

## DEVOLUTION OF UNIVERSAL HUMAN VALUES AND THE CRISIS OF LAW IN THE GLOBAL WORLD

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### Summary

This article highlights the problem of devaluation of universal human values and the role of law in their protection. It is noted that in the current globalized world, there is an intensive attack by world dictatorships on the democratic principles of life and the world order that was established after the Second World War. One of the consequences of this situation is the leveling and destruction of universal human values, which constitute the fundamental basis of human and social existence, are the basis and core of democracy. Putinism, as a regime repressive against a person and a people, has its origins in the historical past of Russia, the imperial essence of which has been preserved to this day. Since the large-scale invasion of Putin's Russia into Ukraine, contempt for universal human values has become total and obvious.

The modern era has created the image of a person as a multiple, decentered, constantly changing subject in a world without final truths and a single center. In these conditions, law-conscious citizens, mature subjects of law, and their civil society must show special activity in order to preserve and protect universal human values, which is their main task. The same task faces all governments of democratic countries – to make the principles and institutions of both national and international law effective, thereby preserving and protecting the basic principles of human coexistence.

**Key words:** law, values, universal human values, principles of law, human rights, global world, dictatorship, democracy, civil society.

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### 1. Introduction

The modern globalized world is experiencing the destruction of the established rules of coexistence, the principles of international law that were established after the Second World War. International law does not work, its principles are grossly disregarded by individual subjects of international politics, authoritative international institutions in the past react to these violations melancholy, ineffectively, and ineffectively. World dictatorships, taking advantage of this situation, are intensively attacking world democracy, shaking its stability, weakening its immunity. In this regard, the Putin regime, supported by the dictators of China, Belarus, North Korea, Iran, and European leaders Orban, Fico, and others, is exerting a particularly significant destructive influence on the international situation. Under the presidency of D. Trump, American democracy is slowly transforming into a fascist-autocratic regime, which, of course, has an extremely negative impact on the entire international situation. One of the extremely negative consequences caused by the above-mentioned alarming situation is the leveling, devaluation of universal human values, which constitute the core of a democratic way of life, the core of democracy and humanism. This leveling has been observed quite clearly since the end

of the 20th century, but recently, especially since the large-scale invasion of Putin's Russia into Ukraine, the disregard for universal human values has become total [Bratasyuk M. (2024); Dzh. Orvell. (2024); Eli Dzh. H. (2007); Enn Eppelbaum (2025)]. Of course, this problem should concern the international community, which should use all means of various plans to protect the foundations of human coexistence, which are embodied in universal human values.

## 2. Analysis of recent research and publications

Ukrainian and foreign scientists have developed a number of aspects of this problem, in particular, it was addressed by such authors as: A. Alexey (*Alexey, 2011*), T. R. S. Allan (*Allan, 2009*), E. Bystrytsky (*Bystrytsky, 2015*), M. Bratasyuk (*Bratasyuk, 2024*), S. Golovaty (Golovaty 2016; 2017), V. Gradova (*Gradova, 2013*), O. Hryshchuk (Hryshchuk, 2018; 2006), A. Ermolenko (*Ermolenko, 2025*), Yu. Lukoshkina (*Lukoshkina, 2024*), A. Mutus Khanov (*Mutus Khanov, 2012*), R. Padalka (*Padalka, 2017*), J. Orwell (*Orwell, 2024*), Eli J. G. (*Eli, 2007*), Anne Applebaum (*Applebaum, 2025*), E. McIntyre (*McIntyre, 2002*), F. Fukuyama (*Fukuyama, 2022*) and others. The mentioned authors worked on defining the concept of value, their varieties, the worldview and philosophical principles of their existence, determined their connection with the human and social dimensions of existence, their significance for human coexistence, their connection with law, morality, etc. Some authors also emphasize the threat to universal human values posed by a hyper-consumer type of person, etc. However, the problem of devaluation of universal human values in the conditions of the global world, in particular, in terms of the attack on them by world dictatorships and the ways and means of their protection, requires more intensive development.

Based on a study of scientific sources, highlight the problem of the devaluation of universal human values in the modern global world and show the importance of law for their protection.

## 3. Values as fundamental principles of human existence and a motivational factor

Value can be defined as something significant in general, either in a positive or negative dimension. A person sees the world through the prism of a value dimension. The current world is generally weighed by values. A person always has certain needs that are directed towards certain values as something important for his existence. Directing himself outward, a person gives preference to one or another fragment of reality, depending on its usefulness or, conversely, its unusefulness for him. He identifies himself, affirms his "self", interacting with a reality that is useful for him, or denying a reality that is useless for him. The subjective dimension of a particular object or phenomenon is an essential characteristic of value. That is, value expresses a person's subjective attitude to a particular fragment of reality and acts as a motivational factor. A person expresses his subjectivity and learns the world by making a choice in favor of certain values. According to the value dimension, one can reveal the human «I», his worldview, attitude to the world, etc.

Axiological issues originate from the philosophical concepts of the pre-Socratic period. Mo-Tzu defined justice as the highest value, since it is it that benefits people. Justice (dike) was already mentioned in the time of Hesiod (*Bachynin, Panov, 1999*). The ancient Greeks thought of law as inseparable from morality, which was created by the polis and lived in it. Before the law,

which should embody natural justice, balance, goodness, common good, etc., everyone should be equal: Solon, Pericles, and Aristotle. Law, which is a measure of justice inherent in nature, and the state, as a form of natural communication between people, according to Aristotle, are evidence of the perfection of man as a natural-political being. In the dialogue «Gorgias», Plato emphasizes the relationship of geometric equality with political ideas on which the order of the city is based – justice, prudence, and restraint (*Platon, 1995*). The Greeks created moralized law or legalized morality, which is the same thing (*Bachynin, Panov, 1999*). They were aware of the importance of individual values for polis life. Equality (isotes) formed the basis of Solon's concept of order. «Equality,» he argued, «does not create war.» Without equality, there is no polis, and, therefore, in this case, there is no friendship. The most famous Roman jurists: Paul, Modestine, Ulpian, etc. asserted in Roman legal culture the principle of aequitas, which synthesized such values as justice and equality, forming equal justice or fair equality. In their opinion, this principle constitutes the very meaning of law (*Bratasyuk V., 2005*). The Roman jurist Paul wrote: «The word «law» is used in several senses: first, «law» means that which is always just and good – as natural law». Celsus interprets law as «the art of the good and the equivalent» The principle of justice was a concretization of a broader idea introduced into Roman culture by the Stoic philosophers – the idea of a life in harmony with nature (*Bratasyuk V., 2005*).

In the era of modern times, J. Locke wrote that the laws of nature, expressing the rationality of human nature, «demand peace and security for all mankind,» and every person, according to the law of nature, has the right to improve «his property, that is, life, liberty, and property» (*Lok, 2002*). J. Locke emphasized that the basic natural rights of a person in a civil state cannot be alienated by other people. Any despotic power, by making people slaves, is worse than the state of nature with its, albeit insufficiently guaranteed, but generally equal rights and freedoms for all (*Lok, 2002*). And the basic natural law, to which the legislative power itself obeys, is the preservation of society and each member of society, he emphasized (*Kavalerov, 2002*). I. Kant argued that a person has only one natural right – justice and freedom, everything else follows from them.

F. Nietzsche in his works raised the problem of reassessment of values in a crisis era. V. Windelband in his work «Philosophy in the German Spiritual Life of the 19th Century» (1910) often replaces the concept of «value» with the categories of «norm», «absolute assessment», «universal law», emphasizing their existence outside of being as an eternal requirement or general significance that is above the personality and naturally necessary processes. From the standpoint of the naturalistic approach (G. Becker, T. Parsons, R. Linton, R. B. Perry, etc.). value is everything that contributes to the effective functioning of human nature, reveals the abilities of the individual, his interests, inclinations, etc. A. Meinong tried to form a general theory of values and prove that there are «personal» and «non-personal» values of a general nature: the values of Beauty, Goodness and Truth (Sartre J-P. (1943). J. Dewey in his works argued that value depends on the situation and does not exist as a property of objects and phenomena outside the activities of people in which these objects are included. Representatives of existential philosophy: M. Heidegger, J.P. Sartre, M. Merleau-Ponty, A. Camus emphasize the subjectivity of values. Especially relevant for them were such values as a person, his uniqueness, life, security, freedom, responsibility, etc. Here it is appropriate to quote A. Camus, who, asserting humanism, wrote: «I know that something still has meaning, and this is man, because he is the only creature who needs it ...» (Camus A. (1945). W. Dilthey, as a representative of cultural-historical relativism, raised the problem of axiological pluralism, that is, the diversity of equal value systems, thereby criticizing the general theory of values as an abstraction from the cultural-historical context and the absolutization of one system of values.

For Ukrainian thinkers T. Shevchenko, L. Ukrainka, I. Frank, M. Mikhnovsky, A. Sheptytsky, etc., the highest value is Ukraine, the fate of the Ukrainian person, people, nation, national existence, language, culture, state. In general, the whole world of Ukrainianness is a value for them. They turn to life and death, faith and hope, will, love and conscience, justice (truth), etc. Special attention of these thinkers is paid to an active nationally conscious human personality, which is the key to solving the problem of the freedom of the nation (*Bahriy, 2025*).

Modern anthropologists believe that values are subjective-objective in nature, acting as a unity of the objective and subjective, spiritual and material, individual-personal and universal, social and natural. Values can be distinguished according to the subjects that affirm and defend them. A special place among values is occupied by universal values, that is, important for every person, universally significant. They are especially important, since they lie at the heart of human existence, are the fundamental principles of the formation of a full-fledged person, human coexistence in general (*Alexi, 2011*); *Bratasiuk M., 2024*); *Holovatyy, 2015*); *Padalka, 2017*) ; *Bachynin, Panov, 1999*); *Kavalerov, 2002*). Among them are such values as: life, man, his dignity, honor, security, nature, food, clean air, communication, goodness, justice, freedom, equality, common good, private property, etc. These are values of both the material and spiritual plane. They are expressed by human rights, a number of them are enshrined in international legal acts and protected by them. They are enshrined in legislation at national levels. Today, man, his life, natural inalienable rights, honor and dignity are considered the highest value.

Appealing to the principles of law, we will inevitably come to the value dimension in law. These principles are based on fundamental, and therefore the most important values for human life. The mission of the principles of law, which are based on fundamental, universal human values, is to consolidate these values, affirm them, protect, defend, etc., since their destruction threatens the destruction of the foundations of human coexistence, the degradation of relations and people themselves. The principles of natural law are those immovable provisions that are accepted by the international community and that arose from the fundamental natural ties of human coexistence (*Alexi, 2011*; *Hryshchuk, 2006*; *Bachynin, Panov, 1999*). Among the principles of natural law are such principles as: respect for man, his human dignity, the principle of goodness, justice, freedom, the special value of human life, the principle of primacy, and, therefore, the superiority of law over law, legal equality, common good, good faith, reasonableness, etc. As we can see, law is related to a whole range of spiritual fundamental values. All these principles are components of the standards of law (*Bratasiuk M., 2024*; *Holovatyy, 2016*; *Holovatyy, 2015*). For positive law, in contrast to natural law, only that which is declared as an absolute value by the state authorities has absolute value. However, a democratic state based on the rule of law considers universal human values and the principles that enshrine them to be the essence and basis of law.

From the standpoint of jusnaturalism, law acts as a means of affirming human dignity, protecting a person and his life, and is not exclusively the embodiment of state (group) will, as in legalism – and this is where its humanistic potential is manifested. Due to its religious, metaphysical and ethical basis, natural law connects itself with culture, many of its values, and is interpreted as a spiritual and cultural phenomenon [1;4;6;8].

#### 4. The leveling of the universal and the crisis of legal values in the global world as a threat to human existence

The problem of values always comes to the fore in extreme conditions for society, in an era of moral anemia, devaluation of cultural tradition, discrediting of ideological foundations of social development. Once upon a time, the crisis of polis democracy forced Socrates to ask the question: "What is good?", and it became the main question of the philosophy of values. The modern world multiplies global problems, and in these conditions the value dimension of human existence comes to the fore more and more clearly. Post-industrial civilization, which gave rise to Artificial Intelligence and the concept of transhumanism, questions the very uniqueness of human subjectivity and our humanistic values (Bachynin, Panov, 1999; Sartre, 1943). Today, the problem of their preservation is particularly relevant. Nowadays, a hyper-consumer person prevails as a social type of person. The crisis of modern man is one of the particularly complex global problems. A modern hyper-consumer is a pragmatic and materialized person, for him all reality has been transformed into a commodity, his commercial thinking has penetrated all spheres of life, including sports, art, science, everyday life, relations with other representatives of society, etc. He has also materialized, objectified, transformed himself into a commodity, he is ready to sell his knowledge, skills, appearance, even body organs, if he receives an appropriate monetary reward for it. This type of person is called a situational or commodified "self", because it modifies itself in accordance with a certain situation. It changes behavior, roles, worldviews, thinking, if it is beneficial to it. Changing situationally, it renounces its self, blurs its "self", loses its identity, authenticity.

This type of person is characterized by decentration not only spatial or temporal, but also value. It is not characterized by a certain value stability. A person of the situational type, who is a hyperconsumer, chooses values depending on the situation in which he finds himself. Being pragmatic, oriented towards material values, he underestimates spiritual ones, which are very important for harmonizing relationships with other people. He created a modern civilization that has distanced itself greatly from the cultural dimension, from its spiritual and mental content. This person is not a creator of meaning, but a product of discourses, power, language, social practices. Identity becomes fragmented, multiple, situational. There is no single human nature, but only bodies, desires, roles that are constantly being rewritten. The freedom of this individual is paradoxical: a person is freed from great meanings and goals, but at the same time deprived of a solid basis for choice. Ethics becomes local, situational, without universal norms. The modern era has created an image of man as a multiple, decentered, constantly changing subject in a world without final truths and a single center (*Sartre, 1943*). In this materialized civilization, the culture of corporeality dominates, which has replaced the Logos. This gap is dangerous, because the spiritual and mental shallowing of social life is a path to nowhere.

History has repeatedly demonstrated this. Such values as human life, security, human dignity, honor, justice, individual freedom, equality, common good, national identity, etc. constitute the basic principles of human existence. Human action is not simply a reaction to external conditions, but the result of an internal choice formed by a system of values. The ideas of freedom, equality and justice determine the direction and content of this choice, transforming human activity into a conscious, morally responsible process and giving it social significance (Bystryts'kyi, 2015; Hryshchuk, 2018; Bachynin, Panov, 1999). The rejection of these values can and does lead to various social upheavals and imbalances. It is obvious that in the conditions of a globalized world, it is necessary to strengthen the protection of universal human values, their affirmation and popularization, so that the world becomes safer. Especially in the

current conditions, when racism has really become a planetary threat, and Trumpism is shaking world democracy from within.

The role of law in the protection of universal human values is particularly significant, since it itself is both a universal human value, without which a full-fledged human life is impossible, and a form of existence of a number of universal human values. First of all, a particularly responsible mission now lies with legally conscious individuals, who are the core of legal reality. They must make every effort to protect universal human values in law and law as a value. Today, international law is being destroyed before the eyes of the world community, dictators of various stripes are violating its principles, human rights standards, entire international legal acts, etc. At the international economic forum in Davos on January 24, 2026, Canadian Prime Minister M. Carney very correctly emphasized in his speech the new configuration of the modern world, in which universal human values, embodied in the principles of international law, have ceased to exist and are ineffective. All democratic governments of the world, faced with the real threat of a third world war, must unite their efforts and use all possible ways and means to preserve peace and security, human lives and freedom. Freedom, as the basis of human existence and culture, is now measured not only by the possibility of choice, but also by a person's ability to preserve humanistic values and human subjectivity in a world that is increasingly controlled by algorithms. The above-mentioned values should be more important than the technical euphoria that has now engulfed the planet. Apparently, J.-P. Sartre was not without reason worried, pondering the problem of freedom, when he wrote: «My freedom is the only foundation of values, ... absolutely nothing can justify me in accepting this or that specific value, this or that scale of values, as a being through which values exist. My freedom worries me precisely because it lies at the basis of values, and itself is devoid of a foundation...» (Sartre, 1943, pp. 78–79). Freedom is so important for a full human existence that there is no alternative to it. However, today the powerful of this world are, unfortunately, ready to exchange it for economic benefits for themselves and their surroundings.

## 5. Conclusions

To summarize, we can state the following: the modern world is experiencing very disturbing times, marked by an intensive attack by world dictatorships on the world of democracy, its principles and values. The old world order is breaking down, the rules of international law that have contributed to the stability of the world since the end of World War II are collapsing. Anxiety for the fate of universal human values should concern all progressive humanity. It is universal human values that are the fundamental basis of human and social coexistence. Their destruction and annihilation can lead to a catastrophe of a planetary scale, the end of the existence of humanity. Since law is one of the forms of existence of universal human values, its affirmation and protection is one of the primary tasks of modern governments and peoples.

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