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Nationalism and Internationalism: A Third World View

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The last twenty-five years or so have seen some fundamental changes in the setting in which the relationship between nationalism and internationalism takes place. Before that time the discussion of that relationship was dominated by the feeble efforts of the League of Nations, the ethical thrust of transnational communities of the Faith—Muslim as well as Christian—and by the claims to international solidarity of the working-class movement (to the point where it degenerated at least in part into an instrument of the cold war). Now what shapes the perspective within which any review of that relationship has to be conducted is the new technology of weapons and communications, the increasing interpenetration in the relations between nation-states, the growing awareness of the finiteness of physical resources and ecology.

Today, without waging war or using the threat of war, a nation-state can fundamentally alter its power relations with other nations simply by the development and emplacement of nuclear weapons within its own national boundaries. Rapid development in communications technology and cybernetics has made possible the growth of large transnational organizations and stimulated the development of regional organizations in economic as well as security fields. The powerful role of the multinational corporations in growth and the direction of growth, as well as the role of transnational portfolio investments, constitute new developments that are beyond the controlling power of nation-states.

The concept of the nation-state is challenged also by the increasing permeability of its borders. Anti-inflation measures taken within one country may seriously affect the economic well-being and political stability of others. The serious impact of the U.S. decision temporarily to stop the export of soybeans in 1973, in the hope of bringing down domestic food prices, is an example of this, as are similar restrictions on trade by other countries. At the same time, the growing insistence on the part of their electorates that nation-states pursue a wide range of new social goals with regard to employment, equality, and social security is generating additional pressures to take decisions that are likely to affect adversely the welfare and the security of other nations. Such new tendencies toward economic nationalism have been manifested, for example, in the breakdown of the international monetary system. And within the past two years the oil crisis has brought home forcefully the contradiction between interpenetration and the erosion of the nation-state, on the one hand, and the tendency toward economic nationalism, on the other.

Most basically, growing resource scarcities, especially of energy and food, will compel greater acceptance of the need for new constraints on national sovereignty and for effective international action at the sacrifice of short-range national interests. The new awareness of the limits to the carrying capacity of the globe's ecosystems, the oceans, and the air with regard to industrial pollutants is bound to provide an additional impetus in this direction.

This listing of the points of tension between nationalism and a wider international approach is generally familiar. Less noticed, perhaps, have been two other major processes taking place in the world that also affect the relationship between nationalism and internationalism. One is the movement of industries toward locations nearer to their raw material sources and closer to the sources of cheap labor. Looked at in another way, this process might be considered as the belated spreading of the Industrial Revolution across the globe, from the North to the South, possibly bu

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not necessarily leading toward an international redistribution of industrial capacity.

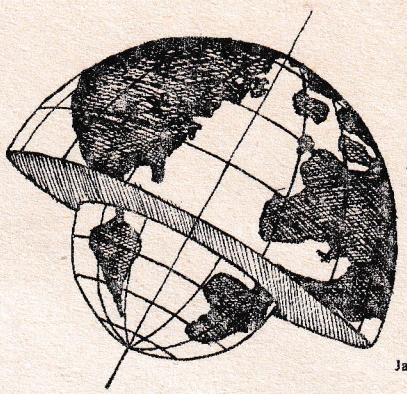
The other phenomenon is the migration of populations across national boundaries. This is in part the opposite to the spread of the Industrial Revolution just mentioned, that is, the movement of labor *from* underdeveloped countries to find employment opportunities in more industrialized countries. Once encouraged or accepted without much thought, this flow has now become so massive, especially in Europe, that industrialized countries must decide whether to reverse the flow, to absorb in a more permanent way the foreign labor they need to maintain growth, or to move even their fairly advanced mass-production industries toward the sources of foreign labor, accepting the risks that are inherent in the political instability of underdeveloped countries.

Another form of migration—but quite different in motivation—is the movement from one nation to another of large masses of people as a result of food shortages, brought on by changing climatological conditions, deterioration of the soil, or population pressure. So far this has been limited to the sub-Saharan region. But the Bengali exodus of 1971, though its reasons were then primarily political, may well be a harbinger of similar movements within the Indian subcontinent in response to desperate food shortages and systemic breakdown. In general, the likelihood of widespread population doubling in the next thirty years suggests that this type of problem will multiply and perhaps strain the capabilities of many nation-states in Africa and Asia beyond their limits.

Already changes such as these have led to significant shifts in value orientation, and hence in political attitudes, among large groups of people in the world. Such shifts further challenge people's loyalty to the concept of the nation-state and its place in the frame of reference of political values.

Here one discerns, I think, two distinct kinds of change in the direction of internationalist attitudes. One form of the new internationalism is practical, oriented to technology and communications, and thus inclined to look at the nation-state as an inefficient and obsolete form of political organization. Its believers make a major point of the superior capacity of regional arrangements, transnational functional organizations, and multinational corporations to take care of man's present and future needs. Then there is a quite different internationalism—especially among the younger generation but not limited to it—that rests on a growing sense of human solidarity. Its adherents reject the confines of the nation-state and are sensitized to domestic as well as international problems of equality and justice by a new moral assertiveness and a visceral awareness of the precariousness of human existence in the face of the dangers of self-destruction.

Yet at the same time there has been another change in value orientation that works in the opposite direction—toward loyalties smaller than the nation



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rather than transcending it. Possibly in order to escape the depersonalizing impact of large modern bureaucracies, governmental or private, or to find a clearer sense of identity, a growing number of people, especially in the industrial countries, seem unwilling to identify with the national government and its purposes and are withdrawing to the more limited concerns of the small community, the ethnic, the religious, or the language group to which they feel themselves to belong.

This new particularism—like the opposite tendency toward broad human solidarity—can express itself in two ways: peacefully, through alienation from the nation-state; or violently, through terroristic activism, made possible by the easy availability of the means of violence and the vulnerability of the systems of modern life at both the national and international levels. The tendency to violence also reflects a general lowering of the threshold of tolerance—a mutation in value orientation not limited to particular nation-states, or particular cultures, but widespread across the globe.

Yet, notwithstanding all these changes, both nationalism and internationalism continue to represent powerful motivational forces that are deeply imbedded in the human psyche. They have become no less important, even though they require considerable redefinition.

In essence we need to review what the concepts of nationalism and internationalism mean today, and how they interact in a new world setting. This article does not purport to undertake such a review in any full sense; it rather attempts, very provisionally, to identify some of the new problems which a full review should consider. To that end, I shall start by looking more closely into a particular aspect of the general problems, i.e., the interaction of nationalism and internationalism in the relationship between the industrialized countries and the Third World, between the North and the South.

While all the various types of heightened interpenetration and interdependence among nation-states, just described, apply to the relations between the industrial countries and the developing world, these relations are predominantly shaped —and one might say distorted—by the vast disparity in power between them. This disparity perpetuates the political and economic weakness of the Third World and its low place on the scale of the international division of labor. It has made it impossible for the Third World to overcome the inherent injustice and

biased terms of trade of the international trade system; to bring about the internal adjustments within the industrial countries which are a precondition for the further industrialization of the Third World; to overcome the unequal sharing in the use of raw materials and energy between rich and poor countries; to speed up the transfer of technology; or to redirect the thrust of research and development across the globe more directly toward the problems of international poverty and injustice. It is no exaggeration to say that this disparity in power lies at the root of the structural dualism between the North and the South.

The basic asymmetry in the North-South relationship leads directly to the sense of dependency and vulnerability felt acutely in developing countries. There is, in the first place, the coexistence in the latter's national economies of a strong and efficient foreign sector and a weak and inefficient domestic sector. This induces fear about the loss of control over their own natural resources and over the decisions affecting economic development and the national interest. It also produces distortions in patterns of resource utilization because of the greater attractiveness and efficiency of the foreign sector, and these in turn aggravate the difficulties many former colonial developing countries have in overcoming the dualism within the domestic sector of their own economies—between the part that is traditional, backward, and inefficient, and a relatively more efficient modern part, which, however, is still weak relative to the foreign sector. Such frictions are bound to impede and complicate the transformation of a colonial economy into an integrated national-growth economy.

A related set of problems is created by the interpenetration between the international economy and the receiving developing countries. Foreign investment tends to develop its own ties with the power structure within countries. It may also develop linkages with particular ethnic groups. Since many developing countries are pluralistic societies in ethnic, religious, or communal composition, requiring continuous attention to communal balances in their efforts to achieve national integration while pursuing economic development, the complications are obvious. The social and political impact of foreign investment on domestic politics emphasizes the problem of dependency and vulnerability.

Moreover, a number of developing nations must finance their development through the export of nonrenewable natural resources. With the prospect that these will be depleted within a few decades, these countries must try to speed up their industrialization so that economic growth becomes a self-sustaining process before the time of depletion. How much of their resources do they want to save for their own future use? And how much—or how fast—should they seek to develop industries that are not dependent on the continued availability of these resources?

Yet the range of options open to these countries in response to these questions is itself determined by international factors. Much depends, for instance, on the extent to which technology, management skills, and capital from the industrialized countries are available on terms other than direct foreign investment or tightly controlled joint ventures. The need is for forms of foreign investment that would make possible greater local participation in management and ownership. Production-sharing arrangements, gradual transfer of ownership to local entrepreneurs, and technology transfer separate from equity and management participation—all these must be expanded.

This correlation also operates in another field. The populous developing countries especially will have to develop a growth-path of their own, one that is capable of providing employment on a massive scale and one that is viable at what, inevitably for a long time, will be a low level of per capita income. This will require the development of labor-intensive industries and production techniques as well as the technology appropriate to them. And it will require consumption levels and future expectations that are within the resources of these countries at any given phase of their development process. Here, again, the scope for the pursuit of such a growth-path—one that is not a repetition of the growth-paths of countries that have industrialized much earlier and that is not a simple extension of the existing international trade system—is a function of, and dependent on, the power relations between the North and the South. To put it simply, the countries of the South feel that as long as the international economic system is dominated by the industrialized countries to the present degree, they are not in a position to determine their own futures, to decide for themselves what to do with their resources, or to work out their own paths to economic growth and development.

These are some of the factors that have led to the crystallization of what might be called a new development nationalism in parts of the Third World. Its aspirations, claims, and rhetoric are exemplified in the declaration on natural resources and development adopted in May of last year by the Sixth Special Session of the U.N. General Assembly.

At the same time, it is obvious that it will be impossible for these Third World countries to pursue their own growth-paths in isolation from the industrial world. On the one hand, a redistribution of power—as well as a global redistribution of industrial capacity—is a necessary condition for the successful pursuit of the goals of development nationalism. On the other hand, the pursuit of these goals is only possible within the context of a viable, effective international system.

It is this contradiction that is bound to dominate the relationship between nationalism and internationalism in the next two decades. On its resolution may well hinge the prospects of a new international order, one that is capable of facilitating peaceful adjustments toward greater international social justice. The stake the

development nationalism of the Third World has in such an international order is no less great than that of the industrial countries.

It would, of course, be unrealistic to close one's eyes to the political dimensions of this problem. There is no denying that within both the North and the South strong centrifugal forces are at work which should not be discounted; neither is a monolith. Still the general disparity in power is a reality, and *its equalization* would supply a crucial missing link in the complicated web of international relationships. As the painful failure of the less developed countries to improve their access to the markets of the North at the successive UNCTAD conferences during the last two decades has shown, any dialogue is bound to degenerate into angry polarization of inflexible positions unless the parties to it are able to meet on a more or less equal footing. Such approximate equality should obtain across the whole range of issues that are part of the North-South structural dualism.

In this light it is of the utmost importance that the growing sense of unity among the Third World (fragmented and often contradictory though it still is in its outward manifestations), its increasing strength, and above all the hopes that this has engendered, be seen not as indications of an unbridled desire for all-out confrontation, but rather as an essential precondition for a constructive dialogue. It was, in fact, only after Black Power was accepted in the United States that a beginning could be made toward the true integration of the black minority into American life. The U.S.-USSR détente is a clear example of the importance of power parity, while the history of decolonization shows that often just a reduction of disparity opens the door for viable solutions through peaceful means.

The formation of producer cartels in the Third World, as well as the efforts to articulate common positions and to develop common policies in a number of areas, should therefore be seen as steps toward the kind of unity that will reduce the North-South power gap. OPEC and eventually some other cartels covering minerals and agricultural commodities can be important assets in the coming dialogue. They should be looked on as potential building-blocks for new arrangements and institutions, linking producers and consumers together in a relationship of equality, and resolving their conflicting interests within the broader context of global and rational, as well as equitable, management—of resources, ecological limitations, terms of trade, markets, and global monetary stability.

All this, however, only becomes possible if the industrial countries, and the United States in particular, refrain from punitive actions against this effort in the Third World, or from attempting to limit the dialogue to a single sector, like oil. None of these problems can be solved in isolation. Nor can they be solved sequentially as a neat series of separate problems. They only stand a chance of solution if approached together and in the global context, however difficult such a comprehensive dialogue is bound to be.

It need not be stressed that this course of action is not without risks. New power has its own seductiveness, and dangerous misjudgments are bound to be made. The length of time necessary for the dialogue to bring solutions within sight, the inevitable clash of perceptions and sometimes diametrically opposed interests, and the intensity of feelings are bound to release forces that are difficult to control. Excessive anxiety and the instinctive inclination to respond nationalistically to perceived threats in new and unfamiliar situations, especially on the part of traditionally powerful nations, will have to be curbed.

The greatest danger of all, however, is that many of the problems with which we are concerned here are intertwined with acute political conflicts of great explosive potential, from which it may be impossible to separate them. It is at the same time reassuring to note at least some inherent limitations on the exercise of power by any side in this situation. Vietnam has shown us the extent to which the need to maintain major-power balances, especially in a multipolar world, circumscribes the application of external force in the Third World by any major power. At the other end, the value of the financial resources now flowing toward the oil-producing countries in the Middle East very much depends on the continued viability of the Western industrial economy. Also, old fears and rivalries among neighbors, resuscitated by the accumulation of new power, may create their own deterrence.

And on top of that we all should remain aware of the inherent fragility of political power in all of the Third World as long as it is in the grip of very fundamental societal change—as it certainly now is. Of course, this also holds for many of the industrial nations, East and West, but the industrial world is bound to retain for a long time powerful leverage in the form of investment capital, industrial know-how, and scientific knowledge, as well as arms, food, and aid.

The intractable structural problems that will have to be faced, in the North and the South alike, are not limited to the economic sphere. In the industrial world part of the difficulty of economic adjustment may lie in the fact that the constituencies on which political power has traditionally been based were forged a long time ago in order to meet entirely different problems from the ones that now stare us in the face. This may account, for instance, for the difficulty many industrial nations experience in dealing effectively with inflation. The adjustment of these traditional constituencies or the creation of new ones is bound to take a long time. In addition, in considering the possible implications of a slower growth rate, people are only now beginning to face up to the even more fundamental question of what the peoples in the industrial world should do with their energies, hitherto consumed in the pursuit of growth.

In the populous countries in the Third World the key problems will be scarce employment opportunities and the long span of time it will take to double per capita income from what at present is frequently not much more than subsistence level. The moral legitimacy and persuasive power of any concept that may be formulated by North or South will depend in large part on where the poor and resource-poor part of the Third World, the so-called Fourth World, with both its problem of poverty and its potentialities, fits into the scheme of things.

Given the complexity of the problem and the way it reaches into the sensitive areas where people really live, no single formula will do. The course of events may take us through many zigs and zags, and possibly through devastating short circuits as well. Above all, we will have to learn to think about these problems not in terms of a unilinear course of action or single overall solutions, but in terms of processes through which essentially only faith and clarity of social vision can give us the perseverance needed to go on.

In the face of present realities the traditional concept of nationalism, as the central point of reference of people's social concerns and the claimant of their paramount loyalty in their social conduct, is obviously inadequate. Traditional nationalism has turned out to be incapable of responding to the alienation and subnational particularism that are eroding the modern nation-state, on the one hand, and, on the other, it has so far been incapable of giving shape to the larger political units needed to make the new transnational phenomena politically and socially accountable and controllable. These contrasting pulls and resulting tensions are especially acute in the industrial world.

As against the two-faced erosion of nationalism in the industrial world, the development nationalism in the Third World is bound to remain for quite some time the supreme principle of organization, integration, and development. The nation-state still represents to many in the Third World the largest unit of political organization with which it is possible to identify, and the most effective vehicle for the pursuit of the aspirations of its people. Still, it would be unrealistic not to observe a generational shift in value orientation, away from the preoccupation with national independence and nation-building of the older generation to the concern with freedom, justice, and participation of the young. At the same time, it is also clear that the attainment of the goals of independence and development for a large number of countries of the Third World depends on appropriate adjustments in the economic structure of industrial countries and corresponding adjustments in the international system that govern flows of resources, technology, information, and trade. The development nationalism of the Third World, therefore, must include a vision of an acceptable international order, a commitment to its creation, and the acceptance of responsibility in maintaining its viability. Such a commitment inevitably also delimits and changes the nationalism that has been characteristic of the young nations of the Third World.

What the world stands in need of, then, is an international order that is not simply the global projection of particular ideologies. Nor will it be enough to make do with an international organization that only reflects the lowest common denominator across the globe. What is needed is an international order capable of facilitating the major structural changes that will be necessary to insure the survival of freedom, justice, and civility in a world of scarcity, without doing violence to the pluralism that is an essential precondition for the viability of any international system. This does not imply the need for a single ideology to be adhered to by all nations and peoples, but for the formulation of a set of new perspectives shared by all, whatever their ideology or social and political system, on the requirements for survival, equality, and justice. In the resulting redefinition of the relationship between nationalism and internationalism a number of perplexing questions pose themselves.

Where, for instance, should the new balance lie between national sovereignty and international responsibility? At what point and how ought a nation's right to use its own resources as it sees fit in the light of its own national interests be balanced with the moral claim of access to these resources for other nations whose need for them is vital? In the case of famine or other types of natural disasters this problem is relatively clear-cut (though not even then is it acted upon). In the area of energy and raw material resources the problem may be essentially an instrumental one of balancing access to those resources with access in return to markets and to industrial products on equitable terms of trade, as well as an adequate voice in the management of various international systems with a view to gradually developing a more rational management of resources and a fairer distribution of them.

Difficult though this problem is, it is even more difficult to decide at what point an affluent country should feel obliged to reduce its consumption level of certain produce in order to ward off endemic hunger and malnutrition in other countries. The diversion of grain production toward foodstock for the purpose of meeting higher meat consumption in the affluent countries, thus in practice preventing higher grain consumption levels in the poor parts of the world, is a case in point. And at what point do the effects of continuing world inflation and the distortions in resource allocation resulting from it create an international obligation toward the poorest of the poor and their children in the developing world?

Another question that is often raised in this connection is: How would it be possible to balance the requirements of efficiency—for instance, in the exploitation of natural resources for which there is a great

international demand—with the requirements of justice, i.e., the right of the less developed countries to control their own resources, the purposes of their utilization, and the rate of exploitation that is commensurate with the growth of their own needs and capabilities? The same tension exists in the exploitation of the resources of the sea, between the greater efficiency of the industrial countries and multinational corporations and the interest, role, and share of the less developed countries in the control and exploitation of what all are agreed should be considered man's common patrimony.

A third type of problem has to do with the international flow of information. How can the free flow of information that stems from man's inherent right to know be balanced with the need and the right of privacy of nations? Varying degrees of national privacy at various points are a vital need of many developing countries engaged in shaping their national unity and identity. For the continued viability of their own societies and the pursuit of their own growth-paths, they must develop their own particular consumption patterns and levels, which will enable them to live within their own resources at each stage of their development. The unimpeded inflow of information from the outside affluent world might well encourage consumer demands and expectations of the future that these countries could not begin to meet, even under the most favorable circumstances. The gap between induced expectation levels and the capacity to meet those demands might well blow the fragile cohesiveness of these societies to pieces—or force upon them an even greater dependency on the affluent nations.

On the other hand, obstruction of the information flow could easily—as it often has—facilitate the suppression of freedom and basic human rights within a country. The new balance between nationalism and internationalism then requires some reconciliation between the right to national privacy and the elementary dictates of international human solidarity. Present disputes about the right of personal contacts across national boundaries and the question of emigration of oppressed minorities point to both the complexity of this problem area and the urgency of finding acceptable answers. As these problems show, the reality of freedom and basic human rights within a country may relate directly to whether international windows and doors are open.

At the same time, the converse may also apply. Part of the changing value orientation of today is the widespread conviction that domestic concerns about justice and equality within a particular country cannot maintain their integrity and credibility if they simply end at the nation's boundaries. If, however, the international dimensions of domestic claims of justice, equality, and freedom can no longer be denied, difficult questions arise regarding intervention into the domestic affairs of another nation. These questions are by no means limited to government-to-government relations. Intense international concern with the deprivation of basic human rights, with political prisoners, and with the oppression of minorities, as well as the support in various forms of liberation movements, may give rise to significant private as well as governmental actions. Thus there are now gray areas in international relations and international law, areas not covered by the traditional concepts of domestic jurisdiction and nonintervention.

From terrorism to economic sanctions, unprecedented levers of international pressure have now come into being. Which of these new forms and methods of international interaction are acceptable? To what extent is their use productive or counterproductive, both in terms of the specific goals pursued and in terms of a viable international order?

For, at least in domestic matters, there is still weight to the more traditional view that each nation is entitled to try to solve its problems by the moral standards prevailing in its society at that time. The norms by which a people judge the manner in which their state tries to solve its problems are different for each nation and for the different phases in the history of any one nation. And, in a time of rapid and at the same time uneven change, it is possible to postulate that though we all live in the twentieth century, each nation may be living in a different phase of human history. Absence of historical understanding in dealing with these questions may lead to an intolerance which easily links up with remnants of the moral parochialism of the imperialist or colonialist era.

Speculations like these, however, should not close our eyes to the acuteness of the problems raised by the new forms of interventionism. The many different ways in which nations all over the world draw the line of legitimacy for arms trade, military support for liberation movements, and international terrorism attest to this. How to deal with these questions in the case of a regional breakdown of the international system as a result of war, famine, or other disasters—events that may well occur before the decade is over—is a problem that already claims our attention now.

So all over the world there is today a need to conciliate new conflicting interests and rights and to articulate the obligations incurred when such rights are claimed and exercised, as well as the rights acquired when certain obligations are incurred. Such questions will severely tax modern man's capacity for moral reasoning. We have, however, no other way to deal with these dilemmas but to search for a new international consensus. Only on such a basis can a new international system be built—one that can be maintained at a lower military cost, and one that will facilitate the international redistribution of power and the structural changes, internationally as well as nationally, within affluent as well as poor nations, that will be required to ensure the survival of mankind in freedom and justice.