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Globalization, nationalism, and the present US immigration troubles

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**GLOBALIZATION, NATIONALISM,
AND THE PRESENT US IMMIGRATION TROUBLES**

Toward the end of, and shortly after, World War II many Western intellectuals started to reflect on ways of securing lasting world peace. These included French Catholic intellectuals like Jacques Maritain and Étienne Gilson and American intellectuals sympathetic to classical education like president of the University of Chicago Robert M. Hutchins and Mortimer J. Adler. Adler penned an important book on the subject entitled *How to Think about War and Peace*, which I would like to use as the point of departure for this article.¹

Historically in the West emigration and immigration have frequently been thorny issues. Poles are well aware of this. These were major problems for Poles and citizens of other Eastern European countries during the period of Soviet dominance of Eastern Europe. To live well, all human beings require, and have a right to, some freedom of movement. A main question of justice is to determine the proper limits of such freedom, to decide precisely how much freedom of movement is naturally and politically tolerable, and to establish how much freedom human beings are entitled by natural and political right.

At the very least, I think Adler would say justice demands that all human beings are entitled to a just amount of freedom of movement: to no less than is adequate for us to live beyond the means of survival and no more than is compatible with every other human being having enough freedom to do the same. These are the limits of tolerance that natural and political justice demand.

To understand present US immigration troubles, we have to place these difficulties within the wider context of World Wars I and II and their aftermath and post-war conflicts between capitalism and the various forms of modern socialism.

Adler's reflections about how to think about war and peace give us a good place to start to understand these contemporary problems. Toward the end of World War II and shortly thereafter, Adler was one of several leading Western intellectuals who saw the issue of national sovereignty as a major obstacle to world peace.

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¹ Mortimer J. Adler, *How to Think about War and Peace* (New York 1995).

At the time, Maritain complained that the contemporary understanding of sovereignty was Machiavellian, identical with the totalitarian claim that might makes right. He complained that this misunderstanding of sovereignty was essentially a kind of secularized version of the divine right of kings, incompatible with classical natural law moral and political philosophy. He argued that future world peace demanded a modification of this prevailing understanding of sovereignty which would recognize that national sovereignty is essentially subordinate to a natural moral law. He also maintained that international institutions such as UNESCO would have to take a lead role in educating national populations to accept this modified understanding of sovereignty.

At first glance, Adler appears to have disagreed with Maritain. He claimed that only one cause of war exists: anarchy, absence of governmental controls, and that government is the cause of peace. He claimed that a government's chief function is to keep the peace, to settle disagreements among people who live together. By "government," however, Adler did not mean a community's administrative bureaucracy, its public officials. He meant the self-determination of a political community, of which public officials are one part. In his sense, "government" means the self-determination of a political community to live in peace together in accordance with commonly-accepted rules of procedure.

Adler also appears to have disagreed with Maritain by claiming, "Anarchy and sovereignty are inseparable, ...incompatible with the notions of society." "Anarchy," he says, "is the condition of those who try to live together without government. Only those who do not recognize any government over them regard themselves as sovereign."² In short, in this work, Adler appears to have maintained that the notion of sovereignty essentially involves the claim that might makes right, that each person is a sovereign, or king unto himself, subject to no higher moral or political authority. He claimed that the notions of a community of anarchists or a society of sovereigns are rationally incoherent. Hence, he argued that war results from anarchy and anarchy from sovereignty.³

According to Adler, sovereignty "has always been at the heart of the problem" of war and peace, and "will always be."⁴ He stated, "The price of sovereignty is war."⁵

In opposition to paying this price, Adler claimed that government is the cause of peace.⁶ He stated, further, that a monopoly of power is the only solution to securing world peace.⁷

From such preceding few claims, a reader or listener might wrongly conclude that Adler's political thinking at the time was tyrannical, similar to that of

² Id., p. 103.

³ Id.

⁴ Id., p. 124.

⁵ Id., p. 104.

⁶ Id., p. 85.

⁷ Id., p. 45.

ancient Thrasymachos, Callicles, or Caesar. Such conclusions would be wrong, however. Far from disagreeing with Maritain, Adler and Maritain appear to be saying close to the same thing, but in slightly different ways.

According to Adler, legitimate government combines two elements: (1) authority and (2) force. Effective government, he maintains, depends upon communities voluntarily accepting rules of procedure for reaching a conclusion about practical matters. These rules cannot guarantee the morally or politically right conclusion in every situation, and cannot determine which side of a practical dispute has truth or right on its side. Still, according to Adler, adhering to such rules and having the ability to enforce them is a bare minimum necessary for living together as members of a political community.⁸

Adler, in short, did not identify political government with the rule of public officials. Rather, he identified it with communal self-determination that can include the use of public officials as agents of that self-determination. Similar to Maritain, he did not chiefly identify a State with the public officials, agents of the political community. Instead, he chiefly identified the State with the political community itself.

By “authority” Adler understood voluntary acceptance of rules of procedure, acceptance of such rules being reasonable requirements of effective community action. “A rule, and everything which follows from it, has authority,” Adler said, “if it elicits an individual’s obedience because his own reason tells him that the rule obligates him for the good of the community and ultimately for his own good.”⁹ The force used by legitimate, or effective, government he called “authorized force.”¹⁰

According to Adler, the term “sovereignty” chiefly signifies a relation between civil government and others. He distinguished two forms of political sovereignty: (1) internal and (2) external. Internal sovereignty refers to the relation of a part of a political community, the ruling authority, or civil government, to the members of the community. External sovereignty refers to the relation of the whole of the political community, including its government, “to other, distinct, and independent societies.”¹¹

Adler maintained that the notion of sovereignty did not, as some modern political theorists have claimed, arise with the modern nation-state. He said the idea is as old as the Greek city-state and Roman empire. Only in modern times has *national* sovereignty become a cause of war.¹² In medieval times, Adler claimed, sovereignty meant being above the coercive force of laws. While the medieval sovereign considered himself to be above the law in his own realm, Adler said, “he seldom if ever regarded himself as the source of law. The law

⁸ Id., p. 93.

⁹ Id.

¹⁰ Id., p. 95.

¹¹ Id., p. 123.

¹² Id., p. 124.

which he pledged himself to administer when he took his coronation oath did not consist of rules either adopted at his pleasure or ratified by his will. They were customary rules—the immemorial customs of the realm.”¹³

During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Adler contended, kings tried to extend their personal sovereignty, tried to make it absolute like the absolutism of the late Caesars.

They did this by claiming, like the late Roman emperors, that (1) they were above the coercive force of laws, and (2) “their will, and nothing but their will or pleasure, would give a rule the authority of law. In addition to being the repository of public force, they would become the sole arbiter of the law.”¹⁴

Like Maritain, Adler thought this return to the notion of sovereignty claimed by the ancient Caesars “led to all the great modern revolutions.”¹⁵ Properly speaking, Adler maintained that sovereignty is the property of no individual human being. By nature, no human being is a sovereign or subject. For a time, we might be private citizens or public officials. In both situations, sovereignty is vested in an office, a relation between an authoritative agent and a community, not in a property of a single person.¹⁶ Apparently, he thought that, as moral agents, for the greater common good, individual members of a community had the right to vest in the office of a governmental agent the political authority to command their obedience to law even when, in an individual situation, the governmental agent might be wrong and a political minority or majority might be right.

Adler claimed that, according to the modern theory of popular sovereignty, to which he subscribed, the sovereignty which resides in the offices of constitutional government is derived from the authority and force of the community itself. A sovereign people confers sovereignty upon the government it constitutes. Being the source of all other sovereignties, popular sovereignty is unalterable. If the people of a particular community decide to federate with the people of another community, neither group relinquishes one iota of its popular sovereignty.

In short, regarding the notions of popular and political sovereignty, Maritain and Adler do not appear to disagree. Like Maritain, Adler agreed that the claims of modern sovereigns to be above all laws, to be the source of moral and political authority are disordered assertions made by the modern nation-state. Like Maritain, he held that, properly understood, popular sovereignty is the source of public sovereignty. Adler, however, added a distinction to the debate about sovereignty’s nature, between internal and external sovereignty. From this analysis and distinction, Adler concluded that only a supra-national world order,

¹³ Id., p. 125.

¹⁴ Id.

¹⁵ Id.

¹⁶ Id., p. 126.

world order, one to which nations would voluntarily agree to cede some of their *external* sovereignty, could guarantee future world peace.

According to Adler, such sovereignty, like good government, involves right and might. He maintained that, without might, human beings are admonished, not governed; and without right, we are overpowered, not governed. Because good government requires both properties, so does sovereignty properly understood.¹⁷

At the same time, Adler realized that rulers can make mistakes and sometimes command what is wrong for themselves and their citizens. Still, he thought, that without procedures for keeping the peace, and for settling disagreements to which citizens vested a government with moral authority, no government could exist. The difference between Adler and Thrasymachos, Callicles, and the ancient Caesars, is that Adler did not think rulers are above the law or that they received this moral authority from themselves. He thought that, through popular sovereignty, citizens have a moral right to vest rulers with sovereign authority even when they know that governments, rulers, are fallible. As he saw it, anarchy was the only alternative to fallible human government.

As the above analysis shows, Adler was no utopian dreamer. He knew that voluntarily ceding sovereignty to a world government would involve risks, including demand for “radical transformation on the institutional level” of nation-states.¹⁸ Included among such radical transformations would be changes in economic and immigration policies that would be difficult to effect and might, to some extent, be wrong. Still, he thought a world government would have to establish such policies and would have to be involved in helping to establish political freedom by insuring economic freedom.¹⁹

Adler maintained that human beings cannot be economically enslaved and politically free.²⁰ He claimed, “The marks of the just constitution are universal suffrage and the abolition of all politically privileged classes.”²¹ He added that, “economic freedom is indispensable to the unfettered exercise of political freedom. Like political liberty, economic freedom is established by justice and by government, not in spite of justice and apart from government.”²²

He stated that we cannot define economic freedom simply “in terms of free enterprise, ownership of private property, or being in business for one’s self, though it is true that free enterprise and private property are essential safeguards against the sort of collectivism which substitutes one economic master, the state, for many.”²³

¹⁷ *Id.*, p. 128.

¹⁸ *Id.*, p. 127.

¹⁹ *Id.*, pp. 177-178, 197.

²⁰ *Id.*, p. 177.

²¹ *Id.*

²² *Id.*, p. 178.

²³ *Id.*

²⁴ *Id.*, p. 176.

Adler asserted, further, that modern constitutional government opposes benevolent paternalism just as much as it opposes benevolent despotism because both forms of government unjustly treat adults like children.²⁴ He recognized that not all despots are tyrants. He admitted that some have been benevolent, have considered “the welfare of their subjects as a father cares for children.” “But,” he said (obviously thinking under the political influence of the Western Enlightenment) “to treat adult human beings like children is itself a rank injustice, of which the people may not be aware as long as they are unjustly kept in an unnatural condition of political immaturity.”²⁵ When they do become aware of it, they tend to rebel.

At the same time, Adler recognized the sad reality of the political situation: that some human beings might not be morally or intellectually “ready” for the responsibilities of constitutional government. He maintained that despotisms cannot federate with constitutional governments.²⁶ The same is true of political communities where human beings lack the moral maturity to assume the responsibilities of popular sovereignty and self-government.

Adler maintained, further, that world federation requires civilizational equality. He claimed that part of this civilizational equality involves equality of moral culture, a common moral agreement about such issues as (1) race prejudice, (2) economic nationalism, (3) political nationalism, (4) and patriotism.²⁷

More problematic than moral culture, Adler argued that world federation requires equality of political institutions: “a basic equality in the civilization of the federating nations, which means an equality in political status and in educational opportunity for their several populations.”²⁸ Even if exploiting nations renounced their imperialism, Adler thought that the basic inequality of the world’s nations with respect to political maturity would remain for a long time.²⁹

Hence, he speculated that, even with luck, the sort of world government he envisioned, one involving a world federation capable of producing lasting world peace, would likely take about 500 years to realize.³⁰ The beginning of such a project would have to start with national governments educating students for democracy. In part, this explains Adler’s interest with Hutchins in expanding Great Books education for all American students during their time.

For three reasons, I have spent a good deal of time summarizing Adler’s teaching about the essential contemporary connection between the modern notion of sovereignty and problems of globalization, nationalism, and immigration: To show (1) beyond reasonable doubt that such an essential connection exists, that we cannot properly understand the troubles of globalism, national-

²⁵ *Id.*

²⁶ *Id.*, p. 319.

²⁷ *Id.*, pp. 325-330.

²⁸ *Id.*, p. 322.

²⁹ *Id.*, p. 324.

³⁰ *Id.*, pp. 352, 358, and 373.

ism, or immigration in the United States or anywhere else in the world today without situating these problems within the wider context of the post-World War II problem of sovereignty; (2) just how complicated is the issue of the relationship of sovereignty to that of political government; (3) that a rush to establish world government in our time is an impossible utopian dream, that, even someone as intellectually bright and careful as Adler concluded that establishing such a world federation would likely take about 500 years. And Adler was basing his judgment on a political situation that was not as tumultuous as is that of our time.

Few people today have the intellectual acumen or moral sobriety to analyze the complexity of this problem with the precision that Adler has done. Like Adler, most of those in the West that have attempted to do so have been socialists. Adler considered himself to be a democratic socialist. Most others, however, have been utopian, including “scientific,” socialists like Marxists.

Since the 1960s especially, the main push in the US toward formation of a global government has come from utopian socialists, from the political Left, people in the US who call themselves “progressives.” Utopian socialism lies at the root of the Western Enlightenment. In my opinion, utopian socialism is a founding principle of the Enlightenment rooted in the thinking of Jean-Jacques Rousseau. While some forms of socialism are benign, tolerable, even good, this form is not. It tends to view the entire Western cultural tradition, including the traditional Western notion of a family, as evil, backward, something that has to be transcended in order to establish a new, idyllic political world order ruled by real social science, and scientific socialists. President Barack Obama is a prime example of this sort of mindset.

Included within this political Left is a group of people often mistakenly identified as traditional American conservatives: a group of American cultural elites that I call “plutocratic capitalists.” This group consists of what I like to call “the Wall Street crowd,” the Eastern political establishment of investment bankers, international corporate executives, heads of major law firms, media executives, foundation heads, and union leaders. While many people inside and outside the US mistakenly believe that Wall Street is dominated by rich conservative Republicans, this belief is false. Wall Street is largely controlled by Democrat and Republican Liberals, plus some Libertarians (who tend to pride themselves as proponents of individual liberty, but who, in reality, advocate social policies that essentially promote socialism). The Rockefeller family is a prime example of such plutocratic capitalists. So, too, is the Kennedy family.

Anyone who has ever attended a cocktail party on the upper East Side of Manhattan or spent time in the Hamptons in the summer time can easily verify my claim. Virtually no self-respecting member of the American financial elite would dare to oppose America’s liberalized abortion laws, a sacrament of the

utopian socialists, because such laws undermine the power of the traditional family, the chief source of real political opposition to socialist paternalism and benign plutocratic despotism. Moreover, their wives would not stand for such backward views. They would have hell to pay when they got home for doing so.

While I am a great fan of, and subscriber to, my friend Michael Novak's advocacy of "democratic capitalism," I do not think that democratic capitalism is the form of political economy at work in the world, or the West, today. Democratic capitalism depends upon the existence of an honest playing field, of real free trade and predominantly honest courts. In my opinion none of these exist in a widespread fashion in the West today. Nor do I think that, precisely speaking, most Western governments are republican or democratic. Rather, precisely speaking, I think that most Western governments are oligarchies, plutocracies, largely controlled by monied elites through manipulation of national currencies.

While I make the above claims partly on the basis of personal experience, I do so also partly on the basis of detailed research of Carroll Quigley. That Dean of the Georgetown School of Foreign Service has been described as one of the last great macro-historians who traced the development of civilization with an awesome capability.

In his classic work on the world political organization, *Tragedy and Hope: A History of the World in Our Time*, Quigley says that, after World War I, the Western powers of financial capitalism had another far-reaching aim, nothing less than to create a world system of financial control in private hands able to dominate the political system of each country and the economy of the world as a whole. This system was to be controlled in a feudalist fashion by the central banks of the world acting in concert, by secret agreements arrived at in frequent private meetings and conferences. The apex of the system was to be the Bank for International Settlements in Basle Switzerland, a private bank owned by the world's central banks which were themselves private corporations.³¹

When talking about the "powers of financial capitalism," Quigley was not offering a stereotypical euphemism for Jewish financiers. As evidence for this, consider that Adolf Hitler's finance minister was one of the founders of the Bank for International Settlements (the BIS). Obviously, not Jewish. Quigley was talking chiefly about British and American socialists, chiefly WASPS (White Anglo-Saxon Protestants), men who subscribed to the teachings of the Western Enlightenment, who thought they had a moral duty to promote the Enlightenment principles of utopian socialism to the entire unenlightened world and bring about a new world order dominated by a global government. Quigley

³¹ Carroll Quigley, *Tragedy and Hope: A History of the World in Our Time* (New York 1966), p. 324.

thought that, acting like feudal lords, competing with each other, this group of financial elites largely controlled global politics up until the first half of the twentieth century, after which he claimed its power started to decline. I do not think the power of this group ever declined. I think it still exists, and that this group is largely responsible for the immigration troubles in the United States, and many Western countries, today.

As subscribers to Enlightenment socialism, this group hates the idea that individual things have individual natures and that justice is a virtue subjectified in human nature. Hence it seeks to undermine at every turn any vestige of such supposedly “backward,” “medieval” ways of thinking. Instead of understanding human beings as possessing individual natures and recognizing that justice is a virtue rooted in human nature, utopian socialism claims that we are social systems of feelings and that justice is simply a social contract made among consenting social equals.

As a result, unlike democratic capitalism, which celebrates individual initiative and promotes the traditional family as a source of political stability and personal wealth, this group of plutocratic capitalists distrusts individuals and individual enterprise. It celebrates collectivist freedom and centralized planning as signs of true science. Since it finds traditional families as obstacles to centralized social planning and its social contract view of justice, everywhere it goes it promotes liberal abortion laws and anything else that will undermine the strength of traditional families, real individual human differences, and the existence of individual nations.

Hence, unlike Adler and Maritain, who opposed the modern nation-state understanding of sovereignty, but not the notion of sovereignty considered as such, for decades utopian socialists have attempted to undermine the power of national constitutions and national sovereignty. For this reason, they have promoted liberal immigration laws in some places.

Liberal abortion laws lead to national depopulation and increased cultural fragmentation. To maintain social welfare programs, socialists need workers to help bear the economic burden of the social welfare system that is beholden to their centralized bureaucracies and to increase their voting base as abortion practices undermine their political dominance. Liberal immigration laws help to solve this problem, help to keep socialists in control of the political institutions by taking political advantage of new immigrant populations not familiar with the history and cultural traditions of the host nation.

At the same time, such laws undermine the cultural unity needed to enable the development of an educated democratic citizenry one-day capable of federating into a world republic. Hence the very immigration policies that utopian socialists promote in the US and elsewhere in the West to sustain socialist bureaucracies undermine the realization of legitimate global democratic gov-

ernment. Instead, they promote the destruction of internal sovereignty of States and the growth of global despotism, global fascism.

As should be evident from a glance at the present world political situation, the policies promoted by utopian socialists to achieve a democratic world government and, through it, lasting world peace are, and have been, a failure. As Maritain and Adler realized decades ago, if we want to achieve world peace we must start by educating people for democracy. Education for democracy, however, lies in knowledge of metaphysical and moral principles, including truths about human nature, rooted in the tradition of classical Western philosophy and theology that gave birth to democracy in the first place. Nothing short of this, certainly not utopian dreams, can create the moral culture out of which to build democratic institutions upon which world federation and world peace essentially depend.

GLOBALIZATION, NATIONALISM, AND THE PRESENT US IMMIGRATION TROUBLES

SUMMARY

The article contains analyses of the connection between the modern notion of sovereignty and problems of globalization, nationalism, and immigration. It shows (1) that such an essential connection exists; (2) how complicated is the issue of the relationship of sovereignty to that of political government; (3) that a rush to establish world government in our time is an impossible utopian dream. The article concludes with remarks on policies of the “progressives,” the people who seem to be pushing the US toward formation of a global government today.

KEYWORDS: globalization, sovereignty, nationalism, migration, progressive policy.