



FROM SILENCE TO FINDING A VOICE: EUROPE MOVING FROM RELIGIOUS TOLERANCE TO FREEDOM OF BELIEF

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Abstract: *This article will explore the problem of religious tolerance and freedom of belief through the opinions and thoughts of William Penn and analyse European peace as a proposed solution to these problems. Although Penn's analysis of the problem is positioned in its historical context and constitutes a solution model to the problems of his region and historical period, this analysis can also be tackled independently from its historical context, and it can shed light on solution proposals to certain problems of today. This study will discuss these problems based on Penn's evaluations of tolerance and freedom of belief, and because of these evaluations, a philosophical analysis of the ideal of European peace and European integration will be offered as a model by this author.*

Keywords: *William Penn, Europe, Peace, European Parliament, Religion*

Rezumat: De la Tăcere la găsierea Vocii: Europa de la toleranța religioasă la libertatea de credință. *Articolul explorează problema toleranței religioase și a libertății de credință, prin prisma opiniilor și gândurilor lui William Penn, propunându-și să analizeze ideea de Pace europeană. Deși analiza lui William Penn asupra chestiunii toleranței și libertății religioase se poziționează în acord cu un anumit context istoric, constituind un model de soluționare specific, abordarea sa poate constitui un model și pentru soluționarea problematicii contemporane. Articolul analizează sintetic problemele expuse, pe baza evaluărilor lui Penn privind toleranța și libertatea de credință. Pe baza respectivelor aprecieri, este efectuată o analiză filosofică a idealului păcii europene și al integrării europene, în viziunea acestui autor.*

INTRODUCTION

Philosophers and political philosophers have been trying to find an answer to the problem of what kind of connection there should be between religion, the state, religious toleration, and freedom of belief.¹ This study will benefit from Penn's opinions and thoughts, as one of the thinkers laying the ideational foundations of the Enlightenment philosophy, in analysing how this connection should be and what the proposed solution should be. There are different reasons for choosing Penn in this study. He defined religious belief as a person's relationship with God, freeing this concept from other reactions and endeavouring to guarantee freedom of belief as a "natural right". In addition, he either directly or indirectly studied the political philosophy of English philosopher John Locke (1632–1704), one of the philosophers who systematically dealt with the philosophy of the Enlightenment and the approach of "secularism",² his contemporary scholar Thomas Hobbes's (1598–1679) interpretation of combining religion and the state,³ as well as Spinoza's (1632–1677) and his successor Jean Jacques Rousseau's (1712–1778) idea that religion should be kept under the supervision and control of political power,⁴ and taking this into account, it becomes clear that Penn was a philosopher who had visionary, libertarian, and progressive ideas going beyond his era.

Penn's views and thoughts in question cannot be considered independently of the circumstances of the period in which he lived and his own life story. He lived in 17th- and 18th-century Britain, ruled by religious radicalism and sectarian conflicts. In George Wilhelm F. Hegel's (1770–1831) words, every philosopher is a "child of his time",⁵ reflecting the *Zeitgeist* of their era in some respects and, in this case, it becomes obvious that Penn's thoughts cannot be considered independently of the historical context in which he lived. In this regard, his views can be read as a practical solution model beyond a theoretical analysis of what or how the relationship between religion, the state, religious tolerance, and freedom of

¹ E. Gregory Wallace, *Justifying Religious Freedom: The Western Tradition*, in "Dickinson Law Review", Vol. 114, 2009, No. 2, pp. 485-570.

² John Locke, *A Letter Concerning Toleration*, Pennsylvania, The Pennsylvania State University, 1988, p. 31.

³ Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1996, p. 253.

⁴ Jean Jacques Rousseau, *The Social Contract and First and Second Discourses*, New Haven, Yale University Press, 2002, p. 180.

⁵ George Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Hegel's Philosophy of Right*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1958, p. 36.

belief should be. This argument can be better understood in Penn's work, *The People's Ancient and Just Liberties Asserted, in the Trial of William Penn and William Mead* (1670),⁶ where he analyses this relationship as well as the sectarian conflicts and religious intolerance in England, on the one hand, and, on the other, his two other works titled *Essay towards the Present and Future Peace in Europe* (1693) and *Some Fruits of Solitude*, the study he wrote during his years of prison, persecution, and exile, indicating that not only political but also religious motives underlay what he had to endure.⁷

However, his views in question are not texts that can be evaluated solely and merely in their historical context. From this perspective, the abovementioned texts will be tackled as a historical record of both the historical period when Penn lived, in other words, 17th-century Continental Europe and particularly England, and as a source going beyond its historical and geographical contexts. Besides, one can read the opinions and thoughts in the texts to produce solutions to today's problems. For example, when Patrick Romanell utters that the first sign of a great work is that it can be read and understood without explaining specific historical conditions, he seems to point out the philosophical and intellectual importance of Penn's texts.⁸

Penn's philosophical, religious, and political views are directly related to his social background. This study will briefly investigate Penn's biography, the relationship he established between religion and knowledge, or between faith and reason, freedom of belief, religious tolerance and his political views opening the doors of European peace. It will be concluded that the idea of the European Parliament, which Penn put forward as a proposal, is related to Penn's personal characteristics, faith, and his view of religion and life.

A BIOGRAPHICAL PORTRAIT FROM SILENCE TO FINDING A VOICE

William Penn was born in 1644, in London. His father was an Admiral. Although Admiral William Penn fought for the Parliament during the English Civil War (1642–1649), marked by divergence between two groups as the King's

⁶ Mary Maples Dunn, 'The Personality of William Penn', ed. Mary Maples Dunn-Richard S. Dunn, *The World of William Penn*, in "Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society", Vol. 127, 1983, No. 5, pp. 316-321.

⁷ Marc Thommen, *William Penn-The Idea of Institutional Peacekeeping*, Cambridge, Trinity Hall, 2005, p. 24-25.

⁸ Patrick Romanell, *A Letter Concerning Toleration*, New York, The Boss-Morril Company, 1955, p. 5.

supporters and the Parliament's followers, he changed sides and joined the ranks of King Charles II. Admiral Penn made sure that the soldiers under his command fight for King Charles II and thus the latter knighted him in 1660 and appointed him Vice-Admiral of England. England was transforming into a new Puritan England when William Penn was five years old. Although he was not old enough to comprehend those formations in detail, he noticed the developments and incidents taking place during the Civil War and evaluated them in the context of his own world.⁹

When he was nine years old, Penn started to study classical Greek and Latin. This education would later have a great impact on his thoughts and his writings.¹⁰ Later, for further studies, he enrolled in Moses Amyraunt's Protestant Academy in Saumur, France. It can be deduced that the education he received at the Academy for two years, the close relations of the sects in Saumur, the pluralistic approaches to religious issues, and the conversations, discussions, surveys, and his works during that time would have a lasting impact on Penn's efforts towards religious tolerance. However, Penn had to discontinue this education since London was infected with the Great Plague shortly after.¹¹ In the subsequent year, Penn joined the English in the fight against the Dutch under the command of Charles II. He helped his father on a battleship belonging to the English; and in 1667, he accompanied his comrade Lord Arran to suppress the rebellion in Carrickfergus, thus witnessing the war environment.¹² Meanwhile, he showed composure and courage in battle, and as a relic of this experience, he embroidered his picture on his armour.¹³

Penn went to Ireland in 1667 to manage his family estates. During this period, Penn attended a sermon by Thomas Loe in Cork, Ireland, and then converted to Quakerism.¹⁴

An Anglo-Saxon lawyer and poet, Penn was recognized as a Quaker leader

⁹ Charles H. Firth, *Oliver Cromwell and the Rule of the Puritans in England*, Oxford, Fellow of Balliol College, 2018, p. 402.

¹⁰ Howard M. Jenkins, *The Family of William Penn*, in "The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography", Vol. 20, 1896, No. 2, p. 160.

¹¹ Kenneth R. Morris, *Theological Sources of William Penn's Concept of Religious Toleration*, in "Journal of Church and State", Vol. 35, 1993, No. 1, p. 83-111.

¹² Caroline Robbins, *The Papers of William Penn*, in "The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography", Vol. 93, 1969, No.1, p. 3-12.

¹³ Catherine Peare, *William Penn*, Ann Arbor, University of Michigan Press, 1956, p. 22.

¹⁴ Mary Maples Dunn, *The Personality of William Penn*, in "Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society", Vol. 127, 1983, No. 5, p. 317.

who built a centre of moderate Christianity in Pennsylvania for Quakers emerging as a reformist movement against the Catholic Christian thought and other Christian minorities. Penn, who often accompanied Fox on his travels, is known for being an advocate of the Quakers' movement in both speech and writing, as well as the first Quaker theologian.¹⁵

Both Penn's personal spiritual experiences and a social revolt against his father, a Vice-Admiral Knight and member of English upper-class society, underlay Penn's decision to convert to Quakerism. Those and similar impositions of the class in question would later lay the groundwork for the fundamental ideas of Quakerism, and Penn's thoughts on religious tolerance, freedom of belief, and peacebuilding.

In 1669, Penn wrote a pamphlet articulating a critical approach to the belief in the Trinity in Christianity and for this reason he was arrested and imprisoned for the first time. The seven-month imprisonment in the Tower of London constituted the first step for him to develop an attitude prone to religious tolerance, freedom of conscience, and acting as a peace ambassador.¹⁶ This traumatic process, which deprived him of freedom, conduced him to write his masterpiece, *No Cross, No Crown*, and his work titled *Innocency with her Open Face*. Besides, in a letter he wrote to the Earl of Orrery, he stated that he had been arrested since a mayor could not tolerate his fundamental ideas for religious tolerance, freedom of belief and social peace, and it was not fair.¹⁷

In 1670, the repressions against Quakers were increased based on the "Conventicle Article".¹⁸ In this regard, authorities closed the meeting house belonging to Quakers on Gracechurch Street, London. In 1670, Penn and William Mead, a Quaker, were arrested for "holding unlawful meetings and disturbing the public peace" for preaching publicly in front of the meeting house on Gracechurch Street.¹⁹ The trial at the Old Bailey is described as a turning point for the history

¹⁵ Rupert S. Holland, *William Penn*, New York, Macmillan Company, 1915, p. 16.

¹⁶ Arlin M. Adams, Charles J. Emmerich, *William Penn and the American Heritage of Religious Liberty*, in "Journal of Law and Religion", Vol. 8, 1990, No.1-2, pp. 57-70.

¹⁷ Edmund S. Morgan, *The World and William Penn*, in "Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society", Vol. 127, 1983, No. 5, pp. 291-315.

¹⁸ The Conventicle Article is an article enacted by the British Parliament that imposes a fine for attending religious meetings in a monastery outside the Church of England. John Noorthouck, *A New History of London Including Westminster and Southwark*, London, British History Online, 1773, p. 245.

¹⁹ Claudia Wair, *How Will "Liberal" Quakerism Face the 21st Century?*, in "Friends Journal", Vol. 43, 1997, No. 1, p. 12.

of English law. At this hearing, Penn contested the indictment with the support of his lawyer and friend, Thomas Rudyard. As a result of his objection, he convinced the jury that he and his friend, Mead, were innocent and that freedom of expression and religious tolerance were essential and they were acquitted by the jury.²⁰ However, the judges rejected the jury's verdict, found the two Quakers guilty, and even had the jury jailed. Nevertheless, the two Quakers and the Jury were found innocent on appeal, and King's Bench ruled that no jury could be punished for a decision not approved by the judges and that the imprisonment of the jury in this case was unlawful.²¹ Despite the tensions and the ongoing struggle, his father did not approve of his son's religious beliefs and political opinions.²² Written during that time, Penn's article entitled *The People's Ancient and Just Liberties Asserted in the Trial of William Penn and William Mead* (1670) revealed that "the procedures and decisions of the court were arbitrary". A year later, in 1671, Penn was again imprisoned for preaching to the people. He was imprisoned three more times between 1673 and 1678. As with previous arrests, these were related to religious tolerance.²³ In 1672, Penn married his first wife, Gulielma Springet. She died in 1694 and Penn married his second wife, Hannah Callowhill, a year and a half later, in March 1696.²⁴

One of the important developments that contributed to Penn's turning his thoughts into practice was the establishment of the American Colony of Pennsylvania. In 1680, he demanded land in America from King Charles II to cover Charles's debt to his father. In return, Penn was allocated a large piece of land in the northwest of Delaware in 1681 and King Charles II appointed him the supreme governor of this territory (Pennsylvania).²⁵ His main idea was to provide an overseas refuge based on religious tolerance, freedom of belief, and peace, for people like the Quakers who had been oppressed and persecuted for a long time.²⁶

²⁰ Arlin M. Adams, *William Penn and the American Heritage of Religious Liberty*, in "Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society", Vol. 137, 1993, No. 4, pp. 516-523.

²¹ Kathryn Parke, *Sigrid Helliesen Lund on Quakerism, Adapted from Her Autobiography, Alltid Underveis*, in "Friends Journal", 1997, Vol. 43, No.1, p. 14.

²² Samuel M. Koeningsberg, *Jury Freedom and the Trial of Penn and Mead*, in "Friends Journal", Vol. 43, 1997, No.1, p. 17.

²³ Benedictus Spinoza, *Theologico-Political Treatise*, New York, Dover Publications, 2004, p. 207.

²⁴ Howard M. Jenkins, *The Family of William Penn: William Penn's First Marriage*, in "The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography", Vol. 20, 1896, No. 3, pp. 370-390.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 380.

²⁶ James William Frost, *Wear the Sword as Long as Canst: William Penn in Myth and History*,

The Pennsylvania Constitution provided democracy and rule of law, which were later essential for the European peace process. In order to establish the government and laws of this province and base them on solid foundations, it ordained the formation of a General Assembly consisting of free people elected for one year. According to the limits of the law, the government would consist of a Governor, free persons, a City Council, and the General Assembly that would perform all legislative actions, elect the incumbents, and handle executive public affairs.²⁷ Thus, the residents of Pennsylvania were granted comprehensive rights and freedoms guaranteed by law, such as religious tolerance, freedom of belief, and the rule of law. In addition, Penn's draft constitution was based on a strict rule of law, underlying the absence of arbitrary judicial decisions, procedural injustices, or gender discrimination (ensured by the delivery of a copy of the complaint to the defendant). In addition, no money or goods could be collected or paid by any of the people of the province through public taxes, customs, or contributions. To ensure this, it was necessary to pass a new law.²⁸ The provisions on restrictions on tax collection depended on a comprehensive understanding of the rule of law.²⁹ In this vein, Penn's liberal political views, understanding of tolerance, freedom of expression and belief were widely accepted. As evidence of this, it is worth noting what French philosopher Voltaire said: "William Penn might, with reason, boast of having brought down upon earth the Golden Age, which in all probability, never had any real existence but in his dominions".³⁰ The liberal principles and institutional provisions laid down for the Pennsylvania State System were later embodied in Penn's plan for European Peace.³¹ Indeed, it is possible to argue that those liberal principles that Penn advocated for laid the groundwork for later fundamental developments such as the social contract, freedom in the modern era, the right to be represented by legal and political institutions, the proprietary right defined broadly to include property, life and freedom, and the right to legal action in due form.³²

in "Explorations in Early American Culture", 2000, Vol. 4, p. 31.

²⁷ Howard M. Jenkins, *The Family of William Penn: William Penn's Second Marriage*, in "The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography", 1896, Vol. 20, No. 4, pp. 435-455.

²⁸ Marc Thommen, *op. cit.*, p. 29.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 28.

³⁰ Isaac Sharpless, *The Quakers in the Revolution*, Philadelphia, Leach & Company, 1990, p. 49.

³¹ William Wistar Comfort, *William Penn's Religious Background*, in "The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography", Vol. 68, 1944, No. 4, p. 341.

³² Andrew R. Murphy, *Liberty, Conscience and Toleration: The Political Thought of William Penn*, New York, Oxford University Press, 2016, p. 158.

He was accused of treason three times due to his relations with the former Crown.³³ In 1693, his former companions Lord Romney and Henry Sidney intervened, and he was finally proven innocent. He temporarily lost his status of Governor of Pennsylvania from 1692 to 1694 but was reinstated two years later.³⁴ More specifically, Penn wrote his works, *Essay towards the Present and Future Peace in Europe* (1693) and *Some Fruits of Solitude* during that period. Those and some other works by Penn were published anonymously due to some of his thoughts and his association with the former King. Penn died on July 30, 1718.³⁵

Based on Penn's biography, it is essential to investigate what he understood from religion/faith, to tackle the problem of what kind of relationship he established between faith and reason, and what sort of solution he proposed to this problem, to reveal the philosophical foundations of his ideas of religious tolerance, freedom of faith, and political liberty – which formed his world of thought.

THE PHILOSOPHICAL FOUNDATIONS OF EUROPEAN PEACE: THE STRUCTURE AND FUNCTION OF REASON AND FAITH

In order to comprehend the philosophical foundations of Penn's views on religious tolerance, freedom of belief and politics, it is imperative to reveal his views on the essence of faith and the relationship he established between faith and reason. As part of those ideas, Penn referred to the concepts of heart and reason. Rather than denying the functionality of reason or adopting an irrational attitude towards it, he implied that reason was a faculty serving faith, putting faith, or heart, in the first place and reason in the second place in the relationship between reason and faith. In other words, he adopted a theological and philosophical approach arguing that metaphysical elements and truths could only be perceived and internalized through the heart rather than the mind. Penn's approach constituted the basis of religious epistemology, which formed his world of thought. His religious epistemology corresponds to moderate fideism, which is one of the prominent concepts in the philosophy of religion. In his understanding of moderate fideism, while reason performs its unique functions, the main function of faith is to comprehend the metaphysical elements. According to him, reason alone cannot perceive the metaphysical field. However, it is reason that can reveal the need

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 160.

³⁴ John Pollock, *The Popish Plot: A study in the history of the reign of Charles II*, London, Duckworth and Co, 1903, p. 224.

³⁵ William Penn, *Some Fruits of Solitude*, London, Headley Brothers Printers, 1905, p. 511.

for reasonable grounds for the heart, that is, faith.³⁶

At the present stage, it is possible to say that Penn's discourses on religious faith are a fideist faith.³⁷ His belief was a supra-belief, beyond an act of belief contrary to reason. In his world of thought, faith is the testimony of God, who reveals a plan. In other words, faith is the most fundamental ability determining what a person should believe in and why. In addition, although reason is an important and valuable ability when it comes to knowledge, the most competent tool is faith. Faith is a result of revelation, and pure reason cannot override it. Therefore, Penn accepted revelation as a source of knowledge and prioritized faith in its relationship with reason. Concurrently, faith is the central concept when it comes to religion.³⁸

As it can be seen, Penn opens the door to a religious epistemology with philosophical foundations and pillars. In this context, Penn attached importance and value to freedom, implying the classical liberal political philosophy that expresses freedom as a right. Thus, his understanding of faith never ignored or denied freedom. In his opinion, faith cannot be characterized as completely independent of the concepts of reason and will. As a matter of fact, although it is the most important ability, faith is ultimately an approval of reason and an act of will. At this stage, will should not be subjected to any obligation. And this is one of the prerequisites of freedom. Compulsion and pressure for any acceptance are neither religiously acceptable nor mentally reasonable. Therefore, faith is not an activity beyond reason or will. A person's faith is associated with his decisions and a fundamental and natural area of freedom in which he will make this decision.³⁹ It is inevitable that this theoretical understanding will have a reflection in practice. In Penn's ideology, this is reflected as follows: one of the strongest elements that can move people to go from silence to freedom, from selfishness to altruism, is faith or freedom of conscience. In this respect, it is emphasized that both religious and political pressures should be removed in order to guarantee a person's faith. In his opinion, when it comes to reason and faith, the main concepts discussed are religious tolerance and freedom of belief. According to him, tolerance is the main motive that guarantees freedom of belief and lies in the background of his political opinion.⁴⁰

³⁶ William Penn, *No Cross No Crown*, Ohio, Market Street Fellowship, 2017, pp. 7-9, 24-33.

³⁷ For fideism, see Thomas Carroll, *The Traditions of Fideism*, in "Religious Studies", Vol. 44, 2008, No. 1, pp. 1-22.; Eleanor Helms, *The Objectivity of Faith Kierkegaard's Critique of Fideism*, in "Res Philosophica", Vol. 90, 2013, No. 4, pp. 439-460.

³⁸ William Penn, *op. cit.*, pp.18-52, 85-87.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 98, 107, 330.

⁴⁰ Karen Ordahl Kupperman, *The Atlantic in World History*, Oxford, Oxford University

THE DOOR TO EUROPEAN PEACE: RELIGIOUS TOLERANCE AND FREEDOM OF BELIEF

Penn played an important role in the recognition of freedom of belief and religious tolerance as fundamental elements of early modern political thought. Its influence constantly increased and gained wide acceptance from a philosophical and sociological point of view.⁴¹ In this regard, what underlies his understanding of freedom of faith is a number of principles: to make sure individuals or groups perform their divine services, to create an area of freedom in order to resolve issues emerging in the public sphere via conscientious methods, and, in the same vein, to create tangible principles for civil and religious freedom. Penn both established and experienced the relationship between the theoretical principles and the practice of freedom of faith. From this perspective, it can be stated that he went beyond evaluating freedom of faith and religious tolerance based on the rights of individual conscience. Penn built his thoughts in this regard through an established government. The fact that he produced his philosophical and political theories in England and performed his public duties or the theoretical application of his theories in America both sheds light on the Transatlantic context of early modern political thought and reveals his originality. Penn's Atlantic perspective helps to make sense of his sophisticated political thinking and his interaction with the exercise of this political power.⁴²

The colony that Penn founded in Pennsylvania was home to a variety of religious beliefs and forms of worship practiced by settlers of various ethnic and linguistic groups. The broad religious and cultural coexistence here, as well as tolerance, can be expressed because of Penn's philosophical and political thoughts.⁴³ This new and different perspective formed the ideological basis for pluralistic understanding. Underlying Penn's view of religious tolerance and freedom of belief, this understanding also paved the way for the peace perspective in Europe. As a matter of fact, freedom of belief and the humanistic approach to faith and practice that he envisioned in the colony in question were shaped around the tolerating

Press, 2012, p. 38.

⁴¹ Andrew R. Murphy, *The Emergence of William Penn, 1668–1671*, in "Journal of Church and State", Vol. 57, 2015, No. 2, pp. 333-359.

⁴² Andrew R. Murphy, *William Penn Political Writings*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2021, p. 3-6.

⁴³ Sally Schwartz, *Society and Culture in the Seventeenth Century Delaware Valley*, in "Delaware History", 1982, Vol. 20, p. 98-122.

approach of different nations to each other and the role of the state in these matters.

Penn claimed that individuals constituted “the great principle of God in man” and “the root and fountain of the divine substance” without the means of priests, preachers or liturgies and that they could themselves comprehend and feel God.⁴⁴ In his opinion, the knowledge of God is individual and cannot be judged by someone else. In this respect, he emphasized that every individual, being aware of his own responsibilities, can find the way of salvation and the Truth as a result of a free individual search. Penn draws attention to one of the basic characteristics of religious tolerance and freedom of belief by stating that every individual has the right to live or worship according to their style of belief. This understanding emerged as a result of the persecutions that Penn and his Quaker friends were subjected to, as well as their religious views.⁴⁵

In the pamphlets written especially after 1670, Penn put forward this theme in a strong and emphatic way. In these works, he propounded his arguments in a more sophisticated manner. He strived to highlight the philosophical, theological, and moral foundations of tolerance and freedom of belief, as well as historical examples that demonstrated the wisdom of respecting individual beliefs. He discussed these thoughts in his works such as *The Great Case of Liberty of Conscience* (1670), *England's Present Interest* (1675), *An Address to Protestants of All Persuasions* (1679), and *A Persuasive to Moderation* (1686).⁴⁶ In these works, Penn criticized the English government's harsh treatment of Quakers and underlined the need that the government should cease labelling only a certain group as “the most Christian or reasonable” and, instead, adopt a prudent attitude and tolerate everyone at the same level. In this context, he defined freedom of faith as follows: beyond an ideational freedom that is about whether to believe in a principle and tenet or not, freedom of belief is a theoretical background to realize a way of worship, where the individual can be at peace, happy and free. Referring to a relationship between reason and faith centered upon faith, Penn criticized impositions such as “coercion, restriction and persecution” with regard to philosophical, theological and moral issues⁴⁷ and attitudes such as punishing those who do not

⁴⁴ Clarence-Rufus J. Rivers, *Freeing the Spirit: Very Personal Reflections on One Man's Search for the Spirit in Worship*, in “U. S. Catholic Historian”, Vol. 19, 2001, No. 2, pp. 95-143.

⁴⁵ Sally Schwartz, *William Penn and Toleration: Foundations of Colonial Pennsylvania*, in “Pennsylvania History: A Journal of Mid-Atlantic Studies”, Vol. 50, 1983, No. 4, p. 284-285.

⁴⁶ William C. Braithwaite, *The Beginnings of Quakerism*, London, MacMillan, 1912, p. 44.

⁴⁷ Sally Schwartz, *William Penn and Toleration*, p. 285.

believe in some desired doctrine. Penn's argument clearly reveals that imposition is contrary to reason, nature, and morality. According to him, the state should not assume the responsibility or imperative to form the divine prerogative, beliefs, or forms of worship. This coercion would create deep wounds in areas such as justice, tolerance, freedom of belief, and peace. The reason for this, as he argued, is that coercion contradicts reason, spirit, and conscience.⁴⁸

Grounded on his thoughts shaped around the concepts of reason, faith and conscience, Penn criticized some of the principles and practices of the Roman Catholic Church. Since the teachings and practices of the Church formed a whole connected to a uniform structure and all those teachings and practices were closed to questioning or criticism, the Church fell outside the scope of Penn's approach to tolerance and freedom of belief. As a matter of fact, according to Penn, if faith was based on oppression and blind obedience, then so would the individual, society, and even the state; and in this case there could be no talk of tolerance or freedom. He, therefore, decided to found a Colony beyond the English territory in order to build religious tolerance and freedom of belief, which he envisioned from philosophical, theological, and moral points of view. This Colony included immigrants of Dutch, French, and German origins.⁴⁹ Penn made an effort to gather people of different nationalities and countries under one roof in the Colony he was going to build. His interest in this effort was to destroy uniformity and, instead, to spread the understanding of tolerance. According to him, intolerance was a cause of instability and disorder. He claimed that such an understanding did not exist in the Christian faith, that Christianity basically opened the door to religious diversity and tolerance that embraced all humanity. He underlined the need to bring forward and spread the broad and inclusive understanding of tolerance in Christianity and the European world. In this regard, Penn highlighted that it was essential to prevent marginalization of people due to faith, while building an area of freedom of faith where individuals would not be subject to any penalty or stigma due to religious nonconformity. This understanding of tolerance and freedom of belief advocated by Penn constitutes the basis of prosperity, security, and peace.⁵⁰

Penn argued that the right to religious freedom based on religious tolerance and freedom of conscience was fundamental and inalienable. Due to this thought, he lived in poverty, he was sentenced to prison and, at times, he led an unhealthy

⁴⁸ Andrew R. Murphy, *The Emergence of William Penn, 1668-1671*, p. 340.

⁴⁹ William C. Braithwaite, *op. cit.*, p. 47.

⁵⁰ Martin I. Griffin, *William Penn, the Founder of Religious Liberty in America*, in "The American Catholic Historical Researches", Vol. 17, 1990, No. 4, p. 171-173.

life. However, he still did not compromise on his approach to religious freedom as the basis of both his philosophical and political views as well as European peace. Hence, he spent his entire life defending an understanding in which religious tolerance and freedom of belief would prevail in a free society.⁵¹

A PROPOSAL TO ACHIEVE LASTING PEACE IN EUROPE: THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

William Penn was an idealist who set peace and tolerance as his goals. Thinking that religion and politics were different spheres and had different consequences, Penn put forward a belief based on individual rights, leaving aside discourses such as the divine right of Kings, and rejected administrative models forcing people against their will. Valuing democracy and representative government, Penn also kept popular will above everything. In addition, Penn alleged that persecution and war prevented many positive developments in the world and dreamed of Earth as a place where people could live in peace. Indeed, he noted that while war caused people to die, on the one hand, it also led to waste of resources, on the other. According to Penn, if a single consensus was achieved in society, wars would end and everything causing injustice would disappear.⁵²

In this regard, Penn said that the way to achieve lasting peace in Europe was through consensus, aiming to unite Europe under one roof. As a matter of fact, Europe had suffered economic, political, military, and psychological damage and experienced crises due to the wars resulting from the power struggle between the European states. Thus, he sought ways to pursue a pro-peace policy in Europe.⁵³ For this purpose, Penn proposed the establishment of a European Confederation of Parliaments. Influenced and inspired by Hugo Grotius, he proposed that the European Parliament would meet regularly. Each member state in the Parliament would act jointly against a state that threatened and harmed peace. The idea of the European Parliament would aim to achieve lasting peace in Europe. In addition, he made this proposal to make war between the European states unnecessary and impossible.⁵⁴

⁵¹ Andrew R. Murphy, *The Emergence of William Penn, 1668–1671*, p. 342.

⁵² Derek W. Urwin, *The Community of Europe: A History of European Integration since 1945*, London, Pearson Education, 1995, p. 26.

⁵³ Marc Thommen, *William Penn-The Idea of Institutional Peacekeeping*, p. 37.

⁵⁴ James William Frost, *William Penn's Experiment in the Wilderness: Promise and Legend*, in "The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography", Vol. 107, 1983, No. 4, p. 578.

Looking for ways to resolve the conflicts in the world by nonviolent methods, William Penn believed that the European Parliament would end the disputes among rulers, as well as between rulers and the people. According to him, problems could be solved not by force, but by justice. For this purpose, Penn focused on considerations such as creating an assembly of authorized persons who would meet regularly, listen to all complaints, and make fair decisions. Attaching great importance to mutual understanding and dialogue, Penn believed that this would only be possible with a Parliament to be established in Europe. He did not want to leave the task of resolving disputes to rulers and opposed the diplomatic activities where kings and other rulers met secretly, arguing that secret negotiations caused wars and conflicts. Furthermore, he stressed that if there was a problem, rulers called to solve the problem should work for Europe independently, not as the representatives of the state.⁵⁵

In this context, Penn strived to build the European Parliament by considering all the details and said that states that were not of equal size should not have an equal number of members in the European Parliament. Instead, he suggested that the number of members in the Parliament must depend on the economic wealth of states. Penn also stated that Parliament decisions needed to be made by majority of votes. In addition, he said that the languages to be used in the Parliament should be Latin and French. The fact that he did not see the need for the English language in the Parliament testifies to his fairness and impartiality.⁵⁶ He suggested the Parliament should consist of 90 members in total with 12 members from Germany, 10 from France, 10 from Spain, 8 from Italy, 6 from England, 3 from Portugal, 4 from Sweden, 3 from Denmark, 4 from Poland, 3 from Venice, 4 from Seven Provinces, 13 from Cantons, 2 from Small Neighbouring Sovereign Dominions, 1 from the Duchy of Holstein, and 1 from the Duchy of Courland. Penn also argued that it was possible to create joint electoral areas due to the existence of small countries in the Parliament. He suggested that the Parliament would convene every year or every three years and take decisions by a majority of 3/4 votes in order to prevent corruption.⁵⁷ Emphasizing that the greater the number of members in the Parliament, the easier peace would be established, and advocating

⁵⁵ William. M. Russels, *William Penn and the Peace of Europe*, in "Medicine, Conflict and Survival", Vol. 20, 2004, No. 1, p. 23.

⁵⁶ William Penn, *An Essay towards the Present and Future Peace of Europe (1693)*, In Andrew R. Murphy (Ed.), *William Penn Political Writings*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2021. pp. 344-362.

⁵⁷ Caroline Robbins, *The Efforts of William Penn to Lay a Foundation for Future Ages*, in "Aspects of American Liberty", Vol. 16, 1977, No. 4, p. 70.

religious tolerance, Penn said that it was possible to include Turks and Russians in the Parliament as well. The reason for this is that Penn believed that bringing together as many states as possible would ensure a long-lasting peace.⁵⁸ In fact, the only reason for Penn to see the Ottoman Empire in the Parliament was not to build a union. At the same time, he wanted to end the Ottoman-Habsburg Wars that had been going on for many years. Indeed, the wars had led to the loss of many lives and the destruction of social and economic life. However, he advocated that if states benefited from diplomacy instead of war, they would be able to recognize that justice was stronger than wars. As a matter of fact, war was unfair for people. Thus, he deemed the need for establishing rules of justice to ensure peace and order. In this way, the value of Christians would increase in the eyes of Muslims, as well.⁵⁹

As it can be understood, the concept of justice occupied an important place in Penn's discourses. According to him, justice was essential in building peace. In addition, Penn suggested that peace was productive. In that, if there was peace in the international system, people's property would be protected, security would be ensured along with stability. Conversely, war is destructive and brings death, poverty, and misery to humanity. That is why it is essential to ensure peace. And the only way to protect peace is by justice, which is the fruit of government. Indeed, the core of the government is society, and the core of society is consent. The government is needed as an instrument of justice.⁶⁰

In the event of the formation of the expected international organization as the European Parliament proposed by William Penn, the probability of war between the states will decrease. Men who would otherwise join the army in case of war would benefit society by joining the labour force in the absence of war. This would also prevent many people from dying, and the people left behind from being harmed. If war is prevented, economic costs of war would be saved, and damage on cities and regions by armed conflict would be prevented, while immoral practices such as espionage would also end. Besides, Penn also thought that education was another fundamental element to ensure the happiness and well-being of society. According to him, educating and raising society in a country in the

⁵⁸ Peter Van den Dungen, *The plans for European peace by Quaker authors William Penn (1693) and John Bellers (1710)*, in "Araucaria. Revista Iberoamericana de Filosofía, Política y Humanidades", Vol. 16, 2014, No. 32, p. 63.

⁵⁹ Neta C. Crawford, *The Passion of World Politics: Propositions on Emotion and Emotional Relationships*, in "International Security", Vol. 24, 2000, No. 4, pp. 116-156.

⁶⁰ Derek Heater, *The Idea of European Unity*, Leicester, Leicester University Press, 1992, p. 2.

proper way would make sure that the future generations benefit that society.⁶¹

At the same time, William Penn also referred to the criticism against his proposals for the European Parliament and tried to come up with solutions. Accordingly, the most powerful and richest countries would not accept this plan. On the contrary, he argued that other states needed to force those countries in order to achieve lasting peace in Europe. Nonetheless, one of the reasons for the possibility of states not accepting this plan would be the concern for the loss of sovereignty. States would not want to lose their sovereignty. Penn, however, said that there was no sovereignty over the sovereign in the international system, while the system was defined by an understanding where big fish eat little fish. He propounded that this order would disappear with the adoption of his proposed plan.⁶²

Penn was one of the first to propose an organization to achieve a lasting peace in Europe. Penn's proposals seem like an old-fashioned version of the Council of Europe when compared to today's European institutions. It is important to note that Penn made this proposal two centuries before European states were ready for such structuring. After Penn, many other thinkers also proposed the creation of an organization that would ensure lasting peace in Europe. Abbot Pierre, for example, proposed an assembly of states to institutionalize cooperation among European states in his work *Plan for the Perpetual Peace*, published in 1713. Pierre, who divided the rules adopted among the rulers into two basic and important rules to ensure peace in Europe, argued that there would be no change in the rules unless the state in question accepted them, and that for important rules, a 3/4 majority would be sufficient.⁶³ In their work *The Reorganization of European Society*, published in 1814, Henry Saint Simon and Augustin Thierry stated that European patriotism would be formed by an organization to ensure lasting peace in Europe.⁶⁴

Immanuel Kant, in his work *Perpetual Peace: A Philosophical Sketch*, said that a federation should be established to achieve lasting peace in Europe, and that the basic condition for the establishment of this federation was the republic. Kant

⁶¹ Wayne Mac Veagh, *William Penn*, in "The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography", Vol. 1, 1877, No. 4, p. 365.

⁶² Vladimir Kreck, *European Identity Concepts and the European Idea*, in "Journal of Intercultural Studies", Vol. 45, 2015, p. 125.

⁶³ Céline Spector, *Who is the Author of the Abstract of Monsieur l'Abbé de Saint-Pierre's 'Plan for Perpetual Peace'? From Saint-Pierre to Rousseau*, in "History of European Ideas", Vol. 39, 2013, No. 3, pp. 371-393.

⁶⁴ Henri Saint Simon, Augustin, Thierry, *The Reorganisation of European Society*, New York, Routledge, 2015, p. 30.

did not limit himself to Europe, but proposed a global federation that included all republics.⁶⁵ Constantin Frantz also proposed a European federation based on Christianity. The states within this structure would depend on the organization to decide their own internal affairs in matters such as foreign policy and war.⁶⁶ As it can be seen, the organizational structure Penn proposed to ensure lasting peace in Europe inspired thinkers and European political philosophy after him.

CONCLUSIONS

Penn's analysis of political philosophy is mainly based on the concepts of tolerance and freedom of belief, and discussions on the subject focus on the meaning assigned to these concepts and their framework. As a general conclusion, it can be uttered that Penn's view of the issue had a practical purpose in finding a solution to the clash of religions and sectarian conflicts of his time. From this perspective, Penn's fundamental aim was to found tolerance and freedom of belief and, beyond delineating the boundaries of these concepts – in other words, rather than merely philosophizing –, he aimed to place tolerance and freedom of belief at the centre of the relations between groups of people with different opinions and beliefs, while also trying to establish a peaceful environment. In this regard, the meaning and importance of Penn's struggle can be better understood⁶⁷ considering that the most common type of intolerance witnessed throughout history has been religious intolerance by individuals and societies against others with different opinions and beliefs and that "the history of tolerance is primarily the history of the struggle against religious intolerance and persecution". Thus, it is necessary to read his thoughts first as criticism of and proposed solution to the religious intolerance of his period.

As a matter of fact, Penn's analysis of tolerance and freedom of belief offers a religious view. It is possible to understand this view from the fact that Penn includes atheists, for example, in the category of those who cannot be tolerated. However, his analysis of this issue should also be evaluated in their historical context and interpreted pragmatically. As a matter of fact, he did not ignore the social

⁶⁵ Immanuel Kant, *Perpetual Peace: A Philosophical Sketch*, London, George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1795, p. 79.

⁶⁶ Arno Carl Coutinho, *The Federalism of Karl Marlo and Konstantin Frantz*, in "Political Science Quarterly", Vol. 53, 1938, No. 3, pp. 400-422.

⁶⁷ Susan Mendus, *Toleration and The Limits of Liberalism*, Atlantic Highlands, Humanities Press International, 1989, p. 6.

norms of the period in which he lived. We can deduce this from the understanding that atheists or those who ignored other beliefs would not be tolerated. According to him, those who completely ignored other beliefs or God were not be tolerated because they lacked the moral virtues that guaranteed civil society. He implied that ignoring other beliefs and God, even in thought, would cause everything to fall and that discourses, agreements, and even oaths that maintained, consolidated, and strengthened the ties between individuals and societies would not be effective on such people. Although the relationship that Penn put forward between moral merits and belief in God is the subject of another discussion, it is possible to state that Penn included these people in the category of intolerable ones not on religious grounds, but rather on secular grounds. Penn's attitude towards Catholics can be shown as the basis for this determination.

When tackling Penn's opinions in the context of the historical period he lived in and the problems he tried to solve, even though it might seem logical and excusable to regard his analysis as having solely religious content to some extent at first sight, he expressed tolerance and freedom of belief as characteristics of the Quakers in one sense and constantly tried to build the topic around religion, while he did not systematically refer to equality and freedom, which are the more central concepts of philosophy, and did not explain non-religious intolerance examples in detail, all of which justify the criticism targeting him to a certain extent. Besides, one of the deadlocks in his opinions is that while he explained tolerance and freedom of belief based on political and religious authority, he always focused on the intolerance of the government and ignored intolerant practices that both individuals and groups might impose on each other. Perhaps for this reason, Penn's understanding of tolerance remained tangent to the centre of modern liberalism.

He did not systematically propose any religious, philosophical, or even political justification. Instead, he drew attention to the harmful consequences of intolerance. Penn mostly emphasized an understanding that would not disrupt the social structure and would not endanger civil rights. Indeed, wars would disrupt the social structure and corrupt society, causing backwardness. For this purpose, he deemed it necessary to create a progressive and libertarian society to ensure lasting peace between states. In fact, the European Parliament proposed by Penn was also a result of this situation. Penn claimed that the European Parliament would ensure peace, justice, and tolerance and end monotony in Europe. Believing that the more states participated in the Parliament, the more peace and tolerance would spread, Penn mainly wanted to include Turks and Russians in the Parliament due to his religious tolerance.

However, Penn's understanding of tolerance and freedom of belief can be criticized for opening the door to the irrationality of intolerance. Penn tried to base the irrationality of intolerance on the one hand on the system of religious belief and on the other hand on the epistemic nature of men.

Penn's views on tolerance can be criticized for reasons such as mostly having a religious content, relatively restricting the scope of tolerance and imposing an instrumental function on tolerance. However, his emphatic approach to the need to protect faith from all kinds of external interference and to guarantee one's freedom of belief carries a remarkable essence. It is also important that he endeavoured to impose some restrictions on religious and political power through freedom of belief and clearly distinguished their areas of authority. With this approach, Penn contributed to both the development and the secularization process of the liberal state by separating the political and religious powers and securing the freedom of belief. In conclusion, if secularism is expressed as securing the freedom of faith and protecting the field of faith from the coercion of both religious and political authorities, it should be underlined that we owe a lot to Penn, who had called out to us centuries ago.

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