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# The Cold War: Lessons and Legacies[1]

PROFESSOR LEONARD SCHAPIRO, FOR WHOSE MEMORIAL LECTURE THIS article was originally written, might not have approved of the content of this article, although there are certainly areas of convergence between us, but he would, I am sure, have agreed about the continued importance of analysing and debating the Cold War, the demise of which – associated with the fall of the Berlin Wall two decades ago – continues in many ways to shape the world we live in, as well as providing lessons for the contemporary world.

The Cold War was a major period of modern European and world history, one that lasted over 40 years and which, in the wars of Korea and Vietnam, Southern Africa, the Horn of Africa and Central America, cost an estimated 20–25 million lives. Of all the major interstate military and strategic conflicts of modern times it was the most truly global in its impact, and the most multidimensional in its composition, as well as being the one that, in the risk of nuclear war or miscalculation, contained the greatest danger for mankind. It is a conflict from which, like others, we have much to learn, but it is also one that in many ways continues to shape the contemporary world (Al Qaeda, for one, is a product of it) even if – and despite occasional deteriorations in relations between the major states, as over Georgia in the summer of 2008 – it is virtually inconceivable that it could return.

In essence, this article on the Cold War will involve a discussion of two connected themes: first, the particular question, historical and analytical, of what the Cold War was, what it was 'about', and what we can learn from how it ended; and second, the broader question, at once retrospective and prospective, raised by the rivalry of Western capitalism and communism as core ideologies of the Cold War, of the

[1] This is a revised text of the *Government and Opposition*/Leonard Schapiro Memorial Lecture 2009, delivered at the PSA Conference, University of Manchester, 7 April 2009.

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form and fate of radical, critical, thinking and politics in the contemporary world. The end of the Cold War has drawn a conclusion to the Bolshevik Revolution and the communism – both movement and ideology – that constituted the West's rival over these decades; it has not, however, resolved the inherent problems of modern society, domestically or internationally, or removed the need for a continued work of criticism, defiance or posing of plausible utopian alternatives.[2] As we survey the wreckage of the communist tradition, of forms of authoritarian socialism associated with it, and distance ourselves from the complacencies of the last two decades about the end of ideological contestation in our time, we would do well to recall that communism and Marxism in its various forms had no monopoly on radical, internationalist and critical ideas, any more than had the working class a monopoly on being the agents of change in modern society.

## INTERSYSTEMIC CONFLICT: NUCLEAR WEAPONS AND THE ROLE OF IDEOLOGY

Historically, it was the First World War that, in effect, launched the European civil war that constituted the 'short' twentieth century, as Eric Hobsbawm has termed it, of which the Cold War, succeeding the First and Second World Wars, was the final and longest chapter. So it is to the Cold War that I wish to turn here, seeking to identify what this in some ways unique international conflict was about, and in particular to answer the question of why and how it came to an end.[3] The Cold War was in the eyes of many, notably most contemporary historians, a strategic rivalry of little or no difference from the great

[2] On the necessary combination – rather than contrast – of utopian and realist thinking, see the work of E. H. Carr, *The Twenty Years Crisis*, new edn, with an introduction by Michael Cox, Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2004. Also F. Halliday, *The World at 2000*, Basingstoke, Palgrave, 2001, ch. 10.

[3] This draws on themes I have developed earlier, notably in F. Halliday, *The Making of the Second Cold War*, 2nd edn, London, Verso, 1986; F. Halliday, 'The Ends of Cold War', in Robin Blackburn (ed.), *After the Fall*, London, Verso, 1991; F. Halliday, *Rethinking International Relations*, Basingstoke, Macmillan, 1994, ch. 8, 'Intersystemic Conflict: the Case of Cold War'; F. Halliday, *Revolution and World Politics*, Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 1999, especially ch. 2, 'An Alternative Modernity: The Rise and Fall of "Revolution" '.

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rivalries of the past, and, by implication, of the future: the only major 'debate' that took place during the Cold War itself was about its origins, and the respective responsibilities of the USSR and of the West. The orthodox position was that it was a result of Stalin's policies, above all in Eastern Europe; the 'revisionists' argued that it was a shared, or even largely Western, responsibility.[4] Some of the elements of classic great power rivalry were certainly present: in the arms race, in the competition for influence in the third world, in the construction of rival alliances. However, as some writers, such as Raymond Aron, noted at the time,[5] there were at least three additional elements in this conflict, ones not found in earlier geostrategic competitions: nuclear weapons, ideological diversity and the intersection of great power conflict with third world upheaval. On the last of these, about which I have written extensively elsewhere, I shall say little here, with the proviso that both of the other unique features of the Cold War that I shall discuss had major implications for events in Asia, Africa and Latin America, and vice versa.[6]

The salience of nuclear weapons and of the nuclear arms race is self-evident: there were around 20 occasions in the four decades of Cold War when the 'superpowers' – a term I do not like – went on nuclear alert, nearly all of them being alerts by the power that could take advantage of such a situation by dint of its numerical and qualitative superiority, the USA.[7] We now know that in the case of the October 1962 Cuba crisis, at least, the world was rather nearer a nuclear exchange than it even appeared at the time. The nuclear danger certainly made victory, or a military end, a less desirable and less explicit strategic aim – hence Raymond Aron's aphorism *paix impossible, guerre improbable*. Although we might recognize that

[4] Prominent among the 'revisionist' historians were David Horowitz, Gabriel Kolko and Gal Alperovitz.

[5] Raymond Aron, *Peace and War*, London, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1966.

[6] See F. Halliday, *Cold War, Third World*, London, Radius/Hutchinson, 1989; Halliday, *The Making of the Second Cold War*; F. Halliday, 'Third World Socialism: 1989 and After', in George Lawson, Chris Armbruster and Michael Cox (eds), *The Global 1989: Change and Continuity in World Politics*, London, Routledge, 2010.

[7] I have included a discussion of these incidents in *The Making of the Second Cold War*, ch. 3, citing the list in B. Blechman and S. Kaplan, *War Without War*, Washington, DC, Brookings Institution, 1978, p. 48, but adding that of the USA in September 1970, during the crisis in Jordan and the apparently imminent Syrian invasion in support of the Palestinian forces.

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deterrence worked, and that to all responsible leaders – for such they remained – nuclear weapons were unusable, it would be mistaken to conclude that they had no function. Here the critics, in casting nuclear weapons as irrational, or plain immoral, or in seeking purely economic reasons for the overproduction and so-called modernization of such weapons (the theory of the 'military-industrial complex'), missed the point: in several respects, nuclear weapons, beyond their undoubted deterrent role, served important *political* goals, in effect vindicating, albeit in a novel way, the famous dictum of von Clausewitz, according to which war is the continuation of politics by other means. This is so for two reasons. First, possession of nuclear weapons enhanced a state's importance, giving it, as the French and British would be the first to admit if they ever articulated such things, an enhanced place at the table, most specifically continued membership of the 'nuclear club', including permanent membership of the UN Security Council and veto rights. Second, as the Cuba missile crisis and following arms race showed, possession of 'superiority', or of a margin, in nuclear weapons gave states an advantage in crisis situations, as they were deemed by themselves and their foes to be capable of inflicting more destruction.

The history of the arms race was not, therefore, purely one of technological innovation and military rivalry. It needs to be revisited and recast, not so much in terms of military or technological factors, although these had their influence, but as a function of the political, ideological and strategic competition of the two blocs, in Europe and the third world. Indeed, a close reading of the record can demonstrate the political logic, competitive and symbolic, of the nuclear arms race. Whether it was in the late 1940s and early 1950s, or around the time of Cuba in the early 1960s, or in the intersection of third world détente and the negotiations for a intermediate-range nuclear force (INF) in the late 1980s, it was not that the arms race was separate from political rivalry, let alone illogical, bureaucratically determined or whatever, but rather that acquiring and enhancing nuclear capability was a function of a state's broader international and regional aspirations. It followed too that US–Soviet 'arms control' talks were not just about weapons, capabilities, 'throw-weight' and verification systems, but were also a function of diplomacy, of diplomatic advantage to be taken and threats to be averted. Whether it be in the American obsession with 'supremacy' in the early 1970s and 1980s, or in Gorbachev's quite explicit linking of his

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withdrawal from Afghanistan with the successful conclusion of an INF agreement in the latter part of the decade, the link was a strong one. The drive for American nuclear superiority in the early 1950s owed much to the loss of China; the same drive in the early 1980s owed much to the succession of third world revolutions – Vietnam, Iran, Afghanistan, Ethiopia, Angola, Mozambique, Nicaragua and others – that undermined détente.

To make the most obvious contemporary application of this general lesson: it is in recognition of this political logic, not in the application of the bleak and forensic concept of 'proliferation', that the logic of what is happening today with Iran has to be understood. Iran's attempt to acquire at least a position of nuclear ambiguity is not separate from its aspiration to regional influence, above all in Iraq: it is rather an inseparable part of it. It has a political logic, it is, in effect, the continuation of Islamic revolutionary politics and the quest for hegemony across West Asia by other means.

## THE ROLE OF IDEOLOGY

Here we can return to the issue of ideology, using the term both to denote political beliefs, and to elicit the less articulated, but guiding, principles of individual societies. In this sense it encompasses values but also their material – political, social, economic – organization, and thereby the interests embodied in particular social orders: 'capitalism' and 'communism' were ideologies in both these senses, both as sets of ideas and aspirations and as labels for particular political and social orders, even if – as with all ideologies – their proponents sought to strengthen them by making them appear natural and therefore inevitable. With all the exaggeration and distortion involved, the Cold War embodied and expressed a global and long-standing ideological rivalry, not only about power, but also about the shape of modern society and politics. It did involve a serious world-wide competition, where ideology is taken both as belief and as the guidelines for the organization of society.[8]

[8] One of the great mistakes to make about communism, one abetted by a retrospective denial by many who once espoused it that they were ever believers or supporters, is that it only commanded a following by coercion. See on this the very perceptive review of literature on Stalin's Russia: Jochen Hellbeck, 'The Ice Forge', *The Nation*, 3

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The argument about the role of ideology in the Cold War is thus not solely one about the intentions of political leaders, but equally one about the global impact of society, and the economic, social and political model such an ideology projects. There is no need to write extensively here of communism's powerful economic and social appeal, which lasted from the 1930s through to the 1960s and won much support in Western Europe and the third world. On the other side, Western politicians may well have been preoccupied by the demands of the moment, and the diplomatic or military accommodations these involved, but by their very existence, and by the fact that they did not collapse, the capitalist states served to erode the confidence of the communist states that they could in the end prevail, somehow or other, and despite the historical lags and detours they admitted to. NATO or the CIA did not have to plan to have the impact they did on the communist states of Eastern Europe. Too much emphasis is laid by diplomatic historians or by critics on what the 'planners' actually thought. Social change, and the spread of information, from official and unofficial sources, played a huge part: the 'demonstration effect' of Western capitalism did much to break the confidence of the East. Hence the slogan of the East Germans who broke through the Berlin Wall in November 1989: '*Wir wollen Kiwis und Nektarinen*' – 'We want kiwi fruit and nectarines.'

In both the communist and Western cases there was certainly a great deal of exaggeration, and it is for this reason that many others, of more liberal, left and generally critical orientation, disputed the reality of the conflict. They inferred that the ideological dimension of the Cold War was unimportant or merely a means by which the elites in the two camps preserved their systems of control. In much of this critical, or 'revisionist', literature – what I have elsewhere termed the 'internalist' approach – the Cold War was about many things other than the ideological competition of two social and political systems. Representatives of this approach would include Noam Chomsky, with his lucid if flawed theory of the functionality of the Cold War for both sides, which he once called 'the two dungeons theory', Mary Kaldor in her *The Imaginary War* or the American historian Walter

March 2008. For non-partisan reconstructions of the history, appeal and global impact of communism see Archie Brown, *The Rise and Fall of Communism*, London, Bodley Head, 2009; and Robert Service, *Comrades: A World History of Communism*, London, Macmillan, 2007.

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LaFeber, who saw the Cold War as a combination of several, combined, dimensions of conflict – US–European rivalry, North–South conflict, divisions within the USA, historic competition between the USA and Russia – but not the one between Western capitalism and Soviet communism. Other revisionist writers such as Ronald Steel developed the position that the USA had an interest in the Cold War, and he concluded that this is why the USA did not want to end it.[9] This debate on the function of ideology in the Cold War had consequently a curious inverted character, often roughly correlated with the political stance of the interpreter in question. For those on the right, who might be expected to see it as but another working out of the timeless balance of power and interstate rivalry, the conflict *was* to a considerable extent about ideology and 'values', about the rival claims of communism and Western capitalism, the self-styled 'Free World', and their competitive aspirations to global domain. It was the left and 'revisionist' writers who tended to be sceptical about this.

## THE LIMITS OF INTERNALISM

As already indicated, my own work has, in part, developed in exchange with what I have termed the 'internalist' school,[10] by recognizing domestic factors and interests, but also insisting on the continued impact and 'autonomy' of international factors. The 'internalist' school has an interesting pedigree. At one level it has much to recommend it: both sides did exaggerate their claims for global legitimacy, there *was* a marked degree of strategic accommodation, helped by the threat of nuclear war, and the confrontation did serve a number of useful internal functions, for arms manufacturers and guardians of authority of all kinds, including those based

[9] See Halliday, *Rethinking International Relations*, ch. 8.

[10] Halliday, *The Making of the Second Cold War*, sought to articulate a multidimensional account of the Cold War, within which the nuclear arms race had an important, but not preponderant, part. Another claim is also being made here, against the new hegemony of the historians, such as John Lewis Gaddis, who claim that newly released archives will in some more definitive way resolve the debates on the Cold War. However much archival material we have, major debates of theory and interpretation will continue – as is the case with, say, the origins of the First and Second World Wars, or the origins of European imperialism.

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on class, age, gender and race.[11] However, to accept all this is not the same as saying that no major geo-strategic and ideological conflict was taking place. Here a critique of ideology, the denial of its autonomy and consequential impact, became an obstacle to analysis. Why? One reason for the misinterpretation was immediate: the critique of discourses of power within the Cold War context, the desire to reduce the confrontation by stripping it of its legitimations and, very importantly, the desire to escape from the political straitjacket of the confrontation. Since the right or – on the left – dogmatic Brezhnevites had appropriated the language of confrontation, those opposed to both, as in the European 'peace movement', rejected this argument. Thus in much liberal and dissenting literature the Cold War became either the work of militaristic elites within each society, such as the 'military-industrial complex', or something termed 'militarism' (a remarkably vague term that, as Michael Mann has pointed out, has several meanings) or a result not of real conflict of interests, but of 'misperception' between the two sides. Explanations in terms of a real clash of interests, explanations at least partially formed by ideology, appeared to be invalidated or, if voiced, to be regarded as helping to justify the Cold War itself.

There is, however, a deeper set of issues here, perhaps most interestingly visible in an early progenitor of the 'internalist' position, C. Wright Mills's *The Causes of World War III*. Published in 1957, this book argued that the Cold War was driven by the military-industrial complexes of both East and West and that, sooner or later, through accident or miscalculation, the dynamic unleashed internationally by these two domestic power blocs would lead to catastrophe. Here we have, in a pristine form, many of the arguments that were to surface in the later writings of the internalist schools. This is evident not least in the assertion of the ultimate bureaucratic–military symmetry of the two blocs and of their leading states,[12] and in the analysis of international relations not as an autonomous sphere of political, economic

[11] The *gendered* dimensions of the Cold War certainly merit much greater attention: not only the role of rival images of the 'modern' woman projected by East and West, a contrast that provided the basis for the extraordinary 'kitchen debate' between Nixon and Khrushchev in the kitchen of the American exhibition in Moscow in 1959.

[12] Echoed, of course, in the widespread post-Trotskyite view that the USSR was really another variant of capitalism, this time 'state-capitalism', and hence not really in conflict with the West at all. This was something that would have been a bit of a surprise to anyone who actually lived in such a society.

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and military rivalry but as the precipitate of *internal* socio-economic development, of a militaristic dynamic, or what E. P. Thompson was later to call 'exterminism', that would eventually lead to war, Mills's 'World War III'.[13]

Mills's work embodies another theme that is central to the 'internalist' approach. This is the view of states as corrupted internally by international competition and involvement; in the particular case of Mills this goes back to the views of his theoretical forefather, Max Weber. Weber, with his image of modernity as an 'iron cage', was the social theorist who perhaps more than any other linked a pessimism and acceptance of inherent conflict in the international sphere to the analysis of contemporary capitalist society and whose concept of a bureaucratic state could, with political fairmindedness, be applied equally to the Western and communist systems (hence the attraction of liberals to 'convergence').

In the case of Mills and other US writers there was, however, another theme central to this debate: the belief that foreign entanglements, especially those since 1945, had corrupted the *polis*. Here we have strains of the view, articulated by Rousseau and even earlier by Plato, that political virtue involves as little contact with the foreign or alien as possible.[14] So much of the liberal US critique of the Cold War is therefore that the Cold War was unnecessary, bad for America and somehow an expression of the growing, corrupting, power of the centre. In Europe the same ancestors have spawned a parallel debate (evident in opposition to the EU and the World Trade Organization (WTO)), according to which the internationalization of politics and economics make radical change impossible, and have served to restrict what individual nation states can achieve. There is, though, at least as much reason to argue the opposite: namely that international

[13] Edward Thompson et al., *Exterminism and Cold War*, London, Verso, 1983. C. Wright Mills was a prominent left-wing American sociologist who taught at Columbia University and who died in 1962 aged 43. His most famous book was *The Power Elite*, New York, Oxford University Press, 1956. He was also an early champion of the Cuban revolution, whose cause he popularized during a visit to the LSE in 1960. There he met the political sociologist Ralph Miliband, who, in homage to his American colleague, later gave the name 'Wright' as a middle name to his first son, David, the future British foreign secretary.

[14] We may recall that in *The Laws* Plato recommended that no one under the age of 40 should be allowed to travel abroad, and then only to gather information on rival states.

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pressures and demonstration effects have served to advance, rather than inhibit, the cause of democracy and individual freedom. In the case of twentieth-century Europe – much as it may pain our liberal instincts to admit it – the First and Second World Wars served to accelerate the process of democratization, be it in the enlarging of the British franchise in 1928 or the granting of votes to women in France in 1948; that the Swiss were able to avoid such changes for so long[15] had, arguably, much to do with their abstention from international conflict. An additional case, that incorporation into the Europe Union has, in general, served to make its member societies more just and open, has much to recommend it.

At the risk of some provocation one could even return this argument to the USA: for all the talk of the 'national security state' and so forth, the period of the Cold War was in some important ways accompanied by a substantial increase in democracy and political freedom in the USA, not its restriction. Against the MacCarthyite period of the early 1950s – a nasty but rather secondary episode in the chronicle of twentieth-century repression – must be set the achievements of the civil rights movement of the early 1960s that enfranchised millions of people, and the rise of a number of mass social movements that had a major impact on US society, and indeed on the developed world as a whole. This major political change, the later consequences of which we see in the election of Barack Obama in November 2008, was intimately related to the Cold War, as US leaders such as Eisenhower and Kennedy, conscious of international repercussions of discrimination and racist violence, were well aware.[16] This progressive and radical aspect of the USA, one that arose in opposition to the dogmas and conformism of the Cold War, was to have major international repercussions as well: one of the ironies of the European situation since the Second World War (i.e. in the four decades of Cold War) has been that virtually all radical ideas came not from the Soviet bloc, or from the third world, but from the USA, from the civil rights, anti-war and student movements of the l960s through the women's and gay movements, and campaigns on such issues as freedom of information.

[15] Only in 1971 did all Swiss cantons grant voting rights to women.

[16] Mary Dudziak, *Cold War Civil Rights: Race and the Image of American Democracy*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2000; Thomas Borstellman, *The Cold War and the American Color Lines: American Race Relations in the Global Arena*, Harvard, MA, Harvard University Press, 2002.

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There are several considerations that may help to cast light on this internalist argument. First, it is simply not true to say that the conflicting ideologies of the Cold War were merely a sham. As already noted, it is often forgotten, and now happily denied on both sides, that there were many people in the East who believed in communism and in the ultimate prevalence of that system on a world scale. At least until the 1970s significant sections of the elite in the USSR and in other communist countries believed, for a combination of nationalist and ideological reasons, in the 'construction of socialism' and in the prospect of prevailing ultimately over the capitalist rival. There were not a few people in the German Democratic Republic in particular who saw the wall that was constructed in 1961 as the means of insulating the East and finally getting on with the business of building socialism. In Russia the advances in weapons technology and the third world victories of the mid- and late 1970s fostered illusions about a world role and about a long-run secular trend in the 'correlation of forces' that would finally bring about their victory. In Vietnam the USA received a striking lesson from rather a large number of people who believed in an alternative to the southern capitalist regime based in Saigon, and were prepared to fight and die, to the tune of over 2 million people, to make this very point. The reason why the Cold War ended was not because of military defeat, or mass revolt from below, but because of a crisis of ideological confidence, so that even the leadership of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) gave up the idea of 'constructing' an alternative order; this realization only came after 1985, however, and indeed after the failure of the first phase of perestroika in 1987–88. On the other side, it was commonplace for liberal writers in the West to say that no one really believed in capitalism, but this was patently not true, even if politicians tended not to use the word.

## HETEROGENEITY AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Beneath these specific historical questions related to the Cold War lies a broader issue in social theory, namely how far and in what ways differences in internal socio-political organization play a role in foreign policy. Ironically, international relations (IR) theory, in its orthodox geo-strategic or 'realist' form, denies this: although realism is theoretically neutral as between social systems and indeed denies

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the relevance of internal factors to foreign policy, 'realism' as the ideology of Cold War is an eloquent example of 'naturalization', of something that legitimizes a practice while denying the content of what is actually going on and making it appear universal. There is, however, another tradition in social theory that asserts that, behind clashes over territory or power, clashes over internal structure (i.e. the embodiment in social and political orders of ideology) do matter and may constitute conflicts more intractable than orthodox strategic ones. In contrast to geo-strategic or 'realist' approaches, which focus on changes in the balance of power, this alternative would imply that the conflict will continue until one side prevails over the other: the conflict is not settled by arms or by changes of territory, but by the ending of a fundamental ideological heterogeneity in international affairs.[17]

In contrast to mainstream international relations theory, much of early sociological theory rests on this presumption that international relations lead to an internal homogeneity of states; from Comte and Saint-Simon, through Marx to Fukuyama, this has been a recurrent theme. One of the most cogent formulations is, unexpectedly, by Edmund Burke, a thinker much misrepresented and tamed in conventional conservative rehabilitation, not least in that he is taken out of his Irish context and stripped of his principled support for the American Revolution. A classic statement of Burke's view is to be found in his *Letters on a Regicide Peace*, written in 1796–97 against those who wanted to negotiate a compromise with revolutionary France. Burke's argument was that there could be no peace between two conflicting sets of values and that the very existence of a France organized on a radically different basis would be a threat to the established monarchies of Europe. His claim, as comprehensible to any revolutionary as to a conservative, was straightforward enough:

> I never thought we could make peace with the system; because it was not for the sake of an object we pursued in rivalry with each other, but with the system itself that we were at war. As I understood the matter we were at war not with its conduct, but with its existence: *convinced that its existence and its hostility were the same.*[18]

[17] See Halliday, *Rethinking International Relations*, ch. 5, 'International Society as Heterogeneity', and ch. 8.

[18] Edmund Burke, *The Works and Correspondence of Edmund Burke*, London, Francis and Rivington, 1852, vol. 5, pp. 320–1, quoted in Halliday, *Rethinking International Relations*, p. 110 (my italics); pp. 109–12 provides an analysis of Burke's general view.

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The conclusion Burke drew was that war, pre-emptive war if possible, against revolutionary states was legitimate. Yet this approach can equally entail what became the logic of US policy in the post-war period – containment. In this sense, the classic formulation of US foreign policy in the diplomat George Kennan's long telegram, sent in February 1946 and reprinted in his anonymous article 'The Sources of Soviet Conduct',[19] bears careful re-reading today. The Kennan telegram calls for military action, but only to 'contain', to stop the USSR from advancing further, in Europe or elsewhere in the core areas of the West. Kennan was little bothered about the third world, even China: if countries like that wanted to go communist, that was their problem, not a threat to the USA. His main argument is Burkean: that the West should, in the face of the moral claims of communism to represent the future, avoid what the Marxist-Leninists were pinning their hopes on, the 'final crisis' of capitalism; it should build up its political and economic systems, to break the myth of capitalism's ultimate collapse and to compete successfully with the Soviet system. In the longer run, Kennan argued, the ideological self-confidence of the other side would be broken, and they would give way. This was, more or less, what happened. The Cold War was a contest of ideology but of ideology embodied in social and political systems. It ended, very much as Burke and Kennan would have expected it to, with one side prevailing.

## THE COLLAPSE OF COMMUNISM

The collapse of communism in 1989–91 was, for all sides, a great surprise. One of the many differences between cold and hot war was, indeed, that while everyone expects there to be an end of a hot war, there was an almost universal belief that the Cold War could, and would, last indefinitely. When the end came, it was clear, rapid and, in the core countries, relatively bloodless. Yet, while the fundamental weakness of the communist system was internal, in so far as the model of politics and economics being pursued was inevitably doomed, this does not explain the actual how or the why of the communist collapse. This latter required an international assessment. Conventional

[19] In *Foreign Affairs*, July 1947, signed 'X'.

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explanations of the geo-strategists do put forward some of the changes of the late 1980s, but the nuclear arms race and third world conflict culminating in Afghanistan, the two causes to which they most frequently resort, may explain some of the pressures on the communist system, however not its collapse. Here we need to examine another dimension of the conflict, one obscured by focus on nuclear weapons or third world conflicts – that of the social history of the Cold War. This was a social history of the mass movements that emerged from the end of the Second World War in Europe and East Asia as well as of the spontaneous political movements that participated in achieving the changes of 1989–91. It is, I would argue, in the field of social history broadly understood – including ideological change, the spread of education, shifting public attitudes, changes in elites, greater and at times dramatic improvements in knowledge about the outside world, as well as in growing tensions between states and society – that the explanation for the end of the Cold War can be found.[20]

The Cold War ended, and the communist system in Eastern Europe and the USSR collapsed, for three contingently related reasons: first, because the peoples of those countries aspired to become part of the Western model they had increasingly come to learn about; second, because the ruling elites in the East, and most prominently the leadership of the USSR, had lost the determination to sustain their system, by ideological mobilization or by tanks; and, finally, because some Western leaders, notably German Chancellor Helmut Kohl, saw their chance and, in the months before and after the collapse of the Berlin Wall in November 1989, made the final push. What is understated in the more transatlantic, 'strategic', bias of the US accounts is the role of the European Economic Community, and not least German prosperity, in this process. Kohl, an instinctive politician with a strong sense of history, saw his opportunity and brought the Eastern German Democratic Republic (GDR) to its knees in a few months: however, this was made possible by long-maturing social conditions.[21] That Kohl could do so quickly and

[20] On this see in particular Nicholas Bisley, *The End of the Cold War and the Causes of Soviet Collapse*, Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2004.

[21] The perceptions and calculations of German leaders at the time, and their sense that they were now pushing at an open door, are well reflected in the diaries of Kohl's security adviser, Horst Teltschik, *329 Tage*, Berlin, Siedler Verlag, 1991.

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decisively reflected the inner crisis that West German success had fostered in East Germany as well as a Soviet acquiescence.[22]

This loss of faith by communist societies, *and elites*, was in the long run inevitable, much as was the end of slavery or of the European empires, but that it happened when it did, and the form it took, was contingent on another factor: the personalities of the leading figures involved on the Soviet side, and most particularly on that of Gorbachev himself. Their change of mind, and their introduction of reforms that in the space of six years destroyed the system, reflected their awareness of how far, in that intersystemic rivalry that they had themselves defined, the Soviet Union had slipped behind the West, in military and economic terms. Gorbachev's recognition of the need for change, and then of the impossibility of reforming the system, must constitute one of the central themes in this whole story, most dramatically in the way in which it was the injunctions to Eastern European leaders to change, and then his clear indication to those leaders that Soviet tanks would not be used to save them, that provided the permissive conditions for the changes of 1989. While Kohl was influenced by the realization that Gorbachev would stop any use of force, this came on top of a broader evolution of spirits. The West did not win the Cold War through geopolitical containment and military deterrence. Nor was the Cold War won by the Reagan military build-up and the Reagan doctrine. The end of the Cold War came when, in the face of external pressures – strategic, economic and social – the Soviet leadership saw the need for change, in a context where they could not control the outcome.

## WHAT WAS COMMUNISM?

In hindsight, and given the singular character of the Cold War as an international contest, we can ask, and should ask, what communism was, what kind of political and social entity the West spent seven decades resisting. The question of what kind of political and social

[22] The Soviet 'green light' was important in those countries that Moscow controlled – Poland, Hungary, the GDR, Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria and, in Asia, Mongolia. Where Moscow could not control things and prevent violence the outcomes were more bloody: Romania, Yugoslavia and Albania. For one excellent comparative study see George Lawson, *Negotiated Revolutions: The Czech Republic, South Africa and Chile*, London, Ashgate, 2007.

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system *was* communism, too near to allow of an easy perspective, has occasioned several candidate explanations, including, in summary: a dictatorial tendency whereby revolutionary elites seized control of societies, a flawed movement for the self-emancipation of the working class, an expression of messianism, a product of oriental despotism, a failed developmentalist project. Some explanation involving different elements of these definitions may be most appropriate. We should not forget that this attempt to escape the conventional path of capitalist development was for a time remarkably successful, not least in the ideological and military challenge it posed to the West but was in the end forced to capitulate, and to do so almost without a semblance of resistance. If nothing else, the communist collapse deserves careful study from the perspective of those who believe in elite-led or state-dictated social and economic development: this is certainly one 'lesson' of communism.

There is, however, another aspect of communism that is of equal importance but is too easily overlooked in post-1989 triumphalist accounts in the West: communism was, as much as liberalism, itself a product of modernity, of the intellectual and social changes following on from the Industrial Revolution and of the injustices and brutalities associated with it. It was the result of the Industrial Revolution, whose early impact on the city of Manchester Engels described so vividly in 1844, of the cycles of boom and slump that culminated in the depression of the 1930s, and of the violence of colonial occupation, exploitation and war. Communism was not just a utopian project, it was a dramatic response to the inequalities and conflicts generated by capitalist modernity; the continuation of some of these same inequalities and conflicts today suggests that further challenges, of an as yet indeterminate nature, will result. Such indeed, for all the delusions and violence it also embodies, is that of radical Islamism.

Although its collapse is now seen as inevitable, this was not how the communist experiment appeared for many decades: both among those who supported it, and among those who feared it, there was a belief in the efficacy of socialist state intervention that subsequent events have belied. In the 1930s, even many of those who opposed it ascribed great success to Soviet planning and industrialization. Nowhere, indeed, was belief in communism's power more evident than among those states opposed to communism. Faced with the challenge of the Bolshevik Revolution and its successors, the capitalist world was forced to modernize its own political and economic systems,

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in the metropolitan and colonial worlds. The greatest achievement of communism may well turn out to have been not the creation of an alternative and more desirable system contrasted to capitalism, but its contribution to the modernization of capitalism itself: no account of the spread of the suffrage, the rise of the welfare state, the end of colonialism, or the economic booms of Europe and East Asia after 1945 could omit the catalytic role that – combined with pressure from within – the communist challenge from without played.

## THE LEGACIES OF COMMUNISM

Communism may indeed be dead, but it remains to be interred. To bury communism can only be done, moreover, on the basis of a recognition of what it represented, why millions of people struggled for, and believed in, this ideal and what it was they were struggling against. It can also only be done when the legacy of this ideology and movement is assessed and not simply forgotten. Communism embodied features of modern politics that should not be abandoned: a belief in mass participation in politics; a radical separation of religion and state; a promotion of the public, political and economic role for women; hostility to interethnic conflict; and an insistence on the need for the state to intervene in the economic and social affairs of people. Stalin and *Gosplan* may have discredited a particular form of 'planning', but the general application of rational scientific, managerial and political thinking to human affairs, the better to manage the future, is an entirely legitimate and necessary aspiration, not least in an age of resource depletion and looming ecological crisis. The interpretation given to these values was authoritarian, bloody, and in some cases criminal. This does not mean, however, that these goals, democratically and humanely conceived, are not necessary parts of a contemporary politics. On the other hand, we have to look, without ambiguity, at the failure of communism, and must not dodge the issue that too many retrospective analyses have avoided: the fact that communism's failure was necessary, not contingent. This system, denying political democracy and based on the command economy, did not just fail accidentally, because of a false policy here or there, let alone because classical Marxist theory was abandoned. It was bound to fail, from the beginning.

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Clearly, part of any evaluation of the Cold War, and of the central place within it of ideas derived from the socialist and Marxist tradition – in effect the radical legacy of the French Revolution – must be an assessment of what this outcome means for the project of socialism itself. It is common, and somewhat too easy, for defenders of Marxism in the contemporary world to argue that Marxist theory and communist practice were divergent, and that, hence, the theory bears no responsibility for the communist record. But if we ask the question of whether another Marxism, a more liberal or 'genuine' or 'democratic' one, or, if you incline in the other direction, a more resolute, militant, disciplined one, could have prevented the collapse of the communist states then the answer is no. Certainly there were, throughout its 70-year history, choices for the Soviet system: the new economic policy (NEP) could have been continued after 1928; there could have been a different trajectory in the mid-1930s if Stalin not Kirov had been assassinated, or Bukharin become party leader; if Khrushchev had not been ousted in 1964 economic reform, of a kind Gorbachev was to attempt after 1985, might have begun 20 years earlier. And so on. As for the final period, the Soviet system could certainly have continued for another generation if another leader – a CPSU conservative such as Romanov or Grishin – had come to power in March 1985 instead of Gorbachev. But, in the longer run, neither prevailing Communist Party ideology, nor, in my view, any variant of the Marxist tradition remotely related to 1917 could have saved, let alone developed, that regime. It had reached a dead end; that aporia, contingent in time and form, was inevitable.

## THE PROJECT OF REVOLUTIONARY SOCIALISM

The revolutionary socialist movement was at once a global movement of collective purposive action, across all continents, and a product of the structural tensions within the development of capitalism over the previous two centuries. It is pointless to begin a critique of it by seeing it as something that could, in its negative and positive features, have been avoided, or as, neoliberal orthodoxy would claim, something that was a historical mistake. It had its illusions, but so does the capitalist ideology that posits that everyone can become a millionaire, the newly fashionable 'wellbeing' fantasy that

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the process of ageing can be halted or reversed, or the irrational belief in divine beings and afterlives that much of humanity still espouses and, in many societies, East and West, tries to impose on others. Like these fantasies, socialism was also an outcome of the prevailing intellectual culture, as much as were the other features of the development of capitalist modernity – be they democratization and scientific change, or authoritarian capitalism, interstate war or colonialism. That said, in its very illusions and delusions, the revolutionary socialist movement was itself a creature of its times, and of some of the chimeras that beset it, not least a belief in the inevitability of progress, and in a scientificity of human evaluation and action. There were and, to some extent, remain elements in the Marxist tradition that contributed not just to the revolutions, but to the particular – bloody and criminal – record of these regimes. Marxist elements were especially retained in four central elements of the communist programme: the authoritarian concept of the state, the mechanistic idea of progress, the myth of 'Revolution'[23] and the instrumental character of ethics. These nineteenth-century illusions were, moreover, linked to the legacy of the French Revolution.

First, and as central to revolutionary Marxism as to the radical politics of the Islamic world, is the anti-democratic, Jacobin, theory of politics and of the 'State'; this, not the self-emancipation of the masses, or workers, or oppressed Muslims, is the core concept, indeed *the core goal*, of all modern revolutionary politics, secular or religious, from Lenin to Osama bin Laden. Second, and equally central to modern revolutionary thought, is the supra-historical concept of Progress. Of course, as a certain idea of Progress it can, in certain ways, be defended: there *has* been progress in, for example, medical knowledge, human wealth or the development of capitalist democracy. This does not mean, however, that there is a historical *telos* of a kind implicit in most nineteenth-century thought, let alone that the pursuit of such a *telos* guides, or legitimates, political action and, in many cases, the killing of people for being 'reactionary'.[24]

Closely related to the myth of 'progress' was the third dangerous myth, that of Revolution, not just 'revolution' as a historical moment

[23] Halliday, *Revolution and World Politics*, ch. 12.

[24] Robert Nisbet, *History of the Idea of Progress: An Enquiry into its Origins and Growth*, New York, Basic Books, 1981.

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of transition, and a means of making the transition from one historical epoch to the other, but Revolution, indeed '*The* Revolution', as a historical myth, a cataclysm that was both inevitable and necessarily emancipatory. Part of the rethinking of the socialist tradition has to be a re-evaluation of this myth, one almost as powerful and for sure as destructive as that of 'nation' and the drawing of a distinction between what one may term 'actually existing revolutions' and the broader, ideological, myth. This latter myth, included within which was the idea of the 'irreversibility' of socialist revolutions, was shattered in 1989–91. The related idea, that somehow Revolution in the mythic sense remained possible within developed capitalism, was disproved long ago, arguably by the failure of the German revolution in the early l920s – in my view in the failure of the revolutions of 1848. On the other hand, the reality of revolutions as historical moments – inevitable and voluntaristic, emancipatory and coercive – is central to the history of the modern world. Not only did these revolutions transform the countries in which they occurred, but, by forcing the dominant classes in the counter-revolutionary states to reform, they transformed capitalism as well.

The underpinning of these three ideas – State, Progress, Revolution – was the fourth component of this legacy, the lack of an independently articulated ethical dimension. Of course there *was* a supposedly ethical dimension: whatever made for progress, crudely defined as winning control for a party leadership and gaining power for an – idealized – working class, was defended. However, the greatest failure of socialism over its 200 years, especially in its Bolshevik form, was the lack of an ethical dimension in regard to the rights of individuals and citizens in general, indeed in regard to all who were not part of the revolutionary elite, and the lack of any articulated and justifiable criteria applicable to the uses, legitimate and illegitimate, of violence and state coercion. If we take three of the greatest forms of conflict and collective action that humans are capable of – war, nationalism, revolution – we can see in the first the theoretical bases of an ethical position: on when it is legitimate to go to war, *jus ad bellum*, and what degree of violence is legitimate in war, *jus in bello*. For nationalism and even more so for revolutions, such ethical consideration does not exist: there is no argument as to the moral foundation of an action separate from the pursuit of power. No one argues, as they should, that a particular bid for national independence is not worth the violence, the loss of life. The very discourse is impossible:

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the only question is whether it is feasible or not. The legitimacy of nationalist, and revolutionary, movements is self-awarded. Nationalism brooks no ethical judgement superior to its own demands. The same applies to revolution: there is no *jus ad revolutionem* or *jus in revolutione*. Communism was 'moralistic' in that it developed a moral legitimation of itself and a critique of its enemies, but this was purely instrumental: it was the lack of an autonomous ethical dimension – 'autonomous' in the sense of not being subjected to the pursuit and retention of power – that enabled the communist tradition to act as it did.

## BEYOND MARXISM AND ANTI-MARXISM

The discursive reinterpretation of the Cold War and of communism therefore leads to discussion of my second theme in this lecture: the need to rethink radical ideas on a broader scale. Here, in keeping with developments in contemporary political thinking, freed of Marxist and anti-Marxist blinkers and prohibitions, and in keeping with a belief in the recuperation of other radical and critical traditions, I would draw attention to the need to study and learn from radical movements that were pre-Marxist and non-Marxist. Whatever else Marxism loses in the late twentieth century it should lose its arrogance, its claim to have a unique insight into history, vis-à-vis other contemporary schools of critical and democratic thought, or its claim that somehow and at some point – 1847, or 1857, or 1871 – it achieved a decisive, once-and-for-all rupture with its 'pre-scientific' antecedents. The arrogance of Althusser's 'epistemological rupture' must end. Marxism is, along with other political ideologies – liberalism included – a product of the Enlightenment, and it is within this broad tradition that the future of critical and emancipatory thought must be located. Marxists too easily turned their backs on their antecedents, and on other emanicipatory and critical currents – we need only look at the long-standing hostility to 'bourgeois' feminism, which did not begin to be eroded until the 1970s. We can look too at the refusal of socialists to take into account what 'bourgeois' sociology had to say about bureaucratization and the corruption of power within authoritarian systems, when this was exactly what was happening in the very countries that were supposedly making a transition to a higher political and social order. Equally blind was the Marxist

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refusal to take seriously the question of nationalism, a failure that led either to catastrophic conflicts with nationalism, or to an unreflective, opportunistic, accommodation with it.

## TWO PRINCIPLES IN PERIL: DEMOCRACY, SECULARISM

This need for retrospective and contemporary rethinking applies, among other things, to our analysis of two facets of modern political life that are to some degree imperilled: democracy and secularism. The failure of authoritarian regimes of the right in the middle and latter part of the twentieth century (Germany, Italy and Japan in the early 1940s; Spain, Portugal and Greece in the mid-1970s; South Africa, Brazil and Chile in the late 1980s) and of the collapse of authoritarian regimes of the left (Russia, Eastern Europe in the late 1980s) led many to proclaim a 'triumph' of democracy. This proposition, in essence, confused two different claims: first, that liberal democracy was, in principle and in historical perspective, the most desirable and effective means of regulating societies, and that an alternative communist system was not possible; second that this model of government was now, in the aftermath of Cold War and the collapse of communism and the remaining right-wing regimes of Africa and Latin America, prevailing worldwide. The apparent discordance between the second claim and reality was cosmetically resolved by use of such terms as 'emerging' democracies, of 'transitions' and, indeed, 'transitology'; all, we were assured, would sort itself out and in time these states would conform. American institutes 'certified' countries that held elections, institutes awarded quantified ratings of the democratic levels attained.

We know enough now to see that this is far too simple, if not plain wrong: the *desirability* of democracy, as argued for by Francis Fukuyama in his thesis on 'the end of history', is an entirely defensible proposition, but the *actuality* of democracy, or the likelihood that in any proximate political future it will prevail worldwide, is not so. Something identifiable and, with due control of the economy, probably enduring has *emerged* from post-communist societies, but it is not Western democracy. 'Transitology', if by this is meant the study of the transformation of authoritarian states into liberal democratic ones, was looking in the wrong direction: there was a transition, from one, relatively egalitarian and ideologically polemical, system to another,

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grossly unequal and corrupt but ideologically more, if not entirely, accommodating.

Here indeed, and in particular if we also invoke the core international relations value of 'order', a realistic view of the development of the state in former communist or revolutionary states since the end of Cold War can serve to cast a very different, and in many ways, disturbing light. In some cases, such as the former Russian republics (except the Baltic states), new dictatorial regimes have consolidated control of the economy and states, and are, if anything, entrenching their power, privileges and acquisitive capacities. In others, such as China and Vietnam, the former communist elites have turned themselves into managers of a new, and for the moment very successful, authoritarian capitalism. Elsewhere, however, the collapse of communist power has been followed not by any discernible new order, dictatorial, semi-authoritarian or authoritarian, but by a breakdown in political and social order, and, in some cases, a virtual collapse of state into anarchy. In effect, this is a widespread and extremely dangerous collapse of the state: in the uncontrolled semi-criminal areas of Transdniestr, Kosovo and Nagorno-Karabagh, in the post-invasion chaos of Iraq and Afghanistan, and in the belt of disorder and violence that encompasses Yemen in south-west Arabia and Somalia on the opposite shore of the Gulf of Aden. A swath of anarchy and violence prevails in that region stretching from the borders of Afghanistan with China to those of Somalia with Kenya and Ethiopia. In these countries, and with dramatic implications for the rest of the world – from the rise in drug-trading and piracy to the Al Qaeda attack on the USA in September 2001 – the post-Cold War record has been profoundly disturbing. Whatever else, these states are not 'in transition' to anything compatible with the liberal democratic model or with the most minimal international relations conception of 'order'. Here the legacy of communism has been not democracy, but violence, chaos and state collapse.

If the issue of democracy has been surrounded with much simplistic optimism, the same applies to the question of religion. Secularist rigour, in particular the need to recuperate, defend and develop elements in the broader field of radical social and political theory, certainly needs to be applied to the question of religion and to the authority of supposedly sacred texts, invisible deities and bearded, self-appointed, representatives of such ideas and deities in the contemporary world. The objection here is not to belief as such, which

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may well meet the moral and psychological needs of much of mankind, and in a way that rational ideas palpably cannot, but to the intrusion into – when not an imposition on – modern society of forms of authority justified in sacred terms. The difficulty is with the respect – not to say grovelling – to which superstition, irrationality and what is now mawkishly termed 'faith' have come to receive in our society, and even more so in the USA.

My view on this, resolute and rational, is inevitably all the stronger because I grew up in Ireland and have devoted so much of my political and intellectual work to the politics of the Middle East. In that latter region the last 40 years, taking the June 1967 Arab–Israeli war as a starting point, have seen the discrediting and displacement of ideologies based on secular values, be these nationalism of the Nasserite kind, or communism, in favour of a militant populist Islamism that rejects, even as it borrows the vocabulary of Western radicalism, the Enlightenment project. I have seen what has happened in Yemen, Iran and Afghanistan and, more broadly, the surrender of large sections of the intelligentsia in these countries to forms of irrationalism and retrograde ideology. That the secular elements in Israeli society are also being overwhelmed by a torrent of obscurantism and religion-inspired prejudice compounds the problem.

To argue for secularism need not involve overstating the case in its favour, and here some reflection on the Cold War is also in order. It is certainly evident, in the Middle East as elsewhere, that the modernist Enlightenment project, as envisaged in the twentieth century, was inadequately and often crudely articulated and applied. As noted already, we are not living in a world where some undifferentiated progress is inevitable or where secularization and disenchantment are universal. Many of the claims of reason were overstated, when not repressively imposed. Certainly, the greatest crimes of the twentieth century were not committed by religious fundamentalists.[25] The very term 'secularism', which lies at the heart of this debate, may also benefit from re-examination; the least one can say is that the French should not be allowed to have a monopoly on its definition. Yet for all their limitations and evasions, these Enlightenment concepts remain a foundation on which it is possible and, I would argue, necessary to

[25] Of the estimated 187 million 'political' deaths of the twentieth century, very few were carried out by religious fanatics and militants.

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build – as important a basis as are our concepts of democracy, individualism, rights and tolerance. We should be prepared to redefine and defend them. Let us be quite clear about it: the fundamentalists of all hues are themselves as unrelenting and determined in pursuit of their goals and are quite prepared to silence, and in some cases to kill, those who get in their way, as well as, for what it is worth, to send the rest of us to hell. On the side of those who are not fundamentalists there should be some greater element of clarity, intransigence and, indeed, combat. The legacy of the Enlightenment is relevant because, inter alia, the battles that were fought over two centuries ago are, as Pope Benedict XVI so mischievously, if ineffectively, reminds us, far from being won.

## REALISM, INTERNATIONALISM AND REASON

Against this background of the collapse and discrediting of the radical communist project, and the end of Cold War, but faced with a world of manifest inequalities, injustices and inefficiencies, if I had to situate myself in regard to contemporary political debates, I would locate myself, in spirit if not always in the letter, close to the positions of Jürgen Habermas. I say this not to align myself with the Frankfurt School tradition in general, but to endorse the central motifs of the Habermasian position: the necessity for an enduring, non-illusory, critique of contemporary capitalism; the identification of an emancipatory space within capitalist modernity; the development of a position that draws on historical materialism and related radical inheritors of the Enlightenment.[26] This does not involve rejecting or adhering to Marxism as conventionally formulated, but rather integrating some of the insights of Marxism into a broader, critical and emancipatory, perspective.

An agenda for dealing with this new world, an ideology for our times, involves several components. In the first place, it requires realism, an informed assessment of the distribution of power in the contemporary world, and of the possibilities open to those states with the greatest amount of that power. Neither benign indulgence of the given, nor unreconstructed anti-imperialist rejection will help much

[26] E.g. in Jürgen Habermas, *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity*, Cambridge, Polity, 1997.

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in assessing how, for example, the USA or the UK can be expected to respond to issues of strategic or economic crisis in the contemporary world. This realism also involves a scepticism about radical alternatives that have, since the late 1990s, enjoyed renewed 'global' popularity, as, for example, articulated by the Global Justice Movement originated in Porto Alegre, in a campaign that pays scant, if any, attention to the negative lessons of the past century or so of revolutionary history. It should also accept, if with caution, the innovative and reforming potentiality of liberal politics and economics: if capitalism has disappointed its supporters, by the idiocy of its speculative uncertainty and its inability to diffuse its wealth, it has also, on occasion, surprised its critics by getting some things right.

Second, there needs to be a renewed commitment to, and popular mobilization in favour of, values that qualify and where necessary go beyond the nation, of a contemporarily reformulated internationalism. This internationalism should be understood not as the denial of national identities, cultures, legitimacies or – as in the monolithic nineteenth-century Marxist *and* liberal vision – the progressive disappearance of national differences, but as recognition that all of these are, as the work of Amartya Sen has emphasized, necessarily plural, and that on many issues the international should take precedence over the particular. As I have put it elsewhere, nationalism should be called to justify itself before a higher tribunal; it should 'know its place'.

It is one of the most miserable features of the contemporary ideological context that so many thinkers have in one way or another capitulated to particularist thinking, be this in the form of nationalism, relativism or postmodernist frivolity and scepticism. In this context, too many political theorists and philosophers – but not, to his great credit, our late colleague Brian Barry – have yielded to supposedly 'communitarian' discourse. A counterattack against this parochialism may best be developed not by recourse to Marxism alone: Marxism, obsessed with its idea of 'progress', wrongly saw such thinking as transitory, something that would 'wither' away; communist and socialist politics, on the other hand, have too easily adjusted to, and even embraced, nationalism and reneged on their universalist origins. To develop, in theory and practice, an effective internationalist ethic and politics involves both recuperating the cosmopolitanism of the Enlightenment, which Marxism partly inherited, and engaging with current debates in political and social theory on

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globalization and the alternatives to it.[27] This involves a recognition within the richer and more powerful countries that in the post-Cold War world a retreat to a narrow definition of 'national interest' is both impossible and morally reprehensible. The refusal to confront issues of ecology or North–South relations, except in the most selfish of terms, is one index of a failure to grasp the requirements of the situation. The pretence at international coordination and reform of global institutions that accompanied the financial crisis does not mask the fact that major economies, the USA in the lead, are seeking primarily national solutions to the problem.

The prevalence within international conflicts and many other areas of international debate of the issue of nationalism, and of appeals to relativist justifications, reinforces the need for something else, a cautious but firm insistence on the universal conception and implementation of rights. Events since 1989 give plenty of illustrations of this point: what is most revolting about all the new nationalisms that have emerged from the post-communist world is their disregard for established norms of political and social behaviour, be it in regard to ethnic minorities, dissenters or women, and the

[27] This is, in summary form, the core of a project on which I have been working in recent years, parts of which have been published in chapter and journal form, and which I hope to complete with publication of a volume, a contemporary defence of internationalism, in 2010. Work on this was greatly assisted by the award of Senior Research Fellowship by the Leverhulme Trust in 2003–5 and by facilities provided by CIDOB, the Barcelona Centre for Research and Documentation, in 2005–7. See, inter alia, F. Halliday, 'Three Concepts of Internationalism', *International Affairs*, 64: 2 (1988), pp. 187–98; F. Halliday, 'The Perils of Community', the 1998 Ernest Gellner Lecture, published in *Nations and Nationalism*, 6: 2 (2000), pp. 153–71; Halliday, *Revolution and World Politics*, chs 3 and 4; F. Halliday, 'Delusions of Difference', in Halliday, *The World at 2000*; F. Halliday, 'The Fate of Solidarity: Uses and Abuses', in Christine Chinkin and David Downes (eds), *Crime, Social Control and Human Rights: Essays in Honour of Stan Cohen*, Oxford, Deer Park Productions, 2007; F. Halliday, 'Revolutionary Internationalism and its Perils', in John Foran, David Lane and Andreja Zivkovic (eds), *Revolution in the Making of the Modern World*, London, Routledge, 2008. These articles of a more general or historical orientation have been accompanied by a series of case studies of revolutionary internationalism on the one side (F. Halliday, *Revolution and Foreign Policy, the Case of South Yemen 1967–1987*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1990; Halliday, *Revolution and World Politics*), and of critiques of nationalist, religious and other ideologies on the other (F. Halliday, *Islam and the Myth of Confrontation*, London, I. B. Tauris, 1995; F. Halliday, *Nation and Religion in the Middle East*, London, Saqi, 2000; F. Halliday, *100 Myths About the Middle East*, London, Saqi, 2005).

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indulgence that this too often receives, with regard to them, as with regard to third world nationalist and religious movements, from the liberal consensus in the developed countries. In many post-communist countries, obnoxious practices of discrimination on national grounds are being practised – not just in former Yugoslavia, but in the Baltic states, Georgia, Romania and elsewhere. Islamic countries in their droves are returning to shari'a law, without anyone seeming to care that in several respects – not least in the equality of men and women before the law, and in the infliction of corporal punishments – this code is quite inconsistent with international conventions to which these countries are all signatories. The chauvinism and harassing of immigrants in Berlusconi's Italy only compounds this trend. Here postmodernism and liberal apologia act as the servants of repression and viciousness. Without comment on the particular rights and wrongs of any one case, it could be suggested that a general reduction of sympathy for particularist ideas and policies, a period of benign universalist impatience, is now in order.

In sum, the Cold War is over and most unlikely to return. However, the tensions of modern society and politics that it and the communist movement expressed are as present as ever. Capitalism and liberal democracy may be the best options we have, but they have not resolved the major issues facing the modern world, and we forget this, as happened in the market-worshipping folly of the past decades, at our peril. The need for critical, radical and imaginative ideas, expressed in intelligent critique and articulated by political parties and movements, remains as necessary as ever. We are far from a world without ideological choices, or where managerial solutions alone can suffice. This, even more than the perils of nuclear war, the role of ideology or the continuing rebellions of the third world, is the central lesson, and legacy, of the Cold War.

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