

# **Abraham, Aristotle and Alinsky: On the Reconciliation of Citizenship and Faith.**

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## ***The opposition of citizenship and faith in theory and practice.***

It has been an axiomatic assumption of political philosophy that the two great and durable moral political traditions of the last two millennia, those of faith and citizenship, of Abraham and Aristotle, of Jerusalem and Athens, are hostile and irreconcilable, in theory and practice. This conflict reached its apotheosis (so to speak) with the French Revolution and has provided the framework for conceptualising the relationship between politics and religion ever since. There are good theoretical and practical reasons why this should be so.

The first concerns the foundations of power and sovereignty. For the citizenship tradition initiated by Aristotle, power is based upon the political community of citizens who constitute the state, are sovereign and the ultimate source of power. For the Abrahamic traditions, in contrast, god, not man, is sovereign. The basis of power is not citizenship, or the relationship between citizens, but the revelation of god and his laws. The ultimate values are not self-government, self-sufficiency and self-defence for a political community acting autonomously through time.<sup>1</sup> It is not freedom from foreign domination by sacrifice and obedience to laws given collectively to yourself but obedience to the laws of god as revealed through the holy scriptures. Human power is circumscribed by divine sovereignty. Citizenship and faith thus seem incommensurable in terms of what really matters in politics: sovereignty, power and authority. Citizenship located power in human action within a self-sufficient political community which constituted the ultimate good, faith located sovereignty outside the political community in divine revelation in which obedience to god was the ultimate value.

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<sup>1</sup> For a clear statement of this republican view see J. G. A. Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment: Florentine Political Thought and the Atlantic Republican Tradition* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975). pp. 156-182.

The theoretical opposition and antagonism also expressed a second and equally profound practical conflict relating to loyalty, solidarity and obedience. If one's ultimate loyalty is to God and one's solidarity with those who accept His word then obedience lies with the custodians of His revealed inheritance. Hostility to religious minorities was based far more upon fears of treachery than on theological heresy. Pharaoh was not the last ruler to consider the Jews a fifth column amenable to the interests of foreign powers.<sup>2</sup> The anti-Catholicism of the British State in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> was founded upon a concern about the political ambitions of Rome and Madrid and the effects of insurrection upon the efficacy of the British state.<sup>3</sup> Protestantism offered a means of resisting both the Holy Roman Empire and the papacy.<sup>4</sup> The solution proposed by the Treaty of Westphalia in which sovereign states would be characterised by one religion only was, in reality, the subordination of religion to politics and an absolute statement about sovereignty and obedience. Treachery and heresy turned out to be closely related concepts.

With the emergence of the nation state citizenship offered a philosophical solution to intractable theological issues. It offered an identity and a moral status that was based upon the capacity of the person for reason and a recognition, in turn, that the authority and legitimacy of the state was based upon that commonly held capacity. In political philosophy the work of Locke, Rousseau and Kant asserted that the state was the product of a constitutive act of will that rendered religion irrelevant to the exercise of political authority, although remaining of great significance in the life of people.<sup>5</sup> Locke's ideas were developed most powerfully in the American Revolution which guaranteed freedom of association and worship and Rousseau's were more faithfully secured in the French

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<sup>2</sup> *Exodus*, 1:10.

<sup>3</sup> For the relationship between the development of the Tudor nation state and anti-Catholicism see Hans S. Pawlisch, *Sir John Davies and the Conquest of Ireland: A Study in Legal Imperialism*, ed. Maurice Cowling, G.R. Elton, and J.R. Pole, *Cambridge Studies in the History and Theory of Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985). pp. 161-175.

<sup>4</sup> Under Cromwell's Commonwealth both Jews and Muslims received full toleration but not Catholics.

<sup>5</sup> See Immanuel Kant, *Religion Within the Bounds of Reason Alone*, Hackett, 1982. John Locke, *Second Treatise on Civic Government*, Cambridge, 1992. Jean-Jacque Rousseau, *The Social Contract*, Cambridge, 1991.

Revolution in which the State took a more active role in the suppression of religion as the move from the city state to the nation state intensified the opposition between citizenship and faith. In Germany as well as France, citizenship offered the possibility of a national identity that transcended the religious division between Catholic and Protestant. The notion that the children of Abraham, whether Jewish, Christian or Muslim represented a form of false consciousness, archaic community, superstition and reactionary oppression became a staple of the enlightened citizens diet. Whereas the Lockean State recognised the threat of tyranny from a ruler who ‘infringed upon private conscience’ the more robust republican virtue that developed in France challenged the rights and existence of faith communities and promoted the benefits of the civil religion.

The intensity of opposition between faith and citizenship played itself out in its most bloody and tortured form in the Soviet Union and the energies unleashed by communism. The activist atheism that underpinned Marxism in all its forms and the particular nature of Bolshevism led to the conscious and systematic oppression of all forms of Abrahamic faith within the framework of real existing socialism. This was done in the name of citizenship, of a secular and philosophical discourse which knew better as to the causes of action, the nature of truth and the requirements of freedom and justice. The point of this crude summary is to suggest that with the breakdown of communism in Europe the opposition between citizenship and faith has also broken down. If the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries are drenched with the blood of religious wars then the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries were centuries of secularist slaughter, whether pagan or enlightened. Not only is neither tradition innocent but the more radical proposal made in this paper is that both traditions of how to act in the world in order to achieve justice and a moral life based upon the integrity of each person, need each other in order to protect and sustain the good life embedded within the teaching and obligations of their faith and citizenship traditions.

The reason for arguing for the mutual necessity of citizenship and faith is given by two related developments characteristic of contemporary European society. The first is the increased power, penetration and pervasiveness of markets. The threat of commodification and its expression on the form of, for example prostitution, people trafficking and body parts selling has been complemented by the diminishment of the capacity of the state to effectively regulate markets and uphold the human status of the

citizen, or the non-commodity properties of nature in defiance of market values. The logic of the market has been complemented by immigration which has led to an intensified pluralism; religious, ethnic and racial that is now characteristic of all European cities.<sup>6</sup> This leads to increasingly sectarian conflicts and the breakdown of traditional forms of solidarity within society, and most particularly cities. The possibility of citizenship as a form of democratic action which expresses the power of relationships in defiance of the dominion of money is stymied by a lack of a common language, a common history and a common set of interests that can conceptualise a common politics. Competition for scarce resources and state power between different groups is a far more realistic description of civic life than an active engagement between different communities in pursuit of a common good.<sup>7</sup>

This combination of market dominion and radical pluralism is not simply a threat to the possibility of citizenship, it also poses a threat to the integrity of faith communities. The pressure of commodification violates a fundamental notion of the sacred common to all the Abrahamic faiths concerning the integrity of the human being, the divine status of nature and the limits of money by their organisation into labour, land and money markets. Through the nationalisation of welfare implicit in the Social-Democratic conception of citizenship the function of religious community is also undermined. We have reached a moment when citizenship cannot mobilise communities and faith cannot protect them.

These circumstances are not, however, entirely new. In 1930's Chicago there was a similar conjunction of mass immigration, market domination, political demoralisation and corruption. It was in this terrain that a new form of urban politics emerged which combined the previously uncomplimentary virtues of citizenship and faith in an extreme form. Its chief proponent was Saul Alinsky and it became known as broad based

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<sup>6</sup> For an interesting discussion of this in the Dutch context see P. Scheffer, "The Land of Arrival," in *The Challenge of Diversity: European Social Democracy Facing Immigration, Integration and Multiculturalism.*, ed. K.A. Duffek R. Cuperas, J. Kandel. (Innsbruck: Studien Verlag, 2003).

<sup>7</sup> See Han Entzinger, "The Parallel Decline of Multiculturalism and the Welfare State in the Netherlands," in *Multiculturalism and the Welfare State: Recognition and Redistribution in Contemporary Democracies.*, ed. Keith Banting and Will Kymlicka (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).

community organising and the institution through which it was promoted was the Industrial Areas Foundation. The type of political organising built upon the leadership of faith communities in the regeneration of poor urban areas has become the most significant feature of American city politics in the past fifty years. The Chicago organisation alone gave both Hilary Clinton and Barak Obama their political education and there are now 134 different political organisations in American cities with four thousand member institutions made up of churches, synagogues and mosques.<sup>8</sup>

Alinsky, an atheist Jew from an orthodox family, engaged with the work of Jacques Maritain and other Catholic thinkers in developing a type of community politics that was driven by faith community leaders and values.<sup>9</sup> Alinsky conceptualised the problem of urban politics as one of atomisation and disorganisation.<sup>10</sup> In the Back of Yards area of Chicago, notorious for its gangs, violence, poverty and intolerance he helped forge an unprecedented partnership between feuding Catholic churches of Polish, Lithuanian, Irish and Italian backgrounds in the name of people taking decisions and control of their areas and thus redefined the meaning of ‘regeneration’ in explicitly religious terms by mobilising ‘citizen’ power.<sup>11</sup> The ‘fact of pluralism’ characteristic of urban environments mitigates against sectarianism as the outcome of faith based politics. The necessity of co-operation between faiths and the practices required for their mutual agreement to a shared

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<sup>8</sup> For an account of the practices and extent of broad based community organising on the United States see Michael Gecan, *Going Public: An Organizer's Guide to Citizen Action* (New York: Anchor Books, 2002), Mark R. Warren, *Dry Bones Rattling; Community Building to Revitalise American Democracy*, ed. Martin Shefter Ira Katznelson, Theda Skocpol, *Princeton Studies in American Politics: Historical, International and Comparative Perspectives* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001).

<sup>9</sup> For an account of the relationship between Alinsky and Maritain see Bernard Doering, ed., *The Philosopher and the Provocateur: The Correspondence of Jacques Maritain and Saul Alinsky* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1994).

<sup>10</sup> See Saul Alinsky, *Reveille for Radicals* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1946). See also Saul Alinsky, *Rules for Radicals: A Pragmatic Primer for Realistic Radicals* (New York: Vintage Books, 1971).

<sup>11</sup> An account of this is given in both P. David Finks, *The Radical Vision of Saul Alinsky* (New Jersey: The Paulist Press, 1984). And also in Sanford D. Horwitt, *Let Them Call Me Rebel: Saul Alinsky - His Life and Legacy* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1989).

political agenda is the most distinctive feature of the Alinsky method so it is worth examining this aspect of his work in a little more detail.

***The Alinsky Method.***

Alinsky developed a method of organising that he claimed was applicable to all urban environments characterised by ethnic and religious diversity. This is true for intra-faith as well as inter-faith pluralism. The Alinsky method is based on instituting a set of democratic practices within community institutions and between them that enable people to understand their relationships with each other as reciprocal and that the quality of their life and the possibility of their power is based upon strengthening their relationships with each other. This means, in Alinsky terms, sustaining and deepening the democratic way of life as a means of resisting exploitation and oppression, the twin perils of domination by the market and the state. The conscious realisation of their own power as a set of relationships enables people to resist the power of money, the domination of political elites and thus to realise the good of their locality and city as built on reciprocal political relationships between the citizens who live there. Only by generating this conscious relationship through sustained action that renews the necessity of mutuality can this resistance be maintained.

It is important to stress that the type of politics discussed here is civic, urban and local. This is not concerned with state based policy and administrative politics, or the politics of the nation state more generally. Alinsky was more concerned with citizenship in the city and how to generate common action in particular urban localities characterised by pluralism of faith communities. In conceptualising politics as the mobilisation of relationships between citizens in opposition to wealth or state power Alinsky draws upon a Republican tradition of politics with a strong commitment to self-government.<sup>12</sup> All of this would have been consistent with a radical American republicanism that would link

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<sup>12</sup> For a particular discussion of this see Sheldon S. Wolin, "Contract and Birthright," in *The Presence of the Past: Essays on the State and the Constitution* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990). For a general overview of this tradition see Sheldon S. Wolin, *Politics and Vision: Continuity and Innovation in Western Political Thought* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1960).

Sam Adams with Tom Paine were it not for the fact that the elements of organisation, the communities through which people act politically and which engage in political action are faith communities.

Alinsky argues that city self-government was historically corporate and that the body politic was made up of organisations. Political demoralisation occurs when atomisation prevails, when people find themselves outside institutions and organisations. It is only through the realisation of the importance of relationships, and the mobilisation of those relationships as a form of political power that people can change their urban environment and participate effectively in civic life. Only organised citizens can effectively resist organised crime. The most important corporate starting point for that engagement are not political parties, which tend to dissolve into the state, nor pressure groups which become campaigning organisations, nor trade unions which often become national and remote. Neither is it the individual citizen acting alone. The starting point are the local faith community congregations within a particular locality and their capacity to work together to re-moralise their civic environment. In this conception the state is a threat to citizenship by promoting an administrative form of politics that undermines the power of local communities to govern their own environment. The market is also a threat to the moral life of communities due to the pressure of commodification, to render for sale things that were not produced for sale and are not easily replaced, such as our bodies, our body parts, our children and the urban spaces that they play and are educated within.

### **Common concepts between Citizenship and Faith.**

Following from the Alinsky method it is possible to discern two areas where citizenship and faith share fundamental concepts.

#### **a. The Power of Community.**

The first area of common ground between the Aristotelian and Abrahamic conceptions of public life, of politics and the common good is that human beings flourish more and have greater power by belonging to a community. This is an argument that concerns both constituents and resources. For Aristotelians as well as Abrahamic human beings are

constituted by a community which provides the language, values and ends for a person and without which they could hardly be considered a person at all.<sup>13</sup> In this communitarian sense, community is constitutive of the self. It is also, however, a resource. Communities provide skills, relationships, belonging, networks and the other things combined under the brutal heading of ‘social capital’.<sup>14</sup> The concept of political action is not about individuals ‘making a difference’ it is about strengthening community institutions as what Karl Polanyi calls ‘embodiments of ethical purpose’.<sup>15</sup> This is done by mobilising relationships and strengthening community activism through actions that generate interest and results that remoralise the civic environment.<sup>16</sup>

For Aristotle, the *polis*, the political community is both the ultimate end of man and the basis of the good. The *polis* comes into existence due to the necessities of self-protection and the fulfilment of needs but it ‘continues its existence for the sake of the good life’.<sup>17</sup> The fundamental role played by the polis is at the basis of what it means to be a citizen. Aristotle writes:

It is evident that the polis is a creation of nature, and that man is by nature a political animal. And he who by nature and not by mere accident is without a polis, is either a bad man or above humanity; he is like the ‘tribeless, lawless, hearthless one’, whom Homer denounces – the natural outcast is forthwith a lover of war; he may be compared to an isolated piece at draughts.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> For a summary of this argument see Michael J. Sandel, *Liberalism and the Limits of Justice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982).

<sup>14</sup> For a discussion and definition of this see Robert D. Putnam, “Bowling Alone: America's Declining Social Capital,” *Journal of Democracy* 6 (1995). p. 67.

<sup>15</sup> See Karl Polanyi, *The Great Transformation: The Political and Economic Origins of Our Time* (Boston: Beacon Hill, 1957). P. 254. See also Karl Polanyi, “Aristotle Discovers the Economy,” in *Primitive, Archaic and Modern Economies: Essays of Karl Polanyi*, ed. George Dalton (New York: Anchor Books, 1968).

<sup>16</sup> See Alinsky, *Rules for Radicals: A Pragmatic Primer for Realistic Radicals*.

<sup>17</sup> Aristotle, *The Politics*, ed. Stephen Everson, *Cambridge Texts in the History of Political Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988). (1, 1252, 30).

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.* (1, 1253, 5).



In the politics of the city state the concept of a community bound by law which demanded the sacrifice and loyalty of its citizens was central. In the development of the European city, most particularly the medieval city, the Christian tradition had a great deal to say about the power of the *commune*. The idea of the corporation, of the body politic, was a distinctively urban Christian civic idea. Augustine's *City of God* with its contrast between the sinful city characterised by lust, greed and corruption and the city of god based upon justice, community and peace plays as important a role in this as the more Aristotelian work of St Thomas of Aquinas.<sup>19</sup> A recognition of the mutuality of faith and citizenship is given by the fact that no city could call itself a city without a cathedral as part of its body politic. The Reformation, whether in Geneva or Zurich, played itself out in conflicts over civic government. I have discussed Christian conceptions of democracy elsewhere and will not rehearse them here.<sup>20</sup> What is important is that there are strong traditions, permeating many different Christian traditions which places the congregation and the church building at the centre of its concerns thus linking concepts of community and locality with the good life.

For exilic Judaism there was no value or practice more important than communal self-government.<sup>21</sup> As concerns the communal organisation of schools, burial societies, the slaughter and preparation of food, the running of the synagogue, care for the sick and the performance of commandments generally the Jewish community developed intense urban communal innovations and institutions that were self-financed and governed. This concept of the *Kehilah*, of the local community understood as a network of institutions in which the ancient laws were combined with the constant renewal of new generations

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<sup>19</sup> See Augustine, *City of God*, particularly chapters 14, 15, 19. Aquinas has entered into contemporary political philosophy through Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, Second ed. (Indiana: University of Notre Dame, 1984). p. 263. Much of the work on this has been of no particular political, philosophical or theological interest, a recent exception being Mary M. Keys, *Aquinas, Aristotle, and the Promise of the Common Good* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006). See pp. 59-65.

<sup>20</sup> See Maurice Glasman, *Unnecessary Suffering* (London: Verso, 1995). See particularly chapter two.

<sup>21</sup> For the definitive statement on this see Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch, *Volume Vi: Jewish Communal Life/Independent Orthodoxy, Collected Writings of Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch* (New York: Philipp Feldheim, 1997). pp. 61-106.

educated within the traditions and values of the Jewish community became both the central focus and ultimate value of exilic Jewish life and found its most profound expression in the cities of Germany before the Holocaust.<sup>22</sup>

Within Islam too the idea of the *Jamat*, or congregation, and of the *umma*, the general community of Muslims, plays a central role. The demands of Islamic law and the necessity of education and burial, worship and welfare within the framework of Islamic religious organisations has required new patterns of communal organisation within the Muslim communities of western Europe as the state is no longer available to underwrite and fund the fundamental activities of either the *Jamat* or the *umma*.

Islamic political theology engages with public action as a means of serving the ends of humanity through pursuing good and avoiding evil.<sup>23</sup> Much of this reflection takes place within a framework in which it is assumed that state power is desirable and practical. This paper is concerned exclusively with the Islamic approach to political engagement under conditions in which the establishment of a Shariah based Islamic state is impossible. Such is the case in European cities generally.<sup>24</sup> The concern here is, therefore, with the obligations upon Muslims to improve the conditions of humanity when living in exile, as a permanent minority within the body politic. The type of reasoning that is being drawn upon is called *ijtihad*, which is the study of fundamentals within Islamic jurisprudence. This refers to the practice of formulating the fundamental guidelines, maxims or ethical orientations of Islamic law and practice.

Al-Andalusi Ash Shatibi, a significant scholar within this tradition argued that the most fundamental principle of Islam was to protect the interests of mankind. He wrote that

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<sup>22</sup> See Robert Liberles, *The Resurgence of Orthodox Judaism in Frankfurt Am Main, 1838-1877*, ed. Henry W. Bowden, *Religious Conflict in Social Context* (London: Leo Baeck Institute, 1985).

<sup>23</sup> The writing of this section has been much aided by Michael Cook, *Forbidding Wrong in Islam, Themes in Islamic History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

<sup>24</sup> It is taken as a given that it is consistent with Islamic law and traditions that where an Islamic state is possible, and is, therefore, consistent with the culture and aspirations of the community (*umma*), then it is the religious obligation of each Muslim to pursue the establishment of an Islamic Republic based upon Shariah law. There are grave disputes within this general consensus as to the type of state this would be and the disputes are particularly severe in relation to the role of democracy and the meaning of rights.

‘The decisive criterion in all cases is the fulfilment of the needs of humans and serving their best interests.’<sup>25</sup> This, in turn is based upon the idea that political power, according to Islam, under conditions where Shariah law is inapplicable, rightly belongs to the political community (*umma*). The Qur’an defines the *umma* in the following terms: ‘their rule is by counsel among themselves’.<sup>26</sup> The guiding principle, argued Ash Shatibi, in conditions where Muslims are a minority, is not the establishment of Shariah law but the engagement of the Muslim community in the upholding of what is right and the prevention of evils such exploitation, oppression, corruption and theft.

The association of Muslims into a *Jamat* gives them the associative power to govern their own affairs and to appoint and depose their leaders.<sup>27</sup> The authority of the group is given by the Quranic injunction:

Let there arise out of you a band of people inviting to all that is good,  
enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong.<sup>28</sup>

Only by mobilising relationships in pursuit of common aims can Muslims exert power over both government policy and over the specific urban environments within which Muslims live.

**b. The limits of money.**

The power of community is a central value shared between citizenship and faith but the commonality is deepened by their common assertion of the limits of money. It is a neglected truth concerning the origins of both Athens and Rome that the concept of citizenship emerged as a means of limiting and controlling debt as well as resisting market penetration. The necessity of establishing the limits of money were related to both the threat to the values and virtues of the citizen and those of corruption, the private

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<sup>25</sup> Abu Ishaq Ash-Shatibi, *Al-Muwafaqat*, 2/6-8. Found in Rashid Ghannouchi, ‘The Participation of Islamists in a non-Islamic Government,’ in *Power-Sharing Islam?*, ed. Azzam Tamimi, Liberty for Muslim World Publications, London, 1993. pp.51-64. p. 56.

<sup>26</sup> *Qur’an*, (17/38).

<sup>27</sup> ‘Political Pluralism from an Islamic Perspective’, in pp.70-71. *Power-Sharing Islam?*, ed. Azzam Tamimi, Liberty for Muslim World Publications, London, 1993.

<sup>28</sup> Qur’an 3:104.

use of public goods. Plato's solution was rule by a guardian class who could not have families or own property and would thus be exclusively committed by interest and education to the highest good, which was that of the City and its citizens.<sup>29</sup> Plato worked within a conceptual framework within which landed property subordinated maritime trade, politics subordinated profit, reason the passions.

Aristotle took a different view of who should rule arguing for a property owning self-governing citizenry, where virtue and reason would demand a common commitment to the good of the city as the condition of their well-being. Reason, the foundation of laws based on the deliberation between free and equal citizens who were mutually dependent on the common good of the city would subordinate rationality, an exclusively individual and instrumental conception of the good. Aristotle distinguished between property in land, which was 'natural', and commercial trading, which was insatiable. There was, in principle, no limit to consumer lust.<sup>30</sup> It is the insatiability of consumer demand that bothered Aristotle, the way that self-gratification undermined the virtues of courage and justice necessary to sustain the solidarity required to sacrifice your life for the freedom of the city and its citizens.

And the avarice of mankind is insatiable ... men always want more and more without end; for it is of the nature of desire to be unlimited, and most men live only for the gratification of it.<sup>31</sup>

Money led to extremes of wealth, gluttony and cowardice. Citizenship, friendship and familial obligation were not understood as commercial relationships. Politics was the public practice through which the common institutions of self-government preserved the sense of community necessary to subordinate money.

In Rome, the regulation of credit, the annulment of debt and the provision of goods to citizens outside the price system characterised the development of both Republic and Principate. There are reported instances of interest being charged at 100% per annum in the fourth century B.C. and in 342 B.C. interest-bearing loans were banned altogether by

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<sup>29</sup> Plato, *The Laws*, 4: 705.

<sup>30</sup> Aristotle, *The Politics*. 1275a(20-29).

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.1267b (1).

the *lex Genucia*.<sup>32</sup> There was another attempt in the *lex Iunia* of 193 B.C. to annul debt and outlaw loans between citizens.<sup>33</sup>

In 88 B.C. the *lex Cornelia Pompeia* was passed which set a maximum rate for landed loans at one per-cent a month, or twelve per cent per annum. This was a maximum rate, not a basic rate and indicated an upper limit and it rarely seems to have dropped below four per-cent.<sup>34</sup> These were overwhelmingly personal loans, made on the whole by rich people to poorer ones at variable rates of interest. Throughout the Republic senators and knights were lending out money in interest bearing loans as part of their patrimonial management.<sup>35</sup>

Most of these loans were what we might call ‘consumption loans’, and as there was no productivity increase that could lead to repaying the principal, let alone the interest, it led to further debt which came to dominate the lives of the landless, which included citizens who had lost their patrimony in debt repayment. The Cataline conspiracy, when dispossessed citizens showed that they would murder senior senators and support land reform and debt annulment in order to preserve their land and avoid *infamia* required a political solution in order to avoid relentless violent conflict.<sup>36</sup> It is one of the arguments suggested here that citizenship politics emerged in order to cancel or limit the debts of citizens by setting fixed rates. Rome also pursued a policy of providing food outside the price mechanism through the *annona*, established in 58. B.C.<sup>37</sup> In this a dole of grain, 33kg of wheat per month, was provided to all the citizens of Rome and supplemented

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<sup>32</sup> Jean Andreau, *Banking and Business in the Roman World*, ed. P.D.A. Garnsey P.A. Cartledge, trans. Janet Lloyd, *Key Themes in Ancient History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999). p. xii, 91.

<sup>33</sup> See N. Rauh, “Finance and Estate Sales in Republican Rome,” *Aevum* (1989). p. 49. See also Andreau, *Banking and Business in the Roman World*. pp. 101-2.

<sup>34</sup> Andreau, *Banking and Business in the Roman World*. p. 92.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.* p. 11.

<sup>36</sup> See Israel Shatzman, *Senatorial Wealth and Roman Politics* (Brussels: Latomus, 1975). p. 39.

<sup>37</sup> See Greg Woolf, “Food, Poverty and Patronage: The Significance of the Epigraphy of the Roman Alimentary Schemes in Early Imperial Italy,” *Papers of the British School at Rome* LVIII (1990). pp. 212-213.

periodically by rations of wine and pork.<sup>38</sup> It provided enough food to live and was adopted in other Roman and Greek cities.<sup>39</sup> The total cost of supplying the *annona* amounted to over 15% of state revenues and constituted about a fifth of the total grain trade of Rome.<sup>40</sup> In other words, while there was a market economy in grain with fluctuating prices, the needs of its citizens were met irrespective of price. In 63 B.C. exporting gold and silver outside Italy was banned.<sup>41</sup>

By the end of the first Century A.D. the Emperors Nerva and Trajan instituted a practice called the *alimenta* in which the emperor would lend landowners money at a rate of five per cent and use the interest to feed and educate Italian children.<sup>42</sup> According to Woolf:

The Alimenta was an imperial attempt to protect the status of citizens' children who had lost their land and economic livelihood.<sup>43</sup>

In other words the emperor acted to slow the rate of change, protect children from debt pressures, preserve a sense of status and limit the logic of an entirely commercial relationship between citizens. The emperor had the authority to cancel debts, both public and private and both Hadrian and Marcus Aereilius did so.<sup>44</sup> The enactment of credit regulation, debt reform and prohibitions on senatorial business took place within a public policy framework within which it was axiomatic that market economics should be subordinated to political order.

The preservation of the non-commodity status of human beings and land has been a consistent pre-occupation of both citizenship and faith since their inception. This does

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<sup>38</sup> Hopkins, p. 8.

<sup>39</sup> Woolf, "Food, Poverty and Patronage: The Significance of the Epigraphy of the Roman Alimentary Schemes in Early Imperial Italy." p. ???

<sup>40</sup> See L. Casson, "The Role of the State in Rome's Grain Trade," in *The Seaborne Commerce of Ancient Rome: Studies in Archaeology and History*, ed. E.C. Kopff J. H. D'Arms (Rome: American Academy in Rome, 1980). p. 23.

<sup>41</sup> See Christopher Howgego, "The Supply and Use of Money in the Roman World: 200 B.C. To A.D. 300," *The Journal of Roman Studies* LXXXII (1992). p. 10.

<sup>42</sup> See Andreau, *Banking and Business in the Roman World*. pp. 119-20.

<sup>43</sup> Woolf, "Food, Poverty and Patronage: The Significance of the Epigraphy of the Roman Alimentary Schemes in Early Imperial Italy." p. 209.

<sup>44</sup> See Andreau, *Banking and Business in the Roman World*. p. 118.

not deny the existence of markets, their rationality or power it merely draws attention to the fact that these markets functioned within an environment characterised by other non-pecuniary institutions that constrained the market's destructive tendencies. This can be summarised as the urge to commodification of things that are not commodities, most importantly human beings and nature. The market, by definition, puts a price on everything through the process of commodification. In this, things not produced for sale, and often protected by customary practice and taboo, are sold for money on the market. These goods are usually irreplaceable. The sale of human beings and nature for cash payment are the most fundamental examples of this. Such practices were present in the later Empire and Constantine (A.D. 307-37) issued two edicts:

instructing imperial officers in Italy and in the province to provide for the newborn children of the poor, in an attempt to limit infanticide and the selling of children.<sup>45</sup>

That both existed and that both were seen as wrong is an example of the mutuality of citizenship and faith.

Judaism was born in resistance to the oppression and exploitation visited upon them by being slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt. The freedom from domination by a tyrant was obedience to God's laws. This meant that there were strict limits on ownership rights and the dominion of the wealthy. Food, shelter and land were provided by the community and in the case of land, redistributed in each jubilee year. It was forbidden to harvest all of a field, or gather the fallen fruit, 'thou shalt leave them for the poor and for the stranger: I am the Lord your God'.<sup>46</sup> The freehold of all property is held by god but also each person is created *imitatio dei*, in the image of god. This means that there can be no ownership of a person. On this basis, Jewish ethics has resisted any market in body parts,

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<sup>45</sup> Woolf, "Food, Poverty and Patronage: The Significance of the Epigraphy of the Roman Alimentary Schemes in Early Imperial Italy." p. 205.

<sup>46</sup> Leviticus, 19:10.

which do not belong to the person to sell. It is also forbidden to sell ones body for sexual services.<sup>47</sup>

Christian Democracy was based on developing an initially dissident interpretation of Catholic teaching which opposed the indissoluble tie to the monarchy and sought to incorporate the modern idea of citizenship with a moral conception of civil association. Its doctrine may be summarised as the subordination of both state and market to a self-governing society through the cultivation of solidarity.

It was an ideology founded upon the resistance to ‘Proletarianisation’, defined as the unmediated dependence on a wage for survival.<sup>48</sup> Drawing upon the idea that the person is a social rather than a political being they argued that ethics were best preserved within the organisations of society. The ideology that had been condemned in 1834 by Pope Gregory XVI as ‘false, calumnious, rash, anarchic, contrary to the word of God, impious, scandalous and erroneous’ had become mainstream Church teaching by 1944.<sup>49</sup> The role given to intermediate organisations in the organisation of society as a means of resisting an exclusively market distribution of assets and power is the principle means of resisting the sovereignty of money.

This Catholic reconciliation of citizenship and faith is one example of how the Christian tradition seeks to constrain the logic of commodification. And one of the most distinctive aspects of Islamic teaching is its Aristotelian insistence on the vice of charging interest and the priority of preserving the integrity of the person and community in defiance of

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<sup>47</sup> Leviticus, 19: 29. For the development of the argument about body parts, prostitution and pornography as a form of idolatry and denigration of the person see Meir Tamari, *"with All Your Possessions": Jewish Ethics and Economic Life* (New York: The Free Press, 1987).

<sup>48</sup> For the argument that deproletarianization was the central feature of Christian Democracy see Richard Camp, *The Papal Ideology of Social Reform: A Study in Historical Development* (Leiden: 1969).

<sup>49</sup> See Kees Van Kersbergen, *Social Capitalism: A Study of Christian Democracy and the Welfare State* (1996). p. 93, f.9. p. 87 Pius XIII declared in 1944 that democratic participation in the economy was a proper means for carrying out ‘just social reforms’ and that the liberal-democratic state ‘is considered by many to be a natural postulate of reason itself’.



the monied interest.<sup>50</sup> The imperative of pursuing right and forbidding wrong is one of the most distinctive features of Islamic jurisprudence and ethics.<sup>51</sup> This is a duty incumbent upon each believer and it is considered particularly important to speak out against the wealthy and the powerful. Within Islamic law and ethics there are very specific prohibitions on the sale of body parts and of the body in all its forms as well as specific prohibitions on the commercialisation of nature.<sup>52</sup> The prohibition on interest takes its place within the subordination of money to communitarian ethics. A recognition that other monotheistic faiths share these concerns has led to a common solidarity between the faith communities on issues such as the status of illegal immigrants and constraints on public advertising.

### **Citizenship and the City**

As the concept of citizenship moved from the city state to the nation state it became more abstract, procedural and general. It became less about how to generate and sustain a set of relationships between people who exert power over each other and more about establishing a set of national institutions that could administer to the needs of a population. The Abrahamic faiths embody a range of institutions and values of far greater intensity and meaning, or in the language of political philosophy far thicker, than the state, as the collective enforcer of a singular law can allow. Concepts of love, brotherhood, mercy and community are difficult to reconcile with equal rights, respect for persons and neutrality. The issues confronting 21<sup>st</sup> century cities, however, is not significantly different from those of Athens in the 4<sup>th</sup> century B.C. or Rome at the time of

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<sup>50</sup> For a straightforward account of the Islamic prohibition as a resistance to exploitation see Abdullah Saeed, *Islamic Banking and Interest: A Study of the Prohibition of Riba and Its Contemporary Interpretation* (New York: E. J. Brill, 1996). See also Mohammad Hashim Kamali, *Equity and Fairness in Islam* (Cambridge: The Islamic Texts Society, 2005).

<sup>51</sup> See Cook, *Forbidding Wrong in Islam*. See also Ignaz Goldziher, *Introduction to Islamic Theology and Law*, ed. Charles Issawi and Bernard Lewis, trans. Andras and Ruth Hamori, *Modern Classics in Near Eastern Studies* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1981).

<sup>52</sup> For the Islamic conception of de-commodification of nature see Richard Folz, "Is There an Islamic Environmentalism," *Environmental Ethics* 22, no. 4 (2000). See also Abou Bakr Ahmed Ba Kader, *Environmental Protection in Islam* (Washington D.C.: Island Press, 1995).

Jesus to the extent that problems of debt, exploitation and commodification required political action to preserve a sense of common status or solidarity. It is a characteristic of globalisation that not only is there a far more intense pluralism than at any previous time in our cities but also that global conflicts can polarise relations within those cities. The conceptualisation of common action in defence of the status of the citizen as capable of choice and responsibility within an environment which they share and care for with all other citizens is of both moral and practical importance. Faith communities are constitutive of identity, they define people and communities. They are also resources, bundles of ethics, skills and networks that can transform people and places. The Alinsky method of common engagement enables the constitutive elements of urban life to offer resources to each other in defence of what matters to them. The pluralist constitution of cities means that they have to agree on common action but if that is so then the definition of the political agenda will challenge the prevailing liberalism of national citizenship. Issues of pornography and prostitution, faith schools and drugs, living wages and family values could move into the heart of urban politics. Communities of faith could yet redeem the lost promise of citizenship by pursuing the good of the community of fate to which we all, by necessity, belong.

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London Metropolitan University, June 4<sup>th</sup>, 2007.