

## "NEITHER UTOPIAN NOR REALIST"

Carlisle, Penn.

Sir: The recent *worldview* article (June 1962) by Donald Brandon, "Neither Utopian Nor Realist," in which he takes to task both "utopians" and "realists" in modern foreign affairs demands a reply—with particular attention to his treatment of Hans J. Morgenthau. Mr. Brandon selects Professor Morgenthau, as so many others before him have done, as the "foremost academic exponent of realism." He then proceeds to identify Morgenthau with some of the worst caricatures of political realism.

Mr. Brandon's arguments, designed to refute Morgenthau's position, would be helpful if, indeed, they dealt with Morgenthau's whole position. However, they do not fully do so and, consequently, it is somewhat distressing to read again the same criticism of Morgenthau's ideas. Brandon falls into the same trap as other Thomists who persist in seeing the realists as "relativists" or "ambiguists."

More serious, however, is that Mr. Brandon identifies Morgenthau with the cynics and power philosophers. He thereby conveniently establishes realism as one polarity in the political spectrum, the other being utopianism. Thomism and its moral expression in Natural Law are enabled therefore to slip in between the two as the great *via media* which takes into account the positive features of both realism and utopianism (or better idealism) without their faults.

Three significant issues interest Mr. Brandon, two of which must be considered only hastily before turning to the third, the relation of national interest to morality. (1) Brandon implies that Morgenthau understands the essential reality of the state to be the perversion of political power. As I understand him, however, Morgenthau understands the state as basically a creation of society. It is at root a legal order, expressive of society's will to organize itself in order to exercise its monopoly of force for the preservation of peace and order under legally defined conditions. What makes the state a viable political institution is the existence of mutual interests, combined with a common set of values and ethical standards shared by the members of the political community making up the state. These common interests and values make possible the institutionalization of processes for peaceful change and the adjust-

ment of disputes and tensions within the state. It is this set of interests and values which is absent in the sphere of international politics.

(2) Brandon also accuses Morgenthau of separating artificially "political man" and "moral man." He assumes that Morgenthau's attempt to separate political science from other intellectual disciplines, e.g., economics, law, ethics, etc., is also the expression of the reality of autonomous political man who acts apart from moral considerations. In actuality, Morgenthau seeks, as a political scientist, to isolate both those factors in man's political life which inhibit the realization of the goals of politics and those which may make their realization more probable. Hence, he can talk about the autonomy of political science as the economist talks about the autonomy of economics. However, Morgenthau knows that the political scientist *qua* scientist is always an abstraction, for the political scientist *qua* man is constantly one with the scientist and as man he determines both the goals of politics and the framework through which political behavior is understood. This is what he would call "morally determined scientific knowledge." If Morgenthau has ever tried to isolate man as a political animal from man as a moral being for anything other than conceptual purposes, then I have yet to discover it in his writing. He is all too aware of the complexity of the human personality.

(3) Finally, the implication is made that Hans Morgenthau is a proponent of "excessive nationalism" and the "unscrupulous pursuit of narrow national interests." Moreover, asserts Brandon, Morgenthau "insists upon the 'moral dignity' of the national interests in a manner which is hardly compatible with the natural law." Nowhere, he claims, can the principles of natural law be found in the writings of contemporary realists, e.g., "the principles of the international good; of the moral obligation of all nations, and particularly of the Great Powers, for the pursuit of peace, freedom and justice as well as the search for national security, and of the need for a return to natural law as the necessary condition of a transformation of international relations." To Brandon, Morgenthau represents the epitome of positivism and relativism in international political theory.

It isn't surprising, of course, that Morgenthau does not invoke Natural Law principles for he consistently

eschews what is traditionally taught as Natural Law (witness his rejection of it in a review of Walter Lippmann's *The Public Philosophy*). This is not to say that he rejects the close relationship of morality to power and interest. In other words, the "moral duty" of a nation to follow "the national interest" as its guiding star in foreign policy must be understood in light of Morgenthau's value theory and theory of norms. His latest work, *The Purpose of American Politics*, and one of his earliest monographs, *La Réalité des Normes*, bear out this evaluation.

Professor Morgenthau has indicated that the national interest ought to be the only standard for foreign policy; furthermore, he has suggested that the reason for the centrality of that standard is because of the very nature of international politics. That is to say, there is no consensus of moral and cultural values which might serve to alter and civilize the raw conflicts of national interest in the struggle for power. Hence, since the individual nation is in fact the object of highest secular loyalty and embodies certain empirical values within its own territory and institutions, there is no alternative to the nation's interest as a guide to foreign policy; there certainly is no world government which embodies the same values and commands the same loyalties as does the nation.

Morgenthau reasons that the concept of the national interest can be defined as to content and meaning. National interest is revealed, upon close scrutiny, to mean "national security." All nations act with their national security in the forefront of policy considerations, or they suffer the possible consequence of the loss of national identity. To proclaim a policy in terms of universal moral principle is to camouflage the real element of self-interest motivating the policy. Morgenthau points to the considerations of national survival, rather than moral indignation, which led France, Great Britain, and the United States into the Second World War. If moral principle were the only consideration involved in the matter, then Morgenthau doubts that the Allies would have resisted at all.

Morgenthau considers national survival, or the defense of the national interest, the most pertinent moral principle confronting the statesman. What appears in the abstract to be a principle contrary to morality Morgenthau designates as moral, and he assigns it a higher value than such universal principles as liberty or economic well-being for all nations which are hopes or dreams rather than actualities. How this can be justified is revealed when one realizes that Morgenthau is concerned to infuse the political realm with a modicum of moral values, i.e.,

to inform the realm of the possible with moral criteria. Morgenthau maintains that the moral dilemma of politics involves the choice of the lesser evil. He maintains that ultimate good, represented by universal principles, cannot be attained in this world; hence, what the statesmen should seek to realize are those values and moral principles which are within the power of the nation concerned. What is within the power of a nation, at the very least, is the defense of its own territorial integrity. Thus Morgenthau says:

The choice is not between moral principles and the national interest, devoid of moral dignity, but between one set of moral principles divorced from political reality and another set of moral principles derived from political reality.

He concludes, therefore, that it is both a political necessity and positive moral duty for the individual nation to take care of its national interest. What is involved here is the whole matter of prudence: "There can be no political morality without prudence, that is, without consideration of the political consequences of seemingly moral action."

A careful reading of *The Purpose of American Politics* will reveal, in my opinion, Morgenthau's approbation of the legitimacy and high moral value of the essential American dream and achievement. It is significant that his statement of the American purpose—equality in freedom—coincides almost wholly with what is derived from his own Kantian moral theory. This latest development of Morgenthau's thought, however, does not diverge significantly from his earlier work; it only explicates more fully his basic position. The purpose of a nation, then, ought to be the moral criterion for a nation's foreign policy. In other words, a nation's foreign policy must be judged by its purpose and, in turn, a nation's purpose must be judged by the moral conscience of the nation. The transcendent purpose of a nation limits sheer Machiavellism and acts as an informing principle for the national interest.

Another limiting principle or element with regard to the judgment of national states is what Morgenthau calls "the requirement of cosmic humility with regard to the moral evaluation of the actions of states." Morgenthau sharply rejects any pretension to identify the particular interests of states with the moral purposes of the universe, that is, the assumption that a particular nation has full knowledge of God's will and that, indeed, God is on its side. But not only does "cosmic humility" require great restraint in the natural tendency to judge other na-

tions; it also implies a philosophy of "live and let live." As Morgenthau puts it: "Respect for the existence and the individuality of its members is of the essence of the Western state system." What is represented here in his view of the necessity of humility is a recognition of the partiality of all nations and the common guilt of all nations for international tensions. A nation which views its purpose in world-wide messianic terms, however, must abjure that "relativistic philosophy and tolerance of other political systems, which is the concomitant of policies based upon the national interest, and the precondition of a number of nations living side by side in mutual respect and peace."

In what has been said already the underlying assumption has been that Morgenthau sees a direct relationship between the national interest and power, on the one hand, and morality, on the other. In the sphere of international politics the goals of morality are almost always inextricably related to the power of nation states. Liberty, order, justice, peace—these are all moral values which must take particular and concrete form in some sort of political structure in order to be existentially meaningful and valid. If these universal moral principles are severed from the capacity of nations to realize them, either conceptually or empirically, they become merely abstract ideals, neither experienced nor within the realm of live option.

Reference has been made to Morgenthau's notion of the national purpose and to the role it plays as a moral criterion for the nation's foreign policy. More, however, must be said at this point of the role which he sees the national purpose must play in informing foreign policy and giving it direction. If a nation's purpose is defined in terms of the advantage of an autocratic segment of society, then that nation's foreign policy will be informed in large measure by the interests of the ruling class. However, Morgenthau believes that the American national purpose, that of equality in freedom, has not existed solely to preserve what has been achieved at home but by preserving and extending that achievement it has been an example to other nations abroad. Moreover, where possible, the American purpose calls for the extension of equality in freedom. This third aspect of the national purpose is integrally related to the nation's power, charismatic as well as military and technological, which serves to determine the manner in and extent to which the nation carries on a policy of active expansion and export of its basic institutions. Thus, the national purpose serves to establish priorities of importance in foreign policy. National self-

preservation is the first order of business, but this necessity, unless linked to the second and third elements, is shallow and the very substance of the American purpose is subverted.

Ever since the end of the American monopoly of nuclear power, Morgenthau's analysis of the national interest has been increasingly conceived in terms broader than a self-centered hedonism and interest. Increasingly he has come to see the national interest in terms transcending the interest of a particular nation and comprising the interests of many nations.

Because Morgenthau does not consider the national interest as a moral principle of permanent validity, he is able to talk about the survival of Western civilization, and of the interests of all mankind as factors of greater importance than the survival of the national-states. The basis for his conclusion is that when the political form takes precedence over the values which that form is supposed to institutionalize, preserve, and encourage, and when the attempt to maintain that form threatens the existence of those values in the process, then the preservation of those realized values must be sought through some other political expression. Although the nation-state has become obsolete in Morgenthau's eyes, nonetheless, he does not see that there has yet emerged any new form able to replace the vital function which it plays. Consequently, until some form of world government can be established, Morgenthau takes the position that the United States must work in two directions: one, it must seek to maintain its national power, including the nuclear arsenal and conventional forces *vis-à-vis* the Communist bloc and thereby forestall further Communist imperialism and two, it must recover its national purpose as a model for the rest of the world:

"[The] plausibility of the American purpose, established in the eyes of the world by deeds, must again become the foundation upon which, supported by the modern techniques of propaganda and foreign aid, the world-wide influence of America must rest.

"That world-wide influence must serve the interests not only of the nation but also of mankind; for it must build the foundations for a supernational order that will take the control of nuclear weapons out of the hands of the nation-state. Thus it will be as it was at the beginning: what America does for itself it also does for mankind, and political experimentation on a world-wide scale in order to save mankind will be in direct line of succession to the political experiment as which at its inception America offered itself to the world."

I have tried to make clear that Professor Morgenthau believes that a realistic internationalism coincides with the nation's true interests. Those interests, of course, are the values represented in human individuals who are relatively free and relatively equal. It is the protection of those human values which is a present responsibility of the statesmen of nations; but it is also the responsibility of wise statesmen who are morally sensitive to seek new forms for the preservation and realization of human values as the old forms gradually lose their validity and become obsolete.

There is no doubt that Morgenthau's position has some serious weaknesses, notably his truncated view

of history which derives from an inadequate epistemology and his value theory which absolutizes freedom, misunderstands the nature and role of morality, and is not consistent in its recognition of the moral ambiguity of power. But, aside from these problems—and they are undergoing reconsideration in his most recent thought—Hans Morgenthau has left us in his debt for the many insights which he has contributed to our understanding of international politics and America's role in it.

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## "CATECHISM ON COMMUNISM"

New Haven, Conn.

Sir: A review as misleading as that of Thomas Molnar, who criticized Herman F. Reissig's "How to Combat Communism" in *May worldview*, deserves further discussion in your pages. The reviewer appears to be the one confused, not Mr. Reissig.

If Mr. Molnar has some secret picture of the right approach to Communism beyond that of Mr. Reissig, who is no pacifist, no isolationist, and no pagan, wouldn't he tip his hand and let us in on it? His review doesn't do this.

Molnar worries about those who are so much less nationalistic than he, and so far liberal-left, as he would say, that he doesn't hesitate to imply the use of the term communist sympathizer may be appropriate. To his mind Reissig doesn't reckon with the "possibility that there might be dupes of Communism among the leftist and progressive pilgrims to Utopia." He leaves the impression, without spelling it out for us, that there is some way of dealing with the internal threat these people are supposed to represent other than the way which the Reissig pamphlet would foster—the way of free discussion. I am assuming we agree that the F. B. I. rightly deals with actual and potential espionage.

As Mr. Molnar puts it at one point, "The essential question is, 'What constitutes freedom and what tactics may best serve it?'" One would assume that freedom actually consists partly in the freedom of such people as socialists, collectivists and Marxists to promote their own ideas of political economy along with the rest of us. To call them communist sympathizers is to beg the question. Freedom is sustained, that is, by arguing the case on its merits when these people are around, rather than by the opposite tactic of treating them as subversive, as the radical right certainly does, and as Mr. Molnar is close to doing. Certainly they may be naive, they may be wrong, they may even be "cynical" in their use of the

power-play in voluntary organizations (as also, incidentally, may be those whom Mr. Molnar would more willingly call idealists when they work within the parties, the unions, or the associations). Their ideologies may indeed be subversive to our democratic institutions if successful in winning popular support or public power.

However, one would assume that free exchange as to the strengths of our system, political, economic, social, and ideological, is precisely the way we fight "communism" of this sort. In attacking the radical right and its neurotic approach to this question, Mr. Reissig is proposing that alternative. If there is another way, we have a right to hear it from Mr. Molnar. (It is an old story now, from McCarthy days, but it comes to mind. An officer of the law, pursuing a naked Dukhobor, found that his own clothes were an impediment, and he caught the culprit to arrest him for indecent exposure only by shedding progressively all his own apparel. To Mr. Reissig, un-freedom appears to be the proposal of the radical right as the means of arresting those who promote un-freedom.)

The other disturbing issue in the reviewer's mind is combatting communism on the international front. Without going into a paper on foreign policy, we may here also ask for some positive suggestions from his quarter. He argues the inadequacy of positions he calls "mere commencement address platitudes," but he doesn't tip his own hand. If NATO, and the Marshall Plan, if foreign aid and even the fight for better race relations on the domestic front, if an intelligent (not blind) dedication to the capabilities of the UN have not served us well in our opposition to international communism, we have a right to know from a critical review what has. A moratorium on criticism of Franco and continued colonialism are no answers at all, nor are proposals for quick liberation of those under communist rule.

Perhaps the work Molnar reviews was assuming

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