

A Warning from the Past

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The competing claims of patriotism, or loyalty to one's native tribe, and the good of humanity at large have been material for controversy at least since Diogenes of Sinope (d. 323 BC) described himself as a "citizen of the world" (*Kosmopolitēs* in Greek). Within Christendom, a care for the universal good was attributed to the Deity, while men were understood to have been assigned by Him to particular "stations" in life, including citizenship in particular communities. Perhaps as a byproduct of secularization, the modern era has witnessed increasing popularity for the view that human beings should take responsibility for the general welfare of mankind, even sacrificing traditional civic loyalties to this end.

But it is not self-evident that the interests of the human race would be best served by being made the direct goal of policy. The experience of socialism in the twentieth century seems to indicate that overall economic prosperity is better achieved by allowing men to pursue the private good of themselves and their families than by requiring them to work for the benefit of their "socialist Motherland" as a whole, let alone the entire human race. Might a world of patriotic citizens devoted to the well-being of their particular political communities not likewise lead to more overall happiness than a world-state populated by disinterested cosmopolitans?

This ancient philosophical debate is as current as today's headlines. While campaigning for the presidency last year, Donald Trump raised eyebrows with his assertion that "the nation-state remains the true foundation for happiness and harmony." This has not been the belief of most of America's elites for a long time now. Although the term "globalism" has only become popular in recent years, the tendency it expresses has been in the ascendant for much longer than most Americans realize.

The book under review was first published in 1923, and the humanitarian internationalism it discusses is the direct ancestor of today's globalism. The author, Charles

Conant Josey (1893-1975), was a Southerner, from North Carolina. He earned his Ph.D. from Columbia University in 1921 and taught psychology at a number of American universities from that year until his retirement in 1963.

The Philosophy of Nationalism

Race and National Solidarity

By Charles Conant Josey

Scott-Townsend Publishers, 1995

(originally published as *Race and National Solidarity* by Charles Scribner's Sons, 1923)

227+xii pp., softcover, currently out of print



It should be stated at the outset that a retreat from universalism is only one aspect of Josey's proposals. The ideal he champions is not precisely a "world of patriotic citizens devoted to the well-being of their particular political communities," but an alliance between the European and European-derived nations:

It is hoped that the reader will recognize the close bonds of culture and race which unite all Europeans, and thus avoid the broad humanitarianism which, in placing all men on the same footing, removes the possibility of using pride in race and culture as levers in creating the social solidarity that is necessary if we are to maintain our position of dominance. Nationalism so defined would be a sort of limited internationalism. Nothing is more foreign to the use of Nationalism here employed than the rivalries, strife, and jealousies which separate the members of our cultural and racial group from each other.

THE NATURE OF HUMANITARIAN INTERNATIONALISM

Josey explains internationalism as the extension of the principle of democracy to relations between nations. The principle of democracy, he says, is not that "all men are created equal," but

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the ethics of service, of mutual sympathy and brotherhood. It is founded on the gospel of love and mutual consideration. It is opposed to all privilege. It seeks to regulate human relations by principles which are universally applicable. It seeks to learn what is just without taking into account race, color, or other bonds that may cause us to desire to serve one man rather than another, and to regulate all our social behavior in the light of a conception so obtained. If favors are to be shown to certain individuals, these favors must be justified in the light of some principle which is universally applicable.

The internationalist generally assures us that such an extension of democracy will benefit everyone, including our own group. But most of his particular recommendations seem designed primarily to benefit others. Josey cites proposals by Leonard Woolf that the Western nations “undertake the task of providing general education for all Africans,” and provide China with “a capital loan and a corps of experts in order to equip her with all the arts of production, and to aid her in establishing an efficient government.” It is easy to see how such policies would benefit Africans and Chinese, but not obvious that they would imply any benefit, even in the long-term, for Western nations. Gratitude being in short supply in the area of international relations, it is entirely possible that the beneficiaries of our generosity might use their newly acquired powers to advance their own particular interests at our expense. As Conant pointedly phrases it: “We admire the hero who sacrifices himself; but should we admire the leaders of a group who sacrifice the group?”

Indeed, a century after Conant wrote, we find that China is not waiting to be given Western technology, but is straining every nerve to acquire it by fair means or foul. The interested reader can take a look at the book *Chinese Industrial Espionage: Technology Acquisition and Military Modernisation* (William C. Hannas, James Mulvenon, and Anna B. Puglisi, Routledge, 2013), which describes China’s “elaborate, comprehensive system for spotting foreign technologies, acquiring them by every means imaginable, and converting them into weapons and competitive goods.”

It may be harder to see how Africa could ever become a threat to the West, but in fact the Dark Continent enjoys one immense advantage over contemporary European civilization: fertility. We might better apply to Africans this remark which Josey makes of the Oriental: “What will be her attitude when she has filled to overflowing her boundaries and sees vast regions of the earth that are sparsely settled denied to her?”

In sum, humanitarian internationalism suffers from the same disadvantages as pacifism: it works fine as long

as everyone observes it, but cannot defend itself against those who do not. And how likely is such a doctrine to become popular outside the West?

Europeans have been characterized as moral universalists, tending to lay great stress on refusing to make exceptions in one’s own favor. This way of thinking is perhaps best expressed in the German philosopher Kant’s so-called categorical imperative, that men should act only in accord with rules that might also be made universal laws. Many Europeans would not hesitate to extend this principle of individual morality to tribes and nations, requiring that nations consider the welfare of other nations as well as their own.

Yet in much of the rest of the world, loyalty to family and tribe form an absolute moral horizon, and little concern is left over for anyone outside. For this reason, allegiance to humanitarian internationalism by Western nations would most likely fail to meet with reciprocity from such peoples: in other words, it would be self-defeating. This is what Josey is getting at when he observes: “Much of the idealism that arouses general enthusiasm in Europe and America strikes at the very roots of the culture in which this idealism finds its most general support.” Some outsiders may even view Western universalism as a weakness capable of being weaponized against us.

THE ECONOMIC ARGUMENT

In addition to humanitarian idealism, Josey discusses the economic argument in favor of internationalism. It is roughly identical to what today goes by the name of *free trade*.

The economy of the West has resulted in the accumulation of great wealth in private hands, which must be invested somewhere. Often, a better return can be had from investing in comparatively poor and backward countries.

Where capital is scarce the rate of interest is high. Since capital is more abundant in [the West], the rate of interest has naturally been lower here. Hence investments in foreign countries have been merely a matter of good business.

The result is a massive exportation of Western capital

which is being used to create industrial rivals. It would seem that a keener realization of [capitalism’s] true interest would prevent such a policy. In its mad anxiety to get quick and large profits, it follows a policy that not only jeopardizes the future of our group, but its own source of income. If ever there were a case of killing the goose that laid the golden egg, we have it in the present policy

of exporting capital to be used for industrializing backward countries.

Josey notes a logical fallacy in the reasoning behind economists' defense of free trade. They start by observing "that there is a tendency to produce goods where they can be produced the cheapest."

From this observed tendency they make the judgment that they *should* be produced where they can be produced the cheapest. In making the transition from a statement of fact to a value judgment, [economists] show too great reverence for the operation of blind forces. Indeed, some economists seem to get the same thrill from subjecting all their values to the operation of impersonal forces that the religious devotee gets from bending his will to that of Deity.

He quotes a contemporary observation that if Americans cannot compete against the lower labor costs in Japan, then American workers deserve to be superseded by the Japanese. This anonymous author seemed unperturbed by the observation that "the Japanese work sixteen hours a day, and that their wives work with them."

In other words, the free movement of capital (and the free movement of labor through immigration, we might add) favors "low standards of living, long hours of work, and unfavorable working conditions." The only sense in which the Japanese workers of *c.* 1923 were more "deserving" than American workers was that they were willing to put up with such hardships. It would be more accurate to say that such economic tendencies, when unhindered by deliberate policy, allow

men in a lower cultural group to drive to the wall men in a higher. But nowhere does it show that men in the lower cultural group are superior to those in the higher.

GREGARIOUSNESS AND THE GREATEST GOOD

Ultimately, any doctrine must be measured by the good or evil it produces. To evaluate nationalism and internationalism, we must use some conception of the good as our yardstick. Josey proposes that the maximum good of mankind would have to include a large measure of

health, wealth, strength, love, friendship, loyalty, appreciation of beauty, music, poetry, art, philosophy, mental vigor of all kinds, artistic and creative fruitfulness, well-developed personalities, pleasure, joy, and happiness.

He also considers the sort of *man* we should want to find populating this world.

A character of a high type must possess a considerable degree of confidence, assurance, ambition, and sympathy...a keen appreciation of his personal worth, and highly developed feelings of individuality. [He will be] a well-integrated character that finds expression in satisfying and creative activities.

Obviously, these are philosophical matters not susceptible of exactness or empirical testing. But it is probable that most intelligent and sensitive people would, upon reflection, come up with something roughly similar to what Josey offers.

Now we must ask ourselves whether nationalism or internationalism is better suited to bring about the goods and the sort of men we seek. A psychologist, Josey relies heavily on the facts of group psychology in making his argument. He begins by pointing out that man is a gregarious animal. But for man, gregariousness means more than wishing to be part of a crowd; it means that man is dependent on his group not only for "intellectual vigor and the complexity of his mental life" but also

for ambition, assurance and courage. Gregariousness is that trait in virtue of which new forces and a new courage are born when men are united in a common purpose, or when they feel the strength and influence of the group supporting them.

Examples include the soldier fighting for his colors, the personally diffident man who acquires confidence and assurance from his faith in the corporation for which he works, or the man of great family pride who feels a duty to live up to the achievements of his ancestors and maintain the family honor — even the college athlete of old (before college sport became a business) who feels buoyed by the "college spirit."

Crowd behavior provides even more striking examples of how the individual may be transformed by his gregarious instincts. The author mentions that the organizers of revival meetings must carefully guard against the possibility of stampedes by crowds exalted with religious emotion.

Now, the internationalist may object that if we can gain such strength from identifying ourselves with a comparatively small fraction of the human race, we should be able to draw even greater force from identifying with the human race as a whole. But this is not the way the psychology of groups appears to function:

The students of the same college can get little from their college spirit to aid them in their struggle with each other. The members of a great family do not get confidence and assurance from their family pride in their relations with each other. It is only when dealing with

outsiders that membership may add assurance and confidence. With nations and races it is the same.

Today it is usually taken for granted that feelings of group superiority must be harmful, necessarily issuing in a desire to oppress outsiders perceived as inferior. But does the man of family pride normally wish to *harm* other men's families? It is more common for members of self-consciously superior groups to hold themselves to higher standards than outsiders, even to take a paternal interest in those they perceive as inferior. This is certainly the case with any healthy aristocracy. It may equally be the case with relations among nations. Why should confidence in Western superiority prevent anyone from, let us say, donating to famine relief in Asia or Africa? The most intense national and racial hatreds tend rather to be directed toward groups perceived as in some sense superior.

Josey notes that smaller groups are the nursery of all social virtues:

Our duties are products of certain relations. Given various relations, our duties will be various. In giving the good of their group no more consideration than the good of other groups, [humanitarians] show scant regard for the ties of duty and love that naturally bind people when brought together in contact and common interest. To regard all men in the same way can be done only at the cost of ruthlessly breaking through bonds of duty and love and of violence to our sentiment of loyalty.

It is more likely that "interest for humanity in the abstract may become so great that no attention is paid to appeals for sympathy at home" — as happened to Dickens' character Mrs. Jellyby (in *Bleak House*), who devoted herself to the welfare of Africans even as her own children went about in rags. Dickens called her condition "telescopic philanthropy."

Contrary to what one might imagine, even individuality is best nurtured in a world of competing groups commanding particular loyalties:

Individuality is a product. The man of a thousand contacts, a man of deep sympathies and understandings, a man who is acquainted with the literature, philosophy, and ideas of the

world is more truly an individual with stronger feelings of individuality than the one who has not entered so fully into the lives of others. Biologically we are very much the same. Apart from differences in training, most men tend to act and feel very much alike. The individual who has received from his group inspiration, courage, ambition, enthusiasm, loyalty, and the other spiritual forces the self-conscious group is prepared to give, has feelings of *the my* or *personal* which have a true basis in reality.

In sum:

To identify oneself with a self-conscious group opposed to other self-conscious groups serves to create tension, and thus energy and force. Internationalism deprives man of a valuable source of psychic energy, sympathy, and feelings of individuality. A homogeneous world would be a static world.

Josey understands that even internationalism itself gains its attraction from group consciousness:

The ideals [the internationalist] has received make him feel he belongs to a superior group. He conceives a group of nationalists made up of bigoted patriots, capitalists, politicians, and the ignorant masses. At present the crusade against these arouses an enthusiasm that brings together men from all classes and races.

But what should ever become of this moral elation after internationalist ideals were thoroughly realized? Josey, writing a few years after the Bolshevik takeover of Russia, feared it would be class conflict, and devotes some space to explaining why class consciousness lacks the advantages that come from national and racial loyalties. This part of his book may strike the reader as dated.

At one point, however, and almost in passing, he refers to another possibility: that "a probable substitute for national hates is hatred of hate." Could Josey have imagined that within a century there would be well-endowed institutions dedicated to sniffing out all who retain less-than-universal loyalties, and hounding them from public life? ■