

## **SUMMARY**

The absolute monarchy, as the dominating form of government in the early modern era, had become the subject of analysis of the greatest thinkers of this age. We can find both the enthusiasts and staunch critics of absolutism among philosophers, that stated their arguments in many treaties, some of which had attained canonical status and became largely influential both in the field of theories concerning the state and in real-life functioning of political societies. The goal of the dissertation is an attempt to show the relations between the thought of chosen representatives of modern social philosophy and the deep changes, which characterized the governmental organisms in this era on the Old Continent. Absolutism had been a major point of interest for these ideals; it had been an everyday experience for the aforementioned creators and naturally became a subject of reflection for state theorists of this time. The mentioned problem is analysed based on doctrines presented by chosen British and French philosophers from the XVI to XVIII century. The choice was mainly dictated by the vastly influential position of thinkers from both countries, both during that era and today. Despite the passage of time, ideas formed by British and French philosophers have still great impact on the shape of contemporary social doctrines. Additionally theories created by those authors have largely been responsible for shaping the fundamentals of the government form dominating today – liberal democracy. Doctrines concerning equality towards law, the necessity of forming autonomous branches of state power (especially the juridical branch) and lastly the idea of human rights granted to all citizens based on the fact that all were born as human beings are in our time seen as inviolable and obvious bases of a rational and lawful political and legal system.

The thesis consists of four chapters, which try to chronologically present the political thought of selected representatives of British and French philosophers from turn of XVI and XVII all the way to the end of the XVIII century. The first chapter analyses the doctrine of Jean Bodin, as one of the first theorists of absolutism. His conceptions had a large impact on creating the ideological foundations of monarchical dominance in France in the XVII century and played an important role in forming the thought of later supporters of this form of governance in the field

of philosophical reflection. The cycle of political metamorphosis that lead to the forming of classical absolute monarchy in this country and the fundamentals of its functioning based on writings of its creators (such as cardinal Richelieu) is also presented. The next chapter focuses on the thought of the XVII century British philosophers in the context of drastic changes, that finally lead to the rejection of absolutism and the forming of the system of parliamentary regime. The first analysed system is the doctrine of Thomas Hobbes, whose *Leviathan* became one the most influential treatises concerning social philosophy and whose original theory reflecting on the origin of the state and its nature was both an inspiration and an object of criticism for a vast variety of authors. The thought of Robert Filmer as the leading apologetic of absolutism in Britain is also presented. Finally the views of John Locke, his critique of the absolute monarchy and his positive program of a mixed, moderate government that protects the innate freedoms of its citizens is discussed. The third chapter is dedicated to the analysis of the thought of chosen representatives of the French Enlightenment. The doctrine of Voltaire as the supporter of a reformed, "enlightened" absolutism is presented. Next the writings of Montesquieu and his and his theory of division of state power and the necessity of keeping balance between their prerogatives as a guarantee of civic freedoms are discussed. The analysis of the views of Denis Diderot is also a part of this chapter and their evolution from a stance close to Voltaire's to outright republicanism in his later days. The discourse is finalized with presenting the philosophy of Jean Jacques Rousseau, whose brave political project became an inspiration for (among others) the ideologists of the French Revolution of 1789. In the last chapter an analysis of the theory of David Hume as a representative of the "Scotch Enlightenment" was done, in which he envisioned a critique of both absolutism and popular radicalism, simultaneously defending the regime created after the triumph of the "Glorious Revolution". A similar, hostile to extremities stance was being held by Edmund Burke. Negatively set both to continental form of monarchy and violent populism of the masses; unlike Hume his main sources of inspiration had been the classical Christian thought and he remained critical of the Enlightenment, laying foundations for the birth of modern conservatism.