Awaiting a Messiah. Normative narratives in European thinking after World War I (1918-1923)

Five years that followed World War I were a peculiar moment in European thinking about normativity. The reason was the experience of the Great War, treated as the metaphorical end of the 19th century. The previous order has fallen apart, both in the terms of formulas of power (end of dynastycism, disappointment with liberal democracy), institutions of social life - as Hannah Arendt wrote, the masses in post-World War I Europe „lost their home in the world - and the sphere of discourse, which become, in the words of Paul Valéry, filled with „the free coexistence of the most dissimilar ideas". In the dictionary of social sciences, the term which best describes this kind of moment is anomie.

Although often translated as lack of law, anomie does not mean that in this kind of moment norms are nonexistent. Rather: that the discord on what they should be occur, and, as Émile Durkheim put it, the effective framework regulating human lives and their *conscience collective* is lost. What appears, are the new proposals of how the social (therefore: political, moral, aesthetic) order should look like and what methods should be used to bring it about; what, to use Rainer Forst's term, should be its justification. In Europe after the Great War these new proposals implied the condition, when the continent started to, as Karl Mannheim put it, „await a messiah" - the new normative order. The goal of this project is to identify these proposals, systematize them into two basic currents and present as normative narratives.

This kind of narrative can be also called: „the story about the social order". The PI defines it as closing the space of objectivity. This closing is consequence of the process of justification: creating universally binding norms, which are considered such because they are perceived as rational. The process of justification takes place in what Karl Popper called World Three, in which live „assertions, such things as problems, arguments, and argumentative inquiries, and besides even commands, admonitions, prayers, treaties, and, of course, poetry and narration". Such a broad identification of what can be a normative narrative can identify as examples of such not only scientific works from the field of jurisprudence, political or social theory, but also non-discursive writing. Therefore, the main research questions of the project are: 1) how did World War I (and the years preceding it) lead to the destruction of normativity in European societies? 2) to what model of anomie can this destruction be fitted into, i.e. what conception of thinking about norms and their justifications is appropriate to capture *lustrum* of 1918-1923? 3) what projects of new thinking about norms and their justifications were born at that time; what were their antecedents and how did they influence each other?

The two currents the PI decided to specify are: post-Kantian and post-Nietzschean. As for the exponents of the first one, their works originate from the Kantian belief that *Sollen* is placed in the structure of the world, because of the rationality of the subject and its choices. As for the exponents of the second, from Nietzsche they take the idea of *Umwertung* in order to use it to develop the concept of giving norms a different legitimacy than they had previously had. In order to understand these trends, one should examine the works of their emblematic representatives. In the case of the post-Kantian trend these will be: Hans Kelsen, representatives of the British pluralist theory of the state, Léon Duguit and Ludwig Wittgenstein. In the case of the post-Nietzschean: the institutionalists (Maurice Hauriou, Santi Romano), Carl Schmitt, James Joyce and T. S. Eliot (a poet and thinker of American origin, yet active in Europe). While these thinkers will differ in their convictions on the sources of normativity, they will be united in the opinion that after the Great War the old ways of thinking about norms burnt out as incompatible with the changing reality; although they will associate this way with the 19th century, each will understand it differently.

The main output of the project will be eight scientific articles, as well as the manuscript of the book that the PI will submit to an international publishing house.