

Us and Them

A Study of Alienation and World Order*

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Abstract

This article focuses on the division of the world into mutually exclusive identity groups and its implications for international affairs. To this end, the concepts of alienation and estrangement are developed as useful analytical tools, and the sources of alienation and estrangement in the state system are discussed. The Bahá'í model of world unity and world civilization is presented as a value system that specifically highlights the need to overcome divisions in global society. Lastly, the concepts developed are employed to assess the phenomenon of European integration.

Résumé

Cet article se concentre sur la division du monde en groupes d'identité qui s'excluent mutuellement ainsi que sur ces implications dans les relations internationales. Étudiant ce thème, les concepts d'aliénation et d'éloignement sont introduits en tant qu'instruments d'analyse, et leurs sources dans le système d'états sont traitées. Le modèle bahá'í d'unité mondiale et de civilisation mondiale est présenté comme un système de valeurs qui spécifiquement met au premier plan la nécessité de surmonter les divisions dans une société planétaire. En dernier lieu les concepts élaborés sont employés aussi pour estimer le phénomène de l'intégration européenne.

Resumen

Esta disertación enfoca sobre la división del mundo en grupos de identidad mutuamente exclusivas y sus consecuencias referente a los asuntos internacionales. Para este fin se desarrollan, como herramientas útiles del análisis, los conceptos de enajenación y extrañamiento, y se discuten las fuentes de enajenación y extrañamiento en sistemas de cuerpos políticos. El modelo bahá'í de unidad mundial y civilización mundial se presenta aquí como un sistema de virtudes que específicamente hace resaltar la necesidad de superar las divisiones en una sociedad global. Por último, los conceptos desarrollados se utilizan para tomar medida del fenómeno de la integración europea.

How does one live according to reason if the *other*, the *alien*, the *foreigner* whether remote or nearby may burst into one's world at any moment?

—Raymond Aron

We live in a world of great turmoil, and students of international politics, amidst so many new developments, need to try to distinguish fundamental from superficial change. This is no easy task, and one's conclusions are

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ultimately the product of the assumptions and conceptual framework brought to bear on the question. For instance, do we, or do we not, have a "New World Order" as announced by an American president early in this decade? Clearly, any answer depends on what one means by "new," and, more basically, what one understood to be the essential characteristics of the "old" world order.

On the one hand, the end of the Cold War does represent something very new. Whether we consider security issues, relations between so-called developed and developing countries, or the evolution of the world economy, the Cold War influenced, directly or indirectly, the substance and priorities of world politics for more than forty years. It provided the international system with its characteristic bipolar structure, in the absence of which many analysts and practitioners of foreign affairs now seem somewhat disoriented. The lack of consensus among these experts about how to evaluate and respond to war in the former Yugoslavia is symptomatic of this new uncertainty.

On the other hand, if one takes a longer view of diplomatic history, contemporary changes may not seem quite so novel. The Warsaw Pact is not the first alliance system to dissolve, Russia is not the first power to give up, or be deprived of, its suzerainty over other states, and communism is not the first ideology to lose its grip on the political life of a people or peoples. As for Yugoslavia, conflict in the Balkans, and specifically among those ethnic nations, is certainly far from new.

However we may interpret contemporary trends, we are still living in a world of "aliens" and "indigenes," a world of peoples divided and distinguished from one another by strongly held, mutually exclusive, national (and other) identities. That this pattern of world order is prone to destructive conflict is only too apparent, and as long as widespread polarization of this kind continues, there is every reason to believe that social conflict, at all levels, will remain a dominant characteristic of world affairs. It is this division of the world into "us and them" in international relations that will form the theme of this article.

In discussing this theme, this article first presents the concepts of alienation and estrangement as useful elements in a conceptual framework for understanding the state system's history and for evaluating trends in its development. This framework is then applied to a topical issue in world affairs: the integration of Western Europe. Though a variety of ideas have been incorporated, what follows is undeniably, and perhaps most profoundly, influenced by the vision of world order and world unity articulated over one hundred years ago by Bahá'u'lláh.

Alienation and Estrangement: Definitions

The terms *alienation* and *estrangement* have many nuances and have figured prominently in the history of both religion and politics.¹ Without going into detail,

1. For a full account of this history, see Der Derian, *On Diplomacy*, particularly chapters 1-4.

I would suggest that, originally, “to alienate” simply meant to give up something, that is, to separate oneself from it. However, such an act seems often to have a characteristic affective dimension: the separation is accompanied by sentiments ranging from indifference to hostility.² James Der Derian explains further that

the English term has expanded to include, among its meanings, the separation between individuals; between individuals and society, supernatural beings, and states of mind; between peoples; and . . . , *between states*. (*On Diplomacy* 14)

The term *estrangement* carries much the same connotation, since to make something “strange” is rarely considered positive, and almost never comfortable. Interestingly, it is alienation that has found the widest application in discussion of the individual, where it connotes to be removed from one’s true self (Marx, “Critique”) or correct state of mind (the French word *aliénation*). Estrangement, however, is invoked to describe social conditions: the cooling of affection and a condition of distance between or among people or peoples. For our purposes, the fact that “aliens,” in the sense of foreign nationals, are so frequently “strangers,” suggests that the two terms have fields of application in international relations, which, though not identical, overlap to a great extent, and we will employ them accordingly.

Self and Other: The Problem of Identity³

What are the origins of alienation in international politics? Why and how has the state system estranged people(s) from one another? These questions will be treated from two angles. First will be considered the extent to which any collective identity requires a distinction between “self” and “other,” and what sort of reaction(s) confrontation with an “other” may bring forth. Second, the historical evolution of the state system will be examined as a process of alienation.

There is no reason to believe that the “state of nature,” the “war of all against all” described by Enlightenment political philosopher Thomas Hobbes, ever occurred. Historical and anthropological evidence indicates that human beings have always lived in larger or smaller social groups, acquiring identity and

2. Though the second part of the definition is conventional, this particular formulation is from Der Derian, *On Diplomacy* 28.

3. The concept of “otherness” is used in a number of different fields and is particularly prominent in feminist scholarship. My primary interest (and competence) is in international politics, and I have drawn primarily on the literature of that field when making my argument. It should also be noted that this article focuses on the evolution of alienation among states and that the entire framework of the state system has been critiqued as a patriarchal construction by “other” (i.e., feminist and Third World) voices in international relations. In this connection, see, among others, Peterson and Runyan, *Global Gender Issues*; Enloe, *Bananas, Beaches and Bases*; *Millennium* 17.3 (1988), a special issue on women in international relations; and Parpart and Staudt, *Women and the State in Africa*.

security in numbers. The fact that the human race has survived and progressed suggests that the various forms of group identity (family, clan, wider ethnic groups, nations, etc.) have, at least to some extent, been efficient for our species.

However, the interaction of such groups has at times been problematic, since the identity they provide has often been founded upon a profound belief in the group's uniqueness and special worth. This phenomenon has been very widespread, as attested to by such diverse examples as the cosmology of the Yoruba people of West Africa, who believe that the first place created in the physical universe was their spiritual capital at Ile-Ife; the traditional Chinese outlook, in which their empire was the political center of the world (the "Middle Kingdom"); and the assumed cultural superiority of Europeans during the ages of "discovery" and imperialism.

Given such intense ethnocentrism, when a group (a collective "self") encounters an "other," the "other" necessarily represents an unknown, an enigma. Most historical responses to this enigma have not been very positive. One characteristically (but not uniquely) Western way of dealing with the "enigma of external otherness" is to deny it, to "treat it as the innocent, primitive, terrorist, oriental, evil-empire, savage, communist, underdeveloped, or pagan whose intrinsic defects demand that it be conquered or converted" (Connolly, "Identity and Difference" 326). Why such a reaction? Perhaps because fully engaging the enigma calls one's own identity into question through observations and questions such as: They are not like us. Are they better? Why are we as we are? Why shouldn't we be like them? One can, however, avoid the malaise and self-doubt such an analysis may engender by simply concluding: They should be like us. We are better than they (so it doesn't matter who they really are). As Connolly explains further:

If conquest and conversion are the two authorized orientations to otherness, neither engages the enigma of otherness. Both operate as contending and complementary strategies by which a superior people maintains its self-assurance by bringing an inferior people under its domination or tutelage. These two modes function together as premises and signs of superiority; each supports the other in the effort to erase the threat of difference to self-identity. ("Identity and Difference" 328)

Mikhail Bakhtin called such a viewpoint *monological*, and explained how it reproduces itself by refusing to "hear" any other "voices":

Ultimately, *monologism* denies that there exists outside of it another consciousness, with the same rights, and capable of responding on an equal footing, another and equal *I* (*thou*). The monologue is accomplished and deaf to the other's response, it does not await it and does not grant it any *decisive* force. Monologue makes do without the other; that is why to some extent it objectivizes all reality. Monologue pretends to be the *last word*. (*Problems* 318)

That such things have happened we all know; that national, cultural, linguistic, religious, and other groups still struggle for dominance in various contexts is sadly only too obvious. What is particularly useful about Connolly's and Bakhtin's formulations, however, is that they highlight to what extent collective identity has been a function of difference.

The interdependence between identity and difference is poignantly illustrated by the fate of those sensitive few through the ages who have tried to bridge the gap, to engage the enigma. In his book *The Conquest of America*, Tzvetan Todorov describes the experiences of Las Casas and Sahugan, two Spanish clerics who, in trying to learn more about the Aztecs of the New World to convert them, developed an appreciation of and respect for the Native Americans' identity. In the end, these two saw their status as missionaries called into question, and they lost their influence in Spain. Thus, by trying to overcome difference, they endangered their own identity.⁴

The last point is pertinent, I would suggest, to the contemporary debate about world order. Many events indicate that the competitive anarchic state system inherited from the past is inadequate to provide for a secure future, but this point has not yet been widely acknowledged. Many factors account for this, but one reason is surely the extent to which people's sense of self is grounded in nationalistic and other group identities rooted in the past. As we have seen, such inherited identity is, *ceteris paribus*, difficult, risky, and painful to transcend.⁵

Indeed, in the field of international relations there is a parallel to the fate of the Spanish missionaries. Those who advocated a rethinking of the assumptions that underlie the division of the world into sovereign states initially lost credibility in the field.⁶ However, recent events have revived interest in the idea of world order, suggesting that these questions cannot for long be avoided.

What was, and is, lacking at both the theoretical and personal levels is a universal code that would foster, as Todorov suggests:

4. In this regard it is interesting to note that many foreign offices limit the length of time diplomats may remain in any one foreign capital lest they become too sympathetic to the host country's point of view.

5. Workers at the Refugee Support Centre in London have told me that to integrate into a new country successfully, refugees actually have to develop a new sense of self that is free of their previous national identity.

6. The World Order Models Project in the 1970s is the best example in this regard. Each volume in this series was the product of a team from a particular region or culture, and presented a critique of the states system and an alternative "relevant" utopia. The work was severely criticized by leading scholars in the field of international relations for ignoring the "realities" of power politics and for relying too much on abstract modeling and not enough on empirical data. World order literature includes: Falk, *A Study*; Galtung, *True Worlds*; and Kothari, *Footsteps*. Critiques of this approach are summed up in Rosenau, ed., *Global Voices* 42.

. . . equality without its compelling to accept identity, but also difference without its degenerating into superiority/inferiority. (*Conquest* 249)

The acute contemporary need for such a broader frame of reference is emphasized by Connolly, who suggests that

we live in a time of recognizable *global* danger that . . . provides cultural impetus to rethink the field of identity and difference through which contemporary states define and cope with otherness. ("Identity and Difference" 330)

This last point permits some degree of optimism. Though one must acknowledge the depth of collective identity and the strength of the impulse to avoid troubling questions posed by social, cultural, and political plurality, there is also an increasingly powerful countervailing force: growing global concern about war, environmental degradation, poverty, and the deprivation of human rights. Attempts to deal with such issues in purely national or ethnic terms seem only to aggravate and complicate them further; they cry for comprehensive solutions. Thus, in the late twentieth century, humanity may indeed be more motivated and better prepared to address the problems arising from "otherness." With this in mind the particular dynamics of estrangement at work in the contemporary state system will be discussed in more depth.

From One to Many

The contemporary global state system is the direct descendant of the European state system, which emerged sometime between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries. Though we may regret the fact that other political cultures and institutions were suppressed, undermined, or destroyed as a result of European imperialism and colonialism, it was the European form and style of international relations that became universal.⁷ Therefore, the roots of alienation and estrangement must be sought in the origins of the European state system.

This is a very complex story, the key facts of which are highly contested. We will begin with the "classical" view that the outline of the state system was drawn at the Congress of Münster, which negotiated the Peace of Westphalia in 1648. As a result of the Thirty Years War, the medieval vision of a unified "Christendom" with a spiritual and secular ruler, the Pope and the Holy Roman Emperor respectively, was eventually replaced by a conception of Europe divided among various sovereign princes and political communities. As Maurice Keens-Soper explains:

The predicate of the [state] system was universally understood after the Westphalia settlement to be the rejection in right and in power of any political authority to "give

7. See Northedge, *International Political System*, Chapter 3.

the law," to prescribe conduct or constrain by force the actions of its members. ("Practice" 32)

Such a development involved major changes in the roles of both Pope and Emperor in European affairs. The Emperor was reduced to the status of *primer inter pares* among the German princes, and the papacy declined from the "international government" of Christendom to the status of a minor Italian state (Keens-Soper, "Practice" 42).

Also as an outcome of this change, the papacy came to lose its role as mediator among the nations of Europe. Der Derian explains that at the Congress of Münster the Pope played the role of mediator for the last time and tried unsuccessfully to declare the treaty null and void by the bull *Zelo domus Dei* (Der Derian, *On Diplomacy* 110–11). Thus, sovereign, independent states came to be the ultimate mediators (i.e., the means for interaction and coexistence) between national groups. In this capacity they perfected the increasingly formalized practice of diplomacy as the principal vehicle through which *international* relations were conducted.

At this point, the nations were politically alienated from the unity of Church and Empire, as well as conceptually and geographically separate from each other. Each individual state perceived the whole of its surrounding environment as an alien area. From this configuration of material and conceptual space arose the distinction between domestic and international politics that persists to the present. Domestic politics in the early modern age were concerned with the creation and consolidation of national political community and order; while international politics, or more precisely *foreign* policy, was concerned with protecting the new and fragile domestic polity from intrusions from without. International relations appeared as the "no man's land" between the domestic political orders where the majority of people found their identity.

However, Europeans still shared a cultural heritage and worldview, which, it is often argued, enabled this anarchical society of states to endure without degenerating into a "state of nature."⁸ More specifically, Northedge points to the influences of classical Roman law, Christianity, the ethnocentrism generated by confrontation with an alien Islamic world, geographical proximity, and later the possibility of settling conflicts by extra-European territorial compensations as the elements of cohesion in the system that counteracted and contained the system's internal competitiveness (Northedge, *International Political System*, Chapter 4).

As early as the eighteenth century it was suggested that because of these common elements and a common interest in the maintenance of a "balance of power" among the principal actors, the European system was a "comity," a "concert," or even a prototypal "federation."⁹ Nonetheless, it was not until the

8. For a full treatment of this viewpoint, see Bull, *Anarchical*.

9. A popular contemporary account of this view was Heeren, *Manual of the History*.

wars of the French Revolution and the Napoleonic threat to the continued existence of the state system that collective action was taken to make the concert a reality. This new system, embodied in the territorial settlements of the Congress of Vienna¹⁰ and the formal pattern of political cooperation created by the Quadruple Alliance,¹¹ is often credited with stabilizing international politics until the Crimean War of 1854. Subsequent events, of course, set the stage for World War I and the appearance of all the new elements of twentieth-century international relations.

In summary, we can say that while profound estrangement inhered in the European international system, it was to some degree tempered, or mediated, by other factors. However, with the expansion of this system beyond its European origins, the bases for a "comity" of nations have been sharply reduced and, at times, put under great strain. Consider the following points:

- Among the European states, the five principal actors in the system possessed relatively equal capabilities. In the contemporary system, the superpower(s),¹² by definition, are far ahead of any other state, at least in military terms. Even more problematic is the fact that one can no longer establish clear weights and rankings of power and powers. For instance, is Japan (a global economic "power") more powerful than India (both a regional economic and military "power")?
- As mentioned above, within Europe, interstate tensions could be eased by providing contending states with acquisitions outside the continent. This is clearly impossible in a universal system without violating the integrity of some members.
- The ethnocentric affinity derived in Europe from confronting alien others, as discussed in the previous section, is yet to evolve fully on a planetary level (though we have suggested there are hopeful signs).
- The European international legal order had a shared (i.e., Roman and Christian) foundation. This foundation could not persist in a world in which many important states were not Christian. Though international law has certainly survived and even evolved in its new context, the level of emotional commitment that underpins the legal order is limited.

10. The Congress that ended the Napoleonic wars and redrew the political map of Europe to create a balance among the Great Powers.

11. The formal alliance among Great Britain, Russia, Austria-Hungary, and Prussia in the nineteenth century.

12. In the wake of the break up of the Soviet Union, the International Institute of Strategic Studies in London designated the United States as the sole remaining "superpower."

Such examples could be multiplied, but my point is, as articulated by Northedge:

In spreading on a world-wide scale the system has acquired variety and novelty. But its joints creak and ache more than men ever remember them having done in the past. (*International Political System* 80)

In other words, the estrangement and alienation among nations has been accentuated and the means to mediate it concomitantly weakened.

“The Earth is But One Country”

The discussion so far suggests that the contemporary national (and other divisions) which prevail among humankind are problematic, and it must be acknowledged that this is an explicitly normative point of view reflecting Bahá'í values. However, any debate over world order is fundamentally about which social values should receive highest priority in determining the collective goals of human life. For instance, Evan Luard argues that the history of international society can best be understood as a succession of different value systems or ideologies (*International Society*, Chapter 5).

If an increasing number of people are calling into question the prevailing order, and by implication, some or all of the values that underpin it, then it would seem pertinent and timely to consider other models based on different values. One coherent vision of a new world order is presented in the literature of the Bahá'í Faith, and this vision has in recent years attracted increasing attention. In fact, Bahá'ís view their own world community as a “model for study,” a sort of living laboratory for the creation of a new planetary civilization based on the oneness of humankind (Universal House of Justice, *Promise* 37). Bahá'í literature pertinent to world order is extensive, and here attention will be confined to our themes of alienation and estrangement.¹³

Bahá'u'lláh claimed to be the fulfillment of the eschatological hopes of all past religions and the divinely appointed initiator of an age of human fulfillment. His teachings stress the need to transcend those limited identities that have given rise to conflict and replace them with a world-embracing outlook. As Bahá'u'lláh wrote late in his life:

O ye men of wisdom among nations! Shut your eyes to estrangement, then fix your gaze upon unity. Cleave tenaciously unto that which will lead to the well-being and tranquillity of all mankind. This span of earth is but one homeland and one habitation. It behoveth you to abandon vainglory which causeth alienation and to set your hearts on whatever will ensure harmony. In the estimation of the people of Bahá man's glory lieth in his knowledge, his upright conduct, his praiseworthy character, his wisdom, and not in his nationality or rank. (*Tablets* 67–68)

13. An introduction to the subject is Bramson-Lerche, “Analysis.”

And again:

Of old it hath been revealed: "Love of one's country is an element of the Faith of God." The Tongue of Grandeur hath, however, in the day of His manifestation proclaimed: "It is not his to boast who loveth his country, but it is his who loveth the world." Through the power released by these exalted words He hath lent a fresh impulse and set a new direction to the birds of men's hearts, and hath obliterated every trace of restriction and limitation from God's holy Book. (*Tablets* 87–88)

These two passages touch on many themes prevalent in Bahá'u'lláh's writings. He states clearly that the divisions that have fostered estrangement are at the heart of humanity's contemporary predicament. Such divisions are inherited from a past when they were functional, but now world unity and world citizenship are required if the current crises are to be overcome.

However, these quotations should not be understood to suggest that the Bahá'í writings deny the legitimacy or seek to subvert the foundations of the nation-state. Quite the contrary:

Let there be no misgivings as to the animating purpose of the world-wide Law of Bahá'u'lláh. Far from aiming at the subversion of the existing foundations of society, it seeks to broaden its basis, to remold its institutions in a manner consonant with the needs of an ever-changing world. It can conflict with no legitimate allegiances, nor can it undermine essential loyalties. Its purpose is neither to stifle the flame of a sane and intelligent patriotism in men's hearts, nor to abolish the system of national autonomy so essential if the evils of excessive centralization are to be avoided. It does not ignore, nor does it attempt to suppress, the diversity of ethnical origins, of climate, of history, of language and tradition, of thought and habit, that differentiate the peoples and nations of the world. It calls for a wider loyalty, for a larger aspiration than any that has animated the human race. It insists upon the subordination of national impulses and interests to the imperative claims of a unified world. (Shoghi Effendi, *The World Order* 41–42)

This passage suggests that it is possible to reconcile the division of the world into nations and states with a broader commitment to human solidarity, and the political means suggested in Bahá'í literature is the alienation of sovereignty from the national to the global level through the integration of all states into a world federal structure. Though administrative divisions would still exist, political communities would share an identity of world citizenship. Thus, some of the form but not the estrangement of the state system would remain.

Speaking about political prejudice as a divisive force, 'Abdu'l-Bahá wrote in 1919 to the Executive Committee of the Central Organization for a Durable Peace (at the Hague):

As to the patriotic prejudice, this is also due to absolute ignorance, for the surface of the earth is one native land. Every one can live in any spot on the terrestrial globe.

Therefore all the world is man's birthplace. These boundaries and outlets have been devised by man. In the creation, such boundaries and outlets were not assigned. Europe is one continent, Asia is one continent, Africa is one continent, Australia is one continent, but some of the souls, from personal motives and selfish interests, have divided each one of these continents and considered a certain part as their own country. God has set up no frontier between France and Germany; they are continuous. Yea, in the first centuries, selfish souls, for the promotion of their own interests, have assigned boundaries and outlets and have, day by day, attached more importance to these, until this led to intense enmity, bloodshed and rapacity in subsequent centuries. In the same way, this will continue indefinitely, and if this conception of patriotism remains limited within a certain circle, it will be the primary cause of the world's destruction. No wise and just person will acknowledge these imaginary distinctions. Every limited area which we call our native country we regard as our motherland, whereas the terrestrial globe is the motherland of all, and not any restricted area. (*Selections* 300)

And elsewhere he said quite simply:

... whatever brings division into the world of existence causes death. (*Paris Talks* 139)

These few quotations, taken together, give an overview of Bahá'í views on the question of "self" and "other" in international politics. In declaring that our species has come of age Bahá'u'lláh calls upon us all to replace our limited notions of who we are with a vision of our common origin and destiny on this planet, a planet whose very smallness in the vastness of the cosmos dramatically highlights his proclamation that "this span of earth is but one homeland and one habitation" (Bahá'u'lláh, *Tablets* 67).

Europe: What Kind of Unity?

In this section, the concepts of estrangement and alienation developed above are used to evaluate a major trend in international affairs, the integration of Western Europe. I have chosen to focus on European integration for a number of reasons. First, with the ratification of the Maastricht Treaty and the creation of the European Union, these states have brought into being the most extensive supranational community yet to emerge in contemporary history. From a Bahá'í perspective, this development can be seen as an important precursor to parallel developments at the global level. Second, the European experience contains both old and new, both positive and negative elements, which have given rise to controversy over its significance and possible future.

The first step in European integration after World War II was the creation of the European Coal and Steel Community, which came into existence through the Treaty of Paris of April, 1951, with six members (France, West Germany, Italy, Belgium, Luxembourg, and the Netherlands). In March of 1957, the Treaty of Rome added the European Economic Community and the European

Atomic Energy Community, thus creating a diverse network of functional cooperation and a multinational economy. Over the years, the European Communities expanded their membership to twelve (i.e., adding Great Britain, Spain, Portugal, Greece, Denmark, and Ireland), and, despite opposition from conservative elements, pursued the long-term goals of full political and economic union. As mentioned above, the latest step in this evolution is the Maastricht Treaty, which brought into being a new institutional arrangement known as the European Union.¹⁴

With the decline of communism and the changes in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, many questions have arisen about the identity and future role of European institutions. Should their scope expand to encompass DeGaulle's vision of Europe "from the Atlantic to the Urals," or should it remain more restrained? There seems to be little difficulty in absorbing prosperous Western countries such as Sweden, Finland, or Austria, but former Eastern bloc states are more difficult because their economies and political institutions do not always conform entirely to the desired models. Also, the rejection of Morocco's application for membership and the many obstacles to Turkey's efforts to join have raised doubts about Europe's ability to accommodate cultural diversity.¹⁵ Is the European Union in fact a "Fortress Europe" against violence and poverty elsewhere, or is it a harbinger of a more peaceful, more coherent style of international politics?

In *The Promise of World Peace*, the Universal House of Justice has written that in regard to world order there is a "paralysis of will" rooted

in a deep-seated conviction of the inevitable quarrelsomeness of mankind, which has led to the reluctance to entertain the possibility of subordinating national self-interest to the requirements of world order, and in an unwillingness to face courageously the far-reaching implications of establishing a united world authority. (23)

Then the message goes on to suggest that

the tentative steps towards world order, especially since World War II, give hopeful signs. The increasing tendency of groups of nations to formalize relationships which enable them to cooperate in matters of mutual interest suggests that eventually all nations could overcome this paralysis. The Association of South East Asian Nations, the Caribbean Community and Common Market, the Central American Common Market, the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance, the European Communities, the League of Arab States, the Organization of African Unity, the Organization of American States, the South Pacific Forum—all the joint endeavors represented by such organizations prepare *the path to world order*. (*Promise* 23–24, emphasis added)

14. The literature on European integration is immense and varied. One good introduction is Daltrop, *Politics*.

15. These issues have acquired further salience in the wake of economic recession, xenophobia and concerns about immigration, and the swing to the right in politics.

Here we have a clear *raison d'être* for regional international organizations: through formalized cooperation on matters of mutual interest, they provide a model for comparable action on a global scale. In this regard, the European Union, which has now eliminated the last barriers to intracommunity trade, made significant progress toward true monetary union, and moved further into the difficult domain of political integration, may well provide useful lessons for an approach to these issues at a world level in the (not too distant) future.

However, regional integration is also an expression of insecurity. States with something in common, geographically or culturally, are moved to suppress their mutual estrangement in the face of a perceived common threat from an even more alien environment. For instance, in 1991, the Association of South East Asian Nations adopted the goal of eventually becoming a full customs union, allegedly because of fears of protectionism in the West (BBC World Service, October 9, 1991). Clearly, a world divided into competing regions economically or politically, would not be stable or desirable. Indicative of the potential dangers in this arrangement is the fact that this was the model of world order portrayed in George Orwell's novel *1984*.

Europe, in particular, has special responsibilities and challenges in trying to ensure that regional integration makes a positive rather than negative contribution to world order. First, Europe is responsible for the form and much of the content of international relations as explained above. Second, European regionalism is the most developed and, so far, has had the greatest impact on international politics.¹⁶ In this sense, European integration already provides an example to other regions.

Furthermore, in earlier centuries Western contact with non-Western peoples was not conducted on a basis of equality. As Hedley Bull explains further:

In the 1880s the Scottish natural lawyer James Lorimer expressed the orthodox doctrine of the time when he wrote that mankind was divided into civilised humanity, barbarous humanity and savage humanity. Civilised humanity comprised the nations of Europe and the Americas, which were entitled to full recognition as members of international society. Barbarous humanity comprised the independent states of Asia—Turkey, Persia, Siam, China and Japan—which were entitled to partial recognition. And savage humanity was the rest of mankind, which stood beyond the pale of the society of states. . . . (*Anarchical Society* 38)

And again:

By the nineteenth century the orthodox doctrine of the positivist international lawyers was that international society was a European association, to which non-European states could be admitted only if and when they met a standard of civilisation laid down by the Europeans—the test which Turkey was the first to pass when under

16. The Common Market is the world's leading exporter.

Article VIII of the Treaty of Paris of 1856 she was admitted to “the public law and concert of Europe.” (*Anarchical Society* 34)

Today international society is no longer formally based on a single culture or civilization, but the question remains whether within Europe, traces of “classical” Eurocentrism persist. To what degree is the European Union perceived as a means to perpetuate a traditional distinction between “us” and “them”? Is this a legitimate goal? To what extent is the protection and preservation of culture positive? When does it become exclusivist? How do these issues affect Europe’s image in the world? These questions will take time to resolve, and this discussion has simply tried to place them in a context that highlights their broader implications.

Conclusion

The implication of the preceding discussion of alienation and estrangement for European integration can be simply stated: To the extent that the expansion and consolidation of European institutions—however wide their geographical scope and however many political, economic, or social functions they might encompass—contribute to the reduction of the prevailing division and polarization among the peoples of the world, they make a positive contribution to the overall evolution of world order. To the extent that European integration aggravates current cleavages or creates new ones within the international system, it would represent an obstacle to be overcome on the way to a more positive world order. The European Community might well exercise influence in both directions, and an overall judgment on its impact on wider global trends would require detailed study. The argument here has sought rather to highlight those tensions in any regional community that render it, in regard to world order, both “part of the problem” and “part of the solution.”

Finally, this analysis has been based on the conviction that the outcome of any regional or global undertaking is primarily determined by the commitment, values, and goals of its architects and participants. In this regard, the Bahá'í model of world order represents a compelling alternative to the current prevalence of conflict and violence, and Bahá'u'lláh's declaration that “the earth is but one country, and mankind its citizens” (*Tablets* 167) provides a clear direction for the development of regional communities. To the extent that exclusivist tendencies are muted and experiences in supranationalism are shared, regional integration can bring closer that day when all peoples do finally agree to “face courageously the far-reaching implications of establishing a united world authority” (Universal House of Justice, *Promise* 23)

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