

The essence of the idea of "liberalism"

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Abstract. This article examines some issues of the philosophical idea of liberalism from a scientific and theoretical position. In particular, an analysis of the opinions and views of famous European philosophers, including I. Bentham, J. Mill, B. Constant, A. Tocqueville, W. Humboldt, A. Stein, was carried out. It is noted that the fundamental principles of government in many countries of the Western world, including the United States, are based on the scientific ideas of liberalism. At the same time, the author comes to the conclusion that today, the ideas of liberalism are going through a difficult period and require deep scientific, socio-political, and cultural understanding from the standpoint of upholding individual rights and freedoms in modern democratic states.

Keywords: liberalism, democracy, philosophy, human rights, values of the Western world, USA, anthropocentrism, neoliberalism.

At present, in the process of transition to market relations in our country, it is important to follow the principles of liberalism in solving the economic and social problems with restraint and stability. With the honor of independence, as in all areas of our society, wide opportunities have been created to carry out objective research in various fields of science. In particular, in the fields of social science, especially in social philosophy, which is a component of this field, the doctrine of liberalism, which was interpreted as a reactionary, non-scientific trend, began to be scientifically researched due to independence, even if it was prohibited or studied in the former Shura period. In this chapter, the socio-philosophical and ideological features of the idea of "liberalism" and the modern conceptual foundations of liberalism are thoroughly analyzed.

Although the theory of liberalism is considered as an important component of world philosophy, it acquires its own essence and significance as a philosophical and

socio-political idea, and is distinguished from other ideas. As a proof of our opinion, we have compared the views of liberalism as an independent system of philosophical and socio-political ideas put forward in the works of English philosophers I. Bentham, J. Mill, French thinkers B. Constant, A. Tocqueville, German scientists W. Humboldt, A. Stein. let's go ¹ Liberalism, unlike other ideological-ideological doctrines, works on the basis of human natural rights in the regulation of socio-political relations in society. In this case, it is determined based on whether or not all aspects of civil law are compatible with human rights and freedoms, starting from the simple feelings of a person. In particular, within the framework of this doctrine, issues related to social, economic and political relations are also resolved on the basis of this criterion ¹. Therefore, in order to determine to what extent, the idea of liberalism is socio-politically important in today's information society, it cannot be studied simply through superficial research, but taking into account that it is a comprehensive and complex phenomenon, from the initial stages of formation to its modern interpretations, it is necessary to study it in depth and special it is possible to solve the problems that are waiting to be solved at a scientific level through research.

From the point of view of this doctrine, a truly liberal society is one that allows free movement for everyone, the free exchange of important social and political information through legal norms, the rule of law is ensured, private property and free enterprise exist, human rights and freedoms are guaranteed, and its economic and it is a society that seeks to satisfy its social and political interests.

Liberalism destroyed many old worldviews that were the basis for society, state, and people's way of life. In particular, the divine rights of rulers and the idea that religion is the only source of knowledge were abandoned. The fundamental principles of liberalism include: the right to life, personal liberty and property for every person; equality of all before the law; free market economy; a government elected by free and fair elections; openness of public administration. At the same time, the main function

¹Bentham I. Introduction to the Foundations of Morality and Legislation. — M.: ROSSPEN, 1998. — 415 p.

¹ Golovchenko A. V. Liberal party in the political spectrum of modern Russia (not the first political party SPS and "Yabloko"). - Autoref. diss... cand. polit. science - Saratov, 2008.

of the state is to ensure human rights and freedoms through the law. In its modern form, liberalism envisages an open society based on pluralism and democratic governance, protecting the rights of minorities. In some modern perspectives, it is considered possible to expand public administration. The reason for this is to ensure equal opportunities for all citizens, to eliminate differences in access to information and benefits. According to supporters of this view, the state should ensure everyone's success in fulfilling its obligations. In particular, it is one of the main responsibilities of the state to help the unemployed, to provide a place for the homeless, and to satisfy people's social interests and needs (the right to education, medical services, etc.). According to the views of liberals, the government should take into account the needs, interests and interests of the people under its care, and the political management of the state should be carried out with the consent of the majority. In this sense, according to the doctrine of liberalism, the most optimal and perfect system of state management is liberal democracy (this system can be described as a system of state management based on liberal ideas and principles).

Over the course of the 20th century, liberalism, adopting its own views from other doctrines, appeared as an increasingly viable and developing idea, maintaining and strengthening its influence and appeal. Such successes are largely explained by his reliance on unique principles and values. In particular, the economic, social, spiritual and political freedom of a person promoted within the framework of liberalism, the fact that competition is the basis of the socio-economic and political development of society, pluralism of views and ideas, the superiority of individual interests over the interests of society and the state, in turn, the priority of society over the state, citizenship These include the ideas and principles of the free formation of society and social relations, the formation of corporate norms and obligations, the separation of powers, and the formation of a legal state.

The essence of liberalism (fr. *liberalisme*) as a philosophical and economic theory, as well as a political doctrine and a system of ideological and ideological views, is primarily based on the idea of a person's free and independent management

of himself and his property ¹. In this sense, it is no coincidence that the concept of "Liberal" (lat. Liber) comes from the word "free", "freedom" and expresses its essence.

It is worth noting that liberalism has a rich and instructive history. Titus Livius describes the struggle for freedom between the plebeians and the patricians in his book "History of Rome from the Foundation of the City". Marcus Aurelius in his "Considerations" said, "In a state with its own law, equal rights and liberties are recognized for all; he also wrote that the government respects the freedoms of those under its control . ²During the Renaissance in Italy, the struggle for freedom and liberty between the independent city-states and the supporters of the Pope intensified. Niccolò Machiavelli describes the principles of republican government in "Reflections on the first decade of Titus Livius". The English thinker John Locke and the French intellectuals A. Voltaire, S. Montesquieu, Jean Jacques Rousseau and others thoroughly justified the struggle for freedom within the framework of the concept of natural rights.

It is known that the role and importance of liberal ideas in the struggle for independence in America was incomparable. In particular, the first Constitution of the USA was based on the views of the liberal state. It emphasizes the fact that state administration is based on liberal-democratic principles, rights and freedoms of all classes of the population, and their equality. The government formed during the Great French Revolution also tried to build its activities on the basis of liberal principles. In the constitution adopted in 1812 and opposed to Spanish absolutism, the term "liberal" was introduced for the first time and used in the sense of "supporters of political action" . ³By the end of the 18th century and the beginning of the 19th century, it became one of the advanced, leading ideas in almost all developed countries of that time. Of course, this process was not smooth, without conflicts and debates. Therefore, in different periods, specific approaches and concepts have been put forward regarding the concept of "liberalism", its essence, main criteria and

¹The latest philosophical dictionary / Comp. A.A. Gritsanov. - Mn.: Izd. V.M. Skakun, 1998. - 365 p.

²Skinner K. Freedom and liberalism. Per.s Engl. A. Maguna SPb. EGU 2006. - 120 p.

³The latest philosophical dictionary / Comp. A.A. Gritsanov. - Mn.: Izd. V.M. Skakun, 1998. - 365 p.

principles. According to representatives of classical liberalism, he supported the idea that all rights should be in the hands of individuals and legal entities, and the state should be limited to protecting these rights. The basis of classical liberalism is individualism, that is, the principle of the priority of individual rights and freedoms. Along with the promotion, justification and protection of human natural rights, he widely promoted the ideas of the Enlightenment.

A well-known representative of modern liberalism is the English scientist I. Berlin. According to Berlin, liberalism as a philosophical and economic theory and political ideology originates from the idea that man is free and has the right to freely use himself and his property ¹. It is noted in the Western literature that the idea of liberalism is a doctrine theoretically based on freedom of action for everyone, free exchange of politically important information, limitation of state and church power, rule of law, private ownership, and freedom of private entrepreneurship.

The roots of liberalism, which is a product of socio-political thinking of European culture, go back to antiquity. Because, during this period, its basis is subjective law, (first of all, the concepts of "private property rights" and the initial institutions ensuring the participation of citizens in state management and the legislative process were established ².

The issue of freedom of thought is also of particular importance in liberalism. In our opinion, freedom of thought is an important spiritual-intellectual condition and means of ensuring human rights, democratizing society, and raising a mature generation. Because it is the individual, the society, and the community organized at various levels that will have the opportunity to fully express their potential through free thinking. This opportunity is realized in the society through the freedom of the individual to choose a profession, entrepreneurship, labor activity, creativity and speech. In other words, freedom of thought represents an extremely important internal criterion, driving force, external reality, realization of the maturity of an

¹Berlin I. Philosophy is freedom. Europe. -M.: Novoe liter. review., 2001. 48 p.

²Berlin I. Philosophy is freedom. Europe. -M.: Novoe liter. obozr., 2001. 44 p.

individual and society. From this point of view, the main operating principles of liberalism are as follows:

- the principle of individualism, the freedom to choose personal values and rely on them in independent activities;
- the principle of non-interference, privacy;
- the principle of democracy is an important condition for the functioning of the system of social institutions;
- the principle of competition, the determination of the spirit of competition in material life;
- based on the principle of mutual compromise, tolerance in interpersonal, intercultural and inter-civilizational relations based on the idea of non-aggression, non-use of destructive methods, etc.

The analysis of scientific literature shows that the ontological principles of liberalism were formed on the basis of the gradual development of classical European anthropocentrism. Within the framework of anthropological views, man is interpreted as a universal and perfect being, whose nature is expressed by abstract-axiomatic rules (for example, the priority of such qualities as "spiritual man", "spiritual man", "economic man"). In modern liberalism, a person is characterized primarily as an economic being, and it is emphasized that his main characteristic is a subject of production and a consumer of products and services.

During the 19th century, within the framework of liberalism, new opportunities, criteria and principles for the development of social and political philosophy were sought, including the development of a system of advanced ideas and views based on the concepts of social Darwinism and the dialectical method. Therefore, at the same time, the ideas of creating equal opportunities in social and political life and implementing the principles of democratic legal administration were put forward and widely promoted on the basis of liberalism.

Liberals try to "economize" politics, since liberalism represents the fundamental interests of the main economic subjects (individuals, groups, social strata, firms, corporations) from a political point of view. The transformation of liberalism is

connected with the gradual development of capitalism, and later neoliberal and conservative currents were formed within it.

There are two methodological approaches to liberalism that can be described as follows:

First, within the framework of the approach as *an abstract-ideological concept*, it is manifested in certain historical periods in the form of a system of economic, political, social and spiritual values. Liberalism is inextricably linked with the principle of individual freedom and the ability of a person to realize himself independently, regardless of the traditions of the existing system. In this sense, it acquires universal significance and appears as an important value system for all societies, countries, cultures and peoples.

Secondly, liberalism is interpreted as a socio-philosophical and ideological-political trend, which is evaluated on the basis of specific historical criteria from the point of view of *concrete-historical approach*. First of all, it was created as a product of self-interest by representatives of the bourgeoisie, businessmen, and the middle class. Also, the principles of limitation of state activity, individual freedom, recognition of his socio-economic and political rights, and obedience of all to the law, promoted on the basis of the doctrine of liberalism, take a leading place.

As a result of the conceptual understanding of liberalism, a tendency to idealize it is revealed, while the concrete-historical interpretation brings liberalism into the social context and turns it into a mechanism for the realization of social, political and economic interests of certain subjects. It is clear from the above that the socio-philosophical and political character of the idea of liberalism covers a very wide and complex reality.

In a certain sense, the philosophy of liberalism can be described as a system oriented towards individualism, because in it individual people, individual interests, rights and freedoms are of primary importance. The role of social groups or organizations is determined by the degree of protection of the rights and interests of individuals and the level of assistance in the realization of the goals of individual subjects. Expanding opportunities for human well-being, happy life, full living and

development is the main goal of liberalism. From the point of view of liberalism, individual initiative and entrepreneurship form the basis of social order. In the vision of liberalism, a person should create his own personal happiness and a prosperous life without limiting himself to meeting material needs.

Liberalism takes under its protection and auspices the freedom of all types of activities aimed at the ownership and increase of private property. Liberalism strives to eliminate the behavior that restricts private initiative and entrepreneurship, which creates a sense of ownership of property, and takes measures to achieve it. However, it should also be noted that liberalism does not only protect profitable enterprises, but it supports any initiative, all types of social enterprises, because it sees in them the expression of the human personality and the factor of becoming rich, the development of human potential and abilities.

The main principles of the liberal individualist social order are expressed very briefly and clearly in the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen (1789), adopted during the great French Revolution, and they differ from the modern forms of the Declaration of Fundamental Rights. The following four principles reflecting the basis of liberal order are expressed in this Declaration: 1) freedom; 2) property; 3) security; 4) the right to protest. These rights constitute the meaning of the phrase "civil liberty". Such personal freedom rests on two factors:

- 1) elimination of any form of private legal subordination;
- 2) to guarantee unimpeded manifestation of personal initiative in any type of enterprises.

Throughout its development, science has always paid attention to the study and research of ideas that have gained fundamental importance for social development. In this sense, in ancient Greece and Rome, the system of political ideas that fought to create an opportunity for a person to freely express his activity in the socio-political life of society was called liberalism. ¹Although the etymology of this word means "freedom", "philosophy of compromise", the Greeks also understood it as an idea recognizing the priority of freedom in all spheres of social life. This interpretation

¹The philosophy of Mir. - M. 1991. p. 233.

was later applied to human activity in all socio-political relations. In fact, it was an effort to ensure the priority of individual interests, rights and freedoms.¹

Liberalism is interpreted in different ways in scientific literature, and it is approached in different ways from the point of view of attitude. In "The Idea of National Independence: Basic Concepts, Principles and Terms" (brief explanatory dictionary), liberalism² is interpreted as "a theory, practice, socio-political and ideological current that recognizes and supports the path of evolutionary development of society". From this approach, it becomes clear that although liberalism was formed as a result and product of the development of social and political life of the society, its existence or practice is not directly related to individuals, social and political events, but has a more viable nature than them. Although the authors of the definition rightly emphasize the wide range of manifestations of liberalism in time and space, they ignore the absence of strict standards in it. As a result, liberalism is interpreted as a purely political-ideological movement developed on the basis of a certain template.

The approach to liberalism, like all "isms", as a passing phenomenon is present in all literature to some extent. For example, Herzen describes liberalism in the following way: "Liberalism in general is a passing phenomenon... it is the need to clear the space between the old and the new construction³. " However, liberalism also has its own leading political ideas, such as the freedom and equality of citizens, the contractual obligations of the state, and in later times, "economic, religious, political associations in which no state can have moral leadership and practical superiority over another state" competing in politics.⁴ was formed on the basis of views on equal rights.

Since the emergence of liberalism, it has supported the ideas of critical attitude to the state, high political responsibility of citizens, religious tolerance, pluralism, and constitutionalism. At the same time, the liberal values formed within the framework

¹Pechchei A. Human qualities. M. 1985. p. 42.

²The idea of national independence: basic concepts, principles and terms" (short explanatory dictionary). -T.: New generation, 2002. - 67 p.

³Herzen A. I. Essays. T. 7. - M., 1958.S. 295.

⁴Selezneva E. V, Markelova L.V. Personal and professional self-improvement of civil servants. - M. 2003. S.38.

of this doctrine caused internal conflicts against its main principles. In particular, during its ideological evolution, liberalism determined a certain level and character of the state's intervention in the private life of an individual at each turning point in history.

In Europe, where the ideas of liberalism acquired their own significance and character and went through certain stages of development, this trend is especially evident during the early Middle Ages and the Renaissance. For example, in the formation and development of liberal ideas in Italy in the XV-XVII centuries, such thinkers as Niccolo Cusansky, Pico Della Mirandola, Leonardo da Vinci, Pomponazzi, Telezio, Bruno, Galileo, Cardano, Patritsi, Machiavelli, in France, Montaigne, Rame Charron, Leferd Etapple, Dole and the views of other scientists are important. Also, in the development of liberalism, Müntzer, Reichlin, Gutten, S.Frank, Kepler, who put forward advanced ideas in Germany in the XVI-XVII centuries, Thomas More, F. Bacon in England, Vives, Huarte in Spain, Erasmus of Rotterdam in the Netherlands, Copernicus in Poland and the humanistic views of his followers, In Switzerland, the teachings of Paracels and Kompensky in the Czech Republic have a special place ¹.

Another thinker who expressed liberal ideas in his own way is Erasmus of Rotterdam. He believes that the Creator created all people equally, and their qualities are not determined by their belonging to the generation of nobles or kings, but by their education, spirituality and level of knowledge. In his opinion, only a person who can subjugate his passions and inclinations, who has a deep understanding of his own soul, body, is the owner of high virtue. Only such a person can find the truth, the way to salvation, good deeds. According to Erasmus, three vices prevent a person from achieving this: ignorance that weakens the mind; physical inclinations and passions; weakness of human nature. Therefore, the essence of human activity should be to gradually get rid of these three vices, first of all, he should strive towards the truth and eliminate ignorance, then he should subdue his inclinations and passions, and

¹ Western philosophy. - T.: 2004.
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finally get rid of weakness. Only a person who has passed these stages can achieve spiritual and voluntary freedom.¹

In general, under the influence of advanced ideas put forward in the early stages of the Renaissance and Enlightenment, great changes took place in the economic and socio-political life of many European countries, a new situation arose in the interaction of production and social forces.

In this period, the thinkers who advocated liberal ideas abandoned the scholastic way of thinking, which had hardened in the study of natural processes, based on economic activity in social life, practical demands and needs of society, a critical approach to the spiritual heritage of antiquity, and abandoned it to theoretical-practical testing, scientific observation and experience. based on the need to rely on, gave impetus to the rise of liberalism to a new stage of improvement. Nevertheless, in the study of liberalism as a socio-political phenomenon, an object of research, an independent ideological current, the philosophical and political views of English thinkers J. Locke, T. Hobbes, J. Mill, A. Smith, who lived and created in the XVII-XVIII centuries, occupy a leading place. . In their teaching, the values of individual freedom, recognition of human rights, ownership of private property, free competition and entrepreneurship were theoretically based. The idea of individual freedom is put forward as the main criterion for determining the level of development of society.

Many internal currents appeared in liberalism, in which ideas about the most important directions and views about their implementation changed . By the 20th century Along with liberalism, a stream of conservative liberalism appeared, which interpreted its main principles in a different way, for example, advocated the direct intervention of the state in the process of socio-economic reforms.

The ideology of liberalism, based on advanced, progressive views, developed and implemented such ideas as individual freedom, legal state, civil society, separation of powers, and self-management, which are the basis of a democratic

¹Western philosophy. - T.: 2004. p. 64.

society. This ideology has become a leading factor serving the development of the society. As noted, the theoretical foundations of liberalism were created by I. Bentham, J. Mill in England, B. Constant, A. Tocqueville in France, W. Humboldt, A. Stein and other scientists in Germany. For example, John Stuart Mill in his works "On Liberty" and "Representative Government" stated that where there is freedom, there are as many centers of social development as there are individuals. The people directly participate in the administration and management of the government through elections. And the parliament should not only be engaged in making laws, but should also control the activities of the government, consider applications, and take into account different opinions about the authorities. While defending the rights of the individual, Mill believes that they can be implemented in relation to democratic and legal principles. The French thinker Alexis de Tocqueville gained a great reputation in scientific circles thanks to his works "Democracy in America", "Old Regime and Revolution". According to him, democracy is a society of equals, in which every individual has the same social position and basic opportunities to engage in economy, politics and other spheres. However, equality as a basic principle of democracy has its meaning only when it is mutually shared with freedom. According to the political structure, a democratic society can be either a republic or a monarchy. Unlike Mill, Tocqueville considers individualism to be a social evil inherent in democracy and calls for its elimination. In Tocqueville's view, he supports the idea that civil society can be built only by ensuring the harmony of equality and freedom of people.¹

F. Hayek and D. Mises, who actively defended the values of liberalism at the beginning of the 20th century, stated that any economic planning leads to monopoly, the main dilemma of social development is expressed in the conflict between planning (a form of tyranny) and competition (a symbol of freedom). In addition, they argue, pluralism can form mechanisms to control disadvantage by the majority. This is contrary to the basic principles of liberalism. That is why individualism, private ownership and the development of the free market, limiting the state's

¹Alexis de Tocqueville. Old system and revolution. M. 2004. p. 76.

intervention in the economy were considered to be the best way out of such a situation.¹

Based on these approaches, it can be said that at the same time, the strengthening of state management of the economy and the increase in the importance of social goals paved the way for the emergence of a unique historical form of liberalism - neoliberalism. Neoliberalism adapted the traditional values of liberalism to the economic and political conditions of the second half of the 20th century. It declared orientation to justice, moral principles and values as the most important feature and achievement of the political system. By this time, the difference between classical liberalism and neoliberalism on the most important issues began to become evident. For example, as B.Umarov noted, "Liberal democrats support unlimited civil liberties, while neoliberals promote the idea of the administrative system's intervention in citizens' lives, participation in income distribution, and direct participation in private investment control ²."

In the political program of neoliberals, special emphasis is placed on the ideas of consensus between the rulers and the ruled, public participation in socio-political activities, democratization of the decision-making process. Rather than mechanistically prescribing the democratization of socio-political life, they rely on pluralistic approaches to the exercise and organization of state power. According to R. Dahl, C. Lindblum and other neoliberals, the weaker the majority rule, the more it conforms to the principles of liberalism. ³The well-known theorist J. Rawls put the problem of equality at the center of liberal doctrine in the book "Theory of Justice". Emphasis on not only political, but more social equality brings this approach closer to the main ideological principles of social democracy.

Neoliberalism strengthened the position of this ideology on the world scale, as a system of political goals served to implement it in the life of Western countries. Today, it is manifested not as a specific program of action, but in the form of a worldview, general theoretical orientations. First of all, its general ideals and cultural

¹Rahimova D, Abulkasimov Q, Abdurahmanov O. Management system and leader. -T.: Academy, 2004. 9 p.

² Umarov B. The development of the idea of freedom in Western social thought (first book). - T.: Academy, 2010. p. 130.

³Giddens E. Sociology. T. 2002. Page 67.

principles are of particular importance. These values influence people's consciousness and worldview in most countries, change public political views, and form the basis of most national ideologies.

The huge historical changes brought about under the influence of liberal-democratic values made it possible for some Western theorists (in particular, F. Fukuyama) to emphasize that the world community is moving towards the "end of history", that is, it is leading to the inversion¹ of the states that are able to ensure the principles of equality and freedom of citizens in practice. However, on the other hand, many arguments have been put forward that show that this ideology is limited to a certain extent in the changing conditions of neoliberalism. Orientation of human activity to public types (political activism, entrepreneurship, etc.), interpretation of morality as a person's personal work (this situation leads to narrowing of the relationship between the individual and society, isolation of a person, alienation from society), different communities (people, nation, state, party and others) including hostility to interests, separation from nature, egoism of needs, autonomy of will and mind. They contradict the requirements of the time and do not allow us to accurately predict the leading trends characteristic of the development of post-industrial societies.

In general, the scientists who conducted research within the framework of these problems approached the question of the role of liberalism in the socio-political life and development of the society from a philosophical, political, legal and sociological point of view, and revealed their socio-political, cultural-educational and legal significance within the framework of the requirements and opportunities of the time. , liberal propaganda sought to justify that, in contrast to authoritarianism and totalitarianism, it is a progressive and progressive society, serving as an important step leading from authoritarianism to democracy. That is why the main principles of liberalism, the separation of powers, the rule of law, individual rights and freedoms, and the inviolability of private property, civil society, and the legal state have lost their importance even today.

¹Ergashev I. Political philosophy. - T., 2000. Page 26.
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To sum up, first of all, the essence and importance of each idea and ideology is determined by the ability to know social and political life events, scientific generalization, influence on social, spiritual and political development. The emergence of new ideas and ideologies is an expression of the fact that human knowledge about the objective world, spirituality and socio-political relations continues on the basis of inheritance.

Secondly, the idea of liberalism is a philosophical theory, a socio-political doctrine that serves to ensure human rights and freedoms. Moreover, issues related to liberalism are the most important topics of social and political life. At the present time, research on the study of liberalism is conducted in philosophy, political science, sociology, cultural studies, ethics and other fields of science.