



*“He drew a circle round him thrice.
‘Heretic, rebel, a thing to flout’—he said
But love and I had the wit to win.
We drew a larger circle and took him in.”
— Edwin Markham*

Revolutionary Citizenship in an Emerging Cosmopolis

In his visionary analysis in *Parapolitics* of an emerging world community (Chapter 17, “Ex Chaos Cosmopolis”), Professor Raghavan Iyer observes “the emergence of an inchoate but increasingly vocal body of world opinion that has crystallized the principle that no nation can live, or lay down the law unto itself or be the judge and arbiter of its own conduct in international affairs, and in internal matters of international importance.” He notes the statement of former President Jimmy Carter that no U.N. member-nation can claim that mistreatment of its citizens is solely its own business. The current vivid images of self-sacrificial

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protests, particularly in the Middle East and North Africa, make us all witnesses to revolutionary demands for freedom, democracy and protection of human rights. The threats and acts of violence by governments against their own citizens test our governments' capacity to act upon the principle that President Carter declared. Have we reached a point in human history where universal principles of human rights have become moral imperatives that no government, business or citizen can resist without shrinking into an ineffective path to extinction? With insightful anticipation of such conflicts, Professor Iyer envisions an emerging cosmopolis as follows:

“Love as well as wit could win the battle between future and past, between the contradictions of international politics and the context provided by the emerging cosmopolis – the love of humanity cannot forever remain in the abstract. It must become a concrete love of persons, involving thoughtful consideration of others, interest in their growth and welfare, and sufficient self-confidence to identify meaningfully with wit the unhappiness and anxieties of the less secure who will crowd the cities of the world. Perhaps, we can already witness small portents of the shape of things to come. Indications are positive at present and promising for the future. People of compassion and charity around the world intuitively understand authentic affirmations of fundamental universal propositions. A Yevtushenko could understand and celebrate a Martin Luther King more ardently than most Americans could. It is possible for men in distant places to identify with those rare harbingers of the authentic language of the human race. Many young people for a variety of reasons are afraid to be joiners. Some are seekers, perhaps needing more help than they know. The universal will not limit the capacity to communicate with or reach out to anything outside. ... We need an adjustment on the part of each person in every given situation of the critical distance between the human agent and the limited structures, systems, and ideologies, which he handles as instruments of his human purpose. This readjustment is the contemporary revolution.”

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The remarkable and inspiring fact about the current protests that we are witnessing today, is that young people are not passive but are at the center of these revolutionary efforts to transform arbitrary and corrupt political systems. Having suffered silently without freedom or opportunity, they are now demonstrating courage, creativity and spontaneity using the few resources they have to confront armed Leviathans. Our test of global citizenship is what can we do in thought, speech and action to support their authentic use of universal principles of human rights with their own human potentials.

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., whose death anniversary is April 4th, proclaimed the following: “Freedom is not won by passive acceptance of suffering. Freedom is won by a struggle against suffering.” Speaking of the global scope of the revolution he helped lead, Dr King wrote: “These are revolutionary times. All over the globe men are revolting against old systems of exploitation and oppression, and out of the wombs of a frail world new systems of justice and equality are being born. The shirtless and barefoot of the earth are rising up as never before. ‘The people who sat in darkness have seen a great light.’ We in the West must support these revolutions ... Our only hope today lies in our ability to recapture the revolutionary spirit [of our founding] and go out into a sometimes-hostile world declaring eternal opposition to poverty, racism and militarism. With this powerful commitment we shall boldly challenge the status quo and unjust mores and thereby speed the day when ‘every valley shall be exalted and every mountain and hill be made low; and the crooked shall be made straight and the rough places plain.’

“A genuine revolution of values means in the final analysis that our loyalties must become ecumenical rather than sectional. Every nation must now develop an overriding loyalty to mankind as a whole in order to preserve the best in their individual societies.... The call for a world-wide fellowship that lifts neighborly concern beyond one’s tribe, race, class and nation is in reality a call for an all-

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embracing and unconditional love for all men.” (*Where Do We Go From Here?*)
These visionary propositions are still relevant and inspirational for those who would be “citizen pilgrims” on an ideal, continuously evolving and ever renewing journey to global citizenship portrayed by Professor Richard Falk in his essay, “The Making of Global Citizenship”.

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