

UNUS MUNDUS – AS A UTOPIA AND AS A REALITY

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Abstract. *Optimistic visions of the future of mankind history, found in certain interpretations of the New Age philosophical thought, contain a universalistic idea about the need for creating a mankind world as a unique global society. Integrating processes realised within the European "circle" of mankind represent a relevant constituent of globalisation, as a mode of our modern historical being. Does modern European history, characterised by various uniting processes, as part of global-historical movement, represent approximation to philosophical ideas of united mankind, or do they still remain in the sphere of utopian thinking – is a question which surpasses the cognitive powers of pragmatic consciousness. The universalistic and cosmopolitan idea "Unus Mundus", realised in different ways, in different forms of unions, in all spheres of social life, does not represent a realisation of the New Age dream of One World as an essential progress in the history of mankind.*

Key words: *progress, modern European history, integrating processes, utopian thinking, global-historical process, globalisation, mankind world, united mankind, social reality*

Urban civilisation, the "birth place" of global-historical process, began and developed within the European "circle" of mankind. The epoch-making changes, announcing the birth of a new system – capitalism, as the world order – gave support to the development of European spiritual thought and to the surge of various philosophical conceptions of human history, in which the essence of those changes was clarified and meditated upon. What was heavily emphasised is the "subjective side" of the historical process, which was understood as an area of the objectification of human power. The New Age brought along the birth of European man's self-consciousness, his faith in his own superiority over nature and other parts of mankind. Philosophical reflections developed, to a large extent, through the understanding of human history as an overall progress.

Human practical activity acquired new dimensions – it was enriched with the new content, since conscious and organised shaping of social reality became a part of history. Historical occurrence, as a constituent of the European New Age history, shaped the very

notion of historical time, for it has "only its historical *beginning*, and only in the modern age, in the New Age European history" (Kangrga;1984:21).

The European philosophical and scientific thoughts developed from the Renaissance onwards through the gradual appearance and growth of the idea of progress. The birth process of this idea represents, according to Barnes, "one of the most wonderful results of science and rationalism from 1500 to 1800" (Barnes;1982;Bk.I:64). The process reached its peak in the late nineteenth century, when the idea of progress triumphed completely in the humanities. Moreover, history was equated with progress (Tartalja;1976:46).

Human history, which can be understood as a process of humans' becoming self-conscious, can also be understood as a process of man's becoming aware of the actual progress, achieved within the medium of his historical being. Up to the seventeenth century, the progress of mankind was natural and spontaneous. History, which is a human creation, was not a result of great, well-thought, and collective efforts in achieving consciously a set of progressive goals; it was created unconsciously. With the New Age, the flow of history was consciously changed. The New Age *is* the age of birth of the self-conscious man, who sets the overall progress of mankind as his goal and task.

The infinite faith in the power of reason is founded on the basis of the idea of progress and progress became the key notion of the New Age thinking. Progress itself was understood differently, depending on the degree of relevance of its dimensions. However, what all New Age perceptions have in common is linking the idea of progress to the global-historical process. The New Age notion of progress is special because it does not imply individual progress, for example, in various skills, knowledge, moral features, but a historical process of human progress.

Progress was understood as a constituent of human history; moreover, as a basic law of the historical process. The infinite faith in reason was simultaneously the infinite faith in the power of knowledge, which gave rise to optimistic visions of the future of mankind. The synthetic view proves that progressive theories saw human history as a process of general progress, which marked the understanding of man, as a superior being, as a basis of the infinite faith in the power of reason and knowledge. Thanks to his reason, man learned about nature, which was to result in technical application of natural-scientific discoveries for the purpose of mastering nature and submitting it to human control. Nonetheless, it was supposed to lead to progress in all other aspects of human historical being, as well.

The meaning of human action within the social and historical totality is the creation of social conditions more highly developed than the previous ones. Therefore, the idea of progress always contains an axiological dimension. The social and historical practice has a teleological character in all its forms. Thus, it is always directed towards the *better* than the existing. If the accomplished goals do not essentially represent a movement towards the better in the history of mankind, their character is regressive, not progressive.

According to Simmel, "the notion of progress presupposes an ultimate state which in all its absoluteness must exist as an ideal, so that nearing it or realizing it on a higher level would characterize any later state as relatively progressive." (Zimel;1994:185). Simmel believes that whether one will or will not see progress in historical movement "depends on one ideal the value of which as such does not result from that order of facts, but is unavoidably added to it via subjectivity" (Zimel;1994:185).

I shall not delve into the problem of relativity of the idea of progress, its ambiguity and even its problematic nature, since it would mean straying from the main topic, although I believe that the problem of current integration flows could be considered from the perspective of progress dialectic. The focus of my reflections is, above all, a universalistic idea – as both a utopian opinion and a constituent of reality, wherein I see different forms of integration processes as means of realizing that idea.

In the optimistic vision which developed within the New Age European thought and which was based on the idea of progress as a means of realizing the better, the history of mankind is seen as the field of overall progress – technical, economic, political, ethical, cultural, etc., in which well-being, freedom, social justice, solidarity, peace and happiness would rule over poverty, injustice, cruelty, violence, barbarism and egotism.

One of the criteria for measuring progress is the degree of realizing one's liberty. Thus, increasing the field of liberty means progress and decreasing it – regression. In the context of progressive theories, human history is viewed as a process of emancipation of mankind. Nevertheless, since the notion of liberty always includes the notion of an individual, the idea of progress also contains the notion of liberty as a relevant characteristic of an individual human being.

The industrialisation process was equated with progress because the industry enabled the increase of the field of liberty. Moreover, the industry contained the moving force which would liberate mankind.

The process of industrialisation, which marked the New Age as a result of applying scientific achievements in the economic practice, represented the foundation of integrating tendencies emerging within the European "circle" of mankind.

The contemporary history of the world is developing under the tension between integrating and disintegrating processes. If the integrating processes are to symbolize progress and the disintegrating ones regression, then the global-historical movement, realised as *globalisation*, should be understood as a dialectic process with the European practice of integration as its constituent part.

A philosophically understood process of globalisation envelops, in its dialectical nature, the totality of all planetary events in modern human history, events which can be termed "globalising". Therefore, reflection about European integrating processes beyond the context of globalisation as a global-historical process could not rise above a mere partial description and accumulation of statistical data. After all, the *world* is one, despite all divisions, differences, imbalances and contradictions.

The history of mankind so far is a history of a mankind not (yet) united. Modern ideas about the need for integration in all social spheres can be understood as an echo of a New Age dream – the idea of a united mankind can be found, differently formulated, in the utopian thinking of great European philosophers, such as Immanuel Kant, Saint-Simon and Karl Marx. Although developed through essentially different philosophical presuppositions, visions of the future of human history, found in the teachings of these philosophers, are based on a common principle – the reign of mind, since it is only the realisation of the mind principle that enables harmony between people, states, nations and cultures and the overcoming of all divisions, conflicts and disharmonies.

The utopian thinking places the ideal society in opposition to its existing state. In philosophical-historical visions, the ideas of a perfect society which *should* be realised according to the demands of the mind are always at the level of a global-historical con-

sciousness, since they represent consciousness about universality. The universalistic notion of historical process as a unity of temporal dimensions – the past, the present and the future – unites all human histories (Heller;1984:49). Therefore, the future is not understood as the future of a single culture, state or nation, but as the future of mankind.

In his ethically founded philosophy of history, Kant developed the project of the future of human history based on an abstractly postulated imagined future as a progress into infinity (Kangrga;1980:152) and on an imagined mankind, just as abstractly postulated. Kant did not understand mankind as denoting a multitude but a generality (Kangrga;1983:150), thus identifying it with the notion of human kind or human species.

In his *Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Purpose*, Kant developed a utopian conception of an ideal cosmopolitan society, in which the highest level of freedom and justice would be realised. According to Kant, "the history of mankind can be seen, in large part, as the realisation of nature's secret plan to bring forth a perfectly constituted state on the inside and, for that purpose, on the outside, as the only condition in which the capacities of mankind can be fully developed." (Kant;1974:36)

The direction of the global-historical process towards "achieving the complete civic union of the human race" (Kant;1974:38) is, according to Kant, an inner necessity, or Nature's secret plan. Nevertheless, since the realisation of this ultimate purpose needs to be the work of people themselves, the world-perfect, civic order is the highest task for their moral-political action. The political form corresponding to the condition of a perfect civic order is the republic, in the form of single states or, universally, as a global organisation. Kant imagined the global civic order as a confederation of republics. The global republic should exist as a harmony between its members, which implies the state of general world peace.

Kant's utopian idea of eternal peace – a lasting state of peace among states, which should be realised universally – as world peace, represents, in his ethically founded philosophy, a moral-practical task for mankind and, thus, a regulatory principle of human moral action.

The teaching of Saint-Simon also contains an ethically founded humanistic utopian dimension. His vision of the future of human history is, likewise, universalistic because he sees the future global society as united mankind. Moreover, he wrote a program for re-organising society, "which was actually a predecessor of a future world government, adapted to that period" (quoted in: Robertson;2003:1994).

The basis of Saint-Simon's universalistic view contains his faith in industrialism, which, according to him, promotes cosmopolitanism and internationalism (see Robertson;2003:195). Saint-Simon believed that industrialism would lead to the unity of mankind. As a social utopian thinker, he saw the foundation of such unity in an overall association of manufacturers which, according to him, could be the only provider of lasting peace and complete harmony.

Saint-Simon's teaching develops the progressive idea of human history as an endless perfection to the very end because Saint-Simon understood progress as a natural (physiological) law which lies at the basis of human development (Tartalja;1976:44). The moral perfection of people, in which Saint-Simon sees the meaning and the goal of historical movement, represents the essence of the overall human progress.

Saint-Simon's utopian thought on the future of human history as an advancement towards united mankind also contains the idea that progress, as a regular process, leads to

the union of divided and separated areas of human spirit – philosophy and religion, art and culture, science and dogma. Moreover, he considered any social science impossible without the united mankind (see Robertson;2003:194).

A completely different conception of world history was framed by Karl Marx. Although under the influence of Saint-Simon, he built his utopian vision of a united, or socialised, mankind on the foundation of his own scientific analyses of capitalism and the understanding of the proletariat as the subject of global-historical movement.

Marx believed that communism was supposed to be the "solved riddle of history", that form of social life which would represent a conscious, planned and rational regulation of human interrelation and their relation towards nature.

Marx imagined communism as a community of freely joined individuals; however, as the future world history, communism, according to Marx, "is for us not a *state of affairs* which is to be established, an *ideal* to which reality [will] have to adjust itself", but "the *real* movement which abolishes the present state of things" (Marks –Engels;1964: Vol. I.34).

According to Robertson, Marx predicted that the proletariat, "as an exploited but potentially global class within expanding capitalism [...] would develop and establish a truly global universalism" (Robertson;2003:195). The planetary union of the proletarian class as the subject of the communist movement (proletarian internationalism) would shape the history of the world, thus realising Marx's project – "united mankind".

With his "concrete utopia" (Bloch), Marx undoubtedly "shaped world history" (Galbraith;1995:94), a part of humanity having taken the road towards realising his vision. Nevertheless, historical movement continued in another direction and all that is left now is the possibility of different readings of Marx's teaching, as a content of the history of philosophy.

According to Francis Fukuyama, Marx's communist utopia is a teaching about the end of history, similar to Hegel's understanding of the global-historical process. He believes that returning to Hegel is relevant because "it supplies us with a framework within which we can understand whether the historical process can be expected to continue incessantly or whether we have, in fact, reached the end of history" (Fukujama;1997:155).

In Hegel's theologically based philosophy of history, history had to stop, the final purpose having been reached. According to Hegel, as opposed to nature, in which everything happens in a circular flow (Hegel;1951:64), the category of the *human* exists as a developing process, the aim of which is progress of freedom-awareness (Hegel;1951:35).

Hegel's philosophy of the global-historical process is retrospective. He is not concerned with what will happen but with what did happen, "because in history, we are dealing with the past" (Hegel;1951:322). Since the ultimate purpose of the historical process, according to Hegel – absolute freedom – has been realised, his teaching can be interpreted as proposing the end of history. The framework in which the attained level of absolute freedom is manifested is a liberal state in which, according to Hegel, all are free.

In the Hegelian spirit, Fukuyama advocates the idea of an ultimate purpose to the global-historical movement: a universal and homogenous state which will become fully established by a definitive victory of economic and political liberalism, even in those parts of the world where victory has yet been secured. According to Fukuyama, fulfilling the ultimate purpose would not mean the end of history in the sense of the end of "event" history, but in the sense that there will be no more progress in the development of princi-

ples and institutions, since all essential problems are solved in a fully developed liberal state.

Modern history mostly corroborates these claims by Fukuyama as western civilisation is sustained exactly by a complex of political and economic liberties, with the occidental model of social life being an ideal set as a goal in other parts of the world.

The economic social sphere represents a relevant framework in which a unifying tendency, as a form of the globalisation process, is manifested. The principle of economic rationality unites the market, as well as production itself; thus, its realisation closes local borders and creates a universal economic bond within mankind. Judging by everything, the process is unstoppable and the globalisation – or the expansion of western, capitalistic model worldwide – alters not only the social reality, but also us, since our individual lives are also affected by this total process.

Our intimacies, our personalities, our individual and collective identities are under the influence of economic globalising changes. Our consciousness undergoes a metamorphosis and we become part of the planetary process. We become victims of consumerist ideology, founded on a reduced "image" of man. Thus, the creation of a "cosmopolitan society" also reveals itself as a process of creation of a new human type – the planet Earth becomes the habitat of *homo consumens*.

The history of the world, born in the world market, began as a history of urban society. The formation of urban society throughout the world, followed by growing awareness of the world as a whole made up of its parts – otherwise known as the process of uniting mankind on the premise of urban society – has lasted for centuries. In current history, the process is termed "globalisation", which implies "condensing of time – space" (Kellner;2003:69). Today, the "condensing" process is accelerated thanks to new technology. According to some beliefs, the concept of a global, or world society "has become possible only in the modern age thanks to science, technology, industry and universal values created in the twentieth century and different from those of any other age" (in Skler;2003:41).

Globalisation, as a "historical *novum*", should be understood relatively because what is new is the forms of its realisation. Likewise, formation of a global society used to be, above all, a spontaneous process; today, it is a result of conscious human redirection of the global-historical movement.

The process of uniting mankind, inherent in capitalism as a global system, contains its objective premise in the application of scientific discoveries and, consequently, in a quick development of productive forces. Despite the existence of disintegrating processes which hinder and decelerate this global process, contemporary reality shows that "every individual has become [...] part of mankind, which is, to a large extent, an accomplished whole" (Rus;1969:521).

Centuries-long direction of the global-historical movement towards realising a unique (human) world is inherent in urban civilisation. Capitalism is "the first social and economic formation to have (partially) changed all people of the world into a tightly knit whole, into a unique living creature of the world" (Rus;1969:521).

Nowadays, the process of uniting (a not-yet-united) mankind is realised in all spheres of human activity. Therefore, *Unus Mundus* as a reality should be understood in its process-like nature, as a *forming process*. Nonetheless, learning the dialectic of that process proves that it is not a result of objectification of humanistic ideas in the New Age utopian thinking; it is realised on the basis of completely different (pragmatic, not

philosophical) premises. Indeed, a thorough comparative analysis of the contemporary level of global-historical movement and the New Age utopian teachings might reveal that certain forms of practice on a global level represent a realisation of some New Age ideas of united mankind. However, despite the humanistic forms of practice, a unified world or a *global society* is not created via realisation of essentially humanistic principles with "no residue".

The direction of global-historical movement is not determined by ideals the realisation of which would signify the end of inhuman forms of practice and the establishment of harmonious social relations; it is determined by economic totalitarianism. The domination of economics and economic interests in the practical sphere of people's lives, apparent on a global level as an expansion of a trans-national, "mondialised" capitalism, leads to the realisation of a *global consumer society*.

According to Fukuyama, human history receives its direction and coherence from a universal mechanism, which is a result of the development of natural sciences during several previous centuries (cf. Fukujama;1997:147). Indeed, the development of natural sciences and the application of their discoveries in industry, represent a moving force without which it is impossible to imagine or explain the current level of economic social development. *Unus Mundus*, as a reality, as an *emerging global consumer society*, contains this universal mechanism at its basis.

The process of uniting mankind is unfolding as a global process of creating HOMO CONSUMENS. For, "with the exception of rapidly disappearing tribes in the jungles of Brazil or Papua New Guinea, there is no other area of mankind which the Mechanism has not touched and which has not become connected with the rest of mankind through universal economic bonds of modern consumerism" (Fukujama;1997:147). The irresistible attractiveness of the splendour of material wealth possesses the strength the effect of which no one can resist and which is rapidly expanding throughout the Earth. Therefore, it would be difficult to say that there exists another state where realisation of a society of abundance is not set as a goal.

The global consumer society – a reality in the making – is possible under a premise of full integration of national economies into the world market. A new global economy is being established. This process shows that closed areas, isolated from the rest of the world, are not possible, and that flows of modern history lead towards establishing a unique economic system, as a founding system of social relations in the global society, seen in its totality. The creation of the global consumer society as a dimension of the globalisation process, within a centuries-old capitalistic modernisation and planetary expansion of capitalism, is enabled by modern achievements in technology, communication and exchange of goods. Thus a unique global world is created with a unique, global market.

A perfectly integrated global economy, reproducing itself through an everlasting process of mass production for mass consumption of any product, anywhere on the planet, is the founding principle to be achieved within the economic universe, in the centre of which *homo consumens* is found, as an alpha and omega, the starting point and the end line of every economic process. The new being, which finds its *raison d'être* in the appeal of purchasing and consuming, is the object of attention in economics and economic practice. Through emphasising its desires, needs, freedom of choice, pleasure and happiness

provided by shopping and consumption of various products, a reason is given for the existence of a *global consumer society*.

The global consumer society – the habitat of homo consumens, the citizen of the world – is possible thanks to the global expansion of consumerist ideology, founded on an implied, reduced, image of man. Human being, a totality, a multi-layered dialectic structure, is reduced to a few of its traits which become the object of manipulation: homo sapiens=homo consumens; man-consumer=being of needs, which he longs to satisfy.

Every age creates a dominant individual type. Our age, characterised by a growing economic totalitarianism of global proportions, creates the type of a "socially desirable" personality – an obedient consumer, disciplined by the world market. The global production of sameness regarding material goods ("mass production for mass consumption") produces sameness even when human beings are in question. Globalisation, viewable as a process of product standardisation, develops also as a process of standardisation of human thought and behaviour.

"Consumerist theology" glorifies man as a being who satisfies his need for a product as an absolutely free being, thus realising his freedom of will and his own free choice. Being incapable of resisting the rule of market and the glorification of consumerism, homo consumens experiences the act of purchasing objects of his desires not as coercion or obligation, but as a result of his own free decision. He believes himself to be the subject of consumption, unaware of the illusion, because global standardisation of human thought and behaviour has turned him into a mere object of manipulation by means of exposing him to the same ideas and pressures of consumerist rhetoric.

Such "philosophy" of man forms the basis of consumerist theology, which preaches sameness, homogeneity and global integration of people; what matters are not the differences but that which connects people as human beings: their mutual human need to satisfy a mutual human need of their own. The product offered to them does exactly that. There is only one world because in the global consumer society anywhere in the world – consumers want the one and the same product.

The ideology of global consumer society exalts the triumph of individual freedom and, accordingly, of individualism; in the act of purchase and consumption each individual expresses their essence as an absolutely free being, thus realising their individuality. Capitalism as an order represents a framework in which the progress of freedom and development of individuality have reached their peak. Consequently, its global expansion will create conditions for global realisation of absolute freedom of every individual, anywhere in the Earth. However, philosophy of individualism, implied in this ideology, is transforming into sheer rhetoric: imposing behavioural patterns with the intent to awaken man's unconscious need for imitation, it cancels out any individuality.

Homo consumens, as an imitating being, is the premise of existence of global consumer society – capitalism in global expansion, whose economic process is realised as an "endless circular movement", "perpetuum mobile", or movement within the same in the same way. Nevertheless, from the perspective of a philosophy of meaning one can raise the question whether this "perpetuum mobile", this endless movement of the same under the same presuppositions, signifies actual realisation of man's personal freedom or, contrary to that, represents a new form of non-freedom.

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UNUS MUNDUS – KAO UTOPIJA I STVARNOST

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Optimističke vizije budućnosti istorije čovečanstva, koje se nalaze u nekim shvatanjima novovekovnog filozofskog mišljenja sadrže univerzalističku ideju o potrebi stvaranja ljudskog sveta kao jedinstvenog svetskog društva. Integracioni procesi koji se ostvaruju u okviru evropskog „kruga“ čovečanstva predstavljaju bitni konstituent globalizujućeg procesa, kao načina našeg savremenog istorijskog bivstvovanja. Da li savremena evropska istorija koja se zbiva u znaku različitih ujedinjavanja, kao deo svetsko-istorijskog kretanja, predstavlja približavanje filozofskim idejama o ujedinjenom čovečanstvu, ili one još uvek ostaju u sferi utopijskog mišljenja – pitanje je koje prevazilazi saznanje moći pragmatičke svesti. Jer, univerzalistička i kosmopolitska ideja "Unus Mundus", koja se ostvaruje na najrazličitije načine, u najrazličitijim formama ujedinjavanja, u svim sferama društvenog života, ne predstavlja ostvarenje novovekovnog sna o jedinstvenom svetu kao suštinskom progresu u istoriji čovečanstva.

Ključne reči: progres, savremena evropska istorija, integracioni procesi, utopijsko mišljenje, svetsko-istorijski proces, globalizacija, ljudski svet, ujedinjeno čovečanstvo, društvena stvarnost