

THE GLOBAL DEMOCRAT: MORALITY FOR THE POSTNATIONAL AGE

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Democracy, like God, is often said to be dying because its followers are too heartless to believe in it, and perhaps that is partly true. More likely, however, the adherents of democracy have failed to realize, as have the adherents of other ideologies, that static ideologies are as short-sighted as idolatrous concepts of Deity localized in time and space. The democratic principles of the European Enlightenment have, to date, remained local rather than global and have thereby, in an increasingly global age, become idolatrous travesties of their originals. To remain moral, then, one must rethink the application of dynamic democratic principles to the changed consciousness of global concerns.

The sad fact is that mankind now has global problems but no global feeling of empathy. From Confucius and Plato to the very latest social philosophers of Left and Right, the felt cohesion, the empathy, the social consciousness remain localized in small groups, so far do the frontiers of fellow-feeling lag behind those of technical mastery over nature and man. In this respect the Koranic dictum in Sura VII that nation after nation, cursing its predecessor, lunges at its fellow and goes into the ditch remains all too true. Men lack a social conscience which would allow them to cooperate on global problems. Hence there is one increasingly polluted skin of environment around this planet but an insufficient will to reverse its deterioration, because men hope to localize the deleterious effects "over there." A more vain hope one could scarcely imagine, since in the air and water cycles "there" is soon "here"—regardless of ideological or national boundaries. Without a common will, as Rousseau pointed out, we can hardly expect to do better; but surely Rousseau's cantons of localized general will were merely an escape mechanism to mask the necessity for a more universal approach to human concerns, even in his time. It is fruitless to pretend that mankind can continue to cater to localized prejudices masquerading as natural differences without allowing the destruction of the global environment. Furthermore, we know that

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what were formerly considered natural differences are not so and can be "educated out," given the time and the will. Man not only has the fire of the gods; he also cannot pretend that it is unusable.

Yet it is not being used, and is less likely to be usable with every passing hour. The fire may be allowed to go out. At least part of the reason for this is that, simply put, the socio-political and technological changes, or Democratic and Industrial Revolutions, have so far had almost opposite effects on the global value structure. The Democratic Revolution, meaning the approach of the so-called "lower classes" and "colonials" toward political and social equality, has tended to reverse the psychological constructs of White Man's Culture, but the Industrial Revolution has reinforced them. Loose talk that the future belongs to the democratic masses is just that—loose talk based on a naturalist or historicist fallacy. Democracy will not be extended to the masses unless men see that it is by overt and conscious actions.

Those who have abiding faith in the progress of the Democratic Revolution seem at first to have historical evidence on their side. The vision of the Enlightenment liberals and radicals—of Locke and Rousseau—that men would someday work together as Man rather than Slave, still tugs at the heart-strings of democratic idealists the world over. Liberal and Marxist, Rich and Poor, White and Non-White, Violent and Non-Violent may quarrel operationally; but they are at one on the vision: Democracy will out! Some identify the New Day with the Utilitarians' triune God of Liberty, Enterprise, and Science, as a quick glance at Walt W. Rostow's *Stages of Economic Growth* or William H. McNeill's *Rise of the West* will demonstrate. Hans Kohn's *Age of Nationalism* and Eugene R. Black's *Dynamics of Modernization* argue cogently that the democratization through modernization that began in Western Europe with deferred gratification, discipline, and talent is by now a world-wide movement. Others, following Marx, locate the dynamo of democratization in the masses themselves. Kautsky and Carmichael, Lenin and Lumumba, Mao and Julião—all could see the millen-

nium when the last would be first, the alienated "outsiders" become "insiders." Frantz Fanon's *Wretched of the Earth* argues it well for our time: those alienated from the product of their labors, from their own language and culture—and thus from their identity and self-importance—experience rising frustrations which inevitably erupt in violence through which they regain control over their destiny and eliminate the frustrations breeding violence. Again, as neatly as before, the *deus ex machina* appears to rescue Democracy from the hell of oppression and negation. To such men as these, Democracy has become the scion of the old deities, something inevitable, inexorable, and natural instead of the conventional product of human intention and action. Progress reigns.



It would indeed be comforting to believe that democratic structures and values, politically aided, are spreading irresistibly like oil on troubled waters, but some influential voices in the wilderness cry that it is not so. In fact, it looks increasingly as if the Liberal notion that the Industrial Revolution strides toward Democracy, and the Marxist notion that it somersaults there, are equally in error because of their optimism. Technology, like other tools, has neither liberating nor oppressing effects except men make it so by inactions and actions, helpful or hurtful. The Machine is not God either, just another potential idol—or devil. At the moment it is difficult to tell whether on a global scale men have decided to warm or burn themselves with the fire of the gods, but more evidence lies on the side of the Jeremiahs and Casandras than is sometimes conceded. The productive boon derived from capital equipment and scientific advance has, for instance, been allowed to enrich the rich and impoverish the poor because it was thought unnecessary to do anything more than pro-

duce goods in order to achieve global prosperity—the rest was the domain of the Market, of Nationalization, or yet other *baalim*. In all his work since *An American Dilemma* and *Economic Theory and Underdeveloped Regions*, Gunnar Myrdal has elucidated the mechanisms which, through rationalized inadvertence, make for "spread effects" among the rich, industrialized sectors and "backwash effects" among the poor, non-developed sectors. Much of technology accentuates the differential because it is directed toward solution of temperate-zone rather than tropical-zone problems. Housing, health, and nutrition are therefore affected in an adverse way relative to the gap between the rich North and poor South half-worlds—exactly the opposite of what is claimed and actually might occur with a little foresight and good will. So serious are the potential dislocations that even the near-super-rich of Western Europe are concerned lest the United States employ its super-technology for localized super-enrichment, as witness the conclusions of Jean-Jacques Servan-Schreiber in *The American Challenge*. In such circumstances, to talk of most-favored-nation clauses, trade bridges, and similar economic devices without implementing equalizing factors such as international pricing arrangements, technical aid, and the like is to invite the opposite of equal opportunity and fair competition. Alas, technology could prove a hollow image. What is more, it could fulfill the horrific nightmares of Herbert Marcuse, according to which the *demos*, by then supine, almost deifies the priests of technocracy because the all-giving machines have touched everyone, but unequally.

So both the Democratic and Industrial Revolutions could but may not prove revolutionary, in the profound sense of changing the content of the localized human self-image. Today man *could* do almost anything; he ought to create global democracy. So far the chief block to global democracy has been "nationalism," a phenomenon ill-defined and ill-understood but rooted in the urge to huddle round the tribal fire in one's own cave. That is, a felt unity of in-group culture traits becomes associated with a state apparatus and a contiguous bit of territory, and the individual and his fellows accomplish more than a little of their self-defining process in this operation. So important is the association of these three elements that "nations" lacking one of them, such as the Jews, who for long had no territorial base, feel obliged to try to acquire it. Although there is substantial agreement on this Enlightenment-derived description of the nationalist-tribalist tendency, serious disagreement

continues concerning how global democrats ought to respond to this form of self-adulation.

Few argue, as did Herder, that nationalism is a global division which makes the Chinese good statesmen, the Germans philosophers, and the Anglo-Saxons good shopkeepers. But some still hope nationalism will just go away, at least after a little fixing up of political and economic relations here and there. Marxist-Leninists, for instance, argue that once it is no longer economically necessary to hate, then nationalist hate, like tribal hate under feudalism, will disappear. And the political descendents of the generation of Woodrow Wilson believe just as firmly that a parliament of nations could exorcise the host of nationalist demons, on the theory that nationalism, once allowed expression, will tend toward economic justice. And then there are those who, without formulating their assumptions ideologically, contend that "the world is getting smaller every day" under the influence of technological foreshortening of transportation and communication, a point of view with which the name of Marshall McLuhan is often associated. Regrettably, nationalism will probably not be magically transubstantiated into cosmopolitanism by some ideological litany or a sudden revelation of truly benevolent natural forces now enchained in hate. Communist will rival Communist, and Capitalist Capitalist; or White will enslave White, and Non-White, Non-White—although perhaps not, so forcefully as across the traditional lines of demarcation. Poverty is not the sole cause of racialism, nor racialism the sole cause of poverty—although these forces exaggerate each other. For the simple fact is that nationalism is a psychological phenomenon as well as, and perhaps more than, a function of economics and technology. Hunger and hate, hate and hunger: they can come in either order; but they must go away together. Still, it is simplistic to believe that the elimination of one will automatically eliminate the other.

Global democrats ought, therefore, to work actively for the elimination of nationalism, but only to conduce to economic and social justice. It will not do to condemn all nationalisms equally, since only such a force can provide the motivation for modernization and equalization in many areas of the Third World. Leveling up, which is to say the raising of the standard of living on both absolute and relative scales, ought to be considered ethical: unleveling and leveling down, unethical. Nationalism which contributes to the former therefore becomes legitimate for the transition period to global democracy, whereas that

which encourages the latter becomes illegitimate. In a future global democracy of political and economic justice, all nationalism, all localized in-group concern, would be illegitimate.

Two present problems illustrate the point. First, there is the question of the "nation-state system" as presently constituted. Everyone agrees that calling Anguilla and China "nations" confuses the issue, so perhaps it would be well to see where the confusion lies and how global democrats should respond to the issues. The primary problem is that areas where local, semi-local, and regional loyalties obtain are alike called "nations," when in fact they ought more correctly to be called localisms, nations, and supernations. Thus a four-step scale of local, national, regional, and global loyalty may be posited. What may be inferred from this is that the wealth and power achieved in each successive step of the scale tends to eliminate the smaller units of loyalty and to increase the rivalry between units on the same level of the scale. At the moment the United States and the Soviet Union, the supernations, are attempting to inculcate a new code of loyalty within and without on the basis of "ideology." Thus new regional loyalties seem to be in the making, as was the case in the Roman Empire when Christianity emerged as a sort of synthesis of Greco-Roman and Near Eastern religion and philosophy. The essential point to be made, however, is that "national" and "local"-level units are being eliminated in the process. Global democracy demands that these nationalists and localists, mainly tribalists, be taken in on equal terms with those who have arrived at a more widespread level of loyalty and power, despite—or rather because of—the fact that the tendencies, economic and psychological, all run in the direction of accentuating inequalities.

It is at this point that the ideologies become so very dangerous, for they function to determine who does *not* have certain rights and powers. Far from acting as liberating tools for the elimination of nationalist hatreds, the ideologies of the United States and the Soviet Union serve as more effective instruments for achieving the power and wealth to suppress the nationalism and localism of others, as often as not through inadvertence or patronizing "help." The percentage of the world's annual use of natural resources centered in the Soviet Union and, more particularly, the United States, is evidence for the above observations. In terms of welfare and longevity most people in the superpowers have joined the New Aristocracy. The nation-state system therefore bids fair to move beyond the mixed nation-supernation

groupings to a supnation system with ideologies substituting for national loyalties, and China, India, Europe, Africa, the Near East, and Latin America struggling to join in. In fact, Europe might already have joined the New Mandarins had the Fascist ideologues not corrupted their schema with a racialist content and thereby weakened their appeal to Latins and Slavs. For the supnation level of loyalty and power demands "subjective" Mandates of Heaven like revolution and wealth-production rather than the older "objective" ones of race or language. The nearest equivalents to ideologies in the past were the religions which tried to rise above race and language, especially Islam and Christianity, but they failed as organizing worldviews for lack of a social infrastructure. It is likely that with the success of regional-ideological complexes, cosmopolitan feeling will become less likely. To consider, for example, how much more easily feudalism became nationalism than nationalism is becoming supnationalism is to have some notion of how difficult the transition from regional-cultural loyalties to ecumenical empathy will probably be. The greater the mass, the harder it will be to move, especially since the techniques of propaganda, refined by psychology and implemented through mass media, can now reinforce supnationalist ideologies at globe-encircling distances.

The rivalries of this nation-supnation system fuel the dynamo of the postnational state, the *second* problem to which global democrats must address themselves. The crucial point is that each step on the local-national-regional-global scale, when completed, magnifies the power-potential of the leaders using the new and more extensive military, administrative, and economic institutions, and diminishes the influence of the scattered and divided masses. The postnational state thus promises to magnify the dangers of statism to and beyond the point of diminishing returns. In the first place, leaders may escape both internal and external controls. As the leaders become further separated physically and psychically from the populace, they will probably have less internal resistance to directing rather than discussing. Likewise, external controls on the leadership seem unlikely, since the populace has been effectively disarmed by the advent of postnational superweapons available only to the army and the police, or to other states' leaders.

Appeals to conscience or to the ballot box still amount to something in some areas, but their role in postnational politics is open to question given the apparent estrangement of leaders and followers in

the most advanced supnations. The problem is likely to become more dangerous in that postnational institutions tend to escape the control of the leaders themselves. In many cases the bigwig is no more able than the little guy to re-orient the bureaucracy, the army, and the media. Postnational infrastructures are becoming too large and complex for anyone to re-direct their inertial motion. Hence outdated social strategies are perpetuated, people are turned into personnel, and indoctrination replaces creativity—as the globe approaches disaster, inch by inadvertent inch. Leaders are often blamed for decay which they have struggled against mightily, which further alienates them from the masses so painfully caught in the web of institutional malfunctions. Politics becomes personalized, and confrontation results. Negative reinforcement then accelerates the disfunction of the social organism as the leaders and the masses join in a symbiotic relationship and chew each other to shreds.



The tragedy of the postnational state is that much of the social superorganization is necessary for such numbers to live on a comfortable level, a point too often missed by critics like Jacques Ellul, whose book *The Technological Society* sums up the point of view that "technology cannot be otherwise than totalitarian." Were all evil leaders and all unresponsive structures to disappear tomorrow, men would still not be free; it would still be necessary to create some wise and good leaders and some responsive structures. For men are enchained not only by other men and by uncontrolled institutions, but by nature as well—by disease, hunger, and discontent not made by men. As Camus said in *The Plague*, evil is very often the child of ignorance rather than ill-will. In particular, one might add, evil often results from the failure

to recognize that successful social strategies from the past no longer apply to changed circumstances.

Such is the case with the strategy of state growth. To generate the conditions for growth beyond localism's apathy and under-use of resources, nation-state growth was useful, and still is where such conditions remain. But to continue state growth in the post-national age of overstriving and the rape of resources is worse than a crime—it's madness. Technical solutions—state solutions—always seem simplest and quickest, when in fact they lead deeper into the Labyrinth. In order to protect, the state must have more powerful weapons; in order to supply work and wealth, the state must encourage invention and incentive; and so on until technical solutions seem the only solutions, systems analysts the only sane men, and marching order the only proper relation among men. Yet social solutions, changed social strategies, are probably now required. To make A.B.C. war on an advanced scale in the postnational era is to fail to recognize that the offense has permanently out-distanced the defense and made the latter impossible in any but limited wars. Since gunpowder (offense) first crumbled the walls of a baronial castle (defense), this has been the direction of modern military developments, namely, toward the point of diminishing returns. To wager all on continued economic growth—as supernations are clearly doing in order to support expanded populations, increased military expenditures, an elevated standard of wealth, and, yes, modernization of the unmodernized—is likewise foolish, since natural resources and places to store our trash are fast disappearing despite scientific efforts to find alternatives. Economic growth is also approaching the point of diminishing returns. Growth, known since the Enlightenment as Progress, must therefore be replaced by Stability or Conservation or Replenishment as the goal of supernations.

Global democrats should thus work to limit statism when it no longer aids justice and equality. But how? The major problems seem, upon reflection, not to be the lack of potential solutions, of which there are many—for example, World Citizenship, starting with stateless persons like refugees and open to any who might prefer such affiliation to national attachments, and a World Treasury, into which future resources from the sea and proceeds from United Nations liberty bonds would be paid. Instead, the enemy lies within—in the agony of ignorance and the curse of anomie. Some pretend to know all. Like Faust calling Mephisto, they believe they can conjure freedom by intoning its ideological name, especially on television.

Woe unto the fools and mountebanks! They conjure the corpse they have themselves laid low by their inaction. Some pretend to know too little. They can work with scientists but never with poets, with philosophers but never with politicians, with the Right but never the Left—when in fact the Enlightenment notion that some things are common dangers to all still holds. Ultimate questions have a way of dissolving in sweat. Alas, the excuses for inaction are legion, and each one must be cast out.

What is lacking is the heroic stance in the face of the impossible dream. Better to have dreamed and awakened than never to have dreamed at all. It is time global democrats burned for justice, not expediency; for brotherhood, not hatred. Not "My country right or wrong!" but "My country, may it right the wrong!" The risk of democracy—of hearing it all like it is, the good and the bad in every ideological and national strategy—is worth taking. For the evil in the world is not so much the result of ill-will as of ignorance—and of inaction. Goethe's Faust said it well: in the beginning was neither the Word nor the Power, but the Deed—the Striving, the Relating, the Empathizing, the Reacting.

Global democrats can no longer afford the luxury of being solely the conscience of the world; they must become its eyes and its hands as well, as wise as serpents but as gentle as doves. Static ideologies do not allow that; dynamic, creative strategies might. But the glacial changes in human consciousness make the development of such strategies difficult. Most of mankind has by now emerged from the feudal-theological I-Thou state of mind in which disease and hunger were Acts of God, but in an aberrant national-supernational I-It direction which makes of Nature and Man the objects of morally unrestrained "scientific" manipulation. Surely, however, Harvey Cox argues correctly in *The Secular City* that between the poles of Martin Buber's I-Thou I-It dichotomy there is an I-You point of accommodation between Theology and Humanism on the one side and Science and Systems Analysis on the other. One cannot treat everyone in an intimate family-close friend manner; nor can one look upon another as a statistic. Likewise man can neither become one with his natural environment nor use it at will on a supernational scale. Once too "pessimistic" or Manichean but now too "optimistic" or pelagian, human consciousness must develop a new Augustinianism—a Good-Bad, New-Old Myth, Morality, and God. God, Man, and Nature, are dead; long may they live!—through intelligent, moral action.