

The Two Poles of Contemporary Political Life

- In the west there are two camps of ideas about politics
- Dreamers – they look forward to a world of peace, love and social harmony. Represented by John Lennon
- Realists- they accept that society is, and always will be, made up of individuals who are out for what they can get . Represented by Adam Smith

- Dream – unity, harmony and world peace. To achieve this objective private property must be scrapped. Lennon says you need to forget your identity of property, religion, nationality, ethnicity etc. and say we are all basically the same, we are all just people. This is altruism.
- Critics are of the opinion that Lennon's dream is far away from reality. Lennon himself is after money.

- Marxists were also aiming for something similar to Lennon: no possession, no religion, no divisive nationalities or racial or sexual prejudices.
- The difference between them is that Lennon thought we could love each other whereas the communists thought there would have to be a big fight before world peace could be achieved.

- People who could gain nothing from the present day world would fight for the ideal world. The slogan: “ Workers of the world unite. You have nothing to lose but your chains”.
- But later the life condition of the workers improved there was no more need to fight.

- Adam Smith developed a science of economic life and his ideas are influential even today.
- According to him, no one does anything for purely altruistic reason.
- It is not from the benevolence of the butcher, the brewer, or the baker, that we expect our dinner, but from their regard to their own interest.

- His principle says the promise of profit inspires people to be creative and take initiatives. The best way of achieving public good is by giving free reign to private self interest. There is a certain selfishness in everything we do. There is nothing wrong with this.

- Both the theories have some advantages and disadvantages. The author suggests combining the good qualities of both the theories: altruism and self interest for the public good. People have to accept planning controls and respect the environment, and volunteer to help out in various neighborhood projects.