

The Intellectual's Dilemma in the Modern World

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The title of my article invites us to consider what we mean by the "intellectual" and the "modern world" and how these two, multifaceted words may be related to one another. This is a challenge; the risks of so broad a theme are all too evident. In the hope of outlining the main points clearly, I must leave out much that would also be relevant and interesting. My warrant for this attempt is the very proliferation of writings by intellectuals on intellectuals.

This is the way writers for the *The Oxford English Dictionary* defined "intellectuals" in 1936: "The class consisting of the education portion of the population regarded as capable of forming public opinion." No attempt is made to distinguish groups within the "educated portion," and the capacity to form public opinion is neatly qualified by saying that intellectuals are regarded as having this capacity. Whether they do or not is left open. With a deft touch, another, later edition of the Oxford dictionary reserves the critical use of the word for another term, "intellectualism." Already in 1838 this latter term was defined as "devotion to *merely* intellectual culture or pursuits." The emphasis on "merely" is my own.

What of American rather than English definitions? In 1934, *Webster's Unabridged Dictionary* had this entry under "intellectuals": "Informed intellectual people collectively; the educated or professional group, class, or party—often derisive." Note that the American definition includes the critical or derisive use of "intellectual," which in the English definition is reserved for the special term "intellectualism." By 1961, *Webster's* had these facets under better control; that is, the pejorative use of "intellectual" has been integrated in the definition. Now we read: "A class of well-educated articulate persons constituting a distinct recognized and self-conscious social stratum within a nation and claiming or assuming for itself the guiding role; an intellectual, social, or political vanguard." The ambivalences of American culture are just below the surface of this formulation. Intellectuals

are well-educated and articulate, but perhaps also too articulate. They are recognized, but also distinct and self-conscious, perhaps again too much so. They claim the guiding role and perhaps rightly; but then again they assume that role for themselves, and perhaps they assume too much. In pointing up these ambivalences I have spelled out the derisive meaning mentioned in 1934. The words used to characterize "the intellectual" seem always on the verge of slipping from the positive to an equally possible negative connotation.

This loaded use of "intellectuals" is a distinctly American phenomenon. We make a clear distinction, for example, between the adjective "intellectual" which has a positive connotation and the plural noun "intellectuals" which has a negative connotation. It is as if we always meant "mere intellectuals" but dropped the qualifier because it goes without saying. Harvey McPherson, a lawyer, noted this usage when he stated on one occasion that "a number of politicians I've known had very considerable intellectual powers, but most of them would have recoiled at the idea that they were 'intellectuals.'" McPherson's statement is based on long experience in Washington, but it is a little startling to find it corroborated by a bona fide intellectual, the Nobel Prize winning novelist William Faulkner. Upon receiving the National Book Award in 1955, Faulkner referred in his address to the pursuit of art as "a peaceful hobby like breeding Dalmatians." As artists, he said, we are "constantly and steadily occupied by, obsessed with, immersed in trying to do the impossible, faced always with the failure which we decline to recognize and accept. . . . [But] this way we stay out of trouble, keep out of the way of the practical and busy people who carry the burden of America." Faulkner accepts the dichotomy. The practical people deal with what can be done, artists with what cannot be done but must be attempted anyway.

The dictionary definitions I have cited and others tell us much about the intellectual's role, even when they do

not give one neat definition. Intellectuals are recognized as the educated part of the population, variously engaged in independent thinking and the formation of public opinion, sometimes constituting a professional group that is recognized and self-conscious, but also falling short of their leading role in their own eyes and those of others. Intelligent people are respected, but intellectuals as critics are suspect. This usage is biased, because practical affairs and the status quo have their defenders, who are intellectuals every bit as much as the critics. The one-sided, critical usage prevails, perhaps because in a business civilization practical people view mere theory with some suspicion, and intellectuals defending that civilization want to avoid designations that undermine their case.

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Those striving to do the impossible find fault with the possible; and since people at large remain earthbound and ridden with defects, they repay their critics with derision and contempt.

This mutual disrespect between intellectuals and practical people explains the curious fact that many people doing intellectual work are not "intellectuals" in their own eyes or those of others. Engineers, physicians, lawyers, many other professionals try—to use Faulkner's distinction—to do the possible like the other people, who "carry the burden of America." Many of these professionals are highly capable, think independently, and guide public opinion; but few if any are philosophically concerned with "man, society, nature, and the cosmos," which Edward Shils considers the hallmark of "intellectuals" in still another definition. Instead, these men of applied learning are busily engaged in building the technically complex society of today and tomorrow, so that most of them are an integral part of the world that the intellectuals without quotation marks tend to criticize. In the modern world only those educated people are intellectuals in this narrow sense, who criticize the world of the possible, which is the principal concern of the practical people, including those doing intellectual work. The critique by intellectuals derives from attempting to achieve the impossible, while declining to accept the failure with which such attempts are faced.

I have introduced our second conundrum: the "modern world." The current term "the Third World," which implies a First World and Second World as well, makes it easy to be brief, although we all know that these slogans of international politics pretend to a unity and uniformity that does not exist. Leaving this difficulty aside, I shall

mean by the "First World" that group of countries which pioneered the development of capitalism in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, or, as I prefer to say, they pioneered the commercialization of land, labor, and capital. The reference is to the countries of northwestern Europe and to their permanent settlements overseas such as the United States, Canada, Australia, New Zealand—and South Africa. Japan is an early addition to this list, and perhaps the state of Israel is a late and precarious one. The "Second World" comprises all countries of centrally planned industrialization under Communist rule, which means that I add a political criterion to the fact of more or less successful industrialization. The "Third World" is commonly understood to comprise the poor countries. Only a few of them were represented among the fifty-one countries that founded the United Nations in 1945. A disproportionate part of the Third World belongs to the ninety-one additional countries that joined the UN between 1946 and 1976. Many of them are former colonies which have acquired their sovereignty only recently. All of the poor countries are "areas of darkness" or "wounded civilizations," as V.S. Naipaul has said of India. Dark and wounded not only in the sense of stark poverty, widespread disease, and only isolated pockets of economic advance; dark and wounded also because their populations are exposed to signs of abundance and well-being in countries beyond their frontiers. Dark and wounded because these poor countries lack a secure sense of national identity. What then is the intellectual's role in the modern world, subdivided into these three unequal parts, when we define intellectuals as those educated people who criticize the world of the possible? I shall attempt an answer to this question in three parts, because the intellectual's role varies, depending upon which of the three worlds is under discussion.

First World

Since I have defined the modern world largely in terms of economic development, we can say very roughly that the First World became modern in the late eighteenth century. There are phases within this meaning of modernity: we speak of early industrialization, of a first and second and even a third industrial revolution—meaning broadly steam-driven machinery, assembly-line production, and now the age of atomic power and computerization. In using the "modern world" in this technical-economic sense, we must not neglect the relevant past.

The First World of countries had its beginning in the eighteenth century and so did the intellectuals' critique of the industrial society that was emerging. In his *Essay on the History of Civil Society*, Adam Ferguson declared that nations of tradesmen consist of members who are ignorant of all human affairs beyond their own particular trade. While he argued that the economic ends of society are best promoted by the mechanical arts, he also said that these arts "thrive best under a total suppression of sentiment and reason." The merchant and the mechanic pay a high price for the economic success produced by their specialization. If this was said by a Scotch moralist

who favored the coming of the industrial world, it cannot be surprising that his sentiments were echoed by a poet, Percy B. Shelley, who was appalled by its consequences as early as 1821:

The rich became richer, and the poor have become poorer; and the vessel of the state is driven between . . . anarchy and despotism. Such are the effects which must ever flow from an unmitigated exercise of the calculating faculty. . . . The cultivation of those sciences which have enlarged the limits of the empire of man over the external world, has, for want of the poetical faculty, proportionally circumscribed those of the internal world. . . . The accumulation of the materials of external life exceed the quantity of the power of assimilating them to the internal laws of human nature.

These sentences of Shelley's are moderate in comparison with two devastating declarations by Charles Baudelaire, which were written about 1864 and may be said to summarize Shelley's sentiments with a dash of vitriol added.

In *My Heart Laid Bare*, Baudelaire wrote: "The man of letters is the enemy of the world" and, by way of contrast, "To be a useful person has always appeared to me something particularly horrible." Here the conflict between the practical, useful people of the modern world and the critical intellectual appears in an extreme form. Baudelaire is relevant for our theme because he is one of the originators of the term "modernity." When he used the term for the first time in 1859, he apologized for its novelty, but said that the word was needed to express the peculiarity of the modern artist, who must not only be able to see decay in the human desert of the metropolis, but also detect the hitherto undiscovered, mysterious beauty of that decay. Baudelaire went much further than Shelley because he asked how poetry was possible at all in a technical and commercialized civilization. Indeed, all the attributes of modern art were anticipated by Baudelaire, each one a challenge to "the practical people who carry the burden" of affairs. Where they emphasize individualism, Baudelaire stresses the depersonalization of the hitherto most personal form of literature, poetry. Where they order and advance the material world, Baudelaire sees it as the marvelous privilege of artistic expression, to make the ugly and horrible beautiful and to fill the mind with quiet joy through rhythmic transformation of its pain.

Baudelaire and the many who followed him had a desperate urge to escape the reality of the practical people who were all around them. To achieve this escape, they used their imagination to decompose the created world, and by reordering the component parts in a manner without precedent they created a new world of their own. A retreat from meaning and coherence is evident in this endeavor. Since the conduct of everyday affairs depends upon the commonsense use of language, opposition to that conduct implies the search for a "new language" which is tantamount to the destruction of grammar and sentence structure. The spirit of this endeavor by the in-

tellelectuals is beautifully expressed in T.S. Eliot's *East Coker*, in which the poet is

Trying to learn to use words, and every attempt
Is a wholly new start, and a different kind of failure
. . . . And so each venture
Is a new beginning, a raid on the inarticulate.

In *Burnt Notion*, Eliot writes that "words strain, crack and sometimes break, under the burden, under the tension." To be usable by the poet, all the old words must be abandoned and a new beginning must be made, a new venturesome raid on the inarticulate. The same idea was expressed in 1935 by Picasso with regard to painting:

I noticed that painting has a value of its own, independent of the factual depiction of things. I asked myself, whether one should not paint things the way one knows them rather than the way one sees them. . . . In my pictures I use the things I like. I do not care, how things fare in this regard—they will have to get used to it. Formerly, pictures approached their completion in stages. . . . A picture used to be a sum of completions. With me a picture is a sum of destructions.

More examples of this kind could be given, but there is no need. To paraphrase André Gide, the world of the "busy, practical people" imposes itself upon us at every turn, while the intellectuals try to impose their own interpretation on this outside world. The rivalry between these two worlds, one practical and the other imaginative—this is the spiritual drama of our lives in the pioneering countries of modern industry.

This drama has had several phases of which I note two: the decline of bourgeois values and the rising skepticism toward science. On the side of practical affairs, we have witnessed in the last hundred years a disintegration of bourgeois culture, whether one considers sexual morality, the work ethic, educational standards, the creative arts, or the manners of everyday life. Bourgeois culture had many drawbacks from which the culture that has taken its place has liberated us. At the same time, the "adversary culture" as Lionel Trilling has called it, has produced many liabilities of its own. We can date this change from the end of the nineteenth century. It may be better to think of World War I as the watershed, because this prolonged slaughter marked the end of widely accepted standards of conduct and judgment. Then again, we may take the end of World War II as the dividing line. The dating is uncertain; the decline of bourgeois culture is not.

Why attack bourgeois culture if it is in headlong decline? Since the later nineteenth century, art has been characterized increasingly by a retreat from meaning and coherence. An ethic of social despair has led by circuitous routes to self-created, hermetic worlds of pure subjectivity in which neither the old romantic ideal of the human personality nor the objects and themes of ordi-

nary experience have a recognized place or meaning. Thus, in the dominant culture of the West a type of sensibility has developed which reacts to the world as a provocation and which is hostile to intellectual positions that retain a belief in the constructive possibilities of knowledge. When a Harvard student wrote in 1969 that "rationality might even destroy our brain cells" or when the Yippies declared the year before that in the future society every man would be an artist, they were no longer attacking bourgeois culture as ordinarily understood, but the scientists and technicians who believe with Francis Bacon that "knowledge is for the benefit and use of life." Be it remembered that in the century since 1870 the number of degrees granted at American institutions of higher education has risen from roughly 9,000 to over 1 million, and that from 1963 to 1970 alone the percentage of the scientific population in the work force has risen from 3.6 to 4.7—that is, to some 4 million people. Hence, the intellectuals' role in the First World, taking the term in its narrow, critical sense, has come to mean distrust of the belief in progress, while enjoying its benefits and testing to the limit the precarious foundations of human freedom. The questions raised by this critique leave none of us untouched, even if the art associated with it leaves us cold?

Second World

What can I say of the intellectuals' role in the Second World? I shall confine my remarks to czarist and Soviet Russia, to simplify matters. According to Robert Tucker of Princeton University, the Russian term "intelligentsia" referred in the nineteenth century to people of all occupations (with the exception of government officials), who shared opposition to the established order and also opposed a regular career if it was oriented toward personal advancement. They shared a love of the Russian people, preoccupation with the country's backwardness and with ideas as a means of change. By contrast, the *Soviet Encyclopedia* gives the following definition of the same term: "Engineering-technical workers, those engaged in science, art, teaching, medicine and other members of society engaged in mental work." Seemingly, the contrast between the czarist and the Soviet meaning of intelligentsia is similar to Faulkner's contrast between those striving for the impossible and the "practical people" who make a country run; but this appearance is deceiving. Czarist Russia had its practical people and Soviet Russia has its visionaries. Today, both types are present in every society; however, the contrast between the types varies and is important.

In czarist Russia, back to the beginning of the eighteenth century, the "practical people" were either public officials, or entrepreneurs (some of them serfs), or landed aristocrats and military men. All these ranks (and their subdivisions) could operate only because they had been entered in government registers and were granted government privileges and assigned government duties. Nearly all worked (or were idle) under governmental directives and supervision. That is the main reason that under the

czars the intelligentsia opposed the established order and regular careers, which depended on official sanction. In Western Europe intellectuals opposed a bourgeois way of life and the "calculating faculty" in the economy and in science; in Russia they opposed the government, often in the name of art and science. In Western Europe, bourgeois morals, economic advance, and technological change were indigenous developments. In Russia, these same developments were slow in getting started; and when they did, they were linked to the pioneering changes of Western Europe. That linkage was profoundly ambivalent.

A case in point is the literary critic Vissarion Belinsky, who lived from 1811 to 1848 and was revered by Russian intellectuals through much of the nineteenth century. Belinsky brought an extraordinary moral passion to bear on such ultimate questions as the purpose of life and the proper moral end of literature. While czarist censorship controlled the expression of opinion, it could not prevent writers from endowing abstract literary questions with moral and, by implication, political fervor. The czarist police thought Belinsky solely concerned with questions of taste, not with anything that touched on "politics or communism." They thought him wayward but harmless, and yet they considered him with suspicion. Gendarmes attended Belinsky's funeral to keep an eye on his friends and prevent demonstrations. We can see their dilemma. Belinsky deplored that Russian men of letters discussed every idea imported from abroad and created nothing of their own. With this heady attraction of foreign ideas went a revulsion at the realities of Western bourgeois society and near despair at the condition of the Russian homeland. Belinsky saw a "syphilitic sore" running through French society, but he also said "we are people whose country is a ghost, and we are ghosts ourselves." There is only one way out: "Lose yourself in science and art, love them as the goal and necessity of your life, and not as mere instruments of education and winning success in the world. . . . Love what is good, and you are bound to turn out useful to your country." The idea has been elaborated many times that czarist autocracy and censorship, which suppressed or closely controlled all activities of civil society, thereby helped to create a culture in which truth and beauty were endowed with surpassing importance and ultimately with political significance.

In part, this political significance of culture arose from the very efforts of the czarist regime to reform itself. Since the reign of Peter the Great, 1685-1725, czarist governments were attempting to develop the country. To this end, craftsmen and teachers were imported from Western Europe. Several prominent officials and scientists were of foreign birth. Catherine II in her reign, 1762-96, cultivated her contacts with French philosophers to present an enlightened image to the outside world. The stunning success of Russian arms against Napoleon in 1812 brought Russian officers and men to Western Europe. This was the era of Speransky's attempts at legal reform and of the Decembrist revolt of 1825, organized by army officers with liberal aspirations: both failed. Czar Alexander II,

reigning from 1855 to 1881, initiated the emancipation of the serfs of 1861, and under his reign the enrollment of students in secondary schools and universities increased rapidly. Both reforms provided conduits for the influx of Western European ideas; opposition to the autocratic regime spread; there was an unsuccessful attack on the czar's life in 1866, and repressive measures followed. It seems that every reform attempted by the government allowed for breathing space to the educated elite of the country, and the intellectuals among them used that space to protest, which led to further repressions and reforms and further protests in a spiral of reciprocal escalation. As Peter Lavrov pointed out in 1870, the very education of students added to their guilty conscience, because it was "purchased" by the suffering of millions. They could not undo their education, but they could redeem their guilt by using their education to oppose the czarist regime that had benefited them. This trauma of Russia's youth led to the assassination of Alexander II, in 1881, producing a much more severe repression than before and still greater traumas at the backwardness of Russia among the country's intellectuals.

A hundred years have passed since that assassination. The military defeat of Russia in the Russo-Japanese war and World War I were followed by the revolution of 1905 and the Bolshevik revolution of 1917, respectively. In November of 1982, the Soviet Union celebrated the sixty-fifth anniversary of the Russian revolution, which under Lenin was led by a highly organized cadre of professional revolutionaries—many of them intellectuals of middle-class background. During the following sixty-five years, the early revolutionary elite was transformed into an elite of party functionaries and an aggregate of scientists and technicians largely responsible for the transformation of Russia's economy. Taking just official figures, we find the following contrasts between 1928 and 1981: electricity (in billion kilowatt-hours) from 5 to 1325; steel (in million tons) from 4.3 to 149; oil (in million tons) from 11.6 to 609, and so on. The record is far less impressive in other branches of industry and altogether dismal in the field of agriculture. In terms of per capita productivity and income, the Russian development cannot compare with the major cases of Western industrialization, and Russia's cost in human lives has been staggering. All this does not alter the success of Russia's industrialization and military buildup. What then of the country's intellectuals, spiritual heirs to the Western critics of bourgeois culture and the Russian critics of czarist autocracy?

Their tragedy is that their situation has become much worse in comparison with their predecessors under the czars. In 1836, Peter Chaadayev was declared mad by the czar himself and subjected to periodic medical inspection because he had publicly criticized the social and political conditions of Russia. This episode of autocratic paternalism cast a pall over the small circle of artists and writers in Moscow and Saint Petersburg, but its notoriety then as now also suggests that it was a singular case. Today, hundreds and perhaps thousands of dissidents languish in psychiatric hospitals, because the regime has decreed that

their deviation indicates insanity. A similar contrast applies to the matter of censorship. Public debate was closely controlled under the czars, as it is under the Soviets. But czarist practice allowed a certain leeway and was riddled with inefficiency. It was often possible to evade the prohibition by discussing the problems of Western Europe or of ancient society, since every reader understood what was meant. In the Soviet Union, such evasions are more difficult or even impossible, in part because censorship has become tighter and more sophisticated and in part because Communist orthodoxy applies worldwide, as czarism did not.

In one respect, the result of censorship has been much the same. The suppression of public debate has endowed poetry and literary questions with extraordinary significance for politics as well as for culture. Belinsky's singular devotion to truth and beauty is echoed today when a poetry reading by Yevtushenko, Voznesensky, and others is attended by audiences numbering in the hundreds and sometimes thousands. The idea that drastic censorship inadvertently endows poetic celebrations of feeling and nature with political significance is reflected in Osip Mandelstam's identification of poetry with power. "If they kill people for writing poetry," he said, "poetry must be powerful."

Poverty and oppression evoke ambivalent responses, then as now. Under the czars "the West" appeared to Russian intellectuals as lands of wealth and freedom, but marred by shallow materialism and cultural decadence. Yet the defects of "the West" brought no consolation regarding conditions at home. Just as under the czars, Slavophiles sought to regenerate Russia by turning to her past and Westernizers looked to France or Germany for inspiration, so it is today. From his exile in Zurich and Vermont, Solzhenitsyn appeals to the Politburo to return to Russian tradition and excoriates "the West" for its spiritual decay. Meanwhile, inside the Soviet Union, Andrei Sakharov, another Nobel Prize winner, champions the protection of human rights—hardly the main tradition of Russian civilization. Both men are at one in their love of Russia; but in contrast to the czarist regime, Soviet Russia has become a world power. If Russian intellectuals previously condemned the slovenly and stupid officials of the czar, today they condemn the graft and brute materialism of the party bosses which foster the evasion of law and the growth of wealthy, but illegal entrepreneurs.

Then as now, the freedom of the West holds a powerful attraction to Russian intellectuals, for they live in a thoroughly regimented society which quickly punishes deviations. Today, the Soviet Union may be the most conservative society in the world, but it is a conservatism based on the success of forced industrialization and the social structure that emerged from it. All symbols of Western culture are suspect, but blue jeans, some Western detective stories, and some jazz music are permitted by the authorities and enjoy a huge popularity. There are some timid imitations of Western modernism in the arts. Nevertheless, it is difficult in modern Russia to point up the dangers of technological advance—let alone of the

military buildup—when in addition to one-party rule there are periodic shortfalls of agricultural production, basic consumer needs cannot be satisfied, and the existence of American superpower can be used to justify every twist of the party line. We get the impression that intellectuals of the Second World prize freedom but confine their critique of technology and individual consumption to the West, while intellectuals of the First World have the luxury of rejecting as a whole what they enjoy in their everyday lives.

The distinction between the two groups may become clearest when we consider the agony of intellectuals within the Soviet orbit who become refugees. In their home country, all power is concentrated in the Politburo, and all organizations in society are coopted and controlled by agencies of the Communist party. This control extends to all channels of communication. Under these conditions intellectuals feel, like their predecessors under the czars, that they alone speak for the whole country.

We have witnessed a disintegration of bourgeois culture in the last hundred years.

Persecution confirms them in this view, because persecution proves beyond a doubt that they are not official speakers and, therefore, cannot speak falsely. As long as they remain in Russia, Russian intellectuals identify morally with the ideals of Russian culture and bear the hardships this entails. When one turns to intellectuals of other nationalities in the Soviet Union and within the Soviet orbit, the identification with the people as well as culture and, by implication at least, the anti-Russian note become more prominent. Returning from a visit to Poland in 1981, Czeslaw Milosz—the Nobel laureate for literature in 1980—described an example of this experience:

Intellectuals, workers, students all spoke the same language. There was true solidarity, for people were united by a common goal. I found that as a poet—and I do not consider myself a very easy poet to read—I had a mass audience in Poland composed of people of various strata of society. Even poems that are rather difficult were understood. That's rare. My poems appeared in 150,000 copies. That's over now [following the military crackdown of December 13, 1981]. A relatively uncensored publishing movement and the free exchange in public opinion are ended. But the human spirit remains.

In the same interview, Milosz stated that he found the United States very difficult to judge. By upbringing and

political instinct, he had expected to find allies among American liberals, “but in fact I see we have not many points in common.” As a Pole and a revered figure in his country, Milosz may be exceptional, and he is certainly different from Russian refugee intellectuals. As an exile, he is one of many who must preserve their identity in an alien environment, in which the multiplicity of groups and sympathizers is a constant reminder of the real or imagined wholeness of their native land. Many intellectuals of the First World have no comparable identification either with the culture or the people of their native land; they tend to be elitists who despair of popular taste even when their works are bought by the public.

Third World

What of the intellectual's role in the Third World? This world of darkness is marked by poverty, disease, and isolated pockets of economic advance, in which people lack a sense of identity because they are continually exposed to signs of affluence abroad. In these countries, neither the educated elite, nor representative institutions, nor an economically active middle class are indigenous developments. Nonetheless, such countries are arenas of intellectual mobilization because officials, teachers, literary people—the whole educated minority—tend to coalesce into a class of their own. This class is sensitive to developments beyond their country's frontier and anxious to find a more viable mode of social organization for their native land.

There is a family resemblance between the Third World of today and the poor countries of earlier eras. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, English intellectuals and other people reacted to the economic advance of Holland and the Spanish world empire. In the eighteenth century, German writers reacted positively or negatively to the economic and political advance of England and France. In response to the French revolution, German rulers proposed to do for “their” people—by a revolution from above—what the French people had done at great cost by and for themselves. Russian intellectuals during the nineteenth century took standards derived from Western European developments to form counterimages of czarist realities; and in the twentieth century Russian revolutionaries adopted programs and tactics derived from the French revolution and Marxist theory in their overthrow of the czarist regime. For awhile, the Russian revolution became in turn the reference society for China before and after 1949. The Chinese under Mao Tse-tung reacted to the model of forced collectivization and industrialization by accepting a slower rate of economic growth with a positive emphasis on the peasantry, on reeducation campaigns, and on the importance of subjective commitment as a major cause of change. By linking these policies with the Chinese tradition, they have created a new revolutionary model, which has been modified further since Mao's death.

An archetypical experience underlies the diversity of these examples. In comparison with some advanced country, the intellectuals see their own country as back-

ward. This is a troubled perception, for it identifies strength if not goodness with alien forces and sees weakness if not evil in the land of one's birth. In this setting, ideas are used to locate and mobilize forces which will be capable of effecting change and thus redress this psychologically unfavorable accounting. A typical strategy of perception and argument ensues. As viewed by the native intellectual, the strength of the advanced country is formidable, but it is also sapped by false values, corruption, and spiritual decay and therefore should not or cannot endure. At the same time, the weakness of one's native land is pervasive, but the hidden spiritual values of the people are an untapped source of strength which will prevail in the end (whatever the evidence to the contrary may be). Thus, the dominance of the advanced country carries within itself the seeds of its own destruction, while the backward people and the underdeveloped country possess capacities that are signs of a bright future. Behind this strategy lies the simple belief that ultimately the advanced country must be weak because its people are evil, while the backward country must be strong because its people are good.

In the middle of the nineteenth century, Russia's best-known exile, Alexander Herzen, wrote that "human development is a form of chronological unfairness, since late-comers are able to profit from the labor of their predecessors without paying the same price." He did not anticipate the enormous price that Russia herself paid for economic development, nor did he, or any of his contemporaries, envisage the far greater problems that the modernizing countries of the Third World face today and in the foreseeable future. This is not a problem that intellectuals of the First World or Second World can contemplate with equanimity. The breakthrough to modern technology and economic development occurred for the first time in Western Europe some four centuries ago; it occurred a second time in Japan in the latter half of the nineteenth century; and it occurred the third time both in the late czarist period and under Communist auspices since the revolution of 1917. In each instance, new inequalities were introduced on a major scale between the country(ies) of economic advance and the many countries that became rapidly more impoverished by comparison. In all too many instances, economic advances in one place were used to exploit the resources and increase the relative poverty in other places.

In the twentieth century all of us, but particularly the intellectuals of the Third World, face the consequences of these antecedents. The effort of learning from the development of other countries is beset by difficulties, and the cost in human labor and suffering is rising and may have become prohibitive already. To sketch the situation in intellectual terms, every idea taken from elsewhere can be both an asset to the development of a country and a reminder of its comparative backwardness—that is, both a model to be emulated and a threat to its national identity. What appears desirable from the standpoint of progress often appears dangerous to national independence. The revolution in communications since the fifteenth cen-

tury has been accompanied by ever new confrontations with this cruel dilemma, and the rise of nationalism has been the response nearly everywhere.

Nationalism is not in fact a force that easily unifies a country. The old states underwent long periods of intellectual polarization when they had to come to terms with challenges from abroad. Similarly, in the new states the typical response is the polarization of modernizers and nativists. These two camps of intellectuals share the desire to preserve and enhance their native land—and even the hostility to the "advanced country" whose accomplishments they covet nonetheless. A Westernizer like Alexander Herzen commented on his affinity with the Slavophiles: "Like Janus, or the two-headed eagle, we looked in opposite directions, but one heart beats in our breasts." All the same, the division is deep over which path the country should follow.

Perception of advances abroad are reminders of backwardness or dangers and weaknesses at home. Intellectuals attempt to cope with the ensuing dilemma: whether to adopt the advanced model and invite its attending corruptions, or fall back upon native traditions and risk their inappropriateness to the world of power and progress. This dilemma engenders heated debates and ever-uneasy compromises. People want their country recognized and respected in the world, and to this end they cultivate or revive native traditions. The reconstruction of history is an act of resacralizing authority in the name of the people. It is an appeal to civic loyalty and national brotherhood in lieu of the more divisive attachments to language, ethnicity, and religion, because birth in a common homeland makes all people members of one nation sharing equally in its past glories. But the desire to be recognized and respected in the world also calls for the development of a modern economy and government, and this effort at development focuses attention upon ideas and models derived from the advanced society of one's choice.

The drama of intellectuals in the First World consists in the rivalry between the practical and the imaginative approach to the human condition. The drama of the Second World consists in the incompatibility between individual freedom and the centralized hierarchy of a one-party state—in the midst of economic advance well in excess of the rate of per capita consumption. The drama of the Third World consists in the pain of intellectuals, usually educated abroad, who confront the poverty of their land amid images of plenty abroad and who struggle against overwhelming odds to define a place for themselves and for their country. □

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