

## CONTRADICTIONS OF LIBERAL DEMOCRACY AND VÁCLAV HAVEL'S *SOPHOCRACY*

### Summary

This dissertation tries to prove that the so-called philosopher on the throne can be a better ruler not only than dictators but also than contemporary liberal democratic politician.

Since the sixth century BC, when the human undertook a systematic and critical contemplation upon surrounding reality, she/he has begun to dream about political rulers to be guided in their doings by the imperative of reason. In principal, the higher level of spiritual culture characterized the rulers, the more likely their subjects were to live to a great age in relative peace. That is why for centuries it has been dreamed of a political system that is something like a kind of a *sophocracy*.

The most complete picture of such a sovereign, which fulfilled dreams about a sage in the crown, was outlined by Plato in his *State*. In his point of view, as long as the lovers of wisdom will not have royal power in the states, or the rulers will not begin to love wisdom honestly, there is no help for states and for the human race. Nevertheless, over the centuries, authority was enforced mainly by physical strength and not by reason. It was not until the twentieth century that democracy brought freedom and equality of rights, thanks to which political power became more rational.

Unfortunately, also contemporary liberal democracy is not free from fundamental contradictions that can bring about its collapse. The main contradiction is the increasingly smaller influence of citizens – who in the theory of democracy are the only legal sovereign – on political decision-making. This is accompanied by the enhancing influence of entities with no democratic legitimacy, e.g. global corporations that do not care about the common (public) good, but only about their own. These entities use the growing intellectual and ethical weakness of democratic politicians whose purpose is their own particular interest and not the happiness (good) of their citizens. This may indicate a slow system disintegration.

For this reason liberal democracy needs politicians who are wise enough to realize this threat. Of all the people in the history of the world who led political communities, to the Platonic ideal in the highest degree (among others, like

T. G. Masaryk and Á. Göncz) got closer the man who, paradoxically, never wanted to be a ruler. Václav Havel's thought is a critique of both Soviet post-totalitarianism and Western democracy. In his opinion both systems, though to a different degree, alienate a human trying to reduce her/him to the role of a machine's cog. Havel proposes that each citizen take individual and global responsibility for herself/himself and the whole world, because only in this way she/he can consciously exert real influence over political decisions. What is more, this is the only way to build a politics that aims – if possible – the happiness of every person. Havel realizes that in today's world this attitude is extremely impractical and very difficult to apply in everyday life. Nevertheless, he knows no better possibility.