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AS THE countries of the European Union (EU) move toward a common currency in the year 1999, jitters have gripped parts of the European left that see in this process the twilight of democratic popular sovereignty and the dawn of the reign of Eurocracy. Even Helmut Kohl, the champion of European unification, has expressed nervousness about giving up control over national currencies to a European Central Bank.

To be sure, there is much to be concerned about in the "democracy deficit" of the institutional development of the European Union, but nostalgic nationalism is no answer to the challenges facing the European experiment. Furthermore, to identify the nation-state as the privileged site of democratic self-determination and social justice, as David Miller ("The Left, the Nation-State, and European Citizenship," Dissent, Summer **1998**) does, is neither conceptually nor institutionally convincing. Emerging out of a customs union and border agreements among a handful of European countries, what was once named the European Economic Community has evolved into one of the more interesting multinational confederations in modern political history.

There is a democracy deficit in the European Union--not, as Miller thinks, because democracy can exist only as the self-expression of a united national will of the people, but because a whole range of issues and policies is being settled without open cross-national information and debate. As the process of European integration accelerates, more and more decisions are being made behind closed doors, at the level of the European Council of Ministers or at the bureaucratic-administrative level in Brussels. The ministers' recent decision establishing a common administrative unit to deal with refugee, asylum, and emigration issues is one such instance. More spectacularly, since the treaty of Maastricht and the ministers' demand that member countries reduce their deficit spending to 3 percent of their annual budgets, fiscal conservatism has reigned supreme in economic policy. There are real trends within the EU to use unification as an excuse to dismantle the Keynesian welfare state and European social democracy, and to inaugurate a neoliberalism à l'Américaine.

I am in complete agreement with David Miller that the left should not turn away from these bread-and-butter issues. Unlike Miller, however, I do not believe that these issues can be settled only at the national level. It is true that smaller countries like Denmark understandably fear being swallowed up by more powerful countries, who in turn want access to the European markets without carrying the burden of sharing with their poorer neighbors. The moral dilemmas of solidarity and egotism, which afflict nation-states within, are reproduced at the level of the union. That is why an EU-wide discussion about minimum social rights, maybe even a guaranteed minimum annual income, can serve the cause of social justice. The next step is indeed the expansion of social rights in Europe and their harmonization across national borders. This requires the establishment of Europe-wide parties; the creation of many European public spheres through newspapers, radio stations, and television channels; and a serious debate at the level of the European Parliament about how and by whom economic and social policy issues should be determined.

More serious, in my opinion, is another economic issue that David Miller does not face squarely. It is impossible to reconcile the level of economic well-being that the more prosperous European countries enjoy today with the kind of nationalist autarchy that Miller envisages. European capital expansion needs the European market, and most national governments are aware that they can maintain their populations' level of well-being only if they let capital flow freely across borders and not reign it in. This creates a dilemma: more and more firms are escaping the control of their "national homes" by moving operations across borders. The Austrian social democrats lost the national elections in 1996 because they could do nothing when a German tire manufacturer, Semperit, picked up and moved to Bratislava. The German Social Democrats (SPD), who are trying to learn from these lessons, are cautiously talking about the need to control such movements by asking companies to compensate their home populations before they leave. Such economic discussions must take place in public forums among the member nation-states of the EU, as well as on the EU level. For it is obvious that national governments can guarantee economic welfare for their populations only by working with the union and not against it; and they can avoid putting themselves at a disadvantage vis à vis the more capital-friendly policies of their neighbors only if there is a transnational coordination of policies. The old adage that there can be no socialism in one country is still true; today there cannot even be social democracy in one country. Frankly, I do not see what Miller's brand of national welfarism has to offer to the economic and political dilemmas facing social democrats and socialists in Europe today. Would it not be more politically savvy to work for the formation of a common social democratic vision at the level of the EU? If the German SPD wins the elections this fall, there will be a social democratic majority in the European Parliament, and the European left will have an unprecedented opportunity to set new social policies.

WHY DOES David Miller think that the nation-state is the privileged site of democratic self-determination? I find the argument that trust can be established among members of a nation more readily than among members of a class, across social movements, or language groups, simply a speculative hope. Furthermore, what does trust have to do with democratic self-determination? Democratic decision making requires respect for others with whom, no matter how opposed our viewpoints, I must come to agreement on some, not all, issues. I need to trust them only insofar as I know that, in the face of conflict and disagreement, they will respect the same principles of constitutional adjudication that I will. Democracy has never meant unanimity; it is not only about consent but about dissent; it is not about national homogeneity but about how to deal with the rights of minorities. David Miller does not tell us how "nationhood" is supposed to be a "common source of identity, particularly in societies that are sharply divided along lines of race,

ethnicity, religion, or lifestyle," when these divisions assume salience precisely because the national consensus has excluded minority voices in the past. Miller offers as cure precisely the causes of the malady. Democratic self-determination does not require national trust, but constitutional loyalties, a civic culture of respect for minorities, and solidarity with our fellow human beings within and outside national borders. I would like to think of such solidarity in terms of Wilhelm von Humboldt's idea of a "union of unions," which has been invoked by John Rawls. Respect and solidarity certainly begin with those closest to us, but like concentric circles in the water caused by the falling stone, they can expand.

In fact, postnational European identities resemble such concentric circles. Within the larger framework of the EU, what is happening today is a reconfiguration of national cultures and linguistic and ethnic alliances. A Europe of regions is emerging, with ambiguous consequences for democracy: although we can see the process of administrative and legislative devolution in Wales and Scotland as an augmentation of democratic self-government, what are we to make of Basque nationalism or the separatisms of the Northern League? Who, in fact, is the nation? Who is in and who is out? European integration, but also the larger forces of worldwide economic globalization and the movement of peoples and capital, information and technology, germs and news across national borders, is making us rethink these questions. Democracies should be judged not only by how they treat their members but by how they treat their strangers. The global politics of inclusion and exclusion, membership and the denial of membership, is facing not only Europe but all nation-states. I fail to see that the invocation of nationalism can help settle these questions.

Europe is undergoing a fascinating experiment. For some this experiment is a "grand illusion" (Tony Judt); for others, and I count myself among them, it recalls some of the hopes expressed by Immanuel Kant in his essay "Perpetual Peace." The European left should not harken after the discredited nationalisms of the past but use its imagination to think up new institutions of democratic self-determination for a postnational Europe. The establishment of Europe-wide political parties to compete with national parties; the encouragement of multilanguage newspapers, television stations, cultural, educational, and scientific projects; the formulation of a common policy of social and economic rights (a European charter of human rights already exists); the democratic regulation of the political rights of third world nationals and permanent residents--these would be steps in the right direction.

ADDED MATERIAL

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