

Global Pillage

Jason Elbaum

If all goes as planned, January 1, 1999 will mark the beginning of a new era in international politics. The adoption of a unified currency by eleven European nations will mean the creation of a new economic superpower, whose annual economic output will rival that of the United States, and whose monetary and trade policies will no longer be set by member states, but by a single, centralized European governing body. It is a step from which France, Germany and the other nations involved will be unable to return without great difficulty, one which will forever bind these nations, and those that follow, in a regional matrimony whose vows include not only the sharing of a single coin, but the eventual removal of all internal barriers to trade and migration, and a common policymaking on foreign and defense issues as well—heralding, in case you missed it, an effective end to national sovereignty in Europe.

Few intellectuals and public figures in Europe today lose sleep over the death of the nation-state. On the contrary, most have welcomed the unification of Europe as a great leap forward, and an inevitable one at that. Their reasoning goes something like this: The nation-state has failed to live up to the economic and political needs of a swiftly changing world which is giving way slowly but surely to a series of multinational associations, such as the

European Union (EU) and the United Nations. And all this is a matter of necessity, due to the unstoppable market forces and technological developments (such as the Internet) sweeping the globe, which are transforming our basic notion of political and economic life into something completely different, something far more homogeneous than ever before.

Of course, the implications of this line of thought are by no means limited to Europe; journalists and activists the world over have begun prophesying the emergence of powerful regional or global bodies, and the corresponding demise of nation-states everywhere. “In the next millennium—in a world where credit and communication transcend all borders—what does ‘sovereign nation’ mean?” wrote *Newsweek’s* Howard Fineman. “Will we still control our land, our currency, our jobs and our courts?” Whatever the answer, it is clear that “there’s no going back” on the process.¹ Nico Colchester, editorial director of the Economist Intelligence Unit, put it in a more controlled manner in a 1994 essay entitled “The Slow Death of the Nation-State”: “The threat or promise of government at above the level of the nation-state will be a strong undercurrent in the politics of the rich world.... Institutionally managed savings now slip across national frontiers like quicksilver, sapping the power of governments to finance themselves through inflation. Great companies now transcend nationality. Elites do the same. So governments are reduced to mere corporate managements, competing to attract savings, companies and elites to their territories. This is a game that demands a degree of international refereeing.”²

Political leaders outside of Europe, too, have taken the new world order for granted in formulating their own visions. In September 1997, the leaders of Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Panama, Belize and the Dominican Republic launched the process of creating a Central American Union. Issuing the “Nicaragua Declaration,” they called for a “further deepening of the commitments adopted within the framework of integration, especially those that allow the region to link itself advantageously with the globalization processes”—the ultimate goal of which, according to Costa Rican Foreign Minister Fernando Naranjo, is to

“construct something similar to what Europe has now, with the European Union.”³ President Bill Clinton has accepted the basic premise as well, arguing that “the challenge before us is to adapt our international institutions, to deepen the cooperation between nations so that [we] can confront a new generation of problems that know no national borders.”⁴ And in Israel, former Prime Minister Shimon Peres, in his 1994 tract *The New Middle East*, writes:

Our era has witnessed the emergence of two contradictory trends: Particularist nationalism and ultranational development of regional communities. In every area in which the first has staked a claim, the social order has been subverted and hostility and violence have taken root.... In contrast, everywhere the ultranational trend predominates, there is sensitivity to human needs, opportunities and desires, leading to a more lasting international order that strives for prosperity, development and human rights.

Though “people are not yet ready to accept an ultranational identity,” Peres claims that “a new type of citizenship is catching on, with a new personal identity.... Particularist nationalism is fading and the idea of a ‘citizen of the world’ is taking hold.”⁵ The only solution, according to Peres, is “the creation of a regional community of nations, with a common market and elected centralized bodies, modeled on the European Community.”⁶

If this all sounds familiar, it should. The idea that irrepressible economic forces are sweeping the world into a new era of international brotherhood, in which national distinctions are trivialized and borders eliminated, has been the principal message of socialist and Communist ideologues from Marx to Lennon. Drawing heavily upon the same determinist materialism unleashed upon the world a century and a half ago, a new generation of collectivist thinkers and activists have convinced much of the industrialized world—yet again—that a new era is dawning, whether we like it or not, and that any nation that does not adapt quickly

by sacrificing elements of its sovereignty to international bodies will find itself the odd man out.

Yet the similarity between the new globalists and the champions of international socialism of generations past does not end with basic ideological assumptions. A closer look at the two most important globalist bodies today, the EU and the UN, reveals that in deed as in creed, these new globalists are really nothing new at all. Not only are they preaching the same gospel, they are also working harder than ever to build the same gargantuan bureaucracies—with the same disregard for the self-determination of nations and the liberty of citizens—that the collapse of Communism was supposed to have ended. At a time when gallant defenders of liberal democracy are basking in their presumed victory and celebrating history's end, a new battle in the same old war may well be taking shape.

II

Even before the 1992 Maastricht Treaty, the European Union struck a pose of sovereignty, with its own flag and anthem, a common format for passports, and legislative, executive and judiciary branches of administration.⁷ With Maastricht came a slew of commitments that went much further, including a single currency, EU citizenship (bestowing as-yet-unspecified rights and duties upon its citizens), and a common foreign and defense policy. Implementing all of these would make the European Union more like a sovereign body itself than an arrangement among sovereign states: Although many provinces around the world have flags, anthems and governments, only sovereign states grant citizenship, coin money, conduct foreign relations and defend themselves.

Yet this union of democratic nations astonishingly left out one vital component of democratic government: Democracy. Though in theory

representative institutions are involved at each stage of the EU's process of government, in practice decisions are made almost entirely by bureaucratic fiat, and the influence of representative bodies is negligible.

The highest body of the EU is the European Council, comprised of the heads of state or government of the member countries, who meet two or three times a year to plan the long-term direction of the Union.⁸ The real work is the responsibility of the Councils of Ministers, assemblies of government ministers from each member country who meet to discuss issues relevant to their portfolios, such as defense, finance, fisheries or transport. Legislative authority lies not with the democratically elected European Parliament but with these Councils, whose decisions are arrived at behind closed doors, and whose arcane procedures include three different methods of reaching decisions. Councils of various sorts of ministers meet about a hundred times a year, including monthly meetings of foreign ministers, finance ministers and agriculture ministers. In theory, all important EU decisions are made at these meetings of national officials.

Yet it would be an exaggeration to say that these ministers are actually setting policy. British journalists Christopher Booker and Richard North report on the plight of a British minister attending his first Council of Ministers, who discovered that “the item heading the agenda was ‘the communiqué’ to be issued after the meeting. When he expressed surprise to his officials, saying that surely the communiqué should come last, after they had settled all the other matters on the agenda, he was condescendingly told, ‘Oh no, Minister, all the other items have already been agreed on at last week’s Coreper.’” “Coreper” is the Committee of Permanent Representatives, senior officials from each member state who reside permanently in the EU’s capital, Brussels. Each layer of junior bureaucrats had already decided what measures should be implemented, Coreper had ironed out the details, and it was up to the ministers to agree on how to word the press release.⁹ Put somewhat obliquely by one reference work, “officials from the national representations meet together regularly to prepare the various decisions to be taken by ministers in full Council....

Coreper's influence is often greater than that of the formal meetings of the Council which it prepares."¹⁰

Under Coreper's guidance, the Council issues some "300 regulations, 50 directives and 160 decisions" a year, to be implemented by the European Commission, the EU's equivalent of a cabinet. The twenty commissioners, who divide up the portfolios of government among them, are appointed for five-year terms by their national governments. But lest anyone mistake the Commission for a representative body, the EU demands that commissioners swear their sole allegiance to the EU, be "completely independent in the performance of their duties ... [and] neither seek nor take instructions from any government or any other body." Formally the Commission is the head of the EU's civil service, but, along with its 20,000 bureaucrats, it is "unique amongst international bureaucracies by virtue of its combination of administrative, executive, legislative and judicial activities."¹¹ It is involved with every stage of the legislative process, even empowered to dismiss amendments passed by the European Parliament, and it is also responsible for implementing the laws. It negotiates with foreign governments, maintains foreign relations, and oversees corporate mergers and competition law. Even the EU doesn't pretend the Commission is democratic, saying only that its "democratic legitimacy is being increasingly strengthened..."¹²

The Commission multiplies the Council's output, turning the few hundred Council resolutions into several thousand Commission Regulations. These are issued directly by bureaucrats with no political accountability.¹³ The legal systems of individual member nations can cope with this volume of regulatory edicts only by automating the process. In Britain, they are implemented via "statutory instruments" drafted by anonymous civil servants, and enter into law without parliamentary scrutiny, requiring only the formality of a ministerial signature. As the independent regulatory authority of the civil service grows, parliamentary legislation within each country correspondingly shrinks, shifting power from elected officials to unaccountable bureaucrats.¹⁴

Not surprisingly, one consequence of immunizing Europe's bureaucracy from political accountability has been a disregard for some of the basic liberties and traditions to which many Europeans had grown accustomed, in the form of an interminable chain of regulations governing industry and commerce. The absurdity of the edicts emerging from Brussels has become a trademark of EU governance: Decisions have covered "limiting the granting of production aid for Williams pears preserved in syrup," "laws of the Member States relating to the windscreen wipers and washer systems of motor vehicles," "a reference method for the detection of cows' milk casein in cheese made from ewes' milk," and an "anti-dumping duty on imports into the Community of photo-albums in book form originating in the People's Republic of China."¹⁵ One EU law deemed British acorns insufficiently pure, requiring commercial oak growers to import acorns less well-adapted to British ecosystems. Similarly, an agricultural seed control scheme required official approval for any variety of plant seed to be marketed, with registration fees of thousands of dollars. This made it uneconomical to keep less popular varieties of seeds on the market, effectively banning, for example, over 95 percent of the 2,500 varieties of tomato. Aside from placing heavy burdens on small farmers and amateur gardeners, such regulations needlessly restrict consumer choice.¹⁶

Likewise, EU regulations have defined the allowable shapes of strawberries, cucumbers and bananas. Britain's most famous apple, the small Cox's orange pippin, is illegal, since apples must be at least fifty-five millimeters in diameter. Under the rubric of health and safety, exit signs in buildings across the continent must be replaced, at a cost of millions of dollars, with Brussels-approved green signs depicting a running man—even though safety experts warn that in case of fire one should never, under any circumstance, run. Similarly, Britain recently introduced a new telephone emergency line, 112, in addition to its traditional 999 emergency line, to conform with European standards. In its first year of operation, only 500 of the two million calls to the unfamiliar number proved to be genuine emergencies; the rest were wrong numbers.¹⁷

While the vast apparatus of the European Commission subverts the self-rule of member states and the freedom of citizens, other EU institutions are designed to run interference, giving Europeans the false impression that they have a substantial say in their continent's governance. The presidency of the EU rotates among the heads of government of the member states every six months, ensuring that nothing constructive can ever be accomplished by any given president. In practice, the presidency answers to an agenda set out by the civil service. The European "Parliament"—the only democratically elected body in the entire morass—can neither initiate legislation nor effectively oversee government decisions, and can only rarely even amend EU laws. As one study put it, its powers "are severely restricted; it is not the legislative authority of the Community...."¹⁸

Neither does this brave new Europe take kindly to criticism. Officials are expected to promote enthusiastically and without reservation the project of European integration with all of its components. Bernard Connolly, the senior European Commission economist responsible for analyzing the EU's Exchange Rate Mechanism (ERM) and plans for monetary union, published a highly acclaimed book in 1995 entitled *The Rotten Heart of Europe*, which presented his "fears that the European Monetary Union project was not quite the Heavenly City that relentless propaganda had made it out to be."¹⁹ Connolly was promptly suspended from his job and targeted by a Commission smear campaign; five months later he was fired. The book was motivated, he wrote, by "incredulity at the hundreds of 'black is white' statements made about the ERM, and ... anger at the treatment given to anyone who tried to point out the lies." Instead of presenting balanced, professional analysis, Commission staff are expected to be "missionaries, soldiers in the crusade for a European superstate."²⁰

Connolly's criticisms touched a raw nerve, since monetary union lay at the heart of efforts to create a European superstate: The launching of the euro on January 1 will surely be the most important step Europe has taken yet toward integration, a point-of-no-return for member states, which will

no longer be able to conduct independent monetary or fiscal policy, or maintain control of their foreign currency reserves, national deficits or debts. To mitigate the effects of centralizing interest rate decisions, massive funds will be transferred from economically stronger regions to weaker ones, threatening growth among the former while inculcating dependency among the latter. Furthermore, to prevent “harmful” competition among governments for investment, greater uniformity will be imposed on tax laws and labor regulations (apparently in an effort to shield French and German industry from competition from more dynamic economies such as those of Britain and Ireland). According to Jean-Claude Trichet, governor of the Bank of France and aspiring EU central banker, “the Council [of Ministers] will have more power over the budgets of member states than the central federal institutions have in the U.S. or in Germany.”²¹

A recent example of the sharp divide between the European bureaucracy and the peoples it represents centered on a decision of the European Commission earlier this year to slap tariffs on products manufactured by Israeli companies in the West Bank, Gaza, East Jerusalem and the Golan Heights, despite its free trade agreement with Israel. The announcement evoked harsh criticisms throughout Israel: Not only are the Israeli industries in the West Bank and Gaza perfectly integrated into Israel’s economy, but East Jerusalem and the Golan were both annexed by Israel long ago.²² The incident proved a major embarrassment for European national governments, which apparently did not approve of the Commission’s stance: Within days, Israeli Finance Minister Ya’akov Ne’eman received a visit from the ambassadors from all fifteen EU countries, who assured him that no steps would be taken in the matter. Yet shortly thereafter, the Commission declared it would press forward with the decision anyway, regardless of how Europe’s elected national governments felt about it.²³ It was, apparently, beyond their jurisdiction.

This, then, is the European standard which so many other regional and global activists have set for themselves: Unaccountable commissioners, silenced critics, a trivialized parliament, unfathomable procedures, arbitrary

rules made in secret by faceless bureaucrats without democratic oversight, and a disregard for the self-determination of peoples as expressed by their elected national leaders. One might even say that the EU looks very little like the dream that Victor Hugo called a “United States of Europe,” and all too much like the recurrence of a nightmare—a Union of European Socialist Republics.

III

While Europe may offer the most advanced case of liberal democracy’s retreat in the face of command-internationalism, a far purer strain of it can be found in the efforts under way to reform the United Nations. In rhetoric as in tactic, both regimes draw upon a rich European internationalist heritage which sees the smelting of nations as part of its utopian vision of peace and prosperity through institutionalized cooperation and socialist coordination. Both initially operated within limited frameworks, but then created self-perpetuating bureaucracies, ever striving to stretch their tentacles into more fields of activity. Both use the language of “historic inevitability,” pointing to irreversible technological changes, to mask what is actually a concerted effort to produce results that are not at all inevitable. And both are fundamentally skeptical of national sovereignty, public accountability, private enterprise and democratic freedoms, paying these values lip service while drawing up schemes to erode them and replace them with bureaucratic regimes that are at once powerful, interventionist and fiercely independent.

At the forefront of UN reform stands a little-known body with an unnerving name: The Commission on Global Governance. The CGG was created in 1992 at the initiative of Willy Brandt, head of the Socialist International and former chancellor of West Germany, and with the goal of designing a structural overhaul of the United Nations in the wake of the

Cold War's resolution. Timed to appear as an answer to U.S. complaints about the UN's expensive, corrupt bureaucracy, the CGG set to work under the chairmanship of former Swedish Prime Minister Ingvar Carlsson and former Secretary-General of the British Commonwealth Shridath Ramphal, and with the blessings of Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali. Yet this group of twenty-eight commissioners consisted not of seasoned managerial fat-trimmers, but of precisely the opposite: A mixture of peace activists, environmentalists, socialists, development specialists and UN bureaucrats—in effect, a dream team for massive bureaucratic expansion. It quickly became clear that the CGG's mission was to make the UN not more efficient but more powerful at the expense of its member states; as Carlsson himself put it, the commissioners began their work “convinced that it was time for a new order in world affairs, a new style of managing our relations on this planet, and a new way of relating to the planet itself.”²⁴

The CGG's proposals, released in its 1994 report under the Sesame Street-like title *Our Global Neighborhood*, are far-reaching and at times frightening. Taken individually they amount to small changes to international institutions. Put together, these incremental reforms would make the UN less accountable to national governments or their citizens, by arming the world body with independent financial resources and even military force.

Take the CGG's recommendations on international security. According to the report, the UN's mandate to maintain world “security”—presumably referring to the jurisdiction of the Security Council, the only UN body currently authorized to employ force—should apply not only to clear-cut issues of military intervention, but to all “economic, social, environmental, political, and military conditions that generate threats to the security of people and the planet.” What specific security threats does the CGG envision? For starters, “the development of military capabilities beyond that required for national defense and support of UN action”—the implication being that the right to decide for any country precisely what military capabilities are “required for national defense” would belong not

to sovereign states, but to the UN itself. Similarly: “Weapons of mass destruction are not legitimate instruments of national defense.” That is, even though many believe that only the presence of nuclear weapons prevented the Cold War from escalating into armed superpower conflict, the CGG calls for the eventual elimination of all nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. And in case that doesn’t go far enough, the Commission also calls for international supervision of *all* weapons: “The production and trade in arms should be controlled by the international community.” The goal: “the demilitarization of global politics.”²⁵

As policy proposals, the CGG’s prescriptions are no different from those of pacifist movements everywhere. The difference is that the CGG wants to see them enforced by giving the UN a standing army—or, rather, “peace enforcement units.” “The UN needs to be able to deploy credible and effective peace enforcement units at an early stage in a crisis and at short notice.” This small force of 10,000 personnel would enable the Security Council to intervene rapidly in crises until more substantial peacekeeping units could be deployed. But it is not far from a small number of peacekeeping units to the much larger standing army some have advocated.

Of course, unchecked UN military intervention would never be approved by the Security Council given the veto rights held by the five permanent members. So, in the name of “democracy,” the CGG is intent on revoking the great powers’ veto. To this end, the Commission recommends a two-stage process. First, the Security Council would be expanded by adding five new vetoless permanent members and three non-permanent members. Then, “around 2005 ... the veto can be phased out.” With conservative irritants such as the U.S. and Great Britain out of the way, an expanded Security Council would likely be dominated by developing countries and European states sympathetic to the agenda of bureaucratic world socialism.

How will the UN afford this expansion of its activities? “Charges on the use of global resources such as flight-lanes, sea lanes, and ocean fishing areas,” for example. Or, even better: An international tax on foreign currency transactions or multinational corporations. With the effective

use of global taxation, the UN could easily raise revenue on the scale of the entire U.S. federal budget.²⁶

Other proposals are nearly as worrying. In the name of “the rule of law,” the Commission proposes that all UN members accept the compulsory jurisdiction of the International Court of Justice (the “World Court”) on all matters of international law. If states fail to comply with the Court’s judgments, the CGG proposes enforcement by the Security Council—soon to be free of great power vetoes. The Trusteeship Council, a defunct UN body once responsible for administering non-self-governing territories, is to be re-launched with “a new mandate over the global commons,” covering resources ranging from the atmosphere to outer space to the biosphere itself—a mandate which potentially encompasses everything on earth. Then, to dilute further the influence of national governments, the Commission wants to increase the role of “civil society,” namely the thousands of international non-governmental organizations (NGOs), in UN decisionmaking. Which NGOs will be allowed to participate is not specified, but early signs point to an abundance of environmentalists, development agencies and other do-gooders. Democratic representation and accountability are not on the agenda.²⁷

What right does the UN have to intervene so extensively, since the UN Charter insists on the inviolability of state sovereignty? Well, the CGG calls for the Charter to be amended, arguing that “a global consensus exists today for a UN response on humanitarian grounds” when “the security of people is extensively endangered,” even by the internal policies of member states. At the same time, the CGG writes, “Military force is not a legitimate political instrument, except in self-defense or under UN auspices.” What makes force illegitimate when exercised by governments but legitimate in the hands of the UN is not explained. Nevertheless, the U.S. appears to have accepted this principle: All American military interventions since 1990 have taken place under UN auspices, from Iraq to Somalia to Bosnia to Haiti.²⁸

When pushed on the sovereignty issue, UN reformers resort to Orwellian acrobatics, arguing that sovereignty is something that can

somehow be “shared” without being violated in principle. Write CGG heads Carlsson and Ramphal:

Today, a sense of internationalism has become a necessary ingredient of sound national policies.... In an increasingly interdependent world ... the notions of territoriality, independence, and non-intervention have lost some of their meaning. In certain areas, sovereignty must be exercised collectively.²⁹

It is unclear how sovereignty can be “exercised collectively” unless states divest themselves of sovereignty in favor of the collective. What is clear, however, is that this will prevent states from exercising sovereignty *individually*. Maurice Strong, a central member of the CGG and self-proclaimed socialist ideologue, argues typically that “it is no abdication of sovereignty to exercise it in company with others, and when you’re dealing with global issues that’s what you have to do.” For example? “That’s what’s happening in Europe.”³⁰

The CGG’s proposals have formed the basis for reforms now under way at the world body. Security Council expansion is progressing, with strong pressure for an end to the veto. Rather than push for global taxation just yet, Secretary General Kofi Annan has proposed a \$1 billion revolving credit fund to enable the UN to continue operating even if the U.S. holds back its contributions. Meanwhile, UN environmental regulation took a major step forward with the 1997 Kyoto conference on global warming, when nations for the first time committed themselves to binding reductions of emissions of so-called “greenhouse gases.” This follows earlier protocols on such topics as the limitation of gases alleged to deplete the atmosphere’s ozone layer, and the “protection of biodiversity.”

A less-known project, international gun control, is moving quickly as well, shepherded along by the same disarmament groups responsible for the Chemical Weapons Convention—perhaps the most intrusive disarmament treaty to date—and the ban on land mines. Having already

established the international supervision of heavy conventional weaponry such as missiles and tanks, the UN has moved on to “small arms and light weapons”—everything from shoulder-fired antiaircraft missiles to handguns and grenades. In October 1997 Mitsuro Donawaki of Japan (where private gun ownership is almost unheard of), chairman of a UN panel of experts on small arms, recommended that the UN look into developing systems for marking and identifying weapons, establishing a database of authorized manufacturers and dealers, and controlling the sophisticated machine tools needed to manufacture some ammunition and explosives.³¹ If these proposals are implemented, the United Nations will be responsible for supervision of all forms of weaponry. As this project is under the auspices of UN disarmament bodies, attempts at actual disarmament of small arms would not be far behind, with the aim of granting the UN a monopoly on the use of force—since, after all, “military force is not a legitimate political instrument, except in self-defense or under UN auspices.” And the UN decides what constitutes self-defense.

Not all the calls for more global governance come from the CGG or the UN. Just about every international problem these days provokes proposals for the creation of additional transnational institutions to “solve” it. A case in point is the recent economic crisis in east Asia, which unleashed a wave of proposals for new international agencies in response. Investor George Soros, known supporter of European integration and avowed skeptic towards capitalism, suggested an International Credit Insurance Corporation to guarantee international loans.³² International financial consultant Henry Kaufman reiterated his support for a Board of Overseers of Major International Institutions and Markets, essentially a worldwide bank regulator.³³ Others have called for the creation of a global central bank and for restrictions on international capital flows. What these suggestions have in common is an assumption, gaining in acceptance every day, that the relative failures of some economies undermine the right and wisdom of self-governance, that the rules of the international game have somehow changed, and that the appropriate response to these changes is the creation

of additional multilateral regimes, where decisions critical to the economic fate of nations will be kept at a safe distance from the nuisance of democratic oversight.

IV

Isn't "globalism" just a new word for "socialism"? Stripped of its Eurojargon and hi-tech perfumery, is not the call for sovereignty to be "exercised collectively" by giving basic decisionmaking over to unaccountable bureaucrats really just an update of the same heavy-handed, collectivist utopianism that threatened the basic liberties of citizens and peoples for most of the twentieth century? A brief look at the intellectual and political roots of today's internationalist movement reveals that it is really nothing new at all; that the ideas and institutions of today's internationalism are the direct progeny of the world's socialist-internationalist heritage; and that even as the collectivist *economic* vision has been discredited, its adherents have reemerged and grown powerful under the banner of the collectivist *political* vision, known today as "globalism."³⁴

Since the eighteenth century, revolutionary thinkers have envisioned a Europe united in peace, transcending national identities for a European one, drawn together by a claimed common religion, culture and history—and by a collectivist ideal. As Jean-Jacques Rousseau put it in 1771, "There are no longer French, Germans, Spaniards or even English ... but only Europeans."³⁵ Rousseau, as well, offered the seeds of modern socialism by casting doubt upon the basic notion of private property, as expressed famously in his *Discourse on the Origin of Inequality*:

The first person who, having enclosed a plot of land, took it into his head to say *this is mine* and found people simple enough to believe him, was

the true founder of civil society. What crimes, wars, murders, what miseries and horrors would the human race have been spared, had someone pulled up the stakes or filled in the ditch and cried out to his fellow men: “Do not listen to this impostor. You are lost if you forget that the fruits of the earth belong to all and the earth to no one!”³⁶

Rousseau’s writings, which sired so many aspects of the emergence of socialism in Europe, offered the basic political outlook in which nations and individuals consistently defer to the larger collective—an outlook that would resound in socialist internationalist writings for centuries to come. Henri de Saint-Simon, one of the intellectual forebears of Christian Socialism in France, advocated the scientific organization of industry and society, and called for the unification of Europe under a single, supreme parliament, through which “the European peoples will be united by the essential bonds in any political association; uniformity of institutions, union of interests, conformity of principles, a common ethic and a common education.” Expressing a sentiment that will no doubt ring familiar, Saint-Simon wrote:

There will come a time, without doubt, when all the peoples of Europe will feel that questions of common interest must be dealt with before coming down to national interests; then evils will begin to lessen, troubles abate, war die out. That is the ultimate direction in which we are steadily progressing; it is there that the progress of the human mind will carry us. But which is more worthy of man’s prudence—to hasten towards it, or to let ourselves be dragged there?³⁷

While Saint-Simon was laying the groundwork for generations of socialist preeminence in France, Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels were establishing a secular variety of socialist internationalism in Germany. In 1848, their *Communist Manifesto* argued, in addition to its well-known economic claims, that the working classes of all nationalities had more in common with their brother proletarians than with their bourgeois compatriots: “National differences and antagonisms between peoples are daily more and more vanishing, owing to

the development of the bourgeoisie, to freedom of commerce, to the world-market, to uniformity in the mode of production and in the conditions of life corresponding thereto. The supremacy of the proletariat will cause them to vanish still faster.”³⁸

As the decades passed, belief in the imminence of a new global order based on organization and reason intensified, and the work of collectivist philosophers began to bear political and institutional fruit. In the years prior to World War I, French socialists came to believe that an era of European, collectivist brotherhood was close at hand, and organized politically to help bring it about. In 1903, Jean Jaurès, cofounder of the newspaper *L'Humanité* and head of the French Socialist Party, told France's Chamber of Deputies that in short order, the Allies and Central Powers would merge into a “European Alliance of Labor and Peace,” whose principal task would be “protecting the workers of all countries throughout Europe, and creating a sort of European social Fatherland for the whole of the proletariat.”³⁹ Jaurès' words were echoed two years later by Gustave Hervé, a French radical who facilitated the merger of France's two socialist parties:

Our compatriots are not the capitalists of this country, who would massacre us if they could, as they massacred the father of the Commune; they are the class-conscious proletarians, the Socialists, the revolutionists of the earth, who are everywhere waging the same battle as we for the inauguration of a new society.... We shall establish the free European federation, the first step towards that grand federation of humanity, in which the principalities of today will lose themselves, as the petty provinces of old lost themselves in the formation of the France, the England, the Germany of modern times.⁴⁰

World War I proved a humiliation for prophets of the new order, at the same time that it catalyzed the effort to unify Europe. The horrors of the “war to end all wars,” which was widely blamed on nationalism, led many to conclude that world peace could be ensured only by associations of international

brotherhood, starting in Europe. After the war, a group called the League of Free Nations Association formed, with futurologist and lifelong socialist H.G. Wells at its helm. In a 1919 essay in the *Atlantic Monthly* entitled “The Idea of a League of Nations,” Wells called for a “World-League of Nations” which would bring together nation-states under a single political umbrella:

The League of Nations cannot be a little thing; it is either to be a great thing in the world, an overriding idea of a greater state, or nothing. Every state aims ultimately at the production of a sort of man, and it is an idle and wasteful diplomacy, a pandering to timidities and shams, to pretend that the World-League of Nations is not ultimately a state aiming at that ennobled individual whose city is the world.⁴¹

The next year the League of Nations was founded, albeit something of the “little thing” that Wells had warned against. In short order, politicians and pundits began to speak of the nation-state’s demise. In 1923 French Foreign Minister Aristide Briand—the former secretary-general of France’s Socialist Party, best known for the 1928 Kellogg-Briand pact outlawing war—called for Europe to be tied by “a federal bond.”⁴²

In the decades that followed, the link between internationalism and socialism became a universal element of European politics. The powerful command economies in National-Socialist Germany and the Soviet Union both made ample use of internationalist rhetoric in justifying their expansionist designs.⁴³ And in Western Europe, the dream of a united Europe continued to accompany the ever-increasing collectivization of Europe’s economies, especially once the Nazi threat had been eliminated. The League of Nations, which had failed to deliver anything resembling the “greater state” that Wells had envisioned, gave way to two new internationalist developments: The creation of a stronger United Nations, enjoying the superpower backing that the League had lacked, and a rejuvenated effort to unite Europe, with leaders envisioning as early as 1949 a “Council of Europe” whose principal institutions bore a striking

resemblance to today's EU—a Committee of Ministers which met in secret, and a parliament-like Consultative Assembly with no legislative authority.⁴⁴ From the start, proposals were floated for a European army and a single currency as well.

The emergence of the Cold War all but paralyzed the UN, and any hope of a UN-based international utopia was dashed, at least for the time being. In Europe, however, the effect of the Cold War was precisely the opposite: Whereas integrationist sentiment had previously been based on a vision of peace and prosperity within Europe, the emergence of a strategic threat from the east imbued the effort to unify Europe with a new sense of urgency.⁴⁵ In 1951, six countries, led by France, agreed to establish the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC). The object was, in the words of French Foreign Minister Robert Schuman, “to place Franco-German production of coal and steel under a common High Authority.... This proposal will build the first concrete foundation of a European federation....”⁴⁶ The real significance of the treaty was not lost on German Chancellor Konrad Adenauer, who noted that the “political meaning” of the ECSC was “infinitely larger than its economic purpose.... For the first time in history, countries want to renounce part of their sovereignty, voluntarily and without compulsion, in order to transfer it to a supranational structure.”⁴⁷ The ECSC's first president, Jean Monnet, was a lifelong internationalist who called for the establishment of a European army to supersede the national armies; he later headed the Action Committee for the United States of Europe (ACUSE), a pressure group which worked to expand the ECSC's role.⁴⁸

And expand it did. Over the years, the ECSC's mandate ballooned to include the collectivization of everything from agriculture to monetary policy. The 1957 Treaty of Rome transformed the ECSC into the European Economic Community, and set as its goal “ever closer union”—an ideal allowing for no permanent solution short of complete union. As more areas of economic and social activity were drawn into the European vortex, additional

countries joined in, some such as Britain desiring market access and political influence, others like Spain and Greece eager to emphasize their shift to democracy and also expecting agricultural and industrial subsidies. Subsequent agreements, such as the 1969 Hague Agreement, the Single European Act of 1987, and the Maastricht Treaty of 1992, brought Europe ever closer to the longed-for unification, each national government voluntarily giving over an increased share of its democratic authority to the discretion of the larger collective—a collective which itself has taken on a life of its own, struggling for ever more power while shying away from the burdens of accountability which are the hallmark of representative government.

Though the intellectual climate has shifted dramatically over the decades, with privatization, deregulation and decentralization taking hold around the world since the 1980s, the collectivists in Brussels have steadied the course. Driven by steadfast ideals, and insulated from public opinion by the absence of democratic controls, the main concern among EU bureaucrats has been to minimize the impact of world events on their fiefdoms and to harness the powers of global trade in an unceasing effort to substitute their authority for that of both national governments and private citizens. To this day, French officials routinely deride free markets as “Anglo-Saxon decadence.”⁴⁹ Only with political union, they say, can Europe protect its collectivized economies from the titans of America and Japan.

V

The downfall of Communism has breathed new life into the process of European unification. No longer distracted by the bear next door (which, in addition to threatening the region, had given socialist internationalists a terrible name), Europe’s leaders have taken full advantage of the geopolitical upheaval to push ahead with Europe’s plans for conquering itself—

and often over the objections of a hesitant public. As European elites prepare for the next stage of integration through economic and monetary union, popular support appears to have run aground. The Maastricht Treaty barely passed a 1992 referendum in France. After it failed in Denmark, the government negotiated some special exemptions and made citizens vote again to get things right. The British government resisted calls for a referendum on Maastricht, but a plebiscite has been promised should Britain decide to join the monetary union. Other governments are not taking the risk. In Germany, where a solid majority opposes replacing the trusty Deutsche mark with the sporty euro, the government has decided not to ask the public for its opinion.

In the meantime, the Cold War's end has also meant a genuine resurrection of the most grandiose of plans for the UN. Again, it was the Cold War that had thwarted efforts to make the UN the global "greater state" which the League of Nations had never become. The fall of the Soviet Union has broken the stalemate that left the UN so incapable of proper global governance and rekindled hopes for a new order. Now having to convince no one other than a United States already eager for UN reform, reformers established the CGG and set to work formulating their plan of how to reallocate the world's resources, and how to convince the world's leading democracies to part with enough of their independent discretionary powers as to allow the UN to govern the world's affairs without obstruction.

The call to international dialogue in political and economic relations is, to be sure, a noble one. Projects such as NAFTA and NATO, despite their numerous flaws, demonstrate that democratic governments do not have to default on the mandate of their respective electorates in order to achieve international cooperation. On the contrary, legislators and executive bodies all over the free world are empowered to negotiate with their peers and conclude whatever agreements they deem necessary—subject always to the watchful eye of those whom they represent. What sets the EU, UN and other internationalist projects apart is that they demand the forfeiture of democratic sovereignty to an ever-growing bureaucracy capable of imposing its

decisions without having to answer to the populations whose lives are most affected.

Perhaps it should not surprise us that globalism—the belief in subordinating the political and economic decisionmaking of nations to the authority of a larger governing body—has so often come together with socialism—the belief in subordinating the political and economic decisionmaking of individuals to the authority of a larger governing body. What should surprise us, however, is how often the world can fall for the same fallacy, no matter how much evidence to the contrary.

Jason Elbaum is a researcher at Imperial College, London.

Notes

1. “Bill’s Last Chance,” *Newsweek International*, December 29, 1997/January 5, 1998, p. 55.

2. Dudley Fishburn, ed., *The World in 1995* (London: The Economist Publications, 1994), p. 14.

3. Latin American Economic System (SELA), *Integration Bulletin for Latin America and the Caribbean*, No. 8, September 1997.

4. Speech in Davos, January 26, 1995.

5. Shimon Peres, *The New Middle East* (New York: Henry Holt, 1993), pp. 73, 81, 98.

6. Peres, *New Middle East*, p. 62.

7. Though the EU formally came into being only with the Maastricht Treaty, to minimize confusion the term “European Union” will be used to refer to all stages of the European Community.

8. David Pryce-Jones, “European Union, A Disaster in the Making,” *Commentary*, June 1997, p. 33.

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9. Christopher Booker and Richard North, *The Castle of Lies: Why Britain Must Get Out of Europe* (London: Gerald Duckworth, 1996), p. 156.
 10. Timothy Bainbridge and Anthony Teasdale, *The Penguin Companion to the European Union* (London: Penguin, 1995), pp. 92-93.
 11. Bainbridge and Teasdale, *Penguin Companion*, p. 161.
 12. "Serving the European Union: A Citizen's Guide to the Institutions of the European Union" (Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, 1996), p. 14.
 13. Booker and North, *Castle of Lies*, p. 156.
 14. Booker and North, *Castle of Lies*, p. 152.
 15. Booker and North, *Castle of Lies*, pp. 36-37.
 16. Booker and North, *Castle of Lies*, pp. 132-133.
 17. Booker and North, *Castle of Lies*, pp. 139-140.
 18. Dick Leonard, *Guide to the European Union* (London: The Economist Publications, 1997), p. 55.
 19. Bernard Connolly, *The Rotten Heart of Europe* (London: Faber and Faber, 1995), p. vii.
 20. Connolly, *Rotten Heart*, pp. xvi, xviii.
 21. *Financial Times*, February 19, 1998.
 22. East Jerusalem was formally annexed in 1967, the Golan Heights in 1981.
 23. *Ha'aretz*, May 19, 21, 26, 1998, and June 11, 1998.
 24. Ingvar Carlsson, lecture at the Center for International and Comparative Studies, Northwestern University, Chicago, October 23, 1996.
 25. Commission on Global Governance, *Summary of Our Global Neighborhood*, February 6, 1995, pp. 8-10.
 26. Economist James Tobin, cited in Ronald Bailey, "Who Is Maurice Strong?" *National Review*, September 1, 1997, p. 34.
 27. In traditional democratic political theory, "civil society" refers to the variety of non-governmental associations to which people belong: Companies, churches, schools, charities, labor unions, clubs, etc. Only a hermit could avoid being a member of several such groups. In a democratic society, these associations often take on responsibilities which otherwise might be left to government: Charities support the poor, churches offer moral guidance, an employer might provide health insurance, etc. Yet unlike government services funded by tax money and

often imposed coercively, civil society associations are voluntary. When services are provided by voluntary associations rather than government, individual liberty is maximized and a creative diversity of public services comes into being. No one would suggest that it would be democratic for the groups of civil society to *run* the government; they are important to democracy precisely because they are separate from government.

None of this applies to “international civil society.” Very few people in the world are members of any kind of international association, whether a global employer, a charity like Save the Children or an advocacy group like Greenpeace. Neither do these groups display the diversity present on the local level; almost without exception, international non-governmental organizations are decidedly internationalist. Finally, the role the UN envisions for these groups is to subvert national governments by creating coordinated public pressure for internationalist projects. Unlike in democratic societies, where voluntary associations of civil society mediate between government and citizens, the UN’s model would have NGOs impose their will on governments and their citizens, like it or not.

28. The only notable exception was the August 1998 missile assault against terrorist bases in Sudan and Afghanistan, when the U.S. acted unilaterally. Still, a White House official insisted, “This is not the start of a new foreign policy doctrine.” *The Daily Telegraph*, August 22, 1998.

29. Commission on Global Governance, *Summary*, pp. 4, 7.

30. Bailey, “Who Is Maurice Strong?” p. 36.

31. Press release, UN General Assembly First Committee, October 21, 1997.

32. George Soros, “Avoiding a Breakdown,” *Financial Times*, December 31, 1997.

33. Henry Kaufman, “The Need for a New IMF,” *Time*, February 2, 1998.

34. Obviously, not all those who have believed in the “softening” of borders or the facilitating of international commerce through treaties have also been socialists. The point is that the internationalist movement as it stands today is the product of the thought and efforts of socialist leaders and activists, and that we should not, therefore, be surprised if the institutions they produce are fundamentally at odds with liberty and democratic control.

35. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, “Considerations sur le Gouvernement de Pologne,” in *Oeuvres Complètes* (Paris: Editions de Seuil, 1952), p. 531.

36. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, “Discourse on the Origin of Inequality,” in Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *The Basic Political Writings*, trans. Donald A. Cress (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1987), p. 60.

37. Henri Comte de Saint-Simon, "The Reorganization of the European Community," in Henri Comte de Saint-Simon, *Selected Political Writings* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1952), p. 68.

38. "Manifesto of the Communist Party," reprinted in Robert C. Tucker, ed., *The Marx-Engels Reader* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1978), second edition, p. 488.

39. Jean Jaurès, "Internationalism and Peace: A Speech by Jean Jaurès," in *European Socialism and the Problems of War and Militarism* (New York: Garland, 1972), pp. 3, 5.

40. Gustave Hervé, "Antipatriotism: Address of Gustave Hervé at the Close of His Trial for Anti-Militarist Activity," in *European Socialism*, p. 11.

41. H.G. Wells et al., "The Idea of a League of Nations," *Atlantic Monthly*, January 1919, pp. 106-115, and February 1919, pp. 77-82.

42. Aristide Briand, from a speech before the Tenth Assembly of the Society of Nations, September 5, 1929, in Georges Suarez, *Briand* (Paris: Plon, 1952), vol. 6, p. 327.

43. According to the Nazis, a strong Germany required *lebensraum*, "living space," meaning the ability to exploit resources from across the continent; Germany frequently employed pan-European rhetoric in justifying its expansionist efforts during both world wars. Cf. Niall Ferguson, "Another Power Play Unlikely to Succeed," *Financial Times*, January 5, 1998, p. 18. German businessmen and academics met in Berlin in 1942 to discuss a "European Economic Community," an idea received enthusiastically by Ribbentrop and Goebbels, and adopted by Third Reich Economics Minister Walter Funk. The National-Socialist version of the "EEC" was responsible for the mobilization of industry in the conquered areas of Europe for the Reich's war effort. The rhetoric and structure of today's European Union bear striking similarities to those of the Nazi program.

44. William L. Shirer, *Midcentury Journey* (New York: Signet, 1961), pp. 246-247.

45. See Timothy Garton Ash, "Europe's Endangered Liberal Order," *Foreign Affairs*, March/April 1998, p. 65.

46. John Pinder, *European Community: The Building of a Nation* (Oxford: Oxford, 1995), second edition, p. 1.

47. Bainbridge and Teasdale, *Penguin Companion*, p. 159.

48. Leonard, *Guide*, pp. 4-5. Monnet's plan for a single army for Europe resulted in the creation of the European Defense Community, signed onto by all six

ECSC countries in 1952. The plan never took wing, however, due to the French National Assembly's failure to ratify the treaty.

49. The Maastricht campaign in France, for example, relied heavily upon such rhetoric. See Connolly, *Rotten Heart*, pp. viii, xviii, 75.

Tellingly, once the European single currency is launched, the EU has proposed that the Group of Eight conference of leading world economies be replaced by a Group of Three: the heads of state of the U.S., Japan and the European Union. Europe would finally have the honor it deserves, as this triumvirate of dollar, yen and euro manages the world economy, presumably at the expense of those not at the table. Britain (not yet planning to join the single currency) and Canada would lose their seats.