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Politics, Ethics and the Challenges to Democracy in 'New Independent States'

Georgian Philosophical Studies, II

Edited by
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William Sweet and *Daniel Ahern*

Preliminary Remarks

The relation between politics and ethics is an uncertain one. Is one subordinate to the other, are they mutually supportive, or incompatible, or have they nothing substantive to do with one another? This issue claims a significant amount of contemporary attention, though it has its roots in some of the central classical texts of philosophy. Questions concerning the role of politics or the state in the promotion of the good life, how political authority is legitimate, the limits of sovereignty, the citizen's obligations towards the state and of the state to its citizens, and what constitutes a violation of these obligations, are far from new. It is not surprising, then, that many today still turn to classical authors to see how their ideas bear on articulating and defining this situation.

This matter obviously involves concepts that have a wide range of meanings or applications – not only the concepts 'politics' and 'ethics' themselves, but also 'democracy,' 'nation,' 'state,' 'culture,' 'community,' 'majority,' 'minority,' 'tradition,' 'person,' 'rights,' 'law,' and 'freedom.' And it is plausible to hold that many of the puzzles and problems in determining relations among politics and ethics (such as whether and when nations or communities have a right to independence or self-determination – and how such a right is to be exercised) are products of the wide range of meaning of these terms.

Yet the relation of politics and ethics is not just an issue concerning the legitimacy of the authority of a particular political leader or regime, or how corruption by government officials compromises the authority of the government as a whole. It reaches into all aspects of social, political, and economic life at a time where there is an international community of states, as well as a highly complex set of economic, political, and legal relations, and an increasing diversity in the makeup of local populations. Nor should we think that the relation of politics and ethics can be easily universalized. There are, on the one hand, states that have a long history – such as China, Poland, and Russia (not to mention 'nations' such as the Basque Country, Euzkadi, which is reputed to have existed for some 10,000 years). But there are also some 127 countries that are fifty years old or less.[1] Because of the differences in history, culture, and traditions, many of the ethical issues confronting these states – and the solutions available to them – will differ.

Still, there are some issues that are undoubtedly similar for many. Some 15 of these new states – often referred to, in scholarly literature, as the 'new independent states' – are the result of the collapse of the Union of the Soviet Socialist Republics between March 1990 and December 1991.[2] And among these 'new independent states' are the three South Caucasus States – Armenia,

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[1] See Dr. Richard Griggs, "The Breakdown of States," http://www.cwis.org/fwdp/International/statebrk.txt [Accessed 2005 01 21].

[2] These states are: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belorussia (Belarus), Estonia, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kirghizia (Kyrgyzstan), Latvia, Lithuania, Moldavia (Moldova), Russia, Tadzhikistan (Tajikistan), Turkmenistan, Ukraine, and Uzbekistan. Lithuania declared its independence in March 1990, Estonia and Latvia in August 1991, and all three joined the United Nations in September 1991. The USSR itself was officially dissolved in December 1991.

Azerbaijan, and Georgia. To speak of the relation of politics and ethics in these cases, one must take into account a number of common features – the legacy of Soviet domination in culture and traditions, new political sovereignty and calls for (re)establishing economic stability, ethnic problems and the challenges of religious diversity, globalization, maintaining central authority and national unity, separatism (e.g., Karabakh separatism), the use of criminal violence across national borders, the activities of international criminal organizations, corruption, terrorism, the continuing presence of Russian military bases throughout the region, Russia's continuing role as a regional power,[3] and so on.

This volume seeks to investigate some of the different ways of understanding the relation between politics and ethics and how the challenges of political change in the three South Caucasus states – particularly the Republic of Georgia – have been, and might be, met. While the theoretical questions have a broad, general character, events and many of the issues in the region are constantly changing. At the time of the initial presentation of these papers, the first term of office of U.S. President George W. Bush had only just begun, the attacks of 11 September 2001 on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon had yet to take place, the Russian conflict with Chechen separatists had only recently entered its current phase (i.e., that which began in mid-1999), and there were still many months to go before the widespread protests of November 2003 that led to the resignation of Eduard Shevardnadze, who had been President of Georgia since 1995.

Realism and Idealism

If we begin from the perspective of politics, we see that there are at least two principal – and yet very distinct – views of the relation between politics and ethics. One view is that politics should be restrained and directed by ethical principle. Those who hold this view are often called 'idealists.'

Idealists believe that there are fundamental ethical and social values (such as freedom and human dignity) that are worth fighting for at all times, and that these values should dominate in policy making. Political leaders, then, should adhere to these values or principles, even in crises. Idealists also share a belief in the essential goodness of human beings, that human beings are fundamentally cooperative and naturally seek peace, and that the state can contribute to the realization of peace and human goodness – for example, through social engineering and by taking an active role in nation building.

Idealists also recognize the relevance and importance of the political and economic interdependence of states (or nations) – one that today is exhibited in such things as the Internet, the global mass media, international conventions and agreements on the shared physical environment, and globalized trade and investment – and that political stability can (only) be achieved on a global scale. Because freedom and dignity are fundamental values, individual states must take into account the existence of diverse cultures and political perspectives within a global unity. Moreover, given the preceding assumptions about human nature and values, idealists insist that foreign policy requires dialogue, and that the aim of political activity is peace on a global scale. Force, then, should be a last resort, and when it is undertaken it should be only after extensive multilateral agreement.

The idealist view is often contrasted with that held by those who are generally called 'realists.'

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[3] Sergei Arutiunov, Andranik Migranian, Emil Payin, and Galina Starovoitova, "Ethnic Conflict and Russian Intervention in the Caucasus" (1 August 1995). Institute on Global Conflict and Cooperation. IGCC Policy Papers. Paper PP16. http://repositories.cdlib.org/igcc/PP/PP16.

Realism is a view often associated with Thucydides (c.460/455 BCE – c.400 BCE), Niccolo Machiavelli (1469-1527), Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679), and – more recently – Hans Morgenthau (1904-80).[4] It is exemplified by the famous remark of Otto von Bismarck (1815–98) that "Politics is the art of the possible [*Die Politik ist die Lehre von Moglichen*].[5] Realists see themselves as pragmatists. They are not especially concerned with discovering, identifying, or respecting universal moral principles; the primary concern of political leaders is to identify and to seek to preserve their nation's particular interests, and to work from there. Realism tends to reflect a pessimistic view of human nature – understanding that human beings are motivated fundamentally, not by a good or by moral or spiritual values, but by the desire for power. Thus, according to realism, the idealistic notions that human beings are naturally cooperative and naturally seek peace, are naive. And, given their assumptions about human nature and human rights, then, realists believe that states should do whatever it takes to maintain their power and protect their interests.

A similar distinction concerning the relation between ethics and politics can be found in the history of ethics and of social and political philosophy. For example, there are those who hold that there is a close relation between ethics and politics, and that the latter is subordinate to, or dependent upon, the former. In Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*, for example, ethics and the understanding of how individuals can pursue moral excellence are matters that are essential to life in the community or *polis*; the close relation between the ethical and the political is evident in the very last sentence of the *Nicomachean Ethics*, which reads: "So let us begin our discussion."[6] In mediaeval thought, human law and political authority were not *sui generis*, but had to reflect moral principle. Law, as Thomas Aquinas wrote in his *Summa Theologiae*, is "an ordinance of reason for the common good, made by him who has care of the community, and promulgated."[7] Indeed, since law itself had its root in the natural and, ultimately, eternal or divine law, politics was to conform not merely to morality but to the transcendent good of human beings.

In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, new regimes and new states (e.g., the United States, France, and Germany) were concerned to give an explanation of the moral authority and warrant for their actions – and they did so in the preambles to constitutions and declarations of rights that were inspired by earlier ethical and political philosophy. Similarly, the most significant political revolution of the early twentieth century – the Russian revolution of 1917 – was preceded by an ethical appeal to principles of justice and humanism found in the writings of Marx and Engels – especially in *The Communist Manifesto*. The attacks on political colonialism in Africa and Asia in the mid- and late twentieth century, too, had a fundamental moral character. The *Freedom Charter of the African National Congress* (1955), for example, provided a moral basis for its call for "equal rights and opportunities" and a "democratic state, based on the will of the people."[8]

Yet the relation of ethics to statecraft – either because of new understandings of 'virtue' and morality, or because of a new analysis of the political – has also been seen to have a radically different character. For some, morality is simply subordinate or incidental to politics.

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[4] 4 Hans J. Morgenthau, "Six Principles of Political Realism" in his *Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace*, Fifth Edition, Revised (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1978), pp. 4-15; see http://www.mtholyoke.edu/acad/intrel/morg6.htm.

[5] From a conversation with Meyer von Waldeck, August 11, 1867 — See *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations* (1979), 3d ed., p. 84.

[6] *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book X, ch. 9, 1181b.

[7] *Summa Theologiae*, I-II, question 90, article 4, resp.

[8] See Patricia Cormack, *Manifestos and Declarations of the Twentieth Century* (Toronto: Garamond Press, 1998), pp. 139-143.

The*Peloponnesian War* of Thucydides – according to Leo Strauss[9] – is one of the first sources of the view that sees international relations as basically anarchic and immoral. For Thucydides, "the strong do what they have the power to do and the weak accept what they have to accept"[10] – and that is the beginning and end of morality. Machiavelli separated ethics (as Aristotle would have understood it) from statecraft – or, better, saw that ethics and virtue were entirely subordinate to power, with the result that politics was seen as an end in itself, and power is to be preserved and expanded for its own sake.[11] Hobbes' sovereign was the authority of all matters of fact and value[12] – with the consequence that ethics or morality was subordinate to the interpretation of the sovereign. What motivates all human beings, on Hobbes's view, was not reason or 'the good,' but the passions – and particularly the desire for power after power that ceases only in death.[13] And while tyrants and dictators still seek – as they have almost always sought – to give an ethical or moral 'justification' for their policies, 'values' did nothing (and could do nothing) to restrain or stop wars, genocides, and threats of wars.

For Nietzsche, the long-standing view of the relation between politics and ethics – from the classical, through the mediaeval, to the modern – had to be entirely overturned.[14] In his self-proclaimed capacity as "cultural physician" – one whose task was to diagnose the ills of his culture – Nietzsche recognized that ethics and politics have been inextricably connected. These relations, however, are corrupt and contemptible. Existing values served only to undermine the health of culture and of the political – and democracy only served to reinforce the decadence and illness of the culture. Values must be "transvalued" to restore health to culture and society – and so the natural strength and power of culture, and of the individuals within that culture, set the standard for moral principle.

The separation of ethics and politics – if not, some would claim, the subordination of the former to the latter – has been a hallmark of postmodern thought. Seen (as they might admit) as the inheritors of Nietzsche, figures such as Jean Baudrillard, Michel Foucault, Richard Rorty, and others have challenged appeals to objectivity and truth, claiming that the distinction between the true and the imaginary, or the objective and the subjective, or the moral and the immoral, is untenable. Moreover, reason itself must be seen for what it is – an instrument of power and domination. And while these individuals tend to agree that tyrants "should" be exposed and opposed, they do not or cannot clearly say what the force of this "should" is.

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[9] Leo Strauss, "What is Political Philosophy?," in *What is Political Philosophy? and Other Studies* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1959).

[10] Thucydides, *The Pelponnesian War*, trans. Rex Warner (New York: Penguin. 1978), p. 402.

[11] 11 See Benedetto Croce, "Per la storia della filosofia della politica," in *Elementi di politica* (Bari: Laterza, 1925, pp. 59-67), Sheldon Wolin writes that "Machiavelli believes in a permanent "economy of violence"" (Wolin, *Politics and Vision* (Boston: Little, Brown. 1960) cited in Isaiah Berlin, "The Question of Machiavelli," *New York Review of Books*, Vol. 17, No. 7 (November 4, 1971).) Federico Chabod writes that the "true and essential contribution to the history of human thought" made by Machiavelli was his "clear recognition of the autonomy and the necessity of politics, 'which lies outside the realm of what is morally good or evil'." See Chabod, *Machiavelli and the Renaissance*, trans. David Moore (Boston: Harvard University Press, 1958).

[12] Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, ed. Michael Oakeshott (New York: Macmillan, 1962) Ch. 18: the sovereign is "to be judge of opinions and doctrines" (sect 6) and of "all controversies ... concerning fact" (sect 8).

[13] *Leviathan*, Ch. 11, sect. 2.

[14] See *Nietzsche: The Ethics of an Immoralist*, by Peter Berkowitz (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995); see also the chapter on "Ethics, Politics and the Critique of Political Liberalism" in *Nietzsche, Politics and Modernity*, by David Owen (Thousand Oaks, CA / London: Sage Publications, 1995).

Discussion of politics and ethics today undoubtedly reflects these two very different views of the relations between them. And one's sympathies for either of these views will undoubtedly be influenced by how one understands contemporary political, cultural, and ethical debates, and the challenges of modern political life. In those cases where public participation in political life has been sporadic or only very recent, those involved might find themselves drawn very quickly in this debate to one side or the other. This is especially likely to be true when one looks at some of the crises facing the new democracies and the new independent states.

From the side of politics and from the side of the history of ethics, then, there is a clear division of opinion on the relation between ethics and politics. Of course, there are variants of the views that might be broadly described as 'idealist' and as 'realist' – but there is more than enough evidence to support the claim that there are two distinct camps on this issue. This is where we are today.

The Situation in the 'New Independent States'

What are the distinctive challenges that are faced by the many new democracies of the past twenty years – those which arose after the collapse of the Soviet Union, after the disappearance of communism in eastern Europe, after the dismantling of apartheid in southern Africa, as well as after the moves towards independence and democracy in Asia, in countries of the Pacific Rim, and in Africa? To go into detail would be impossible here, but we can identify some of the key concerns given a review of both scholarly analyses and recent news reports.

Such challenges include: globalization, local control of economies, and market economies; the problems of inadequate infrastructure on which to base economic development, and the existence of corruption; the rise of religion and religious movements, particularly the new 'messianic' movements; the resurgence of 'tradition', nationalism and national ideals, and the corresponding demands for group rights – cultural, ethnic, and linguistic rights – and the like; the 'information revolution' – information technology – and its growth, but also the change in the meaning and the purpose of information;[15] the revitalization of nations and states where people have been excluded from open and active participation in the political process, and where citizens currently experience a political anomie; demands for democratic rights and freedoms; and the fear that old patterns will simply be repeated, and old elites reestablished.

On these issues, more analytical work needs to be done – and the particular challenges need to be more fully explored. At the present time, one finds a good deal of cynicism concerning what can be done, and – more broadly – support for (or resignation concerning) the realist option described above.

But, though we can see that there are two distinct camps on the issue of the relation of politics and ethics, and that most observers of political affairs – including many of those in the new independent states – hold one or the other of these positions, this does not mean that we can go no further. Despite its political and philosophical pedigree, the realist view is (we would argue) a non-starter. It precludes us from asking a number of questions about governments or states and their actions, and it also limits philosophical analysis and critique to matters of strategy. There is also reason to think that realism is not a particularly productive view. As noted above, even those states that attempt to invert the position which holds that politics is subordinate to ethics, usually seek to

[15] See Peter F. Drucker, "The Next Information Revolution," [Forbes.com: 08.24.98]; see also http://www.versaggi.net/ecommerce/articles/drucker-inforevolt.htm.

provide some kind of ethical legitimation of their political actions. This suggests that there is a recognition of at least the psychological power of the idealist position.

Of course, these remarks do not refute the realist view, but adopting realism would warrant skepticism about ethics having any effective relation to politics and would reduce philosophical analysis to justifying cynicism in politics – if not making philosophy simply a fellow traveler of it.

Philosophical Reflection

What are the principal issues involved in determining the relation between politics and ethics in a world marked by pluralism and the value of diversity, by globalization, by challenges to reason, argument, and philosophical 'foundations,' and by the many distinctive challenges that new democracies face? Three general questions seem particularly pertinent today:

1. If states are to be ethical, what are the resources in ethics that are available to them?
2. If states are to be ethical, what are some of the challenges where politics and ethics may confront one another?, and
3. What are the directions, if any, in which these states might proceed, and what solutions (e.g., what models of the relation between ethics and politics) offer themselves to them?

The primary purpose of this collection of essays, then, is to bring these questions – and the related issues they raise – together, and to present how philosophers, political scientists, historians, sociologists, and those actively involved in politics within the 'new independent states' and beyond, have sought to address these issues. Despite differences in the responses of the contributors, all argue for the importance of a discussion of bringing the ethical into contact with – if not reforming – the political. While the essays often refer to the challenges of carrying out this task in Georgia, Azerbaijan, and Armenia, the issues they raise bear on the many new states that have come into existence in the years following their independence, such as the break-up of Yugoslavia into six states in 1992; the separation of the Czech and Slovak nations on New Years Day 1993, the separation of Eritrea from Ethiopia in April 1993, and the independence of East Timor from Indonesia (1999-2002).

This volume is based on papers from the first Caucasian International Philosophical Conference on "Politics and Ethics" held in Tbilisi, Georgia, at the Institute of Political Science of the Georgian Academy of Sciences, on May 1 and 2, 2001. Like other volumes in the Council for Research on Values and Philosophy (RVP) series "Cultural Heritage and Contemporary Change," the present collection is the product of an effort by regional universities and research institutes – together with the RVP – to provide an opportunity for researchers within a country or region to come together, to work on projects of joint interest, and to share the results of their research with one another. An earlier set of essays published by the RVP on *National Identity as an Issue of Knowledge and Morality* (1994)[16] was concerned with the nature of national identity and its role in a democracy; this volume is as well. Yet the papers in this volume also take account of some of the theoretical issues underlying democracy (such as the relevance and role of human rights; the implications of globalization; the challenges posed by ethnic and religious diversity and by the rise of nationalism, of independence movements and of national security; the effects of political and

[16] *National Identity as an Issue of Knowledge and Morality: Georgian Philosophical Studies I*, eds. Ghia Nodia and Paul Peachey (Washington, DC: Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 1994).

economic corruption and of lengthy exclusion from participation in politics; and the nature of human beings), as well as the increasing cynicism about politics in general

Ethics, Rights, and Democracy

The first question addressed in this volume – and which is debated in Part I ("Ethics, Rights, and Democracy") – is, 'If states are to be ethical, what resources are available to them?'

In his brief introductory remarks ("Politics and Ethics: a word of introduction"), Vazha Keshelava, the Director of the Institute of Political Science of the Georgian Academy of Sciences, reminds us that the relations between politics and ethics are multidimensional, and that they arise in a number of spheres – from the observation of traffic rules to international governance and business.

But how, substantively, are we to engage the question of the relation of politics to ethics? The idealist would insist that there is a long tradition of humanism that appeals to law, human dignity, toleration and respect for differences of conscience, and human rights. Indeed, there are *many* models of humanism that might be considered. In general, these models include respect for the person as a social and political being and respect for diversity and pluralism – but they also acknowledge the importance of social unity and of human rights (based on principles of natural or international law, or global ethics, or the common good of humanity).

One such model is that provided by classical natural law theory. In "Rights vs. Natural Law: At Stake is the Political," Stephen F. Schneck discusses how the theory of law – specifically Divine, Eternal, Natural and Human law – articulated by St Thomas Aquinas, affects not only the understanding, but the very possibility of politics. According to Aquinas, the things which tend to divide us ethically and politically – culture, history, and gender, for example – conceal a natural law universally binding on all human beings and constituting our collective intimacy with each other and with all of creation. The German-American philosopher and political theorist Leo Strauss (1899-1973), however, challenged the Thomistic approach to natural law. Schneck therefore also reviews the position of Strauss on this topic, and provides an alternative to it.

A second humanist model of the relation of ethics and politics is that provided in terms of rights theories, declarations of rights, and related international documents. In "Contemporary Culture and Appeals to Human Rights," William Sweet surveys the history of human rights thinking in philosophy and in politics, and argues that the discourse of human rights is still useful and relevant in dealing with the challenges of social and political life in the new millennium.

Of course, as noted above, some responses to the question of the relation between politics and ethics have been far from 'idealistic,' and one finds some cynicism and scepticism about human nature. Such a skepticism is reflected in the adage of Kant: that "Out of timber so crooked as that from which man is made nothing entirely straight can be carved."[17]

This 'realist' view would remind us, for example, of the opportunistic approach to politics taken by elites, of globalization and international agreements regulating economics – which, in turn, limit national sovereignty as well as the control of government by its citizens; of the irony that democracy is often undermined by those who would benefit most from it (especially in the post-Communist world), and so on. And so one may well wonder whether an ethical response to contemporary political, social, and economic problems is ever likely to be effective.

[17] Immanuel Kant, *Idee zu einer Allgemeinen Gesichte in Weltburgerlicher Absicht*, proposition 6 (1784). Quoted by Isaiah Berlin as epigraph to his *The Crooked Timber of Humanity* (1990).

In "Democracy and the Metaphysics of Multiplicity," Niyazi Mehdi argues that the philosophical and religious traditions of both the East and the West reflect the Jungian archetype of the human subconscious desire for totality – and that this weighs against pluralism and diversity. Mehdi insists that not only religious, but philosophical traditions cultivate mythologies that ultimately lead to the demonizing of democracy – and that this effect can be seen in recent events in the Caucausus and Central Asia and, specifically, in Azerbaijan.

Equally pessimistic, perhaps, is the claim that there can be no effective ethical character to politics because there has been a total collapse of confidence not only in objective morality, but in the possibility of any 'truth' whatever. In "From Politics to Transpolitics: the 'end of politics' and politics as performance," Elizbar Elizbarashvili draws on both Nietzsche and Baudrillard to argue that the traditional distinction between 'truth' and 'imagination' has collapsed. The author then adds that the dissolution of this distinction is shown in political activity, so that politics becomes simply performance. While this problem affects developed, 'first-world' nations, ironically, perhaps, it is not obvious in Georgia and many other post-Soviet nations. This is because, given the relative absence of technological development and the low standards of living, the phenomena of hyperreality and transpolitics do not seem to be present. But this does not mean, we may take Elizbarashvili to imply, that these problems will not appear in the future.

Still these realist 'facts' (if one wishes to call them that) are not immutable; it is worth recalling that, despite the pessimism implicit in the preceding quotation from Kant, he did have an idealist view of the relation of ethics and politics. In his essay "Perpetual Peace: A Philosophical Sketch" (1795), Kant held that such peace was possible – and on a world scale. He argued, for example, that there was a right of "hospitality" for strangers (the "third definitive article for a perpetual peace") – that is, "the right of a stranger not to be treated as an enemy when he arrives in the land of another." Through this, Kant believed, the "human race can gradually be brought closer and closer to a constitution establishing world citizenship." Thus, there could be a "Law of Nations" founded on a "Federation of Free States" (the "second definitive article for a perpetual peace") – and that a perpetual peace would be guaranteed by "nature (natura daedala rerum)" whose "mechanical ... aim is to produce a harmony among men, against their will and indeed through their discord."[18]

Moreover, the (allegedly) Machiavellian view that challenges the role of ethics in politics is (as Isaiah Berlin has argued) one that itself appeals to a system of morality – though it is one that lies outside the Christian ethical schema.[19] And while globalization has clearly eroded the control of nations over their own economies and cultures, at the same time there has been an extensive development of international law and human rights.

Thus, though the defects and abuses of the former Soviet regime give us all much cause to be cynical about how citizens can cope with political reality in the coming years, Michael

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[18] See the "first supplement: the guarantee for perpetual peace" in Kant's *Perpetual Peace: A Philosophical Sketch* at http://www.mtholyoke.edu/acad/intrel/kant/kant1.htm.

[19] Isaiah Berlin, "The Question of Machiavelli," *New York Review of Books*, Volume 17, Number 7 (November 4, 1971). Berlin writes: "[Machiavelli] is indeed rejecting Christian ethics, but in favor of another system, another moral universe—the world of Pericles or of Scipio, or even of the Duke Valentino, a society geared to ends just as ultimate as the Christian faith, a society in which men fight and are ready to die for (public) ends which they pursue for their own sakes. They are choosing not a realm of means (called politics) as opposed to a realm of ends (called morals), but opt for a rival (Roman or classical) morality, an alternative realm of ends. In other, words the conflict is between two moralities, Christian and pagan (or as some wish to call it, aesthetic), not between autonomous realms of morals and politics."

Muskhelishvili argues (in "Hegel, Marx, and the Critique of Communist Reality") that, at the root of communism, lay important ideals and values – equality, human worth, the dignity of labour, and participation in political life. Drawing on the theoretical underpinnings of Marxist thought, particularly as they are derived from the philosophy of Hegel, Muskhelishvili provides an endorsement of the essentially honest and humane communism that, he indicates, was betrayed by the leaders of the former Soviet Union. Thus, even if the Soviet Union was not the legitimate heir of the ideals and values listed above, those underlying ideals remain persuasive.

From the essays in Part I, then, one sees that, despite the strength of the realist analysis of the relation between ethics and politics, the presence and influence of values in the new independent states – values such as dignity, toleration and respect for differences of conscience, and human rights – suggest models of humanism that might be considered. Indeed, many of these models lead to some version of democracy – though not necessarily of the liberal individualist variety. Work may need to be done, at the very beginning, to challenge the realist view. And, perhaps, for the ethical and the political to come together and for humanist models to be realized, we must go beyond nation states (either to civil society or to a global society). In short, there is a case to be made for humanism – for insisting on a positive relation between ethics and politics, and for seeing whether there even might be aspects of the realist view that are ultimately compatible with it.

Challenges: Politics and Religion

The second question raised by the authors in this volume is that, if states are to be ethical, what are some of the challenges where politics and ethics may confront one another? In Part II, "Challenges: Politics and Religion," the authors consider a number of issues such as globalization, the desire for national identity and nationhood, majority and minority rights, the marginalization of intellectuals, political corruption, the role of information systems, and moral weakness. Some of the more striking challenges that one finds in the South Caucuses are the rise of religion, religious movements, and the resurgence of 'tradition' and nationalism; the development of the global market economy, particularly where infrastructure is lacking and corruption is rampant; and the creation of a genuine civil society.

Nodar Natadze (in "Individual Rights and Group Rights in the Post-Soviet World") raises the matter of ethnicity and religion as it exists in Georgia. Natadze presents an analysis of the desire for nationhood based on the ontological entity we call a 'people.' The author begins with comments on the psycho-social dynamics that generate both the successes and obstacles to morally appropriate interpretations of the rights of minorities and majorities within nations. Natadze then provides a working index of these rights, and attempts to validate it through descriptions of the violent political upheaval that characterizes the multiethnic politics in present-day Georgia.

In "Freedom of Belief in Independent Azerbaijan: Majority and Minority Problems," Hikmet Hadjy-zadeh describes some of the conflicts encountered by new religious organizations in Azerbaijan. Hadjy-zadeh argues that it is the *traditional* religious majorities – both Christian and Muslim – which are blocking the growth of religious freedom in Azerbaijan as well as undermining the growth of a more a pluralistic and democratic society. Nevertheless, the author sees evidence of – and therefore has hope for – an incremental progress toward a more open and democratic society, consistent with the articles of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

A second particularly striking challenge is the development of the global market economy and the loss of local control of economies – as well as the problems of inadequate infrastructure and the existence of corruption. In her paper on "The Problem of Corruption in Georgia," Tinatin

Bochorishvili provides an outline of the depth of corruption in Georgia. She speaks to the failure of the late Shevardnadze government in dealing with corruption, as well as to how his administration was dependent upon it. Bochorishvili believes that only by developing a new market economy – one which, presumably, reflects ethical values – can Georgia avoid sliding into dissolution.

A third challenge that confronts those new independent states which strive to implement the ethical into politics, is the creation of the conditions of civil society, particularly where people have long been excluded from open and active participation in the democratic process

For democracy and civil society to develop, one has to take into account the roles that can be played by not only intellectual but religious leaders. In "Problems of Post-Soviet Development: Politics and Ethics," Ali Abasov discusses those strategies that will allow for the emergence of democracy and a "culture of peace" in those nations that were formerly under the Soviet umbrella. Abasov looks at how religious and intellectual leadership has been marginalized in the politically corrupt atmosphere of post-Soviet politics, and makes both theoretical and practical suggestions as to how this state of affairs can be ameliorated.

In "Political Aspects of the Formation of the National Information System in Post-Communist Georgia," Henry Kuprashvili and Teimuraz Sharashenidze describe the development – and the importance – of the national information legislation and the state information policy. This legislation and this policy bear on the relation between politics and ethics, because such policies affect the very conditions in which civil society can exist. Without the development of the national information system, the geopolitical potential of Georgia will be greatly reduced.

Yet, while there is cause for optimism, one should not be overconfident. Paata Chkheidze ("Signs of the Time: Ethical and Political Challenges to the Future of Georgia") paints a somewhat dark portrait of the political circumstances in Georgia. Describing the "pre-moral state" of Georgian politics, the author looks at the forces both within and outside the country that keep it morally weak – such as "the politics of the stomach" – as well as at the moral and religious traditions that, the author believes, could put Georgia back on the path to political responsibility.

Directions

If there is to be a relation between the ethical and the political, and if the new independent states are to meet the challenges where politics and ethics confront one another, what directions – if not solutions – might be considered?

When one looks at the options that are frequently presented in contemporary politics, we find that there are at least *three* very distinct models (each of which may, moreover, be cast in different ways). There is a ‘pre-modern’ model, which often is rooted in ethnicity and religion. There is a ‘modern’ model, which accepts internationalization and globalization as not only irreversible but desirable. But yet there seems to be at least one further model, which seeks to find within diversity, certain shared principles and values. From what has been suggested above, this model must take account of the facts of ethnicity, religion, and internationalization, but it must also be a fundamentally humanistic one that appeals to human dignity, law, and human rights.

Arguably, this third model reflects the broadly humanist approach presented in Part I – and the authors in Part III ("Directions") deal more specifically with what such a humanist model might look like.

In "Ethics in the Context of Globalization," Edward S. Markarian of the National Academy of Sciences of Yerevan, Armenia, looks at the history of human civilization as a manifestation of

evolutionary theory, and at globalization as "a new unit of human evolution." Selecting the industrial revolution as the point where this evolution became derailed by collapsing into technocratic, consumerist values, on the one hand, and the simultaneous erosion of humanist values, on the other, the author attempts to articulate the means through which this evolutionary process can be repaired and consciously directed toward a global civilization. Markarian suggests that by implementing his notion of regional ecological-noospheric experiment (RENE) at an international polyregional level, we will be able draw from a wide range of traditions to arrive at a range of values and related options that promote self-preservation.

In "Ethics, Politics, and the Observations of an Engaged Citizen," Ina Ranson introduces the work of the economist and social activist François-Xavier Vershave (who is inspired by the historian Fernand Braudel). Ranson uses the former's perception of global economics and its radical application by the latter, in order to articulate contemporary global problems as well as to provide strategies that citizens can use to deal with these problems. She concludes her paper by describing two citizen-organizations that provide real examples of truly ethical political activism.

At a more applied level, confronting the challenges where politics and ethics meet requires not only peace and security, but economic infrastructure. Omar Gogiashvili ("The Globalization Process, and Peace and Security in Georgia") notes that, as Georgia and Russia are integrated – as is inevitable – into the processes of economic globalization, Russia is more and more likely to interfere or intervene economically in Georgia. For Georgia to be politically secure and to remain free from overt Russian interference, Gogiashvili insists that Georgia must have greater economic independence.

As many of the authors in this volume insist, however, meeting these challenges does not require just economic stability and strength. Nor can one reasonably expect that the challenges of religion, nationalism, and local culture will simply disappear. There must be a core set of humanist values as well – and this includes respect for the dignity and rights of others.

In his essay on "Tolerance, Christian Faith, and Phenomenological Logic," Mamuka Dolidze provides a theoretical framework for articulating these values, and argues that they need not require any abandonment of core religious beliefs. Dolidze draws on phenomenological logic to show that there can be generalities among traditions, and that one can maintain one's own perspective while, at the same time, reject opposition or aggressiveness toward other religions. If Christianity, for example, were to adopt a phenomenological logic, it would become more tolerant and yet still be able to maintain the unique nature of its dogmatic system. Such an approach could, presumably, serve as a model for other religious and ideological traditions as well.

While a range of humanist perspectives is presented in Part III, the authors clearly allow that the challenges where politics and ethics confront one another can be addressed without returning to a pre-modern, or even a modern approach. However one might describe such a humanist, 'third' model, then, the authors would agree that such a model will involve efforts promoting global interests and values, within or through local citizen organizations; recognizing that globalization as economic integration can proceed while, at the same time, maintaining a reasonable measure of political control and independence; the importance of the uniqueness and value of the individual; and a tolerance and respect for diversity. In fact, it may require the articulation of a humanistic global ethics (on a par with the global character of globalization), and an effective international body to implement this 'on the ground.'

These last remarks are, of course, largely suggestive. While they take account of the realities of the present moment, particularly in new democracies and in new independent states, they remain idealist in character and optimistic. They recognize that there is important philosophical work that

can be done, that we have some sense of the directions that might be fruitfully pursued, and that there is a possibility of civil society and democracy in spite of the many challenges to it. And so, despite recent rapid political change and political crises, many scholars from the new independent states themselves hope that a turn (or return) to ethics in politics is not only possible, but necessary if these new states and nations are to survive.

Conclusions

As the authors of the essays in this volume recognise, the relation between politics and ethics is an uncertain one – and it may see particularly uncertain where the understanding of politics, and many political regimes themselves, are going through transitions. Nevertheless – and despite the many challenges that confront those working in the 'New Independent States' – we cannot deny the widespread and shared concern about what this relation will amount to. While the struggles since 1991 – and even in the few years from the time when many of these papers were first conceived – might lead some to question whether the issue of politics and ethics does not end up being a purely academic one, the fact that there are a number of common features in the experience of the 'new independent states' of Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia suggests that at least some general directions or solutions are possible.

The event of the conference on which this volume is based is itself a hopeful sign. The hospitality of the hosts from the Georgian Academy of Sciences, the collaboration of the Council for Research and Values in Philosophy and of the American Council (ACTR /ACCELS), and particularly the warmth and mutual respect exhibited by scholars from Azerbaijan, Armenia, Georgia, and beyond, all show that serious reflection remains possible. The lively sharing of insights and ideas, the opportunities for informal exchange, and the camaraderie exhibited at the conference dinner (in which the participants contributed traditional songs and stories – including a rousing rendition of "Old MacDonald" by North American participants) will remind the participants – and should suggest to the readers of this volume – that there are many ideals to continue to inspire and unite us, even as ideologies and prejudices threaten to divide us.

Chapter I
Politics and Ethics: A Word of Introduction

Vazha Keshelava

Before introducing the theme, I would like to avail myself of the opportunity to welcome our honoured guests and colleagues to this symposium. I also hope that all the participants of this meeting will join with me to express our gratitude to those whose unselfishness facilitated the holding of this conference.

Above all, I would like to say few words about Tinatin Bochorishvili, one of the leading figures at the Institute of Political Science, who has taken the initiative to invite all of us here to Tbilisi to discuss perhaps the most pressing problem of the contemporary world – the issue of interrelation of politics and ethics. I am sure I am saying nothing new to my Georgian colleagues, but our guests may not know that she is a granddaughter of Angia Bochorishvili, a celebrated Georgian scholar and academician – and she has, in a very real sense, inherited many of the ideas connected with the name of her grandfather. His rehabilitation of philosophical anthropology demanded not only an acute intuition, but the courage of a real citizen, for his work was carried on during the years of ideological dominance when philosophical anthropology was considered to be one of the "bourgeois pseudoscientific trends" to be abolished as alien to the spirit of Marxism-Leninism – at the time, the only "genuine doctrine"!

There is no doubt that the relation between politics and ethics is multidimensional. The problems and issues involved need to be considered from a wide range of points of view (e.g., historical and sociological) and on different levels (e.g., empirical and logical). The anthropological aspect, however, may rightly claim to have a certain priority in addressing the question of politics and ethics. The reasons for such a claim are as follows:

1. Societies and individuals alike tend to focus on the issue of identity during periods of fundamental change – particularly when they are compelled to make choices, assume specific responsibilities, and act on decisions. What we may call the ‘building material’ of both a social entity and an individual person is often acquired during periods of such radical change. Hence we have the importance of understanding the critical phases of the historical development of humanity, and how its ethical improvement is possible.

2. The world-wide historical significance and merit of early Christianity lies in the fact that it established a new ethical concept; only afterwards did it generate its own religious ideology – a doctrine about all that is. Jesus gave his Word – the great Christian principle of morality – to all humanity, and this is the focal point of his teaching. This shows that we have to deal, not with religion in the sense of a teaching about the world generally, but with a new ethical doctrine – a realisation of the Socratic (Delphic) injunction: "Know yourself."

Since I do not wish to stray far from the theme of "Politics and Ethics," I will deal briefly only with the latter concept. However, I foresee that someone may raise a question: Why is it that no one has called the Socratic injunction into question? I will only note (for self-justification) that the words of the Delphic oracle imply not only the process of rational cognition, as it is understood today, but a penetration into one’s own feelings and emotions, an attempt to comprehend something internal, personal, intimate, and often concealed.

Despite its opposition to the ideologies of imperial Rome and antiquity, and despite the initial resistance of the authorities, the new energies in Christianity led to a wide dissemination of the new religion. Without the dissemination of its fundamental principle, which was at root a moral principle, a pure rational outlook would surely have been unsuccessful among intellectuals.

Thus, in the case of Christianity, it is not its understanding of the cause of the universe or its varied cosmogonical or cosmological views, but its ethical doctrine that is its very point and its unfading strength.

3. As Christianity expanded, a new era of humanity was emerging, eliminating differences between the Greek, the Jew, and the barbarian. Unfortunately, it was still true that not all human beings were considered to be persons.

The end of the Middle Ages was marked by the approach of the era of science, the criticism of religious dogmatism, and the triumph of rationalism. But this criticism was most of all concentrated upon the metaphysical, rather than on the ethical essence of Christianity. The position of Kant and his famous phrase about the 'starry heavens above' and 'the moral law within' appear to be early reflections of this.

If we try to define the phenomena of politics and morality in the modern period, however, we will nowhere find any similarity to that exhibited in the meeting between Pontius Pilate and Jesus. There, politics represented by the procurator of Rome embodies brute force and cynicism – a readiness to support any shady deal. Morality is diametrically opposed. Perhaps it is not by chance that morality is exhibited in the person of Jesus as something elevated, celestial, and divine. More recent examples would be F. Dostoevski and – with his principle of non-resistance to evil, a principle advocated as well by great humanitarians from outside the European world, such as Mahatma Gandhi – L. Tolstoi.

This fundamental principle of Kantian ethics – act so as to treat the whole of humanity, as well as yourself and any other person, as ends in themselves and never merely a means – is a restatement of Biblical teaching from beginning to end.

4. In connection with Kant, the notion of ethical socialism comes to mind. But this notion seems to disappear in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. It is not by accident that Karl Marx defined his teaching about socialism as "scientific." Moreover Lenin, following Marx, asserted that there was not even a grain of ethics in Marxism. This is why he considered ethical socialism nonsense.

5. Criticism of Hegel's teaching about the state as a "realization of ethical idea" might be considered in this context. This Hegelian statement provoked mockery – and not only among Marxists. Many figures of high repute in Western European philosophical thought emphasized that the Hegelian idolization of the state would lead to totalitarianism.

6. Yet our post-Soviet experience shows that casting off the chains of the state went so far that much of the central power has collapsed, and the resulting political chaos has come to affect the sphere of morality.

Existing conditions clearly demonstrate that politics and ethics are closely connected. They are joined vessels – as may be seen in any sphere, from international governance and business to the observation of traffic rules. As I have said at the beginning of these remarks, the relation between politics and ethics is multidimensional. The papers in this volume explore, from a variety of perspectives, many of the problems and issues that need to be considered.

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Chapter II
Rights vs. Natural Law: At State Is the Political

Stephen F. Schneck

Introduction

"Human rights" is recent terminology. In English, the term had little usage before the twentieth century. Arguably, it came into prominence and regular usage in the middle part of the twentieth century against the backdrop of totalitarianism and genocide in Europe. The terminology implies that human rights have their foundation in human beings. That is, the words suggest that the "rightness" of such rights begins and ends insofar as the individual somehow possesses them.

Because they are understood as owned like other possessions, the "rights" of human rights are approached and dealt with in the same way that contemporary culture handles other possessions – for example, as something that can be accumulated. The number and kinds of human rights are not fixed; sometimes they increase, at other times, decrease. Like possessions, they can also be handled contractually. That is, rights can be managed by contract law, as things to be exchanged or negotiated.

A slightly older terminology speaks, not of "human rights," but rather of our "natural rights," where rights were understood as justified by nature or what Thomas Jefferson called "nature's God." This usage of the term "rights" goes back about 350 to 400 years in Western thought. John Locke's usage of the term in his *First* and *Second Treatise on Government* exemplifies this understanding of natural rights. Like contemporary "human rights," "natural rights" refers to something possessed privately and discretely by individual human beings, and is rooted in human nature. But the older tradition understood human nature to be grounded in an encompassing order – nature itself. Hence, *sub rosa*, natural rights appeal (beyond contracts, positive law, and human beings themselves) to something deeper or higher.

If we go back earlier than Locke, the term and even the notion of "rights" are just beginning to appear. Hobbes uses the term in *Leviathan* and in *De Cive*, but its roots likely lie in the Fideist and Franciscan intellectual opposition to Scholasticism. Looking for the origin of Hobbes's thinking, the political philosopher Leo Strauss argued in his masterwork, *Natural Right and History*, that Hobbes's idea of rights was part of a larger rejoinder to the Scholastic idea of natural law – a rejoinder that some hold began with William of Ockham.[1] Strauss wrote of what he called a "shift" from "law" (understood as public, transcendental, and objective) to "rights" (understood as private, local, and subjective), and Michel Villey has argued that, theologically, Ockham's move coincided with the Fideist emphasis on intimate and private grace as opposed to the Scholastic emphasis on works and the common good.[2]

While there is still some debate concerning the character of the reaction to the Scholastic tradition, Strauss was certainly correct to notice that the idea and language of rights has its origin in the emergence of the *modern* West. The idea of rights is linked with the development of the

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[1] Strauss, *Natural Right and History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1953).

[2] Michel Villey, "La genese du droit subjectif chez Guillaume d'Occam," *Archives de philosophie du droit*, 9 (1964): 97-127; see also Villey, *La formation de la pensée juridique moderne, cours d'histoire de la philosophie du droit, 1961-1966* (Paris: Montchrestien, 1968).

secular nation state, of market economics, of a scientistic conception of the human being – a being which, because of its alienation from nature, can objectively observe nature – of a theology emphasizing personal grace, and so on. Strauss is also probably right to see the initial development of the idea of rights as one deployed to attack the Scholastic understanding of natural law.

The idea of rights, then, has a particular genealogy; it was crafted as part of an argument against natural law. As such, the idea of rights is allied with the invention of modern political and economic relations to counteract and challenge those of the late medieval period. It also seems plausible that the idea of rights in contemporary times – so-called human rights – is further along the trajectory of a secular understanding of right than the earlier one which appealed to an external transcendental order.

What was lost and what was gained by following this trajectory? What was at stake in the move from natural law?

At issue in this paper are the ideas of natural law and *synderesis* and their relation to politics. This paper will develop the interpretation of natural law found in Thomas Aquinas. The idea of politics used here is one without a settled definition, but it is informed in part by a juxtaposition of Leo Strauss's conception of politics with current discursive and agonistic (i.e., competitive) understandings. I conclude that Aquinas' definition of natural law – strengthened by the Thomistic idea of *synderesis*, which invokes a universality of conscience in possession of the natural law – would close the space necessary for politics. Indeed, to the extent that natural law is available for questions of right in governance and civilization in an unmediated way, politics would be at least unnecessary if not an occasion for disruption and perdition. While Strauss's critique of Thomistic natural law is valuable in making this argument, the conclusion of this paper will likely be at odds with Strauss's notion of 'right by nature.'

Framing the Question

Natural law thinkers maintain that there is an *a priori* code of right evident in the nature of things. Moreover, it is generally available to all of us – not just to the wise or the prophets – and can be used to inform all moral and civilizational choices. Understood in this fashion, natural law trumps and transcends conventions, cultures, mores, beliefs, habits, and opinions. It does not rely on scriptures or the supernatural – not even human awareness of God – inasmuch as it is nature as we experience it that speaks the natural law to our hearts. Yet, its defenders maintain that it is truly a law, that it addresses every conceivable ethical choice, and that it is *not* just a vague prescription to do the right thing. Hence, one imagines a rich code of prescriptions and proscriptions available to us from nature itself.

The appeal of such thinking is powerful: natural law is a universal law, promulgated and universally binding for all human beings regardless of the conditions of their particular lives and circumstances. As an idea, its provenance is probably coeval with that of Western civilization. Ancient Greek-speaking thinkers like Thales looked to the order of nature, and saw therein a guide for human action. Plato's politics endeavored to draw down the order of the cosmos, and to instill that order into the souls of citizens. Stoics like Marcus Aurelius even went so far as to speak of a law of the universe that should properly inform all human law. However, it is likely the Christian saint, philosopher, and theologian, Thomas Aquinas, who is the paradigmatic natural law thinker.

Writing in the thirteenth century, Aquinas was – from the first moments of his intellectual life – caught up in the wider Western recovery of and engagement with the works of Aristotle. In many ways, Aquinas's own work can be seen as an effort to bring Aristotle's teleological conception of

the nature of things into a supportive and complimentary role for Christianity's eschatological understanding of the same. The upshot of his efforts yielded a philosophy and theology premised upon a fundamental cohesion and harmony between the earthly realm and the heavenly realm, between reason and faith, between the natural (political) life of human beings and their ultimate salvation. Thus, the Thomistic conception of natural law is the centerpiece of this fitting together of Christianity and peripatetic thought; it is also the lynchpin for this fitting as it concerns morality, civilization, and political right.

The starting point for the Thomistic account of natural law is the contention that natural things are not evil, not even neutral. Instead, natural things are fundamentally and essentially good. They bear and exhibit the fingerprints of their creator and are luminous with the divine order and its meaning. Each natural thing is, as it were, a perspectival reflection of the rational order of the divine mind. The human mind is naturally directed toward appreciating and knowing natural things. As a result, human beings are capable of discerning some measure of the divine plan in creation by witnessing and considering things in nature. That portion of the divine plan discernable to human reason in this way is what Aquinas called the natural law.

Like any genuine law, natural law must be specific and clear. For example, Aquinas suggests at one point that, while the natural law will be discerned in varying degrees according to the differences among humans in experience and ability, all humans can know and be held responsible for the second tablet of the Decalogue (commandments four through ten). Moreover, when *any* portion of the natural law is recognized by human reason, it will be revealed as a law-like prescription or proscription which we can only obey or not.

Given the transparence and specificity of these prescriptions and proscriptions, politics places a greater emphasis on administration – though at the cost of deliberation. There is much less to deliberate, after all, given what the natural law makes known through human conscience (*synderesis*). Strauss maintained that this diminished role for deliberation was the basic shortcoming of a natural law approach to the question of political right. Fascinated throughout his life by Aquinas and Thomistic natural law thinking, Strauss nevertheless took great care to distinguish his own argument for natural right from the Thomistic idea of natural law.

As Strauss presented the concept, natural *right* – as the basis for resolving the problem of right for politics – would not yield a politics that was agnostic or neutral about right itself. However, in contrast to natural law thinking, Strauss's natural right emphasized the deliberative (maieutic, dialectical, critical) processes by which right gradually acquires practical clarity, imperative, and political authority. Thus, the virtues of political life do not transcend or escape the ambiguity of our everyday political life. On the contrary, these virtues turn the tensions of our political life toward the process of gradual, albeit never totalized, clarification of right. Understandably, Strauss was suspicious of what surely seemed like "anti-political" tendencies of Thomistic natural law.

Ostensibly, many current agonistic or radically discursive notions of politics take Strauss's valorizing of deliberation a quantum step further. For while Strauss was confident that a politics of appropriate deliberation would clarify right, these recent scholars point out that the teleology implicit in Strauss's idea of deliberation toward right would actually foreclose deliberation and impose an arbitrary notion of right. Hence, any given idea of right – and, certainly, any effort to make it final – would narrow the space necessary for the ever-inconclusive deliberations that politics requires.[3]

Natural Law and the Order of Being

[3] I have a very diverse group of contemporary authors in mind.

Aquinas's concept of natural law is elaborated most thoroughly in his *Summa Theologiae*. References to the concept can be found elsewhere: in the *Summa Contra Gentiles*, the commentaries on Peter Lombard's *Sentences*, his review of Aristotle's *Physics* and *De anima*, and in some minor works such as *De animalibus* and *De regno*. However, the argument that follows will draw largely from the explanations found in the *Summa Theologiae*. There, Aquinas outlined a number of arguments to illustrate the necessity of the idea of natural law. These are organized into two categories: those related to nature and those related to human being.

Nature is creation. Creation is by God *ex nihilo*; that is, God created nature from nothing. In Part One of the *Summa*, in the first and second articles of Question 45, Aquinas explained how God created the being of all things from scratch. Nothing – not primordial matter, not laws of physics, not number, not even logic (conceived as separate from the divine intellect) – existed before creation by God.[4]

The usual way in which God's creation of being from nothing is illustrated involves a comparison with a human artist. Here, in fashioning a work of art, the artist pursues the expression of some meaning – but, as we know, the artist always falls short of the full expression because of the limits of the artistic medium. The laws of physics, the inherent characteristics of the artist's paints, canvas, or marble, and similar constraints in the materials, all compromise and skew the intentions. Inevitably, the materials have a momentum of their own, which cannot but be in tension with the intentions of the human artist. As a result, in any human work of art, there is always an alienation present and multiple meanings conveyed.

In Aquinas's view, however, there can be neither alienation nor multiple meanings in divine creation. Creation perfectly represents the meaning and intention of the divine artist. After all, since nothing pre-exists creation (not even ideals of things), the being of created things always conforms to the divine plan. Where some earlier Christian thinkers had perceived a discordance between the natural world and the higher significance of God, Aquinas found a resonance. There are no rifts or alienations in nature itself.

These points allow for the emergence of three components of Aquinas's natural-law thinking. First, because there is a singular intention of the divine mind at work in creation, the nature of created things is orderly, regular, and rational. This means that all being has a rational order to it. Second, the rational order that informs created being is *good*. Nature, then, is how things should be; it is the measure of appropriateness and right. Third, there is no otherness in creation. It is complete and whole.

Let us consider each of these three components in turn.

That creation is organized and operates rationally reveals a law-like structure governing created being. For Aquinas, the rational character of being illustrates its creation by one God. Moreover, he understood this orderly quality of being, not just in terms of the universal applicability of physical laws (e.g., fire burns in Persia just as does in Athens), but in the order revealed in existence itself. In the I-II Q 93 of the *Summa*, Aquinas explained:

> Now God, by his wisdom, is the Creator of all things in relation to which He stands as the artificer of the products of His art.... Moreover, He governs all the acts and movements that are to be found in each single creature.... Wherefore, as the type of Divine Wisdom,

[4] Indeed, the idea of creation *ex nihilo* turns out to be powerfully formative for much of Aquinas's thought. It might be noted, for example, that his appreciation of the idea pre-dates the *Summa* and is treated more fully in *De ente et essentia*, a work that in many ways anticipates the arguments of the *Summa Theologiae*.

> inasmuch as by it all things are created, has the character of art, exemplar, or idea; so the type of Divine Wisdom, as moving all things to their due end, bears the character of law.[5]

In other words, the orderliness and regularity of nature exhibits the creative governance at work in all things as a kind of law. This deep, governing structure of the cosmos Aquinas called the "eternal law."

That the governing structure at work in creation is good may be shown in several ways. Foremost, perhaps, is that creation and its order are good because they were crafted by God. In a more Aristotelian vein, Aquinas claimed that the order of creation is good because it directs all things toward their proper and final end. As well, it is good in a relational sense, inasmuch as this order inclines all things toward harmony with another. Again, from the *Summa* – this time from Ia Q 47 – Aquinas wrote:

> For He brought things into being in order that His goodness might be communicated to creatures, and be represented by them; and because His goodness could not be adequately represented by one creature alone, He produced many and diverse creatures, that what was wanting to one in the representation of divine goodness might be supplied by another. For goodness, which in God is simple and uniform, in creatures is manifold; and hence the whole universe together participates in the divine goodness more perfectly, and represents it better than any single creature whatever. (ST Ia Q 47, art. 1, resp.)

This harmony of parts, each with a perspective reflecting divine goodness, also illustrates that there is no space for otherness in Aquinas's conception of the nature of things. There can be no contradiction among the various reflections of divine goodness; rather, each harmoniously resonates with every other. Even evil, Aquinas explained, has no separate ontological ground within or outside of creation; it is not "other." Evil is only a difference in the degree of goodness, a deficiency. At the level of creation and in progress toward their proper ends, there can be no ruptures in the realm of natural things and no gap between the purpose of God and the character of his creation.

Psychology and Epistemology

Human beings, for Aquinas, do not lie outside of the order of creation. There is a refreshing modesty about humans in comparison with modern authors. Every being has its distinctive place within the organization of being; mere distinctiveness does not distinguish human beings. Although, and with some legitimacy, many modern critics trace the radical *hubris* of the modern Western subject to Christianity, what is central to Aquinas is the order of *being*, with its source in God. Human beings do not occupy some unique position outside of creation. Indeed, human beings – at the level of creation, as they were constructed by God in Eden – are not in tension with the divine order of things. Nevertheless, unlike other creatures of the world, human beings have an ability (i.e., reason), though limited, to perceive and appreciate the creator's order at work in the

[5] *Summa Theologiae* (hereafter ST) I-II Q 45, art. 1, resp. The translation of the *Summa Theologiae* used in this paper is by the Fathers of the English Dominican Province (New York: Benziger Brothers, 1947). When necessary, reference to the Latin text will be to the Leonine edition, included as part of *Opera omnia* (Rome: 1882).

world around them. More than mere appreciation, they also have the ability (i.e., will), though limited, to choose to participate – or not – in the order of things.

Aquinas articulated this notion with reference to the classical Greek concept of the soul. This concept had entered Christian thought through the Hellenistic sources of neo-Platonism and Stoicism. By the thirteenth century, the concept had come to be seen as reflecting a metaphysical dualism (i.e., a supernatural soul and a natural body) common to many contemporary Christian understandings. Yet, for Aquinas – perhaps due to the influence of Aristotle – this dualism is surprisingly muted. He saw the soul, not outside or *prior* to the body, but as incorporated. Parallel to Aristotle's division, Aquinas found the soul hierarchically arranged in living things: from the vegetative soul's character as providing for mere continuation, consumption and propagation of the being, through the animal soul's urge toward pleasure and away from pain, to the intellectual soul's capacity to reason and to choose (i.e., free will). The human soul incorporates all of these elements. Plants and animals are apparently immersed ecstatically within the governance of the eternal law of creation, as presumably would be a human life without the intellectual component of soul. However, the intellectual dimension of the human soul grants human beings the capacity to recognize some portion of the divine plan at work in creation – some portion of the eternal law governing things. We can raise some portion of the divine plan to consciousness and then, via our will, choose to join ourselves to that divine plan or not.

By will, Aquinas understood not the spiritedness nor passions that some earlier Christian thinkers seemed to have in mind. At least in its highest aspect, will (*liberum arbitrium*) offers an opportunity to commit to the order of creation, free from the necessities and limits of choice evident in drives and passions.

Reason is a trickier concept in Aquinas's thought. He admitted that he was influenced by Book VI of Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* in recognizing various categories of reasoning and knowing. And, in several places in his writings, he understands reason in terms of this complexity: from productive reason (Aristotle's *techne and poiesis*), to mere cunning and calculating, to scientific reason (Aristotle's *episteme*) and – of course – prudence.[6] Yet for Aquinas, reason – *as it pertains to the divine plan evident in creation* – allows no room for judging or deliberating; it is instead a perceptive faculty for discerning the order of things. As we will see, this peculiarity of Aquinas's understanding of reason lies behind Strauss's argument against natural law.

Both Etienne Gilson and Frederick Copleston – arguably the two best modern-day readers of Aquinas – agreed with understanding reason as perceptive rather than deliberative, and that neither freedom nor choice belongs to Aquinas's version of reason.[7] Rather, freedom belongs to the closing of judgement that occurs in the will. As a result, for Aquinas, reason works out to be a kind of perception or sense that is attuned to recognize the order of things in creation. Reason does not critique or assess; it *senses* the hint of the divine in the order of nature. It is not deliberative.

This means that Aquinas's use of reason is not the same as Descartes's or Kant's – both of whom identify reason as somehow equivalent to, or the ground of, right for human affairs. Aquinas did not think of reason as the stuff of goodness. Unlike Descartes, he did not imagine thinking to

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[6] See, for example, the discussion of kinds of knowledge in ST II-II Q 47, art. 8. Prudence (*prudentia*) gets special attention in several places, including in his discussions of law and governance.

[7] Frederick Copleston, S. J., *Aquinas* (London: Penguin, 1970) pp. 46-50. Also see Copleston's *A History of Philosophy*, Vol. 2, "Mediaeval Philosophy," Part II (Garden City, NY: Image Books, 1962) pp. 43-45 and 110-114. Etienne Gilson, *The Philosophy of Saint Thomas Aquinas*(translation of *Le Thomisme*, 3rd ed.) (St. Louis, MO: B. Herder Book Co., 1937 / Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1937) pp. 88-94.

be equivalent with the truth of things; instead, reason resonates with and discovers truth outside of itself, in the world as experienced. Unlike Kant, moreover, the processes of reasoning do not serve as the criteria of morality. Instead, reason looks outside itself and discovers the divine order. As a result, it would be incorrect to ascribe to Aquinas the idea that reason deliberates and chooses the "appropriate good" among a plurality of possible goods, or even that reason deliberates among various ends within a hierarchy of ends. Even prudence, a rational faculty, is not understood to be deliberative with regard to ends. Rather, for Aquinas it is a kind of practical wisdom about appropriate conduct in the pursuit of already determined, known, and certain ends. In the *Summa*, he writes:

> The Philosopher says (*Ethics* Bk. 6; 12) that "Moral virtue ensures the rectitude of the intentions of the end, while prudence ensures the rectitude of the means." Therefore, it does not belong to prudence to appoint the moral virtues, but only to regulate the means. (ST II-II Q 47, art. 6, resp.)

But elsewhere Aquinas seems to break even with Aristotle on this issue. He mutes the Aristotelian differentiation between the speculative/theoretical virtues and the practical virtues by stripping from the latter their dialectical and deliberative character. Most modern readers see Aristotle arguing that *speculative* virtues are concerned with discerned truths not subject to dialectical deliberation, while *practical* virtues concern precisely the changing and ambiguous things that are best sorted out with political-like discussion. In contrast, while Aquinas kept Aristotle's terminology, he assigned the speculative virtues to eternal truths and practical virtues to temporal truths. And he obfuscated differences between the two species of reasoning, by stressing (more in line with Aristotle's speculative category) the apprehension and affirmation of truths.

Question 79 of the First Part of the *Summa* (among other sources) addresses this difference with Aristotle. In Article 11, drawing an intriguing parallel between reason and vision, Aquinas writes:

> The speculative and practical intellects are not distinct powers. The reason of which is that... what is accidental to the nature of the object of a power, does not differentiate that power; for it is all accidental to a thing colored to be a man, or to be great or small; hence all such things are apprehended by the same power of sight. (ST Ia Q 79, art. 11, resp.)

Reason, whether speculative or practical, is only a kind of vision. It "sees" truth or not; it does not weigh or consider or deliberate about truth.

The relevance of this epistemological discussion for the question at hand becomes apparent in the next article, Article 12, where Aquinas informs us that *synderesis* (conscience) is not formed through deliberation, but is rather a kind of secondary apprehension derived from the discernment of reason directed toward moral concerns. As we shall see, his determining of *synderesis* as the result of apprehension rather than of dialectical formation is part of an established pattern in Aquinas's thinking that renders politics little more than the mere administration and enforcement of the natural law. But before proceeding to a consideration of the "human side" of the natural law, attention must be paid to the deeper ground of the natural law within the eternal law.

Eternal Law

St. Thomas defined eternal law as the rational and intentional order of being as it was created by God. According to this definition, it is a law in so far as it is a regular ordering and administering of things, that has been ordained by proper authority, in accordance with the common good, which is uniform (i.e., fair) in its application, and which is available to that which it governs (ST I-II, Q 90, arts. 1-4). In this sense, the eternal law is the deep-governing code written into being itself via creation. It is not a sub-species of law; it is the totality of law, under which all legitimate forms of law are sub-species. Aquinas explains in the *Summa*:

> Now it is evident, granted that the world is ruled by divine providence... that the whole community of the universe has the nature of a law. And since the divine reason's conception of things is not subject to time, but is eternal... therefore it is that this kind of law must be called "eternal." (ST I-II Q 90, art 1, resp.)

This means that creation follows the pattern – the ordered, intentional design – of its creator. Hence, it bears the imprint of those same intentions within the essence of all of its parts. The things of creation are, as it were, "governed" by the creative intentions that brought them into being. The law-like governance of the intentions behind creation works within all things. Moreover, this is to be understood teleologically, because the intentions of the creator are for some divine purpose or end.

It is worth noting a few points concerning the eternal law as it is understood by Aquinas. *First*, while it is not in any tension with God, the law itself is located within created being: the cosmos as a whole and all of its parts. This objective quality of the eternal law does not mean that God could alter or suspend the eternal; Aquinas made clear in several places that this would be impossible, since it would be tantamount to saying that God and his own intentions were in conflict. Nor is the location of the eternal law within creation meant to suggest that God is in any way limited by the eternal law; this too would be absurd given the law's origin.[8] Yet, it remains crucially important that the eternal law is not outside creation, but instead is within it as its order. *Second*, like all law, the eternal law is directed toward the common good. In the case of the eternal law, the common good is the final purpose or end of creation itself. As a result, for Aquinas, the eternal law is all-encompassing for creation; there is no appeal beyond it or outside it. Even scripture or revelation does not transcend the eternal law, since such revelations are directed toward created beings and their end within the overarching purpose of creation itself. Scripture cannot be in tension with the eternal law or with any of its sub-species – e.g., natural law. *Third*, the eternal law, while teleological, is not a potentiality but an actuality. The essence and significance of the eternal law is revealed in the existence of created things. The final end of existence need not be known, yet the law itself might be partially grasped.

Not surprisingly, the idea of the eternal law is in accord with Aquinas's conception of the human person. Human intellect, he explained, was created to be able to appreciate the order of things. It was not created to apprehend God, but to apprehend creation.[9] The intellect can be*speculative*, whereby it looks outward to apprehend the creator's order in objects – as, for example, scientific or mathematical *laws* – or, it can be focused *practically*, whereby it discovers that same order as it pertains to human choice and action. There is no division in the intellect, however. It is the same reason at work, and working in the same way, whether directed toward

[8] As Sister Alphonsus explained to me in the third grade, God cannot make a rock so big he cannot lift it.

[9] In Eden, he explained, there would have been no need for scripture or revelation.

practical or speculative things (Cf. ST Ia Q 79, art. 1). Reason discerns the divine order in creation. That order itself is the eternal law – but the subset of the eternal law, discernable by human reason and concerned with human action and choice, is what is called the *natural law*.

Before turning directly to the idea of the natural law and to Strauss's concerns, the larger picture of law needs to be sketched with an eye on two other subsets of the eternal law: divine law and human law. By divine law, Aquinas understood the prescriptions and proscriptions derived from scripture. By human law, he understood the positive laws erected for the human governance of political communities. Both human law (when legitimate) and divine law are themselves within the eternal law. Legitimate human law, moreover, cannot extend beyond the natural law and divine law; it can be only a subset of either that portion of the eternal law available to human reason or that made available through scripture (revelation). The following diagram illustrates the relationships among the various categories of law as they relate to human action and choice.

chart

Among other things, notice that the portion of the eternal law available to human beings – either through human reasoning or revelation – is incomplete**.**

Natural Law

> Wherefore, since all things subject to Divine providence are ruled and measured by the eternal law... it is evident that all things partake somewhat of the eternal law, in so far as, namely, from its being imprinted on them, they derive their respective inclinations to their proper acts and ends. Now among all others, the rational creature is subject to Divine providence in the most excellent way, in so far as it partakes of a share of providence, by being provident both for itself and for others. Wherefore it has a share of the Eternal Reason, whereby it has a natural inclination to its proper act and end: and this participation of the eternal law in the rational creature is called the natural law. (ST I-II Q 91, art. 2, resp.)

This definition of natural law illustrates several key features. *First*, natural law is discerned by turning human reason toward things of this world (our human actions and their consequences) and *not* beyond creation toward God. The content of natural law is not directly revealed to us by God. Revelation has nothing to do with the natural law. Arguably, Romulus and Remus, raised by a she-wolf, could have known the natural law. *Second*, the way reason works to discern natural law is by a sort of perception and not through dialectic or deliberation. There is a symmetry between human reason and the "Eternal Reason" by which the order in creation is apprehended. *Third*, natural law transcends the human condition. On one hand, this means that it does not depend on the human condition for its being and jurisdiction. On the other, and perhaps more importantly, this means that natural law is generally available to all human beings and hence is universally binding from culture to culture.

The obvious advantage of the natural law for human life, especially within our political communities, is that it can benefit us in terms of what normally divides us – namely, culture, history, gender, and so on. In this capacity, natural law should serve as the foundation for political and moral orders – even for those who, for Aquinas, would not have access to the final end of the divine plan for creation, an end revealed only in scripture. Natural law is that portion of the eternal

law apprehensible by human reason. So far as human reason varies in degree from person to person and from existential situation to existential situation, so too does the scope of human apprehension of the eternal law. For those with greater reason, a greater portion of the eternal law might be apprehended; in such cases, the natural law is enlarged in scope and extends further in informing their actions and choices. Alternately, for those with more modest or impeded reason, the scope of the natural law is narrowed. Yet, if human beings possess reason at all – i.e., if they are human beings according to Aquinas's understanding of being human – then they must apprehend a foundational subset of the natural law. Even "infants and the damned who cannot act by it," Aquinas claims at one point, can be held accountable to the natural law (ST I-II Q 94, art. 1).

In this vein Aquinas points out that, by matters of degree, some portions of the natural law are more likely to be perceived by reason than others. So-called "first principles," for example, are immediately and automatically available whenever reason is turned toward a consideration of the good. Question 94 (I-II) of the *Summa* is perhaps the best discussion of these principles. There, after outlining a parallel between such first principles and the self-evidentiary principles of mathematics, Aquinas identifies the foundational starting point for first principles as a basic precept: "that *good is to be done and evil is to be avoided*" (ST I-II Q 94, art. 2). Based on this precept, Aquinas traces a hierarchy of self-evident principles that eventually constitute the all-important general subset of the natural law available to all of us. Ostensibly self-evident to all who would turn reason toward a consideration of the good, these first principles serve as the groundwork for "natural" ethical and political life.

Second- and even third-order principles of natural law are also discussed. These are discerned through reflection on first principles and their application, and are defined as those not immediately given during consideration of the good (or happiness) by the human mind. The effort of reflection and consideration, central to the definition of the second- and third-order principles, suggests that their discernment requires an appropriately agreeable human condition: peace, leisure and social support for reflection, an environment with others who are already well-regulated according to first principles, and so forth. Aquinas admitted that cultural mores, bad habits, and environmental limitations (like passions, insecurities, or deprivations), might thwart or distort our discernment of such principles, resulting in great variation in human societies in their apprehension of these principles.

This might suggest that the natural law would be too uncertain or ambiguous for our ethical and political life – first principles being very general and the derived ones rather variable within different human situations. Nevertheless, Aquinas understood natural law to be uniform, extensive, and very specific in its principles – especially as the circle of reasoning expands, from one lone human being to the reasoning of a whole political community over time. The natural law might seem vague or might be confused for a single individual in a specific situation, but clarity and specificity would emerge over time within a political community. Thus, politically, natural law will appear in a much more thoroughgoing complexity.

Aquinas explains the thoroughgoing character of natural law in two places. In the aforementioned Question 94, Article 2, he maintains that the hierarchical levels of natural law have their origin in human inclinations. First principles for a human being, we are told, follow "an inclination to good in accordance with the nature he has in common with all substances" (i.e., being, which comes from creation). Secondary principles of natural law – the sort that might be forgotten due to evil passions or perverted by a bad culture – derive from the human "inclination to things that pertain to him more specifically as a creature with passions who requires others of his kind to live." And, finally, the third level of principles of the natural law reflects that:

> there is in man an inclination to good according to the nature of his reason, which nature is proper to him. Thus man has a natural inclination to know the truth about God, and to live in society (*societate*); and in this respect, whatsoever pertains to this inclination belongs to the natural law. (ST I-II Q 94, art. 2, resp.)

In other words, the natural law available to us encompasses the whole range of our experience of choosing and willing vis-à-vis creation – from affirming the goodness of our own existence and all creation, to the complexities of the rightness of our free and rational choices within the life of a community of free and rational creatures.

The second place in the *Summa* where Aquinas discusses the hierarchy of the principles of natural law is in Question 100, concerning the status of the Ten Commandments (Decalogue) for natural law. Here, he explains the first principles of the natural law which, including loving God and neighbor, "are so evident as to need no promulgation... wherefore no man can have erroneous judgement about them." Regarding the secondary principles (in which he explicitly includes all the principles of the Decalogue), he claims that they are so obvious to reason that "even an uneducated man can easily grasp" them. Tertiary principles of the natural law seem to require greater powers of rational perception, because they are "not so evident to everyone, but only to the wise" (ST I-II Q 100, art. 11, resp.)

Much debate has occurred over the years about precisely what substantive laws might or might not be given in the various principles of natural law. Some scholars find Aquinas to have argued that the whole of the Decalogue – or, at least, the second tablet of the Decalogue (commandments four through ten) – are to be included among first principles. Others have worried about Aquinas's apparent inclusion of most of the precepts of the Hebraic Law among the secondary principles of natural law (Cf. ST I-II Q 100, arts. 1 and 8). For our purposes, however, what is important is the manner through which substantive natural law is apprehended and becomes known to conscience. It is to this latter point, as well as its connection to Strauss's concerns, that we now turn.

Synderesis

Synderesis is the process by which human conscience is informed of the principles of the natural law directly, with no role for church or culture or family or political community. To be sure, Aquinas is no opponent of learning the natural law through one's social environment or through moral training. Yet, in order to account for the universality of natural law's first principles (and the generality of the subsequent principles), he must demonstrate that human beings – even without scripture and in the sinful human condition – are still subject to it. *Synderesis* is the mechanism, then, by which natural law becomes binding in conscience at the deepest level and regardless of the human condition.

How would this occur? As indicated above, Aquinas rejects the notion of anything like innate ideas. Mind and conscience possess no pre-given conceptions of the good. Likewise, and equally importantly, he rejects the notion that such knowledge comes via immediate grace. Taken together, these points lead to the view that the deep formation of conscience – the knowing and assimilating of the first principles of natural law – can and must be learned through our experience in the world. The formation of conscience around the first principles of natural law comes through our repeated experiences of the goodness of creation. Put most simply, *synderesis* is that instructional process or "habit" whereby exposure to the good of creation instills a binding appreciation of goodness

itself. As with reasoning itself, *synderesis* is not, for Aquinas, a deliberative consideration of possibilities. Indeed, the process has a necessary character; the first principles are not arrived at critically, but are imprinted by experience.

> But, *synderesis* does not regard opposites, but inclines to good only. Therefore, it is not a power, for if it were a power it would be a rational power, since it is not found in brute animals. *I answer that*, *Synderesis* is not a power, but a habit. (ST I-I Q 79, art. 12)

The foundation of the natural law in conscience, then, is by way of an inculcation through experience in a direct fashion. In subsequent discussions, Aquinas includes in the portion of conscience formed through *synderesis* all of the first principles of the natural law.

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Chapter III

Contemporary Culture and Appeals to Human Rights[1]

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Introduction

In his famous lecture "The Rights of Man,"[2] the French philosopher Jacques Maritain draws attention to a remarkable event which occurred shortly after the end of the Second World War. Despite the diversity of interests, histories, cultures, politics, and ideologies, nations from every part of the planet were able to agree on a list of universal human rights. And ever since, the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) of 1948 – and the rights it enumerates – have played a central role in calls for justice, equality, and the respect of human dignity throughout the world.

The Universal Declaration explicitly identified well over two dozen "human rights." Aside from the principal rights to "life, liberty and security of person" (Article 3), freedom of conscience and thought and expression (Article 19), and freedom of peaceful assembly and association (Article 20), the "dignity and the free development of [human] personality" entailed cultural and economic rights: the right to participate freely in the cultural life of the community (Article 27); to social security (Article 22), including the right to work; and to just remuneration, including the right to equal pay for equal work (Article 23). Further, people had a "right to rest and leisure" (Article 24), a "right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being" (Article 25), and a right to education (Article 26). The range of rights enumerated in the UDHR was impressive. The "practical agreement" on the "practical truths"[3] expressed in the UDHR was a great achievement, and Maritain was confident that "a new age of civilization" would "recognize and define the rights of the human being in his social, economic, and cultural functions."[4]

Yet in the years since the adoption of the UDHR, respect for the rights it proclaims has been at best limited. Once-stable societies have collapsed into bloody civil war, totalitarian and single-party states abound, colonialism has often been replaced by only more subtle forms of imperialism, and the gap between the rich and poor has never been greater. Appeals to rights have often been ineffective. Some defenders of human rights have had difficulty accepting several of the articles of the UDHR as stating genuine "rights," and there are critics who reject the rights listed in the UDHR altogether. Other critics have argued that the discourse of "universal human rights" (with its political and legal instruments) does not refer to anything universal at all, but rather simply reflects an ideology rooted in the peculiar circumstances of modern capitalist western Europe – that it ignores the different cultural heritages and social structures of non-western, non-capitalist

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[1] This paper was initially presented at the conference on 'Politics and Ethics,' sponsored by the Council for Research in Values and Philosophy and the Academy of Sciences (Georgian Republic) Institute of Politology, in Tbilisi (Georgia) May 1-2, 2001. I am grateful to Dr. Tinatin Bochorishvili and her colleagues for their gracious hospitality and for their comments. Parts of this paper have since been developed in the Introduction to my *Philosophical Theory and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 2003).

[2] Jacques Maritain, *Man and the State* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951).

[3] Ibid., p. 76.

[4] Ibid., p. 104.

societies, and has been used to justify the imposition of alien models of social, economic, and political relations.

Today, as we look for ways to address common problems, to help to bring diverse communities into genuine contact, and to provide opportunities for all to have a chance to be heard and to make their distinctive contributions, we may ask whether the formulation of theories of rights, bills of rights, the UDHR, and other declarations are still relevant. Has experience shown us that it is hubris to think that respect for all individuals, nations, and cultures is in fact advanced by the language of human rights? Have events of the recent past shown us that the discourse of human rights and its political and legal instruments are ineffective – or, at least, no longer effective – in promoting the dignity and well-being of human beings? Has the language of human rights led to policies or practices that have ultimately detracted from some of the very values one had hoped such a language could defend?

In this essay I wish to address these questions by, first, briefly reviewing some of the background to theories of rights and then, again briefly, looking at the development of the international instruments that have sought to enshrine rights in both international law and in the nations of the world. This, I suggest, will allow us to see better the nature, character, and effects of the discourse of human rights. Then, given this basis, we will be in a position to answer whether the concept of "human rights" and the discourse of universal human rights is still useful and relevant in dealing with the challenges of social and political life in the new millennium.

Theories of Rights

One frequent challenge to human rights is that the very term "human rights" is vague and ambiguous.

For some, the term refers to those freedoms or powers that are or can be claimed by human beings, which are derived from the dignity and worth inherent in (or ascribed to) human persons, and which enable them to engage in activities essential to their growth and development. These rights are said to be universal and, generally, include rights to life, liberty, the security of the person, property, equal protection of the law, freedom of conscience and thought, free religious practice and expression, peaceful assembly and association, and to take part in government.

Others see human rights as fundamentally "equality rights" or rights of "non-discrimination." Here, proponents focus on the cultural and economic sphere – the rights of linguistic, racial, and visible minorities, of the poor and the marginalized, and of the disabled. They are particularly concerned with addressing "abuses," such as restricting education, or participation in culture, or economic development. And some advocates see these "abuses" to extend very far indeed – to include "business practices that limit access to loans, mortgages, bank accounts, telephone services, and other services for people who are on welfare or are unemployed."[5]

This vagueness or ambiguity in the term "human rights" is reflected in the different accounts given of the origin of rights. For some, rights are principles "discovered" in nature, which serve as a basis for individuals to challenge the arbitrary authority of the state. For others, rights have their home in political and legal instruments – such as charters, declarations, constitutions, international agreements, conventions, and protocols – which presuppose the existence and support of communities and states. There are other accounts that look for a middle ground – but without a consensus on origin, it is no surprise that there is little agreement on the nature of rights.

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[5] "Report of the Panel to Review the Canadian Human Rights Act, June 2000"; reported in *The National Post* [Toronto, Canada] (22 June 2000).

Given this charge – that the concept of "human rights" is vague and ambiguous – one might well ask whether this notion is of any real value in addressing contemporary issues. But before we answer this question, we should ask what the evidence actually shows concerning the concept of human rights – and this requires looking at the *history* of theories of rights.

The history of the "discourse" of human rights is fairly well known. While the existence of "natural rights" is implied in works of antiquity, it is only in the Middle Ages that we begin to see an acknowledgment of rights as distinct from "the right."[6] For St. Thomas Aquinas, rights are a product of law.[7] What we would call "human rights" is a product of a law immanent in nature – specifically, in the end or *telos* of the being concerned – which derives its force from its relation to a transcendent order, divine reason, or the eternal law. Rights are, then, subordinate to "law," and are ascribed so far as they are conducive to a being's end or *telos*.

In the seventeenth century (with Hugo Grotius [1583–1645] in *De Jure Belli ac Pacis* [*The Rights of War and Peace,* 1625]), the term "rights" begins to be more carefully unpacked. Grotius and others recognized that rights cannot be separated from the concrete, even if they are themselves abstract and general. And it quickly became clear that a discourse of rights must take account of both the social environment and the characteristics of human beings. Thus, as the understanding of "nature" and "human nature" developed, so did the notion of "right."

"Nature" can be understood in different ways, and so "rights" came to be approached in correspondingly different ways as well. For many seventeenth- and eighteenth-century authors, "nature" was an order that was self-subsistent; its laws were necessary and had force intrinsically. Philosophers no longer had to refer to an underlying divine reason or eternal law. The natural law was "written in our hearts," and natural rights in their entirety were logically derived from it.

Another view – one that has had a strong influence in political thought in the Anglo-American world – is found in Hobbes and Locke and their successors. While there is a natural moral law, its status is unclear; the notions of a human *telos* and a common good recede from view. The fundamental natural law of self-preservation is soon understood as equivalent to *an individual's* right to life. "Natural rights," then, have a weight of their own. With this focus on individual rights, social life is no longer seen as fundamental, but as conventional – a means to the preservation of the lives of individuals. Political and legal authority is regarded as a product of contractual arrangements that people voluntarily engage in. Thus, natural rights are prior to the state and serve as limitations on the state.

On *both* of the above "modern" views, however, rights are "natural" to human beings and, thus, are absolute and inalienable. And once it was recognized that individuals may determine their own good for themselves, the purpose of rights was no longer just to enable them to pursue the good, but to prevent undue interference from others. Rights were "negative."

Through the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, rights play an increasingly important role in political, social, and philosophical thought. We see movements demanding freedom of conscience, religious toleration, the rights of women and of those without property, the elimination of slavery, and the extension of the franchise. But it is worth noting that, at each step, the recognition of "new" rights was concomitant with changes in the understanding of nature and of the human person. The discourse of rights developed in tandem with our view of nature – of the world – as a whole.

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[6] See Arthur P. Monahan, *From Personal Duties Towards Personal Rights: Late Medieval and Early Modern Political Thought* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1994).

[7] *Summa Theologiae*, I–II, Q 96, article 4.

The discourse of rights did not go unopposed. As human beings came to be understood more and more in purely naturalistic terms, and as nature came to be seen as malleable or as something that has changed and continues to change, one encounters more and more challenges to rights. While acknowledging that natural rights were "sacred,"[8] Edmund Burke considered rights to be a "Metaphysical abstraction,"[9] and "rights talk" to be inflammatory rhetoric – and he held that this discourse was responsible for the "havoc" of the French Revolution.[10] Jeremy Bentham also considered "universal human rights" to be unnecessary, vague, anarchical, and dangerous.[11] Karl Marx had a more benign, but still critical, view. In his *Critique of the Gotha Program* (1875), he argued that human or "equal rights" were "ideas which in a certain period had some meaning but have now become obsolete verbal rubbish,"[12] and that the discourse of human rights simply served class interests. And these objections have been extended in our own days – though in different ways – by Margaret MacDonald, Raymond Aron, Richard Rorty, and Alasdair MacIntyre.[13]

Did this criticism entail that the circumstances and grounds that led to the formulation of theories of rights – and rights themselves – were no longer relevant? Despite these challenges, the discourse of rights did not lose its power, and several philosophers have attempted to address the criticisms raised.

Defences of natural human rights may be found in authors as diverse as Mary Wollstonecraft, Immanuel Kant, Herbert Spencer, many of the leading figures of nineteenth- and twentieth-century American jurisprudence, H.L.A. Hart and, today, Alan Gewirth, John Finnis, Tibor Machan, Ronald Dworkin, and Robert Nozick. In general, their argument is that for personhood to be possible – or for "person" to be a moral term – rights are *logically* required. Others responded to the (late-eighteenth- and nineteenth-century) challenges to rights by attempting to reformulate the concept of rights. Inspired by Rousseau and Hegel, and aspiring to unite rationalist and empiricist traditions, the idealist T.H. Green (1836–1882) and his student Bernard Bosanquet (1848–1923)[14] argued for a "thick" notion of human nature and for the inseparability of individuals from their social context. Rights, then, are properties of individuals which reflect the functions or positions they have in communities. Rights are natural, but not inalienable or absolute. More recently, we have "pragmatic" defences of the existence of universal human rights. Jack Donnelly,

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[8] "Speech on Fox's India Bill (1 December 1783)," in *Edmund Burke on Revolution*, ed. Robert A. Smith (New York: Harper & Row, 1968), p. 106.

[9] *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, in *The Writings and Speeches of Edmund Burke*, 12 vols. (Boston: Little Brown and Co., 1901), Vol. III, pp. 240–1.

[10] Burke, "An Appeal from the New to the Old Whigs," *Writings and Speeches of Edmund Burke*, Vol. IV, pp. 151–185; p. 188.

[11] Jeremy Bentham, *Anarchical Fallacies*, in his *Works*, ed. J. Bowring (London, 1838–43), Vol. II, pp. 489–534.

[12] Karl Marx, "Critique of the Gotha Program (1875)," in *Selected Writings*, ed. David McLellan (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), pp. 564–570; see Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *Marx/Engels Selected Works in One Volume* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1973), pp. 320–321.

[13] See Margaret MacDonald, "Natural Rights," *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, XLVII (1946–47), pp. 225–250; Richard Rorty, "Human Rights, Rationality, and Sentimentality," in *On Human Rights, The Oxford Amnesty Lectures*, ed. Stephen Shute and Susan Hurley (New York: Basic Books, 1993), pp.111–134; Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1981), pp. 66–71; Raymond Aron, *Essai sur les libertés* (Paris: Calmann-Levy, 1965) and "Is Multinational Citizenship Possible?," *Social Research*, XLI (1974), pp. 638–656.

[14] See Bernard Bosanquet, *The Philosophical Theory of the State and Related Essays*, ed. William Sweet and Gerald F. Gaus (South Bend, IN: St Augustine's Press, 2001).

for example, points to the fact that human rights have "become a ... well established part of international relations."[15] Thus, almost everywhere we look we find "a basic moral commitment to the idea that all human beings, simply because they are human, have the equal and inalienable individual rights recognized in The Universal Declaration and Covenants."[16]

It is true that, even in these more recent authors, we still see distinct conceptions of human rights, of their origin, of their force, and of their limits. Nevertheless, what is common to all of these defences is the view that rights are both values and indicators of value – they not only reflect moral principles, but constitute socially recognized, quasi-legal claims. Moreover, variations in the concept of rights are not regarded as the result of arbitrariness or metaphysical speculation, but show an evolution and change in our understanding of nature and human nature. (Thus, it is fair to say that – as noted above – as the understanding of nature changes, so does the understanding of rights, as well as the increasing confidence in rights.) Furthermore, in these authors we see a tendency (to a greater or lesser extent) towards a more substantive account of human rights – rights that are not limited to simple "freedoms from" the coercion of other agents, but include "freedoms from" social and economic disadvantages, and even "freedoms to" pursue one's own conception of the good in a concrete way.

Consequently, despite the changes in meaning and continuing vagueness or ambiguities in the term, the discourse of rights and theorizing about rights remain important. Demands for justice and equality by the disadvantaged, the marginalized, and the oppressed, continue to be made in terms of rights, and this discourse has not only come to have a place in many non-Western countries, but has shaped the ways in which these cultures understand themselves, and has become recognised in national and international charters of rights, particularly during the last century.

Political and Legal Instruments

Of course, the concept of rights has long been recognized in law and constitutions. The American Declaration of Independence (1776) and its Bill of Rights (1791), the Polish Bill on Government (1791), and the French Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen (1789) are early examples. The American and French documents in particular affirm both that the well-being of the people is a good and that the authority of the state is based on the will of the people. These explicit recognitions in law of a set of basic human rights and liberties, together with the recognition of the universal applicability of law, gave momentum to extending rights to all human beings.

The history of Britain and its dominions, France, and the United States, in the nineteenth century reveals a gradual extension of a core set of rights. Yet only with the twentieth century did rights become generally understood to extend internationally. After the horrors of the First World War and subsequent political realignments, attempts were made to formulate declarations of international law and human rights, such as the Declaration of the International Rights of Man of 12 October 1929.[17] But not until the Second World War and the recognition of what had been

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[15] See Donnelly, "The Social Construction of International Human Rights," in *Human Rights in Global Politics*, ed. Tim Dunne and Nicholas J. Wheeler (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 71–102, pp. 77–78.

[16] Ibid., pp. 99–100.

[17] Published by the International Law Institute in its plenary session in New York in 1929. See A.N. Mandelstam, "'La déclaration des droits internationaux de l'homme adoptée par l'Institut de Droit

perpetrated during that war, did the call go forth for the "recognition of the inherent dignity ... of all members of the human family" and for a declaration of human rights.

A key moment in the international political and legal recognition of human rights is the Universal Declaration of 1948. The rights it enumerates have been appealed to by almost every democratic movement since. These rights have been elaborated and developed in a number of covenants and protocols, such as the International Covenants on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966) and on Civil and Political Rights (1966), and the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966). As noted earlier, these rights include not only fundamental rights to life, liberty, and security of the person; to freedom of conscience; and to freedom of association. There were also cultural and economic rights, deemed necessary for the dignity and free development of one's personality.

The rights of the Universal Declaration and of its Covenants and Protocols are not just rights of the United Nations. They are (and have been) a model for a number of other international charters, such as the American Declaration of the Rights and Duties of Man (1948), the European Convention on Human Rights (1950), the European Social Charter (revised 1996), and the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (1981). Through the latter half of the twentieth century, individual countries (such as Canada) followed suit and adopted charters or bills of rights, or gave explicit constitutional guarantees of certain basic rights. And in turn agencies and national and international judicial bodies have come to be involved in the implementation and enforcement of human rights. Human rights issues are sometimes treated by the International Court of Justice, the principal judicial organ of the United Nations (although the Court deals only with cases among states, and not between a state and individuals). Where we have regional charters or declarations of rights, legal institutions such as the Inter-American Court of Human Rights and the European Court of Human Rights have been established. It is fair to say that while there continue to be efforts at providing philosophical or theoretical justifications for human rights since the time of the UDHR, the defense of human rights has been made primarily by appeal to political and legal instruments, such as charters, constitutions, and international conventions and agreements, and, where possible, to those bodies concerned with the implementation of rights.

And so, in the formulation of these charters and declarations, we note the increasing presence of "positive rights" and collective or "group" rights, so that "human rights" include language rights and the rights of minorities to act on principles inherent in, or designed to protect, their cultures. We see also the recognition that people have a right to basic goods, and not just freedom from restriction in competing for them. Thus, we find a "thicker" notion of rights – as encompassing both what have traditionally been called negative, as well as positive, rights. These instruments have undoubtedly affected how people understand what their rights are.

Moreover, at the root of these instruments is an explicit recognition or statement of human dignity, as well as of our social responsibilities and duties. As the Universal Declaration reminds us, "Everyone has duties to the community in which alone the free and full development of his personality is possible" (Article 29).

And further, all of this attests to the view that human beings are now regarded as more than rational and self-interested maximizers of pleasure, but as fundamentally social beings capable of, and seeking, moral, intellectual, physical, and spiritual growth. If we look at how many people theorize rights, we find a "thicker" theory of human nature at work. The various political and legal

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international," *Revue de Droit International*, No. 1 (1930); *Les droits internationaux de l'homme*, ed. Paul Gramain (Paris: Editions internationales, 1933).

instruments likely serve as reminders that rights must take account of the human person as a whole, and not just in his or her dimension of being a rational agent.

Challenges to Rights

What does this account of theories of rights and of the political and legal instruments show us about the discourse of rights? Have the discourse of rights and these instruments been successful in protecting and promoting human well-being and human dignity? Recent critics in both the developed and the developing world have argued that this discourse and these instruments are hopelessly naive or have a hidden agenda.

Some critics maintain that the discourse of rights is no longer helpful in addressing moral or legal or political problems. The economic and social rights of the UDHR and subsequent documents have led to an inflation of rights – there are alleged rights against not only racism and sexism but "lookism" and "classism"; there are appeals to "rights" not only to basic education, but to specialized training. The responsibilities of the recipients are rarely, if ever, referred to. Such an approach, critics continue, confuses basic human rights with human goods – that rights such as life, liberty, and association are on quite a different level than goods like "rights" to leisure, and that attempts to secure the latter are not only unrealistic (given the material resources available), but can only interfere with the former. Thus, the list of rights provided in the UDHR, and the apparent shift to an emphasis on economic and social rights, has not contributed to a better understanding of human rights or to promoting and protecting these rights.

Other critics argue that human rights discourse and human rights instruments are ineffective and have failed to make any substantial contribution to the welfare or dignity of human beings. Human rights are only intermittently and arbitrarily enforced, and to depend on appeals to such rights for justice is at best naive. Thus, even though international bodies recognize rights, they are often unwilling or unable to enforce them. Nations such as the former Soviet Union, China, and North Korea were signatories to the UDHR and yet consistently ignored these rights – and there were little or no sanctions that any international body employed to try to change this. Moreover, the invasions of Tibet, Hungary, and Czechoslovakia, and the civil wars in Rwanda, Yugoslavia, and East Timor, are all examples which show claims to human rights are either ineffective or non existent. Finally, different nations interpret freedom of speech in different ways. In some, it is virtually absolute, in others it is subject to "democratic limits," and in yet others it is entirely subject to the whim of the state. Many have come to be disillusioned with the whole discourse of human rights.

Some non-Western countries are particularly critical of the legal instruments of human rights, which they see as revealing human rights for what they "really are" – tools of foreign ideology and political and economic domination. In the Bangkok Declaration (March–April 1993) of ministers and representatives of Asian states preparing for the 1993 United Nations World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna, and in the series of white papers on human rights published by the Chinese State Council (in 1991 and 1995), Asian and developing nations argued that the discourse of human rights was often used as a tool of foreign policy and oppression by larger powers; that these rights cannot be applied without taking into account the distinctiveness of the cultures in which they are to play a role; that many of these abstract rights impede more fundamental concerns (for example, providing a minimum standard of health care, housing, and food, providing a basis for development, and so on); that the responsibilities of the recipients are rarely, if ever, referred

to; and that many of these rights are, at the present time, luxuries rather than essential to social progress and well-being.

Perspectives on Rights

So is the concept and discourse of human rights still useful and relevant? It may seem, from the preceding discussion, that we are at best at a stalemate. But I think that we can say that we have more than that.

For first we should ask: "What is the function of a discourse – and of declarations – of human rights?," "What should we reasonably expect of such a discourse and such instruments? – what should we expect it to achieve?" and "What would suffice to show that this discourse or these instruments have been 'useful,' 'relevant,' and even 'successful' in *this* situation?"

I would argue that the function of a discourse of human rights is not primarily to implement laws or rules, to administer and enforce principles in a quasi-judicial or judicial way, or even to solve or resolve particular social or political conflicts. It can, nevertheless, be important pedagogically, practically, and politically.

A discourse of human rights – and many of the instruments that present them – have the purpose of declaring that there are such rights. This is important *pedagogically*, so far as it serves as a moral indication of what we have learned about humanity – of the recognized value of human dignity – and also as an indication of where those who claim to affirm them stand.

Such a discourse and such instruments are important *practically* – not in the sense of providing rules, but in a broader sense, by providing some indication of how, concretely, individuals can be just, moral, and show solidarity, and also how, concretely, these nations are called to be just in their dealings both with their own citizens and with the citizens of other countries.

Finally, a discourse of human rights – and many of the instruments that present them – are important *politically*. A "thick" theory can provide a middle road between libertarianism and statism. Against statism, it recognizes individual dignity, autonomy, and the value of self-realization, without making individual wishes and wants absolute. Against libertarianism it recognizes the importance of our relations to others as part of our individuality and, therefore, the necessity of social responsibilities and duties. If individual human beings have basic rights, they also have basic duties, and these rights cannot be separated from a good that is common to all humanity. These features were recognized from the very beginning, when rights were tied to natural or divine law. The recognition of the importance of duties and of a common good make the corresponding human rights no less rights and no less individual. (And this may remind us that human rights are not the "property" of just one liberal tradition.) In general, then, a discourse of human rights provides an indication of the moral limits on what states and nations can do, without requiring that there be any prior theoretical agreement.

I have suggested throughout this essay, however, that when we discuss the discourse of human rights we must be attentive to the nature of the human person – both to its dignity and to its social responsibilities and duties. A discourse of rights is a useful way of recognizing certain values, such as the dignity and duties of individuals. The political and legal instruments of human rights show us what is necessary for rights and defences of them to be coherent and effective. And they can indeed be effective.

For example, the introduction of notions of "rights" and "liberty," even in places where they are not native, has been successful. The Japanese constitution (3 November 1946), drafted in only

five days by a "constitutional assembly" of 24 Westerners appointed by General Douglas MacArthur and headed by an American lawyer, Lt. Col. Charles Louis Kades, included a wide range of Western-style rights and liberties (see articles 11–39). This document was initially regarded as outrageous by then-Prime Minister Shigeru Yoshida.[18] Yet the concepts of liberty [*ji-yu*= to depend on oneself] and rights referred to in the document have since become an accepted part of Japanese self-understanding.

What this shows us, however, is not so much the 'universal' character of human rights, but also that adopting a model of human rights does not entail a static set of human rights or an identical set for all. Rather, it shows that, while acknowledging the universal, one will inevitably – and rightly – have different practices of rights in different cultures. The end remains the recognition of the "inherent dignity ... of all members of the human family" – but what we have learned (or, better, what we have been reminded of) from the observation of different cultures and traditions, is that we can avoid relativism and yet acknowledge that the way in which societies will reflect these rights will vary.

Conclusion

Despite the differences of social mores and moral practices in the world, and despite some of the terrible events of the recent past, theories of rights, bills of rights, the UDHR, and other declarations are still relevant. I have argued that the discourse of human rights and its political and legal instruments constitute means to better understand contemporary problems, to supply guidelines to help bring communities into genuine contact, and to provide an effective basis for political responses to the challenges of social life.

For a discourse of rights to be and remain viable, it has to have a clear conception of the human person – of its nature, of its dignity and autonomy, and of its moral and social responsibilities. This could be a "foundation" for human rights and for the project that underlies the various legal and political instruments. We may not need to employ a classical foundationalist approach, where rights are derived from an axiom or a set of axioms (such as a human *telos*), even though such an approach may be more successful than has sometimes been suggested.

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[18] Tadashi Aruga, "The Declaration of Independence in Japan: Translation and Transplantation, 1854–1997," *Journal of American History*, 85 (1999), pp. 1413–14.

Chapter IV

Democracy and the Metaphysics of Multiplicity

Niyazi Mehdi

Introduction

Nationalist enemies of democracy criticize it for reasons other than its incompatibility with their own political ideals. At times, democracy is attacked because of its relation to certain mythologemes, both of an archaic and a medieval type. Russian Eurasians, for instance, "expose" democracy as an invention of God-fighting Jews, while at the same time see their own nations as fortresses of God.

The mythologizing of political and cultural issues has always been attractive since it creates a magical atmosphere permeated with contagious passions. And since mythologizing is not likely to be separated from the theoretical problems of politics, ideology and culture in the future, in defining the main thesis of this article, we are going to resurrect the mythological context around democracy – one which is often characterized as "the devil's plot."

In the Caucasus and Central Asia, however, the enemies of democracy lack a sophisticated mythology with which to attack it. Democracy here is criticized as chaotic, anarchic, and destructive to the institutions of stability and well-being – namely, the traditions of the authority of the elders and the culture of prohibitions. Hence it is not difficult for eastern enemies of democracy to identify it with the devil. The ideology of such fundamentalist regimes as that found in Iran, was always based on attacks upon everything Western – including democracy – as being in league with the devil.

Eastern people often feel an inner resistance to democracy. Through its identification with arbitrariness, license, instability and anarchy, this cultivates a psychology of resistance and rejection of something easily perceived as evil. Where does this fear of democracy as an invention of hostile forces come from? The answer lies in the very notion of democracy as a distribution of power, as a culture of pluralism and tolerance, and its affirmation of individualism. These constitute the necessary requirements of democracy; requirements that are easily perceived as typical of discord and factionalism.

The Copernican Revolution of Democracy

Let us remember that the term 'Copernican revolution' means the overthrow of existing understandings, fundamental theories and paradigms. The very word 'revolution' was itself used for the first time in this context by Copernicus. Kant, too, described his critical philosophy as a "Copernican revolution." Judging democracy's success in transforming the understandings of society, politics and culture, it is quite appropriate to define democracy as a "Copernican revolution."

The ideas of Oneness ("Hen") and Multiplicity ("Polla") have appeared in philosophy since Parmenides. Plato and Plotinus elevated these notions to the point of pondering the vertical and generating axis of all being. Subsequently, neo-Platonist philosophers as well as the Medieval Muslim philosophers Abu Nasr al-Farabi (c.870-950), Abu 'Ali al-Husayn Ibn Sina (980-1037), Khwajah Nasir al-Tusi (1201-74), Shihabaddin Suhravardi (died in 1191), the Sufi thinkers, and

so on, began contemplating the relationship between God and the World in similar terms. For all of them, the same paradigmatic idea was characteristic: God is Oneness, and the World is the result of the unfolding of this One. The unfolding of Oneness generates plurality. Multiplicity is achieved through a reduction of the Oneness. In short, the more pluralistic the stage of being, the farther it stands from God. The perfection of a stage of being and its hierarchic situation depend on the degree of unity within it. The closer the stage of being is to God, the less plurality it possesses. Thus, heavenly spheres, in comparison with the moon, stand closer to God, because the plurality in them is much less. They are simpler.

In the mystical experience of the Sufi sage, particular importance was attached to freedom from plurality. Asceticism was freedom from the plurality of the flesh, the vow of silence from the vociferousness of profane conscience. As in ancient Greece, the Muslim East saw the formula of love to be manifest in unity. The Sufi mystic saw the love for God in this formula, as well. Love for Him meant liberation from one's own plurality. It is under these circumstances that conscience is fully covered by His unified image, so that nothing remains in one's personality but His projection. This situation generated a renowned ecstatic utterance: "I am God."

In this context, it is clear why the topic of achieving unity in plurality has been popular since antiquity. Many thinkers of the past meditated on how to achieve this unity, and also articulated it in terms of the political relationship between rulers and their countries. The call to unity beginning in 1988 simply became a sort of perverted fixed idea in Azerbaijan. The danger was how the unintentional presence of Platonist and Sufi wisdom in this call made ordinary Azerbaijanis blind to a perverted idea of unity.

How this occurs requires a psychological investigation into the subconscious channels through which medieval "formulas of wisdom" (Jung), and non-profane high literature, enter the conscience of ordinary representatives in concrete history. As far as the "formulas of wisdom" regarding unity are concerned, psychologists might maintain that Platonist and subsequent thinkers did not borrow it from the heights of theoretical construction, but from the archetypal collective consciousness. As V.V. Ivanov reminds us, there is an archetype in the collective consciousness which forever justifies our belief that to divide the whole leads to catastrophe. It is this very archetype that makes itself known in Shakespeare's *King Lear*, and in the novel by Honoré de Balzac, *Le père Goriot*, where tragedy is caused by distribution of the father's property. Therefore, the hostile attitude of mankind towards the division of the whole and any assertion of plurality is pre-conditioned on a theoretical level by the Platonic tradition and by a subconscious archetype.

The Copernican revolution of democracy was the overthrow of this image of order and central administration so firmly rooted in the archetype of the subconscious and in a powerful philosophical tradition. Contrary to them, democracy rehabilitated multiplicity and justified it as a source of information, spirituality and effective management. However, even though democracy implemented its Copernican revolution, it was unable to eradicate its enemies since the enemy has taken a stand on ground that is anathema to democracy. In short, democracy is always weaker in the face of the above- mentioned subconscious archetype, and this is the source of the current situation of democracy.

On the one hand, as seen in Francis Fukuyama's essay, "The End of History?,"[1] the conclusion of the Cold War illustrated the triumph of democracy. On the other hand, however, we also see how a nationalistic criticism of democracy has emerged in Russia, much like the previous

[1] See Francis Fukayama, "The End of History?," *The National Interest*, No. 16, Summer 1989, pp. 3-18. An electronic version is available at: http://www.wesjones.com/eoh.htm.

communist criticism. There, many nationalistic movements see national unity splintered by democracy and its attendant introduction of discordant plurality into the "harmonious spirit" of the nation and the state. The association of all of this with "devilish plots" mythologizes the criticism. Such criticism uses mythology, and thereby ensures its popularity. The pluralistic features of democracy can be seen as its greatest enemy since pluralism is reminiscent of polytheism. Let us explain.

A political regime based on a pyramidal administrative structure, where the topmost point is occupied by a ruler, is a political and social analogue of the monotheist administrative model (and management of the world). Therefore, justification of a monarch as a representative of God was perceived as appropriate in Christianity and Islam.

Democracy, in terms of state structure, has undermined the monotheist architectonics of typical political regimes. It has replaced the top of the political pyramid with three branches of power. Thus democracy has led to a sort of a polytheist model of world administration. Now, this 'trinity' could easily be justified by the Sacred Trinity, and the Christian origin of the democratic political system can easily be proven. However, even Christian opponents of democracy do not see a Christian spirit in democracy, and this means that, in addition to Muslims, Christians subconsciously associate the trinity of democratic power with polytheism.

Conclusion

The Copernican revolution of democracy – the rehabilitation of multiplicity in the face of the cult of Oneness (*Hen*) – has met with as much hostility as that exercised by the Church against the disciples of Copernicus. In fact, the situation is not only that of an ideological rivalry. As the experience of the transition period in contemporary societies in the post-USSR republics shows, democracy was and still is meeting a subconscious opposition among laymen.

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Chapter V

From Politics to Transpolitics: The 'End of Politics' and Politics as Performance

Elizbar Elizbarashvili

The side scene is a covered plane separating the stage or the catwalk from the place where the actors or fashion models stand before appearing on the stage. What happens behind the scenes is absolutely inaccessible to the audience. And, beyond the side scenes, is the laboratory of every stage performance or fashion show. It is here that the play/action is planned, created and designed in detail, much of which will later be presented on the stage. What happens on the stage – the performance – comes from the side scenes. (I use the term "side scenes" here broadly, meaning the preparatory work existing beyond a performance or play.) As viewed from the side scenes, the action on the stage is "only" a play or dramatization.

But would the action on the stage lose its meaning for the audience if the side scenes became transparent? Let us imagine a performance or a fashion show where we watch the actors and models before they appear on the stage. This would, in fact, be intriguing. Let us assume that we would see the process of making up, dressing, and the giving of last instructions. Nothing would be hidden from the audience – everything would be one big stage. The stage itself, that is the performance, would no longer be the same as before. Though it would not lose its sense altogether, it would gain a new and extraordinary charm instead. Everything would be in the open. The action taking place on the stage may even recede, to a certain extent, into the background, and no longer command our central focus.

This has already once been done in the history of modern fashion. As an experimental technique in the presentation of a designer's new collection, the material chosen for the side scene was transparent. One could watch the models before their appearance on the catwalk, as they dressed and put on new clothes and accessories. The impression was intensified by the lighting and, on the whole, proved to be very effective.

How is Nietzsche's philosophy related to all this? The relation is not, of course, direct, but only metaphoric. In his work, *Beyond Good and Evil*, Nietzsche referred to all philosophy as "philosophy of the proscenium" which hides a certain philosophy – let us call it "the side scenes philosophy." This is exactly that separation of the stage and the side scenes – of philosophy-performance and philosophy-laboratory – which is presented as one of the fundamental distinctions in Nietzsche's thought. Reconstructing Nietzsche's metaphoric world, one sees it divided into two main domains: beneath the clouds and above the clouds. The domain beneath the clouds unites intersecting streams of the universe, various problems, ways, and so on.

This is the intricate labyrinth of life from which it is impossible to find one's way out – for example, in Greek mythology, to the remote islands. The domain above the clouds is the highest summit, existing beyond every cloud and every star – and from which it is possible to find one's way to the distant cherished islands. Every wind, every stream and every brook descends from here. Reality is born here. What goes on in the domain above the clouds of the universe is a performance staged on the proscenium – which, in Jean Baudrillard's words, is a development of the imaginary – whereas what is given to us in the domain beneath the clouds is "certain philosophy" and is the product of reflection.

But if Nietzsche sees all philosophy as "proscenium," why cannot every philosophy be characterized by the metaphor of the transparent side scene? The experimental character of Nietzsche's thought lies precisely in the fact that (similar to the above-mentioned designer) he introduced the possibility of going behind the scenes into the laboratory of philosophy for the first time – not only the first time in philosophy, but in the history of thinking. This is the hidden "certain philosophy" where every concrete idea – be it the superman, eternal recurrence, will to power, *amor fati*, etc. – is a dressed-up model or actor appearing on stage. In spite of the fact that these side scenes (the clouds being the direct metaphor) are not as transparent as in the performance mentioned above, Nietzsche allows some of the chosen to go behind the scenes and discover the secret. Socrates is unable to go above the clouds to reach the summit, but Dionysus and his fellow traveler are. Thus, the side scenes of Nietzsche's philosophy are still hidden from the majority of readers. A common reader would be content with the state of a traditional spectator for whom the action on the stage holds his complete attention. Therefore the "key" to Nietzsche's philosophy for the majority of his readers, is sought in the content of the superman, the will to power, eternal recurrence or some other idea-'model.' But this is only a performance, beyond which lies the main message. Using the metaphor of the transparent side scene, let us begin to reconstruct the full picture of the Old World, to convey the old era of humankind in which Nietzsche existed, and follow the fate of the above-mentioned dimension of simulation.

In the Old World there existed the old, natural reality. Here the imaginary and the real were clearly distinguished; this corresponds to the first two levels of development of the imaginary described by Baudrillard. This is the dimension of reflection – of truth and falsehood – including ontology and metaphysics. Among the most privileged teachings and theories were those that reflected reality most adequately by demonstrating that nothing can be truly said about reality, thereby already conveying something about it. The convictions of truth or falsehood are based on this.

The nihilism of such a world lay in the death of God, that is, in the devaluation of all values since they proved untrue. This was the stage of reality and philosophical thought, behind which were hidden the side scenes of separate individuals who have always existed and were simulation. This is the third and fourth level of the development of the imaginary described by Baudrillard, namely, the absence of the distinction between the imaginary and the real. Here the dimension of reflection – the dimension of truth and falsehood – no longer exists. That is why no place was left for ontology and metaphysics. Here reflection is replaced by simulation – by the play of signs on the surface which substitute for the "operative real" or hyperreal. But as long as adequate reflection – reflection of the real by the imaginary – was rejected, the various theories and teachings were no longer marked by the property of truth. Every theory was simulation, play or illusion where only manipulation – theoretical violence and seduction – existed. That is why the one who managed to seduce best of all was privileged. In this world of the old reality, the domain of simulation was extremely limited. Therefore, every manifestation of simulation was appropriated by reality. And this enabled separate individuals to become seducers of the whole world by means of simulation and manipulation, creating reality out of their will. Let us call this the old version of will seducing by the mechanism of manipulation. And insofar as the majority still strongly believed in reality, those who understood the side scenes of "reality" possessed the power of seduction. Thus, Nietzsche writes about Dionysus the seducer:

> Mit halber Stimme, wie billig: denn es handelt sich dabei um mancherlei Heimliches, Neues, Fremdes, Wunderliches, Unheimliches. [In a hushed voice, as is but seemly: for it has to do with much that is secret, new, strange, wonderful and uncanny.][1]

Politics, too, "fell" within the domain described above. It, like everything else, was based on performance, manipulation and seduction. Though political activity was regarded as the correlation of real forces on the proscenium of the universe, it was only a performance – just a simulation of the side scenes described above. In *The Will to Power*, Nietzsche referred to the politics of his times as nihilism – as "acting" – and in *Human, All-Too-Human*, he elaborates by saying that becoming "a great personality" is only a pretending to be such:

> Das Recept zu dem, was die Masse einen grossen Mann nennt, ist leicht gegeben. Unter allen Umständen verschaffe man ihr Etwas, das ihr sehr angenehm ist, oder setze ihr erst in den Kopf, dass diess und jenes sehr angenehm wäre, und gebe es ihr dann. Doch um keinen Preis sofort: sondern man erkämpfe es mit grösster Anstrengung oder scheine es zu erkämpfen. Die Masse muss den Eindruck haben, dass eine mächtige, ja unbezwingliche Willenskraft da sei; mindestens muss sie da zu sein scheinen. [The recipe for what the masses call a great man is easily given. In all circumstances, let a person provide them with something very pleasant, or, first, let him put it into their heads that this or that would be very pleasant, and then let him give it to them. On no account give it *immediately*, however: but let him acquire it by the greatest exertions, or seem thus to acquire it. The masses must have the impression that there is a powerful, nay indominable, strength of will operating; at least it must seem to be there operating.][2]

In this vein, he says too that the Catholic Church played a similar role in the Middle Ages, since it was based on artificial, fictitious necessities that were created where they did not exist.[3]

The fact that politics was within the domain of simulation is also clear from Baudrillard's book, *De la séduction*:

> Since Machiavelli politicians have perhaps always known that the mastery of a simulated space is at the source of their power, that politics is not a *real* activity, but a simulation model […] Thus, the Pope, the Grand Inquisitor, the great Jesuits and theologians all knew that God did not exist; this was their secret and the secret of their strength.[4]

Nietzsche was a great seducer. He mastered the art of simulation and thereby, truth and reality. He created, manipulated and ruled reality, for reality still existed, as did his unshakable belief therein. Dionysus is, in fact, its embodiment, who fecundates Ariadne/reality. The philosopher

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[1] Friedrich Nietzsche, *Jenseits von Gut und Böse*, Neuntes Hauptstück: was ist vornehm?, §295; *Beyond Good and Evil*, tr. Helen Zimmern [vol. 12, *The Complete Works of Friedrich Nietzsche*, ed. Oscar Levy], (New York: Russell and Russell, 1964), p. 262.

[2] Nietzsche, *Menschliches, Allzumenschliches*, Achtes Hauptstück: Ein Blick auf den Staat, §460; *Human, All-too-Human*, Part I, tr. Helen Zimmern [vol. 6, *The Complete Works of Friedrich Nietzsche*], *op. cit*., p. 332.

[3] Nietzsche, *Menschliches, Allzumenschliches*, §55; *Human, All-too-Human*, Part I, *op. cit*., p. 73.

[4] Jean Baudrillard, *De la séduction* (Paris: Galilée, 1979), pp. 93-94; *Seduction*, tr. Brian Singer (New York: St Martin's, 1990, pp. 65-66.

played an enormous game, being aware that it was only a game. Yet he realized at the same time that it was worth playing, for one day the game would cease to be an "illusion." His ideas are paper models which, he believed, would become real "one fine day," and steer life and the world in their direction. They would master the action on the proscenium and involve everything in the performance. For some time even Nietzsche was dominated by his own performance.

This is probably what Gilles Deleuze meant regarding Nietzsche's art of transformation in his essay "The Mystery of Ariadne According to Nietzsche."[5] Here, Deleuze distinguishes transformation, which is creation of life, from formation, the latter being only an external, formal change. The ability to transform is the ability to fecundate, dominate and create reality; this is the property of the active creative domain.

But the old era is long gone, and we now find ourselves in a totally different situation. Baudrillard characterizes this as the era of "total simulation." In spite of the fact that Nietzsche was the first to note the domain of simulation, and even applied it in revealing the side scenes of philosophy, he avoided showing the side scenes completely. In the end, he remained loyal to the hierarchies existing in the universe, for he knew that the domain of simulation could be possessed only by the elite. Otherwise, if this domain became universal, we would witness a radical form of nihilism. He was afraid of exactly this, even as he prophesied such times.

Baudrillard speaks overtly about things only hinted at by Nietzsche. There is no longer any transparent side scene separated in one way or another from the stage and the space beyond it. The old hierarchy existing between spectators is disrupted, and the domain of simulation has become the possession of everyone. This has been caused by such factors as technology, mass media, e-communication, advertising and show business. Due to a high level of development, all acquired the function of "a precisely describing machine," causing an eternal reproduction of reality. This results in "the operative real" or "neo-real." According to Baudrillard the old reality no longer exists in the modern world. It was replaced by "hyperreality" where the imaginary is no longer the reflection of a basic reality, and where any distinction between the imaginary and the real has disappeared. The belief in the "old reality" has died, resulting in the elimination of the distinction of truth and falsehood. The possibility of ontology and metaphysics is also thereby eliminated.

Any theory which still believes in the adequacy of reflection is entirely naïve. In this world, unlike former times, every manifestation of reality has already been appropriated by simulation. On the other hand, a collective demand to play the songs of reality still arises. These are performed by the above mentioned "describing machines," thereby forming a reality which is a "synthetic real" rather than natural. By means of this eternal reproduction of reality, society would "rescue" itself and culture turns into porno-culture where there is only production – and no seduction. This culture pursues the same goal as pornography, only in a broader sense; everything must become real, visible, everything must be said and described. Here "production" implies an action which imparts visibility and a certain comradery with the hidden.

Theoretical manipulation, violence or theoretical seduction in such a culture is difficult, almost impossible. Its domain is limited, along with the domain of belief in reality. There is no longer any belief in depth, thought or objective reality. Everything turns into a surface or "a screen." In his book, *Simulacres et Simulation* (1981), Baudrillard writes:

> When God died, there was still Nietzsche to say so, the great Nihilist before the Eternal and the cadaver of the Eternal. But before the simulated transparency of all things, before

[5] Gilles Deleuze, *Essays Critical and Clinical*, trans. Daniel W. Smith and Michael A. Greco (London: Verso, 1998.

> the simulacrum of the materialist or idealist realization of the world in hyperreality (God is not dead, he has become hyperreal), there is no longer a theoretical or critical God to recognize his own.[6]

"Transparency" on the surface of everything is radical nihilism realized in the form of simulation and complete atheism. It is not that all values became untrue, but rather that we know that every value is simulative. Some theories note that everything is simulation and play on the surface; Nietzschean seduction is ruled out in this world. Among these theories, the best demonstrate the tendency toward "nonsignificance" – which is the modern version of the will to power. That is why there is neither sense nor place for separate great seducers in such a world. This "play on the surface" is the hallmark of the politics of the developed nations. Politics in the world of hyperreality is not the same as before, but will end in transpolitics.

In the essay "After the Orgy," Baudrillard notes that if something disappears in the present-day world, this is not due to its death or to its reaching completion, but rather to its transition to a secondary, seeming existence. When objects and actions are freed from their essence as idea and value – and hence all interpretations of their origin and purpose – they take the path of endless self-production and continue to function in total indifference to their own composition.

The same happens in politics. The driving idea, origin and initial purpose of "politics" having disappeared, leads to a political system continuing to function in terms of political figures continuing their games with a total indifference to principles. This is the manner in which politics functions as endless simulation and self-production. Politics passes into a performance in which no one believes any longer. Politics ends in this way, and this is one aspect of the beginning of transpolitics. On the other hand, the end of politics is determined by the fact that it becomes diffused everywhere and in everything, invading every sphere of public life: business, art, science, sport, sex. All is politics. Baudrillard writes: "When everything is political, nothing is political any more, the word itself is meaningless."[7]

In the French writer's view, modern terrorism is the direct result of "transpolitics." In his essay, "The Mirror of Terrorism,"[8] Baudrillard points out that present-day terrorism is wrongly explained in terms of political, social or psychological reasons; this kind of modern violence is rooted somewhere else. It is an explosion in the social field which has its base, not in an occurrence, but, on the contrary, in the absence of occurrences. It is an explosion within transpolitics, when political emptiness explodes. This is when political systems no longer function in accordance with political wills and are ruled by blackmail, staged provocations and invented problems. Real politics has disappeared, yielding to political pseudo-occurrences and pseudo-events, from which the audience, all characters and all passions are ousted. It is a sign that we are disappearing as a political society.

It should be noted finally that the talk about the end of politics and the beginning of transpolitics in relation to Georgia is absolutely unacceptable. The integral project of Nietzsche/ Baudrillard, described above, deals with sophisticated modern Western systems. The end of reality in hyperreality, and accordingly that of politics in transpolitics, is possible only under the

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[6] Baudrillard, *Simulacra and Simulation*, tr. Sheila Faria Glaser (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1994), p. 159.

[7] Baudrillard, "After the Orgy," in *The Transparency of Evil: Essays on Extreme Phenomena* (London: Verso Press, 1993), pp. 3-13 at p. 9.

[8] "The Mirror of Terrorism," in *The Transparency of Evil: Essays on Extreme Phenomena* (London: Verso Press, 1993), pp. 75-80.

conditions of the technological development and high standards of living found in Europe, America and in developed nations in general. The situation of Georgia, and more or less the whole post-Soviet region, is essentially different. A country entering the twenty-first century without electricity, production, or effective laws cannot be categorized in terms of hyperreality and transpolitics. The state of Georgian mass media and state institutions cannot be understood in terms of an end of politics and the beginning of transpolitics – this is possible only for nations with highly developed institutions.

The view that politics is a performance also implies that in Georgia there are the side scenes of real politics not seen on stage, where the play already means nothing and is subject to real forces off-stage.

In this situation, real politics is going on, separated from the performance presented by the mass media. An attempt is being made in modern Georgia to present politics *as* a performance, and this is in fact the greatest performance of all.

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Chapter VI
Hegel, Marx, and the Critique of Communist Reality

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Any reader of Marx will notice his antagonism toward Hegel and the Hegelian dialectic. Thus, in order to fully comprehend Marxism, one must first grasp the fundamental differences between the views of these two men. The underlying theme for both is the human essence and, since this is tied with metaphysics, reality and truth become points of dispute. This paper intends to establish reality as it is and, keeping this in mind, to provide an analysis of several related aspects of the Hegelian-Marxist debate.

> As for the slowness of the world-spirit, we must reflect that it did not have to hurry; it had time enough – 'a thousand years in thy sight are as one day' [Psalm 90:4]. It had time enough just because it is itself eternal, outside time. The evanescent ephemera have not time enough for a great deal, for so many of their aims; who does not die before he has made his account with aims! The spirit has not only time enough; it is not time only which has to be spent for acquiring a concept; this costs a lot more: that the spirit spends many races and generations of men at this labour of its self-knowledge, that it lays out a prodigious expenditure of coming-to-be and passing-away, matters nothing to it. It is rich enough for expenditure on that scale; it paints with a large brush; it has nations and individuals enough to spend. There is a trivial saying that nature goes to its end by the shortest route – correct! But the route of this spirit is roundabout, mediation. Time, toil, expense – categories like these, drawn from finite life, are irrelevant here.[1]

Thought is an object of time in that thinking implies a temporal succession of thoughts. While concepts such as understanding and awareness can be seen as instantaneous, thinking cannot. The Hegelian view of the development of the *Idea*, the process directed toward the knowledge of the absolute, is *necessarily* a temporal one, and this quest of truth and thought – the very essence of the Idea – is subject to time. Therefore, it can be argued that any product of such an inquiry is unreal. To find out whether Hegel is right in saying that the truth is contained in thought alone, one must look at the mechanism of the evolution of philosophy itself. To be more specific here, one must see how philosophical knowledge is transmitted – thereby enabling philosophy to progress – through time.

What is real in the temporal sense? The answer is *now*, the present moment. The past does not exist: it is the present experience of accumulated memory. The actual events of the past – the real, experienced events – do not exist: only the memory of the experience and the knowledge of them do. Knowledge is an archive of empirical experience, abstracted to thought, and is necessarily shared through language. Language, regardless of whether it is English, binary code, or the formulae of physics, reflects a process of abstraction: by creating a history of knowledge, one destroys *real* history – the memory of experience – depriving it of life by making it *abstract*. The future is just an unreal, in that its essence is a projection of the past, and is thus an object of

[1] Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Introduction to the Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, tr. T.M. Knox and A.V. Miller (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985), p. 43.

memory. If reality (that which exists) is truth, we can see that truth can exist *in* time but is not*of* time, and that remembered experience, abstracted to thought and thus subjected to language, inasmuch as it claims independence from any preexisting material conditions, is untruth. In short, philosophy is not real. More on this later.

The basis of reality for abstractions is experienced, sensual reality. Abstraction – derived from moments of past reality and accumulated through time as knowledge (more properly, *wisdom*) – has a basis in a reality that no longer exists. History, as an account, is a corpse of the memory of experience. Thought is thus elevated above experience – since the mortality of the latter has been revealed, the human enchantment with immortality has posed a need for a method for its mummification. Abstraction has been superimposed on the actual basis of the abstraction – our actual sensual experience – and the reality of this experience has been subjected to the tyranny of reason and reasons. The Hegelian absolute, inasmuch as it can be comprehended through wisdom, *is not real*. Perhaps one should not have been so quick to laugh at the Egyptians and their anthropomorphic tendencies. For us to assume our superiority, from a hierarchical standpoint, to a culture of the past – a culture of a *different reality* – using its religious, political and philosophic methods of self-expression to criticize it, is to display a lack of aesthetic capacity. In a real sense, it is also murderous.

"All men," Hegel tells us, "are rational, and the formal side of this rationality is that man is free; this is his nature, inherent in the essence of man."[2] At this point we will pursue this conception of freedom by asserting that, on the contrary, what Hegel is describing here is bondage. *Being at home with oneself* is a paradigm of introspection, and thus a method for finding freedom in *escaping* reality. Perhaps this reveals how Hegel was typical of the spirit of frustration and confusion that marked the Germany of his time and which, like those Eastern thinkers who cultivated the art of meditation, also developed methods of self-defense. The very existence of the *concept* of freedom indicates the existence of a restrictive reality – a present, living, experiencing condition of inhibition – the totality of which Marx called the *superstructur*e. This latter is the domain of human social consciousness, or *culture*. The problem of freedom is therefore *specific* to culture. Further, to be un-free in Hegelian terms, is to be occupied with something other than one's thoughts – something deemed *external* to the *Spirit.* Not only does this include the senses, but also any thoughts recognized as originating in sensual experience.

Thinking on thinking: this is supposed to be the way to freedom! Mortifying one's senses is suicide; the attempt to reduce oneself to pure thoughts as they exist independently of sensual experience is an act of surrender, of negating all reality. However absurd this act, it is a *real* act nonetheless; and once its absurdity is revealed, its path to slavery is revealed as well. Freedom, as found through negation, is bondage. *Affirmation of reality as reality* is freedom. This affirmation, then, is a real act of liberation, not a mere abstraction.

> Communism is for us not a *state of affairs* which is to be established, an *ideal* to which reality [will] have to adjust itself. We call communism the *real* movement, which abolishes the present state of things. The conditions of this movement result from the now existing premise.[3]

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[2] Hegel, *Introduction to the Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, op. cit, p. 75.

[3] Karl Marx / Friedrich Engels, *The German Ideology* [vol. 5, *Karl Marx / Friedrich Engels: Collected Works*] (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1976), p. 49.

In an emerging communist state, all efforts – physical and intellectual – become directed towards reforming the existing material reality or *the mode of production of the material life*, because this is recognized as the basis of all consciousness. This is definitely a real process, expressed as a conscious human life activity, or labor. For Marx, therefore, labor is the real substitute for the method of reason. This last point deserves further analysis.

Like Hegel, Marx saw a process of development that can be construed as somewhat hierarchal. The communist state is the next step on the ladder of human evolution, not a step backwards. A communist employs reason, but his thinking is different in that he perceives his essence to be*different*. Labor is now his method. The essence of man, as a communist sees it, is conscious life activity: social action through social thought. This is not utilitarianism, however, since utilitarianism imposes *utility* on all of humanity, while communism imposes no such thing – its essence is constant action directed toward the reality of existence. All the communist's reasons, values, judgments, and so on, have a material basis in present experience and, therefore, are real themselves. In this light, communism can be seen as an act of constant adaptation, independent of any formulaic truths or universal methods. Labor is the actual embodiment of this adaptive process.

> In the social production of their existence, men inevitably enter into definite relations, which are independent of their will, namely relations of production appropriate to a given stage in the development of their material forces of production. The totality of these relations of production constitutes the economic structure of society, the real foundation, on which arises a legal and political superstructure and to which correspond definite forms of social consciousness. The mode of production of material life conditions the general process of social, political and intellectual life. It is not the consciousness of men that determines their existence, but their social existence that determines their consciousness.[4]

If there is such a thing for Marx as the Idea, it is in the *totality of relations of production presently in existence*. These relations are sensually manifest to human consciousness, or embodied, within the ideological forms of culture, making these forms themselves real. Communist philosophy is thus the manifestation of truth through a *definite form of social consciousness*. One's form of social consciousness, stemming as it does from his actual finite relations, to the mode of social production, is independent of his will. Thus thought is not self-determining, nor is it concerned solely with itself – until it loses its basis of reality and becomes unreal, as a thing of the past. As for the Idea, if such a thing were to exist, it would be the nonsensical thing-in-itself – neither of nor for human consciousness. All that now exists would be its embodiment.

(Let us attempt to briefly summarize this argument: all definite forms of consciousness are the conscious embodiment of the material reality of existence. Existing reality, in Marxist terms, is the embodiment of the universal Idea. However, given that the Idea is a word and nothing else, even the Idea is merely an abstraction, a definite form of consciousness determined by the real foundation of the present relations of production. Here we run into the problem of freedom once again.)

Free determination is necessarily a product of the absence of any counterbalancing, inhibiting forces. The totality of these forces constitutes the will. Freedom is the free determination of the

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[4] Marx, *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, Preface [vol. 29, *Karl Marx / Friedrich Engels: Collected Works*] (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1976), p. 263.

will, as in play. Thus, "will to freedom" is a contradiction in terms and is nonsensical. Further, as we have seen, the problem of freedom is a culture-specific phenomenon; the nature (direction) of this will is necessarily determined by cultural reality – by the array of definite ideological forms which function to mediate the process of labor. For Marx, these definite forms are integrated into the essence of man as a necessary precondition for labor. Consequently, the problem of freedom itself becomes a necessary attribute of human consciousness.

This seems to indicate that bondage is an unavoidable condition of man.[5] However, Marx asserts that the problem of liberty is abolished through the recognition of the social essence of man. In short, it is abolished through socialism. His claim will be analyzed later. Regardless, Hegel is wrong about the nature of freedom: it is not rationality that sets one free.

A culture free of bondage is free of neurosis; it has no conception of neurosis. For Hegel, this is a perfectly rational culture; for Marx, a perfectly social one. At the same time, the very idea of such a culture is a paradox and an ideal. A communist is unconcerned with this paradox, namely that his activity is labor through the idea of communism, though supposedly without an established communist ideal. But we philosophers do not care so much about the fruit of his labour. We want the truth and, in this case, truth can be revealed through a critique of communism.

> Communism differs from all previous movements in that it overturns the basis of all earlier relations of production and intercourse, and for the first time consciously treats all naturally evolved premises as the creations of hitherto existing men, strips them of their natural character and subjugates them to the power of the united individuals. Its organization is, therefore, essentially economic, the material production of the conditions of this unity; it turns existing conditions into conditions of unity. The reality which communism creates, is precisely the true basis for rendering it impossible that anything should exist independently of individuals, insofar as reality is only a product of the preceding intercourse of individuals.[6]

Here we see the development of communism according to Marx – keeping in mind what we know of man. In Marx's terms, labor can only be actualized through conceptual thought. These concepts are real inasmuch as they arise from the existing material reality of life. In communist culture, all "super-extraterrestrial" concepts are done away with – and the rest are constantly tested[7] for a sufficient basis in reality. Concepts are acknowledged inasmuch as they are recognized as useful. But, while in a fully developed communist society/world there is no need for the idea of communism, the conception itself is crucial for the developing stages of the revolution. Therefore, the idea of communism is constructed so that the proletarians of the world have something around which to unite.

The idea of communism is constructed by everyone and no one. On one hand, this synthesis occurs at the individual level – at the level, that is, of personal action, the nature of which is determined by the existing material reality and is necessarily accomplished through a conceptual

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[5] By the term "man" I mean the "social man,", the individual who identifies himself as a member of society *and* as a member of the human species. The word "member" reflects a certain level of identification – sympathy – with others, as well as a sense of duty, as expressed in the recognition of binding social relations and interpersonal responsibility. As for the hermit in a cave, he is for Marx inhuman, depending on the degree of alienation from the social essence of man; indeed, he is a sociopath.

[6] Marx / Engels, *The German Ideology*, op. cit., p. 81.

[7] Due to the very nature of communist thinking.

state of affairs toward a different form of the existing state. Thus an ideal is constructed. It is not an ideal of *perfection* or a utopia; this ideal is simply a state of affairs that is *better*, in specific ways, than the present reality. Yet, on the other hand, through social intercourse, a communal synthesis occurs, i.e., people come to an agreement as to what is to be changed. This is a strictly social decision: individual interests are reconciled, through socialism, with those of society. Consequently, the very concept of greed is disposed of, given the following two conditions: 1) the abolition of families and clans, national, ethnic and racial identities, i.e., all social entities separate from the society as a whole (thereby eliminating a sense of belonging to anything other than the human species), and 2) the formation of a universal working-class or proletariat (which eliminates the concept of specialization inherent in any exchange-centered society). This latter implies an end to the division of labor. With the abolition of private property and every other breeding-ground for greed inherent in the money system, the material interests of individuals do not and cannot stand in opposition to social economic interests. Further, as Marx argues, the advent of communism is the real act of human liberation brought about by the recognition, or the reclaiming, of the social essence of men: "*The human* aspect of nature exists only for *social* men: for only then does nature exist for him as a *bond* with *man* – as his existence for the other and the other's existence for him – and as the life element of human reality."[8] Since all existing modes of production are consciously stripped of their natural character and are subjugated to social interests, they cease to have a life of their own and become real, in the sense that they stem from the social necessity of production. But one has to wonder whether such a transformation is possible, as Marx thought, through revolution.

The reality of a communist revolution is *necessarily* a violent process. As the proletariat rises as a class "which has no longer any particular class interest to assert against the ruling class,"[9] it thus has *every* particular interest against it – down to the most basic premises of reality – hence, it cannot exist without violence. Communism cannot develop naturally and slowly, starting with small localities and gradually expanding: that would assume the autonomy of these localities. Regardless of their economic self-sufficiency on the level of basic subsistence, a certain degree of legal and political autonomy is also necessary. Consequently, a communist "micro-state" subject to constitutional laws governing a capitalist (or any other) state cannot function as such. As for acquiring the means of creating a separate legal, economic and political entity, violence – perhaps civil war – is required. Any commune is destined to stay as just that and eventually fade out unless it has the power to revolt. If the material basis of power is *economic*, there is also the need for a *definite ideology* by which this economic power can be consolidated and put into action. This ideology, of course, is communism.

Communism as an *ideology* is communism abstracted to slogans of propaganda. Due to its imposing character, it appears as alien and unnatural to those with a strong sense of class identity; this is not just the case with the rich. More importantly, in the case of those who accept communist propaganda to the point of *believing* it, the object of their belief takes on an essence of its own; one that is no longer just a result of preceding individual interactions. Such thinking is necessarily formulaic, simplistic and dogmatic in its universality. The proletariat, having overthrown the existing system of oppression, finds itself dealing not with real communism, but with communism as a science, or formulaic communism. The latter is unavoidably a science of *oppression*, since it deals not with the present reality of existence, but with the ideological mummies of the past. Thus,

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[8] Marx, *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844* [vol. 3, *Karl Marx / Friedrich Engels: Collected Works*] (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1976), p. 298.

[9] Marx / Engels, *The German Ideology*, op. cit., p. 77.

the abolition of private property and the formation of a socialist society do not solve the problem of freedom; one form of bondage is replaced with another. As soon as communism, inasmuch as it has established itself as a political and economic power, starts to believe in its own propaganda, it becomes *unreal*. Here it is necessary to further examine the concept of reality so central to the Marxist argument.

> Since the *real existence* of man and nature has become evident in practice, through sense experience, because man has thus become evident for man as the being of nature, and nature for man as the being of man, the question about an *alien* being, about a being above nature and man – a question which implies the admission of the unreality of nature and of man – has become impossible in practice. *Atheism*, as the denial of thus unreality, has no longer any meaning, for atheism is *negation of God*, and postulates the *existence of man* through this negation; but socialism as socialism no longer stands in any need for such a mediation. It proceeds from the *theoretically and practically sensuous consciousness* of man and nature as the *essence*. Socialism is man's *positive self-consciousness*, no longer mediated through the abolition of religion, just *as real life* is man's positive reality, no longer mediated through the abolition of private property, through *communism*. Communism is the position as the negation of the negation, and is hence the *actual* phase necessary for the next stage of historical development in the process of human emancipation and rehabilitation. Communism is the necessary form and dynamic principle of the immediate future, but communism as such is not the goal of human development, the form of human society.[10]

In order to grasp the definition of reality that Marx suggests in this passage, we must ask why postulating the existence of a supernatural being implies the admission of the unreality of nature. Whether one describes the otherness of this being as "beyond," "above," or "without" consciousness, alienation is always implied. This alienation is manifest in the conscious act of *mediation*. However, labor operates in exactly the same way, in that there is an inherent need for a mediating concept; mediation is precisely the function of all abstractions. Without these, there is no conscious activity, no labor.

Abstractions personified – for example, fertility as embodied in the goddess Demeter – reveal the inherent anthropomorphic tendency of human thinking. By imposing perfect rationality on reality, Hegel falls prey to this as well. Moreover, we have seen that for Marx, these abstractions are real insofar as they stem from material reality, and thus are *of use* as mediators. Accordingly, while fertility is very real, Demeter as a divine being is less so.[11] But at least Demeter is the goddess of something concrete and tangible, and most importantly, something *specific*. This

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[10] Marx, *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*, op. cit., pp. 305-306.

[11] There are two ways one could interpret this argument: 1) that reality for Marx is a spectrum, going from perfectly real to perfectly unreal, and 2) that instead of degrees of reality, there exists a definite structure of reality in which, whether an object is or is not real is determined by the existence of another object. Thereby, by saying A is less real than B, one could mean that A's reality is more dependent on objects other than A, than B's. For example, while both fertility and Demeter depend on the existence of the human need for crops, Demeter is less real than fertility because, if the concept of fertility were to become extinct, Demeter would cease to be real. Consequently, we can say: "A is less real than B," but not ask "How real is B?", since there is no unit of measurement of reality. These two interpretations are not mutually exclusive, and can both be correctly inferred from Marx's writings.

specificity sets her limits and prevents her from becoming altogether supernatural – it ties her down to a certain part of nature. Thus, Demeter is *of* nature and exists *in* nature. While the Greeks went so far as to give her human form, such a degree of anthropomorphism is not necessary for mediation. For example, the animistic religion of the early Romans which deified nature itself by assigning spirits to its every tangible aspect, was a religion of labor. Here everything is seen as both divine and finite, as immaterial spirits bonded with material spheres of influence and as *defined by* those spheres of influence. It is different with the limitless, incomprehensible, absolute God. Postulating his existence, for Marx, is the equivalent of deeming human consciousness unreal.

The existence of a God the creator, understood as the essence of all being and the basis of all reality, would render the view that sense-perception is the basis of reality entirely doubtful. Consequently, such a theological negation of empirical reality (both theoretical and practical) as unreal, makes truth incomprehensible and as something above and beyond human consciousness. The notion of the absolute is not based on anything particular. The particular is negated in so far as it is seen as merely a manifestation of the One. Further, the absolute is not just the totality of everything particular. For Marx, the absolute is, by definition, the perfectly unreal. Communism strives to destroy the mask of an enslaving and life-denying abstract existence and create a positive reality through positive self-consciousness or socialism. Self-consciousness, mediated by the absolute *à la Hegel*, is the opposite of this. It is, therefore, a profound irony when the "communist" enslaved by the ideal of "communism," observes the mentality of the masses expressed in a wave of slogans, songs and portraits, and then, with cunning and greed, realizes the possibilities of the abolition of private property – and rubs her hands.

In conclusion, a word has to be said about philosophy. That philosophy is not real is a philosophical issue; men of action, who give priority to the tangible, material reality, do not need proof. The peculiarity of thinkers such as Marx lies in the fact that they use philosophical methods against this latter, under the pretext of not being philosophers themselves. This distancing, however paradoxical, is indicative of a struggle. The origins and nature of this struggle, however, are subjects for another discussion.

Chapter VII
Individual and Group Rights in the Post-Soviet World

Nodar Natadze

Introduction

A macro-group, such as a nation or state, may be a party to war, economic and ideological rivalries, political struggles, and other forms of conflict and competition. Unlike relations between individuals that are regulated by some form of private ethics, relations between groups are ethically regulated in at least two dimensions. The acting individual has to consider, first, the interests of the opposite group and second, those of his own group. His moral duties refer not only to the interests of those "others" who constitute the opposite group, but to the interests of those "others" in his own group who expect his support. This typical situation allows us to raise a number of painful questions: what is the moral limit to serving the less essential interests of one's own group (nation, community, or family), versus the more fundamental interests of the opposite group? Does there exist an unequivocal moral duty for an individual to act as an impartial judge when his own group is party to a conflict with another group? Are there any guidelines for making the right moral decisions in theoe situations where every option involves moral transgression?

The scholarly activity of dealing with these tough questions opens a realm of other questions concerning the mental, emotional, and social ties of the individual to this or that specific group, be it a nation, race, class, family. What, for example, is the basis of one's identification with the group in question? What are the values involved and what psychological, mental, emotional, social needs are implied in this? In terms of these values and needs, there are questions concerning not only their authenticity, but having to do with the effects of losing those values and the failure to satisfy those needs. Indeed, in the realm of "values and needs," a multiplicity of questions emerges concerning the methods required not only for the proper definition of a hierarchy of values and needs, but also for determining the legal and political devices essential to controlling the satisfaction of our needs in accord with the principle: "my freedoms are to be respected as long as they don't violate the analogous freedoms of others."

The nation, as one of the major macro-groups, is one of the most relevant bodies in determining the political and social behavior of its members. Consequently, we will discuss three points here: 1) the basic demands, needs and rights of a nation, 2) the dangers that emerge upon a failure to satisfy those needs and, 3) the consequent violation of rights inherent in dealing with these dangers. The national right of an individual, i.e., the right to have one's nation as, in principle, equal in value and security to any other nation in the world, is integral to one's human rights. This basic feature of anyone's human rights must be explicated further.

The Ties of an Individual with the "Nation"

A human being needs a group with which to identify – a natural "in-group" which is determined by him or her once and for all. This in-group must have a status that exceeds the local social and political system and which can be seen as connected to the human race. In other words, individuals need to know themselves as members of a "natural" (or quasi-natural) group which has traditionally played, and will continue to play, an effective role in the history of humanity. The

individual needs this mainly for two reasons: first, in order to preserve a super-personal "immortality" through one's descendants and "people." Second, in order to realize value through one's relationships to those with whom he or she identifies, who are not in his or her immediate family or town.

There are different kinds of nations – from those who consider themselves world leaders, to little mountain peoples who, proud of their bravery and nobility, assert that their lack of Napoleons and Einsteins is due only to the fact that they haven't had the opportunity to take part in the game of history. No one can simulate this kind of membership in a natural self-identifying group. This sense of membership exists only among those who sincerely feel and believe that the other members of the group (whether known or unknown to them – including those as yet unborn) are really "one's people." Such individuals cannot consent to the idea that their natural self-identification group, their *nation*, is doomed to vanish some time, or that it will not play a role in the history of the human race. Thus national self-identification is a natural element of the primal demarcation of oneself from the rest of humanity. It is a cultural identification too, since individuals decide whether or not they are willing to take on the duties and problems connected with belonging to the nation in question.

The combination of these factors of natural identity, free decision, and the role within humanity, is of an absolutely unique importance. The need for nationhood – of knowing that one's nation exists and will exist forever – is not merely a social, material or other secondary need: it is an ontological one, and is as irrational and as irresistible as is the instinct of self-preservation. All those needs generally considered most fundamental for a nation (like studying in one's mother language, developing one's own culture, preserving traditions, etc.), though important, are in comparison with the ontological one, secondary and symbolic of a nation's willingness to last forever. It is only a half truth to say that different nations exist because of the existence of different languages. There is even more truth in saying that different languages exist because there exist different nations. Why does self- identification with a nation so strongly determine the behavior of people in comparison to their self-identification with humanity? Because our self-identification needs not just the notion of humanity in general, but contact with individual human beings on a daily basis.

Specific National Rights

The following is a (probably incomplete) list of the national rights of individuals which practically coincide with the rights of nations.

a) The right of individuals and groups not to be discriminated against on the basis of their ethnicity.

b) The right of individuals and groups not to be humiliated because of their ethnicity.

c) The right of individuals and groups to freely choose their nationality, i.e., to declare themselves members of the nation to which they think they belong.

d) The right of individuals and groups to use, enjoy, and freely develop culture in the widest sense of the word, i.e., to speak and be taught in their language, to preserve their traditions, and ways of life (so long as it does not violate the law).

e) The right of individuals and groups to have a homeland – i.e., the right to have their own territory, to have an exclusive right to it, to equality before the law, and to govern it through free elections.

f) The right of individuals and groups to reliable guarantees of national survival into the future like any other nation on earth, as well as the right to be free from violence in achieving this goal.

g) The right of the individuals and groups to have reliable guarantees to keep their homeland in perpetuity, i.e., the right not to be conquered, deported, expelled, massacred or otherwise forced to lose their homeland or the ability to control it.[1]

One's nation, its conditions and survival, are experienced in terms of absolute values that – as elements of the "Kingdom of Ends," to quote Kant – reveal the same criteria by which human freedom and morality are grounded. They are not commensurable with those human rights that refer merely to welfare and the comforts of life. If the rights referred to above are neglected, grave mistakes are sure to arise.

An example of such a mistake is the problem of Russian minorities in Baltic states whose voting rights are restricted. If the Russians vote, the state in question may be annexed by Russia once more, thereby depriving other nationals – including future generations – the value of a "Homeland." If they do not vote, recent Russian immigrants and their descendants may face the alternative of either living in a country where they cannot vote on the decision as to whether or not this country should exist, or leaving for another country. Nevertheless, the "Homeland" of the particular Baltic nation in question is a value, the loss of which inevitably results in completely destroying the personalities of those to whom this Homeland belongs. Though facing the dilemma described above is a problem, it is still not a catastrophe for Russian residents in the Baltic states. In short, the practice of restricting the Russian vote in the Baltic states is morally justified if we appeal to the equality of our basic human needs rather than to the more abstract principle of universal suffrage.

Violations of National Rights

Among the most notable in an obviously incomplete list of violations of fundamental rights, is the national discrimination and humiliation involved in forcing people to define their nationality contrary to their wills. This happened to the Georgian Muslims in Azerbaijan who are still being forced by the present post-Soviet administration to define themselves as "Azeris." Other violations include the prohibition of the use of one's mother-tongue; persecuting schools and other cultural institutions; deporting national groups (as in the case of the Chechens and other peoples deported by the Soviet government in 1944); conducting massacres in order to ethnically "clean" territory (like the Georgian population, which is being attacked in the zone controlled by the Russians and Abkhazians); the expulsion of peoples (like the Abkhazians are doing – and Ossetians have been doing since 1992 – in the Russian-controlled zone); the planning and practice of the policy of "confluence of peoples," i.e., national assimilation, and recognizing the birth of a "new historical entity – the Soviet People" (as the Soviets did in their time); and the planning and practice of

[1] One way of losing the control is colonization. Points a, b, and c above should be seen as part of the right of individuals to be equal with others living in the same society. Point d is secondary, and derived from points e and f. But the latter are more than that – they can be considered absolute in the sense that they are inseparable from our perception of the human being as a rational, free being endowed with the will to self-affirmation, having the ability to determine his or her own future, and as interested not only in its immediate environment but in the circumstances of the world as a whole.

settling great numbers of foreigners on others' land, and thus turning the existing nation into a minority group on its own territory.[2]

Defending National Rights

There are various political and juridical devices that can be used to protect primarily small nations. One is the enforcement of the law by international organizations in order to stop the discrimination and the national humiliation of individuals and groups. (Of course, the law itself should be defined by a global agreement on what constitutes "discrimination," "humiliation" and "violations" of the principle of equality before the law.) Another device would be a global agreement that people in any country have the right to define their nationality (ethnicity) according to their will and without any fear of persecution. Efforts should be made to establish criteria to define what counts as an obstruction to the development of a national culture, an individual or a group (such as the use of a mother tongue).

From a judicial point of view, not only deportation and massacre, but the forcible expelling of a nation from its territory, must be considered a crime as well – and an expelled nation should have the right to return to its lands whenever it likes. The same should hold for those who were forcibly settled in other countries. Having a global agreement to protect nations and peoples from the above types of dangers is the only way to guarantee the national survival of nations big and small. And it is certainly the only possible way to avoid the ruthless ethnic conflicts of today. If such agreements exited, along with the means to their implementation, then the problem of national rights within both uni- and multiethnic states would lose much of its intensity.

Multiethnic Relations in Contemporary Georgia

Within Georgia's population of about 5.7 million, there are about 70 ethnic groups and sub-groups. Two of them are the 4.4 million Georgians and the (approximately) 95,000 Apsuas[3] (who live mainly in Georgia and have no other homeland). The others consist of "diasporas" – mostly Russians, Armenians and the Azeris (about 400,000 each.) The best way to guarantee the national rights of these "diaspora" minorities, including that of escaping eventual assimilation into Georgia, is the founding of national communities. These communities do not yet exist, because such political or quasi-political forms of self-government could neither emerge nor exist under Communist rule. Nevertheless, it is the best and most reasonable direction for the future because it has been traditionally practiced in Georgia since the early Middle Ages.[4]

This form of national self-government (to exercise functional and cultural autonomy within the broadest parameters) is an extremely important tool for constructive policies, since it can serve the numerous, small minorities and would include both settled and dispersed groups. For example, the Apsuas may retain autonomous statehood within the Georgian Republic (which they now legally possess) or not retain it; depending on the willingness of both the Apsua and Georgian parties to the conflict. The problem is that the Apsuas, being only 17 to 18 percent of the population in the region, are outnumbered by the Georgians who represent 46 percent of the population. The former will not be able to keep their ethnocracy intact owing to inevitable democratic development and to their misguided political premise that "Georgians are not autochtonal in this region." This

[2] See the Soviet policy in the former non-Russian republics of the former USSR.
[3] Their Georgian name is "Abkhazians."
[4] It ended with annexation to Russia during 1801-1857.

erroneous premise has led to the ghastly conclusion that "The Georgian population should be exterminated." This horrifying conclusion was acted on by Russian, Apsua and North Caucasian fighters in the captured zone, where they have already shot about 30,000 Georgian men and women, and expelled about 250,000.

So the need arises for the Georgians and Apsuas to either divide the territory of the Autonomous Republic, or divide the right to govern it. The former was categorically unacceptable for both parties several years ago, and I doubt if it is any more acceptable now. The most realistic and rational solution to the problem is "supposedly" the following: leave a number of functions in the hands of the Tbilisi government (defence, border control, etc.), but allow the mechanisms of local, democratic self-government to be developed as the local population wishes. This development should include the rights of the majority to regulate land transactions. This would shelter and guarantee the local demographic majority of the national group in its specific region. Thus the local national groups, either Apsua or Georgian (or even, perhaps, a third one), could be defended from possible abuses from other ethnic groups in the Sukhumi or the Tbilisi ruling structures. Hence, in the territory of Abkhazia[5] there will be a local, more or less mono-ethnic community – and this will be a tolerable condition at least until relations calm down and the tragic events of the present fall into oblivion.

The Ossetian autonomy in Tskhinvali – as well as the term "Ossetia" for a part of Georgia – was abolished in 1990 (December 11) because it was illegal. This autonomy, along with the term, was created by foreign (Russian) conquerors in 1922 in order to prepare ground for the bloodshed which has now occurred. The Ossetian territorial autonomy of the population in the Tskhinvali region was intolerable for four reasons: it served the exclusive interests of the 6,000 Ossetians in the region, while 100,000 other Ossetians lived elsewhere in Georgia; it was never agreed to by another "diaspora" which, though more numerous than the Ossetians, had no traditional territorial claims; it was unjust to the 30,000 Georgians who lived in the region from the time of Adam, and who were brought under the control of the Ossetians – the majority of whom were settled in the region under Russian and Soviet rule; and – last but not least – this autonomy was dangerous in principle, because it made the political map of a country hinge on demographics.

So far, this has created and stimulated the passionate desire among original ethnic groups to obstruct the development and welfare of other groups, and has generated the fear that the new majority may become master of the new minority. In light of the absence of the Russian factor, the calming of interethnic relations in the Tskhinvali region will be easier than in Abkhazia because of the 100,000 Ossetians living in the rest of Georgia – the great majority of whom remained untouched by the conflict.

Other Caucasian Problems

We should now take a look at the Georgian view of ethnic and national relations outside its borders. Firmly taking the standpoint of absolute neutrality in the Azeri-Armenian conflict, Georgia is the only possible local base for negotiations and bringing the relations to an eventual peace. The necessary condition for success in this direction is the absence of an overly powerful influence by Russia or any other nation.

Though the Muslim nations of North Caucasia are generally seen as Islam-oriented, this is only partially true. They are certainly Islamic from a religious point of view, but culturally they are more Caucasian. Caucasian local culture, i.e., ways of living, mores, and the sense of solidarity,

[5] See footnote 4 above.

is rather strong and is able to compete, in many ways with the religious factor. (This does not entirely include the Indo-European Ossetians, Turkic Nogaians, or Karachaians, but even among these peoples there is a high degree of solidarity with Caucasian culture.)

Several years ago (in Grozny, in September 1989), during the "Second Congress of the Ingushians," the attitude of various peoples was hesitant. Later Russian forces came to a decisive victory and succeeded in fostering an anti-Georgian "Confederation of the Caucasian Mountain peoples" with an explicit Islamic ideology and background. Yet recent developments show that this victory was not final. There is a high probability (even an inevitability) that the Caucasian factor will play a very significant role in the political behavior of the nations concerned. And this will be far more useful for the development of democracy in the region than their orientation toward Islam or their unconditional acceptance of Russian policy.

It may sound paradoxical, but the peoples of the North Caucasus, with their sense of ethnic (not religious) superiority, along with their desire for civilization and learning, may well become a bastion of the West – not of the East. Among the most important conditions for this possibility is that these peoples (including the Armenians) see signs of the Western interest in the affairs of the region. This shows that the power vacuum presently in the region will be filled Western and not Russian concerns.

Political developments in the North Caucasus are now moved by the demands of the mountain peoples for complete independence and secession from Russia – which Georgia will have to support. If this demand fails in the North Caucasus and in the region in general, then it is quite possible that, in the absence of help, considerable resources of human energy in the region could be used, as they were by Stalin, against the West.

Disputed Issues

The recommendations made above are viable ones. But we should conclude with a look at a couple of disputed issues. First, there is the acute and dangerous problem of how the modern world determines the rights of peoples. This issue deserves urgent attention because there are a number of peoples and nations which are presently striving for independent statehood and which are resolutely prepared to preserve their territorial integrity in spite of the fact that they have citizens of different and unique nationalities – nationalities that are not captured in names formerly imposed on them.

Another acute problem lies in the fact that peoples and nations are self-conscious macrogroups with an historical memory. That is, they are conscious of the atrocities and losses of territory they have suffered at the hands of other nations generations ago, and they ardently plan to regain their losses. The victorious parties of the past may think that five, ten or even fifty generations is enough for the vanquished to have forgotten their old sufferings and humiliations. They also believe that their present rule is natural and in accord with human rights. But the old wounds have neither healed nor been forgotten. The process of one nationality invading the country of another nationality, and then making the vanquished a minority in its own land,[6] may be considered natural by the victorious nation. But to the vanquished, this is a sufficient reason for resistance and war. If the latter are victorious, ethnic cleansing of the territory may well take place. There are more problems of this kind. Bloody national conflicts like this are by now an all too well known phenomenon in the modern world.

[6] As has happened during the last forty years in some of the Baltic states.

If exaggerated, historical "memory" can lead to the most absurd demands on the part of nations with regard to the restoration of their territory and influence. On the other hand, if this memory is neglected, it can lead to conditions wherein ethnic groups will hurry to kill as many of the opposing groups as they can, *because they know* that the World Community only intervenes in order to count survivors, and to bestow the disputed territory on the largest number of the local ethnos remaining at the time of intervention – and this no matter whether the situation occurred two weeks, two years, or two centuries ago.

The fact is that nationalist motives inevitably govern a good deal of the social, political and historical behavior of men and women. These determine feelings and conscious national goals, all focused around a general sense of being owed real justice. Often, people attempt to deal with these problems based on visceral interpretations of the "just" or "unjust" behaviours of individuals, groups and states. Academics and scholars can mitigate the dangers referred to above, however, through careful analyses of the issues raised above.

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Chapter VIII

Freedom of Belief in Independent Azerbaijan: Majority and Minority Problems

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Problems of the Religious Minority

In 1996, at the beginning of the "Religion, Human Rights and Religious Freedom" program at the Center for the Study of Human Rights at Columbia University, I was asked about choosing courses on the problems of religious minorities. I was confused: "We do not have such problems in Azerbaijan. My problems are with the religious majority." But very soon I realized I was mistaken.

While at Columbia, I began receiving e-mails from Baku about problems with religious minorities. There were new "prophets" on the stage – some of them were being threatened with death by religious activists; new preachers of previously unknown sects were coming into the country; and the state and the established religious communities were beginning to impose more and more restrictions on them.

I was informed by the Azerbaijan Institute of Peace and Democracy that, in the fall of 1997, there was an incident in Baku which was very similar to a case mentioned in lectures at Columbia University: a 13 year old girl came to school in a veil, declared that she had developed a strong belief in Allah, and now wished to dress in the appropriate manner. However, the director of the school refused to admit her to classes saying, "Children in a state school should wear the school uniform – and that wearing a veil was not appropriate" The girl swore to immolate herself if she was forced to take off the veil. But the director insisted on it, declaring that the girl could attend a special religious school. The problem has remained unsolved. The girl and members of her religious community continue to demand her right to attend classes in state schools.

I would like to note that Azerbaijan, according to the annual report of Freedom House, is recognized as an "unfree" country. But even the limited freedom won by society from the state over five years ago, has resulted in significant societal diversification and an increasing plurality of ideologies, movements, parties, religions and life styles. Here are statements made by some members of Parliament concerned with the increasing variety of everyday life. In 1991: "Why on earth do we need five hundred different newspapers?" In 1993: "Why on earth do we need fifty political parties?" In 1996, deputies stopped raising questions about the number of political parties and independent newspapers, but found a new question: "Why on earth do we need so many alien religious sects in a Muslim country?"[1] But the process of diversification can no longer be stopped and, though the process is painful and tolerance makes its way with difficulty, our society is learning to live with pluralism.

In general, the situation regarding freedom of conscience can be seen by looking at how religion quickly occupied a place in society after the collapse of the communist regime. In 1992, Parliament passed a democratic law on "The Freedom of Belief," and dozens of new religious

[1] The words "why on earth do *we* need" indicated that members of Parliament, as well as the majority of the population, consider the interests of society much more important than the rights of the individual to self-determination.

organizations were registered. In the same year, by Presidential decree, houses of worship were returned to believers, and religious education became free. Officials began to show up at religious ceremonies, and politicians started making overtures to believers.

Iran also tried to exploit religion; it is reported to have spent hundreds of thousands of dollars advocating an Islamic regime for Azerbaijan. But a religious renaissance did not take place. Religiosity will probably return to society but, because of Soviet atheism, Sharia – Islamic legislation – is out of the question. The constitution and programs of the main political parties insist on complete separation of religion from the state. The overwhelming majority of Azeris identify themselves as Muslims, but only a few follow strict Muslim observances. One is less likely to meet a woman covered with a veil in Azerbaijani cities and villages than in London and, certainly, in Istanbul.

Religion itself is not a big issue. However, a widely discussed problem is that of religious minorities. It has become clear that society is ready to recognize only traditional religions – Islam, Orthodox Christianity and Judaism. New Muslim and Christian religious organizations, along with their many preachers from abroad, are considered detrimental to national identity and a threat to national security. Hence, the "Freedom of Belief" law of 1992 has come under constant criticism.

In 1996 Parliament passed an amendment to the "Freedom of Belief" law, prohibiting the activities of foreign missionaries. Local religious communities should, according to the amendment, be registered at the centers of traditional religious organizations (Mother Churches). Because of fear of the "Iranian" and "Algerian" cases, as well as fear of "Western cultural imperialism," government and independent newspapers often accuse new religious organizations of anti-social activity.

The right of the individual to a non-traditional life style or faith has become the next serious test of democracy for our society. "I address both the authorities, and the opposition," said Hadjy Azer, the leader of the "Islamic Union," in an interview with the *Azadlig* newspaper in the Spring of 1997. "Do not see us as evil, do not think that everyone who is not similar to you is your enemy."

At present, then, the attitude toward new Muslim organizations is suspicious to say the least. It is even worse toward new Christian organizations. Recently during a discussion in Parliament of the activity of the President's advisor on Humanitarian Affairs, Fatma Abdulla-zadeh, one of the deputies accused her of being untrustworthy because her brother had renounced the religion of his fathers and adopted Protestantism.

Angry citizens often complain to newspapers about Christian missionaries distributing religious literature to children – and the Government is taking this seriously. According to amendments to the Freedom of Belief law: "religious literature may be published or imported into the country and distributed only with the sanction of the Committee on Religion in the Cabinet of the Ministers of Azerbaijan" (Clause 23, paragraph 3).

The Head of this Committee on Religion stated in an interview with *Azadlig* that more than 250 religious organizations in the country had been registered by December of 1997. Some of them had been registered at the end of the 1980s (the USSR era), but the majority had registered in 1991-93. Heydar Aliyev's government (from the beginning of 1994) suspended this process. And, since the acceptance of the amendments to the law on Freedom of Belief, it has become practically impossible to register religious organizations (or, indeed, any independent ones). In January 1998, a trial took place in Baku where the defendant – a representative of a Jehovah's Witness church and a resident of Moscow, Alexandr Usenko – was charged with offering a $2000 bribe to the representative of the Ministry of Justice for registration of the Baku branch of his church. Usenko's lawyer told journalists that the officials of the Ministry of Justice had, over the previous two years,

been extorting this sum from him to register his sect. Usenko was found guilty, received three years of conditional imprisonment, and was released after the trial. With regard to this case, the state television network declared that the Jehovah's Witness church is a terrorist organization and, in some places, it is forbidden.

On October 15, 1996, by decree of the Cabinet of Ministers, foreign missionaries were prohibited from engaging in promoting their religions. Since this decision, the Committee on Religion has begun a re-registration campaign of all religious organizations. These decisions are made based on the influence of the so-called "Mother Churches," which feel no sympathy for the new and vigorous competitors coming from abroad.

Nevertheless, new sects still function. And though they are watched and criticized by both the state and the traditional religious communities, their activities continue due to circumstances specific to Azerbaijan. First, there is the general population's indifference to religious issues. Second, there is a policy of soft authoritarianism conducted by the government. That is, one can do what one likes unless there is a threat to the power holders. Third, there is the support of the democratic community's human rights organizations, liberal-leaning newspapers and political parties – not to mention that of the Western nations that promote freedom of conscience. Finally, after a close look at the activities of new religious organizations, even their opponents admit in the depth of their hearts, that sects do help the "fallen and miserable" in an altruistic manner, while the "Mother Church" does not.

The Islamic Party of Azerbaijan as the Religious Majority and Political Minority

I now want to touch upon the problems of the religious majority, or more exactly, those religious activists who seek more control through political institutions. Organized under the influence of the Iranian Islamic Revolution, the Islamic Party of Azerbaijan (IP) was registered in 1992. From the beginning, newspapers have written about the direct contacts of this small but vigorous party with the Iranian regime. During the military coup in Azerbaijan (summer 1993), members of the IP along with their Iranian supporters, were sympathetic to the rebels struggling against the pro-Western government of then-President Elchibey. However, Islamists were less lucky with the next President, Heydar Aliyev. In 1996, the leaders of the IP and dozens of its members were arrested, charged with spying for Iran, and sentenced to long prison terms.

The IP was not formally banned, but those IP activists (among whom there are many devout and worthy people) who avoided prison, have become outcasts and are persecuted from different quarters. By the middle of 1997, after a year of reflection and a reassessment of strategy, a group of IP activists began to revive the party.

The new IP leaders made the following tactical changes: they changed the name of the party to The Muslim Democratic Party; they accepted a new program, in which democracy, a constitution, and human rights would be granted greater significance; they favoured "nationalizing" religious advocacy, so that passages from the Koran were made available not just in Arabic, but in the Azerbaijani language; they decided to avoid isolation by entering into alliances with other opposition forces.

As these changes became known, there was conservative opposition inside the IP to the Party's new direction. The new leadership of the Party had to maneuver between the orthodox elements and those who sought reform. Eventually, and in light of new anti-isolationist policies, in the autumn of 1997 the new IP leaders signed a political agreement to cooperate with small liberal and

social-democratic parties. Newspapers wrote about these agreements with great surprise since they failed to understand that common ground can exist between liberals and the Islamists.

The next goal of the IP was to establish relations with the main opposition party – Musavat. After confidential negotiations in 1998 with Isa Gambar – the leader of the Musavat party and the presidential candidate from the democratic bloc in the elections of 1998 – the IP leadership presented the draft of a pact of cooperation to the Musavat governing Board.

Under this pact, the IP and Musavat undertook: to strengthen independence, deepen democracy, and protect the Constitution; to cooperate during the 1998 presidential elections (which meant that the IP would support the Musavat candidate); to wage a joint struggle against non-Muslim missionaries and non-Muslim sects.

The Board of Musavat discussed this pact for about two months. There was no need for haste because there were about nine months left before the elections. At first, the desire to get IP support for the presidential elections prevailed, but eventually it was decided to remove the paragraph about joint struggle against non-Muslim sects from the text of the pact.

Nevertheless, doubts about the ethics of a pact between the democrats and a political organization that had not yet defined its position, forced the Board to make another decision.

"We shall sign this pact," the Board stated "only when we are convinced that the IP has become a democratic organization and correctly understands the notions of ‘democracy,’ ‘constitution,’ and ‘human rights.’ Therefore it is first necessary to sign a protocol of mutual understanding with IP, stating that we actually share the same values. Only after that can we cooperate."

The leaders of IP were invited to a meeting with the members of the Musavat Board. And, as a member of the Board, I participated. The conversation was extremely useful for clarifying the positions of both parties. It became clear that some members of the IP understood democracy as the democracy of the Iranian regime - the system of Velayati Fakikh. Hence, one member of the administrative board of the IP frankly stated that "the people cannot be trusted to make a decision on serious matters, as they can be mistaken. There should be religious leaders and theologians (ayatollahs) determining the framework in which ordinary citizens can vote." Furthermore, it became clear that, "if the majority in a country are Muslims, democracy demands that all laws should be Islamic." And, as to the Constitution, "it is possible to accept it today, and then change it according to our own Islamic purposes tomorrow."

In reply to these observations, the Musavat Board presented a protocol on mutual understanding. The text seemed to catch the Islamists unawares insofar as "democracy," a seemingly simple term at first glance, bears many currents of meaning.

The text of the protocol read:

We, the parties undersigned, agree that:

- The power of the majority should be limited by the rights of the person as expressed in the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights.
- Religion is a personal affair, and should be separated from the state.
- A person has the right to believe or not, and to freely change his religion.
- A person has the right to practice his own religion privately or in a group of adherents, and to freely promote his religion irrespective of borders.
- This agreement pertains to Azerbaijan, but not to the whole Islamic world.

Upon listening to Musavat's arguments, the IP members took a copy of the document and left, promising to study the protocol and to state their opinion. Surprisingly, by the next day they had their answer. Obviously, the ideologists of the IP had made up their minds long before our meeting:

The answer was as follows:

- The UN Declaration is written by people, but we recognize only the rights bestowed to man by God.
- If religion is separated from the state, then there is no place for religious people in it, and it will be a godless state.
- Man is free in his faith (Judaism, Christianity, Islam), but the sects (all the rest) are false religions.
- A man can change a religion only to convert from Christianity to Islam, but not the contrary since it is forbidden by the Koran. It is forbidden because Islam is the best and the last of the religions, and no Muslim could renounce Islam.
- A man has the right to profess another faith personally but not in a group, nor is he allowed to promote any other faith since this confuses youth and the people with false, weak beliefs.
- Our statement pertains to Azerbaijan, as well as to the whole Islamic world.

Having closely studied this answer, the Musavat's Board concluded that it probably reflected the intense internal struggle between the conservatives and the reformers in the IP. Based on this conclusion, Musavat decided to not sign the pact on political cooperation for the time being, and to continue consultations with the IP.

Popular Front of Azerbaijan
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Chapter IX
The Problem of Corruption in Georgia

Tinatin Bochorishvili

History

On January 1, 2001, as clocks around the world struck twelve midnight, ushering in a new century and a new millennium, Georgia celebrated its own anniversary, marking 3000 years of statehood.

The date was symbolic, because the roots of Georgian statehood are buried deep in our country's history. But now we must concern ourselves with the future of a Georgia struggling to keep its head above water.

Georgia made two attempts in the twentieth century to assert its independence. The first was on May 26, 1918, the first time in 117 years that the country could call itself free. Although Georgia's independence was short-lived, it assumed considerable importance in subsequent Georgian history and formed the basis for the tradition out of which was born the national-independence movement at the end of the 1980s.

Many blame the fall of the Georgian Democratic Republic in 1921 on government errors, along with the treason of the Georgian Bolsheviks. Casting blame in this way serves to remind the current political elite that it has the responsibility of ensuring the future of the country. Today, the background is more favorable for establishing a Georgian state than it was from 1918 to 1921. Then, Georgia suffered from not being admitted to the League of Nations, which meant that there was no international guarantee of the country's independence. Georgia suffered further because it could get neither military assistance nor credits, both of which were necessary to revive the economy.

Fortunately things are different now. A "niche" has been found for Georgia in today's world and could well become an important factor in promoting Georgia's revival and well-being. Most significantly, it is in the interest of many countries including the United States, to guarantee the existence of an independent Georgia as a bridge between Europe and Asia.

Despite the present climate of independence, there remains the question of how the present authorities are using this situation to help the country. As one very high member of the government recognized, unless corruption is eliminated the Georgian state will have no future.

Some already think that Georgian independence only amounts to a "failed state," though its independence was won through the hard work of the best representatives of the Georgian people for generations. Of the numerous "quasi-states" in the contemporary world, none has a history that stretches back thousands of years.

Why should Georgia miss one more chance at an independent existence just because it was for too long headed by immoral and corrupt elites which thought only of filling their pockets and which ignored the country's interests? The political elite of the first Georgian Democratic Republic espoused an anti-national ideology, but at least it was not corrupt. In 2001, in stark contrast, corruption pervaded all echelons of the new state. Despite much talk about the problem, the political will to take real steps to overcome this vile disease was lacking.

There is a crucial need to fight against corruption in Georgia, as in most former republics of the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union was a "kleptocratic" state, populated by government officials

hardly able to avoid corruption. Little has changed since then. Many believe that Georgia's government long shared the same mentality.

The current situation regarding corruption and the legal system is daunting since it permeates and controls the economic development of Georgia. Corruption is hard to investigate and harder still to prosecute, since the state is often reluctant to investigate itself. The result is that corruption has had a serious effect on the political culture of Georgia.

There is need for action by the Parliament which controls the executive. In order to further the development of the country, action against corruption must be taken in order to create favorable public opinion which would increase support for the government and the direction in which the country is moving. Such actions include the firing of people in charge of certain agencies and better scrutiny of the privatization process. Media awareness can contribute to the anti-corruption campaign by making the reform process irreversible.

One way of minimizing corruption by high-level officials is to increase their salaries and thus reduce temptation, although this would have to be offset by saving money and capping expenditures. Decisions by committees charged with rooting out corruption should be made in the open after coordinated discussions. The transparency of the process is of the utmost importance.

In general, Parliament feels that the pace of reforms is too slow and that the executive must be more decisive than in the past. Recently, the executive has been more willing to act, thereby bringing the executive and legislative branches closer together so that the two do not work against each other in the fight against corruption.

Modes of Corruption

Unfortunately, efforts to improve society, economic reforms, (foreign) investment, and the awarding of contracts also feed corruption. Large-scale private economic growth, along with the presence of foreign money, have offered many temptations for corruption to occur and should convince anyone of the need for action.

As in the rest of the world, two types of corruption have existed in Georgia: so-called "petty" corruption and large-scale corruption. Petty corruption has been everywhere. We have found it among judges, police, and other government officials who, lacking substantial salaries, demand bribes as an "unofficial tax" on every transaction in which they are involved. A judge, for example, might delay or postpone the registration of a company without a bribe.

This problem of petty corruption in the registration of companies is widespread. If a client wants something done quickly, a law firm might prepare all the paperwork and then face a dilemma when it comes time to consider bribing the judge. If the law firm bribes the judge, corruption goes on unchecked. However, if the firm decides not to bribe the judge, the client will have to wait. The client also might bribe the judge, if expediency outweighs ethical concern. Such bribes are usually in the range of 100 US dollars, depending on whether the company is local or foreign, large or small. It is difficult for the legislative branch of government to deal with every single instance of petty corruption since it has bigger fish to fry.

The second type of corruption is large-scale and involves higher level officials and conflicts of interest. An official charged with awarding contracts or granting licenses can grant these selectively to family and friends, or to those who bribe the official with gifts or money. When such officials are in the service or pay of an individual or firm, they can no longer be objective. Another example is people in government who are employed openly and concurrently by private companies: an obvious conflict of interest. Along with new economic opportunities in Georgia

comes large-scale corruption. Georgia's situation is by no means unique; the problem is faced by western countries as well.

In 2000, in one of his regular monthly radio addresses, Georgian President Eduard Shevardnadze focused on corruption. He warned his listeners, "Should we fail to overcome this plague, Georgia has no future as an independent state or a civilized nation."[1] However, the ordinary Georgian has heard it all before.

The Response

Shevardnadze first launched all-out war against corruption in May 1973, while serving as first secretary of Georgia's Communist Party. Labeling it as a "struggle against negative factors," the campaign allegedly targeted corruption, bribery, careerism, bureaucracy, egoism, parasitic existence and extortion. In the midst of this anti-corruption effort, Georgians joked at his expense: "A plane is flying over Tbilisi and one passenger asks another: 'Why is it so dark in Tbilisi?' The answer came back: 'Shevardnadze is developing the negatives.'"

Jokes were the only form of protest against the harsh realities of life in Soviet Georgia. However, few remained in a jovial mood when several Party bosses were sacked, dismissed from the Party, jailed and even executed. Initially, some people welcomed the severe measures hoping the campaign would yield positive results. Matters got worse however, with the proliferation of absurd cases – like that of one defendant accused of bribery for giving an extra 50 kopecks to a hairdresser. Such "criminals" were punished "according to the law." The 1990s' version of the "struggle against negative occurrences" took on a slightly gentler aspect when suspect officials were simply dismissed from office. Many, in fact, secured new jobs as presidential advisors or entered business, investing their earnings from corruption.

On the eve of the 1995 elections, the President promised voters there would be no poverty in Georgia within three to five years. Data from the country's department of statistics now puts the number of people below the poverty line at a staggering 90 percent, and in 1999 Georgia's budget deficit climbed to over $250 million. By the end of 1996, corruption was still the country's main problem. The following year was declared the "year of the struggle against corruption." Having partially succeeded in countering problems connected with the civil war – criminality, budget plundering and hyperinflation – the issue of corruption came to the fore as Shevardnadze struggled to fulfill some bold election promises. Shevardnadze declared that 1999 would be the year of a decisive fight against corruption. Nevertheless, the year ended without any apparent success in this fight. The scale of corruption in Georgia is now so impressive that the country is infamous around the world.

Shevardnadze admitted that his subsequent efforts to counter corruption were too softhearted. "Pleading and appealing to patriotism didn't help," he said and, in promising that methods in 2000 would become increasingly severe, added, "I know many will be disturbed by this announcement." He then went on to say that the Security Council spent more than six hours discussing a new strategy against corruption. Council members include representatives from the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the Public Prosecutor's Office. Both these bodies were to institute measures against corruption. However, if public opinion was any guide, these very ministries were the most corrupt in the government. It was therefore unclear who would be "disturbed" by Shevardnadze's announcement if some of the very officials charged with rooting out corruption are the worst offenders.

[1] See http://www.eurasianet.org/osn/Georgia_Appeals _to_Public_to_Help.html.

The creation of a parliamentary anti-corruption committee was considered the first phase in the struggle against corruption. G. Baramidze, one of the leaders of the Citizen's Union faction, provided active leadership, but Shevardnadze refused to grant the committee any real leverage. Some argue that Shevardnadze needed corruption to retain his hold on power. In December 1999, Baramidze presented his proposals to Parliament stating, "Radical measures must be taken. The country is in deep trouble and both tax and customs services are immersed in a swamp of corruption." Baramidze asked Parliament to make legislative and constitutional changes to facilitate this fight. Nevertheless, Parliament dismissed his suggestions and appointed the less radical M. Machavariani in his place. Machavariani was expected to avoid attacking corruption head on, adopting a more conciliatory approach by balancing the real need for increased budget revenues against the interests of the corrupt clans.

Shevardnadze said that in the past he tried to eradicate corruption by "appealing to the people's conscience." Unfortunately, no amount of entreating, begging, asking, suggesting, nor appealing to civic conscience and patriotism yielded results. It is not hard to understand why this would be so, since it allows a corrupt official to hold onto his post with a source of income to maintain a good standard of living. Such people have never concerned themselves with patriotic or civil ideals. Many people lacked faith in such statements by Shevardnadze because he made many similar promises on other occasions. The reality of the situation was that the President made promises that were rather difficult to execute; if he really no longer "agreed with corruption" then the entire state staff of Georgia would have to be imprisoned.

As Shevardnadze has said, the "crusade" against corruption was the result of much consideration. But as he returned to Georgia at the beginning of its new life and continued in power for a long period, the formation of a state system in which corruption flourished must be related to his direct or indirect action. However, not everything has been the President's fault. During those years, Shevardnadze could not act as he would have liked. From the start, he came up against armed criminal groups, which he managed to win over only in 1995. According to some analysts, Shevardnadze's defeat of such "armed bandits" relied on help from a number of corrupt clans who were remnants of the old Soviet nomenclature worried about criminal activity in the country.

The President reiterated: "No one can avoid the tough but just hand of the law, whoever he may be. Even a representative of supreme power, a member of the President's inner circle, a minister, a deputy or a governor will be targeted." But could the President really have managed to fight and defeat the very corrupt clans who helped him gain power? To achieve this, the President would either have had to look elsewhere for support, or support the formation of a civil society. But such a society would be based on the same powerful clans.

Georgians believe that the most corrupt structure in Georgia is that of law enforcement. One Georgian Interior Minister once stated that "there is no place for corrupt persons in law enforcement." On the other hand, he himself had declared that recent staff changes at the Interior Ministry had nothing to do with corruption. According to him, no high officials at the Ministry were involved in corruption. He explained that rooting out corruption would necessitate the structural changes, and ordered newly appointed officials at the Interior Ministry to work hard to remove corruption from the system.

A state minister at a governmental session once said, "A hungry army, unprotected borders, and undistributed salaries and pensions all help someone's pockets to become heavier." The reason why the budgetary revenues permanently show a deficit is well known: corruption. This affects all echelons of the struggling Georgian State. It is not possible to govern a country when those to whom power is entrusted focus more on "eating" the nation's scant resources than on doing their

job. The Minister went on to explain that "Georgia is on the threshold of a power crisis." The shadow economy, he said, constituted 50 percent of the economy proper, and unregistered imported products totaled 460 million Georgian Lari. As usual, everyone present tried to justify their activities, blaming others for the "enormous gap" that had appeared in the budget. The "heads" of the mafia clans have long been destroying the Georgian economy. Yet everyone still pretends that they do not know who to blame. The easiest way out for the powers that be is to wash their hands of this problem, handing responsibility to others.

The President has said that now is a proud time for Georgia because Europe and the world have recognized that our country has turned from chaos to stable democracy. Yet the President has warned: "We shall lose all that we have achieved so far if we cannot prove to the world that we can overcome corruption. Europe recognizes only stable democracy. I have enough power, will and ability to defeat corruption, and I will do it together with my supporters." In this anti-corruption fight, Shevardnadze hoped to be supported by all those – in every sector of society – who share his interests, hopes and beliefs. He expressed great appreciation for the intensive and effective support by foreign experts, including the World Bank and the United States, in working out means to overcome corruption.

The Deepening Crisis

However, many in Georgia are skeptical about this issue – one that Shevardnadze discussed for several years but did not resolve. It is difficult to launch a war on corruption in a country where a policeman makes 40 lari ($20 US) a month, and a prosecutor’s office employee or a judge makes 50 lari ($25 US) – even these salaries have been held up for several months. And this is not all: according to the analysts, corruption has become a cornerstone of the economy.

The unfortunate paradox is that the successful initiation of market reforms was managed through corruption, rather than by overcoming it. In the Soviet period, officials who were accustomed to "state owned" property, saw quite well that an economy based on "market principles" afforded them new opportunities for wealth. Hence they became intensively involved in privatization, in the process creating a private business establishment. The Soviet regulatory economy had been replaced not by a market economy, but by administrative, clan capitalism. State officials are not professionally and directly involved in entrepreneurial activities, but nevertheless are its support and control.

As soon as the fast-cash ways were exhausted and economic success demanded professionalism in entrepreneurial activities, the corruption of these officials constituted strong barriers to reform. The loss of the economic reins for corrupt officials was tantamount to losing their secure and luxurious lifestyle. No wonder, then, that they opposed, as far as possible, the establishment of a free market economy in Georgia.

Under normal state regulations, the governmental and economic interests are strictly separate. The activities of both sides should be transparent enough to all citizens. At present, we are far from this "open" approach. Competition is not yet possible, because the separation between the state and the economy has not yet been accomplished. Such a separation will be a revolutionary structural change, and *more* difficult than the establishment of elections and democracy.

Because of the interests of corrupt officials in Georgia, lobbyists for import companies outnumber those for export firms because imports generate greater profit than does local production. Georgian entrepreneurs unanimously complain that enforcement of the tax code may destroy legitimate and honest businesses. A competitor with "governmental support" can easily

avoid paying taxes. In such circumstances, it is more profitable for an entrepreneur to deal with a corrupt official than with the state budget. It's a sad state of affairs when even the Ministry for Income loses income.

When there is dissatisfaction with the tax code, officials put the blame on international financial organizations. In reality, however, and under proper conditions, one can speak with these organizations which will then take into consideration the interests of local entrepreneurs – which of course are not in the interests of corrupt entrepreneurs. A new change in the tax code affecting how tobacco products are taxed serves non-national interests. The members of Parliament claimed that the executive branch was responsible for this change. Whatever the case, it will not benefit local producers of tobacco who, it is widely believed, face the threat of bankruptcy.

This is the state of Georgian economic development in the last three years. To improve the situation, production in Georgia must again start to move forward and create major new sources of income so that people can be employed, receive salaries and became solvent. Georgia now faces its most difficult period in several years. The time has come to repay some of the money previously earmarked for reforms. Georgia was *not* among the 36 poorest countries in the world whose debt repayment was excused by President Clinton.

Georgia's national budget is so limited that it fails to provide a serious defense system. Authorities have neglected not only salaries and pensions, but also the main instrument of statehood – the army. The only sector in which reform had been successfully implemented in Georgia is the justice system. However, it too faces serious problems. Highly skilled lawyers selected through a formal testing process have been waiting several months for their promised high salaries.

The only way to eliminate corruption is to build a real market economy. The fight against corruption in Georgia must begin immediately, because it is the basis of the country's social problems, the electricity crisis and the default on salaries and pensions. The country's progress toward structural reforms is sorely disappointing, and only squanders the talent and spirit of its people.

The problem of corruption in Georgia is obvious and acute, but how efficient and accurate will the measures be to overcome it? The situation could be fatal, as Georgia is seriously in danger of being labeled a country with no statehood.

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Chapter X
Problems of Post-Soviet Development: Politics and Ethics

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History

Through the historical development of society, the relationship between politics and ethics reflects the old collision of what is and what ought to be. Today humanity still wrestles in the grip of this difficult alternative, and despite essential difference in cultures, mankind has reached the stage beyond which it must either radically change the values of civilization or resign itself to inevitable destruction.

Sometime in the future (if, of course, this future ever comes), the twentieth century will be seen as a period during which all previous history was presented in miniature dramatic performances. Two world wars, the monstrous social experiments of communism and fascism which revived the worst traditions of slavery and feudalism, the Apocalypse of the atomic bomb, the simultaneous existence of primitive and postindustrial peoples on the same planet, the formation and breakdown of a bipolar political world, soaring problems of social and global ecology, an ethical vacuum – no such situation had existed in the past. The scale of the crisis is hidden behind the false achievements of civilization. The poverty and eclecticism of modern ethical thought only confirms the intensity of the situation. Is there a person alive today who still seriously believes that ethics is alive?

Not many people now remember that about 15 years ago, the new philosophy of perestroika in the Soviet Union declared the end of the epoch of opposing blocks, and the priority of values and morals shared by all people. The following years in the Soviet and then post-Soviet regions constituted an epoch of extraordinary cruelty and anarchy, innumerable ethnic conflicts and civil wars, and an avalanche of social and environmental problems.

The three problems of national self-identity, consciousness of religious affiliation, and the challenges to democracy have become more acute and contentious since the time of ‘perestroika.’ Almost all post-Soviet republics faced the problems of the role of nationalism in the formation of new states, as well as the task of including the spiritual heritage and socio-cultural values of religion in the new context of constructing a democratic society. Today, we know the results of many theoretical projects that were hurriedly included in these social experiments. So many errors were committed in the ten-year period after the beginning of ‘perestroika’ in the Soviet Union, that most people are now bereft of any of guiding sense of orientation concerning the past, present or future. Some issues, such as those of spirituality, culture, and the values and ways of their realization in a time of social transformation should not be left only to politicians and ideologists. These are the problems in which intellectuals are traditionally engaged, preparing the basis for moral and intellectual reformation. Such a reformation is perhaps the most important task for the post-Soviet republics due to the earlier period of exclusively atheistic development. The present return of these nations to their spiritual roots is of great value to the whole of humankind, and so should be encouraged by people throughout the world.

Unfortunately, the reality of post-Soviet development in most of the former Soviet republics has been disastrous. A new political elite has empowered and financially enriched itself by transforming nationalism into the main socio-political and cultural value. Thus ethno-religious

specificity has become the ideology. Corruption is now the mark of the lack of commitment by the new ruling elite to statehood and social justice. In the place of freedom, market economy, and democracy, society has received only poor substitutes. As L. Skvortsov says, the movement "from moral chaos to moral panic" has begun, involving especially the intellectual elite among whom authoritarianism has replaced democratic chaos, leading to a return to pseudo-totalitarianism and a society of voluntary slaves.

"New thinking" – perestroika – was not a philosophy but an ideology of the ruling nomenclature, regenerated for the purpose of holding political power in new historical conditions. Even if we imagine for a moment that the intentions of the ideologists of "the new thinking" were sincere, their attempt was doomed to fail since this new thinking was deprived of a ground in a new consciousness. All that the republics inherited from the former Soviet Union was a complete ideological and spiritual vacuum.

Nevertheless, the immediate result of the end of the cold war was a sharply reduced tension between the opposing dogmatic schemes, and this unexpectedly revealed a crisis in the dominant world outlook. Most of the dominant political doctrines, economic models, socio-cultural conceptions, scientific paradigms, values, standards and legal rules gradually but steadily stopped answering the challenges of real life. The philosophy underlying these spheres proved fragmentary and restricted. This philosophy needed to be changed and supplemented by a new understanding of faith and values and of their place in social life. In this connection, it is not at all accidental that a great number of separate national, religious, political and civil ideologies and movements have formed in the last decades, seeking new values and forms of expression in social life. Moreover, a new tendency in science has attracted attention – namely, the formation and development of new integrative directions combining different areas of study and spheres of cognition (systems research, informatics, ecology, synergetics, etc.).

One of the most promising directions characterized by a high degree of integration of social, political, economic and specific scientific interests is gender research. The study of male-female relationships reveals that socio-cultural roles have remained patriarchal and that this has resulted in trying to resolve complicated social problems by means of force, conflict and cruelty.

In its most concentrated form, such "a philosophy of patriarchy" appears in the conflict of international interests being settled by force rather than by law. The gradual formation of an anti-militarist consciousness, the construction of a culture of peace under the conditions of democratic pluralism, and the first signs of the corrosion of "the philosophy of patriarchy," have appeared so far only within the framework of civil society rather than within the whole political system. Developing a culture of peace in civil society is a way to begin changing the old world outlook. This is necessary for the countries in transition from totalitarianism to democracy. Within the framework of this new philosophy and consciousness, many civil, non-government organizations in the post-Soviet republics are developing activities to strengthen the culture of peace among various strata of society. The American non-government organization "Global Community," well-known for its peacemaking work in various regions of the world, initiated such an activity in the Armenian-Azerbaijan conflict on Nagorny Karabakh. Forces promoting a culture of peace have been formed within the framework of the Ben-Lomond process. Also the NGO "Peace Service" forecasts and works to prevent the development of conflicts in the South Caucasus by an exchange and dissemination of impartial information and by organizing meetings of intellectuals. There is a Baku Center for the Culture of Peace, and similar centers in Tbilisi and Yerevan.

The twenty-first century must develop new and peaceful methods of conflict resolution stemming from the development of a culture of peace and "a philosophy of new consciousness."

Not long ago [March 24-26, 1999], the international conference "Democratic Governance and a Culture of Peace in the Countries of Central, East and South-East Europe" was held by UNESCO in Kiev. It adopted a special action program to strengthen the culture of peace. The program included a suggestion to integrate efforts of all people of good will to overcome intolerance and hostility, to inculcate a culture of peace and to promote collaboration in the consciousness of the people. In this connection, it was suggested that history texts be revised to facilitate the task of facilitating a culture of peace.

On March 26, 1999, the Kiev Declaration adopted a reminder of the provision of the Preamble of the UNESCO Charter which states "That since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defenses of peace must be constructed ... and that the peace must therefore be founded, if it is not to fail, upon the intellectual and moral solidarity of mankind.."[1] The text of the Declaration contains an appeal "to all public and religious leaders to promote civil reconciliation." The transitional period now being experienced by all Europeans should be one of release from the stereotypes of hostility and violence. History is a continuous cultural creation, and the vision of new horizons is based on the positive potentialities of human consciousness. Since the loss of the spiritual heritage of previous generations led to the loss of historical experience and uncertainty about tomorrow, a careful preservation and thoughtful updating of traditions should be a keystone in promoting both peace and democracy, security and stability.

Today the political order undertakes functions which were traditionally fulfilled by the different institutions of religion. Nevertheless, religious organizations still seek new ways of collaboration to promote the cessation of violence in the world. There are noteworthy movements trying to bring different religions together behind the idea of a single God worshipped in different ways. This "unifying" movement appears to be developing in the same direction as "the philosophy of new consciousness." Among such movements is Dr Sun Myung Moon's campaign for religious integration throughout the world. Based on "a philosophy of union," this movement has been responding – although not without difficulties – to the need to find new forms of integration. Among these new forms, the most successful emphasize people's integration within the family – "the elementary cell" of the society.

Center for the Meeting of Religions

I would like to dwell on two projects implemented in Azerbaijan in which I personally have taken part. The first was established by the "Meeting of Religions" Center, whose purpose is to promote dialogue among representatives of the different religions of Baku. Among the traditional faiths are Muslims, Orthodox Christians and Jews (European, mountainous, and Georgian).

Isolation of Azerbaijan religious thinking from the main spiritual centers of the world and the primitive-aggressive atheistic policy of the Soviet period produced a culture of outdated, naïve, and often folklorish religious thought. Yet the social and existential problems of people beginning a democracy after an epoch of totalitarianism require a high level of reflexion – perhaps first of all religious thinking. The pluralism of today's culture challenges religion to answer the most difficult political and spiritual issues.

Modern Azerbaijan, along with other post-Soviet states, is faced with the necessity of modernizing the understanding and perception of religion, which for many people is a powerful

[1] Constitution of the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization, adopted in London on 16 November 1945 and successively amended.

channel to direct transcendent spiritual energy. As the experience of many countries shows, the need for such faith increases in the conditions of an open society.

In our work, we proceeded from the assumption that discussions between representatives of different religions and people with different attitudes towards religion would raise the level of reflection on religious consciousness, strengthen the spirit of pluralism in the culture, and outline the path for coordinated spiritual and democratic development of the society. The following key propositions were put forward:

1. We deny that there are "higher and lower," or "true and false," religions.
2. All religions represent different ways for people to approach the Truth or God.
3. The different ways towards the Truth is the result of divine providence and constitutes the spiritual wealth of mankind. Turning them into means of hostility and alienation among people is contrary to human nature.
4. Introducing liberal-democratic values into a religious culture in itself does not suppress deep human feelings or entail alienation among peoples in modern society.
5. As each person or nation is a bearer of a finite part of the infinite Truth, communication, interaction and dialogue facilitate the common spiritual progress of mankind.

Leaders of the traditional religions of Baku, representatives of the authorities responsible for religious organizations, well-known scientific and cultural leaders of Azerbaijan, and officials of the embassies accredited in the Republic were invited to the presentation at the Center. There, a number of problems became manifest.

First, traditional religions regard with great suspicion the activities of non-traditional religious trends and try in every possible way to avoid any contacts with them. Meanwhile, Azerbaijan has experienced a massive influx of sects and non-traditional religious ideas. For example, there are more than ten non-traditional Christian missions, each receiving considerable financial and material assistance from abroad. Islamic missions are represented by Turkey, Iran and a number of Arab countries promoting the dissemination of Shiism, Sunism and Vahhabism respectively.[2] Second, government structures have not yet elaborated a uniform approach in their relations with religious organizations. Third, foreign religious organizations have not shown any interest in the Center's activities and have practically ignored all invitations to participate in its work. Especially strange was the absence of embassy representatives invited to take part at the conference on the problems of freedom of conscience and of regulating the activities of religious organizations in Azerbaijan. Finally, there are no commonly recognized grounds between secularism and religiosity to enable an open dialogue between secularized intellectuals and religious figures. Indeed, as it unexpectedly turned out, the two sides of the dialogue view the history of the development of religious trends quite differently, not to say in an entirely opposite manner.

For this reason, the Center decided first to concentrate its activities on providing historical-cultural information concerning the different religions – such as the time of their appearance in the region, their respective histories, and the peculiarities of their worship and dogma. Practical efforts had to start from zero in a society that had spent seventy years under the rule of militant atheism.

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[2] "Vahhabism has its origins in mid-eighteenth century Central Arabia. Its founder was Mohammed Ibn Abd-al Vahhab. Hence the term Vahhabism, though in Arabia his followers have always been called Muvahhids (adherents of unity)." See "Ethnic Divisions, Politics and Vahhabism in the Post-Soviet North Caucasus," by Khasan Dzutsev, Abraham Pershitz, Ken Roberts, in *Revija Za Sociologiju* (2002).

The outcome of the Center's activities was published in two booklets: one about the origins and development of Judaism, Christianity and Islam in Azerbaijan (with a description of their main doctrines), and the other on the problem of pluralism in the spheres of religion and freedom of conscience.

Islam and Democracy

The second project, "Islam and Democracy," was based on the following premises. Most countries of the former Soviet Union have found themselves in an ideological vacuum that has been quickly filled up with unorthodox national-religious ideologies. Appeal to religion is quite natural, while at the same time, most post-Soviet countries have, in one way or another, proclaimed adherence to the principles of Western democracy. For countries with a Christian orientation, a synthesis of religion and the principles of democracy – difficult as it is – nevertheless does not imply an approach essentially different from the historical analogues of Western countries. It is quite another matter regarding countries with an Islamic orientation. Attempts to use, for instance, Algerian, Egyptian or even Turkish models for the synthesis of Islam and democracy are hardly appropriate, because the level of secularization of the state and population is much higher in post-Soviet countries and, with rare exceptions, can be expected to be only slightly reduced in the near future. Azerbaijan is a concrete example.

During the past 150 years in Azerbaijan, Islam has experienced an ascendancy over the official Orthodoxy of the Russian Empire and, then, the state atheism of the Soviet Union. Priests and intellectuals were wiped out or, if they were lucky, expelled from the Republic. The majority of Azerbaijani came to practice a "radical" form of Islam – Shiism – although, for many decades, people lost both the letter of religious dogma and the spirit of Islamic culture. In the last decade, however, Islam has been rehabilitated in the Republic, though it is still without any competent elaboration of its doctrines. Authorities, religious organizations, parties and intellectuals take from Islam only those fragments which serve their own interests. The state has declared the secular nature of its authority and thus practically keeps itself aloof with respect to religion. The lack of efficient government interaction with the religious institutions confirms this fact.

The level of the professional and spiritual training of religious leaders is very low and will hardly rise noticeably in the near future. The Islamic Party of Azerbaijan has been transformed into a conduit of external Iranian influence to the Republic. Intellectuals have not elaborated a strategy to return Islam to Azerbaijan culture; moreover, they evidently view this process and its consequences in different ways. Meanwhile, Islam, as well as any other religion, is first of all a sphere of spirituality which should be adequately represented in the culture. Spirituality may, depending on many factors, penetrate into post-Soviet Azerbaijan culture in various concrete forms – some of which we can foresee and direct today. The adoption of a real Islamic spirituality, combined with the values of Western democracy, is of vital importance for Azerbaijan in the near future. Islam has its own original system of democracy and mode of life and so it is able to offer an alternative to Western ideals of democracy – at least, in post-Soviet states.

Azerbaijan could well become a leader in establishing an active dialogue between Islamic values and democracy: it was historically the first of the Eastern countries in declaring parliamentary principles and democracy, it has a splendid tradition of educational activities and cultural collaboration with its Muslim and Christian neighbors, and it is situated at the intersection of Arabic, Persian and Turkic spiritual traditions.

At present, we are on the threshold of the real dissemination of the principles of democracy and corresponding levels of spirituality throughout the post-Soviet area. We have no prescriptions ready for use and they probably do not exist at all. But, at the same time, we know that neither the social prescriptions of so-called "fundamentalists," nor those of atheists, nor, as a matter of fact, those of "Western democrats," can succeed by themselves.

It is well known that, when discussing the topic "Islam and modern democracy," it is common to refer to the "totality" of Islam and the impossibility of distinguishing its religious and secular elements. At first sight, this "totality" is a barrier to a civilized and democratic reordering of Islamic communities. After all, democracy implies the existence of autonomous structures including personal autonomy – possibly by dividing and subsequently reuniting the pattern of social life. The "totality" of Islam seems an insuperable barrier to these dynamic social "games." Yet, despite having kept its wholeness, for instance, in the unity of the secular and the religious, there are historical grounds in early Islamic social systems, as well as in its theology and legal systems, for recognizing the person and for defending a co-existence between Islam and science, Islam and education, and religion and pluralism. Certainly, we should not oversimplify these problems, and there are frequent collisions and clashes of opinions, but "the totality" of Islam should not be interpreted as analogous to Soviet totalitarianism.

More difficult is the problem of secularization which has been so thorough in Western society and which should be taken into account when speaking of a modern type of democracy. Secularization in Western communities was a release not from religion, but rather from the dictates of the Church. Nevertheless, when Islam and the need to secularize Muslim society are discussed in the West, as a rule the problem is considered not from the general religious point of view or even from the Christian standpoint, but from the atheistic one of universities, trade unions and parties common in Western society. Why should such institutions cause consternation in the case of Muslim countries? The problem seems to be much more extensive and dramatic, as became clear to us after we made numerous attempts to submit our project to various foreign and international foundations for funding. Despite permanent interest in the materials published by the Center (several bulletins on "Islam: post-Soviet space" and booklets), all grant applications were politely denied, even when submitted as joint projects with foreign partners. In addition to the direct explanation of foreign foundations' unwillingness to finance work on "dangerous" problems dealing with policy, it seems that there are other more serious reasons. Despite small steps toward mutual understanding among the intellectual and religious elites, the reality seems to be that there is still great mistrust.

Factors of Conflict

In our view, two oversimplified views of the world contribute to this harsh opposition in the modern world. The first factor is the claim that there is a super-politicized power structure integrated in a kind of elitist caste. Even in the countries of Western democracy (not to speak of the "third world" and post-Soviet countries), there is a belief in the primacy of political and military decisions and the inclination to put policy above culture, religion, history and the individual. Owing to the efforts of the mass media, we know the faces of political figures very well, and we do our best to understand their secret decisions and manifest actions, but we hardly know those people who can be called thinkers.

The second factor that promotes a deepening opposition in the world is the state of popular or mass consciousness. This is a product of history and, probably, of secularization as well. Popular

consciousness, having renounced any sense of responsibility and stopped being a subject of the historical process, has opened the way for political manipulation. The modern world has transformed popular consciousness into an analogue of a large mechanical toy devoid of anything profound or miraculous. Intellectuals and religious figures, free of the estranging power of policy and mass consciousness, have receded so far into the background that there is a threat of catastrophe. Virtually the whole cultural experience of humankind is inseparable from religious experience, but it has been pushed to the periphery of social life. Is not this an indicator of the crisis of modern consciousness and post-modern omnivorousness?

Today we witness new attempts to modernize faith – not to change the sense of religion, but to foster positions that fundamentally reject violence and compulsion. The importance of such a movement is confirmed by general trends in the transformation of human consciousness. Overcoming the current crisis is possible only by means of integrating different spheres of human activities and of thinking and revising deep-rooted stereotypes which have equal influence on science, philosophy, religion, policy and morals. Therefore we see a deep interrelation among the perspectives and public movements of synergetics, ecology, trans-personal psychology, gender research, the culture of peace, peacemaking, ecumenical movements, religious modernism and inter-religious dialogue. Sooner or later they must join their efforts to form a new non-violent human outlook.

Along this path, non-governmental organizations – i.e., the institutions of civil society in post-Soviet countries – will take a more active part in disseminating knowledge within the new parameters of democracy, the culture of peace and new consciousness. For example, several training seminars on the principles of the culture of peace were organized by the Baku Center for the Culture of Peace within the framework of a meeting of the Helsinki Civil Assembly held in Azerbaijan. These seminars continued after the meeting of the Assembly and were organized with the representatives of the Azerbaijan community.

Although plans for instruction in the culture of peace have been completed by UNESCO, these principles and ideas have not been accessible to the general public. Apparently, there is still formal opposition to the dissemination of UNESCO's decisions among its national committees, and these decisions are realized in the form of short-term campaigns. Communication with delegates of the Helsinki Civil Assembly suggests that often the culture of peace is interpreted either as "the culture of one or another country" or "the formation of a culture common to all humankind."

In the South Caucasus, which is involved in numerous conflicts, ideas of a culture of peace have been met with extreme caution even among the representatives of peacemaking organizations, and there is a sharp polarization of views concerning its importance for the region. The side that regards itself as a victim of the conflict treats the principles of the culture of peace with great suspicion and believes these are "specially disseminated to legitimate the results of the conflict and deprive the victim of the possibility of restoring justice by military means." The opposite side, though formally agreeing to the principles of the culture of peace, insists that "their realization is possible only when all sides acknowledge the results of military conflict." At this point, neither side considers the principles of a culture of peace to be a promising means for real resolution of the problems.

Principles of Reconciliation

In this connection, the aim of the Center was to demonstrate to students in the seminars the positive and even pragmatic role of a culture of peace in dealing with conflicting sides. The training

methods were constructed so as to demonstrate the advantages of this culture of peace and to remove myths and stereotypes about it. The stages of work in the seminars addressed the following:

1. That conflict begins by reviving (usually deliberately) old insults, claims and demands, but on a new basis. Thus the old matter is situated in new historical conditions; this, as a rule, is not noticed or is ignored by the sides.

2. By involving more people and organizations, conflict comes to substitute discussion of real problems with tales designed to evoke unconscious fears, phobias and illusory expectations.

3. Both sides stop listening to each other: the problem, its real components and ways of their resolution are replaced by conceptions of irreconcilable opposition whose settlement is conceived only in terms of military action.

4. If a war is based on such ideological positions, it proceeds with great cruelty. The two sides blame each other for crimes against humanity while simultaneously engaging in barbarous actions, especially in the treatment of non-combatants. Third parties, which may have had their own interests in unleashing the conflict, now try to become mediators in its settlement. They even willingly acknowledge fabricated crimes which they harshly condemn.

5. Ethnic wars, as a rule, are not concluded by a peace treaty. Such wars do not eliminate initial conflicts between the sides, especially concerning their phobias. Therefore, having exhausted their military resources, the sides (usually through the mediation of third countries) conclude a provisional armistice that may last for a very long period. Under such conditions ("neither war nor peace"), the leaders of the conflicting sides seek to strengthen their own regimes, which are sometimes authoritarian. Democratic changes, economic reforms, the formation of a lawful state and civil society progress more slowly or cease altogether, while there is a sharp rise is corruption and calls for the "improvement of the populace" under the pretense of a state of emergency. Problems of poverty and unemployment supplant conflict resolution in people's consciousness.

6. The two sides are afraid of the resumption of war (although they do not state this officially) and agree to negotiations in the hope of solving their problems. Next a substitution of the real problem takes place: hope of reestablishing their position which is replaced by "a mythical truth."

7. Nevertheless, these first contacts allow a hearing of the opposing side's arguments for the first time, and restore the real scope of each side's claims. Now participants in negotiations change their initial standpoints, but instead of providing this information to the mass media, they classify the negotiations as secret. There is now the possibility of changing their attitude towards the opponent. Some of their opposition having disappeared, there is a rise in diplomacy, negotiations and collaboration between various non-government organizations on opposing sides (encouraged by foreign foundations). Officials who spoke at the meeting of The Helsinki Civil Assembly in Baku mentioned this openly, and reproached non-government organizations for intervening in state affairs.

8. Mass media, the opposing intellectual elites, and leaders of political parties and movements should above all be involved in the upbringing and education in the spirit of the culture of peace so that they themselves become mediators of these ideas for the general public.

9. The principles of the culture of peace are not ideas of defeatism, forgiveness, and peace-making through neglect of national interests. On the contrary, they are advanced, implacably, by the facts of crimes against humanity and the demands for conviction and punishment for war criminals. This was the case in Bosnia and Kosovo, regardless of the national identity of the persons responsible. On the other hand, the culture of peace creates an atmosphere of tolerance,

promoting a joint search for a peaceful settlement of the conflict. It takes account of the interests of all sides and works toward acceptable compromises. Under such circumstances, the negotiations promote a peace treaty that reduces the possibility of a resumption of conflict and a settlement by military action. This final point is especially important and its significance is emphasized by people seeing this as a rational, positive and pragmatic decision.

10. Practical establishment of the principles of the culture of peace proceeds along the path of the formation and development of partnership and collaboration among former opponents in the fields of economy, the construction of a state based on general principles of democracy, the formation of a lawful state and civil society, and the development of multilateral cultural and scientific relations. Modern active collaboration of countries which either were implacable enemies or were previously in conflict is a good illustration of the practicality of the culture of peace (e.g., Germany and France, Germany and Russia, etc.).

The stage of the existence of national democracies, marked by signs of anarchy and authoritarianism, is just about over in the post-Soviet areas. Now we are about ready to enter the period of the formation of civil society and a lawful state, where ruling institutions will be transformed. Under the influence of Western political systems, the national self-consciousness of these states will gain features of civil self-consciousness. But this is still tentative. Actual events may remove Azerbaijan (as well as the whole region) from the geopolitical space of the West and return it to the process of transformation for a protracted period (in full accordance with the predictions of Samuel Huntington). However, the dynamics of globalization have yet to reveal other pragmatic ways of entering into democracy. Therefore, at the present moment, it seems necessary to promote the collaboration of Western and Eastern researchers in order to establish a new interaction of politics and ethics aimed at the formation of a global outlook for humanity.

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Chapter XI

Political Aspects of the National Information System in Post-Communist Georgia

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The revolutionary changes in communication technologies, the implementation of the latest information systems and their development, and the creation of regional and global information spaces, have lead to a profound alienation in many developing societies. Nevertheless, these factors play a major part in the gigantic steps being taken in the political, economic, cultural and social spheres of human life.

The difference between an economic system based on information technology and one based on industry is much like the difference between industrial and agricultural societies at the beginning of the twentieth century.

For political modernization to occur, state information policy requires the solution of several complex problems. Unless a society addresses them, information policy cannot be successful, and it will be very difficult to create a whole, interconnected state information space – which will have an impact on that state's information security.

To achieve some degree of political modernization and the development of information processes, we need, first of all, legal regulation – specifically, national information legislation. It is obvious that, during the present 'transition' period, "The Problems of Information" in today's "Information Era" require much more legislative attention than did the problems of the "Epoch of Industrialization." In Georgia, steps need to be taken in this direction. Scientific research must logically be accompanied by the legal regulation of information-related issues. Such information legislation in Georgia will draw on the Constitution of Georgia, the laws of Georgia, the acts issued by the President of Georgia, and the normative legal acts emanating from different governmental structures.

The formation and development of national information legislation is the basis of the state information policy. According to calculations we have made, about 20 normative documents must be prepared and implemented in Georgia. Together with the acts issued by the President of Georgia, the above-mentioned documents will provide a foundation for information policy and prepare the legal basis for its implementation.

Thus, in the process of political modernization, the main factor necessary for information policy formation and its implementation is the formation and the development of a whole system of information legislation which involves a unity of interconnected legal acts, functioning at different levels.

In order to create organizational-technological components for solving functional tasks, there must be a general method of processing information involving several stages:

1. Obtaining, gathering, storing, filtering, and implementing initial information (raw information).
2. Complex discussion and statistical and analytical processing, to be followed by recommendations – i.e., second information (processed information).

3. In order to make decisions, it is necessary to use ‘initial’ (raw) and ‘second’ (processed) information that realize and establish the means of information influence and the directed special forms of this influence. This enables one to make predictions concerning consequences.

4. The spreading and the calculation of documentary information about managing decisions, about first (initial) and secondary information, and about the means of informational influence.

On the basis of the first stage of collecting and gathering initial information and – after the complex discussion of this initial (first) information – the statistical and analytical discussion of secondary information, we can have the formation of state information resources (factual, documentary, precedent-setting, knowledge, etc.).

The specific feature of *information* resources, which differentiates them from other resources, is that these resources are not the products of men’s intellectual activities and cannot "evaporate" or be wasted, but are characterized by the increased volume of reproduction. *State* information resources involve governmental structures and state institutions, as well as the institutional structures of civil society – i.e., the product of the involvement of citizens. Thus, the national information resources are divided into: 1. state resources, formed directly by the state government, and 2. non-governmental resources, formed by individuals (i.e., the institutional structures of civil society).

A concrete example of the formation of special state information resources is the establishment of the information-analytical service by the apparatus of the National Security Council of Georgia. This involves the creation of a system of strategic research. The system of global modeling, "*Didgori*," is a functional system, which consists of:

1. a system of information data formation (receiving, processing and storage),
2. a system of information provision, and
3. a system of data transfer.

The functional structure of "*Didgori*" is characterized by different levels of automatization.

The first level is the information-analytical subdivision into department, regional and autonomous units. This level provides information concerning state security, and the information is operative.

The second level is the apparatus of the Security Council with the local area network (LAN) – which, in its way, provides the processing of strategic global information (through the analytical, scientific evaluation of a given situation, yielding a prognosis, and making possible recommendations). The processed information helps the supreme government to make operational decisions.

The whole network of information provided is constructed in such a way that all the information entered in "*Didgori*" is classified according to the tasks to be solved. Any authorized person can obtain the necessary information from this database. It is also possible to get the information automatically, as the computer programs are constructed especially to carry out specific tasks. "Classified" information, for example, is transmitted directly to the supreme government.

The "*Didgori*" system, then, unifies the receiving, storing, transmitting, and further processing of information.

Now, the indicators of the status of an information system in the global community are the volume of its information resources, as well its quality and availability. These features also directly indicate the status of the state. Two factors characterize modern states.

1. The main source of the accumulation and storage of national information resources (both governmental and non-governmental resources) is the exchange of information with foreign countries. Thus, one's national information resources become the sources of information for foreign countries, organizations and institutions.

2. The most important part of information provider security is not the direct security of the information stored in the national information resources, but the management and organizational-technological means of these resources. Thus, the security of a state can be affected by the disorganization of information resources, and it can be affected by intended and unintended changes of the information mass.

In accordance with the above-mentioned facts, the information policy of Georgia must be directed in such a way that the national information resources will be able to form a whole, interconnected and coordinated system. Thus, it, must exclude:

1. Extra fees for the storage of information and the "information chaos and disorders" caused by the tendency toward information independence (which is characterized by the proliferation of information and the duplication of data).

2. The wrong division and incorrect deprivation of individual responsibility for the formation of certain information mass and the updating of these masses, for the loss of information, and for the accuracy of the information obtained.

In the process of modernization, the quality of the information activity of both civil society and governmental structures is defined first of all by the completeness, reliability, up-to-date character, noncontroversiality, and security of the information resources, and by the balance among these indicators. The coordination and the wholeness of the system of national information resources is the necessary condition for the provision of national information space unity.

Thus, one more important factor for a successful state information policy during the process of modernization is the formation and the development of the coordinated system of national information resources (to integrate the state information space into a single unit).

The quality of governmental (though not only governmental) activities together with the above-mentioned aspects is characterized by an "open and public information infrastructure," by the availability of national information resources, and by the possibility of the use and further transmission of this information. Besides this, the effective development of national information resources requires the transmission of information among libraries, archives, funds, data banks and among other information systems including both those in the home and those in foreign countries.

There is some progress in these areas in certain spheres in Georgia. For example, in January 2000, a new Administrative Code for Georgia was adopted. One of the chapters of the Code concerns freedom of information. It was the first time that public and private data were formally classified. All types of military information were unclassified, as long as the information had no influence on national security or the prosecution of crimes; otherwise, the information remained closed for at least five years. Any citizen can obtain information of interest from the military; in case of refusal, the citizen can bring the case into court, where it will be considered. This opening

of information can solve many problems. It must be admitted, however, that this freedom of information policy has caused many unpleasant situations for those who were against this process. Most institutions were not ready for such changes.

In the process of political modernization, the formation and the development of the information-communication infrastructure, together with the national information resources, form the basis of the organizational-technological functional tasks of the state information policy.

One of the important tasks in the process of political modernization is providing information to large groups of society. Modern means of communication and technology can facilitate the transmission of mass information. Thus, the development of information-communication technologies makes it clear that, in the near future, traditional mass-media will be completely integrated through computer systems, the mass circulation of information, and mass communication nets, which will enable customers to receive instantly – and to be able to use – all the information they need: vocal, pictorial, textual, and numerical data. In this case, the problems which now confront traditional mass media will be readily resolved. These problems are the storage and integration of independent information sources, ensuring diversity of sources, and the mass-transmission of free information. The monopolization of the means of mass information, the influence of ruling elites and corporations, the distrust of the mass media, and the possibilities of interference from the state bureaucratic apparatus, will be very low.

The state information-communication infrastructure holds a leading place among other infrastructures, both in the formation of the whole, united state information space and in the integration of organizational-technological means in the global information space. The basis of the latter is the switch into the global infrastructure of national information communication.

Thus, in the process of political modernization, another important factor in forming the organizational-technological level of state information policy is the establishment and development of the whole state information-communication infrastructure. This is a key factor not only in the formation of state information space unity, but also in its integration into the global information space.

Every stage of advancing information processing and transmission needs specific technological provisions – namely modern information and telecommunication technologies. The most developed and profitable sectors of public industry are the following branches: those involved in the production of information and telecommunication technologies, in the production of the means of computerization and informatization, in program provision, and in the processing and creation of information masses and data bases.

These sectors of state industry should be viewed as an information industry-independent branch of the economy, which is the technical-economic base for the state information space. Thus, in the case of a systems approach, it must be transferred into an object of state management in the context of the current information policy.

Important technical-economic factors of the state information policy are the following: scientific-technical and industrial potential, information industry service, and the marketing of information products. In accordance with these, in order to maintain the unity of the state information space and taking into consideration the national interests in the information sphere, it is necessary to regulate, organize and develop a whole territorial-distributional system.

The scientific-technical and industrial potential of the Georgian information industry is found in the Technical University of Georgia, Tbilisi State University, the scientific institutions of the Georgian Academy of Sciences, and those organizations and enterprises which do fundamental

research and experimental engineering in order to create systems and technologies of communication and to provide and develop programs.

At the present moment, the marketing of information products and services is the most highly developed and beneficial branch of the global market. The competition to gain a place in this market is high. Many states have not yet realized that their place in the global society depends upon their ability to compete in this very market.

The market for the information products and services of Georgia is still at the development stage, and Georgia is unable to integrate into the global market. The result of this is the following: the technologies and technical means appearing on the Georgian market are not competitive with those available in foreign markets. Moreover, the market in information products and services is also not stable because of its disorganized structure.

This market (as well as all the other markets in products and services in the Georgian economic space) first of all needs legal regulation, which will ensure that every member of the market will have equal conditions and rules governing their activities, and which will stimulate local production and create competition. Only this can provide a basis for economic achievement and development. The market is no exception; it requires state economic regulation, including taxation, investment and customs policy.

A prominent problem with Georgia's information products and services market is its poorly developed service sector, which caters mainly to individual requirements and needs. One-sided development greatly decreases its abilities and causes the deformation of information space. This deformation results from the low standard of living in Georgia, and the lack of experience in both exploiting modern technologies and changing practical habits.

One of the characteristic features of Georgia's information market is the flow of illicit, non-certified products and services. It must be admitted that there is much illegal duplication and pirating of software programs.

In the process of modernization, in order to avoid deformation and to develop information products and services, the technical-economic system of information space – which is an important object in the system of information security – must become the subject of state information policy and state management.

In order to decide the functions and tasks of state information policy and, along with it, to ensure the effective exploitation of the modern technical means and scientific achievements in the information sphere, the resolution of legal, organizational-technical and technical-economic questions is not enough. The "human factor" must be taken into consideration and new principles should be introduced into the education system. It is important to have skilled professionals in government, in civil society, and in the information spheres. These professionals will be able to implement and explore modern information and communication technologies, nets, and technical devices. Every citizen must be prepared and ready to use them, both for their professional activities as well as for personal use. Thus, both professionals and consumers must be aware of, and maintain, the legal norms governing activities in the information sphere.

In the process of political modernization, the formation and the development of a state system of information education is one more factor of state information policy.

Thus, in the process of modernization, the multifunctional task of state information policy is to establish and to develop nationally the following structures:

1. Laws and statutes affecting the information system.
2. National (governmental and nongovernmental) information resource systems.

3. Information-communication infrastructure.
4. Scientific-technical and industrial potential of the information industry.
5. Marketing information products and services.
6. Training system in information education for professionals.

The above-mentioned systems taken together can form and develop the whole state information space in a unified way. They will also play a leading part in information security and in the process of integration into the global information space.

This, together with the informatization of every sphere of society – especially economics, science, policy, and the military – will ensure that the geopolitical importance of information technology and information resources increases. The geopolitical potential of the state – that is, its political role in the global arena today – is defined not only by the location of the state, but by its information resources and communication capabilities.

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Chapter XII

Signs of the Time:
Ethical and Political Challenges to the Future of Georgia

Paata Chkheidze

In the 1820s, Thomas Carlyle wrote an essay with the same title – "Signs of the Times." It begins with the words: "It is no very good symptom either of nations or individuals, that they deal much in vaticination."[1] He was just completing his work *The French Revolution*, and wondering if his country would experience a similar fate. Carlyle believed that, during such periods, nations were at greater risk because of the increase in infatuation with prophets. Remarkably, the circumstances leading to the events dominating the England of his time seem to be repeating themselves in twenty-first century Georgia.

Since the 1980s, the number of fortune tellers (astrologers, telepathists) has increased significantly in Georgia – assisted, of course, by the people's growing interest in such matters. The 1990s were marked by the activities of religious sects since, having yielded its position of authority, the Georgian Orthodox church could not offer anything new to its members, except remind them of its past glory as a means to strengthening its power. In the vacuum that was created by this, sects have become active, and they are well aware of the needs of a society in crisis. Offering a piece of bread to poor and frightened people, sects have acquired many followers through teaching predestination and providing cheap aid.

It is worth noting, however, that sects from outside Georgia have also appeared – not only Givi Alaznispireli[2] with his messianic theories, or Basil Mkalavishvili[3] and his followers. Some years ago there appeared the "New Word" sect whose "creator" claimed to have had a vision showing him the Apocalypse. He has many followers and his main thesis is that those who believe in him will survive and live forever – all others will perish. This sect has already been made into a political party with ambitious plans, and was involved in collecting signatures demanding President Shevardnadze's resignation. It is a significant trend in Georgian political life when a group, founded upon the spiritual needs of the people, becomes involved in the competition for political power.

For people in economic crisis – and that is the majority of the Georgian populace – only one thing is obvious: they want neither to die, nor be hungry, nor to be cold. In other words, the first demands of our population are survival and security. Our population has neither initiative nor a strong will, and a sizable material incentive will determine their choices in any particular political direction. The fear created during the Soviet epoch diminished in the 1980s, but was renewed to full force throughout 1991-92 after the coup d'état and the civil war. The conclusion is simple: the existence of a society in Georgia hinges on very personal, individual affairs. We might say, in

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[1] "Signs of the Times" originally appeared in the *Edinburgh Review* in 1829; see *The Collected Works of Thomas Carlyle*, 16 vols. (London: Chapman and Hall, 1858), vol. 3.

[2] Givi Alaznispireli was the owner and editor of the newspaper Noe, who was arrested for publishing an anti-Semitic article in his paper and sentenced to a year's imprisonment, in October 1996, "for violating national and racial equality."

[3] A former Orthodox priest who has been involved in violence against a number of Christian denominations in Georgia.

postmodern fashion, that in Georgia society means non-society – or that the existence of society is a sign of its absence. However, postmodern analyses will not solve our social problems and we can only comfort ourselves in knowing that we have at least moved to a pre-moral society from the anti-moral Soviet one.

The foundation of all personal existence and action is moral. According to Hegel, moral substance exists; this view is manifest throughout his reflections on the family, civil society and the state. The state system in Georgia has been dead for 200 years. Today we nurse the appearance of a state, but it still appears remote and strange. Forming a civil society is prevented by the old Soviet brand of "individualism" that created a profound disconnection between people. That is to say, during the Soviet regime, the individual survived through total distrust, fear and denunciation. People of such a mentality cannot build a civil society in the post-Soviet period. Moreover, economic crisis has shaken the foundation of the family – and this is the greatest misfortune since it is from the family that an immediate natural conscience and a regeneration of morality should begin. In Georgian, as well as in other languages, "moral" has two principal meanings: 1) the correspondence of human behavior with rules and norms; and 2) the national character, customs and traditions. By the 1960s, the national character and traditions had been destroyed and the norms of behavior were dictated first by Russian and then by communist standards. The majority of Georgians had become Soviet-style individuals. In short, they lacked a basis for morality.

At the beginning of the twenty-first century, we see that the contact with liberal-democratic values has had conflicting results for Georgians; this is illustrated in the conflict between objectivity and personal opinions, as well as that between state compulsion and human freedom. The influence of the state is felt only when its power is in danger; otherwise it intervenes in nothing – including the education and health of its citizens. State and private television, newspapers, and magazines constantly provide advertisements featuring pornography, violence, drug abuse, homosexuality and contraception. The state exercises no control over any of this content. On the contrary, it encourages it.

Currently in Georgia, one has every right except the right to a job and to form a union. But the population does not demand these rights. It demands only to be employed in state offices and factories, where both a minimum salary and the possibility of stealing state property are guaranteed. Presently, Georgians miss being absolutely dependent on the state, and thereby subconsciously desire to remain in a pre-moral state.

After the annexation of Georgia by Russia in the nineteenth century, the best part of Georgian society tried to preserve the morality of the nation by remembering the moral and heroic deeds of the past and by searching for a contemporary hero. The national-liberation movement was rooted in past heroic and moral deeds and soon performed such deeds of its own. The movement was directed by the romantic aspirations of the twentieth century as well and, in its fashion, was quite successful. Today Georgia features a kind of Western pragmatism, and when paired with post-Soviet distrust, this creates an absolutely new type of person – one who is anything but *Homo Moralis.*

In our pre-moral political circumstance, searching for a hero is unacceptable since such a thing is an anachronism in a society rife with the falsification of history, pseudo-heroism, making condottieri into heroes, national nihilism, weakening values and promoting cartoon and marionette figures. By these actions the pre-moral citizen is stupefied. The lack of heroes creates a lack of honor. In fighting for power, the winner has no mercy on the defeated. Walt Whitman’s ethical

motto "...battles are lost in the same spirit in which they are won"[4] is quite forgotten. Of course, a winner's lie about his fairness in victory is intolerable, but doubly intolerable are the hysterics of the defeated which is like a virus in a pre-moral society. Pre-moral society is conceived and born in fear and distrust, and its fright is directed to both the past and future. It is afraid to look ahead or to turn back: it looks upon the future with distrust and is rightly afraid to return to the communist regime. Moreover, globalization, despite its role in ending communism in our country, has left us filled with envy of both the officials enriched by corruption and of the few genuine capitalists as well.

Georgia is a defeated nation with lost territories. It would be natural if it were to try to regain her former possessions. Defending borders and the population is the sacred responsibility of a state, and answering aggression is not the exclusive right of super states. Unfortunately, in Georgia we can only dream about doing such things well.

A weak state cannot, and pre-moral society *does not* want to, defend its dignity – or even take a moral step in this direction. Instead, revenge is the main stimulus for Georgian politics – a politics fraught, not with the opposition of right and left wing ideologies, but rather with a plethora of groups. On the Georgian political map, forces can be divided in the following way: 1) the authorities (varied and non-homogeneous); 2) the opposition (varied and non-homogeneous); 3) the followers of the overthrown government of 1991-92; and 4) the communists. The communists suffered a defeat in the elections of 1990 since the Soviet Union had been destroyed. During the 1991-92 coup d'état, only ex-communists returned to the head of a government which denied communist "ideals" and chose a western democratic orientation. Since then, orthodox communists relying on help from the outside have sought revenge. After the coup d'état, the followers of the ex-government did not stop looking for new ways of renewing and gaining power since they, too, were thinking about revenge. Parliamentary and non-parliamentary opposition groups have already lost two elections due to the violent interference of the police and local government offices as well as the poor organization of the opposition. The opposition remains divided and weak, and is satisfied to complain and dream about being restored to power. As the state is weak, so is the government. After creating a strong opposition, the defeat of the government is expected, and it is now preparing for revenge in advance. That is why its foreign policy is submissive and its domestic policy is irresponsible. It does not want to be in charge of the existing crisis in the country and, more often, it is more fractious within itself than toward the opposition. It foresees its own defeat and in its desperate call, pre-revenge notes are heard.

All this leads to the conclusion that there is not only an economic and political crisis in Georgia, but a moral crisis as well. The population of Georgia is accustomed to coercion; they would like to be ruled, directed, defended, tutored, and patronized. If a charismatic leader promises them all that I have described, they will follow; if he keeps his promises, they will call him a savior. But there is a lack of charismatic leadership in Georgia today and, in any case, the methods of Soviet coercion are unacceptable in light of the country's attempt at Western liberal-democratic principles. From the west we can expect methods to make us conform, as others do, to yielding profitable results for everyone. In other words, the West will force us to achieve what we desire to achieve. If we cannot achieve our goals by ourselves, the West will have to make us accomplish them. Unfortunately, the political circumstances in Georgia are such that, in order not to harm ourselves, we need the most radically paternal form of authority available from Western liberalism. Thus I see Georgia eventually coming under the patronage of the International Monetary Fund, the

[4] "Have you heard that it was good to gain the day? / I also say it is good to fall — battles are lost in the same spirit in which they are won." Walt Whitman (1819–1892), "Leaves of Grass" (1900), ll. 355-356.

World Bank, the United Nations, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, and so on.

The majority of projects carried out by Western political organizations and various funds are directed towards institutional reforms. New institutions and new governmental and non-governmental mechanisms have to provide, first, the building of a stable state and the decent functioning of its institutions and, second, the foundation of a civil society and the introduction of Western liberal values. This is the choice of our government, and at first sight, it appears steadily on course. But as Gigi Tevzadze asserts, this appearance is deceptive.[5] After all, the scale of corruption in Georgia, along with the government's encouragement of this corruption, raises doubts as to whether we can escape the crisis by institutional reforms and overcome our pre-moral conditions.

Solutions offered by our government, even though founded on recommendations from the West, are superficial and insufficient. If we consider these measures sufficient, it is because we are not worried about moral, religious, or spiritual affairs; the politics of the stomach again takes priority, and the politics of the spirit languishes. Love of country, a high and noble feeling, has been replaced by the love of power – and the whole political elite, both the majority and the opposition, forgets the individual citizen's personal ambitions and concern for moral appearance. Instead, new mechanisms and organizations are invented along with 'slogans of the week.'

Western paternal politics knows nothing about the history, traditions, customs, or way of life of Georgia – in short, everything we call Georgian morals. Neither is it much concerned about which norms of behavior or spiritual qualities will be conceived after the interbreeding of post-Soviet/pre-moral and Western-liberal societies. European and American organizations help us to conduct institutional reforms; and their aim is to have a stable region between the Black and Caspian Seas. We are sometimes a corridor and sometimes a bridge for them, but they are not interested at all in what we would like to be or be called.

The path of our star will be decided in the future. As for today, "time is out of joint," complains the Georgian Hamlet, because he has lost the habits needed "to set it right." I fear that the constant talk for talk's sake is the shortest way back to Big Brother's farm. I believe we can and must regain the moral wisdom of our ancestors. And, even though many consider such morality to be anachronistic and provincial, it is the surest way to overcome pre-moral being.

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[5] Gigi Tevzadze, a young professor of Philosophy from Tbilisi State University, analyzes contemporary Georgian politics in *Georgia: Simulations of Power* (Tbilisi: Bakur Sulakauris gamomcemloba, 1999).

Chapter XIII
Ethics in the Context of Globalization

Edward S. Markarian

Introductory Remarks

Given the title of this paper, the reader may expect an analysis of the accelerating processes of globalization. But from the outset we are confronted with a confusion rooted in the term "globalization." Often, its basic meaning is understood as the dynamic through which the interrelations among peoples are strengthened such that it is seen as somehow constituting the last stage of human evolution. No less frequently, globalization is identified, primarily, with the neo-imperial ambitions of the United States. From my point of view, globalization must be seen as a new unit of human evolution. This fact makes imperative the elaboration of a radically different value-normative basis for civilization. And I am of the view that a *global humanistic ethics should constitute its core.*

The Value-Normative Trap

The previous stages of imperial civilization were based on force and discrimination with all the accompanying aspects thereof – such as violence and greed. The values and norms peculiar to imperial cultures generated destructive wars which were, for the most part, considered a normal phenomenon of civilization. In this climate, pacifist values and movements, in spite of their importance, had little influence. This started to change after World War II with the creation of nuclear weapons and other means of mass destruction.

In this context, the struggle against the possibility of another world war acquired an essentially new quality. Pacifism became primarily a struggle for the preservation of the human race. The post-World War II era was marked by two essential traits: the disintegration and the disappearance of all the big empires, and the emergence of human rights. These were extremely important socio-cultural phenomena insofar as they marked the initial steps of mankind toward a more humane stage of its evolution.

One particular event is worthy of note in this respect, namely, the repentance of Germany as a nation for the monstrous crimes committed during World War II. This at least demonstrates the possibility of a humane culture within a global civilization. Nevertheless, the realization of a genuinely humane culture that would constitute such a civilization is a very difficult process if we look at the formidable barriers still represented by present-day imperial cultures.

These barriers, in spite of the destruction of most empires in the last century, show that imperial culture, and the values and norms that accrue to it, are still alive today. They do appear, however, to be the evolutionary relics of global civilization. And it is here that we find one of the basic contradictions of our epoch. I am speaking of the glaring discrepancy between the emerging state of interrelated global systems, on the one hand, and the obsolete imperial and neo-imperial *regulation* of the interrelations between peoples and states, on the other. I designate this discrepancy as the value-normative trap.[1]

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[1] I initially used the term "normative trap."

The explanation for the continuing influence of imperial values and norms lies not only in the forces indicated above, but also in the lack of adequate mechanisms for civilian cooperation within interdependent global systems. I assume that peoples have only one chance for finding a way out of this value-normative trap – channelling their energy into close cooperation for warding off ecological and other common threats to our survival. It is precisely in the course of carrying out this urgently needed cooperation that an essentially new value-normative basis for civilization can be created.

It is well known that what has preserved human beings from self-destruction during the emergence of rudimentary social organizations was the formation of morality. It appeared as a specific component of the phenomenon of culture that, being a super-biological mechanism, was specially intended for stimulating, motivating, programming and implementing human activity. Its basic function is to regulate this activity through defining what is good and what is bad. Up to the present, this function has been carried out within the traditional units of human evolution, i.e., peoples or nations.

The self-preservative function of morality must now be realized at a global level and, as a global ethics, will become a salient feature in the future of the human race. Either this new ethics will emerge or the human race will not survive. The cultivation of global ethics cannot be reduced to a spontaneous or natural historical process. It must also be consciously guided – especially in terms of the elaboration of special complex evolutionary projects that can serve as transitional aids toward a new civilization. In particular, these projects should provide a real transition from the culture of war to a culture of peace.

The 'Cognitive Trap' Phenomenon

In light of the necessity of such a transition, we have to look at the problem of the interdependence of scientific knowledge and moral values. This problem is complicated because of the essentially different patterns found in both scientific knowledge and in patterns of moral values. To clarify this, I want to reintroduce here a number of categories I have discussed in the last decade: namely, the concepts of 'cognitive trap' and of 'scientific-educational culture.'

The idea of cognitive trap reflects, in particular, the extreme discrepancy between the present dominant pattern of mono-disciplinary scientific-educational culture[2] and the unusually complex problems human beings face today. This discrepancy discloses the fundamental contradiction of contemporary civilization. If we are to understand this contradiction, it is necessary to first comprehend the reasons why mono-disciplinary[3] approaches dominate scientific-educational culture.

This pattern emerged because of the necessity of organizing the daily rhythms of human activity, which are basically directed towards satisfying the innumerable short-term, everyday needs of social life.[4] It is under the overwhelming influence of this one-sided implementation that

[2] I introduced the concept of "scientific-educational culture" in 1992 while preparing a project for UNESCO, which integrated the three basic features of UNESCO's activities: science, education, and culture.

[3] I use the term "mono-disciplinary" in the sense of specialized approaches to educating people on scientific, cultural and social problems. Specialization has led to a fragmenting of both the identity of what we humans need to live and grow, and the goal of meeting these needs.

[4] One of the basic factors of the current global crisis is the rapid and unlimited increase of these needs, especially the material ones.

the pattern under analysis soon acquired a discontinuous, disproportionate character. Meanwhile, distinct from all previous epochs, the present era urgently needs a balance among the efforts directed towards achieving short-term operational and more long-term strategic goals. The gist of the issue is that the patterns of activity needed for designing and creating future states of human social life and culture have a qualitatively different character than that of former times. They demand a consistently integrative approach to socio-cultural systems and a synthetic knowledge about them. But the dominant pattern of the fragmented state of the social sciences is a serious obstacle in the way of meeting these requirements. As a result of all the above, the destructive pattern of contemporary civilization was permanently and rapidly strengthened.

Integrative socio-cultural theories are not used because their elaboration lacks the rigor of those found in the natural sciences. This situation is worsened by the influence of postmodernist views in the area of social sciences, since these reject the very possibility of integrative socio-cultural theories.[5] Although the social sciences from the seventeenth to the nineteenth century were considered pseudo-sciences, there was the constant desire to develop integrative social theories. Since the beginning of the twentieth century, this desire has diminished – while the need for integrative social theories has become imperative for survival.

The perspectives of the social sciences are needed to deal with various global crises. Because crises impact us so intensely, coping with the burgeoning problems of the world can be solved only by integrating the theories of the social and natural sciences toward a radical transformation of the world, making it into a better place.

In light of the above, I see an inner correspondence between the mono-disciplinary, educational culture (which asserts a tremendous gap between natural and social sciences), and humanistic moral values. I want to develop my point here based, in particular, on my experience of elaborating integrative social theories as a means to developing survival strategies.

The Conception of Key Survival-Development Strategies

There are well known methods for treating pathologies. These are seen in diagnosing and treating their basic causes. Until recently, these activities were primarily associated with medical practice. But social crises can also be seen as pathological and, hence, it would seem that we can use these methods to treat the pathologies of social life as well. Thus, I was brought to a systematic comparison between the articulation and implementation of anti-crisis programmes and the activities of physicians. In short, this practice could be considered as a functional equivalent to medicine. This comparative perspective also allowed me to discover the dangerous state of anti-crisis programmes on a global scale.

This discovery can be expressed in two generalizations. The first is that such programmes focus on the symptoms of crisis situations already manifest in destructive situations. Sadly, the ultimate goal here is often merely decreasing, as opposed to alleviating, negative effects. My second generalization follows from the first. Again, using the metaphor of medicine, it follows that contemporary anti-crisis programmes do not cure pathologies. But if this is so, I ask why are the above-described universal modes of treating life pathologies – medicine's top priority – not used for developing programmes intended for overcoming social crisis situations?

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[5] Cf. E. Markarian, *Teoriia kul´tury i sovremennaia nauka: logiko-metodologicheskii analiz* (Moskva: Mysl´, 1983). (This collection of the author's selected works was also published in German in 1986 and Arabic in 1987.)

The following example provides the answer to this question. It is evident that destructive events in the world are not accidental. It is natural to assume that these events are linked to destructive forces within civilization. Why, then, are the strategic and operationally creative possibilities of humanity not mobilized for identifying and removing these destructive forces? Here we face not only a research, but also a crucial moral, issue.

Moral values play an extremely important role in the stimulation and motivation of human activity – in giving meaning to our activities. But why, then, are the regulatory functions of morality not utilized within that activity which objectively occupies the highest position in the hierarchy of the contemporary global community's value system – namely politics? At this point in the history of the human race we have to seriously ask ourselves: what is the interrelation between politics and ethics?

During the last decade, one which has been so tragic for the peoples of the former Soviet Union, I asked myself the above questions. Now I wish to share some of my conclusions achieved in the course of my studies. First, I wish to draw attention to the fate of global studies. It was initiated in the 1960s and 1970s by the Club of Rome and its founder and first president, Aurelio Peccei, at a time when people began to realize the extremely destructive nature of global dynamics.

One could expect that a progressive process, including the realizing of a new humanism initiated by the Club of the Rome, would be strengthened through taking on the task of revealing and removing the causes responsible for global crises. It is important to note, too, that during the period in question, a moral atmosphere was created that was characterized by a belief in the radically transforming possibilities of civilization.

But the expectations did not come true. This moral atmosphere was soon destroyed and, as a result, a phase of deep frustration began and took hold in interdisciplinary world studies. It happened for several reasons; chief among them that the advocates of interdisciplinary studies neglected the fragmented state of our knowledge of humanity, of the social sciences, and of the very real dangers confronting contemporary world civilization. Therefore, nothing was done to improve the situation and the new humanism perished. My conviction is that only real action directed toward developing key survival strategies can pave the way for the inculcation of the principles of this humanism.

An Experience in the Elaboration of Humanistically-Oriented Integrative Theories

In the 1960s, Armenia developed an integrative research trend that, as a systematic study of human action, culture, and tradition, influenced socio-cultural thought in the USSR and in other countries over the succeeding quarter of a century. Since the 1990s, it has often been called the Armenian Culturological School.[6] Its theoretical core became the principle for understanding a) human society as a universally adapting system; b) the phenomenon of culture (including the development and use of technology) as a superbiological universal mode of evolutionary human activity; c) tradition as a form of self-imposed group-stereotyping and as the basic conduit of human life experience for the development of socio-cultural systems.

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[6] See Y. Cherva, Review, *Voprosi filosofii*, 1 (2001): 177-179; S. V. Lourie, *Ustoricheskaia etnologia* [*Historical Ethnology*] (Moskva, 1997). If we accept this designation, then it is advisable to name this school "culturological" and "traditionological," because the principles of traditionology have become very specific and important ingredients of the trend. "Traditionology" is here understood as the investigation into how "tradition" influences social dynamics.

All of this research was presented in the form of systematically elaborated theories. The mutual influence of these theories generated an overall theoretical model of (industrial) world civilization which is specifically intended for the comprehension and analysis of contemporary social structures. I apply this theoretical model in terms of what I referred to above as a theory of scientific-educational culture.

This application enabled me to conceptualize and systematically examine key survival-strategies, to elaborate programs that provide solutions to urgent global problems and, to take the steps required for drawing attention to these problems. Throughout this enterprise, I emphasized the new humanism proclaimed by Aurelio Peccei.

I then founded two organizations. The first is the research-oriented Department for Key Survival-Development Strategic Issues. It originated in 1991 as a transformation of the Department of Cultural Theory (also established by me in 1973) of the Institute of Philosophy and Law of the Armenian Academy of Sciences. The second organization is the International Association for the Promotion of Creating Survival and Development Strategies (ASDS), established in 1994 in Yerevan.

At the suggestion of my colleagues, I wrote books outlining the principles, programs, and plan of action for the ASDS.[7] The problems of the interrelations of politics and ethics stand out in both of these books. I saw the overwhelming domination in the West of consumerist, short-term values and policies – all of which have such a negative influence on the planet – as profoundly immoral. In this context, I elaborated on current peace issues by introducing the concept "quality of peace" as a variation on the well-known concept, "quality of life." I think it especially important to develop empathy and to thereby "co-experience" the problems and suffering of others. Imperial cultures suppress this feeling, but now this feeling must constitute the psychological basis of humanistic morals and ideology.

In this vein, it is necessary to stress the close interdependence between a feeling of empathy and repentance for committed crimes. The creation of a global ethics presupposes this interdependence, and it is simply impossible to imagine the further evolution of humanity, accompanied by the processes of globalization, without empathy and behavior motivated by repentance for atrocities.

In discussing the issues of global ethics, it is also impossible to avoid the shameful practice we see in world politics of the falsification of history and of the dissemination of misinformation concerning events currently taking place. These practices were typical of empires, and both still remain very much with us today. Despite the seriousness of these negative activities, little is done to eradicate them. The topic for the present conference requires us to look into these practices and seek effective means for their removal.

However important the phenomenon of morality might be, it is necessary to take into account that it is only one regulatory component of civilization, and thus radical changes in this sphere must be considered in the general context of contemporary global civilization.

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[7] The first, *Capacity for World Strategic Management*, *The Forthcoming Reform of the UN System through the Prism of Evolutionary Survival Imperatives*, was published in English in 1998 (Yerevan: Gitutyun – Yerevan State University). In 2000, I published *Sciences on Culture and the Imperatives of the Epoch* [*Nauki o kulture i imperativi epokh*i] (Moskva, 2000). This was the program report of the culturological meetings organized in Moscow and Saint Petersburg to mark my 70th birthday. This latter text extends the logic of the first in terms of the role of integrative, humanistically-oriented sciences on socio-cultural reality – especially on contemporary global civilization and the ways toward radically transforming contemporary destructive patterns.

How to Transform the Pattern of Contemporary World Industrial Civilization

I assume that the chain reaction of destructive and destabilizing effects in the world is the result of an evolutionary blunder which emerged after the Industrial Revolution. The general character of this blunder is an ever-increasing evolutionary imbalance between the technological features of human activity, on the one hand, and the overall, long-term goal of this activity, on the other. This imbalance violates the very principle of a normally functioning and developing human social life, thus generating the abnormal and distorted processes of evolutionary social-organization. This violation resembles a cancerous growth.

I tried to define the mechanism by which the blunder emerged; I saw it as having the following fundamental characteristics: the short-term, technical-economic priorities of science and education; the tremendous split between the natural and social sciences that accompany these priorities; and the mono-disciplinary pattern of scientific-educational culture.[8] These basic shortcomings result in one-sided discontinuous specialization, extreme compartmentalization of scientific knowledge, and a disproportional development of the natural sciences that allow the social sciences to lag behind. I want to stress here that, although such a lag is an abnormal phenomenon, it has nevertheless become a norm within social structures. This asymmetrical developmental pattern is the evolutionary blunder in question.

The above generalizations allowed me to conclude that the chain reaction of destructive and destabilizing effects around the globe was generated due to the essential violation of a universal algorithm that is appropriate to all living systems. While formulating the idea of this algorithm, I took into account the basic laws governing the circulation of essential information required for all societies – namely, life experience and its permanent renewal in cultural organisms. In this case, the algorithm of balanced development between technology and its purpose was flagrantly violated.

Having characterized the evolutionary blunder, I now want to describe the principles of civilization that allowed for this evolutionary glitch, and proceed toward my vision of a mechanism for transforming the destructive development pattern of civilization.

At first I named this pattern "machine civilization." Later, upon carrying out the analysis of the transition from industrial civilization, I began to use the term "machine industrial civilization." Approaching the original problem of contemporary global civilization, I sought out its fundamental properties. I singled out two: the ability to produce and use machines, and second, the production of scientific knowledge for practical consumption in the various fields of human activity. These generated an essentially new phenomenon – practice-oriented science as the main interpretation of all areas of human activity.

This kind of interpretation is an extremely powerful, stimulating, and strengthening mechanism. This new science perspective on a global scale can, and does, generate and transform new cultural experiences via the power of knowledge. But it also contains inherent moral values that can guide our planetary activity. The main point here is that practice-oriented science is, from an evolutionary point of view, intended not just for technological advances (although up to now these have constituted its developmental priorities). It also carries the potential for another even more significant function which, though usually overlooked, goes beyond the short-term, technocratic consumptive perspectives, toward a new vision of post-industrial civilization.

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[8] See footnote 3 above.

These remarks lead me to consider possible ways of creating an essentially new value-normative basis of civilization, including a humanistic morality, through the radical transformation of its present pattern of developmental destruction. I am of the view that such transformation is impossible under the present conditions of human society and, in light of this, developed my project of regional ecological-noospheric experiment (RENE), based on two main assumptions.

The first assumption is that basic collective patterns (stereotypes) of human activity, while reproducing the appropriate structures of civilization, also regenerate the same old value-normative basis for major sources of destruction. As mechanisms of change which are intrinsic to cultural reproduction, these patterns conform to the laws of inertia and promote the same destructive social patterns. Consequently, any transformational survival strategies that could radically alter these patterns are usually blocked.

The second assumption is that, if the needed radical changes are impossible globally, then this does not exclude their realization in experimentally-created, favorable regional conditions. Social experiments in discrete areas of society have been widely carried out in recent decades. The RENE conception suggests that, analogously, social experimentation should be used for global survival and developmental strategic management. This constitutes the core of the RENE project. The rationale for this complex theoretical construction is as follows: the crucial problem related to strategic world management is connected with the elaboration of mechanisms which make possible the conscious selection of holistic variants of socio-cultural evolution which are able to meet strategic ecological and other survival imperatives.

On the whole, the RENE idea is a manifestation of the well-known motto: "think globally, act locally." This motto is usually understood as promoting a harmony of basic global requirements at a regional level. But the RENE project goes much further; it takes up the task of solving fundamental survival and developmental issues which seem insoluble on a global level.

The RENE has been constructed as an international polyregional project. It suggests that major nations, along with environmental and globally significant historical locations and cultures around the planet, should be represented as experimental zones. This would combine within a single experiment the general survival-developmental strategies for the positive self-preservative experience that has accumulated across all traditions. Should the RENE proceed, it would provide a permanent basis for a systematic comparison of ongoing processes across experimental zones. It would become an extremely important channel for understanding and gaining new life experience, which could be disseminated and used all over the world.

It is clear that the achievement of such a project needs a general governing body. Proceeding from the fact that such a body is the United Nations, I think the ongoing reform of this basic international organization can be carried further by making it subject to a systems evolutionary analysis.[9] Conducting such a large-scale cooperative survival project would provide the UN with tools for urgently needed global, long-term evolutionary management. From this point of view, it is the implementation of the RENE project that could create the solid ground for a culture of peace as a qualitatively new mode of existence, including a humanistically-oriented pattern of thinking. This pattern of thinking should replace the obsolete imperial values and norms reflected in the threats facing people today. So I once again wish to stress that the system of global problems is an objective fact compelling us to direct our energy into cooperative activity and towards warding off ecological, military and other disasters. There are grounds to say that a mature global ethics could be shaped out of these processes.

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[9] See Markarian, *Capacity for World Strategic Management*, op. cit.

I personally do not see any other acceptable evolutionary vision for the future. I have met those who have rejected the RENE project because of its extreme complexity. I usually ask them to present a better idea. None has been forthcoming.

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Chapter XIV

Ethics, Politics, and the Observations of an Engaged Citizen

Ina Ranson

Introduction

I am neither a philosopher nor a politician, so I will speak from a standpoint which, in the domain of politics and ethics, can be decisive – namely, that of a citizen. My paper draws on the work of Fernand Braudel (1902-1985) who, having studied the history of the global relationship between economic/political power and socially responsible behaviour, was among the most important commentators on history in the twentieth century.[1] His observations have influenced those of us engaged in the struggle to achieve an ethical politics.

The Work of François-Xavier Verschave

This fight for an ethical politics applies particularly to the case of the French economist François-Xavier Verschave.[2] Verschave published his reflections on the lessons historians can teach engaged citizens, along with strategies for their practical application.[3] Indeed, one of his recent books led to controversy in light of its attack on French politics in Africa; Verschave was sued by a French politician and by three offended African dictators. The lawsuit was covered extensively in the French media through February and March of 2001 – and this benefited both the author and, more importantly, African civil society. Some courageous citizens came to Paris to testify on behalf of the author, aware of the high risk this involved. Eventually the judges recognized the truth of their testimony, and the French politician and the African dictators lost the lawsuit – though there was talk of its continuance in the Court of Appeal. For Verschave, this suit is symptomatic of his constant fight for ethics in politics – one that needs long-term and committed support from all citizens.

In the works of Braudel, Verschave found a theoretical model for this struggle. The former's detailed and far-reaching investigations into economics led to his analysis of the progressive development of societies in terms of an analogy to the "different stories of a house." Braudel shows that, generally, a society is composed of three floors or stories, and different staircases permit or should permit the passage from one to another.

The ground floor is the basis of society, and it is characterized by informal exchanges among individuals, families, and neighbours. Naturally, this ground floor – the matrix of society and cultural values – is the most important part of the house since, if it is in bad condition, the whole building may collapse. Unfortunately, the activities of those living on the floors above often ignore

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[1] Fernand Braudel, *La Méditerrané et le Monde Méditerranéen à l'Époque de Philippe II* (Paris: Armand Colin, 1949; 4e ed. 1979); *L'identité de la France* (Paris: Arthaud-Flammarion, 1986); *Civilisation Matérielle, Économie et Capitalisme* (Paris: Armand Colin, 1980). These constitute a three-volume work providing a detailed description of the long evolutionary development of European society.

[2] He is also the president of an NGO called "Survie" (Survival), dedicated to international solidarity. www.globenet.org/survie.

[3] François-Xavier Verschave, *Libres Leçons de Braudel* (Paris: Syros, 1994); *Noir Silence: qui Arrêtera la Françafrique?* (Paris: Les Arènes, 2000).

those below. So the staircases leading to the top are often in poor condition, and this leads people on the ground floor to develop their own, often ingenious, strategies for survival and social innovation as means to getting up to the first floor. These are the strategies that constitute the primary avenues of production and exchange in the world's poorest nations.

The first floor of society is basically the so-called middle class, and it stands over those on the ground floor. Braudel has described how, over many centuries, people have elaborated social rules, institutions and laws. Traditionally, on the ground floor one helps relatives and friends while at the next stage of social development, we see institutions of mutual assistance like "health-care." Health-care becomes a right guaranteed by the constitution and by law. Another example he points to is that, historically, on the ground floor of our social structures, the punishment for a crime was exacted by the wronged family, while on the first floor we find the institution of the courts. So the first floor of society is characterized by transparent rules binding everyone. This first floor also provides the conditions for both a well-functioning market economy and democratic debate. Within the democratic framework, citizens participate in decisions concerning not only their own immediate interests, but also the welfare of the whole house – the entire society.

The second story or third level of society is occupied by those wealthy and powerful enough to participate in the "world economy." They rarely come into contact with the people affected by their decisions. Their holding of monopolies or oligopolies allows them to virtually ignore the interests of less powerful actors, and provides them with freedom from the rules and laws governing the middle-class on the first floor. The statements of representatives of this sector of wealth and power are often just ambiguous enough to merely feign respect for the institutions that protect those on the floors below. Indeed, discrepancy between speech and action has always been characteristic of the economic elite. In the present world economy, huge corporations have tremendous possibilities for getting around the democratic rules dominating the middle-class. In this respect, the top level and ground level can both be characterized as, in a certain sense, "lawless." The foregoing shows us then, that Braudel distinguishes two general sectors of society: the lower and the upper. The middle-class sector is the only one wherein most of its inhabitants respect transparent rules.

Interestingly, Braudel believed Karl Marx made important errors in his interpretation of capitalism, since Marx did not understand the importance of the different levels in the house of society. In addition, Verschave stresses that modern ultra-liberal economic ideas are far removed from the realities of the poverty of the ground floor, and that essential distinctions between the first and the second floors are lacking.

Of course, I have presented a simplified version of very broad and complex historical studies. And it is worth noting, too, that Verschave stresses that his interpretation of Braudel is unorthodox. The former is primarily concerned with providing a means for analysing social dynamics which, in clarifying the historical dimension of the "house of society," proposes to protect against errors and cynicism. Moreover, these insights cultivate not only an understanding of present day circumstances of oppression, but also hopefully reveal ways of action. In this regard, Verschawe goes further than Braudel in underlining the intimacy between economic and political power.

Braudel has shown how different societies try to meet the continuous problem of the socially irresponsible behaviour of the most privileged sector of society. Of course, ethical behaviour is, first of all, a question of individual conscience, and is not necessarily more or less developed because of the temptations peculiar to having power and money. But the political question remains: who can control and oblige the upper level – the wealthy elite – to consider the welfare of the

whole house of society? Observation of human history suggests that the most important role in this permanent battle must be played by the first floor – the middle class.

Verschave explains that a sane society should have the form of a ball: the middle class should be the largest sector of society, with vigilant citizens constantly obliging the ruling class to respect democratic institutions. He stresses that within this is a continuous and never ending fight, and here a free press plays an important role.

In a society where the middle class is weak and small, the upper class tends to behave more or less independently of the other sectors of society. The upper class will actively pursue its own interests while only paying lip-service to common rules. The majority of the population here lives on the ground floor – in poverty, far from democratic rules, and with few possibilities for finding a passage upstairs.

Thus it seems pointless to replace persons on the top floor without initially stabilizing the first floor – the middle class – and without building many staircases between all levels. Communications between one story of society and another should be permanent. The more citizens can move from one story to another, the more the situation of the house becomes transparent, and excessive privilege can be gradually abolished. This, of course, is an on-going project of construction, requiring the work of many committed citizens.

Verschave stresses how important it is for all organizations dedicated to realizing a more politically ethical society to define and communicate their common long term goals. The challenge today is to create networks between persons and groups on all floors of the social house who share the same goal of social responsibility. Instead of fighting for short term gains on their own levels, they should organize and aim at making the house a more liveable place for everyone. And, in so far as the economic elite today is no longer confined to one country, the extension of these networks on a global scale is indispensable. I think such networks are worth looking at.

Examples of International Networks of Committed Citizens

Via Campesina

Farmers all over the world have many common problems. One of them is the destruction of the eco-sphere. Soil and water are finite resources, but modern agro-business, in its pursuit of short-term maximum production and maximum profit, does not want to take its own unsustainable pollution into account.

Farmer-organizations engaged in sustainable farming practices have formed national networks as well as an international coalition in order to exchange information, support each other, and develop common strategies. Since 1992, they have met in Europe, India and South America. Their common aim is an open dialogue on all important questions relating to agriculture. The Via Campesina movement is in fact engaged in promoting global interests, since any interpretation of an ethical politics must be concerned with the survival and growth of future generations. Via Campesina is engaged in ethical politics by pointing out the effects of both unsustainable agriculture and unsustainable lifestyles on future generations.[4]

Climate network

[4] The reader may contact Via Campesina at: La Via Campesina, International Operative Secretary, Apartado Postal 3628, Tegucigalpa, M.D.C., Honduras, C.A. Telefax: (504) 235-9915; (Direct) Telephone: (504) 232-2198; E-mail: viacam@gbm.hn; Internet: http://www.sdnhon.org.hn/via.

Climate change is a phenomenon recognized by scientists around the world. The development of sustainable lifestyles and sustainable patterns of production and consumption in the richest nations, is the only way to stabilize greenhouse gas emissions at a sustainable level globally. The reduction targets decided in the Kyoto Protocol are disappointingly low compared to the necessities identified by the scientific community. And even these targets are still not even accepted by all countries. In response, citizens on different continents have mobilized local activists, associations, businesses and politicians to enhance the scope of action for climate protection. Examples of their work include: an elaboration of alternative energy and transportation politics, networking with native villages in the Amazon to support their fight for the preservation of the forests, supporting lawyers engaged in fighting corruption and in defending the rights of the native peoples, and supporting the installation of about 40 solar radio stations permitting communication between the Amerindians in the forest, their center in the capital of Ecuador, and European associations. It is engaged in all of these activities as an effective way to prevent illegal logging.[5]

l'Alliance pour un monde responsable et solidaire
Versailles, France

[5] The reader may contact them at: Alianza del Climat/Klimabuendnis Europe, European Secretariat, Galvanistr. 28, D-60486 Frankfurt am Main. Telephone +49-69-70790083; fax +49-69-703927; E-mail: europe@klimabuendnis.org; Internet: http://www.klimabuendnis.org, www.climatealliance.org, www.satnet.net/coica/.

Chapter XV

The Globalization Process, and Peace and Security in Georgia

Omar Gogiashvili

Globalization creates different environments for different populations, and there are many different theoretical interpretations of globalization, particularly as it affects sustainable development. Globalization is a controversial term, and it is often used so loosely that it is easily misunderstood. However, if we are clear about what is meant by "globalization," then the term can be successfully employed to understand the process of global economic integration and its political consequences.

I find globalization to be one of the best guarantees for a world free of violence and as one of the best leverages for nation-states seeking prosperity, security and peace. Politics and economics are inseparable, and prosperity, security and peace create the best ground for the economic regulation of political interests. Many conflicts in the world are triggered to some extent by the ruining of existing economic ties, and often the best solution to these problems would be establishing or reestablishing economic relations between conflicting parties. Even black market or illegal economic relations should be welcomed in these circumstances.

With the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the world woke up to the economic potential this region has to offer. Successful integration of the newly independent Transcaucasian and Central Asian countries into the global economy will create great wealth both inside and outside the countries concerned. Just ten years ago, the Caucasus mattered very little to the outside world, but as soon as the Iron Curtain was removed, Caspian oil became very attractive. The Caucasus, which allowed Russia to prosper for the last 200 years, was the long "forgotten corner of Europe." But as soon as the Caucasus became more accessible, the world's interest was economic – namely oil.

There is oil in Azerbaijan and Central Asia, but all these countries are prisoners of geography since they are physically isolated from Western oil markets. Five nations border the Caspian Sea: Russia, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Iran and Azerbaijan. Because of the political power conferred by oil, the development of the Caspian is inseparable from the politics of these five countries, from global politics, and from the process of globalization. Russia surrounds the Caspian Sea to the north, Iran and Iraq to the south and southwest, while Afghanistan is to the southeast. All effectively block development. Politics surfaced as soon as questions arose regarding possible oil pipeline routes. The driving force in determining these routes is of a political nature, and it is politics more than economics that will determine the future development of the region.

Moscow supplied energy in whatever amounts necessary to all the former republics with oil from Siberia. Consequently, there was no need for the Caucasus to develop its own energy resources. A key point is that, during the era of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, a kind of local globalization was implemented. That is, independent regions did not exist, and republics were not free to produce anything that they might need. This policy was implemented despite the inefficiencies and the high economic costs. It was a policy driven by political rather than economic interests, leading to economic collapse and frequent conflicts in the former republics. Now, thanks to the revival of the Great Silk Road and many Caspian energy-carrier projects, abstract geopolitical schemes are set to become a reality – a reality, that is, as long as Russian opposition to such plans can be tempered. Moscow sees any transit economic projects that bypass Russian territory as violating its own interests.

The United States, in declaring the Caspian region to be a zone of American interest, has been building its own relations with the independent states of the Caucasus and Central Asia. This is especially noteworthy given America's tense relations with Iran. The Transcaucasus countries, namely Georgia and Azerbaijan, also ensure that the US is able to bypass the Russian Federation when dealing with Central Asia.

The next step must surely be to remove the last vestiges of Russian control over the extraction and transportation of Caspian oil. This possibility hinges on providing economic, financial and political support to Azerbaijan, which enjoys the best strategic location in the Transcaucasus. Not only does it command the most energy resources, but it also controls the sea connection with Central Asia. There are two possible routes for Caspian oil: the North Route (Baku-Novosibirsk, through Chechnya) and the South Route (Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan). Russian analysts believe that the United States will support the Baku-Ceyhan project to ensure that, if "big oil" really does exist, it can be kept beyond Russia's grasp en route to the West. To achieve this, the US will exploit every option to ensure that the international oil consortium adopts a decision friendly to American interests.

The latest fears to grip Russian minds, according to some Russian analysts, center on the conviction that the US is once more fixated on forcibly removing Russian influence, not only from the Caucasus, but also from all of the New Independent States. The breakup of the USSR, Russian analysts believe, gave Washington a unique opportunity to control energy resources in the Caspian Sea and in Central Asia. Russian analysts believe that the United States will not stop at this opportunity, but will try to assert its control over the oil and gas deposits in the Russian Federation as well. These same analysts see America's aims in terms of two programs: 1) "separating" Russia, not only from Near Eastern oil producing countries, but also from those in the former Soviet Union, and 2) ensuring that Russian control over its own energy resources also weakens. The means to achieving this agenda is to question Russian "sovereignty" over the regions that constitute its "confederation."

Georgia perceives its most important task as participating in the Caspian oil projects and, more generally, in helping to form a European corridor. Both of these activities should ensure its economic growth and political stability. The only thing that remains is for world leaders (like the US) and for Georgia's nearest neighbors (Turkey and Azerbaijan), as well as the leaders of countries located along the new Silk Road, to maintain their interest in implementing the above-mentioned projects.

Yet, military and political opposition from Russia could spell disaster for such projects. Russian analysts, largely wary of the US, propose that Russia crack down on its "pro-Western" neighbors, primarily Georgia. This explains Russian support for separatist movements in Georgia, its attempts to destabilize the existing regime, and its dream of providing a "desirable power base" in Georgia for the future.

Russian analysts believe that Georgia occupies a special place in Caucasian geopolitics. On the one hand, it occupies the geographically strong position of being a junction on the Eurasian corridor that allows Caspian oil projects to bypass Russia. Yet on the other hand, Georgia looks weak and unprotected and, if sustained efforts are made to destabilize the country, these projects cannot be realized. In any case, pressure on Georgia has been greatly intensified. Conflicts in the Caucasus are one of the strongest cards for Russia, because this is the only way to prevent the oil pipeline from going through the Caucasus.

The oil pipeline could and is *threatening the security* of the Caucasus, and facts bear witness to this. In 1994, just three months after the agreement was signed for oil prospecting on the Caspian

shelf, Russia began its Chechen campaign. Chechnya lies in the heart of the Caucasus, straddling one pipeline and flanking other existing or potential lines. In 1999, the Kremlin restarted its Chechen war shortly before the Baku-Ceyhan agreement was signed in Istanbul. It is clear that the pipeline routes are the main targets in Moscow's fight to restore its influence in the Caucasus.

At the beginning of November 1999, Russia made a last ditch effort to stop the Southern project. That is, it instigated closer political and economic cooperation with the Turks by suggesting that Turkey and Russia should sign a project to build a 440-kilometer gas pipeline from the Black Sea to the Turkish port of Samsun. Through this pipeline Turkey would receive Russian gas in the future. At the same time the vice-premier of Russia, Nikolaï Axionenko, went to Baku to tempt the Azeri government to reject the Baku-Ceyhan project. He suggested instead that the Azeri join a "Northern Project" which was to be two billion dollars cheaper. Russia has already started to build a section from Baku to Novorosiisk that, when finished, will avoid Chechen territory. But this route will only be able to justify its existence if the much-hyped Azeri "big oil" flows north.

Despite these attempts, Russia's efforts both in Turkey and Azerbaijan came to nothing. The Azeri government refused even to discuss Axionenko's projects and Turkey, in refusing to sign the Russian contract for the gas pipeline, proposed postponing such an event to some indeterminate future. Stubborn to the end, the Russians have started both of these projects themselves – despite the sky-high costs of each.

In Istanbul, on November 18, 1999, an agreement on the project to transit Caspian oil and Turkmen gas was signed. Leaders of Azerbaijan, Turkey and Georgia, through which the pipeline also passes, all signed the agreement. The most significant chance for this project's success, is the US's guarantee that the project will be pursued – hence President Clinton's signature on the Baku-Ceyhan agreement.

The declarations made at the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe [OSCE] at the Istanbul summit are set to become a global blueprint for the twenty-first century, thanks to the efforts of 54 countries and their leaders. This blueprint outlines a new Eurasian order, although it will undoubtedly take time and great effort to put the declarations into practice.

Georgia has signed a crucial agreement with its partners on running the Baku-Ceyhan oil pipeline through its territory. According to Georgians, the implementation of this project will guarantee stability for the region and the economic revival of the country. The natural gas pipeline will most probably follow the oil pipeline from central Asia, through Azerbaijan and Georgia, into Turkey. Both of these pipelines will encourage the growth of infrastructure and, together with the Transport Corridor Europe-Caucuses-Asia project, give Georgia good reason to view its future with optimism.

This OSCE summit took some significant steps towards regulating Georgian-Russian relations as well. According to the agreement signed by Russia and Georgia (and endorsed by the OSCE), Russia will withdraw from two of its four military bases in Georgia. With this withdrawal, Georgia has renewed hope in restoring its jurisdiction over separatist Abkhazia. The main achievement of the summit was the Russian promise to reduce its military presence in Georgia. For the first time in two hundred years Georgians will begin to believe that their country really belongs to them.

Nevertheless, the benefits from the OSCE summit are marred by the aggressive politics of Russia. The success at the Istanbul summit is not seen in a positive light by Moscow. Steps made in Istanbul are viewed by some in Moscow as evidence of an anti-Russian agenda encouraged by

Washington. In short, conservatives in Russia think NATO is trying to undermine Russia's influence in the Caucasus.

On November 17, a day before the summit in Istanbul, three Russian military helicopters violated Georgian air space to bomb Georgian villages close to the Chechen border. It is significant that this challenge occurred on the eve of a summit that intended to focus on Russia's current levels of aggression. This was not the first bombing of Georgian villages that year. During Russia's brief Dagestan campaign against Chechen militants, its SU- 25 aircraft bombed the surroundings of Georgian villages.

Georgian authorities warn of the possibility that the Russian war in Chechnya could spread south to involve Georgia. That certain Russian forces are keen to force the Chechen fighters to seek shelter in Georgia is clear from a recent statement made by Russian Federal Border Service head, K. Tozki. He says that Russia will consider its "anti-terrorist operation" a success if the Chechen fighters are forced to withdraw to Georgian territory. If this occurs, Russia will switch its military focus to the Transcaucasus and this will involve Georgia in the war.

Russia is pulling out all the stops to drag Georgia into the war it has unleashed in the North Caucasus. Russian politicians and the Russian media compete in making provocative statements, such as suggesting that fighters and arms are entering Chechnya through Georgian territory, though there is no evidence of this according to Georgian military officials. The Russians continually insist that the escalation of hostilities in Chechnya is causing Chechen fighters to take refuge in Georgia.

By creating genuine instability along with expectations of continuing instability, Russia has significantly reduced economic activities between Georgia and its neighbors. It has also introduced a visa requirement for Georgians and limited the access of small-business to the Russian markets. The idea is to generate anger at and dissatisfaction with the existing political regime. Yet, along the bordering regions of Georgia and Russia, Moscow has introduced *a simplified visa* regime, in order to keep the politically unstable regions of Georgia dependent on Russia.

Russia even tried to discredit Georgia as a transit country. It is in connection with this effort that we should recall the terrorist act carried out on the Supsa oil terminal prior to Shevardnadze's visit to the US in September 1999. Unidentified persons unscrewed 19 bolts from the oil pipeline tube under the terminal; this could have caused the greatest ecological catastrophe ever in the region had it not been for the speedy response of the special services. Just two hours stood between their efforts and the pipeline breaking from the high-pressure of the oil passing through it. Had this act of vandalism remained undetected, the world would have thought Georgia unable to protect the security of any oil pipeline passing through its territory. This would undoubtedly have affected the proposed Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan project. But these days it is not so easy to cause internal disorder, chaos and civil war in Georgia. The country learned many lessons from the events of 1991-93 and, despite the odds, established state institutions do bring some degree of order back to the country. Fortunately, it is prepared to prevent a similar situation from being repeated.

The only option left to those who are intent on destabilizing the area is to directly attack Georgia. Both Western and Georgian analysts have discussed this point. There are those who believe that Russia is trying to prepare public opinion for the bombing of targets in Georgia. Such action would greatly intensify Russia's confrontation with the West. The general lack of confidence in Russia has recently reached unprecedented levels in Georgia. But Russia does nothing to restore Georgian faith – on the contrary, relations between the two countries are becoming increasingly tense.

Violence should not be used to resolve conflicts but, unfortunately, nations continue to resort to it. The Chechen war may be an internal matter for Russia, but there is no doubt of its hurting Russia in the future. Resorting to wars every other year is merely a means for politicians to distract attention from the basic problems faced by their people. The fighting in Chechnya is a tragedy. Oil helped spark the conflict and now requires continually financing it. The only solution to the problem is a political one. A military solution will force the world back into another Cold War – and who knows if it will be "Cold" this time?. Short of wiping out every Chechen, the situation in Chechnya will not be resolved militarily.

Western countries, especially the US, must do whatever they can diplomatically to bring peace to this region. What is needed is a rapid process of globalization to develop a new set of commercial relationships that ensure both amity among the successor states of the Commonwealth of Independent States, and friendly relations with various neighbors across newly opened borders. The prevailing and false assumption is that, having attained political independence, the new states of the Caucasus and Central Asia – many of them landlocked – can then secure their economic independence. But in this already interdependent region, where Russia retains an extremely prominent role in both regional and energy politics (not to mention in the security of the region as a whole), it is pointless to appeal to political independence before striving first for economic independence and prosperity. In this vein the process of globalization is crucial for the region. Let us hope that integration into the global economy will bring real independence from Russia. Let us hope that the Oil War will not turn into a new Cold War, and that the results of globalization will promote peace and security.

This paper has attempted to discuss many ideas in a succinct manner. Let me now briefly conclude. It should be evident that the international community is not sufficiently active in our region. It is nevertheless crucial to resolve the above-mentioned issues by guaranteeing sustainable development through globalization. The World Trade Organization in particular must employ stricter policies so that tariffs and barriers are not subject to the kind of political interference Russia has demonstrated concerning gas reserves. Russia seeks to keep Georgia under its control while it is slowly integrated into the global economy. But this is precisely the problem for Georgia, since it must assert its economic independence and *escape* being integrated into the global economy under the umbrella of the Russian economic agenda.

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Chapter XVI
Tolerance, Christian Faith, and Phenomenological Logic

Mamuka Dolidze

"I am the way, the truth and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me" (John 14:6)
"I and the Father are one." (John 10:30)

The words of Jesus of Nazareth, the Christ, about the indivisibility of Father and Son, suggest a unity of way and purpose for Christian belief. The recognition of the Christian way as the only path to truth implies, in turn, that all other possible ways are false. If my faith implies the certain truth of my purpose, and this is the only certain truth, then any other religion must be false. Tolerance, as a general principle of Christian life as regards other religions, appears illogical. But this kind of logic cannot be consistent with Christian tolerance.

The only solution to this problem is to reject ordinary logic, according to which one suggestion is derived from another, and this from yet another, and so on. This is the formal logic that we apply not only in daily life but also in science and philosophy. For our problem, the formal-logical link would be the following:

If A (Christianity) is believed to be the truth by me, I must say that non-A (Islam) is untruth. In this case, the antithesis derived from the initial thesis leads us to non-adaptability and conflict, not to tolerance. Non-adaptability and tolerance toward another religion are set as contradictory and mutually exclusive points. This causes a gap in the unity of the Christian world-view. To avoid this, we must destroy the logical link according to which the false nature of the antithesis on its own can be formally derived from the thesis (i.e., of belief in the truth).

In rejecting formal logic and searching for an alternative, we should turn to the transcendental logic established in the philosophy of Edmund Husserl.[1] The basis upon which transcendental or phenomenological logic is founded is ignored at the level of formal logic – particularly concerning the relation of things and events, or, to be more precise, the meanings and essences of these events to human consciousness. This, in turn, is a living phenomenon, a permanent stream or "river of Heraclitus," which cannot be entered twice. This means that, although the stream of consciousness has as its bed the structure of general logic, each drop this stream, each movement, is unrepeatable. But if we consider world events in terms of this unrepeatable stream, it becomes impossible to systematize the world and include it in the net of logical ideas and perceptions, because such a system requires periodic repetition and knowledge about general rules. In contrast, in terms of the stream of consciousness, world events are unique phenomena which constantly slide away from the net of a logical system.

Formal logic is based on the postulate stating the general nature of the law and the recurrence of the event. If the event is not repeated, neither law, generalization, nor formal logic can exist. The methods of formal logic – both induction and deduction – are based on the homogenous character of facts. In this homogenous system, the world as the unique life stream vanishes, and consciousness as a unique phenomenon is lost.

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[1] See, for example, Zurab Kakabadze, *Problema chelovecheskogo bytii'a'* [*The Problem of Existential Crisis and Transcendental Phenomenology of Edmund Husserl; Transcendental and Formal Logic*] (Tbilisi: Metsniereba, 1985), pp. 135-144.

Consciousness, as a living essence, is a unique phenomenon. It is that of the process of creation and changes in the meaning of things and events is constantly ongoing. Everything takes place just once and in a special way. Such an integrity of the soul and the world exceeds any logical perception, requiring instead a special way of perception, one which helps one observe the object as unique and self-determined, as taking place just once and in a special way. The phenomenon of perception cannot be derived from the content of cognition through formal logic on the basis of a general law or statement. The phenomenon of perception occurs and exists by its own. On the one hand, it is a kind of revealed content, on the other hand, it "holds" the movement of cognition in which this content is revealed.

In other words, the phenomenon expresses not only the object of perception, but also the subjective process of perception and personification. That is why it is impossible to abstract from this content in order to draw a formal-logical conclusion. Abstraction is impossible when dealing with an event of a unique nature. And an event is unique when it reflects not only the objective fact, but also a live subjective process through which the event becomes a phenomenon of the soul. The logic that is concerned with this unique phenomenon cannot use formal rules and laws of thinking. In this case, logic is only a means to outline some general methodological directions – those symbols and rituals which create favorable conditions for exploring and revealing this unique content. This is the phenomenological logic that takes into account not only the rational relationship of events, but also the content of this event and the internal concentration needed to perceive it.

This is the logic that operates in the field of beliefs. Christianity, as the religion of the living God, should appeal to life, to the unique phenomenon. The phenomenon of life includes the free will of a human being, as well as the idea of the survival of humankind, which is relevant to this freedom.

The divine idea implies not only Jesus's salvific action toward people, but also the responses of human beings awaiting rescue. Without the free will of a person, the process of survival would be implemented by external forces that entirely determine the object under attention – i.e. the human response would lose the character of a moral act and thus could not be connected with the idea of kindness or personal conversion.

Belief is not a product of a higher world. Belief is the result of the harmony between one's inner freedom and divine intention. The human being entering the stream of the Christian religion acts according to his own will, the self-movement of his soul, which, as we have already seen, is the flow of the living and unique contents of consciousness. Consequently, statements regarding the field of beliefs could not be subordinated to formal logic. In this case, the word is the symbol of the unique phenomenon, the content of which is not derived logically from another content, but is rather expressed with the help of intuition.

During expression, not only the object of belief – the whole and supreme essence – but also its subject is revealed: namely, the act performed by the human being in order to obtain belief. Such an integrity of subject and object causes an unrepeatedness of the religious content, thus making it impossible to generalize from this content in order to draw any logical conclusion. That is why the false nature of other religions could not be derived through the formal-logical way from the absolute truth of the way and purpose of the believer. When I try to enhance my belief, my way and my purpose, I act not only in an abstract way, in the logical sphere, but also by through my whole essence, through the integrity of my heart and my reason. I am entirely involved in this process. Consequently, no soul energy remains to approach any other religion negatively.

Being fully concentrated in my faith, I do not exist beyond this concentration. My rationality, my logical comprehension, cannot extend the limit of my existence and consequently cannot judge anything that goes on beyond my soul-concentration concerning any other religion.

Thus, on the one hand, I cannot enter the stream of living faith unless I strongly believe the truth of my way and my purpose, but, on the other hand, I cannot follow this stream and draw any conclusions about the false nature of another religion.

The suggestion stated above does not entail that a Christian cannot be opposed to any other possible form of religious consciousness. It only asserts that such an opposition could not have a formal-logical basis. My being in faith does not lead logically, naturally or formally, to the rejection of another religion. Such a rejection-opposition is possible only when the other religious thinking disturbs my inner concentration on the way and purpose of faith. This reason is entirely informal and has a contextual nature – i.e., in order to oppose an alien stream by keeping the pure stream of my faith untainted. In this case, I am fighting a force trying to hinder my religious life, not fighting the logical statement opposing my truth in the sphere of formal-speculative thinking. I am fighting a force that hinders my creative work – the determination of the essence of my own existence, which merges with the Christian dogma acquired through Church rituals. This dogma is determined by God once and for all, but not enforced, or given to me directly, mechanically. My free will, my creative work, has to be involved in the action from my side, allowing me to re-create an already determined meaning with the help of the Holy Spirit. This is the personal act of the adoption of moral teaching which, through each free individual, merges with ritual, creating the meaning of the whole congregation, the whole Church. This ritual is subordinated not to formal but to phenomenological logic – the logic of consciousness – which is necessary for intuition and the phenomenon.

If an alien force invades my ritual and threatens to destroy it, it will meet with opposition from my side. But let me repeat: here I am defending the purity of my faith and the living integrity of my Church, and not the formal statement regarding the superiority of my truth versus that of another religion.

Phenomenological logic is that which considers psychological aspects as well or, to be more precise, considers that unique part of human consciousness which determines the meanings of the content (of religion). It implies a general-structural form of thinking, where the unique phenomenon can be expressed. Such logic can be used only with that content which, at the same time, involves subjective processes, determining the given content, and dealing not with a system of already established meanings, but with the living, creative process of searching and defining these meanings.

As we have said, this is the very process that takes place during the rituals of the Christian church. Christianity, despite its dogmatic character (or, better, because of its dogmatism), is the creative process of approaching the divine truth by which the moral teaching of Christ is not simply passed to the soul of a human being but, rather, recovered, determined and merged with it though the free movement of consciousness in Church rituals and under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Without personal freedom, the chain of logical thinking cannot be destroyed, and faith, as a moral phenomenon implying kindness, cannot arise as coincidence of the human will with the divine idea of the Messiah's appearance.

But don't we lose our freedom in connecting personal creation with religious dogma? The result of creative work is a unique, diverse phenomenon. That is why it can be related to religious moral teaching – not by its subjective, psycho-emotional content, but because of its idea and meaning. A person builds within his or her faith the free and unique phenomena of his own

spirituality, and gives to it the sense of a dogmatic moral teaching through the shared ritual of the church. In this difficult process of meaning-giving two sides are involved – that of freedom, as far as the unique psycho-emotional content occurs and, on the other hand, the common, super-individual ritual of communion with the truth. These two different processes of generalization and individuation are carried on simultaneously in Christian ceremony. Individuation takes place due to the Holy Spirit, while generalization and communion with the common truth requires the help of Christ, who has established the unity of believers and the living integrity of the church.

Thus, the resurrection of Christ and his appearance to the disciples have established the unity of believers and have united the Church. Pentecost (when the fire of the Holy Spirit was directly and individually passed on to the disciples) oriented the freedom of believers toward the unity of faith.

As the Trinity is united and the Holy Spirit and Christ are indivisible, these two processes should take place simultaneously. The personality of the Christian cannot be formed without love of neighbor; in the end, the integrity of all Christians in the Church is established through this. God has given unmerited grace to a person, and he is obliged to pass on that gift. His personality, as well as his super-individual essence, exist in the permanent process of receiving and giving grace. Love is the free merger of these two general and individual aspects. Thus, phenomenological logic – the logic that works in the sphere of faith – on the one hand, is related to the unique stream of consciousness which gives meaning to the world and, on the other hand (through this unique process of individuation), gets closer to the truth established by God once and for all on the basis of common moral teaching. In the process of individuation and generalization, formal logic is destroyed, because moral teaching – which can be expressed regarding everybody and everything – is not a general or formal judgment, but is rather addressed to me and exists only for me. That is the very reason of its existence and worth to others as well.

Insofar as this common truth does not exceed the limits of my personality, I am not able to judge the way or purpose of any other religion. Something that does not enter the integrity of my personal faith cannot be evaluated by me as a negative event. I can analyze it in general, but this general conclusion will be neither an approval or rejection of it. I cannot apply the free process of individuation toward it, the process which for me – as for any Christian – is the only way to reach general perfection.

This is why Christianity has an internally non-compromising character, while externally it is non-aggressive and tolerant toward other religions. Its living force – its once and for all established orientation – essentially contradicts the logical way of stating the problem (i.e., if it is truly this way, it cannot be any other way). Such a formal conclusion is not relevant to the personal free striving that must stimulate a believer's faith in the living God.

Thus, the driving out of formal logic from the world of religion and its replacement by phenomenological logic (or, in other words, the creation of corresponding circumstances and modes for intuitional thinking in order to mobilize the forces of the soul for mystical experience)[2] means at the same time tolerance toward other religions. The soul is not necessarily directed to one way, and so it cannot judge the truth or falsity of another way or purpose.

From this point of view, the basis of tolerance is not that there is a general essence of religion or that a logical synthesis of all religions is possible, but, on the contrary, that the unique nature of religious thinking entails the total concentration of the spiritual forces of a person. The diverse and

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[2] See Vladimir N. Lossky, *Essai sur la théologie mystique de l'Eglise d'Orient* (in Russian) (Moscow, 1941) pp. 118-131. (For an English translation, see *The Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church*, trans. by members of the Fellowship of St. Alban and St. Sergius (London: J. Clarke, 1957).

special content of Christian faith is determined by the dogma of the Trinity, where the integrity of the principles of generalization and individuation suggest the supreme importance of a person's uniqueness. The aim of phenomenological logic is to discern this very unique generality within the limits of one's concentration or focus on his or her faith, in order to reject an opposition or aggressiveness towards other religions. We can conclude that by passing from formal to phenomenological logic, the Christian faith becomes tolerant, not through abandoning its own position, but through maintaining the unique nature of its dogmatic system and its internally uncompromising attitude towards other religions.

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