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# TRIPERSONAL MONOTHEISM AS A FACTOR OF SOCIAL STABILITY

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## **Abstract**

A well-understood Trinitarian doctrine - in all the oikonomical aspects – has fruitful consequences in the social and political life, very different from those of the mono-personal monotheism, a doctrine that proved to be superior to that inspired by the antique polytheism and materialist atheism even from the apostolic époque.

In polytheism, the divine world is more powerful and pervaded by worship but less varied in values regarding people social aspect. On the other hand, the atheists may choose models of the good, including models of political absolutism and totalitarianism, or they may choose none of these.

The first implication of the Trinitarian monotheism is the fact that having in minds the Trinity Persons, one may reach a loving and free relationship in communion, some members of the society cannot directly deduce from its directions regarding the power, the administration or the social and economical structure issues. The second implication is the one that during each event, the creeds and the socio-political ideologies cannot be represented as ultimate values. The ideology becomes secondary and any thesis that declares itself, either a social ideology or a political one, being primary, is not accepted, in the main.

Any other interpretation or distortion of the socio-Trinitarian doctrine will have risky implications for the world. In the history of Christianity, it was natural for us to know the relationship between God and the world without ignoring the Persons of the Holy Trinity and the loving relationships among Them and to focus on the only God as a merciful legislator or as an omniscient and almighty creator. These images of God, which may have multiple social implications, make possible the understanding of the biblical text: God is Love.

*Keywords:* mission, church, society, philanthropy, salvation

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## **1. Preliminaries**

Democracy as a socio-political way of life was actively noted in the international area since the nineteenth century and it proves to be the perfect model regarding the relationship between people and their elected leaders.

The Church life and doctrine, taking a hand at the social issues faced by believers in their everyday life, has always supported this social *target* without

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promoting a political theology or a religious policy, as the Church was always aware that the kingdom and the standard of life it preaches, is not of this world (John 18.36).

What do we need the missionary space to debate the God-Trinity in relation to society? Wouldn't it be easier to deduce the Christians' behaviour in the content of the Holy Scripture, from the Church's sacred teachings or from the Fathers' doctrine?

## 2. Person and Trinitarian communion

Thinking socially, ever since its historical beginnings, Church has recognized and supported the principle of *self-determination* in the political life of world countries. The principle is based on recognizing the values within the political units that promote, or should primarily promote the quality of life, then the intellectual and cultural progress, human relations based on dialogue and openness to dialogue, on equal opportunities without discrimination.

These are the proper precepts of missionary evangelism (Luke 19.10, Romans 1.14). These principles are promoted by the third millennium Church, which is aware that "the affirmation of democratic form was not the fruit of a more or less triumphant starting point that emancipated from primitive forms of political cohabitation, un-adapted to its economic and cultural level, but it was, and it still is, the expression of a hardly gained moral and intellectual life choice" [1].

Why is Christian Trinitarian monotheism, or it should be, the perfect model for social and political relations? One possible answer might be: the Supreme Structure's interpersonal communion model based on interpersonal communion in love and in the same being unit, is the premise and the expression of unity of all people, dynamic people and open to communion and love, to dialogue and social peace, and for the Christian purpose of the Church mission is a Christological one: *on Earth as it is in Heaven* (Matthew 6.10).

There is no doubt that during the two thousand years of Christianity, true Christians have strayed from these sources of eternal life. However, God and the world remain two indisputable facts: one purely transcendent as a being, the other purely immanent.

"It is widely accepted that *ideology* goes through a period of crisis. In this regard, it was argued that the reforms undertaken define indeed *the end of the ideology epoch* through the fall of the ideological system of socialism. Such an interpretation may be wrong of course, if based only on the fall of walls or socialist regimes as the social formation and acceptance of the principles of various ideological systems preceded their association with such regimes or with raising the walls. Indeed, ideology's coexistence with state power was, as we know, a strange and contradictory historical comity that although offered both dimensions the pursued provisional interests, it contained the seeds of resistance and the prospect of breakdown. Indeed, the state power absorbed ideology its authority generalization, and ideology indulged this association in order to

impose their broader principles, with all its reserved or negative position towards the state and state authority. It is therefore easy to understand that breaking this association does not mark the ideology's end, nor releases it of liability, leading it to a period of internal crisis and to the inevitable attitude of its principles reformulation and modernization." [2]

Thirdly, while for a Unitarian monotheist would be illogical to support total obedience to an individual or a socio-political system, a Trinitarian personalistic faith is aware that it should not accept such a system as an undeniable socio-political model. Such a Unitarian model will have to struggle for an inter-personalistic Trinitarian foundation that cannot be replaced by any political theory. It will have to run after a divine command concerned about the socio-political environment, or after a perfect social model that can only be found in the Trinitarian Christian revelation par excellence.

It is clear that many Trinitarian Christians in the past have seen – for socio-political undermining the secular times – a triple-hypostatic *power* considered divine. Such development of social-ecclesial thinking was indeed expected initially, given that monotheism replaced first the polytheism as the state religion, at a time when autocracy was well established. Kings lacking the divine prestige were compensated by the parallelism of the only heavenly God with a single leader on earth. Actually, in terms of the trinity doctrine, this position was not illegitimate. It was not legitimate when it claimed to be directly validated by the Christian understanding of God-Trinity.

Democracy belongs exclusively to human history, to the society wishing for a free way of being and without any trace of totalitarianism. The democratic form of a political community's social organization is not the natural and definitive source of history [3], but the result of a voluntary and constantly renewed choice. This choice is restricted to freedom in defending the complex cultural, economic, social and spiritual interests, all practical principles underlying the natural coexistence between all members of a group, community and nation. As Christians, freely consented, choose an evangelical, Christological and Trinitarian lifestyle, citizens also choose a civil cohabitation based on freedom, with rules and institutions supporting the human spirit order. As soteriology, democracy also has anthropological roots, worthy of reflection.

Regarding this anthropological plan, only a further dilemma of democracy can be avoided, a dilemma already stated in its contemporary origins and consisting of this egalitarian dynamics' trend, present in the democratic regimes of *alignment* and of the human individual absorption by the mass. This tendency may cause the development of the same democracy to destroy a people's social, cultural and spiritual bases, inherited foundations and that caused its own birth, first that sense of freedom whereby the person claims its own autonomy in full freedom, and that establishes the foundations for an internationally constructive affirmation.

One possible answer on the free and loving communion of Trinity is based on the internal relationship of The Three Persons within Godhead, which oikonomically acting in relation to the created world, oikonomia that is accurate

itself, any such implication makes the triune God equivalent to a unitary, but pluri-personal divine being in any area of human life. God would not have revealed Himself as Trinity if it was not necessary for our life, and this revelation - once accepted and understood - should be considered as fundamental to the social life of humans created in the image of God.

At least theoretically and according to the Western essentialism model, we can also observe a distortion of the faith in Three Persons lacking any sense of communion: a Trinitarian God whose Persons are characterized solely by a common nature. In fact, this revelation distortion can lead to undesirable results in terms of Church's social thought: individualism, secularization, economic crisis, globalization, etc. Or, throughout Scripture we see the divine ancestry holily praised as monada and enada, for the simplicity and unity undivided beyond nature, of which, as from a unifying power, we and our divided differences also unite, focusing above the world, we gather into a divinely monad and in a unit that imitates God, but we see it also as Trinity, for the threefold hypostatic manifestation of fertility above the being through which it exists and through which all fatherhood in Heaven and on Earth is called [4].

### 3. Christology and democracy

Both democracy and Theology start from a common background: the truth. In Theology, Truth was made Man, divine-human person, a subject with two natures: Jesus Christ. Politics, although promoting the truth, turns it into ideology or party ideologies, paradoxically, ending up in permanent conflict. This is the ethical relativism and the thought current that led to extreme consequences, the theory of that Truth's existence as being not only a problem, but rather a risk to society's democracy (Matthew 10.34-35), from the moment when – it is sociologically argued - policy tends to tidy the conflicts and to achieve a reasonable *modus vivendi*, to coerce and to parenthesize man's great existential questions [5]. In terms of theology, Truth admits no tones, no compromises, which, in social terms, would inevitably end by dividing the social group, so, here is the logical conclusion of ethical relativism: it would be better to completely abandon the Truth issue, or whatever, to be totally excluded from the political sphere.

In the early twentieth century, a German philosopher, Hans Kelsen [6], argued that democracy could not last over time, if based on the absolutist conception of truth, a state that characterizes only the religious or metaphysical visions, dangerous for the genuine respect for the citizens' opinions and for the majority principle. In this perspective, he believes that there is only one critical-relativistic view of truth, compatible with democracy, even if such a view cannot provide a *foundation* of democracy, but it offers only a *conditional justification*. In the *kelsenian* picture, the choice for democracy does not appear completely rationally founded, but – like any other valuable choice – remains entrusted to individuals' responsibility. The one who does not believe in absolute chooses democracy; it does not refuge in secure ideologies, but takes the experience

movements constantly changing and accepts the risk of confrontation. Kelsen thus refuses any possibility of democracy's religious foundation, with explicit reference to the attempts led by Emil Brunner, Reinhold Niebuhr, Jacques Maritain. To *tragically* symbolize a possible conflict between truth and democracy, several times, he cites the Gospel story of Pilate querying the people to find out whether he should release Christ or Barabbas: *and the plebiscite votes against Jesus* [1, p. 12].

In Christian's relations with society, Orthodox spirituality is deeply marked by the Godhead's triune and personalistic nature, making possible Its knowledge of grace. Knowing God means loving Him as a merciful and lawgiver God, and in direct relationship with the world. Current syncretistic ideologies, although conceive God as an omnipotent and omniscient creator, most often see such a God's *relationship* with the world based on a number of purely speculative arguments and draw erroneous conclusions about His existence in relation to social environment, and Revelation is devoid of meaning. "Creation is not entirely put out of Trinity. However, it is put from the beginning, and it remains in the Spirit, not intermingling with Him, thus with the Trinity (pantheism). There is something paradoxical in the creation's way of being. On the one hand, it is not part of the Trinity, *or is beyond It*, on the other hand is not entirely beyond It (deism)." [7]

The Church mission sees Revelation as a central point of the divine loving and sacrificial action power of two great acts of power: the Act of God in relation to creation, and the act of the future action by which *He pushes human history to an end*, starting with the following second. Nothing happening in society is a necessity, which makes us believe that everything in history is at least desired by God who will also end it according to the purpose for which it was created.

At first glance, a Trinitarian Christian should perceive this assessment as *idolatry*. God is Trinity, and He has revealed Himself, and will forever determine our whole vision of Divinity as creative person, as He is knowable by His revelation and not due to the abstract philosophical considerations on the speculations about God's involvement or lack of involvement in the public life. This source is fundamental to us in understanding both the nature of God's power and the human history because of the Holy Trinity's oikonomical involvement. The common feature, related to our human conception of the power exercise in the public area, but also of the concept of God's power, is that the latter allows us know Him as *Monad* and *Triad* God in the social plan as well through a charismatic power working in the world to fulfil all positive ideals including the social ones. The autonomous human concept can add to this main idea a halo of idols-creator social self-affirmation, or a distorted mystical of self-fascination. When the creator of everything ends his creative process, tends to express the singular egoist's self-sufficiency. In God, the individual selfishness barrier is overcome by the intrinsic communal life of Theology and oikonomia.

Determining God's power in the world, which is reflected in the His very Revelation, requires careful consideration, because exercising the divine power within the social area, is also a review of this revelation. The authority of His power comes from a constant state of self-abnegation, modelled after His Incarnate Son, Who willingly accepted all the sufferings (Isaiah 53.4).

The synergy between the human concept of power, socio-political power especially, and the eternal power of God is best illustrated by the icons of where He wears a royal crown and high priest robes. At first glance, the picture seems to proclaim a union of religious and political authority. In fact, the evangelic Christ's leadership is open at both ends, one proclaiming that *My kingdom is not of this world* (John 18.36), and the other *Take eat, this is my body* (Matthew 26.26). God's power is exercised until the end of the ages, and His greatness in the social space, through Church, becomes apparent not in self-assuming, but in self-abnegation.

In the light of Trinitarian revelation, society should be seen not only as the ultimate expression of divine omnipotence, but also as a deliberate and personal restriction of omnipotence, designed to lead the world towards the ultimate goal.

"We believe in one God, in one principle, without beginning, uncreated, unborn, imperishable and immortal, eternal, infinite, uncircumcised, infinitely powerful, simple, un-compounded, incorporeal, incorruptible, impassible, immutable, candid, unseen, the fountain of goodness and justice, spiritual light, inaccessible; power that cannot be known by any measure, but being measured only by its own will. For it cans everything it wants" [8], both in the logical sense that all was done in history, cannot be undone, and in the purpose of world's perfecting through grace, an unforced, free and conscious completeness. *Creation's autonomy* that underlies all natural laws is not only an expression of God's creative power or just an expression of His creative love, but the expression itself of our free response as social beings.

#### **4. Secularization and ecclesial solidarity**

The secular phenomenon emphasizes this limitation and self-blur of God in His creation, and it claims to provide the basis for a well-known accusation that God accepts temporary social distress and the eternal hell suffering. This sad but real situation of the world, always divided by the consequences of sin, inevitably leads to our contemporaries' question: how is it possible for a society to exist and to last stable and just society, having free and equal citizens, while deeply divided by incompatible, though rational, religious, philosophical and moral doctrines? [9].

God answered this prosecution not by an act of power in the sense of human understanding, but by an *act of solidarity with the man*, with whose burden of suffering was burdened His Son. Simultaneously, God has revealed Himself as loving communion of Three Persons, with which people can have a personal relationship, starting a real experience, an experience different from that of a world that operates under the necessity of conclusive natural laws. The

Trinity promises a new social life, in and through Church, in freedom and love, ideal to be fully accomplished by its end. This is true eschatology. The truth in Christian Revelation, in terms of the glory of God, is that this glory is complete in heaven, and it will soon be complete on earth. Secondly, that the glory remains the glory of the God-Trinity, who voluntarily came in human social suffering. Thirdly, that the human will deliberations of the public area are of crucial importance, no matter how far their completion date, although in God's terms it is very close (John 14.3, 18, 28).

It is, however, little of what we know about the nature of such days, or about its stages of expression. In particular, there is no reason to assume that a final exercise of the divine destructive power will be included, because it would be the opposite of love deduced from the self-revelation of God-Trinity by His own Revelation (I John 4.8). However, there is a natural tendency for the socially persecuted to see in the exercise of God's eschatological power, at least in part, a revenge following the ruthless exercise of divine power (Matthew 25.41) on the second Parousia, and now advanced on earth by the suffering of so many innocent people.

Once the distinction between the human way of understanding God's power and God's way of exercising His power is understood, we can be freed from the illusion that the central political currents of history must also include God's work. Surely, God can, but certainly acts in history. On the one hand, His action is subjective due to human freedom that He does not want restricted in any way, and on the other hand, He guaranteed His creation charismatic freedom where man is both the crown and its priest. "Today, the conflict between individual and collective interests is still the main problem that every state hopes to solve and to survive. While *law* and legal mentality that can result from it, have been associated with the state control, almost all religions never tried such a human behaviour control. Combining religion with law and rationalism can lead to behaviour *contrary to society's interests*, but it has no cures to people's inner suffering (passions) that leads to this antisocial behaviour. In other words, such a *solution* is not enough. Even the Holy Fathers recognized that the Decalogue (the Ten Commandments) only succeeded to try a fundamental regulation of human society. However, even the laws builders of the most secular states will try to keep the crowd traditional values under the guise of morality and therefore the Church must continually watch over political life. This life does not need moral, but an offering of sacrificial love that is sensitive to the needs of every citizen." [10]

## **5. Conclusion**

Believers' social life cannot ignore the anthropological foundations of democracy. Contemporary reflection on this reality highlights the profound ambivalence of the relationship between Church and society, between Theology and culture, between reason and faith.

In terms of ecclesia, human complexity is always optimistic, but cannot ignore the socio-political perspective, which it sees complementary, not antagonistic, to the extent that it leaves an open door to the pluri-personalist transcendental spirituality, namely to the eternal Trinitarian nature.

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