

Internationalism: Bringing the State Back in to Progressive International Politics

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Introduction:

At first glance, the subtitle of this paper would seem to be somewhat at tension with the values and aims hinted at in its title. Internationalism has often been thought of as antithetical to the state as actor. Moreover, many would argue that attempts to define a progressive international politics are rightly moving away from a statist paradigm. This paper represents the first steps towards an alternative view of the direction in which progressive international politics might be heading. Progressive politics is about solidarity, about extending benefits to others. These benefits can relate to freedom, protection, respect or social gains. The international dimension of progressive politics has always been a complicated matter. What should be the limits of our solidarity? How far should we distribute benefits beyond our borders? Who should be the arbiter of that distribution? The question of the place of the sovereign state is clearly vital here, and the challenges and possibilities presented by globalisation have raised the stakes. Recent decades have seen both a proliferation of normative theory and practical suggestions dealing with these matters, and a certain, in many ways understandable, disorientation of progressive politics. Simultaneously, an increasingly prominent package of issues relating to the protection of human rights, the alleviation of the consequences of extreme poverty, and a pre-emptive attack on the dire future consequences of global warming seems to describe the necessary terrain on which debates about progressive politics take place.

This paper proceeds in three parts. The first presents some thoughts on the difficulties of pinning down a coherent approach to progressive international politics, before introducing internationalism as a possible way forward. The second confronts the difficulties this raises, through a discussion of the manifold varieties of internationalism, drawing especially on the work of Fred Halliday and Carsten Holbraad. It demonstrates that while the concept cannot be reduced to a single set of ideas, it provides us with a useful way of thinking about the relationship between values and the state in international politics. The third section briefly runs through the reasons why resurrecting internationalism as an organising concept could contribute fruitfully to contemporary progressive international politics.

1. The Dilemmas of Progressive International Politics

One of the saddest, albeit funniest characteristics of progressive politics in general was illustrated by the eager revolutionaries of Monty Python's *Life of Brian*, who resolved to unite against their common enemy – the Judean People's Front. The trope of the narcissism of minor differences has particular salience on the left of politics, where a Great Cause has rarely got in the way of a good in-fight. Contemporary international progressive politics is a strange beast, for it has many Great Causes, and a lot of in-fighting. Whether the following will illustrate that point, or merely add to the cacophony is for the reader to decide.

Open the heart, or email in-box, of the average left-liberal Westerner, and there will be a long and impressive list of international, morally-driven commitments: to Oxfam, MSF, Greenpeace, the Make Poverty History campaign... These commitments clearly delineate a

humanitarian, progressive impulse, or consciousness, and suggest an engagement with the possibility of action, of problem-solving, as well as much common ground, centred around aspirations such as the Millennium Development Goals. Yet when it comes to what has traditionally been the primary site of problem-solving, the liberal democratic state, a curious disconnection occurs. Optimism is replaced by suspicion: progressive action is either a paltry and insufficient sop, or a cloak for more sinister ends, even when taken by governments of a progressive hue.

This interpretation is seductive, and difficult to counter when faced with either/or questions such as why oil-rich Iraq but not Rwanda. It is also startling how often it is replicated in the academic literature. Nevertheless, to fall prey to it is to mark a dangerous, prim retreat from the dirty but necessary business of politics, for it leaves no space for states to work out a response to the basic humanitarian needs of the world's vulnerable, that can both co-exist with their core functions and duties towards their primary stakeholders, their citizens, and either negotiate the encounter with the sovereign state that hosts that aforementioned vulnerable, or deal with the consequences of its absence. So unless it is possible to demonstrate that progressive ends would best be served by awaiting, albeit while presumably encouraging, the dawn of a new, cosmopolitan, post-statist age, or retreating into a world of perfectly autonomous self-determining sovereign units, it is hard to argue that progressives can but take this seriously.

In terms of achieving progressive ends primarily beyond a world of states, there are several layers of sophistication. The global anti-globalisation protest movement, perhaps first witnessed at the Battle for Seattle in 1999, undoubtedly aspires to transforming the world. But its aspirations are so vague, and its negativism so consistent, that it is hard to see how anything constructive could emerge from what risks becoming a cult of protest for protest's sake.

More constructively, the fuzzy notion of global civil society has emerged as a counterpart to equally fuzzy processes of global governance. Clearly, there is a network of transnational NGOs and affiliative relationships that constitute a genuine change to how we communicate, interact and advocate for change, but there is every reason to believe that the political predictions of the prophets of global civil society, such as Mary Kaldor or the contributors to the *Global Civil Society* yearbook, are premature, well-intentioned though they undoubtedly are (Brown, 2001a; Kaldor, 2003). They do not provide us with a model of political accountability comparable to that of a liberal democratic sovereign state, though they do establish a valuable resource for the oppressed in less fortunate circumstances. Understandably, then, the activities of these organisations are still aimed at influencing decisions which reside in the remit of states, whether conferring in IGOs or, as is the case in the non-observance of human rights commitments, acting alone. Though Amnesty and Oxfam may speak directly to some kind of global public, the way for that global public to respond and act would seem to be the levers of power closest to hand. Moreover, hopefully those levers of power are in some way connected to a ballot box, providing an accountability that for NGOs can only ever be a voluntary concession.

In terms of the expansion of democratic political structure, David Held has been an influential voice, arguing that while many of the underlying economic changes wrought by globalisation are surely inevitable, the politics of globalisation, how we act given those changes, is

very much up for grabs (Held, 1995; 1999). His diagnosis is a neat summary of the contention being made here. However, his prescription, a social democratic politics based on an emergent cosmopolitan democracy, though attractive, again seems premature. It may not be possible successfully to create an accountable sovereign authority that neatly fits every kind of political interaction that we might engage in globally.

The increasing prominence of humanitarian concerns and their advocacy by an emergent global civil society is one thing, but the politics of acting upon those concerns is another. As even a cursory glance at the reports and documents generated by international NGOs will demonstrate, the key political actors being targeted, both as guilty parties and potential saviours, remain states. The key events are Concert-like gatherings of the G8 or Security Council. When it comes to humanitarian needs, states may well be responsible in the first place, but still hold most of the cards in terms of providing a solution. Moreover it is easy to underestimate, in calling for a new world, the value of the rich internal structures of accountability that characterise liberal democracies and related structures such as the EU. The question of how to extend solidarity and assistance out from within those structures is far from being exhausted. Nor should it be. So much political, economic and social capital lies in democratic statehood, that to bypass it in attempting to solve humanitarian problems would seem to be perverse. That is the subject matter at issue here: when should and how can governments enact progressive ends beyond their borders? What are the mechanisms at stake, and the sources of legitimacy?

It is instructive to turn briefly to the experiences of the progressive politicians who have had to navigate this changing world in recent years. As a preliminary caveat, it is fairly clear that for the New Democrats, New Labour Party and the other exponents of so-called Third Way politics that came to power throughout the West in the mid- to late nineties, what a Third Way foreign policy might look like was often an afterthought. The primary issue, and the issue that still arguably dominates Western left-wing politics, was the extent to which the tenets of social democracy could be enacted domestically in a globalising economy. How to achieve social justice, while maintaining economic competitiveness, was the dilemma incoming progressive governments faced, and were understandably preoccupied with.

However, while globalisation presented social democracy with a challenge, it arguably increased the possibilities for achieving progressive ends through states' foreign policies, something that figures like Gareth Evans, Tony Blair and eventually Bill Clinton came to realise. Along with the apparent triumph of economic liberalism, the end of the Cold War and the strictures of bipolarity seemed to open up the space in which to articulate more specifically progressive, humanitarian aims, as demonstrated by two key related articulations, those of good international citizenship and of ethical foreign policies, which emerged with the end of the Cold War in the context of progressive governments coming to power in various Western countries.

The idea of good international citizenship was first set out by Gareth Evans, Australia's foreign minister from 1988-1996. His basic insight was to state that the national interest need not be in conflict with the international promotion of human rights, and that states like Australia could, in a multilateral framework, be a positive, transformative force in international society. It will be

shown later that this was not a new theme, nor was the content particularly rich, but Evans' advocacy of the idea was an important stimulus to debates on the relationship between ethics and foreign policy. Major theorists, like Andrew Linklater, engaged with it, noting with interest the (admittedly not unproblematic) transfer to the international setting of notions of citizenship that had been boosted by a renewed interest from the left of politics. It broadly chimed with Linklater's philosophical investigation into the transformations of political community and the possibilities inherent therein (Linklater, 1992).

Though the Australian Labour Party lost power in 1996, the idea of good international citizenship was taken up in the aftermath of the New Labour election victory in Britain in 1997, when Nick Wheeler and Tim Dunne revived it as a way of approaching and evaluating the ethical claims being made by the incoming administration (Wheeler and Dunne, 1998; 2004). Indeed, Wheeler and Dunne note the parallels between the concept and the triangulating ideas of Third Way politics (1998: 848-849). But the main focus of academic discussion of New Labour policy was not the specific idea of good international citizenship but rather the notion of an 'ethical foreign policy'.

In fact, Robin Cook's famous mission statement referred to an 'ethical dimension to foreign policy', but the two formulations have been used interchangeably. This claim generated some of the best discussion of the relationship between values and foreign policy (see especially Smith and Light, 2001). There are some fundamental problems here though. Firstly, all foreign policies, and 'dimensions' thereof could be said to be ethical, in the sense that all action takes place in an ethical context of some kind (Booth, Dunne and Cox, 2001: 2). Secondly, the claim is discursively important, highlighting values in a largely unprecedented way. However, it is not clear that the idea of an implied ethical/unethical test helps the analyst much in assessing what is going on. Posing the state as a potential ethical agent need not be too problematic, though it is not without its critics, but a state is clearly going to operationalise values in a more complicated way than an individual does. Politics, and foreign policy, amplifies our constant balancing of different benefits and goods. Rights and duties often come into conflict, as do interests. If one has not come to terms with the complexities of democratic statehood, then in describing an ethical/unethical dichotomy, one is basically setting the state up to fail, albeit perhaps involuntarily. As Chris Brown notes, "some of those who argue most strongly for an 'ethical foreign policy' also argue against state-centric views of the world and, in other contexts, are suspicious of the very notion of foreign policy" (Brown, 2001b: 19-20).

So we need a more sophisticated framework in which to reconcile progressive values and the state, one which takes seriously the limits and possibilities of progressive state politics, without an in-built hypocrisy. The limits will relate to the inevitable disparity between a pure ideal and political reality and to the limits of possible agreement, the possibilities to examples of success when clear fundamental goals are at stake and the national interest is seen as incorporating wider values that can coexist with core interests.

These kind of linkages are beginning to be made elsewhere in the literature. In a major attempt to account for the role of the state in progressive politics, Peter Lawler suggests a return to what he terms 'classical' internationalism in asserting the potential of a 'good state' against dominant

cosmopolitan trends in international political theory. He points to the fact that many contemporary political debates, such as the British debate on Iraq, take place between competing conceptions of internationalism, on the battleground of humanitarian ideas (Lawler, 2005). While the idea of a 'good state' is possibly a red herring, falling into the good/bad, ethical/unethical dichotomies that were criticised earlier, the idea of a return to thinking about internationalism seems a good one. Lawler does not, however, provide us with enough detail on the content of the various strands of internationalist thought. The rest of this paper seeks to start to fill in the picture, exploring the varieties of internationalism, before sketching out some of the possibilities and pitfalls of a return to internationalism.

2.The Varieties of Internationalism

It is clear that internationalism has been a crucial concept since the foundation of the discipline of International Relations (Long and Schmidt, 2005). But for a word so often used, definitions are surprisingly hard to come by. As a consequence, any kind of discussion of internationalism is a risky business. But it remains an important one, for like another slippery term, liberalism, internationalism, when used cautiously, conveys something that no other term quite can. Indeed, it is precisely the contention of this work that the failure accurately to describe a certain contemporary brand of progressive politics occurs as a result of the relative academic neglect of internationalism. Though the post-Cold War period has seen renewed talk of liberal internationalism with regard to humanitarian intervention, for instance, neither the historical antecedents, nor the lateral linkages into other areas of policy have really been satisfactorily examined. This often leads to confusion, as liberal internationalism is used without qualification to describe very different political agendas, such as an ultra-globalising, unfettered international capitalism, or an impulse towards humanitarian intervention. The lack of specification and explanation contributes to the ease with which, say pilgerite and chomskyite analyses, which see only a corporate agenda behind an action such as Kosovo, are accepted. This section will first confront the bewildering diversity of internationalisms, then move towards a classification of internationalisms that will provide a more solid basis on which to proceed.

Amongst theories of internationalism, it is difficult to identify much that they have in common. Internationalism clearly contains both normative and analytical components. It conveys both a sense of how the world should be, linked to some sense of international commonality, and of how the world is shaped by political processes given those aims. Fred Northedge once defined internationalism as the belief in an international interest and an international community (Halliday, 1988: 190). This provides us with a useful starting point, but ultimately raises more questions than it answers, for it is clear that there are manifold interpretations of both international interest and community. For starters, an international interest could refer to something either beyond or between states, while an international community could mean a community of states, individuals or both. It all depends on how the term international is used. Is it a lazy synonym for global or world, or does it primarily refer to that which is inter-state/nation? Surely the latter makes the most sense. Or

perhaps we might think in terms of the global being operationalised by the inter-state system.

To define internationalism in terms of opposites is equally fraught. In US discourse, it is often used as the counterpart to isolationism to define the pendulum motion between retrenchment and engagement that would characterise US foreign policy (Goldmann, 1994: 2). It can be complementary to certain brands of nationalism, and diametrically opposed to others (Navari, 2000: 354-360). It can be equated to cosmopolitanism, or set in contrast to it. If the former route is taken, which it frequently is, what purpose does the term then serve? More problematically, it is sometimes used in a manner that strips it of almost all ideological content, and confuses it with internationalisation, which unhelpfully mixes up the concepts of internationalism, internationalisation, and globalisation. To guard against the latter danger, it is important to keep that sense of the combination of the normative and the analytical, for it is there that internationalism appears at its most distinctive.

Although E. H. Carr dismissed internationalism as “a special form of the doctrine of the harmony of interests” that he denounced as dangerous utopianism, recent scholarship has shown that the idealism/realism divide has clouded much thinking about themes like internationalism and imperialism (Carr, 2001: 78; Long and Wilson, 1995; Long and Schmidt, 2005). It is part of its appeal that it can contain both idealistic and realistic elements. Again, it is that blend of the two that will inform the use of internationalism here. It engages explicitly with both the moral and the political. That same body of scholarship has been important in re-introducing internationalism into IR discourse, though it still stops short of providing a single definition: it tends to focus on individuals' particular approach to the concept.

The work of synthesis, generalisation and categorisation is difficult and risky. Gone are the days of the grand, sweeping and often highly partisan histories (for example Lyons, 1963; Merle, 1966; Ruysen, 1961). But Fred Halliday revived interest in the concept when he focused on it in his inaugural professorial address at the LSE, developed into a succinct text that introduced one of the best and clearest approaches to the subject, which has endured, largely unchanged, through more recent statements (Halliday, 1988; 2000: 125-130).

Halliday defines internationalism simply as “the idea that we both are and should be part of a broader community than that of the nation or the state”. For him, internationalist thought is closely related to ideas of universal government and universal language. He argues that internationalism comprises three broad themes: an assertion of increasing internationalisation and interdependence; the view that in response to this takes place an increasing amount of political co-operation between various types of actors such as governments, unions or campaigners; the judgement that this is a good thing as it promotes “an international interest beyond that of nations” and peace, prosperity and various other goods. States are either rejected or depend on this international interest for legitimacy. (Halliday, 1988: 187-188)

Halliday then presents a tripartite typology of internationalisms. Liberal internationalism is “a generally optimistic approach based upon the belief that independent societies and autonomous individuals can through greater interaction and cooperation evolve towards common purposes, chief among these being peace and prosperity” (Halliday, 1988: 192). He traces this tradition from Adam

Smith to Woodrow Wilson, the League of Nations, the UN and interdependence theory. Hegemonic internationalism “is the belief that the integration of the world is taking place but on asymmetrical, unequal terms, and that this is the only possible and desirable way for such an integration to take place” (Halliday, 1988: 193). For Halliday, this category runs from old-fashioned imperialism to the consolidating effects of free trade on global inequalities. The third category is revolutionary internationalism, which includes Marxist proletarian internationalism, French revolutionary radical republicanism or late-nineteenth century anarchism.

This overview of the topic has been influential and presents several advantages. It is an approach that manages to draw out a coherent central concept of internationalism, while accounting for a diversity of strands of internationalist thought. It also demonstrates the potential accommodation of the analytical and the normative within internationalism in the mixture between processes of change and aspirations to change, and thereby gives us a good picture of the levels at which the idea functions.

But it also presents problems. It effectively equates internationalism to cosmopolitanism by referring to ideas of world government. States are instrumental at best. But this is to miss the fact that while internationalism is always informed by some kind of shared, often universalist aspiration, there are political internationalist possibilities that are not cosmopolitan. It is unlikely that Nehru, unquestionably an internationalist, would have seen the emergence of an independent India as a merely instrumental gain. The category of liberal internationalism is problematic, for it tries to reconcile anti-statist economic liberals to global Keynesians and campaigners for global social justice, when in fact there are fundamentally different dynamics at work related to differing conceptions of the value and usefulness of states. Furthermore, it is unclear what the benefit of folding imperialism into a category of hegemonic internationalism is, rather than seeing it as a distinct ideology, with possible occasional overlaps with some kinds of internationalist thought. True, to the extent that Western policies are identified with some kind of liberal internationalism in contemporary discourse, the link is then made to imperialism and a darker hegemonic agenda. In the nineteenth century, humanitarian politics coexisted with, say, the deeply racist assumptions of the standards of civilisation and a wanton disregard for self-determination. But the systematic and necessary hierarchy and asymmetry of imperialist doctrines seems to refer to a very different set of moral intuitions about the world from the essentially symmetrical, often egalitarian thinking that characterises internationalism, based primarily as it is on commonalities rather than hierarchies.

With the possible exception of the hegemonic internationalist category, Halliday's typology of internationalisms is typical of the way many think about the topic: progressive, cosmopolitan, anti-statist. But an interesting alternative approach arguably provides us with a better way of conceptualising internationalism. In Carsten Holbraad's classic work on British and German thinking about the Concert of Europe, the themes of commonality and shared interests, characteristic of internationalist thought, appear in both progressive and conservative guises, in a statist context (Holbraad, 1970). Holbraad drew on this research in an elegant monograph on how internationalist and nationalist thinking has shaped European political thought over the past two centuries (Holbraad, 2003). This provides the most satisfactory overview of the topic.

For Holbraad, at its most basic internationalism is “the ideology of international bonding”. The bonds and the bonded parties may be of many different types. “The aim may be to maintain or develop the existing order of international society, or to change that order and transform international society in some way or other.” He presents a basic distinction between conservative and progressive approaches to internationalism, but cautions that, even when the ultimate aims of a progressive internationalism are transgressive of the current international order, “the ideological point of departure is still the existing society of nations”. This interpretation opens up the possibility for manifold manifestations of internationalism, but maintains some link to the etymological origins of the term in the actually-existing world of nations and states. The idea of a conservative internationalism based on the maintenance of an existing international order is a more convincing right-wing counterpart to more progressive variants than forcing imperialist ideologies into an internationalist categorisation, allowing us to make a distinction between what the Great Powers did amongst themselves (conservative internationalism) and what they did elsewhere (imperialism). Crucially, his understanding of progressive internationalism contains “a tradition for compromising by striking a balance between the ideals of the ideology and the realities of the political situation”. All internationalisms are in some way, contra cosmopolitanism in its various guises, “ideologies of international society”. (Holbraad, 2003: 1-2)

This approach to internationalism demonstrates the possibility of satisfactorily defining the concept in a way that brings something distinctive to the table that ideas such as cosmopolitanism don't. Holbraad also brings a clarity to the topic that Lawler does not, for while Lawler also asserts the statist nature of internationalist thought, he confuses the issue by describing the values internationalist states commit to as cosmopolitan, even as he attempts to use internationalism as a critique of cosmopolitan thought (Lawler, 2005: 432-433). It would be better to describe these values in terms of ideas of commonality, or of universalising moralities. Internationalism refers to the political implications and consequences of universalising ideas, rather than to the ontological claims about universality that form the basis of cosmopolitanism. Holbraad's basic definition of internationalism as an ideology of international bonding in a world of states seems a solid basis on which to build a more specific argument. It stands alone, but is inclusive enough to be accommodated, at one end of the spectrum, with, say, liberal nationalisms, and, at the other, with the less utopian strands of cosmopolitanism. This is possible because Holbraad's definition is working at a slightly different, and arguably more coherent level.

Given his initial definition, Holbraad suggests a classification along a conservative/liberal/socialist schema that gives a good sense both of the different roots of internationalist thought, and of the possibility for internationalist political projects to be compatible with ideologies across the political spectrum. though it accounts less well for the more complex blends of thinking that characterise contemporary internationalist thought.

Conservative internationalism is the most controversial of Holbraad's categories, and the furthest from the issues at stake here, but it remains of some interest, for it illustrates the compatibility of internationalism with statist thinking. Holbraad proposes a division within conservative internationalism between pluralist and solidarist variants. The former's roots go back

to the dawn of Westphalia and the maintenance of the balance of power and closely. Its political realism is characterised by a society of states, alliances and intergovernmental cooperation, strong separation between foreign and domestic policy and a “low ideological self-awareness” (Holbraad, 2003: 7). Solidarist conservative internationalism refers to the repulsion of doctrinal challenges to established power, via the solidarity of sovereigns or governments. The idea of conservative internationalism is an important one, as it questions many of the pernicious stereotypes about the Westphalian era that have clouded the picture of nineteenth century politics and diplomacy especially, by creating an illusionary, disjointed, Westphalian sovereign statehood, that in turn has contributed to over-emphasising a realist/idealist binary division in international thought and practice.

Liberal internationalism is perhaps the category most used in popular discourse, but is a large and confused one. It contains several distinct strands, which to some extent reflect the tensions within liberalism more generally, though the international manifestations of liberal thought include cosmopolitan as well as internationalist theories. At root, it rests upon a concern for the primacy and rights of the individual, a belief that individuals' interests can be reconciled within a broader harmony, and an optimistic view of the possibility of arriving at those ends. But there are differing views and traditions of thought about how those goals should be achieved, though it should be noted that the strands often blend and intertwine.

A major tradition in liberal internationalist thought believes in the primary importance of free trade, and draws on the certain aspects of the thought of Adam Smith and Richard Cobden. Essentially non-interventionist in character, it holds that peace and prosperity go hand in hand, and rely on free trade, an international division of labour, and a minimal role for the state. This strand has been a strong and persistent one in liberal internationalist thought and may be termed economic liberal internationalism. A second tendency is that of political liberal internationalism, where the focus is more on guaranteeing liberal political structures via a focus on the bolstering of self-determined states, superimposed with an international legal order. This is best illustrated by the ideas of Woodrow Wilson. The third tendency, which might be termed integrationist liberal internationalism, argues for various kinds of international political, economic and social integration, and includes the various manifestations of functionalist thought.

Socialist internationalism rests on the passionate desire to reduce the social and economic inequalities that exist both between and within states. The major division within socialist internationalist thought, which has been consistently widening over the past century, is between those who advocate a comprehensive revolutionary overthrow of the existing order, both at domestic and international levels, and those who would achieve greater equality and social justice through reform at a domestic level and a harnessing of state power to achieve similar goals internationally. The revolutionary story is well known, with various strands of proletarian internationalist thought that seek to overthrow the existing structures and hierarchies via the international solidarity of the working classes. Moderate socialist, or social democratic internationalism is often missed in the literature. Many of its manifestations are implicitly incorporated into the category of liberal internationalism. But the dominant interpretations of the

latter result in them being overlooked. In fact, the roots of a concern for international social justice lie in political beliefs and values that are related to, but distinct from, the roots of economic and political liberalism. Whereas the latter refer to the birth of capitalism, the former sought to alleviate through reformist politics what were perceived as the negative social consequences of capitalism, without hiding in the comfort of a revolutionary utopia.

So we have recovered a conception of internationalism that does useful work in terms of explaining potential interfaces between commonly held or universalising values and international politics in a statist context. But we have also discovered that such is the variety of internationalisms that much qualification and description will have to accompany any use of the term.

3.A Return to Internationalism?

Why then, if there is such a bewildering plethora of internationalisms, argue for a return to internationalist thinking at all, if one is committed to a typically ambitious package of progressive goals such as stopping egregious violations of human rights, alleviating extreme poverty and beginning to address the perils of climate change? The beginning of an answer, I believe, lies in the following related points, to do with the merits of the term as an organising concept, into which we can start to 'plug in' our values and aspirations.

First, the death of the state has been significantly overplayed. There is no getting around the continuing centrality of the state both as actor and barrier to action in the international arena as regards progressive politics. This is both clear, in different ways, from the rise of China and India, and the resurgence of Russia, and the continuing emphasis large scale campaigns such as Make Poverty History place on the key to moving forward being state action and inter-state agreement. It is also clear from the renewed emphasis on the problematic idea of state building. There is no way of avoiding the political, nor should there be. Attempts to bypass the state often carry within them a rejection of politics *tout court*. We need to constantly bear in mind the distinction between goals and values that might aspire to be universal, and indeed in some ways be advocated for at a global level, and the site and means of their political enactment. This is the first way in which internationalism, duly specified, might play a useful role.

Second, the historical surveys that Halliday and, to a greater extent, Holbraad provide show that states have often combined 'national' and 'international' interests, whether of a conservative or progressive nature. In this particular respect concepts such as ethical foreign policies or the ideas contained in Blair's Chicago speech do not represent anything particularly new (Blair, 1999). Nor need they represent the dawn of a cosmopolitan age, as some argued after Kosovo, setting up a nice easy target to be shot down as soon as a national interest reared its ugly head once more. What internationalist conceptions allow for is a more nuanced balancing of universalising aspirations and more parochial interests. In short, they give us a way to advocate for values to be acted upon compatible with the forums in which they are likely to be acted upon, namely the Security Council, G8, EU...

Third, internationalism provides a way back from the impasse that characterises current

normative theory. The key division in normative international theory is that between cosmopolitans and communitarians, echoing, though not always replicating, the distinction in political theory between individualism and communitarianism (Brown, 1992; Cochran, 1999). This distinction, though a simplification, endures because it elucidates the defining tension that exists within normative theory, pertaining to the source of moral value in international political life. For cosmopolitans, the individual is the primary rights-holder and object of concern. For communitarians, those benefits accrue to the political community, often, though not always, the state or nation. These contrasting positions have now been convincingly elaborated from an impressive variety of theoretical starting points (notable amongst which are Kantian and consequentialist cosmopolitan theories and Millsian liberal and Hegelian communitarian approaches). It is now clear that something of an impasse is rapidly being reached. Various resolutions are in the process of being sought, *inter alia* by critical theorists, feminist and pragmatist scholars (eg. Hutchings 1999; Cochran, 1999). But a resolution on the same ontological terrain may well be impossible, and a more humble route, combining some of the insights of both camps, could well be promising. What both positions tend towards is the reification of their respective signifier leading to a denial of the complexities of human life and an over-problematising of the state/political community, giving the impression of the necessity of choosing between one or the other.

To an extent, this does reflect some vitally important real-world hard cases, but what needs to be pointed out is that there is substantial shared ground between many cosmopolitans and communitarians, to do with basic progressive values and outlooks, which, if consistently acted upon, could represent substantial progressive gains. Clearly, as evidenced by the confusion between the terms themselves, referred to above, there are similarities between many branches of moral cosmopolitanism that accept the state as a means to their ends, and liberal and social democratic variants of internationalism. But arguably, in practice, key figures in the communitarian critique of cosmopolitanism, notably Michael Walzer, take up positions that fit well with this type of internationalist thinking. The point here is that insofar as someone like Walzer is presenting a critique of cosmopolitanism, the rhetorical stance is often one of polarisation. But in his journalism in *Dissent* and in volumes like *Arguing About War*, when he takes up positive political stands he, sometimes explicitly, uses the vocabulary of solidarity and internationalism (Walzer, 2004; 2007). This possibility for internationalism also comes through in the 'thin universalism' he discusses in *Thick and Thin* (Walzer, 1994).

One has a sense that whatever their theoretical differences, a lot of the canonical international political theorists, Beitz, Nussbaum, Walzer, Rawls et al., are/were all 'good social democrats' and might well often support the same internationalist dishes on the menu of currently available policy options. Internationalism provides the possibility of reconciling to some degree in practice, if not in theory, the great cosmopolitan insight of a shared humanity with the communitarian explication of our inevitable situatedness. Internationalism can provide for bonding and solidarity between different, situated individuals, peoples and states. Moreover, it aspires, albeit often unsuccessfully, to temper the excesses of universalism and particularism, both of which can

lead to inaction or worse. Mazzini saw this when, in an obscure but telling essay which provides a useful complement to *Duties of Man*, he affirmed his commitment to a “love for all men”, but cautioned that the political cosmopolitan “is compelled to choose between despotism and inertia” (Mazzini, 1891a: 7-8; 1891b). The idea that we must engage in progressive politics both locally and internationally is a powerful one. To focus exclusively on either tiny, localised or huge global problems is surely a recipe for disillusion. More importantly, it fails to reflect the complexity of our empathetic, solidaristic responses and commitments.

Fourth, by way of briefly wrapping this short paper up in reference to the theme of this panel, I believe that internationalism potentially provides a useful approach in terms of, if not reconciling, mediating between the twin claims to sovereignty and individual rights. A good case can be made that sovereignty is simultaneously both indispensable and indefensible. The organisers of this working group have set out in convincing detail, and from a variety of angles, the unavoidability and desirability of the sovereign state as a precondition for political agency and accountability, indeed, for the conduct of politics itself (Bickerton, Cunliffe and Gourevitch, 2007). In that sense, it is indeed indispensable, and represents many historic gains of progressive politics. But many political issues and challenges evade resolution within a single location of sovereignty. On a practical level, not all political problems can be worked out locally, within the confines of a single sovereign unit. There is thus a need for internationalism in problem solving. On a more normative note, the preceding account provides little possibility to deal with the powerfully inhuman in our world. Placing the entire burden of resistance on the oppressed simply denies validity to a large swathe of human experience of compassion and solidarity. While recent events suggest that practices such as humanitarian intervention cannot replicate the positive, creative aspects of sovereign politics, and should thus make no such claims, that is not to say that these practices are unjustifiable under any circumstance; rather we should consider them lesser evils. Should such tragic necessities arise, an internationalist politics presents a useful way to frame and legitimise solidaristic action.

Conclusion

This paper has argued for a return to internationalist politics. While progressive ends are being identified and discussed at an increasingly global level, the key to their execution remains largely in the hands of states, something that a variety of progressive approaches tend to neglect. So an approach that provides the possibility of reconciling progressive values and the state is called for. The bulk of the paper explored the notion that internationalism might represent such an approach. But it became clear on closer inspection that internationalism can take on many different guises, and as such any given internationalist approach needs detailed specification. But as an organising concept, it presents possibilities that warrant that work of further specification and investigation. In many ways, especially when it comes to progressive politics, as opposed to progressive political discussion, say, we still live in an international, rather than a global world. As such, an internationalist politics could well be the way forward. Now the task remains to identify and

describe a plausible model of such a politics.

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