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978-0-521-78509-9 - The Interregnum: Controversies in World Politics 1989-1999

Edited by Michael Cox, Ken Booth and Tim Dunne

Excerpt

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Introduction:

The Interregnum: controversies in world politics, 1989–99

MICHAEL COX, KEN BOOTH AND TIM DUNNE

The shock waves of what happened in 1989 and after helped make the 1990s a peculiarly interesting decade, and while all periods in history are by definition special, there was something very special indeed about the years following the collapse of the socialist project in the former USSR and Eastern Europe. Unfortunately, this has not been reflected in the theoretical literature. Thus although there have been many books on the end of the Cold War,¹ even more on the ‘new’ history of the Cold War itself,² and several on the current state of international relations after the ‘fall’,³ there has been relatively little work done so far on the landscape of the new international system in formation. Moreover, while there have been several post-Cold War controversies and debates—we think here of Fukuyama’s attempt to theorize the end of history,⁴ Mearsheimer’s realist reflections on the coming disorder in Europe,⁵ the various attempts to define the American mission without a Soviet enemy,⁶ and Huntington’s prediction about a coming clash of civilizations⁷—not much serious effort has been made to bring these various discussions together in one single volume. This is precisely what we set out to do here in the thirteen assembled essays, written by a variety of international experts. The editors have not attempted to impose a common conceptual framework, let alone suggest there is a single way of thinking about the years after 1989; and this is reflected in our choice of a suitably ‘transitional’ term designed to try and encap-

¹ Studies in this genre have assumed one of two forms: either detailed reconstructions of what happened in 1989 and after, or more analytical work on the implications of the end of the Cold War for international relations theory. The end of the Cold War has also generated a good amount of memoir writing, most of it useful enough but all designed to serve the purposes of the individual in question. Even spies and members of the intelligence services have felt the need (financial or otherwise) to rewrite history and tell it how ‘it really was’. For an example see Markus Wolf, *Man Without A Face: The Autobiography of Communism’s Greatest Spymaster* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1997) and Robert Gates, *From the Shadows: the Ultimate Insider’s Story of Five Presidents and How They Won the Cold War* (New York: Touchstone Books, 1997).

² See the publications of *The Cold War International History Project* produced by the Woodrow Wilson International Centre for Scholars, Washington DC.

³ One example amongst many is Michael W. Doyle and G. John Ikenberry (eds.), *New Thinking in International Relations Theory* (Boulder CO: Westview Press, 1997).

⁴ See Francis Fukuyama, ‘The End Of History?’, *The National Interest*, 16 (Summer 1989), pp. 3–18.

⁵ See John Mearsheimer, ‘Back to the Future: Instability in Europe after the Cold War’, *International Security*, 15:1 (1990), pp. 5–56.

⁶ For one of the latest efforts see Richard N. Haass, *The Reluctant Sheriff: The United States After the Cold War* (New York: A Council On Foreign Relations Book, 1997).

⁷ Samuel Huntington, ‘The Clash of Civilizations?’ *Foreign Affairs*, 72:3 (Summer 1993), pp. 22–49. Huntington later dropped the question-mark. See his *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996).

sulate the character of the decade: the ‘interregnum’.⁸ We might have employed a different word or none at all.⁹ But in the end, it was felt that the idea of an interregnum as a space between one era and another at least captured something about the ill-defined and almost impossible-to-define character of the last ten years. As we noted in a previous volume, while we might know what our modern era is not—it is not a Cold War—we are not at all sure what it is, or where it might be leading to.¹⁰

That said, there are a number of themes that deserve special mention here. One is the extent to which world politics has actually changed since the great crashes of 1989 and 1991. While most of the contributors agree that the world will never be the same again—that we now live for the first time since 1917 in a more open international system dominated by market relations—there is also a recognition that many things might not have altered at all. Thus, while sovereignty is under challenge (especially in Western Europe) the institution of the state remains more or less intact, in spite of various predictions about its decline and imminent demise in a world without major wars or borders.¹¹ There is also continued inequality and vast disparities of wealth; if anything the gap between the ‘haves’ and the ‘have nots’ is getting wider. The United States moreover remains the dominant power,¹² more so than ever since the fall of the USSR, the economic crisis in Asia Pacific and the perceived failure by the European Union to intervene with any degree of credibility in former Yugoslavia. Finally, states continue to act in ways which assume the possibility (no more) of future conflict. The landscape in 1999 may look very different to 1989, but there are still some very familiar landmarks.

A second set of issues revolves around the dynamics of globalization. Not all analysts subscribe to the notion. Indeed, there has been something of an intellectual backlash against the idea of late.¹³ But it is difficult to avoid: in some respects, it has almost become the common sense of our time, provoking a series of critically important debates about the degree to which it has made national politics irrelevant,¹⁴ the extent to which it has altered international relations as a discipline,¹⁵ and whether or not it has benefited the larger cause of humanity. There are no neat formulaic answers provided to any of these problems in these essays. Overall,

⁸ The dictionary definition of an ‘interregnum’ is a ‘period of temporary authority exercised during a vacancy of the throne or a suspension of the usual government; the interval between the close of a king’s reign and the accession of a successor; a cessation of or suspension of the usual ruling power’. See *The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1973), p. 1099.

⁹ E. H. Carr used the idea of an ‘interregnum’ to describe the period of transition between one phase of the Soviet story shaped by Lenin, and the next that was to be dominated by Stalin. The interregnum was in his view ‘a marking of time’, during which there was an ‘uneasy balance’ between contending forces, ideas and personalities. By definition, it could not last, and according to Carr, it did not outlive the summer of 1924 and Lenin’s death. See his *A History of Soviet Russia: The Interregnum 1923–1924* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1954; 1969), esp. pp. 349–73.

¹⁰ See Tim Dunne, Michael Cox and Ken Booth (eds.) *The Eighty Years’ Crisis: International Relations, 1919–1939* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. xiii.

¹¹ See Martin van Creveld, *The Rise and Decline of the State* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

¹² For one, among many, who predicted otherwise see Steven Schlosstein, *The End of the American Century* (Chicago: Congdon and Weed, 1989).

¹³ See Paul Hirst and Grahame Thompson, *Globalization in Question* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996).

¹⁴ See David Armstrong, ‘Globalization and the Social State’, *Review of International Studies*, 24:4 (1998), pp. 461–78.

¹⁵ See Ian Clark, ‘Beyond the Great Divide: Globalization and the Theory of International Relations’, *Review of International Studies*, 24:4 (October 1998), pp. 479–98.

however, the consensus seems to be that while certain parts of the world like Western Europe and the United States have done rather well out of globalization, others, like Russia and the less developed countries, have suffered badly. The IMF in particular emerges from the various narratives here as one of the more influential, but most criticized of post-Cold War institutions, primarily because it has rigidly attempted to impose a neoliberal agenda on countries that were not ready for it, and whose position therefore has been made worse as a result. And while hardly anybody can see an alternative to the so-called ‘Washington consensus’, there remains a great deal of generalized discontent with the way in which the world’s economy is currently being managed.

This brings us to a third issue: the fate of liberalism. In 1989, it was the American policymaker *cum* political theorist Francis Fukuyama who noted that the great ideological battles of the past had come to an end, and that individualism had finally won the war against its collectivist enemies on both the left and the right.¹⁶ History in this particular sense had turned an important corner, and while the future might not be quite so exciting or enervating, it would at least be liberal.¹⁷ This is not a view shared by all the contributors. On the other hand, it is not one which some of them dismiss as lightly as Fukuyama’s many early critics. Several of the authors in fact express more than a passing sympathy with his way of defining the problem, without necessarily agreeing with his philosophical method (based as it is on a combination of Hegel and Kojeve) or his triumphal conclusions. But even those who would accept his general thesis believe he leaves too much out: the propensity of certain states to go to war, the potent force of nationalism and identity,¹⁸ and the darker, less humane side of the whole liberal economic project. Liberalism might have helped shape the last ten years in ways that would have once been thought unlikely; it remains to be seen how future generations will view its achievements.

This leads us logically to the fourth theme: the intellectual and political consequences flowing from the failure of ‘actually existing socialism’. The collapse of Soviet power was not just of strategic significance: it was also one of the great ideological events of the twentieth century, even of the last two hundred years. The reasons for this are not difficult to fathom. As the most serious alternative to capitalism—its ‘other’ if you like—Soviet communism helped define what the ‘West’ was and who ‘we’ were as individuals. Hence, its implosion was bound to have massive consequences. Moreover, because the fate of Marxism and what some have termed the modernist project was bound up with the existence of the Soviet Union, when the latter fell apart it inevitably altered the way people viewed the world around them. To some it signalled the end of hope, for others the final denouement of all grand universal narratives, and for a few the belief that society was moving in a ‘comprehensive rational direction’.¹⁹ However we read it, the impact of what

¹⁶ Fukuyama later clarified his argument by noting that he did not think that ‘today’s stable democracies’ were ‘without injustice or serious social problems’ but rather that ‘the *ideal* of liberal democracy could not be improved upon’. See his *The End of History and the Last Man* (New York: The Free Press, 1992), p. xi.

¹⁷ For an extended discussion on the nature of liberalism see Andrew Moravcsik, ‘A Liberal Theory of International Politics’, *International Organization*, 51:4 (1997), pp. 513–53.

¹⁸ For a realist look at ethnicity and war in the post-Cold War era see the essays grouped together under the collective heading ‘Ethnic Nationalism, Conflict and War’, *International Security*, 21:2 (1996), pp. 5–138.

¹⁹ See Hermione Martins, ‘Technology, Modernity, Politics’, in James Good and Irving Velody (eds.), *The Politics of PostModernity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. 173.

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happened in the first workers' state—where planning rather than profit shaped choices and determined outcomes—could not be anything but profound. The future, it was argued, had been tried and failed, leaving the world (or so we were informed) without a serious systemic alternative to liberal capitalism.²⁰

A final, more implicit, theme relates to the problem of uncertainty and the extent to which we can ever really know what lies round the corner. None but the most avid positivist would pretend to be able to predict in any exact fashion.²¹ On the other hand, the extent to which the various experts failed to come close to anticipating some of the key events of the 1990s is a little worrying. Who, in 1991, for example, would have predicted that Saddam would still be in power eight years later? Who, in addition, foresaw the peace process in Northern Ireland? The financial crash in Russia? The longest boom in America's economic history? Nelson Mandela as President of South Africa? Ethnic cleansing in Europe? Japan's swift transformation from global economic superpower to financial cripple? And NATO being used as an instrument of military humanitarianism in a part of Yugoslavia? The list could go on, but the answer is obvious: no one—or at least hardly anybody of significance.²² The point is not a rhetorical one, but a serious reminder that history has a rare knack of playing tricks on people, increasingly so in this age of the unexpected where the old rules of the game appear to have been torn up and the new ones are still being written. It is a reminder too that what today might seem obvious will tomorrow look foolish, and what yesterday seemed too fantastic could in a very short space of time become commonplace. If we learn no other 'lesson' from the last ten years of the twentieth century, it is that we rule out the unlikely at our peril. The past has been full of 'radical surprises'.²³ No doubt the future will be too.

The notion of uncertainty is one we need to keep in mind as we reflect upon the rise and fall of the Cold War, the subject of Ned Lebow's opening contribution. Born out of the debris left behind by the Second World War, the conflict by the 1980s had almost assumed an air of permanency. Indeed, while Ronald Reagan spoke the language of communist rollback and talked optimistically about consigning the USSR to the dustbin of history, historians like John Gaddis ruminated in true Waltzian fashion about the peaceful and presumably beneficent character of the Cold War as a bipolar system.²⁴ Imagine the consternation therefore when this carefully constructed, and now intellectually respectable edifice, began to show signs of wear and tear and finally came tumbling down in the latter half of the 1980s. Ten years on, one might be forgiven for thinking it was all but inevitable: that the attractive pull of capitalism on the one side and the decrepitude of Soviet planning on the other, made its collapse a foregone conclusion.²⁵ But that is not how it

²⁰ In 1990 the novelist Salman Rushdie noted that 'we may be heading towards a world in which there will be no alternative to the liberal-capitalist social model'. In Alex Callinicos, *The Revenge of History: Marxism and the East European Revolutions* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1991), p. 11.

²¹ For an illuminating discussion of this issue see Michael Nicholson, *Causes and Consequences in International Relations* (London: Pinter, 1996), pp. 30–53.

²² See Moises Nam 'Editor's Note', *Foreign Policy*, 110 (Spring 1998), p. 9.

²³ See Ken Booth, 'International Relations Theory vs. The Future', in Ken Booth and Steve Smith (eds.), *International Relations Theory Today* (Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1995), p. 329.

²⁴ John L. Gaddis, 'The Long Peace: Elements of Stability in the Postwar International System', *International Security*, 10:4 (Spring 1986), pp. 99–142.

²⁵ For a discussion of why Soviet collapse was not economically inevitable, but the result of Gorbachev's failed attempts to reform the system, see Michael Ellman and Vladimir Kontorovich (eds.), *The Disintegration of the Soviet Economic System* (London: Routledge, 1992).

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seemed at the time. Having got used to the Cold War most writers (and policy-makers) were intellectually incapable of seeing beyond it.²⁶

Lebow, however, is less concerned with our failure to see the end of the Cold War coming and more about the way in which we think about the superpower competition in history. The Cold War, he notes, was not a fixed entity but an evolving relationship which led the US and the USSR from the deep freeze of the immediate postwar years to the era of superpower détente in the 1970s. To this extent at least the conflict was already in a state of metamorphosis, even before Gorbachev came to power.²⁷ It would be more useful therefore to see the changes after 1985 not as a sudden break in an otherwise unrelieved history of hostility but instead as the last stage in a long process of accommodation that had been underway, albeit with fits and starts, for several decades. Certainly, there is little evidence to suggest the Cold War came to a sudden end as a result of renewed US pressure.²⁸

But what was the Cold War? What was it all about? Lebow compares and contrasts four of the contending explanations: a realist one that views it as another phase in an unending and unchanging history of state conflict; another that sees it in largely ideological terms;²⁹ yet a third ‘internalist’ account which regards the antagonism as the by-product of the domestic structures of the two rival superpowers; and a fourth that focuses on leaders’ perceptions and preferences.³⁰ In Lebow’s view none is entirely adequate: all four have to be married if we are to get a complete picture of what actually happened after the Second World War. By the same measure, none provides us with a ready-made answer as to why the Cold War came to an end, least of all realism which assumed, and continues to maintain, that competition rather than accommodation between great powers is the historical norm.³¹ But criticizing others is easy: the more difficult task is to explain what happened, and in Lebow’s view we still do not have a full explanation as to why the Cold War finally withered away. And while more work still needs to be done in the newly opened archives in Russia and Eastern Europe, the most fruitful avenue for historians he feels is to compare the rise and fall of the Cold War with other long-term militarized rivalries—some of which did not end quite so peacefully.

If the end of the Cold War represented the final point in the evolution of one particular epoch and the beginning of another, the issue remains as to how best to characterize the decade after 1989. One way, as we have suggested, is to think of the

²⁶ A good example of this attachment to Cold War structures in Europe at least can be found in the influential study by former State Department official, Anton W. DePorte, *Europe between the Superpowers* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1978).

²⁷ See also Allen Lynch, *The Cold War is Over—Again* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1992) and Walter LaFeber, ‘An End to Which Cold War?’, Michael J. Hogan (ed.), *The End of the Cold War: Its Meaning and Implications* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992), pp. 13–19.

²⁸ See also Richard Ned Lebow and Janice Gross Stein, *We All Lost the Cold War* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994).

²⁹ See Nigel Gould-Davies, ‘Rethinking the Role of Ideology in International Politics During the Cold War’, *Journal of Cold War Studies*, 1:1 (1999), pp. 90–109.

³⁰ For a useful guide to the different theories of the Cold War see the relevant sections in Fred Halliday, *The Making of the Second Cold War* (London: Verso, 1983).

³¹ Randall Schweller thus suggests about the post-Cold War world that ‘precisely because intentions can change, history is far from over, and bold predictions of Kantian peace are not only naively optimistic but dangerously foolish’. See his *Deadly Imbalances: Tripolarity and Hitler’s Strategy of World Conquest* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), p. 201.

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period as an ‘interregnum’.³² Like some other contributors to this collection, Chris Brown wonders about this and argues that we might perhaps think of the 1990s less as an interval between two international orders, but rather as the new order itself after a two century transition which opened in 1789 with the French revolution and concluded two centuries later with the demise of communism. Brown thus asks us to think about our present in a more historically long-term fashion. But the problem still remains: how is this putative new order, if that is what it is, to be understood?

Brown examines a number of different possible answers and in so doing discusses some of the dominating debates of the 1990s. These, he argues, have been unhelpfully posed in the form of an either/or: either the end of history or the end of stable bipolarity; universalism or particularism; liberal dominance or a clash of civilizations; Jihad or McWorld. Brown prefers a different approach which tries to understand the world in terms of complex combinations rather than simple opposites. To proceed otherwise, he argues, would be both analytically and normatively confusing.

An important part of Brown’s argument revolves around a sympathetic, but not uncritical evaluation of Fukuyama and the various intellectual alternatives in the shape of Samuel Huntington and the less well known Japanese analyst, Eusuke Sakakiba. Huntington, we know, believes that the end of the old Cold War conflict will be replaced (or has already been superseded) by a new ‘clash of civilizations’ or cultures. Sakakiba on the other hand insists that the Cold War was basically a civil war within the Western ideology of progressivism. Thus its passing does not represent a victory for political liberalism and ‘neoclassical capitalism’, but instead poses a new challenge to progressivism itself. In this sense, the world at the end of the 1990s is not at the end of *history* pace Fukuyama, only at the end of *one particular* history.³³ But whatever happens, the next period in history will not just be determined by large structural forces according to Brown, but also by what happens inside different countries as well. Liberalism may well have triumphed as Fukuyama claims, but at the end of the day the decisions that count will be made in Washington and elsewhere; and these in the end are going to be shaped by political necessity as much as anything else. In this very important sense, the major questions about the future of world order will not be answered in their own terms; the contingencies of power may still have the last word, as so often in the past.

In her essay Linda Weiss focuses on one of the issues addressed by Brown: the relationship between globalization and national governance. According to Weiss, the most extreme proponents of globalization see the ‘global and national’ in terms of ‘*conflicting* principles of organization’. Hence they take it as read that ‘global networks are advancing *at the expense of* national ones’. Weiss is not only sceptical about such claims, but offers a powerful set of counter-arguments. Even in the developed world, she notes, the overwhelming bulk of production (about 90 per cent) is still carried out and consumed locally. Most large companies also concentrate most of their production and strategic assets in one country. World equity markets also remain poorly integrated. And though international trade and investment are clearly on the rise, the bulk of this is concentrated in a relatively small

³² Gramsci defines an ‘interregnum’ as a period in which the old form of rule was dying but a new one had not yet born. See Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith (eds.), *Selections From The Prison Notebooks Of Antonio Gramsci* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1971), p. 276.

³³ For a critique of Fukuyama see also John Gray, ‘Global Utopias and Clashing Civilizations: Misunderstanding the Present’, *International Affairs*, 74:1 (January 1998), pp. 149–63.

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geoeconomic zone. The one area in which there are genuinely global markets is in finance. Otherwise, there is no compelling case to think we are now living in a fully integrated global economy.³⁴

Nor have present economic trends undermined the possibility of (or need for) national political practices. As Weiss points out, it is quite misleading to think that economic interdependence is either destroying the state or the state's capacity to act. It is also untrue to think that globalization has undermined the provision of comprehensive welfare provision. Again, the evidence points to a different set of conclusions. As Weiss indicates, far from going down, welfare expenditure has remained constant over the past ten years; and where it has come under pressure, it has not been because of trans-border flows but because of low rates of world growth and shifting demographic and household patterns that are poorly accommodated by a welfare structure designed for an earlier era.

The conclusions Weiss draws are therefore challenging ones. The world order is certainly changing and changing fast, but the notion that globalization is already here and is rapidly eroding state power is simply not true. Unfortunately, the presumption that it is, has led many commentators to misidentify globalization as the major source of policy constraints, to overstate its transformative impact and to minimize its diverse outcomes. To avoid such errors in the future, analysts should thus stop thinking of the global and the national as competitive concepts and start seeing them as complementary. Only then will they be able to grasp what is going on in the contemporary world.

If Weiss asks some difficult but necessary questions about one of the key concepts of our time, Buzan and Little ask some equally penetrating ones about the viability of the traditional state system in an era of high capitalism. Forced off the intellectual agenda during the Cold War, capitalism they argue has staged something of an academic comeback. Indeed, with the end of the Cold War being so closely linked with the triumph of the market, it is now impossible to discuss the world without some evaluation of the unfolding international role being played by capitalism as an economic order.³⁵

At the centre of this ongoing debate about future of international relations lie competing evaluations of what has come to be known as the Westphalian system; and the key issue according to Buzan and Little is the degree to which this system can survive the enormous changes now taking place in the world. They are in little doubt that the system is under threat. Not only has the behaviour of states and the patterns of interaction in international society changed as a whole, so too have the priorities which states set for themselves in the post-Cold War epoch. But does this add up to a fundamental transformation? Is the modern world order of sovereign states established in 1648 and after, finally giving way to what they term a 'new postmodern capitalist world order'? Not just yet, they conclude. We still live in a world of states while the logic of 'uneven capitalist development' continues to pull

³⁴ The literature on globalization is by now vast. For a guide to the issues see the two volumes by Ian Clark, *Globalization and Fragmentation: International Relations in the Twentieth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997) and *Globalization and International Relations Theory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999).

³⁵ For a discussion of the complex relationship between economics and security before and after the end of the Cold War, see Michael Mastanduno, 'Economics and Security in Statecraft and Scholarship', *International Organization*, 52:4 (1998), pp. 825–54.

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the world in two different directions, creating two different zones in the process: one they call a 'postmodern security community' composed of 'powerful advanced capitalist industrial democracies' no longer operating by the realist rules of the game, and the other comprised of a mixture of modern and premodern states where international relations continue to operate by the Westphalian norms of power politics that prevailed all over the world up to 1945.

Yet the conclusion cannot be avoided that some quite fundamental transformations are underway in the international system. The spread of democracy and the sustained operation of global markets have begun to reshape some of the most long-standing fundamentals of international relations that only a decade ago would have seemed impossible. Westphalian realism may not have been rendered entirely irrelevant in the last decade of the twentieth century. Nevertheless, its traditional claim to serve as the commanding heights of how international relations can and should be understood is rightly under serious challenge.

If the end of the Cold War has threatened the once solid bastions of realism, the associated collapse of state socialism has also given an intellectual boost to those who not only seem to deny that there is such a thing as truth but that the world is moving (or has ever been moving) in a progressive direction. This in turn has been accompanied by a fairly sustained attack on all notions of science and rationality, and in particular on the Enlightenment, regarded by many as the original source of these ideas—ideas whose dark side, according to one influential theorist, had appalling political consequences in the twentieth century in the form of the planned and efficiently executed extermination of six million Jews.³⁶

Fred Halliday disputes any such connection and vigorously defends the Enlightenment by way of a discussion of one of its more influential thinkers: Immanuel Kant. Kant remains a controversial as well as an influential theorist whose views on the conditions of peace continue to provoke a good deal of hostile comment from realists.³⁷ But Halliday is less concerned to defend Kant from his realist critics than those who would reject Kant's faith in the possibility of human progress. In a powerful broadside against what Gellner once termed 'the cosmopolitan conceit of postmodernism', Halliday takes to task all those who would spurn the Enlightenment and its rationalist belief in the possibility of progressive change measured alongside a set of universal values. While accepting that the challenge of postmodernism is an understandable response to our uncertain era following the collapse of Communism—the most radical of all responses to the crisis of the twentieth century—he concludes that it promises more than it delivers. In fact, many of the things identified as being central to the postmodern agenda such culture, identity, changing values and the importance of language in constituting social power, are not particularly postmodern at all, but very much features of modernity itself and have been so for a century or more. In this sense postmodernism constitutes less a serious alternative to modernity and more a parasitic growth upon it.

Halliday's main concern, however, is not to puncture what he views as the overblown claims of postmodernism, but rather to respond positively to what he regards as our deeply unsettling times. Soviet-style planning he agrees was a failure.

³⁶ See Zygmunt Bauman, *Modernity and the Holocaust* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1989).

³⁷ For a brief but useful guide to Kant's thinking on international relations see Georg Cavallar, *Kant and the Theory and Practice of International Right* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1999).

But that does not mean we have to accept all the claims made by apologists for liberal democratic capitalism. Modern democracy after all contains serious political imperfections; and the market continues to foster enormous inequalities. And while there is no ready alternative to either, we should not conclude that the *status quo* is sacrosanct. As Halliday notes, though we may not yet live in an enlightened age, we do live in an era where enlightened change is still possible; and a combination of purposive state action supported by social movements, improved education and greater participation by an active citizenry point the way to a better world. Whether, how or when we can move forward to what Halliday terms the triumph of reason no-one can tell. It is, nonetheless, a fitting goal for political and academic work, ‘not least on this eve of the third millenium’.

While Halliday declares what to some is bound to look like an unfashionable faith in the possibility of progress, Andrew Gamble asks and seeks to answer the question: what relevance if any does the most radical faith of all—Marxism—have in a post-communist era? Gamble agrees that Marxism is in crisis, though not for the first time in its history. On this occasion however the malaise is more profound. Marxism’s unfortunate association with a failed Soviet project, and the simple fact that the market is so dominant in the world, would appear to have consigned historical materialism to the dustbin of history—where many think it always belonged.³⁸ Gamble seeks to retrieve what is left but calls for two major changes if Marxism is to go forward. First, Marxists themselves must abandon their earlier attachment to a form of realism that saw an almost natural fit between the nation-state as a territorial unit and capitalism as an economic system. Such an approach makes no sense in an age of globalization. They must also give up their historicist claim that socialism was, or remains, the next step in humanity’s evolution. Historical materialism, according to Gamble, needs neither an outmoded view of the international order nor a utopian vision of the future, and can only be entirely credible when it abandons both.

But given these revisions, there is no reason why Marxism cannot be deployed, and deployed most effectively, to understand the world around us. In many ways, it is peculiarly well-suited to do so. Marx after all was one of the very first theorists of globalization: he also had some profound insights into the ways in which the capitalist system operated over time and through space. Furthermore, Marxism contains a powerful ethical message which critics of the market can hardly ignore. Of course, in the same way as there are different varieties of realism, feminism and constructivism, so too are there different forms of Marxism. Marxists, as Gamble reminds us, remain divided in their approach and in their prognoses. Some are pessimistic and some are optimistic about the fate of capitalism. But all are agreed that classical Marxist theory—not to be confused with the official and ossified state doctrine of the Soviet Union—has continuing power to inspire important insights into the shape of the modern international political economy.³⁹

³⁸ According to Stephen M. Walt, constructivism has now replaced Marxism as the principle paradigmatic rival to liberalism and realism. See his ‘International Relations: One World, Many Theories’, *Foreign Policy*, 110 (1998), pp. 32, 34.

³⁹ A view also shared by Peter J. Katzenstein, Robert O. Keohane and Stephen D. Krasner, ‘International Organization and the Study of World Politics’, *International Organization*, 52:4 (1998), pp. 645–85.

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If the oft-proclaimed death of Marxism is premature according to Gamble, how then has Marxism's intellectual *alter ego* fared over the past ten years?⁴⁰ Not as badly as some anticipated, but definitely not as well as most liberals predicted back in 1989. That at least is the central thesis advanced in Geoffrey Hawthorn's contribution. As he points out, what liberals envisioned, and what they got after a decade, were not the same thing. In fact, the contrast between the original vision and the way events in world politics actually unfolded is so marked that he wonders whether liberalism has proved to be an enemy to itself.

Hawthorn begins by describing the early post-Cold War, liberal ideal of a New World Order. This vision, he notes, looked towards a future in which there would be peace, stability, increasing prosperity based on expanding markets and the extension and eventual consolidation of civil and political rights. All alternative approaches seemed to be exhausted. Unfortunately, reality proved to be more complex, and the world less susceptible to liberal restructuring than had originally been expected. However, though the world that has emerged is not as liberal as some might have hoped, it is a good deal more liberal than it once was. Today, for instance, human rights are more prominent on the foreign policy agenda;⁴¹ humanitarian intervention is now at least feasible;⁴² and the international economy promises new levels of prosperity. The paradox however is that these new possibilities can subvert what they claim to secure. Thus the urge to humanitarianism has turned out to be more complex and problematic than liberals had once thought, as the events in Kosovo demonstrated only too clearly; and the logic of liberal economics has led to new polarities between the beneficiaries of globalization and the increasing number of losers.

Hawthorn further explores the paradoxes of liberalism through the work of Carl Schmitt, one of liberalism's more trenchant critics. Liberals, according to Schmitt, will always avoid talk of power. It was true in the 1930s: it remains true today. And what liberals find most difficult to resolve now is that their vision of a better world depends on the exercise of a great deal of power by the United States. But how and under what circumstances will the United States deploy its power? According to Schmitt at least, the United States has to imagine an 'enemy'. The difficulty in the modern world is that there are few obvious antagonists; therefore the US either has to invent one or insist on what Hawthorn calls its 'liberal rectitude'—and under a weakening liberal President, who like other liberal presidents before him, was inexperienced in world affairs, the temptation has proved irresistible. In acting this way, however, the United States also reveals its own weakness, to overcome which it is prompted to act in the same way again—and in so doing, trap itself. The paradox of liberal hegemony in the post-Cold War era is that it is weak because it cannot convincingly be demonstrated—and insofar as it can be, threatens to undermine the principles on which it is built.

⁴⁰ On liberalism see also Robert Latham, 'History, Theory, and International Order', *Review of International Studies*, 23:4 (1997), pp. 419–43, and Daniel Deudney and G. John Ikenberry, 'The Nature and Sources of Liberal International Order', *Review of International Studies*, 25:2 (1998), pp. 179–96.

⁴¹ See Nicholas J. Wheeler and Tim Dunne (eds.) *Human Rights in World Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

⁴² For a radical critique of the new interventionism see Richard Falk, 'Intervention Revisited: Hard Choices and Tragic Dilemmas', *The Nation*, December 20, 1993, pp. 755–64.