OCCIDENTAL COSMOLOGY AND THE THEORIES OF PEACE AND DEVELOPMENT

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The problem in this short paper is the following: given some postulates about Western cosmology as to the organization of space, time, knowledge, person-nature, person-person and person-transpersonal relations, what are we to expect in terms of occidental theories of peace and development? From the very beginning a methodological remark is needed. The exercise now to be engaged in is not a deductive exercise with well known facit. We know what the theories in the occident in empirical practise are, so it might be tempting to try to deduce them from first principles. Rather than deduction, however, it is a problem of articulation: simply spelling out what those basic postulates mean in two areas, in casu peace and development.

Thus, starting with peace, and with space: an occidental world order, for peace and security would have to be centered, even rooted in the West in order to be seen as normal and natural by homo occidentalis. It cannot possibly have its center elsewhere, that would mean a secondary role given to the West, which would not only not be in the interest of the West but also be contradictory to the very idea of order, hence of peace and security.

From this point on there are evidently two possibilities depending on whether one is operating with a division of space in two parts, center and periphery, or three parts, center, periphery and evil. The first conceptualization of space is compatible with organizations like the League of Nations and the United Nations, with built-in executive power to Western countries, constructed around Western theories and practise, for instance in connection with international law. And the second concept, correspondingly, gives rise

to a system of treaties and alliances centered around the major Western power, for the time being the United States: NATO, TIAP, SEATO, CENTO, ANZUS, AMPO and so on; all of them tying the periphery to the center, in an alliance against Evil : "international communism".

The Principle of Evil has been organised around two axes in history as seen from the West: one national, one ideological. The nations singled out as candidates for this important position in the Western view of the world are above all the "primitives", the Turks, the Jews and the Russians and the corresponding ideologies Paganism, Islam, Judaism and communism, even atheistic communism at that. Thus, the evil has been located in the non-Occident on the one hand and competitive religions/ideologies within the Occident on the other. The amount of violence exercised in the name of peace and security against these "evil forces" in history is incredible.

When it comes to time one would expect a peace and security order compatible with the idea of crisis that might lead either to dem ewigen Frieden, eternal peace, or a total disaster; in other words, and apocalyptic vision. I think it can be said that the reliance on military means in general, and offensive military means, either for retaliatory deterrence or simply for aggressive attacks in order to get at the evil at its roots, are compatible with this idea. In other words, the point would be that to the majority within the species referred to here as homo occidentalis the circumstance-so often pointed out by all kinds of peace movements through the ages – that these policies are dangerous, and not only destructive but also self-destruc-

tive carry no news. On the contrary, the policies are accepted precisely because they are seen as normal and natural within such an apocalyptic vision of time. There is also the idea of building up to apocalypse through alliance formation and arms races. In other words, the arms race is also seen as normal and natural, compatible with the general idea of progress. And disarmament, if it should ever take place, not to mention a disarmament race, would somehow run agains against the natural course of affairs and probably be counteracted.

The theory of knowledge enters here: a couple of simple ideas on the top, and a lot of highly concrete consequences at the bottom of the thought system. The ideas are well known and also very old: si vis pacem, para bellum (if you want peace, prepare yourself for war and "attack is the best defense." Believed in by Occidentals for centuries, or millennia with some important variations through time, - they are essentially examples of how the Western theory of knowledge is based on a popular faith in such ideas that attain axiomatic character, never to be falsified, not even falsifiable.

That warfare is compatible with the biblical four class society, with a godly principle on top, then humankind divided into two parts, men and women, and then nature, is obvious. To possess overwhelming force and intelligence are manifestations of omnipotence and omniscience; godly characteristics. But how can warfare be compatible with benevolence, a third major characteristic of god? War itself is malevolent, in its consequences also for oneself. So benevolence only manifests itself by assuming that war is for a higher principle, something far above the untold suffering on the battlefield,

and in the war aftermath. And such principles indeed exist: the Triumph of the Lord would be the religious version; the Fight for Freedom would be the secular version. And from such principles the theories of the just war, the justus bellum would easily emerge, in the name of some occidental religion/ideology (Christianity/Islam, or liberalism/marxism).

At the same time military organization is deeply vertical, but also quite individualistic in the sense that there are great chances of rising, even very high, in these hierarchies, through risk-taking, through acts of heroism. War loosens up rigid structures and provides new opportunities as a reward for sacrifice, if sometimes only post mortem. But women have been denied this opportunity: they are on the margin of the system, serving as victims, also of the particular antiwoman violence known as rape, and as the little helpers not only engaged in reproduction as ever, but also taking over productive tasks left undone by the males participating in belligerence. And there are not the males of a warrior caste only, but in principle the entire male population (except individual objectors).

To this picture, then, should only be added war as devastation of nature, as rape of nature, as total inconsideration, thereby manifesting the ascendency of human beings over the lower levels of life, and the environment in general.

Conclusion: anybody who in one way or the other fights against the war establishment and the military approach to peace and security should realize that this fight is at the level of deep ideology and deep structure, at the level of cosmology. It is not merely a question of an ideological debate and struggle, as between right and left in domestic occidental politics. Much more is at stake: the whole military approach is an almost perfect articulation of the cosmological assumptions, and for that reason deeply rooted in occidentalism. In other words, it is very unlikely to yield unless that cosmology itself

is not only challenged, but to some extent effectively changed.

Unfortunately, something of the same can be said about occidental theory and practise of development. One may dislike it, but in so doing one should realize that to homo occidentalis development = economic growth is not a random choice among many possible views of development: it is simply truth, as that which is normal and natural, that which is compatible with social cosmology.

Thus, take the dimension of space and time. It goes without saying that"development" is a special case of the more general Idea of Progress. But it also goes without saying that however this special case is defined in a more precise manner it will have to be done in such a way that the West comes out as "more developed" and the non-West as "less developed", even as underdeveloped/undeveloped. But also as "developing" since there is supposed to be a dynamism in these matters. In this, however, there is a contradiction: if the non-West is developing and the West only is developed, then one day non-West might catch up with the West!

But this is precisely where the other aspect of Western time cosmology enters: the idea of crisis. Yes, there may be a crisis: they may catch up! And from this follow two clear possibilities: either that the developed countries also are developing, along the same line as before or some new line, or that the non-West takes over and forces the West out of its central position. I think it is precisely this frightening possibility - to some extent even realized in

the world today because of the rather rapid development of Japan and neighboring countries— that revindicates development theory as normal and natural, because of the strong identification of the West with Crisis. A tantalizing challenge, like facing death and avoiding it.

When it comes to the associated theory of knowledge we are in a somewhat similar situation as in connection with peace and security. Simple axioms, such as economic growth and labour productivity are on top of a thought system guaranteeing development for all as logical consequence, the bottom line. There are variations of this theme, but basically it turns out like that. That the process is devastating of nature is a basic part of contemporary reality, known as environmental degradation. That it is compatible with verticality and individualism, with women given a more inferior position (reproduction rather than production) and with great chances, like in the military of rapid personal mobility through risk-taking, even sacrifice for entrepreneurs or other types of players on the "market", is obvious.

And, there is also a god-like principle: the secular successor to striving in your daily work for the glory of God. I think there is such a successor, and it is Welfare, not in the sense of a welfare state, but in the sense of a high standard of material life, comfort. And it plays very much the same role as freedom in connection with the pursuit of peace: it is the overriding concern that justifies the negative consequences of the actions engaged in - and there are many. And just as is also the case for freedom: it can certainly be argued that Welfare is something people pursue, not something abstract like "peace", "development".

There are cases of success. Military ascendancy has created some space out of which some type of freedom can be wrought in the center, of course at the expense of the periphery, not to mention of the "evil" forces. And the same is the case for welfare: our present world shows considerable amounts of welfare at the center, less, though, at the periphery since the whole exercise is tied to patterns of exploitation, particularly through unequal exchange relations between center and periphery. There may also be some welfare to be found among the evil forces, evil because they have their own way of trying to get that welfare, and in so doing neither recognize the West as the center, nor the West as a model. That in practise they tend to do both is another matter, very much to the delight of the Western center that sees itself confirmed through such heretic practises (from the point of view of evil ideology, that is).

Thus, in practise we end up with the four worlds that I think are useful in characterizing the present world: the First world, the center, defining development and seeing itself as a model; the Second world which is "evil" because it claims to have an alternative approach; the Third world which is the periphery and continues to remain the periphery; and then the Fourth world which was once like the Third world but now is threatening to overtake the First world. So there are problems, just as there are for the pursuit of peace, But all those problems are implicit in the model, and not necessarily totally unwelcome since they spell crisis.

Conclusion: we have exactly the development theory and the development practise we deserve. And again the same problem;

he or she who disagrees will have to understand that the struggle for "another development" is not only a struggle for another ideology, as it is often put, between right and left. In fact, when "another development" is launched from the left, for instance within the marxist frame of reference, it will tend, in practise to turn out exactly like what has been indicated above, with some minor modifications. And why: precisely because there has not been sufficient awareness of the cosmological aspect of the problem. The struggle for another development, like the struggle for another peace, has to be conducted also as a challenge, even a transformation of occidental cosmology.