

**G. W. LEIBNIZ'S PHILOSOPHY AND
PRACTICAL PROJECTS**

Licentiate thesis

Markku Roinila

4. LEIBNIZ'S POLITICAL THOUGHT AND DIPLOMACY

4. 1. Leibniz's Political Thought

As a political thinker Leibniz was not a very original one and in comparison to Grotius, whom Leibniz supported, or Hobbes and Pufendorf¹, whom he opposed, Leibniz is clearly of second class.² He also differs from them in many respects : for example, he never accepted the existence of a man's natural state or Hobbesian radical nominalism.³ In his metaphysics the monads are related according to the pre-established harmony and because of that there cannot be such a state as a natural state between humans.⁴ As a political councilor, however, his political skill and common-sense was highly respected and he had a large part in the ascension of George I to the English throne.

Leibniz was committed to goals, which were not only and strictly political. As Patrick Riley argues, he politicizes theology because God is conceived as the just monarch of the "best" world, and he theologizes politics because justice is Christian "charity" regulated by wisdom.⁵

This tendency is clear in Leibniz's criticism of Pufendorf's *de Officio Hominis et Civis juxta Legem Naturalem* (1673). Pufendorf argues that human society is almost entirely a

¹Leibniz said of Pufendorf : "Vir parum Jurisconsultas, minime Philosophus".

Schneider, *Justitia Universalis*, p. 79.

²"...No one can pretend that Leibniz's political writings are equal to those of such contemporaries [Hobbes, Spinoza and Locke], or even to his own writings on logic, metaphysics and theology, they are at least intriguing and worthy of some attention." (Patrick Riley) R, p. ix.

³One should keep in mind, though, that both Hobbes and Locke assumed the natural state between humans as a fiction, not a real, existing state. Viikari, 1700-luvun keskiaikaa ja feodalismia koskevan keskustelun piirteitä (In : Viikari, *Historiallinen ajattelu, edistys ja yhteiskunta*), p. 20.

⁴Den Yul, *The Aristocratic Principle in the Philosophy of Leibniz* (Journal of the History of Philosophy XV (3) 1977), p. 282. As Nicholas Jolley notes : "For Leibniz, then, Locke and Hobbes are united by their subscription to the theory of equal natural rights, and by their deduction of such rights from materialistic theory of man." Jolley, *Leibniz on Hobbes, Locke's Two Treatises and Sherlock's Case of Allegiance* (In : Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz : Critical Assessments IV, ed. R. S. Woolhouse), p. 371. There is no such a thing as equal minds (ref. tabula rasa) because of the identity of the indiscernibles-theory.

⁵Riley, *Leibniz's Universal Jurisprudence*, p. 11-12.

human artifact and God has provided human with a sociable nature which enables them to enjoy the goods He has created.¹ Leibniz could not accept Pufendorf's voluntarism, since if it was accepted, one must agree that there is a standard of justice, which is independent of God's will.²

"...it is enough, indeed, that we be subject to God just as we would obey a tyrant; nor must he be only feared because of his greatness, but also loved because of his goodness..."³

The main emphasis in Leibniz's critique concerned the theory of moral obligations, which we shall not discuss here. According to J. B. Schneewind, Leibniz was not able to see the significance of the complex point Pufendorf was trying to make.⁴ His critique became widely known, however, when Pufendorf's translator, Barbeyrac, included a large part of it in his French translation of Pufendorf's work.⁵

Leibniz was more conservative than most of other social philosophers of the time. He chose the role of the *l'honnête homme*, a respectable man, who is faithful to his superior officials and his prince and would influence to political matters only through them. Other virtues of this kind of man were (according to Leibniz) *curiosité* (curiosity) in sciences and *charité* (charity) in social matters. A lot of the conservatism of Leibniz's political views can be explained by reference to the external facts of his position. He was, after all, a representative of his prince. The Christian natural rights theory, which emphasized the love of order, had also an influence on Leibniz.⁶

¹Schneewind, *Pufendorf's Place in the History of Ethics*, p. 124 & 145.

²*Ibid.*, p. 145.

³(*Opinion on the Principles of Pufendorf*) R, p. 72; Du IV.

⁴Schneewind, *Pufendorf's Place in the history of Ethics*, p. 147.

⁵Saastamoinen, *The Morality of Fallen Man*, p. 95-96.

⁶Schneider, *Justitia universalis*, p. 5. The most famous representatives of this thought were Grotius, Rachel, Zentgrav and Prasch. *Ibid.*, p. 4.

Leibniz's political orientation is clearly compatible with the most usual definitions of absolutism. The following version is presented by J. P. Sommerville : "Absolutists were thinkers who held that the prince is accountable to God also for his actions within his realm, that his commands ought to be obeyed by his subjects provided that they do not conflict with Divine positive or natural law, and that he (and these acting on his command) ought never to be resisted actively by his subjects. A prince could be a specific person or persons, for though absolutism generally preferred monarchy to aristocracy and democracy, they seldom claimed that it was the only valid form of government."¹ The ideal of honestas, presented before, includes all these features and Leibniz accepts all these maxims.

Aristotle was usually referred to by the supporters of absolutist power whereas Hobbes or Spinoza were favored among those, who preferred the other model of a citizen - a libértiné (libertarian). The libertarian would not care about authorities and strive for changes independently. Leibniz opposed these libertarian (who were often atheist) movements vigorously all through his life.² He said Hobbes to be "the most advanced example of a natural philosopher who had abandoned God and treated religion as a mere civil convention."³

Plato was a strong influence to Leibniz - he always insisted that the government belongs to the wisest - or at least, the wisest should act as advisers to the governors. While the English liberalism concentrated mostly on the state as a juridical authority defending natural rights (and particularly property rights), Leibniz concerned himself with social well-being.⁴ For Leibniz the science of the pleasant is medicine, that of the useful is politics, and that of the

¹Sommerville, *Absolutism and royalism* (In : The Cambridge History of Political Thought 1450-1700, ed. J. H. Burns and Mark Goldie), p. 348.

²Leibniz's attitude to Spinoza shows a certain double-faceness. He rejected publicly Spinoza's *Tractatus* without reading it but got secretly in touch with the author. Later, in 1775-76 he read the work thoroughly and met with Spinoza later in the Netherlands. Wilson, *Leibniz's Metaphysics*, p. 85.

³Wilson, *Leibniz's Metaphysics*, p. 51.

⁴R, p. 26.

just is ethics.¹ He also often defines moral philosophy as practical or political philosophy. The connection between the politics and the ethics is strong.

Jaime de Salas Ortueta sums up Leibniz's position neatly when he compares him to Spinoza : "Leibniz was the person who governs, while Spinoza is essentially concerned with the relation between authority and the individual, and the various ways in which the latter can preserve his or hers freedom."² Leibniz's attitude to Hobbes and Spinoza is clear in "*De Schismate*" (1683), where he states that Hobbism and Spinozism are "opinions worse than heresy".³

Leibniz's attitude to the Glorious Revolution in 1688 shows clearly his conservatism. Leibniz supported Sherlock, who opposed Wilhelm III with theological arguments. When John Locke showed the weaknesses of Sherlock's arguments, Leibniz was also embarrassed⁴. Later he thought Locke's *Two Treatises* as a provocation to a revolution. Leibniz's *Theodicy* allows no resistance against the greatest of princes, God Himself, but according to Jolley, it would be wrong to suggest that Leibniz subscribed to a theory of total non-resistance. He thought the question was extremely difficult, but admitted that resistance was allowed if the prince was deliberately destroying the whole community.⁵ Leibniz never denied that the first task of the prince is to provide security to his citizens.

"It is certain...that the absolute power of kings is more tolerable than the license of individuals and (that) nothing is more certain to bring about

¹Riley, *Leibniz' Universal Jurisprudence*, p. 21.

²Ortueta, *Ethics and Politics in Spinoza and Leibniz*. (Studia Spinozana 6 (1990) : Spinoza and Leibniz), p. 202.

³Riley, "*New*" *Political Writings of Leibniz* (Journal of the History of Ideas 55 (1) 1994), p. 154.

⁴Jolley, *Leibniz on Hobbes, Locke's Two Treatises and Sherlock's Case of Allegiance* (In : Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz : Critical Assessments IV, ed. R. S. Woolhouse), p. 366.

⁵Ibid., p. 372.

tyranny than anarchy."¹

A certain conviction can be found in all Leibniz's political action. It states that public benefit will produce individual benefits - in other words : one should strive for common good in order to be happy. In a fragment "*On Natural Law (Über Naturrecht)*" he says : "A most perfect society is that whose purpose is the general and supreme happiness."² Leibniz's political and social thought offers us a unifying goal, which almost all of his various efforts are related : finding a scientific, legal, religious and moral basis for social order.³

The best politics produces common good. This utilitaristic notion includes also Leibniz's conception of justice as charity of the wise. The society should be based on universal jurisprudence, where the reason and the power are balanced. Leibniz says : "If power is greater than reason, he who possesses it is either a lamb who cannot use it at all, or a wolf and a tyrant who cannot use it well."⁴

This is why Leibniz suggested that princes should employ councilors and advisers, who have reason, curiosity of the sciences, honor, charity towards the poor and loyalty towards their princes. According to Leibniz, the man in whom reason is greater than the power to use it is "overpowered". An overpowered person has the capability to excellent moral and political reasoning, but does not have the power to carry out the results of his reasoning in practice. Therefore they should be employed as councilors and those who have power more than reason should listen carefully to their councilors. The philosopher also thought himself as

¹"...il est seur aussi que le pouvoir absolu des Rois est plus durable que la licence des particuliers, et rien n'est plus propre à introduire la tyrannie que cette anarchie."
(A letter to Burnett) R, p. 24; G III, p. 278.

²"Die vollkomste Gemeinschaft ist, deren absehen ist die allgemeine und höchste Glückseligkeit"
D I, p. 414; R, p. 77.

³L, p. 1.

⁴"Ist die macht grösser als der Verstand, so ist der sie hat entweder ein einfältig schaf, wo er sie nicht weis zu brauchen, oder ein Wolf und Tyrann, wo er sie nicht weis wohl zu brauchen."
FC VII, p. 31; R, p. 24.

such an "overpowered" person.

The princes who would strive for common good would benefit, besides immortal fame, in having content subjects. Here Leibniz is referring to the German aristocracy : "Persons of leisure and means, instead of amusing themselves with trifles, with criminal or ruinous pleasures, and with intrigues", will find their satisfaction in becoming virtuous.¹ "...One is obligated in conscience to act in such a way that one can give an accounting to God of the time and powers He has lent us."²

In "*New Essay called Agenda*" (1679) Leibniz emphasized the importance of prince's good will and tolerance :

"...a good will or a rightful intention consists in the fear of God and in piety, or the love of God and of one's neighbour. For that reason one must neglect nothing which serves God's honor...[one must] especially love justice, be hard on oneself and indulgent to others...[and] always be mindful of the general good..."³

These kind of fragments have caused some discussion about Leibniz's political state theory. Douglas Den Yul says that Leibniz was not a monarchist because he thought that one man was not fit enough to take over the whole government. Den Yul finds Leibniz in favor of aristocratism when Hobbes supported monarchism and Spinoza democracy.⁴

It is true that Leibniz in his later years wrote some bitter fragments about international politics and Louis XIV in special and mentions that in aristocracy the government is given

¹R, p. 25.

²(*Memoir for Enlightened Persons*) R, p. 108.

³Cited in Riley, "*New*" *Political Writings of Leibniz*. (*Journal of the History of ideas* 55 (1) 1994), p. 150.

⁴Den Yul, *The Aristocratic Principle in the Philosophy of Leibniz* (*Journal of the History of Philosophy* XV (3) 1977), p. 285.

to the most wise and the most expert, but I still find it hard to accept Den Yul's opinion. Leibniz's political writings are full of Augustinian notions of the City of God, where the monarchy is absolute. We saw earlier that Leibniz's fear for anarchy was so great that he was ready to accept almost any kind of prince (this belief was put to test in Louis XIV's case, however!). If Leibniz thought of aristocracy, it would seem to me that the Platon's Republic is the closest comparison. And there the rulers would be philosophers in the disguise of councilors.

Other commentators have also questioned Leibniz's view of society. Werner Schneiders considers monarchy and aristocracy as alternative models in Leibniz's political thought¹ and according to Gaston Grua, Leibniz mentions in various connections the republic or society.² Here Grua is probably speaking metaphorically and Schneiders asserts, that the City of God is a republic in a symbolic sense, but is still a monarchy - Leibniz speaks in many fragments of *Respublica* meaning a commonwealth. An enlightened prince, who governs with love, would lead such a commonwealth.³ This ideal of enlightened prince or maybe even a constitutional monarchy is always, except in the *Caesarinus Fürstenerius*, present in Leibniz's political writings.

Still, Aristotle is a strong influence of Leibniz, but the influences came mostly through Augustine and Thomas Aquinas. One might say that Augustine's concept of a just and good prince in *De Civitate Dei* is more actual in Leibniz's writings than Aristotle's views of aristocracy. Specifically Aristotelian in Leibniz's thought is his methodology of "saving the phenoma". There was always something right in previous theories and one has only to combine the best parts of different theories. As this method was common (especially among

¹See Schneiders, *Respublica optima*, p. 58.

²Grua, *Jurisprudence universelle et théodicée selon Leibniz*, p. 371.

One notable exception in this respect is the fragment of *Societas Philadelphica*, where learned scholars would eventually control the Netherlands and Europe. This society would be based on principles, which closely resembled the ones in aristocracy.

³This model was also applied by the Sun King, Louis XIV.

the conservatives) in its time, it is no wonder that Leibniz often referred to it.

Leibniz's political writings are mostly of a very practical nature. The writings are usually focused on practical matters, the ones, that can be dealt at once. Theoretical discussions follow from practical actions. This is evident in his theory of state as well : The state must guarantee to subjects not only their safety (Hobbes!) but also their happiness. Both the perfection of the mind and the preservation of the body are needed. Leibniz's theory is the case of institutionalized charity.

A natural society is based on following elements¹ :

Church (the Pope and the Emperor as the leaders of the Respublica Christiana)

State

Households (oikos) (parents, children and servants)

"If everything in the world were arranged in the most perfect way, then, first of all, parents, children, and relatives would be the best of friends, and whole families would have chosen an art of living...would abide in it and continue to perfect themselves in their art and direct their children to the same end. They would marry people of the same calling in order to be united through education from their parents. These clans would make up guilds or estates out of which cities would arise; these would enter into provinces, and all countries, finally, would stand under the Church of

¹R, p. 29.

God."¹

The relationship between the church and the state is not clear in this model. It seems that the states would form a federal union, which is led by the Pope and the Emperor. This would require that both of these leaders work together for the same goal. Leibniz probably thought that once all have found their true conviction and understood the value of the common good, all differences would vanish and the promotion of the glory of God would be understood as the primal factor in politics. This kind of model is hardly an aristocratic model as Den Yul claims.

4. 2. Leibniz as a Diplomat

The Thirty-Years-War ruined German economy, culture and politics. Recovery, however, was surprisingly quick and population losses were compensated by the beginning of the 18th century.² Manufactures and economics took longer to recover, but peace was secured for a long time to come and culture slowly began to flourish again.

There was no shortage of princes : the Peace of Westphalia had spawned about 300 principalities, which were governed by ecclestical or mundane princes.³ All the princes had a sovereign status and their own foreign politics, currency, customs etc. It happened that a prince of the empire was in war against the Emperor as a foreign prince, but had a duty to provide soldiers for the imperial forces. The empire included also the hereditary lands of the

¹"Wenn alles in der Welt aufs wollkomste eingerichtet wäre, so würden erstlich eltern, Kindern, Verwandte, die besten Freunde sein, und ganze Familien eine gewisse Art zu leben erwählet haben, und sich in ihrer Kunst vollkommen machen, und ihrer Kinder Erziehung durnach einrichten, und von einer Beruf sich zusammen verheirathen, um schon durch die Erziehung gleichsam wu der Eltern vereinight zu sein. Diese Geschlechter würden Zümste oder Kasten machen, aus denen würden Städte entstehen, solche zu seiner Landschaft triten, und alle Länder endlich unter der Kirche Gottes stehen."

(*On Natural Law*), D I, p. 418-19; R, p. 29.

²See Press, *Kriege und Krisen Deutschland 1600-1715* (In : *Neue Deutsche Geschichte*), Bd. 5, p. 270.

³*Propyläen Geschichte Deutschlands*, Bd. 5. p. 22.

Hapsburgs in Germany and Bohemia and the Spanish (from 1714 Austrian) Netherlands.¹

The Emperor was also troubled by the war against the Turks, which lasted from 1671 to 1739. The critical moment occurred in 1683, when Kara Mustafa laid siege on Wien and was scarcely won by Karl of Lothringen and John Sobieski of Poland.² Eugene, the Prince of Savoy, to whom Leibniz wrote his *Monadology*, became famous in this long conflict.³

The cities were governed by princes and their courts instead of merchants. The towns of their government were build around the castle of the prince and thus began to adopt the regular form so typical to the baroque city. The glory of Louis XIV was admired and imitated by many German princes. The court of the Hapsburgs was no exception. This became very expensive in the smaller principalities and the princes were not very popular amongst the common people.

This imitation produced also some improvements : education was understood as important and several princes boasted on having great elementary schools. Disintegration of the German states provided also lots of different opinions and libertarians or dissident found always a friendly patron, which was impossible in France.⁴

The most important principalities in Germany were Mainz, Bavaria, Prussia (Prussia became a kingdom in 1701, when the Elector Frederick III declared himself (after negotiations with

¹*Propyläen Geschichte Deutschlands*, Bd. 5, p. 23.

²*Ibid.* p. 235-236.

³*Ibid.* p. 237.

⁴Hertz, *The Development of the German Public Mind*, p. 22.

the Emperor) to King Frederick I¹), Saxony (Elector Frederic Augustus I (King of Poland as Augustus II Strong) governed 1694-1733) and Hanover, which was admitted Electorship in 1692 because of the loyalty shown to the Emperor.² France in particular tried to support the German status quo by supporting powerful princes against the Emperor.

The Emperor was elected since 1356 (till 1692, when the Duke of Hanover was promoted to Elector) by seven German princes known as Electors, who claimed to be successors of the Roman senate. These Electors consisted of Prince-archbishops of Mainz, Cologne and Trier and four lay princes, the Catholic Duke of Bavaria and the Protestant princes of Saxony, Brandenburg and Palatinate. The most important organ of imperial government was the Imperial Court Chancery - the others were the Emperor's legislative body, Diet or Reichstag, which passed laws, raised taxes and declared wars, College of Princes (200 members) and the weak College of Imperial Cities.³

The weakness of the empire was essentially due to the fact that the Electors had to agree almost unanimously if some action was to be taken. These strong princes had their own foreign policies and alliances which could be others than the Emperor. He was powerless if the princes chose to disagree with his politics.⁴ The empire did not fit into any of the classical categories derived from Aristotle : it was neither a monarchy nor aristocracy - even democratical elements were present in the form of self-governing free cities.⁵

Leibniz's political goals were evident even in the Mainz years. The German culture should rise to new heights after the setbacks of the Thirty-years war and the harmony of Europe should be restated. The Holy Roman Empire, which was torn apart by the Thirty years war

¹The Electorship was a result of a long diplomatic intrigues. Ernst August threatened to unite with France against the Emperor, which led to negotiations where the solution was finally found.

Propyläen Geschichte Deutschlands, Bd. 5., p. 242. Gagliardo, *Germany Under the Old Regime*, p. 256. Of Leibniz's influence on this matter, see R, p. 38.

²Ingrao, *The Hapsburg Monarchy 1618-1815*, p. 17.

³*Propyläen Geschichte Deutschlands*, Bd. 5, p. 23.

⁴*Ibid.*, p. 22.

should be brought back to its former glory.¹

The criticism towards the Holy Roman Empire was powerful at this time. In 1667 a very popular pamphlet "*De statu imperii Germanici*" appeared. The author, Severinus de Monzambano (which turned out to be Samuel Pufendorf), described the state of the empire as monstrous.²

In a memoir "*Bedencken welcher Gestalt umbeständen nach auf Festen Fuss zu stellen?*" (1670) Leibniz (acting as a ghost writer to Boineburg) wanted to establish a pure federal state formed by the greatest princes of Germany. The princes in this model would be independent and have one vote each. The confederacy would have its own council, funds and an army.³ It is not certain how strongly Leibniz was committed to these thoughts, since he seems to have been mostly a ghost-writer of Schönborn and Boineburg in this matter⁴. This memoir is indeed a little peculiar compared to other Leibniz's political writings and it is particularly this plan, which may have given cause to see Leibniz as favor of aristocracy. In other writings, however, he praises the political systems of Poland and Netherlands, where one vote could turn the whole majority down.

A great obstacle stood in the way to a federalist or unified Germany : the aggression of France. Leibniz's attitude to France was troubled. On the other hand he regarded Louis XIV as a great prince, who was able to realize much of his plans (including the reunion of the

¹An anonymous Englishman noted that the empire is no more roman, sacred than an empire. Hughes, *Early modern Germany 1477-1806*, p. 116.

²*Propyläen Geschichte Deutschlands*, Bd. 5, p. 84-85.

³Vennebusch, *Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz*, p. 40. There was a statute of a common army in 1681, but it was bound to remain very shattered. Hughes, *Early modern Germany 1477-1806*, p. 121.

⁴A IV, 2. Bd. , p. XX. Carl Haase hints that there had been some intrigues between Schönborn and Boineburg - the question remains open whether Leibniz was more on the side of Schönborn, who promoted local governments or with Boineburg, who had more large-scale plans. I suggest the latter alternative, though I doubt that Leibniz could not have taken sides very clearly - he had to cope with both of his patrons. Haase, *Leibniz als Politiker*, p. 205. Samuel Pufendorf, incidentally, tried to promote the same cause later. Hughes, *Early Modern Germany 1477-1806*, p. 116.

churches), but on the other hand Louis' politics threatened Europe's harmony and well-being. Leibniz was naturally worried about the state of Germany - he thought that a new war in his native country would destroy the growing generation and change Germany into a desert.¹ Leibniz seemed at first to resist all possible insults towards the King of France, but his disappointment towards French politics is mirrored in the later memoir *Mars Christianissimus* (1683). Leibniz had a soft spot for great princes - one has only to remember how he was almost ready to share his future later with Peter the Great, the prince of Russia.

He also heavily criticized the state of Germany :

"The most expert political analysts all agree that the Commonwealth of Germany is so monstrous and so corrupt, that it needs an absolute master to re-establish good government there. What is German liberty, if not the license of frogs, who croak and jump here and there, and who need a stork [to keep them in order], since this piece of driftwood [the Empire], which made so much noise in falling, is no longer formidable to them?"²

The only prince that was able to resist Louis XIV, was the Emperor Josef I. However, he was constantly occupied with the Turks in the eastern border. This situation prompted Leibniz to write a pamphlet, where he argued that the united European forces should attack against the Turks (at this time there was a temporal setback with the good relations between France and the Turks) - Leibniz tried later also to arrange an alliance between Russia and the empire.

¹Ward, *Leibniz as a Politician*, p. 17-18.

²"Praeterita tam corrupta est germaniae respublica, ut non ante emendari possit, quam ubi dominum acceperit; et quid est libertas Germaniae quam licentia quaedam saltantium ranarum, hui quoniam trabs austriaca modum imponere non potest."

(*Mars Christianissimus*) A I, 2, p. 462; R, p. 134.

The threat of French aggression was especially pressing in Mainz - the neighboring areas of Metz, Toul and Verdun were captured by France. Other principalities located in the French border were Trier and Pfalz. The plan *Consilium Aegyptium* was drawn up by Leibniz and Boineburg in order to protect the western border and draw Louis' attention away from Europe. This plan did not receive any positive feedback - the French foreign minister Pomponne answered that the holy wars were out of fashion.

This case can be seen as an illustration of the way Boineburg's (and Leibniz's) political action. The Elector of Mainz, Johann Philipp von Schönborn settled the situation in a different manner. The Elector arranged negotiations and tried to build up some fortifications (Marienburg, Würzburg and Erfurt). There was also a trippel alliance formed between Lothringen, Trier and Mainz.¹ These precautions helped Mainz for a while, but later the Elector had to remain neutral after receiving a promise from France to be left alone.² The conjectures were changed after few years, when Mainz allied against France once more.

This kind of politics were conducted in German principalities - practical matters were often pressing and there was hardly room for any large-scale plans. Small principalities were also often troubled by bad relations between those in power. Carl Haase claims (with Paul Ritter) that several Leibniz's plans for Baron Boineburg were left without feedback because of the bad relations between Boineburg and Schönborn.³ This theory seems quite plausible to me.

The rise of Hanover was very rapid in the end of the 17th century and in the beginning of the 18th century. The Dukes Johann Friedrich and Ernst August made some substantial changes in the administration in 1670 and 1680 : the power politics concentrated on the Duke and the small cabinet of privy councilors were changed to four collegiums, which

¹Wiederburg, *Der junge Leibniz : das Reich und Europa I*, p. 104.

²Gagliardo, *Germany Under the old Regime*, p. 244.

³Haase, *Leibniz als Politiker und Diplomat* (In : *Leibniz, sein Leben - sein Wirken - seine Welt*, Hrsg. Von Wilhelm Totok und Carl Haase), p. 204. Schönborn had a lot of influence in the empire as an imperial archchancellor and was also keen on preserving the imperial institutions as strong and authoritative within limits. Ingraio, *The Hapsburg Monarchy 1618-1815*, p. 55.

were ordered to discuss separate issues.¹ The reforms strengthened the administration and the army,² but differentiated the promotion of other reforms in the principality.

Ernst August strived consciously to rise the status of his position in European politics -the marriage with the Stuart-family Sophie was a clear sign of his ambitions, which were realized through his son, Georg Ludwig, Leibniz's last patron.³ The competition and temporal alliances between the two leading Northern Germany principalities, Hanover and Brandenburg, were also typical to reign of Ernst August.⁴

The growth and influence of Hanover prompted some changes that Leibniz was not necessarily ready to accept : the practical matters took most of the Duke's attention and although practical, Leibniz's political plans were often made concerning the long-term developments, which tended to be overlooked in the new situation.

Leibniz's first Hanoverian patron, the Catholic Duke Johann Friedrich (who died in the age of 54 in 1679⁵), sought support from France and Louis XIV. The course changed radically after his death, since his successor, the Protestant Ernst August, was clearly hostile to French influence.⁶ This is evident also in Leibniz, whose disappointment to practical politics is evident in *Mars Christianissimus*⁷, where he attacks Louis XIV :

"This great prince has foreseen everything : he knows the evils which he does or which he permits, [and] he himself trembles when he envisages the loss of so many thousands of souls. But what do you want? How can he resist the vocation from on high which obligates him? He sees that all other ways of curing the ills of Christendom, except

¹Gagliardo, *Germany Under the old Regime 1600-1790*, p. 289.

²For example, Johann Friedrich's regiment reform in 1670 showed clearly his absolutist ambitions. *Propyläen Geschichte Deutschlands*, Bd. 5, p. 316.

³*Propyläen Geschichte Deutschlands*, Bd. 5, p. 258.

⁴The Elector of Brandenburg was, for example, important in the process of rising the Duke of Hanover to Electorship. Duchhardt, *Protestantisches Kaisertum und Altes Reich*, p. 227.

⁵Rosendahl, *Geschichte Niedersachsens*, p. 387.

⁶Haase, *Leibniz als Politiker und Diplomat* (In : *Leibniz, sein Leben - sein Wirken - seine Welt*, Hrsg. Von Wilhelm Totok und Carl Haase), p. 209.

⁷This pamphlet was made by the request of Landgrave Hessen-Rheinfels (Aiton, *Leibniz, a Biography*, p. 121), but it evidently mirrored Leibniz own feelings as well.

those that he undertakes by iron and fire, would be only a palliative; gangrene cannot be cured except by means which involve cruelty."¹

Resistance of the French threat by thriving to the balance of powers between France and the rest of Europe became Leibniz's leading political principle. This was evident in, for example, when Leibniz was active² in arranging the ascendance of the English throne by his employer, the Protestant Elector George Wilhelm - the rivaling dynasty for the throne was the Catholic Stuart dynasty, which was supported by Louis XIV.³ The same diplomatic pattern can be seen when Leibniz participated in the negotiations between the Emperor and Peter The Great - the Emperor remained passive in the Great Northern War and Peter promised to help the Austrians against the Turks.⁴

While the Duke of Hanover was primarily interested about the wealth and status of Hanover and his dynasty, Leibniz was concerned about the unification of Germany and Europe. The harmony of Europe, in particular, was a necessary pre-condition, which would guarantee a general state of well-being. This thought is evident in early *Caesarinius fürstenerius* (1677), which is one of the most important of Leibniz's mature political writings :

¹"Ce grand prince a tout prevue, il connoist les maux qu'il fait ou qu'il permet, il gemit luy même quand il envisage la perte de tant de milliers d'ames. Mais que voulez -vous? Comment peut-il resister à la volation d'en haut qui l'y oblige. Il voit que toute autre maniere de guerir les maux de la chrestienté, que celle qu'il entreprend par le fer et par le feu, ne sera que palliative, la gangrene ne s'empeche que par des remedes qui tiennent de la cruauté."

A IV, 2. Bd. p. 501-502; R, p. 144.

²Leibniz wrote numerous memoirs of the ascendance, for example :

"*Reflexions sur un escrit Anglois qui contient les moyens dont Madame l'Electrice de Bronsvic se doit servir pour assurer le droit effectiv de la succession d'Angleterre pour Elle et pour sa posterité*" (1700), "*Considérations sur le droit de la Maison de Bronsvic-Lunebourg à l'égard de la succession de l'Angleterre*" (1701), "*Considerations sur l'Affaire de la succession d'Angleterre*" (1701) and "*Sur les interests de l'Angleterre*". Haase, *Leibniz als Politiker und Diplomat*, p. 216.

³Haase, *Leibniz als Politiker und Diplomat* (In : *Leibniz, sein Leben - sein Wirken - seine Welt*, Hrsg. Von Wilhelm Totok und Carl Haase), p. 215.

⁴Haase, *Leibniz als Politiker und Diplomat* (In : *Leibniz, sein Leben - sein Wirken - seine Welt*, Hrsg. Von Wilhelm Totok und Carl Haase), p. 218. Leibniz corresponded with prince Eugene of Savoy about politics and other matters.

"Several territories... can unite into one body, with the territorial hegemony of each preserved intact."¹

By the 1690's Leibniz had changed his mind a little and emphasized the importance of international law. In *Codex iuris gentium* (1693) he accepts the existence of independent states and shows a more realistic and mature conception of international politics. Being a fervent critic of Hobbes, he even admits one of his main points :

"...the subtle author of the *Elementa de Cive* drew the conclusion that between different states and peoples there is a perpetual war; a conclusion, indeed, which is not altogether absurd, provided it refers not to a right to do harm, but to take proper precautions."²

Although Leibniz was prepared to accept this view, he still preferred the idea of *Respublica christiana*. In 1715 he still arguments, against Abbé de St. Pierre's Project for perpetual peace, on behalf of an Europe led by the Pope and the Emperor.³ He insisted that his schemes would be better than a system of independent states and religious fragmentation. Leibniz just could not give them up - the sound of his last letters were often ironic and a little bitter.

¹"...plura territoria uniri possunt in unum corpus, salva sin gulorum superioritate territoriali."

A IV, 2. Bd., p. 57; R, p. 117.

The main political objective in Caesarius Fürstenerius was to redefine the concept of sovereignty in a way which would allow the minor German princes to be treated as sovereigns in internal negotiations. R, p. 111.

²R, p. 166.

³R, p. 33. This plan of unification of Europe was not the first of its kind in addition to Leibniz's plans. There had been numerous plans the most famous probably being the plan of Henry IV (drawn up his minister, Duke Sully). For more discussion of this subject, see Mikkeli, *Euroopan idea*. Incidentally - Leibniz had adopted Dante's idea of the Emperor as a protector of universal peace already in an early age. Hertz, *The Development of the German Public Mind II : The Age of enlightenment*, p. 115.

4. 3. Conclusion

Although there is a clear continuity in Leibniz's political thought, many diplomatic maneuvers and pamphlets written on behalf of many causes make his actions seem a little distracted. It is evident, that Carl Haase's claim that Leibniz formed all his basic political ideas in his Mainz-years¹, is unsound. His attitude to France and Russia, for example, changed with time. It can also be seen, that his style of argumentation changed considerably during his life. For example, a memoir made during his sojourn in Mainz and on behalf of Johann Philipp von Schönborn, *Specimen demonstratum politicarum pro rege polondrum eligendo*, is based on axiomatic method and tries to argue for the superiority of Schönborn's candidate by means of probability calculations.² The mature writings (for example the ones written on behalf of Georg Wilhelm for the ascendance of the English throne) are very sophisticated and the skills of Leibniz the polemicist were respected in several different courts.

The numerous plans Leibniz had in his head led all to the same goal but even though they were connected with one another, he had far too much going on at the same time. His assistant Eckhart noted after a few hours after his master had died : "...he could not finish anything, not even with help from the angels."³

¹Haase, *Leibniz als Politiker und Diplomat* (In : *Leibniz, sein Leben - sein Wirken - seine Welt*, Hrsg. Von Wilhelm Totok und Carl Haase), p. 208.

²Leibniz believed in mathematical and philosophical arguments also in his old days, but was very careful to use especially the forementioned in practical matters. Mates, *The Philosophy of Leibniz*, p. 20.

³Haase, *Leibniz als Politiker und Diplomat* (In : *Leibniz, sein Leben - sein Wirken - seine Welt*, Hrsg. Von Wilhelm Totok und Carl Haase), p. 221.