The Human Rights : A Permanent Challenge

Concluding Remarks

Johan Galtung

Politologue, fondateur de l'Irénologie (Science de la paix) et du *Journal of Peace Research*, fondateur et directeur de « Transcend », réseau pour la transformation des conflits par des moyens pacifiques, lauréat du Prix Nobel Alternatif et membre de l'Académie norvégienne des sciences et des lettres – Oslo, Norvège

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 10 December 1948-the two Conventions of 16 November 1966 are international law-was edited by a committee of Men ; Older, White, Bourgeois, Lawyers, French.

- Nothing about women's and children's rights ; wait till the 1980s.
- The perspective focuses on individuals, not collectives, peoples.
- There are no rights to access to toilet, nor to sexuality : well-mannered bourgeois do such things but do not talk-write about it. Article 27, 2 even protects remuneration for professionals like themselves.

The "human rights legal claims" discourse defines underdog goals but is silent on topdog goals : status quo.

Their justification : "if they rise, they will treat us the way we treated them". Revenge. In a conflict discourse all parties have to be heard, for solutions. But the legal discourse is DMA-Dualist-Manichean-Armageddon ; two parties, rights vs wrongs, final battle in the Supreme Court. No accommodation to legitimate concerns of the losing side.

The winner takes all.

And they were French. What does, or did, that mean ? France as the First Modern State, fruit of the Great Revolution, the locomotive pulling all States on the rails of universalism. Marked and marred by the terreur of "monstre Paris", to be tamed by rules binding the State : hence human and citizen rights. But silent on the citizen duties, in very small script : paying state taxes, dying in State wars.

Universal ? So conditioned by gender, generation, race, class, profession, nation, with its history and geography ? Of course not.

Examples : Asians mention the rights of villages and artisanry to survive "development" ; and the rights of clans as juridical persons.

And yet admirable. We salute article 3, the sacred right to life. And we interpret it as the right to a full life, not cut off by acts of direct violence ; nor cut down by structural violence. Not acts of commission ; nor acts of omission, failing to engage in social change.

And we salute article 28, the meta-right, to live in the social and world orders that make the rights possible. A genius article.

Instead of Human Rights-Democracy controlling States controlling Capital, Capital now controls States through privatization (deprivare, of democratic control), buying legislative-executive-judiciary power by buying politicians, thereby crippling democracy and human rights.

Growing inequality within and between states, recurring crisis when speculation with other peoples' money breaks down–cashing in the gains, pushing the risks on people with states as powerless spectator. Misery spreads : there are now more poor people in United States of America (USA) than in China.

Add to this the USA killing more than 20 million in 37 States since World War II, and more than 245 military interventions since 1801 (Jefferson in Libya) – simple facts the West is unable to absorb.

The Third generation of rights to Peace-Development-Environment : Peace : the sacredness of life also across borders ; USA are against.

Development : more equality, lifting the bottom up-basic needs for all.

Environment : meet also Nature's basic needs, diversity and symbiosis.

Also missing were the perspectives of other civilizations ; their positive messages, their utopias, with implications for human rights.

The Western utopia : One state, the World ; One Nation, Humanity ; One civilization : Western. This is not going to happen : outompeted economically, defeated militarily, and less clout politically. But culture remains. US culture is very strong, carried by Basic English, not by such unnecessarily complicated languages as French and German.

The Islam utopia : the Ummah field of believers with the right to live in local communities centered on the Mosque, Sharia court, and the Imam. The rights to Closeness and Sharing to meet basic needs.

Hindu : Focus on Birth-Preservation-Destruction of what does not have the right of life, with the human rights to that dynamism. Like the human right to change religion/world view during one's life time.

Buddhism : Focus on Relations-Networks of individuals with human right to non-violent relations in local communities-sangha-centered on the temple, the tank-well-for basic needs. Everything hangs together.

China : Focus on Daoist Holism-Dialectics yin/yang always moving. The human right to transcend contradictions, again and again. Three civilizations Daoism-Confucianism-Buddhism enriching each other, not like Judaism-Christianity-Islam killing each other. China is China-centric, lifts the bottom up socially-economically-culturally, and connects Eurasia-Africa with Silk Belts. Human right : to be connected.

Japan : Focus on Eclecticism, of Shinto-Confucianism-Buddhism, Japan-China, Japan-West, Japan-USA. The human right to be eclectic.

The West, Islam and Buddhism seem to define a final state of affairs, the other three are more dynamic, with very open futures.

West and Islam are singularist-universalist, one truth, for all, differ from the other four that absorb from others through occupation, tolerance, dialectics, eclecticism.

Islam and Buddhism favor the human right to live in local units, as opposed to the Western world State and Hindu caste verticality ; but compatible with much of China and Japan given the Buddhism in both.

Differences, similarities, changing alliances-a wonderful basis for dialogue of civilizations, and beyond that : for mutual learning. "*I love that one, learning from you ; what would you like from me ?*"

We are globalizing, internationalizing. A key contribution from France was The Internationale, inspired by the 1870-71 Paris Commune, commune-ist, not communist. The author and composer were both French.

"Don't cling so hard to your possessions. For you have nothing if you have no rights". Also human rights oriented. And ending strongly :

This is the final struggle Let us group together and tomorrow

The Internationale Will be the human kind.

Final or not : human rights drawing on all civilizations harbor that unifying capacity. Let us build on what we have, expand and deepen.

History throws shadows far into the future. Understanding the relation Germany-Greece/Schäuble-Tsipras, and what happens in Ukraine ("at the border") passes through +395 (the Roman Empire breaking into a Catholic West and an Orthodox East and +1094 (the "Schism" ; understanding Iraq passes through +1258 (the massacre of Baghdad) ; understanding Afghanistan-Pakistan passes through +1893 (Durand line) ; understanding the Middle East and the Islamic State passes through 1916 (Sykes-Picot). Understanding mass migration into Europe passes through the history of slavery, colonialism, robbery capitalism, wars.

We sense a human right here, the right to be well informed about the past to understand present and future better.

Geography throws links around the world, like the same climate at the same belts of latitude ; hence deep colonialism West-East-West, less so North-South-North. From the West came empires linking vast spaces, born-expanding-maturing-declining-falling. China stayed in the same pocket Himalaya-Gobi-Tundra-Sea with dynasties born-expanding-maturing-declining-falling.

We sense a human right here, the right to be well informed about the far away to understand the near and the here better.