

CRITIQUE OF DR KENNETH V. LOTTICH'S
"THE ROLE OF POLITICS IN CHANGING CIVILIZATIONS.,"

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In a «bellicose» and «threatening» letter to the discussants, our internationally famous Chairman — this inexorably time-conscious, but brilliant and scintillating, clepsydra of Bridgeport — wrote: «we have to run on schedule ... Your Chairman will ... have to enforce the ... schedule ... 8 minutes given to the «discussant». This means ... 8 minutes only ... You will appear on ... schedule ... do not ask the Chairman to switch the assignments». It is my duty, therefore, to gather speed and zoom with ferocious abandon!

Unfortunately, my discussion of Professor Lottich's excellent contribution is based on an obviously unedited first draft which he sent me recently. And what a draft that was! Dante Alighieri, who was born in May 1265, was said to have lived «four centuries ago». Countless sentences were incomplete. Innumerable words were spelled incorrectly. And myriad infinitives, gerunds, participles, and elliptical clauses were dangling, dancing, gyrating, and pirouetting before my eyes like demoniacal dervishes! Consequently, despite my Hellenic origin, my first reaction to the paper was Casca's response to Cassius in Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*: «it was Greek to me». A second reading, however, revealed the author's ideas, which proved to be quite important.

Of course, the typographical limitations may be forgiven, since Dr Lottich is a busy and formidably prolific author. Besides, his encyclopedic approach is exceedingly interesting. His numerous subtopics, although insufficiently developed, are illuminating. And his emphasis on international understanding and cooperation, based on scientific knowledge, is wise and salubrious — we all remember the scandal caused by our ambassador's inability to pronounce the name of Ceylon's prime minister, Mr Solomon Bandaranaike.

More specifically my main comments may be outlined as follows:

1. Dr Lottich's stress on social change and the sociohistorical approach should be commended, since this area has not been adequately

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explored, despite its inestimable significance¹. Quite inexcusably, social scientists frequently complain that natural scientists receive fabulous grants to study physical change, while the investigation of social change is financed parsimoniously. Obviously, these scholars forget that, with only a pencil and a few notebooks, social change may be explored intensively and extensively in Athena's dusty kingdom — the university library. It is no wonder, then, that, 2,500 years after Heracleitus, the «Weeping Philosopher», our understanding of change is still ignominiously primitive².

2. The author's Kremlin-Byzantium analogy is more trenchant and incisive than he seems to believe — he modestly and sceptically describes it as perhaps unscientific. Historical analogies do exist and the social scientist should explore them incessantly. Thucydides asserted that history repeats itself. Aristotle averred that a certain degree of social regularity is a fact — incidentally, without such regularity, the scientific study of social phenomena would be absolutely impossible³. Something analogous is presented in Anatole France's *Penguin Island* (1908), one of the greatest novels of all time and a bitterly ironical allegory — obviously, the novelist had been infuriated by the Dreyfus affair.

3. Quite carefully, Dr Lottich avoids overstressing the geographical factor, a force dealt with by Bodin, Montesquieu, Buckle, Ratzel, Huntington, and others. It is interesting to note that even Abraham Lincoln, a primarily practical politician, while discussing a serious social problem, said in his famous Peoria speech of October 16, 1854: «As to climate, a glance at the map shows that there are five slave states ... and also the District of Columbia, all north of the Missouri Compromise line ... It is not climate, then, that will keep slavery out of those territories ... Climate will not, no peculiarity of the country will, nothing in nature will»⁴.

4. The statement regarding the «perfect» Platonic and Soviet societies is interesting. One may add that even «perfectionist» Plato's guardians were characterized by limitations generating social change, despite these leaders' meticulous, almost scrupulous, training, as Socrates says

1. Panos D. Bardis, «Hero, the Da Vinci of Alexandria : His Aelosphaera and Other Inventions», *School Science and Mathematics*, June 1965, pp. 535-542.

2. Panos D. Bardis, «Synopsis of Theories of Social Change», *Social Science*, June 1962, pp. 181-188.

3. Panos D. Bardis, «Religious Changes Among American Jews : A Historical-Statistical Analysis», *Indian Journal of Social Research*, April 1965, pp. 56-64.

4. Francis D. Tandy, *Lincoln's Complete Works*, New York : Tandy, 1905, Volume 2, p. 219.

to Glaucon in Plato's *Republic* (416–417 b). In the same work, like Hesiod, Plato speaks of the inevitable decline and evolution of the «golden, silver, bronze, and iron races» (547a). And in his old age, as the *Statesman* indicates, the Athenian philosopher became more practical and realistic.

5. The problem of translating ideology into political action is obvious. Sociologists are familiar with Lester F. Ward's concept of «social telesis». And, to return to Plato, this Athenian dreamer attempted to influence Dionysius the Elder of Syracuse. As a result, if Dio and Aristomenes had not intervened, Plato would have been butchered by the enraged tyrant. Instead, he was sold as a slave⁵. According to tradition, the celebrated vicar of Bray, in England's Berkshire, was «wiser». Indeed, by adopting the religious convictions of each reigning monarch, he was able to preserve his incumbency during the reigns of Henry VIII, Edward VI, Mary, and Elizabeth. Thus, Colonel Fuller sang:

«And this is the law that I'll maintain
Until my dying day, sir,
That whatsoever king shall reign,
Still I'll be the vicar of Bray, sir.»

6. But should the social scientist deal with what Disraeli first called «practical politics»? Bismarck, in his Prussian Chamber speech of December 18, 1863, asserted, quite correctly I believe, that «Politics is no exact science». Robert Louis Stevenson, in his *Familiar Studies of Men and Books*, said that «Politics is perhaps the only profession for which no preparation is thought necessary». In *Major Barbara*, George Bernard Shaw referred to the politician as one who «knows nothing; and he thinks he knows everything» (3). Theodore Roosevelt, on the other hand, observed: «The most successful politician is he who says what everybody is thinking most often and in the loudest voice».

And, of course, a cynic may state that the politician has the gift of gab and the gift of grab; that his political plum is the result of careful grafting; and that his political machine is lubricated by palm oil instead of elbow grease. He may also relate the story about the Republican who told another of one method of getting votes: «Give every waitress a big tip», he advised, «and tell her to vote Republican». The other said, «I have a better method. I give them no tip at all and tell them to vote Democratic!»

5. Panos D. Bardis, «Symmetrical Consonance of Play, Rhythm, and Harmony: An Essay on Plato's Mathematics», *School Science and Mathematics*, January 1963, pp. 52–67.

More seriously, the social scientist would define a politician as «a person versed in public affairs and skilled in adjusting conflicting interests within a state and in the creation and guidance of public policy».

In brief, I would like to state that politics is not a science, but an art, as eugenics, euthenics, medicine, and engineering are arts based on the sciences of genetics, sociology, biology, and physics.

7. The question now arises : Is ideology declining? David Riesman has concluded that economic prosperity diminishes political diversity as well as the number of politicians who represent oppressed groups ⁶. Similarly, Barrington Moore, in his *Political Power and Social Theory* ⁷, speaks of gradually vanishing economic inequalities which no longer generate liberal ideological struggles. Indeed, as Professor Friedrich Hayek complained, Milan's 1955 international congress on «The Future of Freedom», although the participants were prominent intellectuals and statesmen (for instance, Hugh Gaitskell), did not produce a single stormy ideological discussion. I am certain that Dr Lottich can examine this issue quite successfully.

8. Increasing education in the West and the intellectual's influence should also be investigated more carefully. If we admit that, politically speaking, the typical intellectual usually functions only as a critic or ideologist, various questions arise. S. M. Lipset, in his *Political Man*, observes «that the better educated individuals are, the more likely they are to favor all forms of «noneconomic liberalism» ⁸. James Leuba ⁹, in his 1914 and 1933 studies of religiosity among professors and scientists, found that most of them rejected both God and immortality, especially in 1933; that, among sociologists, the nonfaculty ones were more religious; that most writers were atheists; and that most bankers believed in God.

9. Dr Lottich mentions the value of alliances and «advanced systems of education». Unfortunately, the latter remains a dream ¹⁰, while the former has been investigated inadequately, although many insights

6. «Introduction». in Stimson Bullitt, *To Be a Politician*, New York : Doubleday, 1959.

7. Cambridge : Harvard University, 1958.

8. Garden City, New York : Doubleday, 1963, p. 335.

9. *The Belief in God and Immortality*, Chicago : Open Court, 1921; *The Reformation of the Churches*, Boston : Beacon, 1950.

10. Panos D. Bardis, «Leadership, Public Opinion, and Education». *Social Science*, January 1960, pp. 3-5; «The Intercultural Approach in American Education», *Archive of Economic and Social Sciences*, in press.

could be gained by studying the evolution of pacts, alliances, and treaties, from the ancient amphictyonies to the United Nations.

10. The author wisely adds that «security is far more than a military matter», and briefly discusses Claude Bourdet's three elements conducive to national security. But then, he hastens to dismiss Bourdet's idea as «one of the strange dialectics of our time». Almost like Bourdet, 2,500 years ago, Confucius said to Tszé-Kung that a nation's security and its leader's authority depend on «sufficiency of food, sufficiency of military equipment, and the confidence of the people in their ruler»¹¹. Admittedly, such assertions are somewhat subjective, but their partial or complete rejection should be based on empirical evidence.

11. The discipline of «futuristics» sounds exciting. Indeed, greater emphasis should be placed on the interdependence of the various branches of knowledge¹². In addition, we must stress some form of international scientific cooperation, of which Francis Bacon dreamed long ago, when he discussed «Solomon's House» in *The New Atlantis*.

12. Is Professor Lottich too idealistic and optimistic concerning mankind's future? Perhaps! Will, for instance, conflict and strife continue forever? Freud and Einstein, in their famous correspondence, disagreed with each other. Freud considered conflict inevitable, in view of man's «thanatos instinct». But the author of relativity objected that man is taught to hate or love.

Now, am I pessimistic when I assert the following: a) man has certain physical, psychological, and social needs; b) these needs demand some degree of satisfaction; c) the sources of such satisfaction are limited, thus generating at least partial frustration; and d) such frustration tends to produce conflict?

But will man ever create inexhaustible sources of satisfaction? I doubt it. In the United States, for example, physical needs have been satisfied more than ever. Economic prosperity, however, has not prevented the psychological Hydra from raising its many voracious, insatiable, rapacious heads, for which man will never find a Hercules.

Indeed, if we examine the description of the needs of New York's poor families often appearing in the *New York Times*, we will discover an interesting evolution. A few decades ago, the typical family asked for food, clothing, shelter, and the like. But now that such physical

11. Cited in the novel. «Ivan and Artemis», by Panos D. Bardis, New York Pageant, 1957, p. 187.

12. See the poem, «The Pyrrhic of the Neutrino», by Panos D. Bardis, American Journal of Physics, August 1965, p. 661.

needs have been fairly satisfied, these families expect something new : counseling, security, and other forms of psychological support.

This, of course, is not surprising, since, in our psychologizing society, a man cannot be slightly nonconformist without being regarded, even by his closest friends, as one suffering from thalassophobia, chionophobia, ballistophobia, apeirophobia, thanatophobia, ailurophobia, ophidiophobia, or triakaidekaphobia! Even monstrous little Johnny, who has been threatening the entire universe all day long and driving his helpless mother absolutely insane, in the evening, like a Lilliputian psychiatrist, shours at his fuming, furious, blazing father : «Don't you touch me, Dad. Don't you touch me. You'll give a traumatic experience!»

Another question concerning conflict is this : Why has man, from primitive times to the present, always spoken and thought of dualism and war and struggle and strife?

Heracleitus said, «*Pater panton polemus*»; Pythagoras, Right opposes Wrong; Empedocles, *Philotes* combats *Cotus*; Seneca, «*Militia est vita hominis*»; the New Testament, «Michael and his angels fought against the dragon»; Hobbes, «*Homo homini lupus*»; Voltaire, «*Ma vie est un combat*»; and Marx, «*Politik ist Kampf*».

Similarly, the Chinese spoke of Yang against Yin; the Indians, of Indra against the Serpent Demon; the Zoroastrians, of Ahura-Mazdah against Ahriman; the Babylonians, of Marduk against Tiamat; the Egyptians, of Osiris against Set; the Greeks, of Zeus against the Titans; the Norsemen, of the Gods against Fenris, Nidhug, and Midgard (a struggle recalling Wagner's tempestuous, magnificent melodies); the Mayas, of Hun-apu and Xbalanque against the Giants; and the Aztecs, of Quetzal-coatl against Tezcatlipoca.

Now, one may ask, what mysterious, unfathomable new force will break this primordial, eternal chain and introduce a utopian era?

13. (No triakaidekaphobia in my case!). In conclusion, one may briefly state, it seems wiser for man to isolate (artificially, heuristically, for the purpose of analysis and examination) the variables constituting the psychological, social, and physical universes, and then study them dispassionately, etiologically, in order to learn how to control them and thus improve his life. For — to return to politics and ideology — although perfection is unattainable, we should always attempt to solve our sociopolitical problems to the extent possible. It is only then that we will be able to achieve what, in 1384, in the «Preface» to their translation of the Bible, John Wycliffe and Nicholas of Hereford called «government of the people, by the people, and for the people».