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BORDER SITUATIONS AS UNCHANGING HUMAN SITUATIONS (VIA KARL JASPERS, ERICH FROMM & NOAM CHOMSKY)

Abstract

The first aim of this paper is to raise the interest in the works of three authors, Karl Jaspers, Erich Fromm, and Noam Chomsky. The second intention is to show and prove that despite being different in vocation, they essentially speak of the same social reality, regardless of the fact that they observe and reflect reality from different theoretical/scientific positions/aspects: philosophical, ethical/bioethical, anthropological, sociological, psychological, political, legal, economic, cultural, philological/linguistic, ideological. Despite certain differences, what brings them together spiritually/cognitively are the “diagnoses” of the diseased tissue of (post)modern civil society, as well as the assessments of the phenomenon of social/existential reality of our time. What unites them is the comprehensive humanism and care for the man and man’s psychosomatic health and their present and future life, at the time when civilization is on the verge of self-destruction.

Keywords: Karl Jaspers, Erich Fromm, Noam Chomsky, philosophy, ethics

Border situations – death, chance, guilt, and the unreliable nature of the world – point to harm. What should I do faced with this absolute harm, the comprehension of which I cannot avoid if I present everything to myself with honesty? (...)

We are always in situations. (...) To summarize: the source of philosophy lies in wonder, doubt, the awareness of being lost. In any case, everything begins with the fact that man is grabbed and shook by something, and in that feeling of being astounded, he always seeks a goal. (...) In other words: man is looking for salvation. Salvation is offered by great universal salvation religions. Their characteristic is an objective warranty of truthfulness and the reality of salvation. Their path leads towards an act of conversion of an individual. Philosophy cannot offer that. Nevertheless, the entire scope of philosophy is overcoming the world, an analogy of salvation.

(Karl Jaspers, 1973: 137-138)

There are people mobilizations and activism, but all this is going in a very destructive way.

(Ноам Чомски, 2021: 137-138)

And, finally, we should not think that a virus will be our doom, we will forge our own.

(Ким Симонсен, 2021: 16)

Introduction

To those who know nothing or very little of the works and constations of Karl Jaspers, Erich Fromm, and Noam Chomsky, and who may have heard/read some of their quotes, it will seem as though they, at first glance, apparently have nothing in common. Nevertheless, their humanistic philosophical eros, but also their most often pessimistic, dystopian conclusions and apocalyptic predictions are the things that converge them and make them similar, somewhere even identical, and that is primarily due to the fact they essentially start with convergent, and sometimes the same, generally theoretical/philosophical, even ideological, premises. This is comparable besides the fact that their discourses are expressed in different words/languages. The same could be said of Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, and Marx, as the most famous anti-Hegelian philosophers and their different “languages” and styles of writing and expression, but that is, understandably,

a theme for the region of history of philosophy. In this essay, we are able to only superficially list, quote, and paraphrase some dimensions and contents, and to maybe interpret and comment on some of their attitudes on the very poor/pathological/suicidal situation in which the contemporary global society is (Hannah Arendt would say “*conditio humana*”), and which, if it continues to rely on the current principles of growth and development, literally has no chance to survive and live (Honneth, 2007; 2020).

Just to put all dilemmas aside, it is the principles of capitalist/profit political economy as the “ontology of the social being” (Lukacs). Let us not forget that the word principle (lat. *principium*), in a philosophical vocabulary, means the beginning, starting point, assumption, maxim. A principle is that according to which being, is based on what it develops, and what thought returns to as its foundations and, according to Kant, the mind is the “power of the principle” (Filipović, 1989: 265) (Underlined by – D.S.). Therefore, our constant (re) actualizations of the theories of some philosophers are a kind of permanent re-reading, reminding ourselves of some of their statements, attitudes, and judgments which, neither today nor in the future, do not lose and will not lose their relevance and truthfulness. This is proof that not only is a man constantly found in situations but repeats them in certain historical cycles as words which are the same or similar, i.e., the man repeats the situations of previous generations, and in which the future generations will find themselves, meaning all of us - *hic et nunc*. This is true regardless of the famous ironic remark by Hegel on the repetition of history, once as tragedy and then as a farce, meaning it contains a great dose of humor, satire, and laughter. However, we must state and acknowledge in a responsible and honest way (as would Jaspers once say, and today Honet) that the current global situation is all but humorous and funny, considering the millions of sacrifices being laid daily at the altar of the technological profit civilization (located primarily in the highly developed post-industrial capitalistic countries), which threatens to pull down all other parts of humanity (Honet, 2009). That is why we believe that the most relevant/most precise division of contemporary civilization – among so many others – is that by the theoreticians and analysts who divide it into The West and the Rest (Ferguson, 2012; Busek, 2007; Skalovski, 2019).

If we manage to pique the interest of a potential reader to read and analyze the rich philosophical heritage of these three philosophers, which is very important and useful if we want to precisely/correctly understand the reasons/causality for the deep axiological crisis of the Western society and its hierarchy/value

system, we will consider ourselves successful in the primary intent of this paper. It is understood that, in the past decades, a spectrum of followers and free/creative minds of different philosophical, scientific, and ideological provenance has converged around these thinkers. Regardless, what brings them together in a homologous, ontological way is the exclamative and explicit “diagnosis” by Noam Chomsky, which subsumes them “...if we are dealing with a global society based on these principles, then we are on the way towards mass self-destruction.” (Чомски, 2021: 134; ДОНЕВ, 2019)

Karl Jaspers

Karl Jaspers is the first we chose for our short analysis. He can also be put on the list of those philosophers who have been unjustly forgotten and who are the source for a spectrum of philosophical ideas and notions for their followers or people simply following their popular successors without any great justification. Simply put, for a number of reasons which are often not philosophical, they were “more popular”. This is the example of Horkheimer as opposed to Adorno and, in this case, Jaspers as opposed to Heidegger and then Sartre. However, this is an entirely different question, and we will not elaborate on it but immediately move to Jaspers as the founder of the contemporary philosophy of existence and its interactivity, complementarity, and interference, among others, with the Marxist philosophy with which it shares similar humanistic values, ideas and “ideals”; This, besides the fact that Jaspers never seriously studied Marx and the Marxists, reducing them to Stalinists which is completely understandable in the times of the absolute domination of Stalinist interpretations and the (post) Stalinist social theory and practice in general. As such, and precisely due to this, the philosophy of Jaspers deserves a (re)actualization which, truth be told, was started by Miladin Životić in the former Yugoslavian space at the beginning of the 1970s, meaning right after the death of Jaspers.

Jaspers is definitely the most encompassing, deep, and heterogeneous in discourse in philosophy when compared to Fromm and Chomsky, which in no way lessens the value and the truth behind the thoughts of the two later theoreticians who never “declared” themselves to be philosophers, and which ultimately does not matter. This is especially important to state when taking into consideration the subtle analyses of “transcendent” referential points of similarities and differences on the relations between philosophy ↔ religion ↔ science and the defense of the autonomy and “dignity” of each of them. This is due to the fact that each of them

discovers only a fraction of the truth, meaning that the knowledge it reaches is limited. This is the primary reason why, but also because of the impossibility to summarize, elaborate, and understand all of this in one paper, we will contain ourselves only to that which is the reason he became “popular”. Those are the famous “border situations” that man faces every day in an existential way (as the questions of “life and death”, “to be or not to be”) and which cannot be understood without previously listing the main points of his philosophical anthropology, which is subsumed under the notion of comprehensiveness (*Das Umgreifende*). (Јосифовски, 2002: 169-170; Batovanja: 2009: 141-150; Životić, 1973: 15-27)

As a consistent holist, Jasper states that philosophy starts with the realization of the science limits. That does not mean the rejection of science and its utmost importance in the cognitive processes, especially if talking about the science of man, only because scientific cognition cannot, on its own, encompass the entire cognition and knowledge of man. For Jaspers, reductionism and the narrowing of sciences are unacceptable, with the pretense to represent themselves as the only possible forms of realizing reality. This reduction brings about a situation in which there is no clear insight into the real place of science in the entirety of human life; the awareness of the real purpose of science is lost, and man loses control over the use of scientific results. Science realizes causal-genetic relationships which exist in the world/reality, but it cannot comprehend the totality and wholeness of being (*Totalwissen*) due to the fact that the whole is not only a whole of objects, but man is also, as a subject (*I-being*), included as an inherent part of that whole and the empirical science on the subject is impossible, Jaspers believes. (Цепароски, 1993) The existence of the world is not reality as a whole. Philosophy is not and cannot be a “strict science”, as Husserl would say, and it is not an encyclopaedical summary of scientific knowledge because man is “missing” from it, and without him/her, totality is not wholesome while he/she is “lost” as a “tree in the woods”, which is the most common objection to Hegel’s “anthropology”. Marx would say a man is “alienated”, Lukač that the man is “objectified/reified”, Heidegger and Sartre would say the man is “thrown”, Habermas that he/she is “uncommunicative” and Arendt, Bloch, and other Marxists that what is left to man is “hope” for a better future for the realization of which he/she must necessarily engage, fight and be active, if he/she means to survive, advance, and liberate themselves from the dogmatic chains and stereotypes of all kinds. (Arendt, 2020; Honet, 2009) In other words, where the horizons of science “end”, the horizons of philosophy only “begin”; where science sees problems as definitely “solved”, for philosophy they are only created; the

limits to which science arrives and where it falters are the limits from which philosophy only starts and goes on into a comprehensive and spatially and temporally infinite speculative transcendence, Jaspers believes. (Jaspers, 1960: 42-70)

By starting from Kant's demarcation of thinking about phenomena with our reason and the thinking with our mind on the whole of reality which gives regulatory principles for our practical actions, philosophical thought, Jaspers considers, beings to wonder about the purpose of the whole, the purpose of being which is not turned (only) towards the world of objects but (also) towards the inside of the human being. Only then, Jaspers believes, when reaching the thinking which is turned towards the man and their personal being (I-being), when we reach thought turned towards the sphere of personal experience, only then do we reach being-in-itself (Das Ding an sich), the whole. Only then do we reach thought described in that manner, and only then can we claim that thought is comprehensive (Das Um-greifende). (Životić, 1973: 9-11)

We have previously stated that we will focus more on the notion of *comprehensive* because, without it, we cannot understand border situations as "limitless," which is only a new unsolvable contradiction and paradox/dialectic of human existence without which man could not exist nor be open (the notion of *Öffenlichkeit/openness*, namely, is understood as a freedom of thought and is mentioned from Kant and Marx, all the way to Popper). To be open means to be ready and receptive of ever-new "challenges" and undiscovered possibilities of self-finding, self-cognition, self-fulfillment, self-creation, as acts of self-transcending, self-overcoming, self-control, and self-liberation towards the infinite totality of "being comprehensive." (Jaspers, 1973: 48-59)

Namely, the comprehensive (Das Umgreifende) is the main symbol, "key", "code" to understand the philosophy of Jaspers; that thinking, that mind, and that being which are one and who, at the same time, set up and surpass existential limits which they set for themselves. (Jaspers, 1960: 42-70)

““The comprehensive” is that thought which liberates the consciousness of all special knowledge, all the knowledge of the objects of the world and rational notions of logic and mathematics, and turns to that point where the subjective and objective are unified in one horizon. That point is - existence.

The totality of reality, comprehensive reality, is that reality created by an unrepeatable human being - existence.

Comprehensive thought is identical with the realization of the sense of your own existence; that thought is identical with the realization of existential human possibilities.”

(Životić, 1973: 15-16)

By starting with Kant, but not staying only on his generally known agnostic and anthropocentric positions of “transcendental deduction”, in which the world is lost for man, and they themselves are left without hope and faith for the possibility of a better future and under the obvious great influence by Hegel’s dialectic “Science of Logic” (*Wissenschaft der Logik*), Jaspers makes the great step/leap forward by explaining the key notion of comprehensive:

“That is how the comprehensive appears in *two* ways. The comprehensive in which *being* itself appears is the *world*. The comprehensive which is *me* and which *we are* is called *consciousness in general*.

(...)

The comprehensive which is *me* is not exhausted by consciousness at all. I am the *existence* carrying consciousness. The return towards reality is done by taking a step away from pure consciousness towards real existence, towards an existence with a beginning and an end, which struggles and fights in its middle or falters and lets go, enjoys and suffers, fears and hopes. And I am, furthermore, not only existence, but I am actually *spirit* in the ideal totality of which can be received everything which was thought in the world and everything that is, as existence, real.” (Jaspers, 1973: 51)

Even though the Hegelian spirit is obvious with Jaspers, he returns to Kant’s demarcation between the cognition of reason and the mind as a limit of a certain type of knowledge (*Grenzen vernünftigen Denkens*) and the need of their permanent supplementation. Jaspers arrives in the summary reduction to two limits: the limits of human life existence and the one pertaining to his transcendence, which touches the “eternity” of being as such and which is articulated in the awareness of comprehensiveness as eternity. (Jaspers, 1960: 104-126) This is becoming especially actual in our contemporary time, in our Runaway World (Giddens) in which science, as the source will and need for knowledge is devolved into practical usability, usefulness, and applicability (Ginter Anders); the world in which art is most often reduced to depicted everyday life existence, instead of being one of the forms of transcendence, and which is made banal as regular play and easy entertainment (Kundera), which is most often fulfilled with shallow erotica, sexual adventures, and violence as

the most used topics in popular culture and mass media. (Скаловски, 2018) It is unnecessary to stress that the consequences of the current pandemic will reach “new normality” in the sexual life of people as well as their biological reproduction. Furthermore, philosophy is becoming an illusionary “love for wisdom” instead of being radical/critical/free thinking, which always and in each new border situation brings into question the meaning of human life and existence as parts of the cosmic totality of being. Therefore, the feast exists that we are facing danger from the new unbearable lightness of philosophizing/moralizing (that Kundera, for instance, describes as the “unbearable lightness of being/existing”).

In the end, we extend and finish this short review of Jaspers where we started it, namely with “border situations”. Those are the specific situations in which we are in mortal danger, like soldiers in war, like those with a terminal illness (for instance, the current pandemic), or obsessed with mortal sin, helplessness, and fear of responsibility and death penalty; Simply put, when we are in any way directly faced with death, either our own or of a person near and dear to us. That is when we are, as Jaspers concludes, on the border of what we call “transcendence” or God. (Jaspers, 1973: 190-199; Јосифовски, 2002: 169-170) With the globalization of human situations (read: capitalism as a global process), these situations became border situations for all people on planet Earth, precisely in the sense that Jaspers intended, regardless of the objections we might have for him and which are of the philosophical provenance (for instance, irrationalism, non-scientific approach, religiousness, etc.). Therefore, Jaspers still manages to keep and prove the autonomous power of philosophy as opposed to religion and science and, at the same time, not underestimate their role and service in the discovery of great truths about man, world, and cosmos (moreover, Jaspers had started his career as a scientist/physician/social psychiatrist.)

When we sum up all of this, however much apocalyptic and fatalistic it may sound to some, and not just because of the current pandemic, it seems that we are now in precisely such a global border situation: we are faced with mass death and danger from extinction/self-destruction. In biblical terms – we are awaiting the flood. It is understandable that this may not transpire. Whether it will, does not depend on our “faith in salvation” or “the mercy of God”, but on specific and categorical decisions (Kant would say – the categorical imperative) which people/humanity and its political elites (the Paris Climate Agreement) will have to make *hic et nunc*, primarily because there is no more time to postpone/wait. Some experts, even if they are exaggerating, estimate that our planet cannot

sustain man (humanity) for more than another decade if man continues to live by holding on to and relying on current economic principles of their own survival, growth, and development, i.e., as *homo economicus* (Honet). These estimates are quick and catastrophic/dystopic primarily because of climate change (global warming, carbon dioxide emissions, glasshouse effect, various kinds of local and global pollution, toxic waste, etc.). In other words, such an extensity and intensity of usage, spending, exploitation, and destruction of natural resources, including humans, have a not so natural, as much as social/"cultural" origin; Namely, as a system of the profit technological civilization as a human political product par excellence, which is manifesting today as a mass pathological "runaway" (Giddens) and general auto-destructive psychosomatic degeneration and – in postmodern terms – deconstruction (Fromm, Chomsky versus Derrida).

We, as bioethics experts, faced with the border situation of this global/absolute/dystopic harm and evil, must not close our eyes and run from our responsibility. We must once again ask the Kantian question – "What do I do faced with absolute harm?" We, as bioethics experts and as bio-politicians (Agamben), must be responsible, in Jaspers' own terms, "when representing all of this to ourselves with honesty." (Jaspers, 1973: 137)

Finally, in place of a preliminary conclusion on Jaspers, what ties him to Fromm, Chomsky, and many other philosophers before and after him (for instance, Marx, then Hannah Arendt, Habermas, Foucault, Honet, Agamben, etc.) who stress social/existential/biopolitical determination of the individuality of human consciousness and actions, is his insistence on social/continued roots of philosophy itself:

"According to this: the sources of philosophy, however, lie in our wondering, doubt, in the realization of border situations but, ultimately and including all of this, in our desire for true communication. This is shown from the very start in the fact that each philosophy strives to communicate itself, express itself, wants itself to be heard, which is its essence in the communication itself, which is, again, unbreakably connected to its truthfulness.

Only in communication if the purpose of philosophy realized and in that purpose lies, ultimately, the sense of all purposes: to notice being, enlighten love, achieve peace."

(Jaspers, 1960: 71-103; Jaspers, 1973: 141)

Erich Fromm

“I believe that man is a product of natural evolution; that he is a part of nature, but that he transcends it because he is given reason and self-awareness.

I believe it to be possible to determine the essence of man. However, that essence is not a substance characterizing man in all times throughout history.”

(Erich Fromm, 1980: 155)

The key to understanding Erich Fromm is the word “believe” (credo), which is also the first word of each following paragraph of the short chapter titled Credo. That is also the last chapter of his famous book *Beyond the Chains of Illusion* which we can freely speak of as his testament speaking about the end/requiem (Chomsky) of Western civilization:

“Truly, where there is no faith in man, faith in machines will not save us from disappearance; On the contrary, this ‘belief’ will only hasten the end. Either the western world will be able to create a renaissance of humanism, in which the central point will be the complete development of man’s humaneness, not production and labor, or the West will disappear as many other great civilizations did.” (Fromm, 1980: 160)

This, by no means, signifies that new and different civilizations/cultures from those so far will create new internal contradictions and paradoxes of “border” human situations and which will, as such, still cause new conflicts/wards for reasons old and new, Fromm warns (Fromm, 1980a: 46-84). This reaffirms the beliefs of those philosophers and scientists who believe that as long as we know and see a man in this or that, within itself contradictory, anthropological/existential habitus, their evolutionary, “natural” (self)development and (self)creation will never be stopped or finished. (Dobžanski, 1982: 354-385) Alternatively, we arrive at humorous rhetoric on the alleged “end of history” (Fukuyama) and similar nonsense, which is essentially an ideological and geopolitical/globalist derivation and product of a “liberal” mind on the turn between the 20th to the 21st century. This is primarily placed from the state administration of the USA as a unilateral “extended hand” of the arbitrage of American foreign policy.

Ultimately, this daily politics “mind” has shown to be a regular pathological, irrational, and self-destructive/mindless performer of the capitalist/imperialist value dogma and its transmissions, which experiences a catastrophic/apocalyptic

end and which did not have (and still does not have) enough intellectual/moral courage to admit (thanks to the exceptions confirming the rule!) that only the laws of dialectic are eternal and unbeatable, especially those of natural evolution which, if we continue like this, can literally swallow us with all the products of our cultural and social history so far. Ultimately, we might not have brought ourselves to this ecological situation had we listened to the warnings that some philosophers issued over 80 years ago. Let us only take, as an example, Ernst Cassirer, who claims that it is not good when mathematical thought/prediction often goes beyond philosophical exploration (today, we would say bioethical exploration) primarily because, as Cassirer warns, “nature is inexhaustible – it will always provide us with new and unexpected problems.” (Kasirer, 1988: 326-327)

If we are even talking about some sort of an “end” of something (for instance, an imperial/colonial/postcolonial ear which spanned multiple centuries), then it also makes sense and is accurate to talk about “the end of progress” (“progress” being an ideological, “imperial” notion) as Amy Allen, a representative of the critical theory of the Frankfurt school of thought, so successfully elaborates (Allen, 2016). Among other things, this means that we unnecessarily rushed with underestimating, rejecting, even ridiculing some significant philosophical works, primarily Marxist, as is the case with Engels and his “Dialectic of Nature”, in spite of its left Hegelian/Marxist dogmatic scheme of interpretation. Understandably, this is already the second theme we leave for another/following chance. (Engels, 1978; Honet, 2009; Давчев, 2001; Жижек, 2020; Скаловски, 2010: 189-193)

By returning to Fromm, his complex dialectic anthropology forces us to put forward a longer quote, primarily because it is his first and most summary “thesis” from which stem and deductively follow all the later ones, and which we will try to “retell” and interpret/comment in shortened form by not looking back at each of them individually. Put simply, in these theses, Fromm, in a more “dense” form, presents an entire philosophy “reduced”, an entire world view of a grand humanist who is today becoming again very current and relevant, dare we say popular, precisely because of the border situations in which our civilization of today finds itself.

“I believe it is possible to determine the essence of man. However, that essence is not a substance which characterizes man for all times throughout history. The essence of man consists in the abovementioned contradiction inherent to his existence, and that contradiction forces him to respond in order to find a solution. Man cannot stay neutral and passive towards existential dichotomy. By the very fact of his humaneness, life points him

to the question: how to overcome the division between himself and the outside world in order to achieve the sense of unity and identification with their near ones and nature. Man must answer that question every minute of his life. Not only, nor do I mean exclusively, with words but by his way of existing and acting.” (Fromm, 1980: 155)

By believing that reason cannot be functional if a man loses their hope and faith, Fromm begins with Goethe’s famous statement on the difference between great historic epochs as the difference between believing and not believing, namely that the epochs ruled by faith are those filled with success, drive, elan, rises, and rich fruits. For instance, take the Italian Renaissance on which Engels comments positively, wishing its “repetition”. On the other hand, Goethe goes on, the epochs dominated by disbelief, mistrust, a lack of faith, and resignation, vanish and are forgotten as though never having existed. Those are the times without positive utopian energies; times of sterileness, nothingness, a lack of perspective and general depression, lack of ideas, and nihilism. (Honet, 2019) We do not need to doubt, states Fromm, that the 13th century, the Renaissance, and the Enlightenment were epochs of faith and hope and that the western world of the 20th century lost both faith and hope for the creation of a better world. Because if we do not believe in man, the faith in machines/technical things (the myth of engineering) will not save us from disappearance and doom, but such “belief” will only hasten our end. That is where Fromm’s definitive disjunctive conclusion stems “Either the western world will be able to create a renaissance of humanism in which the central point will be the total development of man’s humaneness, not production and labor, or the West will disappear like other great civilizations have disappeared.” (Fromm, 1980: 160)

According to our, and not only our, opinion, without faith and trust in man and the fight for their better future, we lose what little goodness/virtue and humaneness we had so far and managed to preserve in our individual and collective/social lives after so many wars, genocides, exoduses, mass destruction, harm, and death of tens of millions of innocent people in the course of the multi-millennium history of mankind. (Honet, 2009) One of the main obstacles and stopping points of this positive relationship towards the future is our inability to free ourselves of wrong reasoning and numerous stereotypes, among which we must highlight gender stereotypes. (Си--моновска/Скаловски, 2012) We completely agree with Fromm that there are always new and different possibilities of human existence and survival which become visible only when we start to liberate ourselves of deathly embraces and slave shackles of dogma, animosity,

atavisms, stereotypes, and cliches, and when we allow the voice of humaneness and reason to be heard. Alternatively, if we do not believe in those and such possibilities, we will not manage to survive as the human species.

Fromm starts with similar (bio)ethical positions when, in one final credo, he concludes something with which we also fully agree, something which is very important for our current (de)moralized *condition humana* “The principle of ‘lesser evil’ is a principle of despair. In most cases, this only deepens the period until the greater evil comes to rule. The risk to make and do what is right and human, have faith in the power of the voice of humaneness and truthfulness, is more realistic than the so-called realism of opportunism.” (Fromm, 1980: 161) This “categorical imperative” by Fromm leads us to the main moral assignment and main moral concern: the question of *war and peace*. It is no accident that the anthological novel by Leo Tolstoy bears this title. From the moment of the creation of nuclear weapons, man is able to annihilate all life on Earth and all civilizational and cultural values remaining and create a barbaric totalitarian organization (a world government) that would rule what is left of mankind. This danger is something that a growing number of humanists, ethicists, artists, and scientists from all over the world have been warning against for several decades. We can, out of all of them, point out Alasdair Macintyre from the “West”, who talks about a rule of new barbarians, and Alexander Zinoviev from the “East”, who talks about a new, secret, informal, world government with global fascist intents and ambitions. Nietzsche would probably say: will for global power. (Мекинтаир, 1998; Зиновьев, 1999) After all, this is what Fromm warned us about when he talked about a new “fascism with a smiling face”. All that is going on today all over the world resembles more and more this dystopian situation that Fromm and a spectrum of other ingenious thinkers predicted in a “prophetic” way as a realistic possibility of the near future.

At the same time when the militarization of the world is once again intensified, there are block divisions, a race in armaments, military budgets are increasing, and countries are spending billions of dollars to purchase modern weaponry and threaten with new biological/hybrid wars, millions of people are dying from illness, hunger, and wars. Fromm sums our crucial intellectual and moral task:

“To wake for this danger, to see through duplicitous conversations lead on all sides in order to prevent people from seeing the abyss towards which we are going, is a unique obligation, a unique moral and intellectual commandment which man must honor today. If he does not, we will all be condemned.” (Fromm, 1980: 161-162)

Fromm, however, also does not fully answer the question of “what will we be condemned to?” Therefore, to his words, we would only add the following – we will all be condemned to doom or, in biblical terms, a flood. Žižek also believes the same when he warns that, due to COVID-19, “we are all on the same boat, and it is sinking.” (Жижек, 2020: 13-20)

Noam Chomsky

Noam Chomsky starts with precisely this conclusion when he warns that we are moving in a destructive way which will lead us to a border that, if we should cross it, will bring into question the survival of the human species. (Чомски, 2021: 131-140) The scientific/philosophical works and political activism of Chomsky are well known to the public, especially when dealing with the crisis of the contemporary American society and American internal and foreign (geo) politics, as well as the American way/”model” of life, which became a paradigm/pattern of the western system of social, political, and cultural values in general and which, in turn, produced new controversies, internal contradictions, deep crises, and paradoxes which transfer to other parts of the world. The literary counterpart of Chomsky in American artistic literature could be Theodor Dreiser, whose work *American tragedy* was rated as a masterpiece of American literature. We wrote on “American” themes in other places, so we will now restrict ourselves to his latest analyses which are, ultimately, Marxist, even though Chomsky avoids admitting to it openly, quoting only Adam Smith and not his famous successor in the criticism of political economy of capitalism – Karl Marx.

Namely, Chomsky speaks about the principles of neoliberalism’s so-called “devious currency” and the concentration of wealth and power in the USA in the last 40 years. This brings us back to the “game” of the class struggle theory, which was, in the meantime, negated by a series of western theoreticians and ideologists who were anti-Marxist and proclaimed to be outdated. It is most commonly corroborated by the argument that social groups/classes in such a great number do not exist, but that rather only different layers/strata exist, the interests of which are not that opposed or confronted in order to cause a struggle for radical and revolutionary social and political changes with the aim/intent/idea to build a new, namely socialist society/socialist system. This new system would be a new form of the social constitution, a society that would be more humane and moral than all others before it, especially not as “devious” as the capitalist one of today is. (Чомски, 2021: 14; Honet, 2019) It must be

admitted that Chomsky does not rebuke for fierce criticism and judgment of the American society and its “deviousness”, evil, and inhumanity of capitalism in general. Sadly, his critical discourse ends there, with his explicit anarchistic-unionist, even socialist beliefs, and ideologies.

In the search for an answer to the question of how it came to such a concentration of alienated power and material wealth in the hands of the few, Chomsky reveals in his latest book titled *Requiem for the American Dream* the “ten principles” according to which capitalist magnates worked (and still do!) and thanks to which they managed to acquire vast power of social control and manipulation. That has inevitably led to the undermining of the foundations and the reduction of the power of American democracy and the impoverishment of all the social layers, primarily the “middle class,” which is a pillar and carrier of growth and development in not just the American modern civil society and state, but all of them. The impoverishment/failure of this class, Chomsky states, definitely debunks all the myths (as Fromm would say, “illusions”) for the realization of the “American Dream” as a paradigm of the general capitalist dream (read: positive utopia) for the creation of the perfect man/society/state (welfare state) of free, rich, satisfied, beautiful, cultural, solidary, peaceful, and eternally young, in love, and filled with love towards everyone else, potent and happy people (read: Christian paradise).

For similar reasons as with Fromm, we will not list nor elaborate all the ten principles, but only point to a longer quote from the introductory *Note for the American Dream*, which Chomsky provides at the very beginning of the book:

“An important part of the American Dream is class mobility: you are born poor, work hard, get wealthy. The idea is that anyone can find a decent job, buy themselves a home and a car, put their children through school...

That all fell apart. (...)

The inequality is unprecedented today. Generally speaking, it is like we are in one of the worst periods of American history. However, if we get into more detail, we will see that the inequality stems from the extreme concentration of wealth with a small portion of the populace, i.e., less than one percent. (...) – literally, less than one percent are the *superrich*. (...)

Throughout American history, there has always been an endless conflict against those from the bottom wanting more freedom and democracy and the elite groups from the top wanting more control and dominance. That has been so since the creation of the country. (...)” (Чомски, 2021: 10-15)

In the current, contemporary moment, that is a consequence, Chomsky honestly states, of a 30-year long period of change in the social and economic policy, which he accurately assesses as reactionary politics (reaction/counterattack/counterrevolution) against the progressive student movements in Europe and the USA, headed by Herbert Marcuse in the 1960s, which brought great civilizational acquisitions to the modern world. As a result of these negative changes, Chomsky states, the real income of the majority of the population stagnated, and the rich became even richer. It is clear that these, as of yet unseen social differences have become unbearable and that economic growth and development have their limits and are too high of a “price” in every way. (Meadows, 1978) All this combined caused social revolt and mass dissatisfaction which is currently prevalent in the USA and which caused the division of the American nation, which has not been noted since the time of the Civil war in the 19th century. What worries, even more, is that this dissatisfaction and deep social crisis are transferred to other nations across the world, given that the USA, even with its power decline, is still the greatest world economy on which the developmental economic processes in many undeveloped countries are dependent, i.e., countries in development.

Alas, Chomsky points out, precisely because the rich always had great control over politics, we have a crisis that encompasses the totality of social/existential reality (Jaspers!), i.e., the entire social-political system. That is why, from Marx onwards, it has been repeatedly critically stated that each economy is a political one, especially if it is one of the modern capitalist societies. Without the moral-political willpower for the necessary change of this bad capitalist system, i.e., a radical reform/change of its goals – primarily the reform of private property – that system will continue (dis)functioning in a mindless/irrational and auto-destructive way, dragging along and absorbing all other powerful world economies into a chronic crisis. This chronic crisis will not remain simply an economic one; it will spread into a comprehensive crisis that threatens to be the final end of the entire system of values (both material and spiritual) which we can conditionally call “Western”. This danger is precisely what worries Jaspers, Fromm, Chomsky, and a plethora of contemporary scientists and philosophers-humanists, regardless of the fact they come from different philosophical traditions, paths, and “schools”, and have different ideological and other cultural and spiritual ideologies, as well as different, multicultural, polycentric, and multipolar visions and concepts for the future of their indigenous and autonomous civilizations and cultural traditions. (Жижек, 2020; Ска-ловски, 2010: 137-151) This is very

important for the so-called “small identities” as, for instance, are the Croatian and Macedonian national identities.

This is a type of unanimous statement that the individual human cultural/ anthropological habitus (personality) – historically created as a poli-dimensional homo sapiens – is today vulgarized, pathologically socially and mentally degenerated and reified to a homo faber, and then stripped to a one-dimensional homo economicus (Plesner, Arendt, Marcuse, Josifovski, Agamben, Honneth) (Honneth, 2007/2020). However, as Chomsky states, even with this poor human reality (as Hegel would say “bad infinity”), the *American Dream* still survives and exists, fed by propaganda, primarily ideological and geopolitical, most often with the use of mass media, which is digitalized now, criticizing and blackening, more or less, all others, even their own recent allies, while at the same time uncritically glorifying itself, thus creating the *necessary illusion* of self and the realization of its own, liberal and democratic “American Dream” (Чомски, 2003; Скаловски, 2018: 65-88).

All this further hastens the danger of the coming global deterioration with long-term harmful and inconceivable consequences for the entire global economy. With it rises the danger of (auto)destruction of the material/ economic base (Marx) on which the entire global civilization and culture reside. (Чомски, 2021: 10; Meadows, 1978) In other words, it was Marx who was right, before any of us, both partially and globally, regardless of various receptions, interpretations, and renderings of his original thought, and which are most often under the strong influence of ideological prejudice and not philosophical/ scientific reasons. That, alas, we admit this (Honet) is best confirmed by the comments and statements of the leading Macedonian intellectuals from which we can exemplify the president of the Macedonian Academy of Sciences and Arts, academic Kocarev, who states: “Never before in the history of mankind has there been such an unequal and unjust division of resources and opportunities.” (Коцарев, 2021: 1-2)

Conclusion

We hope that we have at least partially succeeded in our intent to interest the potential reader for the works of Karl Jaspers, Erich Fromm, and Noam Chomsky (who is alive and at a very advanced age). Our second intent was to prove that they speak of the same things even though they are different in vocation. Regardless of the fact, they observe and interpret social reality from

different theoretical standpoints/aspects: philosophical, social, psychological, political science, juristic, economic, culturological, philological/linguistic, ideological, religious, etc. Even with their certain differences, what brings them together spiritually/cognitively are the “diagnoses” of the diseased tissue of (post)modern civil society and the ratings of the phenomenon of social/existential reality of our contemporary time. What also brings them together spiritually is their humanism and the care for man and his/her psychosomatic health in his/her present life and future, in times when civilization is at the brink of self-destruction (with and without the current pandemic). There are times which are everything but healthy, everything but mindful, everything but moral, everything but beautiful, everything but happy, everything but just, everything but divine, everything but humane.

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GRANIČNE SITUACIJA KAO NEPROMJENJIVE LJUDSKE SITUACIJE (PREMA KARLU JASPERU, ERICHU FROMMU & NOAMU CHOMSKYOM)

Sažetak

Prvenstvena namjera ovog rada je podizanje interesa za rad triju autora, naime Karla Jaspersa, Ericha Fromma i Noama Chomskyog. Drugotna namjera je pokazati i pokušati dokazati da unatoč pripadnosti drugačijim vokacijama, navedeni autori u osnovi govore o istoj društvenoj stvarnosti, neovisno o činjenici što je promatraju iz različitih teoretsko-znanstvenih pozicija-aspekata: filozofskih, etičko-bioloških, antropoloških, socioloških, psiholoških, političkih, pravnih, ekonomskih, kulturnih, filološko-lingvističkih, ideoloških itd. Unatoč određenim razlikama, ono što ih dugovno-kognitivno spaja je „dijagnoza“ oboljelog tkiva (post)modernog civilnog društva, kao i procjena fenomena društveno-egzistencijalne stvarnosti našega vremena. Nadalje, ono što ih ujedinjuje je sveobuhvatni humanizam i briga za čovjeka i njegovo psihosomatsko zdravlje, kako u sadašnjosti tako i budućnosti, upravo u vremenu kada je civilizacija na rubu samouništenja.

Ključne riječi: Karl Jaspers, Erich Fromm, Noam Chomsky, filozofija, etika