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TECHNOCRATIC UTOPIAS IN THE ETHIC CONTEXT

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The notion 'technocratic utopia' is concretized through the main ethic category of 'good' and other notions referring to the ethic context. The ethic content of technocratic utopias is analyzed, revealing ethic 'components' and their role and correlation. The general ethic ground for technocratic utopias is found. From the ethic perspective different technocratic utopias referring to different cultural spheres are compared and at the same time the shift of ethic emphasis in technocratic utopias is defined and clarified. Also the most important ethic principles stated in technocratic utopias are found out and described as well as the common structure of functioning of the ideal societies is outlined.

Key words: *technocratic utopia, good, (ideal) society, knowledge, social justice, science, technological progress, ethic foundation, ethic purpose.*

Plato had laid the ethic foundation of the technocratic conceptions. Correctly specified system is the unquestionable and common good for any technocratic utopia. According to Plato correctly specified system (the republic) – is the means to achieve the highest eternal idea – the idea of social justice. Thus, in the ethic aspect the idea of social justice is prior, while the republic is minor towards it. Plato's followers have a shift of the ethic emphasis and social justice becomes minor, collateral, resulting from the correctly specified system. Rationalism, antitraditionalism, unhistoricism are the main ethic principles of the functioning of this system. Whereas the mechanism of the system functioning presupposes the certain social differentiation with strongly pronounced hierarchy. The core of the system (specifying the format of the proclaimed sociocultural relationships and at the same time nourishing the system with the essential for its life product of the rationalism – wisdom or knowledge) is the social cluster – intellectual elite – the guarantee of the triumph of rationalism (in the work of Plato – these are philosophers, in the works of Bacon, Galbraith, McLuhan and Masuda – technical specialists, in Skinners' works these are psychologists-behaviorists and etc.)

The question of good and evil is as old as the hills, and if we try to find the earliest attempt to give an answer to this question following technocratic-utopian understanding, we will definitely deal with famous Plato's Republic. We find it reasonable to start with the earliest sample of technocratic-utopian thought not only due to chronological considerations but also because of the fact that the ethic foundation put by Plato since then has been used with enthusiasm by the other successors whose works as well as the work of the ancient thinker are critically marked as 'technocratic utopia'. So, technocratic-utopian ideas of Plato can be called 'classical'. In fact the ethic idea in the Republic is the central

core around which crystallize legislative, cultural, socioeconomic and other 'layers' of the ideal polis. To the questions 'What is the ultimate good?' and 'What is the ultimate evil?' the author answers rather positively and in set terms – 'social justice' and 'social injustice' – '...injustice is the greatest of evils which the soul contains within itself, while justice is the greatest good' [1; p. 153].

When approaching the Republic we see a very certain, logical, strict social system. Today alike sociopolitical systems are reasonably critically and cautiously called totalitarian. In order to realize the concept of the ideal polis suggested by Plato it's necessary to find its initial reference point.

As we have already mentioned above the main idea for the sake of which Plato suggested his sociopolitical system to be set – was the idea of social justice. According to the ancient philosopher this is the highest purpose of the unquestionable good – republic. Plato was convinced that understanding justice was available only for those who were endowed with wisdom, that is – philosophers. That is why proclamation of the privileged stratum as a power structure (here – philosophers) with the help of who (here it would be also fair to note that solely with the help of who) it was possible to reach the good – is quite logical and clear conclusion. At the same time Plato thought that '...wisdom and virtue are closely connected with each other, that wisdom is achieved through the serious, philosophical thinking and only through it. And therefore only philosophers can be wise and truly virtuous' [2; p.47-48].

So, in the classical scenario of technocratic utopia we face indisputable condition of autocracy as represented by intellectual elite – philosophers, who are politicians, teachers and judges. Art, education, privacy – everything is under control of the bearers of virtue. It is also worth noting class differentiation in the Plato's Republic; the society is clearly divided into ruling philosophers, warriors – men and women who ensure the defense against outer enemies (we may suppose – the inner ones either), and the class of landowners and craftsmen who ensure economic basis of the material welfare, the material foundation of the republic.

We could continue going deeper and deeper into the details of the cultural reality created by the ancient thinker, but already on the ground of the mentioned above the conclusion that the main emphasis, the attention of the author is paid to ideological constituent of the republic – to the power intellectual structure – suggests itself. The idea of social justice realized through the correctly specified system of sociocultural and political relationships is represented by the author as the highest good. While the material side, down-to-earth – if we follow Plato's thought, - plays quite minor role in functioning of the social whole.

Hence two main ethic components appear before us: correctly specified system (minor good) and social justice (prior objective good). It is interesting to scrutinize their role and correlation in technocratic utopias. So, the ancient philosopher as the highest idea, the highest good considers social justice which can be realized only in correctly specified system. Fogt notes this circumstance: '...how must the just republic be organized? Or: how to realize within the republic and through it the idea of justice? In such a general form Plato puts a question in his dialogue...' [2; p.28].

Starting with the *New Atlantis* written by Francis Bacon this guideline gets supplemented and enhanced with technique, and technological progress having just appeared on the horizon in the 17th century and only beginning to strengthen – is declared

as sociocultural panacea able to cure society from such diseases as economic crisis, social inequality and etc. In fact, Bacon ‘...suggested the first utopia where the social good is achieved through the development of the technical means and their effective use – the technocratic utopia, the very beginning of the direction of the utopian thought which led in the 20th century to the utopias of futurists and B. Fuller, to the dreams about intellectualized technocracy of Daniel Bell’ [3; p.44].

Bacon opposes a human being to nature, and supposes that with the help of science and experimental research society will finish forever with poverty, famine, diseases. Nature is considered to be something like a machine, blind and demanding effective control and direction by an intelligent human. Idyllic society of the enlightened and progressive island is represented by Bacon exactly this way, describing the purpose of its existence: ‘The aim of our society is cognition of the causes and hidden forces of all things; and expanding of the power of a human being over nature unless everything becomes possible for him’ [3; p.26].

Francis Bacon has much anticipated contemporary gene engineering, experimental physics, pharmacy, different branches of industry (including food industry), the author prophetically describes his New Atlantis where he mentions: ‘...spacious rooms where we artificially cause and demonstrate various natural phenomena, these are: snow, rain, artificial solid particles showers, thunder, lightning, and also living beings generation from air: frogs, flies, and some others’ [3; p.27]. The progressive role of science is totally indisputable, and some of the details described by the prophetic philosopher can seem quite familiar for the contemporary reader, namely: ‘With the help of science we make some kinds of animals bigger than they should be according to their nature, or, on the contrary, turn them into dwarves, impeding their growth; we make them more fertile than it is typical of them according to their nature, or vice versa, infertile; and also we diversify their natural color, temper and figure in different ways’ [3; p.28].

Moving away from the details of the idyllic socium we face an image of the system where as an unquestionable good comes out experimental science. Intellectual elite appears before us as a ruling structure which meets the challenges not only in production and application of knowledge but also in its revealing or on the contrary – classifying as secret for those who do not refer to the circle of the chosen ones, that is scientists. All ethic boundaries are also being stated and outlined by the research scientists.

Comparing the ethic purpose exposing in Plato’s Republic and Bacon’s New Atlantis we cannot but mention an interesting circumstance – in the latter work in the manner of intellectual technocratic tradition, there is a quite visible shift of emphasis on the ethic purpose from abstract ideas (social justice) to the certain purpose of development of the intellectual production. The achievement of the good seems possible not by means of wisdom, but through knowledge. In the ideal enlightened society having restrained nature, defeated diseases, prolonging its residents’ lives and improving quality of life – such concept as ‘social justice’ is something immanent, inevitable and obvious, logically resulting from its very perfection.

This ethic purpose is also visible in the technocratic utopias forming the sense of theories – in the theories of New Industrial, Post-Industrial and Information Societies. By the by, the core of the technocratic system in these conceptions is again intellectual elite – technical specialists. Galbraith even suggests a special term for its denotation – ‘technostructure’. In the earliest theories among the mentioned above – in the theory of

New Industrial Society politics becomes a bearer of the interests of the technostucture, excluding any other formats of political relationships. The system built up on the basis of gigantic corporations ruled by technical specialists provides the social whole with welfare. In this case social justice as an ethic purpose is obviously present in the very idea of the new society guided not by surface personal interests but instead by rational perspectives of the collective whole. And so, social justice is achieved through correctly and rationally specified system. It is worth noting that in the focus of the author's attention are the newest technologies (as a product of intellectual industry). Exactly new technologies (here it is also possible to put an equal's sign to knowledge) are the instrument in the hands of 'wise' engineers with the help of who the idyllic society functions. Such image of the good is the keynote of the theory of Post-Industrial Society suggested by Daniel Bell and supplemented by Masuda and McLuhan and consequently called as a theory of Information Society. Daniel Bell having stated the end of ideologies has as a supporting point of his theory of post-industrial society – the intellectual industry, whereas social differentiation is expressed through meritocracy, and the knowledge is, in fact, an unquestionable good which is not only the source of innovations, but also the basis for politics. The theory of the Information Society supplements the familiar plot with a technical detail – computer is henceforth a genuine 'steam engine' specifying an ethic purpose – the knowledge production. Intellectual elite can be called 'cybernetic' since it includes engineers and programmers whose task is no longer industrial production, but information technologies development. One more considerable detail – self-actualization is from now on one of the most important goods, that is the striving for succeed satisfaction. Besides, it is supposedly available for everyone: 'Information society – is the society with mass knowledge production, where computerization makes it possible for everyone to generate knowledge and improve himself' [4; p.33].

The technocratic-utopian principles and ideas have penetrated into practical sphere, leaving significant traces in the history of architecture and creating the totality of recognizable signs, and have made up an architectural direction – modernism. The technocratic ideology was based on the belief in technological progress as something inevitable, consistent, as a genuine good. Concerning implementation of this ideology in architecture – it resulted in the belief in the ability of architecture to specify and control social relationships; it was thought that by means of technocratic-utopian projects realizing with enormous scale it would be possible to specify and control mass consciousness.

Exactly the city became such a new space where technique and industrial production were born, instantly got implanted and got its inseparable part. Architecture, forming urban landscape, became a bearer of the same ethic purposes as had been identified by us earlier in the theoretical sphere of technocratic utopias. Rejecting the previous traditions the architects-technocrats proclaimed rationalism, functionalism and generality of consumption – the main principles of the contemporary architecture, specifying thereby the new architectural esthetics. The buildings – 'static machines' were intended to serve the rational system, and through its appearance and utility to prove and at the same time support the declared by engineers rational purposes, also being the part and the visual embodiment of the indisputable good – knowledge and technological progress, ensuring the existence of the ideal technocratic society. As N. Ellin has correctly noted in his

monograph: ‘...modernism employed imagery related to machinery, reflecting a faith in technology and a desire to create a technocratic utopia’ [5; p.24].

In conclusion we cannot but mention B. Skinner; in spite of the fact that the ethic core of his ideal socium is also the intellectual elite (but this time – as represented by psychologists-behaviorists) serving for the benefit of the ideal society, the idea of social justice as well as any other idea or feeling the very nature of which is explained through metaphysics or the psychological theories of personality and autonomy of some deep and mysterious human ‘ego’ – is absolutely denied by the author of the theory of the radical behaviorism. Skinner absolutizes the role of the correctly specified system only by means of which (as well as of any other external stimulus) a human being perceives the surrounding reality and acts this or that way. Here the unquestionable major good is again the correctly specified system, the roles of the scientific knowledge and progress – are also indisputable, although, the ideas of social justice and so on – are a mere illusion of good.

Conclusion: Plato had laid the ethic foundation of the technocratic conceptions. Correctly specified system is the unquestionable and common good for any technocratic utopia. According to Plato correctly specified system (the republic) – is the means to achieve the highest eternal idea – the idea of social justice. Thus, in the ethic aspect the idea of social justice is prior, while the republic is minor towards it. Plato’s followers have a shift of the ethic emphasis and social justice becomes minor, collateral, resulting from the correctly specified system.

Rationalism, antitraditionalism, unhistoricism are the main ethic principles of the functioning of this system. Whereas the mechanism of the system functioning presupposes the certain social differentiation with strongly pronounced hierarchy. The core of the system (specifying the format of the proclaimed sociocultural relationships and at the same time nourishing the system with the essential for its life product of the rationalism – wisdom or knowledge) is the social cluster – intellectual elite – the guarantee of the triumph of rationalism (in the work of Plato – these are philosophers, in the works of Bacon, Galbraith, McLuhan and Masuda – technical specialists, in Skinners’ works these are psychologists-behaviorists and etc.)

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Понятие «технократическая утопия» конкретизируется посредством основной этической категории «благо» а также иных понятий, относящихся к этическому контексту. Проанализировано этическое содержание технократических утопий, выявлены этические «компоненты», их роль и взаимосвязь. Найдено общее этическое основание для технократических утопий. С этического ракурса были

рассмотрены и сравнены различные технократические утопии, образующих различные культурные смыслы, в то же время выявлено и детально рассмотрено обстоятельство смещения этического акцента в технократических утопиях. Также отмечены и описаны наиболее важные этические установки.

Сокотун Ю.А. Технократичні утопії в етичному контексті // Вчені записки Таврійського національного університету ім. В. І. Вернадського. Серія: Філософія. Культурологія. Політологія. Соціологія. – 2013. – Т. 26 (65). – № 4. – С. 58–63.

Поняття «технократична утопія» конкретизується за допомогою основної етичної категорії «благо», а також інших понять, які відносяться до етичного контексту. Проаналізований етичний зміст технократичних утопій, виявлені етичні «компоненти», їхня роль і взаємозв'язок. Знайдені загальні етичні підвалини для технократичних утопій. З етичного ракурсу розглянуті і порівняні різні технократичні утопії, які створюють різні культурні сенси, в той же час виявлена та детально розглянута обставина зміщення етичного акценту в технократичних утопіях. Також відзначені й описані найважливіші етичні настанови.