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SOCIO-POLITICAL VIEWS OF ABU NASR AL-FARABI

The study of socio-political views of al-Farabi acquires a greater relevance in contemporary context of increasing democratic reforms, creation of a legal and secular state, approval of harmony in society. At this point, the study of al Farabi's political philosophy, especially his teachings on politics, freedom, happiness, the necessity of mutual aid among people, his appeal to science, intellectual and moral perfection of human and society, are being overly actualized.

Particularly, the concept of political leadership of the thinker, his ideas about the virtuous society, justice, equality, keeping peace, preventing war, condemnation of unjust wars, are relevant today. In this regard, political philosophy and ideas of the thinker can be a valuable source for the political education of the younger generation.

Key words: Socio-political philosophy of Farabi, ethics, tracts, state, philosophy, motive, wisdom, humanity, saturated society, «virtuous» and «ignorant» city, etc.

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Әбу Насыр әл-Фарабидің қоғамдық-саяси көзқарасы

Фарабидің қоғамдық-саяси философиялық көзқарасын зерттеу қазіргі демократиялық қоғамды орнатуда актуальды болып табылады. Фарабидің саяси мұрасын, бостандық және бақыт жайлы, адамдардың бір-біріне мейірімділігі туралы, ғылымдарды зерттеу туралы ойлары, адами қоғамдағы адамгершілікті жетілдіру қазіргі таңда да өз мәнділігін жоғалтқан жоқ. Қазіргі таңда ғұламаның саяси көшбасшы және оның қайырымды қоғам, әділеттілік пен теңдік, бейбітшілікті сақтауға соғысты болдырмау, әділетсіз соғыстарды сынға алу өз мәнділігінен бұл күндері де айырылған жоқ. Бұл тұрғыда ғұлама ойшылдың саяси философиясы өскелең ұрпақты саяси тәрбиелеуде құнды құрал болуы мүмкін.

Түйін сөздер: Фарабидің қоғамдық-саяси философиялық көзқарасында, этика, трактаттар, мемлекет, фәлсафа, хикмет, даналық, адамгершілік, толыққан қоғам, «қайырымды» және «қайырымсыз» қала, т.б.

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Общественно-политические взгляды Абу Наср аль-Фараби

Исследование общественно-политических взглядов аль-Фараби приобретает большую актуальность в современных условиях, в период усиления демократических преобразований, создания правового, светского государства, утверждения согласия в обществе. В этом отношении исследование политической философии ал-Фараби, особенно его учения о политике, о свободе, счастье, о необходимости взаимопомощи между людьми, его призыв к изучению

наук, интеллектуально-нравственному совершенствованию человека и общества, чрезмерно актуализируется.

Особенно важными сегодня остаются концепция мыслителя о политическом лидерстве, его идеи о добродетельном обществе, о справедливости, равенстве, сохранении мира, предотвращении войны, осуждении несправедливых войн. В этом плане политическая философия и идеи мыслителя могут стать ценным источником в политическом воспитании подрастающего поколения.

Ключевые слова: социополитическая философия Фараби, этика, трактаты, государство, философия, мотив, мудрость, человечность, насыщенное общество, «Добродетельный» и «невежественный» город.

Introduction

The life and the work of great thinker of the Middle Ages is a rare example when an individual plays a key role in the cultivation of an entire cultural tradition and public opinion's shaping on the cultivation of society. There are eminent names in the mankind's history which have made significant contributions to the development of various branches of knowledge, moreover, they were the founders of sciences and are considered not only at the level of a domestic culture, but also in a global scale.

These include al-Farabi. As the Kazakh farabi-researchers denote, «enduring importance of al-Farabi's legacy is determined by the fact that many of his positions in the area of philosophy, sociology, logic, ethics, aesthetics, natural scientific ideas had a great influence on the subsequent development of social and philosophical thought of the people not only the East, but also of Europe in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance». Thus, al-Farabi can be regarded as a man of world, who during the searching of knowledge and truth, managed to overcome the existing differences in ethnic, cultural, linguistic, religious grounds. The proof of this is the fact that the philosopher despite being a native of the Turkic lands, became famous as Arab-Muslim culture's philosopher that deeply comprehended and popularized Greek philosophy.

He is the author of about 160 tracts covering a wide variety of disciplines. The problems of sociology, ethics, aesthetics, philosophy, logic, and others, which were relevant to that time took a great place in his writings. The roots of his philosophy, socio-ethical and aesthetic studies were progressive, humanistic ideas of ancient Greek thinkers. His writings had influenced to the development of the liberation movement, indigenous culture, on folklore of the peoples of the Middle and Central East.

In the socio-political views of al-Farabi as a central place takes the concept of the state, which would be headed by a group of people with the leader who

must possess the highest wisdom, allowing to properly rule over human society.

Although much time passed since the establishment of the political philosophy of al Farabi, his ideas and political philosophy largely kept their value and are essential to modern society. Several tracts of Farabi are devoted to public life doctrine («Civil Policy», «Aphorisms of statesman», «Treatise on the views of the residents of the virtuous city», «The way to happiness», «Designation of happiness ways» and other small tracts) [1].

Basing on the political and ethical ideas of the Greek philosophers, especially Plato and Aristotle, and using social ideas of the ancient East, Farabi developed a coherent theory of social structure. In his opinion, virtuous city (al-Madina, al fazila) rulers are philosophers, acting both as the leaders of the religious community. In virtuous cities it's aspired to achieve true happiness for all people, dominated by goodness and justice, condemned injustice and evil. Farabi opposed virtuous cities to ignorant cities (al-Madina, al-Jahiliyyah), where the rulers and the people had no idea about the true happiness and do not aspire to it, and only focus on physical health, pleasure and wealth [2].

«The tract about the views of the virtuous city's citizens» – one of the most mature works of al-Farabi. It was originated in 948 in Egypt. He expounded the doctrine of the virtuous city, which is headed by the philosopher. Al-Farabi believes that the goal of human activity is the happiness that can be achieved only by means of rational knowledge. Thinker identified society with the state. Society is the same as a human body. «The virtuous city is like a healthy body, all the organs of which help each other in order to preserve the life of alive being»[3]. Farabi creates the Doctrine of the virtuous city on the principles of Platonism, although Neo-Platonic and construction elements of Aristotelian teachings cannot be underestimated. Like any ordinary ideas of his time, the political concept of Farabi did not coincide with the theoretical acting canons of Arab

culture, which focused on real images of an Islamic caliphate [4].

In this respect one feature should be noted – «Civil policy» of Farabi develops and interprets Plato's thoughts about virtue in the light of the Islamic worldview, but the justice of the society construction connects to the education of citizens. Farabi says it this way: «By nature, every person is arranged so that for his existence and achievement of highest perfection, he needs many things he cannot deliver himself and for the achievement of which he needs the certain community of people delivering him separately anything from the set of what he needs»[5].

Another feature of the political thoughts of Farabi is geopolitical implications (Geopolitics – the science on controlling over the territory, over the laws of distribution and redistribution of spheres of influence (power centers) of different states and interstate associations. It belongs to the family socio-geographical sciences, as part of the political geography). He, like Aristotle, connects politics with geography, but it complements the territorial dimension, which contains not just a natural geographic component, but also the spatial and territorial factors that are not the same. For example, human society of Farabi is «a combination of many people in one place of residence», which can only occur as a result of the cumulative effects of these factors [6].

Research methods

In this article, in order to reveal the politico-philosophical bases and theoretical importance of Al-Farabi's concept «virtuous city», the authors used as a scientific instrument the comparative-theoretical methods of research. On top of that, researches of foreign and domestic scientists in this sphere were used as one of the bases for this research. Hermeneutic, comparative, stylistic methods were used as well.

Main body

Farabi divides human society into separate nations, differing from each other by the following differences: natural character, natural features (nature) and the language, ie speech. Thus, the foundation of ethnogeny was based by Farabi on natural conditions (nature, character and language of nations), which, in his opinion, are formed by geographical factors. In his great, medium and small societies are seen modern analogues of empire, mono-ethnic countries and policies. At the same time the great, and medium and small societies, in thinker's point

of view can be completely autonomous, politically independent, while providing maximum opportunities for improving people in deeds and thoughts («perfect society»), and the most «achievement» according to Farabi was possessed by urban community (7).

Farabi classified urban communities («City and Society») by the following characteristics:

- «The city and society of necessity» – the aim of which is «to give mutual assistance in the acquisition (of that), it is necessary for the existence and protection of the body ...»;

- «The city and society of exchange – are those (people) who help each other in achieving prosperity and wealth»;

- «The city and society of meanness – these are where people help each other in getting sensual pleasures ...»(8).

Farabi considers best city as Aristotle, «collective city», the one where every citizen is completely free to do what he wants. Its residents elect a ruler themselves who ruled them in accordance with the will of the people.

Perhaps, the idea of Farabi and unnatural sound naive in our understanding, but we should not forget the time in which Farabi lived and under what conditions his political concept of the ideal city was evolved. Time of Farabi was the time of the Arab Caliphate collapse and political instability, when every person deprived of state support and protection, sought help and support in the family, neighbors, urban community. Therefore, thoughts of Farabi based primarily on the most important considerations – the man and his problems. Based on this definition Farabi divides society in the qualitative and quantitative traits: total – small – town society, people – average society, and the society of humanity – large, and incomplete – family, village, city block. Perfection in human society is achieved through the growth in the number of people connected to each other in unity (9).

Farabi sees the structure of society similar to structure of the universe and it has the biological nature of human. Ruler's functions are similar to the functions of doctor who treats the body. Though, ruler does not treat the body but the soul. Here slips the idea that society is a spiritual community of people, although Farabi often speaks about needs, supplies and division of labor. Home or cell of the social organism has three relationships: husband and wife, master and servant, parents and children. Although Farabi calls family the most imperfect society, but in genetic terms he considers it as a primary cell. He says that every nation

characterized by three characteristic features: a natural disposition (morality, tradition), the natural character (psychological characteristics) and the related language [10].

Political ideals of Farabi are most clearly shown in comparing them to «virtuous» and «ignorant» cities as follows: 1) the virtuous city, 2) ignorant city, 3) an immoral city and 4) a lost city (between the last two as a mid-driven «fickle town»). Virtuous city is ideal. Ignorant city – is a reality, but, according to Farabi, it gives some hope for improvement if to engage in education, find a wise ruler, etc. But even among the ignorant cities there are those, to which al-Farabi gives preference as an opportunity to convert them to the path of virtue isn't lost: «... educating of virtuous cities and virtuous guides most likely possible and easy [feasible] in collective and necessity cities.» (11).

In accordance with Al-Farabi, in the city of ignorant, people never aspire to happiness, which represents the highest spiritual perfection. Among benefits people of ignorant city know those, which are only apparently benefits, such as bodily health, wealth, pleasure, freedom to indulge in passions, honor and greatness. Each of these benefits seems to inhabitants of the ignorant city as the happiness, but the greatest happiness consists in combining all of these benefits. Benefits that are opposite misery: body illness, poverty, lack of pleasure, inability to follow their passions and lack of honor.

The residents of necessity city are limited to those necessary things that are needed for the body existence: food, drink, clothing, sexual intercourse and help each other in achieving this. In city of exchange residents help each other in achieving prosperity and wealth, considering them as the purpose of life.

The residents of city of meanness and misery appreciate such enjoyment that would act on the senses and imagination, tend to excite and soothe fun pastimes in all forms and manifestations (12).

The residents of ambitious city help each other, but only in order to be extolled, praised and to be discussed, to be known to other people, for being glorified and exalted in word and deed, that they were in the magnificence and splendor – either in the eyes of others or to each other.

Overbearing city residents crave subjugation of others, do not want to submit to anyone, and their efforts are aimed to achieving the joy that brings victory.

The voluptuous city residents seek to ensure that each of them could freely do what he wants, does not restrain his passion.

Farabi considers overbearing city as the lowest type of ignorant city. The philosopher sometimes called collective city as a free city. It combines the features of all the cities: unites lowlands and uplands. At the same time, having emphasized the integrity of public life, Farabi said that the types of cities do not exist in pure form. The city's population consists of five categories: 1) the most worthy ones (feudal lords), 2) speakers – people involved in science, art and spiritual activities, 3) measurer (officials and technical personnel), 4) warriors and 5) richs (13).

Happiness – the central category of Farabi ethics – is not individual. In the virtuous city is fulfilled the people's happiness, goodness, justice and beauty. «The city where unity of people has the aim of mutual help, which finds a real happiness – is virtuous city and a society where people help each other in order to achieve happiness – is a virtuous society. People living in cities where everybody helps each other in order to achieve happiness – is a virtuous people. Therefore. the whole earth will become virtuous if people help each other to achieve happiness» [14].

As a theoretical prototype city Farabi had a «Platonic State» – a social utopia of antiquity, but there are some differences between «original» and «prototype». Just as Plato, Farabi divides people according to their native public benefit activities. But his division does not create the impression of sharp inequalities among people, they all have common goal – pursuing the happiness through self-improvement, it depends from the positions they hold. Plato gives the ability of perfection to rulers, philosophers, and in a lesser extent to guard soldiers, others' fate is to be an obedient tools in their hands, create wealth for them and for themselves and to have a first opportunity to engage in contemplative activities.

Farabi compares teacher and head of the family with a ruler, but he is enough realistic to understand that the education of citizens includes a moment of social, political, i.e. compulsion to fulfill social norms through the violence, armed forces, courts, etc. In addition to the method of persuasion you may resort, according to Farabi, to the «coercive methods used in relation to the rebellious and disobedient citizens and people who are not encouraged to volunteer on their own and do not obey the orders, this method is also adopted in relation to those who resists assimilation of theoretical knowledge, which they have begun to acquire» (15).

Subject of perfection of «the main member of the union city» is often a repeating theme in the work of Farabi. «Virtuous» city-state of Farabi is a model

of the best and natural communication in which a person can achieve the highest good and decent life. Key features of this city are the order and high moral character of its inhabitants, especially the rulers. Almost all of their formulated conditions, which must be satisfied by the ruler of a city, refer to Islam. In truth, Farabi put policies in one line with Islamic legal doctrine and religious canons. This could be seen as attempt to combine Greek philosophy with Islamic morality policy, the appeal to the analysis of power – all this quite naturally approached the Arabic philosophy to studying of the state actually existed at the time – the Arab Caliphate – in alliance with the Islamic legal doctrine (16).

Actual conditions of historical development, in which people were removed from the knowledge of the culture, in which it played the role of an object rather than a subject of history, led to the vitality of the utopian concept of «enlightened absolutism», which became so influential in the European social philosophy of the XVIII century. Thinkers from different ages harbored a keen interest in figure of politician and his moral or other characteristics, but in different ways. Moral characteristics given by them are necessary for a statesman – the love of truth, nobility, greatness of character, taken by themselves – are the ideal norm. In addition to reasons for educational utopia relatively to monarch – culture hero, the state power in the East can be denoted as a specific point. In virtuous state legislator-ruler or imam, spiritual mentor, connects the temporal power to the spiritual, a philosophical ruler combines the advantages of the first, of the head: has the theory and is able to implement it.

As you can see the virtuous city according to Farabi may exist due to certain structural organization – on the basis of «virtuous» ideas of education, moral purity and residents' decency, observing common canons of Islam, which in today's geopolitics are sometimes treated not merely utopian and unreal, but also sometimes as a spiritual position of Islamic fanaticism. But we should not forget that the «virtuous» mind modern civilization founded by thinkers such as Farabi and many other enlighteners, reformers, which sought to reorganize social life on a reasonable basis, even idealistic utopian (17).

Dream, as well as utopia, gives to person the image of the desired future and a hope. In political philosophy, this range of possibilities is sometimes reduced to a sharp line between positions. On the one hand, utopia is interpreted as a «line of totalitarianism» aimed at the suppression of human freedom in the name of future perfection, on the other hand – as the «principle of hope» without

which human existence is meaningless. A point of intersection of these trends is a person in his everyday existence. But this does not mean that dreams and utopia, as a reasonable idea of the human mind can not ever be implemented.

In the center of the philosophical system of al-Farabi located the problem of man, his intellectual and moral perfection, his desire to achieve freedom, to personal and social happiness, his search for a better future. Questions of the origin and functioning of human society, the state, its types, forms of governance, the role and place of law, principles of a virtuous state, as well as the necessary qualities and attributes for a man who endowed with authority (political leader). All of that wasn't actual only in past, many of his ideas have fundamental importance today. In this regard, the study of political philosophy al-Farabi is very significant.

Developed by al-Farabi philosophical socio-political doctrine, based on rationalism and aimed at finding devices fair and virtuous life, changing and transformation of existing devices on the political liberation of man, the disclosure of his spiritual wealth and opportunity, the justification of humanism and a number of other positions were the foundation on which was formed and approved on a Near and Middle East political philosophy (18).

Living in conditions of medieval thought, al-Farabi wrote about more than higher forms of communication: people, mankind, and the form of government – he thought it's independent, sovereign and supreme in relation to the nation. The basis of the organization of state apparatus puts the principle of hierarchy. Positions occupied by people are not depending on the nobility and wealth, but on ability.

Ideas of Al-Farabi, though have not been realized in practice in the Middle Ages, though it was he who raised the discussion of political issues and moral issues at the level of logical generalizations, thereby laying the foundation for the beginning of a theoretical and methodological research in this area. Problems, which received its impetus from the philosopher, occupied a very important place and enjoyed great influence in the philosophical and political systems of his associates and subsequent thinkers, which are widely appealed to his teachings to justify their theoretical ideas. His follower-scientists creatively developed his ideas in the new historical conditions. It should be noted that the thinker's followers' political concepts represent progressive movement of political philosophy on the uplink (19).

The study of political philosophy of al-Farabi acquires greater relevance in modern conditions

strengthen democratic reforms, creation of a legal and secular state approval harmony in society. In this respect, the study of political philosophy of al-Farabi, especially his teachings on politics, freedom, happiness, the necessity of mutual aid among people, his appeal to science, intellectual and moral perfection of man and society, overly updated. Particularly, the concept of political leadership thinker, his ideas about the virtuous society, justice, equality, preserving peace, preventing war, condemnation of unjust wars remain relevant today. In this regard, political philosophy and ideas of the thinker can be a valuable source for the political education of the younger generation (20).

Conclusion

What should be the leader? This question has troubled many famous philosophers, from ancient times. Plato believed that it should be a philosopher seeking knowledge, loving the truth and rejecting the lie, because only he is able to see an orderly, ideal being, where there is no injustice location and enter it into the social being. Antique thinker argued that only a governor can change the course of history and the presence of such a person in the community will ensure the achievement of yet unrealized ideas. According to Plato, a governor has a good memory, the ability to know and is friends with the truth, justice, courage and wisdom.

Following Plato, al-Farabi lists twelve innate qualities of the head of state, the imam, the Master. Let us consider some of them in the context of the personal qualities of the First President of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev. In his speech in front of students in September 2010, he noted that we are building a virtuous city that Al Farabi dreamed. According to al-Farabi, the first and most important thing is the quality of the head of the virtuous city – «absolutely perfect bodies, which powers are well adapted to carry out the actions they have to perform».

In other words, the head of state should have good health, or, as the Kazakh proverb «the first wealth is health». We know that our President is actively involved in sports such as tennis, golf, athletics, skiing, lead a healthy lifestyle and focuses its propaganda, especially among young people. It should be noted that this trend is typical for many heads of all modern countries in the world.

It is noteworthy that in the same speech, the President noted that our country's universities have excellent sports facilities and encourages students and teachers to engage in sports and take an active

part, following the example of universities in the world, famous for its magnificent sports teams, in the universiade and sports movements. We should note that among the world universities that pay more attention to the development of sport, our university – Kazakh National University named after Al Farabi is also included.

Al-Farabi emphasizes that the head of the virtuous city should be able to understand the nature of the fine and imagine all that he said, comprehending spoken to him in accordance with what the speaker has in mind, and with the way things are in themselves. This according to al-Farabi is perfect quality of mind. Nazarbayev has excellent knowledge in various fields of economy, science and the arts, and always shows a great understanding of the actual problems of these spheres. For example, we have often witnessed how he was having a wonderful memory, when they meet with the youth – scholarship «Bolashak» representatives of business structures, and well-known writers, poets, actors, always he reminded them about the issues discussed at previous events (21).

Al-Farabi notes that the governor should have an expressive style and be able to state quite clearly all that he conceived, to love learning and knowledge, achieving it easily without getting any fatigue from studying. It is well known how the art of oratory has our president, freely and clearly express his thoughts on the Kazakh and Russian languages equally. He constantly heads to knowledge, pays special attention on philosophy. The President is the author of «In the flow of history», «Epicenter of Peace», «Ten years equal to the centennial,» «In the Heart of Eurasia», «Kazakhstan's way», and other fundamental works.

It is necessary to focus on another imam's quality which is said by Al Farabi: determination at fulfilling of what he considers is necessary, at the same time be brave and not cowardice.

We can conclude that the philosophical doctrine of al-Farabi was and remains relevant at all times, the development of human society and every modern man will find in it answers to his concerns on all issues of society and individual development (22.96.).

It is also true that today's political initiatives in the form of the national idea «Eternal Nation» is in contact with the great scientist's ideas. Since 1997 the President of Kazakhstan gives to people a political messages and guidelines. National idea «Eternal Nation» appeals first and foremost to the entire nation, to all citizens of Kazakhstan, which has done by Al-Farabi in his time with his works.

We can say with certainty that the idea of «Eternal Nation» is a logical continuation of Plato's ideas about the ideal state and the teachings of Al-Farabi on the virtuous city.

To achieve happiness, according to Al-Farabi, residents of virtuous city should strive for humanity and discipline that will enable them to be happy in both worlds. In other words, it means the relationship and unity of the inhabitants of the virtuous city. The

same can be said with regard to the construction of «Eternal Nation». The future of our country and the state depends on each citizen of Kazakhstan, on his relation to himself, his family and his country. Unified national idea «Eternal Nation» should be close to people of all ages, across national, linguistic and religious differences. «Eternal Nation» is a national idea in the first place of all Kazakhstan at home and dream of all of our great ancestors.

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