

SOME REFLECTIONS UPON THE HUMANISTIC PHILOSOPHY OF HISTORY

UDC 930.1

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Abstract. *We need a new philosophy of history which meets a demand of humanism. It is possible if we find that humanism is a necessary trend of the integral historical process and an essential part of its contents. We must distinguish between history (<history in general>) and the world history (the world-historical process) because only the integral world-historical process has stable tendencies and humanism is one of them. Definition of humanism must be re-revised in historical way. Ideas of a subject of the world-historical process and of the history meaning are connected with the historical interpretation of humanism.*

Key words: *philosophy of history, humanism, integral world-historical process, subject of the world-historical process, history meaning.*

Philosophy of history is the self-consciousness of the epoch. It provides history as a scientific discipline with a world-outlook and a methodological base. Philosophy of history is a product of philosophical reflection upon the development of the world and vicissitudes of human life. It must help us to understand the world we inhabit, to find out its tendencies to predict the future, to realize our role in history and our possibilities to change something in it.

Are we subjects of history? Is globalization a result of our activity? What shall we do to make our world more humane? Those are the contemporary questions connected with humanism. The great philosophical systems of the past do not answer these questions satisfactorily. It is our task to answer them. But we should take into account the experience of our predecessors. So we need a new philosophy of history which meets a demand of humanism. It is not enough to add humanism to some great historical scheme of the past. If humanism becomes a necessary concept of the theory all concepts must be revised ac-

according to the humanistic interpretation of historical reality. At the same time humanism must be reinterpreted from the historical point of view to reveal its historical contents.

I think that the humanistic philosophy of history makes sense if we find that humanism is a necessary trend of the historical process and an essential part of the history contents. Otherwise humanism would be a good wish without any historical base. But only the whole integral historical process has stable dynamic trends. So we must find out if there is a unified historical process with stable trends, including humanistic tendency. Then we must consider humanism in historical context and define who (or what) a subject of the world history is from the humanistic standpoint.

I propose some approaches to the humanistic philosophy of history. I would like to consider the following points:

- 1) Is history a whole integral process with some tendencies?
- 2) Is humanism a historical phenomenon?
- 3) What is a world history subject?
- 4) Has history meaning?

UNITY OF HISTORY AS A PHILOSOPHICAL PROBLEM

Hegel raised this problem and answered in the affirmative. He interpreted history as a depersonalized integral process of Pure Reason being both the substance and the subject. According to Hegel, the unity of history precedes logically the history of humankind and does not depend on human activity. So history was regarded as potentially world-wide and unite primordially.

Many philosophers oppose Hegel. But if they assume the unity of history, strangely enough many of them regard it out of human activity as Hegel used to do. For example according to K. Jaspers, although the unity of history is realized by people, nevertheless it is not a product of human activity in the full sense of the word. People further unification of history but the nature of the history unity remains incognizable.

I share materialistic interpretation of history. K. Marx affirmed that the unity of history is a historical product of human activity; more exact it is a result of the international division of labor and it forms in the joint activity of all participants all over the world. But a stable system of the international division of labor was established when the capitalist mode of production had crossed frontiers of national states and had assumed an international character. All countries which were affected by the capitalist mode of production constituted together a new historical phenomenon. It was characterized by a system of necessary links between its parts. This system of the international division of labor was expanded and now it is global. We have got the world history or the world-historical process.

Now we encounter two different types of historical reality. One of them is the united world history, i.e. the world historical process which is characterized by the **real** ties between historical and social phenomena. The other type of historical reality is a set of different cultures and societies which may be linked but they may develop separately without connections with each other.

I consider it very important to distinguish between these two types of historical reality, although modern historians usually identify them. I would rather call them the world history (the world-historical process) and history (<history in general>) correspondingly. My

proposal is to use the term <history> to designate **any** events and manifestations of the past and present of mankind. To be brought under the term <history> phenomena must be connected with human life, and that is all. It does not matter if these phenomena are really bound or not. So <history> is not a scientific concept, it is only a designation of some historical reality chosen by a researcher.

On the contrary <the world history> is a scientific notion to express the history in its unity. This notion indicates the **system** of historical events and manifestations really tied with each other. As a result of the international division of labor, the integral historical process manifests transformation of capitalism into the global system. That is why the problem of history unity was realized so late, in Hegel's philosophy of history. Until the integral historical process had formed there was no objective base for such problem.

The formation of the integral historical process changed the situation radically. Before its appearance there were plenty different cultures and societies which might develop separately on their own base. This time many of them constituted the united world historical process with universal dialectically contradictory tendencies. Some societies and social groups are included in this process till nowadays.

I do not share Hegel's idealism and connect trends of the world historical process with universality of capitalist production and an ability of capitalism to capture the whole world by its relations, as Marx showed. The united world history develops on the basis of capitalist manufacture and is characterized by universal communication, promoting human development and formation of the world-historical subject. Humanism became a universal tendency of the world-historical process. At the same time a problem of the world-historical subject arose.

HUMANISM AS A HISTORICAL PHENOMENON

Looking back at history we find out that the concept of humanism designates the tendency of human free development which appeared with the capitalist mode of production, because the latter needs a universal person capable to act according to any purpose and to turn himself into the purpose of his own development.

A person assumes universal essence in the course of his being shaped by the universal world-historical relations. In my view, Marx's thesis that the essence of man is a set of all public relations expresses the kernel of what occurs to a person within the framework of the united world history, i.e. this thesis concerns that fragment of history, on which the capitalist economic system forms and develops up to the condition of world economy. Including in the united system of the world-economic connections, a person becomes a carrier of the universal tendencies in contrast to representatives of other social structures, who usually live in societies with rigid hierarchy, belong strictly to a certain public stratum or group and carry a limited circle of the public relations.

Having universal essence a person acquires an ability to act not only in accordance with any external parameters, but also to turn himself into the purpose of his own development in order to develop himself according to his internal necessity. Realization of this opportunity means that a person develops freely, as according to Spinoza's definition of freedom, such thing is called free which exists on the only necessity of its own nature and is determined to act only by itself. Having agreed in this point with Spinoza, I propose to

name "free" such type of personal development, and to name "humanistic" the tendency to realize the universal person on his own basis. I propose to call "alienating" the opposite tendency, in Marx's tradition, because this tendency is connected with inclusion of the universal person in social systems with his subsequent submission to the laws of these systems, different from the laws of the person's self-development.

The humanistic tendency of the world history is connected with full self-development of personality on its own basis while the opposite alienating tendency means that personal development is subordinated to social laws - especially economic ones - strange and hostile to man. In this case personal development is directed to maintain social functioning and it is restricted by this goal whereas a society may function in favor of man's development or against it. Contradictory as they are, both tendencies are rooted in the same process - universalizing of man. Both may imply person development, but the humanistic tendency means personal self-development as the main value of social life, while the alienated tendency manifests itself in development of person as an active part of productive forces being of no value in itself. Both tendencies emerged with the formation of the world-historical process and continue developing till now.

It's clear now that Kant's categorical imperative is necessary to understand the essence of humanism but it is not enough. It looks like a moral demand for everybody and forever regardless of historical and social conditions. It does not correspond to any historical reality. So the normative view is useless in philosophy of history. Our task is to find the real historical contents of humanism. Having correlated humanism with the formation of the world history we find an objective base for revising philosophy of history in humanistic way. Humanism ceases to be regarded as a good intention, it acquires the historical contents.

To sum up everything just said about humanism I propose to define humanism as a **historically conditioned** system of views considering man as a self-contained value, an independent subject of his actions whose development on the laws of his own activity is admitted as the necessary condition of social development.

To be understood properly I would like to mention that I disagree with the common concept of humanism as a good respective attitude to man and an observance of his rights. Although these moments are in fact significant for humanism I consider them not to be sufficient. I emphasize two points in the definition of humanism: first, man ought to be always regarded and to regard himself as a purpose and never as a means, according to Kant's categorical imperative; second, since humanism bases on free development of personality man is considered to be an independent subject of his own actions and as such to be responsible for them. So humanism appears as a double-sided thing: for one side it means of course a good and respectful attitude to men; for the other side it supposes a severe attitude to men, thus their responsibility and self-criticism.

The conditions for humanism and the proper demands to man were created during the formation of the integral world-historical process. This process became a source of the world history subject.

FORMATION OF THE WORLD HISTORY SUBJECT

The concept of the world history subject was elaborated by Marx. He believed that man would overcome limits of his local existence during the formation of the world history and all participants of the world-historical process would create the world history in their joint activity. Producing the world history, the world history subject is forming itself. The world-historical process acquires humanistic contents and transforms into the process of personal self-development.

Globalization convinces us that Marx was too optimistic. The real globalizing world is dehumanized. We are lacking humanism. People still take part in the process of globalization as an alienated productive force. Thus the process of globalization has no human meaning and no human purpose.

The situation described by Marx would arise if the humanistic tendency predominated. Unfortunately the alienated one prevails now. The situation of alienation is reflected in modern doctrines of globalization. For example I. Wallerstein does not mention the problem of human self-development or the problem of the world history subject in his theory of the capitalist world economy. In my view, it means that the capitalist world system is as alienated now as before and it functions well enough **without** human contents of the world history. It is our work to grasp the situation and to improve it in humanistic way.

If the humanistic tendency prevailed, the united world history would appear as a process of personal self-development and of formation of the world history subject. Unfortunately humanism is a collateral tendency of today. So a tendency to form the world-historical subject in the process of globalization is implied but we must understand that this tendency is as collateral as humanistic one and its practical realization is not guaranteed.

Lack of humanism turns universalizing of man into unification, usually accompanied with depersonalization of man and obliteration of differences between cultures and nations. Under these circumstances some nations have to return back to their local existence to keep their national identity. It means that formation of the world-historical subject is delayed. Inclusion of a nation or a social group into the global process by force does not solve the problem. On the contrary such an action means strengthening of the alienated tendency and further delay of the world-historical subject formation. Whether this formation proceeds successfully depends on strengthening of humanism.

Some problems are connected with the formation of the world-historical subject. Every country entered the world history with its mental outfit, natural for representatives of this culture and incomprehensible for others. A problem of mutual understanding arose. Comparative research projects began. Comparative philosophy develops successfully now. However there are still many problems and the cognition of every culture mental heritage is considered the most difficult. At the same time one must not overlook the fact that the subject of the cognition changes according to the changing object. Now we deal with heritages of different cultures included in the joint relationship where cultural phenomena acquire new meanings. As a part of the world-historical process, a cultural heritage functions differently than before. In fact we deal with a heritage as it is reproduced now by its bearers, included in the international joint activity, and not with a heritage as it formed in ancient world. So cognizability of mental outfit depends on the development of the world history subject. During their joint activity representatives of all cultures must change a bit to get accustomed to each other. Finally we must work out a system of inter-

relation and communication suitable to everybody. The world history subject will be a person enriched by all cultures and all cultures will develop to draw together. Not to suppress somebody but to enrich each other.

THE PROBLEM OF THE HISTORY MEANING

Many thinkers of the past and present tried to find out the meaning of history. Religious philosophers usually accept that history has its meaning as a manifestation of God. Some authors who do not share a religious point of view may neglect it.

Looking through the attempts to find out the meaning of history we see that the authors usually appeal to something supernatural. A direct reference to God as a number of Russian religious philosophers did is the most frequent. Sometimes a reference to God was disguised as K. Jaspers used to do. Rationalistic interpretations like Hegel's are not excluded but they nevertheless look for the meaning of history outside of it.

The next fact worth attention is that the thinkers who regard history as a wholeness usually accept the meaning of history. Both facts just mentioned are obviously linked because the wholeness of history lies upon the base which provides its meaning.

The authors who see no sense in history usually regard history as a number of contingencies unlinked. O. Spengler connected the meaninglessness of history with the contingency and senselessness of the relations between cultures.

The positions of supporters and opponents are obviously opposite. I think however that there is something in common in their approaches to the problem. In both cases the question about the history meaning is raised as if it has nothing to do with man and human contents of history. The positions differ because one authors consider God to be a sort of an ideal mediator between man and history both being derivatives of God; others do not regard history as a whole process, so they see no sense in asking such questions. If an author sees no reasons to refer to something supernatural he merely refuses the history meaning. Both positions ignore the fact that people are participants of the historical process and create history.

Thinking over non-historical approaches to the meaning of history I would like to stress two disputable points. First: is it correct to formulate this problem assuming implicitly anything supernatural and non-human? Second: is there any reason to ask the question about the meaning of <history in general>?

I think that history makes no sense until man provides it with meaning. But to impart sense to history means to make it humane, i.e. to change history contents in such a way that man would become a real world history subject and the world history would coincide with personal self-development.

So we should speak about the **human** meaning of history to make it clear from the very beginning that it is man who breeds the world history by his actions and thus provides it with meaning. To refer to something supernatural in answer means that in the very statement of the question about the meaning of history God or pure logic were implied without any grounds.

Rejecting a religious interpretation of history as groundless I do not consider it a fiction or a mere mistake. In my opinion, disregard of people's activity in history evidences that the human contents of the world-historical process is not yet conspicuous to be no-

ticed easily. Humankind is still living the alienated life, i.e. is still realizing something strange to personal self-development. Humanization of history is not mature enough to conclude the history meaning from itself, that is from the meaning-asserting human activity. Under such circumstances the question about the meaning of history implies an appeal to the realities of higher range than man. So I see what kind of reasons induce thinkers to interpret history in such a way although I suppose it does not justify them.

I think it is high time to diverse faith and knowledge. Let us leave the issues of faith to everyone's judgment but let us stick to the scientific approach while considering the problem of the history meaning. Our further steps in providing history with sense depend on how we understand our role in this process and to what extent we manage to realize the sense-asserting aspect of human activity. We need the scientific approach to make proper efforts in humanizing of history.

As the second questionable point is concerned, I think that the problem of the history meaning is rightful only to that part of history which is characterized by the real unity and the wholeness. I have called this part of history <the world history> in order to distinguish it from <history in general>.

Let us examine now whether the question about the history meaning is put correctly. The question is usually put to answer <yes> or <no>. A possibility of meaningful history formation is ignored. We are to accept without any reason that either history has its meaning, so it was always meaningful, or history was always meaningless and will remain so.

I think that the world history gains its structure and contents during its formation on the base of the international division of labor. So the world history gets meaningful to the extent that personal self-development and transformation of person into the world-historical subject becomes the contents of the united world history. To be exact I can specify that the **human** meaning is implied. But it is not necessary because no other meaning exists.

The more history becomes humane the greater it fills with sense and the more valuable it becomes for man. Humanism turns into the contents and the meaning of the united world history to the extent that the world history needs a formation of self-developing person. If the humanistic tendency is realized the united world history will coincide with a process of personal self-development.

In such interpretation the meaning of the world history is not imparted beforehand, it springs up as a substantial part of the world historical process which implies a strengthening of the humanistic tendency.

Nowadays humanism is still **potentially** (not really) the meaning of the world history due to difficulties which humanism encounters, and to the increasing non-humanistic tendency. In future its transition from possibility into reality is not excluded although it is not guaranteed. We can only hope that this transition will take place as soon as the humanistic tendency has already won some position. Nevertheless humanism has not taken root to the extent that its realization ca not be stopped. The world history still acquires the human meaning but this process is irregular and retarded. So there are good reasons for doubts whether history **has** any sense now. The human meaning of history has become apparent enough to be permanently under discussion but not apparent enough for us to be sure of it. Appeal to the supernatural does not make history meaningful, it creates the illusion of sense.

As much as the united world history coincides with the alienating tendency it loses its human contents and becomes meaningless. If in future the alienating tendency predominates one can affirm that the meaningful history has not realized. History will probably

acquire some other dimension scarcely predictable but humanism certainly will not be the meaning of this historical period.

An origin of the united world history means an emergence of the new historical quality characterized by reorientation of the social history to the development of person. The formation of the really humane history as the history of self-developing persons when the world-historical subject's activity in order to produce itself turns into the production of history becomes possible. But whether this possibility comes true depends on our activity.

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RAZMIŠLJANJA O HUMANISTIČKO-FILOZOFSKOM PRISTUPU ISTORIJI

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Neophodan nam je novi filozofski pristup istoriji koji zadovoljava kriterijume humanizma. To bi bilo moguće ukoliko utvrdimo da je humanizam neophodni trend integralnog istorijskog procesa i ključni deo njegove sadržine. Moramo da uspostavimo razliku između istorije (<istorije uopšte>) i svetske istorije (svetsko-istorijskog procesa) jer samo integralni svetsko-istorijski proces ima stabilne tendencije među kojima je i humanizam. Definiciju humanizma bi trebalo preraditi u jednom istorijskom smislu. Ideje predmeta svetsko-istorijskog procesa i istorije značenja su povezani sa istorijskom interpretacijom humanizma.

Ključne reči: *filozofija istorije, humanizam, integralni svetsko-istorijski proces, predmet svetsko-istorijskog procesa, istorija značenja*