

Halleh Ghorashi ~ De toekomst van de Westerse democratie en de Civil Society

I Have a Dream... De toekomst van de Westerse democratie en de Civil Society – Lezing Halleh Ghorashi (Bijzonder hoogleraar Management van Diversiteit, VU), Felix Meritis, Amsterdam, 2008.

Enerzijds wordt de Westerse democratie als belangrijk exportproduct gezien door regeringsleiders, anderzijds klinkt zowel internationaal als van binnenuit een steeds luidere kritiek op de Westerse democratie.

De afgelopen jaren wordt het belang van de civil society in onze samenleving als wezenlijk geacht. Democratie is veel meer dan de vrijheid om je stem te mogen uitbrengen. In tegenstelling tot wat vaak wordt beweerd, gaat het bij democratie niet alleen om de meerderheid, maar vooral om de ruimte voor de minderheid. En deze is juist wat democratie kwetsbaar maakt, hoe maak je ruimte voor de ander, wanneer je die ander als bedreiging van democratie beschouwt?

Kishore Mahbubani ~ The Century Of Asia: The Inevitable Global Power Shift

Kishore Mahbubani: 'You in the West have no idea how the rest of the world looks at you. They see an emperor without clothes. The world has changed tremendously, but you do not understand what that means. Globalisation Lecture 23: *The Century of Asia: The inevitable global power shift*, Felix Meritis, Amsterdam, 13-11- 2008.

For centuries Asians (Chinese, Indians, Muslims and others) were on the sidelines of world history. But the East is rapidly modernizing and is ready to claim their share of world power. They are among the fastest growing economies and have some of the largest financial reserves. On a social and cultural level the East is changing fast. How do Europe and the US respond to the rapid rise of the East? According to Singaporean intellectual Kishore Mahbubani, the Western business world appears to be the only one anticipating changes in the East. Western governments seem to be looking the other way and fail to accept that a shift in economic power will also mean a shift in political and cultural power.

Internationalisation Of The Arts And Culture Calls For A New Approach



Ills.: Joseph Semah

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The international activities of arts institutions are attracting more and more attention. The simplest foreign activity of an arts institution may consist of the artist or artistic company performing abroad, either on their own initiative or upon request. More and more companies, whether large or small, are increasingly being asked to perform at festivals or other events. The fact that this is gradually becoming common practice fits in with the disappearance of every possible barrier to international exchange. There is probably virtually no arts institution which never performs abroad at some time. Of course, there are all kinds of similar phenomena in the opposite direction.

There are special agencies which manage this import and export. Large or small, they are the middlemen between supply and demand, between presenters and producers, or between presenters and presenters. It thus frequently happens that presenters from various countries engage themselves for tours organised by such agencies.

The state of affairs outlined above is not really much more than a simple question of import and export. Strictly speaking, there is no need for the company concerned to do anything besides preparing its performance. The work is primarily aimed at the domestic market. A text or script may occasionally get translated, but generally speaking no effort is required apart from the effort needed to be taken seriously in one's own country. Besides, regular performances abroad are no automatic guarantee that the company itself makes closer or more artistic international contacts. The most that can be expected is that more markets are opened up for the product supplied by the company, but it is highly questionable whether – and if so, to what extent – the product, the company or the artist are influenced by a different artistic orientation or confrontation.

This kind of cultural exchange will be almost entirely disregarded in a more detailed consideration of the concept of 'internationalisation'. After all, one may assume that these activities across national borders are a part of the ordinary day-to-day activities of an arts institution.

A dialogue requires modesty

Before an exchange, tour, series of lectures or exhibition abroad comes up for discussion, the first question that has to be answered is whether the foreigners concerned are interested in it: "Do they want it? Are we obliging anyone with it?" Before these questions can be answered, it is first necessary to find out who

“they” are. Minimal requirements in this respect are: being able to speak the language of the host country; being familiar with its forms of behaviour and peculiarities; and gauging the interests of both sides by means of personal conversations.

Information can only be transferred after getting to know one another on a personal level, and it should be carried out between the parties themselves: the art gallery owner and the painter, the theatre and the mime company, etc. This demands a thorough and up-to-date knowledge of the entire range of the arts available, both in the home country and abroad. As far as the performing arts are concerned, it is virtually impossible for an ordinary person to keep up with the developments of the past twenty years. It is hardly possible any longer for a local organisation to collect the information required to operate as an international orientation point as well.

People will have to respond to issues relating to the arts, cultural policy and production which arise elsewhere in Europe as well. International cooperation is essential if artists are to continue to have the opportunity to create, perform and innovate.

The development and position of the arts in the old and new Europe are at stake. While the changes in Eastern Europe are primarily related to the rapid depoliticisation of the arts organisation in Western Europe the question is whether the arts are still allowed any moral responsibilities at all. In socialist Europe artists have often had to make use of old forms, while in capitalist Europe the new forms have become the content. The public seems to regard both developments as no more than one of the extras of life. The debate will have to be conducted in St. Petersburg and in Berlin, in Seville and in Brussels, without forgetting Amsterdam either. It will have to be conducted between artists and intellectuals as well as with an interested public.

A market for quality

The economic unification of Europe leads to an increase of scale, uniformity and loss of identity. The disappearance of the ideological barriers in Europe leads to an acceleration of that process.

The market for mass culture is flourishing on an unprecedented scale. There is a risk that it will be confined to a culture of display, art as a means of identification: even more gala evenings, even more festivals, anyway. It is also a pleasant

prospect for the growing prestige of the world of industry and commerce.

Essentially this is a suffocating mechanism. As uniformity increases, however, a market for quality will emerge: an international market, stimulated by knowledge and experience from a great many (informal) networks throughout Europe; a market for divergent opinions. As a result of the openness of communication in Europe, the emergence of this international market is more realistic than it has ever been. The opportunities for finding out about divergent opinions outside the official market are greater than they have ever been. An artistic innovation in Reykjavik may catch the interest of somebody in Lisbon. In this way an increasing number of markets will arise, based on informal personal contacts.

European culture

In view of the above considerations, the discussion of the cultural consequences of European unification which has now broken out in Berlin (Berlin Conference 2004) followed by Paris, Budapest and Granada, is more than interesting. A serious attempt is being made to solve this problem by means of foreign cultural policy.

There is apparently a growing awareness that European, federal and other supranational legislation must not be allowed to affect the growing exchange of artists and forms of artistic expression, and certainly not local policies on subsidies and the arts. More - and more intensive - explorations of new challenges, new forms of arts policy are taking place everywhere in Europe.

Informal cooperation agreements between artists and arts institutions cannot yet be recognised in national and local arts policy. The existing range of instruments is simply inadequate. There are thus grounds for expecting the smaller countries, including Lithuania, to pay more attention to this possible strengthening of their cultural position. The opportunities for local and national government to promote cultural exchange in Europe are still too often confined to the well-known range of instruments: every self-respecting city has some international festival of other within its walls.

They are markets for the finished product, no more than showplaces in the worst sense of the word. A festival is regarded as a success if a large audience has come for unique, wonderful or not so wonderful concerts and dramatic performances. The more money is spent on festivals, the greater the threat to the artists'

autonomy. The role of the arts in a city, the cultural significance of the cities, the cultural future of Europe, has more to gain from paying attention to the process than from demanding a product. These processes are less clearly visible. They take place in closed studios, rehearsal rooms, libraries and coffee shops. We are on the eve of the slow but sure collapse of the high quality cultural infrastructure of Eastern Europe. In the near future it will no longer be a source of products for the glamorous and prestigious festivals in the West. All the same, the common future of Europe must be built on intensive international cooperation, and that goes for the cultural field as well.

What can cities and national governments do?

** artists in residence*

This is one of the simplest ways of promoting contacts between cities. A producer, visual artist, writer, philosopher, journalist or academic from city A spends a number of months, preferably a season or an academic year, in city B on a reciprocal basis.

If a project of this kind is to operate in continuity with a number of cities, it is usually possible to make appreciative use of the local infrastructure: museums, universities, theatres, music academies, etc.

** encouraging barter*

The arts in the New Member States are comparable to those in Western Europe in many ways. We can learn from one another, we can help one another and the cultural dimension of European integration can be given form. But there is one condition: the foreign currency barrier must be removed. Cooperation on the basis of exchange is one way of doing that. It is not an unfamiliar phenomenon in the international arts world. Co-production often includes cooperation in kind. If there is enough interest, an extension of this practice to many artists and arts institutions in Eastern and Western Europe could result in a "barter bank" for European Cultural Cooperation. It is the city councils who are able to stimulate a process of this kind by adopting an international working group, for example, or sponsoring an experimental project that is confined to three countries for the time being. The expertise of urban financial experts and local semi-municipal loan organisations is essential in this respect.

** encouraging person-to-person contacts*

A more systematic approach may consist of creating the opportunities for

subsidised events or jointly subsidised institutions to exchange individuals, not on an ad hoc basis, but on a more general scale, with the government retaining the ultimate responsibility for evaluating the total policy in terms of its conformity to the principle of reciprocity. A more developed form can consist of an informal cooperation between different (arts) institutions in a number of cities to organise a joint series of readings, forums, study sessions and conferences in which the participation of foreign experts, writers and other artists is encouraged.

** subsidising international co-productions and research projects*

The opportunities available in the field of international co-production are more difficult, more labour-intensive and more “thankless”.

All the same, this is an area in which the mutual contacts can be evaluated at their true worth, whether the project involves the publication of a book in a bilingual edition, for instance, a music school, a film or television production or even an opera; the highly variegated cultural differences will be evident from the views entertained on each stage of the process of production.

The government could act as one of the financial partners, for example on the basis of the matching fund principle.

** adopting networks, both informal and formal*

This provides direct support to the vital process of individual cooperation between artists and artists, as well as with arts institutions in different countries.

The preceding remarks indicate that international bilateral cooperation should be founded above all on an international orientation.

When plans are being drawn up, contacts will be sought right at the start with foreign partners, partners from one's own network who need to be consulted in working out the ideas. The laborious process of preparation – the pre-production stage – cannot begin until after a relatively protracted period of consultation, research and above all the compilation of relevant material on similar plans elsewhere. It goes for this stage too that right from the start only the international scope of the plans will be taken into account in the first instance. Thinking and writing must be done within an international context. A growing number of arts institutions will find that this means: paying more attention to the artistic métier and paying more attention to the process than to the product; more value and less volume; the setting up of coaching and training opportunities for professionals from all over Europe; holding workshops, seminars and classes for

and by colleagues; the confrontation of local work with work from abroad for both an informed local audience and an informed foreign audience; facilitating productions which combine interested talent, in so far as that talent is noticed within the action radius of the arts institutions; and generally taking all those initiatives which can contribute to the internationalisation of the arts.

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Blauwdruk Europa ~ Interview met Alicja Gescinksa

Filosoof Alicja Gescinksa houdt een vurig pleidooi voor meer moraal in het openbare discours. We kunnen niet zonder moraal in het gesprek en moeten duidelijk zijn over welke waarden we willen uitdragen, zoals de ander erkennen, geïnspireerd zijn door verschillende culturen, en solidariteit creëren. Het is geen statisch gegeven, maar een eeuwigdurend proces: vrijheid moet je elke dag opnieuw veroveren. Erkenning van de wisselwerking tussen verschillende landen, erfgoed e.d. is noodzakelijk, evenals een politieke vertaalslag. We hebben de EU nodig als overkoepelend orgaan, maar moeten wel sceptisch blijven kijken naar haar functioneren.

Gescinska heeft zelf een migrantenachtergrond, en moest leren loyaal te zijn in haar nieuwe land België. “Maar als je niet weet waar je vandaan komt, weet je niet waar je naar toe gaat.”

Blauwdruk Europa - Alicja Gescinska, interview Linda Bouws - 23 april 2013

Critique Of Heaven And Earth Equality ~ Religion And Political Emancipation According To Karl Marx



Introduction

Both left-wing and right-wing parties and movements claim to defend Western Values while demonstrating against Islam or against Islamophobia and Populism. From both sides we hear words like Liberty and Equality. Both sides are pointing to the Enlightenment as the core of European Values. When defending 'European Civilisation', everyone points to the French Revolution and its Manifesto, the Declaration of Human Rights. The French struggle against privilege, for equal political rights was the start of the political emancipation of the citizens that after 1789 spread all over Europe.

I think we all agree that the legacy of the French Revolution is worth to be defended, but there is a new struggle going on about its Interpretation: do the European Values come in a ready-made package, to be accepted and implemented by the whole world or at least by everyone coming to Europe? Or is the French Revolution still an unfinished business and do we still have to struggle for the realisation of equality and liberty in our societies? I would like to show you why I am of the opinion that the latter is the case, by looking more closely into the heritage of this project for liberty and equality from the 18th century.

I will do so, using a text of the German thinker Karl Marx. (Trier, 5 may 1818 – London, 14 march 1883) He is mainly known for his economical ideas about Capital and Labour, but his political texts are in no means less insightful.

If you want to know how equal and free a society is, it is always a good idea to look at the rights of those who are looked upon as 'different' from everybody else. Those who claim equal treatment because they are being discriminated against.

Marx does exactly this. He addresses an issue that was debated fiercely during the 19th century, just like it is today. I am talking about the relation between State and Religion. Back then the big issue was the position of Jews in society. The state was not secular, but Christian, and Jews were second-class citizens with less rights than our minorities have now. Things are different today, but we can still recognize the questions of the 19th century: does Jews have to renounce their religion in order to obtain full citizenship? Are Jews a threat to society because of their different customs and religious practices? Today, we would never pose these questions in relation to Jews. But they are openly discussed in relation to Muslims.

Marx, of Jewish origin himself, intervenes in 1843 in the debate, publishing the essay *Zur Judenfrage. On the Jewish Question*, is written 24 years before *Capital*. In this text, he laid a fundament for his later work. The text is a polemic reaction to an earlier article called *Jewish Question* from Bruno Bauer, who belonged to the same philosophical-political group as Marx, the Hegelians.

His first point, which is crucial, is a change of perspective: while discussing the *Jewish Question*, do not look at the behaviour and aspirations of the Jews, but look at the role of the State. Marx uses the Jewish Question to analyse the mechanism of political emancipation in a modern society. In this endeavour, the criticism of religion is the condition of a criticism of politics.

Criticism of religion: what religion and political emancipation have in common

What are we talking about? We are talking about human rights. We have to realise that the original Declaration from 1789 was called *Declaration of the rights of Man and of the Citizen* (French: *Déclaration des droits de l'homme et du citoyen*) In 1948, when the UN adopted the Declaration it became the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*. The Citizen disappeared.

That is striking, since the core of the analysis by Marx lies in the difference between 'Man' and Citizen'. In his words, between emancipation as such and political emancipation. By letting the Man and the Citizen fuse into the Human, an essential procedure of political emancipation is covered up. Who is this 'Man' in the Declaration?

Niemand anders als das Mitglied der bürgerlichen Gesellschaft. Warum wird das Mitglied der bürgerlichen Gesellschaft 'Mensch', Mensch schlechthin, warum werden seine Rechte Menschenrechte genannt? Woraus erklären wir dies Faktum? Aus dem Verhältnis des politischen Staats zur bürgerlichen Gesellschaft,

aus dem Wesen der politischen Emanzipation. (p.363-364)

The 'Man' in the Declaration is not the universal Human Being, it is a very real, tangible person – and yes, in the original declaration it was a man! – someone who makes a living in everyday- society. Mostly, it is the homo economicus, the merchant that had done well, but did not have the political rights the nobility had. This 'Man' was the driving force behind the French Revolution. The word Marx is using for this real person, is *bourgeois*. I will use this word from now on. The *citoyen* (French for citizen), on the other hand, is the member of society in its political function. The *citoyen* represents the political rights of the *bourgeois*. By differentiating between the two of them, a separation, or even a schism, is created in the human being itself. This separation is necessary to be able to talk about political rights, but it still has this effect of a division within the human being. The consequence of this is that the very character of political emancipation is alienation. The similarity between the character of religion and the character of political emancipation is precisely this: alienation.

Die Religion ist eben die Anerkennung des Menschen auf einem Umweg. Durch einen Mittler. Der Staat ist der Mittler zwischen dem Menschen und der Freiheit des Menschen. Wie Christus der Mittler ist, dem der Mensch seine ganze Göttlichkeit, seine ganze religiöse Befangenheit aufbürdet, so ist der Staat der Mittler, in den er seine ganze Ungöttlichkeit, seine ganze menschliche Unbefangenheit verlegt. (p.353-354)

This is the relation between State and Religion according to Marx: they both recognize the Human Being only in a roundabout way, thus alienating man from himself. This self-estrangement has to be unmasked and criticized. Marx turns Feuerbachs criticism of religion into a critique of the modern state. Alienation does not only exist with regard to religion, it is also part of the much-praised political emancipation. In that sense criticism of religion is the condition of all criticism, as Marx states in the Introduction of his 'Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right', which was written a year after *On the Jewish Question*.

In this Introduction he talks about the transformation of the criticism of Heaven (religion and theology) into a criticism of Earth. This is not an easy, straightforward procedure. Heaven and Earth do have a complex dialectical relationship. Marx unmasks religion as earthly and the political state as religious. The Dutch theologian Arend van Leeuwen (1972, p. 175) has formulated this dialectical

relationship as follows:

The criticism of Heaven is the condition of the criticism of Earth; The criticism of Earth is the fundament of the criticism of Heaven.

To have a better understanding of this procedure we will read two extracts from *On the Jewish Question* from 1843. In the first, Marx develops his proposition about the separation between the human being and the citizen, in the second, he speaks about the religiosity of the political state.

Extract 1: the alienation between human being and citizen. (369-370)

This extract is about three topics:

- The relation between political emancipation and the emancipation of Jews.
- Marx' criticism of political emancipation
- The difference between political emancipation and human emancipation.

Marx essay is a response to an article of Bruno Bauer, who represents a view that is still often heard: the best reaction to the tension between state and religion is the suppression of religion. For Bauer, emancipation, or the acquisition of equal rights, is only possible if believers – Jews in this case – renounce their religion. Real political emancipation means the end of religion. So the vital question for Bauer is: how to get rid of religion?

Surprisingly, Marx does not agree with Bauer. He thinks Bauer is mistaken by confusing political emancipation with human emancipation. Political emancipation does not yet emancipate human beings from religion. Marx points to the United States as proof: the only secular state in his time was still very religious. We could point to our own societies as well to support Marx on this. Marx does not agree with the idea still living with a lot of liberals and socialists or social democrats, that the veritable modern society is a society without religion.

According to Marx, political emancipation means that the state is secular, not having a religious attitude with regard to religion. The same goes for all other social elements.

Den Widerspruch des Staats mit einer bestimmten Religion, etwa dem Judentum, vermenschlichen wir in den Widerspruch des Staats mit bestimmten weltlichen Elementen, den Widerspruch des Staats mit der Religion überhaupt, in den Widerspruch des Staats mit seinen Voraussetzungen überhaupt. (p.352-353)

Political Emancipation means that the State maintains political relations with all

particular elements in society. The State has become a Public Affair, representing the common good. Not one particular element is favoured. The principle of equality is at the heart of political emancipation.

But: this doesn't mean that these particular elements stop to exist. The private realm is very real: property, family, labour. To be able to represent the common good, the state has separated itself from society. It does not represent the interests of one group in particular, like the Christians, the Richs or the Nobility, but it represent the general interest. This means that the private is no longer political, but it still constitutes the precondition for the State. Without the private, there would be no State.

The State has abstracted itself from the real existence of its citizens and the citizens have handed over the political function to the state. As a consequence, the individual is split into two beings: one is the very real and particular member of the civil society (bourgeois); the other is abstract and political: the citizen. (citoyen)

Bauer does not see this cleavage, and that is why he is expecting something from the State that it cannot do: realising human emancipation, since it has only power over the political domain. That is: Marx thinks it is a delusion to think that the State in its actual form can realise not only political equality, but also social equality.

This cleavage was born together with the political state during the French Revolution and it is still defining our society. This is the cleavage between the political and the social, between the general and the particular, and between true and real, and ideal and practice. In Marxist terms: the cleavage between *citoyen* and *bourgeois*.

This perception is not new, Marx has learned this antithetical thinking from Hegel, who explained the period of terror after the French Revolution as a consequence of the strong tension between the abstract revolutionary ideal and the specific content of the Revolution. But whereas Hegel speaks of a *Weltgeist*, that has to be alienated from itself to be able to progress, Marx is talking about the real, private human being. For him, it is not a matter of a dialectic of the spirit, but a human tragedy. For in the end it is not the State that creates the human Being, but the human being who creates the State. Political Emancipation has separated the true human being from the real human being. This real human being, the bourgeois, member of civil society, is just like the religious human being estranged from himself. He has outsourced the very best part of himself to

the State, just like the religious person has outsourced his very best part to God. On this point, Marx is following Feuerbach, who said that by being religious, human beings are projecting the very best of themselves outside themselves. But just like with Hegel, Marx takes it a step further by not only looking at this as an individual procedure, but also as a social and political procedure, which doesn't only occur regarding religion, but also regarding politics. Now we can see clearly Marx' criticism of political emancipation. In the extract, he says it like this:

Die politische Revolution löst das bürgerliche Leben in seine Bestandteile auf, ohne diese Bestandteile selbst zu revolutionieren und der Kritik zu unterwerfen.

In the end, the ideal of liberty and equality cannot be realised by an abstract State, in a political public domain; only the real people themselves can do this, by acting accordingly to their ideas and creating another practice. The overcoming of the cleavage within the human being, the victory over alienation: that is the real challenge for a movement for equal rights. Only then, human beings will be truly free. But, this cannot be done without having achieved political emancipation first. Historically spoken, the political emancipation accomplished by the French Revolution, was a necessary move.

Die politische Emanzipation ist allerdings ein großer Fortschritt, sie ist zwar nicht die letzte Form der menschlichen Emanzipation überhaupt, aber sie ist die letzte Form der menschlichen Emanzipation innerhalb der bisherigen Weltordnung.
(p.356)

However, we should not mistake the political emancipation for a complete project of human liberty and equality. We are only halfway. To project needs to be finished before we can speak of real liberty and equality. The movement who will accomplish the project, thus Marx, will break up the actual world order and turn it upside down, because it will start to realise the abstract ideal of the political State within the real social and economic relations. Here, we already have the Marx of the Communist Manifesto of five years later.

So, the final answer Marx give to the question of his colleague Bauer: how to get rid of religion, sounds like this: in the same way as we will get rid of the State and of the modern shape of human alienation. Marx replaces Bauers question by a new one, that is entirely different: how can we end human alienation and the inequality and injustice it brings?

To answer this, we have to look again at the relation between the criticism of Heaven and the criticism of Earth, but this time from another angle.

Extract 2: the religious character of the modern State.

This passage shows the conclusion of the debate between Marx and Bauer about the question whether or not political emancipation requires that Jews and other believers, have to renounce their religion. Bauer affirms this, Marx not.

For Marx, the relationship of the State with religion is the same as the relationship of the State with all particular elements in society, like property, family etcetera. The individual doesn't have to renounce all these things, stronger: he or she is not able to do so. They only lose their political meaning. A State can already be a liberal State, without the member of its society being truly free. (p. 351-353).

As a consequence, people lead a double life: one as a political sovereign being – their ideal, let's say heavenly existence. The other as a private citizen – their material, real, earthly existence. Marx says it like this in our excerpt:

Der politische Staat verhält sich ebenso spiritualistisch zur bürgerlichen Gesellschaft wie der Himmel zur Erde.

An important interjection: Marx makes a difference between Christian and religious. According to him, the Christian State of his time was in contradiction with itself. It was not really a State, because his relation to the particular elements in society was not really political, but theological. In the same time it was not really Christian. If the State wanted to realise Christianity, it would have had to abolish itself, like the New Testaments demands in some of its parts. (p. 359)

It must be clear that Marx analysis that the State has a religious character, doesn't concern the Christian, incomplete State, but the complete, modern and secular, State. In a certain way, this State has partly a Christian character, because it represents a certain stage of human development in which Christianity is the ideal conscience. (p.360) The democratic State realises the dream and the presupposition of Christianity, the sovereignty of the human being. But it does this only in part, separated from the real human being. (361) Exactly on this point is the State religious. Just like religion, the State is "the recognition of man in a roundabout way" (*Anerkennung des Menschen auf einem Umweg*, p.353) It is because of this religious character of the modern State, that people cannot be asked or forced to renounce their religion. It would be unfair, because all members of the State are religious:

Religiös sind die Glieder des politischen Staats durch den Dualismus zwischen dem individuellen und dem Gattungsleben, zwischen dem Leben der bürgerlichen

Gesellschaft und dem politischen Leben, religiös, indem der Mensch sich zu dem seiner wirklichen Individualität jenseitigen Staatsleben als seinem wahren Leben verhält, religiös, insofern die Religion hier der Geist der bürgerlichen Gesellschaft, der Ausdruck der Trennung und der Entfernung des Menschen vom Menschen ist. (p.360)

To Marx, religion is a deficiency, an aberration, since it is the product of the self-estrangement of the human being. People are not religious by nature. In its modern shape, religion is the consequence of the nature of the political State. This is how criticism of religion becomes criticism of the State. Criticism of Heaven is the condition for criticism of Earth.

The whole issue of the paradox between the *bourgeois-citoyen* is caused by the religious character of the State. The *bourgeois* can only recognize his true human nature except through the citizen, by making a detour through the political State. Marx has transformed the theological questions of Bruno Bauer into worldly, earthly questions by saying that religion has the same relation to the State as the rest of the civil society. The theological problem of Bauer – the conflict between the Christian State and Judaism has been turned into a political problem: the conflict between the democratic State and the civil society.

This works like this: as soon as the criticism of religion has unmasked the real condition of the human being, he has to understand that he doesn't have any true reality, but that he is an illusory being.

Die Religion ist die phantastische Verwirklichung des menschlichen Wesens, weil das menschliche Wesen keine wahre Wirklichkeit besitzt. (Kritik der Hegelschen Rechtsphilosophie, p.378.)

In the modern world as it is now, religion has a right to exist, whether it is religion in its Christian, Jewish, Islamic or Political form. The only way Religion can be suppressed, is by changing the social conditions from which it emanates. Marx doesn't believe in the liberal approach to religion, which puts religion politically and socially out of action by banishing it to private life. He does the exact opposite, by preserving the political aspirations of religion but taking them out of the religious sphere into the social struggle. Marx criticism of religion is immanent criticism. He raises the religious vision of a world without suffering, in which peace and justice will reign, to a social and political level, to be able to realise it for all humankind. In other words, Marx is concerned about human emancipation instead of political emancipation.

How he looks at the State is similar. He unmask the State as religious. He shows the heavenly face of the Earth, as he has shown the earthly face of Heaven. The two criticisms are intertwined. The statement of Arend van Leeuwen I quoted before, has become more clear:

The criticism of Heaven is the condition of the criticism of Earth; The criticism of Earth is the fundament of the criticism of Heaven.

The 'condition' in the quote points to the false consciousness which gives the State a religious character. Marx is criticising Hegel here (through Bauer). Hegels Idea of the State as the Incarnation of the Absolute Spirit is, says Marx, in reality a mask behind which the real antithesis between *bourgeois* and *citoyen* is hidden.

The word 'fundament' points to this real antithesis, which Marx rejects as well. On the one hand he unmask a false consciousness and on the other hand he shows a wrong reality. De alienation is both heavenly and earthly.

Marx opposes the false consciousness by criticising the State and by unmasking it as religious. Image and reality (superstructure and substructure as he will call them later) confirm each other. (Van Leeuwen p.159) The circle has been closed.

Conclusion

The ambitious assignment Karl Marx has given himself is to break the circle of heaven and earth by giving people a true reality. Criticism of religion cannot stop by shattering illusions, which people need to be able to bear their difficult life. Criticism therefore has to be follow by the changing of reality.

Criticising the political emancipation and the French Revolution means really to accomplish this Revolution by giving the abstract ideal a reality. But this reality asks for a new revolution, which will cancel out the French Revolution. The new Revolution is about reconciling the cleavage the French Revolution has created, the one between the *bourgeois* and the *citoyen*.

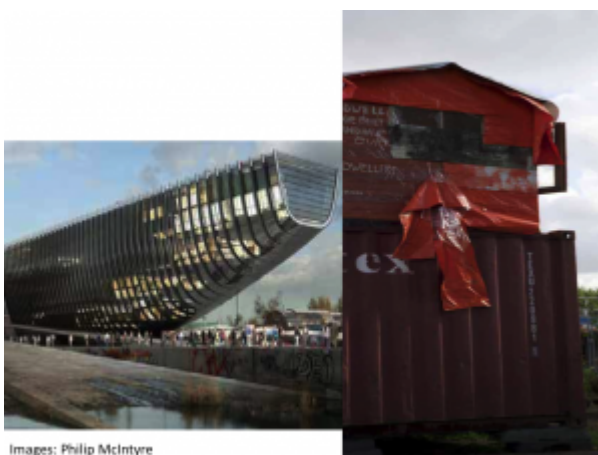
The bourgeois has to become more political, more idealistic you could say. He has to think more about the common good and less about his own interest. But this can only turned out well if the *citoyen* becomes more real, more social, by giving his ideals a practice and not only realising them on an abstract political level. It is not enough to change the political structures. The real conditions of our existence have to be changed. After all: who changes the earth, will also change heaven. And who criticizes heaven, also criticizes the earth.

This is how Karl Marx criticises the French Revolution, without dismissing her. He has shown that the European Enlightenment is everything but a finished project. It is a semi-finished product which leaves a lot to be desired. Especially modern Thinkers, adepts of the French Revolution like Karl Marx, knew about this.

Marx gives account of the historical situation in which the French Revolution took place, he analyses its limits and asks himself what is needed for the promises of the French Revolution to be redeemed. In this way he prevents that liberty, equality and fraternity become themselves abstract symbols without reality, in other words: religious concepts.

This attitude seems to be useful in the actual debate on religion and Islam. Who criticises religion with a plea of equality and liberty, should take the historical and political context of that religion into account and should also be aware of the limitations of the ideals of political emancipation. Those who manifest their support of Western Values as the answer to all kind of evil that strikes our world, should be careful not to defend abstract ideals as if those are the reality itself. By pretending that freedom and equality are not only ideals in our society, but completed accomplishments, find themselves guilty of a false reconciliation. Their criticism of religion consequently becomes religious.

Which image does best represent the state of our European Values?



If we follow Marx, those Values do not appear as a shiny, but impenetrable monument, but more like a temporary shelter of some dwellers in time (the hut has a text of Heidegger written on it), who have to choose their position and their Values time after time.

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In 2003 vond in Felix Meritis de Georgische week plaats, een uitwisselingsprogramma tussen Nederland en Georgië.

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