



SHALOM HARTMAN מכון  
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# Crashing: Jewish Peoplehood After October 7

Yehuda Kurtzer

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## I. When We Crash

### 1. Leon Festinger, *A Theory of Cognitive Dissonance* (Stanford University Press, 1962), 3

The basic hypotheses I wish to state are as follows:

1. The existence of dissonance, being psychologically uncomfortable, will motivate the person to try to reduce the dissonance and achieve consonance.
2. When dissonance is present, in addition to trying to reduce it, the person will actively avoid situations and information which would likely increase the dissonance.
- ...

In short, I am proposing that dissonance, that is, the existence of nonfitting relations among cognitions, is a motivating factor in its own right. By the term cognition, here and in the remainder of the book, I mean any knowledge, opinion, or belief about the environment, about oneself, or about one's behavior. Cognitive dissonance can be seen as an antecedent condition which leads to activity oriented toward dissonance reduction just as hunger leads to activity oriented toward hunger reduction.

### 2. Rabbi Benay Lappe, "An Unrecognizable Jewish Future: A Queer Talmudic Take," *ELI Talks* (2014)

And there are three, and only three, possible responses to a crash, ever. . . . Option One, which is denying that a crash has occurred and reverting to your master story and hanging on for dear life—and people tend to build walls around that old master story to make sure that nothing interferes or threatens it again. Option Two would be accepting that your master story has crashed, completely rejecting that master story, and jumping off into a completely new story. Option Three is to accept that the story has crashed, but instead of abandoning the story, you stay in it, reinterpreting it through the lens of the crash, and building a new story from the amalgamation of the original story the crash material and the reinterpretation.

## II. The End of (the End of) History

### 3. Francis Fukuyama, "The End of History?" *The National Interest* 16 (1989), Preface

IN WATCHING the flow of events over the past decade or so, it is hard to avoid the feeling that something very fundamental has happened in world history. The past year has seen a flood of articles commemorating the end of the Cold War, and the fact that "peace" seems to be breaking out in many regions of the world. Most of these analyses lack any larger conceptual framework for distinguishing between what is essential and what is contingent or accidental in world history, and are predictably superficial. If Mr. Gorbachev were ousted from the Kremlin or a new Ayatollah proclaimed the millennium from a desolate Middle Eastern capital, these same commentators would scramble to announce the rebirth of a new era of conflict.

And yet, all of these people sense dimly that there is some larger process at work, a process that gives coherence and order to the daily headlines. The twentieth century saw the developed world descend into a paroxysm of ideological violence, as liberalism contended first with the remnants of absolutism, then bolshevism and fascism, and finally an updated Marxism that threatened to lead to the ultimate apocalypse of nuclear war. But the century that began full of self-confidence in the ultimate triumph of Western liberal democracy seems at its close to be returning full circle to where it started: not to an "end of ideology" or a convergence between capitalism and socialism, as earlier predicted, but to an unabashed victory of economic and political liberalism.

The triumph of the West, of the Western idea, is evident first of all in the total exhaustion of viable systematic alternatives to Western liberalism. In the past decade, there have been unmistakable changes in the intellectual climate of the world's two largest communist countries, and the beginnings of significant reform movements in both. But this phenomenon extends beyond high politics and it can be seen also in the ineluctable spread of consumerist Western culture in such diverse contexts as the peasants' markets and color television sets now omnipresent throughout China, the cooperative restaurants and clothing stores opened in the past year in Moscow, the Beethoven piped into Japanese department stores, and the rock music enjoyed alike in Prague, Rangoon, and Tehran.

What we may be witnessing is not just the end of the Cold War, or the passing of a particular period of postwar history, but the end of history as such: that is, the end point of mankind's ideological evolution and the universalization of Western liberal democracy as the final form of human government. This is not to say that there will no longer be events to fill the pages of *Foreign Affairs'* yearly summaries of international

relations, for the victory of liberalism has occurred primarily in the realm of ideas or consciousness and is as yet incomplete in the real or material world. But there are powerful reasons for believing that it is the ideal that will govern the material world in the long run.

#### **4. Foreign Minister Shimon Peres, Address to the United Nations General Assembly, Sep. 28, 1993**

... We feel strongly that the time has come for all of us, communities, nations, peoples, families, to finally lay down the last collective wreath on the tombs of the fallen combatants and on the monuments of our beloved. It is the right way to honor their memories and to answer the needs of the newly-born. We have to lay the foundations for a new Middle East.

The peace agreement between us and the Palestinians is not just an accord signed by political leaders. It is an ongoing profound commitment to the next generation, Arabs and Israelis, Christians, Moslems and Jews.

We know that it is not enough to declare an end to war. We have to try to eradicate the roots of all hostilities.

If we shall only bring violence down, but ignore misery, we may discover that we have traded one menace for another peril.

Territorial disputes may have been the reason for wars among nations, poverty may become again the seed of violence among peoples. While signing the documents on the lawn of the White House, I could almost sense the breeze of a fresh spring and my imagination began to wander to the skies of our land that may have become brighter to the eyes of all people agreeing and opposing. On the lawn you could almost hear the heavy tread of boots leaving the stage after a hundred years of hostility. You could have listened to the gentle tiptoeing of new steps making a debut in the awaiting world for peace...

The last decade was comprised of great changes. It saw the finale of East-West confrontation. It opened the gradual disappearance of the North-South polarization. The great continent of Asia, the picturesque continent of South America, introduced the dynamics of an economic making of their own. The dramatic event in South Africa is a great declaration to the same effect. So, contrary to all assumptions it has been demonstrated that neither geography nor race is a harassment or an advantage to an economic promise.

We witnessed the end of some wars only to discover that the warriors did not reach their own promised land. Some colonized people gained their independence, but they

hardly enjoyed its fruits. The dangers may have been over but their hopes evaporated. We have learned that the end of a war should be the beginning of a new genesis which will end belligerency, and put an end to psychological prejudices.

No nation, rich or poor, is able nowadays to attain security, if the region in which they live becomes secure. The scope of the regional security must exceed the range of ballistic missiles which may hit each and all of us. We are striving to achieve comprehensive peace. No wound must remain unhealed...

I am not sure if there is a new order in the world, but all of us feel there is a new world awaiting an order...

As a Jew, may I say that the virtue, the essence of our history since the times of Abraham and the commandments of Moses, have been an uncompromising opposition to any form of occupation, of domination, of discrimination.

For us, Israel is not just a territorial homeland, but a permanent moral commitment as well. There are other questions concerning the building of a common market in the Middle East. Questions are raised as to how to attain this when the governments are so varied and the economies are so different. The differences in government and economies should not prevent us from doing together what can be done together in combatting the desert and offering fertility to an arid land...

Mr. President, it wasn't simple to open the locked doors to peace. In the name of God, let them not be closed again so that peace will be comprehensive, embracing all issues, all countries, all generations...

Maybe we now have the right to say to other people in conflict: "Don't give up. Do not surrender to old obsessions and do not take fresh disappointments at face value." What we did others can do as well.

Mr. President, we are determined to make the agreement with the Palestinians into a permanent success. Israel would consider an economic success of the Palestinians as though it were its own, and I believe that a newly-achieved security will serve the aspirations of the Israelis and the necessities of the Palestinians.

Gaza, after 7,000 years of suffering, can emancipate itself from want. Jericho without her fallen walls can see her gardens blossom again.

As the twentieth century comes to a close, we have learned from the United States and Russia that there are no military answers to the new military dangers, only political solutions. Successful economies are no longer a monopoly of the rich and the mighty. They represent an open invitation to every nation ready to adopt the combination of science and open-mindedness. We see at the end of this century that politics can

achieve more by goodwill than by power, and that the young generation watching their televisions, compare their lot with the fortunes or misfortunes of others. They see freedom, watch peace and view prosperity in real time. They know that they can attain more if they work harder.

If we want to represent their hopes, we have to combine wise policies and regional security with market economies. Historically we were born equal and equally we can give birth to a new age.

“Behold days are coming, says the Lord, when the ploughman shall overtake the reaper and the trader of grapes, him who sows the seeds and the mountains shall drop sweet wine and all the hills shall melt.”

**5. David Hartman, *Israelis and the Jewish Tradition: An Ancient People Debating Its Future* (Yale University Press, 2000), 1–3**

The dramatic events of the twentieth century have altered the traditional interpretation of exile for Jewish self-understanding. Before the advent of modern Zionism, the biblical story of the Exodus from Egypt had served as the dominant paradigm of Jewish history; it implied that change in the Jewish people’s exilic condition would occur only through the radical intervention of God. On the night of the Passover seder we read the following blessing: “Blessed are You, Lord our God, Ruler of the universe, Who redeemed us and redeemed our ancestors from Egypt, and enabled us to reach this night, to eat thereon Matzah and bitter herbs. So may the Lord our God and God of our ancestors enable us to reach other holidays and festivals in peace, happy in the building of Your city Jerusalem, and joyful in Your service. There may we partake of the Passover offerings. We shall then sing unto You a new song of praise for our redemption and salvation. Blessed are You, O Lord, Who redeemed Israel” (Passover Haggadah). Liberation from exile was not to be realized through human efforts. When asked whether he celebrated Israel’s Independence Day, a noted rabbi once answered: “I have only one Independence Day—the liberation day known as Passover.”

The prevailing theological understanding of Jewish history linked the conditions of exile, homelessness, and political powerlessness with sin. “Because of our sins we were exiled from our country and banished far from our land. Our Father, our King, speedily reveal thy glorious majesty to us; shine forth and be exalted over us in the sight of all the living. Unite our scattered people from among the nations; gather our dispersed from the far ends of the earth. Bring us to Zion thy city with ringing song, to Jerusalem thy sanctuary with everlasting joy” (Siddur [daily prayer book]). The upshot of this was the belief that historical change could come about only by the spiritual transformation of the people or an act of divine grace. “All the prophets

charged the people concerning repentance. Only through repentance will Israel be redeemed, and the Torah already offered the assurance that Israel will, in the closing period of his exile, finally repent, and thereupon be immediately redeemed" (Maimonides, "Laws of Repentance" 7:5).

Zionism, on the other hand, represented a transformation of this traditional form of self-understanding. Its fundamental message was: If you wish to change your exilic condition, you must learn how nations emerge and survive. If you wish to return to the land, don't wait for a miracle or a prophet to arise. Build agricultural schools, improve your economic base and your knowledge of banking and finance. Develop the art of self-defense, of modern warfare; become experts in military matters; in a word, master whatever it takes to build a viable state. Secular Zionism completely demythologized the Jewish people's sense of who they were. It contradicted accepted patterns of thought by asserting that exile was not necessarily grounded in sin or observance of the Torah commandments but could be the result of a failure to exploit the political, social, economic, and military conditions required for nation building.

### III. Redemption and the Cycle of History

#### 6. Babylonian Talmud, Avodah Zarah 54b

גמ' ת"ר שאלו פלוסופין את הזקנים ברומי אם אלהיכם אין רצונו בעבודת כוכבים מפני מה אינו מבטלה אמרו להם אילו לדבר שאין העולם צורך לו היו עובדין הרי הוא מבטלה הרי הן עובדין לחמה וללבנה ולכוכבים ולמזלות יאבד עולם מפני השוטים אלא עולם כמנהגו נוהג ושוטים שקלקלו עתידין ליתן את הדין

GEMARA: The Sages taught: Certain philosophers [*filosofin*] asked the Jewish Sages who were in Rome: If it is not your God's will that people should engage in idol worship, for what reason does He not eliminate it? The Sages said to them: Were people worshipping only objects for which the world has no need, He would eliminate it. But they worship the sun and the moon and the stars and the constellations. Should He destroy the world because of the fools? Rather, the world follows its course, and the fools who sinned will be held to judgment in the future.

דבר אחר הרי שגזל סאה של חטים [והלך] וזרעה בקרקע דין הוא שלא תצמח אלא עולם כמנהגו נוהג והולך ושוטים שקלקלו עתידין ליתן את הדין

Another matter: Consider the case of one who stole a *se'a* of wheat and went and planted it in the ground. By right it should not grow. But the world goes along and follows its course and the fools who sinned will be held to judgment in the future.

דבר אחר הרי שבא על אשת חבירו דין הוא שלא תתעבר אלא עולם כמנהגו נוהג והולך ושוטים שקלקלו עתידין ליתן את הדין

Another matter: Consider the case of one who engaged in intercourse with the wife of another. By right she should not become pregnant. But the world goes along and follows its course and the fools who sinned will be held to judgment in the future.

והיינו דאמר ריש לקיש אמר הקב"ה לא דיין לרשעים שעושין סלע שלי פומבי אלא שמטריחין אותי ומחתימין אותי בעל כרחי

And this is as Reish Lakish says: The Holy One, Blessed be He, said: Is it not enough for the wicked that they treat My *sela* coin as if it were ownerless [*pumbi*]? But they also trouble Me and cause Me to sign against My will.



#### IV. Our Uncertain Future

##### 7. Francis Fukuyama, "The End of History?" *The National Interest* 16 (1989), Part III

IF WE ADMIT for the moment that the fascist and communist challenges to liberalism are dead, are there any other ideological competitors left? Or put another way, are there contradictions in liberal society beyond that of class that are not resolvable? Two possibilities suggest themselves, those of religion and nationalism.

The rise of religious fundamentalism in recent years within the Christian, Jewish, and Muslim traditions has been widely noted. One is inclined to say that the revival of religion in some way attests to a broad unhappiness with the impersonality and spiritual vacuity of liberal consumerist societies. Yet while the emptiness at the core of liberalism is most certainly a defect in the ideology – indeed, a flaw that one does not need the perspective of religion to recognize – it is not at all clear that it is remediable through politics. Modern liberalism itself was historically a consequence of the weakness of religiously-based societies which, failing to agree on the nature of the good life, could not provide even the minimal preconditions of peace and stability. In the contemporary world only Islam has offered a theocratic state as a political alternative to both liberalism and communism. But the doctrine has little appeal for non-Muslims, and it is hard to believe that the movement will take on any universal significance. Other less organized religious impulses have been successfully satisfied within the sphere of personal life that is permitted in liberal societies.

The other major "contradiction" potentially unresolvable by liberalism is the one posed by nationalism and other forms of racial and ethnic consciousness. It is certainly true that a very large degree of conflict since the Battle of Jena has had its roots in nationalism. Two cataclysmic world wars in this century have been spawned by the nationalism of the developed world in various guises, and if those passions have been muted to a certain extent in postwar Europe, they are still extremely powerful in the Third World.

Nationalism has been a threat to liberalism historically in Germany, and continues to be one in isolated parts of "post-historical" Europe like Northern Ireland.

But it is not clear that nationalism represents an irreconcilable contradiction in the heart of liberalism. In the first place, nationalism is not one single phenomenon but several, ranging from mild cultural nostalgia to the highly organized and elaborately articulated doctrine of National Socialism. Only systematic nationalisms of the latter sort can qualify as a formal ideology on the level of liberalism or communism. The vast majority of the world's nationalist movements do not have a political program beyond

the negative desire of independence from some other group or people, and do not offer anything like a comprehensive agenda for socio-economic organization. As such, they are compatible with doctrines and ideologies that do offer such agendas. While they may constitute a source of conflict for liberal societies, this conflict does not arise from liberalism itself so much as from the fact that the liberalism in question is incomplete. Certainly a great deal of the world's ethnic and nationalist tension can be explained in terms of peoples who are forced to live in unrepresentative political systems that they have not chosen.

While it is impossible to rule out the sudden appearance of new ideologies or previously unrecognized contradictions in liberal societies, then, the present world seems to confirm that the fundamental principles of sociopolitical organization have not advanced terribly far since 1806. Many of the wars and revolutions fought since that time have been undertaken in the name of ideologies which claimed to be more advanced than liberalism, but whose pretensions were ultimately unmasked by history. In the meantime, they have helped to spread the universal homogenous state to the point where it could have a significant effect on the overall character of international relations.

#### 8. Maimonides, *Mishneh Torah*, Laws of Kings and Wars 12:1

אל יַעֲלֶה עַל הַלֵּב שְׂבִימוֹת הַמְּשִׁיחַ יִבְטֹל דְּבַר מִמְּנִהְגּוֹ שֶׁל עוֹלָם. אוֹ יִהְיֶה שֶׁם חֲדוּשׁ בְּמַעֲשֵׂה בְּרָאשִׁית. אֲלֵא עוֹלָם כְּמִנְהֶגּוֹ נוֹהֵג. וְזֶה שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר בִּישְׁעָיָה (ישעיה יא, ו) "וְגַר זָאֵב עִם כֶּבֶשׂ וְנֹמֵר עִם גְּדִי יִרְבֹּץ" מִשָּׁל וְחִידָה. עֲנִינוּ הַדְּבָר שֶׁיִּהְיוּ יִשְׂרָאֵל יוֹשְׁבֵינִי לְבֶטַח עִם רְשָׁעֵי עַבּוּרֵי הַמְּשׁוּלִים כְּזָאֵב וְנֹמֵר. שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר (ירמיה ה, ו) "זָאֵב עֲרֹבוֹת יִשְׁדָּדִם וְנֹמֵר שֶׁקֵּד עַל עֲרִיָּהִם". וְיִחַזְרוּ כָּלֵם לְדַת הָאֱמוּנָה. וְלֹא יִגְזְלוּ וְלֹא יִשְׁחִיתוּ. אֲלֵא יֹאכְלוּ דְּבַר הַמִּתֵּר בְּנַחַת עִם יִשְׂרָאֵל. שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר (ישעיה יא, ז) "וְאַרְיֵה כִּבְקָר יֹאכַל תְּבָר". וְכֵן כָּל כַּיּוֹצֵא בְּאֵלוֹ הַדְּבָרִים בְּעִנְיֵן הַמְּשִׁיחַ הֵם מְשָׁלִים. וּבִימֹת הַמְּלִיךְ הַמְּשִׁיחַ יִוָּדַע לְכָל לְאִי זֶה דְּבַר הַיָּה מִשָּׁל. וְמָה עֲנִינוּ רְמִזּוֹ בָּהֶן:

Do not presume that in the Messianic age any facet of the world's nature will change or there will be innovations in the work of creation. Rather, the world will continue according to its pattern.

Although Isaiah 11:6 states: "The wolf will dwell with the lamb, the leopard will lie down with the young goat," these words are a metaphor and a parable. The interpretation of the prophecy is as follows: Israel will dwell securely together with the wicked gentiles who are likened to a wolf and a leopard, as in the prophecy Jeremiah 5:6: "A wolf from the wilderness shall spoil them and a leopard will stalk their cities." They will all return to the true faith and no longer steal or destroy. Rather, they will eat permitted food at peace with Israel as Isaiah 11:7 states: "The lion will eat straw like an ox."

Similarly, other Messianic prophecies of this nature are metaphors. In the Messianic era, everyone will realize which matters were implied by these metaphors and which allusions they contained.

**9. Maimonides' 12<sup>th</sup> Principle of Faith, from "Introduction to Helek,"  
trans. J. Abelson**

The days of the Messiah. This involves the belief and firm faith in his coming, and that we should not find him slow in coming. **אם יתמהמה חכה לו** "Though he tarry, wait for him" (Habakkuk 2:3). No date must be fixed for his appearance, neither may the scriptures be interpreted with the view of deducing the time of his coming. The Sages said (Sanhedrin 97b), **תפח רוחן של מחשבי קצין** "A plague on those who calculate periods" (for Messiah's appearance).

We must have faith in him, honouring and loving him, and praying for him according to the degree of importance with which he is spoken of by every prophet, from Moses unto Malachi. He that has any doubt about him or holds his authority in light esteem imputes falsehood to the Torah, which clearly promises his coming in **פרשת בלעם** "the chapter of Balaam" (Numbers 23-24), and in **אתם נצבים** "Ye stand this day all of you before the Lord your God" (Deuteronomy 30:1-10). From the general nature of this principle of faith we gather that there will be no king of Israel but from David and the descendants of Solomon exclusively. Every one who disputes the authority of this family denies God and the words of his prophets.

**10. Isaiah Berlin, "A Message to the 21<sup>st</sup> Century" (1994), *The New York Review of Books*, Oct. 3, 2014**

"It was the best of times, it was the worst of times." With these words Dickens began his famous novel *A Tale of Two Cities*. But this cannot, alas, be said about our own terrible century. Men have for millennia destroyed each other, but the deeds of Attila the Hun, Genghis Khan, Napoleon (who introduced mass killings in war), even the Armenian massacres, pale into insignificance before the Russian Revolution and its aftermath: the oppression, torture, murder which can be laid at the doors of Lenin, Stalin, Hitler, Mao, Pol Pot, and the systematic falsification of information which prevented knowledge of these horrors for years—these are unparalleled. They were not natural disasters, but preventable human crimes, and whatever those who believe in historical determinism may think, they could have been averted.

I speak with particular feeling, for I am a very old man, and I have lived through almost the entire century. My life has been peaceful and secure, and I feel almost ashamed of this in view of what has happened to so many other human beings. I am

not a historian, and so I cannot speak with authority on the causes of these horrors. Yet perhaps I can try.

They were, in my view, not caused by the ordinary negative human sentiments, as Spinoza called them—fear, greed, tribal hatreds, jealousy, love of power—though of course these have played their wicked part. They have been caused, in our time, by ideas; or rather, by one particular idea. It is paradoxical that Karl Marx, who played down the importance of ideas in comparison with impersonal social and economic forces, should, by his writings, have caused the transformation of the twentieth century, both in the direction of what he wanted and, by reaction, against it. The German poet Heine, in one of his famous writings, told us not to underestimate the quiet philosopher sitting in his study; if Kant had not undone theology, he declared, Robespierre might not have cut off the head of the King of France.

He predicted that the armed disciples of the German philosophers—Fichte, Schelling, and the other fathers of German nationalism—would one day destroy the great monuments of Western Europe in a wave of fanatical destruction before which the French Revolution would seem child's play. This may have been unfair to the German metaphysicians, yet Heine's central idea seems to me valid: in a debased form, the Nazi ideology did have roots in German anti-Enlightenment thought. There are men who will kill and maim with a tranquil conscience under the influence of the words and writings of some of those who are certain that they know perfection can be reached.

Let me explain. If you are truly convinced that there is some solution to all human problems, that one can conceive an ideal society which men can reach if only they do what is necessary to attain it, then you and your followers must believe that no price can be too high to pay in order to open the gates of such a paradise. Only the stupid and malevolent will resist once certain simple truths are put to them. Those who resist must be persuaded; if they cannot be persuaded, laws must be passed to restrain them; if that does not work, then coercion, if need be violence, will inevitably have to be used—if necessary, terror, slaughter. Lenin believed this after reading *Das Kapital*, and consistently taught that if a just, peaceful, happy, free, virtuous society could be created by the means he advocated, then the end justified any methods that needed to be used, literally any.

The root conviction which underlies this is that the central questions of human life, individual or social, have one true answer which can be discovered. It can and must be implemented, and those who have found it are the leaders whose word is law. The idea that to all genuine questions there can be only one true answer is a very old philosophical notion. The great Athenian philosophers, Jews and Christians, the thinkers of the Renaissance and the Paris of Louis XIV, the French radical reformers of

the eighteenth century, the revolutionaries of the nineteenth—however much they differed about what the answer was or how to discover it (and bloody wars were fought over this)—were all convinced that they knew the answer, and that only human vice and stupidity could obstruct its realization.

This is the idea of which I spoke, and what I wish to tell you is that it is false. Not only because the solutions given by different schools of social thought differ, and none can be demonstrated by rational methods—but for an even deeper reason. The central values by which most men have lived, in a great many lands at a great many times—these values, almost if not entirely universal, are not always harmonious with each other. Some are, some are not. Men have always craved for liberty, security, equality, happiness, justice, knowledge, and so on. But complete liberty is not compatible with complete equality—if men were wholly free, the wolves would be free to eat the sheep. Perfect equality means that human liberties must be restrained so that the ablest and the most gifted are not permitted to advance beyond those who would inevitably lose if there were competition. Security, and indeed freedoms, cannot be preserved if freedom to subvert them is permitted. Indeed, not everyone seeks security or peace, otherwise some would not have sought glory in battle or in dangerous sports.

Justice has always been a human ideal, but it is not fully compatible with mercy. Creative imagination and spontaneity, splendid in themselves, cannot be fully reconciled with the need for planning, organization, careful and responsible calculation. Knowledge, the pursuit of truth—the noblest of aims—cannot be fully reconciled with the happiness or the freedom that men desire, for even if I know that I have some incurable disease this will not make me happier or freer. I must always choose: between peace and excitement, or knowledge and blissful ignorance. And so on.

So what is to be done to restrain the champions, sometimes very fanatical, of one or other of these values, each of whom tends to trample upon the rest, as the great tyrants of the twentieth century have trampled on the life, liberty, and human rights of millions because their eyes were fixed upon some ultimate golden future?

I am afraid I have no dramatic answer to offer: only that if these ultimate human values by which we live are to be pursued, then compromises, trade-offs, arrangements have to be made if the worst is not to happen. So much liberty for so much equality, so much individual self-expression for so much security, so much justice for so much compassion. My point is that some values clash: the ends pursued by human beings are all generated by our common nature, but their pursuit has to be to some degree controlled—liberty and the pursuit of happiness, I repeat, may not be fully compatible with each other, nor are liberty, equality, and fraternity.

So we must weigh and measure, bargain, compromise, and prevent the crushing of one form of life by its rivals. I know only too well that this is not a flag under which idealistic and enthusiastic young men and women may wish to march—it seems too tame, too reasonable, too bourgeois, it does not engage the generous emotions. But you must believe me, one cannot have everything one wants—not only in practice, but even in theory. The denial of this, the search for a single, overarching ideal because it is the one and only true one for humanity, invariably leads to coercion. And then to destruction, blood—eggs are broken, but the omelette is not in sight, there is only an infinite number of eggs, human lives, ready for the breaking. And in the end the passionate idealists forget the omelette, and just go on breaking eggs.

I am glad to note that toward the end of my long life some realization of this is beginning to dawn. Rationality, tolerance, rare enough in human history, are not despised. Liberal democracy, despite everything, despite the greatest modern scourge of fanatical, fundamentalist nationalism, is spreading. Great tyrannies are in ruins, or will be—even in China the day is not too distant. I am glad that you to whom I speak will see the twenty-first century, which I feel sure can be only a better time for mankind than my terrible century has been. I congratulate you on your good fortune; I regret that I shall not see this brighter future, which I am convinced is coming. With all the gloom that I have been spreading, I am glad to end on an optimistic note. There really are good reasons to think that it is justified.

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