

the Warsaw Pact would have extremely good chances to prevail over the West (*Wohin treibt die NATO?*, 1976).

And these are precisely the areas, and the fields of possible counteraction, in which NATO is being further weakened at present. The Soviet Union has in recent years stepped up its naval force to an unprecedented strength, which is vital for any attack on both the Northern and the Southern flanks of NATO. It has also strengthened the combat-effectiveness and number of its conventional land forces, and above all the number of its tanks, which are vital for a limited surprise attack on Central Europe. It is not true that the Soviet Union has stepped up its armaments wherever it could, but it has done so with circumspect rapidity. It is unlikely that in the coming months the Warsaw Pact will gear itself to exporting its revolutionary achievements on the points of Red Army bayonets. But Soviet foreign policy clearly aims at a *long-range expansion by means of military pressure*. Through the military buildup of recent years the Warsaw Pact countries have undoubtedly laid the groundwork for future claims to more power.

The European nations will have to contribute a larger, possibly the largest, share to the stabilization of the military balance between East and West. This requires mustering the political determination to ensure Western Europe's security. It is more than questionable, in view of Europe's traditional small-state frivolity in security matters, that this will happen. Since the war in Vietnam, erstwhile popular exuberance for the defense of the Free World has dwindled, if not vanished completely in both Europe and America. Admittedly, regimes like the one in Chile make it difficult to equate the Western with the Free world. But for all its shortcomings the Free World is located, if anywhere at all, on *this* side of what was once called the Iron Curtain. This freest of all existing—though certainly not of all conceivable—worlds deserves to be defended morally and, if necessary, militarily.

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## EXCURSUS III

### *Michael Novak on New Ironies of American History*

The North American continent is rich in the world's resources: But our nation is not, perhaps, the richest. Natural wealth must be calculated over time. Some resources become obsolete; the value of others is suddenly discovered. Some resources are

depleted; others—a rich topsoil—can with care endure for centuries. We are temporarily rich and powerful.

The greatest source of wealth in Great Britain and the United States, however, is not natural resources so much as capacities for organization. The English-speaking peoples led the world in discovering how to blend individual freedom with schemes of administration and social organization. They have nourished extraordinary trust, unusual internal and even sexual disciplines, under which individual liberties flourished. In very recent times, precisely in these cultures, modern inventiveness exploded. An unparalleled breakthrough occurred in standards of living. A social revolution brought us modernity. Other nations of enormous natural wealth but lacking equivalent social disciplines and individual liberties long remained "backward."

It can be said, indeed, that the industrialization of Great Britain and the United States, accompanied by that of northwestern Europe, *conferred* wealth on many other regions of the world. Oil lay under Saudi Arabia—undiscovered, unvalued, and useless—for millennia. Apart from European and North American merchant ships and marketing skills there would be little national wealth in coffee, bananas, sugar, and many other products.

The world is now "a global village." It is perceived as "spaceship Earth." The commonest managers in Philadelphia and in Rangoon speak of "interdependence." Without the energies unleashed by democratic capitalism the world would know nothing of such concepts, less still of the underlying achievements that are their technical and social base.

It is said far too glibly that the Western "imperialist" nations "exploited" the Third World. Did they? Of course injustices were done and are still being done. Of course these should be removed, or diminished, or mitigated, or compensated for. (The issue of justice and injustice is not always easy to unravel.) Yet whence came the concepts of "liberation," of "rights," of "exploitation," of "injustice," even of "nation-state," which now have raised the consciousness of most of the world? It is instructive to recall the situation encountered by the Western explorers centuries ago. It is also instructive to read the historical descriptions of their own societies by persons in every quarter of the planet. Poverty, sickness, ignorance, and suffering are not new.

Great Britain was a nation of three million souls when its ideas, its capacities for organization, and the skillful deployment of psychic energies by its people led it after 1688 upon the path of Empire. It must be difficult for the élites of India, Africa, the Caribbean, and other outposts of the British Empire to reflect upon how much intelligence, and how much human power, were exercised for so long by so few so far away. Why didn't the Indians make England their colony? Why didn't the Dominican Republic or Cuba exercise hegemony over most of

the world? They had just as many people, or more. The story of the English-speaking people—so infinitesimal a part of the world in the eighteenth century—is one of the great stories of world history. One must look to the secrets of the human spirit in Great Britain to understand it.

Elites in other parts of the world must explain to themselves their own sleep, down so many generations. It may become important to romanticize this past in order to rationalize it.

Suppose democracy and capitalism has not triumphed in Great Britain and the United States. (One must also imagine then the absence of the Protestant vocabulary of the spirit, disciplined by freethinking and agnosticism.) Suppose feudal ways had continued. Suppose invention and industry and medicine and education had not developed. Suppose, in short, there had occurred in the North Atlantic none of what is now known as “development” or “progress.” Would the situation of the Third World now be better? Worse? Were the poverty, tyranny, injustices, and enormous suffering known to this planet lighter before the world knew the West? It is not at all plain that “exploitation” by North Atlantic states—the First World—is an adequate explanation for the present status of the Third World.

Nor do I believe that envy is the sole or even the best description of the spiritual state of Third World élites. Such élites, for the most part, owe their education to the universities of the First World (or the Second World). The ideas they have learned from other worlds are not easily realizable within their own. Where cultural habits follow different angles of perception, where the psyche is formed to different internal structures, where the development of the human spirit follows different lines of emphasis, attraction, repulsion, energy, and lassitude—there, ideas and institutions must of necessity assume different shape.

The preconditions of democratic living are far more specific than universalists have long imagined. The twin heritage of the Enlightenment and Christianity, claiming universal validity, has been in this respect naive. We naively expected to be imitated. We have been shocked by cultural resistance.

The dislocations caused by attempts at modernization in the Third World are severe in their attendant miseries; of this there can be no doubt. Industrialization in the North Atlantic states was bought at high human price, too. This price was paid over four centuries, and the path of progress had far deeper and more congenial preparation in the habits of such peoples for over a thousand years.

“Meanwhile,” as Reinhold Niebuhr noted in *The Irony of American History* (1952), “the difference between our wealth and the poverty of the technically underdeveloped world is interpreted by communist propaganda as irrefutable evidence of the exploitative character of our economy.” He does not duck the point: “According to this ideology, poverty

is caused solely by exploitation.” Niebuhr draws the irony: “Therefore we confront the ironic situation in world politics that the most efficient modern nation is condemned in the court of public opinion, strongly influenced by Marxist dogma, not so much for its real sins as for its achievements....” In boasting of these achievements, we keep confirming the evidence to which ideologues point for ironic purposes.

Even to the casual traveler the American presence in other countries of the world conveys the worst of our traditions. Our democratic values are not transportable. Overseas, the specifically American ways of doing things—the habits and perceptions that at home give our behavior context, balance, and limits—are relaxed. In their place one sees naked wealth, power, business interests, and a mania for birth control. Abroad, not only American buildings and sport shirts and chewing gum, but also the demeaning and xenophobic side of our values, announce to the world an America none of us would wish to live in. The redeeming feature of American life at home is the virtue that inheres in our institutions and in the inner constitution of our people—but these, precisely, are scarcely visible abroad.

Thus, it is no doubt meet and just that many in the rest of the world despise us. We will not prove our humanity, however, by falsely castigating ourselves. The most difficult of all human relations are those of inequality. The bright endure exquisite anguish when they must, perforce, deal with the dull. The brave despise the cowardly. Many conversations lead to grinding teeth: those between a professor and an auto dealer; between a very rich man and his plumber; between editors and pressmen. Conflicts of class, cultural style, profession, and manner introduce many inequalities into human affairs. Life has edges; angles jut out; few exchanges are rational and painless (and those that are seem bland).

The United States is not in a position to be loved, or even in a position to obtain and to hold “the decent opinion of mankind.” Those days are gone. Nor is there any conceivable economic plan that would alter the cultures, psyches, resources, productivity, and institutions of the Third World so as to render them, in the next century or two or three, equal in wealth, even proportionate to their size, to the United States. It is an immature, vain, and self-congratulatory fantasy to imagine that there is such a plan.

Even if nations of the Third World, like India, the most populous, were to prosper at a growth rate twice that of the U.S. for the next hundred years, their position will then be even further behind ours than today. The base built in the last three hundred years in America is simply too great. And if U.S. corporations and multinationals *withdrew* from the Third World, if every instrument of the advanced nations were *withdrawn* from the Third World in order to avoid further “exploitation,” the situation of the latter would become more hopeless by far.

In 1952 it may have been true that, as Niebuhr wrote, we took “inordinate pride” in our social vir-

tues. In 1976—it is another nice irony of American history—we were taking inordinate pride in our sins. It is a fantasy of omnipotence that makes many in the American élite assume delicious guilt for the “oppressions” of the Third World. We are not powerful enough to have retarded the human race everywhere. Indeed, much of the world’s present restlessness has been stimulated by our ideals, our ideas, and our practical achievements. We can be more generous, more intelligent, and more farsighted in responding to the agonies and miseries of our brothers and sisters elsewhere on this planet. We serve no one’s interests by denying the power of our own ideas, ideals, and institutions, to which the possibility of “modernization” is owed. We have been, not their possessors, but their temporary stewards.

Now that our ideas and ideals belong (at least dimly) to everyone, the long and slow course of building up institutions suited to realizing them will have to be invented by each culture in its own way. It is the fond illusion of many élites elsewhere—and some in our own midst—to believe that ancient tyrannies can be broken only through establishing new ones. *Liberty* is the secret of unleashed human energy, of unparalleled inventiveness, of unexampled productivity. To have missed that point is to have missed everything. We are great sinners, no doubt, but we have given birth to liberty. In fidelity to her we keep alive the world’s hope.

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## **EXCURSUS IV**

### *Harris Schoenberg on Diplomacy or Deceit?*

While the press conferences of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) were projecting a new image of flexibility, the United Nations General Assembly was meeting in November at the PLO’s behest. The agenda was a U.N. committee’s recommendation of steps that would lead to an Arab takeover of Israel.

The recommendations of the General Assembly’s Palestinian Committee, contained in a report endorsed by the Assembly, reflect the perspective and timetable of the PLO, which is still officially committed to Israel’s destruction. These recommendations include the “return” of the Palestinian Arabs “to their homes and property” abandoned since 1948, and their achievement of “self-determination, national independence, and sovereignty.” The territory they would return to in

the second stage of the plan is the State of Israel. The purpose of their return, repeatedly explained by Arab spokesmen, is the extinction of Israel. Thus the report of the Palestinian Committee sanctions Israel’s demise.

Strikingly absent from the report and from the Assembly resolutions authorizing and endorsing it are any references to Israel or to Security Council resolutions 242 and 338. These, it will be remembered, are the resolutions that set forth balanced principles and procedures for a negotiated Israel-Arab peace. These omissions, upon which the PLO insisted, make the Committee’s work and its recommendations contrary to international law and, in the words of the Ford Administration’s United Nations Ambassador, William W. Scranton, “senseless” and “unfair.”

Though the Palestinian Committee was established on November 10, 1975, it was not until five weeks later that the Arabs found twenty states willing to serve as members. Of these only four maintain diplomatic relations with Israel, and only two did not vote for the resolution equating Zionism with racism. Few of the twenty states, which profess concern for the rights of the Palestinian Arabs, honor the civil rights of their own citizens or maintain free and open political systems.

The authorizing resolution enabled the Committee to establish contact with and consider suggestions from the PLO. It quickly became clear, however, that the Committee was not only established at the initiative of the PLO but was serving as its instrument. From February to May, 1976, the PLO participated in all stages of the Committee’s deliberations, including the closed sessions. The PLO also served (although not a Committee member) on its drafting group, whose sessions were also closed. It is therefore not entirely surprising that the Committee’s recommendations are essentially a restatement of the PLO position. Contrary to the U.N. Charter, this position explicitly rejected conciliation, mediation, arbitration, adjudication, or negotiation.

Central to the Committee’s recommendations are the rights to return and to self-determination, which the Committee report refers to as “inalienable.” Not only is the “right” of return fictitious—resettlement has been the accepted international practice throughout the twentieth century—but for Israel to permit the massive influx of self-proclaimed enemies of Israel would be suicidal. Especially in this time, when the Arab states have not ended their state of war.

Precedent from American history is instructive. During the peace negotiations leading to the end of the American Revolutionary War the British Government pressed the new American nation to permit the loyalists who had fled to Canada to return and reclaim their property. The United States Congress flatly refused, in the words of Benjamin Franklin, to “receive again into our bosom those who have been our bitterest enemies.” Congress did agree to recommend that the individual states permit the resto-