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Charter 77 still alive: The Concept of Non-Political Politics in the Work of Ladislav Hejdánek¹

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ABSTRACT

The article analyses Ladislav Hejdánek's (1927) concept of non-political politics (asserted and validated in Charter 77, thus assisting the Charter's incredible ability to be functional) and its possible meaning todays – in debates about the role of intellectuals, philosophers, and regular citizens in politics.

The fundamental characteristic of the concept is an expansion of the field regarded as political; more precisely, his concept of the nature of man as a political being resistant a) to the way power expands into the ideologically intellectual and private plane of life, and b) to the emancipation of power politics from civic life (interest politics) and intellectual life. This twofold resistance distinguishes non-political politics from power (operational) politics and from interest politics (the ideological and intellectual clashes of civic society).

The position of non-political politics versus power politics and the position of the intellectual (philosopher) versus the politician is weakened by the stronger, indeed, the only irreconcilable antithesis of the true politician and the pseudo-politician. Where the activities of the pseudo-politician are concerned, the ultimate horizon of his reasoning and behaviour is his party, or even he himself. The non-political politician, on the contrary, cares for the space for the method of politics formed by the mind; he cultivates the individual and the whole of society in their education in the broadest possible (philosophical) sense.

KEY WORDS

Nonpolitical Politics - Charter 77 - Hejdánek - Philosophy

There is a strong reluctance in some circles of our society to sacrifice energy and time on work for the Charter. Particularly regrettable is the reluctance to take on the role of spokesperson. I do understand that no one likes to get into difficulties to which they are committed by no more than a consciousness of having fulfilled their civic responsibility (and I am aware that many people will grimace at this somewhat pathetic formulation). But Charter 77 is so outstanding, such an exceptional phenomenon in our post-war history, that if that the prominent and renowned signatories, whose aspirations for the future cannot be in doubt, refuse to take on themselves the (certainly not small) risk linked with the role of spokesperson for Charter 77, it is evidence of political short-sightedness and maybe of problematic calculations as well. [...] I think however that in first place it is not a question of courage but rather of a political evaluation of the situation, and that is exactly what I consider mistaken and even a little suspicious.

Introduction

Ladislav Hejdánek (1927), a world-renowned Czech philosopher,² co-founder and spokesman for Charter 77, and one of the most important critics of the totalitarian regime in Czechoslovakia (a pupil of Jan Patočka and a close collaborator of Václav Havel) from the 1950s, worked on a concept of non-political politics that, with most of its principles, was asserted and validated in Charter 77, helping to its incredible functionality. The concept is still topical and meaningful today in debates about the role of politics in human life and the role of intellectuals, philosophers, and ordinary citizens in politics.

In a democratically-functioning society, philosophers do not, for the most part, become involved in politics. Nevertheless, in the following exposition, we present Hejdánek's concept of *non-political politics*, which, in our interpretation, is a good justification of such involvement. In this study, we analyze and synthesize all the texts in which Hejdánek demonstrates his involvement "practically" and analyzes it theoretically, including unpublished texts recently made available in the Archive of Ladislav Hejdánek (http://www.hejdanek.eu/; further ALH). We will focus on the philosopher's reflection on his own activities, that is, the concept of the intellectual and philosopher's proper engagement in events in society, born out of his or her orientation and philosophical research.

Regulation of the Expansion of Power Politics: Emancipation *from* the State, and Authority

Whereas many thinkers and activists associated with non-political politics strive for the complete eradication of politics - best-known is the Utopian method of the Marxists (the replacement of the government of persons by the administration of things), but there are also those who submit themselves to the politics of morality and treat politics as though it were applied morality, and, in conclusion, those who realistically, and nowadays accommodatingly, consciously or unconsciously, depoliticize politics and the management of public affairs associated with it. That is, they reduce politics to the decisions of experts, bureaucrats, economists, and technocrats and dispense with the bonds to the constitution, legislation, and will and views of the public3-Hejdánek's concept consists of a more realistic and, visà-vis current tendencies, a more defiant approach, in which politics and the power apparatus associated with it should not be removed in this or any other way: "Society cannot manage without a state authority as there are certain matters connected with people and society that have to be administered by an authority." Thus, politics is a prerequisite for being concerned with the truth: "the philosopher [...] has to be aware of the social and political premises of every opportunity to submit to the truth [...], and, in this way, to reclaim the right to freedom of thought and conviction not just for him or herself alone, or for philosophers (and scholars, etc.) alone, but, in principle, for everyone. In this sense, every genuine and consistent philosophy is not a private matter, but rather public and inherently political."5

Hejdánek's "non-political" effort is not, therefore, aimed against politics as such, nor is it "anti-political". His aim is to "expand" the sphere of politics by what is known as non-political politics and, in that way, urge and pressurize what is known as party politics (at other times as power politics or operational politics), which narrows down to a power struggle and various (non)legitimate and (il)legal operations with power⁶ to a constant confrontation with the life of society and of the individuals making up society. Non-political politics is, in this sense, an urgent resistance to power politics and, more precisely, to the way it spreads into every sphere of the life of society and into the whole extent of private and personal lives. Hejdánek bases his non-political politics on a fear of the threat that authority will rule every aspect of society and the individual, above all, in intellectual, ideological and cultural activities. At the same time, he describes the illegitimate interference of the state into private and everyday life, something that was analyzed in detail by Foucault and Agamben. In the modern age, the mechanisms of state authority usurp even the natural lives and bodies of individuals (Foucault's "biopolitics").7 In both respects, Hejdánek calls for the expansion of "free" space devoid of any sort of power pressure: "It cannot be done through strength and power, but rather through the steadfast and unwavering resistance of every individual. The aim is not the liquidation of the state, [...] but rather the constitutional and systematic strengthening of a social space that will be exempt from state jurisdiction, will be protected against the interference of the state (church, party, etc.), will be rid of the shackles of state violence. It is precisely this space that Charter 77 wants to help to establish, gradually expand, and watch over. It is a program for the whole of mankind, for the whole world."8

Evidence that Hejdánek's resistance to the expansion of power politics is not extremist and Utopian, and that his recognition of power politics involves more than just purely a servile position, is the assertion that, in ideological disputes, too we have to reckon with interventions of authority, which may not be inappropriate: "There certainly will and must be an application of the aspect of power politics in the 'development and confrontation of ideas', as long as power is a social reality. Every political concept of a 'free' and 'enlightened' society, which seeks to forget this fact and to get round it and thus fail to respect it, is without doubt politically naïve, therefore misguided, and ultimately ineffective and impractical. We do not need idealization, but we want to see every side of reality clearly, and to have our eyes open to reality as a whole." Hejdánek, therefore, understands the need for an authority to have some restrictions on opinions that are "a display of social conflict", but conceives his non-political politics precisely as an effort to limit and regulate (above all by legislation and public negotiation) the influence exercised by authority on ideological discussions and disputes. The question then is, what will remain of possible restrictions by authority if we accept Hejdánek's proposed criterion of the "objectivity" of the interference, i.e., that it cannot weaken or close down ideological disputes; i.e., that it cannot be applicable at the moment when ideological crystallisation would be suppressed (thus the clarification of its own

position as well), at the moment when "it impedes and voids the ideological victory of the opinion supported by the authority, should the ideological dispute finally transfer to a plane on which it cannot be intellectually resolved and conquered." 9

In any event, what concerns Hejdánek is not any absolute resistance to politics, authority and the state, but rather only emancipation *from state, politics and authority* as a prerequisite for the never-ending creation of an orderly civil society and life for himself and his fellows. Hejdánek also talks in this sense about the political modernization of the state, or its democratization. A state that retains a hierarchy that places "the citizens and their state" above "the state and its citizens" has to devote "attention to the routine of the life of society" as a service to its citizens, to its civic movements, and so on. Therefore, when Hejdánek admits the involvement of the state in politics and the national economy, or the promotion of moral life, it is in the spirit of this routine, in the spirit of ensuring order and the basic conditions of prosperity, justice, and similar prerequisites for the good and free life of its citizens. 11

Commitment to routine does not, however, bring every kind of political ethos to an end. More precisely, this commitment is not Hejdánek's only idea about the meaning of politics. He also describes the particular affinity of "true" power politics with the philosopher and the non-political politician in order to defend the traditionally paramount political contest against politics being reduced to a technique of power. Politics is and should continue to be, alongside philosophy and similar exclusively human activities, an impulse towards freedom and history, a courageous and creative step into the future. This interpretation is not, however, a denial that Hejdánek has a twofold description of politics, a duality that is not, in our opinion, identical with the difference between non-political and operational politics; between the true politician following truth and the meaning of life, and the description quoted above of politics as a matter merely of technique and routine. Hejdánek evidently distinguishes not only between operational (power) politics and non-political politics, but also between true (power) politics and false power politics. That is, he retains a tension between recognising power politics and warning against it, not only in its debased form. Therefore, in our view precisely because of this recognition, the characteristics and tasks of true (power) politics and non-political politics at some places essentially agree. The emancipation from politics emancipates people to true politics.

The Struggle against the "Emancipated Elements" and Pseudo-Politics

We all know, and it is Hejdánek's starting position, that the state (community) must be supported by a "non-political", broad, moral and spiritual basis, but that, not only according to Hejdánek, it is precisely that basis that the modern state usurps as one of its instruments, i.e., "it drains that moral and spiritual basis of all decent politics, and transforms it from a foundation into some sort of roof, into a superstructure, into ideology." It is against such politicization and narrowing of spiritual life and cultural society, originally based on the depth and breadth of human life, that Hejdánek's non-political politics has to provide a systematic defense. 12 The

"society of subjects" creates a state simply so it can serve them. Inasmuch as we find ourselves in an age when, on the contrary, the state and politics emancipate themselves more and more, and exploit society for their own growth, then Hejdánek links non-political politics most frequently with the need to correct this anomaly in favor of the idea "that human life is, by its main content and predominant part, anchored outside the state and outside its competence. It is only on the edges that it comes into contact with the state and with state policy"; "politics and public life in general are 'only a modest part of the spiritual life." 13

The modern state meanwhile, like operational politics, belongs to what are known as emancipated elements ("alienated social products"), or false subjects, whose interests and operations are falsely equated with, even considered superior to, the true subject (the people), who once established them (in our case, the state and politics) to serve their own interests only to find in time that the false subject got out of control and became autonomous. If we understand the emancipated elements as human products, which currently operate against human interests, that is, against the interests and plans of the true subjects, then we can define non-political politics as a struggle with the emancipated elements: "Not a group, nor an organization, not society, nor even the state, is capable of reflection, because they do not have the ability to open themselves with authentic openness of language, of the world, and of truth. As the products of man, they are capable of only a type of distancing, that is, of alienation. They are capable of emancipating themselves from human management in order to position themselves against man and, eventually, to sweep even him to alienation."14 The danger of emancipated elements rests mainly on the fact that, in their operations, they simulate true subjects, or are at least difficult to tell apart from them, and are often considered true subjects: "because they convey some distinctive attributes which we generally ascribe to subjects. Even though they are by their nature mere inertia, they function as integration centres of the subject activities of real subjects, they have a dynamic nature and they change; this change is moreover specifically focused and directed as though the emancipated elements were realising a particular interest or intention."15 Operational politics and the state, as emancipated elements, show the characteristics of "a dynamic stolen from a person", which resembles the dynamic of a real subject, although not only is it not that dynamic, it even ex definitione eliminates it everywhere round itself.

The danger of subjugation to the false subject and of the loss of one's own life does not, however, mean that the individual should shun associations. Hejdánek's non-political politics strive for a spiritual and cultural revival or liberation and so can be placed with the cultural and critical concepts of the non-political politics of György Konrád and Thomas Mann. ¹⁶ Nevertheless, unlike them, he does not strive (primarily) for protection for himself or others as individuals. He considers such efforts meaningless and, opposed to them, sees the future only in joint care for a space in which to develop true politics, based on a varied civic society created by educated, personally active, original, creative, and "individualized" citizens. They group themselves naturally in many societies and movements, in which

they first get everything clear for themselves and generally create their interests and plans, and through which their programmes and those of their neighbors are then promoted: "In my judgment, the foundations of the life of society are not in political structures, nor in the economy, nor even in culture or civilization. Society is based on personal relations between people."¹⁷

That means, in the first place, that it is simply impossible to lead a good life unless it is with others and for others. Politics, a broad society and sociability does not have to be characteristic merely of mass quality and alienation, but rather of the path to truth and a dignified life, a life of freedom and for freedom. In this sense, Charter 77 represents an example of an autonomous civic initiative, whose founders and main players included Hejdánek, and whose building, expansion, and operation was ensured by "the emancipation of national and supranational societal activities from the hypertrophied claims of modern states." Secondly, it also means a struggle at an international level, because the tendency toward enslavement by the state, bureaucracy, or globalizing processes is worldwide: "the program to halt and suppress it therefore has to be universal as well. It is quite plain that such a grand attempt can be successful only on the premise that it will be carried out on every side and not only in the limited context of one part of the world. An international non-governmental and extra-governmental nature is simply essential here." 19

One can fight the emancipated elements, which should be characterized not simply as societies or institutions, but rather as pseudo-societies and pseudo-institutions, only on a "supra-individual" plane, in the context of true societies and institutions that reinforce the actions of individuals sufficiently. That applies to politics itself as well: "true power politics" is here "the establishment of order where disharmony, chaos and disorder among people exceed tolerable limits". Non-political or "universal" politics is important at the moment these power politics fail, when they alienate people and society, cease to serve them and become criminal; then it is necessary to prevent the "depersonalization of society." Nevertheless, this struggle is already on a different plane. Ultimately, true victory always needs decent power politicians – only these can validate the defeat of corrupted power politics and only these can replace them.

Non-political politics is instead a general basis for many other specific initiatives – Hejdánek distinguishes them as "universalist politics" from "interest politics" that, likewise, create a front in the struggle against criminal politics, based, however, on many varied partial interests, motivations, and reasons that we can imagine only in a humanity made up of individuals. In opposition to this, non-political politics, as can be well seen in the example of Charter 77, has only one, "negative", interest and motivation: to suppress criminality and alienation, to prevent them, and to remedy them. In contrast to "interest politics", non-political politics, as "universal politics", has one more "advantage" that also makes the whole of its definition more precise. It is not a mere reaction to the corruption of operational politics or the state, but rather a reaction to any sort of impersonality: "The roots

of evil are very often beyond the reach of the means of operational politics. Only 'non-political politics' is, thanks to its distance from limited interests and thanks to its universalist openness to the whole of societal and individual problems, able to point out resources that have been forgotten."²¹

Through the dissimilarity mentioned, universalist and interest politics can form an alliance in the struggle against "alienated politics" and all imaginable inhumanities in general. Only in this alliance and unity can the two forms of politics be a prospect for a bright – that is, real – future for Europe and the whole of mankind. It represents an "international democratic public", it enables the "thinking of the international public" and encourages the democratic life of society to be maintained and promoted.²² In other words, at a very general and quite specific level, it represents maybe the only possible (long-term, sustained and deep) solution counting on the "pressure of civic activities from below", whose prerequisite – but also outcome – is the raising of the "level of civic self-awareness" and of the self-confidence of individuals as citizens of a state and as members of the whole of mankind.

The struggle against the emancipated elements is, in fact, an opportunity to see from the other side how political activities interconnect with philosophical and civic activities: instead of monitoring and critiquing the expansion of politics into the non-political sphere, here we monitor and critique the way politics releases itself from ties to the non-political sphere. From this perspective, non-political politics signify a warning against state and political forces emancipating themselves from the life of society and from responsibility towards people. Should the emancipated elements dominate, should they not allow for a broader civic society, as just and free as possible, which they must serve and must have already facilitated and guaranteed (especially as far as freedom and justice are concerned), then they lose the spheres from which they themselves draw meaning and justification (therefore to which they must also be accountable).²³ In short, non-political politics represents resistance: on the one hand, resistance to the occupation of civic and private life by power politics and, on the other, resistance to the attempts of power politics to release itself from ties to the life of the community and the individual, refusing to serve them or to be based on their needs and interests.

Through this critique, Hejdánek debates with the tendency of the time to be done with politics or to exile freedom to the private sphere and reduce the whole area of public civic life generally, ridding it of meaning – for example, with various reductions of questions of freedom and justice to procedural and formal problems, and with the shifting of political solutions and placing questions of freedom and justice to the area of analyses conducted by methodically-schooled experts, and so on. In short, politics and freedom without each other fade away into nothingness, and all that remains of political society is "operational politics", released from ties to society and the individuals that constitute society. Freedom and justice (which, however, cannot be reasonably thought of in its context) are, like these politics, taken over by blind mechanisms, utilitarian calculation, the techniques of power,

the regularity of economic processes, global trade and other forces, neutral in politics and life (because not bound to the life of society and individuals), and thus "anti-political". They do not solve questions of freedom and justice in society or national interests but are instead run simply from the point of view of profit and power, and rules announced in bureaucratic-operational anonymity. The original political ethos linked with questions of implementing the great values (freedom, equality....) is expelled to the "unimportant" non-political, private field.²⁴ Freedom that shared in the creation of the field of politics, whose basis was the reasoning out of ideas and programs that should exercise control over individuals, the nation, and the whole of mankind, is not only moved into the private field but also reduced – in fact, by being limited to the private field, because this is not an arena in which such a struggle can take place or where such large scale challenges and ideas can be discovered, expressed, considered and fine-tuned.²⁵

Democratic Character, the Social Program, and Active Faith

The tendency to construct a boundary between power politics and civic life is also documented by Hejdánek's relentless struggle for the non-political in Charter 77; he has always been decisive in his refusal to form a *political opposition*, because in that way he would set foot on the front line of the power struggle. He must decide on which of the two fronts to fight, because the difference makes it impossible to combine them – it is a difference characterized by counter-productivity, by existential contradictions, and by a different orientation. The characteristic of non-political politics, which causes such a strong contradiction to operational politics, and which aspires to alternative power relationships, conflicts, and pressures, is their specific democratic character. It applies to this character, first, that "the essence of democracy is not to count on some new type of government, but rather on every government having its imposed limits, beyond which it may not intervene in the field of social and individual life, which have their autonomy."26 As we suggested above, Hejdánek, in this way, refutes Marxism (strongly promoted by one current of Chartists, most interestingly by Petr Uhl) and non-political politics as an attempt to get rid of politics and the apparatus of the state completely. According to Hejdánek, the "democratization" of state and political functions, and thus of power, as well as their distribution and division among people, is Utopian, and a misguided radicalization of the resistance discussed – it is no longer about keeping politics within the right boundaries, but about occupying its "logically" appropriate and corresponding spheres by "another," and, therefore, about their abolition.²⁷

Secondly, Hejdánek's concept of democracy is broader than some specific political program, even a regime. It is connected with Masaryk's consideration of the possible meaning of democracy, i.e., reflecting on the conflict "between the dynamic democratizing trends of the new age; between Liberalism and a humanity understood philosophically and religiously". Masaryk interprets democracy as a program comprising both politics and the economy, as well as social aspects and the morally responsible individual, and also expands the meaning of politics from

a struggle for power, from a struggle for "forces and interests without a higher meaning and without a historical and moral calling", to a struggle under a (religiousfraternal) idea and to an idea of humanity: The "Humanitarian' or 'fraternal' ideal is thus primarily an urging toward the real practical cooperation of a real and responsible individual across confessional and political programmes, and individual or group interests; [...] in the present actualisation and in the future it should also be a deeper spiritual basis for European society than post-revolutionary liberal individualism."29 Non-political politics is then, in this spirit, a "means of long-term internalization of the conviction about democracy, humanity and responsibility as part of the nature of the history of the world".30 Today, democracy approaches this ideal as a liberally constitutional political order with free elections, rule of law, separation of powers, and various types of protection of the fundamental freedoms of expression, assembly, religion, and property, i.e., as a regime which is becoming politically legitimate for more and more countries of the world (compared with the past - when the cement of society was mostly the disparity between the power of the state and that of citizens - the cement today is that very democratization).31

In connection with Masaryk, the Protestant and Puritan ethic is for Hejdánek's democracy a moral supporting strength – for his democracy as the principal limitation of power and the powerful (their limitation in both the directions examined above: on their flight from society in the sense of fleeing their responsibilities towards it and its decisions; and, at the same time, on their ever greater penetration into society in the sense of usurping the decision-making that does not belong to power) and for the intellectual and social programme for the individual and the whole of society. In other words, the limitation it promotes is not primarily of an external, but rather of an internal nature, its foundations are "supra" political, philosophical, and anthropological – democracy begins where, internally and externally, the individual is disciplined and where the possibility of life and thought from freedom and thus from a relationship to transcendent forces, appears.

The political freedom appearing here among disciplined individuals "will not be abused by people mutually violating each other; they will employ it to protect the freedom of every individual, enabling them to use their opportunities no less than all the others." Democracy is here the concept of people "as such moral beings that it is part of their nature to have a will for everyone to have a disciplined will, to have a will that does not force another but means control over oneself no less than over the outside world."

Hejdánek wants, in the case of Czechoslovakia where he lives, to help to reform Socialism with his non-political politics. He does not reject it, because he understands it in very broad and long-term historical contexts so that the solving of the crisis "at home" should be part of the solving of the crisis throughout Europe and throughout the world. In this spirit, "Socialism" is part of Hejdánek's non-political politics; and, although it really does indicate Hejdánek's personal and particular political opinion, rather than non-political politics, his essential connection with Christianity and democracy suggests membership of non-political politics.

Socialism emerged *from democracy* and was "the consideration of the political fundamentals of democracy on a social and economic plane". From this, Hejdánek – in a critical retort to the regime of Socialist Czechoslovakia – extrapolates that "a social system which achieves some social requirements at the expense of political freedoms is misguided and is not true Socialism. [...] A true, really functioning democracy of our days must be social and economic at the same measure as political and cultural."³³ Hejdánek does not, however, have in mind by this Hayek's conviction about "the impossibility of distinguishing between varieties of freedom [...] you cannot preserve right A by sacrificing or compromising right B".³⁴ On the contrary, it is necessary to differentiate as much as possible while the most essential differentiation relies on elevation to the front row of "human" rights and freedoms.

That already reminds us that not even democracy and political freedom stand at the very beginning of Socialist thinking. Democracy itself has its roots and intellectual foundations in Christianity. While the connection between Socialism and democracy is political, the connection between democracy and Christianity is ideological. It is the intellectual background that is essential, which is why Hejdánek emphasizes the impossibility of the long-term flowering, let alone survival, of democracy and Socialism "detached from the ideological and intellectual principles in which they are historically anchored and in which they have their deepest criteria".35 The foundation cannot be the plane of ownership relationships (the economy), but rather the plane of "non-materialized, personal social relationships": "For me, Socialism means the program of a society, in which one person is a socius of the other, that is, a friend, mate, comrade. As a Christian, I would go further, in which one person is another's brother. Therefore, any sort of hatred or enmity to Socialism is simply ruled out, yes, any sort of hatred or enmity at all."36 To be more exact, Socialism is equipped by its Christian origin with the concept of humanity, in that the relationship is fulfilled through humanity towards the other: "Socialism, which teaches us to see the potential or the real friend, the real comrade in another person, can and must in this sense be deepened so that the other person is seen as a neighbor. The difference is that the view of the other person as a potential or real ally is still not the deepest view, for the other is assessed according to how much he is of value to me, and how much he represents a struggle. Far more essential, and for society more elementary, is to see in the other someone who needs me, who is waiting for my help, whose burden I can and must help to bear, someone whom I can and must support in his suffering and difficulties."37 In this sense, Socialism can represent what was originally a Christian programme in the world of "capitalism" where, in the spirit of the Christian aims mentioned above, one has, above all, to get to grips with the inhuman conditions in a society, in which mammon and the market have taken over. As long as Socialism "reveals the inhumane status [...] of workers in a society ruled over by the owners of wealth", as long as it is not a party established by force, itself ruling with the help of force and oppression or concealing injustice, the Christian and the non-political politician must show solidarity with the Socialist.38

The completely essential reference to Christianity should, however, be read in the broader context of Hejdánek's thought. It is not so much a reference to Christianity as commonly understood as a reference to a faith orientation Hejdánek repeatedly writes about as a critique of (not only Christian) metaphysical traditions. There is, therefore, no contradiction when Hejdánek says that the worst we could meet in the future would be a repetition of the history of Christianity: "One of the basic tactical and strategic errors of Marxism (and it is one of the errors on which it definitively fails and perishes) is the superficiality with which it approaches its own resources and historical roots, especially Christianity. We must, in abandoning Marxism and settling the bill with it, avoid those hard errors that would result in a completely pointless experiencing of every kind of decay, deviation, and direct perversion that could be avoided if sufficient had been learnt from the history of Christianity. It would be unfortunate if some future great social programme should turn out to be just another reprise of an absurd drama." 39

In short, in their "given" forms, neither Marxism, nor Christianity, nor even Socialism (likewise capitalism) provide Hejdánek with hope and any real chance for a better world. The only long-term hope is the reform of tradition outlined above and the development of new social and political concepts in its context alone. For Hejdánek, that new, non-political politics-orientation always denotes in first place practice and action as opposed to decrees and other verbal, linguistic proclamations and declarations: Socialism "....originated as the expansion of democratic principles into the social and economic field. History has shown that, if they are limited to the purely political sphere, democratic principles remain on the paper on which they were written. [....] If democratic principles are to be valid, then it is necessary - indispensable and necessary without compromise - to spread them so that they do not remain mere words."40 In the context of biblical and Christian ideals of the meaning and value of human life, what counts is what an individual has done for the hungry and thirsty, the poor, the oppressed, and the persecuted; an unbeliever "who readily helps a man who has been robbed by thieves, has priority a thousand times over the person who may be a priest, a representative of the Church, [....] who does not notice the wretched man." To the everyday problems and questions from which people suffer in this dangerous world - that is, to most immediate problems, and badly needing a solution - "every theoretical answer is weak and essentially futile. On the spot, the only thing is action, only in practical life can this be decided."41 There are no "great opportunities", only the opportunity here and now, in everyday human life.

In other words, one can say that Hejdánek, with reference to the impoverished individual, elevates *social and cultural rights*, or "claims connected with a reasonable share in prosperity and culture" against the liberal right to *Freedom* and democratic right to *participation*.⁴² If he does not elevate them, then with Habermas quoted above, he declares with reference to basic human dignity the need for "uniform joint action of all categories of fundamental rights": "Human dignity, which is one and the same everywhere and for everyone, is based on the *indivisibility* of

fundamental rights. [...] 'Human dignity' is the seismograph, which shows what is constitutive for the democratic rule of law – precisely the rights that citizens of a political community must give to themselves so that they can *consider* each other free and equal members of a voluntary association."43 Habermas speaks in this connection of establishing civil status and a community, Hejdánek more generally of establishing a human community as such. In either case, whether we are talking here about a legal and political community or human in general (Hejdánek, from speaking about man generally, reaches the legal and political plane precisely through non-political politics, as a human interest in general), or whether we already speak of others as fellow citizens or as brothers and friends, the result and consensus are the absolute immensity of human dignity.

The Cultivation of Politics as Man's Destiny, and Civil Society

The expansion of the political field by non-political politics (and interest politics) is also required by the fact that, as well as the spread of the "powerful emancipated elements", the expression and the concept "politics" includes much broader meanings than those normally used. Human life is in itself political: "everything a person does and undertakes [is] political"; "politics in the broad sense" is "every human activity that has or can have public outcomes, that has its political side."44 Even though what concerns us here is an analysis of the coherent, long-term and operative "nonpolitical politics" defined above, and we do not consider unwanted involuntary political activity as worthy of attention, it has to be mentioned here as a certain secondary motivation for (non-political) politics. That is, precisely in context and because of the characterization of man as a fundamentally political animal, and because of the inevitability of politics in every fully human life, Hejdánek - by rejecting the expansion of power politics - not only resists authority, but, also and above all, urges citizens to occupy the sphere to which they have a full right or to whose management and "fulfillment" they are called by virtue of being human. He urges them to a political life that will no longer be without awareness, and will move from "involuntary" acts to the conscious cultivation of oneself and the community, looking to the whole of human life and to politics inclusive of the properly regulative power and operational element; that is, he urges citizens, in their mutual interest, to come to decisions with each other about their life and that of the whole of society including the course they will take.

As is clear from the above, Hejdánek does not conclude from the fact that it is our destiny to be political that there should be any exaltation of the prestige of operational politics in human life – this is neither the most basic nor the paramount accomplishment and challenge to the political life of the individual. On the contrary, the individual and society as a whole have to live autonomously of the state and of operational politics. These should fill a role something like the traffic police, making sure that the highway code is observed, striving for the best possible traffic conditions, but not interfering with where, when, and also who is travelling. The higher political function is taken on by citizens who have to decide

about essential matters, for example, whether philosophy and culture will have their place in society. Power excludes responsibility: "...the person with power must not in the last instance make the decision. And the person who makes the decision must not be corrupted by his connections with power (it is called the principle of the separation of powers) and must be newly deepened and widened. Today we know that boundaries must be established not only to executive political power, but also to economic power."

In this higher sense, therefore, citizens must begin to form politics as "a relationship of free fellow-citizens who, in mutual good will, support each other from those three basic, equally vital elements - tradition, personal interest and social responsibility".46 However, non-political politics is not identical even with those activities that in Hejdánek's terminology fall into the interest politics. Hejdánek does sometimes suggest that the two forms of politics (see above) are identical, but we would nevertheless argue that a more intelligible, coherent and foresighted exposition of his concept requires the two activities to be differentiated. Just as the life of man is not reducible to the creation of a civil society and the activities carried out in it, neither can non-political politics be reducible to it. We have to devote ourselves to them intensively in cases where operational politics (expansion and emancipation) and interest politics (lethargy and oppression) are functioning poorly, i.e. in this sense are more of a marginal affair in the life of people who do not have to think too much about them, just as under normal circumstances they do not think too much about power politics. Non-political politics "is not so much about a distinctive special political concept enshrined in general political theory, but rather about the marginal (although frequently vital) consequences of life attitude, style, and orientation, whose focal point is outside the political sphere, but which take political reality into account, which do not turn their back on it, are not ignorant, but, while paying all due respect, are prepared for political acts and decisions, which, from a narrowly professional political and politological point of view, are incongruous and contestable. This is all, however, because the plane of their logic and meaningfulness is simply different from the plane of practical and theoretical politics in the narrow specialized sense."47

Here again, we encounter the tension that accompanies Hejdánek's concept: non-political politics repeatedly elevated as an inescapable struggle, which every person undergoes as a person, is here in a marginal, temporary, role; namely, as an activity to correct a distorted state of society, which is unnecessary in "normal" times and in the lives of ordinary citizens.

Hejdánek, on the one hand, reminds us of the characteristic association of man and politics and urges its fulfillment; on the other, however, he firmly defends and pursues a life governed by a principled attempt to keep politics on the sidelines and to pursue, without political influences, the focal point of a life resting in non-political life – then it is only the results of this otherwise central life that are marginal (and again just for this non-political political life itself), results which Hejdánek has in the sphere of power politics and interest politics.

The fundamental problem is the diminishment in non-political politics, its marginal status against interest politics itself, or its secondary status vis-à-vis civicpolitical society. Yet, here non-political politics must, on the contrary, be central, in the sense of the most general care possible of humanity described above. We are not trying to solve this tension definitively and unambiguously even here; we are thus explaining that non-political politics is central only as a general interest, whereas the interest politics of a creative civil society consists of "clusters" of specific individuals, uniting but also dividing, and of the projects and longings of individual people which simply cannot be reduced to the content of non-political politics (see also the well-known distinction of "thick and thin concepts").48 This creative chaos, i.e. the plans and interests of individuals, often antithetical, is what holds us together; non-political politics itself would not show that, because it is, so to speak, "empty" - we have evidence in the Chartists, who en masse founded further movements to fill the space of freedom being opened up by the Charter (but not yet open as a space - the real opening took place precisely with those specific fillings which could not be created by the Charter itself).

Non-political politics does not rely either on the struggle for power or on the fair rivalry of opinions; it relies on the struggle "for greater space for the humanity of man". We, therefore, lean to the interpretation that one has always to devote oneself to non-political politics, because it consists, in essence, of care for humanity, and in this spirit the most fundamental and the highest awareness and education at the same time – education for mankind and service to the truth (see next section). It is precisely this care that also stands *above* civic and political conflicts conducted in a democratic society. The results of their activities on the level of operational politics and interest politics are for them marginal, because these do not create its nucleus or even main aim.

Nevertheless, not even the status indicated in "stands above" is unambiguous; that is, the care in question requires, at the same time, mature citizens and a wider free cultural society, in part precisely so that those mature individuals can conduct cultivated political and civic disputes, but chiefly because it is only in the context of proper leadership of such disputes that such mature people now really emerge – in the end education in what is known as the "second culture" is not enough here: "Democratic society needs educated citizens, politically (and in other ways) astute, steadfast, and resolute in their lives; outstanding intellectual, moral and cultural leaders, and reliable, skillful and trustworthy political leaders. But where to get them? We do not dig them out of the ground either through education or through persuasion and agitation." Nevertheless, this whole inclination to the plane of social encounters does not ultimately weaken the role of non-political politics, because they open one front of such "worthwhile" encounters precisely in an unfavourable time for proper politics.

We would also add that, just as non-political politics from the point of view of "normal life", essentially goes beyond its subsidiary status when one understands it as an always necessary, sustained education to humanity, so power politics too

transcends its lowly status; it is in its true form a meaningful part of interest politics, and this, likewise, cannot manage without access to power politics: "Politics, as Masaryk stated [....] is work, so that it must in itself [....] link both the technical execution of power and the critical question for its meaning".⁵¹

The Political Nature of Faith and of (Philosophic) Education

We saw just now that the sources of non-political politics are not at all only "negative", that is, a weapon against expansionist powers, but are rather based on "positive" care for mankind and truth. That presupposes the faith mentioned above, and philosophies deriving from its orientation such as love and truth. Against operational politics and the government of power linked with them, faith and philosophy stand as a more fundamental and entire human life justly integrating the kingdom of truth: "the state does not integrate the meaning of human life and its function remains only at the level of a means towards transcendent human determination." The biblical tidings of man created in the image of God are tidings of human freedom, and of the possibility for a person to behave responsibly and decently, that is, to respond to being addressed by the truth and to live by this transcendence.⁵² In other words, no earthly power can gain a decisive dominance over human life. The task of non-politically politically active people is the energetic promotion here and now of the future victory of truth. That does not mean, however, that such activists should reject politics and place it in an irreconcilable antithesis with the truth and its implementation. On the contrary, politics is for them one of the spheres of life where faith and philosophic reflection should apply. They should, in fact, apply as a condition of their regular faith in the case of a broader concept of politics and connection to civil society and non-political politics - since faith that neglects the life of society is "infirm, weakened, strayed": "The non-political, that is, the politically non-engaged Christian is considerably crippled, diseased, broken, simply deficient. The fullness of a life of faith necessarily includes a strong political dimension."53 The same applies to the philosopher.

Although it is not only the philosopher or believer who know that politics form only one plane of life, far from the highest, and that there are deeper and more important planes that must be given priority – both in one's personal life and in that of society – and that therefore politics should not be allowed "to flood and choke one's entire life and entire thinking," in the case of non-political politics the opposite is true, for this in essence corresponds to "the basic political precept of Jesus's proclamation of the Gospel"; "the Kingdom of Heaven is nigh". There will come a Kingdom which is not of this world (John 18:36); and it likewise corresponds to the philosophic and evangelical precept of the governance of truth, non-objective reality and the future: "...the heavenly or divine kingdom is the government of the future; those who open themselves to it and who accept it have to leave the past behind them." In contrast to warnings against becoming "overloaded" with politics, Hejdánek emphasizes here that, in human life, "the affairs and tasks [of the Kingdom of truth] are the first priority, all the others take second place". Service

to truth is the basis and the essence of political involvement, for they are activities which, on principle, cannot be carried out in secret, out of the public eye, concealed, or on an individual basis: "The public nature of operations in the service of truth leads a Christian to his or her own political nature, that is, to the truest source and basis of their political involvement. It is impossible to speak the truth and it is impossible to stand for the truth or even to fight for the truth in any other way than in cultural and political centers, in public, in full light." 56

In our opinion, the apparently contradictory idea that, just as (operational) politics is practiced by professionals, so non-political (or real) politics should also be carried out by "no less schooled and expertly prepared representatives of society" and that, in a normal society, the ordinary citizen should not carry out any of these, can only be harmonized with the preceding by recognizing that when, in the second case, Hejdánek says "expertise", he is thinking of an upbringing and education with the widest and deepest possible range, including philosophy, and direct orientation in attitudes to life and in matters of truth and untruth. In addition, Hejdánek explicitly states that philosophy holds a central, irreplaceable role in this education and in law itself and non-political politics: "One of the most important tools in the struggle for the liberation of culture is the expansion of critical, non-ideological thinking into the broadest layers of society. The role of critical, modern, and informed philosophy remains indispensable for this great task; it is a role in which no other discipline, and certainly no institution, can replace or even represent philosophy." 58

To summarize the above, Hejdánek is connecting proper freedom and the good life of a person with their participation in politics - to the extent that politics is connected with the implementation of truth and with education "in the truth", with care for the diverse civic and intellectual society, in which orientation to the truth dominates or is facilitated. In this spirit, education and upbringing (and thus the political nature of citizens which takes shape as a certain type of education) are not only the means to something more (to practical life), they cannot be understood as something conditional, a "social need", but rather the opposite, as something that should direct activities in society, that should be adapted to, regarding which: "We hear too often that no society can invest enormous sums in the education of people whose qualifications would be some sort of luxury, that it is enough for their needs to be covered. On the contrary, the very opposite should be emphasized: it is a luxury not to educate people more than some sort of 'social need' requires [...] - it is a luxury not to use every possible means to raise the educational standard of the population or even not to use the educational standard that is already here at our disposal."59

Non-political and real politics are on the one hand based on educated people and on an education which is not a utilitarian "order", whether on the part of the state, nation, region, family or the individual him or herself; on the other hand, they themselves, as resistance in the face of an epidemic of (state) authority outside politics, establish and form a sphere of freedom, of the education of "free spirits";

they *resist* the expansion of power into a sphere that is preserved only when it is not itself power, not even compromised with power, and they *clarify* and rethink the situation, human behavior and life from a point of view that is not reduced to power and politics.

In this, Hejdánek agrees with Masaryk's "reversal of values" and refusal to regard progress and education as a means to self-fulfillment and elevating individuals and the entire state. Autonomy and salvation rely on morality and education, state autonomy is second in line, and the educated and moral person can manage without autonomy, even overcome it. Self-sufficiency derived from "false entities" such as the state or a political party cannot be any substitute for a basis of education, of cultural and intellectual autonomy: "For us, the political party must have, as well as its narrower program of politics, the firm basis of a broad cultural program. In the case of a small nation, even if politically autonomous, it cannot be otherwise if that political autonomy is not to be only the *pro forma* and political agent of a more powerful neighbor." 60

NOTES:

- 1 The publication was supported within the project of Operational Programme Research, Development and Education (OPVK), "Centre for Ethics as Study in Human Value", registration No. CZ.02.1.01/0.0/0.0/15_003/0000425, co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund and the state budget of the Czech Republic.
- 2 See e.g. Jonathan BOLTON, Worlds of Dissent: Charter 77, The Plastic People of the Universe, and Czech Culture under Communism, Cambridge, Mass. and London, England 2012, pp. 186–191.
- 3 See Bernard WILLIAMS, *In the Beginning Was the Deed*, Princeton 2011, pp. 42–50, on the dangers of leaving decisions about important questions to do with living (ethical questions) to experts and on the relationship of politics to this problem.
- 4 Ladislav HEJDÁNEK, Úvod do filosofovani, Prague 2012, p. 88.
- 5 Ladislav HEJDÁNEK, "Filosofie a společnost", In: Filosofický časopis, Vols. 1–2 1990, p. 72.
- 6 HEJDÁNEK, Úvod do filosofovani, pp. 88.
- 7 See Giorgio AGAMBEN, Homo sacer. Il potere sovrano e la nuda vita, Torino 2005.
- 8 Ladislav HEJDÁNEK, *Dopisy příteli III.*, Letter no. 6, p.46, *Dopisy příteli II.*, Letter no. 5, p. 26, Archive of Ladislav Hejdanek (ALH) 1978–1979.
- 9 Ladislav HEJDÁNEK, Kultura tváří v tvář politice, ALH 1965.
- 10 He does all this in the spirit of Masaryk and others who however did not, in the conditions of the "unjust" position of the Bohemian Lands in the Austro-Hungarian Empire, maintain their effort for civic emancipation outside national interests. For a more detailed account of the sources of Czech non-political politics in the unjust position of the Bohemian Lands, and thus in the struggle *against the state* see Miloš HAVELKA, "Nepolitická politika: kontexty a tradice", In: Miloš HAVELKA (ed.), *Ideje dějiny společnost, Studie k historické sociologii vědění*, Brno 2010, pp. 323–324.
- 11 For example, Ladislav HEJDÁNEK, "Naše cesta k lepšímu uspořádání společnosti nepovede přes žádné návraty ke starým pořádkům", In: Svazky pro dialog (ALH, 1981), pp. 8–30. Similarly, see Jan SOKOL, Etika, život, instituce. Pokus o praktickou filosofii, Prague 2014, pp. 17–18, according to which the capacity of the state must be shifted

- from the culturally ideological plane to the plane of institutional domination (law enforcement and security forces, administration) and the support of new civic virtues in which a minimum of social order, tolerance and discipline is based.
- 12 Hejdánek finds the same position and concept of non-political politics as early as in the work of the Czech 19th century intellectual František Palacký who describes the historical clash of an extreme escalating and expanding state power with the power of public opinion provoked however by this very expansion of state power. See HEJDÁNEK, *Dopisy příteli IV.*, Letter no. 3, p. 60.
- 13 Ladislav HEJDÁNEK, *Dopisy příteli*, Prague 1993, p. 43. HEJDÁNEK, *Dopisy příteli III.*, Letter no. 6, p. 46.
- 14 Ladislav HEJDÁNEK, "Reflexe v politice a otázka politického subjektu", In: *Filosofický časopis*, Vol. 6 1990, pp. 746–761.
- 15 Václav TOLLAR, "Emancipáty a problém lidských práv", In: Martin ŠIMSA (ed.), Nepředmětné výzvy české filosofie. K myšlení Ladislava Hejdánka, Ústí nad Labem 2013, pp. 345–346.
- 16 See for example HAVELKA, Nepolitická politika: kontexty a tradice, pp. 318–320.
- 17 Ladislav HEJDÁNEK, "Několik slov úvodem", In: Ladislav HEJDÁNEK (ed.), Filosofie a politika. Patnáct let nepolitické politiky. (Dokumenty z let 1963–1978), Prague 1978.
- 18 HEJDÁNEK, Dopisy příteli III., Letter no. 14, p. 54.
- 19 HEJDÁNEK, "Perspektivy demokracie a socialismu ve východní Evropě," in *Filosofie a politika*, AHL.
- 20 HEJDÁNEK, Několik slov úvodem.
- 21 HEIDÁNEK, Několik slov úvodem.
- 22 HEJDÁNEK, *Dopisy příteli III.*, Letter no. 14, p. 54. The "public" is, in antithesis to the emancipated elements, characterised by intellectual and democratic qualities and is in antithesis to the masses and the mass movements that Hejdánek fears. One can say that, from the point of view of current events internationally, non-political politics taking care of the free intellectual space in the above limited sense do not struggle so much with the state and politics intervening in spheres they should have nothing to do with, as with powers such as global corporations and other "players" on the global market. Globalisation and the market, like the state and technical politics, can be a serviceable element, only it must serve the individual and society in deepening and improving the quality of their lives (for example by worldwide surveillance of the maintenance of human rights, or the organised distribution of foodstuffs for everyone to have a share) and not to proliferate at their expense.
- 23 See HEJDÁNEK, Dopisy příteli, Letters no. 2 and no. 6.
- 24 See HAVELKA, Nepolitická politika: kontexty a tradice, pp. 317–318, p. 327.
- 25 See SOKOL, *Etika*, *život*, *instituce*, pp. 47–57, who points out how concepts of a truly human freedom that does not tire or become exhausted with time are born only through clashes with other great rivals, whereas at the private level one can speak maximally of "adolescent freedom", i.e., freedom as an absence of obstacles of release from every limitation, that is, of "freedom of choice" as the most extensive possible expansion of the opportunities of their life.
- 26 HEJDÁNEK, Dopisy příteli II., Letter no. 19, p. 40.
- 27 HEJDÁNEK, Dopisy příteli III., Letter no. 6, p. 46.
- 28 Tomáš HERMANN, Emanuel Rádl a české dějepisectví. Kritika českého dějepisectví ve sporu o smysl českých dějin, Prague 2002, p. 31.
- 29 HERMANN, Emanuel Rádl a české dějepisectví, p. 32.
- 30 HAVELKA, Nepolitická politika: kontexty a tradice, pp. 326-327.

- 31 See Fareed ZAKARIA, *The Future of Freedom*, New York 2003, which emphasises the need to link democracy with constitutional liberalism, which protects the dignity of the individual from pressure.
- 32 Jan PATOČKA, Tři studie o Masarykovi, Prague 1991, pp. 31–32.
- 33 HEJDÁNEK, Dopisy příteli II., Letter no. 13, p. 34. HEJDÁNEK, Perspektivy demokracie a socialismu ve východní Evropě.
- 34 Tony JUDT and Timothy SNYDER, *Thinking the Twentieth Century*, New York 2012.
- 35 HEJDÁNEK, *Dopisy příteli II.*, Letter no. 13, p. 34. Non-political politics themselves naturally need an ideological basis: "Of course the activity of the groups of defenders of human rights too needs its ideological background and its deep moral and spiritual hothouse if in the end it is not just going to slide into the single-track of the purely political, or even become the object of political manipulation." HEJDÁNEK, *Perspektivy demokracie a socialismu ve východní Evropě*.
- 36 HEJDÁNEK, Dopisy příteli II., Letter no. 13, p. 34.
- 37 HEJDÁNEK, Naše cesta k lepšímu uspořádání společnosti nepovede přes žádné návraty ke starým pořádkům, pp. 8–30.
- 38 HEJDÁNEK, Dopisy příteli II., Letter no. 17, p. 38.
- 39 HEJDÁNEK, Dopisy příteli II., Letter no. 13, p. 34.
- 40 HEJDÁNEK, Dopisy přítell, Letter no. 4, pp. 29-30.
- 41 HEJDÁNEK, Dopisy příteli, Letter no. 10, p.64, p. 66.
- 42 Jürgen HABERMAS, K ustavení Evropy, Czech transl. A. Bakešová, Prague 2013, p. 23.
- 43 HABERMAS, K ustavení Evropy, pp. 23-24.
- 44 HEJDÁNEK, Úvod do filosofování, p. 88.
- 45 HEJDÁNEK, Několik slov úvodem.
- 46 Erazim KOHÁK, Průvodce po demokracii, Prague 1997, p. 133.
- 47 HEJDÁNEK, Dopisy příteli III., Letter no. 5, p. 45.
- 48 Michael WALZER, Thick and Thin: Moral Argument at Home and Abroad, Notre Dame, Indiana 1994.
- 49 HEJDÁNEK, Dopisy příteli, p. 43.
- 50 HEJDÁNEK, Perspektivy demokracie a socialismu ve východní Evropě.
- 51 Jiří PŘIBÁŇ, Obrana ústavnosti, aneb Česká otázka v postnacionální Evropě, Prague 2014, p. 15.
- 52 Božena KOMÁRKOVÁ, "Svoboda občana od státu," In: Božena KOMÁRKOVÁ (ed.), Lidská práva, Heršpice 1997, p. 108. KOMÁRKOVÁ, "Nárok a zaslíbení," In: Lidská práva, pp. 99–100.
- 53 HEJDÁNEK, Perspektivy demokracie a socialismu ve východní Evropě. HEJDÁNEK, Dopisy příteli II., Letter no. 17, p. 38.
- 54 HEJDÁNEK, Dopisy příteli II., Letter no. 17, p. 38.
- 55 HEJDÁNEK, Dopisy příteli II., Letter no. 17, p. 38.
- 56 HEJDÁNEK, Dopisy příteli II., Letter no. 17, p. 38.
- 57 HEJDÁNEK, Dopisy příteli III., Letter no. 6, p. 46.
- 58 HEJDÁNEK, Dopisy příteli IV., Letter no. 4, p. 61.
- 59 HEJDÁNEK, Dopisy příteli III., Letter no. 16, p 56.
- 60 HEJDÁNEK, *Dopisy příteli IV.*, Letter no. 3, p. 60, where Hejdánek cites Tomáš G. MASARYK, Česká otázka, Prague 1894, chap. 75.