

# *Towards a Philosophy of Political Economy*

## *A Preliminary Exploration*

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### **Introduction**

Since 1989 it has become difficult to speak in terms of a scientific socialism. Marxism-Leninism did speak of itself as scientific socialism. The term referred sometimes to a dynamic set of theory and practice, and at other times to a particular socio-economic formation created by the law-governed forces of matter in historical development.

The universal model of scientific socialism was the one evolved in the Soviet Union since 1917, though each nation had to create its own version of that model, adapted to local conditions. Today it is clearly acknowledged that the Soviet and European models did not work, but led to stagnancy and stifling of creativity, and were basically anti-human. With the discrediting of the model, there comes about a radical questioning of the very possibility of a scientific socialism.

However, many countries which were constrained by the forces of history to follow this model (more or less) for four decades or more and which have in 1989 consciously abjured this model, are now on the look-out for new models. Time, however, is at a premium in this process of shaping new models. Hardly can one ask for the time needed to work out all the theoretical presuppositions for such a new model. Experimentation with new institutions and new relations has already begun in at least eight countries beginning with china, and including the Soviet Union, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Hungary, Bulgaria, Romania, and GDR as also perhaps in Albania and Yugoslavia.

While these experiments are going on, incorporating elements of a market economy into what was previously a socialist economy in various stages of realization, it may not be altogether idle

to begin some work on the theoretical principles which should underlie these new societies. It is this work which we regard as leading, not to a revised scientific socialism but to a provisions formulation of basic principles that I would call a philosophy of political economy. The building up of institutions and structure based on these principles will take time; in the meantime these principles can serve as a set of criteria by which to assess existing institutions and to project new institutions.

I would like to submit that there is no given methodology by which one can proceed to the formulation of these principles.

Even acknowledged principles like human rights, democracy, justice, peace and the integrity of the biosphere will need philosophical justification. Neither can one simply accept without criticism the stated and unstated principles of existing market economies.

Can one take some principle like global humanism and proceed to amplify its meaning and implications? This is not only notoriously difficult, but often impractical, it now seems. Nor can we take one single thinker, like Marx or Gandhi, and build on his thought. What about some religious scriptures like the New Testament, the Mosaic Law, the Quran, the Vedas or the Upanishads, the Gita or the Dhammapada? These can of course be consulted, but no one of them can be made absolutely normative for the kind of pluralistic societies we envisage. But these do have a role-- to which we must give attention.

I know there are many in the West who shy away from asking fundamental questions and are content to reduce such questions to a simple problem of political ethics. This is because they forget the groundedness of all ethical considerations on some more fundamental perceptions of reality. And perhaps a good enough starting point for a significant political philosophy would be to examine some of the basic assumptions of both Marxism and Liberalism, hoping thereby to formulate some fundamental assumptions of our own.

## **I. The Basic Assumptions of Yesterday's Marxism-Leninism**

We have today no official spokespersons for Marxism-Leninism-- no authoritative philosopher can even tell us today what Marxism-Leninism ought to be. We can only be very tentative therefore in stating its fundamental assumptions. I suggest that we ask the following five questions to both Marxism and liberalism.

- a) What is reality like? (Ontology)
- b) How do we know? (Epistemology)
- c) Where do we humans fit in, as knower, agents, etc.? (anthropology)
- d) What is the role of the State and other institutions? (political science)
- e) How can we promote, direct, and regulate the free, creative power of the people?  
(political Economics & culture)

I do not propose to answer these questions on behalf of Marxism or Liberalism. I can only point out some problems which we need to keep in mind, in answering these and other questions.

What is Reality like? How do we know? Orthodox Marxism, till a few years ago, had a clear answer to this question. If you ask what is therein, the answer would be "matter-energy, self-existent, infinite, auto-dynamic, auto-creative, in process of dialectical development". The formulation is my own, and the content is compiled from writings and conversations of competent Marxist philosophers.

In a world where what was revisionism yesterday becomes Orthodoxy today, fundamental philosophers of Marxism are understandably reluctant to discuss basic ontological and epistemological questions. They join, it would appear, in the western liberal camp at this point and are satisfied either with a strategy-oriented pragmatism or even the naive realism of liberalism.

We cannot, however, escape or evade these questions if we want to have a modicum of consistency in this regard. The self-existent matter-energy ontology has no scientific basis. Perceptive Marxist thinkers also know that atheism is as unscientific as theism. Even the great soviet anti-God journal *Religion and Sciences* today recognizes this. The assertion that matter-energy in process of development is what we observe, with our limited mental equipment, would be more scientific than any affirmations of science about theism or atheism.

But does western liberalism have a stronger foundation than cheap pragmatism and naive realism for its own ontological positions? The answer is no. Liberalism finds strategies for evading the issue. The issues raised by quantum physics about the non-determinate character of the smallest units of reality as modern physics envisage them (particles-waves, and now quarks) do not yield to observer-independent objective study or expectations of law-regulated predictability.

I am not asking either Marxism or Liberalism to come forward with more precise and scientifically demonstrable ontologies. I am only asking them and others to be aware that such ontologies do not exist. Every ontology, whether naive realism or goal-governed pragmatism, is a leap of faith, which has no demonstrative proofs; by their fruits, ye shall know them.

I will not go deeper here into the problem of ontology. I have pointed out the problem. It needs to be discussed if only to make us aware of the fact that our social choices are rather arbitrary, and may even turn out to be quite foolish.

Neither do I want to dwell long on the problem of epistemology -- the question of how we know, and whether what we seem to know is reliable knowledge and to what extent. Marxism moved some years ago from the Copy Theory of Lenin to a revised epistemology which takes for granted that reality is faithfully reflected in the human social consciousness -- again an assertion which has no scientific basis. Epistemology is that discipline which shows us again how uncertain is that knowledge which we often take to be so certain.

These ontological and epistemological uncertainties of the scientific rational-critical method have direct consequences for our envisioning of a new model for political economy as we shall soon see.

## II. What is Man?

In Neo-Marxism, the guiding analytical principle has become global humanism rather than historical materialism and the class struggle. The philosophers in the Soviet Union have in the last few years produced voluminous material on the human being in nature and the human being in society. President Gorbachev has even set up in Moscow an *Institut Chelaveka* or Institute for Humanum studies, with Pravda editor I.T. Frolov as Chairman of the Board. I had the privilege last year of interviewing some of the researchers at this institute. If they had some idea on the methodology of humanum studies, they were unable to communicate such ideas to me.

Since human persons and societies are materially and phenomenologically present in our world, humanum studies could very well aspire to be scientific -- unlike fundamental ontology and epistemology which have no phenomenological object. The best hypothesis which accounts for most observed facts, and which enables us to predict the way human beings in the aggregate do or should develop, would be the most scientific hypothesis on the humanum. In doing this, however, we have to observe the human in all the three dimensions -- personal, social, and transcendent.

And there begins the parting of the ways. Western liberalism too often tries to give primacy to something called the individuals. I have tried to understand this word, which seems to be a culture-word of western bourgeois civilization, for which many of our Asian languages lack a precise equivalent. Translated into Greek, it becomes atom (*atomos*) which literally means indivisible or 'uncuttable'. Surely we do not have scientific justification for conceiving individuals as pre-existing society and therefore constituting it by something like a social contract. That mythical image of the social contract among equal individuals fitted in nicely with the interests of 19th century capitalism.

Today we know that no human being can become one except in society. Embryos may be developed in a glass dish, and infants can be given birth without two persons meeting socially. But an infant can grow up to be a human being only in society. Becoming a human being is essentially a social process, and without looking at the process itself we cannot draw up any theories of human becoming.

Hegel sought to provide a theory of human becoming (*Menschwerdung*). *Menschwerdung* is the German equivalent of Greek *enanthropesis* or incarnation, a theological concept. Hegel sought to reinterpret what he regarded as the myth of God

becoming Man in Christ Jesus in universal terms, as the Absolute Idea historically realizing itself in the Human being<sup>1</sup>.

For Hegel, the History of the world is God's history, ie. history of the development and the realization of *Geist* or God's Holy Spirit<sup>2</sup>. It is God as spirit, as freedom incarnate, that is being shaped and formed in history, as subject of the history of humanity. The State, even the monarchic state, for Hegel, especially the monarchic Prussian state, is an embodiment of *Geist*, of Divine Reason in human social form.

We need to pay some attention to this contention of Hegel that the state does not arise from a social contract of the people, but from the embodiment of Divine Freedom with Virtue:

"A government of some kind, however, is always in existence. The question presents itself then, whence did it (English government) emanate? Theoretically, it proceeded from the people; really and truly from the National convention and its committees. The forces now dominant are the abstract principles -- Freedom, and as it exists when within the limits of the Subjective Will -- Virtue. This Virtue has now to conduct the government in opposition to the Many, whom their corruption and attachment to old interests; or a liberty that has degenerated into license, and the violence of their passions render unfaithful to virtue.<sup>3</sup>

Thus for Hegel, the Absolute idea is Freedom with Virtue guiding the human will in history. Different forces of the state seek to embody it in human history. When either freedom or the good is compromised, the Spirit breaks out destroying the old form of the state and creating a new one, through the fresh exercise of reason.

The French Revolution was the nodal event of World History as Hegel saw and experienced it. Liberalism is the product of that event, and the principle of all modern states, according to Hegel<sup>4</sup>. What compromised Liberty was religious slavery promoted by the Roman Church. The liberal state becomes rotten because of the fetters of church despotism, especially in the Latin countries of Europe.

Becoming human, or *Menschwerdung* is an eminently political-social-economic process, which includes all social institutions, the state as well as the Church<sup>5</sup>. But Freedom is always compromised. In the state, as also in the Church, the Few (the *aristoi*) emerge as power-wielders and suppress the freedom of the many, possessing property on behalf of the people and practising non-virtue. Here Reason revolts again, and the truly human asserts its nature as freedom-in-virtue; absolute self-determination (*Eigensinn*) through the Germanic (Barbarian) spirit which invaded the Roman Empire, destroyed the corrupt state, and made itself into a new Romanitas or Christinitas in Charlemagne's Christendom.

For Hegel, the German Spirit is the true spirit of freedom, as manifested in the Reformation, as well as in the development of the secular realm where freedom can develop without religious constraints.

All this history is part of humanity's becoming human -- humanization as Teilhard de Chardin called it. But finally and ultimately, human becoming is an internal event,

a thought-event produced by thought-work, *Denkarbeit*, in the inner world of the Geist, not in the state or in organized religion, according to Hegel. This happens only when the human self realizes its identity with the Absolute Idea: “*das Selbst ist das absolute Wesen*”<sup>6</sup> more or less on an analogy with the Vedantic *aham brahmasmi* (I am Brahman).

The Absolute has to be apprehended, not as substance, but as subject;<sup>7</sup> the single human being experiences oneself as unmediated God (*er ist der unmittelbar gegenwaertige Gott*) the local presence of the universal consciousness in determined existence. It is a feat of *reinen Denkens*, pure thought by which the self, recognizing itself in the light of the other, becomes conscious of the other as of the same origin and comes back to the Self as the self-for-others and Self-in-itself.

### **III. The Marxian Overturning**

Immediately after Hegel wrote the last pages of his Phenomenology there was thunder in Jena, the tranquil little university town of Weimar, the town of *Fichte* and *Schelling*, of Goethe and Hegel. Napoleon, as history on horseback, marched into and through Jena in 1806 ravaging and plundering.

Feuerbach and the Young Hegelians turned Hegel around, to the great delight of Marx, who was born 12 years after the Jena earthquake. As a young student at the university of Perkins Marx had paid tribute to the Hegelian system:

“In this system, and herein is its great merit-- for the first time the whole world, natural, historical, intellectual, is presented as a process; ie. as in constant motion, change, transformation, development; and the attempt is made to trace out the internal line that makes a continuous whole of all this movement and development.”<sup>8</sup>

But with the Young Hegelian, Marx developed his basic atheism, which dates back at least to his doctoral dissertation of 1841 at Jena in which he rejected Democritan atomism and espoused Epicurean atheism, and human freedom based on the absence or non-being of God. Fear is the ground of freedom, especially fear of mythical beings. Epicurus “knows no other nature but the mechanical”<sup>9</sup> according to the Young Marx.

Nature was not an object of worship; the heavenly bodies have to be brought down to the same status as earthly bodies; they too are matter. Matter is the One; there is naught else.

“Epicurus is therefore the greatest representative of Greek Enlightenment and he deserves the praise of Lucretius:

Humanity lay grovelling on earth  
Before human eyes, crushed by the oppression of religion  
Religion whose menacing head hovered over men from heaven  
Striking horror into mortal minds;  
Then a mortal man of Greece stood up in defiance  
Standing erect with that defiant look  
The gods of the fables did not crush him  
Nor did heaven peal forth its thunder and lightning ..  
Therefore behold, religion now lies prostrate and grovelling  
We are the ones to triumph, level with the heavens.”<sup>10</sup>

This materialism-atheism of Marx is not too hard to refute. The refuting arguments will be of the same word-spinning and abstraction- weaving type as Epicures or Hegel or Marx have used. Marx is so heavily dependent on Holbach’s System of Nature<sup>11</sup>, which reflects a pet notion of Europe that all religion arises from a fear of the natural elements transferred to a mythical God.

I have dwelt at some length on this point because religious foundations are perhaps the most relevant single aspect that this lecture wants to dwell upon.

Western political philosophy traces its descent through to the Greek philosophers to the Latin Varro<sup>12</sup> and the Latin North African Augustine. Augustine’s City of God was written in installments during the long period 413-426 A.D.

It was a time similar to what Eastern Europeans are now experiencing, when the old institutions were crumbling and the new ones had not taken shape. Except that the collapse of the system involved a great deal of loss of life and property, on account of the descent of the Barbarians and the sack of Rome by Alaric in 410 A.D.

Augustine’s City of God did not serve either as a political model or as a philosophy of history in his life-time. His contemporaries largely rejected Augustine’s teachings as not faithful to the gospel and to the received tradition. More than 160 years later, Augustine’s writings were promoted by the one the West calls St. Gregory the Great (540-604 AD) (neither the sainthood nor the greatness of Gregory is acknowledge by the non-Roman churches), who became Pope in 590. Son of a Roman senator, himself Prefect of Rome before becoming a monk, Gregory

decided to assert the imperial power of the Western church over against the already devious imperial power of the Byzantine Greek church at Constantinople. He appointed governors for Italian cities and enacted laws for the ecclesiastical and civil realms backed only by the prestige of the Roman See in the vacuum left by the lack of a western emperor. He was a great preacher, a great ascetic, a great writer, and a great organizer. He was above all a holy man who was also one of the greatest of political power brokers in history. He was the one who popularized the ideas of Augustine and laid the foundations of Christian civilization in the west. As *Servus Servorum Dei* a title which Gregory appropriated for himself, he laid the foundations of an ecclesiastical imperium which has lasted to this day.

You celebrate Gregory's feast day on March 12th. This is a time to recognize how great a role the Papacy plays even today in changing history. Eastern Europe should recognize the key role played by Pope John Paul II in bringing down the "Yalta communism" of the six East European countries in 1989-- the communism imposed from above by the Yalta agreement of Roosevelt, Churchill, and Stalin in 1945.

Marx over-turned what Gregory with the aid of Augustine had setup in the sixth and seventh centuries. Now Marx has been over-turned, at least in parts of Eastern Europe.

Europe is on the verge of reconstructing the old Romanitas in a new form. That is What we hear when we hear of the European Home idea -- Christendom- Romanitas in a new form of neo-colonial imperium aspiring to universal domination.

It is about this Marxian overturning of the Augustinian-Gregorian political economy and the current partial over-turning of the Marxian political economy that I wish to make my main point, which I can only briefly state here.

#### **IV The State and the Transcendent**

This is the key issue of my paper. Does the State have or need any transcendent reference? Can the secular realm be self-sufficient in providing the principles of a political economy? Plato, the spiritual father of the West did not think so. For him God is the beginning, the middle, and the end<sup>13</sup>. Eternal justice is God's minister. Men who exalt themselves above this standard shall destroy themselves and their state. God is the measure of all things, not man, as some say.

What the Romans did was to reduce God to gods -- little capricious powers who could be placated and from whom favours could be elicited by sacrifice. These gods Varro had defended as the foundation of Romanitas, and these gods the Christians had rejected. This reduction of God to gods one finds in Plato and later neo-Platonism as well. Plato in *The Laws* argues very strongly that a state ruled by those who have no sense of the Transcendent will be self-destructive.

Augustine made that cruel and misleading opposition of man and God by positing two cities -- one *Civitas Dei*, i.e. of God, and another the City of the Earth or the City of Man.

In Book XV, Augustine makes the most unsophisticated and misleading polarisations

"that (human) race we have divided into two classes, one that lives according to man and the other that lives according to God. In symbolic fashion we call these two cities, that is two communities of men, of which one is predestined to reign eternally with God, the other to suffer eternal punishment with the devils"<sup>14</sup>.

Augustine's understanding of history is that it is the realm where the two cities coexists: i.e. "the faithless, worldly city" and the "heavenly city" part of which is an earth as a pilgrim. The celestial city has nothing to do with the temporal laws of the earthly state, but does not break them.

The heavenly city has its own peace, but respects the peace of the world:

"The earthly city, which does not live by faith, seeks an earthly peace, and therein contrives a civic harmony of command and obedience ... The heavenly city, on the other hand, or rather that part of it that is a stranger on the earth and lives by faith, also uses that peace because it must until the mortality that makes it necessary shall itself pass away"<sup>16</sup>

Despite this unjustifiable separation God and the City of Man, Augustine had established the principle of Transcendence by positing the Divine as existing side by side with the human, in a tenuous and non-integral co-existence of the two cities. As Pope Gregory and his successors shaped the European State, the City of God, represented by the papacy, came to have authority over the City of Earth. What Europe did, to integrate the two disjunct cities of Augustine, was to place one under the other, and to derive the civil authority for the temporal state from God through the Pope. The transcendent which hovered around the temporal in a somewhat loose way in Augustine, was anchored inside the Temporal as supreme, by making the state also God-derived. The Prince was now no longer deriving his authority from the temporal state, but from the divine source through the Papacy.

## **V. The State as Representation**

Eric Voegelin in his *The New Science of Politics*<sup>17</sup> argues that the government represents the State, which in turn represents the people, organized into a body for corporate action.

Representative here means both agent and image. Formerly Kings used to represent the people and the state. Today institutions do that Job. Voegelin says this is a peculiarity of Graeco-Roman and western civilizations only, based on the prior articulation of the individual as a representable unit<sup>18</sup>. This can be contested.

Voegelin says that in the great Far Eastern and Middle Eastern empires, this was not the case. These empires regarded themselves as representatives, or agents and images, not of the people,

but of a transcendent divine order. He documents this from the Behistun Inscription, celebrating the feats of Darius I of Persia, who regarded himself as representative and tool of Asuramazda. The Mongol King Kuyuk Khan wrote in the 13th century to Pope Innocent IV (1243-1254), who invited the Khan to receive Christian baptism.

If you say, 'I am a Christian; I adore God; I despise the others', how then shall you know whom God forgives and to whom He grants His mercy? How do you know that you speak such words? By the power of God, from the rising of the sun to its setting all realms have been granted to us. Without the Order of God How could anyone do anything?<sup>19</sup>"

The Asian monarchs and emperors did not make any claim to derive their authority from the people or to represent them. They claimed to represent God. This seems to have been the case in medieval Christendom also, though in the Graeco-Roman tradition, especially in Athenian democracy, the people- representation claim had been made.

What the modern post-Enlightenment, post-1789, western world had done is to reject the monarchic principle of God-representation, and replace it with the democratic principle of people-representation.

This democratic principle is only one strand in the western tradition. The Romanitas and Christentum traditions are clearly that of integrating the divine and the human in the social order. Augustine separated them, but they came back together again in medieval Christendom. In the Romanitas tradition the Pontifex is the bridge-builder between the divine and the human. Cicero recognizes this and in his *De Natura Deorum* philosophically justifies the divine-human nature of civil society as the original situation until the charm was broken by the mysticism of the individual and the secularization of society. This was also the earlier Greek society reflected in Homer and Hesiod -- a community of close interaction between gods and humans. Even Alexander of Macedonia who got his inspiration from the Persian conquerors was not a believer in Athenian democracy. Neither was that democracy totally secular. Alexander's mentor, Aristotle, himself thought the rule of the many pretty bad, one is the lord.<sup>20</sup>

The Christians did not dedivinize the social order; they only drove out the many gods of Rome, and put the one God of Jews and Christians in their place. Only gradually did the Triune God of the Christians take the place of the one God of the Jews as the author of *taxis* or civil order.

What Augustine, or using him Pope Gregory, did was to dedivinize the civil order and to concentrate divinity in the ecclesiastical order -- thus paving the way for the civil order to assert its total independence of the ecclesiastical order in the French Revolution, the Enlightenment and the process of secularization.

Eric Vogelin does not think that the secular order began with the French Revolution and the European Enlightenment of the 18th century. He thinks it began much earlier in a rebirth of

Gnosticism. It was western Christianity which de-divinized the temporal order by transferring divinity to the Church by Augustine.

But Charlemagne's Christendom built back the transcendent into the State, by the identification, Romanitas = Christianitas = Christian Roman empire of Charlemagne and his successors. The state was re-divinised by medieval Christendom; assumed by Byzantium earlier, and after the fall of Constantinople to the Turks, by Moscow, the Third Rome.

The European enlightenment, the French Revolution and the Process of secularization -- all these mark a new de-divinisation of that which had been re-divinised. In that process, the transcendent is domesticated. The people take the place of the transcendent God as the ultimate source and authority for all power. This overthrow of the Transcendent in order to affirm the sovereignty of the Human is what undergirds both products of the European Enlightenment -- Democratic Liberalism and Marxism-Leninism.

In the common European Home, where Marxists and Liberals are now to come together for a new programme of power-seeking and world domination, one doubts whether the old bourgeois trick of the European Enlightenment will still work.

In Kant's small but powerful essay "What is the Enlightenment?" he defines it as the assertion of adulthood by humanity, a humanity which only because of its timidity failed to come into its own inheritance as sovereign humanity. He, however, immediately goes on to say that such sovereignty can be exercised only by the "educated class", i.e. by middle class people with *Bildung*.

When the European Home people speak of a Global Humanism, I suspect that in the back of their minds, they regard European humanity as the true adult humanity. They may be willing to recognize by painful necessity, the Americans and perhaps the Japanese also as nearing maturity. But the rest of humanity like Asia and Africa particularly, and also Latin America (which is largely European) will need a long period of European tutelage before they become mature enough or adult enough, to handle the great responsibility of human sovereignty.

In principle, Global humanism is fine; but in practice, however, only a part of humanity, the technologically and industrially advanced part of humanity, can exercise leadership. This principle is not always acknowledged in theory, but is implied in much of planning and action -- in the economic and political policies of all industrially developed societies, including socialist societies like the USSR and ex-socialist societies like those of Eastern Europe. China does not quite go along that line.

## **V. The Secular and the Sovereignty of the People**

I think both principles of European civilization -- the secular perspective on reality as self-existent and non-transcendent, and the affirmation of the sovereignty of the people which goes

with the secular perspective need thorough questioning and re-examination before the principles on which to found a political economy can be formulated.

The secular assumption is one of the most fatuous assumptions made by European civilization, which has thereby fundamentally distorted all our human institutions including the State and the Academy. The dichotomisation of reality into sacred and secular was a direct consequence of Augustine's polarization of the divine and the human.

Feuerbach (1804-1872) stated it in his own terms, when he denied Hegel's notion of the pre-existence of the Absolute Idea or other logical categories before material evolution began. He was right in stating that Hegel's Absolute Idea was a philosophical term which served as a surrogate for the traditional belief in God.

Friedrich Engels put it this way:

"With irresistible force, Feuerbach is finally driven to the realization that the Hegelian pre-mundane existence of the Absolute Idea, 'the pre-existence of the logical categories' before the world existed, is nothing more than the fantastic survival of the belief in the existence of an extra-mundane creator; that the material, sensuously perceptible world to which we ourselves belong is the only reality." <sup>21</sup>

The Feuerbachian reduction of the Transcendent to be identical with the future of humanity lies at the heart of modern secular culture in both its forms -- Marxism and Liberal Democracy.

No philosophy of political economy can really escape this fundamental issue. The immanentist archaeology, i.e. the claim that the transcendence of God is identical with the future of humanity, has its background in European civilization's desperate drive to bring everything (including God) under the firm grip of its *cognitio*. Hegel brought the Absolute Idea within human cognition, and made that cognition in its final state, the final fulfillment of the Absolute Idea itself, as it works out its potentiality into actuality in natural and human history.

In western civilization we can trace three attempts to domesticate God within the human:

- a. the intellectual, theoretical, exemplified by Hegel and Schelling,
- b. the aesthetic-emotional, exemplified by Pentecostal sects, and
- c. the volitional-activistic exemplified by Marxism, Liberal Democracy, and National Socialism.

Religious Fundamentalism keeps the transcendent as transcendent, but by making the religious leadership the custodians of the transcendent, it makes another pernicious kind of domestication of the Transcendent possible. At the moment this tendency is very strong in many religions, but noticeably so in Iranian and Saudi Arabian Islam, in some forms of resurgent Hinduism, Irish Roman Catholicism, Jewish Zionism, Khalistani Sikhism, and Sri Lankan Buddhism-- to cite a few of the more obvious fundamentalisms.

Subtler forms of this attempt to domesticate the Transcendent can be seen also in the varieties of self-understanding of various expansionist cultures: e.g. Moscow as Third Rome, America's Manifest Destiny, and China's Celestial Kingdom-- all of which are used to justify forms of quest for hegemony, imperialism, and world domination.

Immanuel Kant, who in a philosophical sense is very much the Father and Prophet of the European Enlightenment, did not go as far as the investigation of the Transcendent

in future human history, primarily because his basic standpoint was characteristically bourgeois and centred in the individual mind rather than in human history as a community experience.

Kant did this by refusing to yield the teleological principle of understanding nature to the ambitions of the mechanical-causal principle of modern science. For him the purposiveness of nature is an a priori concept,<sup>22</sup> not one to be demonstrated by the empirical methods of science. The purposiveness of nature is a transcendental deduction of the critique of judgment. And Kant insists that the order of nature cannot be understood without the a priori principle of purposiveness. The teleological judgment about the purpose of nature (or the purpose of the created order as understood by us, if we speak in non-Kantian Christian theological terms) should form an integral part of any philosophy of political economy. For Kant this purposiveness can be understood only in a transcendental dimension:

“In other words, nature, considered as mere mechanism, could have produced its forms in a thousand other ways without stumbling upon the unity which is in accordance with such a principle. It is not in the concept of nature but quite apart from it that we can hope to find the least ground a priori for this”<sup>23</sup>

It is reflection (for it is not a matter for empirical science) on this purposiveness of the whole that the European enlightenment tradition has neglected. The result is that the purpose of the whole has been replaced by partial purposes of human communities-- like the establishment of national power or *impirium*, or *dominum terrae* and so on. Liberal Democracy certainly operates on the pragmatic, arbitrary human choice of what a section of humanity wants. Marxism on the other hand defines the purpose of the whole as the establishment of the classless society-- a stateless, creative, human community in history; it thus does not, at least in theory, fall into the trap of making parochial pragmatism and provincialist greed for domination its final purpose.

But Marxism too has domesticated the transcendent purpose of the created order in accordance with a 19th century perception of the final goal of human history. Kant was very keen on affirming the transcendent character of the whole. The whole is not the cause of the part as we understand causality: "to speak strictly ..... the organization of nature has in it nothing analogous to any causality we know"<sup>25</sup>

The point of Kant is that

1. Reason is not a mere mechanism of nature;
2. Nature is not mechanical, but a purposive entity which cannot be understood apart from its purpose;
3. Nature is a system of purposes, and it is the function of human Reason to go beyond what Pure Reason can do ( ie. scientific, mechanical-causal explanation) to discern the nature of the purposiveness of nature, and to fulfill the creative human role within it in imagination, creativity and moral freedom.

Kant goes on then to formulate the two constitutive principles of the possibility of Objects:

"proposition: All production of material things is possible according to merely mechanical laws;

counter-proposition: some production of material things is not possible according to merely mechanical laws"<sup>26</sup>

The two principles seem to be in conflict, in contradiction, looking like an antinomy in Reason itself. Kant says, however, that it is not so; but that we should go along with the first principle as far as it takes. Beyond that we need a different principle for assessing final causes. This cannot be given by experience-based use of pure reason; humanity needs to reflect.

And as humanity has reflected, according to Kant, two sets of systems have emerged -- Idealism and Realism. These systems do not, however, provide that which they pretend to. Kant refers to the system of Epicureans, who accept the idea of purposiveness in nature but denies intentionality. This is the system which Marx defended in his doctoral dissertation. Blind chance, or total randomness, is sufficient cause to explain what looks like purposiveness in nature, according to Epicurus and Marx.

According to Kant, Christian Theism, with the hylozoism it implies, does not give the philosophical ground for purposiveness either; though it is superior to all other grounds of explanation,<sup>27</sup> it still remains non-objective as a judgment.<sup>28</sup> It cannot be proved, not even by a future Newton.

It is at this point that Kant goes beyond critical judgment to pure speculation. Culture, the creativity of human beings in accordance with chosen purposes, does not surrender its freedom to any *a priori* rules as to how it should function. These choices of humanity are made, however, not primarily by an individual, but by the civil community which regulates the abuse of the conflicting freedoms of individuals.

The climax of Kant's argument is that there is a final purpose for the very existence of the world ; final purpose here means for Kant much more than what Aristotle put into that notion. A final purpose needs no other as the condition of its possibility"<sup>29</sup> ie. the world exists because of its

Idea - the idea of the highest good, in freedom. This final purpose is humanity, not as a phenomenon, but as a *noumenon*. Only human beings are capable of freedom in purpose, and so only in Man can the world achieve its purpose. This purpose of both world and humanity can exist only in an intelligent "World Cause (as highest artist)" but such a First Cause is not open to Pure Reason; it is a fundamental *a priori* of human consciousness.

And here Kant provided a moral proof for the Being of God, a proof which has not stood the test of time and has therefore been largely abandoned. It was a subjective argument which Kant knew to be not logically compelling; it was an appeal which could find a positive response from a moral being, one who acknowledges duties and responsibilities and therefore a moral law to which one is bound by nature. A morally sensitive person can recognize that the ground of the moral law one observes in one's own nature is a divine command.

Today we recognize how weak Kant's argument is. It comes at the end of his Third Critique, and almost seems like an appendix which Kant added to escape the charge of Atheism (or to please his servant who complained about Kant's Critiques doing away with God). The Father of the European Enlightenment did not want a secular perception of the world, ie. the idea that the world can be understood without reference to any entity transcending it. Kant was not "secular" as many children of the Enlightenment have become.

I am here concerned, not with the weakness or strength of Kant's arguments, nor with his personal beliefs. What I am concerned is the acceptance of the secular principle as the basis of modern western civilization. I can understand the historical circumstances under which the original anti-secular principle of the modern western state ie. *cuius regio eius religio* (as king, so religion) has been repudiated and replaced by the other western political principle of separation of church and state. I can understand secularization as a social, spiritual, intellectual process by which the domination of religion has been beaten back by the assertion of human freedom.

But I cannot understand the driving out of God from academic science (as not a 'necessary hypothesis') and from the State (secular state). If God is really the source and foundation of all existence, how can there be a science or state in which that source and foundation of all existence, in which that source and foundation has no relevance? Let me repeat -- for me both the idea of the secular and the idea of the sovereignty of the people are ideas without foundation, mistaken ideas, based on arguments much weaker than the one advanced by Kant as moral argument for the existence of God. Modern Science is foundationally wrong, in so far as it pretends to explain everything without reference to God by positing a self-existent, auto-developing "nature" which it then proceeds to explain by its causal laws. The modern state, whether Marxist or Liberal Democratic, is conditionally wrong in so far as it affirms the principle of the sovereignty of the people, because there is absolutely no evidence, either in practice or in theory, that the people ever have been or will be sovereign.

## Conclusion

We as humanity are at a great cross-road. We need to understand the nature of the choices facing us.

In relation to what is happening and has happened in the Eastern part of Europe and in the Soviet Union, I can unhesitatingly make the following affirmations:

1. The model of Marxist-Leninist socio-economic and political development initiated by the Bolshevik revolution of 1917 has not stood the test of times
2. What was previously condemned by Orthodox Marxism-Leninism as "bourgeois revisionism" is now becoming official doctrine for some socialist countries, including China and the Soviet Union.
3. This does not mean a total discounting of the socialist experiment; some values established in socialism are now becoming increasingly normative even for market economies: eg. a full employment society, the imperative to make education, health, food, housing, clothing, communication and transport equitably accessible to all people according to need -- whatever their economic and social status, geographical location, or religious, ideological and political convictions. Social justice has been demonstrated to be a goal to be pursued in all societies. People have become aware of the moral condemnability of domination, oppression, exploitation and great inequalities in standard of living. No political philosophy today can afford to ignore these basic norms.
4. The triumph of market economy capitalism is extremely temporary. Faced with the presence and challenge of socialism, the market economy system has developed highly sophisticated ways of overcoming crises. But the contradictions of capitalism are intrepid, and the system is bound to collapse by the weight of its own internal contradictions, sooner or later. Its temporary triumph, however, is quite substantial and in the countries of Eastern Europe, where the knowledge of the market economy has been from a distance, capitalism has won millions of open supporters. It also has received an enormous boost by the opening up of new investment and market possibilities in Eastern Europe, the Soviet Union and China. It can go on for a while, even if there is insubstantial increase in military budgets of nations.
5. By dint of sheer historical necessity, new economies will develop which are mixtures of some socialist principles and practices mixed with prominent market economy features. Only the proportions of socialist and capitalist elements will vary in these new economies as well as the establishment economies like those of USA Germany and Japan, as well as the EC. Pure capitalism is a thing of the past. Pure socialism is still a thing of the future.
6. The challenge that shows no signs of being met is to create new models of political economies based on our present insights about the nature of the world as process and of human beings in it. It may take quite a while before the incipient questioning of the values of the European enlightenment the mechanistic and largely anti-human paradigm

of scientific-technological development and the fatuous and fallacious secular assumption will lead to the devising of totally new political, economic models. Pushing that questioning to some creative levels is the present challenge before a philosophy of political economy.

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