

Decoding the Myth of End of History

Kushal Pal and Anita Agarwal
Department of Political Science, Dyal Singh College
kushalpal66@gmail.com & anitadsc@gmail.com

The ideological battle in the world is very old. It intensified with the Soviet Socialist Revolution of 1917, which also culminated in a cold war between the two super powers. It impelled upon the liberal thinkers to declare an ‘End of Ideology’ in 1955. Subsequently some of the western scholars declared Political theory as dead, whereas others maintained that, it is not dead but declining. Further to this debate in 1989, a US State Department official, Francis Fukuyama wrote a sensational essay “The End of History” in which he claimed that the world in which historical progress was understood in terms of the struggle for human freedom had reached its final destination where history ceases to exist. The statement of Fukuyama is highly debatable and has led to many serious writings among western and non-western scholars.

Before the demise of communism in Soviet Russia, in his thesis, Fukuyama wrote that the promises of communism were an illusion. He strongly put forward his argument that like monarchy, fascism and other forms of autocratic government that had been tried from time to time, communism, the last great challenger to liberal democracy, had failed to deliver the proverbial good. Interestingly, after the sudden death of communism, this liberal thesis received a great boost among the western intelligentsia.

While explaining his thesis, Fukuyama argued that modern liberal democracies were not without their practical deficiencies and still struggled with problems of crime and injustice. But Fukuyama argued that these deficiencies simply reflected the incomplete realization of basic principles of liberal democracy – liberty and equality rather than any defects in the principles themselves. The basis of his argument is that the Marxist dream of socialist society has failed and capitalism, as the logical economic accompaniment to liberal democracy, has triumphed. And, thus, by the end of history he means a much more secure existence in a liberal democratic world. Thus, the entire thesis reflected characteristically the end of ideological hostility, which represented the surrender to the forces of western values of economics and especially political freedom.

But Fukuyama’s thesis seems more of a myth than a reality. Applying his own argument to a Marxist vision of an egalitarian society based on the principles of

equality, liberty and justice one may argue that the Marxist ideology, too, is free from defects in its principles; only its objectives have not been achieved fully. Its notion of a socialist society is still relevant for the third world countries where a large part of the population is struggling for bare minimum necessities of life. Moreover, under the present conditions of globalization, the dominant economic paradigm of global capitalism has resulted in wider economic disparities between classes. So, the capitalist manifestation of liberal democracy cannot be treated as the ultimate stage of historical progress. And Fukuyama's vision did not promise a world free of the tragedy of violent conflicts. History, a very important component of social sciences, cannot be simply whisked away on the basis of fake premises.

The ongoing discussion and analyses of the concept shall involve the use of historical, analytical and comparative research methods.

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