Racist US Laws Provided Inspiration To The Nazis: An Interview With James Q. Whitman

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At a time when white supremacist ideas are thriving in the United States, a recently published book by James Q. Whitman, professor of comparative and foreign law at Yale Law School, provides a chilling account of the way US race law provided inspiration for the Nazis, including Hitler himself, in the making of the Nuremberg Laws and their pursuit of a "perfect" racist order. In an exclusive interview for Truthout, Professor Whitman explains the connection between the centerpiece anti-Jewish legislation of the Nazi regime – the Nuremberg Laws – and US race law.

C.J. Polychroniou: Professor Whitman, most scholars before you have insisted that there was no direct US influence on Nazi race law, yet Hitler's American Model argues something quite the opposite: that the Nazis not only did not regard the United States as an ideological enemy, but in fact modeled the Nuremberg

Laws after US racist legislation. First, can you briefly point out some of the evidence for your thesis, and then explain why others have failed to see a direct connection?

James Q. Whitman: The evidence is pretty much in plain sight. Hitler himself described the United States in *Mein Kampf* as "the one state" that was making progress toward the creation of a racial order of the kind he hoped to establish in Germany. After the Nazis came to power, German lawyers regularly discussed American models — not only the model of Jim Crow segregation, but also American immigration law, which targeted Asians and southern and Eastern Europeans; American law establishing second-class citizenship for groups like Filipinos; and American anti-miscegenation statutes. Some of the most dramatic evidence comes from a stenographic transcript of a planning meeting for the Nuremberg Laws in 1934. In the very opening minutes of that meeting, the Nazi minister of justice presented a memorandum on American law, and the participants engaged in detailed discussion of the laws of many American states.

As for why other scholars haven't seen the connections: One reason is that they have focused too much on the question of whether the Nazis were influenced by Jim Crow segregation. The answer, for the most part, is no – though there were some Nazis, including some especially vicious ones, who did want to bring Jim Crow to Germany. Another reason is that America did not have law [specifically] persecuting Jews. That is true enough, but it did not prevent the Nazis from taking an interest, and sometimes a pretty enthusiastic interest, in the law that America *did* have. Maybe the biggest reason is that it just seems too awful to be true.

During the 1920s and 1930s, both US and Nazi Germany were keen on eugenics. Is this another example of the influence of American racist culture and legislation on the Nuremberg Laws?

It certainly is, and there's an excellent book by Stefan Kühl that tracks the history down. The Nazis frequently expressed admiration for American eugenics in the 1930s. Still, we have to be a bit cautious in talking about the eugenics connection. Eugenics was an international movement, and one that seemed fairly respectable at the time. Countries like Sweden had eugenics too. The race law of the United States and Nazi Germany was different. Some of it involved eugenics, but a lot of it involved nasty forms of legal degradation like second-class citizenship, and

harsh criminal punishment for miscegenation. That kind of hard-edged race law was unusual: There were not many examples outside the US and Nazi Germany.

How did the Nazis work around the fact that US law was not always open about its racist goals? Isn't that a significant enough of a factor not to draw a strong parallelism between US's racist legislation in the Jim Crow era and Nazi efforts toward the creation of a "perfect" racist order?

Well, in some respects America *was* open about its racist goals. That's especially true of American anti-miscegenation law, which was explicit in naming the various races: not only Blacks and whites, but also Asians and Native Americans. There were anti-miscegenation laws in 30 of the American states, and the Nazis studied them carefully. Precisely because those statutes were open about their racist aims, it was American anti-miscegenation law that had the most direct influence on Nazi policy-makers. You are absolutely right, though, that other aspects of American law were different. The Thirteenth and Fourteenth Amendments guarantee the equal rights of African Americans, at least on paper, which means that American racists had to use various legal subterfuges to achieve goals like suppressing Black voting rights. When it came to those aspects, the Nazis could not have borrowed directly from American statutes. That does not mean that American law did not matter: Even if its law was not "perfect," in Nazi eyes, the fact remained that the United States, the richest and most powerful country in the world, was manifestly a *racist* power. Inevitably that excited and emboldened Nazi lawyers. That said, we must not forget that there *were* the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Amendments. Thankfully, racism was not all there was to American law.

The Nazis also seemed, you argue in your book, to find the US "common law" approach to jurisprudence perfectly suitable to their own preferred version of a legal culture. Why was that so?

Yes, indeed. In one startling moment, one of the most frightening and brutal Nazi lawyers said that American jurisprudence "would suit us perfectly." What attracted radical Nazis was the open-ended and pragmatic style of American law-making. Traditional German lawmakers believed that the law had to be based on clear and scientifically defensible definitions. That presented problems when it came to the definitions of race. How were you supposed to know whether a person of, say, half-Jewish descent counted as a racial Jew? What was the

scientific basis for making such a determination? American courts and legislatures were much less troubled about those sorts of problems. Sometimes they would cheerfully define anyone with one drop of Black blood as Black. Sometimes courts would simply eyeball the people before them, or base their judgment on rumors or public opinion. Radical Nazis, who wanted to implement the Nazi program without worrying about [precision], found that attractive — though even for radical Nazis, American approaches like the "one-drop" rule seemed to go too far.

How would you describe the United States' place in the international history of racism?

Racism … [has] played a uniquely formative role in the making of the United States. At least there are few parallels among the other traditions I know … what makes America important in the international history of racism is no different from what makes America important in the history of corporate law, or many other areas. When Americans make law, they display a kind of unbridled, and sometimes terrifying, willingness to experiment. We see that terrifying willingness to experiment in contemporary American criminal justice.

Is Another World Really Possible? The Slogans Of The French Revolution Reconsidered

The famous slogan of the French Revolution was "*liberty, equality, fraternity*". In the succeeding two centuries the world has demonstrated both the contradictions of this slogan and the very limited degree to which in fact any of its three elements have been realized anywhere in the modern world-system.

Today, the question is whether, in a future world-system, there are ways of making this trio more compatible each with the other. We are dealing here not with this trinity but rather with the relation between inequality, pluralism, and the environment. It is hard to say what the French revolutionaries would make of this discussion. Pluralism was exactly the opposite of their aspirations, since they wished to eliminate all intermediaries between the individual and the state of all the citizens. The environment was entirely outside their topic. And inequality was assumed to be inevitable on tis way out, precisely because of their victorious revolution.

"*But these questions about both trinities are very much unresolved today. The next several decades will be a period of collective world decision about precisely these issues, about whether another world is really possible in a foreseeable future. I shall start by discussing the least discussed, indeed the long almost-forgotten, member of the French Revolution's trinity, fraternity. It is only in recent decades that fraternity has returned to the forefront of our collective concerns, but it has indeed returned, and with a vengeance*".

Fraternity

What do we mean by fraternity? To be sure, the first problem with any definition or elaboration of the concept – one that is now obvious to us, but was not at the time of the French Revolution nor throughout the next century and a half at least – is the term itself. It is a masculine term, and thereby leaves out more than half the world's population. The French revolutionaries had in fact a terrible record on the question of the rights of women. On July 20, 1789, less than a week after the storming of the Bastille, Abbé Siéyès, in a report to the National Assembly, placed women, along with children and foreigners, in the category of passive, as opposed to active, citizens. He said of the distinction:

"*Everyone is entitled to enjoy the advantages of society, but only those who contribute to the public establishment are true stockholders (actionnaires) of the great social enterprise. They alone are truly active citizens, true members of the association*" (Siéyès, 1789, 193-194).
On Dec. 22, 1789, the National Assembly formally excluded women from the right to vote. And when in 1793, the Society of Republican-Revolutionary Women was formed and began to agitate for the rights of women, the Committee on Public Safety appointed a committee to consider whether women should exercise political rights and whether they should be allowed to take part in political clubs. The answer to both would be no. The committee deemed that women did not have "*the moral and physical qualities*" to exercise political rights (George, 1976-77, 434).

But sexism was only one of the constraints on the concept of fraternity. Although fraternity was put forward as a bedrock of universal values, it was almost never meant to be global in application. It was the fraternity of all those who were citizens of a given country. Nor was such nationalism the characteristic merely of middle-class political movements and those with bourgeois values. Throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, nationalist sentiments constantly overcame the professed universalism of labor and Marxist movements as well. Workers of the world may have been adjured to unite, but as we know all the important worker and socialist parties that would emerge in this period were national in scope and, when push came to shove, national in objective.
We hardly need add that fraternity was almost never in reality trans-racial. The perceived and constructed divide between the White world and the non-White others seemed virtually self-evident for a very long time. And when, in recent decades, it has been challenged more vigorously and effectively by non-White movements, it has re-emerged in slightly more masked form, as the divide between cultures or as the meritocratic divide. The verbiage has changed, but the results remain roughly the same.

Equality
And what is equality? It obviously means sameness or at least similarity in something – but in what? Therein lies a not so subtle terminological minefield. For some it means equal life chances – the absence of socially-constructed barriers to a certain standard of living or of other measures of economic equality. But for others, it means not equality of life chances but equality of life results. And to still

others, like Marx in the famous quotation, it means "*to each according to his needs*", a concept that recognizes that people are unequally endowed (although what exactly does that mean?), therefore have different level of "needs," and should consequently be accorded not identical portions but the portion that each person "needs."

Equality has also been interpreted in a quite different way as meaning meritocracy – each gets what he/she merits. This is a variant of equality of life chances. Each of us is said to start off from a mythical identical point and arrive where his work and/or intelligence gets him. But of course we do not start off from identical points. Attempts to compensate for that by social decree is what we mean by "*affirmative action*", which in turn is criticized as being "*reverse racism*" as well as a program that undermines the meritocratic principle. In the United States, authorities bend over backwards to deny that affirmative action means quotas, and have insisted that the object of all arrangements should be individual equality. They are therein giving verbal endorsement of the position of the French revolutionaries rather than adhering to any concept of pluralism. Other countries are less reticent about recognizing group rights and imposing outright quotas in consequence. Switzerland has long had linguistic quotas in its civil service. India is currently debating whether, in addition to the reservation in state universities of 22.5% of the places for "*scheduled*" castes and tribes which is what they currently attribute, they should reserve another 27% for "*other backward castes*," a social category that is higher than that of "*scheduled*" castes and tribes but lower than that of half the population.

Equality has been promoted in the political sphere as well. One simple meaning is that all citizens have the same rights – thus abolishing any distinction, such as that between aristocracy and commoners, the more educated and the less educated, or that of Siéyès between active and passive citizens. These rights can have to do with elections (voting, standing for office), with the judiciary (equality before the law), or property (right to own, right to inherit). But of course an opposite road to political equality is to deny any right to distinctiveness whatsoever. The recent debate in France concerning the rights of Muslim girls to dress in headscarves (foulards) was resolved by legislation outlawing wearing of any "*obvious*" (ostensible) religious symbols by persons adhering to any religious faith. This was meant to be an imposed equality, and others objected to it precisely on the grounds that it violated the individual's or group's right to religious

freedom as reflected in the right to particular symbolic items to place upon the body.

Concept of liberty

If equality is ambiguous in the simple sense that there is wide disagreement about what is to be equalized, there is even more ambiguity about the concept of liberty. What is liberty? Endless authors have written on the subject. And it has been a matter of no small public debate and concern, as well of course of rhetorical flourish. There is the famous question of where is the line between an individual's right to do as he/she deems fit and his/her infringement thereby on the right of someone else to do as he/she deems fit. And then there is the equally famous question of the line between an individual's right to do as he/she deems fit and the right of the collectivity of which he is a member (but what does it mean to be a member of a collectivity?) to protect the group's interest and perhaps indeed survival as a group, which conceivably could require limiting or annulling the right of the individual to do as he/she deems fit.

Today, we are in the curious situation that virtually everyone – from the far right to the far left – asserts they are in favor of, indeed defend, freedom. But of course, the practical meanings which they give to this assertion are not merely radically different but often totally opposite one from the other. So, the defense of liberty or freedom has become a rhetorical device, a claim of virtue that has rather little purchase.

It is of course not only that these three elements of the slogan are embroiled in terminological debate and confusion, but the relation of one part of the slogan to the other has an equally unclear history. The most famous debate is about the relationship of liberty and equality. Many, perhaps most, analysts and publicists have tended to make the case that one must choose between the two objectives, at least in terms of priority.

The extreme arguments of these views illustrate the profundity of the chasm. There are those upholders of the priority of liberty who have argued that the search for equality actually imperils the realization of liberty. They often argue that to achieve equality, there must be social imposition of equalizing – that is, actions by the state to redraw material and other allocations. This, they say, necessarily leads to a totalitarian state, which is defined as a state that leaves no room whatsoever for liberty.

There are, however on the other hand, those upholders of the priority of equality

who have argued that the search for liberty leads to establishing formal rules that imperil, indeed contradict, any expectations of achieving equality. Anatole France summed up the basis for this position well in his well-known quip: "*The law, in its majestic equality, forbids the rich as well as the poor to beg in the streets, steal bread, or sleep under a bridge*."

As for fraternity, insofar as it endorses group sentiment and thereby tends to place one's own group over other groups, it seems to contradict the idea of equality. And insofar as it endorses the defense of the group rather than of the individual, it seems to contradict the idea of liberty that each can do what he/she deems fit.

By the twenty-first century, we have become somewhat jaded about the merits of the slogan of the French Revolution. Few invoke it. Even fewer believe it has been realized or could indeed be realized anywhere. And yet too many assert that it has been better realized in one's own country than in other countries, thereby transforming the struggle for such values into a nationalist boast or, even worse, an excuse for war.

World Social Forum

Still the underlying idea of the slogan, that one could construct a world in which such values were held high, remains an inspiration for all those who refuse to accept the inevitability of the manifest injustices of the world in which we live and of the previous world-systems in which our ancestors lived. Those who have come together in the World Social Forum proclaim their objectives in a slogan that has caught on: "*Another world is possible*." So we come to the legitimate question today, is another world really possible? And if so, what should such a world look like, and how could we arrive nearer to its creation? I shall try to answer by delineating what is at issue in the three themes we have set ourselves: pluralism, environment, and inequality.

To advocate pluralism is to raise a basic question about the historical construction

of the modern state-system. In the international law that we have constructed, the states were said to be sovereign. We have meant by that idea two things. Externally, it is the argument that each state can decide by itself, and by itself alone, what shall be the governing laws and policies of that state. It is a refusal of the right of others outside the state to interfere with this process. And internally, it means that no institution within the boundaries of the state can reject the legitimate decisions of the central authority which is supreme.

Sovereignty is a unifying and homogenizing idea. The French Revolution did not launch the concept but it illuminated its implications. Since the French revolutionaries were creating what they and others at the time considered to be a different kind of state, based on different principles, they were asserting that no other state could use force or influence to make them desist. They were not responsible, as we know, for launching the European wars that started in 1792 and in which France was embroiled for two decades thereafter. But, as we also know, the French thereupon violated the very idea of sovereignty that they were defending by proclaiming the right to combat tyranny everywhere and to spread by military invasion the presumably universal values of the French Revolution.
The external version of sovereignty has always been a fiction. Stronger states have constantly interfered with the internal processes of weaker states. They have done so by invoking so-called universal values that they said permitted them to fight barbarism, and by insisting on the superiority of their own cultures and technologies. These asserted cultural differences served as the justifications of the inequalities resulting from the practices of power. But, if the weaker states tried to adopt the values of the stronger states in order to remove this justification, they were told they had to do this on bases that ensured the openness of their frontiers to unequal divisions of labor and other mechanisms that maintained, indeed magnified, the inequalities (see Wallerstein 2006).

National Assembly
As an internal doctrine, the French revolutionaries interpreted sovereignty to mean Jacobinism – that is, the right to impose uniformity throughout the realm: unifying the judicial system, abolishing all intermediary bodies, making French the only legitimate language, creating a single system of weights and measures, creating the secular state. In 1792, the Marquis de Clermont-Tonnerre said in the National Assembly: "*The Jews must be refused everything as a separate nation, and be granted everything as individuals*" (Davies, 1996, 73). Although the Jaco-

bin version in France is considered the extreme exemplar of this position, the internal homogenizing concept of sovereignty was tacitly or even explicitly adopted by almost all states in the modern world-system in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

It is only in the past 30-40 years that serious pmolitical challenges to this concept of national uniformity have been made. The basic objection of these challenges has been that all "*minorities*" were in effect told that they had only one choice: if they wished to become citizens in some full sense, they had to "*assimilate*" – that is, to adopt as closely as possible the social and cultural traits of the dominant group within the state. Failing this, they could legitimately be excluded, formally or informally, from the rights of citizens. In many cases, this "*dominant*" group indeed constituted a majority of the population – hence, the reason that we speak of the others as "*minorities*." But there are not a few cases in which the "*minorities*" were actually the majority of the population.

This "d*ominant*" group might be defined racially, ethnically, linguistically, by religion, or any combination thereof. But it was always obvious to everyone who they were and how they were defined, even if the definition in a particular place evolved over time. The dominant group was of course dominant not only in this cultural sense but politically, economically, and socially as well. Defending itself against criticism, the dominant group has tended to argue that cultural integration was the entrance key that would open the way for "*minorities*" to achieve political, economic, and social equalization. But in fact the opposite was most often true. Cultural integration did not lead to these equalizations. The unequal realities somehow managed in large part to continue (if less obviously), but the ideology of cultural integration did deprive the group that was being "*integrated*" from the collective political strength they might have used to struggle for more equalization. So-called assimilation has been on the whole an extremely effective means of preserving inequalities within the state.

The concept of pluralism was a response to the worldwide and national pressures to homogenization, which the groups that were weaker or were "*minorities*" believed had ensured the continuation of the inequalities from which they suffered. Pluralism meant recognizing the existential reality of multiple groups within the state and therefore the rights of such "*groups*" both within the world-system and within each state. These groups might be so-called indigenous peoples; they might be racial, ethnic, linguistic, or religious groups different from

the "*dominant*" group in the world-system or within each state. Pluralism was a demand both for collective group rights and for recognition of and compensation for the past maltreatment that constituted a structural base for present-day inequalities.

Revolution of 1968

The historic turning-point in the demand for pluralism was the world revolution of 1968. This world revolution was in part fired by the awakening and/or deepening of pluralist demands in the post-1945 period and in part by the effective elaboration of pluralist doctrines against the previously dominant centrist liberal ideology which had always refused to recognize the legitimacy of pluralism. It is not that pluralism triumphed in 1968, but rather that it gained droit de cité. It is not that assimilation died as a doctrine but that it lost its status as a self-evident proposition. An open struggle had now begun, and of course is still going on.

The story of environmental concerns is not very different. The maltreatment of the environment within the modern world-system is not at all something new. It has been going on throughout its history. But it was facilitated by a very simplistic idea of property rights. It was said that each of us, but most particularly each entrepreneur could deal with his property as he/she saw fit. And it obviously followed that each would seek to minimize costs in the effort to produce for the market. There were three ways in which an entrepreneur could reduce real costs of production by "*externalizing*" these costs.

The first way was to deal with waste, especially toxic waste, by ejecting it outside the property into public space. As long as there was much public space and little supervision over what happened in public space, such a mode of disposal was both easy to effectuate and largely socially unobserved in any meaningful way. It constituted the path of least resistance and least expenditure for producers, and was therefore common practice, indeed virtually universal practice.

The second way was to turn a total blind eye to the degree to which the utilization of certain inputs (particularly raw materials) exhausted the supply, both locally and worldwide. Producers are oriented by and large to the short run, and do not

normally undertake expenditures on the grounds that this will preserve supply in the long run. The needs of their successors is not central to entrepreneurial decision-making, nor can it be if one keeps one's eyes focused on the possibilities of short-run profit and therefore of capital accumulation.

The third way was to turn to political authorities to supply what we call infrastructure, particularly all those investments that improve the possibilities of the transport of commodities and the ease of communications. Once again, it is clear that an increase in the speed of both and reduction of their cost will increase the likelihood and quantity of profit and therefore be a boon to producers.

The need to deal

What we have discovered more recently, as the size of world population and density of settlement has grown, is that the costs of these operations have risen, primarily because of the disappearance of relatively unused public space, the genuine exhaustion of some raw materials, and the worldwide rise in wage levels. The "*externalization*" of costs may have been a boon to individual producers but its costs were merely shifted elsewhere – to the public, that is, to the states. And, as the bill began to come more obviously due, the costs of toxic cleanup, resource renewal, and infrastructural maintenance began to seem ever higher. In addition, the need to deal immediately with these costs began to seem ever more urgent because of the long-run negative consequences of public negligence.

The result has been the emergence of an ecology movement that represented more than merely a concern for maintaining pristine areas (conservation) and involved necessarily heavy expenditures by someone. Once again, such ecological consciousness and political mobilization started in the post-1945 period but it picked up considerable political steam after 1968.

Finally, the story was parallel as well for our concern with inequalities. Notice the negative version we use at present as compared with the positive version of the slogan of the French Revolution. There is a simple reason for this. There were of course believers in traditional hierarchies who thought of equality as structurally impossible and socially undesirable. But as centrist liberalism gained ground in the nineteenth century, most people began to accept that equality was both theoretically possible and socially desirable. There were nonetheless two versions of this belief. There was the centrist version that the processes of modernity were gradually and effortlessly bringing about this rectification of a hierarchical society. Convergence was on its way, more or less inevitably. And there was the

more radical version of this belief: that equality was on its inevitable way, but only because the socialization of productive practices combined with the political efforts in its favor would inevitably bring it about.

The new concern with inequalities emerges in the post-1945 period and came to the fore after 1968 precisely because there began to be a recognition that not only was convergence not occurring but that there was actually increasing divergence. The gap was growing greater. To be sure, not everyone has been willing to admit this, and there are many attempts to fiddle with statistics to say it is not so, but more and more non-radical analysts are beginning to admit this reality, even in IMF journals (Pritchett, 1996).

Liberty among unequals

Now let us put the pieces together. First of all, take the three parts of the slogan of the French Revolution – liberty, equality, fraternity. They cannot be treated separately or weighed one against the other. Liberty among unequals is an oxymoron. If some have significantly more than others, they have more power and more influence as a result and they can therefore have their way against the will of others more easily, in which case those with significantly less are not "*free*" to pursue their individual or group wills as they wish.

But equality without liberty is also an oxymoron. If each of us does not have the same degree of real political rights, then we are not equal in any meaningful sense, and we will not be equal in any material sense for very long. Political power (which involves the absence of "*liberty*" for those with less power) is rapidly translated into real inequalities, however measured.

And neither liberty nor equality has any meaning without the sense of human solidarity we imply in the term of fraternity. Solidarity is about empathy, and the social meaning of empathy is that each of us sustains the liberty and the equality of the other. If we limit our empathy to only some then we establish an unequal allocation of social benefits and thereby impinge upon the liberty of those we exclude. Nor can liberty and equality survive very long with the support of the others to whom we appeal with the concept of solidarity.

So much then for the pseudo-debates in which the nineteenth and most of the twentieth century had indulged about the priorities among the three parts of the slogan of the French Revolution. This is why it is more useful today to concentrate on the relation between pluralism, the environment, and inequalities.

Slippery doctrine

Pluralism is however a very slippery doctrine. If a group is deprived of equal rights, its political search for overcoming the imbalance may attract the support of many outside the group. Such a group demand is usually considered to be on the left, or democratic, or somehow worthy of empathetic endorsement. But the process of group mobilization immediately opens up certain standard dangers. The "*group*" may insist on the full support of all its own members. However, since we all without exception belong to multiple groups, this demand almost surely conflicts with demands made by other groups to which we belong. So the group looking inward may be trying to suppress the individual liberty of some of its members in order to ensure the collective liberty of all of its members.

In addition, there is the frequent trajectory of groups that assert their rights, moving from being the underdog to the position on top, and thereupon frequently repeating the behavior towards others of which they complained when directed towards themselves. At this point, their collective rights become "*majoritarian*" in intent rather than equalizing. In addition, the solidarity that encrusts mobilization for group rights tends to overlook the reality of the multiple cross-hatching of each person's group memberships, and therefore of the legitimate demands of other kinds of groups within the world-system. This is the familiar and continuing complaint that nationalist and/or ethnic movements in their mobilization and even more in their political triumphs ignore the legitimate demands made on the basis of class, gender, and a host of other bases of plural groupings.

This picture becomes even more complicated once we intrude the demands of ecological rationality. Ecological demands are made in the name not only of the multiple persons throughout the world on whom ecological harm has been inflicted unevenly, but also in the name of the generations to come. It is therefore the adding of a fourth major age-group to the trio into which we divide our allocations constantly: the young, those of working age, and the elderly. The fourth is now the unborn.

If a government builds or permits the construction of a large dam, for example, it may argue that the purpose is to permit increased economic benefits to many – its citizens, its producers, or still others. But of course the same dam does harm to many living and perhaps still more harm to those unborn. The harm may be economic; it may be to their health; it may be to their group's ability to survive as a group. The demands of rationality and justice require balancing the multiple pluses and minuses, most of which are extremely difficult to measure even approximately. Still, producers make decisions; governments make decisions; and

social movements make decisions.
Meanwhile, the inequalities built into our system grow ever greater. An upper quintile benefits while the bottom quintile or even the bottom four quintiles find themselves worse off, certainly relatively and quite often absolutely. In these trade-offs, the struggle of some groups under the heading of pluralism and the struggle of others under the heading of environmental concerns may actually deepen the inequalities in practice.

That other world
It seems to me clear that the struggle for that other world that might be possible is dependent on two factors: the degree to which the present world-system is in structural crisis and therefore moving towards radical change; and the degree to which those who wish to entertain a fundamental alternative to the present world-system can put together a lucid program that could mobilize the strength to prevail in the historical choice the world is making.

I have written much on the structural crisis of the capitalist world-economy in recent years, and I shall not use this forum to repeat the argument in detailed form. I shall just very briefly summarize my views, and then move on to the political program it implies. Over five centuries, there have been three secular trends in the capitalist world-economy: an increase in the cost of personnel for enterprises; the increasing socio-economic expense of externalizing costs of production (particularly toxic waste and the renewal of utilized resources); and the costs of public expenditures on education, health, and guarantees of lifetime income.
Each of these costs of production has risen globally to the point that their combination has created serious limits on the possibilities of the endless accumulation of capital. The primary consequence of this "*profits squeeze*" is that the world-system has entered into structural crisis. The system is now fluctuating severely, is bifurcating, and there is a worldwide political struggle over what kind of alternative world-system to create. The two basic alternatives are those I term the spirit of Davos and the spirit of Porto Alegre. The first is seeking to establish a system that, although new, will maintain two crucial features of the present world-system: hierarchical privilege and systemic polarization. The second is seeking to establish a quite different system that is relatively democratic and relatively egalitarian.
In a systemic transition which is anarchic, it is intrinsically impossible to predict

which of the two forks of the bifurcation will come to dominate and become the basis of a new orderly system. On the other hand, it is also true that in such an anarchic transition, the ability of each human actor to affect the outcome is considerably magnified in the absence of any effective pressures to return to equilibrium. This might be termed the temporary triumph of free will over determinism (Wallerstein, 1998).

Pluralism, the environment, and inequalities

Given this perspective about the structural situation in which we find ourselves, I return to the three themes we are discussing – pluralism, the environment, and inequalities. It seems to me that the advocacy and implementation of a pluralist emphasis in our policy-making and political objectives is an indispensable corrective to the historic mistakes we have made in trying to transform the modern world-system. Only a pluralist emphasis will permit the enormous number and variety of oppressed "*minorities*" to achieve first of all self-affirmation and secondly some greater approximation to equal political, economic, and social rights.

But we have to recognize nonetheless that pluralism is a dangerous tool to manipulate, since it can so easily slide into a narrow defense of particular groups which in turn can transmute into intergroup violence difficult to end once launched. There are no easy formulas here. It is using a dangerous mechanism to pursue positive ends. The mechanism may be necessary but we must be prudent in its use since it is also dangerous.

The story is not too different when we approach the issue of how to deal sanely with our global environment. It is so obvious that we have been mishandling badly the natural world that loud shouting about the need to deal with fundamental errors and evils is indeed legitimate. On the other hand, there is the question of what we do in substitution for the mishandling. We do not want the cure to be worse than the malady.

As I said, I look on the use and apportionment of natural resources as a decision of allocation between four generational groups: the young, those of working age, the elderly, and those yet unborn. Each generational group has its legitimate claims, and neglecting any of the four is profoundly irrational and leads to serious negative consequences. But balancing the needs of the four generations is not easy, since resources are inherently limited. And a substantively rational negotiation between those speaking for each of the four generations may not be

able to be established, much less to find adequate solutions.
And finally, when we come to inequalities, we have to realize that not only have they never been greater than they are today, but that there is no simple mode of rectifying the polarization. The greatest single problem is that, in the short run, there is not likely to be any win-win solution. A serious reallocation of the world's resources to the bottom fifth, half, three-quarters of the world's populations means a significant diminution of what the top fifth or even top half presently have as their standard of living. Politically, this will not be easy to achieve at all, even if one can argue that in some middle run the benefits will accrue to all.

So what is the bottom line about the political conclusions we must draw? On the one hand, I am personally convinced that what we want to see happen about pluralism, the environment, and inequalities is totally incompatible with the operations of the capitalist world-economy. On the other hand, I have just said that I think this world-system is coming to its end and will be replaced by something else, as yet impossible to define. It seems to me that it follows that we should do two things: further elucidate what kind of a world-system we would find acceptable and conduct discussions and debates about this; and we simultaneously use this current period of anarchic transition to implement, however imperfectly, whatever we can achieve locally, nationally, regionally, or worldwide. In short, we must act both in the short-run and in the middle-run at the same time. And all this while, we must attempt to maintain a lucid view of our possibilities and of the consequences of what we propose.

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From: The Troubled Triangle – Unravelling the Linkages between Inequality, Pluralism and Environment

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Why Do So Few Christian Syrian Refugees Register With The United Nations High Commissioner For Refugees?

Photo: UNHCR

The Syrian refugee crisis is one of the worst humanitarian disasters since World War II. It is estimated that more than 11 million Syrians have been forced to flee their homes since the outbreak of the civil war in 2011. More than six million are internally displaced, while approximately 4.6 million have taken refuge in Lebanon, Turkey, Iraq, Jordan, and Egypt, and another one million have sought refuge in Europe. Against that background, it is striking that the United States has accepted only 10,000 Syrian refugees. In contrast, Canada, with a population barely one-tenth the size of that of the United States, has accepted three times more Syrian refugees.

There is considerable interest and concern in the United States as to why so few Syrian Christians are registered as refugees by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), and why so few Syrian Christian refugees eventually resettle in the United States.

While religion should not be an issue when it comes to the treatment of refugees, the numbers need to be analyzed to determine what they really mean and how

they can be explained. Although Christians are generally represented to be as much 10 percent of Syria's prewar population, the total percentage of Syrian Christian refugees who registered with the UNHCR is only 1.2 percent **[i]**.

Recent news reports state that only 56 of the 10,000 Syrians refugees who resettled in the United States in 2016 are Christian.**[ii]** These numbers have led to criticism that the systems in place discriminate against Christians, making it difficult for them to register.

This report, which relies mostly on information gleaned from interviews conducted with people and organizations in Turkey, Lebanon, and Jordan in June and July 2016, provides contextual explanations of why Syrian Christians are not registering as refugees with the UNHCR.
This report also contains the findings of interviews conducted in the United States with individuals associated with U.S.-based organizations and Syrian religious and activist groups. The broader topic of discrimination and the horrors of the Syrian civil war, including its effects on the Syrian Christian community, should be examined more fully, but are not covered by this report. It should be noted that much of the report contains anecdotal information. Very few organizations or individuals—especially individual refugees—were willing to be quoted on the record, but informal conversations with a number of organizations and individuals made this report possible.

One notable finding is that there are sharply different perceptions in the United States, on one hand, and in Lebanon and Jordan, on the other, about treatment of Syrian Christian refugees: U.S. suppositions of anti-Christian discrimination and systemic difficulties as the possible reasons for the small numbers of this group being registered and resettled as refugees contrasts with the perception, especially in Lebanon and Jordan, that Syrian Christians receive preferential treatment and are resettled at a higher rate than other refugees.

Syria has always been a diverse state with numerous minority and religious groups. The Kurds (in the northeast portion of the country) are the largest national minority group. Next are the Palestinians, who fled to Syria following the 1948 and 1967 Arab-Israeli wars, mostly living in refugee camps administered by the UN Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA). Armenians are also a prominent religious and national minority group, living primarily in Aleppo and estimated to number from 70,000 to 100,000 at the beginning of the current civil war. There

are also smaller numbers of Turkmen and Yazidis. Most Syrians are Sunni Muslims, but other Muslim sects include Alawites, Shiites, and Druze.

Christian minority groups are estimated to represent seven to 10 percent of the pre-conflict population. Included are Greek Orthodox, Melkite Catholics, Syriac Orthodox, Maronites, and other smaller sects. Most of the Christians are Orthodox, with the largest group centered on the Orthodox Church of Antioch and the Eastern Catholic (or Melkite) Church. Other Christian sects include Armenians, Syriac Orthodox, Greek Orthodox, other Orthodox churches, and a small Protestant community.

The Syrian civil conflict and outflow of refugees

The Syrian civil conflict that began in March 2011 has become one of the greatest human tragedies since World War II. Upward of 400,000 people have been killed, and over five million have been displaced and sought refuge outside of Syria. This does not include millions of Syrians who are internally displaced. The refugee crisis has had substantial impact not only on neighboring countries, but also on the world in general. Most of those displaced have sought refuge in Turkey (upward of two million), Jordan (1.5 million to two million), and Lebanon (one million to 1.5 million). Although Turkey and Jordan have created refugee camps, most refugees—perhaps as many as 85 percent—do not stay in the camps, preferring to reside in urban areas (see Appendix 1). Turkey's government runs the camps in its country, while the UNHCR administers those in Jordan. Lebanon, which still hosts a significant number of Palestinian refugee camps from the 1948 and 1967 wars, has decided not to create any new official camps. This has the unintended consequence of generating more than the one million refugees, who have subsequently dispersed and settled in communities throughout the country.

The UNHCR is tasked with identifying and registering these refugees and providing for their support (see Appendix 2). The UNHCR has a process for identifying and registering refugees and providing basic foodstuffs and access to medical care. Registration is an important first step for refugees not only to receive aid, but also to join a queue for eventual resettlement outside of Syria, if the refugee so chooses. The UNHCR identification system also records vulnerability, so that those refugees deemed as most vulnerable receive preference for resettlement.

It should be recognized that not all those fleeing Syria register as refugees, or

seek to resettle, or accept the system for refugee designation. The process of registering and being resettled is long and arduous. The United States, which accepted in excess of 15,600 refugees **[iii]** since 2011, has a vetting period that takes approximately two years.

Critical question: Why are there so few registered Christian refugees?
The majority of those interviewed for the purpose of this report asserted that the Assad regime does not threaten Syrian Christians in the same way it threatens others. The ruling Baath party and the Assad regime are avowedly nationalistic. Many of the Syrian Christian refugees interviewed in Lebanon – including some who initially supported the opposition – expressed fear that rebels in Syria appear to have become increasingly more dominated by 'Islamic radicals,' leaving little place for them in the opposition. The rise of new opposition or rebel groups, including Jabhat Fath al-Sham (the rebranded Jabhat al-Nusra), and, of course, the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), make the Assad regime appear less of a threat to Christians in comparison.

Most Syrian Christians are urban and lived in Aleppo, Damascus, Homs, and smaller cities such as Tartous and Latakia. Wadi Nassarah, or the "Valley of the Christians," is an interesting exception to urban Christian residence trends. The valley is historically a Christian area, containing around 35 Christian villages. It is also where many urban Christian families, who may have moved to Damascus or Aleppo for better opportunities, either kept a historical family home or built a vacation or retirement home. Since the conflict started, many from volatile areas have either moved to their second homes in the valley or allowed families and friends to occupy them. There are even regime-controlled areas of hard-hit Aleppo that are functioning and not under siege. Most of the hardest-hit areas are rebel controlled, and the Assad government's use of air power and barrel bombs are examples of its superior and deadly firepower that has destroyed rebel-held areas.

Some Christians have been returning even to devastated cities like Homs. Bishop Issam John Darwich of the Melkite Greek Catholic Church in Zahleh, in Lebanon, currently hosts about 800 Syrian Melkite families. Very few of them have registered with the UN, mostly because they plan on returning eventually to Syria. In June 2016, the bishop stated that about 100 families have returned to Homs.**[iv]**

According to Anne Richard, U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for Population,

Refugees, and Migration, many Christians within Syria also might feel protected by President Bashar Al-Assad, who himself is part of the minority Alawite offshoot of Islam. In her testimony on Capitol Hill in December 2015, Assistant Secretary Richard reported that "a higher percentage of Christians in Syria support Assad and feel safer with him there."**[v]**

Characteristics common among Christians in Syria explain why their numbers are low in registering as refugees and applying for resettlement. Since they tend to be highly urbanized, as previously noted, they benefit from greater government spending and better educational facilities, and therefore have more opportunities to acquire wealth in urban areas than in rural regions.

Christians in Syria tend to be more highly educated than other minorities; this is due to historical factors as well as current circumstances. Historically, in Ottoman territories during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, "American missionaries established schools, printing presses, hospitals, and other institutions. Ultimately, very few converted to evangelical Christianity in the way that American missionaries might have hoped."**[vi]** After 1856, Ottoman government authorities continued to recognize the de facto ban on Muslim out-conversion, while Muslim communities at the grassroots level stood ready to apply legal and social sanctions against apostates from Islam."**[vii]** These Christian missionaries established institutions throughout the great cities of the time, perhaps the most famous of them being the American University of Beirut, founded by Daniel Bliss in 1866. The Catholic community, alarmed by these activities, created its own series of schools and universities, such as St. Joseph's University, founded in 1875, also in Beirut. Such undertakings were repeated in the great cities of Syria, including Aleppo and Damascus. Christian and Jewish children attended these missionary schools, but the Muslim ulema **[viii]** tried their best to prevent Muslim children from attending, instead urging them to study in the traditional madrassas **[ix]**. This meant that by the beginning of World War I, "Christian and Jews had much higher literacy rates than did Muslims."**[x]**

Rami Khouri, a well-known scholar and journalist and director of the Issam Fares Institute at the American University of Beirut, called the propensity for Christians to seek education the "Minority Syndrome," which he describes as the belief that education would be their ladder to success.**[xi]**

Having higher literacy rates and embracing "Western schools" led to Christians –

as a whole – having higher penetration in professions such as medicine, dentistry, teaching, and engineering. As a result, Christians tend to earn higher incomes and possess degrees and professions that are in greater demand in other places in the Arab world or elsewhere, thereby eliminating the need for them to register as refugees. (Jordan and Lebanon are exceptions to such portability of professions, as those countries have bans on refugee employment.)

Another factor against Syrians registering as refugees is the fear of appearing disloyal to the regime. With Syrian Christians having on average more wealth than Syrians in general, it follows that they may own an apartment, a business, or some land, or have a government job with a regular paycheck they still are eligible to collect. The majority of individual refugees, officials in aid organizations, and UNHCR outreach workers interviewed stated that most Syrians believe the mokhabarat **[xii]** would somehow discover the act of registering as refugees, and that it would be considered disloyal to the Assad regime and the Baath party potentially putting relatives in danger or leading to the confiscation of one's Syrian property or business. Numerous interviewees expressed how difficult it is for someone from the United States or even Lebanon to understand the stresses of life in Syria because of the pervasive presence of the mokhabarat, even during peacetime. It was reported that even during peacetime, Syrians had to report foreign guests to the secret police.**[xiii]**

There is, in addition, a stigma associated with the status of being a refugee so much so that people with resources want to avoid it at all costs. Based on discussions and interviews with numerous Syrian Christian refugees and Christian aid and civil society organizations in Lebanon, it became obvious that a great many Syrian Christians had the ability to rent apartments in Lebanon and did not want to register as refugees. They planned on waiting out the war—or at least waiting for the fighting to end in areas where they had lived.**[xiv]**

A further consideration is that many Syrian Christians worked for the government. Syria has a mixed but mostly centrally planned economy, with a very large government sector. The government regularly pays its bureaucrats, even if their place of employment no longer exists. For example, some Syrian Christians in Lebanon still receive a regular government paycheck. This particularly applies to refugees who have arrived in the last year or so, despite being prohibited by the Lebanese government from entering the country. Aid agencies report that many of the recent refugees are women who come to Lebanon with 17-year-old

sons to avoid their conscription into the Syrian military, while the fathers may remain in Syria to either work or receive a paycheck.

Where have Syrian Christians fled?

Syrian Christians overwhelmingly choose Lebanon as a refuge over Jordan or Turkey. According to the UNHCR and U.S. embassy officials, virtually no Christians reside in Jordan **[xv]** and Turkey.**[xvi]**

Syrian Christian refugees choose Lebanon for three principal reasons: First, Lebanon has a large and well-organized Christian community, including churches and institutions. Its churches have developed a large and important civil society network throughout the country. Second, most Syrian Christians have well-developed kinship ties in Lebanon, or their home churches have branches in Lebanon. Third, while most Syrians flee fighting and bombardment, those refugees—especially Sunnis—who fear the government tend to escape via the north (to Turkey) or the south (to Jordan). For Syrian Christians, avoidance of areas of government control is not a concern, and they are likely to choose Lebanon as a destination, despite its recent nominal ban on refugees.

Most Syrian Christian refugees avoid refugee camps by choice, fleeing to areas where they have family connections or can work. They know Lebanon does not have formal refugee camps for Syrians. The Lebanese government decided against opening camps on the basis of its experience with official and formal camp facilities created by the UNRWA for Palestinian refugees who fled to Lebanon during the 1948 and 1967 Arab-Israeli wars.

Prior to May 2015, when the UNHCR stopped registering Syrian refugees in Lebanon, it operated numerous mobile registration teams, as well as walk-in registration at facilities throughout the country, including at its headquarters in the Ramlet El Baida neighborhood of Beirut. These teams comprised Lebanese, international UN employees, and Syrians permitted to work in the country. While the UN does not keep records of the religious affiliations of team members, it is highly likely -given Lebanon's large Christian population – that Christians were involved in these teams. A perception of anti-Christian bias in registration protocol would seem unfounded. UNHCR officials confirmed this view during discussions on the subject.**[xvii]**

The proportion of Christians among the 102,000 Syrians who came to the United States through work, study, or other visa programs since 2011 is unknown. It seems highly likely, however, that Christians have constituted a significant

number of those Syrians who arrive in the United States without official refugee status.**[xviii]**

A large number of Syrian refugees interviewed for the purpose of this report expressed their desire to return to Syria when the conflict is over, or even when the fighting ends in their area. Outreach workers from the UNHCR and Caritas International confirmed these sentiments. Bishop Darwich reported that 100 of the 800 families receiving assistance from his church in Zahleh returned to Homs in May 2016.**[xix]**

While the Department of Homeland Security does not keep religious affiliation data in the visa applications of people entering the United States, it does record religious affiliation information for those who apply for asylum. Asylees differ from refugees because their status is determined after they arrive in the United States. Unlike UNHCR-registered refugees, asylees are not vetted, and simply arrive at the border or have already entered the United States and are asking for asylum. According to data from the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), as illustrated in the chart below, Christians accounted for 31 percent of all Syrian asylee cases in the United States from March 2011 to May 2016. **[xx]**

Filing Date	Syrians (Total)	Syrian Christians	Percentage of Syrian Applicants Who Identified as Christian
March 2011–May 2016	5,200	1,596	**31%**

Most of the refugees interviewed, who want to skip the UNHCR line, do not have the United States as their top destination choice, reporting instead they find it easier to travel to Europe, Canada, or Australia, and that these destinations are more appealing in terms of services and benefits offered. A major factor in the refugees' shared sentiment is that they consider the U.S. vetting process too long and burdensome. It takes roughly two years for refugees to be thoroughly investigated to rule out potential ties to radical Islamist groups. The process is also not considered flexible enough. For example, if one step is missed—either through the fault of the refugee or if U.S. personnel are unable to be in the field, such as in Lebanon for security reasons—the whole process restarts.

Are refugee camps hostile to Christians?

Some commentators have speculated that Christians fear living in refugee camps because of religious oppression or perceived loyalties to the Assad regime. This, they surmise, accounts for the failure of the UNHCR – which operates in the

camps – to register a greater number of Syrian Christian refugees.

This explanation, however, is not in accord with the fact that only 10-15 percent **[xxi]** (Also see Appendix 1) of all Syrian refugees reside in refugee camps, while, as stated before, the vast majority of Syrian Christians flee to Lebanon, a country that—as a matter of policy—does not have any formal or official Syrian refugee camps.

The conflicted position of Syrian churches

Christianity has a long history in Syria, with the notable conversion of St. Paul the Apostle on the road to Damascus. Today's churches are concerned about their continuing presence and viability in Syria if their members become registered refugees and eventually resettled in foreign lands.**[xxii]**

Perceptions of favoritism

It is interesting that in the United States, many (who point to the low numbers of registered refugees as evidence) perceive that institutions in the Levant discriminate against Christians. Perceptions in the Middle East, however, are quite the opposite. While only 1.2 percent [xxiii] of registered refugees are Christian, the actual resettlement rate is 2.5 percent **[xxiv]**, a fact that is interpreted as meaning Christians are favored when it comes to resettlement. While the UNHCR and U.S. resettlement processes are faith-blind other refugee programs and countries like Canada and Australia take other factors into account, including education and kinship ties (i.e., having relatives in host countries – a factor that increases one's resettlement chances). Moreover, the percentage of Arab Christians in the diaspora is much higher – for example, in the United States approximately 65 percent of Arab-Americans are Christian **[xxv]**. As Syrian Christians have more kinship ties to the West, they benefit more from resettling in those countries that put emphasis on kinship. Although no interview participants spoke on record, all interlocutors – particularly Christian nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) – were adamant that Christians are not and should not receive preferential treatment, and maintained that the perception of favoritism is harmful. All of the Christian organizations that participated in interview sessions concurred with this fear of favoritism.

A Case in Point: Syrian Armenians

The total numbers of Armenians in pre-civil conflict Syria is estimated to have been anywhere between 70,000 and 100,000, with the overwhelming majority

living in Aleppo. The Armenian community in Syria is generally economically successful and constitutes an important part of Syria's merchant and professional class. Armenians sought refuge in Syria following Turkey's genocidal campaign against them from 1915 to 1917. While most Armenians subsequently left for Western Europe or the United States, the community that stayed in Aleppo prospered.

Armenians in Syria are wealthier than the average Syrian, and highly clustered around medical professions and trade. They are loyal to the Baath party, having made a community-wide deal with the burgeoning party in the late 1970s to maintain control over their own schools. In this sense, there is a tradition of gratitude among Armenians for the support Syria gave them following their mass displacement from Turkey. This is compounded by the support a secular government engenders among minority Christian groups. In essence, Syrian Armenians are similar to most Syrian Arab Christians in that they are not disloyal to the Baath regime.

Most of Aleppo's Armenians have fled – only around 5,000 have remained behind. Some have relocated to safer areas within government-held Syria, especially Damascus, Kassab, and Latakia. In addition, while some have been internally displaced, a large number of Syrian Armenians have fled Syria, going to Lebanon and then elsewhere. For historical reasons, Syrian Armenians do not wish to travel or flee to Turkey.

Syrian Armenians are an example of a Christian minority group that has kinship ties in the United States and the ability to obtain foreign passports to leave troubled areas of Syria. Syrian-Armenians are able to obtain citizenship and passports from the Republic of Armenia, which – as of July 2016 – was the only foreign government to have a functioning consulate in Aleppo. The Armenian consulate waives all fees to those who can prove Armenian heritage. Like other Christians, Syrian Armenians do not register with the UNHCR in high numbers. Syrian Armenians have sought refuge throughout the world based on kinship ties. Some have looked to Lebanon, which already has a large and well-established Armenian community. Approximately 16,000 **[xxvi]** have fled to Armenia, with only 500 having registered as refugees with the UNHCR. Syrian Armenians use their Armenian passports to travel legally to other countries and evidence points to a trend toward traveling and resettling in Canada, Australia, and the United States. Lebanon, which has stopped the inflow of refugees from Syria, allows

Syrian Armenians who hold Republic of Armenia passports to travel to Beirut International Airport if they have one-way tickets to Armenia.

According to Serop Ohanian, the Lebanon field director of the Howard Karagheusian Association, a well-developed Armenian social service organization, approximately 16,000–20,000 Armenians have moved to Lebanon, where most have family members. They have settled in the historic Armenian community of Bourj Hammoud and the Bekaa town of Anjar. Mr. Ohanian and the outreach staff at the association actively encourage these refugees to register with the UNHCR, but most do not. Sarkis Barklian, an Armenian activist in Washington, DC, echoes the same sentiment as the Armenian associations in Beirut, reporting that most Syrians Armenians do not register as refugees.

Conclusion

It appears clear that the small number of Syrian Christians who have registered with the UNHCR and the even smaller number of those who have resettled in the United States do not substantiate evidence of pervasive anti-Christian discrimination. Theories that Christians are reluctant to go to refugee camps and thus are not registered by the UNHCR ignore the fact that almost all Christian refugees go to Lebanon (which does not permit official or formal refugee camps for Syrians) and avoid going to Jordan and Turkey (where there are formal and official camps).

Better explanations for the low numbers can be found in such factors as stigma, concern about regime reprisals, availability of resources and kinship ties for alternative actions, and hope for eventual return to Syria. Syrian Christians who wish to resettle elsewhere are using other means to go to foreign countries, as evidenced by USCIS data showing that in 31 percent of all recent cases involving Syrians seeking asylum in the United States, the applicants are Christian.

Notes

[i] The Hill, 'Critics Wrong on Christian Syrian Refugees,' December 20, 2015.

[ii] Elliot Abrams, 'The United States Bars Christian, not Muslim, Refugees from Syria,'
Pressure Points blog (Council on Foreign Relations), September 9, 2016.

[iii] "Refugee Arrivals From January 1, 2011 through October 27, 2016." Refugee Processing Center. Accessed November 4, 2016. "Refugee Arrivals from January 1, 2011 through October 27, 2016." Department of State. Accessed November 4,

2016. http://www.wrapsnet.org/admissions-and-arrivals/

[iv] Interview with Bishop Issam Darwich in Zahleh, June 28, 2016.

[v] The Hill, 'Critics Wrong on Christian Syrian Refugees,' December 20, 2015.

[vi] Heather J. Sharkey, American Missionaries in Ottoman Lands: Foundational Encounters, 2010, 2.

[vii] Ibid, 9.

[viii] The Arabic term for a recognized body of Islamic scholars.

[ix] The Arabic term for school; in this context meaning traditional Islamic religious schools.

[x] Bruce Masters, Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Arab World, Cambridge University Press, 2001, 156.

[xi] Various interviews and discussions with Rami Khouri in May and June 2016.

[xii] The Arabic term for intelligence agency.

[xiii] Numerous interviews with refugees and various Christian relief organizations in Lebanon, June and July 2016.

[xiv] Meetings with refugees in late June and early July 2016; meetings with leaders, including Father Karam, and outreach workers from Caritas (a Catholic international aid organization). Michel Constantin of the Pontifical Mission echoed this view and stated at a June 21, 2016, meeting at the Pontifical office in Sin el Fil that most middle-class and upper-class Syrian Christians did not want to register as refugees, and, in spite of having to flee their homes, donated monies to Lebanese Christian charities to help other Syrians in need.

[xv] U.S. Embassy in Amman, Jordan, stated in e-mail correspondence on June 14, 2016, that "Jordan does not see Christian refugees from Syria because they either did not flee Syria or fled to Lebanon or Turkey."

[xvi] Discussions with U.S. Consular officials in Adana, Turkey, on June 16, 2016, during which one official stated: "My knowledge is generally limited, as the number of Christian refugees in Turkey is quite small and often off the grid. My understanding is that many Christians opted to flee towards more regime-held territories and away from ISIL and Sham Front-held territory, which happened to be along the border with Turkey."

[xvii] Meetings and interviews at UNHCR headquarters, week of June 20, 2016, in Ramlet El Baida, Beirut.

[xviii] The Hill, 'Critics Wrong on Christian Syrian Refugees,' December 20, 2015.

[xix] Interview with Bishop Issam Darwich in Zahleh, June 28, 2016.

[xx] E-mail correspondence from USCIS, compiled from case management data,

June 13, 2016.

[xxi] 'Syria Regional Refugee Response.' Accessed November 8, 2016. UNHCR Inter-Agency Data Portal, http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/regional.php.

[xxii] Numerous meetings with church officials in the United States and Lebanon.

[xxiii] The Hill, 'Critics Wrong on Christian Syrian Refugees,' December 20, 2015.

[xxiv] Meetings and interviews at UNHCR headquarters, week of June 20, 2016, in Ramlet El Baida, Beirut.

[xxv] "Arab-Americans: An Integral Part of American Society", Arab-American National Museum, Dearborn Michigan, http://www.arabamericanmuseum.org/umages/pdfs/resource_booklets/AANM-ArabAmericansBooklet-web.pdf.

[xxvi] Huffington Post, 'Armenia and the Syrian Refugee Crisis,' March 2, 2016.

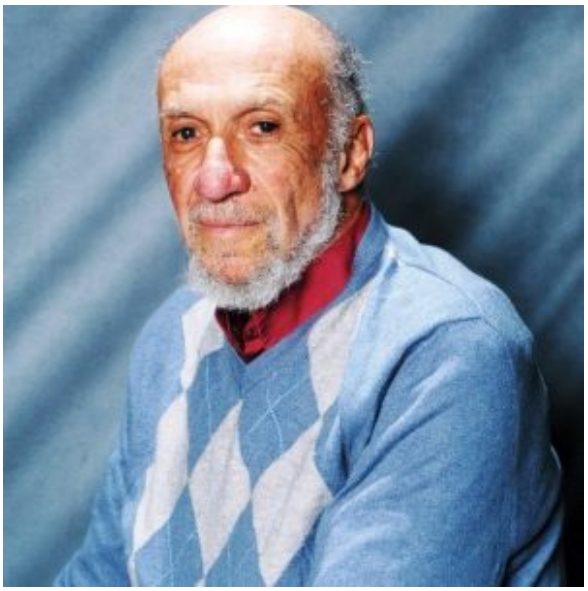
Research Dossier Leiden University: 'Africa Reconsidered'

Africa is a continent in transition, with developments occurring at breakneck speed. African Studies scholars from different academic disciplines of Leiden University have conducted research for many decades. Their close links with African partners and their emphasis on fundamental research have enabled them to generate insights that benefit both African and Western societies. Leiden University created a new research dossier 'Africa reconsidered' on its website, for which many ASCL researchers were interviewed.

Read the new research dossier 'Africa reconsidered' in English.

Lees het wetenschapsdossier 'Afrika heroverwogen' in het Nederlands.

“Trump Feels A Kinship With Authoritarian Leaders”: Richard Falk On Turmoil In The Middle East



Prof.em. Richard Falk

Since Trump’s visit to the Middle East, the region is experiencing new forms of turmoil, with the boycott against Qatar by several Gulf countries and Egypt reflecting the manifestation of geopolitical rivalries encouraged by Trump’s support for dictatorial regimes in the region willing to join the US in the fight against terrorism. For the latest developments in the Middle East, Truthout spoke with Richard Falk, emeritus professor of international relations at Princeton University, who is now in the region for a series of public lectures.

C.J. Polychroniou: Richard, you are traveling and lecturing at the moment in the Middle East. How are the media in countries like Lebanon, Israel and Turkey treating Trump’s policies in the region, and what’s your reading of the mood on the ground among common folk?

Richard Falk: I have just arrived in Istanbul after spending several days in Beirut. While in Lebanon, in addition to giving a public lecture at the end of a cultural festival on the theme, "The rise of populism, Trumpism, and the decline of US leadership," I had the opportunity to interact with a wide range of people. As far as Trump is concerned, there was virtual unanimity that he is worsening an already volatile situation in the region. His trip to Riyadh was viewed in Beirut as a stunning display of incompetence and bravado, topped off by succumbing to a Saudi/Israeli regional agenda focused on building a menacing anti-Iran coalition and misleading publicity surrounding a nominal commitment to join forces to combat ISIS (also known as Daesh). Trump was viewed as a leader who did not understand the region and was more interested in pushing destabilizing arms sales than in genuinely promoting stability and conflict resolution.

Why is Qatar singled out on terror when it is a well-known fact that Saudi Arabia has been a chief supporter of the most radical ideological version of Islam, and Turkey's President Erdogan has been accused of aiding ISIS and other extremists against Kurds and Syrian President Bashar al-Assad?

The short answer is geopolitics. Saudi Arabia, like Israel, has a "special relationship" with the United States, meaning that in diplomatic practice, Washington adopts a subservient posture that includes seeing the world through a distorted optic provided by the Saudi monarchy. Trump did not initiate this American tendency to avert its eyes when it comes to the massive evidence of Saudi support for Islamic extremism, but he seems to be carrying further this form of geopolitical [ignorance].

When it comes to Turkey, the American attitude is ambivalent, regarding Turkey as a sufficiently important strategic partner via NATO, as well as the site of the important American Incirlik Air Base to justify looking the other way when it comes to indications of earlier Turkish support for ISIS in the context of implementing its anti-Assad Syrian policies. Of course, there is evidence of contradictions along similar lines with respect to pre-Trump US policies in Syria. All hands are dirty with regard to Syria. The Syrian people are continuing to pay a huge price for this mixture of internal struggle and a multilevel proxy war engaging regional and global actors.

Singling out Qatar is the strongest instance of the Saudi regional game. Saudi Arabia has long been bothered by the relative independence of Qatar in relation

to a series of issues that have nothing to do with terrorism. These include the creation of Al Jazeera, a show of sympathy for the Arab Spring movements of 2011, asylum for the Muslim Brotherhood leadership after the Sisi coup of 2013, hosting Hamas leaders and tangible support for the Palestinian struggle — including aid to Gaza, and relatively friendly relations with Iran partly as a result of sharing a huge natural gas field.

The "terrorism" angle is a cover story that hides the real objective of the anti-Qatar policy, which is to assert Saudi hegemony with respect to all Gulf monarchies, and to make an example of Qatar so as to demonstrate that there is no room for either challenging Saudi primacy or departing from its policies of hostility to Shia governments and political Islam — that is, organizations within countries that build grassroots support for political movements among Muslims seeking control of the national governance process. Saudi policies, as in relation to Egypt, show a strong preference for authoritarian secular rule over an Islamically-oriented movement that achieved control of the state through electoral victories.

Saudi Arabia has two regional enemies: Shia Iran and political Islam, whether or not Sunni. Riyadh is sectarian when it serves Saudi regional interests in countering Iran, and repressive toward any kind of challenge directed at dictatorial government and monarchical authority, even if religiously oriented in its political identity. One dimension of its policy is directed toward sustaining royal authority at home, another is preoccupied with Gulf hegemony, another with crushing any democratizing movement in the region, and still another with its anti-Iran rivalry. When it comes to ISIS and jihadism, Saudi policy sends the West an anti-terrorist message while continuing to spend billions on disseminating Wahhabi versions of Islam far and wide.

The United States is more confused than Saudi Arabia when it comes to Qatar, but equally ineffectual if anti-terrorism truly tops its regional agenda. For one thing, Qatar is not a supporter of ISIS or of terrorism except to some extent in the context of Syria, where it is on the same side as Saudi Arabia, the United States and Turkey — each of which has from time to time made expedient use of anti-Assad Sunni terrorist groups. For another, the United States maintains a major military base in Qatar staffed by 11,000 American troops. For another, while celebrating the post-Riyadh moves against Qatar, the US has concluded a $12 billion arms sales arrangement with Doha. While Trump boasts about his role in

crafting the anti-Qatar policies as a triumph of counterterrorism, the American secretaries of state and defense are vigorously trying to bring the confrontation with Qatar to an end through diplomatic mediation, illustrating policy incoherence between the White House and the governmental bureaucracy.

Do you think Donald Trump's warm embrace of dictatorial regimes and authoritarian leaders in the region — including President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan in Turkey — represents a new development in US foreign policy toward the Middle East?

Trump clearly feels a kinship with dictatorial regimes and authoritarian leaders throughout the world, and not just in the Middle East. As suggested earlier, the attitude toward Erdoğan is more complicated because of NATO considerations and overall Syrian policy coordination, and reflects a pre-Trump pragmatism with respect to the interface between American opposition to repressive government and the pursuit of a post-Cold War grand strategy in the Middle East and around the world. Trump is far less conflicted about embracing authoritarian leaders than his predecessors, especially Obama. In this sense, Trump's affection for autocratic governance patterns cannot be fully explained by the pragmatic priorities of earlier American leaders. It seems to reflect an ideological affinity that is independent of foreign policy goals. The sheer hypocrisy of Trump's approach to such choices has been recently underscored by his rollback of Obama's moves to normalize relations with Cuba because of its allegedly poor human rights record. Interpreted more transparently, this Trump move was a political payback to the support given his presidential campaign by Miami's right-wing Cuban exile community.

If we consider the question of whether Trump's comfort level with authoritarian governance should be regarded as a real change in American foreign policy toward the Middle East, we can only say now that it is too early to tell. There is no doubt that Trump's visit and talk to the 50 leaders of Muslim countries assembled in Riyadh allowed the most authoritarian among Islamic rulers (Iran excepted) a welcome sigh of relief. It meant they would no longer have to listen sullenly to lectures delivered by a liberal American president about the importance of observing human rights.

This may also help explain the closer policy coordination between the US and Gulf Arabs, illustrated by agreeing to ramp up pressure on Iran. The intensification of

American hostility to Iran is more likely to flow from Trump's eagerness to please Israel than to be responsive to Saudi guidance. Unlike the Qatar initiative, which seems to disturb [US Secretary of Defense] James Mattis and [US Secretary of State] Rex Tillerson, the anti-Iran moves seem compatible with a shared militarist hostility to Iran, which is misleadingly blamed for spreading terrorism in the region through Tehran's support for such diverse groups as Hezbollah, Hamas and the Houthis.

Now that ISIS is weakening, tensions and sectarian passions in the Middle East are actually on the rise. Any connection between the two factors?

ISIS certainly seems to be in the process of losing its territorial base and caliphate in Iraq and Syria, but whether it is really weakening overall is hard to tell. It has spread its terrorist operations to many countries throughout the world and still seems capable of causing havoc in Europe and the United States by using native sympathizers to mount terrorist attacks that inflame targeted societies.

With respect to the apparent rise of sectarian passions, there is a need for careful assessment. Sectarianism is used to mobilize support for the anti-Iran coalition and the Syrian War in Sunni-majority countries, but a more convincing explanation of these policies would emphasize the Saudi-Iran rivalry for regional hegemony based on competing expansionist aspirations. Sectarianism accounts for political alignments in Yemen, Bahrain and Saudi Arabia, where Sunni rule feels threatened by Shia minorities — in Yemen and Saudi Arabia — and a Shia majority in Bahrain. As suggested earlier, where Sunni popular movements are perceived as threatening to the Arab monarchies, Sunni rulers will not hesitate to use or encourage bloody repressive tactics. In this respect, sectarian justifications for alignments are misleading unless interpreted as opportunistic. A more adequate understanding of Arab politics can be gained by evaluating intergovernmental tensions in the Middle East and related efforts to sustain the stability of existing political structures in the face of internal threats.

Both Jordan and Lebanon have managed to avoid becoming ISIS targets. What are the reasons for this?

I think there is no definitive explanation. It appears that ISIS is rather opportunistic in its selection of target societies, as well as in its tendency to treat some states as off-limits. By and large, where ISIS has enjoyed its greatest

success in the Middle East and North Africa has been in countries experiencing chaos, combat and unrest, especially in contexts of American or European intervention.

Turkey and Iran have been targeted by ISIS, although neither can be considered chaotic or a combat zone. Turkey has been targeted in all likelihood in retaliation for switching from aiding and abetting ISIS to policies of belligerent opposition. There may be sectarian reasons for ISIS attacks on Iran, although this is highly conjectural. There are also rumors about various bargains struck by ISIS with governments and wealthy donors to engage in or refrain from certain attacks.

Jordan has been comparatively stable over the course of the last decade, which means that they do not seem to be the kind of society that ISIS targets. In addition, neither Lebanon nor Jordan has been active in anti-terrorist regional politics, although ISIS and Hezbollah are on opposite sides in Syria, and have there engaged in violent combat. There is very little public knowledge about the operational side of ISIS behavior, which means that either of these countries could come under pressure from ISIS militants at some future time.

How do you see the "Palestinian question" playing out under Trump's administration?

Everything about Trump's political style makes his position at one time subject to drastic revision almost on impulse. Up to now, Trump seems to be investing energy in the idea that a deal can be struck. This is highly unlikely to materialize, principally because Israel seems to be moving toward an imposed one-state solution, with its "Plan B" being a long-term apartheid administration of Palestinian territories that initially fell under its control 50 years ago in the 1967 War. The idea of revived negotiations seems like a Washington stunt that is given lip service by the Israeli government for public relations purposes and endorsed by the Palestinian Authority because of its weakness and vulnerability to the cutoff of foreign funding. Given the accelerated expansion of settlement-building, as well as the sheer number of settlers — numbering at least 700,000 if the West Bank and East Jerusalem are combined — the situation seems ill-suited for a political compromise envisioned by the two-state international consensus. In other words, a diplomatically induced end of the conflict seems currently implausible.

Palestinian prospects are increasingly dismal. The Trump presidency is not

disposed to challenge Israeli policies, or to exert pressure on Israel to yield significant ground as to the manner with which it is administering the Palestinian people. The American ambassador at the UN, Nikki Haley, is outdoing herself by constant[ly] bashing the UN for its supposed anti-Israel bias. Whether these tactics of intimidation will result in a gradual disappearance of Palestinian grievances from the UN agenda remains to be seen, but it is clearly a major Israeli objective. It seems that with armed struggle no longer a threat and diplomacy at a dead end, the only real worry for Israel is the mobilization of hostile public opinion under UN auspices.

Palestinian hopes, such as they are, depend on several developments: continuing growth of the global solidarity movement as most vividly expressed by the BDS [Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions] campaign, which is the centerpiece of "the legitimacy war" that has been discrediting Israel's policies and practices while giving the high moral and legal ground to the Palestinian national movement; eventual achievement of sustainable Palestinian unity, overcoming the rift between Hamas and Fatah; and more tangible expressions of solidarity by Arab neighbors with the Palestinian struggle.

If none of these Palestinian hopes … materialize in the next decade, the Palestinian struggle will increasingly come to be seen as a "lost cause." What Trump does and doesn't do is likely to influence perceptions as to whether the Palestinian goals are credible or not, but at this point, the policy impact of the Trump presidency seems mainly to be emboldening Israeli hardliners.

Myths Of Globalization: Noam Chomsky And Ha-Joon Chang In

Conversation

Ha-Joon Chang Photo: Wikipedia

Since the late 1970s, the world's economy and dominant nations have been marching to the tune of (neoliberal) globalization, whose impact and effects on average people's livelihood and communities everywhere are generating great popular discontent, accompanied by a rising wave of nationalist and anti-elitist sentiments. But what exactly is driving globalization? And who really benefits from globalization? Are globalization and capitalism interwoven? How do we deal with the growing levels of inequality and massive economic insecurity? Should progressives and radicals rally behind the call for the introduction of a universal basic income? In the unique and exclusive interview below, two leading minds of our time, linguist and public intellectual Noam Chomsky and Cambridge University economist Ha-Joon Chang, share their views on these essential questions.

C. J. Polychroniou: Globalization is usually referred to as a process of interaction and integration among the economies and people of the world through international trade and foreign investment with the aid of information technology. Is globalization then simply a neutral, inevitable process of economic, social and technological interlinkages, or something of a more political nature in which state action produces global transformations (state-led globalization)?

Ha-Joon Chang: The biggest myth about globalization is that it is a process driven

by technological progress. This has allowed the defenders of globalization to brand the critics as “modern Luddites” who are trying to turn back the clock against the relentless progress of science and technology.

However, if technology is what determines the degree of globalization, how can you explain that the world was far more globalized in the late 19th and the early 20th century than in the mid-20th century? During the first Liberal era, roughly between 1870 and 1914, we relied upon steamships and wired telegraphy, but the world economy was on almost all accounts more globalized than during the far less liberal period in the mid-20th century (roughly between 1945 and 1973), when we had all the technologies of transportation and communications that we have today, except for the internet and cellular phones, albeit in less efficient forms.

The reason why the world was much less globalized in the latter period is that, during the period, most countries imposed rather significant restrictions on the movements of goods, services, capital and people, and liberalized them only gradually. What is notable is that, despite [its] lower degree of globalization … this period is when capitalism has done the best: the fastest growth, the lowest degree of inequality, the highest degree of financial stability, and — in the case of the advanced capitalist economies — the lowest level of unemployment in the 250-year history of capitalism. This is why the period is often called “the Golden Age of Capitalism.”

Technology only sets the outer boundary of globalization — it was impossible for the world to reach a high degree of globalization with only sail ships. It is economic policy (or politics, if you like) that determines exactly how much globalization is achieved in what areas.

The current form of market-oriented and corporate-driven globalization is not the only — not to speak of being the best — possible form of globalization. A more equitable, more dynamic and more sustainable form of globalization is possible.

We know that globalization properly began in the 15th century, and that there have been different stages of globalization since, with each stage reflecting the underlying impact of imperial state power and of the transformations that were taking place in institutional forms, such as firms and the emergence of new technologies and communications. What distinguishes the current stage of

globalization (1973-present) from previous ones?

Chang: The current stage of globalization is different from the previous ones in two important ways.

The first difference is that there is less open imperialism.

Before 1945, the advanced capitalist countries practised [overt] imperialism. They colonized weaker countries or imposed "unequal treaties" on them, which made them virtual colonies — for example, they occupied parts of territories through "leasing," deprived them of the right to set tariffs, etc.

Since 1945, we have seen the emergence of a global system that rejects such naked imperialism. There has been a continuous process of de-colonialization and, once you get sovereignty, you became a member of the United Nations, which is based upon the principle of one-country-one-vote.

Of course, the practice has been different — the permanent members of the Security Council of the UN have a veto and many international economic organizations (the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank) are run on the principle of one-dollar-one-vote (voting rights are linked to paid-in capital). However, even so, the post-1945 world order was immeasurably better than the one that came before it.

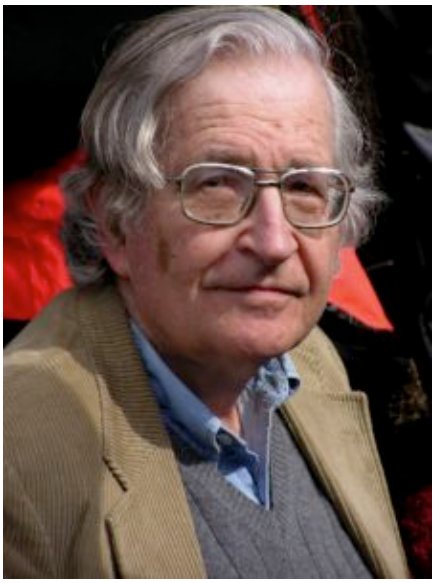
Unfortunately, starting in the 1980s but accelerating from the mid-1990s, there has been a rollback of the sovereignty that the post-colonial countries had been enjoying. The birth of the WTO (World Trade Organization) in 1995 has shrunk the "policy space" for developing countries. The shrinkage was intensified by subsequent series of bilateral and regional trade and investment agreements between rich countries and developing ones, like Free Trade Agreements with the US and Economic Partnership agreements with the European Union.

The second thing that distinguishes the post-1973 globalization is that it has been driven by transnational corporations far more than before. Transnational corporations existed even from the late 19th century, but their economic importance has vastly increased since the 1980s.

They have also influenced the shaping of the global rules in a way that enhances their power. Most importantly, they have inserted the investor-state dispute

settlement (ISDS) mechanism into many international agreements. Through this mechanism, transnational corporations can take governments to a tribunal of three adjudicators, drawn from a pool of largely pro-corporate international commercial lawyers, for having reduced their profits through regulations. This is an unprecedented extension of corporate power.

Noam, are globalization and capitalism different?



Noam Chomsky ~ Photo: en.wikipedia.org

Noam Chomsky: If by "globalization" we mean international integration, then it long pre-dates capitalism. The silk roads dating back to the pre-Christian era were an extensive form of globalization. The rise of industrial state capitalism has changed the scale and character of globalization, and there have been further changes along the way as the global economy has been reshaped by those whom Adam Smith called "the masters of mankind," pursuing their "vile maxim": "All for ourselves, and nothing for other people."

There have been quite substantial changes during the recent period of neoliberal globalization, since the late 1970s, with Reagan and Thatcher the iconic figures — though the policies vary only slightly as administrations change. Transnational corporations are the driving force, and their political power largely shapes state policy in their interests.

During these years, supported by the policies of the states they largely dominate,

transnational corporations have increasingly constructed global value chains (GVCs) in which the "lead firm" outsources production through intricate global networks that it establishes and controls. A standard illustration is Apple, the world's biggest company. Its iPhone is designed in the US. Parts from many suppliers in the US and East Asia are assembled mostly in China in factories owned by the huge Taiwanese firm Foxconn. Apple's profit is estimated to be about 10 times that of Foxconn, while value added and profit in China, where workers toil under miserable conditions, is slight. Apple then sets up an office in Ireland so as to evade US taxes — and has recently been fined $14 billion by the EU in back taxes.

Reviewing the "GVC world" in the British journal International Affairs, Nicola Phillips writes that production for Apple involves thousands of firms and enterprises that have no formal relationship with Apple, and at the lower tiers may be entirely unaware of the destination of what they are producing. This is a situation that generalizes.

The immense scale of this new globalized system is revealed in the 2013 World Investment Report of the United Nations Commission on Trade and Development. It estimates that some 80 percent of global trade is internal to the global value chains established and run by transnational corporations, accounting for perhaps 20 percent of jobs worldwide.

Ownership of this globalized economy has been studied by political economist Sean Starrs. He points out that the conventional estimates of national wealth in terms of GDP are misleading in the era of neoliberal globalization. With complex integrated supply chains, subcontracting and other such devices, corporate ownership of the world's wealth is becoming a more realistic measure of global power than national wealth, as the world departs more than before from the model of nationally discrete political economies. Investigating corporate ownership, Starrs finds that in virtually every economic sector – manufacturing, finance, services, retail and others — US corporations are well in the lead in ownership of the global economy. Overall, their ownership is close to 50 percent of the total. That is roughly the maximum estimate of US national wealth in 1945, at the historical peak of US power. National wealth by conventional measures has declined from 1945 to the present, to maybe 20 percent. But US corporate ownership of the globalized economy has exploded.

The standard line of mainstream politicians is that globalization benefits everyone. Yet, globalization produces winners and losers, as Branko Milanovic's book Global Inequality *has shown, so the question is this: Is success in globalization a matter of skills?*

Chang: The assumption that globalization benefits everyone is based on mainstream economic theories that assume that workers can be costlessly re-deployed, if international trade or cross-border investments make certain industries unviable.

In this view, if the US signs NAFTA with Mexico, some auto workers in the US may lose their jobs, but they will not lose out, as they can retrain themselves and get jobs in industries that are expanding, thanks to NAFTA, such as software or investment banking.

You will immediately see the absurdity of the argument — how many US auto workers do you know who have retrained themselves as software engineers or investment bankers in the last couple of decades? Typically, ex-auto-workers fired from their jobs have ended up working as night-shift janitors in a warehouse or stacking shelves in supermarkets, drawing much lower wages than before.

The point is that, even if the country gains overall from globalization, there will always be losers, especially (although not exclusively) workers who have skills that are not valued anymore. And unless these losers are compensated, you cannot say that the change is a good thing for "everyone"….

Of course, most rich countries have mechanisms through which the winners from the globalization process (or any economic change, really) compensate the losers. The basic mechanism for this is the welfare state, but there are also publicly financed retraining and job-search mechanisms — the Scandinavians do this particularly well — as well as sector-specific schemes to compensate the "losers" (e.g., temporary protection for firms to promote restructuring, money for severance payments for the workers). These mechanisms are better in some countries than others, but nowhere are they perfect and, unfortunately, some countries have been running them down. (The recent shrinkage of the welfare state in the UK is a good example.)

In your view, Ha-Joon Chang, is the convergence of globalization and technology likely to produce more or less inequality?

Chang: As I have argued above, technology and globalization are not destiny.

The fact that income inequality actually fell in Switzerland between 1990 and 2000 and the fact that income inequality has hardly increased in Canada and the Netherlands during the neoliberal period show that countries can choose what income inequality they have, even though they are all faced with the same technologies and same trends in the global economy.

There is actually a lot that countries can do to influence income inequality. Many European countries, including Germany, France, Sweden and Belgium are as unequal as (or occasionally even more so than) the US, before they redistribute income through progressive tax and the welfare state. Because they redistribute so much, the resulting inequalities in those countries are much lower.

*Noam, in what ways does globalization increase capitalism's inherent tendencies toward economic dependence, inequality and exploitation***?**

*Chomsky***:** Globalization during the era of industrial capitalism has always enhanced dependence, inequality and exploitation, often to horrendous extremes. To take a classic example, the early industrial revolution relied crucially on cotton, produced mainly in the American South in the most vicious system of slavery in human history — which took new forms after the Civil War with the criminalization of Black life and sharecropping. Today's version of globalization includes not only super-exploitation at the lower tiers of the global value chains system but also virtual genocide, notably in Eastern Congo where millions have been slaughtered in recent years while critical minerals find their way to high-tech devices produced in the global value chains.

But even apart from such hideous elements of globalization … pursuit of the "vile maxim" quite naturally yields such consequences. The Phillips study I mentioned is a rare example of inquiry into "how inequalities are produced and reproduced in a [global value chains] world [through] asymmetries of market power, asymmetries of social power, and asymmetries of political power." As Phillips shows, "The consolidation and mobilization of these market asymmetries rests on securing a structure of production in which a small number of very large firms at the top, in many cases the branded retailers, occupy oligopolistic positions — that is, positions of market dominance, and in which the lower tiers of production are characterized by densely populated and intensely competitive markets.… The

consequence across the world has been the explosive growth of precarious, insecure and exploitative work in global production, performed by a workforce significantly made up of informal, migrant, contract and female workers, and extending at the end of the spectrum to the purposeful use of forced labour."

These consequences are enhanced by deliberate trade and fiscal policies, a matter discussed particularly by Dean Baker. As he points out, in the US, "from December 1970 to December of 2000, manufacturing employment was virtually unchanged, apart from cyclical ups and downs. In the next seven years, from December of 2000 to December of 2007, manufacturing employment fell by more than 3.4 million, a drop of almost 20 percent. This plunge in employment was due to the explosion of the trade deficit over this period, not automation. There was plenty of automation (a.k.a. productivity growth) in the three decades from 1970 to 2000, but higher productivity was offset by an increase in demand, leaving total employment little changed. This was no longer true when the trade deficit exploded to almost 6 percent of GDP in 2005 and 2006 (more than $1.1 trillion in today's economy)."

These were substantially consequences of the high-dollar policy and the investor-rights agreements masquerading as "free trade" — among the political choices in the interests of the masters, not the results of economic laws.

Ha-Joon Chang, progressives aim to develop strategies to counter the adverse effects of globalization, but there is little agreement on the most effective and realistic way to do so. In this context, the responses vary from alternative forms of globalization to localization? What's your take on this matter?

Chang: In short, my preferred option would be a more controlled form of globalization, based on far more restrictions on global flows of capital and more restrictions on the flows of goods and services. Moreover, even with these restrictions, there will inevitably be winners and losers, and you need a stronger (not weaker) welfare state and other mechanisms through which the losers from the process get compensated. Politically, such a policy combination will require stronger voices for workers and citizens.

I don't think localization is a solution, although the feasibility of localization will depend on what the locality is and what issues we are talking about. If the locality in question is one village or a neighborhood in an urban area, you will

immediately see that there are very few things that can be "localised." If you are talking about a German land (state) or US state, I can see how it can try to grow more of its own food or produce some currently imported manufactured products for itself. However, for most things, it is simply not viable to have the majority of things supplied locally. It would be unwise to have every country, not to speak of every American state, manufacture its own airplanes, mobile phones, or even all of its food.

Having said that, I am not against all forms of localization. There are certainly things that can be more locally provided, like certain food items or health care.

One final question: The idea of a universal basic income is slowly but gradually gaining ground as a policy tool in order to address the problem of poverty and concerns over automation. In fact, companies like Google and Facebook are strong advocates of a universal basic income, although it will be societies bearing the cost of this policy while most multinational firms move increasingly to using robots and other computer-assisted techniques for performing tasks traditionally done by labor. Should progressives and opponents of capitalist globalization in general support the idea of a universal basic income?

Chang: Universal basic income (UBI) has many different versions, but it is a libertarian idea in the sense that it puts emphasis on maximizing individual freedom rather than on collective identity and solidarity.

All citizens in countries at more than middle-income level have some entitlements to a basic amount of resources. (In the poorer countries, there are virtually none.) They have access to some health care, education, pension, water and other "basic" things in life. The idea behind UBI is that the resource entitlements should be provided to individuals in cash (rather than in kind) as much as possible, so that they can exercise maximum choice.

The right-wing version of UBI, supported by Friedrich von Hayek and Milton Friedman, the gurus of neoliberalism, is that the government should provide its citizens with a basic income at the subsistence level, while providing no (or little) further goods and services. As far as I can see, this is the version of UBI supported by the Silicon Valley companies. I am totally against this.

There are left-wing libertarians who support UBI, who would set its level quite high, which would require quite a high degree of income redistribution. But they

too believe that collective provision of “basic” goods and services through the welfare state should be minimized (although their “minimum” would be considerably larger than the neo-liberal one). This version is more acceptable to me, but I am not convinced by it.

First, if the members of a society are collectively provisioning some goods and services, they have the collective right to influence how people use their basic entitlements.

Second, provision through a citizenship-based universal welfare state makes social services like health, education, child care, unemployment insurance and pensions much cheaper through bulk purchases and pooling of risk. The fact that the US spends at least 50 percent more on health care than other rich countries do (17 percent of GDP in the US compared to at most 11.5 percent of GDP in Switzerland) but has the worst health indicators is very suggestive of the potential problems that we could have in a system of UBI combined with private provision of basic social services, even if the level of UBI is high.

Chomsky: The answer, I think, is: “it all depends” — namely, on the socioeconomic and political context in which the idea is advanced. The society to which we should aspire, I think, would respect the concept “jedem nach seinen Bedürfnissen”: to each according to their needs. Among the primary needs for most people is a life of dignity and fulfillment. That translates in particular as work undertaken under their own control, typically in solidarity and interaction with others, creative and of value to the society at large. Such work can take many forms: building a beautiful and needed bridge, the challenging task of teaching-and-learning with young children, solving an outstanding problem in number theory, or myriad other options. Providing for such needs is surely within the realm of possibility.

In the current world, firms increasingly turn to automation, as they have been doing as far back as we look; the cotton gin, for example. Currently, there is little evidence that the effects are beyond the norm. Major impacts would show up in productivity, which is in fact low by the standards of the early post-World War II era. Meanwhile there is a great deal of work to be done — from reconstructing collapsing infrastructure, to establishing decent schools, to advancing knowledge and understanding, and far more. There are many willing hands. There are ample resources. But the socioeconomic system is so dysfunctional that it is not capable

of bringing these factors together in a satisfactory way — and under the current Trump-Republican campaign to create a tiny America trembling within walls, the situation can only become worse. Insofar as robots and other forms of automation can free people from routine and dangerous work and liberate them for more creative endeavors (and, particularly in the leisure-deprived US, with time for themselves), that's all to the good. UBI could have a place, though it is too crude an instrument to achieve the preferable Marxist version.