

# Editorial

The Editorial in *Theoria* 101, written as the United States of America led a 'coalition of the willing' in the invasion of Iraq, posed questions about the global significance, viability and desirability of this project. In this first issue of 2004 some of the contributions explore further the implications of this invasion, and the role of the U.S. in world affairs.

Iris Marion Young, in her challenging contribution, notes that at 'this historic moment we live under world dictatorship'. For her, a dictatorship is 'a regime willing and able to exert its will without consulting with or answering to those affected by its decisions and actions'. In her view, the United States' continued insistence on demanding cooperation from other states on terms it sets suggests that the present 'hegemonic situation remains at least that of aspiring dictatorship'. In contraposition to this dictatorial hegemony Young adverts to the 'global grass roots movement that rallies around the slogan 'Another world is possible!'' Young reviews reasons why 'global military and economic hegemony is both wrong and dangerous', and develops 'some conceptual elements of a vision of global democracy that enables rather than overrides local and regional self-determination that is grounded in reflections on 'global redistribution and economic empowerment'. Central to the contrast drawn by Young is the problem of how transformation towards democracy can occur under the conditions of powerful, autocratic rule. Young's essay, though primarily 'conceptual and normative', speaks also to action and to the possibility of 'another world'. She argues that the 'only way to weaken a dictator is to withdraw cooperation from him'. In this context she touches on some of the instruments and initiatives for economic restructuring that have been proposed, such as the Tobin and related taxes and fair trade consumer movements. She touches too, on the potentially countervailing role of the European Union and the need to work on and through the United Nations. Specifically she speaks to the need to reform and transform the UN and to address the current 'unfair and outdated' composition of the Security Council. She concludes with the claim that U.S. military force can best be reined in by creating 'transnational military forces with greater authority and capacity than UN forces have yet been given'.

Tom Rockmore, in an article that neatly complements Young's, asks whether war can transform Iraq into a democracy. The analysis

presented leads him to the conclusion that not only is the outcome of the war unlikely to deliver a democracy in Iraq, but that the actions of the U.S. have damaged the ability of those committed to democracy everywhere to effectively resist tyranny of all kinds. Rockmore examines four of the commonly acknowledged reasons for the U.S. going to war: internal U.S. pressures, oil, weapons of mass destruction, and democracy. The first two provide the most compelling logic for war. The third is dismissed as being discredited through the failure to provide evidence. The final reason – namely delivering a democracy – is not credible either, because through its actions on a number of levels the U.S. increasingly poses a threat to democracy. In terms of the U.S. has become less democratic, while the idea of Iraq being open to democratic transformation is implausible, and the notion of imposing democracy on an unwilling populace is self-contradictory. Thus, Rockmore concludes, the combination of anti-democratic processes in the U.S. and the war combine to pose the largest threat to democracy today.

The difficulties of manufacturing democracy in Iraq would no doubt be compounded if, in addition, that country's national sovereignty remained weak. In 'The Political and Legal Dilemmas of Globalisation' Danilo Zolo attacks political and social theorists who hold that a post-national age is both imminent and a good thing. He begins by contrasting the rise of both the idea and reality of global interconnectedness with the practical exclusion of the developing world from the 'global village'. To this he adds the dissensus sown by the standardization of culture and lifestyle that accompanies globalisation. Having challenged the assumption that globalisation equals progress, Zolo moves to arguments that a global government must and will supplant the system of sovereign states. Articulated in different ways by thinkers such as Noberto Bobbio, David Held, Jürgen Habermas and Ulrich Beck, these arguments 'underestimate the positive role that states have played and continue to play in the international arena'. In due course Zolo follows Hedley Bull in arguing that abolishing state borders will not open doors to peace and justice, but rather to the might of the great powers. Without national sovereignty developing countries would become even more vulnerable to Western economic penetration and political dominance. In conclusion Zolo attacks the 'legal globalism' of the above 'Western globalists' as advocating an unrealistic and culturally imperialist legal system. The idea of a universal legal system, which supersedes existing national legal traditions, is unrealistic as it ignores the link between law and state-level military

force. It is imperialist as it seeks to impose a Kantian political philosophy on Chinese, Indian and African alternatives concerned to contain the anarchic effects of the market and the disintegrative impact of Western individualism.

Michael Pendlebury's article, 'Individual Autonomy and Global Democracy', begins by affirming the centrality of autonomy in considerations of justice. In doing so, Pendlebury uses Darrel Moellendorf's *Cosmopolitan Justice* – to the critical reception of which a subsequent issue of *Theoria* will be devoted – and its Rawlsian framework, as a foil. Pendlebury claims that there are two excellent, theoretical reasons for adopting autonomy as a fundamental political value. First, Pendlebury argues that autonomy 'provides a principled basis for adjudicating between competing claims of liberty and equality'. Practically translated, this could result in economic inequalities that would not be tolerated by those adhering to Rawls's Difference Principle. However, what it would demand is a substantial social minimum: a prerequisite for genuine autonomy and an issue Pendlebury reconsiders when he turns to discuss global democracy. The second theoretical advantage of adopting autonomy as a fundamental political value is that 'this yields a useful general criterion of human rights: ask whether the satisfaction of a hypothetical right is required for individual autonomy, and count it as a genuine human right if and only if your answer is affirmative'.

Pendlebury then turns to consider the implications of holding autonomy to be the fundamental value for global democracy. He gives evidence for the claim that the global economic, social and political order in which we live can erode autonomy, not just through the political decisions of powerful nation-states, but also by the functioning of the global market and international agencies. Pendlebury argues that autonomy is eroded not least of all because 'mainstream political philosophy has not adequately come to terms with the fact that the world order is global', and as such the players in the game of international politics are 'nation states rather than human beings'. Pendlebury points to some cosmopolitan theorists who are challenging this statism, as well as the statism in Rawls's account of global justice. Such critiques allow theorists like Moellendorf to condemn the impoverished status of many Africans and Asians using a global version of Rawls's Difference Principle. However, Pendlebury argues that what is wrong with such poverty is not that it violates the Difference Principle, but rather that such poverty compromises the autonomy of the individuals thus affected. The difference between these two explana-

tions is most obvious when considering their practical implications. Pendlebury argues that the massive institutional evolution that would be required by an adoption of the Difference Principle would be impossible to achieve. In contrast, he says, ‘smaller adjustments would result in substantial improvements in individual autonomy’. Essentially, more democracy, both national and global democracy, would contribute to such improvements. However, Pendlebury is quick to point out that by saying that, he is not advocating a global state. In determining how best to encourage the growth of such democracy, Pendlebury urges us to keep in mind the ‘ought implies can’ principle. Indeed, he concludes, it is only by fully understanding possible remedies that we can fully understand the present injustices facing people.

Arpad Szokolczai’s article is concerned with the perennial problem of sociological dichotomies, and proposes to solve it via the concept of experience. Briefly tracing the history of the concept since Descartes, he identifies three strands, from the methodological and categorical approaches of Kant and Hegel (leading to modern social constructivism) through the suspicions of Marx, Freud and Nietzsche to the more religious-spiritual approaches of Schleiermacher, Kierkegaard and Dilthey. Developing Kant’s concept of *Erfahrung* in the direction of *Erlebnis* (or ‘lived experience’), Dilthey’s work promised to take thought closer to actual reality, and beyond mere sense perception. Szokolczai explores the linguistic associations of the term experience with testing and suffering, both passively endured and actively transformative, and demonstrates the relevance of Victor Turner’s work on rites of passage, particularly the manner in which experiences are interpretively and reflexively understood. Karl Kerényi’s studies of mythology, and René Girard’s approach to violence and the sacred, are enlisted to show the primordially of experience, not least in the forms of the Dionysian (and, in equal measure, Socratic and Christian) ‘divine child’ or child-god, where event-experiences of suffering and sacrifice are linked to catastrophe or crisis and followed by conversion or salvation. In this light, it is suggested that modern society’s rationalist, empiricist and idealist ‘neo-scholasticism’, which attempts to both repress and control its own traumatic foundational experiences of war, revolution and dictatorship, would benefit – if also altered beyond recognition – from a cautious reconstruction of the links between experience and thought.

The phenomenological and existentialist work of Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1908-1961) was a strong influence on Pierre Bourdieu, who has been seen as the former’s ‘sociological heir’. Nick Crossley’s con-

tribution develops this view through an all-embracing examination and evaluation of Merleau-Ponty's social theory, especially his reflections on questions of history, social institutions and social structure. Merleau-Ponty's understanding of human 'being in the world' is more than a mere subjectivist account; it not only facilitates an exploration of the interplay of objective and subjective elements but anticipates and adds a degree of philosophical sophistication to more recent sociological theories of structuration as developed by Bourdieu and Anthony Giddens. Crossley teases out Merleau-Ponty's critical engagements with thinkers such as Husserl, Levi-Strauss, Durkheim and de Saussure, the impact of whom is perhaps most clearly apparent in the key concept of 'institution'. As Crossley puts it, individuals 'learn to inhabit an institution, by letting that institution inhabit them, but that institution is at the same time a trajectory which requires of them that they continue it and modify it'. Merleau-Ponty's understanding of institution as 'those events in experience which endow it with durable dimensions ... or ... which sediment in me a meaning, not just as survival or residues, but as the invitation to a sequel, the necessity of a future', also resonates with another article in this issue of *Theoria*, namely Szokolczai's examination of experience as event. Of course, given the theoretical and political climate of his times, and having attended Alexandre Kojève's lectures on Hegel in the 1930s, it is in critical relation to Marx and Marxism – and the attendant issues of class, struggle and historical change – that Merleau-Ponty more often located himself, and this is the focus of the final expositional section of Crossley's article.

THE EDITORS