

Original Article



Power Needs Monitoring and Limitation, Now More Than Ever

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Abstract:

For some years now, large fortunes have no longer been counted in billions, but in hundreds of billions to soon over a trillion USD. Money gives you power. And power tempts people to abuse it for the benefit of their own ideas. This issue is fundamentally correct. Even in ancient Athens, laws were found to limit the unrestrained exercise of power. Democracy and civilization were born. Nothing fundamental has changed to this day. If the dominated sections of the population do not succeed in countering the hybris of certain elitist circles, humanity is threatened with a fall into the abyss of civilization.

Introduction

"Enough is enough" is a principle that applies almost everywhere - except when it comes to money and power. For those who have tasted these two poisons, they often develop an addictive character. Power addicts are often not bothered by the fact that their actions are dragging society as a whole, and therefore themselves, into the abyss. Voluntary renunciation on the part of the "elites" is certainly not to be expected. A great deal of harm has been done in history because the community of the ruled did not develop control mechanisms in time to set limits to power. In any case, "democracy" is often just a nice-sounding name that attempts to disguise the reality of preventing citizens from having a say.

Solon, the politician

Solon described this problem in Athens as early as around 600 BC. Solon worked as a social analyst, politician and reformer in a profound crisis of the Attic polis, but also as a poet, philosopher and orator. (1) In antiquity, Solon was counted among the seven wise men of Greece. Modern research is primarily concerned with his political thinking and actions as a pioneer of a development that led

to Attic democracy in the classical period of Athens. "Greed for money and an imperious mind that knows no bounds" - for Solon, these were the two core causes of the social decay of his time, a time that predates ours by two and a half thousand years and at the same time shares with our present day fundamental social developments of a growing dissolution of the boundaries of power. (2)

Like many thinkers and poets before him - and countless after him - Solon found the decisive driving force behind destructive social developments in the parasitic desire to have and be more, the greed of the rich and powerful. Because power strives for more power and possessions for more possessions. Once the desire for power and possessions has been awakened, it becomes an insatiable desire for more at the expense of others. It becomes a parasitic desire that seeks to free itself from all social boundaries and thus threatens to destroy the cohesion of a society.

These insights into the fundamental dynamics in the organization of a society are as old as the

history of civilization itself. Solon, however, went beyond this insight and saw the roots of destructive development in the inability of a

society to develop suitable social protection instruments against a parasitic desire for more on the part of small groups. (Figure 1).

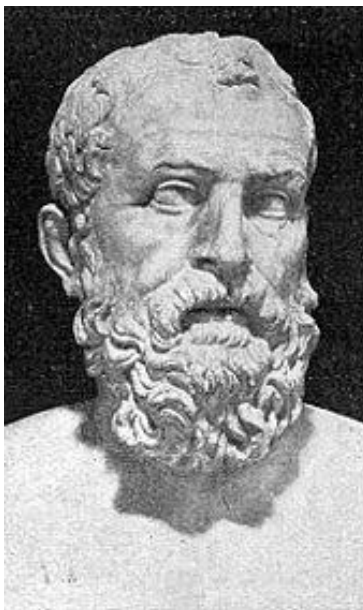


Figure 1: Bust of Solon

Solon's laws were recorded in writing on wooden tablets (axones). The popular lawsuit introduced by Solon opened up an additional dimension in this respect, as it was now also legally possible to assist a fellow citizen who had been wronged by another party by filing a lawsuit. Not only theft and robbery, but also the protection of the weak and underage in the event of embezzlement on the part of their legal representatives or the waste of assets, for example through inactivity, could be the subject of the popular action. (3,4) Community solidarity and the protection of the weak were at the heart of the Solonian legal system.

Power and property

If the pursuit of power and property is not limited and contained by society in a robust manner, it inevitably threatens to disintegrate a society. With the collective awareness that people themselves are responsible for the fate of their society, citizens also became aware of their obligation to resolutely oppose the hubris of a parasitic desire for more if they want to escape the nemesis of a

civilizational abyss. This insight was at the beginning of systematic political thinking. And this insight was at the beginning of targeted efforts to civilize power.

Solon's assessment reflected an insight that has to do with the nature of human beings themselves and the basic dynamics of every society that are rooted in them. Even the earliest societies were aware that they would destroy themselves if their order was based on law and the might of the strongest.

Such a society has always been seen as the dystopian antithesis of a well-ordered society. As a vision of horror, it has found its cultural expression in various allegories and not least in proverbs such as "The big fish eat the little fish". It is an allegorical depiction of a world in which the big devour the small and the strong live at the expense of the weak (see Figure 2). Pieter Brueghel the Elder (circa 1556) provided this in a drawing in 1556 that bears this proverb as its title. (5)



Figure 2: "The big fish eat the little ones". Drawing, Albertina, Vienna.

Civilization?

The civilization of power always consists of withdrawing recognition from the right of the strongest and replacing it with a right of equals - a train of thought that ultimately culminated in the guiding civilizational principle of democracy.

For obvious reasons, this guiding principle has been seen as the worst and most dangerous enemy of those who have (or want to have) great wealth and power since its beginnings. This has not changed in the present day, even if today this enmity tries to disguise itself with the mask of democratic pathos.

The law of the strongest is and remains the guiding principle, albeit mostly unspoken, of those who seek to gain great advantages for themselves at the expense of others. Today, however, it no longer appears with its true face of raw power, but hides behind the endeavor to usurp the law itself, which was developed precisely to protect the weaker from the stronger, for the purposes of power and to manipulate the consciousness of those subject to power in such a way that, without really being aware of it, they tolerate the right of the stronger or even give it their consent.

Since power aims directly at the conquest of consciousness, i.e. ideological power, the law of the strongest can develop a much greater destructive force than the natural law order of violence that prevails in the animal kingdom, where battles do exist, but not an intentional war or civil war to destroy the enemy. This is reserved for humans.

Bertolt Brecht, the poet

There was a poet in Germany who dealt intensively with this topic: Bertolt Brecht. In the allegorical image of the "order of the fish", the most powerful social destructive force would arise "if the sharks were people", as Bertolt Brecht demonstrates in his Keuner parable (6,7) with this title. For if the sharks were human, they would be able to exercise ideological power and make the small fish willingly swim into the greedy mouths of the sharks. If the sharks were humans, they would give the slightly larger fish posts, such as teachers, officers or civil servants, to keep order among the little fish. The famous quote "He who fights can lose, he who does not fight has already lost" comes from B. Brecht. (Figure 3)

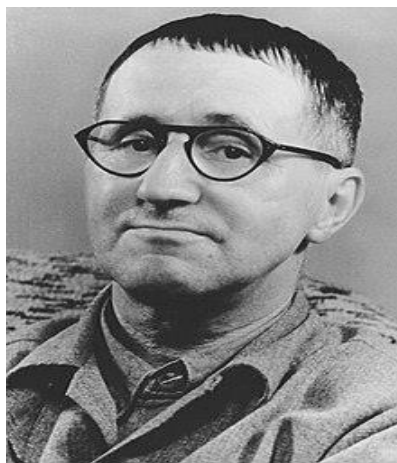


Figure 3: Photo of Bertolt Brecht

If the power of the strongest is able to gain additional ideological power over the weaker, it can gain an effectiveness never before achieved in nature, with all the destructive consequences of unlimited power. We are experiencing this today, where the unequal distribution of money and power has reached an all-time high.

Conclusion

There is no doubt that humanity today needs to fall back on great thinkers (politicians, painters, poets) who have described the dangers of the accumulation of money and power and who have shown ways of solving these problems. It is shocking that today we are in a situation in which the logic of monitoring and limiting power is not a significant factor. Individuals and groups use this to manipulate the masses of people. And only around 20% of people have the critical faculties and awareness to recognize this and demand change. If the power holders and the super-rich manage to take control of the media and do so with the help of artificial intelligence (AI), we

would experience a civilizational regression to a time thousands of years ago.

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