

Toward a New Philosophy of Human Survival*

The Contemporary Significance of the US Declaration of Independence for the Philosophy of our Times

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1. Preface

1. Professor Ed D'Angelo, representing the Society for the Philosophical Study of Marxism (SPSM), asked me to present a paper at its symposium, as a session of the 20th World Congress of Philosophy (Boston, 10-16 August, 1998). It is a great honor and pleasure for me to be invited to the symposium. Professor D'Angelo suggested that I submit a paper on the Marxist movement in Japan with some references to social movements.

1.1 But I would like to refrain from referring to the Marxist movement in Japan, because firstly I am not a "Marxist" in the traditional term

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which was used in the so-called Soviet version of Marxism. Marx himself criticized those who called themselves "Marxist," when he said, "Tout ce que je sais, c'est que je ne suis pas marxiste." ("All I know, I am not a Marxist.") (Engels, 1890a)

Secondly, because I would rather like to propose some keywords of "a new philosophy of human survival," which has been asked to be submitted to world public opinion by the UN. It seems that a consideration about such a philosophy is more crucial and necessary than any discussion about "Marxism" in our nuclear and biotechnological age in which human survival is being threatened.

1.2 Of course, it does not mean that the philosophy of Marx and Engels is outmoded. Surely, the so-called "orthodox" Soviet version of it is out of date, which is welcome. Rather, it is just the time for us to revive the essence of Marx's genuine philosophy, which has for many years been distorted by Stalin and his followers. As I understand, the essence of Marx's philosophy is nothing but the full development of people's democracy, that is, people's sovereignty in all aspects. Therefore, the philosophical foundation of democracy should be more deeply elaborated and developed. I am of the opinion that thereby we can demonstrate how the newly reconstructed philosophy of Marx would be able to contribute something to the formulation of a new philosophy of human survival.

1.3 In this context, it would be more appropriate for us at this symposium in Boston, as the birthplace of the American Revolution, to discuss the contemporary significance of the Declaration of Independence in connection with a new philosophy of human survival.

2. The terms "life" and the "right to life" as the key values in a new philosophy of human survival

2.1 To begin with, I would like to remind you of "a new way of thinking" which might be called a "new philosophy of human survival."

Einstein once said: "If mankind is to survive, then we need a completely new way of thinking." Since then, within the framework of the UN, many efforts have been made to elaborate "a new way of thinking." In my opinion, one of the most important UN documents which embody "a new way of thinking" is "New Philosophy on Disarmament" (33/71/N, 1978). It reads in part:

"The General Assembly...

Convinced that the world is in fact witnessing a revolution in its mode of thinking as regards the historic legacy of armed national security and giving way to new concepts in a manner that will require the full partnership of peoples;

Confronted by an explosion of new ideas, new theories, new proposals and new strategies in an effort to cope with the short- and long-term plans submitted by statesmen and Governments in intolerable fragmentation and which need to be formulated as a fused and organized departure from past outmoded (sic) premises, into a new philosophy on disarmament;

Considers it necessary that all the new ideas, new proposals, new thinking and new strategies...be formulated into *a single comprehensive and coordinated system, into a new philosophy on disarmament in a message that can effectively reach the minds of men in a mobilization of world public opinion in support of the United Nations goal...*" (emphasis added).

2.2 I do not know what kind of a document on a new philosophy of disarmament, (that is, human survival), has already been submitted to the General Assembly of the UN. Anyway, it is still one of the most important tasks for all philosophical schools all over the world to contribute to the formulation of such a philosophy, and submit it to the UN to inspire worldwide awareness and activism.

2.3 Then, what kinds of philosophical schools can contribute to this cause?

First of all, I would like to consider the philosophy of the Declaration of Independence. But, allow me to speak a little about my personal history in relation to the Declaration of Independence.

Often a single book can change the whole life course of a youth. In my case, it was *The Philosophy of Peace*, by John Somerville (Somerville, 1949), who was one of the founders of the SPSM. When I was a student at the University of Tokyo in 1950, I came across the original American edition in a public library. Fascinated by its title, I started to read it and could not stop. I was greatly impressed with the following two insights:

2.3.1 First, the appearance of the atomic bomb is one of the biggest events in human history. Henceforth, history will no longer be divided into ancient, medieval and modern. We shall have to speak of the pre-atomic and the atomic periods.

2.3.2 Second, the ideology of the USA originates from the Declaration of Independence. It was written in 1776, but it still is one of the essential philosophical guidelines for those who live in our atomic, that is, nuclear age.

At that time I read Somerville, I was critical of America as represented by Truman and MacArthur. But I was happy to discover the conscience

of "another America" in *The Philosophy of Peace*, and I was moved by it. It motivated me to write to Professor Somerville. A few weeks later, I received an encouraging reply from him, a philosopher of international repute. Ever since then, for over forty years, he has been my teacher and I learned much from him through correspondence. I myself edited and translated many of his papers and books into Japanese. Maybe I am the Japanese philosopher and sociologist who has most energetically introduced the philosophy of J. Somerville, as well as "another America" to the thinking world in Japan. I am proud that he used to call me his "philosophical son."

2.4 Another person who taught me the implications of the Declaration of Independence was Alice Herz (1882-1965). In 1952, I received a letter from her, a German-born American, a Quaker, a Nazi-refugee and a resident in Detroit. She had an opportunity to hear a speech by J. Somerville in Detroit. It was from him that she obtained my name and address. In her first letter of March 8, 1952 she wrote to me: "Please let me know, if you would like to have more American literature which gives some ideas of the America of Jefferson and Lincoln and their truly democratic principles. I would be glad to send you what you desire in the limits of my abilities."

2.5 Inspired by John Somerville and Alice Herz, I have devoted much time to the study of the Declaration of Independence, another true America and the implications of Hiroshima and Nagasaki for humanity and world history. Since then, for the past 48 years, the Declaration has been one of the most precious sources of my philosophical thought and social activities.

2.6 What is the implication of the Declaration for the new philosophy of human survival? Allow me to cite from it:

"We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable Rights; that among these are *Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness*" (emphasis added).

2.6.1 It is important to note that, in drafting the Declaration, Thomas Jefferson placed "life" first among the inalienable rights with which all human beings are equally endowed, followed by liberty and the pursuit of happiness. Indeed, the most important thing for a human being is "life," without which all other rights and all other values are inconceivable. All human beings have the right to enjoy a meaningful life, completing the natural span of their lives. How could this ever be refuted? If there should be a human being who contends that it can be refuted, then such a person by his or her own logic would be compelled to admit the possibility that his or her own "right to life" could be denied.

2.6.2 It is also noteworthy that Jefferson wisely did not use the word "Property," instead of "Life." If he had placed the "right to property" first among the inalienable rights, the Declaration should have been called only a declaration of bourgeois rights. As far as the "right to life" is concerned, however, it is neither "bourgeois" nor "proletarian." It is surely the human right in its true meaning.

2.6.3 Therefore, it was very much appropriate for Marx to have called the US Declaration of Independence "the first Declaration of Rights of Men" in the congratulatory address he sent to Lincoln on behalf of the International Working Men's Association (Marx, 1864). To my knowledge, Marx never called the Declaration only "a declaration of bourgeois rights."

2.6.4 It was also in accordance with the philosophy of Marx that Ho Chi Minh, in the Declaration of Independence of the Democratic Republic

of Vietnam of 1945, read the key passage (2.6 above) from the US Declaration, and evaluated it as an "immortal statement." Nobody would dare to refute Marx's and Ho Chi Minh's high estimation of the US Declaration.

2.7 In this context, the central values of the US Declaration, and of Marx, could be said to be not so different. Engels (1890b) wrote:

"According to the materialist conception of history, the ultimately determining element in history is *the production and reproduction of real life*" (emphasis added).

Indeed, the first starting point of the existence of society is human living activity or the expression of human life; human beings must first of all drink, eat, wear clothes and dwell in shelters. From that follows the "right to life" as a "truth held to be self-evident," and the most fundamental right, followed by the unfolding of the other many rights.

2.8 Therefore, it would not be wrong for us to say that both philosophies belong to a same school of the "philosophy of life."

Of course, the US Declaration presupposes the Creator, while the materialism of Marx does not. I myself do not presuppose the Creator, but I do not like to criticize those who presuppose the Creator. Because, whether human beings do believe in the Creator or not, it is most essential for humankind to live with dignity and enjoy the right to life, not to be killed by any power. A philosophical difference between those who believe in the God and those who do not is not important today in the face of the threat to human survival itself.

2.8.1 Rather, in my opinion, those who, believing in the Creator, respect the "right to life," should be more highly estimated than any "materialists" or "atheists" who dare to ignore the "right to life."

In this respect, the philosophy of Alice Herz is relevant. She was not

only a splendid peace activist but a deeply thoughtful person. Her thought might be called a "philosophy of life" (Shibata, 1976, 1977b). But it is quite different from what we understand generally by the term "philosophy of life" in F. Nietzsche, W. Dilthey, or H. Bergson. It is, so to speak, a rationalistic "philosophy of life" which opposes irrationalism and mysticism, and preaches the dignity of man. Through correspondence, Alice Herz and I cooperated for the cause of peace, nuclear disarmament and human survival, as well as opposition to the USA's war in Korea and Vietnam.

2.8.2 My correspondence with her ended on March 16, 1965, when she chose "the flaming death of the Buddhists" on the streets of Detroit, in order to make her protests heard against the US invasion of Vietnam and the American policy of nuclear threats against other nations. In her final note, she wrote, "As a Citizen of the World, in full possession of my physical, mental and spiritual capacities, before the Creator of this World," (I accuse Lyndon B. Johnson) "for having declared his decision and already started to enact it; to use his amassed capacity of '400 times OVERKILL' to wipe out, 'if necessary,' whole countries of his own choosing." She further went on to appeal "to the American People," and concluded her testament with the following words:

"May America's Youth take the lead toward LIFE!"

With such an appeal to the "philosophy of life," she died. But her self-sacrifice was not in vain. It moved American and Japanese people. It gave an impetus to mass movements for the cause of solidarity with Vietnamese people and human survival.

2.9 Let us return to a "new philosophy of human survival." What schools of philosophy can contribute much toward formulating such a philosophy?

2.9.1 As to the so-called "orthodox" Soviet version of Marxism, is it possible for it to engage such a task? I would say "No!" The philosophical reason is because, in its system, the concept of "life," not to speak of the "right to life," has not been given the leading place. It was not accidental that the "right to life" of countless peoples were brutally violated under Stalin and his followers in Soviet and East European countries. Stalin's successors surely didn't only violate the "right to life" of their own peoples, but still trampled the same rights of peoples of Czechoslovakia, Poland and the Baltic states. Likewise, they showed no respect for the "right to life" of the people of Afghanistan. The same can be said about Mao's and Kim Il Sung's philosophies and their application to politics, as well.

2.9.2 Needless to say, the same should also be said about all philosophical schools of Japan, Germany and Italy which advocated or were indifferent to the invasion of China, Asian-Pacific and European-Atlantic-African countries, as well as the genocide of the so-called "inferior" nations. They surely stressed "life" and "right to life," but only for the so-called "superior" nations. They completely ignored and infringed on "life" and the "right to life" of the suppressed peoples.

2.9.3 To come back to the Declaration of Independence, 222 years ago, Jefferson had accused King George III of such crimes against the American people as follows:

"He has plundered our seas, ravaged our Coasts, burnt our towns and destroyed the lives of our people. - He is at this time transporting large Armies of foreign Mercenaries to compleat the works of death, desolation and tyranny, already begun with circumstances of Cruelty & perfidy scarcely paralleled in the most barbarous ages, and totally unworthy the Head of a civilized nation."

About 190 years later, however, the USA, the biggest and strongest power in history, committed the very same crimes against the Vietnamese people in the worst aggressive war of destruction ever recorded. To use the words of the Declaration, Kennedy, Johnson, Nixon, and their cohorts were "totally unworthy the Head of a civilized nation," and should be denounced as the traitors to the USA.

2.9.4 I highly appreciate the Declaration, but here we fairly have to cast a critical eye on the fact that even it was not free from racist prejudice against the Indians. It reads: "He (King of Great Britain)...has endeavoured to bring on the inhabitants of our frontiers, the merciless Indian Savages, whose known rule of warfare is an undistinguished destruction of all ages, sexes and conditions." But it was the very Americans who waged such ruthless warfare against the native Americans.

I am also moved that Jefferson denounced slavery in his draft of the Declaration. But I am critical of the fact that the denunciation of the slavery was omitted from his draft by the Continental Congress. In this respect, I do not deny that there are some historical limitations in the Declaration. I well know that the Declaration of Independence really had in mind only the human rights of white property owners, and ignored the equal human right of women, natives and African Americans. But it is more important for us to stress its positive aspects than its negative ones, because the ruling circles in the USA, Japan and other advanced capitalist countries want to have the people forget its positive implications for our times, and the central ideal of this text is radically egalitarian.

2.9.5 I have referred to many vicious crimes committed by all imperialist and hegemonic powers against other subjugated nations. Besides, we

have to note that since Hiroshima and Nagasaki, humanity has always been threatened with nuclear destruction. A nuclear war is no longer a kind of war. It includes all kinds of killing, including homicide, infanticide, patricide, matricide, suicide, genocide, biocide, ecocide and so on. So, it is nothing but "omnicide." This word was coined by Somerville. Therefore, a government which declares that it is ready to use nuclear weaponry is thereby declaring that it is ready to kill virtually everyone and everything. Once "omnicide" has been committed by nuclear powers, humanity and all forms of life on the only one precious and beautiful earth will be completely destroyed and distinguished. Again to quote from the Declaration, "The works of death, desolation and tyranny, already begun with circumstances of Cruelty & perfidy scarcely paralleled in the most barbarous ages" will be completed a million times more than all genocide and war crimes recorded in history.

2.10 Then, what philosophers and thinkers did advocate and defend "life" and the "right to life" of the Vietnamese and other oppressed peoples, as well as of humanity and all forms of life?

2.10.1 I would like to mention the following people: A. Einstein, N. Bohr and H. Yukawa, who were philosophical thinkers, as well as L. Mumford (Mumford, 1979), J. Somerville (Somerville, 1949, 1975), B. Russell (Russell, 1959, 1961, 1963), J.-P. Sartre, G. Anders (Anders, 1959, 1972), H.L. Parsons (Parsons, 1971) and others. With admiration, I would also like to note that there are many philosophers with the same insights among members of the SPSM and the International Philosophers for Prevention of Nuclear Omnicide (IPPNO), as well as the Japanese Society for Study of Materialism.

2.10.2 Allow me to say some words about my philosophical and social commitments. In July 1967, I, as a member of the four-scientist

Japanese team investigating US war crimes against Vietnam, made a survey of the crimes on the spot through a three-week trip by two jeeps from Hanoi to the 17th Parallel, under the heavy bombing of American fighter-bombers which dumped CBUs (Cluster Bomb Units) all over the territory. This experience motivated me to study the Vietnam Revolution and War from the standpoints of philosophy, sociology, the theory of scientific-technological revolution, the military science, international law and so on. Perhaps I could contribute something to the development of solidarity movements with Vietnam, as well as to philosophical and sociological research of the war and revolution there (Shibata, 1971, 1972, 1973a, 1973b, 1977a).

As a Professor at Hiroshima University, I could also study the implications of the nuclear age, the anti-nuclear culture and Hibakusha (atomic victims) from the philosophical, ethical and sociological points of view (Shibata, 1978, 1978/79a, 1978/79b, 1980a, 1980b, 1981a, 1982, 1983a, 1983b, 1986, 1987c, 1996). I, helped by many leading musicians, could further organize the "No More Hiroshimas! Concert," every August, from 1980 to 1989 and in 1995, in Tokyo and Hiroshima.

2.10.3 Generally speaking, however, unfortunately we cannot but note that not many schools of philosophy have paid due attention to the philosophical implications of the key values "life" and the "right to life" in our nuclear age. Most philosophers have been indifferent to the danger of "life" on the earth. In contrast, it is with admiration that we note that many religious leaders have been active in the campaigns for defending "life" and the "right to life." Many people might be mentioned, but here I mention only Pope John Paul II, Rev. M.L. King, Jr., the bishops of the Pax Christi in the USA and J. Gerson, an untiring anti-nuclear activist of the American Friends Service Committee

(Gerson, 1995). In Japan, I have many friends among religious friends, including Christians, Buddhists, Shintoists and so on who have been involved in solidarity movements with the oppressed people, and in anti-nuclear mobilization for survival (Shibata, 1978/79b).

I think all of them are the same in placing "life" first among all values. So, we can perhaps say that philosophies of most religious trends belong to the "philosophy of life" in the above-mentioned sense.

2.11 Anyway, I think that most of philosophers and spiritual people can be united in stressing the priority of "life" among all philosophical and theological concepts. Accordingly, I would like to propose the keyword "life" as the starting point and cornerstone of a system of the new philosophy of human survival. I am convinced that with this value, almost all people, irrespective of their philosophical, religious and political differences, will be efficacious in mobilizing people all over the world for human survival.

2.12.1 Of course, besides the key concepts "life" and the "right to life," there are many human rights which could be derived from them. If a system of the new philosophy of human survival could be submitted less fragmentarily and more systematically, it would be more easy for the public to understand what the new philosophy proposes. As cited above, the UN document (33/71/N) asked to have "a single comprehensive and coordinated system" submitted.

2.12.2 In this context, allow me cite from my commemorative paper on the bicentennial of the Declaration of Independence, which was published over twenty years ago (Shibata, 1975, 1987a). In this paper, I tried to systematize the foundation of the new philosophy as a system of the human rights. I would like to propose a "system of fundamental human rights" as illustrated by the **Figure A** attached at the end of this

paper. If this system is applied in practice, it will create a "system of institutional forms of contemporary democracy," which can be illustrated by the Figure B. Here is not the place for me to go further into the theoretical backgrounds of these systems, while some people may criticize such systems. I believe that no one can deny that there is a need to create and offer such comprehensive and coordinated systems of human rights and democracy, which are the preconditions of societies for life in peace (Shibata, 1987c).

3. The "right to and the duty of revolution" as the key principles in a new philosophy of human survival

3.1 The next problem for the new philosophy of human survival is how to protect and defend "life" and the "right to life" and other human rights deduced from the former. In this respect, the Declaration of Independence is still one of our crucial sources. It reads:

"We hold these truths to be self-evident:...that to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed; that *whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it*, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness" (emphasis, added).

3.2 Not only that. The Declaration goes on:

"But when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same Object evinces a design to reduce them under absolute Despotism, *it is their right, it is their duty to throw off such*

Government, and to provide new Guards for their future security" (emphasis, added).

3.3.1 As is declared, it is not only *the right of the people* to resist or to alter any government when such government evinces a design to reduce the people under absolute despotism. The Declaration goes a step further in saying that to resist or alter such government is *the duty of the people*. It is important to note that only resistance and revolution against a despotic government are mentioned in the Declaration as *both the right and the duty*.

If a right alone is in question, people may choose to relinquish their right. But when duty is added to it, they are not allowed to escape from the confrontation against despotic government. To fulfill this duty, people must struggle against the despotic government, *whatever form it may have*. And when people so act in accordance with their duty, they will naturally find in themselves increased self-consciousness of their rights, and more and more intense feeling for the exercise of such rights, thereby facilitating a fuller realization of these rights. Indeed, the recognition and enunciation not only of the right to resistance and revolution, but also of the duty to pursue them constitute the ultimate guarantee of all the human rights beginning with the "right to life."

3.3.2 Any system or any concept cannot be democratic, nor can it be said to respect human rights, so long as it denies the right and the duty of revolution. The recognition and enunciation of them are the essentials of the Declaration and the touchstone of democracy. If there are people around us who would deny this, and find burdensome the right and the duty of revolution, they would be merely confessing their ignorance of the Declaration, and even of democracy and human rights.

3.4.1 In the above-mentioned paper of mine, I focused on the above

cited statement: "whenever *any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends*." This phrase raised some questions in my mind. Is it absolutely impossible for such a state of affairs to occur under a government of a socialist country? If such a state of affairs did arise, from whatever cause, could that government still claim to be a socialist government? Shouldn't it be said that such a government has already ceased to be a socialist government? Would it not then be just for people, above all, socialists, to exercise their right of revolution, to carry out their duty to rebel? And if there is *absolutely* no possibility for such a state of affairs to occur, then why would the recognition, in socialist states, of the people's right and duty of revolution need to be feared as something advantageous to counter-revolutionary forces? On the contrary, wouldn't such a recognition mean for the socialist state power to declare its firm trust in the people and its policy for total freedom of the people under socialism? And, in fact, isn't it paradoxical but true that the recognition by the people of such a right and duty of revolution is the most effective way to prevent a "revolution" or a counter-revolution against the socialist state power?

3.4.2 In that paper, I went on: In this respect, can it not be said that the following assertion by John Locke is still valid today?

"...this power in the people of providing for their safety anew by a new legislative when their legislators have acted contrary to their trust by invading their property is the best fence against rebellion, and the probablest means to hinder it. For rebellion being an opposition, not to persons, but to authority, which is founded only in the constitutions and laws of the government, those, whoever they may be, who by force break through, and by force justify their violation of them, are truly and properly rebels...They who are in power...being likeliest to do, the

properest way to prevent the evil is to show them the danger and injustice of it who are under the greatest temptation to run into it" (Locke, 1690).

Isn't this thesis of Locke applicable to those in power in the socialist states as well? Why do many socialists fear its application to themselves? Instead, isn't the application of this principle the surest means to prevent the birth and growth of bureaucracy under socialism, and to ensure the security of socialist states?

3.5.1 Again, let us keep in mind the above-cited words from the Declaration: "whenever *any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends...*" It was John Somerville who contended that the Declaration and the theory of Marx were the same in recognizing the right to and the duty of revolution, which could thereby successfully refute the arguments of McCarthyism (Somerville, 1956).

3.5.2 But did theorists of the so-called Soviet "Marxism-Leninism" inherit the legacy of the Declaration and Marx? On the occasion of the bicentennial of the Declaration, I checked how "the right to and duty of revolution," which are the important category of the indivisible system of the human rights, have been recognized by the successive human rights declarations and constitutions. I could find the recognition only in the documents as follows: the Constitution of Virginia (1776); the Constitution of Massachusetts (1780); many other constitutions of states in the USA and the Declaration of the Men and Citizens (1789) of the French Revolution. I could also find it in the constitutions of states of Hessen (1946), Bremen (1947) and West-Berlin (1950) in Germany. Of constitutions of the Soviet and East-European countries, only the Constitution of the German Democratic Republic (1949) stipulated that "...every person shall have the right and the duty to resist

measures running counter to resolutions of the People's Assembly," but this stipulation disappeared after its revision (1968).

To my knowledge, the right to and the duty of resistance and revolution are not recognized in most declarations of human rights or in the constitutions of most countries. In this respect, the Declaration of Independence still is not outmoded, but rather most advanced in the world.

3.6 So, In the above paper I proposed that we revive the right to and the duty of resistance and revolution, and submitted a new system of the human rights, including them. I further suggested that this system should be applied to the constitution *in every country*. It invited a critique by Professor Hermann Klenner, one of the leading philosophers of law at the Institute of Philosophy, the GDR (Klenner, 1979). It was an honor for me to have been criticized by a German philosopher of international repute. Fortunately, he and I could discuss these topics in a friendly exchange of critical comments and dialogue. All papers on this debate have been published in Japanese and English (Shibata, 1979, 1981b). But at that time, I was already convinced that the justice of my thesis would, sooner or later, be proved. As a matter of fact, in 1989 and the ensuing years, the Soviet and East-European peoples exercised their right to revolution, and fulfilled the duty of it against what Marx called "crude communism" or the pseudo-socialist governments (Marx, 1844 and Shibata, 1981c). The vitality of the Declaration has been judged by the Court of History. As a German poet, Friedrich Schiller said, and Hegel positively evaluated, "Die Weltgeschichte ist das Weltgericht." (The world history is the world court.)

4. The equality of all nations as an indispensable principle in a new philosophy of human survival

4.1 The Declaration of Independence has at its very beginning the following passage:

"When in the Course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to assume among the Powers of the earth, *the separate and equal station* to which the Laws of Nature and Nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation" (emphasis added).

Explicitly advocated above are the rights of the peoples to independence and equality. When the American Declaration of Independence declared this, America was a fledging country, compared with other powers of the earth. But, as the USA expanded its territories and became a big imperialist power, the above principle of human right on equality of peoples (nations), small and big, ceased to be a principle of its government.

4.2 The concept "equality of nations" as a fundamental human right was inherited and developed by Marx, Engels, and Lenin. Their principle reads: "A nation oppressing other nations can never be free." Engels further predicted: "One thing alone is certain: *the victorious proletariat can force no blessings of any kind upon any foreign nation without undermining its own victory by so doing*" (Engels, 1982). Lenin wisely inherited this principle and warned Stalin of his big-power chauvinism. In spite of Engels' and Lenin's serious warning, Stalin and his cohorts did continue to force many "blessings" of all kinds upon many other

nations, including the Baltic three countries, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Afghanistan and so on. Under the so-called "blessings" of Stalin and his followers, the human right of equality of nations was savagely violated. Even after Stalin, the successive General Secretaries of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, including Gorbachev, were not free from the big-power-centralist "blessings." As a result, it was *not accidental but necessary* for the so-called "socialist" states in the USSR and East European countries to have undermined their own victory.

4.3 Even after WWII, the UN was founded on big-power centralism, because only the Big Five Powers have been given the privileged veto in the Security Council. As the Big Five Powers are nothing but the Nuclear Big Powers in our age, it cannot but be said that the UN still now functions based on the nuclear-big-power centralism.

4.4 On the contrary, the legacy of the "rights of equal nations" of the US Declaration, as well as Marx, Engels and Lenin was further inherited and developed by Ho Chi Minh. Ho, quoting the above cited statement from the Declaration (2.6 above) in the Vietnamese Declaration of Independence of 1945, went on to say:

"In a broader sense, it means: *All the peoples on the earth are equal from birth*; all the peoples have a right to live and to be happy and free" (emphasis added).

Hence, the subject of human rights is not only all human beings as individuals, but all peoples (nations). Of course, the equal rights of all peoples include all human rights of all individuals, as illustrated in the **Figure A**.

4.5 In a sense, since the end of WWII, the history of many conflicts in international relations can be explained as the history of the confrontation between two principles regarding human rights. On the one hand,

the violation of the rights of equality of nations, that is, the privileged big-power centralism has been represented by the Nuclear Big Five, the Security Council of the UN and the G7 or G8. On the other hand, the rights of equality of nations by the Vietnamese Declaration, the Non-Alignment countries, the General Assembly of the UN and the NGOs. In the case of the history of the Vietnamese war and revolution, there were a train of confrontations between the two principles. The Geneva Agreements of 1954 were achieved under the control by the big-power centralism, and the victorious Vietnamese military forces were forced to withdraw from the South to the North of the 17th parallel, while the Paris Agreements of 1972 were achieved by the principle of equality of nations, of Vietnam and the USA. Vietnam could finally be victorious only by applying the latter principle. The Big Five could have no voice to control Vietnam as an independent state.

4.6 In the light of recent events worldwide, generally speaking, the world is still controlled by big-power centralism, headed by the imperialist circles of the US government. Therefore, the principle declared in the US Declaration still has to be revived and incorporated in the system of the new philosophy of human survival.

5. Conclusion

5.1 In this paper, I have considered the significance of the US Declaration of Independence, as well as its implications for the new philosophy of human survival. As I understand, the executive, legislative, and judicial branches of the USA must unconditionally be loyal to the founding principles of the nation, including the Constitution of the USA. According to the latter, only the Congress is qualified to declare war.

Nevertheless, since Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the successive presidents have declared that they would never give up the strategy of the nuclear first strike. As you well remember, the Japanese bombing of Pearl Harbor was nothing but a first strike. Did America's leaders forget the slogan "Remember Pearl Harbor!"? Why have they not been impeached as traitors to the Declaration and the Constitution?

5.2 Anyway, is there a more despotic government than their government? Is there a criminal act more destructive of people's rights to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness than omnicide? Is it not the right and the duty of the people to alter or to throw off such a government? The Declaration of Independence was written 222 years ago, but we can say it is more proper and applicable today than when it was drafted. It should be revived and incorporated into the new philosophy of human survival.

5.3 How can the philosophy of Marx and Engels contribute to formulating a system of the new philosophy of human survival? The thesis of Engels is noteworthy today. He wrote:

"With each epoch-making discovery, even in the sphere of natural science, it [materialism] has to change its form; and after history also was subjected to materialistic treatment, a new avenue of development has opened here, too." (Engels, 1888)

Since then, for the past 110 years, how many epoch-making discoveries and events in the spheres of not only natural science, but also history, society, economy, politics and social sciences have humanity witnessed? To mention only some of them, the revolutions in physics, biology, biotechnology, information theory, computers and so on, as well as the genocide under Japanese imperialism, Nazi fascism, Stalinism, the nuclear destruction of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the appearance of

Hibakusha (nuclear victims) in Japan, nuclear test sites all over the world, Three Mile Island and Chernobyl, plus the danger of emerging new pathogens, genetically modified organisms and biohazards (Shibata, 1990, 1997), such as *HIV*, *Escherichia coli* O-157 and many others. Also, environmental destruction, military weapons revolutions, the possibility of the end of history and all forms of life, and the essential human rights revolution (Somerville, 1975). Isn't it evident that materialism has to give up its hitherto accepted *form*, to create the *most universal form* to tackle the challenges of our life today, and to mobilize the people for human survival?

5.4 Inspired by the advice of Engels, I have tried to create and submit such a form of materialism as a system of human rights. Of course, my thesis is only one proposal for a new philosophy of human survival. All of you are encouraged to submit your own proposals to our common efforts for survival. Your critical comments about my proposal would be greatly appreciated.

Figure A: System of Fundamental Human Rights and Categories in Social Theory

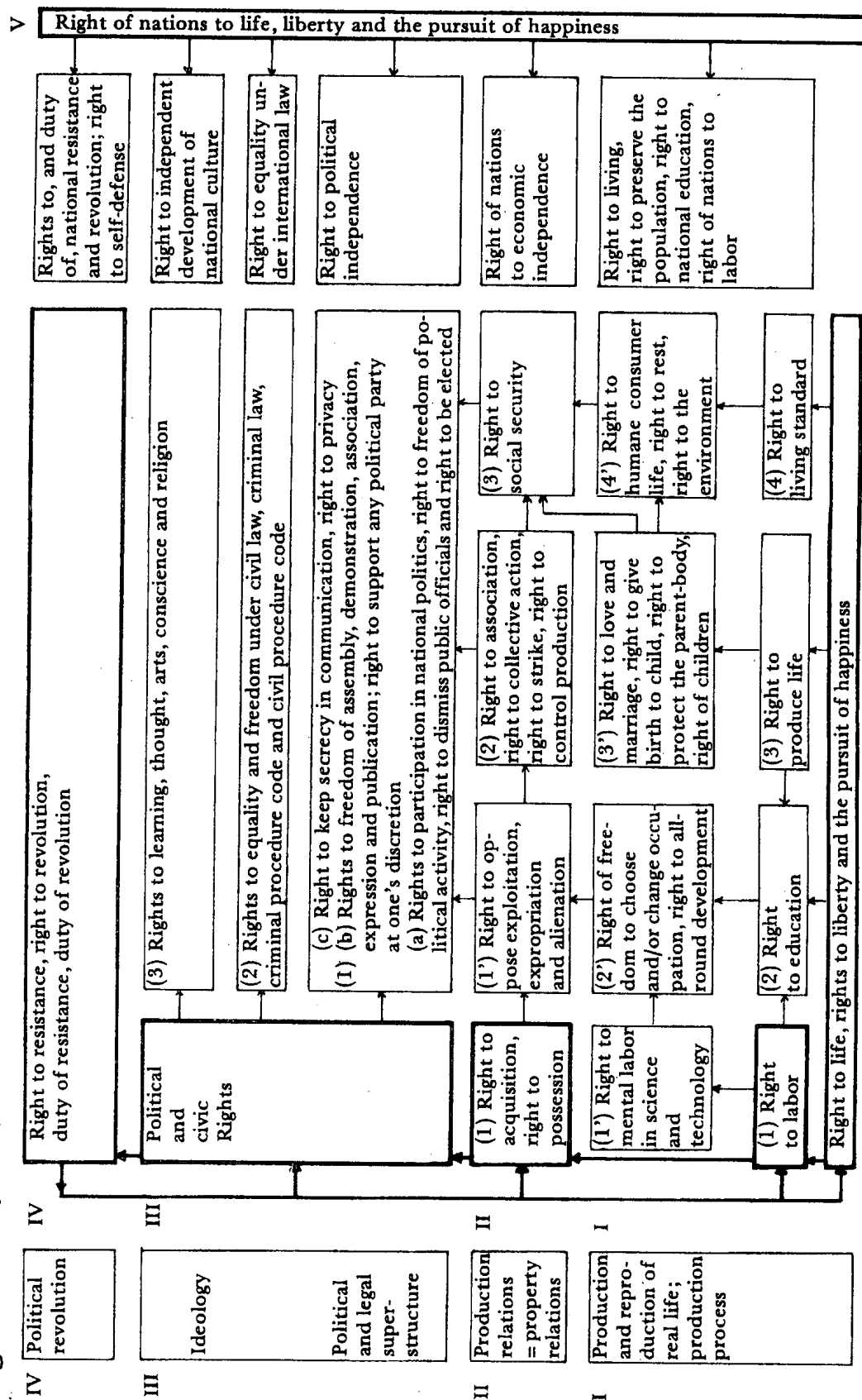
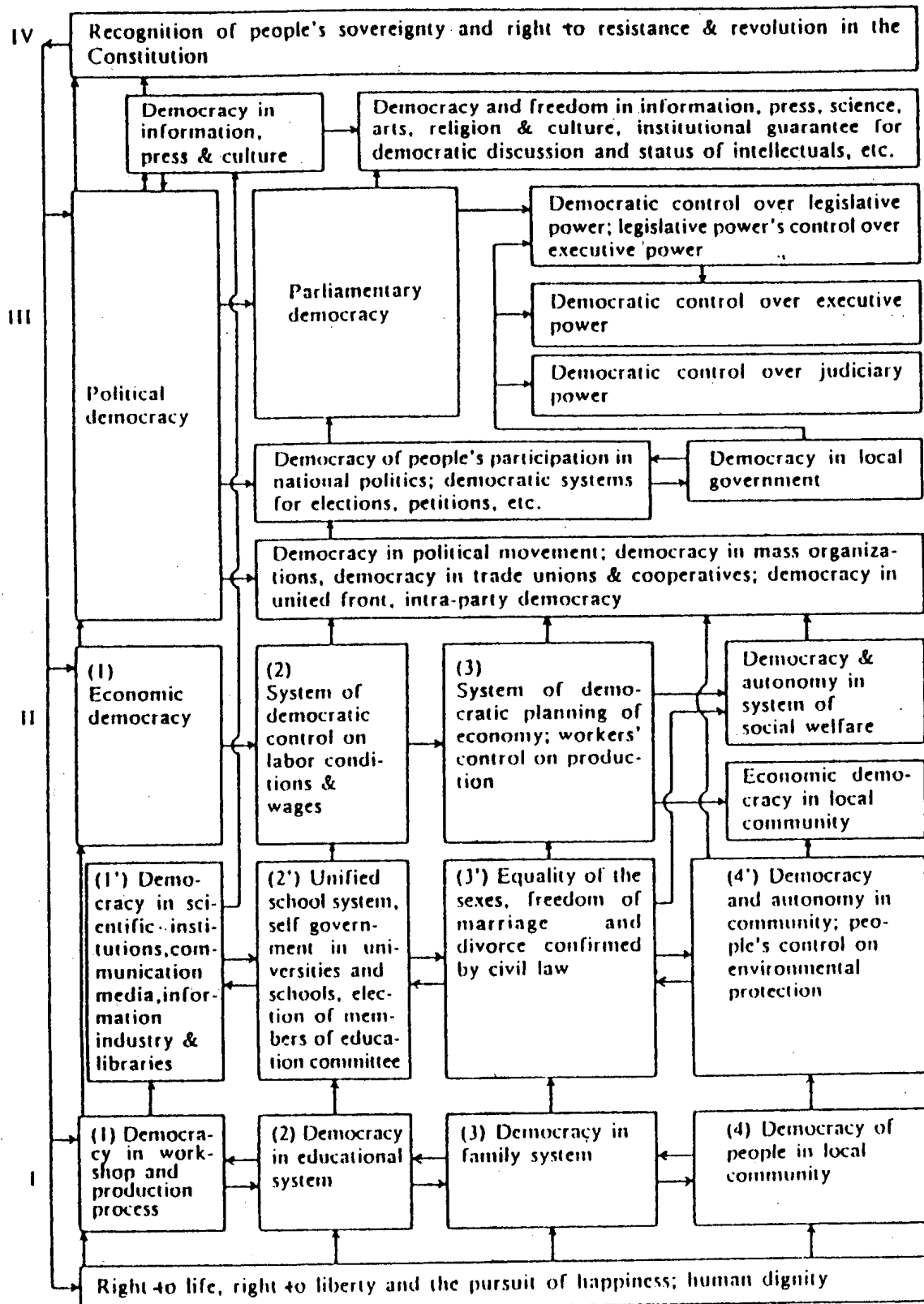


Figure B: *System of Institutional Forms of Contemporary Democracy*



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