

Global Governance and Justice

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The new men of Empire are the ones who believe in fresh starts, new chapters, new pages; I struggle on with the old story, hoping that before it is finished it will reveal to me why it was that I thought it was worth the trouble.

J.M.Coetzee, Waiting for the Barbarians

Civilisational Tendency towards barbarism

The contemporary human civilisation has become barbaric both as between human beings, and in terms of human relations with other species of life. It has become wantonly destructive. It is a norm among predatory animals to kill only when in need for food; at some time in the historic past, humans also used to kill mainly for food. Hunting was part of food gathering. As "civilisation" moved on, humans began to kill other animals for fun as well as for food. In the capitalist phase of our civilisation, the dominant culture is for humans to kill other species not for food but for profit. Food is only the medium through which to make profits. Though millions may starve, profits must first be made.

Unlike animals, human beings also destroy those species of life that they do not themselves eat. Thus, they kill weeds because weeds reduce the output of corn or wheat or what have you. They kill pests though they do not eat them. The wanton, and senseless, part is that the destruction has to be total. The cholera virus has to be annihilated for good, the cotton boll worm has to be eliminated permanently, the stalk borer weed has to be destroyed for ever. Animals have to be put into zoos and parks, crop varieties into gene banks and laboratories. None must have free existence except with the permission of humans. This is the anthropocentric part of global governance.

Unlike animals, humans kill competitors. Lions do not kill cheetahs just because both predate on giraffes. Humans kill other human beings as well as other species in competition for land, for forests, for cattle, for fish, for water, for space, for pleasure. Competition may have been the impulse behind the development of science and technology. But it is also at the root of the barbarism of human beings. Our present capitalist period is the most competitive and also the most destructive. Millions of species are destroyed every day. Millions of human lives are wasted away simply because they do not have the "market power" to buy food, shelter, clothing or medicines. Ours must be the most barbaric period of human "civilisation".

In fact, it is only a little exaggeration to say that natural species are destroyed so that manufactured products can be offered in their place that yield profit to the capitalist. For the loss of the microbe that filters the drinking water, the capitalist has developed the Brita water filter, with its "more efficient" filtration technology. Of course, it has to be patented to recover research costs and to make profit. The capitalist can provide the fruity Flintstones chewable vitamin supplements to replace the rare nutrients of some species of the now extinct berries plant of Indonesia. However, consistent with man's anthropocentrism, nobody has replaced the sea snails on which the life of Borneo hooded tern depended. There is no profit to be made out of the hooded tern; unlike humans they cannot buy sea snails from the market.

Much of the rise in consumer-product diversity, the UN Report

cited above says, is a direct result of the decrease in bio-diversity. Thanks to the ingenuity of our industry, consumer-product diversity now far exceeds bio-diversity. 200 million new product options have been generated since 1993 in replacement of the millions of now extinct species. Joseph A. Schumpeter, in his classic, Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy, had said that "creative destruction" was the necessary basis for the development of capitalism. If so, then its present phase is dominated by almost pathological destruction of lower forms of life species. Capitalism, in its present phase, "creatively" offers substitutes for what it destroys, yes, but at such high cost that humans may be digging their own biological grave.

The pathology of Global governance

Global governance is ruled by profits. This is not an expression of reductionism. There are, of course, other aspects of globalism, such as art, music, culture, communications, football, Wimbledon Tennis, white water rafting, social welfare, acts of charity and writing novels. There are also large sections of societies in all countries which do not function in the market where profits rule. Nonetheless, as broad generalisations go, profits form the basis of contemporary global governance. It is also at the root of its pathological character.

Take the example of global medical governance. In 1977, the World Health Organisation published the "Essential Drugs List" of some 306 drugs which, it said, "... should be available at all times in adequate amounts and in the appropriate dosage form." But the poor in the third world (and that means the majority of the population) have to wait for decades to have access to life-saving drugs, such as those against HIV/AIDs (for example) which is a deadly scourge in the South. The pharmaceutical industry is dominated by a few large global corporations, and they will not allow these 306 or so drugs to be marketed at prices affordable to the people. They have spent money on research, they say, and they must get these back from the consumers. If people cannot pay then they must die. Fertile minds might conjecture that diseases may well be "created" so that the capitalists can make profits out of providing remedies for them. It does not take much imagination, however, to agree that as human immunity reduces with heavier and heavier doses of antibiotics, and as viruses mutate and develop stronger strains, the pharmaceutical industry is the only sector of society that draws profits out of this particular vicious circle.

In South Africa the Government introduced a system of compulsory licensing of patents and parallel import of cheaper drugs. So the multinational drug industry backed by the US Government are now using all the power at their command (and it is not a power to trifle with) to block the action by the South African government. In the world of global governance health is subordinated to the demands of profit, and protecting patents take precedence over protecting human lives. This is only one instance of the pathology of global governance.

In 1992, during the Earth Summit in Rio on Environment and Development, many countries in the world signed an agreement called the Convention on Bio-Diversity (CBD). It recognised the right of indigenous communities to their biological resources, and

the sovereignty of nations in the use of these resources. But this would have blocked the pharmaceutical multinationals' access to these materials. Led by US pharmaceutical giants, the Western governments then tried, and succeeded, to push through the Trade-Related Intellectual Property rights (TRIPS) within the World Trade Organisation (WTO). This effectively took away the rights of governments and communities recognised under the CBD. The companies secured the right under the TRIPS to exploit biological resources wherever these might be. Countries that would forbid them from using these newly acquired "rights" are now subject to sanctions by the Governments of countries where the big pharmaceutical companies originate.

In effect, this puts a big divide between the "North" (where these companies originate) and the "South" (where most of the bio-diversity exists), or to use Samuel Huntington's pithy phrase, between "the West and the Rest".

The Huntington thesis revisited

In 1993, Huntington put forward the challenging thesis that the post cold war period would be a period of clashes of civilisations. By making somewhat simplistic assumptions, and even simpler classification between different kinds of "civilisations", he opened himself to much deserved criticism. Nonetheless, his thesis retains a kind of macroscopic empirical validity, much like when historians make broad generalisations about history characterising it as "the age of reason" or "the romantic period", and so on. What we are witnessing in the post-cold war period is indeed the increasing dominance of one particular branch of human civilisation -- the Euro-Christian-Judaic-capitalist civilisation -- over other civilisations, never an easy subject to put into neat classification or description in any case.

Contrary to all reified polarities, the reality is, of course, much more complex and contradictory. However, even when there are apparent contradictions to this thesis such as the intervention of the West on the side of Moslem ethnic Albanians against orthodox Christian Serbs, it does not detract from the general argument that in our present epoch it is the West that decides, dominates, and determines the fate of nations - even in Kosovo.

This polarity, otherwise described as that between "the North" and "the South", is widening in our times as the UNDP's Human Development Reports have testified year after year. Propositions that seek to qualify this broad division of the world - such as that there is a 'North' in the 'South' and a 'South' in the 'North' - strengthen the argument instead of weakening it. The "North" and "South" are not simply geographic constructs, although those too, but refer also to particular manifestations of certain cultural and consumerist attributes. The dominant "North" historically created and continues to nurture a minuscule class representatives of its own kind in the "South", those that rule and over-consume; the "North" also creates an impoverished and marginalised "South" within its own midst, those who do not rule, and who under-consume.

Modernisation theories of the 1950s and 60s assumed that the "South" (conceptualised in both the geographic and cultural senses) would "eventually" catch up with the "North" if they would only open up their economies to Western technology and science, and emulate the "North" in their institution building (democracy, for example). Retrospective analysis indicates that those theories were no more than ideological expressions of the West's continued drive to dominate and conquer the "Rest". That drive continues to this day. Only it is no longer called modernisation. It is called "globalisation". Like the earlier concept of modernisation, globalisation is also presented by the ideologists of the West as something driven by technological and economic forces that cannot be stopped, something "natural", something inherent in history itself.

The barbarism of text and the text of barbarism

Language can obscure reality. Text is often created to hide reali-

ty. It is created to encourage a certain perspective, a certain mind-set. For example, in the colonial times, a person from the colonised world did not have an individual identity; he was an Arab, an Asian or an African. Their personalities were generalised, their individuality dissolved. That made the colonised easier to handle. To the question one Englishman asked another on how many people there were on the bus came the reply, "Only the two of us, the rest were Africans." Such racist imagery of "us" and "the other" facilitated global governance during the colonial period.

Nothing describes the dominance of the West over the Rest so grotesquely as the West's definition of what constitutes "barbarism" in our present time. Nobody in his right mind would condone the bombing of American embassies in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam in August 1998. Whether that was the work of the "terrorist" xxx remains an open question. The US Government is convinced that xxx was indeed the culprit. On that basis, the US went on to bomb a pharmaceutical factory in the Sudan, alleged to be supplying bio-chemical weapons to xxx. Not a single country, not even USA's usually unquestioning ally, the British Government, supported the American theory about the Sudanese factory. If one were to be objective about the matter, then the American act qualifies as an act of barbarity no less than that of bombing of its embassies in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam. In the text of the West, however, only the latter is barbaric.

The UNICEF reported recently that almost 600,000 children under the age of five have perished in Iraq because of the sanctions that the West maintains against that beleaguered country. The infant mortality rate has increased from 56/1000 in the pre-sanctions period to 131/1000 after the sanctions. If this is not barbarism, what is? And yet, in the vocabulary of the ruling circles of the West this is no more than "collateral damage" that sanctions cause to the children of Iraq. It is striking, indeed inhuman, how language can caricature a grotesque reality and "cleanse" it of evil and absolve responsibility of its perpetrator. Blame it on Saddam Hussein is the West's outrageous and indefensible defence of this carnage.

The blame culture is deeply rooted in Western culture and the history of its colonialism and civilisational domination. Blame the "collateral damage" against the people of Yugoslavia on Milosovic, try him in the Western-dominated court and, if possible, hang him. Blame Fidel Castro for US sanctions against the country and the resulting suffering of the people of Cuba, isolate him and if possible remove him from power. Blame the British atrocities against the Mau Mau in Kenya during the 1950s on Jomo Kenyatta, lock him up. Blame Nasser, bomb the Suez Canal; blame Mandela, incarcerate him; blame Gadaffi, bomb his child; blame Mugabe, he is a Marxist; blame Mahathir Mohamed, he refuses to conform. The demonisation of the "rebellious" leader in the South has been an abiding feature of West's "justification" for its barbarism against the "Rest".

The barbarism of ideology

Language makes "acceptable" that which is inhuman and unjust. "Collateral damage" to civilians sanitises bombing. The collective noun, "the African", dehumanises the individual, objectifies him, and makes it easier to dispose of him. Demonisation of the individual leader separates him from his people, his history and his reason, casts him as irrational or simply mad (the gallant Somali fighter against British colonisation was simply called "the Mad Mullah"), and therefore outside the pale of "civilised" discourse.

Where language is a one-off description, ideology is a complex knitwear of values, prejudices and assumptions. Both serve the same purpose of obscuring reality and making "acceptable" that which is inhuman and unjust. The anthropocentric ideology puts man at the centre of the universe, and "justifies" to himself the subjugation of all "lower" species of life to his control and abuse. The ideology of "white man's burden" puts the white man and woman at the centre of the universe, and relegates all other human species to lower levels to be controlled and abused by the white people. The ideology of "Anglo-Saxon superiority" puts the Englishman

and the Anglo-Saxon American at the centre of the Universe. In an ever decreasing circle of defining the "superior" being, it is finally the Anglo-Saxon MAN whose gender ideology puts HIM at the centre of the Universe, so even Anglo-Saxon women are then relegated to a step below the top. Racist ideologies set the pecking order of human society.

Where language is descriptive, ideology is prescriptive. It shows the direction in which the Universe must move at the behest of the "superior" beings. The communist ideology is teleological; it promises to lead to the classless society at the behest of the vanguard of the proletariat. The capitalist ideology is economistic; it promises unending "growth" at the behest of the owners of capital. Both are presumptuous, both denigrate the role of the human spirit in the advancement of humanity.

Communism is no longer an issue today; Capitalism is. As the ruling ideology of the moment, it has passed through many phases and modes, from the competitive phase to that of monopoly, from the state interventionist mode to that of privatisation. But its underlying ideology has remained constant, namely, that it is the profit incentive that promotes growth. Like all ideologies it is a combination of truth and lie. In the period we are living through, the lie overshadows the truth. Speculative capital which now forms over 90 percent of the movement of capital promotes growthless profit. A George Soros makes more money in exchange rate and interest rate speculation in six months than an average sized industry does six years. Speculative capital disembowels the economy of industry and productive activity. It generates money with money without having to go through the process of production. It gives the lie to the capitalist ideology that capital generates growth. We have reached a stage in the development of capitalism where 90% of capital generates only air - and profits.

An associated lie of the ideology of contemporary capitalism is that countries of the South must liberalise their economies to provide incentives to foreign direct investments (FDIs) for the sake of their own growth. This is the lie of globalisation. Globalisation is a desperate effort by excess capital in the Western world beset by a declining rate of profit to find more profitable ventures in the South. But the matter is presented as if it is the South that needs capital and they must therefore provide the best incentives for it.

Ironically, and that is the force of ideology, the countries of the South have taken the ideology for truth. So they vie with one another to offer most competitive terms to Western capital. In the process they cheapen their resources and the value of their labour-power. This sets a vicious circle of poverty and debt bondage from which it is impossible for them to escape. Those countries in East Asia that were able to escape the debt bondage, and to generate self-motivated growth in the half century to 1997, were forced by speculative attacks on their currencies in that year to roll back their gains and succumb to the power of western capital. The currency crises forced the opening of their economies to ownership and control of foreign capital. Thus, for example, in South Korea whereas formerly only up to 15% of the shares of Korean companies could be owned by foreigners, after the crisis foreigners could own first 50% and later up to 100%. The result is that South Korea is now more foreign owned than during its last fifty years of industrialisation. Larry Summers, the US Secretary of State, said that the IMF deal in Korea accomplished for US what trade could not in all the trade rounds. The West is once more in command in the Pacific, both economically as well as militarily.

The collateralised language of the ruling sections of the Euro-Christian-Judaic civilisation and the collateralised ideology of capitalism have both obscured reality and "sanctioned" the domination and barbarism of one section of humanity against another, as well as that of the whole human race against all other living species.

Global governance, the IMF, the World Bank and the WTO

Ideology needs ideologists, paid servants of the ruling circles. These are located in the institutions that churn out globalist ideolo-

gies neatly expressed in elegant, "balanced", official language. The officials of the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and the World Trade Organisation are some of the highest paid bureaucrats of global governance. Not all bureaucrats are conscious peddlers of ideology; most of them, in their innocence or ignorance, have "faith" in what they preach. They get recruited in those jobs precisely because of their faith. They actually believe that the countries in the South must open their doors to capital (since the Asian crises they now make a distinction between "bad" speculative capital and "good" FDIs) if they want get their people out of the vicious circle of poverty.

They are, alas, touching evidence of what ideological education from institutions such as Harvard and Chicago can do to their mind-set and independent power of reasoning. Joseph Stiglitz, the maverick senior Vice-President of the World Bank, himself a product of Harvard, in a stinging attack on the IMF bureaucrats said that the sum-total of knowledge of those who prescribed Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) to developing countries boiled down to six basic concepts: inflation, money supply, growth, interest rate, budget, and trade deficits.

When ideology takes hold of ones mind, no amount of contradictory evidence (such as the increasing poverty of the people of the South, and the increasing gap between the North and the South) will persuade them to discard their ideology. There is always that bit in the complex set of assumptions in their ideology that will "explain away" contradictory evidence. "If only the Governments in the South were to do as we tell them to," they would say, "they really should have no problems that they are encountering." This is the escape route of all ideological propositions; they are, in the words of Sir Karl Popper, "impossible to falsify".

For over twenty years the so-called "Washington Consensus" provided the ruling orthodoxy of development "theory". Its "axiomatic" tenets were the basis not only of mainstream development economics at the academic level but also of the main policy directions of most developing countries, especially those which had come under the strictures of the World Bank's SAPs. At the political level, the minimalist state became part of the Washington Consensus. Developing countries which were hostage to World Bank's SAPs were forced to privatise, or stand accused of "Soviet style" statist dirigism. This, the Bank's bureaucrats argued, spawned waste and corruption, and diverted capital from the private sector where it properly belonged. Stiglitz was later to say that the focus of the Washington Consensus on liberalisation, deregulation, and privatisation had grossly ignored the important role the state needs to play in regulation, industrial policy, social protection and welfare. But that was twenty years later, after the damage had already been done to several third world economies forced to follow the SAPs based on what Stiglitz called the "misguided" Washington Consensus.

Misguided or not, the Washington Consensus had served its purpose for the West. The liberalisation, deregulation and privatisation that it forced on the economies of the countries under SAPs enabled a greater control over these economies by Western multinationals. The ruling circles in these "developing" countries conformed to the policies dictated to them partly in the false illusion that these were indeed the correct policies for them, and partly because they were under a debt trap which left them no other alternative. The illusion is finally being shattered. But the poor of these countries are now paying a heavy price. Many have lost jobs (where they had these), most had their real wages slashed (where they managed to retain jobs), most of them are now paying cash for health services and the education of their children (if they have cash at all), and they are now joining the ranks of the so-called "informal sector" as the final refuge for survival. In the meantime, the profits of Western multinationals and speculators have soared and soared.

In 1994, the WTO was created following eight years of intense negotiations between mainly the USA and Europe. The countries of the South were asked to join in later. They did, for the alternative of staying out might have been worse for them. But they had practically no say in the making of the WTO. The WTO has inau-

gured a multilateral trading regime that has an ever-expanding agenda. The rules of WTO are backed by mandatory sanctions against those that fail to fulfil their obligations, even if they had no part in the making of those rules.

The WTO is no longer confined to trade in visible commodities, as its predecessor, GATT was. Under the prefix "trade-related" all manner of items and issues are now brought under its sanctions-bearing authority. Earlier we referred to the Trade-Related Intellectual Property rights (TRIPS) that has undermined the sovereign rights of nations and indigenous communities over their bio-diversity. In like manner, TRIMS (Trade-Related Investment Measures) have made serious inroads into the sovereign right of nations to regulate foreign investments. Not satisfied with this, the rich countries of the OECD are pushing for multilateralisation of the investment regime (the Multilateral Agreement on Investments - MAI) which would force countries of the South to give "national treatment" to foreign investors. This means that foreign investors would be treated on the same basis as nationals, and so such policies of the South as favour their nationals for a share in the economy would be regarded as a violation of the WTO rule, and so subject to sanctions. However, the ruling classes in the West met with stiff resistance on this issue. The civil society in both the North as well as the South were shocked at the ramifications of MAI for the national independence of their countries, and they joined forces in an unparalleled global action to defeat MAI (for the time being).

Besides, TRIPS and TRIMS (and MAI), the West are now pushing for all kinds of issues to be subject to the WTO regime of rules and sanctions. These include the environment, labour standards, public procurement, industrial tariffs, E-commerce, competition policy, trade facilitation and Genetically-modified organisms (GMOs). These are all controversial issues. They all are potential mine-fields. They pose a veritable threat to the ability of the governments in the South to control their economies, and to use policy tools as a means of advancing the interests of their populations. Most of them are very weak in terms of negotiations, and extremely vulnerable to pressure from the North and the sanctions that the latter could impose on them.

The WTO, more than the IMF and the WB, is the camel's nose that will open up the South until the animal occupies the whole tent. The WTO inheres the full potential of globalisation. It is a process that will undermine the sovereignty and independence of the weaker states of the third world, leaving the more powerful states, such as the US, Europe and Japan, fighting over the rest of the world for control over their resources and markets.

The UN System and Global Governance

At the end of the Second World War, the victorious powers had created two sets of institutions. One set related to matters of mainly economic nature. These were the IMF, the World Bank and GATT - the so-called Bretton Woods institutions. The second set consisted of the United Nations and its related agencies. These represented the more "visionary" aspects of international relations, dealing with disputes settlement, health, welfare, labour, culture, education, trusteeship, and other such matters. The visionary part of the UN also paid homage to the idea of "We, the people..." as against "We, the Governments ..." although in the Security Council, it congealed power in the hands of the big and powerful.

Over the last nearly sixty years now, the vision and authority of the United Nations have diminished and the power and control of the Bretton Woods institutions have increased.

During the cold war years, the peace and security dimension of UN's work was used mainly by the United States and its allies to legitimise their global policies and interventions, such as in Korea, the Middle East and the Congo. The peoples of the South were able to use the UN to effect and legitimise the process of decolonisation, but not without a price. Because of the nature of alliances that needed to be built over the decolonisation process, and because of Western hegemony in the United Nations, decolonisation came with mixed baggage. While the former colonial powers were

eased out, the accommodations that were worked out, in general, favoured the West. In the Congo, for example, the UN became the means, under US hegemony, to neutralise nationalist forces led by Patrice Lumumba and to install in power Mobutu Sese Seko, who ruled the country for 27 years as a bastion of Western interests and ideology in Africa. Where the West was adamant in supporting the European colonial powers as in Mozambique, Angola and Guinea Bissau, and in supporting the apartheid regime in South Africa, the decolonising forces opened the door to Soviet influence and ideology. This has now begun to wane in the post-cold war period, and the West is once again the dominant force in these countries. They can now pursue their interests in these countries directly, that is, without having to go to the UN to neutralise the influence of the Soviet Union. In fact, they have more or less lost interest in the UN as a mechanism for peace and security. The US even refuses to pay its dues to the UN.

One result of this is that the UN has become largely ineffective on issues related to peace and security. In Africa, for example, the UN has made half-hearted, ineffectual, interventions in places such as Somalia and Angola. This has led Africans to accuse the West of double standards. For example, when it comes to removing Jonas Savimbi out of his position blocking peace efforts in Angola, the UN has been extremely parsimonious in the resources it provided, and half-hearted in the pursuit of the objective that it set for itself. In contrast, the Western efforts to try to get Milosovic out of Bosnia and Kosovo have been an entirely different story. This duplicity of the West has been observed by Africa even in relation to issues such as the care of refugees. Once again, African refugees are treated to the minimum of resources compared to refugees that came out of Yugoslavia.

The social and economic dimensions of the UN have suffered a fate even worse than its disputes settlement sector. The US and some of its Western allies, especially the UK, have tried over the years systematically to destroy the role, influence and justification of organisations such as UNESCO, ILO, UNIDO, UNEP and UNCTAD. For example, before the UNCTAD IX Conference in Midlands, South Africa, in 1996, the US and the UK had mounted a sustained campaign to argue that since the WTO had been created there was no justification for UNCTAD. Only a concerted effort by the developing countries supported by countries such as France and Japan, and the action by civil society organisations, saved the UNCTAD from almost certain demise. Even then, UNCTAD is no longer what it used to be; it can provide technical assistance and undertake research but it is no longer permitted to give policy advice to the developing countries. In fact, because of the attitude of the Western countries, UNCTAD is becoming a lesser arm, a poor cousin, of the WTO.

The Economic and Social Council of the UN, similarly, has been virtually disembowelled of its role and functions. Most of the economic functions of the UN have been effectively transferred to the Bretton Woods institutions and the WTO. These, in contrast to the UN, have become powerful institutions of global governance. The weighted voting in the IMF and the World Bank puts decision-making powers effectively into the hands of the West. In the case of the WTO, decision-making is in theory by consensus. In practice, however, decisions are taken in small committees, and they come out as negotiated settlements between its powerful members - the so-called "quad countries" (US, EU, Canada and Japan) and without the participation of the developing countries. Yet these decisions bind these countries. An example is the decision taken on information technology at the Singapore Ministerial meeting of the WTO in 1996. It was pushed by the US, the interests of the European countries and Japan were accommodated, whilst the developing countries were more or less forced to accept the *fait accompli*.

Global Governance and The Question Of Justice

Nation states are fairly new phenomena in the annals of global history - no more than about 400 years old. In their formative decades there was much debate in Europe (where the nation states first

emerged) on the principles that should guide relations between emerging nation states. A powerful voice in the debate was that of Hugo Grotius, the famous 17th century Dutch jurist who argued that international relations should be subject to principles of natural justice.

This particular school of thought has flourished in many forms and shapes through centuries, with additions and refinements, and continues to retain a following amongst those who believe that there are certain principles of justice and fair play that should guide international relations. In some ways, the modern-day theorists who advocate "fair trade" instead of "free trade" are the inheritors of what might be called the Grotian tradition in international relations. Nowadays, most of the followers of this tradition come from among civil societies, i.e. organisations and movements outside of Governments, many of whom have in recent years taken to the streets to demand that governments apply principles of justice and fair play in their international economic and political relations.

The other major tradition that guides international relations is the Machiavellian tradition, following the teachings of the 16th century Italian "guru", Niccolò Machiavelli. For this tradition, politics is amoral. The name of the game is power. There is room for "virtue" but only insofar as it is necessary to legitimise power. This tradition, too, has been refined and elaborated over the centuries. In its more sophisticated versions, American writers such as Hans Morgenthau allow a discrete and limited role for diplomacy and the United Nations in international relations, but at the end of the day, it is power and *raison d'état* that really matter.

The ruling circles in the West are essentially *raison d'état*ists, power-centralists. There may be departments in their governments that look after issues of "development", just as there may be departments that look after "women" or "the disabled". But these are tertiary, largely ineffective, bodies that must subordinate their policies to the dictates of *realpolitik*. It is for this reason that there is no protest from Western governments against the carnage in Iraq or Yugoslavia, or against the poverty in the South. They are all implicated in the theory that the "collateral" damage to the people of Yugoslavia must be blamed on Milosovic, that the "collateral" killing of the children of Iraq must be blamed on Saddam, and that the poverty and misery of the countries in the South must be blamed on the "corruption" of their leaders.

Justice is hostage to power in contemporary international relations. Indeed, all evidence shows that what is taking place is concentration of wealth and power within and between nations. A Bill Gates as a single person can flaunt a wealth that is more than the GDPs of fifteen or twenty African countries put together. Such is the scale to which the pathology of the present international system has reached. The real sickness of our society is that this is regarded as "normal", Bill Gates as a deserving beneficiary of his hard work and intelligence, a model to emulate.

The ruling orthodoxy is that whilst millions perish for lack of food, shelter and medicines, the directors of multinational corporations must make profits for their shareholders. That is the bottom line of our "civilisation". To enable this to happen Western Governments rule by force, sometimes brutal force, thinly disguised by "rules" they create in the IMF, the World Bank and the WTO. There is competition and much rivalry between them, to be sure; in the power corridors of the WTO they fight tooth and claw for control over markets and resources. But when it comes to the developing countries (and now the countries of the former Soviet empire), they close ranks. They have all vested interests in the defence of a system on whose survival lies their comfort zones both as governments and as individuals.

Redemption and Healing

Where will healing come from for this pathological order? Where will change come from, and how?

It is an unfortunate lesson of history that wisdom does not come from an exercise of reason. Sanity is not necessarily a product of

rationality. Wisdom and sanity usually come out of catastrophic or traumatic experiences, like war for example. Some people had thought that the state of destruction of the world's natural resources and the environment has reached catastrophic proportions shocking enough to bring some wisdom and sanity to humankind. May be. At least there is some evidence that since the Brundtland Commission Report, the air and water in Western countries have improved and their forests have been saved.

At the global level, however, the situation, if anything, has worsened. In the Amazon alone, forests the size of Belgium disappear every year. On closer examination, Western industry has been able successfully to transfer some of their worst practices and pollution to the South. The poverty of the South and the worsening terms of trade for their commodities have added pressure on their natural resources and the environment. For example, the world cocoa prices have dropped so badly that peasants in Ghana are forced to open up new lands, clear up forests, in order to be able to keep up with production.

The air in the North may have improved, but what has not diminished, over all, is North's ever escalating destruction of species from plant, animal and insect life. What is encouraging, however, is that opposition to this carnage against bio-diversity is increasing both in the North as well as in the South. The world's environmental movements are gradually shifting their attention to this threatening calamity, and the potential danger that bio-genetics poses to human safety as well as to the remaining bio-diversity in the developing countries. Hence the importance of the global struggle to save the Convention on Bio-Diversity against the TRIPS agreement of the WTO and the predatory threats of pharmaceutical mega-corporations backed by the US Government.

One of the problems of the present epoch is the incomplete democracy in the United States, the most powerful country on earth and probably of all time. The US government is accountable more to its corporations than to its people. The US Congress is, in fact, a plutocratic power house. The ordinary people in America are implicated in this power house and its predatory character by the manner they cast their votes every four years, by the promise of jobs from their corporations and an over-consumptionist life-style, and above all by the role that the media plays in shaping opinion. It is a sad fact of American "democracy" that, barring a few individuals or groups of individuals, the people are generally behind their government who skillfully use the media to prepare public opinion before bombing Iraq or Yugoslavia or Libya. The lack of humanist consciousness among the people of America is quite appalling. Also, the over-consumption in America is one of the principal reasons for under-consumption in the South, a fact about which the ordinary Americans are either callous or ignorant.

So one of the most daunting challenges of the next millennium is how to democratise the American society and Government, how to rein in their greedy corporations, and how to persuade the American people to reasonable consumption. Only the American people can take up that challenge, though it is clear that the rest of the world's population may have to vote with their feet and follow the example of the poor Mexicans who scale the walls around Rio Grande to seek jobs and income in the US. Throughout history people have moved from regions of scarcity or oppression to those that are more promising, the presence of Americans in the USA being one of the principal examples of this. Why should it be different in the next millennium?

It needs repeating that it is *realpolitik*, the politics of power and predation, that underpin Western mode of conducting international economic and political relations. In the short run, therefore, there is very little the rest of the world can do but to protect themselves from the excesses of the system's barbarism perpetrated either through the invisible market or directly through military action. Acts of defiance of the kind that Fidel Castro, Mummur Gadaafi and Saddam Hussein projected against US and allied powers have proved to be disastrous to the ordinary people of their countries. More subtle strategies may need to be cultivated. China provides a model of diplomacy from which much can be learned by the other

developing countries. Globalization is a reality, but not in the way the West make it out to be. There are aspects of it that are unavoidable of course. For example, the spread of the Internet and its implications for trade and politics are unavoidable. Nonetheless, there is no need for the peoples of the third world to rush into full integration into the global market which is presently dominated by Western technology and Western corporations. Indeed, a measure of de-linking from the global market through regional efforts in the developing countries may need to be more vigorously pursued than hitherto.

In the long run, only two possible trajectories appear on the horizon. One is that the global system would collapse under its own weight. The second is a return to a reasonable level of sanity if a global peoples' movement emerges sufficiently united and strong enough to control the excesses of the system. There are emerging signs of the second trajectory in the various strands of alternative movements - in the areas of the environmental and bio-diversity protection, gender equality, fair (rather than free) trade, holistic

conceptions of human rights, alternative money, alternative livelihood models, and so on. These are presently weak and fragmented movements, but they are gathering strength and experience.

If the alternative movements fail, then the world will certainly collapse under its own weight. It has already become a veritable den of inequity and injustice against the vast bulk of humanity. No system lasts for ever.

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