Mysticism and Social Justice

by

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The topic mysticism and social justice is related to Voegelin's life work. Voegelin's central publications, the five volume series *Order and History* are a search by a mystic political philosopher "that sets out to trace the history of [just] order."[1] Voegelin insists in the first sentences of this series that it is the task of every society in history to create its order in a manner "that will endow the fact of its existence with meaning in terms of ends divine and human"[2], thus the mysticism. Hence, for Voegelin , order and/or contemporary social justice in every society is tied to mysticism. First, mysticism counters the alienation that arises in society due to politically imposed dogmatism.[3] Secondly, "social" justice is so closely tied to mysticism in Voegelin's understanding of an ordered society, it could be called its visible face temporally.[4]

Thus Voegelin championed Bergson's *l'ame ouverte* writ large as the source of true

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[1]Maurice P. Hogan, "Editor's Introduction," Eric Voegelin, *Order and History,* Vol. 1, *Israel and Revelation* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2001)1, Vol. 14 of the *Collected Works of Eric Voegelin,* 34 vols.

[2]Voegelin, *Israel and Revelation,* 19.

[3]"In the sixteenth century . . . Jean Bodin [understood] the secondary importance of doctrinal truth in relation to mystical insight. He wanted his king to be a mystic, . . . in order to stand above the dogmatomachy. . . . [This study] gave me my first full understanding of the function of mysticism in a time of social disorder." Eric Voegelin, *Autobiographical Reflections*, edited with An Introduction by Ellis Sandoz (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1989), 113.

[4]We will discuss this claim in Part II: "A Definition of Social Justice."

order in contemporary societies that are socially just, following Plato's ideal of a just *polis*.[5] The open soul is a mystic one forged in the experience of the felt presence of God. The initiative has been from the Divine, seeking a chance to act in human affairs. This Divine activity is dependent on a human invitation welcoming God's agency in concrete situations.[6] The ones who open their souls to divine justice, thus those formed with the mystically differentiated experience of participation in the In-Between divine/human reality, are the ordered human sources for justly ordered societies. For Voegelin there will always be a tension between the truth of the soul and the truth of a just society.[7] Justice in society arises from the mystic constitution of the soul, the measuring standard of justice in contemporary societies, no matter their political organization. Hence the first premise of this paper is that from a Voegelin perspective there is a direct and unbreakable connection between mysticism and social justice. The very definition of social *justice* is tied to the fact that justice is a unique divine attribute in which humanity participates.

In arguing this thesis I will first define social justice and mysticism. The definition of the former is difficult. Michael Novak (quoting Friedrich Hayek) has written that whole books have been written about social justice without ever really given clarity to its definition.[8] Novak

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[5]Eric Voegelin, *The New Science of Politics* in *Modernity Without Restraint,* ed. and intro. Manfred Henningsen (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2000), 136, vol. 5. CW of Eric Voegelin. Also see, Eric Voegelin, *Anamnesis,* trans. and ed. By Gerhart Niemeyer (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1978), 98, 196.

[6]Ellis Sandoz, *Give Me Liberty" Studies in Constitutionalism and Philosophy,* (South Bend, Indiana: St. Augustine Press, 2013), 62, 73.

[7]*The New Science of Politics,* 215.

[8]Michael Novak, "Defining Social Justice," *First Things,* 108 (December, 2000), 11.

has identified two definitive traditions that define social justice very differently—with two opposing methodologies—that I will research. They are the mystical one of participation and human solidarity and the socialist one of class struggle and alienation.[9] The former tradition, the classic one, is a seriously religious one, but it does include Enlightenment rights political philosophy as well.[10] The latter tradition, the Enlightenment one, is one often termed "Christian socialism,' but it has integrated formulas and beliefs of secular/atheistic social philosophies. The second one enlarges economic concerns also.

Secondly, it is necessary to define what is meant by mysticism. Mysticism as defined in the Voegelin synthesis is an open welcome by human persons to the Divine work of making us human. It also welcomes God's involvement in human affairs, as a Co- Actor in human history. It is at first associated with experiences of the Divine in specially chosen persons in history. Their "leaps in being" led to the great human advances in understanding humanity existentially. But then it is also a necessary evocation of the Divine in every life, hence there is also a 'common mysticism of humanity'. The awakening of the explicit human characteristics of reason and will are tied to experiences associated with the common mysticism. From the perspective of social justice these specifically human endowments are necessary for the human

[9]These terms are adapted from Karol Wojyla in this analysis of the social forms that exist when human beings live and act together. See, Karol Wojtyla, "Intersubjectivity by Participation," in *The Acting Person*, trans. By Andrzej Potocki, collaboration with the author by Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka, *Analecta Husserliana X* (D. Reidel Publishing Co., 1979), 261ff.

[10]Sandoz, *Give Me Liberty*, 97; see also other books written by Ellis Sandoz, i.e.: Ellis Sandoz, *A Government of Laws: Political Theory, Religion, and the American Founding* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2001), 163-217. One can find this introduction of a rights language into a traditional Judeo-Christian notion of social justice in the writings on social justice by the Salvation Army. See Karen Shakespeare, "The Salvation Army and Social Justice" (www.salvationarmy.org, 2009), 1-10.

vocation of just stewardship over world and society. Secondly, this common mysticism opens society in a subsidiarity of smaller communities to be the locus of Divine action in history so that justice can emerge in ever concentrical circles to become a universal justice emerging from humanity's participation in this Divine attribute[11]

The conclusion will provide what this author believes would be Voegelin's definition of social justice—if he had chosen to define it. The claim in this definition is that social justice must begin in and erected upon the foundational subsidiarity of concrete persons in co-action together in society marked by loving solidarity. Social justice is the result of an effort within the mutuality of open souls bonded through a common mysticism to life lived in participation with the Divine in Veogelin's 'In-Between' Reality. This latter participation is of actual, concrete persons who must live and act together in society for the common good—which is the ultimate goal of social justice.

Secondly the conclusion will affirm the classic tradition as it calls for mystical openness to the partnership of human/divine action for justice in history. The same argument made for the relevance of mysticism to social justice will be employed to dispraise the Enlightenment tradition, which is at heart one of a class struggle imposed through law.[12] Action for justice in this tradition is grounded in a "creeping socialism",[13] that in turn subjugates or banishes

[11]This was the Stoic theory of justice. It was one of "treating one another with *agape* and putting the interest of others ahead of one's own . . . the individual should, by way of rational argument, extend his concern for himself in concentrical circles until all of humankind is eventually included." J. Strijdom, 43.

[12]"Social reformers have to find ways to compel the rich and powerful to make changes that will benefit the poor and powerless." World Council of Churches (www.oikumene.org/), "Social Justice and Common Goods: Policy Paper (March 22, 2011).

[13]The form of socialism that exists with the 1989 collapse of real socialism. Peter L. Berger,

explicitly articulated religious values from the public life of the world's already secularized societies. It works for the immanent, non-religious goals of a more temporal concern: such as economic egalitarianism and wealth distribution, various minority rights, or environmental protection.[14] Moreover, it is separated from the divine; it imposes a previously decided social dogmatomachy.[15] From a Voegelinian perspective, it creates closed societies, collapsed sub-human worlds cut off from the human-Divine partnership that is the measure of what is human.

But, if much of this is already familiar to followers of the Voegelin synthesis, there will be finally an articulation of a very novel Voegelin insight that will be presented about the possibilities of human work for social justice that arises from Voegelin's unique writings on mysticism. This novelty is Voegelin's creative contribution to the topic of mysticism, and thus to questions and issues in the contemporary search for authentic social justice. It is natural/"supernatural" role of mysticism. First Voegelin presents mysticism as the key to becoming fully and rationally human. It only after this that he demonstrates mysticism's role in opening the human world to the Divine effective gift of justice to societies.

A Definition of Social Justice

I would like to begin with a brief history of the actual term social justice. The first

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"Social Ethics in a Post-Socialist World," in *First Things*, 30 (February, 1993), 10.

[14]Quite often this is due to current notions of "separation of Church and State." But in the history of this tradition, the explicitly religious language was seen as an obstacle to any co-operative effort among religious and atheistic partners in the social justice effort. See Tillich.

[15]A Voegelin noeolgism. See Eugene Webb, "Glossary of Terms Used in Eric Voegelin's Writings," in *The Collected Works of Eric Voegelin* Vol. 34, ed. with Introduction by Ellis Sandoz (Columbia & London: University of Missouri Press, 2001), 156.

person to use these words, social justice, was a Jesuit philosopher, Luigi Taparelli D'Azeglio in 1840.[16] Normand Paulhus writes that the beginnings of the modern concept of *social* justice, in the writings of Taparelli and the "social" Catholics of the mid-19th century, are in the concept of legal justice. These Catholics inherited traditions about justice extending to the Aquinas synthesis. In this synthesis legal justice codifies a general justice, defined as a personal ordering virtue named justice based upon natural and divine law. This specific virtue would guide the mutual action of persons for the common good of societies whatever their political/juridical organizations.[17] This virtue would influence the cultural world of meanings and back enactment of just laws. Hence, social justice at first was a virtue, a differentiated new form of legal justice.

The unity of society in the classic tradition was a unity of order based upon the relationships of persons, hence governed by justice making it a social virtue. Catholic thinkers in the second half of the nineteenth century were dealing with the new language of modern liberalism and new economic conditions of a 'working class of persons.' The insight in this era was that there was a need beyond individual justice. This need came to be articulated as the ideal of full justice in the social order itself.[18] Thus social was used in contrast to individual justice.[19] It was built on the recognition that unifying relationships generating a society were

[16]J.J. Ziegler, "What is Social Justice?" *The Catholic World Report* (April 10, 2013), 1.

[17]Normand J. Paulhus, "Social Justice: A Meaningless Term? www.shc.edu/theolibrary/jp.htm, 4-5.

[18]Norman Paulhus, 5.

[19]See conversation on Eric Voegelin's definition of society/social on p. of this paper.

sometimes corrupted by antagonisms especially among smaller associations with special interests. Hence, using the new language of 'rights', social rights against the whole or perfect society were added to individual claims on that whole. So in the new term social justice, social right brings in the relationships between associated intelligent beings.[20] J. J. Zeigler writes that the first appearance of social justice as a term in Catholic curial documents was in 1894. "A new practice of social justice was born from the principle that 'the despoiled before all things ought to be restored.'"[21]

In addition, a further elucidation of the normative ideal behind general or legal justice is important to make. Traditionally, there was a connection between divinely ordained legal authority and virtue, that does becomes a question to be taken up in a discussion of social justice as a virtue.[22] There is a role in the medieval synthesis on justice that is given to the secular authority—the state then—to promote virtue of justice through just laws. Hence justice when it takes the form of general justice would be afforded precedence over both communtative and distributive rules of justice in this synthesis, because as virtue it becomes intimately associated with human happiness. Through the perfect virtue of justice embodied in the general justice brought into human laws each person is able to attain "the *Summun Bonum* of this world".[23]

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[20]*Ibid.* 6

[21]J.J. Zeigler, 2.

[22]In other words, this first definition reflects the medieval synthesis, often called the Gelesian thesis of the "two swords" of divinely authorized human authority—that of church and state. In this thesis the secular ruler received authority directly from God and not through any religious authority. The thesis also reflects the understanding of two separate orders of human activity—the secular and the sacred. Robert W. McElroy, *The Search for an American Public Theology: the Contribution of John Courtney Murray* (Paulist Press, 1989), 20-22.

[23]Ellis Sandoz, ed., "Editor's Introduction," *The Roots of Liberty: Magna Carta, Ancient*

Hence the roots of the social justice in the history of the medieval paradigm lie in a division of justice into that of commandment and that of counsel—life lived on supererogatory level of prayer, fasting and almsgiving, or in the ascetic life of the mystic. The latter was called "contemplation in action", which hardly can be described as a social *justice* activity. Rather it was one of social charity carried on by those who left all to follow Christ in anticipation of the coming of his Father's kingdom. One could call this justice, but it was God's gracious justice making things right in the human world. In contrast, the ordinary virtue of justice, as commutative, distributive, and legal—is a virtue that must be understood as rooted in the Roman system of law continued in the structures of political societies of Christendom. This was a minimum public order instituted through the political rulership inculcating a basic public morality in members of society.

In this paradigm, the realm of the great social needs as articulated by the 8th century prophets and in the biblical works of mercy were addressed by moral heroes in societies—the saints following Christ, founders of religious orders and charitable associations. They followed a greater committed private morality. The latter was a calling to "leave all" to participate in the work of 'the kingdom' that was the focus of the public ministry of Christ. Thus the great social needs of tending to the poor, the vulnerable, the sick and the un-educated was met by those who lived a life of the counsels, that is who welcomed a supererogatory task beyond basic moral obligation of legal justice. Divine charity was the source of the success of the justice achieved by the work of these orders; this was not a political achievement but one in

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Constitution, and the Anglo-American Tradition of Rule of Law (Indianapolis: Amagir Books, 1993), 8.

the tradition of the Hebrew *mitzvot*..[24] These needs were understood as met and healed by God himself, acting in concrete history through the concrete persons who welcomed his providential intervention to help those suffering injustice, through their own mystic co-operation with his effective graciousness to humanity. That this would be achieved through person's acts of charity points to the divine nature of rescuing justice that is brought to bear against social injustice. This paradigm of social justice constitutes the core of what I have called the "classic tradition".

The advent of the era of modernity brought about new social arrangements and new forms of social injustice. At the end of the 19th century, Pope Leo XIII will begin a new tradition that has been called Catholic social thought in his encyclical, *Rerum Novarum* (Of New Things).[25] The social Catholics mentioned above contributed significantly to the formation to what is called social doctrine, and inadvertently played a role in the rise of the two definitive traditions of social justice. In the latter case the social Catholics represent the first attempts to merge the two realms of commandment and counsel into a legal synthesis. At this time in history, Norman Paulhus writes, the word social began to be used as a contrast to the word political; it referred to the conditions of the masses that were needed for persons' intellectual, moral and material development. So the idea of a 'social right' as underlying all relations of members in society became a new ordering concept.[26] The idea of society as different from the state emerged from this matrix also. A dispute took hold that still determines the differences between the

[24]*Mitzvot* , the shared human responsibility for justice by those who depend on God.

[25]The "Catholic Church [from the time of this encyclical] has one of the most visible non-governmental actors in the struggle for human rights." David Hollenbach, *Claims in Conflict* (New York: Paulist Press, 1979), 1.

[26]Paulhus, 6.

contemporary two traditions: if charity alone holds the key to social peace and welfare, should not charity be a matter of justice in society rather than the activity of specially committed and dedicated persons? The social Catholics of the mid-19th century began an effort to make charity a matter of legal precept for the sake of justice in society that still continues in the Enlightenment tradition's definition of social justice.

Paulhus writes that with the "social Catholic" movement that grew out of the first writings of Taparelli in the mid-nineteenth century revealed "their desire to broaden the scope of justice . . .[and they] fell prey to misunderstandings of Thomas' notion of legal justice"[27] The idea that certain acts of charity, such as almsgiving, should and could be legally codified as precepts of justice was one of the central views of this movement. Moreover, the movement supported the role of the public political power in the distribution of the wealth, hence legal justice was seen to command distributive justice whenever this was needed for the common good.[28] This egalitarian focused understanding of justice, among other things, undermined the first tradition's strong sense of public versus private morality as distinct realms.

Michael Novak in the essay quoted above pinpoints the specific beginnings of the second social justice tradition in the utilitarian philosophies of Jeremy Bentham and John Stuart Mills. Novak writes that a couple of decades after the social Catholic movement, the utilitarian philosophers completely obscured these two distinct realms of commandment and counsel in the medieval synthesis. These philosophers held that there should be no difference between the public morality and the private morality, "*all institutions* and the efforts of all virtuous citizens,

[27]Paulhus, 8.

[28]Paulhus, 8-9.

should be made in the utmost degree to converge." Hence society itself, ordered through the non-personal rules of legal justice, is imagined as being capable of the same virtue as that which can be held by personal moral agents serving the poor and needed in this theory.[29]

In just a few short years after J.S. Mill, the " liberalism" of the utilitarian philosophy made a transition into its more radical form as communism.[30] Another name for liberalism employed by Pope Leo XII is socialism,[31] the philosophical model of the Enlightenment tradition. Three points can be made about social justice and it ties to socialism and communism. The first is the quest is for what Voegelin names "immanent salvation of man and society . . . [true to] John Stuart Mill's faith in the ultimate advent of communism for mankind."[32] As such, God and faith in God becomes unnecessary as heaven will be built on earth by human beings themselves. This is a utopian philosophy. And religion is excluded from the human work for justice. Secondly, liberalism in its most radical expression as communism re-defines social justice as essentially economic. Hence social justice becomes identical to distributive justice in practice if not in theory. Thirdly, socialism and communism are built upon the alienation seeded by a continual class struggle, thus hindering the solidarity of participation of all persons in society.

Religious socialists of the twentieth century would not admit to this alienation. They

[29]Novak quotes J.S. Mill from *Utilitarianism*, 12.

[30]Voegelin, "The New Science of Politics," CW 5, p. 230.

[31]Pope Leo XII, *On Socialism*, (December 28, 1878).

[32]Voegelin, *New Science*, CW 5, 230.

support "an economy of solidarity of all, and of joy in work rather than profit."[33] Yet the religious socialist is fundamentally committed to the class struggle against "the bourgeois principle" based upon Marxist analysis of the alienated proletariat. Religious socialism desires to socialized the human being and human consciousness; it seeks to build the classless society, to replace bourgeois society's consciousness and the laws of the market with "economic rationality". The project enjoins the use of state power for this goal. The biblical tradition of prophecy is secularized. It becomes a tool for the critique of systematic unjust social structures. The prophet's message of the Divine righteousness seeking to rescue the poor becomes a call for a temporally just citizenry formed through the powers of just law that can save the lower class.

With this brief history of the term social justice, we can attempt to define it in its two modern forms. Michael Novak has provided a insightful analysis. His general comment is that social justice is still *justice*, hence we must begin with the fact that social justice in its roots is a virtue—a good habit, disposition, or *hexis*—that empowers a certain form of activity characterized in the tradition as justice. Referring to Hayek Novak writes, "social justice is either a virtue or it is not. If it is, it can properly be ascribed only to the reflective and deliberate acts of individual persons."[34] Novak finds the contemporary confusion that has led to the presence of

two social justice conflicting traditions centers around the personalist issue of virtue.[35]

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[33]The paragraph that follows is a brief summary of Sherman, "Tillich's Social Thought."

[34]Novak, 11.

[35]Personalism is a 20th century philosophy which defines persons in relationship to other persons. The I to the Thou of this relationship is *sui generis* and persons have inviolable dignity. See Emmanuel Mounier, *Personalism* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1952).

Novak's approach is summed up in this quote: "social justice as a virtue can be compared and contrasted to social justice as political power. In the latter case it works as a regulative principle of a particular social order." Hence its "operational meaning" is really "we need a law against that." Hence social justice is a phrase that becomes an instrument of "ideological intimidation, for the purpose of gaining the power of legal coercion," Novak concludes.[36]

Novak continues that "the birth of social justice [in the Enlightenment tradition] coincided with two other shifts in human consciousness: the 'death of God' and the rise of the ideal of the command economy." Conceit about the power of human reason in solving social needs and a "scientific" approach to the economy led to the political ambitions stemming from the heady notion that humans could do what God could or would not do—create a just social order through the power of the intelligentsia. A further result of this new tradition is that no individual is to be blamed for his unjust situation, but rather it must be the social system itself. The goal is to destroy those who made it this way for you. In the end social justice, which at first in Catholic/religious social teachings was really an appeal to the ruling classes to alleviate the needs of the poor and vulnerable in society, evolved into an attack on free society itself with the move to make it a highly controlled command society. Novak writes: "it no longer describes the product of *virtuous* actions of many individuals, but rather the utopian goal toward which all institutions and all individuals 'are made in the utmost degree to converge' by coercion." Social justice then is "dogmatomachy" imposed —sometimes violently—from a power elite above.

The religious socialist definition of social justice aligns itself with the Enlightenment tradition. For example, the common good itself is understood more in line with the utilitarian net

[36]*Ibid.*

good.[37] There is also a decisive emphasis on economic equality, hence social justice is quite heavily articulated in the language of distributive justice. As John Paul II wrote in *Centesimus Annus,* "a poor man's envy" makes up the content of the regulative principle to be enacted in law; the right of private property is severely questioned also.[38] The methodology is to bring biblical ethics or social teaching as content to be enacted in law. In this religious socialist practice, social justice not a virtue, even if virtue is required of those who work for legally just structures. Thus it becomes the task of the government to create social justice through the enactment of just laws.[39] Hence social justice is linked to the exercise of political authority; the role of individual persons is an indirect and preparatory one—of solidarity, education, and advocacy.[40] Some religious socialisms carry a theme of liberation and speak the gospel language, but because they deal with Marxist analysis of the alienation between social classes understood as a law of human history, they belong in this Enlightenment tradition. [41] A utopian strain is in all these religious forms of these traditions. An ultimate faith is placed upon the power of recreated economic structures to re-make human nature, or to heal the wounds of

[37]But it is not one that would deprive someone for the sake of the greater good. Karen Lebacqz, *Six Theories of Justice* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1286), 66-82.

[38]John Paul II, *Centismus Annus,* Section 12.

[39]For half a century the formal USCC/UCCB definition of social justice has employment the metaphor of the "two shoes"—charity and social justice----the former is the work of individuals and the latter the work of the government or larger community that can effect social change. (www.ecatholic 2000.com/sj/socjust.shtml)

[40]*Ibid.*

[41]Lebacq, 103-108.

original sin.[42]

In sum, a defining characteristic of the Enlightenment tradition of social justice is that its definition is the same for religious and atheistic advocates for justice. Given its genealogy in utilitarianism's collapse of the private into public legally mandated morality, the religious roots of social justice have become re-articulated in a secular language. Social justice, as Voegelin complained, becomes a temporal, secular reality apart from any religious considerations. The common goal for both religious and atheistic socialists is the legal enactment of the shared common content[43] of what is social justice—often articulated as human rights—into law.[44]

We can begin with Novak to define the term social justice in the form it takes in the classic tradition. He defines social justice as the virtue for democracy, "a habit of putting the principle of association into daily practice,"[45] hence it consists of specific habits held by members of free society which enable individuals to work together and organize for the work of justice. It is social because this is *sui generis* the work of persons with other persons, and thus constitutes a unique way of doing justice. It is justice because this common action renders what is good to others as well as to the intermediate communities in society, or indeed to society itself. The end which is the common good—defined as the full participation of all persons in that

[42]Richard John Neuhaus, *Doing Well and Doing Good* (New York, Doubleday, 1992), 26.

[43]Thus George Weigel writes that one of the last projects of Cardinal Bernadine was "Catholic Common Ground Initiative" which would foster a conversation between the Catholic "socialisst" who promoted a series of human rights issues and the traditional Catholics whose understanding of social justice rested on a resistance to abortion as a fundamental form of right of life.

[44]See *Claims in Conflict,* n.# 30. This book provides a comprehensive summary of the different human rights approaches to social justice that are both secular and religious.

[45]Novak, 13.

dynamic which is society—is in turned reached through the freely decided means of persons participating with each other to achieve this end.

I found a very similar definition of social justice in the first tradition from John Hardon's *Modern Catholic Dictionary*. This definition adds three further concepts to Novak's definition. First the new word social justice implies the awareness that world has entered on a new manner of social existence with the possibility of greater justice and greater harm being perpetuated. Secondly, social justice is not only the virtue of the city, but it is a virtue that applies beyond local, regionally, societal needs to that of the world, "literally to all humanity."[46] Finally the methodology in working for social justice depends explicitly upon principles of subsidiarity and solidarity. This work is a part of the larger task of evangelization for the kingdom of God; its first tenet as expressed in Catholic social teaching is that "the poor hear the Good News."

Three clarifications can be made to conclude this section. The first is in regard to the Enlightenment tradition of social justice. Given its roots in social contract theory and the rise of the modern state,[47] reliance on political power to force systematic social justice apart from the contribution of personal moral agency, the medieval view in which law can create virtue in a society is not the goal of social justice in this tradition. Rather this is a view of social justice in which religion and its moral values have been completely privatized. It is also a view that promotes nearly absolutist "private rights". A juridical rather than a participatory moral conscience drives the lawmaking of the state.

Secondly, the primary impetus behind the presence of justice in any society in the Greek

[46] John Hardon, *Modern Catholic Dictionary* (http://www.catholicculture.org/culture/library/dictionary/idex.cfm?id=36529).

[47]Paulhus, 6. This topic will be address more comprehensively at the end of this section.

roots of the medieval synthesis still exists in the modern classic form of social justice Ellis Sandoz writes that Plato's cardinal teaching in the *Republic* is that justice is the perfection of all virtue in a man as well as in a polity.[48] It is as virtue a condition of the soul, a condition when writ large is the source of justice in a polity. The biblical traditions of justice as the quality that describes the human being after the act faith—the faith that justifies—also informs the classic tradition.[49] There are those beautiful Hebrew words, *sedaqah*, *hesed*, and *mispat*—attributes of God that must become the essence of order in human community. The first word speaks of the righteousness of God generously revealed in his abundant gifts to the human race. The second speaks of the mercy of God. The last refers to the rescue of humanity such generosity implies.[50] The work of social justice is to foster these attributes as qualities of persons and society itself.

Thirdly it must be remarked that a contemporary definition of social justice will reveal a changed definition of the term "the common good" from its meanings in the medieval synthesis. For Aquinas, the common good, a more universal final cause that an individual's good because it affects a greater number of persons, is the highest of all human goods. In Aquinas's thought this good holds a primacy among all goods; the individual can participate in it. Today with the advent of personalism as a philosophy, this notion of the common good itself has evolved. In the Catholic Catechism, the primacy of the common good over the personal good becomes more nuanced. The common good, "is always oriented towards the progress of persons: 'The order of

[48]Sandoz, *The Roots of Liberty*, 8.

[49]Paul, *Romans*: 3:28, 4,3.

[50]Stephen Charles Mott, *Biblical Ethics and Social Change* (New York/Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982)62-63.

things must be subordinate to the order of persons, and not the other way around'". [51] The common good is an enshrined social justice principle in the classic tradition. The ultimate end of society is ordered to the dignity of persons. The common good in socialist thought remains the utilitarian one focused on the numerical amount of justice. It cannot measure up to the personalist paradigm, as some persons are called in this synthesis to sacrifice their rights for others.

What is Mysticism?

Since the role of the prophetic critique of injustice is so central to the definition of social justice, I asked Professor Sandoz in an e-mail conversation if he believed that the Hebrew 8th century prophets were mystics. There has been a long standing distinction in Scholastic theology between the mystic and the prophet. The former enjoy special personal graces and rapture whereas the latter were granted Divine words, meanings, and judgments for the sake of the religious group to which they belonged.[52] Because both social justice traditions examined in this paper looked to the vocation of the Hebrew prophets as a paradigm for the work of social justice, a clarification of mysticism's role in the graced empowerment of human beings by prophecy becomes a necessary one. Thus the question. Professor Sandoz answered that "anyone who conversed with God on a regular basis should be called a mystic. If one talks to God on a regular basis—in prayer, meditation and contemplation—an intimacy of friendship with God is inferred. This intimacy is a characteristics of the Hebrew prophets. Hence while

[51]*The Catechism of the Catholic Church,* USCC—Liberia Editrice Vaticana (St. Paul Books & Media, 1994), #1912, 466.

[52]Louis Roy, *Mystical Consciousness* (State University of New York Press, 2003) xix.

prophecy has its own unique characteristics, the action ascribed to prophecy is rooted in this more fundamental reality of mystic communion with God. The beginning of all work for justice lies in mysticism remains the premise of this paper.

The answer to the question, what is mysticism, will entail three considerations. First, an explanation of mysticism from the aspect of a deeper differentiation of religious consciousness is part of the integral definition of mysticism. Secondly, Professor's Sandoz's understanding of a universal mystic human possibilities will be explored in more detail. The distinction between the "common mysticism of humanity" or ordinary mysticism, and the special mystical experiences of the saints will be examined as part of this second point. Finally, Voegelin's own understanding of mysticism in both senses—ordinary and the special mystics will be re-articulated upon the role of mysticism in its existentially role of make us human. Voegelin's explanation of humanity's 'leaps in being' from specially gifted mystics, as well as of the role of mystically ordered concrete souls as the source of just order is compatible with this thesis

The definition of the phrase, 'differentiation of consciousness' becomes the starting point for a definition of mysticism. Voegelin defines this phrase for " the process by which the discernible features of a previously 'compact' . . . field of experiences are noticed as distinct and given expression."[53] Mystical consciousness is first of all a process of differentiation of the more compact religious consciousness.[54] Religious consciousness is an existential mode of being in the world, a world that is experienced as surrounded by and penetrated throughout with the presence of mysterious Superior and providential Being—the primal religious name for this

[53]Webb, "Glossary", 155.

[54]It is my position that Voegelin's descriptions of both the noetic and the pnuematic differentiations of consciousness reflect the essentially religious call/response structure.

experience was "the manifesting Sacred".[55] Religious consciousness is one of wonder, awe, surrender to the greater order in a sacralized cosmos. It understands this cosmos as "Gift", the gift from a loving Creator,[56] or it understands human reason as a sensorium of a transcendent call. So a further act of revelation by the Sacred—but not to be explained as a conceptual experience—lies behind the mystic differentiation of consciousness out of the more compact religious consciousness. There are many forms this enhanced basic awareness of the Divine may take—of God's care, presence, providence, attributes, mercy, etc., but in all forms a communion with the reality of the Divine is more experientially lived.

Louis Roy explains mystical consciousness in his book, *Mystical Consciousness: Western Perspectives and Dialogue with Japanese Thinkers*.[57] Mystical consciousness "obtains when we reach a stage beyond our customary acts and states," he writes. It is odder than our usual consciousness of people or things or of our reflective awareness of own consciousness that we are aware of these things. Rather, in mystical consciousness interior reality becomes opened in an unrestricted manner as bounded by the Infinite but not objectally. God is "known by identity with Him as one knows something by being it. There is an immediacy then to this consciousness as God infuses the wholeness of consciousness.[58]

One important resource for Voegelin's understanding of what mysticism is, Henri

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[55]Mircea Eliade, The Sacred and the Profane: The Nature of Religion, trans. from the Frency by Willard R. Trask (A Harvest HBJ Book, 1959), 14-15.

[56]Louis Roy sees this distinction between the religious and the mystical in Bernard Lonergan's writings. 48. See also Kenneth L. Schmitz, *The Gift: Creation* (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1982), 1-11.

[57]See note 7.

[58]Louis Roy, 43.

Bergson, describes mystical consciousness in his book, *Two Sources of Morality and Religion*, in his chapter "Dynamic Religion." He writes about the 'full mysticism' (as the paradigm for all mystical consciousness) of the Christian mystics, who experience such a union with God "that the soul becomes, in thought and feeling, absorbed in God . . . . Now it is God who is acting the soul; the union is total, therefore final."[59] In sum, in mystical consciousness one participates in the Divine consciousness—this is Voegelin's In-Between. Mysticism as a differentiation of consciousness in more traditional terms thus implies a consciousness whose prism is formed in theological faith, hope and charity. One is in permanent knowing and affective mutual communion with God.[60] Hence this consciousness is a permanently differentiated spiritual state of being in touch with the Infinite that leads to a basic disposition vis-a-vis one's existence.

But the differentiation of the mystical consciousness is not necessarily a rare occurrence. Henri Bergson writes about full and partial mysticism: "the mystic too has gone on a journey that others can potentially, if not actually, undertake; . . . [A]long with the souls capable of following the mystic way to the end there are many who at least part of the way . . . ."[61] There is something within the human soul, Bergson writes, that echoes the mystic's explanation of his/her experiences of God as love and the eros of human responding love. This love is creative energy, it is the very essence of the Divine who desires to dwell among the human race. So there is "boundless impetus" in the mystic; and it is no longer human love for his fellow humans at

[59]Henri Bergson, *Two Sources of Morality and Religion*, trans. By R.Ashley Audra and Cloudesley Brenton with the assistance of W. Horsfall Carter (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, edition 1977), 230-232.

[60]Roy, See Chapter 3, 37-54.

[61]Bergson, 245.

work but the love of God for all men. It is an "energy to which no limit can be assigned, and a power of creating and loving which surpasses all imagination."[62]

Our point is concentrated on the echo each of us can hear within us when dealing with the mystic's message. There are many modern day mystics, with a small 'm', "who realize that in prayer or meditation or contemplation it is Mystery that makes the first move. . ." . Whenever faith opens up new possibilities, new strength, new insights that enable the Gospel to be lived more radically, there is a taste of the mystic's world."[63] Due to its relevance to the tasks of social justice, the possibilities of mysticism in ordinary life—the wide spread common mysticism of humanity----is a fact to be stressed. If prayer becomes a way of being for someone in the world, than in that new awareness of orientation to boundless mystery, one's eyes will be opened to the possibilities for justice that God is placing before us existentially in everyday events.[64]

Voegelin speaks of mysticism as a state of consciousness in two modes: noetic and pneumatic. The first is respresented in by the Greek philosophers' noetic differentiation of consciousness in experiences of "In-Between Reality." This is consciousness opened in its horizon to the boundless Divine Ground beyond. The pneumatic differentiations of consciousness is exemplified in Moses; it is formed through experiences of divine Self-revelation. Voegelin uses the term "luminosity" to characterize the 'knowledge by identity' or rather "participatory identity and non-identity of knower and known, thought and being" in mystic experiences in consciousness. What is luminous are both sides—human and

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[62]*Ibid*, pp, 254-262.

[63]Mary DeTurris Poust, "Unlocking the Mystery of Mysticism," *Our Sunday Visitor* (March 6, 2011) 12.

[64]*Ibid.*, 14.

divine—that are horizons of the In-Between found in consciousness.[65] The special and full differentiations of consciousness that have actually occurred to concrete human beings in history are instances of "full mysticism." Voegelin calls them initial "leaps in being," as first such experiences in a tradition, resulting in permanent human consciousness formed in tension towards the divine as the main defining attribute of human reality, and thus as the source of order for the human race. [66]

Hence, there are two points about mysticism that are central to Voegelin's understanding of it that can be articulated. First, there is for Voegelin, a common or ordinary mysticism at work in every human being: it is necessary for each of us to be fully or theomorphically human. And secondly, mysticism is the source of human order because human beings, divinely defined are ordered together as a "spiritual community".[67] To the first point, Voegelin does not think of human reason as merely natural or physical. The human being as a "living being with *Nous*" in Aristotle's definition of human nature is someone who participates in the Divine through on-going permanent tension attracting one to the Divine merely to be human. [68] This is where Voegelin does make a definition of a common or ordinary mysticism. In Volume 4 of the *Order and History* series, *The Ecumenic Age* Voegelin describes this common mystic experience as one

[65]Webb, "Glossary", 166-167.

[66]Sandoz, *Give Me Liberty,* 57, 63-64, 73. (Humans are theomorphic, images of God).

[67] Also this is a theme in the corpus of Martin Buber. The order of the Hebrew people was 'theopolitical' with all relating to God at the center and thus to each other. See *Israel and Revelation,* p. 290, n. 12. Also see n.#35.

[68]Eric Voegelin *The Drama of Humanity and Other Miscellaneous Papers, 1939-1985,* CW 33, edited with an Introduction by William Petropulous and Gilbert Weiss (Columbia and London: University of Missouri Press, 2004), 298.

in which human beings discover they have reason as the "site and sensorium of divine presence.[69] As Professor Sandoz writes "openness to the whole, experienced both noetically and pneumatically[70] . . . [is] a calling or a way of life" for all. **Reason is due to God's grace** . . ."The consciousness of being caused by the Divine ground and being in search of the Divine ground—that is reason [*nous*]."[71]

Secondly, our common mysticism as human beings is also the source of just human order in Voegelin's thesis. The Divine gracious call and the human response to this call continually provoke human yearning for God beyond our senses. The mutual divine/human union creates the human reason imperatively moved to seek truth, and the human will equally in need to surrender to what is truly Good (and Beautiful). But for Voegelin it is the attuned noetic seeking in the In-Between experienced in this common mysticism and its counterpart of religious surrendering to the Divine as a mystical life ordering the soul, occurring non-objectively with its countless forms of experience/symbolization—so not in anyway to be understood as a discursive action—that is the source of order in a society. There is not a way that this experience can be conceptualized to directly articulate forms of order to be adapted by persons as they act together in societies. Divine order is hindered in its providential possibilities for society if the experiences of the In-Between become dogmatized and imposed as humanly conceived laws.

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[69]Eric Voegelin, *The Ecumenic Age*, Vol. 4 (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1974) 8.

[70]While Voegelin refers to the pneumatic differentiation of consciousness often enough in connection with the noetic one, he does not as fully explain just what this in the case of what can called our common mysticism. The book by Kenneth Schmitz,(n. 14), does provide an excellent explanation of this differentiation of consciousness in the experience of "original revelation" in the gift which is creation.

[71]Sandoz, *Give Me Liberty*, 80-81, 85.

Rather, just social order is always dependent upon the souls living in full conversion to the graces which endow them with divinely grounded reasons and wills. Thus endowed and in active partnership with each other and with the Divine pole of the human/divine metaxy, we can say that the work of order is always the existential human/Divine task. The converted spiritual community living by this mystic source of order in concrete temporality nonetheless "muddles" through towards the just ordering of society.

A Consideration of Mysticism and Social Justice

I have attempted to restrict my considerations of the very broad topic discussed in this paper to a Voegelin perspective, with just a few outside references from thinkers who reflect Voegelin's emphasis on truth as grounded in experience. I will continue this approach in my conclusion that brings understandings of mysticism to the analysis of social justice as newly differentiated form of justice in modern/post modern conversations about justice. There are three parts to this conclusion. First, I will offer a proposal as to Voegelin's synthesis between mysticism and social justice. Secondly, I will use that synthesis to re-affirm the classic definition of social justice in this paper, and to articulate in greater detail how mysticism serves the project of social justice in our contemporary societal political arrangements. I will use Henri Bergson as a resource—an important source in the Voegelin corpus---to make these points. Finally I will attempt to show, using the Voegelin perspective, that the Enlightenment tradition of social justice is proved to be ineffectual in achieving its own goals, as well as being true to its own principles, because the divine power that is integrally a part of human work for justice enabled by mysticism is rejected. The arguments for the "socialist decision" fail to recognize this rejection inherent in definition and methodology of social justice in the socialists forms of

social justice.

Because society in its very definition is justly ordered—a spiritual community united through shared value, virtue, and meaning—Voegelin's definition of social justice is part of his greater insight into society itself. [72] The novelty in Voegelin's thought reveals itself already in his dissertation. Professor Sandoz sums it up very succinctly in his latest book: it takes God's grace to have reason. Reason is discovered in the experience of the Beyond's calling it into being. This conviction is implicitly present in Voegelin's early work about the nature of humanity society. Already his ideas point to his insight of the mystical as conduit of the Divine Substance, which would be named justice in pneumatic vocabulary, as the "shared common element" that makes a society. In short, humanity is distinguishable as a species in its capability for God, dynamically realized in the development of the religious, then mystical consciousness. Therefore, if we desire to bring together mysticism and social justice in the Voegelin synthesis, we can define a justly ordered society as the society that seeks after God in its concrete subjectivity, with many persons' souls 'writ large'. This society is marked by social justice.

Voegelin last and overtly summation of this synthesis is in his final death bed essay, "Quod Deus Dicitur". Voegelin speaks of the biblical fool who does not know God. The "*nabal'*, he writes, "signifies the mass phenomenon of men who do evil rather than good because they do not 'seek after God' and his justice," . . . [t]he personal contempt of God will manifest

[72]Voegelin investigated the nature of social reality in his doctoral dissertation. He proposed that it was a spiritual community with a substance as a bond—a shared value dynamically realized, a substance that surely must be tied to justice. Eric Voegelin, *The Theory of Governance and Other Miscellaneous Papers, 1928-1938*, trans. By William Petropulos, et al., edited with an Introduction by William Petropulos and Gilbert Weiss, CW 32 (Columbia and London: University of Missouri Press, 2003), 19-149.

itself in ruthless conduct toward the weaker man and create general disorder in society."[73] This is the society criticized by the 8th century prophets. Its spiritual dullness leads to depravity and the social abuse of the weaker by the more powerful, with no fear of divine judgment—a Divine that has been existentially forgotten.[74]

Voegelin brings the mysticism of Plato to fully spell out the descent into social injustice of a society of 'fools'. First there is the decline into a general loss of experiential contact with divine-cosmic reality. There is a contraction of human existence. This society's dogmatic articulations of justice further compelled through law—of unrecognized previously mystical insight into divine justice by philosophical and moral heroes—replace that true divine justice as the *ultimate* justice. The falsehood of the soul, that reflects a disease of the psyche itself, creates the "anxiety" of the moderns. The concomitant rejection of reason is inevitably replaced by the irrational slogan, the sophism, the poll supported truth of the uninformed. In sum, the general loss of a common mysticism of humanity fatally deforms humanity, especially in its essentially sociality. A just social order, social justice then, becomes impossible .

Secondly, this Voegelin synthesis on mysticism and social justice supports a definition of social justice as a virtue, a special *hexis* of empowered co-operative divine/human action to meet the "new" social vulnerabilities of peoples in the modern state. Justice first *justifies*, with power of the Divine to restore the image and likeness to God to humanity that makes persons and society reach the mark of being human. Justice then heals and rectifies. Social justice, as a recognized new term for the ever present divine gospel justice of the kingdom, refers in this case

[73]"*Quod Deus Dicitur,"* in CW 12, 386.

[74]*Ibid.*

to moments of realized eschatology and divine favor to humanity. This happens on the Divine timing and cannot be forced. But with a common mysticism of humanity, this justice can be invited and invoked through the faith, hope and charity of many mystic souls through prayer and sacrifice—acts of religion. All things can be possibly made just through the mystic union of God and his personal creature when the world becomes opened to his action in the midst of society. In a traditional view of this, the Divine cannot resist human yearning for God's justice continually invoked in the religious acts of mystically ordered souls, who invite the entrance of God into human affairs. The work for justice of these ordered souls is always one viewed as secondary to effective divine providential intervention into the lives of human beings and society. Voegelin's own persuasion is for the classic tradition.

Hence, according to the tenets of the classic tradition, justice exists in society on two levels. First it exists as commandment—through commutative, distributive, and legal justice, [75] and secondly, as counsel in the supererogatory sense—as social justice, achieved in the mystic welcome of the justice of God incarnating itself in human affairs. The latter happens through the exercise of the human virtue of justice, traditionally defined as personal habits of prayer, fasting and "almsgiving" by the subjective of society—persons in participation with other persons, who

[75]This would be Voegelin's view. "Concrete man orders his existence from the level of his consciousness, but that which is to be ordered is not only his consciousness but his entire existence in the world. . . . Man's bodily existence is also the basis for his social existence. This may grow quantitatively from the family, to the labor-dividing small society, to that size in which ordering consciousness finds the material basis for the unfolding of the *eu zen*, the good life, Aristotle's criteria of the *eunomia*, the good social order. No matter how well ordered society may be, its corporeality, compelling it to provide material care and the control of passions, requires an existence in the form of organized rulership. The organization of society through representatives charged with care for the social order within and for defense against external dangers is the *conditio sine qua non* of society . . . . ." Voegelin, *Anamnesis,* 200.

must live and act together in their temporal affairs. Justice in the first sense is indeed unfree; it must be minimally compelled through political laws that govern and order society. Traditionally the source of these laws is the natural law. The morality enacted by the justice of commandment is limited to the goals necessary for there to be a society at all. The social justice of the prophets and the gospel is a greater justice; it can only be enacted freely through virtuous persons' choices to meet the needs of those most vulnerable in society. They in turn know such needs and meet them through the mystic union of divine/human co-operation for justice.

Voegelin refers to Bergson's *Two Sources of Religion and Morality* to explain this latter justice. Bergson's thesis both affirms the classic tradition's duality of justice. It also critiques the second tradition's goal to enact a utopian single form of earthly perfect justice. The mystic union creates the "open soul" empowered to devise endless new possibilities of actual forms of justice to meet "the new things" that call for these forms. The unfree and free inauguration of justice is addressed by Bergson using the vocabulary of the closed and open society. Social cohesion, according to Bergson will always require some ordering of society through the compulsion of laws for a just order. So there will always be some closure to a society, some legal justice.

But there is the possibility of a dynamic growth of justice through the social justice. This happens when "moral heroes" with new emotions as to what justice is and forms it should take, drawn from their mystic union with the Divine, in turn inspire persons in society with their understandings. Bergson explains that the compulsion to act for a greater justice arises through sheer appeal of these new insights into justice. Persons aspire for this new justice. Society opens up to its full human possibilities as imaging the Divine in light of these open souls and

their moral heroism; it becomes dynamic with the infiltration of their imaginative insights into justice. Thus the novelty that is Divine justice for solutions of new forms of injustice, is enabled to bring justice, righteousness, and rescuing mercy to societies.

Hence and finally, when mysticism's role in the enactment of social justice is articulated, a clarification of the errors of the Enlightenment tradition are also revealed in detail. The methodology is one that attempts to legally compel what God has made voluntary and a matter of virtue. It does this when it collapses to the whole creative and mystic based realm of free action for justice, of private morality, into that of the legal realm of forced socially engineered forms of "justice" in the public life of a society. Society becomes highly regulated by social justice dogmatomachy. The Divine's effective power to work justice in this world is blocked. Thus, "new social ills" can only be met by rules of justice devised by those devoid of reason as Voegelin understands it. These rules are imposed on everyone. Hence personal contributions to justice in society are thereby severely restricted—to the unfree and non-creative following of rules. The fatal flaw in the Enlightenment tradition is that it prevents the best human effort for justice which is our free and reasoned co-activity with the Divine in history for justice. So when activity for social justice is severed from mysticism, God is left out, faith is unimportant, free will and reason are destroyed What is left is an inquisition spirit guiding the work for justice in society—one that uses the power of civil law to impose a legally mandated sub-human corrupted doctrine about "justice' upon everyone. Society as Voegelin defines it will die in the alienation of the new "second reality" it has become. Mysticism, and the encouragement of the common mysticism of all, emerges as the one way to rescue justice from this corruption.