suspicious. One may wonder whether the main purpose of introducing it was to make the move to *Republic V* more plausible. Even so, the context of Books II to IV allows for the possibility that guardians would have some limited private property and children. For example, the notion of “demoting” children of guardians to lower status, introduced at 415b, (Plato, 1992) suggests that there might have been closer ties between guardians and their children: “If an offspring of theirs should be found to have a mixture of iron or bronze, they must not pity him in any way, but give him the rank appropriate to his nature and drive him out to join the craftsmen and farmers.”

particular craft they would want to pursue. At 434a (Plato, 1992) Socrates entertains the possibility of a certain level mobility among craftsmen.<sup>10</sup> But, he is right about two fundamental aspect of Plato's state. 1) Citizens do not, on their own, choose what class they could belong to. That decision is made for them, in childhood, on the basis of emotional and intellectual examination. [415b] (Plato, 1992) Those who are not deemed qualified for political rule could not participate in political decision making on any level, nor could children lacking sufficient amount of courage and spiritedness be encouraged to enter the military. It is noteworthy that at the beginning of Book IV Socrates notes that "we must leave it to nature to provide each group with its share of happiness" [421c] (Plato, 1992), and, speaking of ordinary citizens, he says that they must be "directed to for which each is naturally fitted, so that he should pursue that task which is his own" [423d] (Plato, 1992). Thus, in defence of Plato, one might point out that members of the "third" class could enjoy a full range of freedoms in their everyday lives. For example, while one might imagine that state authorities would have control over the level of global economic production and consumption, (to avoid excessive poverty and wealth) individual production and consumption would not, within reasonable limits, be restrained: it would be a violation of Plato's principle of justice to allow legislators and soldiers to meddle with the task of craftsmen.<sup>11</sup> Also, whether one agrees, or not, with Plato's method of dividing the population into different classes his class division is defensible on the ground that economic, military and rhetorical advantages, or popularity, should not qualify one for playing a leadership role in politics. Plato's view that the capacity to grasp what is best for a city as a whole can only be acquired through an education in philosophy also has some plausibility. The question of what this education should consist of is answered differently in Books II-IV and in Books VI-VII. The bar set for philosophical competence in the early books is much lower than the one set in the middle books. In Books II-IV it is sufficient that philosophers be capable of "reasoned discussion" [411d], (Plato, 1992) and of seeing what is good for the city as a whole. In Books VI and VII the emphasis is placed on the metaphysical questions of what it is to be a TRUE philosopher.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>10</sup>This passage from Book IV makes it clear that while cobblers may do the work of carpenters without doing harm to the city. Real harm to the city would come from money-makers "puffed up with wealth" entering the class of soldiers, or from uneducated soldiers becoming judges and guardians.

<sup>11</sup>Hostile critics of Plato do not take into consideration that non-meddling, a key aspect of justice, goes both ways. Rulers would be unjust if they interfered with the expertise of farmers and craftsmen. In other words, Plato's conception of justice, properly understood, would rule out what we would call today a command economy. In fact, *The Republic* could be seen as advocating a limited market economy kept in check by a political leadership that would own no excessive material wealth.

<sup>12</sup>There is no space in this essay to argue for it, but I consider that there are major political differences between the early and the middle books. Plato's critics like Popper who accuse him of totalitarian tendencies are right about the politics of the middle books. This is the result of a change in Plato's views about philosophical knowledge. If true philosophers are capable of attaining absolute knowledge, then they are, if they are rulers, obliged to have absolute authority. Straussians are also right that philosophy, understood the way it is in Books VI and VII, is incompatible with politics. Where Straussians go wrong is thinking that Plato also held the view that philosophy, as it is outlined in Books VI and VII, is incompatible with politics. In the middle books, perhaps as a result of lately acquired Pythagorean influence, he held exactly those views.

Popper and Strauss are, in their own way, both right to worry about the political implications of the text as a whole; and, it is most likely that Hegel also had a “unitarian” interpretation of it. But, if one is prepared to restrict Plato’s political views to the way they are presented in Books II to IV, one still gets what to us might seem like a conservative-elitist political programme, but not an offensively totalitarian one implicit in Books VI and VII. The debate between Popperians and Straussians hinges on whether one is to take these books seriously as advocating a philosophically inspired political programme (Popper), or to see in them the impossibility of applying philosophical ideas to politics (Strauss). A “fragmentarian”<sup>13</sup> interpretation avoids this dilemma.

In a famous passage of Book V Socrates declares that “Until philosophers are kings...that is until political power and philosophy entirely coincide...cities will have no rest from evils, ...nor, I think, will the human race” [473cd] (Plato, 1992). There are two questions raised by this passage. The first is whether it is possible for this city to exist and how it can be brought about. The second is: what would be the nature of philosophical knowledge possessed by the rulers of this city. Neither of these two questions should have presented a problem to Socrates and his interlocutors in the early books. The answer to the first question would have been that a city described in Books III-IV, would exist if, by chance, it had wise rulers, namely ones who could engage in a reasonable discussion about what is best for the city as a whole, assisted by courageous and steadfast soldiers, and a class of farmers, craftsmen and merchants: providers of the necessities for material well being. The second question could also have been dealt with easily in the context of the early books: the philosophy required by rulers of a just city is the capacity to discourse reasonably and to have a grasp of problems in their totality. But, if the question is about how the city described in Book V is to come into being how, in other words, people would accept having no private property and a family, different philosophers would be needed, ones who would not just be adept at state craft but would also be engineers of human souls. And these philosophers would have to have absolute knowledge about the eternal truths regarding everything in the cosmos: those who would know all the Forms and their interconnectedness with one another, namely, the Good. In sum, the “Philosopher King” passage can be read two ways: one, referring to the early books it is trivial, and the other referring to the middle books it is highly objectionable. On the reading I propose there are two “Republics” implicit the text as a whole: one is a defensible, though problematic view of the relation between a form of practical wisdom and political rule, the other is an indefensible, totalitarian, view of politics based on an absolutist (“Platonic”) conception of

<sup>13</sup>As these terms suggest, on a fragmentarian reading of *The Republic* the text was composed from fragments written at different times, and on a unitarian reading it was written as a seamless, continuous, whole. H. Thesleff is the main advocate of the fragmentarian interpretation: see Holger Thesleff, *Platonic Patterns*, Parmenides Publishing, Las Vegas (Thesleff, 2009).

philosophy.<sup>14</sup>

Hegel warns us against unhistorical bias in thinking about political matters. So, it would be misguided to think that Plato's conception of the state, even as it is outlined in Books II to IV, could give us direct instructions. The ethical life that he wanted to restore was one in which individual citizens were expected to identify, without self-conscious reflection, with their political community. As Hegel noted it, citizens of Plato's *Republic* had, because their government was wise, substantive freedom. They were "free" to develop their natural potential within the sphere of life most appropriate for them. We should recall what Hegel says about the Socratic moral longing for a better world and contrast it with what Plato attempted to do: to articulate the rational core of the actual world of ancient Greece. Instead of simply endorsing a hierarchical order based on myth and established custom, Plato designed a hierarchical state based on merit, capacities and moral disposition. If one accepts Plato's moral psychology and his views on the proper relation between individuals and their city, views which for his time were quite revolutionary, many of his proposals do seem plausible in the context of his world. What seems to us excessively paternalistic may not have seemed so in that context.<sup>15</sup>

There are two possible ways in which Plato's tripartite division of society could be defended: 1) as I suggested earlier it might be a good idea to separate those who possess material wealth from political power, think of the influence of wealth has in political decision making today; political power exercised by the military can also lead to dire consequences as well. 2) Captives of the idea of unlimited mobility that we are, it is natural for us to ask Plato why could adults of any background not acquire enough critical wisdom to fully participate in political deliberations. In Plato's defence it could be said his aristocracy is based on merit, at least as it becomes evident in childhood, and he might be forgiven for thinking that given the social customs, and the time available for intellectual pursuits to craftsmen, who did not have slaves in his city, they could not obtain

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<sup>14</sup>In my view, an effort has been made by whoever composed the final version of the text to give it an organic unity. There are suggestions in Book V, as well as in other dialogues such as *The Sophist*, that Plato was preoccupied with the question of how to distinguish sophism and philosophy. What the middle books want to establish is that there is a higher form of knowledge than the one attained by even the most reasonable sophists. For example, the question might be raised whether Socrates was not really one of them? The discussion of the Divided Line in Book VI [508d-511e] (Plato, 1992) suggests that state craft as it is described in Books II to IV might not result in stable political rule, that it would have to be raised to an absolute knowledge of all that there is, namely, to a knowledge of the Good. On my reading, the philosophers referred to in the early books would be placed at the top of the first major division of the line, at the level of "right opinion": the highest form of cognition regarding human things alone, and not, also, regarding the cosmos as a whole.

<sup>15</sup>Plato's discussion of censorship in Books II and III has been taken as an example of excessive paternalism. But this, too, given certain assumptions, might be defended. While Plato restricts his attention to what poetry should be forbidden for potential guardians it is reasonable to assume that he wanted this censorship to apply quite generally: would the rest of the population be illiterate? Would they receive absolutely no education? And, if they would, why could they be exposed to poetry forbidden for guardians? Given Plato's emphasis on the importance on education, it is likely that he saw traditional poetry as an obstacle to the educational reforms he was advocating. For better or for worse, he saw ancient poetry as a harmful alternative to his own educational philosophy.



the critical skills needed for serious political participation. Whether all citizens can fully participate in politics is an open question even today. At least, in Plato's state citizens would not be encouraged, as they are in ours, to think that lack of expertise is a political asset.<sup>16</sup>

In Plato's time, the social bond between citizens and their state was maintained by (archaic) religion and myth. It is the blind obedience to moral authority that was attacked by the Sophists. Socrates, if we are to follow Hegel, urged that his interlocutors follow his example and turn inward to find a better world. "Know thyself." was his advice to them. Plato, by contrast created a rational, and comprehensive idea of social existence: a city where the relation between the government and its subjects was based on reason. Still, as far as subjects were concerned, this reason was not theirs, it came from on high. In other words, Plato sought to neutralize the disruptive power of criticism coming from free thinkers (he was mainly opposed to the Sophists among them) by embedding critical thought in the founding and programme of the *Republic*. In short, he wished to restore a rational unity where before there was an "aesthetic spiritual unity".

### 3. How Is It with Hegel?

Having presented Plato's *Republic* as the rational reconstruction of Greek ethical life as it was reaching its end, we can now ask: "How is it with Hegel?" What has he learned from Plato, and does he play the same role at the twilight of modernity that Plato played at the twilight of the ancient city state? In the Preface of his *Philosophy of Right* Hegel speaks of the disruptive role of free thinking to which Plato opposed his political ideal as an antidote. Also, he calls it a "pivot" on which the impending world revolution turned at the time (Hegel, 1971: p. 10). The questions I want to address now are: 1) in what sense Hegel's *Philosophy of Right* is a rational reconstruction of modern ethical life? And 2) what is the "pivot", the disruptive force, threatening it on which both Hegel's philosophy and the impending world revolution turns?

Given the distance between our time and his, what I have said so far about Plato's "First Republic", the one presented in Books II to IV may not be too controversial. The same cannot be said about my claim that Hegel's philosophy also turns on a pivot heralding a world revolution. If one agrees with Hegel that the last stage of world history, the one his *Philosophy of Right* studies, is the "Ger-

<sup>16</sup>In this age of rising populism, where emotional attachments to false solutions, and resentment of experts is widespread, one might see in Plato's meritocratic radicalism a possible alternative. Hegel's view of the State owes much to Plato's *The Republic*, suggesting that in some form it might be adaptable to modern conditions. For example his "universal class", the class of public servants, recalls Plato's advocacy of the possession of expertise by rulers. However, Hegel's monarch does not need such expertise, his role is simply to decide among reasonable alternatives presented to him by his ministers. The key question for us today is how much direct political role politically, philosophically and scientifically ignorant individuals should have in deciding central issues relating to a nation, to a highly integrated economic world and to a commonly shared planet, all along making sure that these same individuals, ordinary citizens, have maximum substantive and subjective freedom in conducting their private lives.

manic” (Northern European protestant-capitalist) world, then one might also agree that the work constitutes a rational reconstruction of it. He is right to single out the economic dimension of that world as both what promotes concrete (embedded) subjective freedom and the destruction of family life, (both on the level of individual families and on the historical level of “family” relations, characterized by the Ancient and Feudal worlds). His idea of the modern state could, then, be seen as a rational expression of the early modern political order. In fact, at Hegel 1971, p. 257, he calls the (modern) state “The actuality of the Ethical idea”. He elaborates on this view in the next section:

The state is absolutely rational in as much as it is the actuality of the substantial will which it possesses in the particular self consciousness once that consciousness has been raised to its universality. (Hegel, 1971: p. 155-156)

The main idea behind Hegel’s view of the modern state is that it has an intimate connection with particular individuals. Not only do individuals find their concrete freedom in the state but the state itself can only achieve completion “along with particular interests and through the co-operation of particular knowing and willing”. (Hegel, 1971: p. 160) Those who wish to find in Hegel’s political philosophy elements of liberalism need go no farther than the following sentence:

The principle of modern states has prodigious strength and depth because it allows the principle of subjectivity to progress to its culmination in the extreme of self-subsistent personal particularity, and yet at the same time brings it back to the substantive unity and so maintains this unity in the principle of subjectivity itself. (Hegel, 1971: p. 161)

This would, indeed be a rational state.<sup>17</sup> The question is how individuals caught up in the pursuit of their selfish end in civil society will be brought to the substantive unity of the political state. How, in other words, does Hegel see individual consciousness being raised to a consciousness of its universality? This is a key question because, as far as he sees it, civil society is an irreducible element in the modern state. One possible answer might be that Hegel assumes that the inward moral-religious consciousness of the earlier Christian epoch would remain present in the realm of needs, and that the sense of community on the part of the faithful will always allow them to find their spiritual satisfaction in the common

<sup>17</sup>There is no space in this essay to go into other aspects of Hegel’s liberalism. However, a number of passages in which he raises issues commonly associated with liberalism need to be mentioned. For example, he is in favour of freedom of religion: “...since religion is an integrating factor in the state implanting a sense of unity in the depths of men’s minds, the state should even require all its citizens to belong to a church – a church is all that can be said, because since the content of a man’s faith depends on his private ideas, the state cannot interfere with it (Hegel, 1971: p. 168).” Of public opinion he says that it “deserves to be as much respected as despised” (Hegel, 1971: p. 205), but adds that “The sciences...do not fall under the category of public opinion (Hegel, 1971: p. 205)”. His support of the freedom of the press is conditional. He does not endorse the right to say just anything. Its value “...is directly assured by the laws and by-laws which control or punish its excesses (Hegel, 1971: p. 205).” In discussing the relation between (abstract) right and welfare, he notes: “Welfare without right is not a good. Similarly, right without welfare is not a good (Hegel, 1971: p. 87).”

pursuit of material goals. Hegel's view on the importance of religion for the state lends support to this answer:

Since religion is an integrating factor in the state, implanting a sense of unity on the depths of men's minds, the state should even require all its citizens to belong to a church, a church is all that can be said. (Hegel, 1971: p. 168)

Another possible answer might lay in the influence Adam Smith's metaphor of "the invisible hand" had on Hegel. At the very beginning of his discussion of **Civil Society** Hegel says this:

In the course of the actual attainment of selfish ends, an attainment conditioned in this way by universality, there is formed a system of complete interdependence, wherein the livelihood, happiness, and legal status of one man is interwoven with the livelihood, and rights of all. (Hegel, 1971: p. 123)

According to Hegel, particular interests become also the interest in the universal. The idea seems to be this: in civil society the universal interest, the interest of the whole society, is at work behind the backs of particular individuals because without being conscious of it, in their selfish pursuit, they promote, and are dependent on, the common interest. Furthermore, by becoming conscious of what they were hitherto unconscious: the interdependence of theirs and of society's interest, they will affirm it. Again, Hegel does not spell out in detail how individuals internalize in their consciousness their dependence on others. And, more importantly, he does not demonstrate why this coming to consciousness will lead to generalized political solidarity. We might agree with him that the affirmation of solidarity by individuals whose economic life is so closely interconnected would, indeed, be the rational thing to do. In a small state with relatively small industries such a situation might arise. The state structure Hegel proposes might work for even a limited market economy. What it could not work for is the advanced capitalist system that was on the horizon in Hegel's time.

It has been suggested that Hegel's knowledge of modern political economy came primarily from his reading of books and not from actual experience of it. Be it as it may, the impact of the theories of political economist had on Hegel's political philosophy is highly significant. By putting such a great emphasis on the role of civil society for the attainment of concrete freedom, he opens himself to a virtually insurmountable criticism. At a crucial point in his discussion of civil society Hegel takes up **the problem of poverty**. His discussion of the causes of property indicates an awareness of the nature of advanced industrial capitalism; for, he sees the root cause of modern poverty, not in contingent external factors, but in the very nature civil society:

When civil society is in a state of unimpeded activity, it is engaged in expanding internally in population and industry. The amassing of wealth is intensified by generalizing 1) the linkage of men by their needs, and 2) the

methods of preparing and distributing the means to satisfy these needs, because it is from this double process of generalization that the largest profits are derived. That is one side of the picture. The other side is the subdivision and restriction of particular jobs. This results in the dependence and distress of a class tied to work of that sort, and these again entail inability to feel and enjoy the broader freedoms and especially the intellectual benefits of civil society. (Hegel, 1971: p. 149-150)

Having considered, and rejected, a few possible means for eliminating poverty (charity, public works and colonization), he goes on to say that:

It hence becomes apparent that despite an excess of wealth civil society is not rich enough, i.e. its own resources are insufficient to check excessive poverty and the creation of a penurious **rabble**. (Hegel, 1971: p. 150)

In the Addition to the previous section he also makes the astonishing claim that:

Against nature man can claim no right, but once society is established, poverty immediately takes the form of wrong done to one class by another. The important question of how poverty is to be abolished is one of the most disturbing problems which agitate modern society. (Hegel, 1971: p. 278)

These admissions pose a number of difficulties for Hegel's political philosophy: 1) if poverty is endemic to modern civil society, the prospect of normalizing it cannot come from within that society. So, if a wide section of the population is reduced to the status of **rabble**, how can the state be seen as the "actuality of concrete freedom"? By insisting on the autonomy, and central role played by civil society in the promotion of freedom, how could Hegel appeal to the state for correcting a problem caused by it? In the literature on the *Philosophy of Right* a number of commentators have raised these same questions. Recognizing that it threatens the internal coherence of Hegel's view of the modern state, some have suggested that it points to a dilemma that cannot be resolved in the context of the present form of the text. As Avineri puts it, if the state cannot intervene, a vast portion of the population would be left outside it, being deprived of fundamental freedoms, but given the firm distinction Hegel makes between civil society and the state, state intervention would undermine his conception of modern ethical life<sup>18</sup>. Others think that state intervention could be limited to safe guarding social welfare without disrupting the basic freedom of capitalist entrepreneurs. This option is attractive to those who see Hegel as a proto-Keynesian economic liberal. Still others believe that Hegel is making an implicit attack on the bourgeois capitalist state.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>18</sup>(Avineri, 1972) *Hegel's Theory of the Modern State*, Cambridge University Press, p. 151: "Hegel's dilemma is acute: if he leaves the state out of economic activity, an entire group of civil society members is going to be left outside it; but if he brings in the state in a way that would solve the problem, his distinction between civil society and the state would disappear, and the whole system of mediation and dialectical progress toward integration through differentiation would collapse".

<sup>19</sup>Since Avineri's ground breaking thesis a great number of alternatives to it have been proposed. In this essay I cannot do justice to them.

In my view, Avineri's comments come closest to the mark. It is difficult to see Hegel as a proto-Keynesian economist, let alone a precursor to Marx. My view about this thorny problem follows from the view that the *Philosophy of Right* is a rational reconstruction of a pre-industrialist market society. What I need to explain, then, is why he introduces a problem that is **endemic only to a highly industrialized economy**. In order to answer this question I want to return to Hegel's remark that the world historical revolution impending in Plato's time turned on a **pivot** which, at the same time, provoked the Athenian philosopher to reconstruct a decaying ethical life in a rational form. My thesis is that Hegel, too, was a world historical philosopher who sought to provide a rational reconstruction of an ethical life that was already in its decline. For Hegel "his time" was the Germanic Protestant world of the post-renaissance (modern) period stretching from the 16<sup>th</sup> to the 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. And, Hegel's **pivot**, the principle on which the impending world revolution turned, was 19<sup>th</sup> century political economy. That was the principle forcing its way into Hegel's political philosophy, as it was forcing its way into the existing world. Without introducing mass industrialization, class division and poverty into it, Hegel's *Philosophy of Right* would have remained a convincing account of what pre-industrial modernity could have been, had it been rational. But the great thinker that he was, Hegel could not turn a blind eye to the forces threatening that world. He attempted to internalize the disruptive element that he saw fast approaching, and in this he failed. Nevertheless, by pointing to the limit of the existing world he signalled its completion. "When philosophy paints its grey in grey, he says, then has a shape of life grown old". (PR p.13) Most of his political masterwork is, in fact, a painting grey in grey, except for one moment of it. The moment where it comes up against its own limits is the moment that might lead to rejecting that world, and for giving hope for a transition to a higher one.

Thomas Kuhn, in discussing scientific revolutions, suggests that normal science conducted within the context of a **paradigm** will reach a point of crisis (one might say a **pivot**) when it is no longer capable of solving those problems that arise in the course of its development; and that a crisis will lead to a revolution only if there is an alternative to the existing paradigm. My approach to Hegel was inspired by this suggestion.<sup>20</sup> Given Kuhn's thesis modified by Lakatos, one

<sup>20</sup>In his work: *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, University of Chicago Press (Kuhn, 1962), Thomas Kuhn had two main opponents in mind: positivists who saw the history of science as a linear progression toward higher and higher degrees of truth, and Popperians who advocated a method whereby scientific theories were to undergo a permanent revolution. Against both of them he argued that scientific revolutions are relatively rare occurrences which do not necessarily lead to a greater grasp of essential truths. A few years later, Imre Lakatos added an important qualification to Kuhn's thesis. He argued, in his "Criticism and the Methodology of Scientific Research Programmes" (Lakatos, 1969), that, indeed, there was an important "dogmatic" aspect to the practice science. But, instead of "paradigms" he referred to "scientific research programmes". Core scientific theories, he claimed, are accompanied by interpretive theories, a kind of "protective belt" which can deflect attacks on the core of the theory by absorbing criticism directed at them. However, eventually, theories cannot be protected for ever, Lakatos maintained. They will be rejected after repeated "degenerative" empirical or theoretical "problem shifts".

might say that the reason neither capitalism nor the liberalism Hegel associates with it, have been abandoned nearly two hundred years after the signs of crisis were noted by Hegel, is that, refuted theories, or discredited political systems, might survive as ideologies if practical, empirical, progress can be claimed on their behalf. So, one reason for the resilience of the capitalist-liberal ideology is that it is able to mitigate its periodic crisis by arguing that, in spite of shortcomings it is better than any available alternative to it.<sup>21</sup>

Already, in the second half of the nineteenth century, liberal voices have started to be raised against the devastation caused by *laissez faire* capitalism. And these same voices advocated a more humane, ethical, version of liberalism.<sup>22</sup> At the beginning of the twentieth century, with the advent of Fordism, it seemed that capitalism could provide greater prosperity and freedom to working people. But, in hindsight, one can see that all Fordism produced were industrial slaves<sup>23</sup> whose only liberty consisted in buying consumer goods, enhancing the growth of capital without significantly improving the quality of their own lives. A closer look at the failure of capital to even satisfy the needs of employed workers for decent working conditions, let alone providing work for the unemployed, proves that Hegel's insight into the harm caused by the drive toward unlimited economic growth was prophetic.

One might still question the close connection made in this paper between the crisis of capitalism and that of liberalism. One answer might be that the rise of the liberal ideology of possessive individualism, came into being simultaneously with *laissez faire* capitalism. By the beginning of the nineteenth century Hegel had an obscure notion that the liberal ideology was in grave danger. My thesis here is that while he saw it he could not come up with a realistic solution to it. Another answer might be that, as the last two hundred years show it, all forms of liberalism, even those with an ethical dimension; so long as they are wedded to capitalism have run into different crises at different times. And, finally, advocates of liberalism, understood as unrestrained individual freedom, should recognize that 1) being free involves having constraints and 2) the idea of unrestrained individual freedom can be used to justify unrestrained accumulation of capital by those who own it. In sum, today we can speak of three forms of liberalism: 1) Classical *laissez faire* liberalism; 2) Neo-liberalism; 3) Rawlsian, ethical, liberalism. The first two are direct products of capitalism and the third is an effort to reconcile competitive capitalism and concrete individual freedom. In all

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<sup>21</sup>It has also been suggested, for example by Deleuze and Guattari, that capitalism thrives on crises. But, in my view, this is true only if no viable alternative to it exists at the time.

<sup>22</sup>J. S. Mill, T. H. Green, L. T. Hobhouse and J. A. Hobson, are the best known among those who advocated reforms to liberalism.

<sup>23</sup>The basic idea behind Fordism is that by increasing worker's power to consume leads to increased demand for commodities which will, in turn, lead to an increase in production; so, everyone, including workers, will benefit. F. Lordon's *Willing Slaves of Capital* (Lordon, 2014) explores the way in which Fordism and neo-liberalism have created an environment in which workers/consumers perpetuate the conditions of their own subjugation.

three versions capitalism and liberalism are inseparably tied to one another.<sup>24</sup>

As I have noted, Hegel was facing a dilemma: he needed a robust conception of civil society in order to give substance to his conception of individual freedom. At the same time he had an awareness of the harmful effects an unregulated economy would lead to. But his commitment to private property made him hesitate about advocating for explicit restrictions on it. For these reasons, his entire political philosophy came up against a point of crisis. Had he accepted a greater role for the state in regulating the economy, his political views could have avoided the dilemma it seems to have been saddled with. This would have made Hegel a revolutionary philosopher no longer a thinker of his age, but as Avineri suggests, it would have undermined the coherence of his political philosophy. As it is, progressive liberals might find inspiration in Hegel's political philosophy. But it is doubtful whether they could make the step Hegel himself hesitated to take: the abolition of private capital, and still remain liberals in its (negative) form that is still dominant today.

The paradox of Hegel's liberalism is that it is both tied to the capitalist market economy, and to a desire to heal the wound inflicted by this economy on what was a pre-industrial form of ethical life. In an important sense he was caught between his present and his future. That is what contributes to his wisdom: neither to reject the present nor to see it as the final stage of history. It has been noted that the *Philosophy of Right* is only the penultimate stage of his philosophy to be followed by a higher one "Absolute Spirit". From this interpretation it would follow that Hegel would have wanted to leave the future of the modern State, what he called "Objective Spirit", open. His objections to common ownership of the means of production suggest that he would not have looked favourably on Socialism, let alone Communism. Still, his insight into the way in which an unrestrained capitalist economy subverts the principle of individual liberty might have given him pause. He might have envisioned a different, non-economic, relation to private property, and a more robust power of politics over the economic life of nations. But, as Avineri suggests, this would have required his rethinking the relation between civil society and the state.

It might be said that the ultimate goal of Hegel's philosophy was the promise of absolute freedom that would be attained in the realm absolute spirit. The question he left us with is how this level of freedom could be attained in a political context. It is not clear that the highest form of freedom can be attained in the

<sup>24</sup>The late Rawls, with his notion of "property owning democracy" complicates the issue of the relation between capitalism and liberalism. However, I find in Rawls the same ambivalence that I find in Hegel. While they both recognize the merits of positive liberty, they both put greater value on negative (subjective) liberty, and they both think that a free market (capitalist) economy is essential for the flourishing of society. Nevertheless, it may be said that a market economy is not the same as a capitalist economy. And, by making the distinction between a free but regulated market economy, and an unregulated monopolistic capitalism (see (DeLanda, 1996)): "Markets, Anti-markets and Network Economics" on line) one can also make the distinction between the dominant capitalist liberal ideology that is in crisis today, and a form of economy which can allow for both subjective (negative) and for substantive (positive) freedom.

context of political liberalism, at least, not in the ways in which it is understood today.

#### 4. Conclusion

There is much talk about “the crisis of liberalism” today. The question is how Plato and Hegel can help in understanding this crisis. Many see the current crisis in narrowly economic terms: the failure of the system to provide enough jobs and decent wages. However, with the fast pace of technological development and the increasing need for specialization it is doubtful whether the present capitalist system can provide a solution to economic needs defined even in this narrow way. Others see the crisis of liberalism as a crisis of identity. This is one area in which liberals need to ask themselves whether in their view a cosmopolitan liberalism is tenable. They need to ask whether liberty is possible outside some limited social/communal framework. If their answer to this question is, “yes”, they need to explain what being free means outside all horizons and constraints. If, on the other hand, their answer is, “no”, they need to explain how new, non exclusive, identities could be constructed in a world that is becoming increasingly global.

In my view, whatever periodic political crisis liberalism might come up against, as a socio-economic system, it has deep roots; deeper than most liberals are willing to face up to: its eternal complicity with free enterprise capitalism. This is one of the lessons I take away from Hegel. He tried, perhaps more vigorously than most political philosophers of his time, to articulate a vision of the world in which free enterprise capitalism was compatible with concrete human liberty. In my view, in this he failed. The other lesson I take away from him is that rational freedom, the freedom to act freely within rational constraints, is preferable to doing what one wants to do in the absence of a clear understanding of the relevant context. Whether today’s liberals can learn from him is doubtful.<sup>25</sup> Their dis-avowal of positive liberty in favour of narrower negative liberties would prevent them even from reaching the position Hegel had reached, let alone go beyond it.

Plato’s most vocal opponents (Popperians) objected to his efforts to spell out what a just society would have to look like. But, as I have argued, a charitable reading of *The Republic*, based on the first four books of that work was, in fact, a radical reconstruction of ancient ethical life and not simply an attempt to preserve the existing political order. Even his objections to democracy and to liberty

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<sup>25</sup>For the last sixty years Rawls was the beacon of progressive liberalism. His proximity to Hegel, and even to social democracy, combined with his unflinching defence of negative (subjective) liberty, has put him in an ambiguous position. But as the crisis of this American style liberalism becomes more evident, the question needs to be asked whether it is not a function of a blind commitment to the capitalism that erodes liberty from within. Opponents of globalization, of neo-liberalism and of merely formal liberalism need to realize that at the root of the problem is the unconditional support for negative liberties that, in turn, perpetuate a basically illiberal monopolistic social and economic system.



in Book VIII were objections mainly to their corrupt forms<sup>26</sup>. For us, Plato's *The Republic* offers an insight into what might be a reasonable conservatism: the primacy of community over individuals, the love of country and the preservation of its traditions, and a belief in the relative stability of human nature. Today's liberals do not, and need not agree with these conservative ideals, but, in my view, they need to be prepared to debate them in good faith.

The current atmosphere of polarization is due partly to liberals' failure to distinguish between thoughtful conservatism and irrational populism. To say that populist emotions are fanned by corporate interests is only half of the story. Liberal activists must also play their share in separating radical populist movements from moderate conservative initiatives. As it is, they may take the moral high ground on inalienable human rights, but as long as they do not see these rights in concrete social contexts, requiring concrete local struggles, they will always be vulnerable to blackmail by lobbyists for corporations, and by other pressure groups: any number of impostors advocating anti-democratic measures, in the name of individual "freedom". But, in my view, the more fundamental problem with liberalism today is not just the high mindedness of its advocates; it is the corruptive aura of *laissez faire* runaway capitalism affecting most mainstream political discussions. And, here is where some Plato's views about a well run city might also be of help to those who would like to see the flourishing of concrete liberties. His call for expertise in running a state, his advice that individuals should be allowed, and encouraged, to lead their lives in conformity with what they are inclined to, and capable of, doing, his advice to limit economic growth, and his refusal to allow wealth and non-rational powers to run governments, might also serve as inspiration for rethinking liberalism today.

While it would be misguided to call Plato a "liberal", he did show that even in a hierarchical and authoritarian regime citizens might enjoy real freedom in their private lives. His views of human psychology, and his failure to recognize that human beings could change significantly in the course of their lives, led him to rule out the possibility of political pluralism.<sup>27</sup> At the same time, he main-

<sup>26</sup>A case could be made that the bulk of Books VIII and IX was originally written before Books V to VII. What strikes most contemporary readers in Plato's discussion of democracy and liberty in these books is his distaste for having many unrestrained desires, and many different forms of life. [See: 561a-562d, (Plato, 1992)] One theme that runs through all of the *Republic* is that desires, given free reign, unaided by reason, will inevitably become destructive. Had he restricted himself to the critique of negative freedoms, his position might seem to us more plausible. Still, who knows how much civilization our desires needed to have undergone before they reached the relative innocence they have today.

<sup>27</sup>In an infamous passage of *The Republic* [494a] (Plato, 1992), Plato declares that "The crowd cannot be philosophers". This could be interpreted as saying that only a small elite are capable of critical thinking; but it could also be interpreted as saying that philosophy is not an activity that can be conducted by an unruly mob. It is probable that Plato held both of those views. Given his meritocratic elitism, and his belief that children of any background should have the same opportunity to develop intellectually [*Republic*, 415ab] (Plato, 1992), one might put the following question to Plato: What if an individual were to achieve the ability for critical thinking only later in life as an adult, enabling him/her to participate in philosophic discourse, would such an individual be permitted to participate fully in political decision making? It would be somewhat anachronistic to put this question to a fourth century Athenian thinker. Still, Plato would not have good reasons for preventing such an individual from joining the guardians of society.

tained that, given the extent of their capacities, human beings could reach what was the best in their own nature. With his theory of justice he did anticipate what today might be thought of as “positive freedom”: the freedom to develop, in a rational way, one’s natural capacities.

With his concept of “rational freedom”, the unity of subjective free will and the pursuit of rational goals, Hegel could plausibly be called a “liberal”. And while he resists doing it himself explicitly, with some modification his views about the state might be consistent with what many would see today as a liberal welfare model. But, his emphasis on private property as a condition for individual freedom does make even this “ethical” liberalism problematic. Critics of liberalism even in its contemporary **ethical** version, point out that current liberals place too much emphasis on social and not enough on economic issues, consequently, allowing corporations to divert attention from what are serious socioeconomic problems.<sup>28</sup> More and more progressive thinkers believe that with inequality in economic power come other inequalities, putting constraints on freedom.

In the last two centuries, a number of alternatives to capitalism have been proposed. None of them was an unqualified success in the real world; some have ended up in real disaster. But one idea, the idea of communism, still captures the minds of those who are aware of the deep crisis of capitalism fuelled by an individualist liberal ideology. If what I have said about Plato and Hegel is correct, we are still in the period of transition. The arrival of a post-modern, post-capitalist age is still to come. The question is whether it will come gradually through regulations, or whether it will come abruptly. [Marx & Engels \(1848\)](#) in their *Manifesto of the Communist Party* declared that capitalism produces its own grave diggers. Their belief was that the working class, a class of humanity that both creates wealth and suffers from the inequalities it produces, will eventually do away with the capitalist system. To date their hope has been frustrated. In any case, as a number of thinkers suspect, the nature of the working class and its condition has changed to the point that it lost its revolutionary potentials. These same thinkers see other subversive forces on the horizon: automation, globalization and new information technologies. These forces might be the true grave diggers of capitalism, for, they are inescapably linked to it.<sup>29</sup> But given the his-

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<sup>28</sup>One core idea of liberalism is the protection of individuals from the abuses of power. Initially, this meant protection of property owners from excessive taxation by the Crown. With time this idea morphed into protecting capital from the state, leaving aside the question whether it is the state or giant corporations who represent a greater abuse of power.

<sup>29</sup>I have in mind such thinkers as Negri, Hardt, Badiou and Zizek. (My favoured texts are [Hard & Negri \(2009\)](#)’s *Commonwealth*, and [Hardt \(2010\)](#)’s short essay: “*The Common in Communism*”, available on line. None of them would describe themselves as advocates of socialism, which they see as a form of state capitalism. The main idea of communism, as it is articulated by these authors, is the re-appropriation of what is the common heritage of humanity: nature, social labour, general knowledge, etc. In such a society individuals would have private property but not private capital. The question this form of communism raises today is how what is common would be managed, and how work, what ever will be left of it, would be organized. These are questions which can only be answered at a much higher stage of technological development (automation, robotics, bio-medicine etc.) than we are familiar with today. Still, the idea of communism, and its possible modalities inherent in late capitalism, should be an object of enquiry already.

tory of the last hundred years and anti-liberal movements rampant in the world today, nothing can be taken for granted. Liberalism, capitalism and their crises are likely to stay with us for some time.

### Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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