Europe and the Maghreb

by Margaret Blunden

The ending of the Cold War, with its focus on the European Central Front, has helped to shift attention towards the Mediterranean. The boundaries of the European Community, of NATO, of the Western European Union, of the CSCE, indeed of a 'common European home', run East/West along the Mediterranean, dividing communities which have historic links extending back more than two centuries. Five million inhabitants from the Maghreb live in Southern Europe and some 75 per cent of the trade of the Maghreb is with the European Community.

However, institutional and psychological divisions between north and south shores have been steadily widening, particularly since the fall of the Berlin wall and the outbreak of the Gulf War. There are disturbing indications that a divide between what the French call the 'north' and the 'south' (ideological rather than geographical concepts) is replacing east/west divisions. Economic consequences flowing from the extension of the European Community to Spain and Portugal, political fallout from European participation in the Gulf War, the tightening of immigration restrictions, and the privileging of relations with Central Europe have exacerbated tensions. The fact that Spain and Italy introduced visas for visitors from the Maghreb at much the same time as visas for visitors from Eastern/Central Europe were phased out, symbolised what many in the Maghreb see as their increasing marginalisation.

Southern European governments have their own fears of marginalisation, faced as they see it by a shift of Europe's gravity towards the north and the east. Spain, France and Italy are trying to assert a Southern and South-Mediterranean orientation, in the

"Europe as Queen"
from S. Münster, *Cosmographia*, 1588, p.119.

face of an increasingly Germanic Europe. They conceive of the security of their southern flanks in terms of maintaining the stability of the southern shore. The concept of stability is a broad one, encompassing economic, cultural, religious and above all political factors as well as military ones. Most Southern European governments have reluctantly concluded that support for non-democratic

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governments in Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia is necessary for stability. This judgment raises issues about the nature of Islamic activism and its relationship with democracy, about which North Africans themselves are deeply divided. There is, however, no doubt that Southern European governments are pursuing a high risk policy, at a time when, as Jean-Claude Guilleband has observed, "there is this enormous rejection of the West which is rising like a rumour all around the Mediterranean. One has to be deaf not to hear it."

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CSD?

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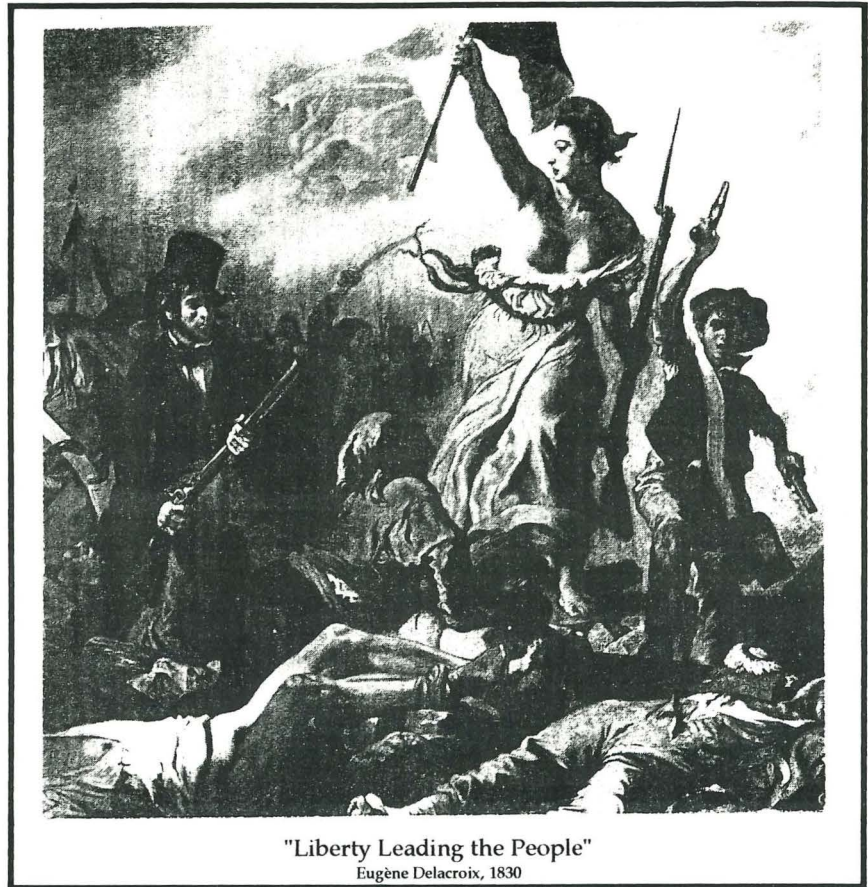
"Liberty Leading the People"
Eugène Delacroix, 1830

Democracy and Woolworths

by Martyn Oliver

When Wittgenstein attempted to persuade one of his students to dispense with philosophy and work in Woolworths, the tone was set for a type of pragmatism which now resonates loudly in a contemporary form within the work of Richard Rorty. Like Wittgenstein, Rorty asks us to dispense with philosophy. But instead of advising us to work in Woolworths, Rorty is less cynical and suggests we leave philosophy and concentrate on the pragmatics of politics and democracy. Unfortunately as my current research suggests, separating philosophy from theories of democracy is not quite as straightforward as Rorty's no-nonsense approach to philosophy may at first appear to suggest.

An equally difficult question posed by Rorty's shift from philosophy to politics is whether it is possible to develop a theory of democracy that explicitly tries to do away with efforts to establish Founding Principles for democratic procedures. Such efforts are made all the more treacherous by Rorty's venture into the intellectually dangerous territory of postmodern liberalism and a radicalism with real political advice at hand. This is often a difficult journey which, according to his sizable body of critics, has become marooned.

Since his move to political theory Rorty has suffered severe criticism from both sides of the postmodernism/radicalism divide. Attempts to bridge this gap are now long overdue, especially within the political theory of democracy. Rorty's work is a good example of how difficult it is to extract the best bits of postmodernism (an 'ism' which according to Rorty is more trouble than it's worth) and use them in a more productive way to ask pragmatic questions about the possibilities of democratic thinking devoid of 'unpragmatic' moral formulas. In other words, the problem is how to preserve the postmodern 'Pick n Mix' counter without taking your eye off the till. For this reason at least, Rorty's work