

## *Preface*

# Explaining the Unity of This Book

When with sufficient historical perspective the story of the twentieth century is told, I venture to predict that three things will be among the most noteworthy features of the last hundred years. First, it would be impossible, I think, to say anything of prime significance about the twentieth century without highlighting its technological advances. Among the many marvels that these advances engendered is the emergence of what Marshall McLuhan called "the global village." The travel time for going from one place to another anywhere on earth has become little more than a day. The communication time is almost instantaneous. The globe has shrunk to a size much smaller than that of small communities in earlier centuries. These facts underlie the prediction and the promise of this book's closing essay about the new world of the twenty-first century.

The second feature is the rise of constitutional democracy. In the nineteenth century constitutional democracy, in its modern conception, was hardly more than a dream in the minds of a few political thinkers who were regarded as visionary reformers. By the middle of the twentieth century, that dream began to be realized by constitutional amendments and legislative enactments in a relatively small number of countries, mainly in the countries of Western Europe, the

British Commonwealth, and the United States. At the end of the century's ninth decade, the movement toward the ideal of democracy spread with the speed of infection to many countries that had been long deprived of the benefits of political liberty and majority rule.

Finally, one of the most remarkable facts about this century is that totalitarian communism came into existence and (with a few exceptions) ceased to exist within the same hundred years. In the nineteenth century, the misery of the working classes in the early stages of the Industrial Revolution and under the oppressive economic system that Karl Marx called "bourgeois capitalism" inspired the first proposal of socialist reforms. In the second decade of this century, the establishment of totalitarian communism by the dictatorship of the proletariat, replacing private-property capitalism with the ownership of all capital by the state, was the first step taken toward the realization of the socialist ideal. But in the successive decades of this century, totalitarian communism proved to be the wrong method and the ineffective means for achieving the ideal that all varieties of socialism aim at.

The last two features of the twentieth century—its movement toward the democratic ideal in the political sphere and toward the socialist ideal in the economic sphere—explain the title and subtitle of this book, as well as the subject of its opening chapter: the end of the conflict between capitalism and communism. What needs a word of further explanation is that the book's title, when understood in political and economic terms, relates the ideas of democracy and socialism as inseparably as Siamese twins are related.

In relatively advanced democratic societies, all persons (with a few justifiable exceptions) are enfranchised citizens. All are political *haves*, possessing political liberty and the other rights and privileges accorded citizens. The *have-nots* are limited to those below the age of consent, those confined in hospitals for the mentally incompetent, those incarcerated in prisons as felonious criminals, and all those who have ever

been convicted. A politically democratic society is a society of *haves without have-nots*.

The socialist ideal lags behind in the degree to which it has been realized anywhere. Socialism is the economic correlate of democracy in precisely the same terms. The socialist ideal is realized in varying degrees in societies in which all or most are haves and there are few or no have-nots—persons grossly deprived of what any human being needs to lead a decent human life. Thus a socialist society, like a democratic society, is also one of haves without have-nots, one in which all (again with a few exceptions) enjoy the right to a decent livelihood.

Communism is antithetical to democracy, but socialism is indispensable to it, for political haves who are not also economic haves cannot discharge their duties as citizens. At the end of the ninth decade of this century, the same countries that began to move toward political democracy also renounced the economic errors of communism and adopted in its place other means to socialism.

Much earlier in the century, the democratic societies whose economic arrangements were those of private-property capitalism corrected the errors of bourgeois capitalism by socializing their economies through a variety of welfare measures. In the United States, we have no qualms about calling all or most of the Western democracies “welfare states,” but the widely prevalent mistake of identifying socialism with communism blinds a vast majority of our citizens to the fact that any welfare state is, to some degree, a socialized form of private-property capitalism. That mistake can be corrected only by understanding socialism as an ideal and communism as a wrong and ineffective means toward achieving it. The right means is socialized private property capitalism.

In between Chapters One and Six, Chapters Two, Three, and Four support, in different ways, the argument set forth in Chapter One.

Chapter Two is the report of a disputation about the

future of democracy that occurred in 1977 at the Aspen Institute. Bill Moyers was in the chair. I was one of the disputants; the other two were Lord Quinton, then a fellow of Trinity College, Oxford, and until recently chairman of the British Library; and Maurice Cranston, professor of Political Philosophy at the University of London. I defended the affirmative position on the following three theses: (1) that political democracy *should* prevail everywhere because it is the only perfectly just form of government; (2) that political democracy *can* survive where it now exists and can spread to other countries where it does not now exist; and (3) that political democracy *will* prevail everywhere and will survive and prosper. My two opponents were more qualified and querulous about the first two theses, and expressed grave doubts and reservations about the prediction I defended in the third.

The lessons to be learned in Chapter Three are not limited to the reasons why the nomination of Robert Bork to the Supreme Court of the United States should not have been confirmed by the Senate. The essay is mainly concerned with the basic issue in jurisprudence—that between the legal positivists or realists and those who assert that principles of justice provide us with criteria for judging governments, constitutions, laws, and majorities. This issue has a direct bearing on the development of democracy and socialism in the United States.

Chapter Four was a lecture I delivered in Springfield, Illinois, on an occasion devoted to celebrating Abraham Lincoln's birthday. Lincoln's dedication to the principles of natural law and natural right, expressed in the second paragraph of the Declaration of Independence, justifies the conclusion that he would have been a staunch proponent of the Thirteenth, Fourteenth, Fifteenth, Nineteenth, and Twenty-fourth amendments (the last in 1964), amendments that at long last rectified the injustice in the Constitution of the United States and transformed it into a truly democratic charter. The chapter goes further in suggesting that were Lincoln alive in the middle of the twentieth century, he would have been a socialist reformer as well. He would have argued that life and

liberty were not the only natural rights indispensable to the pursuit of happiness, but that among man's unalienable rights is the right to a decent livelihood.

Chapter Five gives support to the predictions about the twenty-first century set forth in Chapter Six. It points out that in the twentieth century, mathematics and the natural sciences, as well as the technology they generate, are trans-cultural. History, the social sciences, philosophy, and religion are not, at least not yet. Is their becoming so necessary for the political and economic unification of the nations of this earth? Are there obstacles to be overcome that are not intransigent? These questions are answered in Chapter Six.

Of the six chapters that comprise this book, all derive their substance from seminars that I have conducted or lectures that I have delivered at the Aspen Institute. Two of them (One and Two) have been previously published in the *Great Ideas Today*, of which I am the editor. Two of them (Three and Five) have been previously published by the *Aspen Institute Quarterly*. Two of them (Four and Six) have not been previously published.

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