Reply to Michael Walzer
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Political Theory 1995; 23; 250
DOI: 10.1177/0090591795023002003

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REPLY TO MICHAEL WALZER

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WALZER DEFENDS HIS FOCUS on the (nation-)state with two additional arguments: (1) "physical and cultural survival," and (2) "welfare." Fortunately, he does not limit his response to normative arguments, including historical-empirical and strategic considerations as well.

Ad 1. I agree that "sub-state or trans-state formations" have to meet the same empirical tests as states. Evidently, the struggle by national liberation movements for independent states has not been a historical misunderstanding. However, I think that, in our times, one should not discuss state formations and "alternative formations" any longer as exclusive alternatives but as security formations, which can supplement and mutually help and criticize each other. Walzer's arguments in favor of the nation-state do hold, if at all, only for "vertical ethnies" (Smith 1989, 348f). He presupposes, normatively, that the goals of liberation movements and states "are bound to be the same" and, consequently, underestimates that the assurance of the "survival of this group of men and women" (e.g., the Jews in Israel) all too often is at the expense of that one (the Palestinians). Strategically, his arguments show the well-known but suspect chronological logic of "first-then": in my view, we should, in debates and practices of redistribution of state powers, not wait until state sovereignty, in its old forms, has been established ("after-then"). Limitations of sovereignty, internally and externally, by liberal and democratic constitutionalism, should go hand in hand, strategically and normatively, and the same is true for universalist inclusion and criticism of illegitimate exclusions with regard to welfare. The logic of "begin within" "and then for that of their neighbors" reminds me too much of famous subordinations: first comes the liberation of workers, then of women, and so on.

Ad 2. The long struggle for the—still very fragile—internal universalist guarantee of social rights was only mentioned in the introduction of my
article, indeed, because I wanted to focus on the other, exclusionary side of this development, which has been forgotten for such a long time. Walzer stresses that ethnic homogeneity and (nation-)states play a crucial role, empirically as well as strategically. I’m not so sure about this. The empirical claims that this “extension has been most successful, the welfare system strongest, in the most homogeneous Western states” and that ethnic heterogeneity and the disentanglement of citizenship and ethnicity in the United States “go a long way toward explaining the shoddiness of our welfare system” are very much contested. Other immigration societies (Australia, New Zealand, Canada with their fairly well-developed welfare systems) are counterexamples as well as the ethnically quite homogeneous Japan (with a “corporate welfare system”) or France (with her occupational and sectoral systems of social security and the comparatively very late development of a welfare-“state”). I do not know detailed comparative studies of the relation between ethnic homogeneity/heterogeneity and welfare-state. Strategically, we are confronted with two problems: (a) evidently, “we still have a state” and we totally agree that it is at least “a necessary agent”: no realistic strategy of national and international social policy and redistribution is feasible “alongside the state.” Still, Walzer should, in my view, more openly confront the problem that these policies can be—in principle, solidaristic as well as exclusionary—and that they have been, historically, predominantly welfare-chauvinist. The experiences within the European Community show, furthermore, that it is strategically misleading to trust only or mainly on the sovereignty of (nation-)states in the struggle to guarantee social security for the “most vulnerable first world workers.” In this regard, too, the state level has to be supplemented and criticized by infrastate movements and organizations and suprastate ones (like the European Trade Union Congress, the International Labor Organization, the aborted European “charter,” the European court in Luxembourg), some of which are notoriously weak. (b) The “moral usefulness of the (nation-)state” as a source of loyalty, solidarity, and common goals is very ambivalent: historically, the appeal to national loyalty and solidarity has, to say the least, not promoted the “progressive expansion . . . of existing solidarit[y].” Of course, one has to try to prevent the “abolition of existing solidarit[y],” but the necessary transformation of this solidarity into a nonexclusionary solidarity has to count on and develop universalist, not particularist, “motives” (as I think one can learn from the history of the labor- and trade-union movement).

Walzer thinks that my favorite disentanglement of democratic citizenship from all ascriptive identities as well as from state membership is a typically American project, not sufficiently taking into account the great diversity of states: “is all the world America?” He is right in stating that this project “is
much harder, morally as well as politically” in nation-states, particularly in those in which the ethnic and civic aspects of nationality are closely connected. These are the only ones who, historically, do allow one to speak of a “possible legitimacy of the citizenship/ethnicity or citizenship/culture connection.” I have to confine myself to three remarks, which would all need much more extended treatment. First, I would agree that this disentanglement is difficult, indeed, but at the same time, it is one of the most urgent problems on the political agenda. Walzer does underestimate the fact that “France” herself has always been (see Leslie Page Moch) and recently has become (see Noiriel, Taguieff) much more “multiethnic” and “multicultural.” Second: How to persuade the French? The project to disentangle democratic citizenship from ascriptive identities is not only an American one but also very much the project of the French republican concept of *citoyenneté* (see Brubaker). One should take the credo of this concept seriously and develop it in the way I tried to show in my essay. Third, how far should such a “neutrality” go? At least some of the most urgent problems I have tried to state in my essay (particularly in section 4.3). The short outline of political proposals in the last section of Walzer’s response do also presuppose at least some such disentanglement, difficult as this may be. Whether we are able to realize that, in time, was my alarming question we all have to tackle.