

LIBERALISM, GLOBALIZATION, AND CULTURAL RELATIVISM

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Constant revolutionising of production, uninterrupted disturbance of all social relations, everlasting uncertainty and agitation distinguish the bourgeois epoch from all earlier ones. All fixed, fast-frozen relations, with their train of ancient and venerable prejudices and opinions, are swept away, all new-formed ones become antiquated before they can ossify. All that is solid melts into air ...

The bourgeoisie has through its exploitation of the world-market given a cosmopolitan character to production and consumption in every country ... In place of the old wants, satisfied by the production of the country, we find new wants, requiring for their satisfaction the production of distant lands and climes. In place of the old local and national seclusion and self-sufficiency, we have intercourse in every direction, universal inter-dependence of nations. And as in material, so also in intellectual production.

The bourgeoisie, by the rapid improvement of all instruments of production, by the immensely facilitated means of communication, draws all, even the most barbarian, nations into civilisation ... In one word, it creates a world after its own image.

(Karl Marx, *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, 1848, 476–477)

The above words, written a century and a half ago, seem hauntingly accurate and up-to-date in our era of global markets, global competition, and free trade. Liberal Capitalism may have emerged triumphant from the Cold War. It may have survived to bury its Communist rivals and to prove many of Marx's predictions to be wrong. But some aspects of his description of our socio-economic system remain well worth pondering. On one hand, Marx eulogized capitalism for its compulsive *dynamism*, its unprecedented *productivity*, and the *revolutionary* way in which it

has subverted all forms of traditionalism. On the other hand, he compared modern society, with its gigantic system of production and exchange, to a sorcerer who is unable to control the powers that he has summoned up. Modern commerce and technology give rise to unintended and unpredictable consequences. New industrial techniques eliminate, not only jobs, but whole sectors of the economy. Inventions such as the car and the computer transform the way we live and work. The demands of "competitiveness" threaten social programs, as nation after nation competes to declare itself open for business. More and more, the world becomes one big market —one McWorld, linked by jet airplane and telecommunication satellite, in which people on every continent consume American fast food, watch Hollywood movies, and are bombarded with ads for Coke and Nike (Barber, 1995).

1. Globalization Defined

Globalization is the process whereby liberal capitalism "creates a world after its own image." It has three faces —one *economic*, one *cultural*, and one *demographic*. The first involves a move towards global markets, the growing interdependence of national economies, and free trade agreements such as NAFTA. Economic globalization weakens the power of governments, subjecting them to the discipline of currency traders and international bankers. The imperatives of "competitiveness" make it harder to tax and regulate corporations, which have the option of moving to the most low-tax, low-wage place they can find. Social issues that once could be dealt with by countries and provinces now require global solutions. The same goes for the latest crop of environmental issues: acid rain, global warming, and the depletion of the ozone layer are all "problems without frontiers."

Second, globalization is driven by the influence of movies, music, television, computers, and other mass media. The American information and entertainment industry plays a particularly key role here. The process is also driven by modern advertising which, whatever it is selling, implicitly glorifies a lifestyle of materialist consumption. In relation to the Third World, this raises questions about the ethical wisdom of promoting luxury cars, Big Macs, and Western patterns of consumption in countries where the vast majority of people are in dire poverty. For Western countries like France and Canada, it raises concerns about language and culture. Francophones worry about the fate of their language in a world

where English is the language of Hollywood and the Internet, and English Canadians have similar concerns about their cultural identity.

Third, the migration of people is a potent globalizing force. Once such migrations proceeded outward from Europe. Millions of colonists and settlers swamped the indigenous peoples of America and Australia, and established a presence in Africa and Asia. In recent years, this pattern has reversed itself, as people from impoverished Third World countries with high rates of population growth seek to move to the West. Such migrations pose a cultural challenge. They require immigrants to adapt to a new way of life, host countries to accept diversity, and everyone to become more cosmopolitan and tolerant—or risk traveling down the road of Bosnia, Rwanda, Sri Lanka, and Lebanon.¹

Globalization undermines the autonomy and distinctiveness of many of the world's cultures. However, it is not clear that this is a bad thing. For globalization is an essentially peaceful process. Some may condemn it as "cultural imperialism"—a kind of Coca-colonization of the world, in which Western values and ways of life overwhelm indigenous cultures. But globalization has little in common with the imperialisms of the past. The empires of Alexander the Great and Genghis Khan were created purely by force, and broke up soon after their deaths. The economy and technology of the day made their empires virtually impossible to sustain. The conquerors were soon assimilated by the civilizations that they had conquered.

Today, globalization proceeds largely through the free choices of countless businesspeople, immigrants, and consumers. It is a matter of trade and technology, of communications and culture. Its origins may date back to the European colonial empires of the early modern period, but its progress has not been greatly impeded by their break-up. The process of globalization has inertia on its side. By this, I mean that if markets are left relatively free, if people are allowed to express themselves, travel across borders, and consume cultural products as they see fit, then globalization will continue. The peoples of the world will gradually become more homogenous. Western capitalist values will tend to gain ground; those of pre-modern cultures will tend to lose ground. If one objects to the globalization process and wants to halt it, one must take political action. One may have to seal off one's economy from the

¹ For a discussion of these three aspects of globalization in relation to Canada, see Gwyn (1996).

global economy, or clamp down on immigration, or enact special laws protecting one's language and culture. In order to protect cultural uniqueness, one may have to force individuals to conform.

2. Liberalism Defined

The question I shall deal with here is whether such policies are ethically justifiable, and whether they are compatible with liberalism. Liberalism is concerned with delimiting the proper scope of government action. The term covers a range of ethical and political views, all of which are *universalist* and *individualist*. Liberalism gives rights to *persons*, not to cultures. And these rights are justified in *universal* terms, on the grounds that the autonomy, or utility, or basic needs of all human beings are worthy of consideration. If liberalism protects cultures, it does so *indirectly*, by upholding people's freedom of expression and their freedom to pass on their customs and values. But it takes a dim view of attempts to "protect one's culture" *directly*, whether this involves privileging an official religion and ethnicity, or trying to keep out foreign ways simply because they are foreign.

There are several versions of liberalism. *Libertarianism*, or classical liberalism, insists that the role of the state should be limited to upholding people's negative liberty and protecting them against force and fraud. By this standard, some of the things done by all states, and most of the things done by most states, are illegitimate. *Welfare Liberalism* is more egalitarian, allowing the state to assist the least advantaged and to redistribute wealth. But it demands that the state remain neutral between competing conceptions of the good. This, essentially, is the view of Rawls (1971).

A third view, which I think better reflects political practice in liberal democracies, could be termed *Moderately Perfectionist Liberalism*. Perfectionist liberals include Raz (1986), Nussbaum (1990 and 1993), and Hurka (1993). According to MPL, it is quite proper for citizens acting together to "promote the good" by instituting public health care, supporting the arts and sciences, protecting the environment, and generally enabling people to live in a society that does not suffer from a chronic shortage of public goods. MPL is not a doctrinaire position. In contrast to Rawlsian liberalism, it does not subscribe to a "doctrine of neutrality" in any strong sense. For any public policy concerning education or the environment must promote the realization of some goods at the expense of

others. For example, public schools must teach some lessons and not others; and the value of education must be weighed against that of other goods. These decisions will inevitably be "controversial." Moreover, some choices and decisions simply must be made collectively. The freedom to pollute is inconsistent with the public enjoyment of clean air, and laws protecting ecology tend to interfere with economic growth.

MPL, however, remains liberal in three ways:

(1) While it promotes the good, it does so by *enabling* valuable options and activities instead of by *coercing* people to conform to some standard of goodness.² Thus, a liberal state may subsidize certain medical services, but it must respect people's autonomy, allowing them to refuse treatment, to pursue alternative remedies, and to make their own reproductive decisions. People must retain the right to make decisions concerning their own body. The same principles apply to public support for the arts and sciences.

(2) While some choices must be made collectively, those which pertain only to the individual should be left to the individual. Like Mill's harm principle, this raises the question of how the private realm is to be defined. But sometimes this is fairly clear. Environmental issues do not admit of any simple "live and let live" solutions, because their impact is regional or global. Issues of free speech and sexual morality, on the other hand, often do admit of such solutions. Liberals thus tend to agree with Pierre Trudeau that the state has no place in the bedrooms of the nation.

(3) Finally, MPL insists that the state should remain neutral concerning religion, race, and ethnicity —issues with a long and bloody history of setting human beings at each other's throats. In other words, government should refrain from using coercive power to uphold an "official culture" or to enforce a code of conduct whose *raison d'être* is religious or traditional. The fact that a practice is customary is, for liberals, never enough to justify its coercive imposition on one's neighbor.

² As Hurka (1993) says: "Neutrality is not a traditional liberal ideal, for it is rejected by Mill ... Nor is neutrality supported by our perfectionistic arguments. These arguments tell strongly against coercing citizens into the good, but they do not have the same force against non-coercively promoting the good" (159).

3. Against Cultural Relativism

In outlining Moderately Perfectionist Liberalism, I have tried to present a version of liberalism that is flexible, defensible, and in reflective equilibrium with many of our practices and ideals. MPL still may not win the approval of communitarians, ethnic nationalists, or defenders of traditional cultures. Such people are most likely to challenge MPL on the basis of cultural relativism. Liberalism, for them, is merely a product of Western culture—a culture whose emphasis on the individual is excessive, and whose claims to universality represent a kind of moral imperialism, which seeks to impose Western values on the world.

Among social scientists, support for cultural relativism is somewhat uneven. It tends to be strongest among anthropologists and sociologists, whose basic unit of study is the particular culture or society. It is considerably less popular among economists and psychologists, who begin with atomistic individuals and seek to uncover general laws governing human behavior. Moral philosophers also have been strongly universalist and individualist. Whether their theories are grounded in utility, respect for persons, or universal human rights, and whether they speak of autonomy, self-realization, or the right to liberty, few philosophers have bought into cultural relativism—and for good reason.

As a *normative* theory (as opposed to a *description* of cultural variation), cultural relativism is indefensible. To defend it, one must win debates on two separate fronts, fending off both the universalist and the individualist. The arguments that cultural relativists must use on the one front, however, inevitably rebound against them on the other.

Universalism: On one hand, advocates of cultural relativism must undermine universalism. They must show that all codes of ethics are culture-bound, and that there is no common standard by which one can arbitrate between cultures. Such arguments are very familiar and are not easy to refute directly. The problem for cultural relativism is that any skeptical argument powerful enough to undermine all forms of universalism, must also undermine every cultural code. *Cultural* relativism thus collapses into *individual* relativism, otherwise known as ethical nihilism. For one may always ask: why should I respect the customs of your culture, or even obey the laws of my own culture, if they get in the way of self-interest? Many people equate relativism with tolerance. But such thinking is confused. For relativism, when its implications are logically followed out, leads (in theory) to a Hobbesian jungle, where *good* is

simply what I happen to desire, *power* is the ultimate arbiter of disputes, and the strong do what they can while the weak suffer what they must.

Such an amoral conclusion gives us no basis for condemning the imposition of the values of one culture upon another. However, if one cannot live with such a view, one has little alternative but to follow Hobbes and Locke down the road to liberal contract theory. In the context of moral uncertainty and religious disagreement, this type of liberal theory thrives (it is no accident that it first made its appearance in the wake of the 16th and 17th century Wars of Religion). For contractarian liberalism accepts human diversity. It insists only that people have a common interest in maintaining peace, and avoiding the continual insecurity of a "state of nature" where, according to Hobbes, life is "poor, nasty, brutish, and short" (Hobbes, 1651, ch. 13). Contract theory focuses on upholding liberty and security—primary goods on which people are most likely to agree—while relegating contentious issues of faith, lifestyle, and ethnicity to the private realm of individual preference.

This type of liberalism may not be "neutral" (whatever that means). But it is not just another cultural norm. It attempts to meet the challenge of cultural pluralism, providing a framework that enables a wide range of values to co-exist. The strength of such a framework is its *thinness*. Where other codes offer detailed prescriptions which generate conflict, liberalism seeks to minimize what is universally and legally required. One culture insists that people bury their dead and avoid eating pork; another insists that people burn their dead and refrain from eating beef. The liberal universalist says "no problem" and shows how these conflicts can be resolved. The more globalization brings people of various cultures together, the more the need for such a framework becomes obvious.

Individualism: At this point, cultural relativists are likely to turn their critical guns on the individualist premises of the above argument. They may claim that liberalism relies on an overly atomistic and asocial concept of the self, and that real human beings are embedded in particular cultures and traditions. This sort of argument is often advanced by communitarians, who insist that our very identity is constituted by culture. All this may be true, and it may undercut various forms of liberalism. But it is of little help to the cultural relativist, and to those seeking to defend the "rights of cultures" against globalization.

In order to condemn liberalism as too individualistic, one must develop a fairly thick conception of what a human being is. For instance,

one may argue that humans are social creatures, that they share a capacity for affiliation and mutual concern, that they come into the world as helpless and hungry babies who must be cared for and socialized into the ways of their culture. Such facts are hard to deny, and they tend to support a Moderately Perfectionist Liberalism of the sort I outlined earlier. For human beings do have certain needs beyond liberty and security which are reasonably universal, and liberalism is defensible in neo-Aristotelian terms (see Nussbaum, 1992 and 1993).

The problem for the cultural relativist is that while humans have a need for culture (for enculturation), their flourishing does not necessarily depend on any particular culture. For individuals, if well-informed, have a fairly robust capacity to choose between cultural options. The world offers them a plurality of traditions to choose from. Communities which are free and dynamic are in a constant state of flux.

Moreover, the concept of a "culture" is extremely vague. The question of who belongs to a particular culture and what defines its identity are often disputed. In the modern world, people's identities are multifaceted and their allegiances are divided between different groups, myths, and values. Even if they share allegiances, they may prioritize them differently. Take the case of Canada. Some people see themselves simply as Canadians; others identify strongly with their province, region or linguistic group. Some cherish the monarchy and the country's British traditions; others see Canada as a cultural mosaic of immigrants. Some fear Americanization and wrap themselves in the flag as they defend Medicare and the CBC; others want nothing more than lower taxes, less government, and the right to bear arms. In every case, what some Canadians fear as a threat to their identity is eagerly embraced by others. Richard Gwyn has described Canada as "the first postmodern nation," because it has no "coherent, stable, autonomous identity" (1996, 253).

Some Quebec separatists claim that Canada is not a "real country." But even paradigm nation-states like Britain and Spain have their regional "nationalities," such as the Welsh and the Basques. Whether the issue is trade, culture, or immigration, people in many countries are divided between those who embrace globalization and those who see it as a threat. Even French-speaking Quebecers are split almost half and half between those who wish to remain Canadians, and those who desire independence.

Thus, I think, liberals are wise to focus on basic needs or primary goods which are *universal*, and on the dignity and autonomy of the *in-*

dividual. Both of these poles of liberal thought offer a more solid basis for ethical theory than such fuzzy, intermediate entities as cultures and traditions. This is not to deny the ethical relevance of such entities. It is only to insist that cultural relativism, a position which takes into account neither what we have in common as human beings nor our separateness and reflective capacity as individuals, is an indefensible position.

4. Dealing with Difference

This appears to leave us with liberalism as a one size fits all framework, applicable everywhere and at all times. Liberalism gives us reason to uphold what is *universally right or good*, and to respect the *individual person*. However, when it comes to international or multicultural issues, many people feel that this is not enough. Some claim that nations have a "right" to protect their identity, even by illiberal means, while outsiders have a "duty" to respect indigenous cultural values. I reject such claims, and refuse to speak of "rights" and "duties" in such a culture-relative way. However, the relativist position does embody certain insights which are compatible with universalism and which deserve to be taken into account. Consider the following two arguments.

First, the *Argument from Development* accepts that different ethical priorities may be appropriate to societies at different levels of development. For example, most of us disapprove of infanticide. We live in an affluent society, with access to birth control and abortion, and a ready supply of adoptive parents. But in a tribal society where people are barely able to subsist, the practice may be accepted as a way of controlling reproduction or eliminating those whose deformities would otherwise render them a permanent burden on the resources of the tribe. Such infanticide may horrify some of us, who will condemn it as a basic violation of the right to life. But given the circumstances, one can understand why the tribe acts as it does.

The differences between us and them are not just arbitrary, non-rational products of culture. Consider: do we not value the control that modern medicine has given us over our reproductive lives? Is there really that much difference between thinking that an infant acquires the right to life at birth, and thinking that it becomes a person at a ceremony ten days later when it is publicly welcomed into the tribe? The boundaries of personhood are fuzzy. The fact that others may draw them differently

does not mean that they do not love their children, abhor murder, and have the same basic needs as we do.

The Argument from Development is relevant to debates about welfare rights. For if such rights exist, they must be seen as being relative to the economic and technological capacity of a society. Classical liberal rights, such as the right not to be tortured, may arguably be seen as binding under all conditions. Welfare rights are more problematic. For before wealth is available to be redistributed, it must be created; before public education can become a right, society must be able to afford to subsidize it; and before a poor country can afford Western-style social programs, it must attract investment and win export markets. In relation to the First World, low labor costs will probably be its biggest competitive advantage, and it probably will be more willing to "trade off" environmental damage for the sake of growth.

This brings us to the core of what makes the globalization of the world economy problematic; namely, that rich and poor nations are likely to have different social and environmental priorities. Those sympathetic to labor in North America, for instance, are likely to oppose free trade agreements with countries like Mexico (whose cheap labor they see as a threat) unless they contain provisions which "level the playing field." But radically improved wages and working conditions are unlikely to be in the immediate interest of Third World countries, whose "competitiveness" depends on cheap labor. Such conflicts of interest make it hard to reach the sort of agreements that will be necessary if we are to regulate multinational corporations and deal with environmental issues such as global warming.

Second, there is the *Argument from Realpolitik*. This sort of argument has recently been made by Samuel Huntington in *The Clash of Civilizations*. Huntington sees the world as divided up into civilizational blocs. He condemns belief in the universality of Western values as "immoral" and "dangerous," because it brings the West into conflict with civilizations such as China and Islam, which are becoming increasingly powerful and assertive (Huntington, 1996, 310). At the root of Huntington's argument is the Hobbesian principle, that those with the power to inflict significant damage on one another must seek mutual accommodation or risk destruction. Huntington applies this principle to international relations. The underlying message is: "let Chinese authoritarians and Islamic fundamentalists do what they want in their own backyard —be content to uphold liberal values and institutions in the West."

Huntington's case against universalism is *descriptive* and *prudential*. It is not *normative*—it does not attempt to show that dissidents in China are obligated to respect the “ways of their culture” (i.e. the ways of their government), or that an Islamic theocracy is uniquely conducive to the well-being of the Iranian people. Huntington insists only that massive numbers of people do identify with their nationality or religion, and that many non-Western countries have (or will soon have) weapons of mass destruction. Liberalism, in theory, may be the most defensible ethical framework. But, as the Argument from Realpolitik shows, it is one thing to know what is good in principle—another to know how to uphold one's ideals in a less-than-ideal world without alienating other people, engendering conflict, and doing more harm than good. The Vietnam War illustrates what can happen when “means” get out of control, and principles are overshadowed by the evils resulting from misguided efforts to uphold them.

Consider the question of whether to use sanctions against countries that violate human rights. There are no simple answers here. On one hand, we may properly reject extreme relativism, which stigmatizes all interference in the affairs of another nation as “cultural imperialism” (always a convenient excuse for dictators). However, we cannot afford to be so self-righteous, or so afraid of “dirty hands,” that we threaten to impose sanctions on every non-liberal regime. There are just too many such regimes, and some of them, like China, are just too big and powerful. Sanctions may be effective when most of the world is behind them (as in the South African case), but such unity is exceptional. As the failure of U.S. sanctions against Cuba (after 35 years) seems to indicate, attempts to bully an illiberal regime into changing its ways may be counterproductive. People who identify with their nation tend to resent it when foreigners tell them what to do. They may come to equate patriotism with the illiberal policies of the regime, to equate liberal capitalism with the hated foreign power, and to blame their troubles on “enemy” sanctions instead of on the economic failings of their own government.

It is irrational to reject new ideas simply because they are foreign. But demagogues are quick to wrap themselves in the flag, and to brand the policies of their opponents as un-American, or un-Canadian, or un-Islamic. Thus, if we truly wish to advance liberal principles, we must be good diplomats. Our universalism must be tempered with a *sensitivity to the particulars* and a *concern with the consequences*. We may be passionate believers in religious tolerance and equality of the sexes; we may

affirm such values as universal norms. However, there is little point in trying to pressure nations like Iran into upholding them. Since the Islamic fundamentalists who govern Iran are hostile to the West and regard America as the "Great Satan," we have no moral authority with them. The more equality for women (for instance) is seen as a Western value, the more likely they are to reject it. Given the circumstances, we would be wise to focus on "seeking peace" in the sphere of international diplomacy. If liberal norms are to gain ground in Iran, the impetus will almost certainly have to come from within Islamic culture.

The Argument from Realpolitik is also relevant to cultural clashes much closer to home. Consider the example of Quebec's Bill 101, the Charter of the French Language, which (among other things) forbids the use of English on commercial signs. This part of the law was struck down by the Supreme Court of Canada in 1988, as a violation of the right to freedom of expression. The decision upheld the liberal principles of Canada's Charter of Rights. In response, the Quebec government invoked the "notwithstanding" clause, a constitutional loophole allowing it to override the Charter. It claimed to be protecting the language and culture of the province (Vipond, 1991, 192).

Ethically, this sort of excuse for illiberal policies simply will not do. Bill 101 goes beyond *enabling* French-speakers to enjoy the use of their language. It actively *prohibits* businesspeople from erecting bilingual signs. The message it conveys is: "the public face of Quebec shall be French: other languages are not welcome." This supposedly is justified in the name of "protecting culture." But suppose *Québécois* identity was centered in the Catholic faith (as it was before the Quiet Revolution), rather than the French language. Would it then be okay to prohibit the public expression of other faiths? If the dominant faith was in danger of losing ground, would it be okay to "protect" it through illiberal means? (Consider Russia's recent restrictions on the practice of "non-traditional" faiths). And if not, why is it okay in the case of language? What makes protecting the French tongue such a sacred and overriding cause? If one looks to history, one will find that some people have been obsessed with upholding the True Faith or Racial Purity, others have accepted diversity; some people have become chauvinistic about their native tongue, others have been happy to live in multi-linguistic states and to speak world languages (such as Latin or English). The variations go on and on.

Such nationalist enthusiasms provide no sound and defensible alternative to liberalism. But they must be taken into account, if for no other

reason than that they are shared by large numbers of people. Most French Quebecers have nationalist sentiments, feel insecure about their language, and believe that something like Bill 101 is needed. Perhaps the "notwithstanding" clause is not a bad thing. For to insist that Bill 101 is unconstitutional would probably cause support for separatism among French Quebecers to shoot through the roof. To send federal troops into Quebec to uphold the Charter of Rights might even provoke the FLQ to go back into the terrorism business. Such risks would be worth taking, if the safety and well-being of Quebec's Anglo minority was in real danger. But ethical behavior is not just a matter of correct principles. It is an "art of the possible," which often requires us to tolerate lesser evils in order to avoid greater ones. This may not be a very inspiring doctrine, but it is more coherent than cultural relativism, and it sure beats civil war.

5. Towards a Liberal World Order

Liberalism is a political theory which developed within such nation states as Britain, France, and America. It is concerned with defining the proper role of government and upholding human rights. But for liberals, there is nothing sacred about the nation state. Government is simply a means of protecting liberty and security, meeting basic needs, and enabling valuable options and activities. If globalization should undermine national sovereignty, liberals have little reason to mourn. For they are universalists, who have never found it easy to explain why our commitment to freedom or human welfare should be limited by national borders.

The idea of a liberal world order can be traced back to Kant (1795), who argued for the establishment of a *federation of free states*, dedicating to avoiding war and upholding the international rule of law. The ideals of liberal internationalism were later embodied in the United Nations and the U.N. Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948. The Declaration affirms the entire range of liberal rights, from *classical liberalism* (the right to life, liberty, and security of person; prohibition of torture and arbitrary arrest; freedom of thought, expression, and association; the right to own property and to emigrate), to *welfare liberalism* (the right to a standard of living adequate for food, clothing, housing, and medical care; the right to social security in the event of unemployment, disability, or old age; the right to just conditions of work, including fair pay, periodic

holidays, and the freedom to join trade unions), to *perfectionist liberalism* (the right to enjoy the arts and to share in scientific advancement; the right to education, which shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and the promotion of understanding and tolerance among all nations, races, and religions).

The Declaration is a powerful statement of Moderately Perfectionist Liberal principles. It affirms the universality of individual rights, and stands as a repudiation of those who would use cultural relativism to "justify" illiberal policies. However, the rights listed in the Declaration have never been enforceable. Article 28 says that "everyone is entitled to a social and international order in which the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration can be fully realized" (Laqueur and Rubin, 1989, 202). But the question of how best to create such a liberal order is not easy to answer.

The founders of the United Nations were aware of the lessons of the Argument from Realpolitik: they were aware that in a world in which there are many powers, the first priority is to *seek and maintain peace*. Thus, the U.N. has authorized the use of force against aggressor nations such as North Korea and Iraq, and it has intervened in various ethnic civil wars, trying to establish peace and prevent genocide. But it has never undertaken the more ambitious and dangerous mission of using force in order to uphold individual rights. In an ideologically diverse world, such a mission would be a never ending source of strife. Thus, according to Article 2 (7) of its Charter, the United Nations is not authorized "to intervene in matters which are essentially within the domestic jurisdiction of any state" (Laqueur and Rubin, 1989, 196).

Since 1945, the prospects of a liberal world order have both fallen and risen. They fell when the Cold War set in, Soviet Russia used its permanent seat on the Security Council to veto Western resolutions, and the General Assembly came to be dominated by Third World regimes which were neither liberal nor democratic. More recently, the tide has turned. With the collapse of Communism, the success of market economies in the Far East, and the resurgence of liberal democracy throughout Latin America and Eastern Europe, the hopes of liberal internationalism have been reborn.

First a caution: the end of the Cold War is not necessarily the "end of history," heralding the end of international conflict (pace Fukuyama, 1992). In foreign policy, peace and security must remain a priority. If we are negotiating with China and can hope to get only one concession, it is

arguably more important to pressure them on arms control and nuclear non-proliferation rather than on their treatment of dissidents. In a well-ordered liberal state, individual rights can be upheld impartially; in international affairs, we must rely on diplomacy and sanctions (if and when they are appropriate). In a liberal society, wealth can be redistributed for the sake of welfarist and perfectionist goods; in international affairs, this is largely out of the question. Even if First World nations were willing to be much more generous with foreign aid (which they are not), the fact remains that much of the misery in the Third World, and in what used to be the Second World, is due to a legacy of repressive dictators, corrupt bureaucrats, continuous political instability, excessive military spending, and the failure of various forms of socialism. Unfortunately, we can do little to prevent rulers from impoverishing their subjects, just as we can do little to prevent them from violating civil liberties.

Nevertheless, a liberal world order appears to be emerging. The process has been driven by economic globalization, and by agreements and treaties between liberal countries in Europe, the Americas, and East Asia. As Fukuyama observes: "a Kantian liberal international order has come into being willy-nilly during the Cold War under the protective umbrellas of organizations like NATO, the European Community, the OECD, the Group of Seven, GATT, and others that make liberalism a precondition for membership" (1992, 283). This emerging political-economic order is not fully global. But it is a more promising basis for liberal internationalism than the U.N., for its leading members are free states who are committed to democracy, markets, and individual rights.

Several challenges remain. We must ensure that the emerging political-economic order is Moderately Perfectionist Liberal (not neo-conservative), that it is as inclusive as possible, and that its benefits do not merely accrue to the corporate elite. In recent years, we have succeeded in reducing trade barriers and opening up markets by means of binding international agreements. We must try to reach the same sort of agreements on welfare rights, labor standards, and environmental protection. This would make it harder for multinationals to play jurisdiction off against jurisdiction in the futile quest for greater "competitiveness" (i.e. to see who can offer corporations the sweetest deal). Such agreements could take many forms, from a set of provisions in a trade deal to the partial delegation of sovereignty to institutions resembling the European Union. Perhaps the concept of "unfair trade practices" could be expanded beyond subsidies, to include the violation of a basic labor and

environmental code. If both rich and poor countries were involved, the terms of the agreement would have to be asymmetrical (for reasons set out in the Argument from Development). Wealthy nations could agree to set higher standards for themselves, while allowing their poorer trading partners a bit of leeway.

Ideally, such agreements would strike a balance between the interests of the various stakeholders. Developing nations would benefit by obtaining secure access to North American and European markets. But agreements on labor and environmental standards would help to protect the jobs of Western workers and to set limits on exploitation and pollution in "less advantaged" parts of the world. These sorts of agreements are probably our best hope of creating an international order in which the rights set forth in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights could be more fully realized. For if such "controlled globalization" was to succeed, the number of stable and prosperous liberal democracies would be almost certain to grow. Eastern Europe could be integrated into Western Europe, Latin America could draw closer to North America, and more Asian nations could follow the example of Japan and Hong Kong. This would lead to a wider distribution of welfarist and perfectionist goods. Such developments would also be conducive to international peace and security, bringing us closer to the ideal of a liberal order which is truly global.

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